Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfc.org

MEMORANDUM

February 1, 2016

TO: **Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**

FROM: **Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC)**

RE: **TC Comment on Additional 2016 Conservation Equivalent Management Options for Maryland (MD) and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)**

Maryland submitted two new regulatory options for their 2016 recreational fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay via Addendum IV conservation equivalency (CE) proposals. These options are in addition to those previously reviewed and detailed in the joint TC and LEC Memo (M16-004). As before, PRFC submitted a proposal to follow suit with MD to maintain regulatory and enforcement consistency across adjoining jurisdictions. The following bullets present an overview of the two new options and consensus recommendations from the TC.

Proposal Overview

- Option 1 – Spring Trophy fishery, April 16 – May 15; **1 fish at 35" minimum size**.
- Option 2 – Summer/Fall fishery, May 16 – December 20; boats and private anglers would be able to choose one of two previously approved options on any given trip, **either 2 fish at 20" minimum size (only 1 fish can be over 28"), or 1 fish at 18" minimum size**.
- Rationale is to improve the quality of fishing opportunities while maintaining consistent regulations across recreational fishing sectors, and meet the harvest reduction requirements

Technical Committee Comment and Recommendations

Option 1: The TC had no comments regarding Option 1 and approved the option with consensus.
Option 2: The TC was not comfortable providing recommendations for the Board at this time.

- The TC requested that MD conduct further analyses to look at the potential reduction from the two options combined instead of relying on a range using the two independent options.
- The TC expressed concerns about the following:
  1. The estimated harvest reduction associated with the two pre-approved options from Addendum IV are no longer valid when the options are combined.
  2. The realized percent reduction will be strongly influenced by changes in angler behavior and effort that cannot be accounted for, which is the case with all bag and size limit analyses conducted for Addendum IV and the conservation equivalency process.
  3. The TC was concerned that this particular regulation would increase the potential for high-grading and non-compliance more than other options, reducing the realized harvest reduction. The TC requested the LEC's opinion on this matter.
  4. The TC also expressed concern about the ability to predict changes in harvest based on the MRIP sampling data, as well as the impact of this proposal on fleet selectivity in future stock assessments.

Enclosed: Additional Proposed Regulations for Maryland's and Potomac River Fisheries Commission's 2016 Striped Bass Season

Additional Proposed Regulations for the Maryland 2016 Striped Bass Season

Discussion of striped bass regulations for the 2016 fishing season has continued with stakeholders and Maryland requests Technical Committee approval for two new options. Calculations of the reduction followed the procedures outlined in the Technical Committee memo (M14-110) and use the same data as previously described in the 2015 Maryland Implementation Plan.

The first option for consideration is a 35 inch minimum size for the Chesapeake Bay trophy fishery with a 1 fish/person/day creel limit. The season would continue to be from the 3rd Saturday of April through May 15 and calculations for the reduction are in the attached Excel spreadsheet. As before:

- The 2011-2013 length frequency from the volunteer charter boat survey was used to estimate the reduction as it provides more information on the length frequency of fish harvested than MRIP during the four-week trophy season. The 2011-2013 volunteer charter survey contained 11,332 fish lengths from 249 captains.
- An estimate of 2011-2013 Virginia trophy harvest (32" minimum, May 1-June 15) was included in our trophy wave 3 harvest estimate. Virginia requires anglers to submit a catch report for trophy fish and adjusts the number to account for non-reporting. Using the ratio of Maryland trophy dead discards to trophy harvest (0.356), an estimate of Virginia's dead discards was calculated and also added to Maryland's trophy wave 3 estimate.
- Using these data, we estimate that that a 35 inch minimum size will result in a 28.3% reduction in total removals, above the 25% required in Addendum IV.

The second option for consideration would be for the Chesapeake Bay summer/fall season. Previously approved options for this fishery include: 2 fish/person/day with a 20 inch minimum size (Option C4 from Addendum IV, 22% estimated reduction) or 1 fish/person/day with an 18 inch minimum size (Option B10 from Addendum IV, 31% estimated reduction). This new option would allow boats and private anglers (if pier or shore fishing) to choose which of these regulations to follow for their trip. Anglers fishing together on a charter or private boat would be required to all follow the same regulation. Similar to 2015, the season would be from May 16-December 20. As each of these options have been previously estimated to achieve at least a 20.5% reduction as required by Addendum IV, allowing boats and individual pier or shore anglers to choose which regulation to follow for a trip should not impact the overall reduction. Based on the previous estimates, the smallest reduction we would expect to achieve would be 22%, assuming everyone continues to harvest 2 fish at 20 inches. If boats/individual anglers choose to harvest 1 fish/person/day at 18 inches, the percent reduction would slightly increase.

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"Potomac River Compact of 1958"

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

P.O. Box 9
Colonial Beach, Virginia 22443
www.prfc.us

OFFICERS:

MARTIN L. GARY
Executive Secretary

MICHAEL C. MAYO, ESQ.
Legal Officer

TELEPHONE:
(804) 224-7148
(800) 266-3904

FAX:
(804) 224-2712

E-MAIL:
prfc@gmail.com

Additional Proposed Regulations for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission for the 2016 Recreational and Charter Boat Striped Bass Seasons

The Potomac River Fisheries Commission's FinFish Advisory Committee met on Wednesday, January 27, 2016. At their meeting, the new Maryland proposals for Striped Bass management options for recreational and charter boat fisheries in 2106 were discussed. It was agreed that PRFC would like to submit these same proposals for PRFC jurisdictional waters. The rationale is to maintain regulatory and enforcement consistency in our adjoining waters. PRFC requests ASMFC's Striped BassTechnical Committee approval for two new options. Calculations of the reduction are based upon the procedures outlined in the Technical Committee memo (M14-110) and uses the same data as previously described in the 2015 Maryland Implementation Plan. There are no MRIP harvest specific estimates for PRFC jurisdictional waters.

The first option for consideration is a 35 inch minimum size for the Potomac River Striped Bass trophy fishery with a 1 fish/person/day creel limit. The season would continue to be from the 3rd Saturday of April through May 15 using calculations by MD. (PRFC does not have MRIP data for its jurisdictional waters).

The second option for consideration would be for the Potomac River summer/fall season. Previously approved options for this fishery include: 2 fish/person/day with a 20 inch minimum size (Option C4 from Addendum IV, 22% estimated reduction) or 1 fish/person/day with an 18 inch minimum size (Option B10 from Addendum IV, 31% estimated reduction). The new option would mirror the one submitted by Maryland and allow boats and private anglers (if pier or shore fishing) to choose which of these regulations to follow for their trip. Anglers fishing together on a charter or private boat would be required to all follow the same regulation. Similar to 2015, the season would be from May 16-December 31. As each of these options have been previously estimated to achieve at least a 20.5% reduction as required by Addendum IV, allowing boats and individual pier or shore anglers to choose which regulation to follow for a trip should not impact the overall reduction. Based on the previous estimates, the smallest reduction we would expect to achieve would be 22%, assuming everyone continues to harvest 2 fish at 20 inches. If boats/individual anglers choose to harvest 1 fish/person/day at 18 inches, the percent reduction would slightly increase.