

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City  
Arlington, Virginia  
August 8, 2019**

**Approved October 30, 2019**

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## INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda** by Consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of April 2019** by Consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to adopt Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment** (Page 25). Motion by David Borden; second by Ritchie White. Motion amended.

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to include an option under Section 2.2.6 that conservation equivalency will not be permitted while the Atlantic Striped Bass stock is overfished or experiencing overfishing** (Page 26). Motion by Dennis Abbott; second by John McMurray. Motion fails (Page 31).

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to add two suboptions under section 3.1.2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30" minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections** (Page 31). Motion by Emerson Hasbrouck; second by Chris Batsavage. Motion passes (Page 33).

### **Motion to Amend**

**Move to amend to remove from the Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal** (Page 38). Motion by Jim Gilmore; second by Megan Ware. Motion carried (Page 38).

4. **Main Motion as Amended**  
**Move to add two-suboptions under section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30" minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different section; remove from Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal; and adopt Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment as modified today.** Motion carried (Page 42).
5. **Main Motion from May 2019**  
**Move to initiate an Amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan to address the needed consideration for change on the issue of fishery goals and objectives, empirical/biological/spatial reference points, management triggers, rebuilding biomass, and area-specific management. Work on this amendment will begin upon the completion of the previously discussed addendum to the management plan.**  
  
**Move to Amend from May 2019: Move to amend to add reallocation of commercial quota between states.**
6. **Move to postpone to the Spring Meeting 2020** (Page 43). Motion by Mike Luisi; second by Marty Gary. Motion carried (Page 44).
7. **Motion to adjourn** by consent (Page 45).

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members**

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Russ Allen, NJ, Governor Appointee proxy
Sen. David Miramant, ME (LA)	Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Andrzejczak (LA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)	Andy Shiels, PA, proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)
G. Ritchie White, NH (GA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Stewart Michels, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Mike Armstrong, MA, proxy for D. Pierce (AA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Mike Luisi, MD, Administrative proxy (AA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Russell Dize, MD (GA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Phil Langley, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)
Justin Davis, CT (AA)	Bryan Plumlee, VA (GA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Sen. Monty Mason, VA (LA)
Sen. Craig Miner, CT (LA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for S. Murphey (AA)
Jim Gilmore, NY (AA)	Mike Blanton, NC, proxy for Rep. Steinberg (LA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Martin Gary, PRFC
John McMurray, NY, proxy for Sen. Kaminsky (LA)	Derek Orner, NMFS
Heather Corbett, NJ, proxy for J. Cimino (AA)	Bryan King, DC
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	

**AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)**

**Ex-Officio Members**

**Staff**

Robert Beal	Lisa Havel
Toni Kerns	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Max Appelman	Katie Drew

**Guests**

Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	R. Newberry, Delmarva Fisheries
Josey Cline, ASA	Patrick Paquette, MSBA
Genevieve Croker, Delmarva Fisheries	Kelly Place, Williamsburg, VA
Tony DiLernia, MAFMC	Claire Richer, Ofc. of Sen. Markey, DC
Joan Dize, Tilghman, MD	Tim Sartwell, NOAA
Russell Dunn, NOAA	Dave Sikorsky, CCA MD
Pete Himchak, Omega Protein	Mike Simpkin, NMFS
Arnold Leo, E. Hampton, NY	Tom Sminkey, NOAA
Chip Lynch, NOAA	Jack Travelstead, CCA
Julia Mason, Ofc. of Sen. Markey, DC	Mike Waive, ASA
Meredith Mendelson, ME DMR	Charles Witek, W. Babylon, NY
Mike Millard, US FWS	
Chris Moore, CBF	

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia; Thursday, August 8, 2019, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Michael Armstrong.

**CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL ARMSTRONG: Good morning everyone. I would like to call to order the Striped Bass Board. I'm Mike Armstrong, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, your Chair. I think we'll have a busy meeting, so we'll try and stay on track. Remember at the end point what we hope to achieve is to sign off on sending the Addendum for public hearing. That is the goal of this meeting, so we'll try and move forward with that as best we can.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: You all have an agenda, are there any additions, replacements, substitutions needed for the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

**APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: You have the proceedings from April of 2019, any amendments, additions to the proceedings? Seeing none, the proceedings are approved by consensus.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: At this point we'll accept public comment, again on issues that are not on the agenda today. Anything that has to do with the Addendum and the items within the Addendum will be out of order for public comments. I hope folks understand that when they come up. I have three people signed up. First is Charles Witek.

CHARLES A. WITEK III: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as you know that my name is Charles Witek, recreational fisherman from West Babylon, New York. I've been a participant in

the striped bass fishery since the mid-1960s. I've seen the good times and the bad times, and given that you'll be dealing with this topic for the next few months, and maybe the next few years if you move forward with the Amendment.

I thought I would just mention a few topics I would like you to think about in those times when you address the management issues. The most important one of those is that whatever you do, your management issues should match the actual use of the fishery. You know we have a striped bass fishery. We have a very well managed commercial fishery.

That's fine, but the commercial fishery only makes up a very small part of the harvest. Even if 2017 caught the recreational fishery at its extreme large size compared to the commercials, the fact remains this is primarily a recreational fishery, and more than that it is primarily a private boat and surf recreational fishery. From 2014 to 2019 there were about 87 million trips directed at striped bass, 86 million of those trips were from the two sectors I mentioned, and those sectors tend to release their fish. When you manage this fishery, you know we've heard a lot of conversations over the last few months that are we harvesting enough fish, should the regulations allow greater harvest if there was a new Amendment, a new Addendum? But harvest isn't how you manage a recreational release fishery. You manage that for abundance. You rebuild the stock to target.

You do it within the terms of the management plan, because recreational fishermen are seeking encounters, and harvest is only secondary. That is something you always need to remember that pounds on the dock matter far less than fish in the ocean, when you manage a recreational fishery.

The other thing that I would note, and I'm keeping these comments as short as I can, is that I have heard talk about initiating a new amendment that could, depending on what you

decide, reduce the biomass target, which would lead to an attenuation of the size structure of the spawning stock. You would lose older fish, and it would increase the chance of a stock collapse, particularly at the low levels we're facing today. Now, I fished through a stock collapse. I don't think that is anything we want to see again.

We can avert it very easily where we are now. But I would just like to remind everyone here on the Board that while you may think of yourselves as representatives to the state, as you may think of yourselves as representatives of a sector. More than anything else, you're stewards of a public trust resource, and it's your duty as you sit here to manage that resource in a way that restores abundance to the population, and assure us that a stock collapse will not happen again.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Robert T. Brown.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN: Robert T. Brown, President of the Maryland Watermen's Association. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk. I want to talk a little bit about the history about what has happened with our rock fishery. But I'm not going to go into the past as much as I have done many times before, as you've already heard it.

You know we had an open fishery, no limits, you know wide open fishery. Since 1982, when we opened up this rock fish fishery, we've made some hard choices in here. It's been all good for the fish. When it's good for the fishermen, it's good for the fish also. One of the things we have is a few years ago we had a 25 percent reduction for the ocean, and trophy season in the Bay, and a 20.5 reduction on the Chesapeake Bay fishery itself.

This was hard for us, but however we made some assumptions, the Watermen did on this. Well you know, we'll have this for three years, and possibly our quota will come back. We'll get some of it back. Well, we made a wrong assumption. In fisheries management there are

so many assumptions into it that sometimes things don't come out exactly like you want them to.

I just want to say that our stocks in our rivers are very good. I was glad to hear the discussion yesterday, when they talked about depletion, because the word depletion has been used a whole lot in this rockfish here lately of the spawning stock. It's not depleted. It's far, far from where it was in 1982. In 1982, I don't know how low it was but it was the lowest that was ever recorded. Our stocks are still in good shape. As to the reason why they have gone down a little bit, I don't think it's because of harvest. If you go back and look at your young-of-the-year class back from like 2008 up to about 2013/2014, we had some bad years of recruitment.

However, back in 2014, the young-of-the-year class was 11. In 2015, it was 24.2. In 2016, it was a bad year that year, it was 2.2. It wasn't because we didn't have spawning stock in there. Mother Nature plays a big control in everything that happens out there. Maybe the water was not fresh enough up far enough, maybe it was too much salt, and maybe it wasn't enough plankton in there for the fish to survive on.

In 2017, we were at 13.2, and in 2018, it was 14.8. These were all, makes our average above the average year class. As long as we have these young fish coming along, we're heading in the right direction. One of the reasons is because some of the hard decisions that you all have made here in the past. I want to thank you for that.

I didn't agree with all of them, because it hurt. But sometimes when you leave the room and nobody's happy that is when you're the closes to being right. As far as it goes, I heard the gentlemen ahead of me talking about our fishery collapsing. We are so far from that it's not even recognizable.

I just want to say that the Maryland Watermen's Association wants our fishery to remain the same as it is. We only catch a small portion of the fish, I think it's 8 percent of the fish we harvested, and we had a 2 percent death rate. We are well within our compliance, and we are opposed to anything that would change that at this time. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ross Squire.

MR. ROSS SQUIRE: Good morning, my name is Ross Squire and I'm the President of the New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing. I'm also the founder of the 132 Pledge on Facebook, which has about 2,300 conservation minded anglers as members. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

My comments today are more about the frustrations and the disappointments and the loss of confidence that many in the recreational sector feel, in how you manage this very important resource. Amendment 4 failed to achieve its intended goal, and I believe that much of this failure was predictable, preventable, and largely self-inflicted.

My hope is that my comments will lead to changes in how you manage striped bass, and how you live up to the charter of ASMFC. Addendum IV had two primary goals, rebuild the fishery and protect the 2011 year class. Since 2015, the great majority of the ocean states have significantly under harvested striped bass, which makes us wonder whether the fishery was actually in worse shape than we originally thought.

As has been well chronicled, and no matter how some might attempt to sugar coat it, Maryland contributed nothing in the way of harvest reductions. Based on MRIP estimates, Maryland killed close to 2.5 million more striped bass than were indicated in Addendum IV. A significant number of these were part of the 2011 year class. Digging deeper finds the true problem. The conservation equivalency proposal presented by Maryland was analyzed

and approved by the Technical Committee. The problem is that the impact of the CE proposal on a 2011 year class, the fourth largest since 1954, was not considered. It makes many of us question how scientists from states up and down the coast could not factor in the impact on the very year class that Amendment 4 was intended to protect. That was error number one.

The second critical error was a lack of any action when deficiencies in the Maryland analysis came to light. The stock assessment updates conducted clearly showed that Maryland was overharvesting, and that the 2011 year class was being hammered. This Board took no action. Right then and there Addendum IV was doomed.

We are where we are today in large part due to these two errors. These are not insurmountable, and I offer the following. The first, any conservation equivalency proposal and analysis must take into account its impact on every year class, especially around key spawning areas. Second, addendum goals and objectives should be managed actively, and continuously measured, and if interim actions are required to meet the goals, they must be taken.

This is Management 101. Third, the standard of 50 percent probability of success for addendum options just seems inadequate. This fishery is too important to the recreational and economic impacts of everyone up and down the coast. Finally, states should not be rewarded for not meeting their harvest reductions.

For any state grossly not meeting their harvest reductions, subsequent harvest reductions should be based on the quota that they originally had, not on their overage. It just defies logic. The success story that's been told about modern fisheries management and the rebuilding of the striped bass fishery can no longer be told the same way.

It has to now include the fact that it was rebuilt, and then managed in a way that had the fishery

become severely depleted. Under your management we're not overfished, and overfishing is occurring. I speak for many in the recreational sector when I say that we truly hope that lessons have been learned, and that we can once again tell a story of how the Commission effectively restored the striped bass fishery to the benefit of all the constituencies. I appreciate your time.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you that concludes our public comments.

**CONSIDER DRAFT ADDENDUM VI FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Moving to Item 4; considering Draft Addendum VI to send for public comment. Max.

MR. MAX APPELMAN: I will run through Draft Addendum VI. I want to first acknowledge the Plan Development Team for their time and effort over the last few months, a pretty quick turnaround, and I think they put together a really good document for you all to consider today. The second thing I want to do is just make sure we all are on the same level, regarding what happened to Draft Addendum V. We're working on Number 6 here.

Where is Addendum V? Recall back in 2017 there was a series of events that essentially led to the Board initiating an addendum. That was Draft Addendum V. It was developed; it was brought back to the Board for review. It ended up not going out for public comment, but nonetheless it exists on the record. There is Draft Addendum V for public comment in meeting materials, and so the count continues and we are now on Draft Addendum VI. Here is a little quick review of the Addendum timeline. Again today, the Board will consider approving Addendum VI for public comment. If approved there will be a pretty quick turnaround to get this out to the public, when public hearings will be held August through September.

In October at annual meeting the Board will review public comment, and select final

measures, and then the intended implementation schedule so far has been for January of 2020. Here is an outline of the Addendum, and I will walk through each of these sections. There is a lot of important background information that I'm going to get through, so please bear with me, and we'll start with statement of the problem.

Back in May the Board reviewed the results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which indicated the stock is overfished and is experiencing overfishing. By accepting that benchmark for management use, the reference point triggers in Amendment 6 relating to fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass reference points are tripped.

Therefore, the Board initiated Draft Addendum VI to address overfishing status. However, there has been discussion already regarding rebuilding the biomass, a tabled motion that will be brought back to the table after this agenda item. Those discussions have already commenced. Also at the May meeting there was a lot of discussion around the high proportion of removals attributed to recreational releases, release mortality, and therefore the section also highlights that issue as well. You'll see that recurring throughout the presentation.

This section reviews the status of the stock; again the latest assessment is the 2018 benchmark. It shows that the stock is overfished and overfishing relative to the current reference points, which are based on the 1995 estimate of female spawning stock biomass. The 1995 value is used as the threshold, because many favorable stock conditions were reached by that year.

It was also the year that the stock was declared rebuilt. SSB target is set at 125 percent of that. I wanted to note the impact of the new MRIP removals estimates on spawning stock biomass. The new estimates are roughly two to three times higher than the estimates used in previous stock assessments, and resulted in



higher estimates of female SSB, and therefore higher estimates for our reference points.

That makes it very difficult to compare the results of the 2018 benchmark to past assessments. The F reference points are designed to achieve the respected SSB reference points in the long term, and you can see the values on the right hand side of the table. This is Figure 1 from the draft Addendum, showing female SSB in recruitment time series. The bars are the recruitment estimates and that corresponds to the right hand access in millions of fish, and then on the left hand access you have the female spawning stock biomass in thousands of metric tons.

The solid line is the threshold, and the dash line is the target. The takeaway here is that SSB reached its peak around 2003, and has been declining since then. SSB has been below the threshold level since about 2013. Regarding recruitment, there have been periods of low and high recruitment throughout the time series. From the period of 2005 to about 2011, this was a period of lower recruitment, which certainly contributed to the decline in SSB that the stock has experienced in recent years. Of note are the high estimates in 2012, 2015, and 2016. Those corresponding, as they are estimates of Age 1 fish, they are corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes. I'll try to be clear about that as I go through this presentation; try not to interchange between recruitment values and years classes. It can be a little confusing, but I'll do my best. Also note though that those strong year classes were sort of sandwiched by less strong or low recruitment estimates.

This is Figure 2 from the draft Addendum showing your fishing mortality time series. The takeaway here is that F rate has been above the threshold for a number of years, 13 of the last 15 years, and in 2017 you can see above the threshold. This section highlights more recent history of the FMP, namely that the fisheries managed under Amendment 6, and its addenda, the most recent being Addendum IV,

which currently sets the regulatory program for striped bass.

That addendum was initiated in response to the 2013 benchmark, which did not find the stock to be overfished or overfishing. However, fishing mortality was above target for a number of years, and spawning stock biomass was similarly below target, and that also tripped management action. As part of that addendum new F reference points were established, the ones that I just went over a few slides ago that link to the SSB reference points.

It also implemented a suite of measures aimed to reduce F to that new target. As a reminder, federal waters remain closed to striped bass fishing. NOAA Fisheries has been directed to review this federal moratorium in consultation with the Commission, although I don't have any updates there as of late.

This section is pretty straightforward reviewing the status of the fishery, the relative contributions of the different sectors to total removals and the magnitude of those estimates. Just to orient to the figure, this is in millions of fish. At the bottom in the blue, it looks blue up there, it is commercial harvest.

The next color above that is commercial discards. The green is recreational harvest, and then the top color is recreational release mortality. As you can see, the current fishery is predominantly recreational. In 2017, total striped bass removal, so that being commercial and recreational harvest plus discards and release mortality for both sectors were estimated at 7.1 million fish, 90 percent of which was attributed to the recreational sector. In 2018, total removals came down to 5.8 million fish, but still 88 percent of that is attributed to the recreational sector.

Side barring now, looking at the commercial sector in particular. The fishery is managed via a quota system, which has resulted in relatively stable landings since 2004, which is the year when Amendment 6 was fully implemented.

From 2004 to 2014, landings harvest averaged 6.8 million pounds, roughly 1 million fish during that time.

That has come down to 4.8 million pounds, roughly 600,000 fish, following the implementation of Addendum IV and those harvest reductions. Majority of the harvest does come from Chesapeake Bay. Roughly 60 percent by weight or 80 percent in numbers of fish, indicating that more, smaller fish are coming from the Bay, as opposed to the ocean fishery where fewer, larger fish tend to be caught there. Commercial dead discards account for 2 percent of total removals that being commercial and recreational combined. But as a proportion of commercial removals only it's about 13 percent. A few extra notes regarding the commercial sector, unlike the Chesapeake Bay commercial fishery, the ocean commercial fishery regularly underutilizes its quota. This is mainly attributed to gamefish status in several states. Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New Jersey don't have commercial fisheries, although they do hold about 10 percent of the ocean quota.

Additionally, striped bass have not been available off the coast of North Carolina. In recent years there has been no reported ocean harvest of striped bass off North Carolina, which also holds about 12 percent of the ocean quota. About 22 percent of the ocean quota is underutilized every year.

Shifting gears now, focusing on the recreational sector. Unlike the commercial sector, which is managed through a quota system, the recreational management program does not have a harvest limits. Instead it's managed through bag limits and size limits, which has allowed recreational effort and therefore removals to change or fluctuate from year to year, with resource availability and other social and economic factors.

From 2004 to 2014 under Amendment 6, harvest averaged 4.6 million fish, and that has dropped to 2.9 million fish on average under

the provisions of Addendum IV and those harvest reductions. Similarly, a large proportion of harvest does come from Chesapeake Bay; roughly 33 percent annually under Amendment 6, and then that has since increased since 2015 to about 45 percent annually, reflecting some of those strong year classes pulsing through the fisheries.

It's been mentioned already, but recreational dead releases make up a large portion of total removals, because most of the catch is released. Roughly 90 percent of annual recreational catch is released alive, and that's what this figure is trying to show. The bars are total catch in millions of fish, and then the red line across the top that is the proportion of that catch that is released alive, and you can see it's relatively high across the entire time series.

In 2017, 38 million striped bass were released alive, resulting in an estimated 3.4 million dead releases; and that's based on an assumption in the assessment where 9 percent of our releases are assumed to die as a result of being caught, so 3.4 million dead releases in 2017 that equated to roughly 48 percent of our total striped bass removals that year. In 2018, an estimated 49 percent of total removals were attributed to dead releases that estimate being 2.8 million fish.

This section is sort of lessons learned from Addendum IV; it's a performance review essentially of that Addendum, what happened after it was implemented. Just a quick refresher, the Addendum implemented harvest reductions again to bring fishing mortality down to that new target, and essentially states were required to achieve a 25 percent reduction from 2013 removals in the ocean fishery, and Chesapeake Bay fisheries implemented regulations to achieve a 20.5 percent reduction from 2012 levels.

The reductions came in the form of reduced quotas for the commercial sector, and changes in bag limits and minimum sizes for the recreational sector. Those new measures went

into place prior to the 2015 fishing season. In 2016, following the first full year of measures under Addendum IV, the Plan Review Team compared the actual removals estimates in 2015 to those predicted during the development of Addendum IV to evaluate whether the reductions needed to bring that back down to the target had been achieved. Those results indicated that the observed reduction in 2015 was very close to what was predicted on a coastwide level.

Similarly, the commercial reduction was very close to what was predicted. However, the recreational reduction in the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries diverged significantly from the predicted values. It was later determined that changes in effort, changes in the size and the age structure, and the distribution of the 2011 year class were the most significant variables contributing to that difference observed between the observed harvest and the predicted values during the development of Addendum IV.

At the time of this analysis the 2011 year class was the largest recruitment event since the early 2000s, and those fish first become available to the inland fisheries, including Chesapeake Bay. It made sense that the 2015, the harvest estimates went up in the Bay, and the harvest estimates sort of came down along the ocean, canceling out. Therefore you met that reduction on a coastwide level.

But as those fish continued to grow, they migrate out to the ocean, they become increasingly available to the ocean fisheries, and that led to significant increases in removals in both regions in 2016 and 2017 under the same management program. Roughly an 18 percent increase relative in 2016, and then in 2017 it was a 15 percent increase relative to 2015.

Also of note is that a decrease in effort in 2018 resulted in an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017, again under the same management measures. This is the challenge of predicting removals under different management

scenarios, particularly for the recreational fishery when changes in effort, angler behavior, and the availability of strong year classes can have such a large effect on catch and on harvest.

Also, this was the time when the Board explored an addendum that would relax striped bass regulations across the coast, based on information coming from the 2016 assessment update which showed F was below target in 2015, indicating some room to increase removals. Again at that time preliminary estimates from 2016 came out, and with that information the Board did not move forward with the Addendum.

This section is highlighting the socio-economic impacts that should be considered when pursuing changes in management. The take-home is that commercial and recreational sectors will be impacted differently because of their different contributions to the local economy. Generally speaking, the harvest reductions are likely to have a short term negative impact on the economy, on angler welfare.

However, positive long term impacts stemming from stock recovery and increases in catch down the road, will likely outweigh those short term impacts. The next section in the draft Addendum highlights management program equivalency, which has been commonly referred to as conservation equivalency or CE. This allows states to develop alternative measures that address unique or very specific state or regional differences, while still achieving the same level of conservation for the resource. Several states do currently use conservation equivalency for striped bass; an example is to propose closed seasons, to have lower minimum sizes, or perhaps an increased bag limit. Under Amendment 6, a state may pursue conservation equivalency for any mandatory compliance measure. There are a few restrictions in Amendment 6, and this draft Addendum does maintain that flexibility.

If this document were to be approved for public comment, the TC will develop criteria for conservation equivalency during the public comment period, and would be a quick turnaround to get that information back out to the states so they can have that when considering the development of a CE proposal.

Keep in mind that the Commission also has a Conservation Equivalency Technical Guidance Document, and please consult that document if pursuing conservation equivalency down the road. I just went through all the background information there, and we can start moving into the proposed management options, which include the recreational and commercial fishery measures, as well as the circle hook provision, and then continuing to wrap up with compliance schedule.

The first things to review are the harvest projections. The Development Team used the same forward projecting methodology that was used in the 2018 benchmark, in order to estimate the level of removals; that being total removals, commercial and recreational, plus dead discards from both sectors. When I referred to removals that's what I'm referring to.

To estimate the removals needed to achieve F target in 2020 with a 50 percent probability that being guidance given by the Board, and to identify the percent reduction from 2017 levels, again that being guidance from the Board, the 2017 is our reference year in these calculations. The results indicate that an 18 percent reduction from 2017 is needed to achieve F target in 2020. Recall back in May seeing that number was a 17 percent reduction. That was based on preliminary removals estimates.

These calculations are based on final removals estimates. That number changed slightly. Additionally, the Development Team used an average removal from 2016 to 2018 as a proxy for removals in 2019, and sort of in an effort to account for that interannual variability that we've seen over the last few years.

Now, while this Addendum is strictly designed to address overfishing in the short term, the projections do indicate that additional reductions may be needed, in order to achieve the female spawning stock biomass target in ten years, which is prescribed under the Amendment 6 management triggers.

Okay, so the Development Team is putting forward three different scenarios per the guidance of the Board, three different options. Option 1 is status quo. Option 2 is a suite of options where the desired reductions are applied equally or proportionally to the two sectors, based on 2017 levels.

The third option is a suite of measures where the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector, and the PDT believes that this concept sort of reflects the Board's discussion in May, and the intent of the motion that was passed by the Board. These scenarios are mutually exclusive, meaning that under each scenario or option there are suboptions for each fishery and region, so commercial option for the Chesapeake Bay and ocean fisheries, as well as recreational options for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay.

Keep in mind throughout all of this that there are no proposed changes to North Carolina's FMP for the Albemarle Roanoke Fisheries. There are also no changes to the commercial size limits proposed or to the quota transfer provision, which transfers are currently not permitted in the FMP. Okay so working through this Decision Tree.

Under Option 1, status quo there essentially would be no change in management. Striped bass fisheries would continue to be operating under the provisions of Addendum IV, which keep in mind is not designed to achieve an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017 levels. By selecting Option 2, now the desired percent reduction is applied equally to both the commercial and recreational sectors, so both

sectors would take an 18 percent reduction from 2017 levels.

The commercial quota under this option is reduced by 18 percent, and there are suboptions for the ocean recreational fishery, and suboptions for the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, which I'll move into in a few slides here. First with the commercial quota, this is for the ocean. We have the Addendum IV quota for reference in the first column.

We have 2017, the harvest also for reference in the second column there, and then the option is on the right hand side, and again it is an 18 percent reduction to the Addendum IV quotas. A couple notes here. One is that some states have reduced quotas through conservation equivalency under Addendum IV, and these calculations are based on that already reduced quota.

In the case of Rhode Island, New Jersey and Maryland, they would not have to resubmit conservation equivalency to maintain those programs. That has already been built into this. Again, it is assumed that the commercial size limits would remain the same as they were in 2017. The important assumption here, the caveat is that an 18 percent reduction in quota can achieve an 18 percent reduction in total removals, if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017.

You can see even those states with commercial fisheries not fully utilizing their quota in 2017. However, if they were to fully utilize their quotas in 2020, if fish suddenly appeared off of North Carolina, and they report harvest in 2020, or if some of these states without commercial fisheries start having a commercial fishery that percent reduction would be lower. The expected reduction could be less than 18 percent. I also want to note that the PDT did explore applying the reductions based on the numbers of fish harvested.

But again, because the ocean fishery underutilizes its quota, and because the Bay fishery harvests more fish than the ocean, it actually would change the allocation of the quota within states and between regions, and for that reason the PDT chose to apply the reductions to the quota, as was done with Addendum IV, and in this way every state takes an equal cut. Moving to the Chesapeake Bay commercial quota, again the same comments and caveats apply here. The commercial size limits would remain unchanged; an 18 percent reduction in quota can achieve an 18 percent reduction in total commercial removals, with the assumption that fisheries will perform the same as they did in 2017, which I will add it is a reasonable assumption. The PDT feels that it's a reasonable assumption. Looking back over the last few years the active fisheries have utilized the same relative amount of its quota, so it appears to be a reasonable assumption.

Of note here, so in Addendum IV, the Bay-wide quota is what is specified. However, I'm showing jurisdiction-specific quotas, which aren't specified in the Addendum. This is based on the allocation for the agreement that seems to be in place in Chesapeake Bay. Assuming that that remains the same, this is what the Bay quotas would look like under Option 2. Okay I'm going to move into the recreational fishery suboptions.

First a few points to make. One is that these calculations used MRIP data, taking that data at face value. To characterize the catch in 2020, the PDT used 2016 and 2017 data, pooled those two years together, and that was an attempt to account for year class strength. If we think about the strong 2014 and 2015 year classes, they'll be five and six years old in 2020.

Similarly, in 2016 and 2017, the 2011 year class was five and six years old. We felt that that was a reasonable proxy for characterizing the catch in 2020. Also of note, we made an assumption about compliance in 2020. In Addendum IV, the assumption was 100 percent compliance, but here we're assuming the same level of

noncompliance that occurred in the reference years would occur in 2020.

More specifically that the proportion of harvest of undersized fish in those reference years would also occur in 2020 that being sublegal fish that were harvested illegally or sublegal fish that were harvested legally through existing conservation equivalency programs. That will come up again in my presentation.

Okay, so first with the ocean suboptions under Option 2. The idea here is that the slate would be wiped clean, and all states would implement the selected suboption in its ocean fishery, with a few exceptions that I'll cover in the next slide. All of these suboptions on the screen propose a 1-fish bag limit and maintain the same seasons, the same trophy fish seasons and regulations that were in place in 2017.

The first suboption is a 35-inch minimum size, which gets you an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017. The second suboption is a 28-inch to 34-inch slot limit. That is sort of tied to guidance given by the Board looking for a slot limit where the lower bound is 28 inches, and essentially what does that upper bound look like.

Here to achieve at least an 18 percent reduction, the slot is 28 to 34 inches, and then the last option in this table is a slot of 32 to 40 inches, again based on Board guidance, wanting to see what an upper bound of 40 inches got you. That is a lower bound of 32 inches, roughly a 21 percent reduction from 2017 levels.

Of note, under the third option here, trophy fisheries that are occurring in the ocean under this option would be capped at a 40-inch minimum size that being the upper bound of the slot limit. That would put an upper bound on the trophy fishery as well, so I believe Virginia has an ocean trophy fish season, and so that regulation would change to 36 to 40 inch slot under that third suboption.

As I mentioned on the last slide, there are a few exceptions to these suboptions. The first one being that Delaware could maintain the 2-fish bag limit at 20 to 25 inch slot during the summer Delaware Bay fishery. The reason for that is that the harvest, those fish are accounted for in the calculations that have been done.

This is based on that noncompliance assumption, where undersized fish, so in the case of the ocean fishery, fish below 28 inches that were harvested in the reference years. That would continue to occur, and it's very difficult to tease out which ones were harvested illegally or legally through a conservation equivalency program like this.

For that reason Delaware could roll that those measures under into these suboptions, although that is the purview of the Board to decide if that would be permitted. Additionally, Connecticut and New Jersey, which I neglected to mention that they allocate their commercial quota, because they do not have commercial fisheries to the recreational sector, and they've implemented these bonus programs through conservation equivalency.

Those bonus program regulations are also lower minimum sizes than the current 28 inches. They would also be carried over into these suboptions, although depending on which commercial quota option is selected, the number of tickets or permits or vouchers, or however those programs work. Those would have to be reduced to match whatever the new commercial quota was, or is.

Lastly, catch from Pennsylvania's waters, as well as the Hudson River, are not covered by MRIP. Since these calculations used MRIP data, New York would have to come forward with a proposal to achieve an 18 percent reduction for its Hudson River management program under all of these suboptions, and similarly Pennsylvania would have to come forward with a proposal to achieve those reductions in its state waters.

Moving to the Chesapeake Bay suboptions, again the same concept here, the idea is that the slate would be wiped clean, and all Bay jurisdictions would implement the selected suboption. Suboptions 1 and 2 in this table maintain the same seasons and the same trophy fish season and regulations that were in place in 2017.

The first suboption reduces the bag limit to 1 fish, and also reduces the minimum size to 18 inches, which is sort of reflecting that historic minimum size that was in place prior to Addendum IV. The second suboption maintains a 2-fish bag limit, but increases the minimum size to 22 inches.

You can see the respective projected reductions under those options on the right. Suboptions B-3 and B-4 in this table propose 2-fish bag limits, and also maintain the same fishing seasons as 2017, but the trophy fish seasons would be eliminated under the suboptions, and states would have to come forward with CE proposals to reinstate those trophy fish seasons if they chose to do so. B-3 is an 18 inch to 23-inch slot, which gets you a 19 percent reduction, again reflecting that sort of historic minimum size limit, and then the last option is a 20 inch to 24 inch slot, also getting you a 19 inch reduction and reflecting more or less the minimum size that's in place right now. Okay, moving to the third scenario which is Option 3. Again here the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector. That is a 1.8 percent reduction, meaning that the recreational sector must take a 20 percent reduction in order to make up the difference.

Just so everyone understands where that 1.8 percent came from, we recall that in 2017, 10 percent of the total removals came from the commercial sector, so this 1.8 percent is 10 percent of the total percent reductions needed at being 18 percent, so it's the product of those two numbers.

Again, if the commercial sector is reduced by 1.8 percent then the commercial sector must be

reduced by 20 percent, in order to achieve your overall 18 percent reduction in removals. Option 3 and Option 2 are sort of set up in the same way, and I'll go through each of those sector and region options.

Beginning again with the ocean commercial quota under Option 3, the same approach was taken here. Commercial size limits will remain the same. You have your Addendum IV quota up there for reference, your 2017 harvest there for reference, and the option for the commercial quota is there on the right hand side, again a 1.8 percent reduction relative to the Addendum IV quotas.

I'm not going to reiterate all the caveats that I did the first go around, but just remember that this option can achieve a 1.8 percent reduction total removal if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017. Moving to the Chesapeake Bay under Option 3, same comments and caveats again, you can see the respective quotas if the same allocation agreement is in place in 2020.

Moving through these a little quicker, having done it already under Option 2. Moving into the recreational fishery suboptions under Option 3, now the only major difference here again is that these are designed to achieve at least a 20 percent reduction, whereas under Option 2 they are designed to achieve at least an 18 percent reduction.

Again, the same concepts, the idea is that the slate would be wiped clean. All states would implement a selected suboption with the same exceptions for Delaware in Delaware Bay, Connecticut and New Jersey regarding its bonus fish programs, and New York for the Hudson, and Pennsylvania for its state waters.

Option 1 in this table, Suboption 1 is a 36-inch minimum. It's about a 1 inch increase relative to the 18 percent reduction option. Then you can see the two slot limit options, 28 inches to 33 inches. As the second suboption and third suboption is 32 inches to 40, 32 to 40 inch slot.

Also of note that you can sort of slide the slot limit around, and achieve more or less the same projected reduction.

The PDT moved forward with these, again based on Board guidance, wanting to see what a 28 lower bound looks like, what does a 40 inch upper bound look like. There could be a number of different slot limit suboptions in this table; it's really how many you want. For the Chesapeake Bay under the suboptions for Chesapeake Bay, under Option 3 there are a few more here. I'm going to walk through them. The first two suboptions maintain the same seasons and trophy fish season, and regulations that were in place in 2017, and drop the bag limit to 1fish. The first suboption maintains the same size limits that were in place last year. Maryland would maintain its 19 inch minimum size; PRFC, D.C. and Virginia would maintain a 20 inch minimum size.

This is projected to achieve a 29 percent reduction in removals. You can see by just lowering the bag limit the savings that you get from that. Of note the PDT did do these calculations based on 2017 measures, when all jurisdictions had a 20-inch minimum size, and that actually achieves a slightly higher reduction.

For the sake of this Addendum, we're just putting forward more or less status quo size limits and reducing the bag limit. Suboption 2 in this table is repetitive to what was seen under Option 2, and it's a 1-fish bag limit at 18 inch minimum size that gets you a 20 percent reduction. Suboptions B-3 through B-5 of this table maintain a 2-fish bag limit, also maintain the same seasons and trophy regulations that were in place in 2017, except under these options the trophy season could not start prior to May 1.

There are some open days in April, I believe, and in order to meet the desired reduction those days had to be cut from the analysis, in order to achieve the 20 percent reduction. Under these three options the trophy fish

season would change to not be able to start before May 1, so 23 inch minimum is the third option. The fourth is an 18 to 22 inch slot, and the fifth is a 20 to 23 inch slot.

You can see the projected reductions on the right. Then the last suboption in this table maintains 2-fish bag limit and maintains the same seasons, the same trophy fish season as well, although it would put a cap on the trophy fish measures at 40 inch maximum size on those size limits. A couple notes before we move on to the next slide, the next options in the document.

It's important to keep in mind that these suboptions for the recreational fishery are designed to reduce harvest and overall removals. They are not necessarily designed to reduce or address effort and release mortality. Essentially the PDT had to make some assumptions regarding effort in 2020. These calculations assume that effort is constant, meaning that the same amount of trips encountering striped bass in the reference year, will occur in 2020.

By doing that the proposed measures actually are projected to increase releases. Essentially all the fish that were harvested between the current minimum size limit and the proposed minimum size limit, are now being thrown back and are adding to our pile of releases, and because of that releases go up.

Your release mortality goes up, and therefore larger reductions in harvest are required to offset that expected increase and releases, in order to achieve the overall reduction in total removals. In order to address both harvest and release mortality, additional effort controls should be considered to reduce the number of fishing trips that encounter striped bass. The closed seasons have been an effective tool to reduce effort in some areas and seasons. However, the PDT did not develop closed seasons for this Addendum, primarily because the impacts are expected to have very different results, depending on the state and fishery.



While closed seasons could be very effective in regions when striped bass is the only viable fishing choice, closed seasons may have little or no impact in fisheries that operate as catch and release, or in areas where other species are available for harvest.

Lastly, the last bullet here is in regards to slot limits. The PDT notes the conservation benefits of implementing slot limits that being protecting larger, older fish, may not be realized if effort is concentrated on fish within the slot, thus reducing the number of fish that may survive to grow out of the slot, and potentially reducing the population of larger, older fish over time.

Now we're moving into the circle hook provisions, there are just a few slides left. It's been mentioned several times that recreational release mortality does account for a considerable amount of removals in the striped bass fishery, and the use of circle hooks has been identified as a method to reduce discard mortality, release mortality in recreational fisheries.

This is what spurred the Board to request this Addendum consider options regarding the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait, to reduce discard mortality. The Commission does have a special report on circle hooks; Special Report Number 77 was developed in 2003 with a number of different bodies contributing to the development of that document.

In there the Commission defines circle hooks as a non-offset hook, where the point is pointed perpendicularly back towards the shank, and the term non-offset means that the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank. I stole this picture from Maryland, so thank you Maryland for the picture. I work better with visuals, and I hope it provides a good visual.

On the left you have a standard J hook, where the shank and the hook are parallel to each other. The circle hook is the second picture.

You can see the barb is turned perpendicular to the shank, and then non-offset is the green checkmark where they are in the same plane, and then offset being not in the same plane, with the red X through it. It's my understanding that as I said, a number of different bodies weighed in on the development of this document, and the LEC was one of those.

Members from the LEC contributing believed that this definition would hold muster, would be enforceable if regulatory action was taken on circle hooks. A couple things to keep in mind, first is that factors other than hook type can certainly have an effect on release mortality rates. Water temperature, air temperature, those are big ones. Salinity, hook size, fish length, hooking location, and there are certainly others that are not listed here that could impact release mortality rate.

Additionally, it's unknown how many anglers are currently using circle hooks, so figuring out what that added benefit would be, or added savings would be if circle hooks were mandated would be difficult. Then of course enforceability and compliance are also concerns, and should be taken into account when developing strategies to improve release mortality, specifically depending on which anglers these regulations would apply to, whether they be to those strictly targeting striped bass, or to all anglers in that region or state. With all that in mind the PDT is putting forward three options here, the first option being status quo, where essentially it's already in Amendment 6. It is recommended that states promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach programs.

Option B would require states to implement regulations requiring the use of circle hooks, as defined by the Commission with the intent of reducing striped bass discard mortality in their recreational fisheries. This option again is a regulatory requirement, but it does give states the flexibility to develop regulations with its constituents that address the specific needs of their fisheries.

The PDT intentionally left out language regarding fishing with bait, sort of learning from what Maryland went through recently that it's clear that it can be difficult to define what bait is sometimes. Leaving that out here and leaving it up to the states to define what bait is, or what it means to their respective fisheries.

Additionally under this option, states are also encouraged to promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach. Option C would require states to promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach campaigns, and this option differs from status quo being that this would be a requirement to promote the use of circle hooks, and status quo is merely a recommendation to promote the use of circle hooks.

This is the last slide I have here, essentially reminding the Board that they will have to set an implementation schedule for this Addendum during final approval at Annual Meeting. The dates here are merely suggestions based on what the intended timeline has been thus far. Assuming this Addendum is approved at Annual Meeting, approval of state implementation plans could occur at the February, 2020 meeting.

Working backwards from that implementation plans would have to be submitted no later than November 31. Again as I noted, if this document is approved today for public comment, the TC will get together, develop criteria for conservation equivalency, and get that out to the states as soon as possible, so they would have that information well before this deadline.

Then again the Board will have to specify a full implementation date; I've left it blank here. But again the intent thus far has been to implement these regulations prior to the 2020 season. That concludes my presentation. I'm sure there are questions out there, I'm happy to take those, thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I would also like to thank the PDT for the enormous amount of work that went into this. I think we have a good document here. I'm sure there is some discussion we need to have, with the ultimate goal to get a motion to approve this to bring it for public hearing. That being said, let's start with questions first for Max, any questions? Rob O'Reilly.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: Thank you, Max. I do have a question, but if I may I would like to make what I think is a correction. Max, I think you indicated that Virginia had a trophy season in the ocean. This past spring Virginia eliminated all trophy fisheries, including the ocean. I just wanted to clear that up. I think that's what I heard you say. If that's okay I would like to make that correction.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to clarify, these are all based on 2017 measures. In 2017, it is my understanding that Virginia did have an ocean trophy.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, and they're gone now.

MR. APPELMAN: That is where that comment came from.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you Max, and my question is it wasn't talked about specifically, but Virginia in discussions, as many of the states have been in discussions for several months. One thing that you said, Max was based on the lessons learned, talking about Addendum IV. What we're wondering is the 50 percent probability of reaching the target F.

Why wasn't there thoughts, and maybe there was, about having a higher probability of reaching the target F, and in fact to have options that would show the amount of reductions that might be required with say a 75 percent probability versus a 50 percent probability. We don't know in Virginia whether it's a mechanistic situation.

Is it a situation with the modeling itself, or is it sort of an historical approach that you know

somewhere back about 1993 it was decided that you had to have a 50 percent probability on the federal side. We do remember that. I'm wondering with the comments that we heard, not a lot but we heard a few today.

We certainly are getting a lot of e-mails, everyone is getting e-mails. It seems that we don't want to replicate what we just have gone through with now our fifth year for Amendment 5. The question is, did the TC talk about having something higher probability than 50 percent? I'll leave it at that. We just don't know that's why I'm asking.

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks for that question. The short answer is that that 50 percent probability comes as guidance from the Board, and so the TC or PDT did not look at other probabilities in their projections for this Addendum. It has sort of been a default, I believe is that 50 percent.

I think the Commission is working on a Risk and Uncertainty Policy that would sort of get to that what is that probability that should be given to our Development Teams for guidance that is still in development? But I think that process would help with the concerns and questions that you have.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: John McMurray.

MR. JOHN G. McMURRAY: Max, you mentioned additional reductions may be needed to rebuild. You also mentioned that rebuilding was a requirement of Amendment 6 if the stock was overfished. There was a figure in the document, Figure 5. If you have access to that could you put it up? While you're working on that I could go ahead and make my point, and try to expedite this, or ask my question. Okay there it is. It looks like 2033 is when the stock would be rebuilt under this 18 percent reduction, and under a fishing mortality rate of 0.2. I know there was some discussion of this at the last meeting. I thought I had asked for some analysis of what sort of reduction we'd be looking at to get us to F rebuild, to get us to rebuild within ten years.

I don't see that in here, but was there any discussion of that? I'm asking this question; because I'm sure you guys got the same e-mails that I did. People are wondering why we're not abiding by the Amendment 6. Amendment 6 is very clear that we must rebuild, not it should rebuild. I'm wondering why that wasn't considered.

MR. APPELMAN: There was discussion at the May meeting; you know what does this mean for rebuilding the biomass. Considering that this Addendum aims to address overfishing in the near term, we did take that opportunity to explore, when would SSB reach our reference points while fishing at F target? That is what this figure is coming from.

Certainly the further you go out with these projections the more uncertain things get, if you look at the confidence intervals around that median value. It asymptotes near the end there around 2033. But again, it wasn't the intent of this Addendum to explore measures that would rebuild the biomass within a 10-year timeframe. It was to address overfishing in sort of the near term. That's why we didn't develop any options for that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, John?

MR. McMURRAY: Thank you for that. My intent is not to jam up the timeline on this, and that's the last thing I want to do. But I feel compelled to ask this question. If we were to have some consensus around the table, and ask you guys to go back and do that analysis, and figure out for us what percent reduction we would need to rebuild in ten years, and have a suite of options that would allow that to happen. What sort of effect would that have on the timeline?

MR. APPELMAN: A pretty big effect.

MR. McMURRAY: That's it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: Great job, Max on the presentation. Could you go to your slide, it was the last slide before you got into the circle hooks.

MR. APPELMAN: Kirby is on it.

MR. LUISI: Okay that's it, yes. You made a couple of really important points while you were summarizing this, and I was scribbling down as fast I could some of the things you said. I just want to make sure that I'm clear. On Page 1 of the document it's clear that the focus of this Addendum should be on total removals, and the options that the PDT developed for the recreational fisheries, including the commercial fisheries, were focused on total removals. You did a great job of making sure that the word harvest wasn't the only thing that accounted for those total removals. However, the suboptions for the recreational fishery in this case are designed to reduce total removals, but I believe what I heard you say is that the focus there was mostly on harvest, because you're going to have increased releases given most of the options that are there.

With increased releases you're going to have more release mortality. As you know, the state of Maryland has gone to great lengths over the last few years to try to reduce the amount of release mortality that's happening in the Chesapeake Bay and along the coast. We've put forth an effort to mandate the use of circle hooks, which was mentioned here earlier.

We've reduced our minimum size, in that same effort to try to reduce release mortality. Over this past year we have implemented a weather alert system, for days when it would be recommended that fishermen be mindful of the heat and the time period during the day for which they're fishing, in an effort to reduce release mortality.

We're putting together education videos and outreach, in order to reduce release mortality. I hope it's clear that there is an interest on the

part of the state of Maryland to reduce release mortality, and we're putting a lot of effort into that now, because effort and release mortality are not part of the suboptions for what we can consider.

What would be the avenue that our state could take? Would it be conservation equivalency? Would we use conservation equivalency to prepare a recreational program that would maintain our focus on release mortality and trying to reduce that level, in an effort to maintain and comply with the goals of the Addendum?

MR. APPELMAN: I'll start with saying that the PDT worked within the bounds that it had, meaning that the recreational fishery is currently managed through bag limits and size limits, so those were the tools that the PDT had to work with. As you say, managing effort to get at your releases is something that the Board needs to really think about.

Also how to manage effort in this fishery, and get guidance to the PDT if they want to look at effort measures, measures towards effort. The other answer to your question I think is that states have used closed seasons, for example, to reduce effort and get different regulations in place through conservation equivalency, so two sorts of answers there.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Mike.

MR. LUISI: We're not suggesting, I'm not suggesting that the PDT do any extra work here. I don't want to influence any timeline. I think it's really important that we maintain the timeline we're on. But it's clear then that if we wanted to put together a package for conservation equivalency for consideration by the Board, not only to address effort, but perhaps address the release mortality issue that that would be something under the provisions of 2.2.6, which is the management program equivalency section of the document.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Katie.

DR. KATIE DREW: Yes, for sure you can submit a conservation equivalency program that would reduce the release mortality, and use that to achieve your 18 percent reduction. However, I would say I think the TC is going to be hesitant to endorse things that are difficult to quantify. Things like educational programs or using circle hooks, or things like that where it's harder for us to say what is the actual effect of these measures this educational approach on actually reducing release mortality.

Something like season limits or closed days, if you actually close the fishery during days when temperature is too high, as opposed to just saying, maybe don't go fishing. That I think the TC and the PDT would be much more open to. I think we're focused on things that will have a concrete, demonstrable quantitative benefit on reducing how many fish you're throwing back alive.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, understood.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: If I could editorialize just a bit while I have the bully pulpit. Keep in mind, I think an assessment ago before this the stock was okay, we hadn't hit the trigger. We were all shocked around this table to see the results of the addition of the new MRIP data, which gave a whole different complexion to what the stock trajectory has been. This Board did a good job. We reacted, and our reaction was to drop F as quickly as possible.

That is what this Addendum is about. Now looking at the B-2s, the discard, and looking at the SSB and the trajectory. This Board has got to look at that and over the next couple of meetings we'll look at that. But the goal of this one, to me we wanted to get F down as quickly as possible, before the next fishing season. I think this Addendum does a good job in that respect. Adam.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: Building on this topic of the concern of dead releases. All of the tables in the document about the recreational reductions, the last column that indicates

percent reduction from removals that incorporates a reduction in harvest, and I'm assuming that reduction in harvest is actually higher than the percent reduction needed because there is a comparable shift in increase in discards as a result.

Is there a reason that would preclude us from including those two additional columns, where we see the percent reduction from removals? One column that shows the contribution from the reduction in harvest, and the second column would be the reduction as a contribution from dead releases.

MR. APPELMAN: We can add those in there. Since this was again aimed at reducing total removals that's why you had that one column relative to total removals.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom Fote.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: I'll save most of my questions for later on, actually comments for later on. My concern here is everybody is talking about protecting bigger fish, and I know a few percent of the people that actually take fish home to eat that don't like taking 36 inch, because they think they're protecting the fish at 35 inches. They try to take the smaller 30-inch fish now. Now we're basically going to shift the focus on taking the bigger females. Of course this year I actually saw a 36 inch male that somebody had caught, which was to me unusual, because I never saw a 36 inch male before. That is one of the consequences. That doesn't get figured into the overall reduction that we're supposed to be doing.

Again, I don't see 2018 mentioned here at all. I see the numbers, but I don't see the fact that it was a 25 percent reduction, which was what we really needed, was more than actually what we needed for the 17 percent reduction. It should be basically stated that that will be part of the discussion; I guess when we start approving this plan at the Annual Meeting.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to respond to the 2018 levels. I think it was an 18 percent, but nonetheless there was a note in the presentation and in the draft Addendum that that largely had to do with a decrease in effort that was seen, not just at trips directed at striped bass, but across all recreational fisheries in 2018.

I think there is an assumption there that if this Board expects that effort will be at that lower reduced level moving forward, and then perhaps you know the current management program is okay and meets that reduction. However, if that's not the assumption, if effort is going to spring back up to what it has been over the last decade or so, then you would expect removals to go up again in 2019 and beyond.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, Tom.

MR. FOTE: I mean 2019 is a bigger reduction than last year. People are not taking the same amount of trips. There are many factors that are involved in that but the trips are going down, and this is directed stripe bass trips, and you see it all over the coast. Every captain I talk to basically says the same thing, unless people are basically actively fishing in a whole bunch of areas.

That's a trend that's going on, which actually started in 2016. We started seeing a reduced number of trips for striped bass. We actually have the lowest number of trips of striped bass in the last couple of years. I don't know why you assumed that that is not going to be the downward trend. There is nothing to show that it might go up.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris Batsavage then Jim Gilmore.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Going back to the conservation equivalency issue, in the document it says the TC will develop criteria for conservation equivalency in the Addendum after it's approved. I was wondering if that

means, I guess there are going to be certain bounds, as far as what could be considered for conservation equivalency.

Such as if there was a slot limit put forth with a maximum of 40 inches or 34 inches, and states couldn't come up with a conservation equivalency that allows for a larger fish, things of that nature. Just trying to get a sense of what you have in mind with that statement, just to make sure that everyone is kind of working under the same set of guidelines and that measures that are equivalent on paper are approved that actually work in practice.

DR. DREW: We wouldn't restrict anything in terms of the measures that you could look at. We wouldn't say you have to have a maximum of this or a minimum of this. The focus would be on making sure that everybody is using the same datasets, the same years so that everything is equivalent that you're using the best available data, and that if you have additional supporting data you explain why you're using that.

If the TC feels that's appropriate so that people aren't using well we're basing ours off of 2013 data and we're basing ours off of 2017 data. We're going to prescribe sort of the datasets, the year ranges, and the criteria that you should be looking at; in terms of making sure that everybody is using the same method for conservation equivalency. But we won't be prescribing the specific measures that you could look at for your state.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Jim.

MR. JAMES J. GILMORE: Max, you may have said this, but I just want to make sure I've got it clear. If we implement the 18 percent reduction based upon one of the options, but then on top of that we were to add in some of those non-quantifiable measures such as circle hooks or education or whatever. Is it a valid assumption that that would improve the 50 percent probability? I know we can't quantify

it, but I would assume that we would improve that if those measures were implemented.

DR. DREW: Yes, I think there would be an unquantifiable but beneficial approach of implementing circle hooks, or implementing education, implementing outreach programs to reduce total effort, to reduce release mortality. I think it may not necessarily show up in terms of how we calculate total removals.

But ideally it would show up, the population would experience that in the reduction of fishing mortality, and further on down the road we'd be able to see that response in the indices in the age structure of the population, and we would see the population response, rather than something specifically on paper. But the assumption is certainly that any kind of additional conservation efforts on top of this reduction in total removals would be beneficial to the population.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Andy Shiels and then Mike Luisi.

MR. ANDREW SHIELS: I am misunderstanding what we're doing today I think, based on some comments I've heard and I think what Max said. What I think I heard Max say was that this effort, this Addendum VI is designed to reduce the overfishing that's occurring in the year 2020. I think he said more than once that this is not designed or to address the spawning stock biomass issue.

That being the case, I heard John McMurray ask a question, and the projection is it would take 13 years, based on the numbers we have in front of us. While we're sitting here I dug into Amendment 6, and I would like to read what it says under 2.6.2 Stock Rebuilding Schedules. Then I have a question. If at any time the Atlantic striped bass population is declared overfished and rebuilding needs to occur, the management board will determine the rebuilding schedule at that time. The only limitation proposed under Amendment 6 is that the rebuilding schedule is not to exceed 10 years. There are two really important parts.

If at any time, and I think any time was when perhaps in February or April, when we received the data telling us that overfishing and the population is overfished. That is when we received that data. That could be any time. The Board will determine when the schedule for rebuilding will occur. My question is, as I'm starting to understand what we're proposed to do today, when is any time, and what are we going to do next regarding the spawning stock biomass?

Is there going to be a discussion today about that? Is there going to be action taken today? Is there going to be a timeframe or a milestone set today so that this is done within ten years, or are we going to wait a year or two and speed things up so we can get it done with the remaining seven years? That's my question. What's the timeframe for the spawning stock biomass part of this?

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks, Andy. I'm just thinking back to the May meeting when this information was presented to the Board. The decision was to do a quick, fast Addendum, address overfishing. Then also there was a motion made to address rebuilding the biomass. That motion is back on the table today for the Board to consider. But I think, I mean the clock is sort of ticking, and the ten year clock began in May when the information was presented to the Board.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for another opportunity for a question. I raised my hand after Chris Batsavage brought up an issue under conservation equivalency, and I think you'll see the common thread in where I'm thinking right now, as far as making sure I'm clear and we are clear about what we can use conservation equivalency for.

My question is because it's not stated specifically under 2.2.6, would a state have the ability to allocate the necessary reduction of 18 percent to the sectors, and the sectors meaning

that you know on your flow chart, which was really nicely done. It kind of gives you a sense of Option 1, 2, and 3.

There are two different ways that the Board could decide how those allocations of reductions could go, either equally or proportionally, smaller percentage to the commercial. The Board will decide on that ultimately, but if a state would like to modify that allocation of the reduction to those sectors, is that something currently under conservation equivalency that can be applied?

Meaning, if the state of Maryland decided it wanted to increase the reduction from 1.8 percent to 5 percent for the commercial fishery, or make it 0 percent for the commercial fishery. Would we be able to put that into a conservation equivalency plan? Meaning that you have to account for that change with the other sector, and I think it's very important for our state to understand if that's something that we can do, because we've been discussing this externally with a lot of our different user groups. We would like the document to actually state that so when we go to public hearing it is clearly defined that we could use that under conservation equivalency.

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks, Mike. I think that is the purview of the Board really. I mean by selecting an option as you said, let's take the equal reduction approach. The Board is saying that the reductions will be applied and that a portion or that allocation is set in that option. If states want the flexibility to alter that through conservation equivalency, I think we need consensus around the table on that and to put that language in there.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, we'll come back to that. I would be of the opinion that this Addendum assigns the quota to the state, and what the state wants to then do with it is up to the state, but we'll come back to that to that; to that point, Tom.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to make a correction real quick, a majority of this table, to put that language and that understanding into this document.

MR. FOTE: I'm not sure we can do that. We've been around this discussion a couple of times when they wanted to transfer other quotas of commercial fish with certain fisheries on that. It's not stated in any of the plans that that is the viable way of doing it. I can remember discussion going on that we're not, because one time we wanted to do commercial to this, because they wanted to utilize their quota and we could not do it.

We've been told that also in the trophy tag program and things like that when you use the commercial. It's a different category. I remember the long discussion we had, because I was trying to do something years ago. It really has not been allowed previously, and I'm sure if we look back to the history of that we'll basically find it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I've got Ritchie then Justin then Jay. Ritchie White.

MR. G. RITCHIE WHITE: I wanted to expand on the issue that Andy and John raised about the rebuilding and the ten year. Maryland, I don't remember if it was a motion or brought up the desire to begin an amendment process. I think we agreed to delay that until after this Addendum is complete.

I've been certainly getting a lot of e-mails about don't start an amendment; it will mean that you're going to be less conservative. An amendment doesn't mean less or more conservative, and I'm certainly going to support an amendment, and I'm going to support an amendment to be more conservative.

That is how we address what you raised, Andy. We'll look at more structural parts of striped bass management in an amendment, and hopefully it will be more conservative so we won't have to undergo the issues we're



undergoing now. Put something in place so the stock stays in a good situation.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We'll be talking about that at the next agenda item. Justin Davis.

DR. JUSTIN DAVIS: Katie, I'm wondering if you can comment on some of the challenges that might be inherent to assessing a conservation equivalency proposal that's based on either reductions in release mortality through use of things like circle hooks, or angler education or reductions in effort.

Given that usually when we're looking at how changes in size limits might influence catch or harvest we're using the MRIP data, the amount of catch and the size structure of that catch. But I would imagine that if we're looking at a proposal that's thinking about reducing effort, we would have to use the effort side of the MRIP survey. I'm wondering if that lends itself as easily to assessing conservation equivalency.

DR. DREW: Sure that's a good question. I think in terms of things like angler education requiring the use of circle hooks, things like that. The problem is that we can't quantify right now how many people are actually using circle hooks to begin with. If 90 percent of your fishery is already using circle hooks, are you going to see that benefit on paper if you now require that 10 percent and maybe that 10 percent doesn't comply?

How do you translate that into an actual number that you could say, previously our release mortality rate was 9 percent, now it's 5 percent. I don't think the TC feels that our data on what is the current use of circle hooks, what is the current use of best angler practices, in terms of obviously how you handle the fish also makes a big difference in terms of survivability, regardless of what hook type you're using.

Things like how many experienced anglers are there versus how many people go out there, grab that fish by the gill and wave it around, take a picture and then throw it back. How do

you change that? How do you quantify that on an educational standpoint? We don't have the data set up now to even know what our baseline is, let alone what you would actually expect to get out, in terms of improving handling behavior, improving circle hook usage.

I think that's something you know, we would love to have information on, and if the Board wanted to go forward and start developing programs to kind of quantify that we would support it. I think the TC would feel you can't just sort of wave a magic wand and be like, boom circle hooks, and our release mortality is 5 percent now instead of 9 percent.

I think we would be hesitant to endorse that as an actual quantifiable way of saying; well we're using circle hooks so now we can have a longer season or a higher size limit, or a bigger slot whatever. But we would definitely say yes that's going to reduce your fishing mortality in some way likely.

On the other side, in terms of how do you reduce effort, because that's what we really need to do to reduce this release mortality in a quantifiable way is reduce the number of trips that are encountering striped bass, and throwing them back alive. Things like seasons are a potential option.

We do have the MRIP data on the seasons, and what we're making with that assumption is that if you close the season those trips won't happen, or the harvest during that season won't happen, but also potentially trips during that season won't happen, which can give us a little bit of a better handle on effort and things like that. Seasons are definitely on the table, because we can quantify that data either through the MRIP as a whole, or through the effort side, with kind of the caveat of course that just because you close that season it depends on what else is happening. In your fishery what other fisheries are open?

Are you truly eliminating those trips or you're changing the targeting behavior and they may

still encounter striped bass? I think those are the kinds of things that we would be looking at when people bring us conservation equivalency programs to reduce that release mortality. Really what we're looking for is how you can reduce the number of trips that are catching and releasing striped bass.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, I've got Jay then John then Ray then Emerson. Jay McNamee.

MR. JASON McNAMEE: First just complements to the PDT for a really thoughtful document. I think most of my questions were in the document, and so I didn't have any. But I've got one. It was something I thought I understood, and now I think maybe I don't. In the tables there are comments about these trophy fisheries.

What I'm now confused about is the way I originally interpreted it was in the analysis that was done there was an assumption made on 2017, when those trophy fisheries wherever they existed were in place. What I'm not clear on is if they are assumed to then persist, and are incorporated into the calculations for the reduction. Just in case I wasn't clear there.

Do the in particular the slot limit options anticipate that there are going to be trophy fisheries in the future in the places that they existed. I'm not talking about, I feel differently about some of I guess they call them bonus fisheries, where they're taking a quantified quota, tagging those out and there is high accountability there. I feel differently about those, but trophy fish are used I feel another way about them. Hopefully that is understandable.

MR. APPELMAN: Yes the short answer is that the existing trophy fisheries are predominantly in Chesapeake Bay, are accounted for in these calculations. You can see in some of the options the trophy fishery is eliminated from those options. Some of them they are modified, either the season has been shortened

to allow that fishery to continue, but still meet the required reduction.

In some of them the slot limit example, if the slot upper bound is in the same range of where that trophy fish minimum size was it now puts a cap on the upper bound of that. It changes the regulation in some of the options, but the season will remain the same. It has been accounted for. The only ocean trophy fishery I'm aware of is Virginia.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: To Ritchie's comment. We don't need an amendment to rebuild or to be more or less conservative with the reference points. The only thing we need an amendment for is to change the goals and objectives, and I think that's where things get sticky. But I had a question about the slot limits, and that was the intent of raising my hand. I understand a certain part of the recreational fishing community has been asking for them, and the intent is good to try to protect those older, larger more fecund females. But Max, you mentioned this in your presentation that over time if you focus effort on that handful of year classes those fish might not get there.

I'm also well aware, not only from my time on the water but from my time here that release mortality goes up with the size of fish. Particularly now, when you have Facebook and Instagram, and everybody wants a picture of that trophy. Was any of that taken into consideration with your corresponding percent reductions with the slot limits?

MR. APPELMAN: No, none of those little nuances are accounted for here. The assessment assumes a 9 percent release mortality rate across the board. That's based on a number of studies, sort of an averaging of those studies. That's what is used in assessment that's what the PDT used in their analyses. Apology to Virginia again, I know there is no ocean trophy fishery this year.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, John?

MR. McMURRAY: Not necessarily a follow up, but a comment. I think it's important to point out here that those alternatives, those options are more risky. They are intuitively more risky. I want to say that on the record.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Ray Kane. Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: Thank you Max for your presentation. Max, did I hear you say that even though the document includes two different options for slot sizes, two different suboptions under two different options for slot sizes that there could be variations in those slot sizes, and the results of different slot sizes would be similar to what's listed in the document?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes. I think that's a reasonable assumption that you could shift, you know say for example it's a 6-inch slot, you could shift that up and down on the ruler and get sort of the same predicted reduction, more or less. We kept it simple and to the sizes that the Board gave us guidance on.

Minimums of 28 and 32, upper bound of 40, and what that kind of equates to in the form of a slot limit. But if there is an option that is not represented in these tables that you feel should be, you know especially when you go out to public comment. We could probably add that relatively quickly, assuming that it still meets that desired reduction.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Alternatively, if the option is not explicitly in the Addendum now but it's equivalent by just sliding the slot, would we be able to do that after the public hearings, or does it have to be on the document? That's a Toni question.

MS. TONI KERNS: I think to be cleanest, anything that is not in the document and you want to put those regulations in place, you will need to apply for conservation equivalency to

do so, unless it has a measure in there that is not allowed. If you want something that is not in the document now, you need to let us know today or within a week. Because we will not have a lot of extra time to add things to the document, because I assume that the entire coast will want hearings, and so it will take us a little while. Conservation equivalency will need to be applied for, for anything that is not in the document, to keep it clean.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, but I'm not referring to individual states, I'm talking about this Board. Say we go to public hearing and for some reason we don't want 28 to 33, we want 29 to 34. Can we make that decision without having it in the document now?

MS. KERNS: It has to be within the range of the issues that had gone out for public comment, options that had gone out for public comment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well that clears it up.

MS. KERNS: That's why I think if you want something additional that is not in the document, you need to tell us now so that we can add it to the document today, or by Friday.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: To follow up on that. When Toni just said tell us now. Do you want me to give you a suggestion right now, or do you want to wait until we discuss whether we're going to adopt or modify the Addendum?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let's wait a few minutes. We've got a few more people to go through, and these are more general questions. Then we'll come back to that. David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. BORDEN: I was just going to ask, Mr. Chairman to you. Are you ready for a motion, or would you like to take more questions? I'm happy to make a motion when you feel the need for a motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We are not done with questions, but I would entertain a motion to focus our discussion. Would you like to make that motion?

**MR. BORDEN: I'll move adoption of Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for striped bass for public hearing purposes.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second? Ritchie White, second discussion.

MR. BORDEN: The only comment I'll make, I'll echo Jason's comment. I think the staff and the PDT have done an excellent job of really fleshing out clear options that I think the public can weigh the differences fairly easily. To Emerson's point, if there are other options that need to be in here, I would hope people would make a motion to amend. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: To this point, Dennis.

**MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Yes, I have a motion to amend this motion.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead.

MR. ABBOTT: I've been waiting all morning for this. I'm kind of a new guy around the table; I've only been here 23 years. Twenty-two years ago I was drafted to sit on the Striped Bass Board, prior to us taking action to find a seat for everyone here. There is an old phrase, a fine kettle of fish, and I think that we find ourselves in that kettle right now.

After a lot of thought and being who I am, I've decided to step into these dangerous waters, but maybe not. Striped bass are experiencing overfishing and are overfished according to the latest assessment. We're here today to meet the obligations of Amendment 6. Many anglers through the years have expressed to me and others the strong displeasure with varying regulations.

Its disparity is principally due to the generous application of conservation equivalency. I may be wrong, but I don't know of any conservation equivalency application that isn't really intended to increase mortality of striped bass. In my many years in the State Legislature, I always held the belief that when one is advantaged someone else is going to be disadvantaged.

We're here today in part because some of us have been advantaged, and we're all here to pay the piper. I think the public should be given an opportunity to make their voices heard. It's time to take a meaningful action, so **I wish to add a section to Paragraph 2.2.6 to consider the non-application of any conservation equivalency while we're overfished and overfishing is occurring.** I've given the staff this motion. If I have a second I'll briefly speak to it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second? Second by John McMurray.

MR. ABBOTT: Thank you, John. I urge you to support my motion to allow the public the opportunity to speak on this subject, and I know that many of you operate under various political pressures and sometimes it's hard. Sometimes it is time to step up and do things that are right for the situation at hand. The situation I think is dire, and I think extreme action is required. I think the time is now.

In the future when we prepare a new amendment, we can then consider a conservation equivalency with rigid sideboards which achieve our objectives. There would be a burden on the TC to review whatever conservation equivalencies that already, prior to even approving this Addendum that are in the works.

We haven't even approved it, and I'm sure that states are figuring out how they're going to manipulate the Addendum to their own benefit, as we generally do. I was quite pleased with Katie Drew's recent comments a few moments

ago about having more, stricter applications in the subject of conservation equivalency.

We really have to tighten up how we do that. I urge you just to allow this to go into the Addendum so that the general public that speaks to all of you through e-mails and whatever methods, to give them an opportunity to speak on this subject. I thank you, Mr. Chair.  
CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further comment, John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: I wanted to qualify my support for this, and I'm just saying this now, so I haven't had a whole lot of time to think about it. We're just putting this out to the public right now for comment. I'm not opposed to conservation equivalency, and my support of this might paint the picture that I am. But I think with it has to come some sort of accountability. If it doesn't work then the state that implements it has to be accountable. We saw how that played out, and Ross mentioned it in his comments. That is where my support lies right now.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: Well Dennis, I've been sitting around the table about six more years or seven more years, since 1990. I've been dealing with Striped Bass Board meetings since about '87, so I've been around a few more than you have on this. Every state has different constituency and different fisheries.

What we try to do is accommodate the fisheries in those particular states. That's what conservation equivalency is about. We're not looking to skate the issue. We're not looking to basically get an edge, but we're looking to address the fishermen that we basically represent. You know everybody is talking about e-mails they get.

You know a form e-mail is very simple to get out. But go out and talk to the people on the street. Go out and talk to the people that fish on the docks and the piers, you know the ones

that aren't basically sitting behind a computer, basically out fishing and basically looking to take a fish home to eat it and things like that.

I represent all those people, from the catch and release fishermen to basically guys that want to take something home to eat. When I took this job I knew I was going to wind up making one group mad sometimes and making another group upset. Well that's why I get paid the big bucks, zero. I'm looking at taking on the force that basically does that.

I grew up fishing on Canarsie Pier and Steeplechase Pier in Brooklyn. That's what people wanted to do. They don't have the same opportunity as people in boats that basically fish for striped bass. They always caught smaller fish. What we try to address is that we don't unequally hinder those people on the docks and piers.

That is why Connecticut put a certain easing of the fishery on summer flounder, so those people that don't see big fish could actually harvest fish. We did the same thing in Island Beach State Park in New Jersey, because they don't see the big fish. You're trying to accommodate all the fishermen in your state, not just the ones that have big boats and get out to fish, or not the ones that just want to catch and release.

I'll get into that topic a little later, but we try to represent all of them. You try to do that conservation, but you're not looking for an edge, you're not looking to catch any more fish than you are allowed to catch. Sometimes it's more restricted by what you have to do to do that. You make it, well it's not a 20, it is a 22 percent reduction. But this will make the things work. As I said, I'm looking to make the best source, and also working with the other states that I know they have similar problems and more problems. It's easy when you come from a state that just has striped bass, and they get in there and everybody fishes pretty much the same, and you have a small group of anglers. When you start representing 800,000 in-state

anglers and 500,000 out-of-state anglers, you are trying to accommodate the tourists and everybody else that comes in to a state.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I will say that I do agree that the discussion around conservation equivalency should be had, but this isn't the time and place for it. We're in the middle of an addendum process, for which it's been on a fast track. We had a PDT develop options in a matter of a few weeks to put before the Board, over maybe two or three conference calls. There weren't any social and economic considerations on those measures that were put forth.

They were put forth simply because they achieved a number on paper. There needs to be a deeper consideration when states take on management change. The conservation equivalency program as defined under 2.2.6 states that it's an integral component to the Commission's fisheries management program, particularly for striped bass, and that it allows states flexibility to develop alternative regulations to address specific state or regional, and I'd say even social and economic differences in those fisheries.

It's critical that the states have the ability at this point in this Addendum process to craft rules that meet the needs of their fishermen, as long as those rules are achieving the goals and objectives of the FMP. It's not that the state draws something up and it disappears, it's not considered, it's not reviewed, and it's not evaluated. It goes through a thorough review process where the Technical Committee weighs in.

Then the Board has the ability to either approve or deny a state's conservation equivalency proposal, and get public input on it as well. Again, I think that this idea, bringing this to the public, getting feedback from the public. This should be something that we include in the Amendment that we'll be discussing later. I think this is a bigger thing that we need to think

more thoroughly about, and the impacts that something like this will have on the states, if they're not able to use conservation equivalency in Addendum VI.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, Jay McNamee.

MR. McNAMEE: Maybe I'll start by saying I would be really interested in seeing public feedback on an option like this in the Addendum. But here is the glitch for Rhode Island. The way that I interpret what's up on the board right now would apply not just to recreational, but also to commercial.

The state of Rhode Island has had a conservation equivalency in place for our commercial fishery – it's really small – based on a yield-per-recruit analysis with high accountability with a quota, but it's on the commercial fishery. It has been effective for us, it has worked well. It's been in place since 2014. Because of the way this is worded at least, I would have trouble supporting it. But again, I'm interested in hearing additional feedback. I got a lot of e-mails that were of a particular type of comment on this. I wouldn't mind expanding that to see if that kind of holds with additional public comment. However, this wording is problematic for Rhode Island. If it were an option to add into an amendment, I would be supportive of that to give us some more time to think of maybe a better way to word something like this.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Megan Ware.

MS. MEGAN WARE: A question for the maker of the motion. It's currently Section 2.2.6 is outside of the management options in the document. Is the idea that this is a statement in the Addendum, or is it the idea that this would be two management alternatives as status quo, and then Option 2 being not permitting conservation equivalency. I likely have a follow up after that.

MR. ABBOTT: My original intent was to include an option of status quo, or what I have there. In talking with Max, he suggested that we just place that in the document to include that as a statement. Is that not correct?

MR. APPELMAN: That was my intent of the motion that it would be status quo, which would allow conservation equivalency, and then the alternative would be what the motion reads.

MR. ABBOTT: While I have the microphone. I just want to repeat that I want to give the public an opportunity to weigh in on this. If this goes into the Addendum at this point, it's still going to come back and allow you folks to vote on the final action, whether you want to go status quo, or listen if the public overwhelmingly or in some part gives you a different opinion. If nothing else it might lead you and help you in the preparation of a later amendment.

MS. WARE: Just to follow up on that. Thank you for the clarification on that. Obviously in Maine we have concerns about the status of the stock, both overfishing and overfished. But I'm a little nervous about not allowing states the flexibility to put forward quantifiable conservation equivalency proposals, similar to what Jay was mentioning. If we could work on the language maybe a bit to include that word quantifiable that might help a little bit. But right now I have some concerns.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ritchie White.

MR. WHITE: When Dennis brought this idea up to me, I said that at this point I would not be in favor if this was voting on a final action. I'm always in favor of bringing things to the public, and I voted consistently on things that I opposed, but put them out to the public to get public input. I certainly support this. I guess there would have to be overwhelming public support for me to support this in the final document.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Rob O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Virginia would not support this motion. I think Andy Shiels made a good comment earlier, although I know that the reduction in fishing mortality rate is the tantamount to having success with this Addendum. I think if we just have Addendum VI it is certainly not going to satisfy Virginia. We already have grave concerns, not only about our fishery, but more than that the resource itself. If you look at the action we've already taken to eliminate trophy size fisheries. Granted it's not going to be a break-the-bank type of reduction. It's about a half a percent.

We had mandatory reporting for 25 years. We have no idea how many large fish were taken out. We're intent on conservation equivalency to be more progressive than the Addendum is, and the hallmark is the spawning stock, and our efforts will continue as we go forward to have those types of conservation measures.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Phil Langley.

MR. PHIL LANGLEY: I'm new to the Board here, but I'm certainly not new to the fishery. I've had thousands of trips on the water, in the Chesapeake Bay area especially. But I try to stay up to date with what happens up and down the coast in all of our fisheries. I would have to speak against this motion to remove conservation equivalency, just because of the fact that it's not a one-size-fits-all in our fishery. These are migratory fish.

Basically every state I feel knows your strengths and weaknesses better than anybody else. I think everybody sitting around this table; we're here because we're all conservation minded. If we see weaknesses within our state that we can make improvements on to better the fishery in the future, I think we need that flexibility to address those issues.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Sorry, we've still got a long list here. Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: I'm going to oppose the motion, because we're not here today to address the new Amendment, which is where this question if it were to come up, should be located. It should be in the new amendment. In other words, should conservation equivalency be allowed or should it not be allowed? That belongs in the amendment. We're changing Amendment 6, which recognizes conservation equivalency, so I don't think that this particular motion is appropriate for our consideration today. Therefore, I'm going to oppose it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I did not have my hand up on this issue.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Oh I'm sorry, the other white beard, Craig Miller.

SENATOR CRAIG A. MINER: Sorry, Emerson. I was trying to remember Max's presentation and whether he indicated that previously existing or currently existing conservation equivalency efforts were part of the calculations or part of the considerations in arriving at the schedule of changes that would need to occur. Is conservation equivalency that already exists in the species baked into the TCs evaluation?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes and no. Conservation equivalency measures that had lower minimum sizes than the current minimum size, those because of our assumption of noncompliance and the assumption of fish illegally harvested below that size limit. If that would still continue to occur, those can be carried over. Those are accounted for. But modifications that are still above the current minimum size, those are not factored in. The selected measure would sort of replace those conservation equivalency programs.

SENATOR MINER: As a follow up, if this motion were to pass would there be work required to reevaluate changes recommended for those states that have conservation equivalency in

this species? It doesn't seem perspective to me, it seems inclusive the way it's drafted.

MR. APPELMAN: I don't see any additional work here. I think this is more to the point of depending on this, would conservation equivalency be permitted under this Addendum while the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. It would alleviate any work for this if it does go through in the end.

SENATOR MINER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Justin Davis. You did have your hand up though, right, yes, Russell Dize?

MR. RUSSELL DIZE: I would be against this amendment. Equivalency is equivalency, and I think the states need this tool in their toolbox to manage the fishery. But amongst this gloom and doom, I'm going to say I'm a commercial waterman, 60 years on the Chesapeake Bay. I've never seen in all my life as many small striped bass, we call them rockfish at home. At Taormina that's about the center of the Chesapeake Bay, and on the Maryland portion.

We use clams as bait for our trotline to catch crabs with, and every day about twelve or one o'clock, we have a feast for the small menhaden, I mean small I want to say rockfish and I'm trying not to say it, so I'll say menhaden, but small rockfish that are gathered to get the bait that we throw over. There are hundreds of them, and every boat has that.

There are so many small rockfish in our portion of the Bay that when you're going down the trotline to dip crabs, sometimes you'll dip a rockfish up. As a little ray of sunshine, we have them in the pipeline. Now, whether they mature and get out of the Bay and get on the coast is another thing, because these are small fish, anywhere from 8 inches to say 14 inches.

Maryland got this good numbers; even with so wet a year this year and last year. We got all the water coming down the Susquehanna River.



The fresh water has killed all the oysters in the upper Bay; it stopped the crabs from going to the upper Bay this year. They're just starting to get into the upper Bay.

It's not all Maryland's fault. This is coming from Pennsylvania and New York, down to Susquehanna Valley, down the Susquehanna River. To get in 2018, a 14.8 was fantastic with that much fresh water. I hear a lot of gloom and doom, but I do see a ray of sunshine with all these small rockfish in our portion of the Bay.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Millard.

MR. MIKE MILLARD: I was inclined to support this Amendment under Ritchie White's theory that it's rarely if ever a bad idea to go out to the public with an option, and hear what they have to say. But then listening to Roy Miller, I wonder and I would ask staff, if this is a procedural issue? Can you adopt, could you ever adopt an option in an addendum that is at odds with the amendment?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Mike, I'll try to answer that. I don't think it's necessarily at odds with the underlying amendment, Amendment 6. I think it would modify some of the provisions and flexibility provided in Amendment 6. The question is, I think is restricting conservation equivalency kind of in bounds for an addendum.

I would argue yes, but there are arguments around the table that have been made that folks feel this may be part of Step 2, which may be an amendment down the road. The Board can do this if they want, but that doesn't mean you have to do it. It is at the pleasure of the Board right now whether they can or can't do it, or want to, or don't want to.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're close to moving the question, last word, Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: The last word, okay. My count is not looking too good for this motion. But

even if it fails I am encouraged by the maker's statement about putting more teeth into conservation equivalency. I'm interested in that. Recent history maybe will support my opinion, but the other thing that I'm also encouraged.

Even if this fails is Ms. Drew's statement about tightening the requirement to apply and get approval for conservation equivalency. If this fails I think we have some way forward, even if this fails. I liked going out to the public, but I probably will oppose the motion knowing that the intent is to tighten the reins on conservation equivalency right away.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're going to move the question. I need two minutes to caucus. Are we ready? **Let me read it into the record. Motion to amend to include an option under Section 2.2.6 that conservation equivalency will not be permitted while the Atlantic Striped Bass stock is overfished or experiencing overfishing. Just to clarify, this will be an option in the Addendum with the other side of the option being status quo. All in favor raise your hand, opposed, null, abstentions. The motion fails 2 to 12, 2 abstentions.** Jim.

MR. GILMORE: While we're on the conservation equivalency train. Max had brought up during the presentation about there are states that currently have conservation equivalency that would kind of get a bye in this Addendum. However, and I think we said we had to make a decision on that. I just wanted to bring that up, and I'm not sure how to resolve it. But at this point it is my preference. I will preface this by saying I have no problem with the states that are going for conservation equivalency that have done it before.

I understand the way it was done, but I think it would be cleaner if that anybody under the new rules would essentially have to recalculate their conservation equivalency, and maybe Max, you know this better than I do. But the last time we did it I don't think all of the numbers were done

the same. For instance, when we did the effort on the Hudson River, we did 16 percent fish guard mortality. I think some of the other states had 9 percent, so it wasn't exactly the same. I believe it would be cleaner if everybody just, if they are going to do conservation equivalency that all the states submit those proposals, especially when it was considering that if we were using 16 percent and other states were using 9 percent, and we're talking about warmer weather and increasing mortality. Probably everybody should recalculate those numbers, just so we and the public understand it that we're not giving a bye to any state that we're going to look at the numbers again.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We're back to the main motion, so try and keep your comments this way, so Emerson then Adam, then Marty and then Rob.

**MR. HASBROUCK: I would like to move to add two options to the Addendum or two suboptions rather, a suboption 2-A4 and a suboption 3-A4 to look at a slot size of 30 to 36 inches.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let's get that on the board.

MR. APPELMAN: Just a point of clarification here. We might have done those calculations already, so I think the question is does it meet the required reduction? We would have to verify that it meets the desired reduction. Pending that they meet, is that something that we could add to the motion?

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, go ahead

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, so the discussion is this will need to be reanalyzed, because it doesn't quite fit with the others, but it can be done very quickly. Is there a second to the motion? Chris Batsavage seconds, discussion.

MR. HASBROUCK: There has been interest by recreational anglers in New York to evaluate this slot size, so I would just like to bring that out to public comment, and based on what Toni had said earlier this is the time to get that in there, if it meets the required reduction.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I have a list of people who had their hand up, but I assume it's not towards this. To this motion to amend, I'll go through the list and if you want to address it then you can. Adam.

MR. NOWASKY: I would like to speak towards the main motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Marty Gary to the main motion or this one? Rob O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: I have a proposed addition relative to what the ISFMP Director invited us to do, as far as before we finalize this if we have any added components to bring them to the Board. That is my request, so it's more fitting with the main motion, I think.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I'll hold.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: This is really not necessary, because if you want to put a 30 and 36 inch slot limit in, basically conservation equivalency approves the same thing, so that is what you're already able to do without putting another option in there. I think it's redundant.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris Batsavage.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, assuming that this meets the required reductions, it fills the gaps and gives us a broader range of slot limits. What's intriguing about this is it still provides for a decent size range of fish that could be harvested, but it increases the minimum size a little bit, but then has a slot size.

It falls between the 34 and 40 inch, and what's intriguing about the 36 compared to the 40 is just thinking about red drum management. You kind of increase the chance for a fish to escape from recreational harvest, and be part of the adult spawning stock that it will have a lot less harvest on it. I think it's worth having in there, assuming it meets the required reductions.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further discussion, Justin Davis.

DR. DAVIS: I guess I have a question for the maker of the motion. I'm wondering if the primary interest here is in having a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum, because the options that we already have in the document basically operate off of a slot limit with a 40 inch maximum, which was part of the original direction to the Board, and then another option with a 28 inch minimum.

I can imagine a scenario here where the analysis is done and it says well a 30 to 36 won't work, but a 30 to 35 would. Then I can imagine that we wouldn't necessarily be able to include that in the Addendum, because it's not part of this motion. This motion specifies 30 to 36. I'm wondering if it might make more sense to change this motion to say a slot size limit with a 30 inch minimum, if that is the primary interest of the fisherman who wants this slot limit.

MR. HASBROUCK: It's not necessarily just a 30 inch minimum, it's another option. As Chris had said before, it's kind of between that 28 inch minimum and the 40 inch maximum, so it kind of fits in the middle there. I put it up there so that New York could have that option if it wanted, without having to go through conservation equivalency.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to add to those comments. I think what Justin is getting at is that this option in the motion might not meet that reduction. Therefore, it would disappear and it wouldn't be in the document. I think if we're looking for another slot in the middle of those two, with a 30 inch lower bound.

The question is really what is the upper bound that meets that desired reduction? If you are okay with the idea that this could disappear if it doesn't meet that desired reduction, then it's fine. But if you really are intent on having another middle slot option, I suggest modifying it to meet that intention.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: **Then I'll change the wording there. Chris, let me know if you're good with this. To include a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum size, and a maximum size to meet the required reduction of those two different sections. Then the maximum may be different between the 18 percent and the 20 percent.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris, are you okay with the new wording?

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes I am.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I've noticed some hands in the audience, and I will call on a couple public comments. I'm going to wait until we're back to the main motion fully amended, and ready to vote. Is there further discussion on this motion to amend? When this is finally done I'll read into the record. Do we need to caucus? The motion is move to amend to add two suboptions under, oh still perfecting.

I'll read slowly. **Okay, move to amend to add two suboptions under Section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30 inch minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections. Are we ready for the vote? All in favor, okay opposed, null, abstention. The motion passes unanimously.** Back to the main motion, Rob O'Reilly, I believe you had.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, I'm again following up on what Toni Kerns said earlier that if you wish to try and add anything it has to be done now. I looked through the document, and if I'm incorrect please let me know, but I don't see a

table that specifically indicates by state the recreational harvest and dead discards and total removals.

I know there was a question earlier, a request earlier on the reductions to include which were harvest removals, but I'm speaking about on a state specific basis, and I bring this up because last meeting we lamented the dead discard issue quite a bit. This meeting we started it again. We have different modes of fishing geographically.

Virginia has had the information by state for many months, and I think it is something that I wouldn't use the word transparent, I would use the word obvious that the states should see, so they realize where the discard mortality is really more pronounced than in other areas. I do think this is necessary.

It does so happen that if you are in Virginia and you look from 1990 until the present, we mapped out all the states. Virginia ranks either first lowest, second lowest, third lowest, and in one year fifth lowest. But that tells you something about the fishery in Virginia. Even in the good times of 2003 to 2006, when the fishery could barely be constrained, the recreational fishery, including the bad times from 2007 to the present. I think that's a piece of information that is missing, and I think now the way the Addendum VI portrays that situation, it lumps everything together. It's an aggregate approach, so that's my request and I thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: To be clear, we're just adding a table of state-by-state recreational landings and discard. Is there anyone opposed to adding that? Seeing no opposition we'll add that by consensus. Okay, Marty.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Just a clarifying question about conservation equivalency and how it applies to seasonal closures. Our jurisdiction at Potomac River Fisheries Commission, along with the district, although I'm asking for our jurisdiction, does not have MRIP specific

estimates. The fish that are caught in PRFC jurisdictional waters are assumed to be landed in Maryland or Virginia. My question is does that preclude us from pursuing conservation equivalency that includes seasonal closures?

DR. DREW: No it would not. I think generally for the PRFC and for D.C. we tend to assume that because the landings do happen in areas that are encountered by MRIP, we use those regions as proxies for what you would expect. You can use that information that is available as a representation of what you would expect to have. Alternatively, if you have your own additional non MRIP data sources that the TC feels are robust enough, you could also submit based on those data sources as well.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Andy Shiels.

MR. SHIELS: For the benefit of the public, as we go out to the public this fall, and for the benefit of the document. I just would like to make a request that we put some effort into the verbiage to explain what that 50 percent probability means. We discussed it earlier. I brought it up at a previous meeting.

I can tell by the comments that I'm seeing out on the internet, letters that are coming my way, chatter that I see that the public, and maybe not everybody around the table, I'll raise my hand. We still don't understand exactly what that means, and I think we're making assumptions that we all know what it means but the public doesn't.

I think making it very clear how the 50 percent was arrived at, what the 50 percent means, both in this document and when you go out and you do public presentations, take some time to do a Power Point slide that explains exactly what that means. For better or for worse, the public will better understand it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any objection to adding some elaboration of the 50 percent? Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: It started the 50 percent at a court case that was on summer flounder that they started using, and we started making sure everything was at least 50 percent. At points we've used higher than 50 percent on certain species, but that's where it came out of, a judge, because we sometimes with summer flounder years ago were using 38 percent or something like that. They said it should have at least a 50 percent probability of accomplishing it. But that was in the summer flounder lawsuit that basically went on in 1992 or 3, something like that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Before I vote, before we take this up as our final action to move this document along. I just want to go back and revisit the comments I made earlier regarding a state's ability to provide an equivalency based on the allocation of the reduction to the different sectors, as it applies to the document.

We can certainly take your advice, Mr. Chairman, since you are the all-knowing Chairman of this Board that you see no problem in a state handling its responsibility in the manner that it sees fit. I want to make sure it's clear. Max said we need a consensus or a majority opinion on that point. But before we move this I need to be clear on that before we finish.

MR. APPELMAN: My feedback is the same as it was before. If there is no objection to putting that explicit language in that management equivalency section, great. If there is some objection then I think we would have to go to a motion to add that language.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there objection to that further clarification of the conservation equivalency? Doug.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I would just like to have what he is asking clarified, or at least put up on the board somehow, so that I can determine whether I can object or not.

MR. LUISI: I can certainly do that. If you want to put up, let's just put up one of the commercial tables. Let me look and see which one it is, maybe the 1.8 percent reduction option for Chesapeake Bay commercial quota, if you could put that up from the presentation.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Jim, did you have a comment on this?

MR. GILMORE: It's after this; it was just getting back to another clarification, so I'll wait.

MR. LUISI: Okay so here is the table in the document, and let's just say that in October the Board selects Option 3, and goes down the road of suggesting that the reduction to the recreational fishery I think was 20 percent, and the commercial fishery was 1.8 percent. If you look at the difference between Addendum IVs quota and that 1.8 percent reduction, you get 26,494 pounds, so that is the reduction amount that the commercial fishery in our state would be reduced by.

If there is an intention by a state to take the 26,000/27,000 pounds that they are responsible for reducing that fishery by. Converting that into an amount of fish for the recreational fishery, and you can make that clear in their proposal for conservation equivalency, it adds to the recreational reduction that's needed, but it's the decision of the state to make that call. That wouldn't just be for us, it would be for all the states as they want to apply those reductions. I think it gives a state an ability to manage that responsibility for reduction in its own way, based on the needs of its sectors and its fishermen. I would like that language if possible to be clear under the conservation equivalency section, so that when we go to public hearings on this it can be reported out as such.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ritchie.

MR. WHITE: Just to be clear to understand this then, so the Technical Committee then would review that proposal. If they did not find it was

equal then it would not work. Is that your understanding, Mike of the process?

MR. LUISI: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike, you're just talking about adding language in the conservation equivalency that clarifies this specific thing would be okay. I'm not sure when I was cut off, so you would like language put in that clarifies that the mechanism that you talked about for conservation equivalency. Does anyone have a problem with adding that in, seeing no objection that will be added by consensus. Doug, you're all set?

MR. GROUT: At some point I have a question to add, it's a modification to the conservation equivalency for clarity, but there may be some people ahead of me.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, I just have Adam Nowalsky.

MR. NOWALSKY: I think at this point it's clear that the motion on the board needs to be amended to reflect as modified today, given the changes that we've made so far beyond just the addition of the options. But as I referenced earlier, I would like to see a change to the document that would add two columns to the tables, where the removals are to identify both what portion is coming from, what that option offers as a reduction in harvest and as a change in discard mortality would be helpful.

I would also like to see some language change in 2.2.5 under socioeconomic impacts, specifically the first paragraph, and the second paragraph talks about that there is expected negative short term impacts, but the long term impacts will be positive. I think most of us around the table agree with that sense in theory, but the reality is what we've experienced is that when we continue to take these changes there is a loss of interest in the fishery, particularly on the recreational side.

There is a loss of infrastructure that often occurs on the commercial side, and there aren't many cases in the last ten year in particular, where we're getting back what we hoped to. Again, I think in theory we agree with it, but I would like to see something added to these sections that reflects that there is an anticipated loss of interest and infrastructure that may not allow the long term expected benefit to be reaped as expected, and as outlined in this section.

MR. APPELMAN: Just trying to recap that a little bit. The idea that these reductions would be such that loss of interest in the fishery, we may not realize that long term benefit of this from angler welfare perspective.

MR. NOWALSKY: The last paragraph I think talks about angler welfare, the first paragraph specifically talked about economic jobs and value, so it would be reflected in both of those cases.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is everyone okay with that language? John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: I guess I'm okay with the language, but I would request that we also add language if there is a much greater loss of interest when there is no fish around to catch, because this fishery is really driven by opportunity to catch fish, not how small of a fish you could catch. I've been in it a long time, and that's really the truth about the striped bass fishery.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well, I'm not sure how to deal with that John. We're sort of rewriting things on the fly, and I don't think we can do that right now. But I understand your point. Jim Gilmore.

MR. GILMORE: Maybe I wasn't clear before, but my comments before were to the main motion that currently. Maybe I'll rephrase it differently. Currently the document says that conservation equivalency measures for the Delaware Bay or the Delaware River would not

have to be resubmitted, and my comment was that I think that they should.

Anybody that's going to want to do a conservation equivalency should have to resubmit the calculations, because they were not done consistently. Either we can agree, talk about that or I can put a motion up just to amend that so that any conservation equivalencies that are being presented by a state would have to resubmit their calculations justifying the use of conservation equivalency. Up to you how you want to handle it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to get some clarification on this too, so I have up on the screen basically those exceptions to the suboptions. These are the measures that exist now that would carry over more or less into all these suboptions, so the one you're referring to is Delaware. Again yes, it's been accounted for in our calculations.

It is a question to the Board if they want to allow that measure to be rolled over or resubmit, in which case as you said it might shake out to be about the same thing anyways, but going through that process to vet it that is up to the Board. But I'm asking about Connecticut and New Jersey's programs, which are a reallocation of the commercial quota, so those would be reduced in terms of number of tags that they could issue. But here we're assuming that the size limits stay the same, so are you just speaking to Delaware's situation or to all three of those?

MR. GILMORE: Well, primarily Delaware but I think all of them should be done. It's a little bit more work, but we're going out to the public, and I've already gotten questions from this about why are they getting a bye and we're not, you know that type of thing. Well why do we have to recalculate them?

It's just easier. Again, I preface this by I think these are all going to fly. I don't have any opposition to them getting conservation

equivalency. It just makes the document cleaner that we all recalculated the numbers under a consistent set of rules, and that it would just be a cleaner way to put the document out.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any objection to what Jim is proposing? Stewart Michels.

MR. STEWART MICHELS: Well it's just a matter of backing those numbers out. Those numbers are reflective in this analysis that was put forward right by the PDT. How are we going to back those numbers out then to accommodate for them? If it provides any assurance that this is a summer slot, and to date it only affects resident males in the system, and it wouldn't affect the ultimate goal, which is reducing mortality on female spawning stock biomass. It just creates a lot of work for us, and I think as Max pointed out, I don't think it's really going to get us anywhere.

DR. DREW: Just from the technical side. It would basically be just a standard state conservation equivalency program. You have all of the data available to show that during this segment of time, if you still allowed that harvest you would still see the same reductions that you would see just from going to the whatever new set of reductions is put into place for the coast.

That having that slot fishery would still give you on, a statewide level, the same percent reduction that we're seeing from all of the other that we're expecting from the larger overall change. As you say it is a very small component of your fishery, and it's a very small component of the overall harvest. I think on paper you will be able to get that back in without a problem, but it would just mean that you would need to formally resubmit a conservation equivalency program, as would any other state that is sort of not rolled over now.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead Jim.

MR. GILMORE: Just the two issues before again was that we were using different discard mortality percentages when we did the calculations previously. Secondly, you know we have to redo them on the Hudson because MRIP doesn't cover the entire Hudson. It doesn't cover the entire Delaware also, so there are just some additional factors in this that I think again it just would be cleaner if we did it. I don't think it's a lot of work Stew, if it was I wouldn't propose it. But I think it's just a cleaner way to do it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: It doesn't look like we have consensus on this, so it would need to be a motion I guess, Jim.

MR. GILMORE: Are you ready? **Move that all states planning to use conservation equivalency submit justification for each proposal in the addendum, just for each proposal, leave it at that. Conservation equivalency should submit justification for each proposal. Okay, all states planning to use conservation equivalency should submit justifications for each proposal.**

MR. APPELMAN: Point of clarification. I don't think that really gets at what you're getting at, which is that under the suboptions Delaware is able to roll over this lower slot in Delaware Bay during the summer. I think the intent is to get rid of that ability to roll over that. In which case they would get in line with all the rest of the states and have to submit for CE if they want to change from whatever is selected. Is that?

MR. GILMORE: Do you just want a motion to remove that section? Isn't that easier?

MR. APPELMAN: I think so.

MR. GILMORE: **Okay, Kirby if you can just say a motion to remove, I don't know what to say, I don't have it in front of me. But remove it from the draft document.**

MR. APPELMAN: **Jim, would that also apply to the Connecticut and New Jersey bonus fish,**

**which I'm realizing now that it didn't make it into the document, but it needs to be in there that those two bonus program slot limits would also carry over for Connecticut and New Jersey.**

MR. GILMORE: Yes, because again we all should be doing the same thing.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is that it, Jim?

MR. GILMORE: Close enough, a little longer but that's fine.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second, second by Megan Ware, discussion? Jason.

MR. McNAMEE: I'm trying to catch up here, I'm not sure I completely understood what is going on here. Maybe I'll say how I'm understanding it and that is, we're now asking, there was a comment in the Draft Addendum that kind of gave a pass to a couple of states because they've had conservations equivalencies that were approved at some point that have kind of propagated through time.

If we're now asking them to redo those, I just make the point that that is work for probably the Technical Committee member, and if we expect them to potentially work on an amendment and whatever is going to be in that we're piling up a bunch of work that I don't know has a lot of technical value. The amendment part does, the other part I'm not sure does. I just wanted to make that comment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further comment on the motion. I need one moment to caucus.

MR. APPELMAN: Mr. Gilmore could you just read the language up there to yourself and let us know that that's good.

MR. GILMORE: Yes that's fine if Megan's okay with it.



**CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG:** Let me read it in. **Move to amend to remove from the Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal.** Roy Miller.

MR. MILLER: I am requesting clarification of the motion. We've discussed two specific measures for conservation equivalency, the Delaware Bay slot size and also the Connecticut and New Jersey trophy seasons. The way this motion reads to me, it's nonspecific for whose proposal we're talking about. Is that the way I'm reading this? In other words, does it also encompass Maryland's circle hook and educational program? In other words, do you have to re-justify any preexisting conservation equivalency program that you had in place under Amendment 6?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes. Based on whatever measure is selected in the end, all states have to come forward with CE, in order to put in alternative measures to that selected measure. The three examples in the document that sort of rolled over existing CE would now be wiped clean by this statement. It's an even playing field for everybody in all regions and fisheries now.

DR. DREW: To add to that. Things like the circle hook provisions and the education, so these regulations cover specifically the sizes. In this case Maryland's. Depending on the regulation that was chosen, the 19 for Maryland and the 20 for everybody else in the Bay, if that option is chosen that would stay, as would the associated circle hook or educational provisions as well.

If we go to for the Bay everybody goes to 20 inches and we put in a slot, Maryland if they wanted to go back to the 19 inch would have to resubmit that conservation equivalency proposal as well. They are not grandfathered into the specific calculations, the same way that

some of these other coastal or ocean fishery minimum sizes were.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I need to be absolutely clear. Whatever is selected in the Addendum, there will be an option selected at some point in October. If Maryland has a different plan that what is selected, we'll put together a full package of conservation equivalency, which may or may not include circle hooks. I don't know that yet. We're likely not going to change that rule, so it will stay in place. But everything will be packaged up together. We can't assume that we're fishing under some reduced level of mortality because of a previously submitted plan, correct? Okay.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: **All right let's vote, all in favor, okay opposed, null, abstention, the motion passes 11 to 4, 1 abstention.** That brings us back up to the next motion. Stand by; we need to amalgamate all these things now. All right this is it. This is now the main motion as amended several times, and I am required to read this into the record. **Let me read it in first.**

**Move to add two-suboptions under section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections; remove from Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal; and adopt Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment as modified today.** Doug.

MR. GROUT: Hopefully what I'm going to suggest here won't require a motion. I'm looking at in Section 3.2 we have a couple options where we're either going to mandate the use of circle hooks or promote the use of circle hooks. What I would like to have for clarification in there is the fact that we're

talking about the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait for striped bass.

Because quite frankly, if you put a circle hook on a fly or a lure, you aren't going to get the reduction you're looking for. The whole thing behind circle hooks, the benefit of circle hooks is when you're fishing with bait, as opposed to J hooks. I think if we could just add that wording when fishing with bait for striped bass in both Option B and Option C, just as a clarification. I think there will be some benefits behind that going out to the public.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to clarify, so as it reads, Option B for example, implement regulations requiring the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait. That's the place where it would go in?

MR. GROUT: Yes that's fine, or you could say circle hooks as defined above when fishing with bait for striped bass.

MR. APPELMAN: Either way is fine.

MR. GROUT: Yes either way. The same thing under C, the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait for striped bass.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: David Miramant.

SENATOR DAVID MIRAMANT: If it needs a second we'll second that and if it doesn't, I support that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any disagreement with adding that in? **Seeing none, we adopt it by consensus.** All right, are we ready to vote? Yes. Patrick Paquette.

MR. PATRICK PAQUETTE: Patrick Paquette, I am a member of the Striped Bass AP. I've been a past President and then the Government Affairs Officer for the Massachusetts Striped Bass Association since 2001. I've been attending this meeting for I don't know, almost as long as Tom Fote. I would like to make a couple of comments based on the motion you're about to

make, just to make sure a few things that I did not hear as said.

I'm not going to repeat a bunch of stuff that you guys have debated; I value your time as much as my own. Nine percent release mortality is a good thing. It's one of the best release mortality numbers in all the fisheries management in the northeast. To realistically think we're going to get that release mortality down, although we should always be making strides for that. From a management point of view that may be unrealistic, especially when I don't hear you talking about a goal as to where you would like to get with that release mortality.

Any data in the document that is surrounding removals, and that shows removals should very clearly show the number of trips tied to those removals. My understanding is that discard mortality is not factored into commercial quota calculations. Pound nets, gill nets, hook and line release in my own state, they all have a discard mortality tied to them.

When you get into things like the proposal you discussed about Maryland, and what Maryland is talking about doing, discard mortality needs to be very clearly understood when you start swapping the fish back and forth between sectors. Based on Toni's comment answering to Dr. Armstrong's comments about what would and would not be able to be voted upon when this comes back from public, I see this as a very, very narrow scope to document. Social and economic impacts of this document are massive. I've heard an hour's discussion about the small summertime fishery in Maryland, and I've heard zero discussion that you are today when you vote this, and limit the options of what can, you are going to significantly impact, if not wipe out, a multi-million dollar tournament structure up and down the east coast.

Hundreds of thousands of hotel rooms, visitor trips, private vessels, the tournament fishing on the east coast for striped bass is about to be

reduced by probably 90 percent. Multi-million dollars in local impact, and we had no discussion of it here today. There is not much in here for people to talk about.

The same thing when it comes to impact. It's about one of the primary reasons that people do fish, and people fish for large fish. The word trophy has definitely got to do with where you're at. But I saw no option. My understanding in my experience as a Master is somebody who fished in two different parts of Massachusetts as a charter captain, the hunt for very large fish, the elusive 50 pound fish.

I would love to see an option in this document that the public could at least comment on a true trophy fish; 50 inch fish barely ever survive release. There is data around those, what we refer to as super cows, 50 inch fish. I believe that if you analyzed a 50 inch option along with some of these slot limits that you would see almost no difference in impact, because of how low that number is.

However, as you all know the ability of fishermen, fishermen fish on hope. Sportfishing fishes on hope. I would really appreciate it if you could at least let the public comment on a true fish of a lifetime opportunity. That is a big part of for-hire fishing, and a big part of private fishing. Conservation equivalency plans that do not work should face some sort of automatic accountability measure.

In Federal FMPs those kinds of automatic accountability measures that are known up ahead by those states, those are regular in Federal FMPs, they should be in this. I would also suggest that the people around the table, based on what these slot limits look like, do a little bit of research about a building phenomenon in U.S. fisheries, something called a dude trip.

I'm not a fan of dude trips, but make no mistake about it. When you take trophy fish, truly the hunt for big fish, yes there are about ten different TV programs under those names.

When you take the hunt for big fish out of striped bass fishing, commercial anglers, and commercial fishers in Louisiana and in Alabama, are actually basically selling mate slots on their boat.

They let then the fishermen buy from dealers onshore. Please look into what a dude trip is, because dude trips are coming to the northeast very soon, because those people that can access when the size limit is different for the commercial fisher than it is for the private recreational fisher. Dude trips will become a viable thing for businesses in the northeast.

The last thing I want to tell you is the biggest one. The public expected to comment on the 50 percent likelihood of success of this document. The public commented many members of the public and organizations did prior to this document that they wanted to see options that meet the ten year rebuilding of Amendment 6. You've had at least two Commissioners around this. But because these things are not in the document, the public is not going to be able to comment on that and you're not going to be able to consider it when it comes back. You're already going to waste a lot of the public's time, because you've got dozens of documents that say, hey we've got a problem with the 50 percent.

Hey, we've got a problem with not meeting the ten year. But you're taking that off the table. The public wants to comment on these things, and you're not giving them that opportunity. I have a problem with this document. This document I do not believe would meet the federal standard of a wide range.

Last but not least, if we miss. I want you to really think about this, and you're going to hear this in a lot of comments after the public comments. If management misses, and I'll be honest, I wonder if the environmental factors affecting the species are going to allow us to get the reduction we want at all.

But if we miss, anglers in the northeast are going to lose May or September or both. If we don't achieve this and the decline continues, you're getting ready to flip a coin on 50 percent of losing September or May, and that's going to be devastating to sportfishing in the northeast. Thanks, and I hope you listened to some of this stuff, because this document is significantly incomplete.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Yes sir, briefly please.

CAPTAIN ROBERT NEWBERRY: My name is Captain Robert Newberry, I'm Chairman of Delmarva Fisheries; located in Chestertown, Maryland. We represent commercial, recreational and packing and industries through the seafood industry on the Delmarva Peninsula. One thing that is a concern to me, we're looking at this conservation equivalence.

In the Chesapeake Bay, being the diverse ecosystem that we are. What's driving this conservation equivalence happens to be the fact of the fishing mortality, or basically the overfishing of the fish and the overfishing of the biomass. One thing, it's kind of a comment and a question. Maybe Max might be able to help me on this.

One of the factors in the definition of overfishing is not just strictly harvest, it can be following severely on episodic events like the freshet that we've had in the Chesapeake Bay, a 300 year record of fresh water. It can be pollution, it can be temperature. There are several different variances.

I was very interested to see if the TC is going to consider, when we submit conservation equivalences, if it is based on some of these episodic events in the definition of overfishing, if the TC will consider the fact of the pollution problems that we have in the Chesapeake Bay, the freshet that we have that would apply to the conservation equivalence.

It's not just our overfishing, it is like maybe, I would say 70 percent, maybe 60 percent, but 40 percent is like you know we have an area in Baltimore that has dumped over 2.5 billion gallons of pollution into the Bay in the past year. If that is going to be figured, if the definition of overfishing that is a factor in the definition of why overfishing is occurring, or overfished is occurring. I was wondering if the TC would be considering that when we submit out conservation equivalences.

DR. DREW: No. The conservation equivalency is only to say these regulations will result in the same percent reduction in total fishery removals as the proposed measure, so we're not considering any additional mortality from pollution, from any other environmental sources. The conservation equivalency is strictly focused on the fishery removals.

CAPTAIN NEWBERRY: The one thing with the dead zones and the benthic zones that we have in the Bay that are increasing right now, because of the temperature and the weather and the fresh water. When I look at the definition of how we get to overfishing, and the definition is consider some of these environmental events. I think that should be, just my opinion that should be considered in when we do our conservation equivalence, so thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are we ready to vote? Very ready, all in favor, do you want to caucus? Caucus, two minutes. All right, we're going to call the question. **All in favor, thank you, opposed, null, abstention. The motion passes unanimously.**

**CONSIDER POSTPONED MOTION FROM THE  
APRIL 2019 MEETING**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, Item 5, it's up to the Board. What do we want to do with this? I would suggest we need to move this down the road quite a bit until we're done with the Addendum. Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I think we were in the same spot last time. We were either over the time limit or we had five minutes left when I made this motion to consider the initiation of an amendment. I'm not going to speak to that again. I think it's very important that we consider the long term success, and the long term management of this fishery. However, again we're faced with time limitations.

Based on our discussion yesterday, I talked with the Chair about what I foresee moving ahead. We have an October annual meeting where we'll be dealing with this addendum; Addendum VI probably will take some time. There is going to be conservation equivalency programs, and measures that are going to be needed to be considered at the winter meeting, which will likely take a great deal of time.

**I'm thinking, Mr. Chairman that it may be best to postpone this motion and the consideration of the initiation of an amendment until the spring meeting of 2020. If you're okay with it, I would make that motion to postpone consideration of the initiation of the amendment to, I guess it will be the spring meeting of 2020, or move to postpone, what's up on the board.**

The intent of the motion originally was to wait until Addendum VI had kind of cleared the decks before we begin the discussion. But I think just the motion in itself, and the initiation of an amendment is going to require a great deal of discussion, given what's been talked around about the table. Another idea that we may want to think about is putting together a small working group between now and May, to flesh out a little bit of what this amendment might look like, just something to consider.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is that enough of a motion to do what we need to do? All right, is anyone opposed?

MR. LANGLEY: We have a motion to amend; I believe that should be addressed first, before

the main motion. I may be incorrect but that is my assumption.

MR. APPELMAN: Mike, is your intent to postpone both of these, the main motion and the motion to amend?

MR. LUISI: Just as we did in May. My motion is to postpone the whole action, because I believe that there will be additional items such as conservation equivalency that may be brought up. We don't have time to get into that full debate today.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: If we delay any discussion about an amendment until next May, does that mean we essentially now have nine years to rebuild spawning stock biomass, or we will have nine years to rebuild?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well, we will be rebuilding at an F of 0.2. It just becomes more and clearer as time goes along, if we can do it in ten years. It's not like we're getting behind the eight ball by delaying it for six months, or whatever.

MR. APPELMAN: The ten year timeframe, the clock is ticking on that yes.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, let's have a vote on the motion, all in favor.

MS. WARE: Could we have two minutes for caucus, please, 30 seconds.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Yes. Andy.

MR. SHIELS: Before we take a vote could I add a comment or ask a question?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Sure.

MR. SHIELS: Do you want me to wait until they're done caucusing, or just jump in?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're done.

MR. SHIELS: This brings me right back to where I was two hours ago, and so my concern then was that the Addendum that we just approved going out for public comment was not going to address the spawning stock biomass part. I read the section of Amendment 6 that says where we're supposed to do that.

Emerson asked the question, now we're nine years and counting. We're going to go out to the public with only half of the story. What are we going to tell and convey to the public, either in the news releases that go out after today, or when we go out to the public in the next two months. Well, you have to wait until May or August or next year at the Annual Meeting, before we actually do anything on the spawning stock biomass part. I cannot vote for this in good conscience.

Although I know that we have no time left today that there is no time afforded for it at the October meeting, I can't support this in good conscience, because I'm helping to contribute to violating what's in Amendment 6. I have to vote against this for that reason, and I want that on the record.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: The reason we're going this route is because an amendment would be six months or a year from now, and so we're starting rebuilding now. We have a projection that gets us to 95 percent of the SSB target in ten years, and we'll be above the trigger in four or five years. We're being very progressive. We have to relook at it and make sure we hit it by ten, but we're coming very close, and we're moving forward in management quite a bit with this Addendum. Yes.

MR. SHIELS: Just a brief follow up, and I'm not going to be argumentative, only that when I recapped what I thought Max said was that what we just passed was dealing with the overfishing part, but was not dealing on the spawning stock biomass rebuild. That's what I

understood, and so that is not gelling with what I'm hearing right now. I'll stop at that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: **Yes let's vote, are you all ready. All in favor raise your hand, opposed, null and abstention. The motion passes 11 to 5.** Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: I disagree with Andy vehemently on this. We are dealing with the spawning stock biomass. This is what the rules are basically put in place so you can reach the target. We're not looking at whether it's going to accomplish in ten years or not, we have a 95 percent in doing that. Do we need to fine tune it?

You also forget that we got hit with a bunch of data, and I've been sitting around this table a long time. I said to Dirk before, I said what's going to happen three years from now when they reevaluate what they just did with MRIP, and tell us while we were wrong here, we've got to change here and change there, because they've done that to us over and over again.

We should be taking a right path, and again we need to deal with hook and release mortality. I can't accept the comments that we can't do anything about it, because people are going to fish. If we start basically going to look at what's happening, people right now are out fishing in Bays and estuaries where the water is 90 degrees, and they tell me well they're only catch and release fishermen.

I'm saying, you're catch and kill fishermen. With a 30 or 40 percent hook and release mortality, people that are conservation minded are not fishing in Bays and estuaries with 80 degree water right now for striped bass. I applaud Maryland for what they did by putting in that weather alert, and we should be doing that in the Delaware River when the water gets between 80 degrees for both New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I'm looking at a whole bunch of other issues that need to be covered under an amendment. Also, we are 40 million pounds higher than we produced the highest young of the year. We managed in 2011 and 2015, to

produce, and '14 also, record year classes. It's not the spawning stock biomass that's the problem, it's a whole bunch of other issues like catch and release and other things that are going on that are causing the high mortality and environmental issues, which sometimes we don't have the control over. That's where I'm going to leave it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Doug.

MR. GROUT: Yes. I just wanted to make two points, one that I do think when we pass this Addendum, if we take the measures that are in this Addendum, we will start rebuilding the stock. There is clearly an indication we're reducing F back to the target. The reason I voted against postponing is because I think we can start the Amendment even sooner. I think we can start discussion at a minimum in January. If I was still going to be here, I might make another motion to try and un-postpone it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well we're thankful about that Doug. All right we're done with this item.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2019 FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND  
STATE COMPLIANCE**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: The next item we're going to eliminate, we will be doing the FMP Review by e-mail, is that correct?

**OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURN**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Which leaves us to other business, any final comments other business? Yes, sir.

MR. J. BRYAN PLUMLEE: My name is Bryan Plumlee. I just wanted to recognize Rob O'Reilly for his 32 years of service for the Commonwealth. I had the pleasure of serving on the State Management Board while Rob was the Chief of Fisheries. He was terrific. Jack Travelstead is here.

I think he would agree with me that Rob has been universally recognized as a source of great information and fairness for the Commonwealth, and I didn't want to let him slip away from his last meeting without us recognizing all the good work he has done, so thank you, Rob. (Applause) Just so he can relax a little bit, I want everyone to know that applications close out on Monday, so please submit.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let the record show that was a standing ovation. Any other business, seeing none we are adjourned?

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 12:15 o'clock p.m. on August 8, 2019)