



2022 Fishery Management Plan Review for Tautog



Tautog Management Board
August 2, 2023

Overview



1. Status of the FMP
2. Status of the stock
3. Status of the fishery
4. Biological Sampling
5. Tagging Program

Status of the FMP



Managed under Amendment 1 (2017)

- One change in recreational regulations
 - RI: one fish allowed >21-inches

Status of the Stock

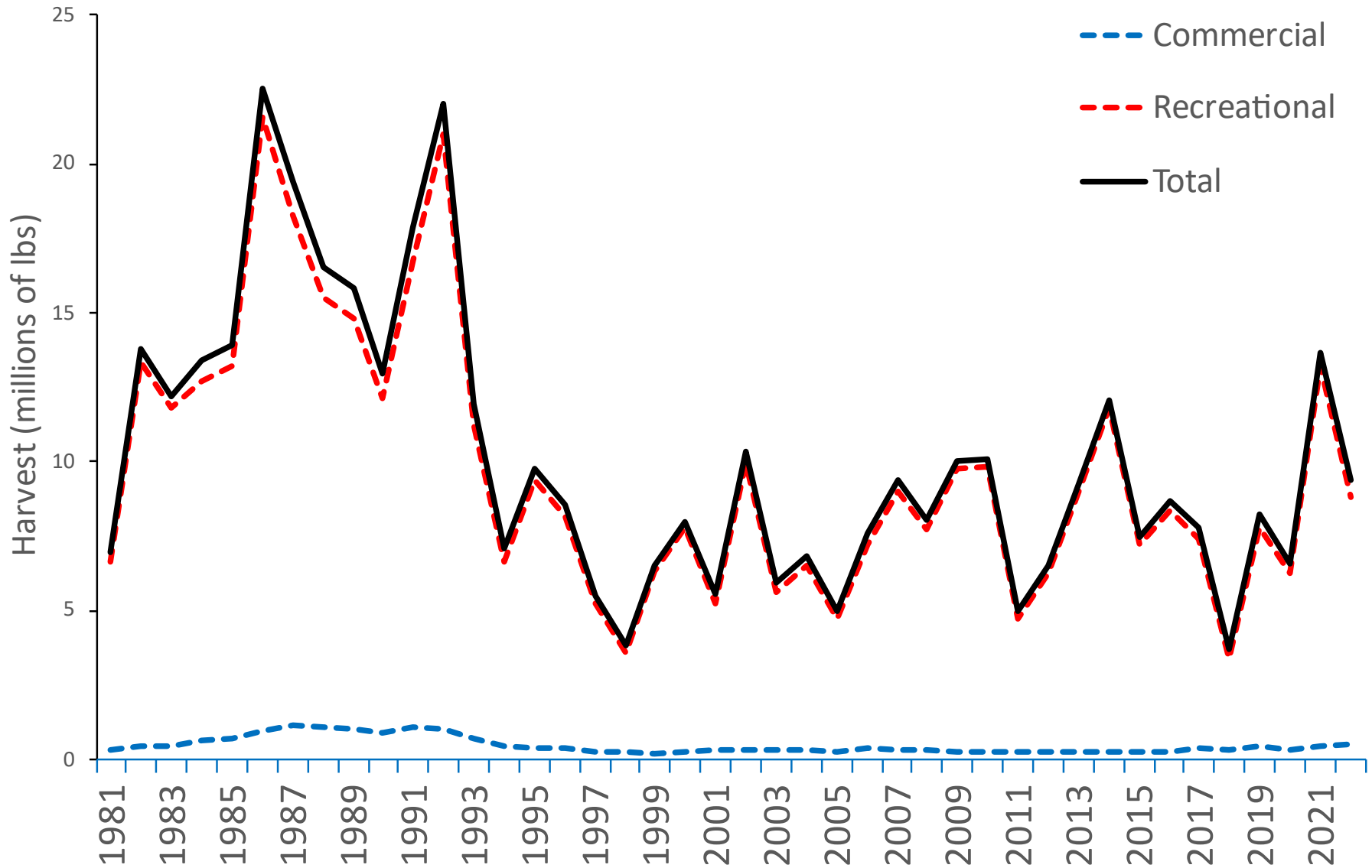


- 2021 Stock Assessment Update
 - Four regions
 - Massachusetts-Rhode Island (MARI)
 - Long Island Sound (LIS)
 - New Jersey-New York Bight (NJ-NYB)
 - Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia (DelMarVa)

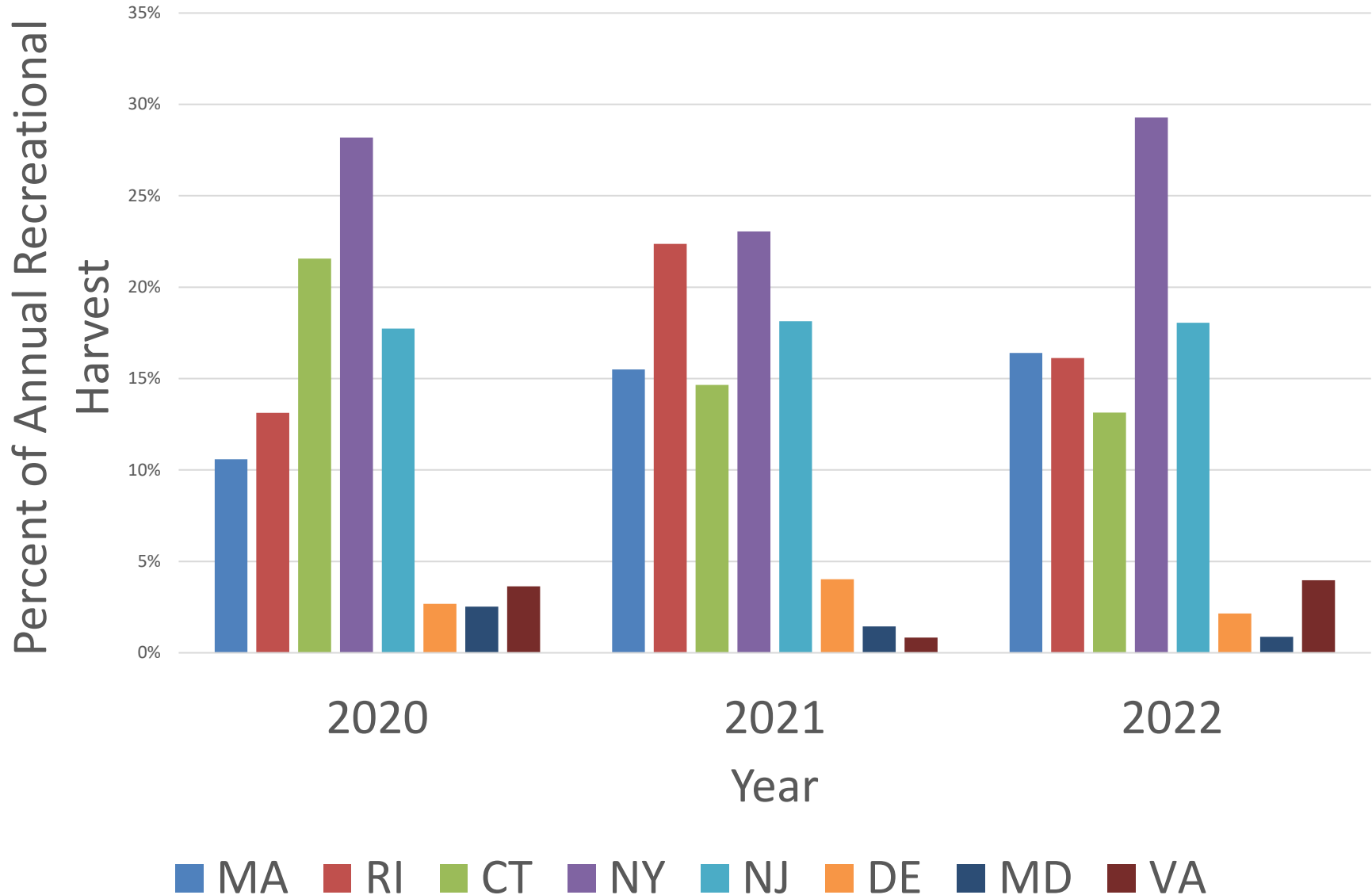
Tautog Stock Status and Reference Points by Region

Stock Region	Spawning Stock Biomass (in millions of pounds)			Fishing Mortality			Stock Status
	Target	Threshold	2020 Estimate	Target	Threshold	3-year Average	
MARI	10.09	7.57	14.90	0.28	0.49	0.23	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
LIS	14.83	11.12	14.70	0.26	0.38	0.30	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
NJ-NYB	14.45	10.78	10.54	0.19	0.30	0.26	Overfished; overfishing not occurring
DelMarVa	9.90	7.40	9.66	0.17	0.27	0.06	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring

Status of the Fishery



Status of the Fishery cont'd



Biological Sampling



- Virginia were unable to meet the 200 age sample requirement in 2022
- The PRT recommends the Board find all states in compliance with the sampling requirements of the FMP

State	2022 Samples
MA	503 lengths; 314 ages
RI	226 lengths and ages
CT	302 lengths and ages
NY	1,213 lengths; 267 ages
NJ	271 lengths; 269 ages
DE	200 lengths and ages
MD	424 lengths; 211 ages
VA	181 lengths and ages



De minimis

- Criteria: state landings in the most recent year of data does not exceed 10,000 pounds or 1% of the regional commercial landings
- Both Maryland and Delaware requested *de minimis* status and meet the criteria

Commercial Tagging Program



- Summary
 - All states implemented the program in 2021
 - 12,992 tags unaccounted for coastwide (5.1% of tags issued)
 - 30% decrease from 2021 (18,417 unaccounted for tags)
 - More feedback on tagging program will be covered in later presentations

Board Action for Consideration



- Move to accept the 2022 Tautog FMP Review and state compliance reports and approve *de minimis* status for Delaware and Maryland.



Questions?



Tautog Tagging Program Update: Technical Committee Report



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Background (1 of 2)



- The Technical Committee (TC) met on April 3, May 16 and July 21 to discuss the reported live market fish quality and mortality issues presumably associated with the commercial tagging requirements.
- Survey questions were developed, standardized and distributed to fishery participants in April, and those results were discussed by the TC in May.
- The TC discussed the May 2023 Policy Board approval for NY to tag tautog in various locations on the fish for the commercial season, and to conduct tagging experiments with different style tags.

Background (2 of 2)



- The best practice recommended for tagging tautog in the left operculum was included in the Technical Guidance Document but not mandated in the FMP.
- Furthermore, the TC noted that a previous study, conducted before the implementation of the tagging program, NY successfully evaluated a smaller version of the current tag. The current tag was chosen to accommodate the amount of unique identification numbers that are required.

Overall survey results



Each region was experiencing varying levels of problems associated with fish that had been tagged in the operculum.

- 91/176 harvesters (52%) use live storage
- 77/176 harvesters (44%) reported lesions or excess damage
- 75/176 harvesters (43%) reported mortality

The most concerning problems were associated with **the live market** in New York, although stakeholders in other states reported similar issues.

New York 2023 Tag Study



Planned for Three Phases, **stopped after Phase 1**

1. Feasibility Study

- 10 fish held in a cage pier side for 15-days
- Cinch tag on caudal peduncle
- NBT tags (current and smaller version)
 - Current tag was already applied to operculum
 - Smaller version and current tag were also applied to the dorsal fin and caudal peduncle

2. 30-day study

- Pier and flow through storage

3. Live market testing

NY Feasibility Study Results



The results of the study showed that all tag treatments resulted in **damage that was equal to or greater than the current tagging system**. NY recommended that the smaller version of the NBT tag be evaluated for further consideration.

TC Discussion



A range of recommendations were discussed from eliminating / pausing the tagging program, different tags for the live market, and tradeoffs between the security of the tag design and identifying the most workable tag.

The merits of the program were also discussed. It was noted that NY landings have increased recently, which may be due to better reporting.

The TC reached a consensus opinion that the tagging program should remain in place, and various new studies to focus on changing the tagging locations, tag size, or tag type may provide relief to the harvesters.

TC Recommendations



After discussing potential methods to reduce the unique characters needed on each tag, the TC is recommending that the Board consider tasking the TC with **evaluating the feasibility of converting to the smaller tag**. If feasible, NY plans to conduct a study with industry to evaluate the effectiveness of the tag in current commercial holding tanks to be presented to the Board at the Annual Meeting. **Other states are encouraged to conduct replicate research.**

Alternative tag types such as the T-Bar may provide a compromise with easy application and minimal impact to marketability, but these will be offset with less security and higher cost.



Questions?

LEC Report on Commercial Tagging Program



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LEC Discussion



- Technical Committee results of the State Harvester Survey.
- State of New York assessment of the Tautog tagging program.

LEC Update for Consideration



- Is the program working to reduce illegal harvest?
 - Is there a quantitative or qualitative way to evaluate?
- What are the areas of concern for compliance?
 - Are these outweighing the benefits of the program?
- Are the tag issues causing non-compliance?



Questions?