

# ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

## REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

HORSESHOE CRAB  
(*Limulus polyphemus*)

2022 Fishing Year



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

Approved October 2023



*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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## I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

<u>Date of FMP Approval:</u>	December 1998
<u>Amendments</u>	None
<u>Addenda</u>	Addendum I (April 2000) Addendum II (May 2001) Addendum III (May 2004) Addendum IV (June 2006) Addendum V (September 2008) Addendum VI (August 2010) Addendum VII (February 2012)
<u>Management Unit:</u>	Entire coastwide distribution of the resource from the estuaries eastward to the inshore boundary of the EEZ
<u>States with Declared Interest:</u>	Massachusetts – Florida, Potomac River Fisheries Commission
<u>Active Boards/Committees:</u>	Horseshoe Crab Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, and Plan Review Team; Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee; Adaptive Resource Management Subcommittee

### **Goals and Objectives**

The Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crabs (FMP) established the following goals and objectives.

#### *2.0. Goals and Objectives*

*The goal of this Plan is to conserve and protect the horseshoe crab resource to maintain sustainable levels of spawning stock biomass to ensure its continued role in the ecology of the coastal ecosystem, while providing for continued use over time. Specifically, the goal includes management of horseshoe crab populations for continued use by:*

- 1) current and future generations of the fishing and non-fishing public (including the biomedical industry, scientific and educational research);*
- 2) migrating shorebirds; and,*
- 3) other dependent fish and wildlife, including federally listed (threatened) sea turtles.*

*To achieve this goal, the following objectives must be met:*

- (a) prevent overfishing and establish a sustainable population;*
- (b) achieve compatible and equitable management measures among jurisdictions throughout the fishery management unit;*

- (c) establish the appropriate target mortality rates that prevent overfishing and maintain adequate spawning stocks to supply the needs of migratory shorebirds;*
- (d) coordinate and promote cooperative interstate research, monitoring, and law enforcement;*
- (e) identify and protect, to the extent practicable, critical habitats and environmental factors that limit long-term productivity of horseshoe crabs;*
- (f) adopt and promote standards of environmental quality necessary for the long-term maintenance and productivity of horseshoe crabs throughout their range; and,*
- (g) establish standards and procedures for implementing the Plan and criteria for determining compliance with Plan provisions.*

### ***Fishery Management Plan Summary***

The framework for managing horseshoe crabs along the Atlantic coast was approved in October 1998 with the adoption of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crabs. The goal of this plan is to conserve and protect the horseshoe crab resource to maintain sustainable levels of spawning stock biomass to ensure its continued role in the ecology of coastal ecosystems while providing for continued use over time.

In 2000, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum I to the FMP. Addendum I established a state-by-state cap on horseshoe crab bait landings at 25 percent below the reference period landings (RPL's), and *de minimis* criteria for those states with a limited horseshoe crab fishery. Those states with more restrictive harvest levels (Maryland and New Jersey) were encouraged to maintain those restrictions to provide further protection to the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population, recognizing its importance to migratory shorebirds. Addendum I also recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) prohibit the harvest of horseshoe crabs in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) within a 30 nautical mile radius of the mouth of Delaware Bay, as well as prohibit the transfer of horseshoe crabs in federal waters. A horseshoe crab reserve was established on March 7, 2001, by NMFS in the area recommended by ASMFC. This area is now known as the Carl N. Shuster Jr. Horseshoe Crab Reserve (Figure 1).

In 2001, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum II to the FMP. The purpose of Addendum II was to allow the voluntary transfer of harvest quotas between states to alleviate concerns over potential bait shortages on a biologically responsible basis. Voluntary quota transfers require Technical Committee review and Management Board approval.

In 2004, the Board approved Addendum III to the FMP. The addendum sought to further the conservation of horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird populations in and around the Delaware Bay. It reduced harvest quotas and implemented seasonal bait harvest closures in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, and revised monitoring components for all jurisdictions.

Addendum IV was approved in 2006. It further limited bait harvest in New Jersey and Delaware to 100,000 crabs (male only) and required a delayed harvest in Maryland and Virginia.

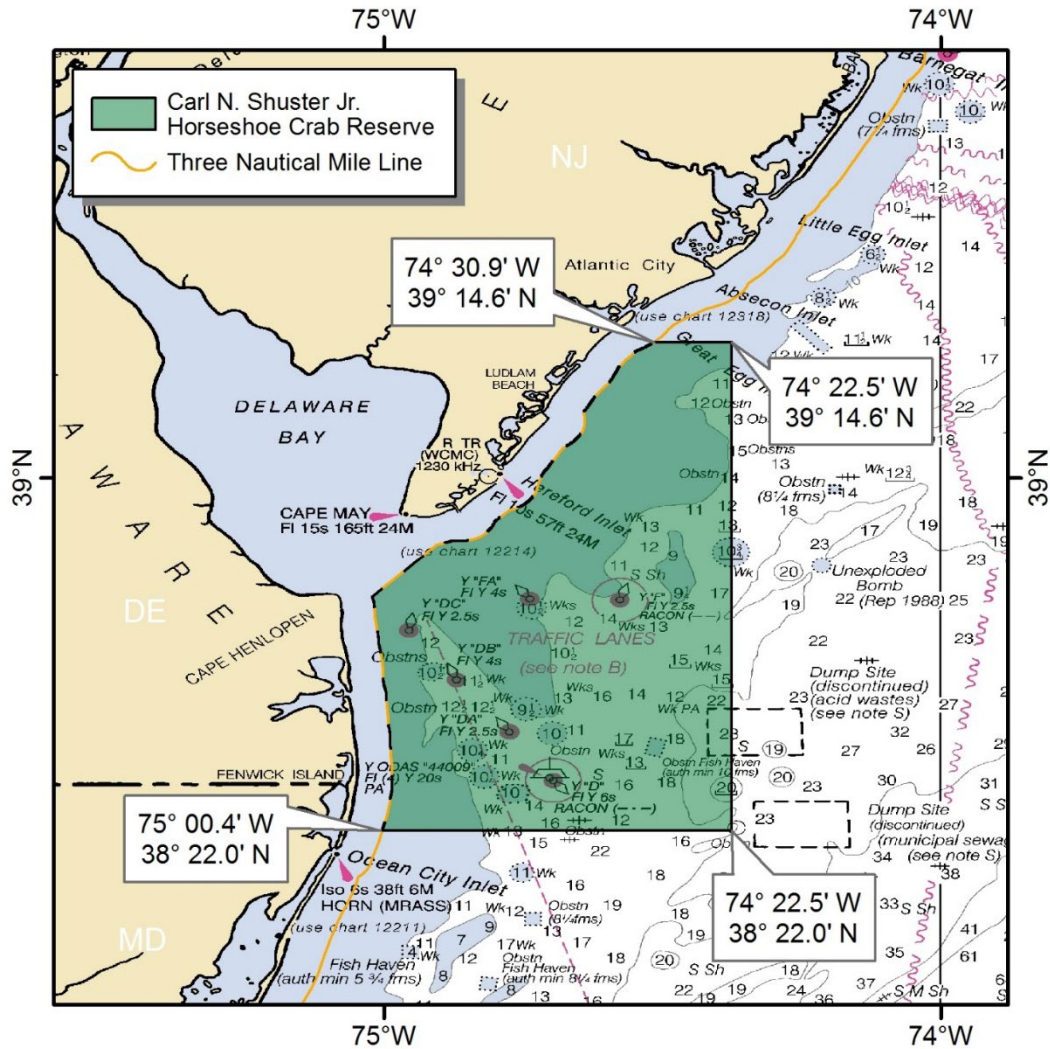


Figure 1. Carl N. Shuster Jr Horseshoe Crab Reserve.

Addendum V, adopted in 2008, extended the provisions of Addendum IV through October 31, 2010.

In early 2010, the Board initiated Draft Addendum VI to consider management options that would follow expiration of Addendum V. The Board voted in August 2010 to extend the Addendum V provisions, via Addendum VI, through April 30, 2013. The Board also chose to include language allowing them to replace Addendum VI with another Addendum during that time, in anticipation of implementing an Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework.

The Board approved Addendum VII in February 2012. This addendum implemented an ARM framework for use during the 2013 fishing season and beyond. The framework considers the abundance levels of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds in determining the optimized bait harvest level for the Delaware Bay states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia (east of the COLREGS).

The ARM Framework underwent a revision process in 2021 to incorporate more available data and update the software platform. Several improvements were made to the ARM Framework during this revision. The ARM Revision improves the population models for horseshoe crabs and red knots by incorporating Delaware Bay region-specific data collected over the past few decades. Horseshoe crab population estimates from the Catch Multiple Survey Analysis (CMSA) model used in the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment were incorporated into the ARM Revision. Additionally, the ARM Revision includes more sources of horseshoe crab removals than the previous version, adding mortality in the biomedical industry and commercial discards from other fisheries. The maximum number of male and female horseshoe crabs the ARM Revision can recommend remains the same at 210,000 females and 500,000 males. However, harvest recommendations under the ARM Revision are now based on a continuous scale rather than the fixed harvest packages in the previous Framework. Also, the harvest of females is decoupled from the harvest of males so that each are determined separately. While additional data and model improvements are used in the ARM Revision, the conceptual model of horseshoe crab abundance influencing red knot survival and reproduction remains intact with the intent of ensuring the abundance of horseshoe crabs does not become a limiting factor in the population growth of red knots. The Board accepted the ARM Revision and Peer Review for management use in January 2022.

Addendum VIII was approved in November 2022. Addendum VIII adopts the changes to the ARM Framework as recommended in the peer-reviewed 2021 ARM Framework for use in setting annual specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay-origin.

## **II. Status of the Stock and Assessment Advice**

A benchmark stock assessment was completed and approved for management use in 2019. The assessment report is available at:

[http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5cd5d6f1HSCAssessment\\_PeerReviewReport\\_May2019.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5cd5d6f1HSCAssessment_PeerReviewReport_May2019.pdf)

This assessment was the first to successfully apply a stock assessment model to a component of the horseshoe crab stock. A Catch Multiple Survey Analysis (CMSA) model, a stage-based model that tracks progression of crab abundances from pre-recruits to full recruits to the fishery, was applied to female crabs in the Delaware (DE) Bay region (New Jersey-Virginia). This model estimated regional female crab abundance using relative abundance information from the Virginia Tech Benthic Trawl Survey, New Jersey Ocean Trawl Survey, and Delaware Adult Trawl Survey, and estimates of mortality including natural mortality, commercial bait harvest, commercial discard mortality, and mortality associated with biomedical use. While reference points were not approved to determine stock status, the CMSA population estimates were recommended as the best estimates for female horseshoe crab abundance in the DE Bay region.

The base CMSA model population estimates show an increase in the number of female crabs in the DE Bay region since 2012, when the ARM Framework was established via Addendum VII.

This increasing trend is supported by positive trends in regional fishery-independent surveys during this time period. Population estimates from the base model are not publicly available due to the inclusion of confidential biomedical data. However, a sensitivity run assuming no biomedical mortality is publicly viewable, and these estimates are not significantly different from the base model results. Estimates of discard mortality from the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) were also included in the base CMSA model and indicate that discard mortality could be significant, of similar or greater magnitude than mortality due to bait harvest. Population estimates from the CMSA are currently being considered for incorporation into the ARM Framework, which is applied annually to specify bait harvest quotas for the DE Bay region.

Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) models, similar to those used in previous assessments, were applied to all regions. ARIMA models were fit to fishery-independent survey indices trends of abundance in each of the regional horseshoe crab populations: Northeast (Massachusetts-Rhode Island), New York (Connecticut-New York), DE Bay, and Southeast (North Carolina-Florida). No definitions for overfishing or overfished status have been adopted by the Management Board. However, the assessment characterized the status of each regional and the coastwide population based on the percentage of surveys within a region (or coastwide) having a >50% probability of the terminal year being below the ARIMA reference point. The ARIMA reference point was the 1998 index for each survey. “Poor” status was defined as >66% of surveys meeting this criterion, “Good” status was defined as <33% of surveys, and “Neutral” status was defined as 34–65% of surveys. Based on these criteria, stock status was neutral for the Northeast region, poor for the New York region, neutral for the Delaware Bay region, and good for the Southeast region. Coastwide, abundance has fluctuated through time with many surveys decreasing after 1998 but increasing in recent years. The coastwide status includes surveys from all regions and indicates a neutral trend, likely due to a combination of positive and negative trends.

An assessment update is expected for completion in 2024.

### **III. Status of the Fishery**

#### ***Bait Fishery***

For most states, the bait fishery is open year-round. However, because of seasonal horseshoe crab movements (to the beaches in the spring; deeper waters and offshore in the winter), the fishery operates at different times along the coast. New Jersey has prohibited commercial harvest of horseshoe crabs in state waters since 2006. State waters of Delaware are closed to horseshoe crab harvest and landing from January 1<sup>st</sup> through June 7<sup>th</sup> each year, and other state horseshoe crab fisheries are regulated with various season/area closures.

The total reported bait landings in 2022 totaled 570,988 crabs. This is well below the ASMFC coastwide quota of 1,587,274 crabs (Table 1, Figure 2) and represents a 23% decrease from 2021 landings of 741,684 crabs. Landings increased in New York but decreased in most states.

Reported coastwide landings since 1998 show more male than female horseshoe crabs were harvested annually. Several states presently have sex-specific restrictions in place which limit or ban the harvest of females. The American eel pot fishery prefers egg-laden female horseshoe crabs as bait, while the whelk (conch) pot fishery is less dependent on females. States with greater than 5% of coastal landings are required to report sex for at least a portion of their bait harvest; for 2022 these states include Massachusetts, New York, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Within these states, 61% of reported bait landings were male, 17% were female, and 22% were unclassified in 2022.

The hand, trawl, and dredge fisheries accounted for the majority of reported commercial horseshoe crab bait landings in 2022. Other gears that account for the remainder of the harvest include rakes, hoes, and tongs, fixed nets, and gill nets.

**Table 1. Reported commercial horseshoe crab bait landings by jurisdiction. "C" indicates confidential landings.**

	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ*	DE*	MD*	PRFC	VA**	NC	SC	GA	FL	TOTAL
<b>ASMFC Quota 2022</b>	330,377	26,053	48,689	366,272	162,136	162,136	255,980	0	172,828	24,036	0	29,312	9,455	1,587,274
<b>State Quota 2022</b>	165,000	8,398	48,689	150,000	0	151,345	255,980	-	172,828	24,036	0	29,312	9,455	1,020,820
<b>Landings by Year</b>														
<b>2015</b>	117,611	7,867	19,632	145,324	0	151,262	27,494	0	102,235	24,839	0	0	264	596,528
<b>2016</b>	110,399	20,676	21,945	176,632	0	109,836	157,013	0	128,848	25,197	0	0	689	751,235
<b>2019</b>	172,664	C	17,588	167,181	0	164,225	145,907	0	151,727	13,463	0	0	0	832,755
<b>2020</b>	163,695	C	15,942	63,367	0	124,803	61,165	0	24,031	3,672	0	0	0	456,675
<b>2021</b>	156,013	1,706	17,492	97,860	0	172,927	181,044	0	112,497	2,145	0	0	C	741,684
<b>2022</b>	135,731	C	1,343	111,481	0	147,558	84,627	0	89,748	500	0	0	C	570,988

\*Male-only harvest

\*\*Virginia harvest east of the COLREGS line is limited to 81,331 male-only crabs under the ARM harvest package #3. Virginia harvest east of the COLREGS in 2022 was 8,334 crabs.

### **Biomedical Use**

The horseshoe crab is an important resource for research and manufacture of materials used for human health. There are five companies along the Atlantic Coast that process horseshoe crab blood for use in manufacturing Limulus Amebocyte Lysate (LAL): Associates of Cape Cod, Massachusetts; Lonza (formerly Cambrex Bioscience), Limuli Laboratories, New Jersey; Wako Chemicals, Virginia; and Charles River Endosafe, South Carolina. Addendum III requires states where horseshoe crabs are collected for biomedical purposes to collect and report total collection numbers, crabs rejected, crabs bled (by sex) and to characterize mortality.

The Plan Review Team (PRT) annually calculates total coastwide collections and estimates mortality associated with biomedical use. In 2022, 911,826 crabs were collected coastwide

solely for biomedical purposes<sup>1</sup> (Table 2). This represents a 27% increase from 2021. Of the total biomedical collections in 2022, males accounted for 43.3%, females comprised 34.3%, and 22.4% were of unknown sex. Some crabs were rejected prior to bleeding due to mortality, injuries, slow movement, and size (mortality observed while crabs were going through the biomedical process is included under ‘Observed Mortality’ in Table 2). Approximately 2.4% of crabs collected solely for biomedical purposes were observed and reported as dead from the time of collection up to the point of bleeding.

During the 2019 benchmark stock assessment, a meta-analysis of literature estimates was performed to estimate post-bleeding mortality of horseshoe crabs. Although many of these studies did not implement biomedical best practices, these values are the only available estimates of mortality experienced after bleeding. Based on the literature review, post-bleeding mortality is estimated at 15%. Tagging data was used in the assessment to compare survivorship between crabs that were and were not bled. These results indicated some decrease in short-term survivorship, but greater long-term survivorship for bled crabs. These results are likely attributable to the culling process used by biomedical facilities to select healthy crabs for bleeding.

Post-bleeding mortality, calculated as 15% of the number of bled biomedical-only crabs (not from the bait market), for 2022 was estimated to be 124,227 crabs. Total mortality (observed mortality plus post-bleeding mortality) of biomedical crabs for 2022 was estimated at 145,920 crabs. The total estimated mortality from biomedical collections represents approximately 20% of the 2022 total directed use mortality (716,908 crabs), which includes both total biomedical mortality and removals for bait.

In 2023, a work group appointed by the Board reviewed and updated the *Best Management Practices for Handling Horseshoe Crabs for Biomedical Purposes*<sup>2</sup>. The work group included technical committee and advisory panel members with expertise in horseshoe crab biology, ecology, and biomedical processing. The purpose of the BMPs is to recommend broadly

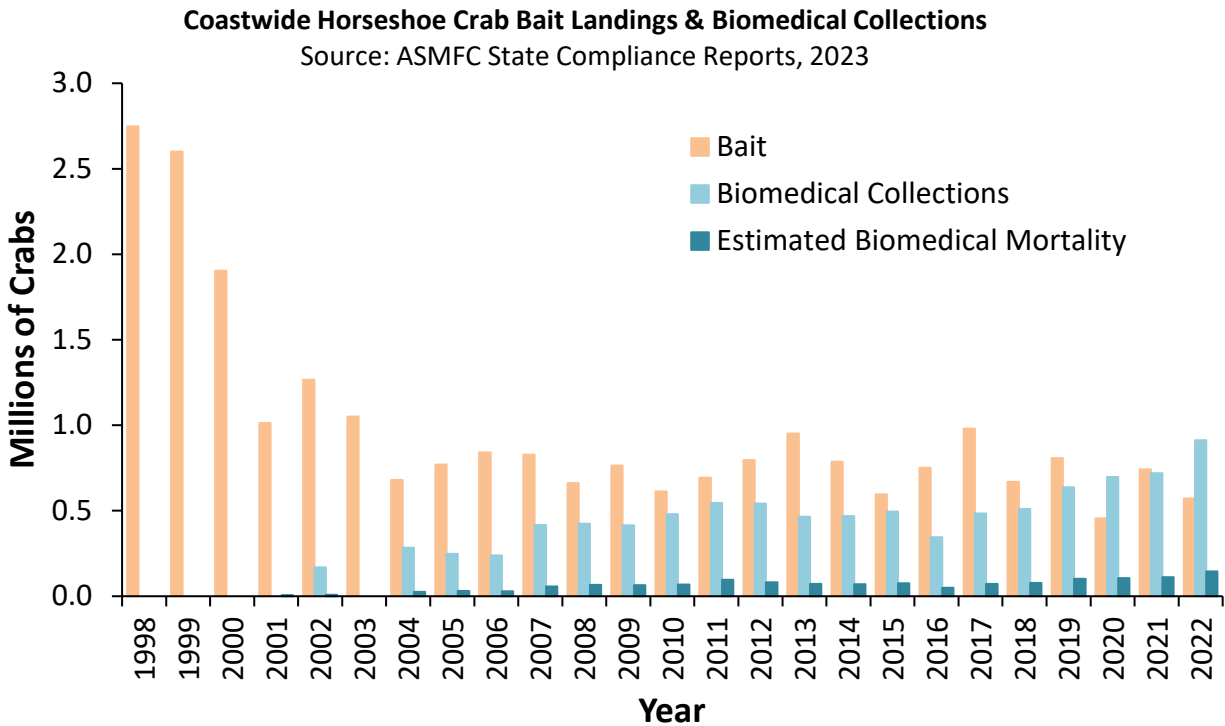
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<sup>1</sup> This does not include bait crabs borrowed for bleeding and then returned to the bait market; these are counted against state bait quotas. The dual use of horseshoe crabs harvested for bait is encouraged as a conservation tool. Facilities that bleed horseshoe crabs to manufacture LAL can utilize crabs from the bait market in what is often referred to as the “rent a crab” program. Permitted bait harvesters and/or dealers can “rent” crabs caught for the bait industry to the bleeding facility; these crabs are returned to the bait vendor after bleeding. These crabs are caught under bait permits, are counted against the bait quota of the state of origin, and must comply with that state’s regulations for bait harvest. The dual use of crabs in this program can reduce overall harvest, may decrease overall mortality, can provide the LAL manufacturers with an additional source of raw material, and may offer harvesters and dealers opportunity within this secondary market.

<sup>2</sup> Best Management Practices for Handling Horseshoe Crabs for Biomedical Purposes can be found here: [https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/645bf065HSC\\_Biomedical\\_BMPs\\_2023.pdf](https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/645bf065HSC_Biomedical_BMPs_2023.pdf)

applicable industry standards that are expected to minimize mortality and injury of horseshoe crabs associated with the biomedical process.

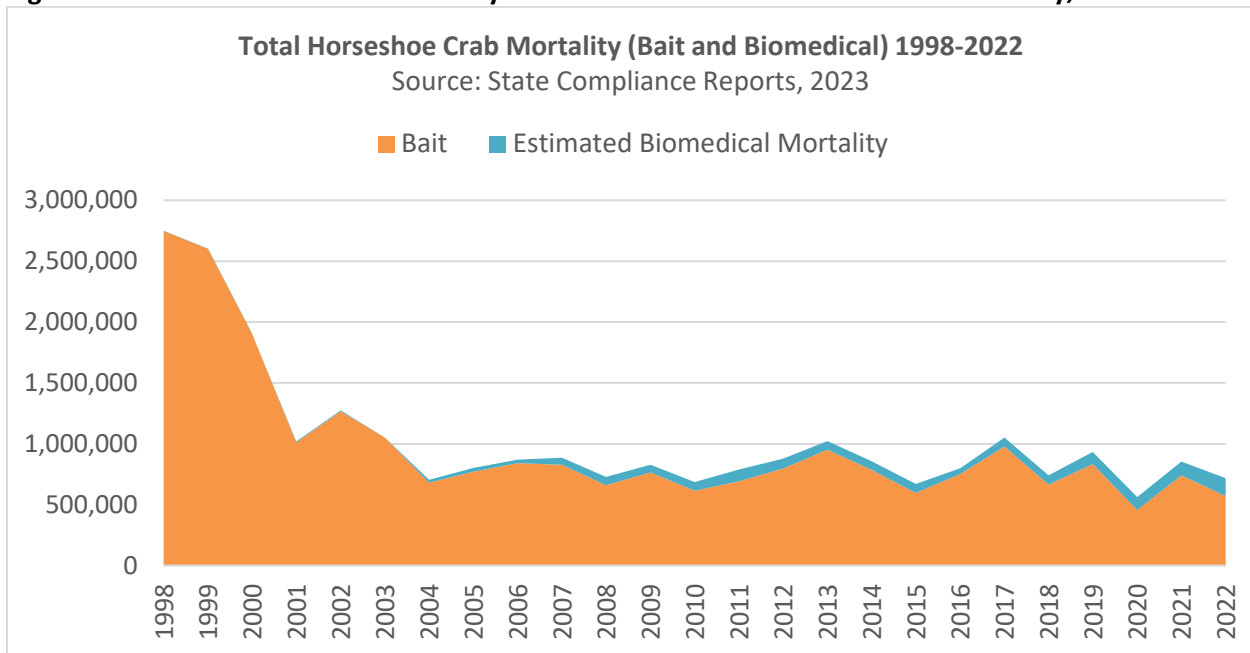
**Figure 2. Number of horseshoe crabs harvested for bait and collected for biomedical purposes, 1998-2022.**



\*Biomedical collections are annually reported to the Commission and include all horseshoe crabs brought to bleeding facilities except those that were harvested as bait, “rented” by biomedical facilities and counted against state bait quotas.

\*Crabs collected solely for biomedical crabs are returned to the water after bleeding; a 15% mortality rate is assumed for all bled crabs that are released. This number plus observed mortality reported annually by bleeding facilities via state compliance reports equals the 'Estimated Biomedical Mortality.'

**Figure 3. Total Horseshoe Crab Mortality from Bait and Estimated Biomedical Mortality, 1998-2022.**



**Table 2. Numbers of horseshoe crabs collected, bled, and estimated mortality for the biomedical industry. Numbers shown are for crabs collected solely for biomedical use. Mortality of bled crabs that later enter the bait industry is included in bait harvest.**

Year	Crabs Collected	Crabs Bled	Post-Bleeding Mortality	Observed Mortality	Total Mortality
2010	480,914	412,781	61,917	6,829	68,746
2011	545,164	486,850	73,028	24,139	97,166
2012	541,956	497,956	74,693	7,370	82,063
2013	464,657	440,402	66,060	5,447	71,507
2014	467,897	432,340	64,851	5,658	70,509
2015	494,123	464,506	69,676	5,362	75,038
2016*	344,495	318,523	47,778	1,004	48,782
2017	483,245	444,115	66,617	6,056	72,674
2018	510,407	479,142	71,871	5,588	77,459
2019	637,029	589,361	88,404	12,789	101,193
2020	697,025	649,546	97,432	8,907	106,339
2021	718,809	667,951	100,193	11,911	112,104
2022	911,826	828,181	124,227	21,693	145,920

\*Some biomedical collections were reduced in 2016 due to temporary changes in production.

#### IV. Status of Research and Monitoring

The Horseshoe Crab FMP set forth an ambitious research and monitoring strategy in 1999 and again in 2004 to inform future management decisions. Despite limited time and funding there are many accomplishments since 1999. These accomplishments were largely made possible by forming partnerships between state, federal and private organizations, and the support of hundreds of public volunteers.

### **Addendum III Monitoring Program**

Addendum III requires affected states to carry out three monitoring components:

1. All states who do not qualify for *de minimis* status report monthly harvest numbers and subsample a portion of the catch for sex and harvest method. In addition, those states with annual landings above 5% of the coastwide harvest report all landings by sex and harvest method. Although states with annual landings less than 5% of annual coastwide harvest are not required to report landings by sex, the PRT recommends all states require sex-specific reporting for horseshoe crab harvest.
2. States with biomedical collections are required to monitor and report collection numbers and mortality associated with the transportation and bleeding of the crabs.
3. States must identify spawning and nursery habitat along their coasts. All states have completed this requirement, and a few continue active monitoring programs.

### **Virginia Tech Research Projects**

The Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey (VT Survey) was not conducted in 2013-2015, due to a lack of funding, but was conducted in 2016-2022, and is in progress for 2023. Funding sources beyond 2023 continue to be explored. The 2022 surveys were conducted between August 2 and October 12. The lower Delaware Bay area of the survey was not sampled in 2022 as increased operational costs resulted in limitations to time on the water.

For the Delaware Bay Area (DBA), the 2022 survey resulted in an increase in the stratified catch-per-tow values for newly mature females and immature individuals, and decreases in the stratified catch-per-tow values for newly mature males and mature individuals. No estimates were significantly different from the previous year with the exception of newly mature females, as none were caught in 2021. Mean stratified catch-per-tow for all demographic groups in the DBA continues to be highly variable, although mature individuals have shown a positive trend over the time series. Prosomal widths of mature and newly mature males and females show decreasing trends over the time series in the DBA.

The indices from this survey, along with the New Jersey Ocean Trawl and Delaware Fish and Wildlife Adult Trawl Survey indices, were used to estimate horseshoe crab abundance in the 2021 ARM Framework Revision to produce optimal harvest limits for the upcoming year.

### **Spawning Surveys**

The redesigned Delaware Bay spawning survey was completed for the twenty-fourth consecutive year in 2022. Twelve beaches in Delaware and ten beaches in New Jersey were sampled. Delaware is currently in the process of analyzing survey data.

### **Tagging Studies**

The USFWS continues to maintain a toll-free telephone number and a website for reporting horseshoe crab tag returns and assists interested parties in obtaining tags. Tagging work continues to be conducted by biomedical companies, research organizations, and other parties involved in outreach and spawning surveys. Beginning with the 2013 tagging season, additional

efforts were implemented to ensure that current tagging programs are providing data that benefits the management of the coastwide horseshoe crab population. All existing and new tagging efforts are required to submit an annual application to be considered for the USFWS tagging program and all participants must submit an annual report along with their tagging and resighting data to indicate how their tagging program addresses at least one of the following objectives: determine horseshoe crab sub-population structure, estimate horseshoe crab movement and migration rates, and/or estimate survival and mortality of horseshoe crabs. The PRT recommends all tagging programs approved by the states coordinate with the USFWS tagging program, in order to ensure a consistent coastwide program to support management.

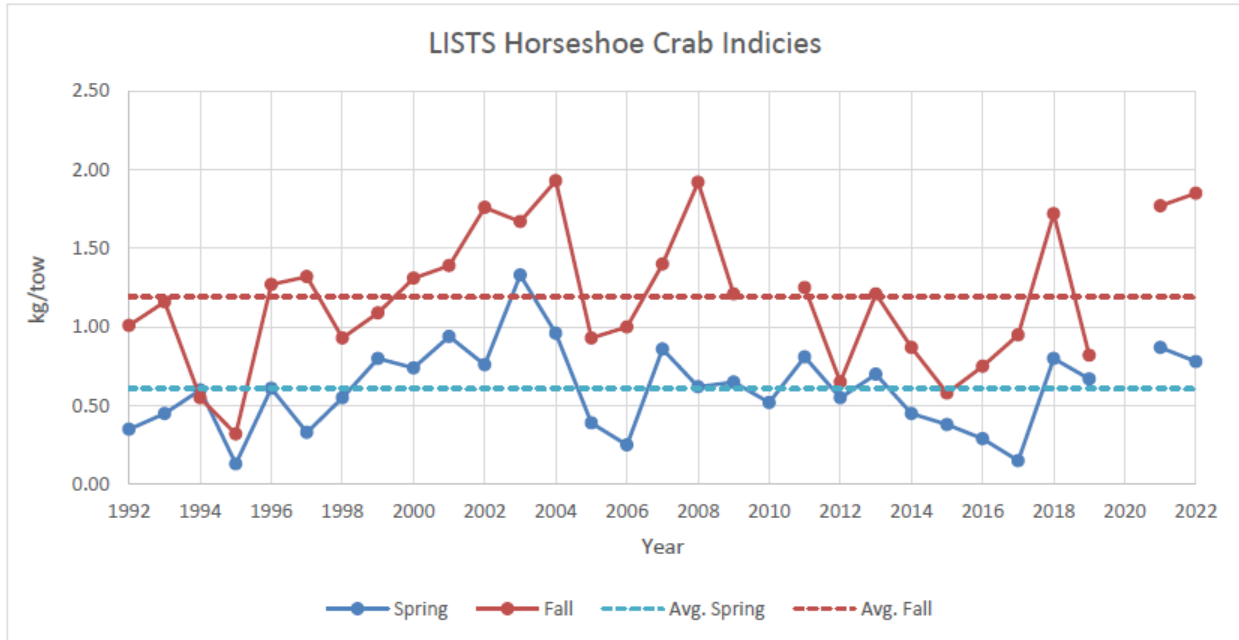
Since 1999, over 409,859 crabs have been tagged and released through the USFWS tagging program along the Atlantic coast, and 49,993 unique crabs have been recaptured. Crabs have been tagged and released from every state on the Atlantic Coast from Florida to New Hampshire. In the early years of the program, tagging was centered around Delaware Bay; however, tagging has expanded and increased in Long Island Sound and the Southeast. Tagging information from this database has been used in the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment to define stock structure, estimate total mortality, and characterize impacts of biomedical use on crab mortality.

### ***New York Region Monitoring***

Following the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment, which characterized the status of the horseshoe crab population in the New York region as “Poor”, the Board directed the PRT to monitor fishery-independent surveys in this area to track progress of state management actions toward improving this regional population. During the assessment, five surveys were included in the ARIMA model to characterize this population. One of these, the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP), includes sample areas outside of the New York region, making it too data-intensive to specify the regional index on an annual basis. The most recent information from the state-conducted surveys used in the assessment is summarized below, but can be viewed in greater detail in the Connecticut and New York state compliance reports. The Western Long Island (WLI) Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay seine surveys were combined in the assessment to form a single index, but are shown below separately. None of these beach seine surveys were completed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in 2021. Figures 5-8 show the annual index for each survey over the time series until 2021.

#### Connecticut

- Long Island Sound Trawl (LISTS) (Fall) – 2022 index – The 2022 survey was limited in April due to staff limitations and in June because of mechanical issues with the research vessel. The LISTS indices for 2022 were above average in both the spring and fall (0.78 and 1.85 kg/tow, respectively). The fall index was one of the highest in the time series.



**Figure 4. LISTS Horseshoe Crab Indices, 1992-2022.**

**New York**

- Peconic Trawl – 2022 index = 0.14 (delta distribution average catch per unit effort [CPUE]), increase from 2021, below 2010-22 average.
- WLI Jamaica Bay Seine (all horseshoe crabs) – 2022 index = 0.06 (geometric mean), decrease from 2021, lowest value in time series.
- WLI Little Neck Bay Seine (all) – 2022 index = 1.23 (geometric mean), increase from 2021, below 2010-22 average.
- WLI Manhasset Bay Seine (all) – 2022 index = 0.89 (geometric mean), increase from 2019, below 2010-22 average.

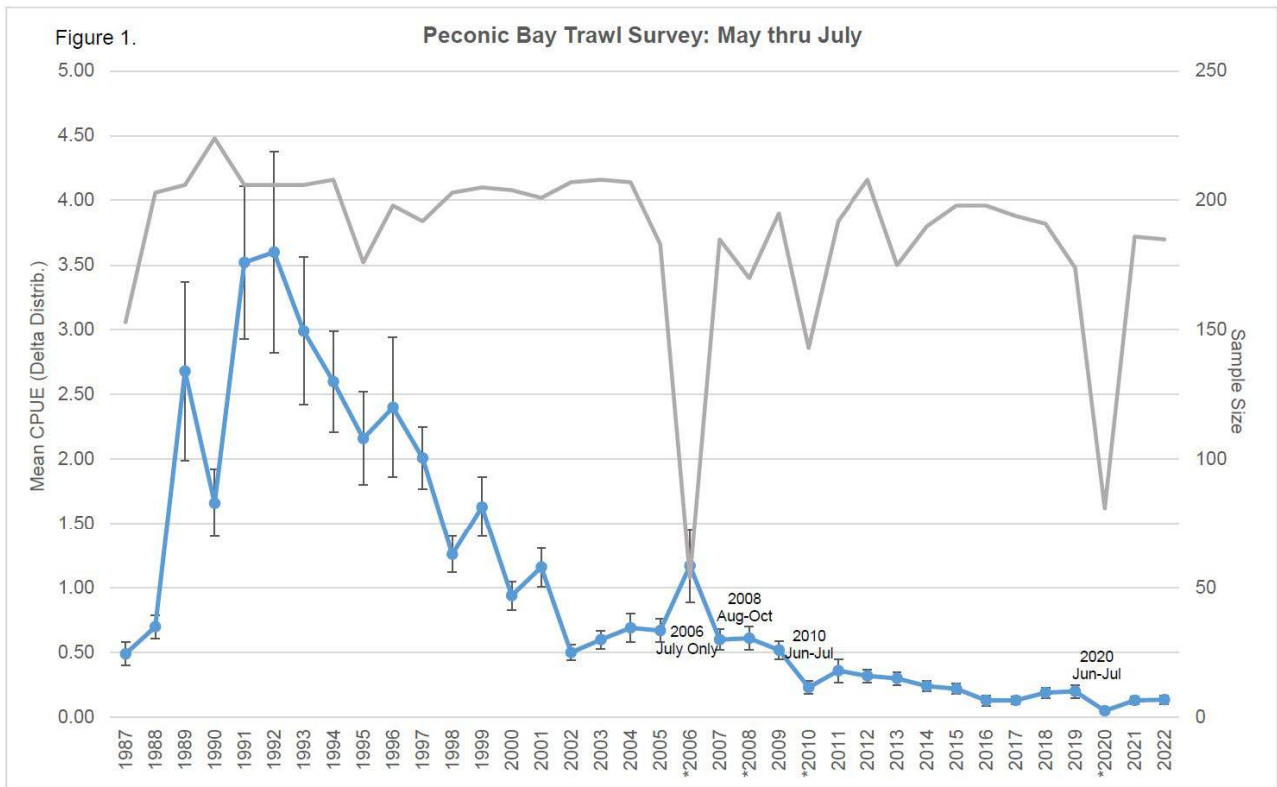


Figure 5. Peconic Bay Trawl Survey: May through July, 1987-2022. (Gray line=sample size, blue line=mean CPUE).

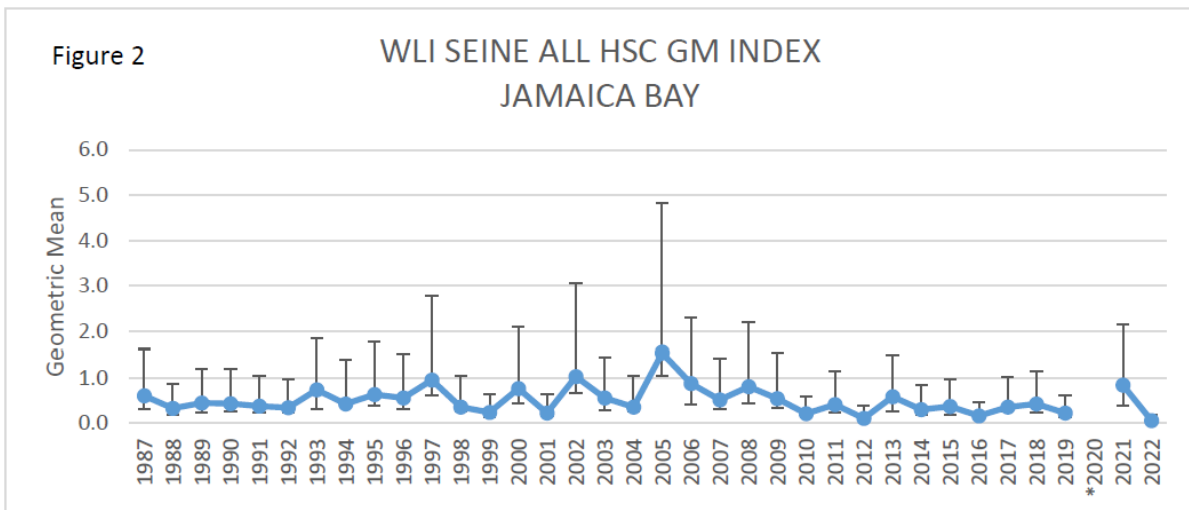
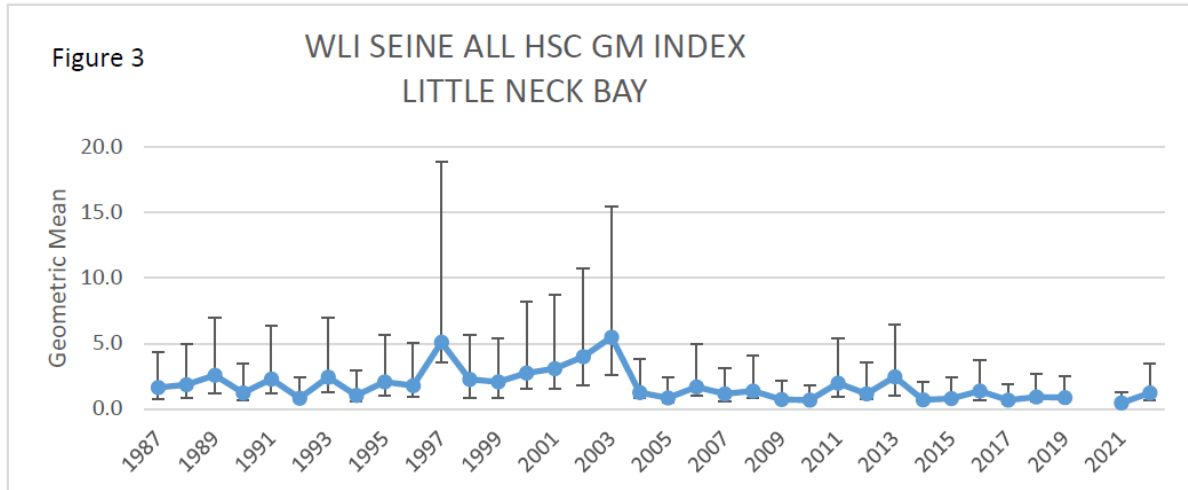
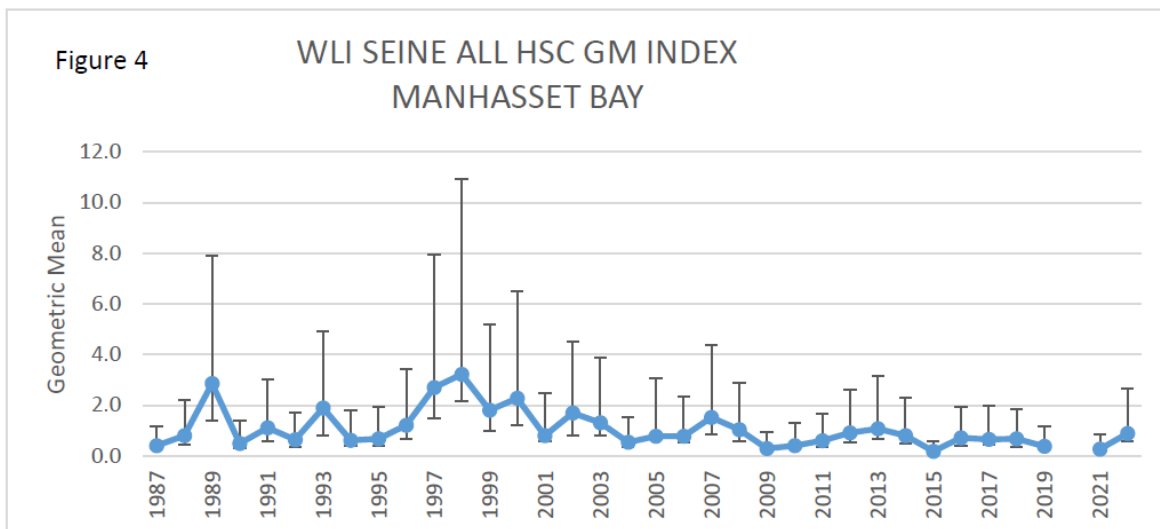


Figure 6. NYSDEC WLI Jamaica Bay Beach Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2022. \*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.



**Figure 7. Little Neck Bay Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2022.** \*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.



**Figure 8. Manhasset Bay Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2022.** \*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.

## V. Status of Management Measures and Issues

### **ASMFC**

Initial state harvest quotas were established through Addendum I. Addendum III outlined the monitoring requirements and recommendations for the states. Addendum IV set harvest closures and quotas, and other restrictions for New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, which were continued in Addenda V and VI.

In February 2012 the Board approved Addendum VII to implement the ARM Framework; it was implemented in 2013. Addendum VII includes an allocation mechanism to divide the Delaware Bay optimized harvest output from the ARM Framework among the four Delaware Bay states

(New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia east of the COLREGS line). Season closures and restrictions present within Addendum VI remain in effect as part of Addendum VII.

State-specific charts outlining compliance and monitoring measures are included in Section VII. Issues noted by the PRT include:

- Massachusetts and Connecticut did not report to ASMFC by the required deadline.

The PRT finds that all other jurisdictions appear to be in compliance with the FMP and subsequent Addenda in 2022.

### ***Changes to State Regulations***

No changes were made to state regulations for fishing year 2022.

### ***Alternative Baits***

Trials testing effectiveness of alternative baits to horseshoe crab for the American eel and whelk fisheries have previously been conducted. Additionally, a survey of bait usage in the eel and whelk fisheries was conducted in 2017. This survey is available at:

[http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5a04b785HSC\\_BaitSurveyTCReport\\_Oct2017.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5a04b785HSC_BaitSurveyTCReport_Oct2017.pdf).

### ***Shorebirds***

The USFWS received petitions in 2004 and 2005 to emergency list the red knot under the Endangered Species Act. In fall 2005, it determined that emergency listing was not warranted at the time. As part of a court settlement, the USFWS agreed to initiate proposed listings of over 200 species, including the red knot. In fall 2013, the USFWS released a proposal for listing the red knot as threatened. In January 2015 the USFWS designated the red knot as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

In 2022 the USFWS conducted an analysis of the changes to horseshoe crab management that would occur under the 2021 ARM Revision to determine the likelihood of impacts to the red knot. The finding from analysis is that there is a < 1% chance of a red knot population decline due to the implementation of potential female harvest under the revised ARM. Therefore, the Service concluded that take, defined under the Endangered Species Act as killing or injuring, of red knots is not likely.

The red knot has been listed as an endangered species in the state of New Jersey since 2012.

## **VI. PRT Recommendations and Research Needs**

### ***De Minimis***

States may apply for *de minimis* status if, for the last two years, their combined average horseshoe crab bait landings (by numbers) constitute less than one percent of coastwide horseshoe crab bait landings for the same two-year period. States may petition the Board at

any time for *de minimis* status, if their fishery falls below the threshold level. Once *de minimis* status is granted, designated States must submit annual reports to the Board justifying the continuance of *de minimis* status.

States that qualify for *de minimis* status are not required to implement any horseshoe crab harvest restriction measures, but are required to implement components A, B, E and F of the monitoring program (Section 3.5 of the FMP; further modified by Addendum III). Since *de minimis* states are exempt from a harvest cap, there is potential for horseshoe crab landings to shift to *de minimis* states and become substantial, before adequate action can be taken. To control shifts in horseshoe crab landings, *de minimis* states are encouraged to implement one of the following management measures:

1. Close their respective horseshoe crab bait fishery when landings exceed the *de minimis* threshold;
2. Establish a state horseshoe crab landing permit, making it only available to individuals with a history of landing horseshoe crabs in that state; or
3. Establish a maximum daily harvest limit of up to 25 horseshoe crabs per person per day. States which implement this measure can be relieved of mandatory monthly reporting, but must report all horseshoe crabs harvests on an annual basis.

The following states have been removed from the Management Board since its formation: Pennsylvania (2007), Maine (2011), and New Hampshire (2014). South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida are requesting *de minimis* status for the 2023 fishing season based on the 2021-22 season landings and meet the FMP requirements for being granted this status (Table 1). The PRT recommends granting these jurisdictions *de minimis* status.

### ***Biomedical Threshold***

The 1998 FMP established a biomedical mortality threshold of 57,500 crabs that, if exceeded, requires the Board to consider management action. This threshold has been exceeded in all but one year since 2008. Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment indicate that levels of biomedical mortality prior to 2017 (the terminal year of data used in the assessment) did not have a significant effect on horseshoe crab population estimates or fishing mortality in the Delaware Bay region.

In 2020 the Board tasked the PDT to review the threshold for biomedical use to develop biologically-based options for the threshold and to develop options for action when the threshold is exceeded. It also tasked the PDT to review the best management practices (BMPs) for handling biomedical catch and suggest options for updating and implementing BMPs. The PDT concluded that given the lack of coastwide population estimates for horseshoe crabs, it is not possible to develop a biologically-based threshold for biomedical mortality. Thus, the PDT did not recommend a change to the threshold. Based on this information the Board determined no action is warranted, but agreed to form a work group to review and update the best

management practices for biomedical handling to further reduce stress, injury, and mortality to horseshoe crabs collected for biomedical purposes if possible.

***Funding for Research and Monitoring Activities***

The PRT strongly recommends the funding and continuation of the VT benthic trawl survey. 2022 sampling had to be reduced due to increased costs. This effort provides a statistically reliable estimate of horseshoe crab relative abundance that is essential to continued ARM implementation and use of the CMSA stock assessment model.

***Discard Mortality Estimation***

Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment indicate that discard mortality may be significant, of similar or greater magnitude than bait harvest. The Review Panel’s report indicated that these estimates could be further refined to reduce their uncertainty and more precisely characterize this mortality source. The PRT recommends the Board take steps to increase access to and use of data from the NEFOP, allowing for improved monitoring and estimation of discard mortality.

***Improvement of the New York Regional Population***

Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment indicate a “Poor” status for the New York regional population, due to negative trends in regional abundance indices. New York and Connecticut have indicated that they will take actions within their states to improve this population. The PRT and Board have recommended such actions so that this population’s status may improve.

In 2022, Connecticut implemented measures to reduce harvest in response to the Board’s request. These changes include the commercial fishing season moving from May 22 to the calendar date three days after the last full or new moon (whichever is later) in May, and a new 5-day closure centered on the first moon phase in June. The daily possession limit for commercial hand-harvest was decreased from 500 to 150 crabs. These changes were implemented prior to the 2022 Spring season.

The PRT will continue to annually report regional indices of abundance so that progress of management actions may be tracked through the annual FMP Reviews.

**VII. State Compliance and Monitoring Measures**

<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>		
	<b>2022 Compliance</b>	<b>2023 Management Proposal</b>
<i>De minimis</i> status	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
<b>Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings</b>		
- ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	330,377 (165,000)	330,377 (165,000)
- Other Restrictions	Bait: 300 crab daily limit year round; limited entry; Biomedical: 1,000 crab daily limit; Conch pot and eel fishermen: no possession limit Mobile gear: 75 crab trip limit, exempted from “no-fishing days” starting 10/9/2020; All: May and June 5-day lunar closures; 7” PW minimum size; Pleasant Bay Closed Area	Bait: 300 crab daily limit year round; Biomedical: 200,000 crab quota; 1,000 crab daily limit; Conch pot and eel fishermen: no possession limit All: May and June 5-day lunar closures; No mobile gear harvest Fri-Sat during summer flounder season; 7” PW minimum size; Pleasant Bay Closed Area
- Landings	135,731	--
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>1</sub></b>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes, plus weekly dealer reporting through SAFIS	Yes, plus weekly dealer reporting through SAFIS
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>2</sub></b>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Yes – w/NPS and USFWS; Pleasant Bay, Monomy NWR, Waquoit Bay	Yes – w/NPS and USFWS; Pleasant Bay, Monomy NWR, Waquoit Bay

RHODE ISLAND		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis status</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	26,053 (8,398)	26,053 (8,398)
- Other Restrictions	State Restrictions: - Daily possession limit: 60 crabs per permit - Bait Fishery Closure: May 1- May 31 - Biomedical Fishery Closure: 48 hours prior to and 48 hours following new and full moons during May. - Biomedical quota and best management practices	State Restrictions: - Daily possession limit: 60 crabs per permit - Bait Fishery Closure: May 1- May 31 - Biomedical Fishery Closure: 48 hours prior to and 48 hours following new and full moons during May - Biomedical quota and best management practices
- Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes, weekly call in and monthly on paper	Yes, weekly call in and monthly on paper
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes, included in Massachusetts' biomedical reports	Captured in Massachusetts' biomedical reports
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes, since 2000	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No

CONNECTICUT		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis status</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	48,689	48,689
- Other Restrictions	- Limited entry program - Hand-harvest possession limit of 150 crabs - seasonal and lunar closures	Prohibit hand harvest of horseshoe crabs or eggs in state waters, effective Oct. 1, 2023
- Landings	1,343	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	No – exempt under Addendum III because landings are < 5% of coastwide total	No – exempt under Addendum III because landings are < 5% of coastwide total
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Not provided	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes, since 1999 (methods differ from DE Bay survey)	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Yes, in collaboration with local universities (Sacred Heart University since 2015)	Yes

NEW YORK		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis status</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	366,272 (150,000)	366,272 (150,000)
- Other Restrictions	Ability to close areas to harvest; seasonal quotas and daily harvest limits Five-day lunar closures around the full moon in May and the new moon in June. Initial trip limit dropped to 150 crabs in period 2.	Ability to close areas to harvest; seasonal quotas and daily harvest limits - Five-day lunar closures around the full moon in May and the new moon in June. -Initial trip limit dropped to 150 crabs in period 2.
- Landings	111,481	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Yes	Yes

NEW JERSEY		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis status</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Does not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota (Voluntary state quota)	162,136 [male only] (0)	162,136 [male only] (0)
- Other Restrictions	Bait harvest moratorium	Bait harvest moratorium
- Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>5</sub></b> Egg abundance survey	Yes, no longer mandatory	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>6</sub></b> Shorebird monitoring program	Yes	Yes

<b>DELAWARE</b>		
	<b>2022 Compliance</b>	<b>2023 Management Proposal</b>
<b><i>De minimis</i> status</b>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
<b>Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings</b>		
- ASMFC Quota (State Quota)	162,136 [male only] 151,345 [male only]	164,364 [male only] 164,364 [male only]
- Other Restrictions	Closed season (January 1 – June 7)	Closed season (January 1 – June 7)
- Landings	147,558 (male only)	--
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>1</sub></b>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (daily call-in reports & monthly logbooks)	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>2</sub></b>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes – updates once every 5 years or as needed	Yes – updates once every 5 years or as needed
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No state program but has assisted in the past with various Delaware Bay horseshoe crab tagging initiatives	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>5</sub></b> Egg abundance survey	Removed as component	Removed as component
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>6</sub></b> Shorebird monitoring program	Yes	Yes

Note: The egg abundance survey has been discontinued as a mandatory monitoring element. Delaware will include information on the survey if it continues, but is no longer required to perform the survey.

MARYLAND		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis</i> status	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	255,980 (male only)	255,980 (male only)
- Other Restrictions	Delayed harvest and closed season/area combinations, catch limits	Delayed harvest and closed season/area combinations, catch limits
- Landings	84,627 (male only)	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (weekly reports for permit holders; monthly for non-permit holders)	Yes (weekly reports for permit holders; monthly for non-permit holders)
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Yes – through biomedical use	Yes – through biomedical use

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<b>De minimis status</b>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
- Ability to close fishery if <i>de minimis</i> threshold is reached	No horseshoe crab fishery	No horseshoe crab fishery
- Daily possession limit <25 for <i>de minimis</i> state		
- HSC landing permit		
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	0	0
- Other Restrictions	None	None
- Landings	0	0
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes - weekly	Yes - weekly
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

VIRGINIA		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<i>De minimis</i> status	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	172,828 (81,331 male-only east of COLREGS line)	172,828 (81,331 male-only east of COLREGS line)
- Other Restrictions	Closed season (January 1 – June 7) for federal waters. Effective January 1, 2013 harvest of horseshoe crabs, from east of the COLREGS line, is limited to trawl gear and dredge gear only.	Closed season (January 1 – June 7) for federal waters. Effective January 1, 2013 harvest of horseshoe crabs, from east of the COLREGS line, is limited to trawl gear and dredge gear only.
- Landings	89,748 (60,693 males)	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	No	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No

<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>		
	<b>2022 Compliance</b>	<b>2023 Management Proposal</b>
<b><i>De minimis</i> status</b>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>	Did not request <i>de minimis</i>
<b>Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings</b>		
- ASMFC Quota	24,036	24,036
- Other Restrictions	Trip limit of 50 crabs; Proclamation authority to adjust trip limits, seasons, etc.	Trip limit of 50 crabs; Proclamation authority to adjust trip limits, seasons, etc.
- Landings	500	--
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>1</sub></b>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>2</sub></b>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Little information available; Survey discontinued after 2002 and 2003 due to low levels of crabs recorded	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	No	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No

SOUTH CAROLINA		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<b>De minimis status</b>	<i>De minimis</i> status granted for 2022.	<i>De minimis</i> requested for 2023 and meets criteria.
- Ability to close fishery if <i>de minimis</i> threshold is reached	No horseshoe crab bait fishery	No horseshoe crab bait fishery
- Daily possession limit <25 for <i>de minimis</i> state		
- HSC landing permit		
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	0	0
- Other Restrictions	None	None
- Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (Biomedical)	Yes (Biomedical)
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Completed	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	Yes	Yes

GEORGIA		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<b>De minimis status</b>	<i>De minimis</i> status granted in 2022.	<i>De minimis</i> requested for 2023 and meets criteria.
- Ability to close fishery if <i>de minimis</i> threshold is reached	Yes	Yes
- Daily possession limit <25 for <i>de minimis</i> state	25/person; 75/vessel with 3 licensees	25/person; 75/vessel with 3 licensees
- HSC landing permit	Must have commercial shrimp, crab, or whelk license; LOA permit required	Must have commercial shrimp, crab, or whelk license; LOA permit required
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	29,312	29,312
(State Quota)	29,312	29,312
- Other Restrictions	None	None
- Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Completed	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	No	No
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No

FLORIDA		
	2022 Compliance	2023 Management Proposal
<b>De minimis status</b>	<i>De minimis</i> status granted in 2022.	<i>De minimis</i> requested for 2023 and meets criteria.
- Ability to close fishery if <i>de minimis</i> threshold is reached	Yes	Yes
- Daily possession limit <25 for <i>de minimis</i> state	25/person w/ valid saltwater products license; 100/person with marine life endorsement	25/person w/ valid saltwater products license; 100/person with marine life endorsement
- HSC landing permit	See above	See above
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
- ASMFC Quota	9,455	9,455
- Other Restrictions	Daily possession limit	Daily possession limit
- Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A <sub>1</sub>		
- Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
- Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A <sub>2</sub>		
- Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
- Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Monitoring Component A<sub>3</sub></b> Identify spawning and nursery habitat	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>1</sub></b> Coastwide benthic trawl survey	Yes, VT Trawl Survey was conducted in 2022	Yes, VT Trawl Survey will be conducted in 2023; future years and spatial scope unknown at this time
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>2</sub></b> Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>3</sub></b> Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
<b>Monitoring Component B<sub>4</sub></b> Tagging program	No	No