

# Possible Next Steps for Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore Management

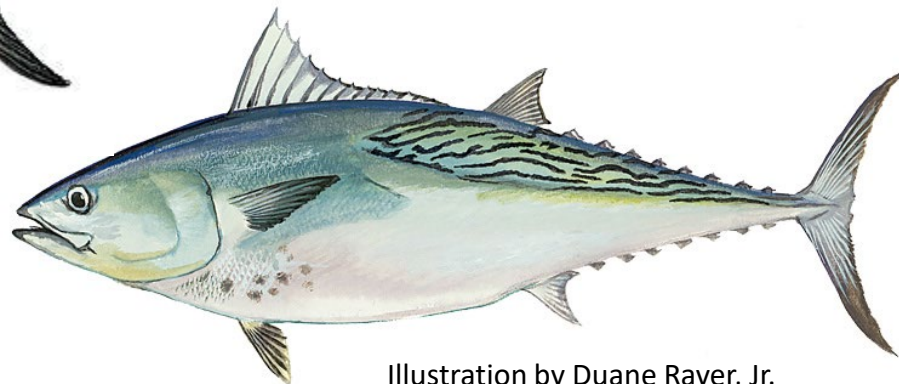
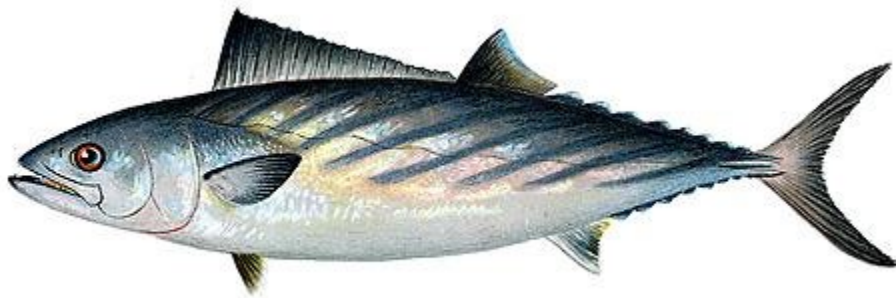


Illustration by Duane Raver, Jr.

May 2023

# Considerations



- Additional species to the Commission portfolio will impact Commission and state staff
  - Add additional ISFMP staff, possible new stock assessment scientist
  - Measurable change the current species priorities, both management and stock assessments
  - States would need to populate TC, SAS, PDT, and PRT

# Options



- States implement own measures
  - 4 states could not with caveats
  - SC and DE could follow federal regulations
  - NC and MD could start state FMP, takes years
- White paper
  - Include if available: distribution, habitat, life history, landings, and management history
- Fishery Improvement Project
  - Multi-stakeholder effort to improve fishing practices and management
  - Often strive to achieve a sustainability certification



**Questions?**



# **Recreational Addendum and Amendment Timeline PDT Consideration**

May 2023

# HCR Addendum/FW Timeline



| Date            | Activity/Action                                       |
|-----------------|---|
| Spring<br>2023  | PDT/FMAT Development                                  |
| Summer<br>23-24 | Draft Document Development                            |
| Aug 24          | Approve for Public Hearings (hearings summer to Fall) |
| April 25        | Final Action  |
| Winter 25       | Federal Rule Making                                   |
| 2026 FY         | Implementation date                                   |

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# PDT Nominations



- Mike Celestino
- Rachel Sysak
- Adam Nowalsky\*
- Corrine Truesdale
- Sam Truesdall

\* Consider moving to a small Commissioner/Council Member work group to advise PDT when needed

# Rec Amendment Timeline



| Date             | Activity/Action                                  |
|------------------|--|
| Summer 2023      | PDT/FMAT Development                             |
| Dec 23           | Approve Scoping Document                         |
| Winter 24        | Scoping Hearings                                 |
| Spring 24        | Review Scoping and Provide direction to PDT/FMAT |
| Spring 25        | Approve Public Herring Document                  |
| Spring/Summer 25 | Public Hearings                                  |



# Rec Amendment Timeline



**Date**

**Activity/Action**

Aug 25

Fina Action

Winter 26

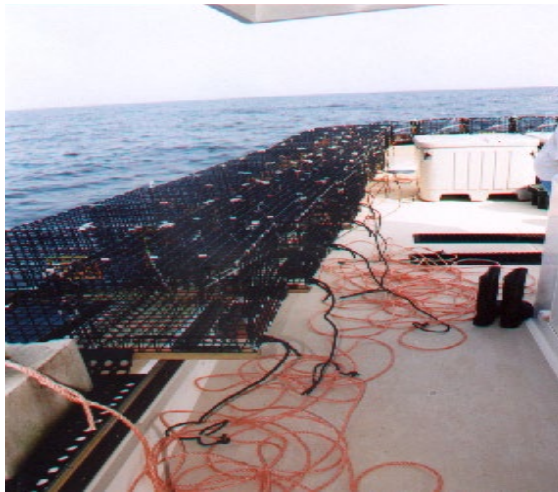
EA development/Federal Rule Making

TBD

Implementation date



**Questions?**



# Research Set Aside Program

# RSA Background



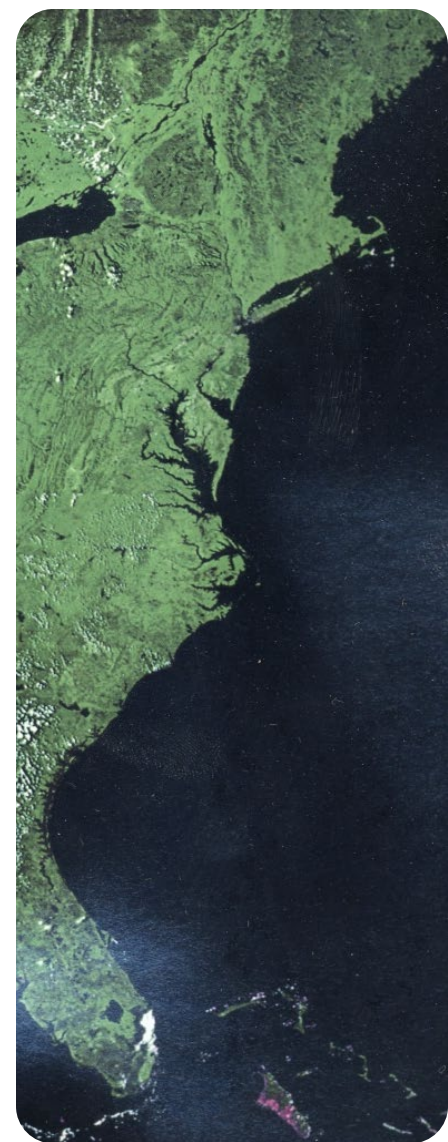
- **Approved in 2001**
- **Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Dogfish**
- **Meet Unaddressed Research Needs**
- **Up to 3% Set-Aside**



# RSA Background



- **Convert Fish Into Funding**
- **Compensation Fishing**
  - **PI and Vessel Agreements**
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Auction**
- **Commercial/For-Hire**
- **State/Federal Vessels**
- **\$1-2 Million/year**
- **2014: 103 Vessels; 2,000+ Trips**



# General RSA Program Roles



- Program creation
- Set aside specifications
- Priority setting
- Proposal review support
- Application of results

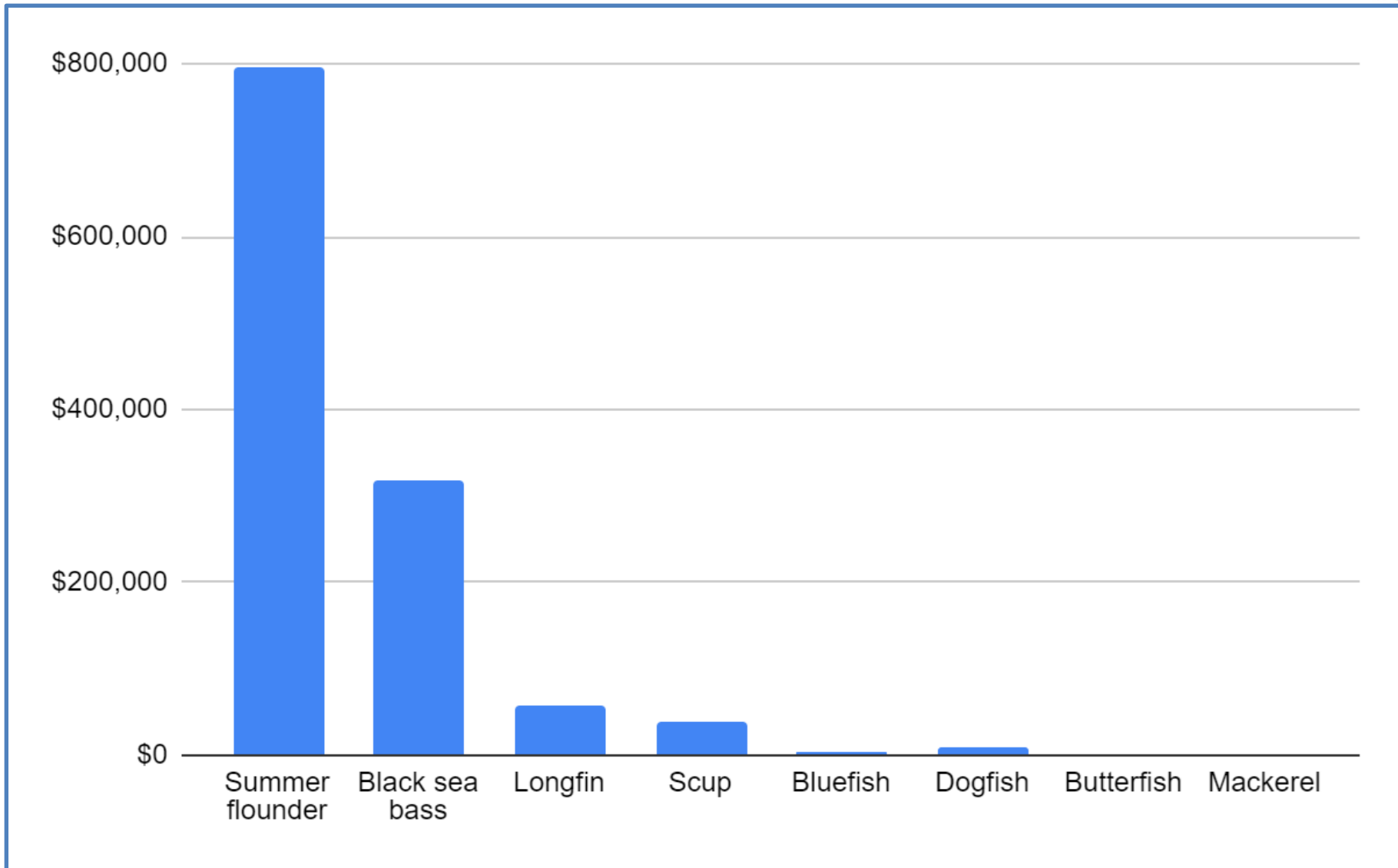


- Program/grant administration
- Project selection
- Project oversight
- Technical support
- Compensation fishing permitting and oversight
- Proposal reviews
- Application of results



- Dockside enforcement
- Compensation fishing permitting and administration
- Quota monitoring, reporting and reconciliation

# Funding Opportunities vs Research Needs



# Program Strengths



- Funds high priority research that is supported entirely by the industry (no Federal dollars)
- Managers involved in the decision process on what research gets carried out
- Gets fishermen and researchers working together (cooperative research) (Trust)
- Gives NOAA Fisheries Service an opportunity to work with the managers and fleet to solve problems



However.....





# RSA Program – Issues



- **Costs:**
  - Large administrative and enforcement costs not considered initially
  - Value of fishing opportunities very different across species
  - Costs outweigh benefits – forgoing up to 3% of harvest
- **Enforcement:**
  - Uncovered financial incentives to not report trips/all RSA landings leading to noncompliance
    - National Standard 1 (prevent overfishing) concerns
  - Recreational landing reporting is not verifiable through dealer reporting
  - Capacity to monitor and enforce all RSA trips
    - 2014: 103 vessels, more than 2,000 trips
- **Research:**
  - Number of projects failed peer review
  - Application and utility to management
  - P.I. interest - limited number of projects, some long-term

**All leading to a lack of public trust in program and suspension in 2015**

# MAFMC Considers RSA Redevelopment



- **2021-2022**
- **4 Workshops**
- **RSC Meetings**
- **SSC Economic Work Group**



# MAFMC RSA Framework



- **Expanded Goals and Objectives**
  - Administration
  - Enforcement
  - Funding
  - Research



# ASMFC/State Engagement & Cooperation



- Potential future program will require ASMFC and state partner support and cooperation
- Areas of state involvement in RSA redevelopment
  - Shoreside participation – opt in/out provision
    - Vessel and sector participation – caps, state/federal permit holders, and phase in options
    - Limits to locations, dealers, and timing of offloads
  - For-hire tracking of harvest
    - Staff as observers on RSA trips
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Auction
    - ASMFC Involvement
  - Greater Restrictions = Less Participation = Less Funding Generated.

## Consensus by the RSC to conditionally recommended the Council consider redeveloping the RSA program

- Value in program to produce science to support management
- Recognize a lot of work remains, details to be addressed, and questions answered
- Concerns about state administrative burden and cost-benefit of program



# Potential Next Steps



- Should Commission support continued RSA redevelopment?
  - Still more work ahead and not committing to implementing an RSA program
- Recommendations/Feedback to MAMFC?
  - Species Included
  - Sectors
  - Funding Options
- Engage with the MAFMC?



# Assessment Science Committee Report

K. Drew, ASMFC

May 3, 2023

# Current Benchmark Schedule



- 8 benchmark assessments scheduled for 2023-2025

| Species               | 2023      | 2024      | 2025      | 2026      |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| American Eel          |           |           |           |           |
| American Shad         |           |           |           |           |
| American Lobster      |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Croaker      |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Atlantic Menhaden     |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atl. Menhaden ERPs    |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Sea Herring  |           | Update    | Benchmark | Update    |
| Atlantic Striped Bass |           | Update    |           | Update    |
| Atlantic Sturgeon     |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Black Drum            |           |           |           |           |
| Black Sea Bass        | Benchmark |           | Update    |           |
| Bluefish              | Update    |           | Update    |           |
| Coastal Sharks        | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Cobia                 |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Horseshoe Crab        |           | Update    |           |           |
| Horseshoe Crab ARM    |           |           |           |           |
| Jonah Crab            | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Northern Shrimp       |           | Update    |           |           |
| Red Drum              |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| River Herring         | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Scup                  | Update    |           |           |           |
| Spanish Mackerel      |           |           |           |           |
| Spiny Dogfish         |           |           |           | Update    |
| Spot                  |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Spotted Seatrout      |           |           |           |           |
| Summer Flounder       | Update    |           | Update    |           |
| Tautog                |           | *Update   |           |           |
| Weakfish              |           |           | *Update   |           |
| Winter Flounder       |           | Update    |           | Benchmark |



# Current Benchmark Schedule



- 8 benchmark assessments scheduled for 2023-2025
- 6 assessment updates

| Species               | 2023      | 2024      | 2025      | 2026      |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| American Eel          |           |           |           |           |
| American Shad         |           |           |           |           |
| American Lobster      |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Croaker      |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Atlantic Menhaden     |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atl. Menhaden ERPs    |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Sea Herring  |           | Update    | Benchmark | Update    |
| Atlantic Striped Bass |           | Update    |           | Update    |
| Atlantic Sturgeon     |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Black Drum            |           |           |           |           |
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| Bluefish              | Update    |           | Update    |           |
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| Horseshoe Crab        |           | Update    |           |           |
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| Jonah Crab            | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Northern Shrimp       |           | Update    |           |           |
| Red Drum              |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| River Herring         | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Scup                  | Update    |           |           |           |
| Spanish Mackerel      |           |           |           |           |
| Spiny Dogfish         |           |           |           | Update    |
| Spot                  |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Spotted Seatrout      |           |           |           |           |
| Summer Flounder       | Update    |           | Update    |           |
| Tautog                |           | *Update   |           |           |
| Weakfish              |           |           | *Update   |           |
| Winter Flounder       |           | Update    |           | Benchmark |

# ASC-Proposed Benchmark Schedule



- Change sturgeon and menhaden single-species benchmark assessments to updates

| Species               | 2023      | 2024      | 2025      | 2026      |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| American Eel          |           |           |           |           |
| American Shad         |           |           |           |           |
| American Lobster      |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Croaker      |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Atlantic Menhaden     |           |           | Update    |           |
| Atl. Menhaden ERPs    |           |           | Benchmark |           |
| Atlantic Sea Herring  |           | Update    | Benchmark | Update    |
| Atlantic Striped Bass |           | Update    |           | *Update   |
| Atlantic Sturgeon     |           | Update    |           |           |
| Black Drum            |           |           |           |           |
| Black Sea Bass        | Benchmark |           | Update    |           |
| Bluefish              | Update    |           | Update    |           |
| Coastal Sharks        | Benchmark |           |           |           |
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| Horseshoe Crab        |           | Update    |           |           |
| Horseshoe Crab ARM    | Update    | Update    | Update    | Update    |
| Jonah Crab            | Benchmark |           |           |           |
| Northern Shrimp       |           | Update    |           |           |
| Red Drum              |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| River Herring         |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Scup                  | Update    |           |           |           |
| Spanish Mackerel      |           |           |           |           |
| Spiny Dogfish         |           |           |           | Update    |
| Spot                  |           | Benchmark |           |           |
| Spotted Seatrout      |           |           |           |           |
| Summer Flounder       | Update    |           | Update    |           |
| Tautog                |           | *Update   |           |           |
| Weakfish              |           |           | Update    |           |
| Winter Flounder       |           | Update    |           | Benchmark |

# Menhaden



- No changes to the model planned
  - BAM is a solid, well-developed model that has been peer reviewed multiple times (2011, 2015, 2020)
  - No new menhaden data sources identified
- An update reduces the workload for the TC, SAS, Staff, and the Peer Review Panel, and allows more time and energy to be directed towards the ERP assessment
  - ERP assessment will remain a benchmark

# Sturgeon



- 2017 Benchmark recommended an update in 5 year and a benchmark in 10 years
  - 2022 update was postponed
- TC recommended doing an update in 2024 and to allow for existing research projects to be completed
- TC will recommend the timing of the next benchmark once the update is complete

# River Herring



- SAS recommended pushing the completion of the river herring benchmark assessment back one meeting cycle
  - Original: peer review in August 2023, presented to Board October 2023
  - New: peer review in late Nov/early Dec 2023, presented to Board February 2024



# **Law Enforcement Committee Report to ISFMP Policy Board**

May 3, 2023

# LEC Deliberations



- New member orientation process has received positive feedback
- Discussed Tautog Tagging Study
- Collaborated with Striped Bass PRT on new law enforcement compliance reporting language

# LEC Business Session



- Review of the Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures (August 2015)
  - Identify new management measures and consider relevance of previous measures
  - Subcommittee established with the goal of finalizing document for board approval in 2023
- ACCSP update on the VMS program in the American Lobster fishery
- NACLELA / ICCA Wildlife Officer Exchange Program – Belize Fisheries Compliance and Enforcement Agency
  - Shared experience helped to increase international collaboration and individual capacity to address wildlife crime globally



# Notable Case Work



- **New York** – Seasonal Striped Bass pulse operation over three years along the Hudson River during the annual migration
- **NOAA/USCG** – Conducting enhanced enforcement of the Right Whale speed rule with state law enforcement partners along the Atlantic coast.
- **South Carolina** - Operation “Sea Fluke” “South-Eastern Area Flounder Liberation from Unlawful Killing and Exploitation”
  - Wide-ranging investigation into the illegal commercial harvest and sale of flounder and other saltwater finfish species
  - Three-month investigation led to over \$48,000 in fines against four separate offenders with additional license sanctions



**Questions?**