

# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

February 4, 2025

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

### Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*M. Ware*) 3:00 p.m.
2. Board Consent 3:00 p.m.
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Approval of Proceedings from December 2024
3. Public Comment 3:05 p.m.
4. Review and Consider Stock Assessment Schedule 3:15 p.m.
  - Review Timeline for 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment and Technical Committee Recommendation on Assessment Schedule (*K. Drew*)
  - Consider Whether to Conduct 2026 Stock Assessment Update **Possible Action**
5. Discuss Scope of Draft Addendum III for 2026 Measures 3:45 p.m.
  - Review Timeline and Initial Scope (*E. Franke*)
  - Provide Guidance to Plan Development Team
6. Other Business/Adjourn 5:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held at The Westin Crystal City (1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA; 703.486.1111) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details.

# MEETING OVERVIEW

**Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**  
**February 4, 2025**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

Chair: Megan Ware (ME) Assumed Chairmanship: 1/24	Technical Committee Chair: Tyler Grabowski (PA)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Sgt. Jeff Mercer (RI)
Vice Chair: Chris Batsavage (NC)	Advisory Panel Chair: Vacant	Previous Board Meeting: December 16, 2024
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS (16 votes)		

## 2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from December 2024

**3. Public Comment** – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

<b>4. Stock Assessment Schedule (3:15-3:45 p.m.) Possible Action</b>
<b>Background</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment for Atlantic Striped Bass will begin in 2025 and is scheduled to be presented to the Board in May or August 2027.</li> <li>• A 2026 Stock Assessment Update is tentatively scheduled as well.</li> <li>• The Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) met to discuss concerns about the timing of the 2026 Assessment Update since it would directly overlap with work on the 2027 Benchmark Assessment (<b>Supplemental Materials</b>).</li> </ul>
<b>Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of stock assessment timeline and TC recommendation by K. Drew</li> </ul>
<b>Board action for consideration at this meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether to conduct a 2026 stock assessment update</li> </ul>

## **5. Draft Addendum III (3:45-5:00 p.m.)**

### **Background**

- After receiving updated projections and potential 2025 management options in the [December 2024 TC Report](#), the Board maintained status quo measures for 2025 and initiated an addendum to consider 2026 management measures to support stock rebuilding.
- Board guidance on the scope of potential management options for 2026 is needed to inform the Plan Development Team's (PDT) analyses (**Briefing Materials**).

### **Presentations**

- Overview of timeline and initial scope of Draft Addendum III by E. Franke

### **Board guidance for consideration at this meeting**

- Provide guidance to the PDT for Draft Addendum III

## **5. Other Business/Adjourn (5:00 p.m.)**

## Atlantic Striped Bass

### Activity level: High

**Committee Overlap Score:** Medium (TC/SAS/TSC overlaps with BERP, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, horseshoe crab, shad/river herring)

#### Committee Task List

- TC-SAS – Begin work on 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment, including Data Workshop and Methods Workshop in 2025
- TC – June 15: Annual compliance reports due and data deadline for benchmark assessment
- TC – Conduct analyses for Draft Addendum III, including projections with preliminary 2024 data to inform potential reduction and reviewing size-bag-season analysis

**TC Members:** Tyler Grabowski (PA, Chair), Michael Brown (ME), Gary Nelson (MA), Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI), Kurt Gottschall (CT), Caitlin Craig (NY), Brendan Harrison (NJ), Margaret Conroy (DE), Alexei Sharov (MD), Luke Lyon (DC), Ingrid Braun-Ricks (PRFC), Shakira Goffe (VA), Charlton Godwin (NC), Jeremy McCargo (NC), Tony Wood (NMFS), John Ellis (USFWS)

**SAS Members:** 2027 Benchmark SAS to be considered and approved by the Board

**Tagging Subcommittee (TSC) Members:** Angela Giuliano (MD), Beth Versak (MD), Brendan Harrison (NJ), Gary Nelson (MA), Ian Park (DE), Jessica Best (NY), Victoria Lecce (USFWS), Julien Martin (USGS)

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

**The Westin Crystal City  
Arlington, Virginia  
Hybrid Meeting**

**December 16, 2024**

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board.  
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

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## INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of October 23, 2024** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Main Motion**  
**Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029 in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest vs no target closures. Final action shall be taken at the Summer 2025 meeting to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fisheries** (Page 17). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by John Clark. Motion amended.

### **Motion to Substitute**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 9%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine–Rhode Island: no-harvest closures of 22 days in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Connecticut–North Carolina: no-harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Chesapeake Bay:**  
**Maryland no-targeting closure of 22 days in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. Virginia no-harvest closure of 18 days at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures to achieve 9% reductions.**

**The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the Winter 2025 Meeting Week. If a region can’t decide on uniform dates, the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by Cheri Patterson (Page 19). Motion amended.

### **Motion to Amend the Main Motion**

**Motion to amend to replace “at the summer” with “by the annual”** (Page 25). Motion by Mike Luisi; second by Pat Geer. Motion passes (12 in favor, 2 opposed, 2 abstentions) (Page 28).

### **Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029 in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest vs no target closures. Final action shall be taken by the 2025 Annual Meeting to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fisheries.**

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**Motion to Amend the Substitute Motion**

**Move to amend the commercial reductions by replacing 9% with 1%** (Page 29). Motion by Jeff Kaelin; second by Emerson Hasbrouck. Motion fails (7 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions) (Page 33).

**Motion to Substitute**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 9%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine–Rhode Island: no-harvest closures of 22 days in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Connecticut–North Carolina: no-harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Chesapeake Bay:**  
**Maryland no-targeting closure of 22 days in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. Virginia no-harvest closure of 18 days at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures to achieve 9% reductions.**

**The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the Winter 2025 Meeting Week. If a region can’t decide on uniform dates, the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

**Motion to Amend the Substitute Motion**

**Move to amend the commercial reduction by replacing 9% with 5%** (Page 33). Motion by Emerson Hasbrouck, second by Raymond Kane. Motion passes (10 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions) (Page 34).

**Motion to Substitute as Amended**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 5%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine–Rhode Island: no-harvest closures of 22 days in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Connecticut–North Carolina: no-harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Chesapeake Bay:**  
**Maryland no-targeting closure of 22 days in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. Virginia no-harvest closure of 18 days at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures to achieve 9% reductions.**

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**Motion to Amend the Substitute Motion**

**For the area specific fisheries, move to amend to add after seasonal closures “or size limit changes”** (Page 36). Motion by John Clark; second by Nichola Meserve. Motion passes (13 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions) (Page 36).

**Motion to Substitute as Amended**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 5%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine–Rhode Island: no-harvest closures of 22 days in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Connecticut–North Carolina: no-harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region.**
- **Chesapeake Bay:**  
**Maryland no-targeting closure of 22 days in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. Virginia no-harvest closure of 18 days at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures or size limit changes to achieve 9% reductions.**

**The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the Winter 2025 Meeting Week. If a region can’t decide on uniform dates, the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

**Motion to Amend the Substitute Motion**

**Under Maryland Chesapeake Bay, move to amend to add “and or no harvest” and strike of 22 days** (Page 36). Motion by Dave Sikorski; second by Dennis Abbott. Motion approved by consent (Page 37).

**Motion to Substitute as Amended**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 5%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine–Rhode Island: no-harvest closures of 22 days in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region**
- **Connecticut–North Carolina: no-harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region**
- **Chesapeake Bay:**  
**Maryland no-targeting closure and or no harvest in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. VA no-harvest closure of 18 days at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures or size limit changes to achieve 9% reductions.**

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**The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the Winter 2025 Meeting Week. If a region can't decide on uniform dates, the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

**Motion to Amend the Substitute Motion**

**For Maine—Rhode Island, Connecticut—North Carolina, and Virginia Chesapeake Bay, move to amend to add “and or no targeting closures” and strike “of 22 days,” and “of 18 days” and “of the same number of days” (Page 38). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Emerson Hasbrouck. Motion passes (9 in favor, 5 opposed, 2 abstentions) (Page 40).**

**Motion to Substitute as Amended**

**Move to substitute to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9% reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 5%. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows:**

- **Maine—Rhode Island: no-harvest closures and or no targeting closures in Wave 3 plus the number of days needed in Wave 5 to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region**
- **Connecticut—North Carolina: no-harvest closures and or no targeting closures in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9% reduction across both Waves, to be implemented in uniform dates across the region**
- **Chesapeake Bay: Maryland no-targeting closure and or no harvest in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure [9% reduction as calculated with “striped bass only trips eliminated” assumption]. Virginia no-harvest closure and or no targeting closures at the end of Wave 6 [9% reduction].**
- **New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware area-specific fisheries: seasonal closures or size limit changes to achieve 9% reductions.**

**The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the Winter 2025 Meeting Week. If a region can't decide on uniform dates, the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

Motion fails (4 in favor, 11 opposed, 1 null) (Page 49).

**Main Motion as Amended**

**Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029 in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest versus no target closures. Final action shall be taken by the annual 2025 meeting to be in place for the 2026 rec and comm fisheries. Motion passes (14 in favor, 2 opposed) (Page 50).**

4. **Move to adjourn by consent (Page 50).**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members**

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	Kris Kuhn, PA, Proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)
Cheri Patterson, NH (AA)	Loren Lustig, PA (G)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	John Clark, DE (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Nichola Meserve, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for L. Fegley (AA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Robert Brown, MD, proxy for R. Dize (GA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Pat Geer, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Matt Gates, CT, proxy for J. Davis (AA)	James Minor, VA (GA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Craig Miner, CT proxy for Rep. Gresko, CT (LA)	Chad Thomas, NC, proxy for Rep. Wray (LA)
Marty Gary, NY (AA)	Ronald Owen, PRFC
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Daniel Ryan, DC, proxy for R. Cloyd
Jim Gilmore, NY, proxy for Assbly. Thiele (LA)	Rick Jacobson, US FWS
Joe Cimino, NY (AA)	Max Appelman, NOAA
Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)	

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

**Ex-Officio Members**

Tyler Grabowski, Technical Committee Chair	Sgt. Jeff Mercer, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.
Mike Celestino, Stk. Assmnt. Subcommittee Chair	

**Staff**

Bob Beal	Tina Berger	Katie Drew
Toni Kerns	Emilie Franke	Madeline Musante

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, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Monday, December 16, 2024, and was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Megan Ware.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR MEGAN WARE: Good morning, everyone, it is ten o'clock on the dot, so we're going to go ahead and call the Striped Bass Board to order this morning. My name is Megan Ware; I'll be chairing today.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

CHAIR WARE: We'll start with Approval of the Agenda. Are there any modifications or additions to today's agenda? Seeing none; we'll approve that by consent.

### **APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIR WARE: We have proceedings from our October 2024 meeting, are there any edits to those proceedings? Seeing none; those are approved by consent.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIR WARE: We now have Public Comment, so this is for items not on the agenda. If you're hoping to comment on potential Board action today or any response to the 2024 Stock Assessment, I would ask you to hold that comment. I will try and take a few public comments when we get into motions today. I'm not seeing any in the room. We have two hands raised on the webinar, so we're just going to take those two hands. Tom Fote, we'll start with you, you have three minutes.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: Thank you, very much. My history with striped bass management goes back 30 years and I may have seen watching the ups and downs of this fishery. We have made drastic cuts in both the commercial and the recreational fishery every year, emergency

action and going through the addendum process.

The management tools ASMFC is using does not consider reasons why we have poor recruitment. There are a number of signs that show the effects of endocrine disruptors in estrogen in the water that are causing problems with the sexual development of male species nationwide. One study done on smallmouth bass in the Potomac showed the male smallmouth bass were having sexual development problems, and some were trying to lay eggs.

This is just one of the three studies that were in my written comments. The known studies have shown the same problems are nationwide, and now we have studies that are even affecting male sperm counts. In the Chesapeake Bay we are harvesting smaller fish. They may not have the numbers in poundage, but these harvesters are catching a lot more fish and a lot of them are males. Is it a male shortage? ASMFC needs to review the hatcheries account during the early rebuilding period. Striped bass were raised in pristine waters without pollutants, they were just tagged and released. Those tagged bass showed up in numbers on the spawning grounds where it probably took place. In my written comments I have touched a couple articles on hatcheries past and current. In closing, to get hatcheries to do those necessary research problems, to know what is causing a lot of recruitment, will cost money. The crisis in the seventies made Congress vote in a bipartisan way is Congressman Walter Jones from North Carolina, Congressman Studds from Massachusetts and Senator Chafee from Rhode Island that put in the bill funding research and hatcheries through the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. We need this kind of bipartisan support again. We cannot keep going down the same path that does not work. We need to start raising fish in hatcheries to supplement those viable male striped bass populations in spawning grounds.

I had my public comment, I put a lot more information out there. I really like that your Board is basically allowing me to basically make these comments. I really think that we have a real problem with the male population and we should

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be looking into it. Thank you very much for giving me, I only used two and a half minutes, and that's hard, I'm going half a minute under.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Tom, appreciate it. I think your connection is a little rough, so if you're at your house and you want to comment again, it might be good to move your laptop or computer closer to the Wi-Fi portal thingy, if possible. But I think we got the gist of it, Tom, so thank you.

MR. FOTE: It's in my written comments.

CHAIR WARE: You already submitted written comment, great, thank you, Tom. Next, I have Mike Spinney.

MR. MIKE SPINNEY: I want to speak on behalf of myself and the group I represent, Stripers Forever. The elephant in the room today is the notion that we can achieve a restoration of wild Atlantic striped bass just so long as we nibble at the edges of meaningful action for the sake of equity, when it is obvious to everyone.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to ask you to just focus your comments on things not related to potential Board action today. Thanks.

MR. SPINNEY: I will do that. When it is obvious to everyone that trying to please every user-group isn't working. None of the user groups are pleased, and striped bass continue to disappear from the coast. Meanwhile, in the place that nature saw fit to combine the factors that would have it produce as much as three quarters of the migrating population of striped bass, we find the biggest obstacle to the fish's recovery.

The irony is that in 1985, Maryland recognized it had an outside share of the responsibility to protect striped bass, and it led the way. Today that same place fights against progress and hides from its responsibility behind the term equity. I know that many of the delegates to the ASMFC Striped Bass Technical Committee

are as frustrated as tens of thousands of anglers at this fact. I ask, which of you will finally stand up and say, to hell with equity, and lead the way. Thank you!

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Mike. That concludes our public comment today.

### **CONSIDER MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO STOCK PROJECTIONS**

CHAIR WARE: We're going to move right along to Agenda Item 4, which is going through the presentations and considering a potential Board action. Just to kind of tee up how we're going to work on this, I think Tyler is going to give the TC presentation.

We'll pause after that for questions, and I'm just going to encourage everyone to focus on questions that are critical to being able to vote today. We have seen this a couple of times now, if you've been on any of the AP webinars, informational webinars, then we'll have a quick presentation from Emilie and then we'll get into discussion. Tyler, I will pass it to you.

### **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON UPDATED STOCK PROJECTIONS AND 2025 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

MR. TYLER GRABOWSKI: Like Madam Chair said, Emilie has given this presentation two times, so hopefully at least everyone has seen it once or twice. Hopefully she did a much better job. We'll just get right into it. This presentation is going to go through the background of why we're here, looking at the projections and reductions, potential options for management. Then we'll move into questions to finish up the presentation.

A little bit about the background. In October we presented that the 2024 Stock Assessment Update found that the stock remained overfished but was not currently experiencing overfishing. Through that the stock rebuilding deadline is 2029, and so with the most likely projection scenario in the assessment report indicating that fishing mortality

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will increase in 2025, the probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029 is less than 50 percent.

Again, coming back from the Stock Assessment Update that is where that came from. Since the Assessment Report indicated that it would be less than 50 percent chance of rebuilding would occur by 2029, the management board can change management action measures through a Board action without initiating an addendum.

The Technical Committee at that October Board meeting was tasked with updating the projections and developing the 2025 management options. Moving into the projections and reductions discussion, so Task 1A was to update the assessment projections with additional data to determine the 2025 reduction needed to achieve a 50 percent probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029.

Then the Board also tasked the TC with extra projections for comparison only. The most likely projection scenario of interest from the TC indicated that low fishery removals would occur in 2024 followed by an increase in fishing mortality in 2025, as the 2018-year class moved into the current slot, and then a decrease and/or stabilization of F from 2026 through 2029.

The TC noted that there are three components to consider. What data are used to update the 2024 removals, how high will F increase in 2025, and how low will F decrease in the subsequent years from 2026 through 2029? The first step was to estimate this year's fishery removals under the current Addendum II measures. The Assessment Report extrapolated preliminary MRIP data from Waves 2 and 3, March and April and May and June, to estimate the 2024 removals, and it found that the 2024 removals would be estimated at roughly 3.89 million fish and a fishing mortality rate of 0.13, with the updated MRIP data from Wave 4, the total removals in 2024 actually decreased to 3.67 million fish, roughly. The fishing mortality

dropped to 0.12. Assuming no management intervention, F estimated to increase in 2025 due to the 2018s entering the ocean slot limit.

The TC assumed that F would increase by roughly 17 percent in 2025, and this is the same magnitude as was seen from 2021 to 2023, with the 2015s entering that current narrow slot of 28 to less than 31 inches. Then one note is that this may be an overestimate, since the 2018s are not as strong as the 2015-year class.

The 2025 increase could take the rebuilding trajectory offtrack unless F in the subsequent years of 2026 through 2029 is low enough to offset the projected increase in 2025. Assuming F decreases and stabilizes from 2026 through 2029, due to the 2018-year class growing out of the slot, and no strong year classes behind it.

How low will F decrease in those subsequent years? Will it be low enough to offset that 2025 increase that is expected? The next few slides will show the different fishing mortality scenarios. These scenarios here will be clustered around the gray line, which is F rebuild, as you can see in the bottom between the red and green, which is the constant F rate needed to achieve at least a 50 percent probability of reaching the target by 2029.

You can see that the F rebuild is below both the target and threshold, which are the red lines, the dashed and solid lines above it. This first scenario is from 2024 Assessment Update. Then you can see that the starting point of fishing mortality in 2024 is F rebuild, followed by the subsequent increase in 2025 and then decreasing back to F rebuild for the subsequent 2026 through 2029.

In this scenario, the 2025 increase took the rebuilding trajectory off track, so that there would be a projected 43 percent chance of rebuilding, which would require a 14 percent reduction to the fishery to increase that probability up to 50 percent. This next slide is looking at this dashed line using the updated Wave 4 MRIP data.

Again, you can see first that fishing mortality decreased, or was projected to be lower in 2024

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using that updated MRIP data. Again, followed by the subsequent 17 percent increase in 2025, and then decreasing back down to the current projected fishing mortality rate using the updated MRIP Wave 4 data.

Under this scenario the probability of rebuilding is 57 percent, and so no reduction would be needed. Finally, this is the last scenario, 1A Subsection 2, and it's somewhat in the middle there in that, again, we see that the Wave 4 MRIP data is the starting point, so again fishing mortality is lower in 2024, again, followed by an increase in 2026.

But then the magnitude of drop from '25 to 2026 through 2029, doesn't return to its current projected Wave 4 levels, and it only returns to F rebuild. Again, this scenario would take it off track of the rebuilding trajectory with a 46 percent chance of rebuilding, which would require an 8 percent reduction to achieve the goal of 50 percent rebuilding by 2029. This table just summarizes what I went through and what is included in the Assessment Report, highlighting the scenarios using different MRIP data, using different starting fishing mortality rates, and a subsequent probability of rebuilding associated with each of these scenarios, and in the subsequent reduction in removals for 2025. They range from 0 percent to 14 percent.

This is just a graph highlighting the spawning stock biomass trajectory, again, going through each of the scenarios with the original projections in the black line, the Scenario 1, which is the orange line, and Scenario 2, which is the blue line. We're expecting spawning stock biomass to increase towards the target, it's just a question of which side of the target you could be on by 2029.

This is an updated graph that Katie pulled together, and so this just kind of illustrates the uncertainty around spawning stock biomass in 2029. This figure shows the distribution of spawning stock biomass for each trajectory, not

just the median value that was presented in the previous slide.

The distributions of spawning stock biomass for all scenarios include the spawning stock biomass target, with more of the runs in the original projection in the gray portion being below the target and more of the runs in Task 1A (1) for the yellow being above the target. Just to note for the spawning stock biomass threshold, all scenarios have a less than 1 percent chance of being below the threshold.

Kind of to summarize the probability of achieving rebuilding by 2029 range from 57 percent to 43 percent across the three primary scenarios, which would equate to a roughly 0 percent reduction to up to a 14 percent reduction. The TC at our recent meetings noted that all three scenarios represented a credible range of what may happen in the next couple years.

The Board should consider its risk tolerance when considering potential management responses for 2025 and beyond. The level of risk the Board is willing to accept, with respect to resource status, economic loss, and persistent modeling uncertainty due to annual management changes, is a management decision.

Just looking further into smaller reductions and overall uncertainty with these various models and projections, we'll move into a couple slides. Management changes designed to achieve small changes, in essence reductions less than 10 percent, would be difficult to measure, given the uncertainty in the MRIP estimates that are used in these models.

Reductions less than 10 percent would not be statistically distinguishable from the status quo. One difference in the projection scenarios is the 2024 starting point, whether it's based on Waves 2 and 3, or Waves 2 through 4. Using Waves 2 through 4 to predict total removals for the entire year does not always result in a more accurate estimate than using Waves 2 and 3.

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In recent years using Wave 2 through 4 data sometimes overestimated removals, and in other instances underestimated removals. Then recently, we updated the next graph with Wave 5 data, and this also indicated lower removals in 2024. You can see on the right-hand side of the graph, in 2024, in the upside-down purple triangle, using Waves 2 through 5 MRIP estimates for removals. You can see that is below both Waves 2 through 3 estimates and 2 through 4 estimates highlighting those removals in 2024 using this updated projection is lower than what has been presented to the Board.

There is also uncertainty with all of this, in that angler behavior and fish availability are certainly still sources of uncertainty in management. The magnitude of the increase in 2025, while the TC projected it to be at roughly 17 percent, and the decrease in 2026 through 2029. They are both highly uncertain in that what may actually happen moving forward.

One other note is that projections always assume a constant F from 2026 through 2029. However, this fishery has shown it is difficult to maintain a constant F from year to year, and it's difficult to predict how F will vary in these subsequent years. There is also some uncertainty around how well the 2024 selectivity curve represents actual selectivity, and what would benefit the uncertainty in this aspect is additional years of data under the same management regulations would inform a better estimate of selectivity for upcoming assessments in the future.

Moving into potential management options, there are a couple scenarios that the Board can consider. If reductions were to be taken by the Board there is a potential for either an 8 percent or a 14 percent reduction in this assessment report. This could be split through even reductions to the commercial and recreational sector.

It could be split where the commercial fishery takes no reduction, and then there could also be reductions based on sector contributions to

total removals. The Board indicated any commercial reduction would be considered via a reduction in the commercial quota, and the Board tasked the TC with developing size limit and seasonal closure options for the recreational sector.

There are some tradeoffs of allowing the harvest of larger fish vs maintaining a current slot targeting smaller fish in the ocean, as the current ocean harvest remains in the 28-to-31-inch slot, the remaining larger 2015-year class will be protected, but the incoming 2018-year class will be subject to harvest within this slot.

However, if harvest is shifted to larger fish, the incoming 2018s would be protected, but the larger 2015s would then subsequently be subjected to harvest. This is looking at the various recreational size limits for both the ocean and the Chesapeake Bay, and as you can see, by changing the recreational slot limits in the ocean, very minimal to no reductions relative to the current slot would occur by changing the slot limit or minimum size limits in 2025.

For the Chesapeake Bay, some options do see a larger reduction in total removals relative to the current slot, but then as you can see other options are very minimal, in terms of reductions. The Board asked the TC, what about an ocean size limit below 28 inches, and so the TC analysis results indicated a 2-inch slot limit with sizes below 28 inches would not result in a reduction, but would actually increase removals.

This is logical, considering smaller fish are generally more abundant in that even if it's a poor year class, the fishery develops through time, and these fish have not been exposed to natural and fishing mortality as much as the subsequent older year classes. For this analysis, the 2011-year class was used as a proxy for the 2018-year class. The 2011s are highlighted in yellow and the 2018s are highlighted in blue. The reason the 2011s were used is that the 2011 was a strong year class followed by two weak year classes, similar to what has occurred in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The dash line indicates average recruitment. Just some more

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data. This is presenting the length frequency of the catch in 2018, when the 2011-year class was seven years old.

The yellow bars are the fish harvested, and the blue bars are those released alive. With this data, 90 percent of the striped bass that are caught are released alive, and the majority of harvested fish in the Ocean are above the 28-inch minimum size, which was the regulations in 2018, while the majority of released fish are smaller than 28 inches. Just to kind of summarize this whole concept of strong year classes followed by weak year classes.

This is presenting the Age 5 and Age 6 fish in 2025, and you can see it's compared to the 7-year-olds, which are the 2018s in 2025. You can see that the Age 5 fish will be roughly 24 inches, and the Age 6 fish will be roughly 26 inches, and these two age groups will be as abundant as the current 2018-year class.

It shows even though those weak 2019- and 2020-year classes, even though they are a lower year class, they still will be as abundant as the 2018-year class. In the event that size limits were shifted downwards, anglers who would harvest a 28-to-31-inch fish would still have the same potential of harvesting fish that are in those smaller size bins.

It's unclear whether the biological benefits of reducing harvest of the remaining 2015s and 2018s would outlay the biological risk of targeting immature fish under 28 inches. This is obviously potentially preferred by some stakeholder groups, but the harvest of immature fish would increase, resulting in a loss of spawning potential for the overall stock.

Looking at seasonal closures for the recreational fishery, two themes were considered, in addition to the current existing closures, whether that be a no harvest closure where harvest is prohibited but catch and release fishing is still allowed, and then also a no targeting closure, where all fishing for striped

bass is prohibited, meaning that there will be no catch and release and no harvest on these fish. In looking at the no targeting closures; different assumptions were made for how no targeting closures would reduce releases.

The two scenarios could be that all striped bass trips still occur, but with a new target species. This is to say that all trips previously targeting striped bass, including those targeting striped bass only, would still occur, but would shift to target other species, releasing striped bass, incidentally at a non-targeted rate, or Scenario 2, where all striped bass only trips are eliminated, which would state that trips that only target stripe bass and no other species would no longer occur, or no longer release any striped bass.

To break up these seasonal closures, for the Ocean three different groupings were utilized, a grouping of all states, a grouping from Maine through Massachusetts, and Rhode Island through North Carolina, or a grouping of Maine through New Hampshire, Massachusetts through New Jersey, and then Delaware through North Carolina. Then for the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland and Virginia during the same wave, Maryland and Virginia during different waves, Potomac River Fisheries Commission and District of Columbia can choose to match either of Maryland or Virginia's timings for this. This report included options for various reductions for different waves, and regional state combinations. Just one thing to note, the report was originally posted on December 3rd, and a revised report was updated on December 5th, due to some Chesapeake Bay closure options.

In the original version some options listed closures that exceeded Maryland and/or Virginia's current open seasons. Just as an example in the next couple slides, these are options designed to achieve a 14 percent recreational reduction, assuming an equal commercial reduction. The report also includes options to achieve a 16 percent reduction, assuming no commercial reduction, and then the report also includes region-specific and state-specific reductions.

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These next couple slides are not an exhaustive list of options. The report contains an extensive number of options for the various scenarios, and these are just showing the combinations requiring the shortest closures for 14 percent. The report again, like I stated, includes an option to achieve a 16 percent reduction, but this would lengthen the closures by approximately 3 to 7 days, and some no harvest options are also not possible if a 16 percent reduction was needed.

Appendix 3 includes this more comprehensive list. I don't want to spend too much time on this just highlighting. In the first column the regional breakdown regarding various regions and waves, the second column shows the number of days needed for a no targeting closure, assuming all striped bass trips only are eliminated, which would be the shortest closure option.

The third column shows the number of days needed for a no targeting closure, assuming trips targeting only striped bass still occur, but switch targets and release striped bass at a lower, nontargeted rate, and then the last column shows the number of days needed for a no harvest closure, which is the longest of the three scenarios presented.

Again, just kind of highlighting various scenarios and other different regions and waves, where the first column shows the lowest number of days needed to achieve the reduction with a no targeting closure, and the fourth column if a no harvest closure was enacted for a 14 percent reduction for number of days. Again, a more extensive list is presented in the Appendix.

This is for the Chesapeake Bay, again, highlighting various management actions. Just one thing to note is that if Maryland/Virginia wanted to close the Wave 3 fishery to no harvest, to achieve a 14 percent reduction, it would not be possible. That is just kind of highlighting the various, again scenarios for the Chesapeake Bay.

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Again, following through different waves for different states, a couple scenarios again not possible for the Maryland Wave 6 and Virginia Wave 3, but otherwise possible, showing the difference in days for each state. The Board requested a calculation example for an option combining a size limit change and a seasonal closure.

The benefit of changing to a size limit with such a small estimated reduction may be limited, particularly in contrast to using a single longer seasonal closure to achieve the same higher reduction. Appendix 4 lists the one example that the TC analyzed, where a combination size limit and seasonal closure was analyzed. With that I'll take any questions regarding the TC Assessment Report.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thank you, Tyler, and I want to thank the TC for a truly heroic effort to get all of this ready for us for this December special Board meeting. We're going to go to Board questions, again these are questions that are critical to you being able to vote today, so see if there are any questions. John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thank you for the presentation, Tyler. I was just curious, if I recall from the memo, the TC felt that Scenario 1A (1) was the most likely, and that is the one that would have F dropping back to the 2024 F after 2025. Did the TC get a chance to discuss with the Wave 5 data now available, whether that can strengthen their belief that that was the most likely scenario?

MR. GRABOWSKI: That was updated on Friday afternoon, so unfortunately no, no discussions were had. But given the logical nature of that F decreasing in 2025 would bring F down, and then not understanding what it may do. Again, that is where the uncertainty is. We're getting an idea of what is occurring in 2024, but how it moves forward into 2025 and beyond is what were uncertain about. But no, no analyses were conducted given that.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: Just to your first question, John. I just want to clarify that the TC did not choose any one of the three scenarios to be most

likely. They determined that all three would be credible scenarios for what might happen, so did not select one as the most likely.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I had Bill Hyatt.

MR. WILLIAN HYATT: I note today our discussion is focused on 2029, but throughout the documents that we've been asked to review the point has been made over and over again that we've got to look at this as in the context of what level of risk we're willing to accept. I think this question sort of goes towards the latter. All of the scenarios that were presented, I think four or so, they all converged at the target spawning stock biomass.

My question is, just again for context and level of risk, looking beyond 2029. If the recruitment, if the spawning success remains as low as it has in the last six years, coupled with the low fishing mortality rates that we've had recently. Where would you expect that spawning stock biomass curve that as we're being showed converges around the target. Where would you expect that to go and level off in the long term, after 2029?

DR. KATIE DREW: Great question. I think if recruitment stays sort of low, in terms of like maybe 2020 to 2024 levels, and fishing mortality also stays low, like where we expect to be in 2024. We would stabilize likely somewhere between the target and the threshold. If fishing mortality increases to higher levels, maybe some more to the level that we saw during the height of the fishery under Amendment 6, then the spawning stock biomass could be pushed below the threshold. It's unclear how low it would go. It would depend on; you know the fishing mortality that we see. But under a current low F rate, and current recruitment, it would stabilize somewhere between the target and the threshold.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Tyler, for your presentation. I was going to ask a question about Slide 16, which had projections, rebuilding projections, and my question was going to be about confidence intervals around those curves. Then you went on to Slide 17, which I think is new. I remember seeing that in the original TC Report. Slide 17 may answer my questions, but you went over that pretty quickly. Could you just review that slide again, please? Thank you.

MR. GRABOWSKI: Certainly, so this is projecting where spawning stock biomass is going to be through 10,000 iterations projecting it forward. One way to think of it is, is the likelihood of these 10,000 runs, where each point estimate will be. Given the original projections in the gray, the likelihood more often than not is that the spawning stock biomass will be below the target in 2029.

Whereas in Task 1A (1), of those 10,000 iterations more often than not, the spawning stock biomass would be above the target. It's more or less looking, not necessarily at confidence interval, but looking at potentially the likelihood of being above that. I don't know if Katie wants to further kind of speak to that, but that is more or less.

DR. DREW: Just to add, this was not in the original presentation, but we did get a lot of questions about kind of uncertainty and those asking to see confidence intervals. As you can see, so this is just like a snapshot of 2029 on that graph, and those distributions are overlapping each other a lot, and they're overlapping the target a lot, to help, I think try to answer some of that concern we've heard from the public and the Board and the AP about the uncertainty in 2029.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: Thanks for a tremendous amount of work here. I'll be honest with you, I had very little hope that there would be any kind of a slot limit under the minimum size limit analysis. I thought that was great that you could spend some time putting that together, because that is very informative and helpful.

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I just had one question about that. Clearly, the analysis that you are using you were trying to use a proxy for what the fishery looked like, and you showed the length frequency off of the volunteer angler surveys in there, which you used in your analysis to length frequencies back then. It seems to me from when I've looked at some of the current length frequencies from 2023 from the volunteer angler surveys that is used.

They look very different in my evaluation of it. Is there any way that you could do some analysis, if we were going to look at slot limits below that in the future that would take the most recent volunteer angler surveys and grow them into 2025 or '26, or would that not be really an appropriate way of doing the analysis?

MR. GRABOWSKI: I'll let Katie fully answer this, but more or less, this was such a rapid analysis that there was no real time to kind of combine as much. This was the quickest, fastest way that we could get somewhat of an answer presented to the Board. But certainly, future discussions and analyses can be conducted, at least visited to see what may occur.

But again, given such a short timeline this was the best-case scenario that we could provide. Katie and I discussed this, so I'll let her kind of fully answer the question, but that was more or less the gist of it is that given the short timeline this was the best available data.

DR. DREW: Yes, and just to add onto that, so I guess control expectations as we go forward. Obviously, the Striped Bass Assessment is an age-structured assessment not a length-structured assessment. We can't really move the length frequencies forward, because that is a combination of like the availability of the strength of the year class, as well as the fishery selectivity.

We have generally used those as sort of a snapshot in time. I think maybe there is more

we could do on some of these projections, and developing a length frequency from the age data or the age structure that we're projecting. But it's definitely additional work that would require more time to set up is not a common analysis for us to do.

CHAIR WARE: Max Appelman.

MR. MAX APPELMAN: Can we go back to the slide with the projections and the confidence intervals, because my question is related to this as well? I think looking at this, naturally your brain sort of tries to average these, and you can sort of see that that target divides the overlap almost right down the middle.

Did the TC discuss if it's even appropriate to average the projection scenarios and try to find a middle ground, so that we're not presented with a range of plausible projections to look at instead, give us all sort of like a more confident footing as a starting point for the projections? I don't know if my question is coming across right, but I'm just wondering if there was any discussion about ways that we could sort of look at all these scenarios and try to synthesize it into one potential outcome.

MR. GRABOWSKI: More or less, you're asking if we can combine the original projection for Task 1A (1) and 1A (2) and combine them into one more or less projection? I think given the circumstances of the uncertainty with F, I think that would be somewhat inappropriate, in that combining different F rates to start and then combining different F rates to end.

We're kind of breaking them down piece by piece showing the various scenarios that may occur, so if you combine the three various scenarios it's not really taking the individuality of each scenario, which is the uncertainty of what may happen. But we did not have, from what I recall, any discussions about combining these three different scenarios into somewhat of a median or mean scenario where we think it will be, given the starting points and the endings points from these scenarios. I don't know if Emilie or Katie has anything further to add.

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CHAIR WARE: I have Mike Luisi and then Jeff Kaelin, and then we're going to move to the next presentation.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to ask a question. I had this question at the last meeting, but based on the discussion I never had the opportunity to ask. I thought I would ask a question of the folks doing the analysis that we're reviewing today. Highlighting something that I've been asked a lot about, which is crediting states for actions that have been taken since the emergency action was taken.

I'll get to an example in a second, how those actions may be considered as credit in the work that we're considering today. I'll lay this out. There is a table that Tyler put up on the presentation that had seasonal restrictions for the Chesapeake Bay, and in one of those cases there is a 30-dayish closure in Wave 3 for both Maryland and Virginia.

That accomplishes some form of a credit towards the reductions that would be necessary if we decide to take action today. My question gets to, after the emergency actions were initiated and we implemented the slot limit on the coast, Chesapeake Bay and specifically in Maryland, had a trophy fishery season that started on May 1 and went to May 15.

Based on the actions that the Board took, we entirely closed that trophy season to a no targeting for striped bass, outside of any mandate from the Commission. We currently still have those on our books, we just put them forth again for another year for 2025. If we were to take action today and have to consider seasonality as one of the provisions for taking reductions in the Bay.

Is there any way that the work that we did to close the trophy season in May for those first two weeks, is there any credit that the state of Maryland would get from those actions, or are we starting with a clean slate? Depending on

the answer I may have a follow up, but I'm curious, having to answer that question from our stakeholders and I would love to get the feedback on the technical side as to how that might play out.

MS. FRANKE: I'll start. I was present during some of the discussions of the Chesapeake Bay TC members, and trying to think about, right so since the emergency action there was the elimination of the trophy season, the PRFC and Maryland. However, the reductions that the TC is considering are relative to what the regulations that are currently in place, so relative to what regulations were in place for 2024, that is what we're using as our base to take a reduction from.

Since those closures happened prior to 2024 they are already incorporated into what is happening currently in 2024, so in a sense they are already contributing to lower removals in 2024, so there is no specific percent credit for those prior actions. They are already wrapped up into what has happened in 2024.

CHAIR WARE: Jeff Kaelin.

MR. JEFF KAELIN: Thanks a lot, Tyler and Emilie and Katie and your TC people for putting all this together in such a short period of time. My question has to do with the allocation of overall mortality in this fishery between the recreational sector and the commercial sector. What are your current projections about that, and does it make any difference whether you are considering pounds or the number of fish?

MR. GRABOWSKI: I'll defer to Katie on this one.

DR. DREW: For striped bass we don't separate fishing mortality into commercial or recreational, we just do it on whether it happens in the Bay or whether it happens in the Ocean, and the commercial and the recreational are sort of combined into each region. Right now, as we discussed in the past, that the commercial removals are about 10 percent of the total removals, and recreational removals are about 90 percent of the total removals.

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Translates somewhat into, you could think of that as translating into the F in that way, but we don't separate them out, so I can't say F percent of F is commercial versus F percent of F is recreational. In terms of does it matter for pounds versus numbers of fish, it does somewhat, but essentially if we are keeping our commercial size limits the same, then the average size of the fish will be the same, and the numbers of fish that you're reducing by will be the same proportion, effectively.

As long as we're not talking about major changes to the commercial size limit, which would affect the average size of the fish, then they are effectively in numbers, and we are using the recreational numbers in numbers, because the model itself is all done on the basis of numbers of fish, so the currency is consistent across all three, or across the commercial, the recreational and the model.

MR. KAELIN: Okay, so it's still 90-10 like we heard in October.

DR. DREW: Yes, 90-10 comes with the removals, which is the most updated information from the assessment.

MR. KAELIN: Yes, and in this exercise, we're not looking at changing the fish size on the commercial side, we're just looking at the quota reductions. Okay, thank you very much.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, Marty, is it a very quick question?

MR. MARTIN GARY: It is, Madam Chair, thanks. I know you want to move the conversation along. Bill Hyatt's question sort of got to where I wanted to go, but I wasn't 100 percent sure. There is a theme of weak recruitment that is underlying this discussion at this meeting today, and Bill was asking a question, what does that biomass look like relative to the biological reference points. My question was a little bit more specific.

You know as time goes on, if the weak recruitment affects our decision making at this Board year after year, maybe it intensifies, maybe it plateaus. I don't know. I was looking more specifically for, you know looking at our maturity schedule for SSB, you know we assume 45 percent of Age 6 fish are mature, 85 percent of Age 7 fish are mature. Just going forward, for instance, to the Benchmark Stock Assessment in 2027, the terminal year will be 2026. The 2019-year class, that first of those six successive poor recruitment years will be Age 7, so they are just moving into SSB at that time. I'm just really trying to understand how the Board can react to the projections we're getting. We don't really see them coming to SSB later, and I'm not sure I'm couching it the best way I can, but hopefully you understand what I'm asking. I don't know if that's a question for Tyler or Katie, whoever wants to try. I guess it was a decent question, right?

MS. FRANKE: I guess, I think Marty had requested in this most recent Stock Assessment Update that the TC also include projections through 2034, so I think that maybe could answer, partly address your question is, you know the Board of course is working toward this rebuilding goal of 2029, but for the next assessment that Board can definitely request longer term projections to try to get a better idea of what the stock will look like as those lower weak year classes start to come into the SSB.

MR. GARY: Okay, just a final thought. Yes, we did ask for those projections back in August, they were delivered in October. I guess this is just a lot of uncertainty the further out you go, right. There is nothing really, there is no way we can get around that. Okay, thank you.

#### **REVIEW PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY**

CHAIR WARE: We are going to now move on to Emilie's presentation, which is the public comment summary and the Advisory Panel Report, and then similarly, we're going to focus questions that are critical to being able to vote today.

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MS. FRANKE: Moving into the presentation. I'll go over the Public Comment Summary and Advisory Panel Report on the next slide, but I'll also just briefly review a couple of clarifications on some of the Board decisions. These were in a staff memo in the main meeting materials, so I'll just briefly review those.

On the next slide and then the following slide, just a reminder on the Board Action Provision. As the TC Chair mentioned, as soon as the assessment indicated a less than 50 percent chance of rebuilding the Board can change management measures through Board action without an addendum. Just as a reminder, this does not require the Board to take action at this point, it is up to the Board whether or not to take action at this point.

The requirement is to rebuild the stock to the target by 2029, it is up to the Board how to get there. On the next slide, as far as seasonal closures. If the Board does decide to implement seasonal closures the Board would each decide whether all states in a region would have to have the same closure dates, so all of the options present closures for a particular Wave.

The Board would have to decide if all states would need to have the same closure dates, and the Board would need to think about when that decision needs to be made about what those exact closure dates would be. Then on the next slide, as far as area specific measures for the recreational fishery.

In Addendum II there were a couple of areas that were required to submit area specific management measures, that's the New York Hudson River, the Pennsylvania spring slot fishery and the Delaware summer slot fishery. If the Board does take action today, the Board will have to determine if those three areas will need to take similar action and what the timeline for that would be. The next slide I will get into the Public Comment Summary and Advisory Panel Report. The Chair of the Advisory Panel that position is currently vacant, so I will be giving

that report today. As far as public comment, we received a total of 4,360 public comments as of last Tuesday, December 10.

A total of 40 organizations submitted comments, and 1 of those organization letters included about 1,700 signatories. We received 976 comments for form letters, and then about 1,600 individual comments. Then for the Advisory Panel, the Atlantic Striped Bass AP met last week on December 9 via webinar to discuss the recommendations on the TC Report, and there were 20 AP members in attendance.

The Public Comment Summary and the AP Report are organized by the four primary questions the Board is considering today. As far as the public comment, some of the public comments addressed all four questions directly, some comments addressed one or two questions, and then some comments addressed other striped bass management issues.

I'm going to go through each of the four questions and provide the public comment summary and the AP summary. The first question is, what level of reduction should the Board implement in 2025, if any? What level of risk is the Board willing to accept? On the next slide we see a majority of comments supported keeping a reduction in 2025.

There were also a fair amount of comments that supported status quo. Just to be clear on how this particular question was tallied for the comments, these are comments that explicitly indicated support for taking a reduction or taking action in 2025, or comments explicitly opposed to taking action or support maintaining the status quo.

There were some comments that noted, you know if the Board were to take action, then I would support X management measure. For some comments it was unclear whether or not they supported taking a reduction in the first place. Due to this, these tallies may be an underestimate. We just tried to count those that explicitly said, I support taking action now or I oppose taking action now maintaining the status quo.

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Those that supported taking action now, taking a reduction in 2025, noted the need to act quickly to rebuild the stock by the deadline, especially considering low recruitment. There was concern about if action is not taken now, then there would be a need for more drastic action in the future. Also, comments noted the Board should be risk averse, given the uncertainty in the stock projections.

On the other hand, the comments supporting status quo noted that the current management measures, specifically the narrower slot, are working to rebuild the stock, and more time is needed to see the results of those measures. They also noted that the projections indicate the stock will be close to reaching its rebuilding target with no action, and further restrictions would have negative economic consequences.

Then other comments noted that taking any reduction would not address the underlying environmental factors and other factors contributing to the low recruitment. As far as the AP Report, there were 9 AP members who supported taking a reduction in 2025. They noted that the data point to a declining fishery, including low recruitment in the fishery must be managed to the smaller level. The AP members wanted to avoid taking even larger reduction later by starting now. They noted that not taking action would be the greatest risk.

Some noted taking the full 14 percent reduction, others noted at least 10 percent reduction, and noted that the Board should overall be conservative, given the uncertainty in projections in the low recruitment. There was 1 AP member who could support either an 8 percent reduction, so that was sort of the middle scenario, or could support status quo to get one more year of data before taking action.

On the next slide there were 8 AP members who supported status quo. They noted that any more reductions will put the industry out of business, and that the Board should wait until performance of the current measures can be

evaluated before taking action. They noted that the projection scenarios are not statistically different, and again that taking a reduction does not address the underlying environmental conditions that are contributing to the low recruitment.

They noted that the economic risk to fishing businesses by taking a reduction would outweigh the potential benefit, because it is unclear if the reduction would have a meaningful input on the stock, given the stock projections. They also noted that if there were, for example no targeting closures, other species would not be able to potentially withstand that additional effort. The next question the Board is considering is for any reduction.

How should that reduction be split between the recreational and commercial sectors? On the next slide you can see that most public comment supported both sectors taking a reduction. Most of those comments supported both sectors taking even reductions, so the same percent reduction to each sector. There were a small number of comments that supported each sector taking a reduction based on their contribution to total removals.

For example, that would be the commercial taking closer to a 1 percent reduction and then the recreational sector taking a slightly higher reduction to compensate. In the next slide comments that supported both sectors taking a reduction noted that all sectors should share the burden to rebuild, and there were some comments that supported taking a reduction off of landings instead of off of quota.

Then comments that supported the commercial sector taking no reduction noted that another cut to the commercial sector would not be economically sustainable, and also reiterated that the commercial sector is managed by a hard quota. On the next slide for the AP Report on the sector split there were 5 AP members who supported equal percent reductions, again noting that all sectors should share the burden.

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Three AP members supported no reduction for the commercial fishery, noting the economic concerns, and then 3 AP members supported each sector taking a reduction based on how much to contribute to total removals. Then on the next slide there was 1 AP member who didn't have a preference on the sector split. He noted that the overall reduction is the most important thing to consider. Then 1 AP member noted the importance of considering which sector is contributing to excess fishing mortality, again, reiterating that the commercial fishery is managed by quota and has not been utilizing their full quota, and the recreational fishery has just been increasing over time. On the next slide, the next question is, should the Board change recreational size limits? On the next slide you can see there were about 2,000 comments that supported changing the size limit, and there was a wide variety of recommendations provided in the public comments on how to change the size limit.

On the next slide you can see that some comments supported lowering the size limit below 28 inches to protect the 2015s- and 2018-year classes. On the other hand, there were some comments that specifically opposed moving the size limit below 28 inches, because of the risk of targeting immature fish.

There were comments kind of on both sides there. There were some comments that recommended narrowing the current slot even further, for example 28 to 30 inches for implementing a higher minimum size like a 36 or 40 inch minimum, to protect the incoming 2018-year class.

Then other comments recommended expanding the slot or going back to a 28-inch minimum size to reduce release mortality. As far as the AP, there were no AP members that supported changing the size limit at this point. One AP member noted the science seems to indicate that targeting immature fish would be problematic.

One AP member noted size limit changes could be considered, with some additional time for evaluation of options over the next few years. Finally, the last question the Board is considering is for recreational seasonal closures, should the Board implement no harvest closures or no targeting closures?

On the next slide you can see the columns in blue were comments that supported either no harvest closures or no targeting closures. Kind of in the yellow are comments that opposed either both no harvesting, no targeting closures or just opposed no targeting closures. You can see there were a lot of comments in opposition to closures, but there were some comments in support of particular closure options.

You'll note that for the support of no targeting options, a lot of those comments were specific to no targeting closures in the Chesapeake Bay. On the next slide, those who were opposed to no targeting closures noted that there would be severe economic consequences to local fishing economies if no targeting closures were implemented, and that prohibiting fishing would be a drastic and unnecessary measure that would devastate the fishing industry, and that no targeting closures are unenforceable.

Then those opposed to no harvest closures noted similar economic concerns about that loss to the fishing communities, even with the no harvest closure, also noted that just a no harvest closure would unfairly impact those who prefer to harvest fish, while allowing the catch and release fishery to continue. There were some comments that noted that the particular set of options in the TC Report, they would not support those. But they could support options in the future that were potentially more equitable. On the next slide on that note of equity, there were a lot of comments about the importance of having equitable closures. Comments noted that with the current options, states that have shorter fishing seasons would be disproportionately impacted by a longer closure. They noted that states and regions should take equitable reductions, and there was concern about

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the different regions that were proposed in the TC Report.

Some noting that the regions are too big, the fisheries are too different in all those states in a region, so a closure in one wave might impact one state in the region, but other states in the region wouldn't be impacted at all. There were a lot of comments specific to closures in New Jersey.

There are a lot of comments opposing closures in New Jersey, specifically during October, November and December, noting that this was peak fishing season and it would have devastating economic impacts. Then there were a few comments that noted that if closures had to be implemented, then perhaps they could occur during the spawning season earlier in the year, and not during the peak fishing season.

On the next slide, a couple more public comments here. There were some in support of no harvest closures. They noted that this would be an effective way to reduce fishing mortality while still preserving the ability to fish. Then there were comments in support of no targeting closures. As I mentioned, a lot of these comments were supporting no targeting closures in the Chesapeake Bay when release mortality is high.

But generally, others supported no targeting closures as the only fair way to address both the harvest portion of the fishery and the catch and release portion of the fishery. On the next slide for the Advisory Panel Report, there were 9 AP members who would support no harvest closures, in particular would support them instead of no targeting closures. They noted that anglers could still participate in the fishery during a no harvest closure, the impacts would be less severe from a no harvest closure, as compared to a no targeting closure.

They noted again that there is a lack of other species to target, especially in New England, if

there were a no targeting closure, and again the no targeting closures would be unenforceable and not very practical, given the overlap with other species. There was 1 AP member who specifically noted that he would support a no harvest closure as sort of the first step, but long term would support moving to a no targeting season.

He would support having a season with either a later start date or an earlier end date, instead of having a big closure in the middle of the season. On the next slide there were some AP members who did support no targeting closures. There were 5 AP members, they noted that all components of the recreational fishery should be part of the closures. It wouldn't be equitable to allow catch and release fishing but not allow harvest.

They noted the no targeting closures would be shorter, and they would support these closures when water temperatures are high, and 1 AP member noted the importance of maintaining harvest, especially for shore anglers. Then on the next slide, as I mentioned, the Public Comments there were several concerns about the regional breakdowns in the Ocean, AP members noted the regions were too large, and so as I mentioned, one state would take on the burden of sort of the whole reduction for the region. States in the regions have different peak seasons, and some AP members recommended the closures be evaluated state by state, in order to ensure equity. On the next slide just a couple of other topics raised by the public and the Advisory Panel.

On the next slide in the Public Comments there were a lot of other topics raised, including support for a moratorium, support for eliminating commercial harvest, leading to better understand the causes of low recruitment, additional support for recreational gear restrictions, angler education, concerns about enforcement, some support for managing the for-hire sector separately, and then also concern about the harvest of menhaden. Then finally on the next slide the AP also discussed a few other topics.

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There are some questions about whether the Stock Assessment can identify the spawning origin of different fish. Again, concern the for-hire sector is not managed separately, a comment that the Board should consider the potential values of hatcheries and additional research into the impacts of environmental conditions. Then also concern about the narrow slot currently and the high releases, and then there was some discussion about commercial quota utilization. With that I am happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: Questions from the Board on the AP or Public Comment Summary. I want to thank Emilie, I think we had over 2,000 pages of public comment that staff had to sort through in about three days, another heroic effort from staff to get us that Public Comment Summary, so thank you. Any questions? Yes, Loren Lustig.

MR. LOREN W. LUSTIG: Thank you, Emilie, for a very interesting report. Early in your report you mentioned that there are certain environmental conditions causing low recruitment. Could you be more specific relating to what these conditions are, the primary conditions that are of concern, and where such conditions are most significantly found within the range of the striped bass?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, thanks for that question. I think both at the AP level and in public comments the comments were sort of looking for more research to sort of answer that question is what are the environmental conditions that are really driving the low recruitment that we've been seeing, and I think a lot of the concern is in the Chesapeake Bay

I don't want to sort of get into, I don't have specific examples of what I think would be the most important conditions to consider. I think there is a lot of work in the Bay to sort of look into what has been driving this low recruitment, but I think that's the question from the public and the AP is, there is a need to understand what are the drivers here.

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CHAIR WARE: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Emilie, for your excellent summary of all of those comments. Listening to your summary, and reading through many of the public comments and the AP Report and speaking with individual fishermen. As a Commissioner in New York, representing all citizens of the state of New York, one of the things that I'm concerned about is equity. A couple of things that I've heard through a lot of the public comment, is that a lot of people say we should take some action here today, and that all sectors need to participate in that reduction. However, there seems to be an exception being made by the public, an exception for catch and release.

Some of the language is that many anglers could still participate in the fishery if catch and release is allowed. But if we're reducing removals, don't we want to reduce all removals? I mean that question, I don't expect you to answer that question. I'm just wondering, if there is some additional information that came out.

Perhaps in the AP or public comment about how are we going to be equitable here with telling some components of the recreational fishery, you can't go fishing, and perhaps a reduction in the commercial fishery, and at the same time saying, oh, but it's okay if we continue to allow a segment of the recreational fishery to keep catching fish and discarding and applying that 9 percent mortality. Was there any discussion about that? I might bring this up further in our discussions later today, thank you.

MS. FRANKE: I think at the AP and as reflected in the Public Comments. I think that just reflects that there are just different values. There were some AP members and some public comments that supported, for example, a no harvest closure to allow the catch and release fishery to continue, while others noted that that would not be equitable from their perspective. I don't really have any additional information, just that I think there are different values among the stakeholders, and I think they both clearly came through.

## CONSIDER MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

CHAIR WARE: Those are all the hands for questions that I have, so what I would like to do is move us to Board discussion. I've kind of heard two different ideas on how to move forward. We've received motions for both of those, so what I would like to do is just go right ahead, get those motions on the board. There will be a substitute for one or the other, and then we'll begin our Board discussion from there. Adam, I see your hand raised, do you want to start us out?

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, I'm just wondering if you would go back in time to when you were elected Vice-Chair, if you would like to have nominated someone else at the time. Appreciate the wonderful job you've been doing, as well as everyone from staff, and that includes all members.

This is something, you know when I walked in here today, I saw conversations all around the room. It's not very often to walk in here ahead of something and see those going on. I mean I know everyone talks, but I think what it did to me is it just galvanized that there is still a lot of question about how we should best move forward on this action, and that everyone remains engaged.

The question for me is, how do we best respond to science moving forward here? There is no question that we're all committed, myself included, to keep rebuilding on track. With that in mind, and with a response to a science-based trying to address a number of questions that came up during the TC report and comments, I would like to make the following motion today.

**Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029, in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall**

**reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to those reductions, recreational season and size changes, taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest versus no target closures. Final action shall be taken at the summer 2025 meeting, to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fishery.**

CHAIR WARE: We have a motion by Adam, I saw a second from John Clark. Adam, you gave some rationale, is there anything else you would like to say on the motion?

MR. NOWALSKY: For me, I would just like to point to the TC Report and essentially submit that as the greatest amount of rationale that I have here. From what I heard, any range of reduction from 0 to 14 percent all result in a similar level of credibility in getting us to rebuilding. I want to reiterate that not acting in 2025 is not a no-action alternative.

That by going ahead and taking action for 2025 to be deliberative about how these reductions should take place if needed in 2026, still gives us time to achieve that rebuilding. We've heard that any management change less than 10 percent is essentially indistinguishable as to whether or not it's going to provide any assistance.

We heard that the preliminary data for Waves 2 through 5 now indicate a potentially even lower amount of mortality that has occurred in 2024. I would submit that having the full suite of data about those 2024 removals through Wave 6, puts this Board in the best possible scientific position to make a decision how to keep rebuilding on track for 2029.

We agreed that we would be able to take Board action in the result of getting data. As that data is coming in, we're getting more information, again that suggests that mortality in 2024 is not what we expected, so I think going back to the addendum strategy is a good way to go. We've heard from the TC that additional years of data under the same management measures will better inform the selectivity analyses that are going to take place. We

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also heard the TC used the comment that they performed a rapid analysis.

Is that really the message we want to take to the public for the poster child of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission management that we took action based on rapid analysis? I don't think so. Going ahead, going through the addendum route, that goes ahead and gives us the opportunity to pursue a number of the further analyses that the TC knows that they can perform.

That the public is interested hearing, including different regions, different seasonal options that may be on the table, giving us the full scale of what the 2024 removals are. Again, if this is no action today, this puts us in a place of best understanding where we are, so that we can ultimately achieve our goal of rebuilding by 2029.

CHAIR WARE: John Clark, as seconder, do you want to provide rationale?

MR. CLARK: As usual, Adam has been thorough and eloquent. But I would just also like to emphasize that as was mentioned by Mr. Grabowski, the Technical Committee would benefit from having another year with the same regulations. It would help in the analysis and also just would like to emphasize that as we heard at the annual meeting, the for-hire sector is already struggling with the cuts we've already made, and this would just, taking another cut based on a situation where the most likely scenario seems to be that F will be below the rebuilding F, and we seem to be doing very well in that regard.

I certainly understand the concerns about the lack of recruitment. Looking at the previous history of this species, clearly when the last time the recruitment was this poor was during the rebuilding when SSB was about half of what it is now, and the stock did rebuild. Now will that happen again?

We don't know. But at the same time, I think we're in a situation here, where taking this time to clearly look at all our options, both recreationally and commercially, and put something very fully thought out in place for 2026 would be the way to go, rather than taking a knee jerk action right here.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to get the second motion up on the table, so Nichola, do you want to make your motion?

MS. NICHOLA MESERVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to offer an alternative motion that does look at Board action in 2025. I don't think I need to give a big preamble to why. The Advisory Panel, the Public Comment comments, many of them, the majority of the public comment has supported a Board action for 2025.

We've reviewed those already from staff, and those are all the same reasons for taking Board action in 2025. It is a bit longer than the alternative motion, because there are a lot of decision points to make, so before reading it I'm just going to give a little bit of an introduction to it. But what I looked at in the Technical Committee projections was five competing projections that give a range of 0 percent reduction to 14 percent reduction.

They said those are all viable paths forward here, so when you average them out those come to a 9 percent reduction, so that's the number that I focused on for a Board action to reduce removals in 2025, and then it looks at on the commercial side and the recreational side, the motion starts out with equal reductions, I expect some Board debate on that situation.

It then considers a three-region approach to taking seasonal closures to reduce harvest, reduce removals by 9 percent per region. A lot of the comment that we've heard addressed inequity among the regions when it was different number of days, different waves. This approach looks at the same percent reduction by region, and makes a little bit of changes to the regions, again in response to the comments that we received about equity.

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It does not contemplate any changes to the size limits. That was actually one thing that our Advisory Panel was unanimous on, which I think is rare coming from the AP. Again, it's focused on closures, which specifically would be no harvest along the Ocean and a combination of no targeting and no harvest in the Chesapeake Bay, consistent with the types of closures that those states have already implemented. I'm going to make the motion, and then if there is a second to it, I'll provide a little bit more clarity as to some of the specifics of it.

**I move to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational season closures to achieve a 9 percent reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 9 percent. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows.**

**Maine through Rhode Island, no harvest closure of 22 days in Wave 3, plus the number of days needed in Wave 5, to achieve a combined 9 percent reduction across both waves be implemented in uniform dates across the region. Connecticut to North Carolina, no harvest closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6 needed to achieve a combined 9 percent reduction across both waves be implemented in uniform dates across the region. Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, no targeting closure of 22 days in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure (9 percent reduction is calculated with striped bass only trips eliminated assumption.) Virginia, no harvest closure to 18 days at the end of Wave 6 (a 9 percent reduction.) New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware area specific fisheries, seasonal closures to achieve 9 percent reductions. The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the winter 2025 meeting week. If a region can't decide on uniform dates the Board will make the selection. Implementation deadline is April 1, 2025.**

CHAIR WARE: All right, so we have a motion to substitute from Nichola, is there a second?

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Cheri Patterson. All right, Nichola, some rationale?

MS. MESERVE: Yes, I just wanted to explain a little bit more about the different regions and days and waves that you see in this motion. Starting with the Connecticut/North Carolina region. That was initially analyzed as a Rhode Island through North Carolina region, but given the focus on Waves 2 and Wave 6 as the closure options that were in the document primarily, it seems more equitable to include Rhode Island in the Maine through Massachusetts region, where some closure would impact the state as well.

We don't have the exact analysis of this, but there was interest in closing days in both Wave 2 in the spring and the fall, to provide some more equity within that region. When that was analyzed for Rhode Island through North Carolina that was a 19-day closure in Wave 2 and Wave 6, so I expect it would be very similar to that with moving Rhode Island out of that region, because they don't have that much activity in Wave 2 and Wave 6.

Moving up to the Maine through Rhode Island region. When that was analyzed as Maine through Massachusetts it would be 54 days in Wave 5 in addition to the 22 days in Wave 3 that essentially provides something around a Memorial Day to a Labor Day open season for that Maine through Rhode Island region.

Then moving in to the Chesapeake Bay, the approach here was more state by state in terms of achieving 9 percent reductions, because that would help to align the closures within the Bay that currently exist. Maryland has a summer closure, which could be extended to get the 9 percent reduction. Similarly, Virginia could take days off the end of Waves 6 to better align the closure dates in the Bay from Maryland to Virginia, because currently Maryland closes December 10, and Virginia closes December 31. Then there are those area specific fisheries that would also submit some plans that would have to go through a Technical Committee review and be reviewed by the Board in February, prior to the deadline for implementation. I am offering this as an alternative. There is a lot to

it, I understand that, and a lot to digest. But in essence it's looking for 9 percent closures in three different regions and from the commercial fishery, and I would be happy to take any questions about it.

CHAIR WARE: All right, I'll go to Cheri Patterson as the seconder.

MS. CHERI PATTERSON: Nichola covered things very thoroughly, thank you. Obviously, this is from the public interest that they are supporting more measures to occur in 2025, as opposed to no action. I think this provides something that people can understand and have some equity behind it.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so just to set the stage here. We have two motions, a motion for an addendum and then a motion to substitute for Board action. What we're now going to do is perfect each of those underlying motions. I'm going to ask Madeline to go to that original underlying motion, which is our motion for an addendum.

This is an opportunity for the Board to make amendments to this underlying motion if you would like to perfect it. We'll perfect both motions, and then we will vote on the motion to substitute. Is everyone clear on the process here? Do you have a question, Bill?

MR. HYATT: I have a comment by way of a question relative to this motion that could lead to perfection, but certainly will lead to, in my case, better understanding. Is it appropriate that that be included at this point?

CHAIR WARE: Yes, I think if you have a question on this underlying motion that would be a good place to start.

MR. HYATT: My question, and it goes to a point that both Adam and John made, and that was made by the Technical Committee is, the benefits of an additional year's worth of data pertaining to the impacts of the 2024 rules and

removals, in terms of understanding. My question, not necessarily to the makers of the motion.

But maybe to the Technical Committee or to Katie is, how significant are these benefits, and are the benefits that you were alluding to in the Technica Committee report run additional years with the data, met by this motion which calls for action, taken at the summer 2025 meeting?

DR. DREW: I think yes, it is difficult to quantify the exact benefits, in terms of reducing uncertainty. I think the benefits would be you get more benefits by maintaining current size limits and maintaining current seasons would maybe have less of an impact, but not none.

But we would assume less impact from changing seasons on what the model is specifically trying to figure out for 2024, than we would get from maintaining current size limits. I think you know how does that play off with sort of the risk to the benefits of taking action. Is it really something we can quantify at this point? I'm not sure if that fully answers your question, or if you wanted to add.

MR. HYATT: Yes, I think the gist of my question was that the Technical Committee made the comment that additional years' worth of data would be beneficial. This is calling for a decision point in summer of 2025, so you certainly would have access to data playing out the current fishing season, but would have very limited or none for 2025 season to put into this now.

DR. DREW: I think the action would be taken in 2026, so we would have 2024 and 2025 under the current regulations, and then so it's having that extra year would definitely be more beneficial than changing for 2025 and having '24 and '25 be different from each other, versus '24 and '25 the same and then figuring out what happens after that.

MR. HYATT: At least in my mind there is a little disconnect, because that says final action should be taken at summer 2025 meeting.

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DR. DREW: I think in place for 2026, so '25 would be under the same set of regulations versus the other option, which is taking action today for new regulations in '25. In that scenario we would have only 2024 as sort of its own special year, and then 2025 something different, versus '24 and '25 being the same in this scenario, and then '26 potentially being different.

MS. FRANKE: Maybe just to jump in to help clarify, maybe I'm not sure if this is what you're getting at, Bill. But I think Katie is referring to the next time we do a stock assessment we'll have, if the Board did an addendum and maintained measures for '25, we'll have '24 and '25 data the same.

However, if you were maybe asking if you're doing this addendum and you're asking what data are we going to have for this addendum. You're nodding your head, then correct, we'll have all of 2024 MRIP data, but we'll have maybe Wave 2 of 2025. For this addendum you would have 2024 data, we wouldn't have '25 data yet.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so I am looking for perfections to this underlying motion. Mike Luisi, did you have an amendment, I'll say, for this underlying motion?

MR. LUISI: I might, and I wanted to get your thoughts about this. I'll first say that I support this motion. I would like it though, and maybe the question goes to the maker about the goal of the motion. I think for the public to see this and to understand what it is that the Board, if we vote in support of this, are expecting as an outcome.

Something that is not addressed in here, which has been brought up time and time again, is what are we trying to achieve? We are rebuilding by 2029, that's one. But I think what we've discussed, what I would like to potentially see in this. I haven't drafted it yet, but I can

kind of come up with it if you think it's necessary.

But protecting the spawning stock is something that we are trying to do here, and I think it deserves to be identified in this. But also, preventing or working in some way to try to prevent or engage in some way this recruitment issue, and try to do what we can to try to minimize the recruitment failure or the lack thereof of recruitment in the future, in moving on. I don't think it changes the intent, just maybe for the record that's enough. That is what I think we should be working on as we engage in this addendum, and I wanted to put that on the record. I would be happy to add some language if you think it's appropriate or necessary, but I can hold for now, wait and see where that goes. Those are my thoughts.

CHAIR WARE: I'm personally not totally clear on what you would be looking to amend based on that comment. I think at this point we're looking for specifics. If you have a motion to amend that is what we're looking for. Okay, so you're going to hold off. Marty Gary, do you have a perfection, a motion to amend?

MR. GARY: Maybe, we'll see. I'm trying to get to a point where we might consider that, but I was trying to understand, particularly with a substitute. With New York opening in mid-April, April 15 and closing on December 15, so Wave 2, Wave 6 closures. I'm trying to understand how that intersects with the substitute, the intent of the substitute motion, and is it the same number of days, and how do we achieve uniform dates throughout that region? Trying not to complicate it, but I think I need to understand that before we can weigh in.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, let's let Madeline pull up then the motion to substitute, and it sounds like a specific question that you have for the maker of the motion. Is that what you're asking? Okay, so do you want to rephrase or re ask your question to the maker of the motion?

MR. GARY: Sure, thanks. I guess this goes to you, Nichola. With our fishery here in New York opening April 15, closing December 15, so we already have

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15 days into Wave 2 and 15 days off of Wave 6. I'm just trying to understand how your motion impacts that, if at all. Would it be just additional days off of that?

Are all the dates going to be uniform across the region? Understand your motion now moves Rhode Island into the northeastern district. I think that does it. I don't want to overcomplicate it. I can follow later about the Hudson, because that is another item we have to address as well.

MS. MESERVE: My interest would be in creating the uniform closures throughout the region to minimize any type of border issues, shifting of effort and compliance and enforcement. If it meant that the region wanted to overlap with where New York already has its closure, then that would be acceptable to me. But it might be the Board would be reviewing implementation plans in February, and making that final decision.

CHAIR WARE: Marty, does that answer your question?

MR. GARY: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have Madeline take us back to the underlying motion, and again, I'm looking for any perfections i.e. amendments to this underlying motion. David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. BORDEN: I don't have a perfection, but can I ask a question on the underlying motion, so I understand. Let's just assume that this passed today, for the question. When would the staff have to have a public hearing document finished, in order to meet that schedule?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, I can address that. With final action in summer 2025, so that would be August, so we would have to have a Draft Addendum approved for public comment at the May meeting. If this passed, I would anticipate,

if we could get a PDT together quickly, maybe we could come back to the Board in January.

Probably asking for more guidance to then inform drafting the Addendum for approval for public comment in May. I will say, I think we'll also need to have some TC discussion, because we'll need to update projections and that sort of thing. We'll need to have a document approved for public comment in May.

MR. BORDEN: Thank you and then the follow up question is, would the Board at a subsequent meeting have the right to move the implementation deadline?

CHAIR WARE: We're going to have Toni weigh in on that.

MS. TONI KERNS: The implementation deadline would be approved when you approve the document for final approval. It is the goal to be finished in time so you could set the measures for 2026. But if the Board decides to shift the implementation deadline through the approval of the document, then it does that at the time that it gets approved.

CHAIR WARE: I guess maybe I should be asking for questions on the underlying motion or any amendments. Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I think it's a question for the maker of the motion about the language about you know taking into account regional variability of availability. Maybe this could be a discussion for if this motion passed, would we have some discussion afterwards as to what more we might be looking for, are there different regional configurations that you would like analyzed? Is there specific tasking that might help to get to the document that is of interest to be seen here.

CHAIR WARE: I'll pass that to the maker of the motion. Adam, do you want to answer that?

MR. NOWALSKY: Yes, can I just put up like a little sign here that says the maker has left the meeting

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or something, turn this over to seconder? No, thank you. I am looking forward greatly to perfection of this, so this turns into ownership by the Board. I think ultimately any of these motions, when we take vote on them, having them reflect that they are the property of the Board as opposed to individuals would reflect very well moving forward, so I welcome this process right now.

With regard to the specific question about the line here, taking into account regional variability of availability, yes, those regional configurations are exactly what this phrase was meant to touch on, to ensure that those regions that were set up would be both productive, in terms of responding to ensure that rebuilding takes place by 2029, as well as accounting for any other concerns that individual states may have about being placed in certain regions with other fisheries. I would also state that with regards to the previous question about timing of this, if the part about action being taken by the summer 2025 meeting is a sticking point at all, we can take that out of there.

What I am completely committed to is that final action shall be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fisheries. My goal of adding that summer 2025 element was in order to ensure, we've heard multiple times about concerns, particularly about those states that issue tags in the commercial fishery, about making sure that that action be taking place in time.

I don't think it's going to come as any surprise if the substitute motion is actually what takes place, we're going to hear a lot of comments about the changes to the commercial fishery likely aren't going to take place is my guess what we're going to hear about issuance of tags. My goal here is just purely to make sure that everything is in place, recreational fisheries, businesses, know well in advance what changes are coming.

For example, in New Jersey, if we were to go ahead and implement anything about a Wave 2 change to our fishery, that is going to happen basically last minute in New Jersey, which will go ahead and contribute to noncompliance. The two questions that came up here prior to my speaking.

One, happy to seeing that account for regional variability be changed to something that more closely resembles what everyone knows more as the regions. The second element, don't let that summer 2025 be a sticking point. The goal here is to make sure that everything is in place for 2026. If someone wants to change that or staff has feedback as to how to better put that so it's not a sticking point, I am all for it. Thank you very much.

CHAIR WARE: I have Dave Sikorski, and then Ray Kane, and again looking for questions or motions to amend.

MR. DAVID SIKORSKI: I have a question. I think I know the answer, but I wanted to talk about this on the record. Ultimately, we have a Wave 2 closure, at least half of Wave 2 is closed in Maryland, to targeting of striped bass the month of April. This has been something that came about in 2020. We've had it in place now for four years.

It has been a bone of contention by some folks that want access to the fish at that point, and from a conservation perspective, well I had complained about this at many meetings in a row now from a conservation perspective. Ultimately, if this were to pass, my question is, can we take into account current closures that we have, whether they are harvest or nontargeting whatever that may be in Maryland, and sort of reset the deck?

If so, I think that is a very strong way that we can better design our fishery to maintain access and be conservation minded, to make sure some of these fish make it to the rest of you all. But I am concerned that our current regulations will not do that, and that weighs on how I view both of these potential motions. The question is, the rule that is written in the past, can we make changes to

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something, for example like our Wave 2 closure in April.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Dave, so I guess a couple things. If there was an addendum passed, the Board could specify how seasons would work in that addendum. In the TC report right now, the analysis indicates that any seasonal closure would be on top of closures that are already happening in the states.

If through the Addendum the Board wanted to give a little bit more flexibility, you know new closures have to be on top of additional closures, or maybe a state if you are indicating there is no targeting program Wave 2, if the state wanted to move that no targeting closure somewhere else. That is up to the Board to determine how to address closures.

Right now, the report says any closure would be on top of what is currently occurring. The Board could modify that in the Addendum. I think it would have to be very clear what the requirement is. Like right now the analysis is any new closure is additional to what's already happening.

I think there would have to be some discussion about if you are changing existing closures how that would play into the analysis. But I mean that is all within the scope of an Addendum. Just to clarify, you had mentioned Wave 2 in Maryland has a no targeting closure. That is currently for the Chesapeake Bay, so for the Ocean for Maryland currently it is an open season, I believe. I just wanted to clarify that.

CHAIR WARE: Next, we have Ray Kane. Ray.

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: My concern is probably going to go back to the TC on the timeline of this motion, Wave 6, I mean we'll have had our winter meeting, you know in February. You don't get results from Wave 6 until the middle of February, so that gives us the May meeting and then final action at the following meeting.

I'm a little concerned about the timeline, because we know how this goes. We'll get together for the May meeting and things will get postponed and pushed down the road. We've heard from the public already that they want action from this Board. Thank you.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Ray, I guess just kind of a question, but I can say yes, the Wave 6 data for 2024 won't become available until the middle of February, so I think if this Addendum were considering a specific percent reduction, that will require the TC to do some projections with the new 2024 data to come up with the options for what would the reduction be.

The TC wouldn't be able to meet until, I don't know, early March, and then the PDT perhaps in the background could be working on, you know what are different regional breakdowns, but right, we wouldn't have a TC report with updated projections with 2024 data, probably until late March. It will be a tight timeline, I think.

CHAIR WARE: All right, Mike Luisi, you're good. I've heard lots of questions, which is great. I have not heard any perfections or amendments, which is totally fine. Mike, you have a motion to amend?

MR. LUISI: I'll be the first one to actually follow through with what it was you were asking for. I think what has already been brought up about the timing of all of this. I know that there are concerns about when final action would be taken, in order to allow for some of the states that start their fishing seasons earlier, to have everything in place and ready to go starting in 2026.

We're one of those states, I know Virginia is as well. I would move to amend to strike the word summer and modify that to annual 2025 meeting, to give us a little more time. Not that it couldn't be done before that, but that would be the end date for which we would make a final decision for 2026.

CHAIR WARE: I think your motion to amend is to replace the word summer with annual.

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MR. LUISI: Well, we could say final action shall be taken by the annual 2025 meeting.

CHAIR WARE: Let's give staff a second to work that up. All right, Mike Luisi, could I get you to read this motion to amend into the record, please.

MR. LUISI: Of course, thank you. **Move to amend to replace at the summer with, by the annual.**

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have a motion by Mike Luisi, is there a second? Pat Geer. Mike, do you want to give any other rationale or you're good?

MR. LUISI: I just think the timing is important, it's been an ongoing saga between the states as to when final decisions need to be made. I also understand that in support of this in the work that we're planning, there may be a hiccup along the way. You know the summer 2025 will be here before we know it, I just thought by adding a little extra time, putting an end date to this discussion and the selection of management options for 2026 would be better served in October next year, rather than the summer. It just gives us some more time, that's all.

CHAIR WARE: Pat Geer, as seconder, do you have a rationale?

MR. PAT GEER: I agree with Mike, with the term saga with this, because we've gone through this for a couple years now, where our commercial fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay are starting in January. If we don't get something in place by October, you know we're running into trouble. I'm fine with October, I think that's great. I mean it will still allow us to meet our goals with our commercial fishery in the start of 2026.

CHAIR WARE: Just to focus the Board now, we are in our underlying motion. We have a motion to amend on the timing or potential timing of action under that motion to amend.

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Cheri Patterson, you have your hand up. Do you have a question, it sounded like?

MS. PATTERSON: Yes, I have a question to the makers then the seconder. Forgive me if my memory is not serving me correctly, but I thought that in Board action that late in the year was problematic for Maryland and/or Virginia to actually put something in place for the commercial fishery in the following year.

CHAIR WARE: Go ahead, Mike, and Pat, you can both answer, no problem.

MR. LUISI: Yes, Cheri, it certainly, we need time before the end of the year to prepare for the following year. But I think in talking with Virginia, I think October is a time for when, had we been back in October and made final decision, this past October we would have had those implemented by January 1st. It's moving into December that got things complicated for us.

I think October should be a focal point in moving forward on striped bass management changes, because the states that need to have that little bit of time between the decision and the start of the season, I think it gives us enough time by adding that additional, even though we're adding time to the process, in this case, we still have what we need to get things in place by the start of 2026.

MS. PATTERSON: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: I'm looking for comments on the motion to amend. Eric Reid and then Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. ERIC REID: I just have a process question. Here we are with a ton of public comment sitting in front of us, and then I don't know how you did all that work, but anyway, thank you for that. If we initiate an addendum, do we have to go back to the public, which will take time?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, we would have a public comment period for a Draft Addendum.

MR. REID: Okay. That may delay or takes more time. I guess that is my question, can the staff support final action by the annual meeting at the latest or not?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, we could support that. I think it would be within our typical addendum process of having the one meeting cycle to do all the hearings and comments.

MR. REID: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson Hasbrouck and then Bill Hyatt.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, I also have a process question, not specifically to the underlying motion or to the amendment, but a process. Whether we implement something today or not, whatever that level may be or if we defer it for another year, and come to some level of reduction.

What is the timing, in terms of, when are we going to know how successful we are here before we get to 2029? If we do something for 2025, will there be an update in 2025 or 2026? If we don't do anything until 2026, are we not going to know until 2028 how we're doing, at which point it's going to be too late to do much of anything else?

DR. DREW: There are two ways to know. One you obviously could do a full assessment update, which we have almost a year on the lag for the data and when we present to you. The other option obviously is just monitoring total removals, and I think we'll know as we did with 2022 where we could see that we had greatly exceeded what we thought the trajectory of the catch was, and we just take emergency action without an update.

I think sort of the timeline to keep in mind is, we are scheduled to complete a benchmark assessment in 2027. We're on the schedule for the June SAW/SARC for 2027. If the Board would like to schedule a full assessment update

sometime prior to that, obviously that is additional work that would place the burden on the TC as we are working through the benchmark. But we also have the ability to just monitor catch, to see if we are aligning with our removals.

Sort of scenarios, in order to see are we roughly on track with our prediction about F increasing and then decreasing or not, would take less time and would maybe be an easier check for the Board, in terms of evaluating our success. But I think the decision about when to have the next assessment update is maybe something that could be discussed at our January winter meeting, in order to decide if we're going to put that on the schedule for 2026, or just wait for the benchmark in 2027.

CHAIR WARE: I still have Bill Hyatt and then Jim Gilmore, I did see your hand on the webinar, so you will be after Bill.

MR. HYATT: This is a follow up to the question on timing that Eric just asked. He asked about whether or not public comment would be included should this motion be approved. With the change that we've made to go from summer 2025 to the annual meeting, my question is, not only would public comment be included, but would that time schedule allow for inclusion of data from Waves 2 and 3? I understand that all of 2024 would be available, but also in my mind, to reap the benefits of the additional timeline, you would need to be able to include Waves 2 to 3 data.

MS. FRANKE: Good question. Wave 3 data for 2025, so that is data for May and June, will become available approximately around August 15, so the answer is no. We would not be able to include that Wave 3 data, because the Board would have to have a Draft Addendum approved for public comment at the August meeting for action at the October meeting, and that Wave 3 data would not be available yet.

CHAIR WARE: Like I said, Jim Gilmore.

MR. JAMES J. GILMORE: It's a clarification or a follow up to what Cheri's question was. Mike's

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response was we should be able to, so I wanted to just make sure we're clear on this. If we do go with this motion, that it would be a requirement to have those in place by 2026. If a state, if there was an issue with implementing those because of the tag, whatever the commercial fishery was. That would raise a noncompliance issue. I was just expecting that to be a yes or no, so back to Cheri's original question. Would both Virginia and Maryland be able to implement those without any problem?

CHAIR WARE: I'll go to Maryland and Virginia.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, Madam Chair, and Jim, yes. The answer is, yes. Unless the annual meeting is somehow postponed until late November, we would be fine, as long as the decision is made in October, if there are any commercial restrictions that we need to incorporate into our management plan for the following year, October is our end all deadline on that, so we'll be fine, as long as it's made in October.

MR. GEER: Jim, in regards to Virginia, yes, we will be able to do it, with an October date we will be able to do it by the end of the year.

MR. GILMORE: All right, thanks, guys.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I have Max Appelman.

MR. APPELMAN: Again, on timeline process. In the motion to amend to switch out summer and annual, would that mean that a PDT would not strive to bring a draft document for approval in May anymore, and would use that as an opportunity for feedback, or could that still be on the table to buy us some wiggle room if that were to not work out?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, I think the PDT could still strive to bring a document to the Board if the Board made it clear that they wanted to see a draft document in May, and I think this just leaves the option open for the Board to take more time to perfect that document and come

back to it, and approve it for public comment in August, or if the Board could make decisions to approve it in May.

I think the PDT still could strive to bring a document by the May meeting if that is the intent of the Board. This motion, if the Board switched it to taking action by the annual, the PDT could still try to bring a document by May, if the Board made that clear that that is what they were looking for in May.

MR. APPELMAN: Yes, without providing my position on any of this, I think that if in the motion it read by the annual, I would still hope that there would be a push to get a document in May if it's possible.

CHAIR WARE: I have Nichola Meserve and then Danny Ryan on the webinar, again focused on the Motion to Amend and then if there are no other hands I think we can start the voting.

MS. MESERVE: I just wanted to ask what the dates of the annual meeting are, they are not currently on the ASMFC webpage. I ask, because this really has been a sticking point for a number of states, and a number of actions as to what the date is. I really want to make sure that it's clear that October, if that is when the Board meeting is, is not going to be an issue. I also think that some of the interest in this addendum though is that it provides for more time to do public education awareness, so bumping things back further into 2025 also erodes the benefit of some of that.

CHAIR WARE: Toni, dates on the annual meeting.

MS. KERNS: I believe the contract was signed last week, or it will be signed this week, it is October 27 through the 30th, so the last week of October.

CHIAR WARE: All right, on the webinar we have Danny Ryan.

MR. DANIEL RYAN: I guess I just have a clarifying question in relation to the question that Bill asked, and I understand that the Wave 3 data won't be available to include and to have public comment on that. But by extending from the summer meeting to

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the annual meeting, does that give the Board and the TC the ability to use the Wave 2 data? Will the Wave 2 data still be available for use if the extension were not in place?

MS. FRANKE: To answer that question, the 2025 Wave 2 data, which would be from March and April, would be available mid-June. Sort of, to Max's earlier question as well, any document the PDT brings forward at the spring meeting in May, will not have any Wave 2 data available. A document that is brought forward for Board approval for public comment in summer could have Wave 2 data available.

MR. RYAN: Thank you, Emilie.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so I don't have any more hands on my list, so just to focus the Board, we're on the motion to amend. I think we'll do a 30 second caucus, just because there are some states that have Commissioners online, and then we'll vote. I know there is a lot of members of the public online, and we have some in the room that are hoping to comment. Just to set expectations, I will absolutely go to the public when we are considering the underlying motion versus the motion to substitute.

If we have motions on recreational versus commercial, apportionment or tools, I will go to the public. I am not going to on this motion to amend on summer versus annual meeting. But I do want folks to know, I know you're online, and we'll definitely accommodate those comments when we get to some other motions, so a 30 second caucus. All right, is everyone ready to vote?

Actually, we'll ask states with members in the room, you'll be the one raising your hand. I think Danny for D.C., you're on webinar, so we'll look for your hand online. Oh, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also, I think you're only online. All right, so this is on **our motion to amend to replace summer with the annual meeting. All those in favor of the motion to amend.**

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**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware and District of Colombia.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. KERNS: Maine, New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. KERNSE: NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? Okay, so the motion to amend passes 12 to 2 with 2 abstentions.** All right, so we now have an amended underlying motion. My goal is to finish perfecting this motion before we go to lunch. Are there any other perfections to this underlying motion on the Addendum? Okay, so Emerson Hasbrouck, do you have a motion to amend?

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, I have a question. A question I guess for the maker and the seconder. The first sentence says to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029, in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality by balancing socioeconomic impacts. What is it that we're going to be balancing those socioeconomic impacts against? Are we balancing those against rebuilding, or are we balancing the socioeconomic impacts to the private angler, as opposed to the for-hire industry as opposed to the commercial sector? It's not clear to me what we're balancing here.

CHAIR WARE: The motion is technically a property of the Board now. Adam, if you would like to respond you can, but otherwise you don't have to.

MR. NOWALSKY: I just want to give you a hug for saying that. I would defer to the Board specifically for that. You know we heard an awful lot from the public. The conversation around this table has been about socioeconomic concerns for a long time. We understand that there are impacts from no harvest versus no target.

We understand that there are impacts about recreational versus commercial. We understand that there are impacts from one region versus another. I think everyone of the options that we are potentially contemplating today, or we would contemplate in this Addendum, has a socioeconomic impact.

I think that this statement is a signal to the public, as well as a message to the PDT to give the Board information to justify our actions with whatever information is available, whatever can be analyzed, to give us information in order to make a decision that best weighs those concerns that we've debated, as well as the public has brought forward to us. That is the best answer I can provide you for myself, I would certainly welcome yourself or any other Board members about further clarifying something they want specifically detailed in this motion with regards to that.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson, you're all set? Joe Cimino, additional perfection?

MR. JOE CIMINO: I mean just to that end. You know the maker of the alternate motion, so to speak, talked about at least one very wide region having all the same closures. I think this gives us the option to explore, should Delaware through North Carolina have a different seasonal closure than Connecticut through New Jersey or Rhode Island through New Jersey, since no motions have passed yet and the regions aren't specifically laid out. But those are economic impacts that could be decided through an addendum process. Where are the appropriate seasons?

CHAIR WARE: I'm not seeing any other hands-on motions to perfect or i.e. amend this underlying motion. What I'm going to ask is that staff put up the motion to substitute on the board. During lunch I would ask folks to think about if you have a motion to amend for a substitute motion.

We'll start with that after lunch, I think we get a half hour for lunch, so 12:40 we're going to be back online. Lunch is provided outside. This is also your opportunity for a bio break, and at 12:40 we will be back here and I will be asking for motions to amend the substitute. Thank you.

(Whereas a lunch break was taken.)

CHAIR WARE: All right, we are calling the Board back into session here after a lunch break. As to remind folks where we are at, we have an underlying motion, which is a motion for an Addendum, we've perfected that motion. We're now working on our motion to substitute and perfecting that. Once both motions are perfected, we will have a Board discussion comparing the two motions. Right now, we're just focused on the motion to substitute, and if there are any amendments to this motion to substitute. Jeff Kaelin.

MR. KAELIN: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a motion to amend. That motion would change the first sentence to read, commercial quotas by 1 percent. In other words, the 9 percent recreational cut and the 1 percent commercial cut, which I'll speak to the motion if I get a second.

CHAIR WARE: We're just going to give staff a second to get that up, and then we'll have you read it into the record. Okay, so Jeff, see it's all the way at the bottom there. Yes, hopefully you can see it.

MR. KAELIN: Yes, I **move to amend the commercial reduction by replacing 9 percent with 1 percent.**

CHAIR WARE: It looks like Emerson Hasbrouck is seconding the motion. Some rationale, Jeff?

MR. KAELIN: Yes, you know we talked a minute ago about socioeconomic impacts, and I think this amendment would create equity, fairness and establishes relative accountability for the sectors, based on actual removals.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson, do you have any rationale as a seconder?

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MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, Jeff said it pretty well. I really don't have much to add, other than this more closely represents the contribution by the commercial fishery to total removals.

CHAIR WARE: We're now going to take comments on the motion to amend. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I am in favor of the motion to amend, but will you still take questions on just the motion itself, because I just wanted to ask the maker of the motion. As usual it's a very thorough, very well-crafted motion by Nichola, but I just had a question as to why 9 percent. You know we heard from the TC that anything less than 10 percent really would be hard to measure. Obviously on the commercial side it would be much easier to measure, but on the recreational side in particular I'm sure it's very much a difficulty there. Just curious about that.

MS. MESERVE: Thank you for that question, John. The 9 percent was based on the average percent reduction of the five projections in Table 1 of the TC memo, so not the lowest, not the highest, trying to compromise and meet somewhere in the middle, still provide for maintaining SSB at a high enough level to support recruitment when the environmental conditions are right, and ward off an increase in fishing mortality that would take us off the rebuilding trajectory. That was the basis in an averaging approach.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we are going to focus on the motion to amend. Dave Sikorski, you have a comment?

MR. SIKORSKI: I just want to speak against the motion. I think this Board has had trouble with proportions and percentages in this striped bass fishery in recent years, and I think some of that, the cause of that came from my state and of the jurisdictions in the Bay, coming up with this idea. I think all it does is further weight the ratio of recreational to commercial.

We're already roughly 90/10, but then to multiply it again just completely ignores that proportions and percentages already take care of it. Ten percent of the fish removed are believed to come out of the commercial fishery, so why 1 percent? What does that actually do? Equal percent reductions are easy for people to understand. They are equitable, just by their nature.

We're talking about how many removals we had last year and previous years versus how many we didn't make moving forward, and so undercutting that goal and placing it on less reliable data on the recreational side of things is a mistake. We've done it already, let's stop doing that, and so I speak against this motion.

CHAIR WARE: I'm not seeing any other hands so I am going to go to the public and then we'll come back to the Board. I'll take two comments from the public. I'll look for one in the room and one on the webinar, so in the room, Mike Waine. Keep it at two or three minutes, Mike.

MR. MICHAEL WAINE: Yes, I'll be even shorter, thank you, Madam Chair. Mike Waine with the American Sportfishing Association. I'm just going to echo what Mr. Sikorski said, and this is about being equitable. We've got anybody that contributes to fishing mortality must participate in conservation. I just question if the Board continues to give conservation passes, is it realistic that we'll actually achieve such significant conservation goals in the biological reference points for this fishery. Thanks.

CHAIR WARE: To the webinar I see Marcin Puzio, hopefully I said that name correctly. This is a comment on the motion to amend replacing the commercial reduction with 1 percent. Marcin, you are unmuted, it looks like.

MS. KERNS: Marcin, we can't hear you on our end, so I would recommend checking your microphone connection, and we'll go to the next person, and we'll come back to you.

CHAIR WARE: The next person I had was Joseph Albanese, this is a comment on the motion to amend.

MR. JOSEPH ALBANESE: Yes, hi, my initial question I guess has been answered in the great presentation by Emilie. I just want to say, I think that to some of the cynics that think that the Board doesn't listen to the public, I think Emilie showed that that is not the case at all. She did a great, thorough job capturing all the different comments from the public.

But if I could go back to one slide that you presented, Emilie, I think there was one slide that contradicted another one in the Advisory Panel Report. One slide it said there was 1 AP that seemed to want to maintain the status quo, and then the next follow up slide was that 8 AP supported the status quo, so I wasn't sure which one it would be.

Then lastly, I just wanted to comment that someone once said not to decide is to decide. I don't know who gets credit for that, but I think if the Board does decide to continue with the status quo, I think that is a decision, and that is in compliance with the public, who seems to want the Board to take action. Maintaining a status quo does take action. Anyway, can you answer that contradiction, Emilie?

CHAIR WARE: Hey, Joseph, so we are not in a question phase right now, we're looking for comments on the motion to amend. If you have a comment on the motion to amend, I'll take that, otherwise we're going to move on.

MR. ALBANESE: The previous motion to amend I support, this one I don't. It's too complicated for me, to be honest, I can't make a decision on this one.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, thank you so much. We're going to go back to the Board now. I saw some additional hands go up. Yes, Robert Brown.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN: I'm opposed to this motion that is on the floor. Last year the commercial fishery just had a 7 percent cut. We haven't even had time enough to see what is the result of that to start with. Back in 2018 we had a 20 percent cut. We had another one in '22, and then we had the 7 percent again last year.

If you look at the commercial fishery, and you look at these, we have less than 9 percent or right at 9 percent now, less than 10, that if you look and see every time that we get a cut, and if you see things getting better, it's not. The reason it is, our percentage is so small, and we are a minority into the fishery now. What is happening is, the small part we're getting is so insignificant, what we are now, it's not maintaining. You can't see where anything is getting better by cutting the commercial fishery. You've got to realize that nobody owns the fish. The commercial fishery doesn't, the recreational doesn't. It belongs to everybody. The person who is not into the water, the person who, say he plays golf on weekends or whatever he may do, and he wants to go out and have fish for dinner.

The commercial fishery are the people who serve that fish to those restaurants. I also heard during some of the testimony here earlier rapid analysis. It was not enough time to do the complete project. They were uncertain of many of the things that may come out of it. We need to take time and do this right. We are opposed to any change, status quo. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Just to clarify, I think you would be in favor then of the motion to amend, which is reducing from 9 percent to 1 percent. I just want to make sure it's correct for the record.

MR. BROWN: Well 1 percent is better than 9, but at this rate, we just had 7 percent taken last year. I'm not in favor of no cut at all at this time, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Got it, thank you very much for that clarification. Dennis, do you have a comment on the Motion to Amend?

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: It seems to me that replacing 9 percent to 1 percent really will not have an effect, being that the commercial fishery has not been catching their quota for a good number of years. I don't see how they will be affected at all. Surely, we don't want to affect anyone.

But the truth of the matter is, is that in our actions today we could affect a lot of people, and that is the pain that goes along with the condition that the fishery is in. But again, if the commercial side was catching their quota, to me it would be a different story. Then they would realize that cutting 1 percent or some other percentage off the commercial quota really doesn't, from my point of view, does not have an effect.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola Meserve and then John Clark.

MS. MESERVE: My preference is for the 9 percent across the board, but I'm open to considering something a little bit less for the commercial fishery, but 1 percent just doesn't pass as a straight taste test for me, because it is not a meaningful contribution.

CHAIR WARE: John Clark.

MR. CLARK: First, just to Dennis's comment. We do cap our quota and 9 percent or 1 percent would be a reduction to what our fishermen catch, but 1 percent is better than 9 percent, but once again, I think that if this is the route we go, I would prefer to see this. But I think as has been stated many times, commercial fishery we know how much they're catching.

Based on what we've heard today, 9 percent, especially with what we're going to be doing recreationally, we don't know what kind of impact it will have. But 9 percent we know, that takes 9 percent out of the revenue of our fishermen. We've been cutting them and cutting them, and I just don't think it's fair to take the same amount out of both fisheries.

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CHAIR WARE: Jim Gilmore.

MR. GILMORE: Just following along Dennis's comment goes back a few years. In New York the last two years, we harvest out our full commercial quota last year and again, right now we're at 99 percent of our quota. Any reduction to the commercial fishery now is going to have an impact, but that 1 percent I'm not particularly thrilled with. I don't think that maybe is meaningful, but there will be a reduction if we come up with a percentage.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to see if there are new hands first. I'm only seeing people who have spoken already. Okay, so I'm going to allow Robert T. Brown then Dennis, and then we're going to caucus.

MR. BROWN: Yes, in reply to Dennis. There is a reason why we can't catch our quota is the way because it's in the allocation. Allocation goes through the state. We would have to over allocate our amount of fish to catch it, because some of our fishermen don't fish. We could catch more.

It's not that we're not catching it, it's that we cannot go over our quota, because if we do, we end up and get penalized for the next season. The way it is now, we're coming as close as we can to it without going over it, trying to stay within the means and what we expected part of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to keep us in compliance. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Dennis.

MR. ABBOTT: I do stand corrected on my statement regarding the quotas in New York and Delaware, but overall, we're still not catching, which means to me that the Chesapeake Bay is probably catching a lesser percentage.

CHAIR WARE: We're going to do a 30 second caucus, and then we're going to vote on our motion to amend. Okay, we are going to vote, so again, this is **voting on the motion to amend, regarding the commercial percent reduction. All those in favor of the motion to amend, please raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, New Jersey, Virginia, PRFC, Maryland, Delaware, District of Colombia.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed to the motion to amend.**

**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maine, New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. KERNS: NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? The motion to amend fails 7 to 7 with 2 abstentions.** Give us a second here to clean this up on the screen and then we'll get back to our discussion. I had heard from Marty Gary that you had a question on the motion. Is that question still out there or are you all set?

MR. GARY: Madam Chair, I wasn't sure of the timing on this, but this is from my earlier conversation I didn't quite close the loop on some of the New York concerns related to this one to the Hudson River. Is this the appropriate time to ask for that clarification?

CHAIR WARE: Let me just see. Are there any other motions on the commercial percent reduction? I'm going to table your question, Marty, until we figure that out. Great, Emerson Hasbrouck, do you have a motion to amend?

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, **move to amend the commercial reduction by replacing 9 percent with 5 percent.**

CHAIR WARE: We have a second from Ray Kane. Just give us a second, and then I'll go to you for some rationale, Emerson. Okay, so Emerson, I think you had already read that into the record, so move to amend the commercial reduction by replacing 9 percent with 5 percent. Do you have some rationale?

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, it's essentially the same rationale for the previous motion, that this more closely reflects the removals or the proportion removals by the commercial fishery.

CHAIR WARE: Great, and Ray Kane, as a seconder do you have any rationale?

MR. KANE: Yes, once again, the commercial fish landed are accounted for. We have hard numbers.

CHAIR WARE: Any new comments on commercial percent reduction from the Board? Okay, I am going to go to the public again, because we have a lot of hands up. Is there anyone in the room that would like to comment on this motion to amend? No, okay, so I'll take, I'm going to go to the webinar first, and the next hand I see is Brian Kelly. This is a comment on the motion to amend.

MR. BRIAN KELLY: Hello, Board, thank you for taking my comment. I am in favor of this motion for the 9 percent reduction in commercial and recreational.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, just to be clear, I think you actually oppose the motion to amend for the 9 percent.

MR. KELLY: Yes, so I would oppose.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, thank you for that clarification. If you have a question, I am going to ask you to hold it, I'm just going to look for comments right now. Yes, turn your question into a comment. That is one strategy.

MR. VICTOR HARTLEY: I'M Victor Hartley from New Jersey. If this motion ends up going to vote down the road, you are going to want to look at New Jersey as its own region, because we're very unique. We have no commercial industry, and we have a recreational industry. They are both the same, so you've got to look at that. New Jersey can't be clumped in with all these other regions, because it would never work.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for your comment, we'll talk about the regional breakdown in a little bit. I'm

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going to bring it back to the Board. Any new comments? Dave Sikorski, a new comment on the motion to amend.

MR. SIKORSKI: The member of the public just kind of reminded me of something that is important for us to consider, where New Jersey has that curve ball when it comes to how they allocate their commercial catch. Maryland did this proportional thing already a couple times over the last few years.

If I'm not mistaken, last year's numbers Bay wide was something like 65 percent/35 percent recreational versus commercial in removals in the Bay. Board members, again, how do you think we should be treating these really small year classes, by giving people passes or not? That is the vote we're making right here. Do we want to conserve the resource that is in the Chesapeake Bay to grow into a future fishery, because our commercial fishery has been catching upwards in the 90-percentile of its quota in normal years.

In fact, our coastal gillnet fishery couldn't have its quota put in place in time in 2024 and exceeded its quota by about 7,000 pounds, which it will pay back. Bottom line is, the only clearcut way to do this is equal percentage reduction of fishing mortality period. Stop the sector to sector to a subgroup nonsense. We need to save fish.

CHAIR WARE: Last comment from Adam Nowalsky, and then does anyone feel like they need a caucus? Okay, so we'll go right to the vote after Adam's comment.

MR. NOWALSKY: Given this follow up motion after the last motion that failed, Madam Chair, would you be able to provide any guidance as to what is your intention on this aspect moving forward? If this motion fails, are you going to allow a motion for say a 7 percent reduction? If this motion passes, are you going to entertain a motion for say a 3 percent reduction instead, or can you provide some guidance as to whether

this is going to put this particular element of the substitute motion to rest?

CHAIR WARE: Future motions on percent reductions are in bounds, as long as it's not one we've considered. I would ask the Board to think about what is a meaningful difference in the percent reduction, in terms of this substitute motion overall. Follow up?

MR. NOWALSKY: That is actually a great segue then to what I would comment on regarding this motion. I'm going to remain opposed to it on the basis of a 9 percent reduction as per the substitute from 10 percent of the fishery is actually, if I'm doing the math right, less than a 1 percent total change in the removals, if I'm doing that math right.

We're now talking about parsing between 1, 5 and 9 percent of the commercial removals. We're talking about an impact to the total removals between 0.1, 0.5, and 0.9 percent. Even given the fact that every fish is supposedly counted on the commercial side. I think what we're talking about here, and the TC would agree is just imperceptible changes.

If there is going to be a reduction here that is considered equitable, it has to be the maximum extent practicable that is equitable from both sides. I think at the 9 percent we're already way below something that is perceptible, and now we're talking about 1 in 5 percent of less than 10 percent of the fishery. This is beyond parsing hairs at this point, Madam Chair, but I appreciate it, thank you. I'll be opposed to this amendment.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so I didn't see any other hands from Board members, so we're going to move to a vote. Again, we're **voting on the motion to amend, so the 9 percent versus the 5 percent. All those in favor of the motion to amend, please raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, New Hampshire, District of Columbia.**

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**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. KERNS: Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maine.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. KERNS: Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? The motion to amend passes 10 to 4 with 2 abstentions.** Give us a second to update the motion on the board, and we'll move to the next part. Marty, I'm going to you now for your question on the Hudson.

MR. GARY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. I would just turn to Nichola to see if I could get some clarity on how the motion impacts the Hudson River Fishery, which as a reminder is a slot limit of 23 and 28 inches, April 1 through November 30, just how you see the motion impacting that. What would be required and what the options would be if this motion were to pass, Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: Similar to Addendum II, where for these specific regional fisheries the states had to submit plans to achieve a percent reduction through a certain type of measures. The intent here would be doing the same thing, specifically with a seasonal closure. The motion doesn't specify any particular wave though, so that is flexible. But you would be looking for implementation plans by the winter meeting that would be for a 9 percent reduction in the Hudson River season length. I understand that there is less data to support these types of proposals, but as in the past the states would do the best that they can to justify the measures that they propose.

MR. GARY: Just a quick follow up, Madam Chair. The process for that would flow through the Technical Committee per usual?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so we would probably schedule a Technical Committee meeting in

January. We'll work with New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware to determine by what date would be reasonable to get an implementation plan to send to the TC.

CHAIR WARE: John Clark, do you have a question or a motion to amend?

MR. CLARK: Yes, thank you, Megan, but based on what Marty just brought out. I just wanted to make sure I understand it. For Delaware summer fishery we couldn't change the size limit, it's only the season. We would have to take like 9 percent of the days off, is that what it would have to be, because it has to be a seasonal closure?

CHAIR WARE: Based on how I'm reading the motion, I would agree with you that it's seasonal closures to achieve a 9 percent. If you want to move to amend that would be the tool.

MR. CLARK: Well, I don't know at this point. If we could amend it to maybe just add that flexibility to add for these area-specific fisheries, could I amend it to say seasonal or length reductions to achieve 9 percent reduction?

CHAIR WARE: Sure, so you're going to make that motion to amend.

MR. CLARK: Yes, just in case, I don't know what will actually work better for us, but I would like to have that flexibility.

CHAIR WARE: Yes, just give us one second to get that up. A second to the motion? Just to clarify, John, I assume this is for all three of the area specific fisheries?

MR. CLARK: Yes, I just wanted that flexibility, because they are all kind of weird and unique.

CHAIR WARE: John, can I get you to read that motion into the record that starts with the "For the area."

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MR. CLARK: Oh, with pleasure, Madam Chair. **For the area specific fisheries move to amend to add after seasonal closures, or size limit changes.**

CHAIR WARE: That's a motion by John Clark, we had a second from Nichola Meserve. You could give some rationale, John, are you all set on anything else?

MR. CLARK: No, I think it's been covered, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola, anything? All good. Any comments on the motion to amend? Seeing none; does anyone need a caucus? Okay, we're going to try something wild. Is there any opposition to the motion to amend? There is, so we're going to do a roll call vote. **We're voting on the motion to amend. This is adding size limit changes for area specific fisheries. All those in favor, please, raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, District of Colombia.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. KERNS: New Jersey.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. KERNS: Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? Okay, the motion to amend passes 13 to 1 with 2 abstentions.** Again, give us a second to update the substitute motion, and we'll continue on. We are still working to perfect our motion to substitute. I had a hand from Dave Sikorski. Do you have a motion to amend? Go for it.

MR. SIKORSKI: This is for the Maryland portion of the motion. I am going to speak to my intent,

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and then we can figure out how we do it right. My intent is that it would be that Maryland has the option of no targeting or targeting, to include no targeting or not include no targeting, and then continue to do that in Wave 4 to reach the goal here. But if we add harvest closure. Let me start over. I wanted to say that MD can use no targeting or harvest, or a combination of the two, to achieve however many days we need to get a 9 percent reduction.

CHAIR WARE: I suggest then maybe after no targeting you write and/or no harvest, and then I think it would be striking of 22 days. Does that match what you're going for?

MR. SIKORSKI: Yes.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, give us a second to get that up. While we're working to get that up, can I just get a sense from the Board. Are there any other motions to amend that folks are hoping to make? Okay, Adam, could I ask you to start writing that on a piece of paper, and then we could give it to staff? Thank you. Question for me, yes.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: Is there an opportunity to ask a clarifying question as well?

CHAIR WARE: On the motion to amend that we're talking about now, or just in general?

DR. McNAMEE: Sorry, it will be after the motion to amend.

CHAIR WARE: Yes, I will go to you after we dispense with this motion to amend. Dave, can I get you to read into the record your motion to amend?

MR. SIKORSKI: Yes, Ma'am. **Under MD Chesapeake Bay, move to amend to add "and/or no harvest" and strike "of 22 days."** The intent here is to land a 9 percent less fish killed by using a combination of no targeting or no harvest.

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to the motion, Dennis Abbott. Dave, do you have any other rationale or you're good?

MR. SIKORSKI: Yes, thank you. Ultimately losing days on the water has been a major issue for our for-hire sector. Some of the stuff I've talked about in every single meeting since I've joined this Board is related to closing days on the water when we're not saving fish, and Maryland has done that effectively in April.

Ultimately, our industry is at a breaking point within our fisheries, at a point where they are really unfortunately not catching much, folks. My gut tells me that in reality we're going to save enough fish, but not completely gut what is left of our recreational fishing community, if we can find some balance between no harvest days and no targeting days.

I think it's really important, and something I've heard from the public, and specifically business owners, is that the no targeting thing, while it seems like it makes sense, especially on our paper exercise here. Ultimately it sends out a certain tone to the public too, in a number of trips that could be great trips that people enjoy, that fuel economy aren't happening when people hear the words no targeting.

As our Board has struggled with it, I would not want to prescribe it the way the original motion does, and force Maryland to add more no targeting, and I think it's only fair that we have an opportunity to balance the no harvest and no targeting before we ultimately decide what to do. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Dennis, as seconder, anything else to add? You're good, excellent. Okay, so we have a motion to amend to and/or, let's say the no harvest option for Maryland Chesapeake Bay management tools. Is there any discussion on this motion? Okay, I'll go to the public for one hand. I did say I would go out to the public when we talk about different management tools. I'll see on the webinar, the next hand I have is Mark Ellis, this is commenting on the motion to amend, so either no harvest or no targeting closures in Maryland in the Bay.

MR. MARK ELLIS: Comment is on the motion specifically. I think a no targeting closure is going to absolutely disrupt the recreational industry that supports this fishery, in terms of the hotels, restaurants, other bookings, tackle, what have you. I really don't understand on this motion or the other motion, that is why we keep going back and forth, because we're taking out the very fish that are going to rebuild this stock by not continuing to share the recreational and commercial reductions.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Mark, I'll bring it back to the Board, last chance for comments on this motion to amend. Seeing none; again, we'll try something wild. **Is there any objection to the motion to amend? Seeing none; we will approve the motion to amend by consent.** Next, I had a question from Jason McNamee. You have a question on the motion to substitute?

DR. McNAMEE: I think I'm good, Madam Chair, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Love it, excellent. Adam, I'll go to you. Are you ready to make your motion to amend?

MR. NOWALSKY: Well, that depends on how quickly staff has processed what I had previously sent to them.

CHAIR WARE: We just got it, give us a second.

MR. NOWALSKY: While they're working on that, let me just go ahead and start speaking to it, if you would like me to, or if you prefer me to wait I will, Madam Chair.

CHAIR WARE: I think, Adam, I am going to have you just start talking about your motion and the general concept as they start to write it up, because I think it may take a minute to write that up. But if you want to describe what you're aiming for that would be great.

MR. NOWALSKY: Great, thank you. The motion that I will be making momentarily will focus on the no harvest element of the two regions, as well as the Virginia portion in the Chesapeake Bay. Specifically,

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I would like to see that language be consistent with the motion that we just passed for Maryland.

I would like to see no harvest replaced in the two regions, as well as the Virginia portion of Chesapeake Bay with consistent language that refers to no harvest or no targeting closures. There was a lot of debate during the AP and as well as the public comments about no harvest and no targeting. They both have pros, they both have cons.

Obviously, the no targeting aspect is something that has generated a lot of discussion amongst people who have for a long time advocated for conservation at all cost, are now pulling back from that stance to some degree, when they are faced with being directly affected by the need for conservation. Whereas, the no harvest aspect only comes with the caveat of longer seasonal closures, more impactful as a result of that than what the no targeting closures implement.

If we're going to go ahead and offer one geographic locale an opportunity here to discuss no targeting or no harvest, in terms of what their constituents best feel represents their needs. I think it would be appropriate to extend that to all of the geographic regions discussed in this motion.

CHAIR WARE: That was perfectly timed, Adam, because we are ready to go on your motion to amend, if you would like to read it into the record.

**MR. NOWALSKY: For Maine to Rhode Island Region, Connecticut to North Carolina Region and the Virginia/Chesapeake Bay Region, move to amend to add "and/or no targeting closures," and strike of "22 days and of 18 days."**

CHAIR WARE: Great, thank you, Adam, and we had a second from Emerson Hasbrouck. We're

now going to discuss this motion to amend. Yes, Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: It is not clear to me how this motion and the previously passed motion apply to the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. Can you enlighten me in that regard?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and the District of Columbia can each choose to match either Maryland or Virginia's closure.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson, my apologies. I should have gone to you as seconder, so I'll let you go next.

MR. HASBROUCK: Quite all right, no problem, we're moving along just fine here. This motion addresses an issue that has been concerning me, and that issue is equity and inequity. You know reading through the public comment, the public comment summary, the AP Report, speaking with fishermen, and as the Commissioner representing all citizens in the state of New York. I see that there is an inequity here in not addressing catch and release.

We know that catch and release doesn't remove as many fish, and when I say remove, I don't mean just harvest, I mean dead discards as well. But a lot of the comment is that everybody needs to sacrifice, because everybody will benefit. But then there is always the caveat, except we can't have no targeting, because by not having no targeting it provides an opportunity for anglers to continue fishing.

To me that is somewhat disingenuous, and I know that no targeting is difficult to enforce. But we've been ignoring the removals by people who continue to target striped bass during closed seasons and otherwise. Catch and release, I'm not against catch and release fishing, I think it is very good and it helps to reduce total number of discards.

However, that fishery, so minimum sizes don't impact that fishery, because they are not keeping fish. Maximum sizes don't impact that fishery. Slot sizes don't impact that fishery and seasons don't,

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and that was particularly clear through the public comment that it doesn't matter to them what the season is, just don't include no targeting, because we want to keep fishing. I've heard it from Commissioners around the table here several times today that we all need to participate in rebuilding, and I agree with that. That is why I seconded this motion.

CHAIR WARE: We just have a clarification from staff for Adam.

MS. FRANKE: In your motion, in the original motion it says for Connecticut to North Carolina, closures of the same number of days in Wave 2 and Wave 6. Were you also intending to strike that so it doesn't have to be the same number of days, or were you intending to keep that?

MR. NOWALSKY: I would say strike that, but just leave the combination. The intention would be to leave the combination of Wave 3 and Wave 5 for Maine to Rhode Island, and leave the combination of Wave 2 and Wave 6 for Connecticut to North Carolina.

MS. FRANKE: Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to go to our next comment. Adam, we will have you reread that when it's back up on the screen, and I'll let you comment at that point when you reread. Chris Batsavage, you're next.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Just so I understand for this Amendment if it would be applied. No targeting and no harvest would be applied regionwide, right? We're not trying to parse out which states and which region would have no targeting versus no harvest, if I understand this correctly, right?

CHAIR WARE: That is my understanding, that the region would have to decide which tool, it's not each state choosing which tool.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Great, thanks, I guess where my concern comes with this particular

application of no targeting is the Recreational Release Mortality Workgroup spent a lot of time on this issue, and we explored several different examples of no targeting closures for striped bass, as well as other species. They seemed like the ones that were, I guess most effective, were more limited in time and space.

Although we concluded that there could be some uses for no targeting closures in the striped bass fishery. We definitely kind of cautioned against doing them in a widespread level, especially right off the bat, where I think in some of these other no targeting closures that we explored were in place for a while, and it took time for them to become effective. I'm just worried that some regions will be taking less days closed, and thinking it would have the conservation benefit that it may not actually have.

CHAIR WARE: All right, Adam, I think we are ready for you to reread that motion into the record.

MR. NOWALSKY: For Maine to Rhode Island, Connecticut to North Carolina, and Virginia Chesapeake Bay, move to amend to add "and/or no targeting closures," and strike "of 22 days, and of 18 days, and of the same number of days."

CHAIR WARE: Do you have a comment you wanted to make?

MR. NOWALSKY: Yes, a comment regarding the no targeting aspect here. I appreciate Chris bringing up that point about the work the Workgroup did that I was also part of. I think with the purpose of these waves here are in large part because of the opportunity they present, particularly in the springtime. It's a spawning area, a time of congregation and that fall is certainly a high time of fishing activity. With regards to that Workgroup's work, I think this is a very targeted time with a reason for doing so. I would also offer a personal experience from just this past Saturday, fishing around the three-mile line. While I understand that this Board, the Workgroup has looked at a lot of enforcement in general. There is not a whole lot of cases made on the enforcement of no targeting, and

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that is a true statement. But this is an area of structure, just over three miles off Atlantic City, New Jersey, that had been a very popular area for the past few weeks. He took a Saturday in December, shortly after a high period of fishing, where Coast Guard Station Atlantic City just happened to be out doing some drills that day.

Guess what? There was nobody there striped-bass fishing on Saturday. While I understand that we talked a lot about the no targeting provisions that we don't have the cases to fall back on, the no targeting provision is a very effective conservation tool in the toolbox that limits the mortality on these fish through release fishing.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola Meserve and then last comment will be Emerson Hasbrouck.

MS. MESERVE: I'm going to speak in opposition to this amendment. The no targeting closures to the Bay are responding to unique environmental conditions there that increase release mortality. I'm more comfortable in that application for that reason right now. I was also reflecting on the Board's Workgroup that looked at this issue, and saw more reasons against them than for them at this time.

I also was struck by the fact that we keep on talking about anglers that harvest a fish and anglers that catch and release fish as two separate entities, and that is just not the case. We will impact many people in a more equitable way that I think some are thinking about it, as by making that distinction by having a no harvest closure.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to comment again. Just to go along with what Adam just mentioned. Even though there is difficulty in enforcing no targeting closures, those anglers who are conservation minded, who really want to help to rebuild this resource, will abide by that.

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Will everybody abide by it? No. I'm not under any illusion that because we have a no targeting closure that everybody is going to abide by it. We don't have 100 percent of the people abiding by minimum sizes and bag limits and so forth. But I think that conservation minded anglers will abide by it, and I wouldn't be surprised if we get 75 or 80 percent of anglers who might otherwise fished for striped bass in a closed season, who would now consider no targeting.

CHAIR WARE: We're going to take one comment from the public. The next hand I see is Thomas Matulonis, I apologize if I mispronounced your last name. Then we're going to caucus and vote. Thomas, it looks like you're unmuted and I just ask you to speak to the motion to amend.

MS. KERNS: Thomas, we cannot hear you. I would recommend checking your microphone, and we'll keep you in the queue for public, and Megan can go to a different member of the public.

CHAIR WARE: Next on the webinar I have Paul Haertel, again this is a comment on the motion to amend.

MS. KERNS: Paul, you should be able to unmute yourself now.

MR. PAUL HAERTEL: Okay, thank you. Yes, I support the motion. I believe that all sectors should have to cut back equally, including the catch and release guys. However, I would like to see it closed to no targeting during the time period when other fish are available to catch, because to close, say during November and December in New Jersey, it would be devastating to our tackle stores, because there is nothing else to fish for, particularly from the shore. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Paul. All right, we're going to do a 30 second caucus, and then we're going to vote. All right, we are ready to vote. **We are voting on the motion to amend. All those in favor of the motion to amend, please raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. KERNS: New Hampshire, Maine, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?**

**MS. KERNS: Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? The motion to amend passes 9 to 5 with 2 abstentions.** Give us a second to update that and we'll carry on. While we are updating the motion on the board, I think we had a question/comment from Rhode Island, so we'll go to you guys, and I would just ask if there are any other motions to amend the substitute motion, please see me now.

DR. McNAMEE: I originally had a motion to amend. However, the motion that just passed took care of what I was attempting to do, so there is no need for that anymore. I'll just take a moment though. The flexibility is what I was after, and that last motion kind of allowed us a little more flexibility in when the closures happen. I also wanted to note, this is going to sting for Rhode Island, being in this northern region, but you know, I feel it is the right thing to do.

Our fishery is more like those fisheries, and if we had been put into that other group. I think the idea here is to do something meaningful. This is a lot more meaningful for Rhode Island than it would have been in the other regions. I just wanted to kind of acknowledge that and get that on the record. Thanks to the makers of the last motion that took some heat off of what I was trying to do, so thanks.

CHAIR WARE: I have not seen any hands or received anyone coming up for a motion to amend. What I'm going to have us do now, we perfected both motions, congratulations. We are now going to debate the underlying motion versus the motion to substitute, so the Addendum versus the Board Action. I am going to do two in favor, two opposed, and then we'll just keep repeating that. I'll ask for new comments, so something that is new to the discussion, and we'll work that way until we are ready to vote. Could I see folks who are interested in commenting in favor of the motion to substitute, raise your hand, and those looking to comment in opposition to the motion to substitute. Great, thank you, we have a question from Max, we'll start with a question.

MR. APPELMAN: It's not written in the motion, motion to substitute. The overall intent to achieve a 9 percent reduction, which I think I heard when the motion was made. Now that the percentages have changed, I suspect it's a minor shift in what that total would be. But I don't know if that needs to be recalculated or reaffirmed with this motion to substitute, because the percentages for the commercial reduction have changed, commercial and recreational have changed.

MS. FRANKE: Thanks, Max. Can you clarify, you're asking.

MR. APPELMAN: The overall intent of this motion was to achieve a percent reduction, I believe. It's not written in there, but I think I heard 9 percent, which is why it was originally proposed as 9 percent for recreational season closures, and 9 percent for commercial quotas. Now that the commercial quota percentage has dropped to 5 percent, does that overall intent change? I suspect it is negligible, but I just want to put it out there, in case it needs to be recalculated.

CHAIR WARE: Max, as I read the motion, it doesn't say what the overall percent reduction is, it just says 9 percent for the recreational through season closures and 5 percent for commercial quotas. I don't think we have to update anything; I think your point is correct. The total overall reduction may be

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impacted, but that's not in the motion. We are going to move to two in favor, two opposed, so I'll start with Doug Grout, and then Matt Gates, speaking in favor of the motion to substitute.

MR. GROUT: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you all for coming here to work on this difficult decision. As has been stated, the reason we're doing this is to try and increase the probability that we will get our SSB back up to target by 2029. But one of the reasons we had this special meeting was because the Technical Committee was estimating that we were going to have an increase in our catch in 2025, by up to 17 percent.

That was going to throw us off our schedule of meeting our target, or at least decrease the probability of meeting our target by 2029. They also indicated that there were a couple things that we needed to decide on, and what our risk tolerance was. The first thing that I looked at was what is going to be the catch in 2024.

Originally, I was a little bit uncertain, but now that we have not only Waves 2 through 4 and Waves 2 through 5 estimates, I think there is a fairly good probability we're going to have a low catch in 2024, which will mean that our overall reduction that is needed, I think is going to be somewhat less. We're not sure whether it's going to be not taking anything or whether it's going to be 8 or 9 percent. I think that if we don't approve action today, we will do nothing to try and address the potential increase in harvest that is going to happen in 2025. We're going to be relying on trying to get an Addendum passed that will try to stabilize the effort, and F in 2026 to 2029, at a very low level. We like to try to, I think I'm going to support moving forward with this, because I think we need to try and do something right now to temper the increase in harvest that we're foreseeing in 2017. That is my reason and rationale for supporting this motion.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I have Matt Gates.

MR. MATTHEW GATES: The Board gave itself the ability to take action in the event that the assessment came back and said, we're not going to get to the target by 2029. That assessment came back and it did indicate that. Now we've had some subsequent analysis after that that says we may or may not get there.

It's not clear to me that we're really getting there, and given the current condition of the stock, the low recruitment we've had, I just think that taking Board action is the right thing to do now. That leaves us in a better position to achieve our target and leave us in a better position for the future, so thanks.

CHAIR WARE: We're going to move now to two opposed. I'll start with Joe Cimino and then Mike Luisi.

MR. CIMINO: Going from strongly opposed to opposed. I think it was important to include the no targeting closures. I think before that action was just a half measure, almost by definition, since we were ignoring 50 percent of the mortality. But I still think this needs to be done through an addendum process.

You know one of the things that I have seen for being several years on a TC for fluke and black sea bass, changing regulations constantly. Noncompliance, you know there were times where we were looking at a need for 10 or 12 percent reduction that we could have got it, just by people knowing what the regulations were.

People are allowing their fish to be measured by APAIS intercepts, if we just had compliance with the current regulations we would have met those reductions, and now we're talking about pushing this forward for, you know Wave 2 closure for states like New York and New Jersey, who now have to decide all of this at a regional level on, what are the right days, and are we doing nontargeting or no harvest closures.

That is really not the information that we got from the public yet. I'm strictly opposed to this now,

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because I think the timing is such that we need to do this through an Addendum process, and I think the TC has made it clear that you know the stock can handle that, but it's just a matter of Board decision.

CHAIR WARE: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Madam Chair, I'll pass my comment on to Dave Sikorski, he beat me fair and square with his hand. I would like to speak in support of the main motion, or in some reverse way if we get around again to that, I would be happy to jump in. But I'm going to give Dave the opportunity.

MR. SIKORSKI: Thank you, Mike. I started the day, or headed into this meeting thinking about, what can we do to set something in motion that leaves us there until we are guided by the Benchmark Stock Assessment, which should be November of '27. I think that a cut is necessary. After all the discussion we've just had, I'm okay with adding in the no targeting stuff, even though I don't think it's a meaningful way to manage this fishery.

I said a lot about that on the record last meeting. But ultimately, I don't support this because of the first line. You're going to talk about equity and pretend like 9 and 5 equal each other all of a sudden, we've made a mistake. It further undermines the Board's support of us, our ability to do our jobs, and it's just simple math.

Commercial caught fish, recreational caught fish, fish caught on a charter boat or all dead or they are all alive, and until we have a data system and a management system that can better shape our sectors, which we might get to eventually. I think doing it in these meetings with a need that this fishery has right now is embarrassing.

I would support this motion with equal percent reductions that are probably greater than 9 percent. But instead, I would rather we have an

addendum. Give us the tools in Maryland specifically, to solve some of the problems that we've created over the last 5 years in our fishery, because trust me, you're going to want more fish leaving the Chesapeake Bay in good condition, to support the growth in our fisheries.

Right now, it's just not happening. I think we're overharvesting a depleted stock. I think the difference between a recreational and commercial efficacy and efficiency in the water is playing out in the water, waters of the Chesapeake. Commercial fisheries are catching their quotas and our recreational fisheries, which are really highly skilled people in some cases, aren't catching fish day to day.

Some of our Board members went fishing with a really popular guide, Matt Filbert, and caught three fish on a full day fishing in the Chesapeake Bay. We need to save more fish. I think this is a less-than-ideal way of doing it. I prefer to focus on the Addendum, even though I wish we could really save a lot more fish in 2025. I opposed this as up there today.

CHAIR WARE: All right, we're going to go back to two in favor. Next, I had Emerson Hasbrouck and then Chris Batsavage. Looking for new types of comments.

MR. HASBROUCK: As the TC/SAS Memo points out, there are a lot of uncertainties going forward here, and it also has us question what our risk tolerance is going forward with striped bass. We can't predict the future, but we don't even know as of today where we are for 2024, much less going forward in the future. Therefore, I think we need to do something here today to reduce removals by some amount starting in 2025. I'm not in favor of putting it off for another year. I'm also thinking beyond 2029, in terms of the small year classes in recent years, both in the Chesapeake and the Hudson. I think that doing what we can here today to help improve spawning stock biomass is going to help us long term. Also, relative to the question I raised whenever it was, a couple of hours ago, I guess,

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about updates, in terms of where we are with removals.

I'm hoping that the rest of the Board is supportive, and we will probably have this conversation, I guess in October, in February, sorry, of providing us with removal updates, so we'll have a better idea of how things are going on that and we move forward. But anyhow, I support this substitute motion.

CHAIR WARE: Chris Batsavage.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, many of the reasons that I support the substitute motion have already been said. There are certain aspects of the substitute motion that I don't particularly favor, but I think the bottom line for me is, do we have the 2018-year class entering the Ocean recreational slot limit pretty much right in the middle of it next year.

It's the last good year class we have indefinitely, until we hopefully see another good year class in the future. That is the main thing, and as a result, we're going to need to focus on just maintaining the spawning stock biomass that we have, because we could be looking at some pretty lean times after 2029 if we don't get a little boost in recruitment in the next several years.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I'll go to two opposed, so I have Mike and then John Clark, just for folks in the public, I am going to go to the public after those two comments, so if you could raise your hand either in the room or online that you would like to comment, that would be helpful. Mike.

MR. LUISI: I'm going to speak in opposition to this motion in comments that support the main motion to initiating an addendum today. If we look back over time throughout the recreational striped bass management, there were many, many, many years in the early 2000s when things were just stable.

There was a long period of time where there was stability in the recreational fishery. As we have managed the fishery to reduce fishing mortality, we have continually added to the complexity of the regulations, that the states or the regions are having to deal with their recreational anglers and their public.

I see this motion, the substitute motion, which is taking action now, as just another level of complicated analyses piecemealed together to try to accomplish and strive to achieve a certain value, whether it's 9 percent, I guess it's 9 percent here, trying to get to a 9 percent mark on reducing the level of removals.

I don't support just a continued effort to add on to that complexity. What I would like to do, or what I think the Addendum does, is it provides us an opportunity to implement the things that we have learned over time. A few years ago, Maryland closed April to no targeting. We did it for reasons back then. We're looking at that fishery now thinking what we know about catch and release mortality, you know maybe the access to the fishery during that particular time of year is more important. Maybe it's something that we should be considering as we evolve and have to deal with the onset of the environmental conditions and the climate affects that are occurring throughout the East Coast and along the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas. This approach before us on the screen right now doesn't give us any ability to be creative, to rethink, to step back and to take what we've learned and apply it.

All it does is provides a prescriptive next step that we'll need to go back and start to work with our partners within the regions that we've been identified to be in, to come up with a strategy that might work. I don't know if Maryland and Virginia are going to be able to agree on whether we do a no targeting or a no harvest closure.

That is a conversation we'll still have to have. The other states in the ocean, those conversations are going to be had as well, based on the amendments that have happened to this. I'm very supportive of taking action in '26. Let's learn from what we've

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experienced in the past, and let's try to use some creative outlook into the future to establishing meaningful rules that apply during the times of the year.

You know it's that balancing act that was brought up earlier in the main motion, the balancing act of the impacts to the effects on the resource. I don't think we achieved that with this, I think we achieved it by taking a step back and looking at it holistically, comprehensively, and coming up with a strategy that works for 2026. Those are my comments, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I have John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Holy Cow, I see we're already at the ending time for this conference, so I guess I'll keep it as short as possible. But not much I can add, just saying that I think if we had had the data through even Wave 4, we probably wouldn't even be here right now, because it would have shown the probability of meeting the SSB in 2029 would have been over 50 percent.

I think this is unnecessary to take this action now. We'll have better data if we stick with the regulations we have through 2025, and we can take our time and come up with a good addendum that addresses all aspects of both the recreational and commercial fishery. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Emilie is going to just provide one quick clarification, and then we're going to go to the public. Two on the webinar, one in the room.

MS. FRANKE: I just want to remind the Board that if this motion passes and if regions were to pursue no targeting closures for their implementation plans, there are two sets of assumption for no targeting closures. The TC provided one where you assume striped bass only trips would be eliminated; they would no

longer occur. That is the shortest possible closure.

The other assumption is that those trips would still occur, but they would target a different species, so it would be a slightly longer closure. The TC can provide all of that information, both sets of assumptions. I think it would be up to the region to propose to the Board which assumption they would propose as most appropriate. At that point it would be back to the Board to review the region proposals. Just a reminder, there are two assumptions for no targeting closures. In the motion right now for the Maryland no targeting closure, one of those assumptions is specified, but for the other regions it's not specified, so it would be up to the regions to look at both of those assumptions and go from there.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so the first two hands I saw on the webinar were Patrick Paquette and then Rick Bellavance, so we'll start with Patrick.

MR. PATRICK PAQUETTE: Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I first want to appreciate the hard work that the Board wrestling with this comment. I've been doing this for a really long time, interacting with ASMFC management, and I see nothing but a dark reality for the future of the striped bass fishery.

More citizens want to catch these fish than I believe the stock can handle. All the long-term science points to a shrinking stock. The environmental conditions appear to be the problem, not any one sector or proportion of the sector. I see a future in the long term with seasons. I see the motion before you as the beginning of getting our way toward what is going to happen as we get to coming out of the next assessment.

I urge the Board to consider the Atlantic striped bass as being at high risk of overfishing in 2025. I urge you to consider that risk as the TC urged you to consider risk. I urge you to pass this motion and to begin transitioning all of us, all sectors into the reality of a smaller striped bass fishery, until the environment changes, and I just don't see that

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future in anywhere close to the near terms.  
Thank you for your work today.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Patrick. Next is Rick Bellavance.

MR. RICK BELLAVANCE: Thank you, Madam Chair, appreciate the opportunity to comment, and I thank the Board for their work, particularly Mr. Nowalsky and his amendment to put in no targeting closures. I think that is a move forward, but I still oppose this motion. The substitute, I think it singles out Rhode Island a little more than the other states, and being from Rhode Island, I don't like that.

I think there is a lot of confusion about how these negotiations are going to work in the different regions. I think that should have been clarified a little bit more, and I think it feels to me like a rush job. I feel Mr. Luisi's comments about taking the time to do it right and thinking through all of these different management strategies is a better alternative, so I would oppose it, and thanks for the time to comment.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Rick. We're going to go to the room now, so I saw Mike Waine with his hand up, and then I think there is maybe one more hand, and then we'll come back to the Board.

MR. WAINE: Thank you, Madam Chair, Mike Waine with the American Sportfishing Association. I oppose the substitute and support the main motion. I think the public process is really important for such a significant decision of season closures, and it seems like on the fly the Board has chopped up this motion to look a lot like the conservation equivalency process that I think everyone had opposed moving forward with, given the status of the resource. I think giving the Addendum the opportunity to consider this more thoroughly, really develop options out that the public can consume and provide input on is the best path forward. You guys know that I'm part of a lot of these fishery management discussions and this

is probably the most unique fishery that ASMFC manages, especially recreationally.

I look at the public comments and I know there are millions of striped bass anglers out there, millions, and I'm only seeing 25-2800 comments from a lot of the same people that we know have been commenting. As an organization, we're going to work with our members to try to get more people integrated into this process.

We know that the recreational fishery is very diverse, and I don't feel like the public comments really are a good reflection of that diversity. Where is the opportunity to get those individuals into this process? Where is the opportunity to give folks the chance to get involved and engaged? I don't think it's on the fly with this substitute motion.

I challenge the Board to go the addendum route and reach out to the constituents that they haven't heard from. Don't talk to the same folks that you've been talking to the same all the time. Find the people who care about this resource, and value it in a way that their voices should be heard too, and as will reward you as an association yourself. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Mike. Is there one more hand in the room, because I saw a person with a hat. I saw your hand first. I forget your name, I apologize.

CAPTAIN VICTOR HARTLEY: I'm from New Jersey, Captain Victor Hartley. I don't paint a doom and gloom on this fishery, and I don't think anyone in this room has a crystal ball, because I would like to know why people think we're going to catch more next year. The Chesapeake Bay is not the primary source for this fishery anymore.

When I was younger, we fished in the Delaware Bay and we caught a ton. Those fish moved; we don't catch them there no more. Now we're in North Jersey, we see a ton of little fish coming out of the Chesapeake Bay or out of the weir. We have released more fish this year than we ever have, with the new rule, which hurt us.

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If we shut down for any amount of time, that will probably take a half of our business away. Your own numbers say that there is a chance we might make it by 2029, there is a chance we might not. It's not much difference in any of these percentages. I don't understand also why we're just looking. What if we don't rebuild by 2029? What if it's 2030? A businessman is in business. The plan is you make out good in five years, so what, maybe it takes six years.

We are releasing more fish right now than we ever have before, along with November this year, we lost 15 days due to weather. We're a 75 per boat, we're not the only boat that lost those days due to weather, and we're catching more fish. We're not worried. One other thing I don't hear anybody here worrying about is the bunker that is getting taken out by the Omega fleet is affecting our bass, it's affecting the whales that are around this year. We need to start worrying about some of the bait. But another thing you should think about if we have to take a closure is looking outside the box. We're in the for-hire sector. If we have to close the season for 20 days, okay, let's close it Monday to Thursday, but let's give everybody Friday, Saturday and Sunday to fish. That means we're not closed down for a whole entire month or 37 days, whatever it's going to be. It will give us a chance to make money every week.

All you guys think the same way every single meeting I come to; you've got to start thinking outside the box. How can we protect these people who make a living. Let me tell you, I know a lot, because I've lost houses over this industry, based on decisions that have been made here, and I've rebuilt, and it gets harder and harder. Now my kids are doing this. But that is all I had. You've got to start thinking outside the box, I mean not the same ways we do every single year.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, Victor. All right, so I'm going to bring it back to the Board. I've had two hands raised, and then we're going to go to

caucus. I had Jim Gilmore on the webinar and then Dennis, and then we're going to caucus.

MR. GILMORE: As much as I really would like to take some kind of reduction at this point, and when I was coming in there that was my mindset. By the way, Nichola has carried on the David Pierce tradition of motions that are just amazing. Anyway, the concern I have is really from a practical one now. When I look at the region that New York would be in, which Connecticut to North Carolina.

I look back, we were trying to do simple things like regional management for summer flounder and try to get consistent size, season, bag limits, and what we went through with that took years, and it resulted in noncompliance findings and lawsuits and a whole lot of other things. The big concern I have is that we're going to resolve those types of issues plus targeting/nontargeting, commercial/recreational blah, blah, blah, all the stuff that we talked about today, and do that in 6 to 7 weeks.

I think we're just getting ourselves into a real mess. For those reasons, as much as I am in really, I would like to vote in support of that substitute motion. I think the practicality of it, an addendum makes more sense. That was really stated by a lot of the other folks. We actually do this right and actually have something meaningful and sustainable changes.

CHAIR WARE: Dennis Abbott.

MR. ABBOTT: I guess I'm getting the last word.

CHAIR WARE: We'll see, we've had some hands go up, so we'll see how generous I'm feeling.

MR. ABBOTT: Okay, a lot of us are going to be leaving shortly, hopefully. Just stepping back, we're here because we took Board action a couple years ago that if we had recruitment failure or whatever, we fell below our rebuilding target we would take action. Here we come, we went out to public comment, we got 4,000 people. Contrary to Mike Waine, we'll never get a million people or a whole

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bunch more people. There are people who voice their opinions and there are people who trust us to do what is right. But right now, we're boiled down to making a choice. We have a choice in front of us to do something. The alternative is to do what the public blames us for not doing all the time, and that is kicking the can down the road. That will be the perception when we leave this meeting if we don't adopt this substitute motion. I don't think that anything I say is going to change anyone's mind.

I think people's minds are made up. They've probably been made up long before they got here. We've had a good discussion. Thank the Technical Committee for all the work that we put upon them, and hopefully we'll come to a conclusion here, whatever it is. Thanks.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, I'm looking towards the two people I saw hands go up. Robert, 30 seconds. Then we're definitely caucusing.

MR. BROWN: Yes, thank you, Ma'am. I'm making this very simple. We've got a lot of respect for the Technical Committee, and words I heard out of their mouth was rapid, analyzing it, not enough time for the project and they need more time. There are a number of things that I don't like with this motion that we're looking at now. I'm in favor of the main motion, and I just wanted to add that we've got to take our time and make sure we get it right this time, or as close to right as we possibly can. Thank you very much.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Robert, Max, 30 seconds.

MR. APPELMAN: I support action to ensure stock rebuilding, and what I'm really struggling with here is the process, and I was hesitant to raise my hand when asked for those in favor and those against, but given the credible range of projections, I'm just increasingly uncomfortable asking through this expedited process. I commented and voted in favor of an Addendum back in October. I still support an Addendum as the next best appropriate step in

this process. I don't see it as kicking the can down the road, necessarily. I think that the option that has been developed in this substitute is a great example of something that could be flushed out a little bit more in an addendum, especially if it is a viable option. I'll leave it at that. I'm going to vote against this motion to substitute and support the main motion.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, does anyone need time to caucus? Yes, 30 seconds to caucus and then we're going to vote. As a reminder, this is the time, five minutes, no. You get two minutes. I'm a hard bargainer, Emerson, two minutes. We're voting on whether to vote up the substitute or not. All right, I'm going to call the Board back to order. If you took a bit of a walk during those two minutes. We are going to vote. Again, we're voting on the motion to substitute, so this is, are you in favor or opposed to the motion to substitute.

New York, you get one more minute, because I have to read this into the record, I guess. **Move to Substitute: to take Board action to implement in 2025 recreational seasonal closures to achieve a 9 percent reduction and decrease the commercial quotas by 5 percent. The recreational season closures will be implemented regionally, as follows. Maine through Rhode Island, no harvest closures and/or no targeting closures in Wave 3. Plus, the number of days needed in Wave 5, to achieve a combined 9 percent reduction across both waves be implemented in uniform dates across the region. Connecticut to North Carolina, no harvest closures and/or no targeting closures in Waves 2 and 6 needed to achieve a combined 9 percent reduction across both waves to be implemented in uniform dates across the region. Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, no targeting closure and/or no harvest closure in Wave 4 to lengthen the existing closure (9 percent reduction is calculated with the striped bass only trips eliminated assumption.) Virginia, no harvest closure and/or no targeting closures at the end of Wave 6 (9 percent reduction.)**

**New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware area specific fisheries, seasonal closure or size limit changes to**

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**achieve 9 percent reductions. The regions/states will submit implementation plans for Board approval at the winter 2025 meeting week. If a region can't decide on uniform dates the Board will make the selection. The implementation deadline is April 1, 2025. Okay, all those in favor of the motion to substitute, please raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed to the motion to substitute.**

**MS. KERNS: Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, NOAA Fisheries, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: I think that is everyone, but I'll just check, any abstentions and any null votes.**

**MS. KERNS: North Carolina.**

**CHAIR WARE: That motion to substitute fails 4 to 11 with 1 null vote.** That's going to bring us back to that main motion on the Addendum, so we'll give staff a second to update here. Okay, does anyone need time to caucus on this now main motion? Doug, do you need time to caucus?

**MR. GROUT:** I would like to make a comment on this.

**CHAIR WARE:** Okay, keep it quick, and it has to be something new.

**MR. GROUT:** Yes. From my perspective we're not going to be gaining much information between now and when we have to start initiating this Addendum, because we won't know, to me a very important piece of information on what we need to do next, because we won't have any information on the 2025 harvest, how much it went up.

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If we do make any kind of measures this year to try and have in place by the beginning of 2026, we're going to have to come back once we find out what the harvest is in 2025. I mean that's the key thing. What kind of impact are we going to have on the 2018-year class when it goes into that slot?

I'm going to oppose this too, because I think if we're not going to do something now, we should actually wait until the year 2026, once we have 2025 information on our harvest to put in an addendum to see what we now need to do to get to our final target of SSB. That is my, thank you Madam Chair.

**CHAIR WARE:** Any other quick comments just on, we don't need a motion for status quo, I'll say this failing would be status quo, so that is why we don't do that motion. 30 second caucus, is that difficult? Okay, you get a minute, because I have to read it into the record. **Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029, in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts.**

**Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to those reductions, recreational season and size changes, taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest versus no target closures. Final action shall be taken by the annual 2025 meeting, to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fishery.**

Thirty second caucus. We are going to call the question; I appreciate everyone's allowing me a few seconds there extra. **We are voting on the main motion now; this is to initiate an addendum. All those in favor, please raise your hand.**

**MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, NOAA Fisheries, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.**

**MS. KERNS: Maine and New Hampshire.**

**CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions? Any null votes? Motion passes 14 to 2.** Okay, I think, Representative Hepler, you have a comment? Very quickly.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLISON HEPLER: Okay, thanks. I just want to be put on the record that the reason I voted no is because I think we need to do something sooner rather than later, and that was clearly what I heard from the public comments. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you. Okay, I think we have accomplished what we were brought here today to accomplish, so we have a motion that passed for an addendum. I expect staff will be reaching out about Plan Development Team membership at some point.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, we will reach out as soon as possible about a Plan Development Team. I'm not sure if we can get a Plan Development Team meeting before the winter meeting. I hope we can, but I think at the winter meeting at the very least, we would be looking for some additional Board guidance on what different options to include.

I think from a staff perspective, maybe a helpful place to start is the TC Report. If you have a chance to review the TC Report again and consider what options that aren't in there, like regional breakdowns that weren't in there in the first place that you would like to see, other things that you thought are missing from the TC Report, in terms of options that you want to see. I think that would be a helpful place to start, thanks.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, Emilie. Just a few things here. I want to thank MRIP staff. They were able to get us the preliminary Wave 5 striped bass data in advance, so a huge thanks top them for that. I want to thank obviously,

Emilie, for all her hard work, the TC, Tyler and Katie. We are blessed with some very good science communicators with this group.

That is not always the case, so I just want to thank them so much for their communication skills. I want to give a big shout out to Madeline, she is doing all of the motions, typing up all of your amendments and different ideas. She doesn't get a ton of credit, and I really want to highlight her today and thank her for her work. Emilie wants to say something.

MS. FRANKE: I also just want to say, it wasn't just me reviewing all the public comments, there were a lot of staff at the Commission who helped, so it was really a team effort.

CHAIR WARE: All right, I think we would just be looking for a motion to adjourn, made by John Clark, seconded by Dave Sikorski. Thanks everyone for coming and safe travels, happy holidays.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, December 16, 2024)

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board. The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

**FROM:** Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator and Plan Development Team Chair

**DATE:** January 21, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Request for Board Guidance on Draft Addendum III for 2026 Management Measures

In December 2024, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved the following motion initiating Draft Addendum III to consider 2026 management measures:

Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029 in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest versus no target closures. Final action shall be taken by the annual 2025 meeting to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fisheries.

As the Board discussed in December, the Plan Development Team (PDT) will work toward having a draft addendum ready for Board review at the 2025 Spring Meeting in May to consider approving for public comment. To meet the timeline of final action by the 2025 Annual Meeting in October, the latest the Board can approve the draft addendum for public comment is the 2025 Summer Meeting in August.

As specified in the motion, the PDT will consider potential reductions based on projections from the Technical Committee incorporating preliminary 2024 removals estimates. Projections will continue to be run with a target 50% probability of rebuilding unless the Board indicates otherwise. The PDT will also consider options for sector contributions to the reduction. For any commercial reduction options, the PDT will consider commercial quota reductions. For any recreational reduction options, the PDT will consider size limit changes and/or season closures. The PDT will discuss both no-harvest and no-targeting closures.

**To inform the PDT's work, Board guidance at the 2025 Winter Meeting is needed to further outline the scope of potential management options:**

### Recreational Modes

- For recreational measures, should the PDT consider different measures for the for-hire modes vs. private/shore anglers (i.e., mode split options)?

M25-06

### Recreational Size Limits

- Should the PDT consider recreational slot limits or minimum size limits? Or both?
- For slot limits or minimum size limits, how small and how large should the PDT consider? E.g., a 20-22" slot or 40-42" slot? What is too small or too big?
- For ocean size limits, should the PDT consider slot limits less than 28"?
- Is the Board's intent to protect the remaining strong year classes by having size limit options that avoid them?

### Recreational Seasonal Closures

- What type of equity is the Board looking for in seasonal closure options? Equity in the estimated percent reduction for each region? Equity in closure length? Other type of equity?
- For ocean season closures, should the PDT consider coastwide and regional closure options? Or only regional closure options?
- Are there specific ocean regions the PDT should consider? The PDT can start with the regional breakdown discussed at the December 2024 Board meeting of Maine-Rhode Island and Connecticut-North Carolina.
- Should the PDT consider seasonal closure options that split a reduction between two Waves? E.g., closed for x days at the beginning of that region's fishing season (Wave 2) and then closed for y days at the end of the fishing season (Wave 6).
- How small should regions be? Can a single state be its own region?
- Should seasonal closure options prioritize the shortest possible closures to achieve the reduction (i.e., closures during Waves when most removals are occurring)? Are there other timing considerations the PDT should consider for closure options?

### Other Topics

- Are there any other commercial or recreational management measures the PDT should consider?

**From:** [Joe Angelini](#)  
**To:** [Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Stripper catch enforcements  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 4:31:09 PM

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Sent from my iphone

I am a resident of York Maine

I paddle board on long sands beach and witnessed numerous boats catching strippers and gutting/filleting them and tossing the remainder off the boats

The remainder of the fish washed ashore on the public beach and judging by the size of the heads they were clearly not within the slot limit.

Not an isolated case the boats were there for most of the 2024summer months along with the gutting of the fish and the washing up on shore

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**From:** [Gerard C. Addonizio](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] striped bass  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 2:30:20 PM

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I agree with the asmfc's decision to not make any changes until more data is available. As with many other people I have spoken to, I disagree with the no targeting option as both drastic as a first step and also feel that it is totally unrealistic. When fishing from Cape Cod beaches, we use the same lures for blue fish that we use for striped bass. The only way this could work and avoid striped bass as collateral damage would be to totally ban fishing for periods of time, and I feel that this option should only be taken under very extreme circumstances. I have been surprised by your estimate for striper mortality with recreational fishing as my observation has been that the fish are being placed back into the water with much greater care than years ago. It seems to me that much greater research and attention needs to address the problem with juvenile development in the Chesapeake. Unless this is addressed, any kind of fishing restrictions will ultimately fail. I know that I speak for many people who are very concerned but fail to write to you about it. Thank you for addressing this important issue. Please alert me to any future webinars.  
Gerard Addonizio

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**From:** [paugustine3@verizon.net](mailto:paugustine3@verizon.net)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Re: Thank you for attending Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024 10:54:20 AM

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I listened to the complete webinar; reviewed the recommendations to address the current issues and expected the Board "had the guts" to take some action for the 2025 fishing year.

The information presented to the Board relative to stock status, projections, and other pertinent information, clearly pointed to the fact, immediate action was required to protect or reduce pressure on the year classes as noted. In addition, the public's overwhelming comments to take some immediate action fell on deaf ears and blind eyes. Special interest groups seem to have won the day, again.

The motion that passed to create an addendum was the right action to take for 2026 and beyond. However, IN MY OPINION, it should have been in addition to action taken in 2025 to reduce effort/mortality. Sooner rather than later, kicking the can down the road is going to catch up.

Respectfully,  
Pat Augustine

On Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 02:01:27 PM EST, Webinar Staff 2 <customer@gotowebinar.com> wrote:



## Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

Mon, Dec 16, 2024 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EST

We hope you enjoyed our webinar.

Please send your questions, comments and feedback to:  
[g2w2@asmfc.org](mailto:g2w2@asmfc.org)

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**From:** [Jonathan Barry](#)  
**To:** [Bob Beal](#); [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Striped bass no action  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 9:58:34 AM

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You're telling me grown men can't figure out a way to make money for a few years outside of striped bass commercial fishing, and you folks at the asmfc have absolutely zero backbone in doing your job restoring the stocks for striped bass when commercial guys bitch and moan for a few hours? The fish can't even breed anymore and you idiots say "No action".

Maybe it is time to shut your organization down and give your jobs to federal agencies.

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**From:** [Timothy Begin](#)  
**To:** [William Hyatt](#); [Sen. Craig A. Miner](#); [Robert LaFrance](#); [Justin Davis](#); [Rep. Joseph P Gresko](#); [John Clark](#); [Roy Miller](#); [Rep. William J Carson](#); [Craig D Pugh](#); [Daniel Ryan](#); [Rese Cloyd](#); [Stephen R. Train](#); [Pat Keliher](#); [Megan Ware](#); [Rep. Allison Hepler](#); [Cameron Reny](#); [Lynn Fegley](#); [Russell Dize](#); [Michael Luisi](#); [Del. Dana Stein](#); [Max Appelman](#); [David Sikorski](#); [Dan Mckiernan](#); [Nichola Meserve](#); [Raymond Kane](#); [Rick Jacobson](#); [Jennifer Armini](#); [Dennis Abbott](#); [Cheri Patterson](#); [Doug Grout](#); [Renee Zobel](#); [Sen. David H. Watters](#); [Jeff Kaelin](#); [Heather Corbett](#); [Adam S. Nowalsky](#); [Sen. Vin Gopal](#); [Emerson Hasbrouck](#); [Marty Gary](#); [Jim Gilmore](#); [John Maniscalco](#); [Fred W. Thiele Jr.](#); [Chris Batsavage](#); [Kathy Rawls](#); [Chad Thomas](#); [Jerry Mannen Jr.](#); [Michael Wray](#); [Kristopher M Kuhn](#); [Loren W. Lustig](#); [Tim Schaeffer](#); [Tyler Grabowski](#); [Anita A Kulik](#); [David M. Deloso](#); [Jason E. Mcnamee](#); [David V. D. Borden](#); [Sen. Susan Sosnowski](#); [Lt. Jeff Mercer](#); [Eric Reid](#); [Patrick Geer](#); [Jamie Green](#); [Emilie Franke](#); [Ingrid Braun-Ricks](#); [Ron Owens](#); [James Minor](#); [Danny Diggs](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Re: Another Failed Spawn  
**Date:** Monday, December 23, 2024 2:21:09 AM

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Hello - I'd like to start by thanking the representatives from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts for trying to do the right thing last week and put in some practical measures in to help rebuild the striped bass stock. Those efforts are much appreciated.

I'm extremely disappointed in the outcome from last weeks meeting. You have kicked the can down the road yet again and I fear for the last time before the striped bass stock completely collapses, again.

There's not much else for me to say other than, as one of the many citizens who has entrusted you to manage this resource, I'm extremely disappointed. I'm disappointed for all my fellow anglers who love this fishery, I'm disappointed for my son who may never get to enjoy it and I'm sad for striped bass who now seem destined to be on their way out.

The die has been cast and you'll have to live the decision you've made regarding this fishery, I guess unfortunately for the citizens you serve we'll have to live with the outcomes.

Happy Holidays,  
Tim Begin

North end fishing co

On Fri, Oct 18, 2024 at 1:49 PM Timothy Begin <[northendfishingco@gmail.com](mailto:northendfishingco@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good Afternoon - as I'm sure the board is aware there has been another failed striped bass spawn in the Chesapeake Bay - see below. This has to be the last straw that wakes the board up to take drastic action.

THERE ARE NO STRIPED BASS FOR A SIX YEAR SPAN TO RECRUIT INTO THE COASTAL STOCK. Which is a stock that is already over fished. How in the world can we keep allowing striped bass to be killed at the rate we are knowing there aren't any coming down the pipeline?

It's basic resource management, the change in a resource quantity is equal to the difference in the rate resources are extracted vs the rate the resource is replenished. Our resource is not being replenished at all and yet we're still extracting from it. That is by black and white, mathematical definition, unsustainable.

I'm an avid fisherman in the Boston area and the owner of a small fly tying side business focused on saltwater flies. I fish five days a week during the season and have done so for 30 years and this was the worst season of my life. I caught ONE fish over a two month period

this season, fishing five days a week. Now you can go ahead and say I'm bad at fishing and that's probably true, but I've never had an issue catching fish and enjoying the fishery until the last 3 seasons. The fishery is not in good shape and if this season is any indication it has basically collapsed for shore based anglers like me.

There is no relief coming down the pipe. WE CANNOT WAIT.

I'm voluntarily deciding to not fish for striped bass next season and probably into the future. That's thousands of dollars of economic input from me lost.

Here is a list of things I won't be purchasing next year and into the future because of the state of striped bass.

1. guide trips
2. hotels along the coast for fishing trips.
3. meals at restaurants in areas I fish
4. tackle at tackle shops
5. fly tying materials
6. gas to get to my fishing spot.... and there is so much more.

I also won't be selling any flies for striped bass next year.

WE CANNOT WAIT ANY LONGER, WE JUST CAN'T!!!!

Please do the right thing and take drastic action to rebuild the striped bass stocks. I don't want to have to explain to my kids that striped bass went the way of buffalo because a few people decided to not do the right thing.

The specific things we need to pursue are listed below:

- No more commercial striped bass fishing.
- No more recreational retention. It should be a completely catch and release fishery.
- No targeting closures in major spawning areas during spawning periods
- A major study should be performed on the potential reasons for poor spawning.

Tim Begin

North End Fishing co

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**From:** [Bryce Budrow](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** [External]  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 8:35:53 AM

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No change in the Atlantic striped bass regulations for 2025? I guess the ASMFC isn't really concerned about the declining fishery. Absolutely should've put a ban on all fish harvested. I guess too many people making \$ off this dying fishery to make any changes.

Regards,

Disappointed fisherman

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**From:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Stripe bass Management  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 2:40:07 PM

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**From:** Anthony Cappuccio <anthony.cappuccio176@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 16, 2024 4:21 PM  
**To:** Emilie Franke <EFranke@ASMFC.org>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] Stripe bass Management

Not taking action to is stupid. This fishery is in trouble, the stripe bass need help. This decision is ludicrous. How can the ASMFC need to do something, at least raise the size limit



**From:** [Info \(ASMFC\)](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Deeply Disappointed and Worried  
**Date:** Friday, December 20, 2024 10:05:03 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Steve Collins <steveperc@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 8:45 PM  
To: Info (ASMFC) <info@ASMFC.ORG>  
Subject: [External] Deeply Disappointed and Worried

With all due respect, as a responsible recreational fisherman, I am appalled by the lack of action taken to further protect and restore the striped bass population of the Atlantic states. I imagine there were plenty of passionate arguments on both sides of this issue and tough decisions are just that - tough. But what in the world is going on? Restore the biomass by 2029? That seems absolutely impossible at this point. You can't wait until it's too late.

I know your officials are in a very difficult position. But no action equals near death or maybe even extinction to our beloved fish. Shame. You need to do better.

Sent from Steve Collins' iPhone

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**From:** [Joe Deck](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Striped bass management  
**Date:** Thursday, December 19, 2024 2:19:47 PM

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I can remember when I was child it was always a joy to catch a fish no matter the size. I guess that was the thrill of fishing, between the way it would pull and having to bring it in without line breaking and adjusting, when line broke it was always upsetting especially when don't know what was on other end. It was even more of experience when fish would jump out water.

I can remember the striped bass regulation was around 3 feet long could easily be measured if bigger then yard stuck can keep it. Also was catching many fish.

The regulation changed to a smaller size fish and then a smaller size and again a smaller size. The fishing went to barely catching anything at all during peak spring/summer migration.

With the regulation as only that slot size of fish that is now once those small fish are that size and caught they are going to be kept. The larger ones are going to survive but eventually too old to produce eggs, there is no way to create more as most of those eggs from the smaller ones are sterile eggs.

That is going to leave a smaller amount of striped bass. Due to fewer eggs being left and most sterile.

I am thinking if put regulation back to 3 feet or even go larger to 40 or 42 to keep, the amount of striped bass is going to increase.

You may say but those ones are the ones with lots of eggs, but those smaller barely produced any and those that are bigger then the slot size can eventually dry up but since increasing size to keep, which are barely caught at 40+, there is still the abundance of eggs from those smaller to be fertilized.

Maybe a regulation 36"+ or 38"+ commercial size limit and 40"+ or 42"+ recreational size limit can within 3-4 years create a more abundant amount of striped bass.

I noticed it with the flounder as increased size limit and lowered amount can keep, there was more flounder caught and even though undersized still a good time was had. Also the lowering of amount to keep of bluefish has given more bluefish caught.

It is what to do to increase population of the fish lower the amount to keep and increase the size to keep.

Lots of people fish just to catch fish and have a good time out. Which is more then those fishing to catch a trophy or to get food as instead of buying the fishing stuff and driving their distance could have bought food or even went to market and bought fish to eat. Bloodworms a common bait to catch striped bass are around \$20.00 USD a dozen and hooks since having to use circle hooks are around \$6 to get 6 and lead weights are around 50¢ each at a 2oz weight to use in river or calm bay or up to \$2 to get a 5oz weight to use in ocean, so there is money right there to get food from market.

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

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**From:** [Thomas Devine](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Feedback striped bass webinar  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 6:27:47 PM

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I have high praise for the chairwoman of this webinar. She has the patience of a saint and kept to the topics, I.e. comment or question. I was only able to listen to the discussion on commercial reduction.

BTW one person's argument that the commercial quota is not filled was misleading. Since New Jersey has a commercial quota but has no commercial fishery, its quota is never filled. So the coast wide quota can never be filled.

New Jersey does use about 20% of the commercial quota for its Bonus Tag program. This still leaves 80% as an overall savings or conservation program.

Thank you,

Tom Devine

Hi-Mar Striper Club (NJ) Member

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** [RomanAround5246](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Emergency Striped Bass Meeting  
**Date:** Friday, December 20, 2024 10:18:50 AM

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**Hi ASMFC,**

**I am writing to you to voice my displeasure with the Board. For years we have heard about the shrinking population of Striped Bass. We have a council who's job it is to prevent the stock biomass from crashing like it did in the 80's.**

Unfortunately, these bunch of clowns kick the can down the road instead of starting to take steps to rebuild the stock for 2029. All these board members should be fired. All they do is come up with excuses and they also look to favor one group.

Most of the board members at the beginning of the meetings claim they want and need to do something but when the final vote comes down after four and a half hours of bs, they vote to do nothing but kick the can down the road. Then there is the other members who constantly claim that they don't have enough time to implement new regulations for their commercial sector because the decision in October because they already placed their order for commercial tags all of a sudden claim that they will be able to accomplish this in October of 2025 and not one person questioned them about this issue. We in Connecticut don't have a commercial fishery for Striped Bass but we did have a select number of tags for recreational anglers. But because of the Striped Bass issue but they were taken away by the same person who doesn't want to see the commercial sector take a complete like the recreational sector.

What's going to happen is these pathetic board members are going to do nothing and in 2028 they are just going to say the numbers are impossible to get to and just change it to reflect their negligence. We have a Volunteer Angler Survey along with MRIP numbers but none of these clowns want to read them. They argued that they want the 2024 numbers but the population of Striped Bass that we are concerned about will be slot size in 2025. What makes you think that they won't wait until 2026 to get numbers so they can make a decision and put something into affect in 2027?

**The board chairman is on the New England Fishery Council and look at the cod stock that she is in charge of? And we are letting her make decisions on Striped Bass? Can you say Gloom and Doom? So when the Striped Bass population crashes, does that mean everyone going to be happy with a No Target or No Harvest Striped Bass? In Connecticut, we did nothing when we saw the lobster population dwindling and the lobster men and women didn't want to do anything because of the economic impact. Well know there is no lobstering between September and November, those people just switched over to catching bluefish instead. All the hardship but they will just decimate another species.**

## **Win for Striped Bass Conservation: Court Upholds ASMFC Regulations**

**I find this funny too. A court has to rule to keep the ASMFC to do the right thing against itself. This just makes this board look dumber.**

**I have a real question for the technical committee, New Jersey claims that by closing their Striped Bass Season towards the end of the year would decimate their economy, how many of those fish they catch are going to die because they are dragged across the sand before they can be unhooked and released? And what about all the fish that this is happening too?**

**I see dark times in many marine species from porgies to striped bass to whales. We have decision makers who have no clue and should not be where they are. Whether it's because of DEI or if it's politics, we just need the right people making the decisions.**

**Thank You for taking the time to listen to my rants and my two cents. You do a great job at these hearings especially with all the work.**

**Sincerely,**

**Roman Dudus**

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy Z Flip3 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone

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**From:** [rfyogibear@aol.com](mailto:rfyogibear@aol.com)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] to emile franke  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 5:13:06 PM

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you did a great job navigating and moving through the meeting in a courteous, firm and timely way.

i do agree with the nj charter/party boat captain's views(toward's the 2:00 time of the meeting or so):

- don't black out an entire week for any closures. leave the weekend open where they have the most traffic. black out mon/tues or mon/tues/wed. to get the proposed 20(twenty) day closure. i would say do it early in the season before the migration and in dec. towards the end. you could even put more days closed in dec. as after thanksgiving fishing traffic drops.

- look at the commercial taking of bunker. no bunker no whales, dolphin and strippers. of course you know this.

- i saw the same conditions out of captree state park, long island, n.y. as he saw in his part of nj. alot of stripers, alot of bunker, alot of birds and whales.

- i believe these populations might be coming more from the hudson and raritan river then the chesapeake but it is just my guess.as the hudson river populations are not that strong either.

thanks again for the invite and please let me know about the next one. i hope my opinion helps. robert fackovec, massapequa park, n.y.

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**From:** [James Jewkes III](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Striped bass webinar feedback  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 2:56:16 PM

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As usual everyone did a great job presenting the information. The chairman did a great job handling situations as they rose. Problem I had was with the outcome of the meeting. We all know something has to be done with striped bass but as in the past things got kicked out to the future these fish are running out of time

Thank you  
James Jewkes

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

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**From:** [Don Jones](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Cc:** [Don Jones](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 7:18:14 PM

---

I could not attend the entire web meeting, but from what I did see and hear, everyone seemed to be aware of the data and very concerned about how to best handle the near term fishery.

The amount and the degree of detail in the scientific surveys is impressive. However there seems to be a severe disconnect between the scientific numbers and the actual number of fish in the wild in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. I can only speak for the middle Bay area and the Little Choptank river and the mouth of the Choptank. In my area, we were at least catching some rockfish recreationally before the last total moratorium occurred. There were many more rock in my area after the fishery reopened.

However this time, there are very few rockfish in my area at all. For at least the last four months of season 2024, we could not find a single rockfish anywhere in the area mentioned above. Of any size. That is catastrophic. In addition, of the many boats I was near while fishing, I saw very few fish caught by anyone, at any time, in any of the above mentioned areas. To see zero rockfish over roughly a dozen trips in this area from June to December is concerning, to say the least.

I expected the board to increase the number of no fishing days in a major way for 2024. Instead we are doing nothing for 2024. I consider this to be a travesty. Having more complete data on harvest and dead loss for the last portion of 2024 will improve the accuracy of the numbers but will not increase the number of future rockfish.

If I was holding a thermometer while outside in the sun, and the thermometer read 65 degrees, yet my skin was severely burning from the heat of the sun, the numbers would show nothing wrong, but the symptoms would prove something else was going on. I feel we are putting far too much importance on the scientific numbers.

Ask 25000 or more commercial and recreational fishermen what their experience was when fishing for rockfish in 2024. Ask as many as humanly possible.

If the current processes are more than a little inaccurate, the striped bass population could collapse on short order. I think that point is in the near future, and we are moving too slowly to avoid it. I truly hope I am wrong.

thanks for listening,  
Don Jones

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**From:** [tom.matulonis](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Recent webinar regarding Striped Bass management  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024 11:40:09 AM

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Hello,

My feedback is that it was a total dog and pony show.

You ask for comments, but deep down you have already made your mind up.

What a total waste of time. People would have way more respect for your organization if you just told the truth instead of lying to them year after year.

You have no desire to fix the striped bass stock, this is pretty obvious.

Kicking the can down the road must be posted on the wall of your offices as it's certainly your business slogan.

Regards,

Tom Matulonis.

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**From:** [Parker Mauck](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Feed back on ASMFC SBMB Dec 16 2024  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 4:54:45 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I thought the moderator and the staff did a good job running the meeting.

However, it is hard to express my disappointment at the outcome. These boards are not fulfilling their duty. There was a CLEAR message sent by the overwhelming majority of comments asking the board to take action. Kicking the can down the road like they did is NOT action as one member suggested. It is a blatant move to reap another year of heavy removals before more drastic action will be needed. The claim that more data is needed to take action is complete BS. We have enough information now. What additional info will be available to the board that will outweigh six years of poor spawning?

Public confidence in these boards from people that truly care about conservation and protecting Striped Bass populations is at ZERO. The greedy states to the south have figured out how to game the system and every angler, both recreational and commercial, is going to pay the price. Less fish hurts everyone, more fish helps everyone. It is so simple. Honestly, can't we kill less fish for a few years to help counteract the poor spawns? Please listen to the people that take the time to comment and stop pandering to a small majority of selfish anglers who only see Striped Bass as short term money. If the Striped Bass populations crash it will cause widespread economic damage and the blame will rest on the shoulders of the ASMFC that had the information to act, but did not. Shame on the ASMFC.

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**From:** [Matt Mobley](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board mtg feedback  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 3:29:54 PM

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To whom this concerns: My name is Matt Mobley and I am a recreational fisherman from the state of Maryland. I listened to the webinar on Mon, Dec 16, 2024 and I am writing to provide feedback. To begin with, the purpose of the meeting was not clearly stated, up front. I recommend beginning these meetings with a problem statement or clear purpose of the meeting, and clearly state the desired goal or outcome so an outsider can understand the intent of the meeting.

I found many, perhaps too many, comments, questions and concerns to be disconnected from any specific, shared understanding of the overall goal. Is there a problem or not? If there's a problem, what is it? It is my observation that many speakers did not believe there's a problem with Striped bass. People speaking and/or asking questions seemed to be using time to state their personal agendas. It is my opinion, this meeting was not an effective use of time.

In my opinion there's a significant problem with the coastal striped bass population. As I have previously stated, YoY data is not a reliable measure of recruitment by any scientific definition of recruitment. Using YoY surveys to estimate the number of mature fish entering the ocean fishery is a leap of faith, at best. Fishing related mortality is poorly counted in the bay fisheries. Effort management has not been effective to manage actual recruitment to the spawning stock biomass. Actual recruitment from the bay to the ocean is the most important form of recruitment. Without good data to estimate true recruitment to the exploitable Ocean fishery, it is my opinion ASMFC will not effectively manage striped bass.

After many years of this unscientific mismanagement, I believe conservationists will be forced to challenge ASMFC's guesswork through legal means. I am calling for my fellow conservationists to denounce ASMFC and seek legal recourse.

Sincerely, Matt Mobley

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**From:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] RE: Atlantic Striped Bass Board Initiates Addendum to Consider 2026 Management Measures  
**Date:** Thursday, January 16, 2025 2:45:39 PM

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**From:** mobileweighstation@gmail.com <mobileweighstation@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 21, 2024 4:27 PM  
**To:** Tina Berger <TBerger@ASMFC.org>  
**Cc:** Bob Beal <RBeal@ASMFC.org>; Alexander Law <ALaw@ASMFC.org>; Toni Kerns <TKerns@ASMFC.org>; Emilie Franke <EFranke@ASMFC.org>; Caitlin Starks <CStarks@ASMFC.org>; Chelsea Tuohy <CTuohy@ASMFC.org>; Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>; James Boyle <JBoyle@ASMFC.org>  
**Subject:** [External] RE: Atlantic Striped Bass Board Initiates Addendum to Consider 2026 Management Measures

Very disappointing. They continue to kick the can down the road. I have been writing letters to the ASMFC since 2013 and at time, the governors up and down the east coast asking for more meaningful regs to stop this latest decline which has been happening for close to 20 years now. I knew this was going to be an issue when they went to the 2 @ 28 many years ago. We're repeating history just like we did in the 80s. Now, the usual groups who do not represent me as a recreational angler, are fighting these regs just like they do every regulation. They don't seem to realize or care, their unwillingness to follow the best science we have available, leads to more stringent regs which is where we are now.

I and many others have zero faith in this process and those responsible. If you don't believe me, and if you are not familiar with this site, I suggest taking a look at the link below. Very disheartening.

<https://www.stripersonline.com/surftalk/topic/897118-asmfc-striped-bass-board-to-consider-2025-fishing-restrictions-at-dec-16-meeting-today-10-am-to-2-pm-online/page/19/#comment-19054476>

**From:** [Joe Nicosia](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Management Meeting 12/16  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 2:39:32 PM

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Very dissatisfied with the results and no action for the 2025 season as the 2018 year class will most likely be wiped out as they enter the slot size.

Doesn't seem like the striped fishery is in the best interest for the ASMFC to be protected.

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<https://www.instagram.com/onlyonthefly/>

[Instagram -at\\_ the\\_ vise](#)



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**From:** [Robert Tartaglia](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] 12/16 meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 4:21:40 PM

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I attended and listened to the entire meeting on Dec 16, 2024 from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EST.

It actually was quite enlightening but at the same time incredibly disappointing. I felt convinced that some action would be taken in order to affect changes that would reduce mortality while preserving opportunities for all stakeholders to enjoy and benefit from the fishery.

To me it seems like in the end, the outcome was manipulated by the special interests of some that once again lead to the kicking of the proverbial can down the road.

And please whoever tried to make the case that taking no action was actually taking action needs to really think how that came across.

Rob Tartaglia  
Massachusetts

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**From:** [Bill Tyson](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Striped Bass Webinar  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024 3:41:27 PM

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Thank you for extending an invitation to the recent webinar.

I believe the board's decision to refrain from immediate action was prudent. While the proposed slot change for 2023 appears to be yielding positive results, it is imperative that we continue to gather comprehensive data and conduct a thorough analysis. This will enable us to make an informed decision and mitigate any potential risks.

I was particularly impressed by the contributions of the Technical Committee team and their candid feedback. They rightly emphasized the need for additional data to support a definitive recommendation. It is crucial to maintain a realistic perspective and avoid hasty conclusions.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Program Management team for organizing such a productive meeting. It provided an invaluable opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in a constructive discussion of the situation.

Thank you once again for your efforts. I wish you a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Bill Tyson

Long Beach Township, New Jersey

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**From:** [Capt. Eric Wallace](#)  
**To:** [Emilie Franke](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Re: No Harvest Move the slot  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 5:48:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Shameful!!!!!!!!!!

Capt. Eric Wallace  
Ph 207-671-4330  
[coastalflyangler.com](http://coastalflyangler.com)

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**From:** Emilie Franke <[EFranke@ASMFC.org](mailto:EFranke@ASMFC.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 10, 2024 9:42:45 PM  
**To:** Capt. Eric Wallace <[eric@coastalflyangler.com](mailto:eric@coastalflyangler.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: No Harvest Move the slot

Thank you for providing input on striped bass management. Your comments will be shared with the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board for consideration at its next Board meeting, which will occur on December 16.

[Emilie Franke](#) | Fishery Management Plan Coordinator  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Phone: 703.842.0716 | Fax: 703.842.0741  
[efranke@asmfc.org](mailto:efranke@asmfc.org) | [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)

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**From:** Capt. Eric Wallace <[eric@coastalflyangler.com](mailto:eric@coastalflyangler.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 10, 2024 11:55 AM  
**To:** G2W2 <[G2W2@asmfc.org](mailto:G2W2@asmfc.org)>  
**Subject:** [External] No Harvest Move the slot

Dear ASMFC

What the hell are you guys doing?? chat about closer waves, talking about a unicorn class of fish that are not in the ocean, what is it you are after? doing nothing - is my guess, but to even mention a no-target time period within the season vs a no harvest is just BS and you know it!!!! But wait we could do something like maybe protect the class of fish that are in the spawning year classes, changing the slot range for a few years add in a 60 day no harvest during prime waves in different areas as pressure on the fish is deem the most....., But to manage by no target vs no harvest give me a break....



No Harvest !!!!!!!

Move the slot!!!!!!

Commercials get a no Harvest wave aswell!!!

\*\*\*\*\*How difficult is this??

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## Captain Eric Wallace

Coastal Fly Angler



COASTAL  
FLYANGLER

207-671-4330

<http://www.coastalflyangler.com>

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**From:** [John Weinbuch](#)  
**To:** [G2W2](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Re: Thank you for attending Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 2:41:15 PM

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Thank you for having me! Great job kicking that can down the road. Striped Bass are in trouble, but yet again we listened to the small bunch who want status quo.

Shameful.

On Tue, Dec 17, 2024 at 2:01 PM Webinar Staff 2 <[customer care@gotowebinar.com](mailto:customer care@gotowebinar.com)> wrote:



## Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

Mon, Dec 16, 2024 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM EST

We hope you enjoyed our webinar.

Please send your questions, comments and feedback to:

[g2w2@asmfc.org](mailto:g2w2@asmfc.org)

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