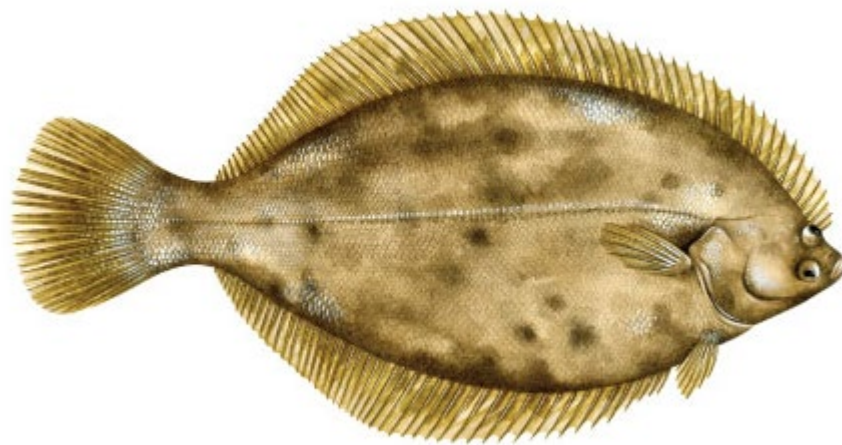




Winter Flounder Specifications



Winter Flounder Management Board
February 2nd, 2021

Outline



- Background
 - Status of the Winter Flounder GOM & SNE/MA Stocks
 - Commercial & Recreational Fishery Trends
- NEFMC Winter Flounder Specifications for FY 2021-2023
- Addendum III Specifications Process Overview
- Technical Committee Recommendation
- Advisory Panel Report
- Board Action: Consider Setting Specifications for FY 2021-2023

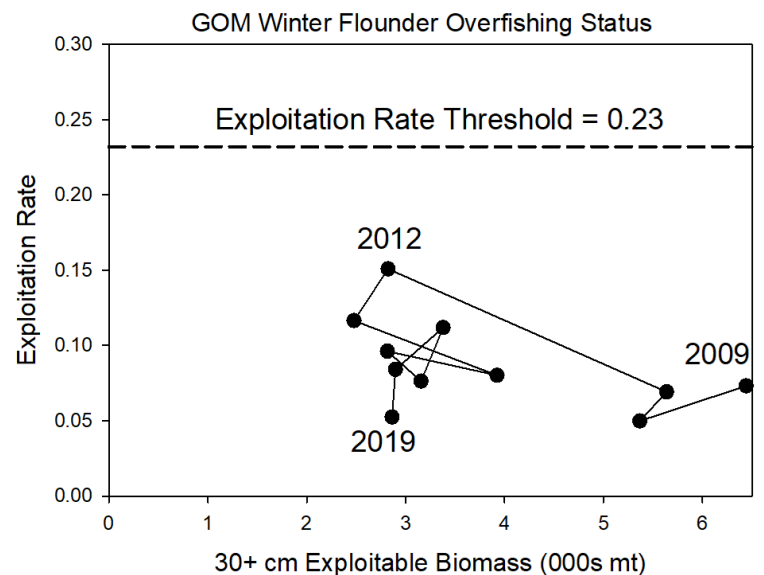
Status of Stocks - GOM



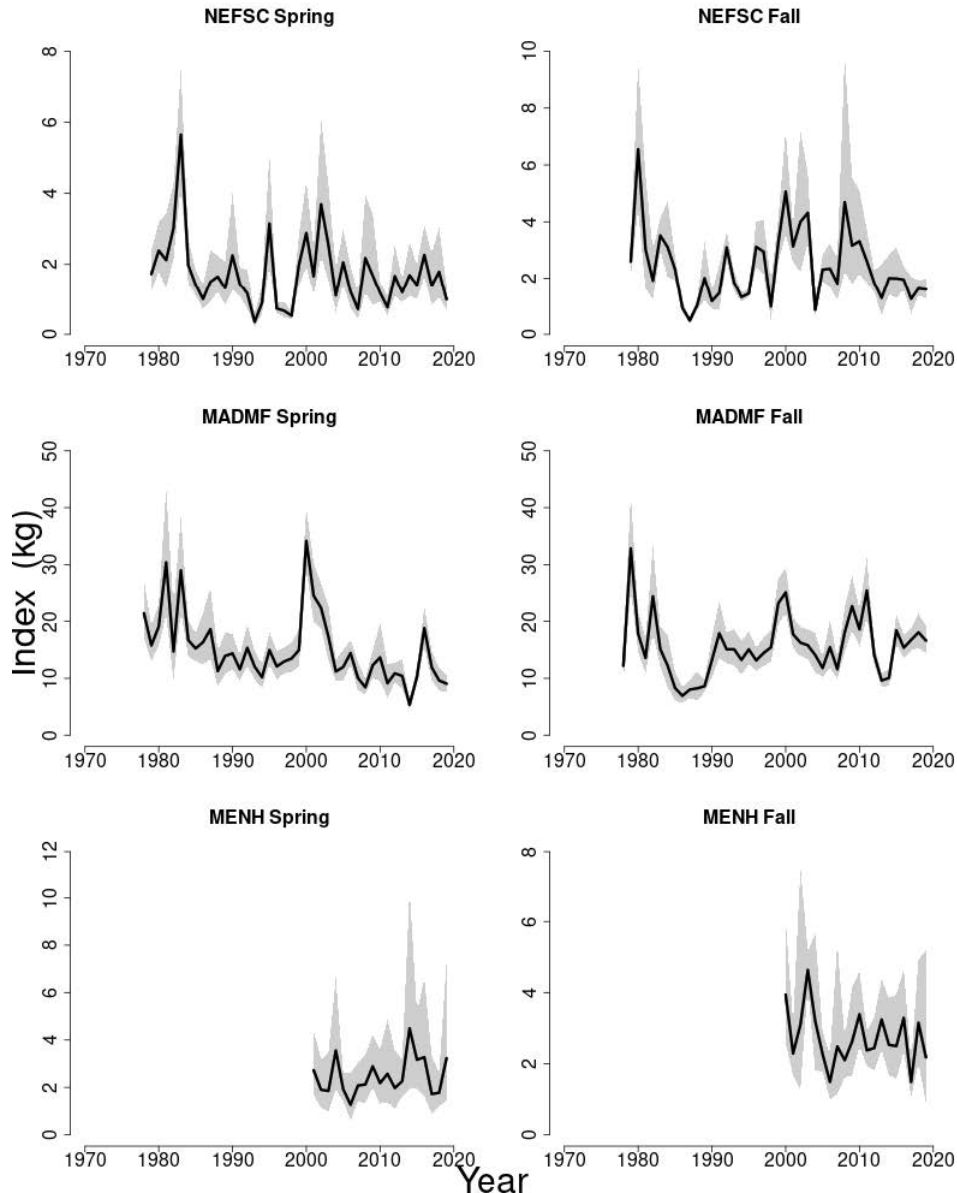
2020 Management Track Stock Assessment

- Stock biomass status unknown
- Overfishing is not occurring

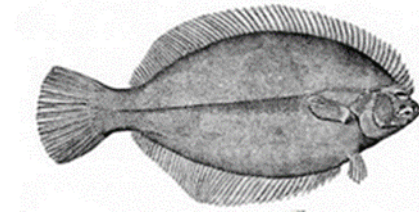
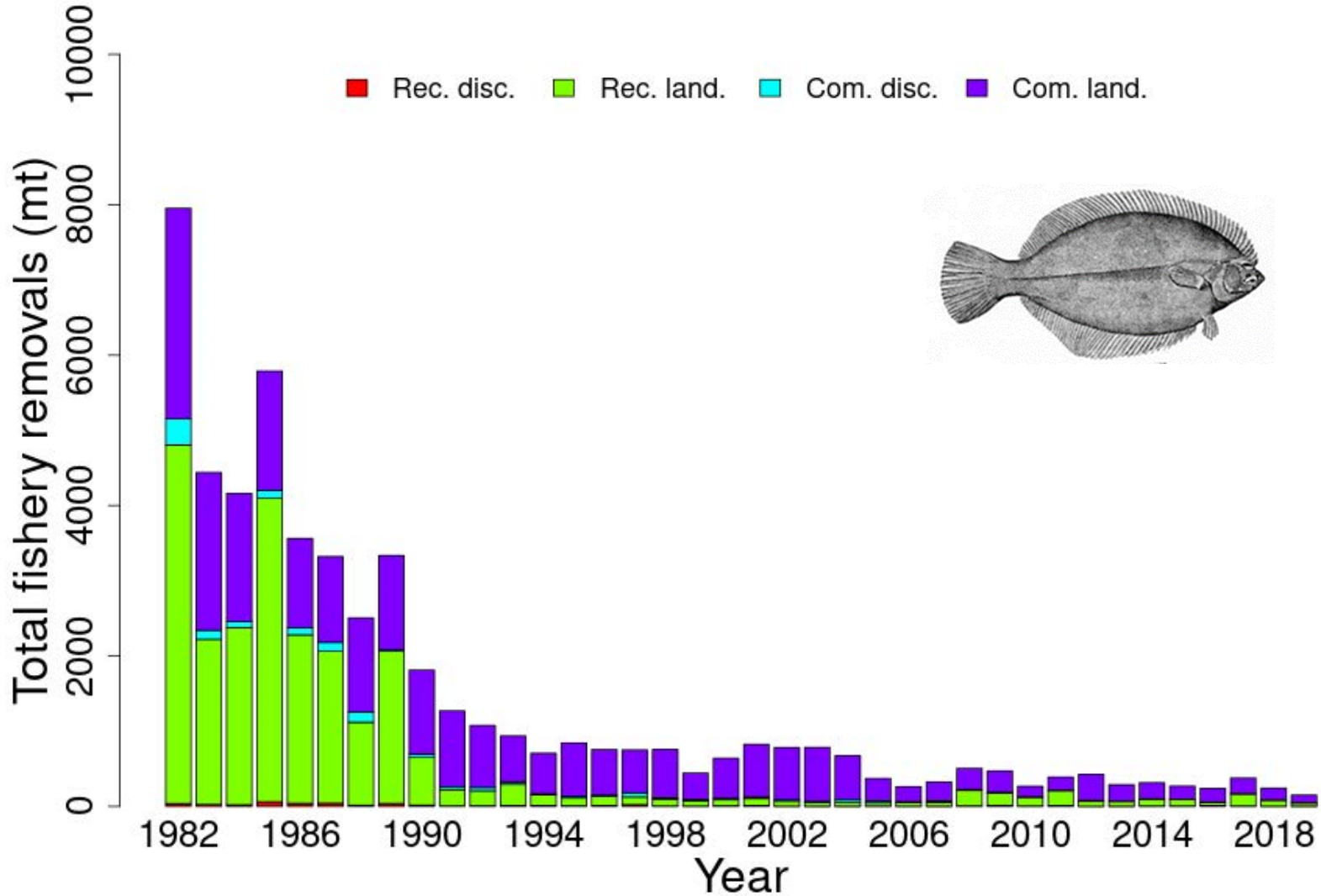
Not in a rebuilding plan since GOM winter flounder was never declared overfished



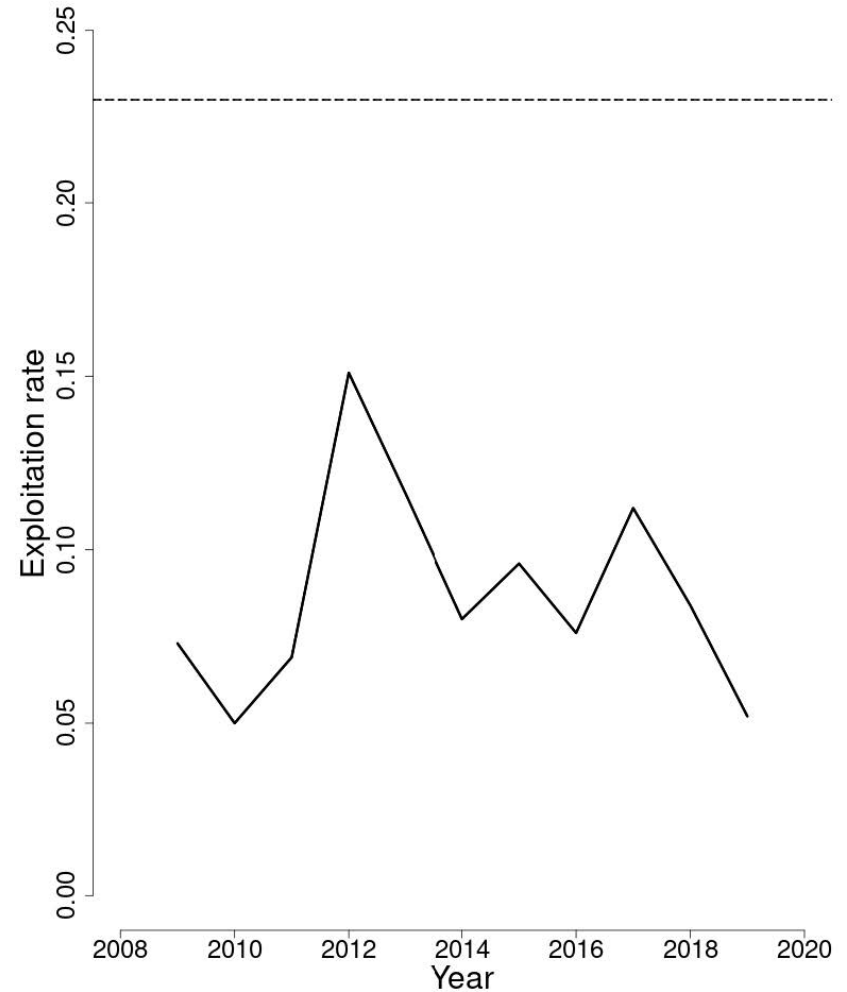
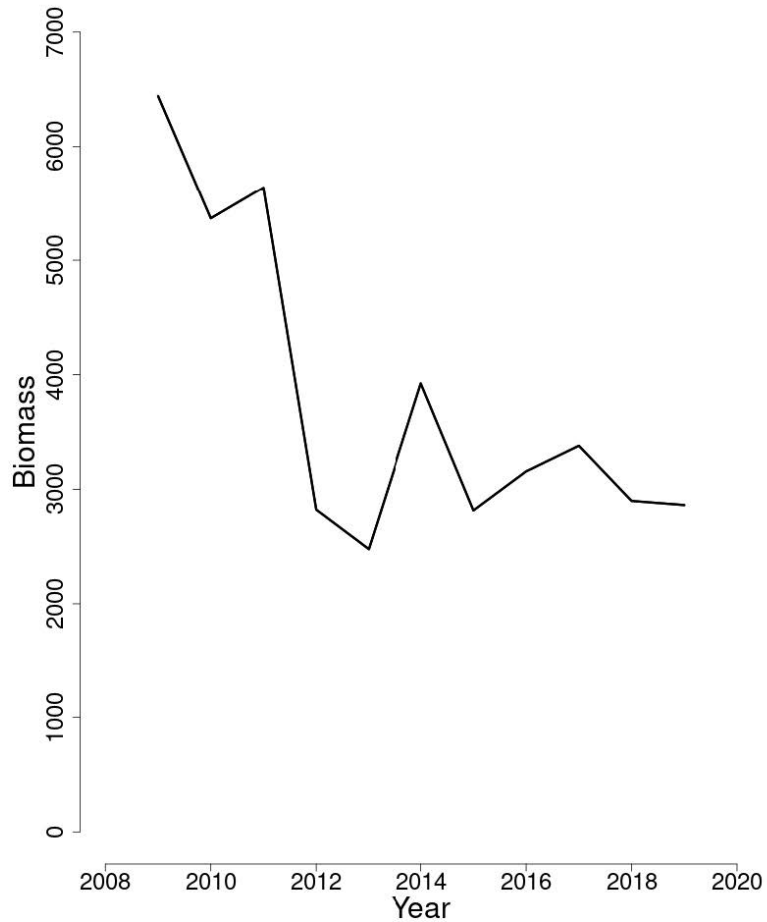
Surveys



Total Catch (Com/Rec) in GOM



Total Catch (Com/Rec) in GOM



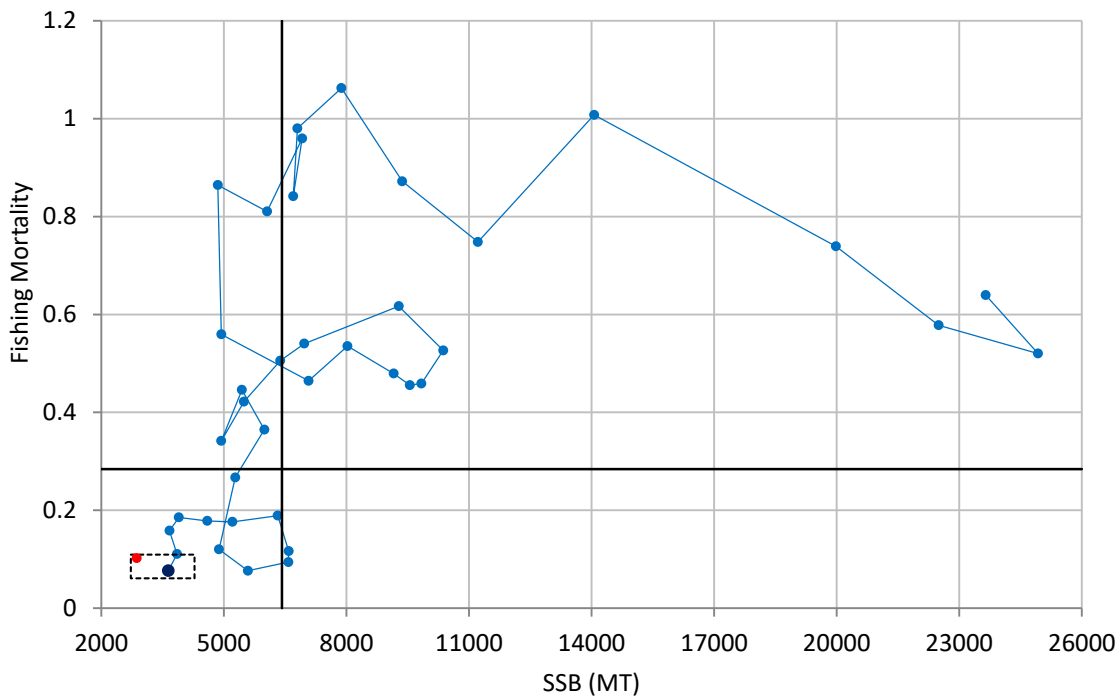
Status of Stocks – SNE/MA



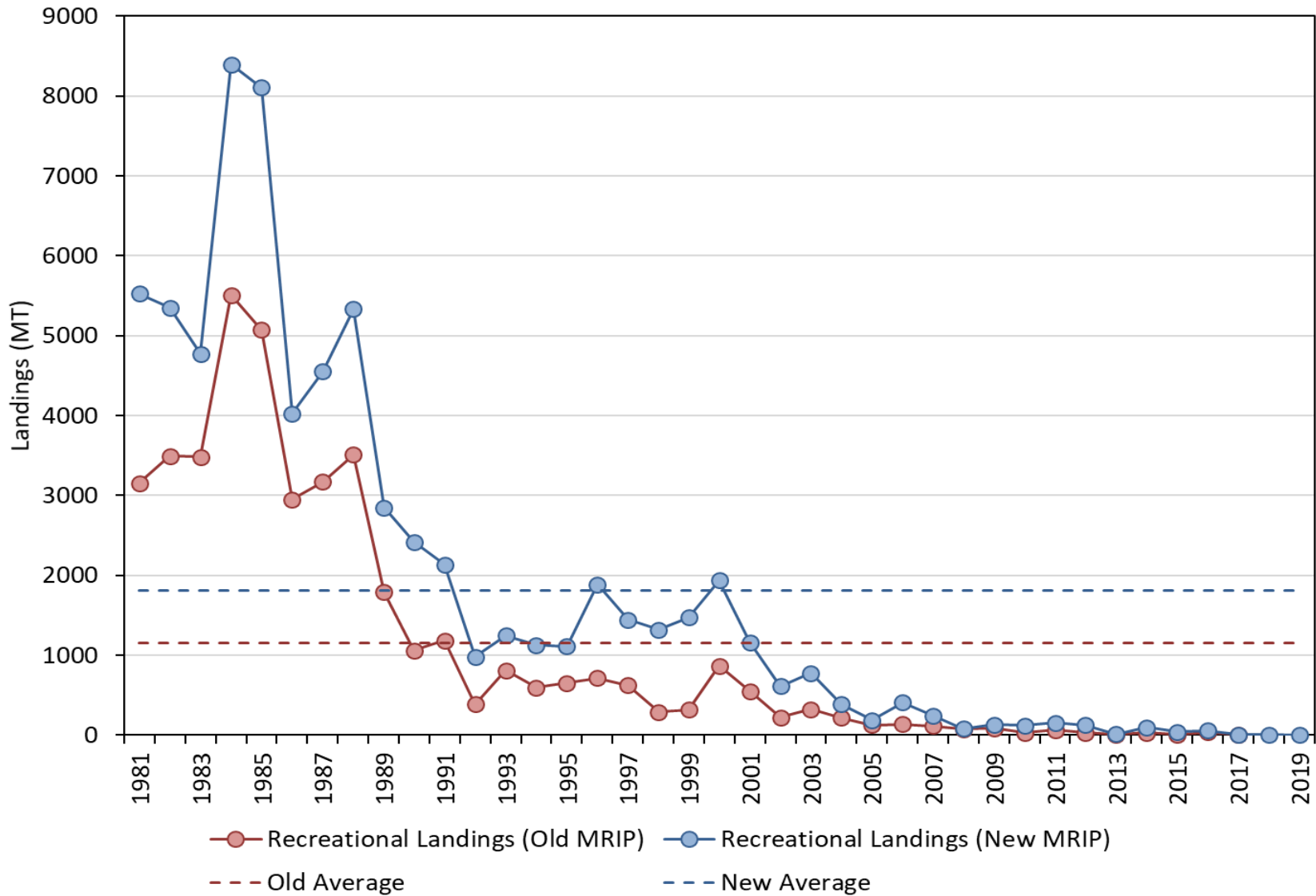
2020 Management Track Stock Assessment

- Stock biomass status overfished
- Overfishing is not occurring

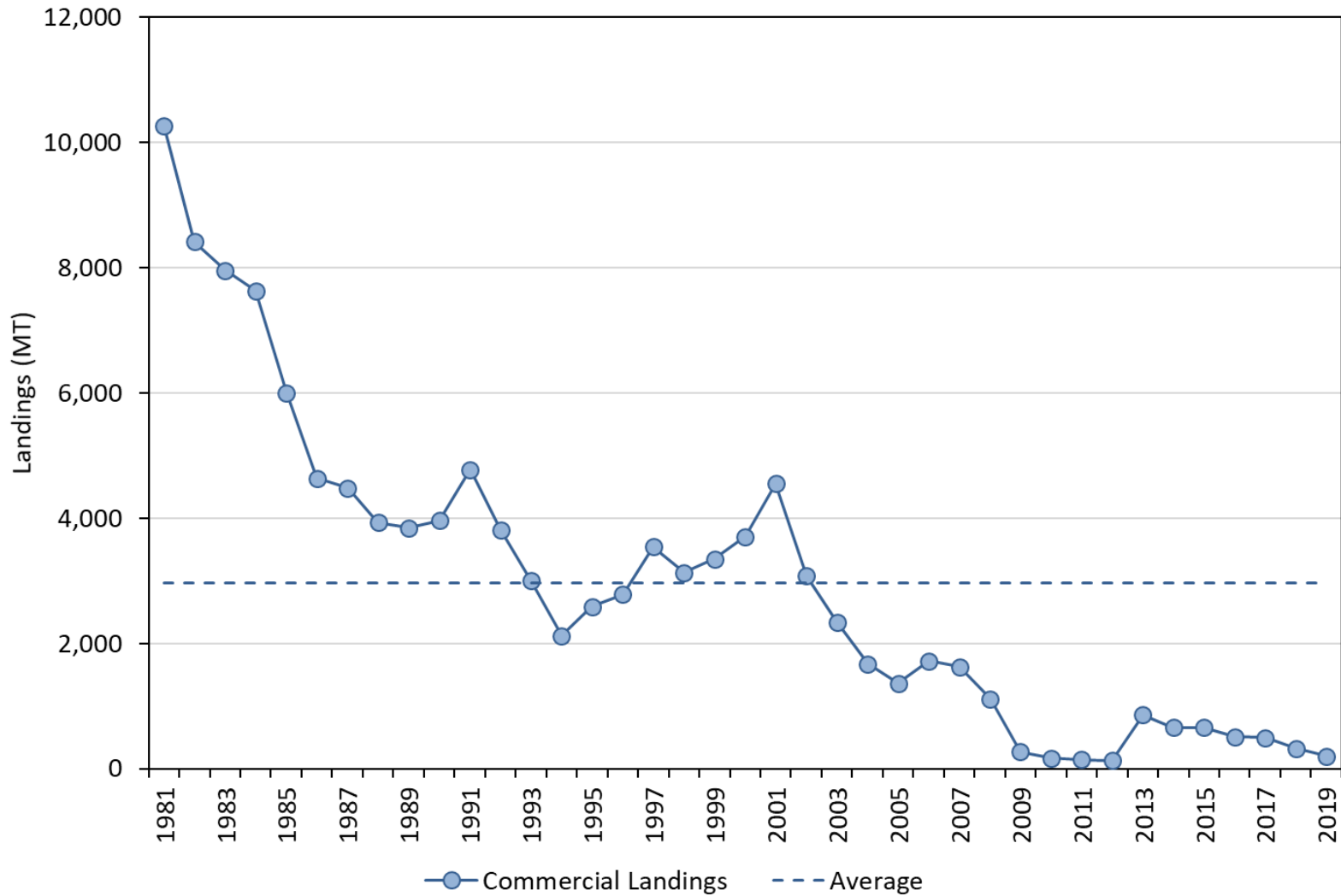
In a rebuilding plan with target rebuild date of 2023



SNE/MA Recreational Landings



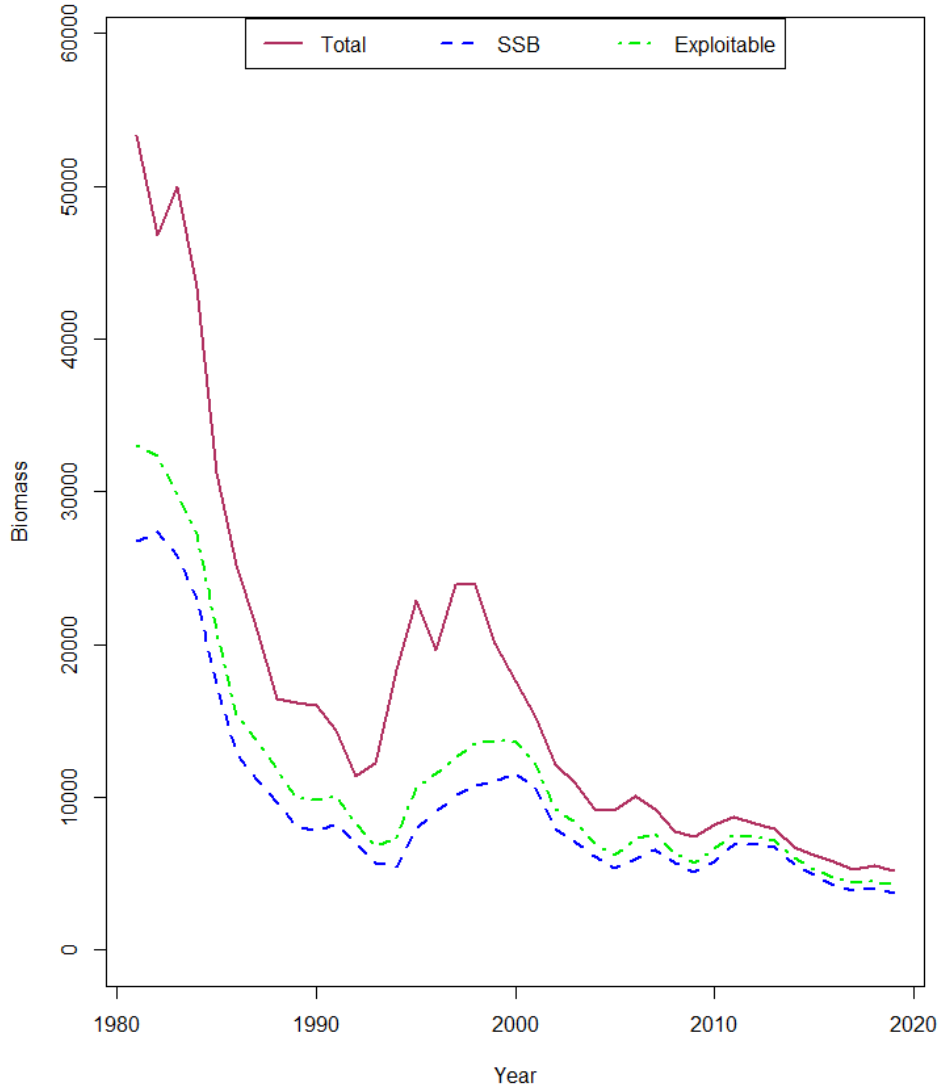
SNE/MA Commercial Landings



SNE/MA Biomass



Comparison of January 1 Biomass



Specifications for FY 2021



GOM and SNE/MA Specifications and State Sub-component Average Catch

Stock	Total ACL	State Subcomponent		
	FY21-23 (mt)	FY20 (mt)	FY21-23 (mt)	2017-2019 average catch (mt)
GOM	482	139	194	195.6
SNE/MA	441	36	21	19.9

- State sub-component = recreational + commercial catch
- Not an allocation, no pound for pound payback if exceeded

Addendum III Specifications Process



- Specifications may be set up to 3 years
- Measures that may be adjusted through Board action:
 - Commercial measures
 - Trip limits
 - Trigger trip limits
 - Size limits
 - Season
 - Area closures
 - Recreational measures
 - Size limits
 - Bag limits
 - Season

Table 2. Commercial Winter Flounder Regulations.

State	Stock Unit	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Seasonal Closure (dates inclusive)	Min. Mesh Size
Maine	GOM	12"	500 lbs	May 1 – June 30	6.5"
New Hampshire	GOM	12"	500 lbs	April 1 – June 30	6.5"
Massachusetts	GOM	12"	500 lbs	Open all year	6.5"
	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	Open all year	6.5"
Rhode Island	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	Open all year	6.5"
Connecticut	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs or 38 fish	March 1 – April 14	6.5"
New York	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	June 14 – Nov 30 (for all gear besides fyke nets, pound and trap nets)	6.5"
New Jersey	SNE/MA	12"	38 fish	June 1 – Nov 30 (all gear except for fyke nets) Feb 20 – Oct 31 (Fyke net)	6.5"

Table 3. Recreational Winter Flounder Regulations.



State	Stock Unit	Creel Limit	Size Limit	Seasonal Closure (dates inclusive)
Maine	GOM	8	12"	Open all year
New Hampshire	GOM	8	12"	Open all year
Massachusetts	GOM	8	12"	Open all year
	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1- February 28
Rhode Island	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – February 28
Connecticut	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – March 31
New York	SNE/MA	2	12"	May 31 – March 31
New Jersey	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – February 28
Federal Waters	GOM & SNE/MA	Unlimited	12"	Open all year

Technical Committee Meeting Summary



- TC met via webinar on January 6th
- Recommended no changes to recreational or commercial measures
 - State subcomponent was adjusted to reflect recent trends in catch
 - 2018 analysis indicated that most SNE/MA commercial fishermen are not landing the trip limits
 - SNE/MA winter flounder is a bycatch fishery
 - Adjustments to commercial measures could increase regulatory discards without much effect on F
 - Anecdotal reports of SNE/MA recreational fishermen rarely catching bag limit

Technical Committee Meeting Summary



- TC noted mismatch between state and federal recreational measures.
 - Clarified recreational anglers are held to the more restrictive of the two measures
- TC concerned about low likelihood of SNE/MA stock rebuilding
 - Fishing mortality does not appear to be the issue

Advisory Panel Meeting



- AP met on January 14th
- Discussed specifications, current fishery management issues, and provided research recommendations
- Attendance was limited

Advisory Panel Meeting



- Concerned about overfished status of SNE/MA stock and low abundance of winter flounder in GOM
- Two AP members supported:
 - Recreational fishing moratorium
 - In-shore commercial fishery season closure December-April

Advisory Panel Meeting



- Research Recommendations
 - Increase understanding of inshore stock substructure
 - Sonic tag tracking studies to improve life history information
 - Genetic testing to analyze natal homing
 - Conduct studies of eggs, larvae, and young of year to test for abnormalities contributing to natural mortality
 - Effects of nearshore pollution on winter flounder

Advisory Panel Meeting



- AP requested Board review panel membership, appoint representatives, with a focus on younger members of the fishing community to ensure sustained stakeholder participation in management process



Questions?

