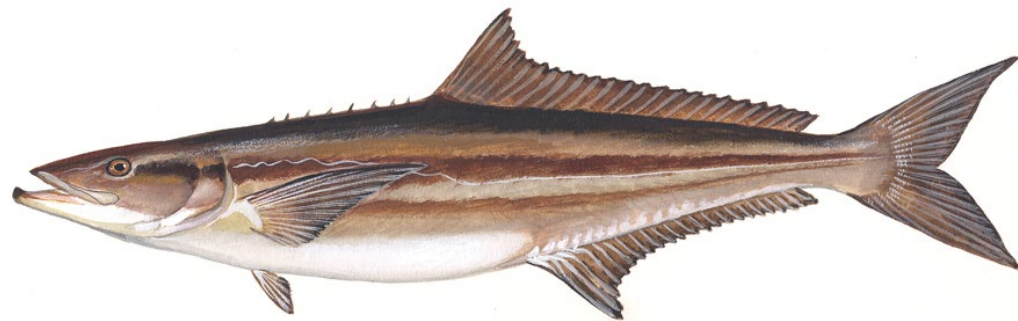




# Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II for Board Review



Coastal Pelagics Management Board  
May 1, 2024

# Outline



- Overview and Timeline
- Current Management Process
- Statement of the Problem
- Management Options
  - PDT Memo

***Board action for consideration today: Consider approving Draft Addendum II for public comment***

# Overview



- **October 2023:** Board initiated addendum to address recreational reallocation using more recent harvest data, and consider alternatives to the state-by-state allocation framework
- **January 2024:** Board provided additional guidance to address future allocation updates, consider uncertainty, and timeline for setting measures (i.e., total harvest quota)

# Timeline



Date	Action
October 2023	Board initiated the Draft Addendum
January 2024	Board provided additional guidance on Draft Addendum scope
February – April 2024	Plan Development Team developed Draft Addendum document
<b>May 2024</b>	<b>Board review and consider approving Draft Addendum II for public comment</b>
May – June 2024	Public comment period, including public hearings and written comments
August 2024	Board reviews public comment, selects management measures, final approval of Addendum II



# **Current Management: Recreational Allocations and Harvest Target Evaluations**

# Current Management



- Total harvest quota set for up to 3 years
  - 96% recreational and 4% commercial
- Recreational portion of harvest quota is allocated to non-*de minimis* states with 1% set aside for *de minimis* states
  - Non-*de minimis* allocations based on recreational landings in number of fish for weighted timeframe 50% 2006-2015 + 50% 2011-2015
  - Allocation percent → state soft harvest target

# Current Management



- For non-*de minimis* states, realized harvest is evaluated against state soft targets each time the Board sets the total harvest quota
- Average of up to three years with the same recreational management measures
  - If state's average harvest  $>$  target, state must adjust measures to reduce to target
  - If state's harvest  $<$  target for at least 2 consecutive years, state can liberalize to target
- Changes to measures reviewed by TC and approved by Board

# Current Management



- Board set total harvest quota for 2024-2026
- Conducted evaluation of state average harvest for 2021-2022 against state harvest targets
- Based on TC analysis, Board decided to maintain status quo state measures for 2024 instead of requiring reductions for states exceeding targets
  - Low probability of exceeding target under status quo
  - **Use new addendum to determine allocation framework, harvest targets, and evaluations for 2025 measures**



# Current Management



- Use new addendum to determine allocation framework, harvest targets, and evaluations for 2025 measures
- Upcoming stock assessment (SEDAR 95) available to inform 2026 or 2027 management measures



# Statement of the Problem

# Statement of the Problem



- Atlantic Cobia FMP (2017) established state-by-state allocations based on harvest data from 2006-2015; Amendment 1 (2019) updated allocations to add 1% de minimis set-aside
- Distribution of landings have changed since 2015
  - Increased in some Mid-Atlantic states and relatively stable in southern states → range expansion
  - RI and NY declared into the fishery due to increasing presence of cobia
- Updating allocation data timeframe would account for changes in landings

# Statement of the Problem



- State-by-state allocation framework implemented to provide flexibility for states
- MRIP estimates for cobia tend to have high PSEs; pulse/rare event fishery with highly variable landings year-to-year
- Concerns about continuing to use these uncertain state-level estimates to evaluate performance and change management at the state level
- Could reduce uncertainty by increasing sampling size for harvest estimates → regional or coastwide allocation framework

# Statement of the Problem



- Uncertainty could also be addressed by considering:
  - number of data years included in rolling average for landings evaluation;
  - whether the use of point estimates is appropriate;
  - whether a state/region's performance is considered on its own or relative to another state/region

# Statement of the Problem



- Allocation percentages may need to be updated in the future:
  - if current *de minimis* state loses *de minimis* status, and therefore needs its own harvest target factored into allocation;
  - if MRIP updates FES estimates.
- If updates to allocation are considered via addendum, could take several months
- If the Board could make those updates via Board action (Board vote), changes could be accomplished more quickly

# Statement of the Problem



- Concern about changing management measures too frequently
- Board can set total harvest quota for up to three years
- To avoid management whiplash, specifications could be set for a longer period of time



# Management Options



# 3.0 Management Options



- **3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework**
- 3.2 Future Updates to Allocations
- 3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations
- 3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations
- 3.5 Timeline for Setting Rec./Comm. Measures

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



- Consider how recreational quota is allocated
  - State-by-state (status quo)
  - Regional
  - Coastwide
- For state or regional framework, consider data timeframes as basis for allocation
  - 50% 2006-2015 + 50% 2011-2015 (status quo)
  - 100% 2018-2023
  - 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023
  - 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2021-2023

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



- Note: 2016-2017 excluded from allocation calculations due to fishery closures; 2020 excluded due to COVID-19 impacts on MRIP sampling
  - 2018-2023 – 5 years of data in 6-year timespan
  - 2014-2023 – 7 years of data in 10-year timespan

# Final MRIP Data for 2023



- Final MRIP estimates for 2023 are now available
- Minor changes for cobia harvest estimates from preliminary estimates
- Draft addendum will be updated based on final 2023 data
  - Some allocation percentages changed by <math><0.01\%</math>

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



## Options A-B. State-by-state framework

- Option A. Status Quo State-by-State
  - 50% 2006-2015 + 50% 2011-2015
  - 1% *de minimis* set aside
- Option B. Updated State-by-State
  - B1. 100% 2018-2023
  - B2. 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023
  - B3. 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2021-2023
  - 5% *de minimis* set aside

# 3.1 Rec Allocation Framework



	<b>Option A Status Quo 50% 2006-2015 + 50% 2011-2015</b>	<b>Option B1 100% 2018-2023</b>	<b>Option B2 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023</b>	<b>Option B3 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2021-2023</b>
<b>De minimis Set Aside</b>	1%	5%	5%	5%
<b>Virginia</b>	39.4%	69.2%	64.5%	63.3%
<b>North Carolina</b>	38.1%	13.2%	17.4%	15.9%
<b>South Carolina</b>	12.1%	6.5%	7.1%	7.8%
<b>Georgia</b>	9.4%	6.1%	6.0%	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



- **PDT Memo:** updated state allocations would result in significant changes to state allocation percentages
- Magnitude of changes primarily driven by VA's increased proportion and NC's decreased proportion of total harvest in recent years
- PDT does not recommend phase-in approach, as this would result in constantly changing state harvest targets and measures during the phase-in years

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



## Option C. Regional Allocations

- Two or three regions: **PDT recommends two regions**
- Which states in each region
  - Should NC be grouped with Virginia, or with South Carolina and Georgia?
  - **PDT recommends the Board consider if there is a preferred regional grouping for NC**
- Three allocation timeframes



# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



## Option C. Regional Allocations

- Eventually establish region-wide size and vessel limit; seasons may vary among states
- Measures remain status quo in each state until a reduction is needed or until completion of the next stock assessment, whichever comes first → then consider region-wide measures
- New measures reviewed by TC and approved by Board

# 3.1 Rec Allocation Framework



Data Timeframe	100% 2018-2023	50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023	50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2021-2023
	<b>Option C1</b>	<b>Option C2</b>	<b>Option C3</b>
Northern Region RI-CT-NY- NJ-DE-MD-VA-NC	87.24%	86.65%	83.96%
Southern Region Two State SC-GA	12.76%	13.35%	16.04%
	<b>Option C4</b>	<b>Option C5</b>	<b>Option C6</b>
Northern Region RI-CT-NY- NJ-DE	1.53%	1.31%	1.65%
Mid-Atlantic Region MD-VA- NC	85.72%	85.34%	82.31%
Southern Region Two State SC-GA	12.76%	13.35%	16.04%

# 3.1 Rec Allocation Framework



Data Timeframe	100% 2018-2023	50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023	50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2021-2023
	<b>Option C7</b>	<b>Option C8</b>	<b>Option C9</b>
Northern Region RI-CT-NY-NJ-DE-MD-VA	73.77%	68.69%	67.67%
Southern Region Three State NC-SC-GA	26.23%	31.31%	32.33%
	<b>Option C10</b>	<b>Option C11</b>	<b>Option C12</b>
Northern Region RI-CT-NY-NJ-DE	1.53%	1.31%	1.65%
Mid-Atlantic Region MD-VA	72.24%	67.38%	66.02%
Southern Region Three State NC-SC-GA	26.23%	31.31%	32.33%

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



## Option D. Coastwide Target

- Only the coastwide recreational harvest quota
- Eventually establish coastwide size and vessel limit; seasons may vary among states
- Measures remain status quo in each state until a reduction is needed or until completion of the next stock assessment, whichever comes first → then consider coastwide measures
- Measures reviewed by TC and approved by Board

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



- Conservation equivalency is not allowed for any allocation framework option
  - State-by-state framework already allows flexibility for each state
  - Objective of regional or coastwide frameworks is consistent size/vessel limit for the next management change (seasons may vary among states)

# 3.1 Rec. Allocation Framework



- **PDT Memo:** each allocation framework has benefits and challenges
- Regional or coastwide allocations could pool data into larger sample sizes to reduce uncertainty, but require coordination between states on uniform management measures
- Underlying challenges
  - High PSEs
  - Seasonal migration dictating availability
  - Relatively new sole Commission management (2019)

# 3.0 Management Options



- 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework
- **3.2 Future Updates to Allocations**
- 3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations
- 3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations
- 3.5 Timeline for Setting Rec./Comm. Measures

# 3.2 Updates to Allocations



- Option A. Status Quo. Allocations can only be changed via an addendum/amendment
- Option B. Change via Board Action
  - Allocations may be changed via Board action (Board vote) under **two scenarios**:
    - A state loses *de minimis* status and needs their own harvest target factored into the state-by-state allocation framework;
    - Harvest estimates for allocation source data are revised (i.e., future MRIP updates based on current FES study)



# 3.0 Management Options



- 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework
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- **3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations**
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# 3.3 Data and Uncertainty



- Option A. Status Quo. Up to 3-year rolling average for harvest evaluation against target
  - Average of up to 3 years under the same management measures (same measures year-to-year)
- Option B. Up to 5-year rolling average for harvest evaluation against target
  - Average of up to 5 years under the same management measures (same measures year-to-year)
  - More years of data given variability and imprecision of harvest estimates

# 3.3 Data and Uncertainty



- Confidence Interval (CI) Provision
  - For regional or coastwide allocation framework, the Board could decide in the future (via Board vote) to switch from a rolling average approach to a CI approach for harvest target evaluation
  - More directly account for uncertainty around MRIP point estimates
  - Requires region-specific CIs and PSEs, which are only available through MRIP custom data request

# 3.3 Data and Uncertainty



- Confidence Interval Provision
  - Evaluate harvest target relative to 95% confidence intervals associated with MRIP point estimates
    - If lower bound CI is above target for majority of years evaluated, adjust measures to reduce to target
    - If harvest target falls within CI bounds for majority of years, status quo can be maintained
    - If upper bound CI is below target for majority of years, may liberalize to target
  - Years with large CIs (high uncertainty) & years with  $PSE > 50$  would not be included in evaluation
  - Years with PSE between 30-50 evaluated by TC

# 3.3 Data and Uncertainty



- Confidence Interval Provision
  - CI provision is currently included in the draft addendum → no matter which rolling average option is chosen (3-yr or 5-yr), the Board could switch to CI approach in the future
  - Board could frame this as an option instead:
    - Option A. Status quo. No CI provision. Only rolling average approach.
    - Option B. Include the CI provision.

# 3.0 Management Options



- 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework
- 3.2 Future Updates to Allocations
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- **3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations**
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# 3.4 Overage Response



- Option A. Status Quo. If a state/region's average harvest exceeds the target, measures must be adjusted to reduce harvest to achieve target.
- Option B. Performance Comparisons. If a state/region's average harvest exceeds the target, a reduction would not be required if:
  - Another state/region is below their target by the same amount and has chosen not to liberalize; AND
  - Average coastwide harvest has not exceeded the coastwide quota

# 3.0 Management Options



- 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework
- 3.2 Future Updates to Allocations
- 3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations
- 3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations
- **3.5 Timeline for Setting Rec./Comm. Measures**



# 3.5 Timeline for Setting Measures



- Option A. Status Quo. Specifications (e.g., total harvest quota) may be set through Board action for up to **3 years**.
  - New specs may be implemented after the expiration of previous measures or following a stock assessment
- Option B. Specifications may be set through Board action for up to **5 years**.
  - Reduce frequency of management changes (management ‘whiplash’)
  - Better align with when new stock assessments are available

# 3.0 Management Options



- 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework
- 3.2 Future Updates to Allocations
- 3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations
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# Questions

***Board action for consideration today:  
Consider approving Draft Addendum II for public comment***

# Spanish Mackerel White Paper: Overview of State Fisheries



Coastal Pelagics Management Board  
May 1, 2024

# Background



- Board discussion to better understand each state's current Spanish mackerel fisheries
  - Anticipation of future Board action to address state-federal management differences
  - Emerging fisheries at northern end of species range
- States from RI through FL (east coast) declared interest in fishery, except CT and PA
- Managed cooperatively with South Atlantic Fishery Management Council/NOAA Fisheries
- Differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs (e.g., commercial closures)

# Background



## **August 2023 Board Motion:**

Move to direct the Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee to develop a paper that characterizes the recreational and commercial Spanish mackerel fisheries along the Atlantic Coast. The timing and content of the paper are intended to help the Coastal Pelagics Management Board address state waters management issues.

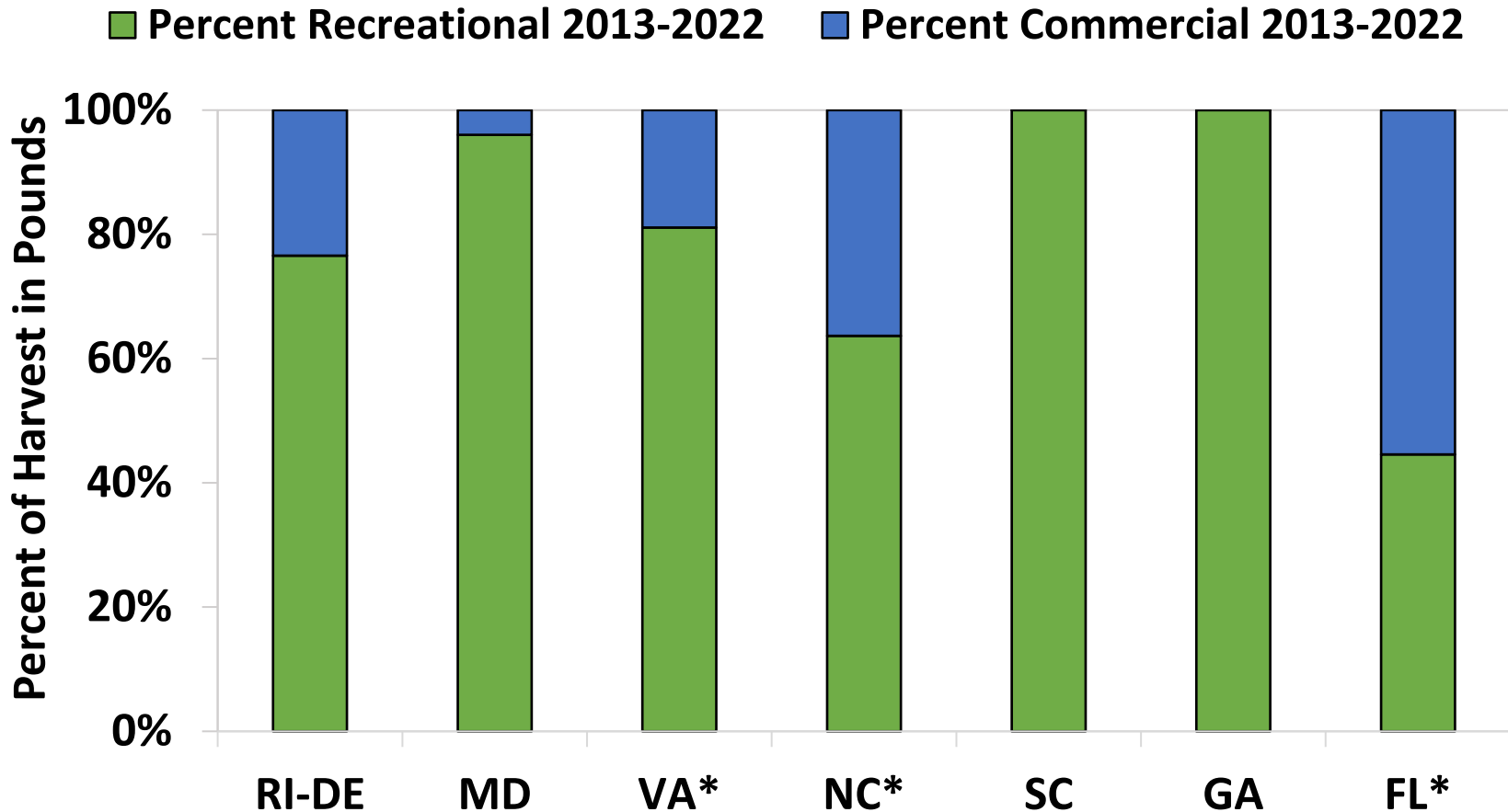
- States submitted fishery profile questionnaires with details on state fisheries
- TC used profiles to develop paper highlighting key details

# Seasonal Fish Availability



- Spanish mackerel availability driven by water temperature and seasonal migration
- Atlantic coast stock spends winter off east coast of FL, then moves northward to NC in early April and further north in June
- As waters cool later in the year, returns south to east coast of FL
- Majority of harvest (both sectors) occurs:
  - FL: late Fall through early spring
  - GA-VA: early summer through early Fall
  - MD-RI: late summer through early Fall

# Sector Proportion by State



\* indicates state with a directed commercial fishery

Source: State Fishery Profiles, ACCSP, MRIP



# Commercial Fisheries



- Three states have targeted commercial fisheries
- Since 2013, Florida accounted for 75% of coastwide commercial landings, North Carolina 22%, Virginia 2%
- Florida
  - 436 participants in 2022
  - Average landings ranged from 299 pounds per trip in 2022 to 603 pounds per trip in 2021 over past five years
- North Carolina
  - Average 374 participants per year in past decade
  - Average landings 221 pounds per trip in past decade
- Virginia
  - 50-100 participants per year in past decade
  - Average landings per trip ranged from 31 to 200 pounds per trip in past decade

# Commercial Fisheries



- GA, SC, PRFC, MD, DE, NJ, NY, RI
  - Combined less than 1% of coastwide commercial landings in past decade
  - None or limited directed commercial fisheries
  - Opportunistic, bycatch fisheries
  - Variable landings year-to-year
  - Average landings <100 pounds per trip
  - Few participants

# Commercial Fisheries



- Vast majority of commercial fisheries occur in state waters
- Variety of gear types
  - Hook-and-line and cast net most common in FL
  - Trawl most common in SC
  - Gill nets and pound nets common from NC northward

# Recreational Fisheries



- Recreational hook-and-line fisheries occur in all states
  - Opportunistic, not necessarily targeted in SC and some northern states
- Over past decade, FL accounted for 44% of coastwide recreational landings, NC 32%, SC 14%, VA 7%, GA 1%, RI-MD 2%
- Vast majority of recreational fisheries occur in state waters, with a few exceptions
  - NJ notes 55% of rec landings from state waters
  - DE notes majority of rec landings from federal waters
  - SC notes 97% catch from state waters via MRIP, but charter logbook indicates 60% of trips in federal waters

# Recreational Fisheries



- High PSEs for MRIP estimates, particularly for northern states and Georgia in some years
- TC noted increase in effort in several states in 2020-2021 that may be associated with COVID-19
- Private/shore modes account for majority of recreational harvest
  - Over 90% of harvest in most states in past decade
  - 81% of harvest for Maryland northward

# Northern End of Range

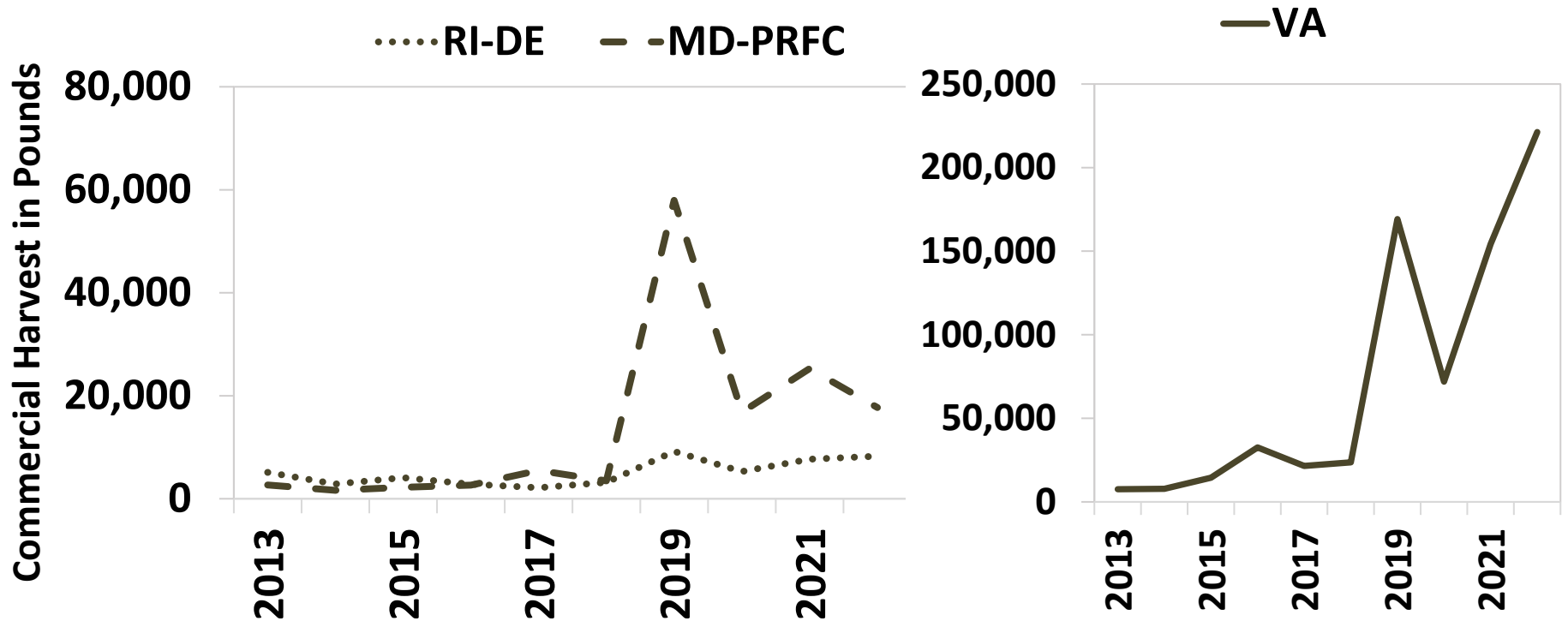


- At the northern end of the species range, landings from 2019-2022 are generally higher than 2013-2018
- Landings variable from year to year, and vary among states

# Northern End of Range



## Commercial Harvest in Pounds 2013-2022

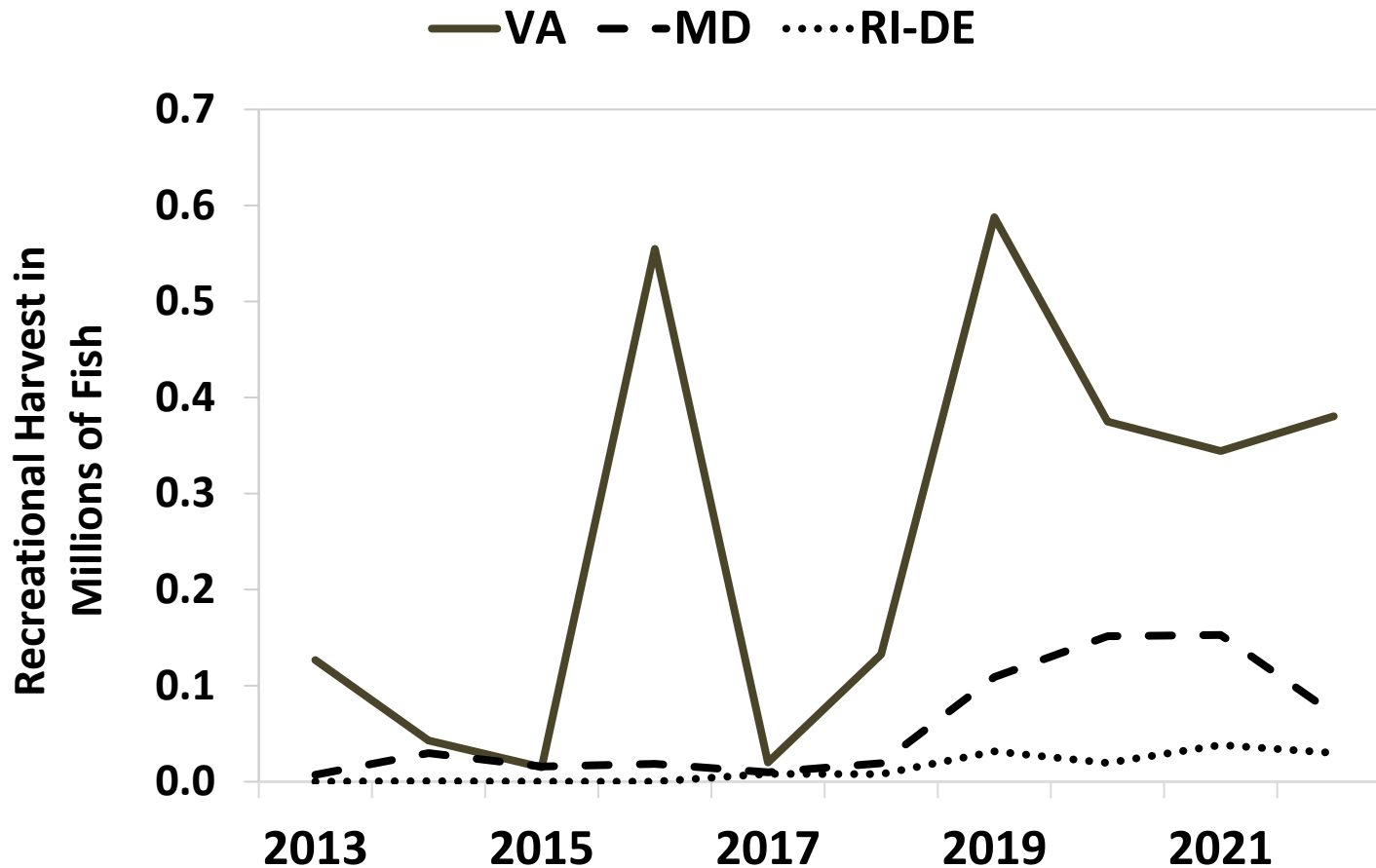


Source: State Fishery Profiles, ACCSP, MRIP

# Northern End of Range



## Recreational Harvest in Number of Fish 2013-2022



Source: MRIP



# Florida Fisheries



- Florida's commercial and recreational fisheries typically contribute a large proportion of coastwide landings, but recent decline in 2022
- One factor is increase in areas closed to vessels off central east Florida to create safety zones associated with space launches, preventing access to traditional fishing areas for Spanish mackerel
- Spanish mackerel concentrate in easily accessible, inshore areas during the winter, which leads to commercial and recreational fisheries operating simultaneously in the same area and resulting conflicts between the two sectors



**Questions?**