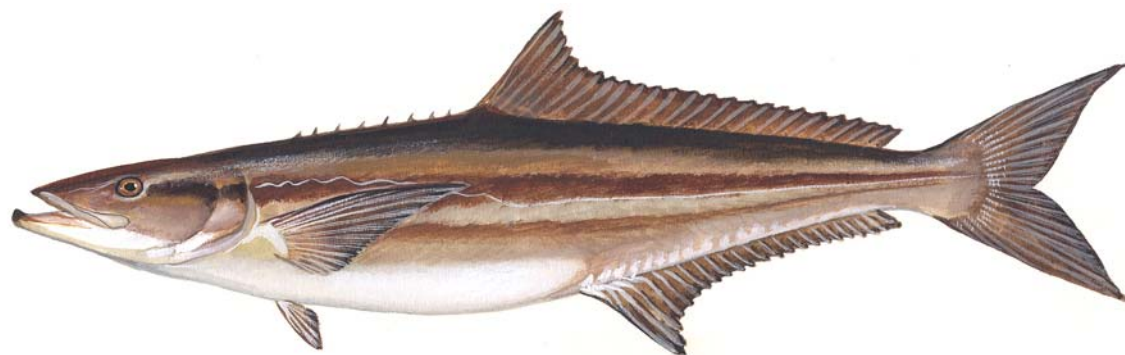




# **Draft Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia for Public Comment**



September 2017

# Presentation Outline



- ASMFC Overview
- Timetable for the Document Development
- Document Structure
  - Statement of the Problem
  - Background
  - Description of the fishery
  - Status of the Stock
- Management Options
- Questions & Public Comment

# ASMFC Overview



- Formed in 1942
  - Interstate Compact
- 15 Member States: ME-FL
- Cooperative management of transboundary resources
- Regulatory authority in state waters (0-3 miles from shore)
  - ACFCMA 1993
- 3 Commissioners per state
- Each state has one vote

# Document Development



Board Initiated Public Information Document (PID)	August 2016
Board Approval of PID for Public Comment	October 2016
Public Comment on PID	Winter 2016-2017
Board Approval of PID and Initiation of Draft Fishery Management Plan (Draft FMP)	February 2017
Board Approval of Draft FMP for Public Comment	August 2017
<b>Public Comment on Draft FMP</b>	<b>September-October 2017</b>
Board Considers Final Action on Draft FMP	October 2017
(Pending Board Approval) FMP Implementation	2018 Fishing Season



# Statement of the Problem

- Cobia currently managed by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) through Annual Catch Limit (ACL)
- Recent overages of the recreational ACL in 2015 and 2016 resulted in closures to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
  - Disproportionate impacts of closures on states



# Why Interstate Management through ASMFC?

- Majority of fishery occurs in state waters
- Need to maintain catches within the ACL
- Lack of consistency in state regulations
- Flexibility to adapt management to states' fisheries



# Primary FMP Objectives

- Complement SAFMC Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP for Cobia
- Constrain harvest to the federal ACL
- Provide states flexibility to manage their specific cobia fisheries

# Background Information



## Proposed Management Unit

- Management Unit: Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia – Georgia through New York
  - SEDAR 28 (2013); genetic and tag-recapture data
  - SEDAR 58 Stock ID Workshop being cooperatively planned for 2018 by SAFMC, GMFMC, and ASMFC

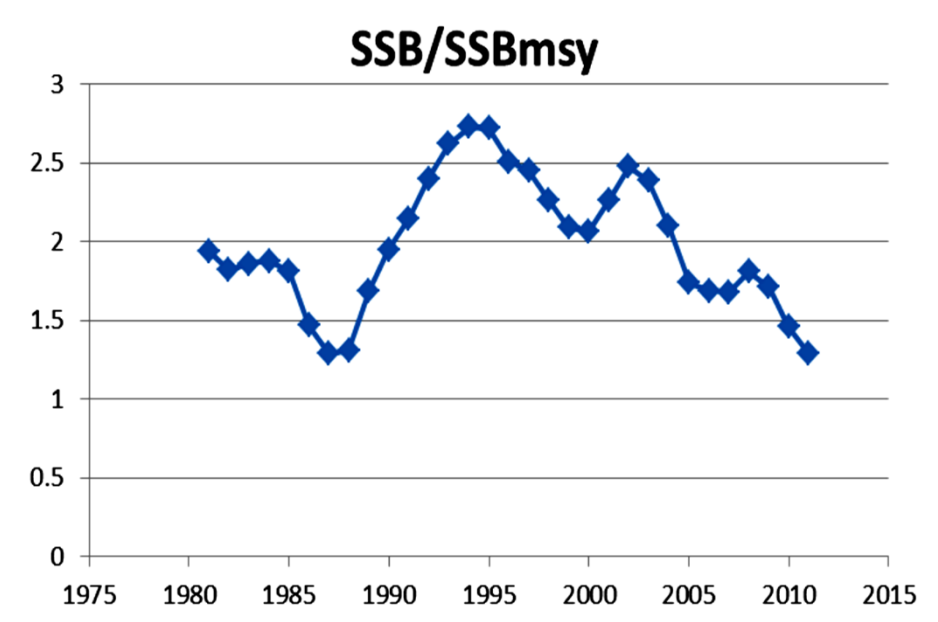


# Background Information



## Stock Status

- SEDAR 28, 2013: Not overfished/No overfishing in 2011
  - Declining Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)



# Background Information



## Commercial Fishery

- Federal commercial ACL – 50,000 pounds (est. 2015)
- Primarily a bycatch fishery
- Majority of landings from NC
- Table 2 in Draft FMP

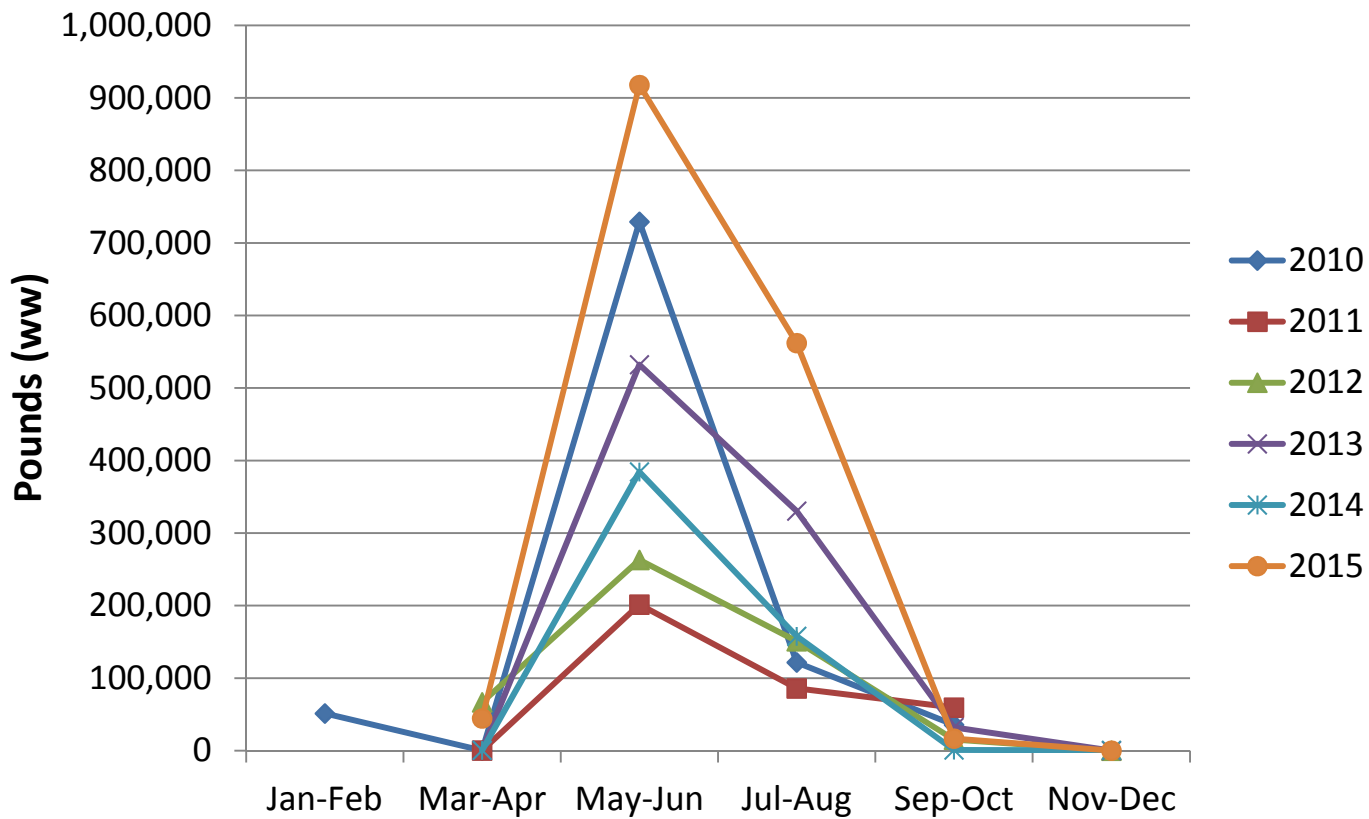
## Recreational Fishery

- Federal recreational ACL - 620,000 pounds (est. 2015)
- Landings in 2015 and 2016 exceeded 1 million pounds
  - Federal closures of the EEZ in 2016 and 2017
- Most landings GA-VA; episodic landings north of Virginia
- Table 4 in Draft FMP

# Background Information



## Seasonal Recreational Landings



(Figure 1)

# Background Information



## SAFMC Framework 4 Implementation

- Implemented as of September 5, 2017
- Methods (Accountability Measures) to address overharvest
  - Reduce vessel limits
  - Shorten season
  - Close fishery in EEZ

# Background Information



## SAFMC Framework 4 Regulations

- **Recreational:**
  - 620,000 pound ACL
  - 1 fish per person
  - 36 in FL size limit
  - Vessel limit up to 6 per vessel
- **Commercial:**
  - 50,000 pound ACL
  - 2 fish per person
  - 33 in FL size limit
  - Vessel limit up to 6 per vessel



## 4. Management Program Implementation

- Management options developed to complement actions proposed by the SAFMC in Framework 4
- Approved management options would be scheduled for implementation during the 2018 fishing season



## 4.1.1. Recreational Size Limit Options

- **Option 1: Status Quo:** No coastwide size limit option.
- **Option 2: Coastwide size limit:** Minimum size limit of 36 in FL (all future length limits in FL). A total length equivalent may be considered by the TC and Management Board.



## 4.1.2. Recreational Bag Limit Options

- **Option 1: Status quo:** No coastwide bag limit option.
- **Option 2: Coastwide bag limit:** 1 fish per person.

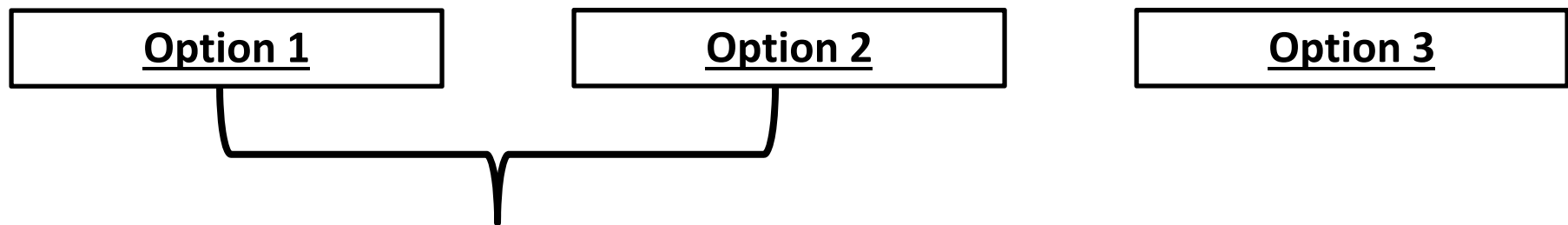
## 4.1.3. Recreational Vessel Limit Options

- **Option 1: Status quo:** No coastwide vessel limit option.
- **Option 2: Vessel limit:** State-specific daily vessel limits not to exceed 6 fish per vessel.





## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options



- Options for state-by-state allocation of a coastwide Recreational Harvest Limit (RHL) set equivalent to the federal ACL
- Allocation PERCENTAGES for each state determined by historical landings in NUMBERS
- State Harvest Limit (lbs) = Allocation PERCENTAGE x 99% x Coastwide Harvest Limit (lbs)
  - 1% of coastwide Harvest Limit set aside for *de minimis* states



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options

### Option 1:

- State-defined seasons/harvest control measures
- State-by-state hard recreational quota shares of coastwide RHL (based on **Sub-Options a-d**)
- Shares divided among non-*de minimis* states only
- Overharvest paid back in following year; under harvest does not carry over

## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 1:

- Historical Landings Ref. Period Sub-Options for Option 1 (a-d; allocation % based on numbers):

State	a. 3-yr Average (2013-2015)	b. 5-yr Average (2011-2015)	c. 10-yr Average (2006-2015)	d. 5-yr/10-yr Average
GA	n = 1,421 4.5%	n = 2,150 9.0%	n = 2,445 10.0%	n = 2,298 9.5%
SC	n = 1,984 6.3%	n = 2,558 10.8%	n = 3,312 13.6%	n = 2,935 12.2%
NC	n = 15,065 48.2%	n = 10,344 43.5%	n = 8,203 33.6%	n = 9,273 38.5%
VA	n = 12,799 40.9%	n = 8,714 36.7%	n = 10,465 42.9%	n = 9,589 39.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N = 31,269</b> 100%	<b>N = 23,766</b> 100%	<b>N = 24,425</b> 100%	<b>n = 24,095</b> 100%

(Table 10)

## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 1:

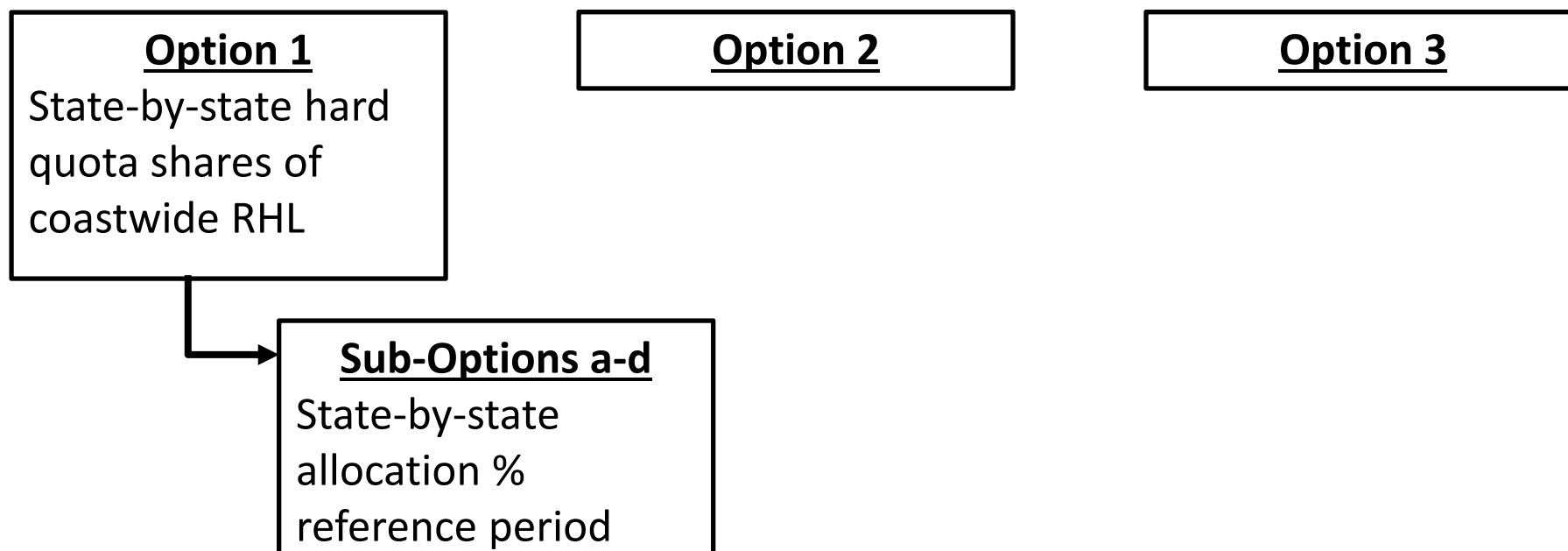
- Historical Landings Ref. Period Sub-Options for Option 1 (a-d; in lbs with RHL of 613,800 lbs):

State	a. 3-yr Average (2013-2015) (lbs)	b. 5-yr Average (2011-2015) (lbs)	c. 10-yr Average (2006-2015) (lbs)	d. 5-yr/10-yr Average (lbs)
GA	27,621	55,242	61,380	58,311
SC	38,669	66,290	83,477	74,885
NC	295,852	267,003	206,237	236,313
VA	251,044	225,265	263,320	244,292

(Table 11. Includes 1% (6,200 lbs) *de minimis* set aside)



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 2:

- State-defined seasons/harvest control measures
- State-by-state soft recreational harvest targets based on coastwide RHL (based on **Sub-Options a-d**)
- Limits divided among non-*de minimis* states only
- Avg. annual landings evaluated against state-allocated quotas (**Sub-Options a-d**) over multi-year period (**Sub-Options e-f**)
- Overharvest paid back in following multi-year period (**Sub-Options e-f**)
- Relaxed measures considered after under harvest

## 4.1.4 Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 2:

- Historical Landings Ref. Period Sub-Options for Option 2 (a-d; allocation % based on numbers):

State	a. 3-yr Average (2013-2015)	b. 5-yr Average (2011-2015)	c. 10-yr Average (2006-2015)	d. 5-yr/10-yr Average
GA	n = 1,421 4.5%	n = 2,150 9.0%	n = 2,445 10.0%	n = 2,298 9.5%
SC	n = 1,984 6.3%	n = 2,558 10.8%	n = 3,312 13.6%	n = 2,935 12.2%
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VA	n = 12,799 40.9%	n = 8,714 36.7%	n = 10,465 42.9%	n = 9,589 39.8%
<b>Total</b>	N = 31,269 100%	N = 23,766 100%	N = 24,425 100%	n = 24,095 100%

(Table 10)

## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 2:

- Historical Landings Ref. Period Sub-Options for Option 2 (a-d; in lbs with RHL of 613,800 lbs):

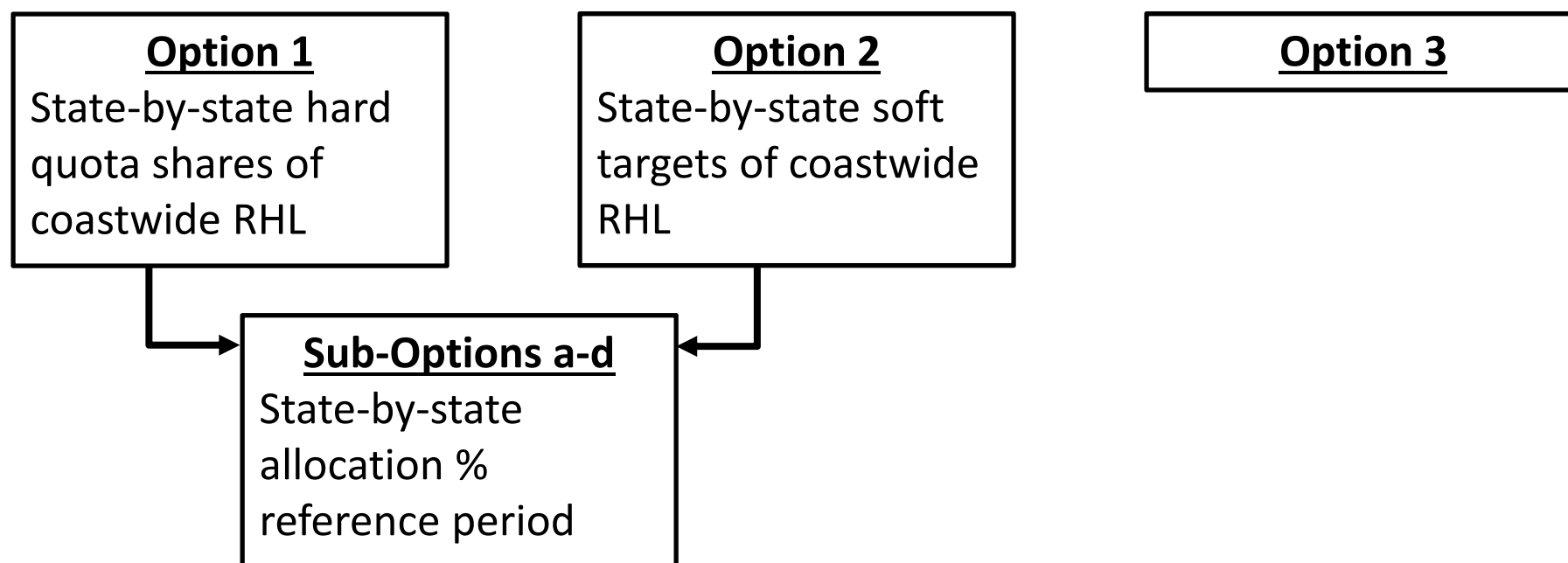
State	a. 3-yr Average (2013-2015) (lbs)	b. 5-yr Average (2011-2015) (lbs)	c. 10-yr Average (2006-2015) (lbs)	d. 5-yr/10-yr Average (lbs)
GA	27,621	55,242	61,380	58,311
SC	38,669	66,290	83,477	74,885
NC	295,852	267,003	206,237	236,313
VA	251,044	225,265	263,320	244,292

(Table 11. Includes 1% (6,200 lbs) *de minimis* set aside)





## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### **Option 2:**

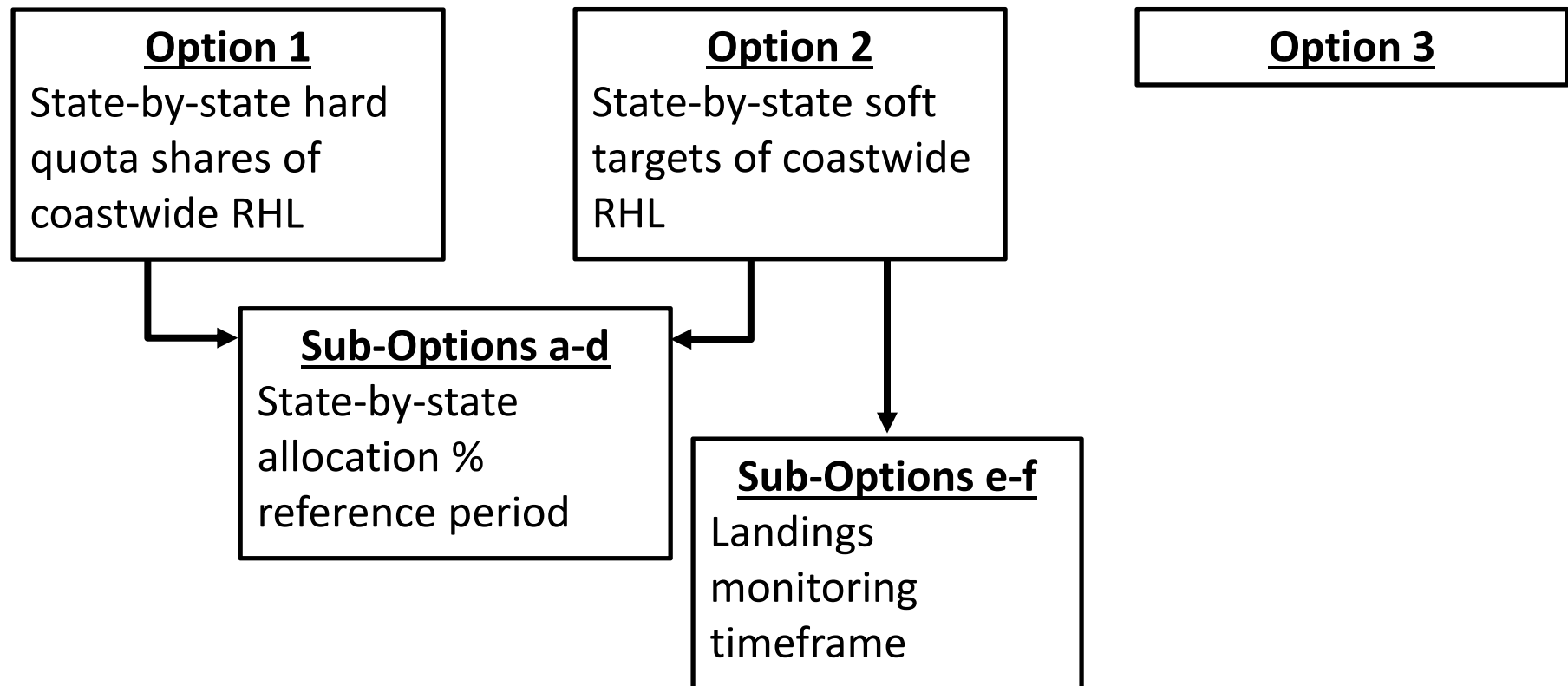
#### **–Landings Monitoring Timeframe Sub-Options for Option 2 (e-f):**

**e) 2 years**

**f) 3 years**



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



### Option 3:

- Coastwide season and daily vessel limit (**Sub-Options a-f**)
- **Sub-Options (a-f)** based on SAFMC CMP Framework 4 analysis
- 1 fish per person bag limit and 36 in min. size limit
- Coastwide overages paid back with reduction in RHL in the following year

## 4.1.4. Recreational Season/Allocation Options



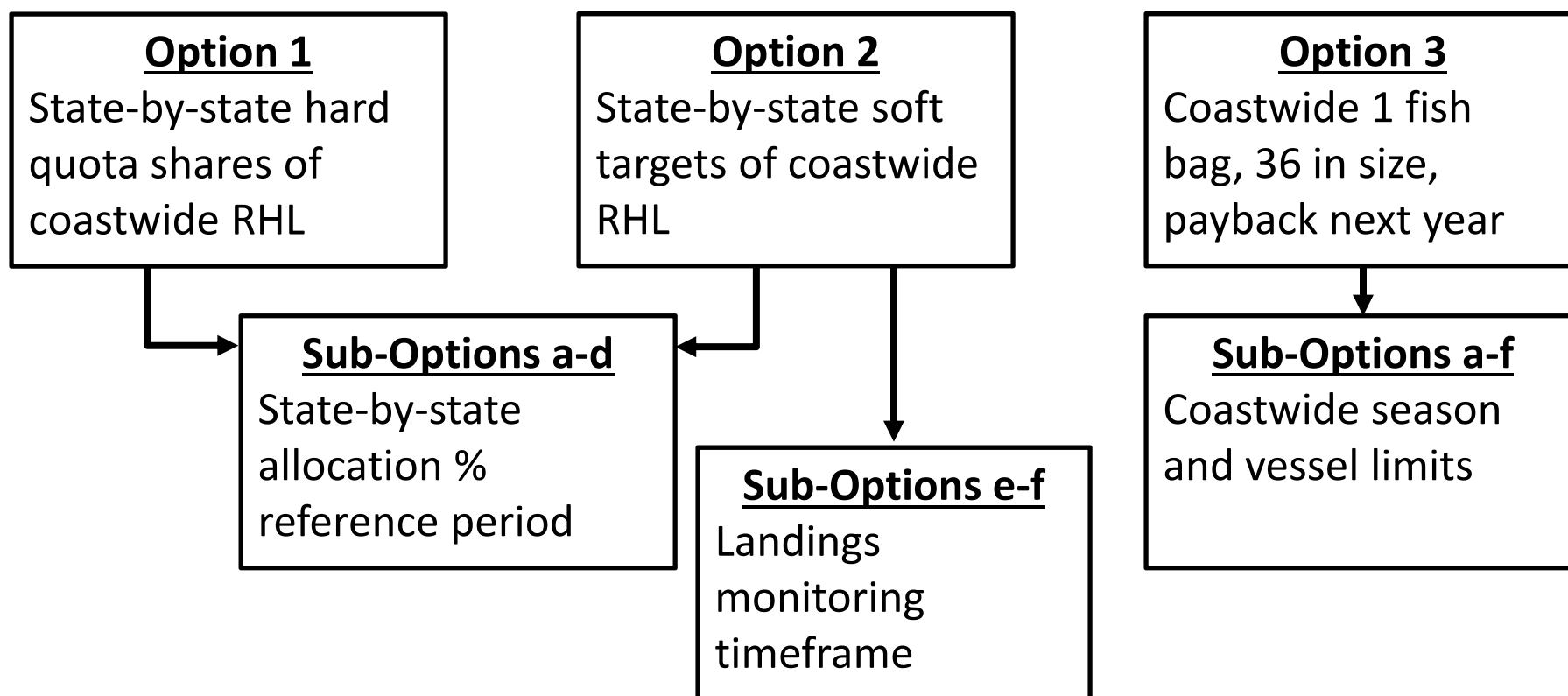
### **Option 3:**

#### **– Coastwide season and vessel limit Sub-Options (a-f):**

- a) January 1-August 22; 1 fish vessel limit**
- b) January 1-July 28; 2 fish vessel limit**
- c) January 1-July 20; 3 fish vessel limit**
- d) January 1-July 18; 4 fish vessel limit**
- e) January 1-July 17; 5 fish vessel limit**
- f) January 1-July 15; 6 fish vessel limit**



## 4.1.4. Recreational Season and Allocation Options





## 4.2.1 Commercial Size Limit Options

- **Option 1: Status Quo:** No coastwide size limit option.
- **Option 2: Coastwide size limit:** Minimum size limit of 33 in. A total length equivalent may be considered by the TC and Management Board.



## 4.2.2. Commercial Possession Limit Options

- **Option 1: Status Quo:** No coastwide possession limit option.
- **Option 2: Coastwide size limit:** State-specific possession limits of no more than 2 fish per license holder, not to exceed 6 fish per vessel.





## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- ***De minimis***: Typically exempts states with minimal fisheries for a species from biological monitoring requirements
  - FOR COBIA:
    - No biological monitoring requirements in FMP
    - Would allow states with minimal or episodic historical landings to keep a small number of cobia
- **Option 1: No *de minimis* program**
- **Options 2 & 3: Total (Option 2) or recreational (Option 3) harvest limit reduced by 1% to allow for *de minimis* landings**



## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

### Option 1

- No *de minimis*

### Option 2

### Option 3



## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

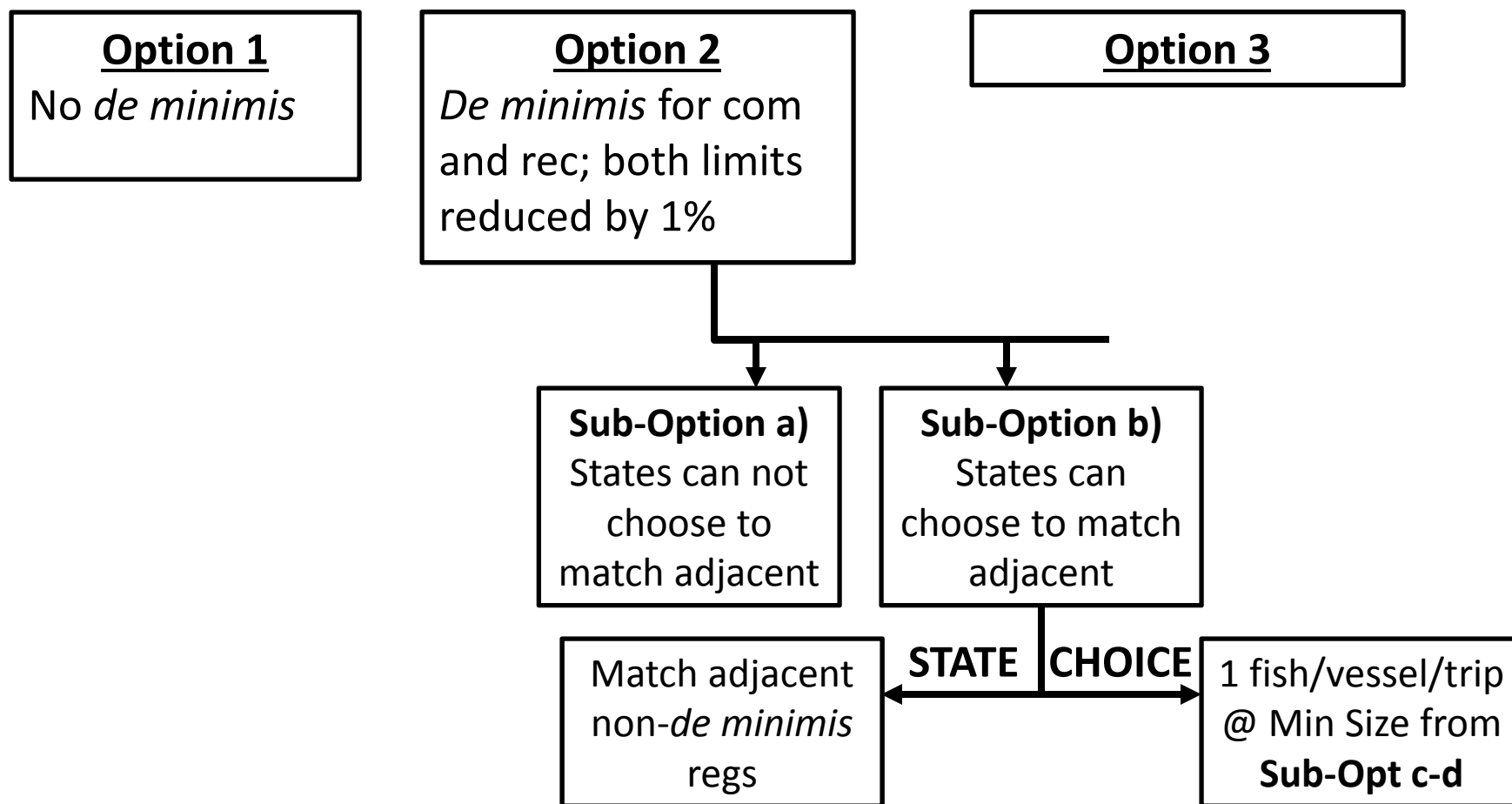
- **Option 2: Include *de minimis* program for commercial and recreational fisheries**
  - **Criteria:** State's total (commercial + recreational) landings for 2 of the previous 3 years must be less than 1% of coastwide total landings for the same time period.
  - **Regulations:** Potentially match regulations of adjacent non-*de minimis* state (**Sub-Options a-b**) OR 1 fish per vessel limit with minimum size limit (**Sub-Options c-d**)



## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- **Option 2 (continued): Include *de minimis* program for commercial and recreational fisheries**
  - **Regulations: *De Minimis* able to Match Adjacent Non-*De Minimis* Sub-Options:**
    - a) **A *de minimis* state may not match management measures of an adjacent non-*de minimis* state**
      - 1 fish per vessel per trip limit with minimum size limit (**Sub-Options c-d**)
    - b) **A *de minimis* state may match management measures of an adjacent (or the nearest) non-*de minimis* state OR have a 1 fish per vessel per trip limit with minimum size limit (Sub-Options c-d)**
      - Matching includes all regulations (bag, possession, size, vessel, SEASONS, etc.)

## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

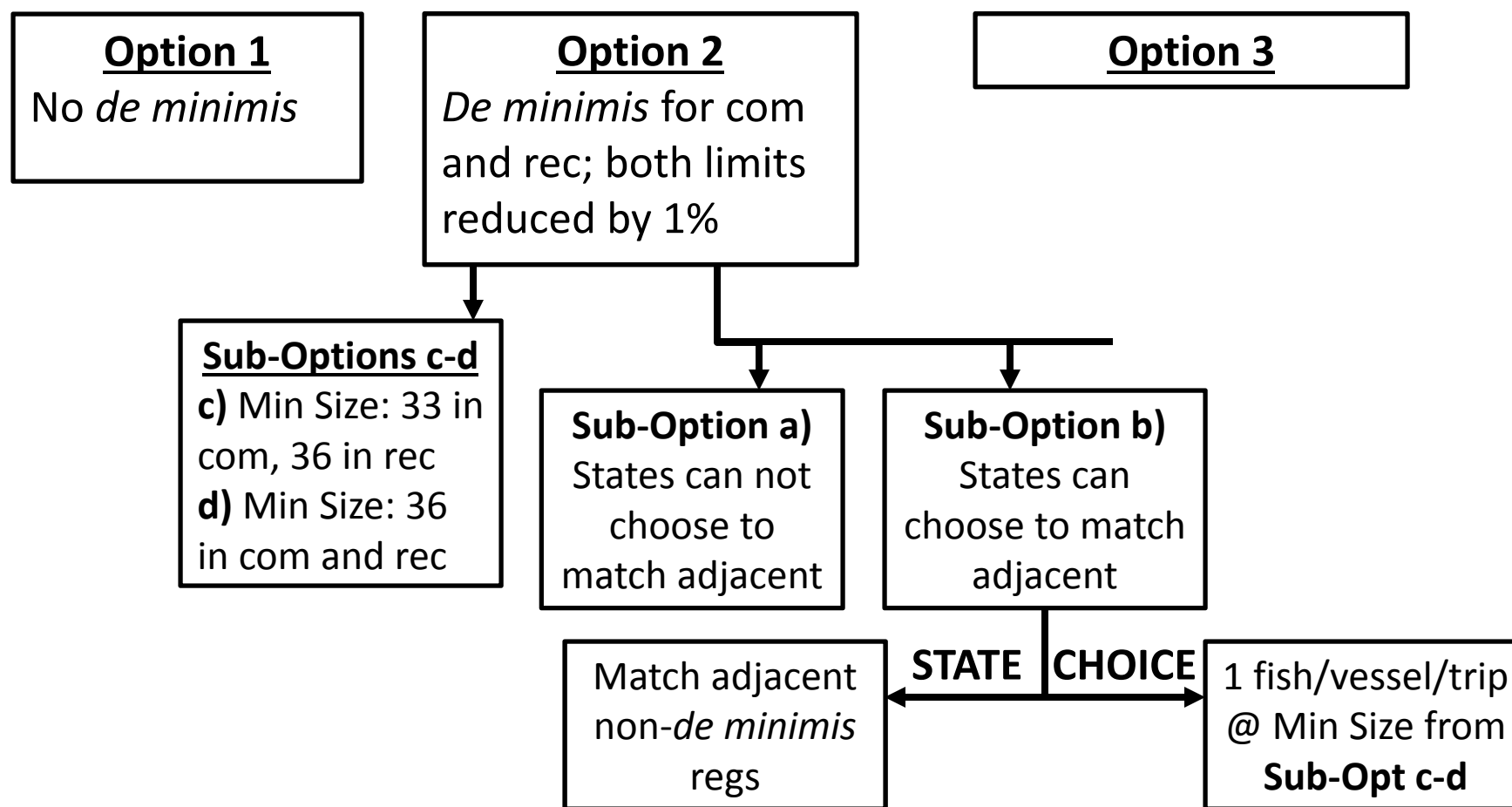




## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- **Option 2 (continued): Include *de minimis* program for commercial and recreational fisheries**
  - If *de minimis* states are required (Sub-Option a) or choose (Sub-Option b) to implement the 1 fish per vessel per trip limit
  - **Regulations: Minimum Size Limits for *De Minimis* States Sub-Options:**
    - c) **Minimum size limits of 33 in FL for commercial and 36 in FL for recreational**
    - d) **Minimum size limits of 36 in FL for both commercial and recreational**

## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options





## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- **Option 3: Include *de minimis* program for recreational fisheries only**
  - **Criteria:** State's recreational landings for 2 of the previous 3 years must be less than 1% of coastwide recreational landings for the same time period.
  - **Regulations:** Potentially match recreational regulations of adjacent non-*de minimis* state (**Sub-Options a-b**) OR 1 fish per vessel recreational limit with minimum size limit (**Sub-Options c-d**)
    - Commercial subject to coastwide regulations

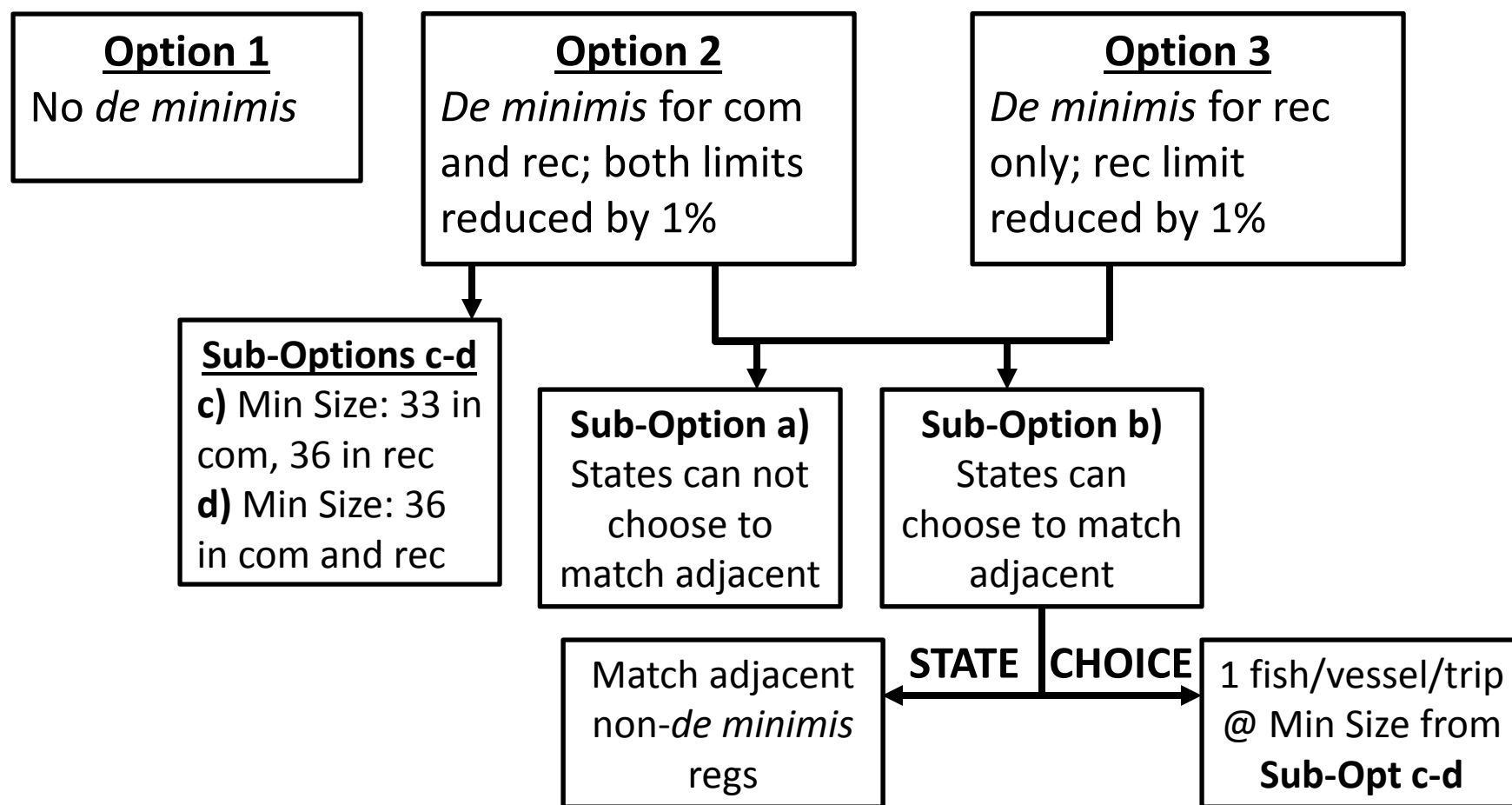




## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- **Option 3 (continued): Include *de minimis* program for recreational fisheries only**
  - **Regulations: *De Minimis* able to Match Adjacent Non-*De Minimis* Sub-Options:**
    - a) **A *de minimis* state may not match recreational management measures of an adjacent non-*de minimis* state**
      - 1 fish per vessel per trip recreational limit with minimum size limit (**Sub-Options c-d**)
    - b) **A *de minimis* state may match recreational management measures of an adjacent (or the nearest) non-*de minimis* state OR have a 1 fish per vessel per trip recreational limit with minimum size limit (Sub-Options c-d)**
      - Matching includes all recreational regulations (bag, possession, size, vessel, seasons, etc.)

## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

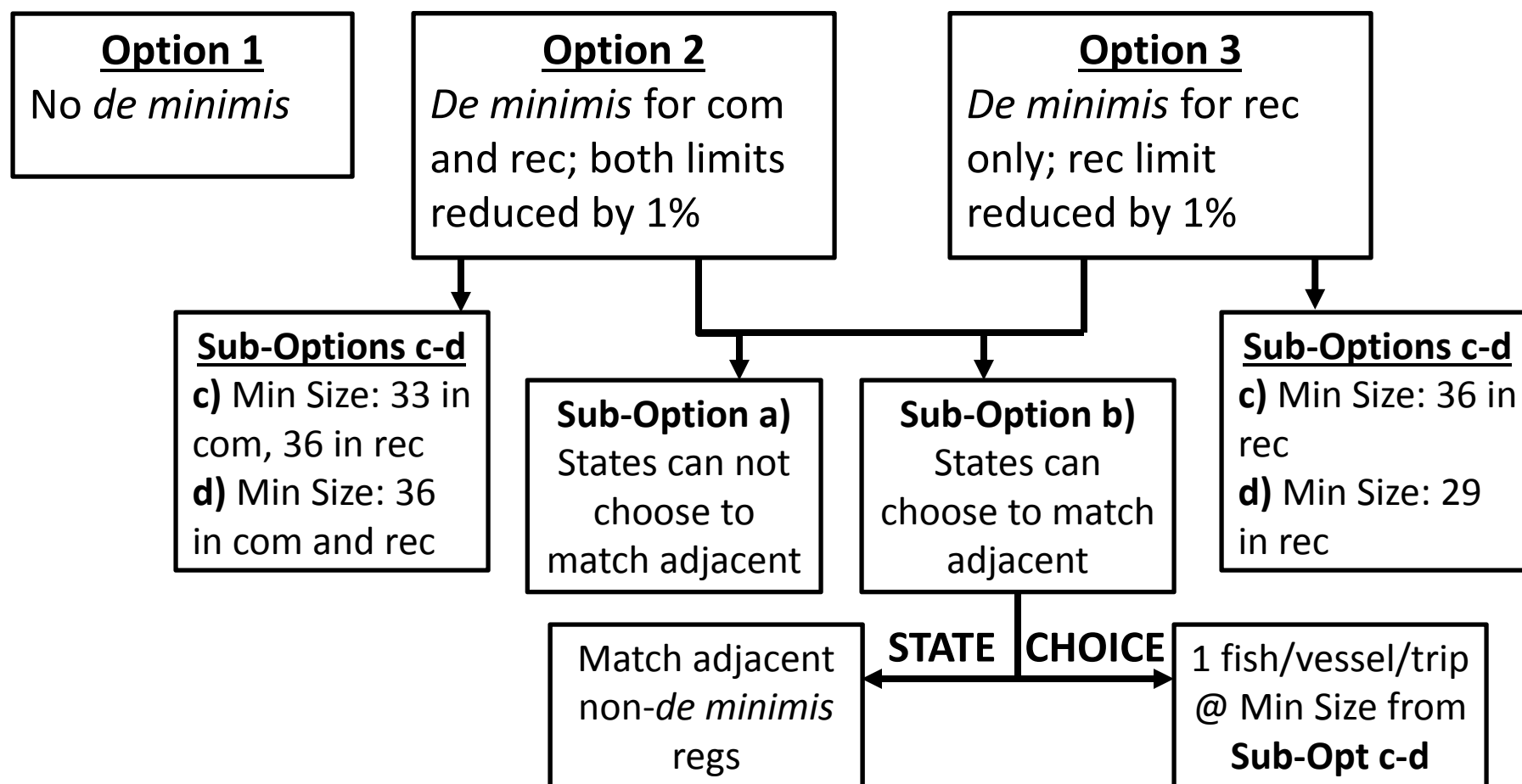




## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options

- **Option 3 (continued): Include *de minimis* program for recreational fisheries only**
  - If *de minimis* states are required (Sub-Option a) or choose (Sub-Option b) to implement the 1 fish per vessel per trip recreational limit
  - Regulations: Minimum Size Limits for *De Minimis* States Sub-Options:
    - c) Minimum size limit of 36 in FL for recreational
    - d) Minimum size limit of 29 in FL (FL at 50% maturity) for recreational

## 4.4.3. *De Minimis* Options





**Written public comments will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**Send public comments to**

**Email: [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org)**

**Mail Address: 1050 N. Highland Street  
Suite 200A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201**



# Questions and Comments





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