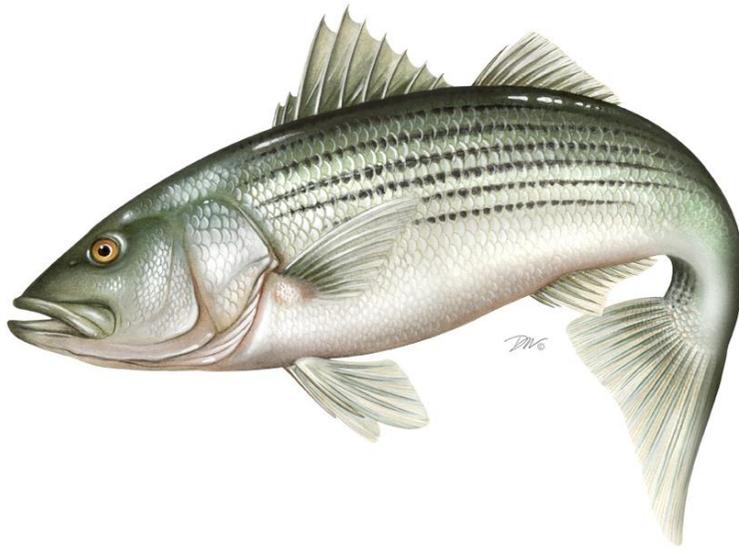


ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS
(Morone saxatilis)

2021 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

Draft for Board Review
July 26, 2022



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

<u>Date of FMP Approval:</u>	Original FMP – 1981
<u>Amendments:</u>	Amendment 1 – 1984 Amendment 2 – 1984 Amendment 3 – 1985 Amendment 4 – 1989; Addendum I – 1991, Addendum II – 1992, Addendum III – 1993, Addendum IV – 1994 Amendment 5 – 1995; Addendum I – 1997, Addendum II – 1997, Addendum III – 1998, Addendum IV – 1999, Addendum V – 2000 Amendment 6 – 2003; Addendum I – 2007, Addendum II – 2010, Addendum III – 2012, Addendum IV – 2014, Addendum VI -2019 Amendment 7 – 2022
<u>Management Unit:</u>	Migratory stocks of Atlantic striped bass from Maine through North Carolina
<u>States With Declared Interest:</u>	Maine - North Carolina, including Pennsylvania
<u>Additional Jurisdictions:</u>	District of Columbia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
<u>Active Boards/Committees:</u>	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Tagging Subcommittee, Plan Review Team, and Plan Development Team

Original FMP and Amendments 1-5

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) developed a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass in 1981 in response to poor juvenile recruitment and declining landings. The FMP recommended increased restrictions on commercial and recreational fisheries, such as minimum size limits and harvest closures on spawning grounds. Two amendments were passed in 1984 recommending additional management measures to reduce fishing mortality. To strengthen the management response and improve compliance and enforcement, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (P.L. 98-613) was passed in late 1984. The Striped Bass Act¹ mandated the implementation of striped bass regulations passed by the Commission and gave the Commission authority to recommend to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior that states be found out of compliance when they failed to implement management measures consistent with the FMP.

The first enforceable plan under the Striped Bass Act, Amendment 3, was approved in 1985, and required size regulations to protect the 1982 year class – the first modest size cohort since the

¹ The 1997 reauthorization of the Striped Bass Act also required the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior provide a biennial report to Congress highlighting the progress and findings of studies of migratory and estuarine Striped Bass. The ninth such report was recently provided to Congress (Shepherd et al. 2017).

previous decade. The objective was to increase size limits to allow at least 95% of the females in the 1982 year class to spawn at least once. Smaller size limits were permitted in producer areas than along the coast. Several states, beginning with Maryland in 1985, opted for a more conservative approach and imposed a total moratorium on striped bass landings for several years. The amendment contained a trigger mechanism to relax regulations when the 3-year moving average of the Maryland juvenile abundance index (JAI) exceeded an arithmetic mean of 8.0 – which was attained with the recruitment of the 1989 year class. Also, in 1985, the Commission determined the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) stock in North Carolina contributed minimally to the coastal migratory population, and was therefore allowed to operate under an alternative management program.

Amendment 4, implemented in 1989, aimed to rebuild the resource rather than maximize yield. The amendment allowed state fisheries to reopen under a target fishing mortality (F) of 0.25, which was half the estimated F needed to achieve maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The amendment allowed an increase in the target F once spawning stock biomass (SSB) was restored to levels estimated during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The dual size limit concept was maintained (coastal versus producer areas), and a recreational trip limit and commercial season was implemented to reduce the harvest to 20% of that in the historic period of 1972-1979. A series of four addenda were implemented from 1990-1994 to maintain protection of the 1982 year class.

In 1990, to provide additional protection to striped bass and ensure the effectiveness of state regulations, NOAA Fisheries passed a final rule (55 Federal Register 40181-02) prohibiting possession, fishing (catch and release fishing), harvest, and retention of Atlantic striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with the exception of a defined transit zone within Block Island Sound. Atlantic striped bass may be transported through this defined area provided that the vessel is not used to fish while in the EEZ and the vessel remains in continuous transit, and that the fish were legally caught in adjoining state waters.

In 1995, the Atlantic striped bass migratory stock was declared recovered by the Commission (the A-R stock was declared recovered in 1997) and Amendment 5 was adopted to increase the target F to 0.33, midway between the existing F target (0.25) and F_{MSY} . Target F was allowed to increase again to 0.40 after two years of implementation. Regulations were developed to achieve the target F (which included measures to restore commercial harvest to 70% of the average landings during the 1972-1979 historical period) and states were allowed to submit proposals to implement alternative regulations that were deemed conservationally equivalent to the Amendment 5 measures. From 1997-2000, a series of five addenda were implemented to respond to the latest stock status information and adjust the regulatory program to achieve each change in target F.

Amendment 6

In 2003, Amendment 6 was adopted to address five limitations within the existing management program: 1) potential inability to prevent the Amendment 5 exploitation target from being exceeded; 2) perceived decrease in availability or abundance of large striped bass in the coastal migratory population; 3) a lack of management direction with respect to target and threshold biomass levels; 4) inequitable effects of regulations on the recreational and commercial fisheries, and coastal and

producer area sectors; and 5) excessively frequent changes to the management program. Accordingly, Amendment 6 completely replaced the existing FMP for Atlantic striped bass.²

The goal of Amendment 6 is “to perpetuate, through cooperative interstate management, migratory stocks of striped bass; to allow commercial and recreational fisheries consistent with the long-term maintenance of a broad age structure, a self-sustaining spawning stock; and also to provide for the restoration and maintenance of their essential habitat.” In support of this goal, the following objectives are included:

1. Manage striped bass fisheries under a control rule designed to maintain stock size at or above the target female spawning stock biomass level and a level of fishing mortality at or below the target exploitation rate.
2. Manage fishing mortality to maintain an age structure that provides adequate spawning potential to sustain long-term abundance of striped bass populations.
3. Provide a management plan that strives, to the extent practical, to maintain coastwide consistency of implemented measures, while allowing the States defined flexibility to implement alternative strategies that accomplish the objectives of the FMP.
4. Foster quality and economically viable recreational, for-hire, and commercial fisheries.
5. Maximize cost effectiveness of current information gathering and prioritize state obligations in order to minimize costs of monitoring and management.
6. Adopt a long-term management regime that minimizes or eliminates the need to make annual changes or modifications to management measures.
7. Establish a fishing mortality target that will result in a net increase in the abundance (pounds) of age 15 and older striped bass in the population, relative to the 2000 estimate.

Amendment 6 modified the F target and threshold, and introduced a new set of biological reference points (BRPs) based on female SSB, as well as a list of management triggers based on the BRPs. The coastal commercial quotas were restored to 100% of the states’ average landings during the 1972-1979 historical period, except for Delaware’s coastal commercial quota which remained at the level allocated in 2002³. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two-fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay fisheries, North Carolina fisheries that operate in the A-R, and states with approved alternative regulations. The Chesapeake Bay and A-R regulatory programs were predicated on a more conservative F target than the coastal migratory stock, which allowed these states/jurisdictions (hereafter states) to implement separate seasons, harvest caps, and size and bag limits as long as they remain under that F target. No minimum

² While NOAA Fisheries continues to implement a complete ban on the fishing and harvest of striped bass in the EEZ, Amendment 6 includes a recommendation to consider reopening the EEZ to striped bass fisheries. In September 2006, NOAA Fisheries concluded that it would be imprudent to open the EEZ to striped bass fishing because it could not be certain that opening the EEZ would not lead to increased effort and an overfishing scenario.

³ The decision to hold Delaware’s commercial quota at the 2002 level is based on tagging information that indicated F on the Delaware River/Bay stock is too high, and uncertainty regarding the status of the spawning stock for the Delaware River/Bay.

size limit can be less than 18 inches under Amendment 6. The same minimum size standards regulate the commercial fisheries as the recreational fisheries, except for a minimum 20 inch size limit in the Delaware Bay spring American shad gillnet fishery.

States are permitted the flexibility to deviate from these regulations by submitting conservation equivalency proposals to the Plan Review Team (PRT). All proposals are subject to technical review and approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management (Board). It is the responsibility of the state to demonstrate through quantitative analysis that the proposed management program is equivalent to the standards in the FMP, or will not contribute to the overfishing of the resource.

Five addenda to Amendment 6 have been implemented. Addendum I, approved in 2007, established a bycatch monitoring and research program to increase the accuracy of data on striped bass discards and recommended development of a web-based angler education program. Also in 2007, President George W. Bush issued an Executive Order (E.O. 13449) prohibiting the sale of striped bass (and red drum) caught within the EEZ. Addendum II was approved in 2010 and established a new definition of recruitment failure such that each index would have a fixed threshold rather than a threshold that changes annually with the addition of each year's data. Addendum III was approved in 2012 and requires all states with a commercial fishery for striped bass to implement a uniform commercial harvest tagging program. The Addendum was initiated in response to significant poaching events in the Chesapeake Bay and aims to limit illegal harvest of striped bass.

Addendum IV was triggered in response to the 2013 benchmark assessment, which indicated a steady decline in SSB since the mid-2000s. The Addendum established new F reference points, and changed commercial and recreational measures to reduce F to a level at or below the new target. Chesapeake Bay fisheries were required to implement lower reductions than coastal states (20.5% compared to 25%) since their fisheries were reduced by 14% in 2013 based on their management program. The addendum maintained the flexibility to implement alternative regulations through the conservation equivalency process. This practice has resulted in a variety of regulations among states. All states promulgated regulations prior to the start of their 2015 seasons.

Addendum VI was initiated in response to the 2018 benchmark assessment which indicated the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing⁴. Approved in October 2019, the Addendum aimed to reduce total removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels in order to achieve F target in 2020. Specifically, the Addendum reduced all state commercial quotas by 18%, and implemented a 1 fish bag limit and a 28" to less than 35" slot limit for ocean fisheries and a 1 fish bag limit and an 18" minimum size limit in Chesapeake Bay to reduce total recreational removals by 18% in both regions. The Addendum's

⁴ In February 2017, the Board initiated development of Draft Addendum V to consider liberalizing coastwide commercial and recreational regulations. The Board's action responded to concerns raised by Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions regarding continued economic hardship endured by its stakeholders since the implementation of Addendum IV and information from the 2016 stock assessment update indicating that F was below target in 2015, and that total removals could increase by 10% to achieve the target F. However, the Board chose to not advance the draft addendum for public comment largely due to harvest estimates having increased in 2016 without changing regulations. Instead, the Board decided to wait until it reviews the results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment before considering making changes to the management program.

measures were designed to apply the needed reductions proportionally to both the commercial and recreational sectors, although states were permitted to submit alternative regulations through conservation equivalency that achieve an 18% reduction in total removals statewide. The Board reviewed and approved management options for 2020 on a state-by-state basis in February, and all states promulgated regulations by April 1.

Addendum VI also required the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait to reduce release mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries. States are encouraged to promote the use of circle hooks through various public outreach and education platforms to garner support and compliance with this important conservation measure. In October 2020, the Board approved state implementation plans for circle hook requirements, with the caveat that no exemptions to Addendum VI mandatory circle hook requirements will be permitted. Circle hook regulations were required to be implemented no later than January 1, 2021. In March 2021, the Board approved a clarification on the definition of bait and methods of fishing⁵ that require circle hooks, which must be implemented by states as part of Addendum VI compliance. Per Commission standards, states could implement more restrictive measures. The Board also approved guidance on how to address incidental catch of striped bass when targeting other species with non-circle hooks with bait attached. This guidance was not a compliance criterion since incidental catch was not originally part of Addendum VI.

Amendment 7

Amendment 7 was approved in May 2022, and consolidates Amendment 6 and its associated addenda into a single document. The purpose of Amendment 7 is to update the management program to align with current fishery needs and priorities given the status and understanding of the resource and fishery has changed considerably since implementation of Amendment 6 in 2003. Amendment 7 builds upon the Addendum VI to Amendment 6 action to address overfishing and initiate rebuilding in response to the overfished finding from the 2018 stock assessment, requiring the Board to rebuild the stock by 2029. Amendment 7 establishes new requirements for the following components of the FMP: management triggers, conservation equivalency, additional measures to address recreational release mortality, and the stock rebuilding plan.

For management triggers, Amendment 7 establishes an updated recruitment management trigger that is more sensitive to low recruitment than the previous trigger, and it requires a specific management response to low year class strength. The response requires reevaluation of the fishing mortality management triggers to account for low recruitment. If one of those triggers trips after reevaluation, the Board is required to take action to reduce fishing mortality. Amendment 7 also updates the spawning stock biomass triggers by establishing a deadline for implementing a rebuilding plan. The Board must implement a rebuilding plan within two years of when a spawning stock biomass trigger is tripped.

⁵ Definition of Bait and Methods of Fishing: Circle hooks are required when fishing for striped bass with bait, which is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached.

For conservation equivalency (CE), Amendment 7 does not allow CE to be used for most recreational striped bass fisheries when the stock is overfished. Amendment 7 also provides constraints around the use of Marine Recreational Information Program data for CE proposals and defines the overall percent reduction/liberalization a proposal must achieve, including required uncertainty buffers. These restrictions are intended to minimize the risks due to uncertainty when CE is used for non-quota managed striped bass fisheries.

For recreational release mortality, Amendment 7 establishes a new gear restriction which prohibits gaffing striped bass when fishing recreationally. This is in addition to the existing circle hook requirement when fishing recreationally with bait. Additionally, Amendment 7 requires striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take (e.g., caught on a J-hook with bait) must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury. This provision, which is related to incidental catch, was previously a recommendation in Addendum VI to Amendment 6.

For stock rebuilding, Amendment 7 addresses the upcoming 2022 stock assessment and how it will inform efforts to meet the 2029 stock rebuilding deadline. Given concerns about recent low recruitment and the possibility of continued low recruitment, Amendment 7 requires the 2022 stock assessment's rebuilding projections to use a low recruitment assumption to conservatively account for that future possibility. Amendment 7 also establishes a mechanism for the Board to respond more quickly to the 2022 assessment results if action is needed to achieve stock rebuilding by 2029.

All provisions of Amendment 7 are effective May 5, 2022 except for gear restrictions. States must implement new gear restrictions by January 1, 2023. Amendment 7 also maintains the same recreational and commercial measures specified in Addendum VI to Amendment 6, which were implemented in 2020. As such, all approved Addendum VI conservation equivalency programs and state implementation plans are maintained until such measures are changed in the future. A stock assessment update is expected in October 2022, which will determine whether management measures need to be changed to achieve stock rebuilding by the 2029 deadline.

Pending Action

In August 2021, the Board initiated Addendum VII to Amendment 6 to consider allowing the voluntary transfer of commercial striped bass quota between states/jurisdictions that have commercial quota. The Board deferred consideration of Draft Addendum VII until August 2022, and given the recent approval of Amendment 7, this draft addendum is now referred to as Draft Addendum I to Amendment 7.

II. Status of the Stocks

The 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass was peer-reviewed at the 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW)/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) meeting in November 2018. The assessment addressed several of the recommendations from the 57th SAW/SARC, including developing new maturity-at-age estimates for the coastal migratory stock and evaluating stock status definitions relative to uncertainty in biological reference points (NEFSC 2018a). The assessment also made progress on developing a spatially and temporally explicit catch-at-age

model incorporating tag-based movement (migration) information. Although the Peer Review Panel did not accept the migration model for management use, it recommended continued work to improve the model for future assessments.

The accepted model is a forward projecting statistical catch-at-age (SCA) model which uses catch-at-age data and fishery-dependent and -independent survey indices to estimate annual population size and fishing mortality (NEFSC 2018b). Indices of abundance track relative changes in the population over time while catch data provide information on the scale of the population size. Age structure data (numbers of fish by age) provide additional information on recruitment (number of age-1 fish entering the population) and trends in mortality.

The biological reference points (BRPs) currently used for management are based on the 1995 estimate of female spawning stock biomass (SSB). The 1995 estimate of female SSB is used as the SSB threshold because many stock characteristics (such as an expanded age structure) were reached by this year and the stock was declared recovered. The SSB target is equal to 125% of SSB threshold. To estimate the associated fishing mortality (F) threshold and target, population projections were made by using a constant F and changing the value until the SSB threshold or target was achieved. For the 2018 benchmark, the BRP values have been updated. The benchmark incorporates the newly calibrated recreational catch estimates based on the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES), resulting in higher estimates of SSB and therefore higher estimates for the SSB threshold and target (refer to *Section III* for more information). The SSB threshold is estimated at 91,436 metric tons (202 million pounds), with an SSB target of 114,295 metric tons (252 million pounds). The new MRIP estimates did not have a large effect on the estimates of fishing mortality, and the updated F threshold and target values are very similar to the previous F reference points. The F threshold is estimated at 0.24, and the target is estimated at 0.20

Based on the results of the 2018 benchmark, Atlantic striped bass is overfished and experiencing overfishing. In 2017, female SSB was estimated at 68,476 metric tons (151 million pounds) which is below the SSB threshold (Figure 1). Female SSB declined steadily since the time series high in 2003 and has been below threshold since 2013. The recent decline in female SSB appears to be attributed to a period of low recruitment since about 2005 (Figure 1). However, the 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes (representing the 2012, 2015, and 2016 age-1 recruitment estimates) were above average. Total F was estimated at or above F threshold in 13 of the last 15 years, and was estimated above threshold in 2017 at 0.31 (Figure 2).

A stock assessment update is expected in October 2022 with a terminal year of 2021. As specified in Amendment 7, the 2022 assessment will use a low recruitment assumption for the stock rebuilding projections (rebuilding deadline of 2029).

III. Status of the Fishery in the Ocean and Chesapeake Bay

Total Removals

In 2021, total Atlantic striped bass removals (commercial and recreational, including harvest, commercial discards and recreational release mortality) was estimated at 5.1 million fish, which is about the same as removals in 2020 (less than 1% increase relative to 2020) (Table 3; Figure 5). The recreational sector accounted for 86% of total removals by number (Table 4). It should be noted that the recreational catch estimates reported here reflect the new, improved MRIP mail-based survey and are not directly comparable to FMP Review reports published prior to 2019.

Commercial Fishery

The commercial fishery harvested 4.29 million pounds (577,363 fish) in 2021, which is an 18% increase by weight relative to 2020 (9% increase by number; Tables 5-6). Notably, the ocean commercial quota utilization increased from 55% in 2020 to 76% in 2021. This is the highest ocean quota utilization in the past five years and is similar to the ocean quota utilization in 2017 (74%). Each state that allows commercial harvest utilized 87-99% of their ocean quota in 2021, with the exception of North Carolina which had zero ocean harvest.

In the Chesapeake Bay, quota utilization slightly increased from 76% in 2020 to 81% in 2021. In the past five years, 2020 and 2021 were the two lowest quota utilization years for the Chesapeake Bay, with utilization between 88-91% from 2017-2019.

Quota utilization is important to consider when calculating reductions in commercial removals. The projections for Addendum VI assumed the same quota utilization rate as 2017. As quota utilization changes from year to year, the realized reduction in commercial removals will change.

The PRT notes there are several factors that could have contributed to the 2021 increases in commercial harvest relative to 2020. Year class availability could be a factor, particularly in the ocean, with the relatively strong 2014 and 2015 year classes becoming more available to ocean fisheries. If stock abundance is increasing overall, that could also contribute to more fish being available. Availability also depends on when and how long striped bass stay within state waters (vs. offshore in the EEZ) during the season. Another factor is the impacts of COVID-19, which could have been more detrimental to the commercial industry in 2020 as compared to 2021; however, the PRT recognizes the impacts of COVID-19 on striped bass commercial fisheries likely varied among states, varied between 2020 and 2021, and varied depending on timing within the season.

Commercial harvest from Chesapeake Bay accounted for 57% of the 2021 total commercial harvest by weight. Of total commercial harvest (combined ocean and Chesapeake Bay) by weight, Maryland landed 33%, Virginia landed 20%, and Massachusetts landed 17% (Table 6; Figure 6). Additional harvest came from New York (15%), PRFC (10%), Delaware (3%), and Rhode Island (3%). The proportion of commercial harvest coming from Chesapeake Bay is much higher in numbers of fish; roughly 81% in 2021 (Table 7). This is because fish harvested in Chesapeake Bay have a lower average weight than fish

harvested in ocean fisheries. In 2021, coastwide commercial dead discards were estimated at 85,676⁶ fish, which accounts for <2% of total removals in 2021 (Table 3).

Overall, average commercial harvest in 2020-2021 (under Addendum VI quotas) was 16% lower than the average commercial harvest from 2015-2019 (under Addendum IV quotas). This average decrease relative to 2015-2019 commercial harvest levels aligns with the 18% reduction in commercial quota implemented through Addendum VI in 2020, although some states implemented a less than 18% reduction in their commercial quotas through approved state conservation equivalency plans.

Recreational Fishery

Total recreational catch (harvest and live releases) coastwide was estimated at 30.4 million fish in 2021, which is a 6% decrease from 2020 (Table 8). This overall coastwide decrease was a combination of an increase in harvest offset by a decrease in live releases.

Total recreational harvest (A+B1) in 2021 is estimated at 1.82 million fish (15.7 million pounds), and represents a 6% increase relative to 2020 (5% increase by weight) (Tables 9-10). New Jersey landed the largest proportion of recreational harvest in number of fish⁷ (42%), followed by Maryland (32%), Massachusetts (10%), and New York (8%) (Table 10). The proportion of recreational harvest in numbers from Chesapeake Bay was estimated at 35% in 2021, compared to 46% in 2020.

The vast majority of recreational striped bass catch is released alive either due to angler preference or regulation (i.e., undersized or already caught the bag limit) (Figure 7). The assessment assumes, based on previous studies, that 9% of fish that are released alive die as a result of being caught. In 2021, recreational anglers caught and released an estimated 28.6 million fish, of which 2.6 million are assumed to have died (Table 8). This represents a 7% decrease in live releases coastwide from 2020.

The PRT notes that the ocean and Chesapeake Bay regions experienced different changes in recreational catch in 2021 relative to 2020. The ocean region saw an increase in both recreational harvest (29% increase in numbers of fish) and live releases (7% increase) relative to 2020. On the other hand, the Chesapeake Bay experienced a decrease in both recreational harvest (19% decrease, primarily in Maryland) and live releases (46% decrease) relative to 2020.

According to MRIP, the coastwide number of trips directed at striped bass (primary and secondary target) slightly decreased from 2020 to 2021 by about 2% (Table 12a). However, the trend again differs between the ocean and Chesapeake Bay regions (Table 12a).

In the ocean, the number of directed striped bass trips in 2021 increased slightly by 1% relative to 2020. The number of ocean trips in 2021 is similar the number of trips in 2019. In 2020, most ocean fisheries switched from a minimum size to the Addendum VI slot limit, which likely contributed to

⁶ Commercial dead discard estimates are derived via a generalized additive model (GAM), and are therefore re-estimated for the entire time series when a new year of data is added.

⁷ By weight, New Jersey had the largest proportion of recreational harvest (53%), followed by Maryland (17%), Massachusetts (12%), and New York (10%) (Table 8).

decreased harvest in 2020 and may have changed angler behavior (alongside COVID-19 impacts). The slight increase in ocean trips (and increase in harvest) from 2020 to 2021, under the same regulations, could be attributed to a number of factors discussed later in this section. At the state-specific level, this ocean trend is not the same for each state. Tables 12b and 12c show striped bass directed trips by state for 2019-2021 along with each state's size/bag limit during those years.

Unlike in the ocean, the number of striped bass trips in the Chesapeake Bay increased by 36% from 2019 to 2020 before decreasing by 18% in 2021. Chesapeake Bay regulation changes through Addendum VI in 2020 were a decreased bag limit for Maryland private anglers and summer no-targeting closures in Maryland and the Potomac River. While these regulations may have contributed to decreased harvest, changes in effort could again be attributed to a variety of factors, recognizing different impacts in the Bay as compared to the ocean region.

The PRT notes several factors that likely contributed to trends in recreational catch and effort, including year class availability, overall stock abundance, nearshore availability, and angler behavior. The relatively strong 2014 and 2015 year classes moving out of the Chesapeake Bay and into the ocean could have contributed to increased catch in the ocean and decreased catch in the Bay in 2021. COVID-19 likely had continued impacts in 2021 and affected recreational sectors differently. For-hire trips may have been limited due to restrictions on the number of people permitted on vessels at different times throughout the season; however, anecdotally, shore and private trips may have increased at certain times. For example, license sales in Maryland increased in 2020 followed by a decrease in 2021, which could reflect some impact of COVID-19 increasing participation and effort in the Chesapeake Bay during the first year of the pandemic in particular. It is important to recognize that impacts from COVID-19 were likely not uniform across states or sectors.

IV. Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Management Area

Fishery Management Plan

While striped bass in North Carolina's ocean waters are managed under the Interstate FMP, Addendum IV to Amendment 6 formally defers management of the A-R stock to the state of North Carolina using A-R stock-specific BRPs approved by the Board (NCDMF 2013, 2014).

Estuarine striped bass in North Carolina are currently managed under Amendment 1 to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and its subsequent revision and recent supplement (NCDMF 2013, 2014, 2019). It is a joint plan between the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). Amendment 1, adopted in 2013, lays out separate management strategies for the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) stock and the estuarine (non-migratory) Central and Southern striped bass stocks in the Tar-Pamlico, Neuse, and Cape Fear rivers. Management programs in Amendment 1 for the A-R stock utilize annual total allowable landings (TAL), daily possession limits, open and closed harvest seasons, gill net mesh size and yardage restrictions, seasonal small mesh gill net attendance requirements, single barbless hook requirements in some areas, minimum size limits, and a no-harvest slot limit in the Roanoke River to maintain a sustainable harvest and reduce regulatory discard mortality in all sectors.

Amendment 2 to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass FMP is in the final stages of development. Amendment 2 would maintain for the A-R stock the use of a TAL to manage harvest as informed by stock assessments, and also includes consideration of a new 18-25" harvest slot limit in the Albemarle Sound to protect larger striped bass. At the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission's May 2022 business meeting, draft Amendment 2 preferred management options were selected. The NCDEQ Secretary reported progress to the appropriate legislative bodies and the review period has ended. The Marine Fisheries Commission will consider adopting Amendment 2 at its August 2022 business meeting.

In 2021, striped bass fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean of North Carolina were managed under ASMFC's Amendment 6 and subsequent addenda to the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Striped Bass. As of May 2022, striped bass fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean of North Carolina are now managed under ASMFC's Amendment 7 to the Interstate FMP. North Carolina is required to inform the Commission of changes to striped bass management in the A-R System.

Status of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock

The most recent A-R stock assessment a forward-projecting fully-integrated, age-structured statistical model to estimate population parameters and reference points for the A-R striped bass stock for 1991-2017 (Lee et al. 2020). The model was peer reviewed by an outside panel of experts and approved for management use by the Board in May 2021. The A-R stock is managed using reference points for female spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) with threshold values based on 35% spawning potential ratio and target values based on 45% spawning potential ratio. The 2020 assessment estimated female SSB in 2017 (terminal year) was 78,576 pounds (35.6 metric tons), which is below the SSB threshold of 267,390 pounds (121 metric tons). The assessment estimated F in 2017 was 0.27, which is above the F threshold of 0.18. These results show that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring (Figures 3 and 4).

	Target	Threshold	Terminal Year (2017) Estimate
Female SSB	350,371 lbs.	267,390 lbs.	78,576 lbs.
Fishing Mortality (F)	0.13	0.18	0.27

Based on the assessment results, North Carolina implemented a 2020 Revision to Amendment 1 that lowers the annual TAL for Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River management areas for 2021 and 2022 in order to reduce F to the target level. The new TAL is 51,216 pounds, which is a 57% reduction from 2017 landings (NCDMF 2020). A stock assessment update with data through 2021 is currently being performed.

Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Atlantic Striped Bass Fisheries

In 2021, total commercial and recreational harvest in the Albemarle Sound Management Area (ASMA) and the Roanoke River Management Area (RRMA) was 63,733 pounds (16,649 fish).

Commercial harvest in the ASMA was 27,930 pounds (6,596 fish). There is no commercial harvest in the RRMA. Recreational harvest in the ASMA was 8,257 pounds (2,258 fish), and recreational harvest in the RRMA was 27,546 pounds (7,795 fish).

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Amendment 6 and its Addenda I-VI set the regulatory and monitoring measures for the coastwide striped bass fishery in 2021. Amendment 6 requires certain states to implement fishery-dependent monitoring programs for striped bass. All states with commercial fisheries or substantial recreational fisheries are required to define the catch and effort composition of these fisheries. Additionally, all states with a commercial fishery must implement a commercial harvest tagging program pursuant to Addendum III to Amendment 6.

Amendment 6 also requires certain states to monitor the striped bass population independent of the fisheries. Juvenile abundance surveys are required from Maine (Kennebec River), New York (Hudson River), New Jersey (Delaware River), Maryland (Chesapeake Bay tributaries), Virginia (Chesapeake Bay tributaries), and North Carolina (Albemarle Sound). Spawning stock sampling is mandatory for New York (Hudson River), Pennsylvania (Delaware River), Delaware (Delaware River), Maryland (Upper Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River), Virginia (Rappahannock River and James River), and North Carolina (Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River). Amendment 6 requires NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina to continue their tagging programs, which provide data used to determine survivorship and migration patterns.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues

Ocean Commercial Quota

In 2021, the ocean commercial quota was 2,411,154 pounds and was not exceeded. Table 11 contains final 2021 quotas per Addendum VI and approved conservation equivalency programs and harvest that occurred in 2021.

Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota

In 2021, the Chesapeake Bay-wide quota was 3,001,648 pounds and was allocated to Maryland, the PRFC, and Virginia based on historical harvest. In 2021, the Bay-wide quota was not exceeded. Table 11 contains jurisdiction-specific quotas and harvest that occurred in 2021 for Chesapeake Bay⁸. In 2021, commercial harvest from Chesapeake Bay accounted for 57% of total commercial landings by weight, a slight decrease from 63% in 2020. From 2015-2019 (under Addendum IV quotas), the Chesapeake Bay averaged 61% of total commercial landings.

Chesapeake Bay Spring Harvest of Migrant Striped Bass

Historically, recreational fishermen in Chesapeake Bay are permitted to take adult migrant fish during a limited seasonal fishery, commonly referred to as the Spring Trophy Fishery. From 1993 to 2007 the fishery operated under a quota. Beginning in 2008, the Board approved non-quota management until

⁸ Maryland commercial landings for 2021 are considered preliminary.

stock assessment indicates that corrective action is necessary to reduce F on the coastal stock. The Spring Trophy Fishery is currently managed via bag limits and minimum sizes. The Commonwealth of Virginia closed the spring trophy season beginning in 2019.

The 2021 estimate of migrant fish harvested during the Maryland trophy season was 6,016 fish (1,764 fish by charter boats; 4,252 fish by private anglers), which is a 15% decrease compared to 2020.

Wave-1 Recreational Harvest Estimates

Evidence suggests that North Carolina, Virginia, and possibly other states have had sizeable wave-1 (January/February) recreational striped bass fisheries beginning in 1996 (NEFSC 2018b). MRIP, formerly the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), has sampled for striped bass in North Carolina during wave-1 since 2004 (other states are not currently covered during wave-1). Virginia harvest in wave-1 is estimated for stock assessment via the ratio of landings and tag returns in wave-6 and regression analysis (refer to the methods described in NEFSC 2018a for more detail).

However, based on fishery-independent data collected by NCDMF, ASMFC and USFWS, striped bass distributions on their overwintering grounds during December through February has changed significantly since the mid-2000s. The migratory portion of the stocks has been well offshore in the EEZ (>3 miles) affecting both Virginia's and North Carolina's striped bass winter ocean fisheries in recent years. Furthermore, North Carolina has reported zero recreational striped bass harvest during wave-1 and wave-6 in the ocean for 2012-2021, and Virginia has reported zero recreational ocean harvest for seven of the last eight years. Similarly, North Carolina's commercial fishery has reported zero striped bass landings from the ocean since 2013.

Addendum III to Amendment 6: Commercial Fish Tagging Program

Addendum III to Amendment 6 includes compliance requirements for monitoring commercial fishery harvest tagging programs. In 2021, all states implemented commercial tagging programs consistent with the requirements of Addendum III. Table 18 describes commercial tagging programs by state. One state (New York) reported issues with delays in fishermen receiving tags from the tag company, as well as issues with incorrect printing and issuing of tags. New York noted these were likely a small percentage of the total number of tags issued but could be an issue if the issue consistently occurs.

The PRT notes that in a few states, only about half of issued commercial tags were reported used. The PRT emphasizes the importance of tag accounting to account for unused tags at the end of each fishing year in all states. Due to the early deadlines for commercial tagging reports (60 days before the commercial fishery opens), tag accounting for the previous year is often preliminary or not yet available at that time. To address this, the PRT plans to update the striped bass compliance report template (due in June each year) to request updated tag accounting for unused tags. The PRT recommends that Commission staff work with the Law Enforcement Committee and the PRT to regularly follow-up with all states on tag accounting and other questions about state commercial tagging programs as needed. Additionally, the PRT recommends the Board task the PRT with a specific review of the commercial tagging program at a regular interval (e.g., every 5 years) to review the program components, such as the biological metrics used to allocate tags.

Addendum VI to Amendment 6: 18% Reduction in Removals

2021 was the second implementation year of Addendum VI, which implemented measures to reduce total striped bass removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels in order to achieve the fishing mortality target in 2020. Tables 13a-13c list total removals (harvest plus discards/release mortality for commercial and recreational) in numbers of fish for 2017, 2020 and 2021. In 2021, a 27% reduction in total removals coastwide (numbers of fish) was realized relative to total removals coastwide in 2017. This is about the same level of reduction realized in 2020 since total removals were about the same in 2020 and 2021. For the ocean region in 2021, a 23% reduction in total removals (numbers of fish) was realized relative to 2017 removals. For the Chesapeake Bay in 2021, a 35% reduction in total removals (numbers of fish) was realized relative to 2017 removals.

Tables 14 and 15 list the realized change for recreational removals (in numbers of fish) and commercial harvest (in pounds) by state for 2017, 2020, and 2021. Table 14 also includes the predicted reduction in recreational removals from state conservation equivalency plans, where applicable. The PRT notes that differences in performance are influenced by many factors, including changes in effort, fish availability/year classes, and environmental factors. The TC has discussed the challenge of trying to evaluate performance since the effects of different management measures cannot be isolated from the effects of effort changes and fish availability. There is a lot of year-to-year variability even under consistent regulations due to different year classes moving through the stock and variability in effort and angler behavior. During the TC's review of Addendum VI conservation equivalency proposals, the TC noted there is a high level of uncertainty in the percent reductions calculated due to the effect of changes in angler behavior (effort) and the size structure and distribution of the population (availability of legal and sub-legal fish), and these changes are difficult to account for and cannot be accurately quantified.

Note on 2020 MRIP Data

The component of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) that samples dockside catch rate data (Access Point Angler Intercept Survey - APAIS) was interrupted by the pandemic. Due to this interruption, catch rate data were imputed as needed from 2018 and 2019 to generate total catch estimates in 2020. The contribution of imputed data for Atlantic striped bass recreational harvest and release estimates by state ranged from 0-100% (Table 16).

Addendum VI to Amendment 6: Circle Hook Requirement

Addendum VI circle hook regulations were required to be implemented by the states in January 2021. In March 2021, the Board approved a clarification on the definition of bait and methods of fishing that require circle hooks, which must be implemented by states as part of Addendum VI compliance.

All states have implemented the Addendum VI circle hook regulations. The PRT notes that New Jersey's rule to implement the circle hook requirements was delayed in the regulatory process and was fully implemented in December 2021.

The PRT notes differences among the definitions of bait implemented by the states (Table 17) with some definitions being more restrictive than the Board-approved definition. A few states have not defined bait, which could be considered more restrictive (per Commission standards, states can

implement more restrictive measures). Additionally, some state regulations are more restrictive by not specifying any exemptions, as compared to the Board-approved exemption for bait on artificial lures.

In March 2021, the Board also approved guidance on how to address incidental catch of striped bass when targeting other species with non-circle hooks with bait attached. Although this guidance is not a compliance criterion for Addendum VI, since incidental catch was not originally part of Addendum VI, several states implemented this guidance in 2021 (Table 17). As part of Amendment 7 approved in May 2022, this provision regarding incidental catch is a requirement that must be implemented by January 1, 2023.

Juvenile Abundance Index Analysis

The following states are required to conduct striped bass young-of-year juvenile abundance index (JAI) surveys on an annual basis: Maine for the Kennebec River; New York for the Hudson River; New Jersey for the Delaware River; Maryland for the Maryland Chesapeake Bay tributaries; Virginia for the Virginia Chesapeake Bay tributaries; and North Carolina for the A-R stock.

The PRT and the Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) annually review the JAIs per the recruitment trigger specified in the FMP. As of May 2022, the new Amendment 7 recruitment trigger is effective and reads as follows:

If any of the four JAIs used in the stock assessment model to estimate recruitment (NY, NJ, MD, VA) shows an index value that is below 75% of all values (i.e., below the 25th percentile) in the respective JAI from 1992-2006* (which represents a period of high recruitment) for three consecutive years, then an interim F target and interim F threshold calculated using the low recruitment assumption will be implemented, and the F-based management triggers will be reevaluated using those interim reference points. If an F-based trigger is tripped upon reevaluation, the striped bass management program must be adjusted to reduce F to the interim F target within one year.

For the 2022 review of JAIs, the analysis evaluates the 2019, 2020, and 2021 JAI values per the Amendment 7 recruitment trigger. One state (Maryland) met the criteria of the Amendment 7 recruitment trigger (Figure 8). Maryland's JAI values for 2019 (1.95), 2020 (1.12), and 2021 (1.65) were below the Maryland JAI trigger level of 4.16. Since this trips the recruitment trigger in 2022, F reference points using the low recruitment assumption will be calculated. Because 2022 is a stock assessment year, that reference point calculation and trigger evaluation will be part of the 2022 assessment update (results expected in October 2022).

New York's JAI (Hudson River) was above its trigger level (11.70) in both 2020 and 2021 with values of 35.39 and 15.89, respectively. New Jersey's JAI (Delaware River) was below its trigger level (1.07) in 2021 with a value of 0.67. A 2020 JAI value for New Jersey is not available due to COVID-19 restrictions. Virginia's JAI was above its trigger level (8.22) in 2020 with a value of 13.89, but fell below the trigger level in 2021 with a value of 6.3.

Maine's JAI (Kennebec River) and North Carolina's JAI (Albemarle-Roanoke) are not part of the recruitment trigger, but are still required monitoring for those states (Figure 9). Maine's JAI was below

the level of recruitment failure in both 2020 and 2021 with values of 0.0 and 0.02, respectively. North Carolina's JAI tripped the previous Amendment 6 recruitment trigger in 2021 based on low index values in 2018, 2019, and 2020. North Carolina's JAI was also low in 2021 with a value of 0.07, the fourth consecutive year below the level of recruitment failure.

Law Enforcement Reporting

States are asked to report any law enforcement issues that occurred the previous season in annual compliance reports. The most common violations noted were recreationally harvested fish under or over the legal size limit.

The PRT notes that states' responses to this section of the compliance report are widely varied; some states provide the number of violations, some provide a qualitative overview, and some only identify major enforcement issues. The PRT recommends the Board consult with the Law Enforcement Committee to determine what type of enforcement information would be most helpful to include in compliance reports. The PRT recognizes that states have different enforcement processes and that this type of information is most important immediately following a regulation change.

VII. Plan Review Team Comments and Recommendations

A summary of 2021 fishery regulations by state is provided in Table 1 and Table 2. Each state's commercial tag monitoring program is described in Table 18, and state compliance with fishery-independent and -dependent monitoring requirements are summarized in Table 19.

Based on annual state compliance reports (ASMFC 2022), the PRT determined that all states in 2021 implemented a management and monitoring program consistent with the provisions of Amendment 6 and Addenda I – VI, with three inconsistencies noted below:

- As identified in the past two FMP Reviews (ASMFC 2020, 2021), the PRT notes an inconsistency with implementation of the Addendum VI slot limit. New York's recreational regulations state a slot limit of "28" to 35" TL". This does not explicitly indicate whether the upper limit is inclusive or not.
 - The PRT reviewed New York's Addendum VI implementation plan, which predicted a greater than 18% reduction, and confirmed the harvest calculations did not include the upper bound of 35" (assumed harvest up to 34.99"). The PRT calculated what the predicted percent reduction would have been if the slot was inclusive of 35", and confirmed that it still would have been greater than the required 18% reduction.
 - Future reduction calculations will need to recognize this measure as being different from the FMP standard of 28" to less than 35".
- As identified in last year's FMP Review (ASMFC 2021), the PRT notes that Maryland's 2021 summer closure period (no targeting July 16-31) is different from their approved 2020 summer closure period (no targeting August 16-31). At the August 2021 Board meeting, Maryland stated their intent to continue with the July 16-31 closure period.

- The PRT notes that Pennsylvania implemented the circle hook requirement when fishing with bait in the tidal portion of the Delaware River (downstream from the Calhoun St. Bridge), but not in the non-tidal waters upstream from that point. This does align with Pennsylvania’s approved implementation plan, which specified that the use of circle hooks in the non-tidal portion would be a recommendation only. Pennsylvania noted the targeted striped bass fishery in the non-tidal portion of the Delaware River is very limited with low numbers of striped bass utilizing that upriver habitat.

The PRT developed the following **recommendations**:

- As described in the commercial tagging section, the PRT plans to update the striped bass compliance report template to request updated tag accounting for unused tags. The PRT recommends that Commission staff work with the Law Enforcement Committee and the PRT to regularly follow-up with all states on tag accounting and other questions about state commercial tagging programs as needed.
- The PRT recommends the Board task the PRT with a specific review of the commercial tagging program at a regular interval (e.g., every 5 years) to review the program components, such as the biological metrics used to allocate tags.
- As described in the Law Enforcement Reporting section, the PRT recommends the Board consult with the Law Enforcement Committee to determine what type of enforcement information would be most helpful for states to include in compliance reports.

The PRT notes the following **additional comments**:

- As described in the Addendum VI circle hook section, there are differences among the definitions of bait implemented by the states (Table 17), with some more restrictive than others.
- Several states have already implemented the guidance on incidental catch, which is not a compliance criterion for Addendum VI. Per Amendment 7, this incidental catch provision must be implemented by all states by January 1, 2023.
- While the New York spawning stock monitoring program in the Hudson River does meet the FMP’s fishery-independent monitoring requirements, it does not provide an index of relative abundance to characterize the Hudson River stock which was identified as a high priority research recommendation at SAW 66.
- Some fishery monitoring efforts in 2021 were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but there were fewer survey impacts than in 2020. Table 19 notes which 2021 programs were impacted by COVID-19, as identified by state compliance reports.

VIII. Research Recommendations

Research recommendations were developed by the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment Subcommittee and the 66th SARC and are listed in the final [stock assessment report](#) starting on report page 569.

IX. References

- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). 2020. Review of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (*Morone saxatilis*): 2019 Fishing Year.
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- Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). 2018a. 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (66th SAW) Assessment Report. US Dept Commer. Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 19-08; 719 p.
- Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). 2018b. 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (66th SAW) Assessment Summary Report. US Dept Commer. Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 19-01; 45 p.
- Shepherd, G.R., R.W. Laney, M. Appelman, D. Honabarger and C.L. Wright. 2017. Biennial Report to Congress on the Progress and Findings of Studies of Striped Bass Populations --2017. National Marine Fisheries Service, Silver Spring, MD. 11 p.

X. Tables

Table 1. Summary of Atlantic striped bass commercial regulations in 2021. Source: 2022 State Compliance Reports. Minimum sizes and slot size limits are in total length (TL). *Commercial quota reallocated to recreational bonus fish program.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	SEASONAL QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
ME	Commercial fishing prohibited		
NH	Commercial fishing prohibited		
MA	≥35" minimum size; no gaffing undersized fish. 15 fish/day with commercial boat permit; 2 fish/day with rod and reel permit.	735,240 lbs. Hook & Line only.	6.16-11.15 (or when quota reached); open fishing days of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, with Thursday and Friday added on October 1 (if quota remains). Cape Cod Canal closed to commercial striped bass fishing.
RI	Floating fish trap: 26" minimum size unlimited possession limit until 70% of quota reached, then 500 lbs. per licensee per day	Total: 148,889 lbs., split 39:61 between the trap and general category. Gill netting prohibited.	4.1 – 12.31
	General category (mostly rod & reel): 34" min. 5 fish/vessel/day limit.		5.20-6.30; 7.1-12.31, or until quota reached. Closed Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during Jul-Dec.
CT	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program in CT suspended indefinitely in 2020.		
NY	26"-38" size; (Hudson River closed to commercial harvest)	640,718 lbs. Pound Nets, Gill Nets (6-8" stretched mesh), Hook & Line.	5.15 – 12.15, or until quota reached. Limited entry permit only.
NJ*	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program: 1 fish/permit at 24" to <28"	215,912 lbs.	5.15 – 12.31 (permit required)
PA	Commercial fishing prohibited		
DE	Gill Net: 20" min in DE Bay/River during spring season. 28" in all other waters/seasons.	Gillnet: 135,350 lbs. No fixed nets in DE River.	Gillnet: 2.15-5.31 (2.15-3.30 for Nanticoke River) & 11.15-12.31; drift nets only 2.15-28 & 5.1-31; no trip limit.
	Hook and Line: 28" min	Hook and line: 7,124 lbs.	Hook and Line: 4.1–12.31, 200 lbs./day trip limit

(Table 1 continued – Summary of commercial regulations in 2021).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	SEASONAL QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
MD	Chesapeake Bay and Rivers: 18–36” Common pool trip limits: Hook and Line - 250 lbs./license/week Gill Net - 300 lbs./license/week	1,445,394 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota)	Bay Pound Net: 6.1-12.31 Bay Haul Seine: 1.1-2.28; 6.1-12.31 Bay Hook & Line: 6.1-12.31 Bay Drift Gill Net: 1.1-2.28, 12.1-12.31
	Ocean: 24” minimum	Ocean: 89,094 lbs.	1.1-5.31, 10.1-12.31
PRFC	18” min all year; 36” max 2.15–3.25	572,861 lbs. (split between gear types; part of Bay-wide quota)	Hook & Line: 1.1-3.25, 6.1-12.31 Pound Net & Other: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15 <u>Gill Net</u> : 11.9.2020-3.25.2021 Misc. Gear: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15
VA	Chesapeake Bay and Rivers: 18” min; 28” max size limit 3.15–6.15	983,393 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota)	1.16-12.31
	Ocean: 28” min	125,034 lbs.	
NC	Ocean: 28” min	295,495 lbs. (split between gear types)	Seine fishery was not opened Gill net fishery was not opened Trawl fishery was not opened

Table 2. Summary of Atlantic striped bass recreational regulations in 2021. Source: 2022 State Compliance Reports. Minimum sizes and slot size limits are in total length (TL).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL)/REGION	BAG LIMIT	GEAR/FISHING RESTRICTIONS	OPEN SEASON
ME	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Hook & line only; circle hooks only when using live bait; must release if caught on unapproved hook type	All year, except spawning areas are closed 12.1-4.30 and C&R only 5.1-6.30
NH	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Gaffing and culling prohibited; Use of corrodible non-offset circle hooks required if angling with bait	All year
MA	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Hook & line only; no high-grading; gaffs and other injurious removal devices prohibited. Inline circle hook requirement when fishing with bait, except with artificial lures; mandatory release of catch on any unapproved method of take	All year
RI	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Circle required while fishing recreationally with bait for striped bass (except for artificial lures with bait attached); must release if caught on unapproved method of take	All year
CT	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Inline circle hooks only when using whole, cut or live natural bait. Exemption of artificial lures/ release of incidental noncircle hook provision (July1st, 2021). Spearing and gaffing prohibited.	All year
NY	Ocean and DE River: Slot Size: 28 -35"	1 fish/day	Angling only. Spearing permitted in ocean waters. C&R only during closed season. Circle hook requirements.	Ocean: 4.15-12.15 Delaware River: All year
	HR: Slot Size: 18 -28"	1 fish/day	Angling only. Circle hook requirements.	Hudson River: 4.1-11.30
NJ	1 fish at 28 to < 38"	1 fish/day	Circle hooks required when fishing with bait; must release if caught on unapproved method of take	Closed 1.1 – Feb 28 in all waters except in the Atlantic Ocean, and closed 4.1-5.31 in the lower DE River and tributaries

(Table 2 continued – Summary of recreational regulations in 2021).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS/REGION	BAG LIMIT	GEAR/FISHING RESTRICTIONS	OPEN SEASON
PA	Upstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 1 fish/day at ≥ 28" to <35"			All year
	Downstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 1 fish/day at ≥ 28" to <35 (except 4.1-5.31)		Circle hooks required when fishing with bait	All year. 20"-<24" slot from 4.1 – 5.31
DE	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Hook & line, spear (for divers) only. Inline circle hooks required when fishing for striped bass using cut or whole natural baits	All year. C&R only 4.1-5.31 in spawning grounds. 20"-25" slot from 7.1-8.31 in DE River, Bay & tributaries
MD	Ocean: ≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	Circle hooks if chumming, live-lining, or bait fishing and targeting striped bass	All year
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs^	C&R only	Circle hook requirement with bait; no eels; no stinger hooks; barbless hooks when trolling; max 6 lines when trolling	1.1-2.28, 3.1-3.31, 12.11-12.31
	Chesapeake Bay: 35" min	1 fish/day	Geographic restrictions apply; Circle hook requirement with bait; no eels as bait	5.1-5.15
	Chesapeake Bay: 1 fish/day, 19" minimum size; 2/fish/day for charter with only 1 fish >28"		Geographic restrictions apply; circle hooks if chumming, livelining, or bait fishing and targeting striped bass	5.16-5.31
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs: 1 fish/day, 19" minimum size; 2/fish/day for charter with only 1 fish >28"		All Bay and tribs open; circle hooks if chumming, livelining, or bait fishing and targeting striped bass	6.1-7.15, 8.1-12.10

^ Susquehanna Flats: C&R only Jan 1 – March 31 (circle hooks when bait fishing); 1 fish at 19"-26" slot May 16 – May 31 (circle hooks if chumming, livelining, or bait fishing and targeting striped bass).

(Table 2 continued – Summary of recreational regulations in 2021).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS/REGION	BAG LIMIT	GEAR/FISHING RESTRICTIONS	OPEN SEASON
PRFC	Spring Trophy: 35" minimum size	1 fish/day	No more than two hooks or sets of hooks for each rod or line; no live eel; no high-grading; non-offset Circle Hooks are required when fishing for striped bass using cut or whole natural bait.	5.1-5.15
	Summer and Fall: 20" min	2 fish/day	No more than two hooks or sets of hooks for each rod or line; non-offset Circle Hooks are required when fishing for striped bass using cut or whole natural bait.	5.16-7.6 and 8.21-12.31; closed 7.7-8.20 (No Direct Targeting)
DC	18" minimum size	1 fish/day	Hook and line only	5.16-12.31
VA	Ocean: 28"-36" slot limit	1 fish/day	Hook & line, rod & reel, hand line only. No gaffing. Circle hooks required if/when using live bait	1.1-3.31, 5.16-12.31
	Ocean Spring Trophy: NO SPRING TROPHY SEASON			
	Chesapeake Bay Spring Trophy: NO SPRING TROPHY SEASON			
	Bay Spring/Summer: 20"-28" slot limit	1 fish/day	Hook & line, rod & reel, hand line only. No gaffing. Circle hooks required if/when using live bait.	5.16-6.15
	Bay Fall: 20 - 36" slot limit	1 fish/day	Hook & line, rod & reel, hand line only. No gaffing. Circle hooks required if/when using live bait.	10.4-12.31
NC	≥ 28" and <35"	1 fish/day	No gaffing allowed. Circle hooks required when fishing with natural bait.	All year

Table 3. Total removals (harvest plus discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish, 1991-2021 calendar years. Note: Harvest is from state compliance reports/MRIP (June 2022), discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Commercial		Recreational		Total Removals
	Harvest	Dead Discards*	Harvest	Release Mortality	
1991	158,491	90,329	798,260	715,478	1,762,557
1992	256,476	189,814	869,779	937,611	2,253,681
1993	314,526	114,317	789,037	812,404	2,030,284
1994	325,401	165,700	1,055,523	1,360,872	2,907,496
1995	537,412	192,368	2,287,578	2,010,689	5,028,047
1996	854,102	257,506	2,487,422	2,600,526	6,199,556
1997	1,076,561	324,445	2,774,981	2,969,781	7,145,769
1998	1,215,219	346,537	2,915,390	3,259,133	7,736,278
1999	1,223,572	347,186	3,123,496	3,140,905	7,835,158
2000	1,216,812	213,863	3,802,477	3,044,203	8,277,354
2001	931,412	175,815	4,052,474	2,449,599	7,609,300
2002	928,085	187,084	4,005,084	2,792,200	7,912,453
2003	854,326	126,274	4,781,402	2,848,445	8,610,447
2004	879,768	156,026	4,553,027	3,665,234	9,254,055
2005	970,403	142,385	4,480,802	3,441,928	9,035,518
2006	1,047,648	152,308	4,883,961	4,812,332	10,896,250
2007	1,015,114	158,078	3,944,679	2,944,253	8,062,124
2008	1,027,824	108,830	4,381,186	2,391,200	7,909,039
2009	1,050,055	133,317	4,700,222	1,942,061	7,825,654
2010	1,031,448	132,373	5,388,440	1,760,759	8,313,020
2011	944,777	82,015	5,006,358	1,482,029	7,515,180
2012	870,684	192,190	4,046,299	1,847,880	6,957,053
2013	784,379	112,620	5,157,760	2,393,425	8,448,184
2014	750,263	114,065	4,033,746	2,172,342	7,070,415
2015	621,952	88,614	3,085,725	2,307,133	6,103,425
2016	609,028	91,186	3,500,434	2,981,430	7,182,077
2017	592,670	98,801	2,937,911	3,421,110	7,050,492
2018	621,123	101,264	2,244,765	2,826,667	5,793,819
2019	653,807	85,262	2,150,936	2,589,045	5,479,050
2020	583,070	58,641	1,709,973	2,760,231	5,111,915
2021	634,552	85,676	1,824,484	2,572,931	5,117,643

* Commercial dead discard estimates are derived via a generalized additive model (GAM), and are therefore re-estimated for the entire time series when a new year of data is added.

Table 4. Proportion of total removals (harvest plus discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish, 1991-2021. Note: Harvest is from state compliance reports/MRIP (June 2022), discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Commercial		Recreational	
	Harvest	Dead Discards*	Harvest	Release Mortality
1991	9%	5%	45%	41%
1992	11%	8%	39%	42%
1993	15%	6%	39%	40%
1994	11%	6%	36%	47%
1995	11%	4%	45%	40%
1996	14%	4%	40%	42%
1997	15%	5%	39%	42%
1998	16%	4%	38%	42%
1999	16%	4%	40%	40%
2000	15%	3%	46%	37%
2001	12%	2%	53%	32%
2002	12%	2%	51%	35%
2003	10%	1%	56%	33%
2004	10%	2%	49%	40%
2005	11%	2%	50%	38%
2006	10%	1%	45%	44%
2007	13%	2%	49%	37%
2008	13%	1%	55%	30%
2009	13%	2%	60%	25%
2010	12%	2%	65%	21%
2011	13%	1%	67%	20%
2012	13%	3%	58%	27%
2013	9%	1%	61%	28%
2014	11%	2%	57%	31%
2015	10%	1%	51%	38%
2016	8%	1%	49%	42%
2017	8%	1%	42%	49%
2018	11%	2%	39%	49%
2019	12%	2%	39%	47%
2020	11%	1%	33%	54%
2021	12%	2%	36%	50%

* Commercial dead discard estimates are derived via a generalized additive model (GAM), and are therefore re-estimated for the entire time series when a new year of data is added. Note: Percent may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5. Total harvest of Atlantic striped bass by sector, 1991-2021 calendar years. Note: Harvest is from state compliance reports/MRIP (Query June 2022). Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

Year	Numbers of Fish			Pounds		
	Commercial	Recreational	Total	Commercial	Recreational	Total
1991	158,491	798,260	956,751	966,096	10,640,601	11,606,697
1992	256,476	869,779	1,126,255	1,508,103	11,921,967	13,430,070
1993	314,526	789,037	1,103,563	1,800,176	10,163,767	11,963,943
1994	325,401	1,055,523	1,380,924	1,877,197	14,737,911	16,615,108
1995	537,412	2,287,578	2,824,990	3,775,278	27,072,321	30,847,599
1996	854,102	2,487,422	3,341,524	4,822,864	28,625,685	33,448,549
1997	1,076,561	2,774,981	3,851,542	6,078,566	30,616,093	36,694,659
1998	1,215,219	2,915,390	4,130,609	6,551,623	29,603,199	36,154,822
1999	1,223,572	3,123,496	4,347,068	6,485,079	33,564,988	40,050,067
2000	1,216,812	3,802,477	5,019,289	6,715,044	34,050,817	40,765,861
2001	931,412	4,052,474	4,983,886	6,266,953	39,263,154	45,530,107
2002	928,085	4,005,084	4,933,169	6,152,583	41,840,025	47,992,608
2003	854,326	4,781,402	5,635,728	6,750,799	54,091,836	60,842,635
2004	879,768	4,553,027	5,432,795	7,340,822	53,031,074	60,371,896
2005	970,403	4,480,802	5,451,205	7,120,647	57,421,174	64,541,821
2006	1,047,648	4,883,961	5,931,609	6,780,541	50,674,431	57,454,972
2007	1,015,114	3,944,679	4,959,793	7,047,179	42,823,614	49,870,793
2008	1,027,824	4,381,186	5,409,010	7,190,800	56,665,318	63,856,118
2009	1,050,055	4,700,222	5,750,277	7,217,484	54,411,389	61,628,873
2010	1,031,448	5,388,440	6,419,888	6,996,713	61,431,360	68,428,073
2011	944,777	5,006,358	5,951,135	6,789,792	59,592,092	66,381,884
2012	870,684	4,046,299	4,916,983	6,516,761	53,256,619	59,773,380
2013	784,379	5,157,760	5,942,139	5,819,678	65,057,289	70,876,967
2014	750,263	4,033,746	4,784,009	5,937,949	47,948,610	53,886,559
2015	621,952	3,085,725	3,707,677	4,829,997	39,898,799	44,728,796
2016	609,028	3,500,434	4,109,462	4,848,772	43,671,532	48,520,304
2017	592,670	2,937,911	3,530,581	4,816,395	37,952,581	42,768,976
2018	621,123	2,244,765	2,865,888	4,741,342	23,069,028	27,810,370
2019	653,807	2,150,936	2,804,743	4,284,831	23,556,287	27,841,118
2020	583,070	1,709,973	2,293,043	3,620,031	14,858,984	18,479,015
2021	634,552	1,824,484	2,459,036	4,287,048	15,666,527	19,953,575

Table 6. Commercial harvest by region in pounds (x1000), 1995-2021 calendar years. Source: State compliance reports.

^Estimates exclude inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean								Chesapeake Bay				Grand Total
	MA	RI	NY	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	PRFC	VA	Total	
1995	751.5	113.5	500.8	38.2	79.3	46.2	344.6	1,874.0	1,185.0	198.5	517.8	1,901.3	3,775.3
1996	695.9	122.6	504.4	120.5	75.7	165.9	58.2	1,743.2	1,487.7	346.8	1,245.2	3,079.7	4,822.9
1997	784.9	96.5	460.8	166.0	94.0	179.1	463.1	2,244.4	2,119.2	731.9	983.0	3,834.2	6,078.6
1998	810.1	94.7	485.9	163.2	84.6	375.0	273.0	2,286.6	2,426.7	726.2	1,112.2	4,265.1	6,551.6
1999	766.2	119.7	491.8	187.1	62.6	614.8	391.5	2,633.7	2,274.8	653.3	923.4	3,851.4	6,485.1
2000	796.2	111.8	542.7	140.6	149.7	932.7	162.4	2,836.0	2,261.8	666.0	951.2	3,879.0	6,715.0
2001	815.4	129.7	633.1	198.8	113.9	782.4	381.1	3,054.3	1,660.9	658.7	893.1	3,212.6	6,267.0
2002	924.9	129.2	518.6	160.6	93.2	710.2	441.0	2,977.6	1,759.4	521.0	894.4	3,174.9	6,152.6
2003	1,055.5	190.2	753.3	191.5	103.9	166.4	201.2	2,662.1	1,721.8	676.6	1,690.4	4,088.7	6,750.8
2004	1,214.2	232.3	741.7	182.2	134.2	161.3	605.4	3,271.2	1,790.3	772.3	1,507.0	4,069.6	7,340.8
2005	1,102.2	215.6	689.8	173.1	46.9	185.2	604.5	3,017.4	2,008.7	533.6	1,561.0	4,103.3	7,120.6
2006	1,322.3	221.4	688.4	179.5	91.1	195.0	74.2	2,771.8	2,116.3	673.5	1,219.0	4,008.7	6,780.5
2007	1,039.3	240.6	731.5	188.7	96.3	162.3	379.5	2,838.1	2,240.6	599.3	1,369.2	4,209.1	7,047.2
2008	1,160.3	245.9	653.1	188.8	118.0	163.1	288.4	2,817.7	2,208.0	613.8	1,551.3	4,373.1	7,190.8
2009	1,134.3	234.8	789.9	192.4	127.3	140.4	190.0	2,809.1	2,267.3	727.8	1,413.3	4,408.4	7,217.5
2010	1,224.5	248.9	786.8	185.4	44.8	127.8	276.4	2,894.7	2,105.8	683.2	1,313.0	4,102.0	6,996.7
2011	1,163.9	228.2	855.3	188.6	21.4	158.8	246.4	2,862.5	1,955.1	694.2	1,278.1	3,927.3	6,789.8
2012	1,218.5	239.9	683.8	194.3	77.6	170.8	7.3	2,592.0	1,851.4	733.7	1,339.6	3,924.7	6,516.8
2013	1,004.5	231.3	823.8	191.4	93.5	182.4	0.0	2,526.9	1,662.2	623.8	1,006.8	3,292.8	5,819.7
2014	1,138.5	216.9	531.5	167.9	120.9	183.7	0.0	2,359.4	1,805.7	603.4	1,169.4	3,578.5	5,937.9
2015	866.0	188.3	516.3	144.1	34.6	138.1	0.0	1,887.5	1,436.9	538.0	967.6	2,942.5	4,830.0
2016	938.7	174.7	575.0	136.5	19.7	139.2	0.0	1,983.9	1,425.5	537.1	902.3	2,864.9	4,848.8
2017	823.4	175.3	701.2	141.8	80.5	133.9	0.0	2,056.1	1,439.8	492.7	827.8	2,760.3	4,816.4
2018	753.7	176.6	617.2	155.0	79.8	134.2	0.0	1,916.6	1,424.3	449.4	951.0	2,824.7	4,741.3
2019	584.7	144.2	358.9	132.6	82.8	138.0	0.0	1,441.2	1,475.2	417.3	951.1	2,843.6	4,284.8
2020	386.9	115.9	530.5	138.0	83.6	77.2	0.0	1,332.2	1,273.8	400.3	613.8	2,287.9	3,620.0
2021 ⁺	732.1	130.3	629.5	140.3	88.7	119.9	0.0	1,840.7	1,305.3	411.3	729.7	2,446.4	4,287.0

+ Maryland commercial landings for 2021 are considered preliminary.

Table 7. Commercial harvest and discards by region in numbers of fish (x1000), 1995-2021 calendar years. Source: harvest is from state compliance reports, discards is from ASMFC. ^Estimates exclude inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean								Chesapeake Bay				Discards*			Grand Total Removals
	MA	RI	NY	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	PRFC	VA	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	
1995	39.9	19.7	43.7	5.6	4.0	9.9	23.4	146.1	267.0	29.3	95.0	391.3	150.5	41.8	192.4	729.8
1996	37.3	18.6	40.5	20.7	9.0	14.1	3.3	143.5	486.2	46.2	178.2	710.6	165.3	92.2	257.5	1,111.6
1997	44.0	7.1	37.6	33.2	8.4	17.3	25.8	173.4	620.3	87.7	195.2	903.2	237.9	86.5	324.4	1,401.0
1998	44.3	8.8	45.1	31.4	10.3	41.1	14.2	195.2	729.6	93.3	197.1	1,020.1	308.3	38.2	346.5	1,561.8
1999	40.9	11.6	49.9	34.8	10.2	48.7	21.1	217.2	776.0	90.6	139.8	1,006.3	312.5	34.7	347.2	1,570.8
2000	42.1	9.4	54.9	25.2	13.3	54.5	6.5	205.8	787.6	91.5	132.0	1,011.0	183.0	30.9	213.9	1,430.7
2001	45.8	10.9	58.3	34.4	11.1	42.3	25.0	227.7	538.8	87.8	77.1	703.7	140.0	35.8	175.8	1,107.2
2002	49.8	11.7	47.1	30.4	10.2	38.8	23.2	211.3	571.7	80.3	64.7	716.8	142.7	44.4	187.1	1,115.2
2003	56.4	15.5	68.4	31.5	11.6	10.5	5.8	199.6	427.9	83.1	143.7	654.7	91.9	34.3	126.3	980.6
2004	63.6	16.0	70.4	28.4	14.1	10.4	31.0	233.9	447.0	92.6	106.3	645.9	106.5	49.5	156.0	1,035.8
2005	60.5	14.9	70.6	26.3	6.1	11.3	27.3	217.1	563.9	80.6	108.9	753.3	85.3	57.1	142.4	1,112.8
2006	70.5	15.4	73.6	30.2	10.9	11.5	2.7	214.9	645.1	92.3	95.4	832.7	97.1	55.2	152.3	1,200.0
2007	54.2	13.9	78.5	31.1	11.6	10.6	16.8	216.7	587.6	86.5	124.3	798.4	93.4	64.6	158.1	1,173.2
2008	61.1	16.6	73.3	31.9	14.0	10.8	13.4	221.0	580.7	82.0	144.1	806.8	63.1	45.7	108.8	1,136.7
2009	59.4	16.8	82.6	21.8	12.5	8.9	9.0	211.1	605.6	89.6	143.8	839.0	59.2	74.1	133.3	1,183.4
2010	60.4	15.7	82.4	19.8	5.4	9.4	13.7	206.8	579.2	90.6	154.9	824.7	39.2	93.2	132.4	1,163.8
2011	58.7	14.3	87.4	20.5	2.1	12.2	10.9	206.0	488.9	96.1	153.7	738.7	34.1	47.9	82.0	1,026.8
2012	61.5	15.0	67.1	15.7	6.9	10.8	0.3	177.3	465.6	90.7	137.0	693.4	25.1	167.1	192.2	1,062.9
2013	58.6	13.8	76.2	17.7	7.6	10.0	0.0	183.8	391.5	78.0	131.0	600.5	37.3	75.3	112.6	897.0
2014	58.0	10.5	52.9	14.9	8.5	10.0	0.0	154.8	362.2	81.5	151.8	595.5	49.1	65.0	114.1	864.3
2015	42.3	11.3	45.6	11.0	2.6	7.7	0.0	120.4	298.3	71.0	132.2	501.5	37.1	51.5	88.6	710.6
2016	48.0	11.7	51.0	8.8	1.2	7.6	0.0	128.3	284.9	73.7	122.2	480.8	45.1	46.1	91.2	700.2
2017	41.2	10.1	61.6	9.5	3.5	7.6	0.0	133.5	263.6	67.5	128.0	459.2	78.4	20.4	98.8	691.5
2018	37.8	10.1	52.2	11.4	3.5	6.9	0.0	121.9	286.4	64.4	148.4	499.3	56.8	44.5	101.3	722.4
2019	29.6	7.3	29.6	8.2	3.3	6.9	0.0	84.9	356.7	62.6	149.6	568.9	18.2	67.1	85.3	739.1
2020	19.6	5.037	49.3	8.4	3.4	4.42	0.0	90.2	299.9	66.6	126.4	492.9	24.8	33.8	58.6	641.7
2021 ⁺	36.9	4.6	58.8	9.2	3.6	6.6	0.0	119.6	300.7	68.0	146.2	514.9	14.0	71.7	85.7	720.2

* Commercial dead discard estimates are derived via a generalized additive model (GAM), and are therefore re-estimated for the entire time series when a new year of data is added. + Maryland commercial landings for 2021 are considered preliminary.

Table 8. Total recreational catch, releases, and release mortality in numbers of fish by region (x1000), 1995-2021. Source: MRIP (Query June 2022).
 Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

Year	Harvest (A+B1)			Releases (B2)			Total Catch (A+B1+B2)			Release Mortality (9% of B2)		
	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total
1995	1,260	1,028	2,288	16,587	5,754	22,341	17,847	6,782	24,629	1,493	518	2,011
1996	1,362	1,125	2,487	22,384	6,511	28,895	23,746	7,636	31,382	2,015	586	2,601
1997	1,514	1,261	2,775	22,819	10,178	32,998	24,333	11,439	35,773	2,054	916	2,970
1998	1,647	1,268	2,915	29,294	6,918	36,213	30,941	8,187	39,128	2,637	623	3,259
1999	1,758	1,366	3,123	26,139	8,760	34,899	27,897	10,125	38,022	2,353	788	3,141
2000	2,198	1,604	3,802	25,090	8,734	33,824	27,289	10,338	37,627	2,258	786	3,044
2001	2,758	1,294	4,052	21,073	6,145	27,218	23,831	7,440	31,270	1,897	553	2,450
2002	2,756	1,249	4,005	23,653	7,371	31,024	26,409	8,620	35,030	2,129	663	2,792
2003	3,124	1,658	4,781	20,678	10,971	31,649	23,802	12,628	36,431	1,861	987	2,848
2004	3,078	1,475	4,553	27,868	12,857	40,725	30,946	14,332	45,278	2,508	1,157	3,665
2005	3,182	1,299	4,481	28,663	9,580	38,244	31,845	10,879	42,724	2,580	862	3,442
2006	2,789	2,095	4,884	41,239	12,232	53,470	44,028	14,327	58,354	3,711	1,101	4,812
2007	2,327	1,618	3,945	25,135	7,579	32,714	27,462	9,196	36,659	2,262	682	2,944
2008	3,025	1,356	4,381	21,878	4,691	26,569	24,904	6,046	30,950	1,969	422	2,391
2009	2,898	1,803	4,700	16,740	4,838	21,578	19,638	6,641	26,279	1,507	435	1,942
2010	3,906	1,483	5,388	13,606	5,957	19,564	17,512	7,440	24,952	1,225	536	1,761
2011	3,617	1,389	5,006	12,644	3,823	16,467	16,261	5,212	21,473	1,138	344	1,482
2012	3,071	975	4,046	11,242	9,290	20,532	14,314	10,265	24,578	1,012	836	1,848
2013	3,723	1,435	5,158	19,463	7,131	26,594	23,186	8,565	31,751	1,752	642	2,393
2014	2,276	1,758	4,034	15,107	9,031	24,137	17,382	10,789	28,171	1,360	813	2,172
2015	1,770	1,316	3,086	15,419	10,216	25,635	17,189	11,532	28,721	1,388	919	2,307
2016	1,817	1,683	3,500	17,794	15,333	33,127	19,611	17,016	36,627	1,601	1,380	2,981
2017	1,738	1,200	2,938	28,963	9,050	38,012	30,701	10,249	40,950	2,607	814	3,421
2018	1,195	1,050	2,245	22,739	8,669	31,407	23,933	9,719	33,652	2,046	780	2,827
2019	1,342	809	2,151	21,131	7,636	28,767	22,473	8,445	30,918	1,902	687	2,589
2020	923	787	1,710	22,710	7,959	30,669	23,633	8,746	32,379	2,044	716	2,760
2021	1,189	636	1,824	24,281	4,307	28,588	25,470	4,943	30,413	2,185	388	2,573

Table 9. Recreational harvest by region in pounds (x1000), 1995-2021. Source: MRIP (Query June 2022). ^Estimates exclude NC inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean												Chesapeake Bay			Grand Total
	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	VA	Total	
1995	83	127	2,739	1,049	1,331	5,594	8,587	301	0.0	141	232	20,184	3,115	3,773	6,889	27,072
1996	95	183	2,983	1,626	1,405	10,739	3,959	795	0.0	812	392	22,990	2,789	2,847	5,636	28,626
1997	223	538	5,133	1,997	2,263	8,543	2,179	374	0.0	1,096	865	23,211	3,203	4,203	7,405	30,616
1998	305	262	7,359	1,544	1,807	4,889	4,182	645	579	545	636	22,754	3,023	3,826	6,849	29,603
1999	196	181	4,995	1,904	1,327	7,414	9,473	312	3.8	110	339	26,256	2,323	4,986	7,309	33,565
2000	347	109	4,863	2,008	890	7,053	9,768	925	0.0	416	277	26,656	3,503	3,892	7,395	34,051
2001	446	334	7,188	2,044	1,101	5,058	12,314	695	314	382	1,082	30,959	2,928	5,376	8,304	39,263
2002	775	322	10,261	2,708	1,251	5,975	9,621	589	0.0	1,135	998	33,634	2,643	5,563	8,206	41,840
2003	458	466	10,252	4,052	2,666	10,788	12,066	763	14	392	966	42,882	5,246	5,964	11,210	54,092
2004	554	268	9,329	2,460	2,229	6,437	13,303	870	57	1,067	6,656	43,230	4,860	4,941	9,801	53,031
2005	546	384	7,541	3,155	3,133	11,637	14,289	680	7.7	487	3,947	45,808	7,753	3,860	11,614	57,421
2006	610	244	6,787	1,569	2,854	9,845	12,716	586	2.8	921	2,975	39,109	6,494	5,071	11,565	50,674
2007	422	93	7,010	2,077	2,786	10,081	8,390	207	0.0	516	1,965	33,547	5,249	4,027	9,277	42,824
2008	607	182	8,424	970	2,273	18,000	12,407	847	0.0	1,690	750	46,150	5,639	4,877	10,515	56,665
2009	781	222	9,410	2,185	1,458	7,991	17,040	940	138	48	187	40,399	8,672	5,340	14,012	54,411
2010	218	238	9,959	2,102	2,323	18,190	17,454	895	107	206	1,198	52,891	6,482	2,059	8,541	61,431
2011	245	659	11,953	3,066	981	13,151	15,715	605	8.6	308	4,467	51,157	6,220	2,214	8,435	59,592
2012	152	432	14,941	2,096	1,835	13,096	11,551	644	21	1.7	0.0	44,768	3,819	4,670	8,488	53,257
2013	331	831	9,025	4,428	4,236	16,819	19,451	1,073	1,051	67	0.0	57,313	5,137	2,607	7,744	65,057
2014	423	203	7,965	3,402	2,665	13,998	8,886	381	159	0.0	0.0	38,083	8,877	989	9,866	47,949
2015	132	202	7,799	1,394	2,585	8,695	9,982	340	28	0.0	0.0	31,156	7,786	957	8,743	39,899
2016	189	191	3,731	1,776	912	12,053	12,790	86	7.2	0.0	0.0	31,735	10,912	1,024	11,936	43,672
2017	318	394	5,664	1,655	1,560	8,885	10,886	666	0.0	1.8	0.0	30,030	7,309	613	7,922	37,953
2018	142	130	4,925	1,121	1,165	3,453	7,012	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	17,982	4,683	404	5,087	23,069
2019	415	291	2,698	2,300	685	7,072	6,674	44	7.3	0.0	0.0	20,187	3,145	224	3,370	23,556
2020	180	29	776	483	830	2,202	6,584	16	0.0	0.0	0.0	11,100	3,480	280	3,759	14,859
2021	89	36	1,826	597	201	1,492	8,313	132	0.0	0.0	0.0	12,686	2,682	299	2,981	15,667

Table 10. Recreational harvest by region in numbers of fish (x1000), 1995-2021. Source: MRIP (Query June 2022). ^Estimates exclude NC inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean												Chesapeake Bay			Grand Total
	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	VA	Total	
1995	4.0	7.4	124.3	70.9	75.8	250.3	671.4	25.8	0.1	13.4	16.5	1,259.8	491.1	536.7	1,027.7	2,287.6
1996	4.1	11.0	156.6	100.6	95.9	511.6	301.2	59.7	0.0	89.6	31.7	1,362.0	564.2	561.3	1,125.5	2,487.4
1997	43.0	29.9	365.6	124.7	149.0	450.5	171.2	29.1	0.0	91.1	60.1	1,514.1	552.4	708.4	1,260.8	2,775.0
1998	65.3	14.8	500.9	91.1	114.1	383.8	289.2	51.0	24.3	71.3	41.2	1,647.0	596.2	672.2	1,268.4	2,915.4
1999	37.5	9.9	327.1	116.6	88.2	450.9	657.1	28.3	1.6	14.1	26.4	1,757.8	530.9	834.8	1,365.7	3,123.5
2000	77.3	6.0	306.2	156.8	84.0	494.6	939.8	88.3	0.0	27.2	18.1	2,198.3	810.9	793.3	1,604.2	3,802.5
2001	91.9	23.5	551.0	149.8	78.2	364.2	1,267.5	70.6	64.1	36.7	60.7	2,758.1	513.3	781.1	1,294.4	4,052.5
2002	135.2	28.1	723.5	181.5	92.5	439.3	957.6	65.7	0.0	76.4	56.3	2,756.1	464.4	784.6	1,249.0	4,005.1
2003	99.7	41.3	797.2	226.4	181.7	678.4	942.8	75.7	0.9	29.3	50.4	3,123.8	816.0	841.6	1,657.6	4,781.4
2004	118.3	22.1	666.7	159.6	134.5	458.1	1,042.1	66.6	11.0	75.9	323.2	3,078.1	657.5	817.4	1,474.9	4,553.0
2005	118.3	35.5	536.1	195.6	202.6	854.6	958.1	48.8	3.6	34.2	194.9	3,182.2	815.5	483.1	1,298.6	4,480.8
2006	140.9	20.9	483.2	129.3	168.3	614.8	972.2	44.5	0.4	80.6	134.2	2,789.0	1,342.0	753.0	2,094.9	4,884.0
2007	95.5	8.1	471.9	135.8	163.9	602.8	722.2	17.2	0.0	28.0	81.8	2,327.1	1,127.3	490.3	1,617.6	3,944.7
2008	133.4	11.9	514.1	73.4	132.8	1,169.9	791.0	67.7	0.0	94.4	36.9	3,025.4	779.7	576.1	1,355.8	4,381.2
2009	146.5	17.3	695.0	138.4	100.3	574.2	1,141.5	64.8	10.2	3.0	6.5	2,897.7	1,094.4	708.1	1,802.5	4,700.2
2010	37.3	21.4	808.2	162.0	170.2	1,449.0	1,091.4	61.4	12.5	25.3	67.1	3,905.9	1,139.3	343.2	1,482.6	5,388.4
2011	48.5	54.2	873.5	202.2	91.1	1,005.3	1,038.9	43.7	0.8	51.2	207.6	3,617.1	1,112.1	277.2	1,389.3	5,006.4
2012	31.4	37.3	1,010.6	130.7	137.1	927.5	742.4	51.3	2.9	0.3	0.0	3,071.5	716.7	258.1	974.8	4,046.3
2013	73.3	63.2	658.7	308.3	269.6	902.5	1,324.2	70.6	48.4	4.4	0.0	3,723.2	1,136.7	297.9	1,434.5	5,157.8
2014	86.4	16.5	523.5	172.0	131.8	804.5	501.9	26.2	12.6	0.0	0.0	2,275.5	1,627.0	131.2	1,758.2	4,033.7
2015	14.4	10.0	485.3	67.0	140.8	406.8	600.3	41.9	3.5	0.0	0.0	1,770.1	1,108.0	207.7	1,315.7	3,085.7
2016	14.2	17.6	230.1	128.4	63.3	697.7	659.6	5.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	1,817.2	1,545.1	138.1	1,683.2	3,500.4
2017	22.0	37.7	392.3	59.8	94.9	477.3	626.4	27.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	1,738.3	1,091.6	108.0	1,199.6	2,937.9
2018	16.0	13.4	389.5	39.2	85.5	181.7	465.3	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,194.6	993.3	56.8	1,050.1	2,244.8
2019	38.0	14.7	195.6	104.1	67.1	498.0	412.9	10.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	1,342.2	764.1	44.6	808.7	2,150.9
2020	19.0	3.2	67.2	36.9	71.2	203.7	520.1	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	922.9	734.8	52.2	787.0	1,710.0
2021	12.7	4.4	179.1	57.7	21.2	137.8	766.2	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,188.6	583.7	52.2	635.9	1,824.5

Table 11. Results of 2021 commercial quota accounting in pounds. Source: 2022 state compliance reports. 2021 quota was based on Addendum VI and approved conservation equivalency programs.

State	Add VI (base)	2021 Quota [^]	2021 Harvest	Overage
Ocean				
Maine*	154	154	-	-
New Hampshire*	3,537	3,537	-	-
Massachusetts	713,247	735,240	732,071	0
Rhode Island	148,889	148,889	130,308	0
Connecticut*	14,607	14,607	-	-
New York	652,552	640,718	629,491	0
New Jersey**	197,877	215,912	-	-
Delaware	118,970	142,474	140,250	0
Maryland	74,396	89,094	88,652 ⁺	0
Virginia	113,685	125,034	119,921	0
North Carolina	295,495	295,495	0	0
Ocean Total	2,333,409	2,411,154	1,840,693	0
Chesapeake Bay				
Maryland	2,588,603	1,445,394	1,305,276 ⁺	0
Virginia		983,393	729,736	0
PRFC		572,861	400,414	0
Bay Total		3,001,648	2,435,126	0

Note: North Carolina's fishing year is December-November; PRFC's fishing year for gill nets is November-March.

* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota.

** Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with re-allocation of quota to the recreational fishery.

[^] 2020 quota changed through conservation equivalency for MA (735,240 lbs), NY (640,718 lbs), NJ (215,912 lbs), DE (142,474 lbs), MD (ocean: 89,094 lbs; bay: 1,445,394 lbs), PRFC (572,861 lbs), VA (ocean: 125,034 lbs; bay: 983,393 lbs).

⁺ Maryland commercial landings for 2021 are considered preliminary.

Table 12a. Number of directed trips for Atlantic striped bass (primary and secondary target) from Maine through North Carolina (excluding inshore NC) for 2017-2021. Source: MRIP (Query June 2022).

Year	Ocean	Chesapeake Bay	Coastwide Total
2017	16,794,554	2,634,244	19,428,798
2018	15,686,903	2,650,311	18,337,214
2019	16,189,653	1,967,387	18,157,040
2020	15,859,277	2,678,922	18,538,199
2021	16,017,420	2,183,568	18,200,988

Table 12b. Number of directed trips (x1000) for Atlantic striped bass (primary and secondary target) in the ocean region from Maine through North Carolina (excluding inshore NC) for 2019-2021 with size/bag limits noted each year. Source: MRIP Query June 2022.

Ocean ME-NY and NC								
Year	Size/Bag	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY*	NC
2019	28" min 1 fish	1,216	433	4,366	1,141	1,057	4,003	25
2020	28 to <35" 1 fish	1,498	569	3,203	934	1,278	4,210	3
2021	1 fish	1,340	527	4,252	1,047	1,133	3,296	23

Ocean NJ-VA								
Year	NJ		DE [^]		MD		VA	
2019	28 to <43", 1 fish and ≥43", 1 fish		3,592	28" min (no 38-43") 2 fish	255	28-38"/>44" 2 fish	57	28-36" 1 fish
2020	28" to <38" 1 fish		3,818	28 to <35" 1 fish	254	28 to <35" 1 fish	68	25
2021	1 fish		4,137	1 fish	236	1 fish	23	2

*NY Hudson River 18-28" 1 fish (or ≥40 in 2019)

[^]DE: 20-25" from 7.1 – 8.31

Table 12c. Number of directed trips (x1000) for Atlantic striped bass (primary and secondary target) in the Chesapeake Bay for 2019-2021 with size/bag limits noted each year. Source: MRIP Query June 2022.

Chesapeake Bay			
Year	MD		VA
2019	Trophy: 35" min, 1 fish Summer/Fall: 19" min, 2 fish (1 over 28")		1,651
2020	Trophy: 35" min, 1 fish Summer/Fall: 19" min, 1 fish		2,279
2021	(2 fish/day charter, 1 over 28")		1,935
			Spring: 20-28", 1 fish Fall: 20-36", 1 fish
			316
			400
			248

Tables 13a-13c. Total removals in numbers of fish (harvest plus discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish for 2017, 2020, and 2021. Harvest is from state compliance reports/MRIP (Query June 2022), discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

Table 13a. Coastwide removals in numbers of fish for 2017 and 2021.

	Commercial		Recreational		Total	
	Commercial Removals	% Change from 2017	Recreational Removals	% Change from 2017	Total Removals	% Change from 2017
2017	691,471	-	6,359,021	-	7,050,492	-
2020	641,711	-7%	4,470,204	-30%	5,111,915	-27.5%
2021	720,228	+4%	4,397,415	-31%	5,117,643	-27.4%

Table 13b. Ocean removals in numbers of fish for 2017 and 2021.

	Commercial		Recreational		Total	
	Commercial Removals	% Change from 2017	Recreational Removals	% Change from 2017	Total Removals	% Change from 2017
2017	211,924	-	4,344,953	-	4,556,877	-
2020	115,044	-46%	2,966,848	-32%	3,081,891	-32%
2021	133,578	-37%	3,373,924	-22%	3,507,502	-23%

Table 13c. Chesapeake Bay removals in numbers of fish for 2017 and 2021.

	Commercial		Recreational		Total	
	Commercial Removals	% Change from 2017	Recreational Removals	% Change from 2017	Total Removals	% Change from 2017
2017	479,547	-	2,014,068	-	2,493,615	-
2020	526,667	+10%	1,503,357	-25%	2,030,024	-19%
2021	586,650	+22%	1,023,491	-49%	1,610,141	-35%

Note: Some states chose a less than 18% commercial quota reduction in exchange for a greater than 18% reduction in recreational removals in their CE plans.

Table 14. Realized percent change in recreational removals in numbers of fish (harvest plus release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by state relative to 2017 and predicted percent change in recreational removals from approved conservation equivalency plans (where applicable). Harvest is from MRIP (Query June 2022), release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina. NA = Percent reduction not calculated if implementing Addendum VI measure.

State	Realized % Change Recreational Harvest from 2017		Realized % Change Recreational Release Mortality from 2017		Realized % Change Rec. Removals (Harvest + Release Mortality) from 2017		Predicted % Change in Rec. Removals from CE Plan
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	
Maine	-14%	-42%	-21%	-25%	-21%	-26%	NA
New Hampshire	-92%	-88%	-37%	-71%	-49%	-75%	NA
Massachusetts	-83%	-54%	-60%	-64%	-66%	-61%	NA
Rhode Island	-38%	-4%	-17%	+91%	-23%	+62%	NA
Connecticut	-25%	-78%	-45%	-41%	-41%	-48%	NA
New York	-57%	-71%	+142%	+13%	+11%	-42%	-23.8%
New Jersey	-17%	+22%	+43%	+237%	-2%	+76%	-25%
Delaware	-94%	-66%	+80%	+11%	-16%	-31%	-20%
Maryland	-33%	-47%	-10%	-50%	-24%	-48%	-20.6%
Virginia	-52%	-52%	-31%	-69%	-41%	-61%	-23.4%
North Carolina [^]	-	-	-100%	+305%	-100%	+305%	NA
Coastwide Total	-42%	-38%	-19%	-25%	-30%	-31%	

[^]Offshore recreational harvest for North Carolina was 0 fish in 2017, 2020, and 2021. Offshore estimated release mortality for North Carolina was 463 fish in 2017, 0 fish in 2020, and 1,875 fish in 2021.

Note: Increased recreational releases in NY, NJ, and DE contributed to realized reductions in total recreational removals being less than predicted for those states.

Table 15. Percent change in commercial harvest by weight of Atlantic striped bass by state relative to 2017 and percent change in commercial quota from 2017. Note: Harvest is from state compliance reports. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

State	% Change in Commercial Harvest by weight from 2017		% Change in Commercial Quota ⁺
	2020	2021	Add VI
Ocean			
Maine			
New Hampshire			
Massachusetts	-53%	-11%	-18%*
Rhode Island	-34%	-26%	-18%
Connecticut			
New York	-24%	-10%	-18%*
New Jersey			
Delaware	-3%	-1%	-1.8%
Maryland (ocean)	+4%	+10%	-1.8%
Virginia (ocean)	-42%	-10%	-9.8%
North Carolina [^]	-	-	-18%
Ocean Total	-35%	-10%	
Chesapeake Bay			
Maryland (Ches. Bay)	-12%	-9%	-1.8%
PRFC (Ches. Bay)	-19%	-17%	-1.8%
Virginia (Ches. Bay)	-26%	-12%	-7.7%
Chesapeake Bay Total	-17%	-11%	
Coastwide Total	-25%	-11%	

+ 2020-2021 quota changed through conservation equivalency for MA, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA.

*MA and NY quotas were based on an 18% reduction from 2017 quota and spawner-per-recruit (SPR) analysis that accounted for changing the commercial size limits.

[^]North Carolina reported no ocean commercial harvest in 2017, 2020 and 2021.

Note: Some states chose a less than 18% commercial quota reduction in exchange for a greater than 18% reduction in recreational removals in their CE plans.

Table 16. Contribution of imputed data to 2020 MRIP estimates for Atlantic striped bass by state.
 Source: MRIP (Query July 8, 2021).

State	Contribution of Imputed Data to Observed Harvest (A) Rate	Contribution of Imputed Data to Reported Harvest (B1) Rate	Contribution of Imputed Data to Released Alive (B2) Rate
Maine	0%	0%	0%
New Hampshire	12%	100%	7%
Massachusetts	4%	2%	3%
Rhode Island	1%	0%	13%
Connecticut	87%	28%	56%
New York	69%	13%	9%
New Jersey	57%	36%	32%
Delaware	59%	0%	13%
Maryland	9%	8%	7%
Virginia	7%	4%	36%
North Carolina	42%	84%	73%

Note from MRIP: Due to COVID-related disruptions to the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey and subsequent gaps in catch records, 2020 catch estimates are based in part on imputed data. Columns labeled 'Contribution of Imputed Data to {ESTIMATE} rate' represent the weighted percentage of catch rate information that can be attributed to imputed catch data.

Table 17. State circle hook requirements (excerpt from state regulations as of June 2022) as compared to the Board-approved bait definition and incidental catch guidance (listed below) for Addendum VI. Source: State regulations (linked in table).

Y = state adopted Board-approved bait definition, exemption for artificial lure with bait attached, and/or incidental catch guidance

MR* = state regulations are more restrictive than the bait definition and/or exemption for artificial lure with bait attached

N = state has not adopted incidental catch guidance.

Definition of Bait and Methods of Fishing: Circle hooks are required when fishing for striped bass with bait, which is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached.

Guidance on Incidental Catch: Striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury.

**The PRT assumes that if bait is not specifically defined, the regulation would be considered more restrictive since circle hooks would be required for any type of bait.*

STATE	CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT	BAIT DEFINITION	METHOD EXEMPT	INCIDENTAL CATCH GUIDANCE
ME	It is unlawful to use any hook other than a non-offset circle hook when using bait...Striped bass incidentally caught on any unapproved hook type must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury. <i>Bait is defined as any marine or freshwater organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof, and earthworms, including but not limited to, night crawlers.</i> Exception: Rubber or latex tube rigs will be exempt from the circle hook restriction as long as they conform with the following: the lure must consist of a minimum of 8" of latex or rubber tubing with a single hook protruding from the end portion of the tubing where bait may be attached.	MR	MR	Y
NH	Non-offset, corrodible circle hooks required if angling with bait.	MR*	MR	N
MA	Mandatory Use of Circle Hooks. Recreational fishermen shall use circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with whole or cut natural baits. This shall not apply to any artificial lure. Striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury. <i>Bait means any marine or aquatic organism, live or dead, whole or parts thereof.</i>	Y	Y	Y

(Table 17 continued – Summary of circle hook regulations).

STATE	CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT	BAIT DEFINITION	METHOD EXEMPT	INCIDENTAL CATCH GUIDANCE
RI	<p>F. Circle hooks: 1. The use of circle hooks is required by any person while fishing recreationally with bait for striped bass.</p> <p>a. <i>Bait is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof.</i></p> <p>b. The circle hook requirement shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached.</p> <p>2. Striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury.</p>	Y	Y	Y
CT	<p>No person shall engage in angling for striped bass with natural bait unless such person uses an inline circle hook. Any striped bass taken incidentally by use of natural bait on a hook other than an inline circle hook shall be returned immediately to the waters from which taken. The provisions of this subsection (h) shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached, or to the use of a fly...<i>For purposes of this subsection, "natural bait" means any organism, in whole or in part, that is live or dead</i></p>	MR	Y	Y
NY	<p>Recreational anglers are required to use a non-offset (inline) circle hook when fishing for striped bass when using <i>any marine or aquatic organism or terrestrial invertebrate, live or dead, whole or parts thereof</i>. This requirement shall not apply to any artificial lure with any marine or aquatic organism or terrestrial invertebrate, live or dead, whole or parts thereof attached. Striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury.</p>	MR	Y	Y
NJ	<p>Hook and line fishermen are restricted to the use of non-offset circle hooks while fishing with bait. Bait is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole, or parts thereof. This restriction shall not apply to an artificial lure with bait attached. A circle hook is a non-offset hook where the point is pointed perpendicularly back towards the shank. Non-offset means that the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank. Striped bass caught using an unapproved method of take must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury.</p>	Y	Y	Y
PA	<p>It is unlawful to fish with bait for any species of fish in the tidal Delaware Estuary, including tributaries from the mouths of the tributaries upstream to the limit of tidal influence using any hook type other than non-offset (in-line) circle hooks.</p>	MR*	MR	N

(Table 17 continued – Summary of circle hook regulations).

STATE	CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT	BAIT DEFINITION	METHOD EXEMPT	INCIDENTAL CATCH GUIDANCE
DE	It is unlawful for any recreational fisherman to fish for striped bass with bait using any hook other than a non-offset circle hook. This shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached. <i>"Bait" means any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof.</i>	Y	Y	Y
MD	Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries: (2) When fishing for striped bass, a person recreationally angling in the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries shall only use a circle hook when <i>using fish, crabs, or worms as bait, or processed bait.</i> Atlantic Ocean: When fishing for striped bass, a person recreationally angling in the Atlantic Ocean, its coastal bays, or their tributaries shall only use a circle hook when <i>using fish, crabs, or worms as bait, or processed bait.</i> <i>"Fish" means finfish, crustaceans, mollusks, and amphibians and reptiles which spend the majority of their life cycle in water, and any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of these species.</i>	MR	MR	N
PRFC	Non-offset (inline) Circle Hooks are required to be used when using cut or whole natural bait.	MR*	MR	N
DC	The mandatory use of non-offset circle hooks will be required when fishing for striped bass with bait to reduce release mortality in recreational fisheries. In addition to anglers targeting striped bass, a non-offset circle hook will be required regardless of the targeted species when recreationally fishing with <i>bait of any kind (e.g., fish, worms, shrimp, chicken livers, corn, dough balls)</i> and using a hook size of number two (#2) or greater. <i>Bait – does not include artificial lures (bucktails, crankbaits, rigged soft plastics, etc.), but does include any other fresh, frozen, live, cut, scented moldable offering used to attract fish.</i>	MR	Y	N
VA	Any person fishing recreationally shall use non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing with bait. <i>"Bait" means any whole or part of any marine or aquatic organism, live or dead.</i>	Y	MR	N
NC	It is unlawful to fish for or possess striped bass from the Atlantic Ocean for recreational purposes using hook and line gear with natural bait unless using a non-stainless steel, non-offset (inline) circle hook, regardless of tackle or lure configuration. <i>Natural bait is defined as any living or dead organism (animal or plant) or parts thereof.</i>	MR	MR	N

Table 18. Status of Commercial Tagging Programs by state for 2021.

State	Total Participants	Tags Issued	Tags Used	Tags Returned	Tags Not Accounted For ¹	Point of Tag (sale/harvest)	Biological Metric ² (Y/N)	Year, State and Unique ID on Tag (Y/N)	Size Limit on Tag (Y/N)	Tag Colors	Annual Tag Color Change (Y/N)
MA	131	46,760	36,865	9,061	834	Sale	Y	Y	Y	one tag color	Y
RI	23	15,640	4,606	4,651	6,383	Sale	Y	Y	N	two tag colors by gear	Y
NY	393	67,539	58,831	7,719	555	Harvest	Y	Y	N	one tag color	Y
DE*	239	16,769	9,161	7,608	0	Both	Y	Y	N	Harvest: two tag colors by gear Sale: one color	Y
MD [±]	836	456,200	320,882	tbd	tbd	Harvest	Y	Y	N	three tag colors by fishery and area	Y
PRFC	308	81,076	66,219	10,257	4,600	Harvest	Y	Y	N	five tag colors by gear	N
VA	368	191,900	152,734	32,589	6,577	Harvest	Y	Y	Y	two tag colors by area	Y
NC [^]	25	10,480	6,552	3,919	9	Sale	Y	Y	Y	three tag colors by area	N

¹ Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that are not returned/not reported as lost or missing.

² States are required to allocate commercial tags to permit holders based on a biological metric. Most states use the average weight per fish from the previous year, or some variation thereof. Actual biological metric used is reported in Annual Commercial Tag Monitoring Reports.

*The number of tags noted in the table for Delaware are the tags issued to and used by harvesters. Tags are also issued to weigh stations where a second tag is attached to each striped bass, such that each fish has two tags. In 2021, 13,000 weigh station tags were issued and 9,161 were used.

[±] Maryland's audit of unused tags has been delayed by COVID-19 shutdowns.

[^] All commercial tags noted in the table for North Carolina were used in the Albemarle Sound management area.

Table 19. Status of compliance with monitoring and reporting requirements in 2021. JAI = juvenile abundance index survey, SSB = spawning stock biomass survey, TAG = participation in coastwide tagging program, Y = compliance standards met, N = compliance standards not met, NA = not applicable, R = recreational, C = commercial.

Jurisdiction	Fishery-independent Monitoring		Fishery-dependent Monitoring		Annual reporting Status
	Requirement(s)	Status	Requirement(s)	Status	
ME	JAI	Y	-	NA	Y
NH	-	NA	-	NA	Y
MA	TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
RI	-	NA	composition (C&R), catch & effort (R), tag program	Y	Y
CT	-	NA	composition, catch & effort (R)	Y	Y
NY	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
NJ	JAI, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (R)	Y	Y
PA	SSB	Y	-	NA	Y
DE	SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C), tag program	Y	Y
MD	JAI, SSB*, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
PRFC	-	NA	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
DC	-	NA	-	NA	Y
VA	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
NC	JAI, SSB*, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y

*Part or all of the monitoring program could not be conducted due to COVID-19.

XI. Figures

Figure 1. Atlantic striped bass female spawning stock biomass and recruitment, 1982-2017. Source: 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

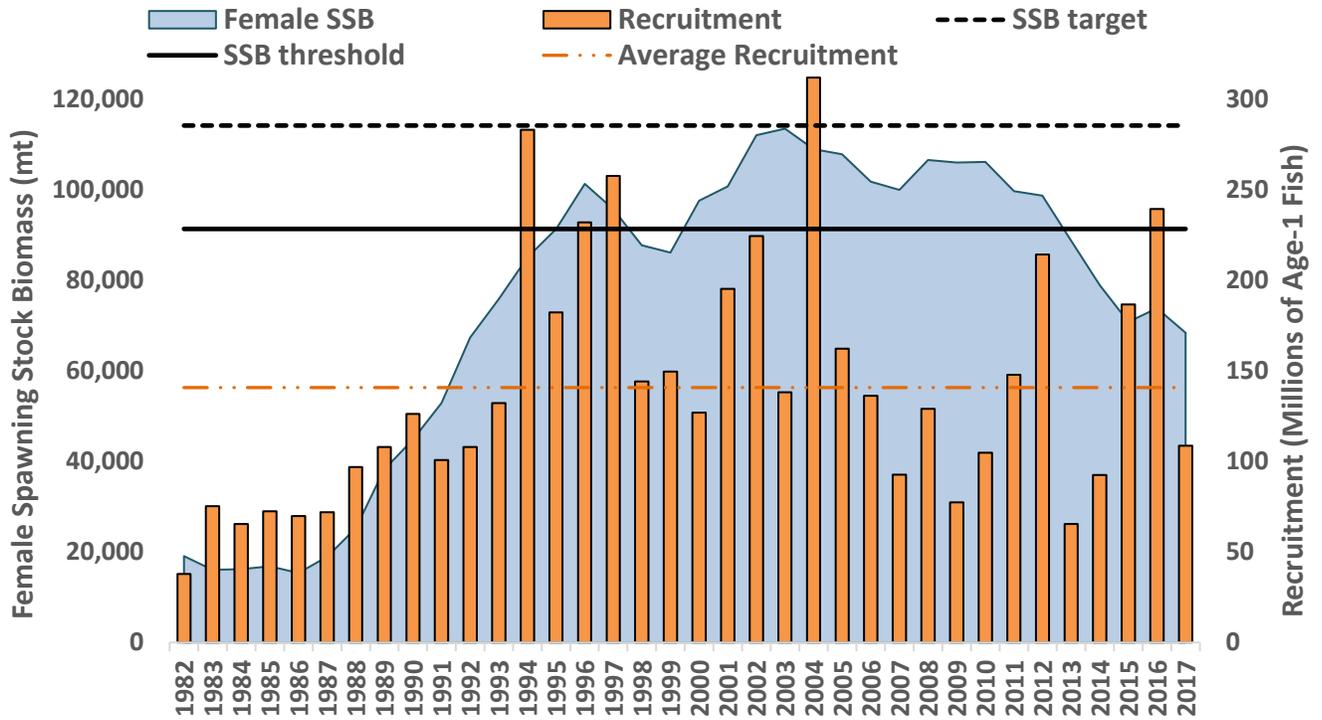


Figure 2. Atlantic striped bass fishing mortality, 1982-2017. Source: 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

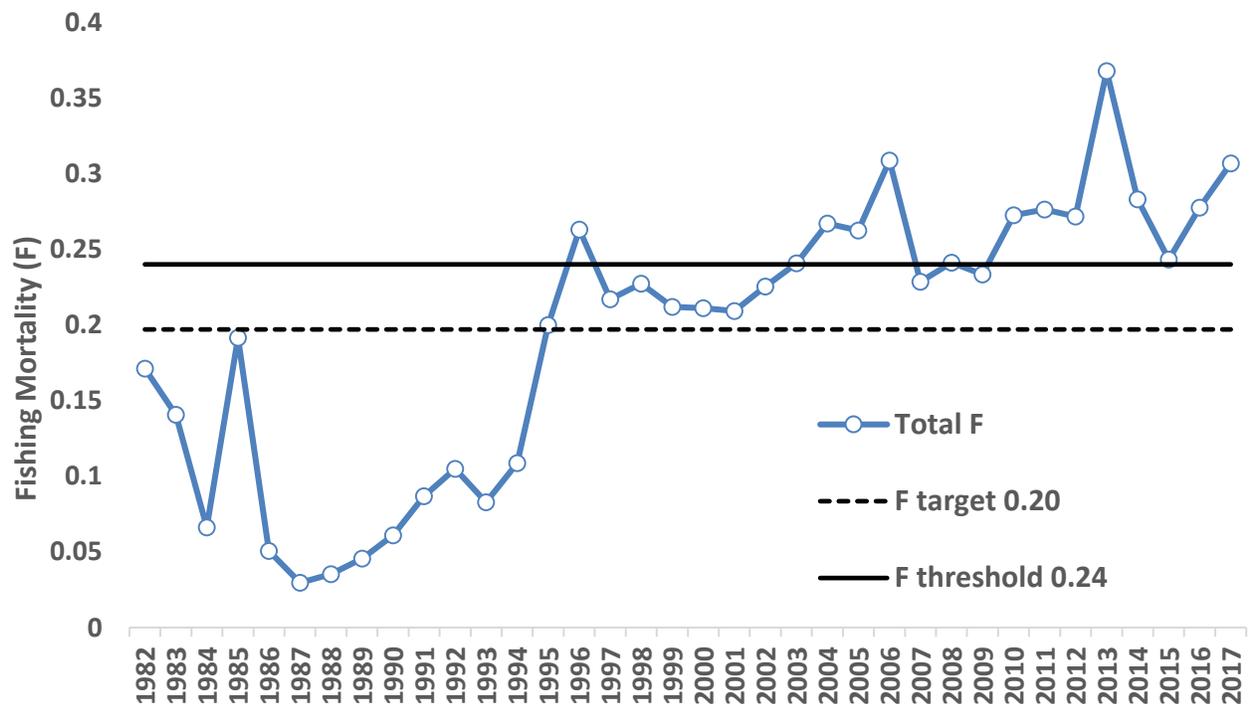


Figure 3. Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River striped bass female spawning stock biomass and recruitment (abundance of age-1), and biological reference points, 1991-2017. Source: 2020 A-R Stock Assessment (Lee et al. 2020).

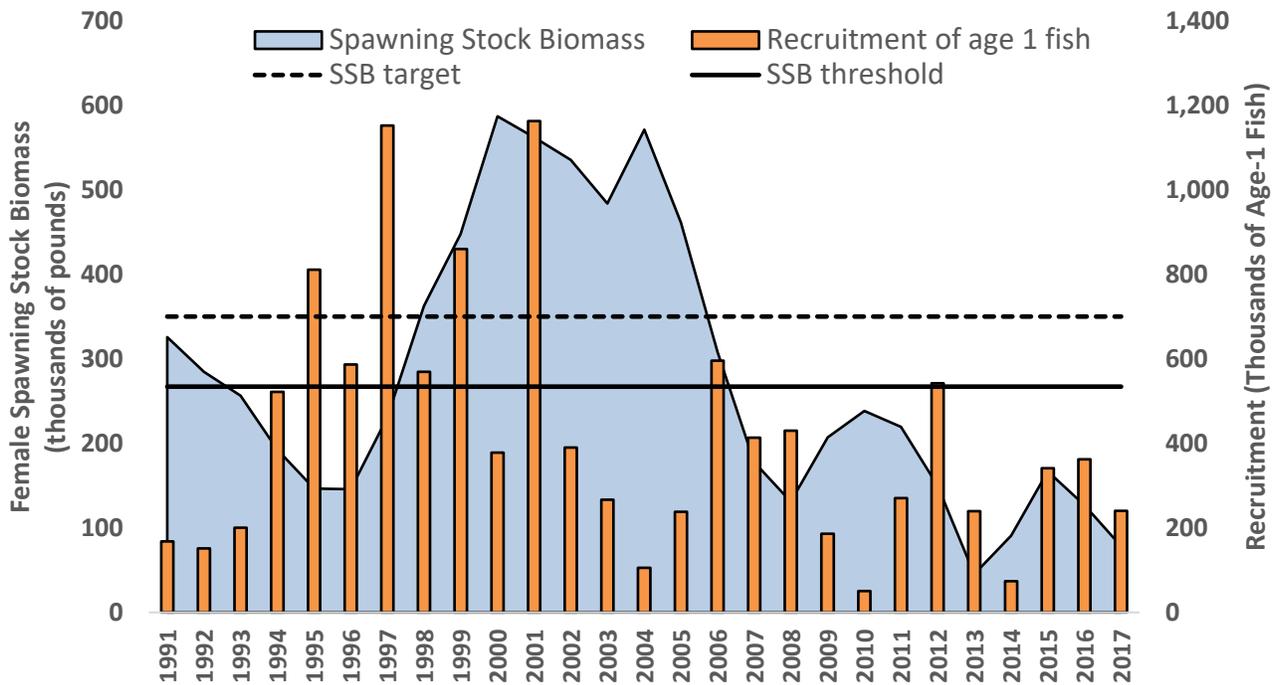


Figure 4. Albemarle Sounds-Roanoke River striped bass fishing mortality (F) estimates, and biological reference points, 1991-2017. Source: 2020 A-R Stock Assessment (Lee et al. 2020).

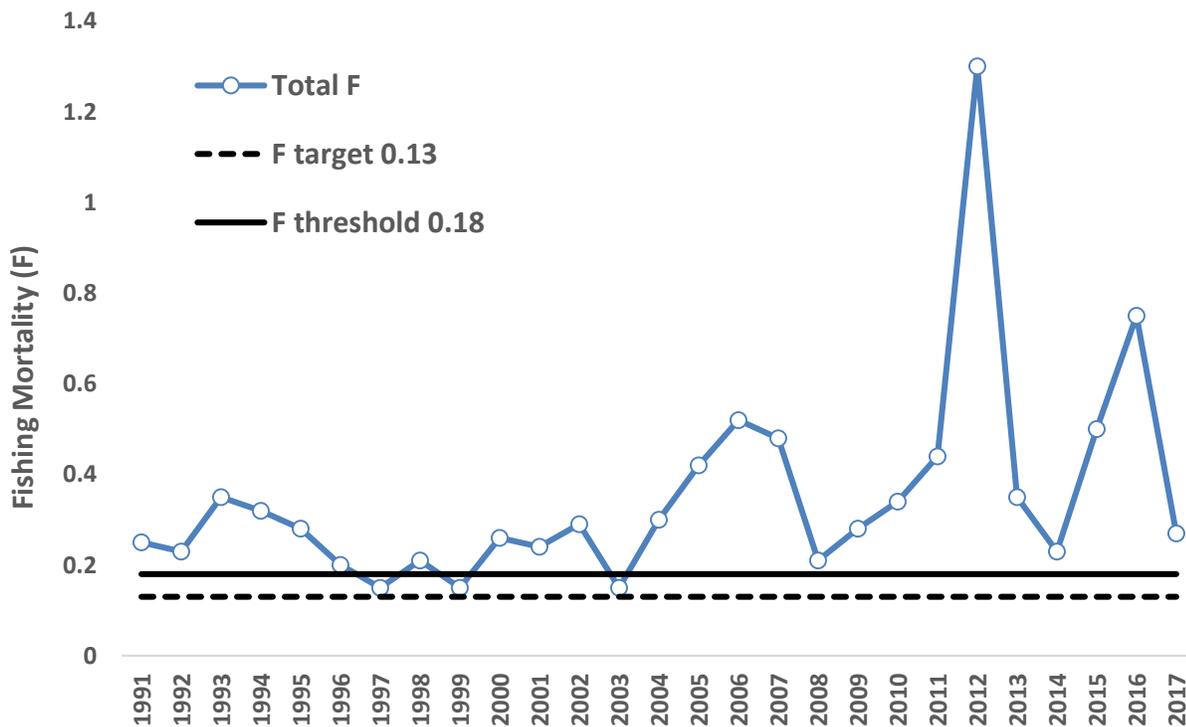


Figure 5. Total Atlantic striped bass removals by sector in numbers of fish, 1982-2021. Note: Harvest is from state compliance reports/MRIP, discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from A-R.

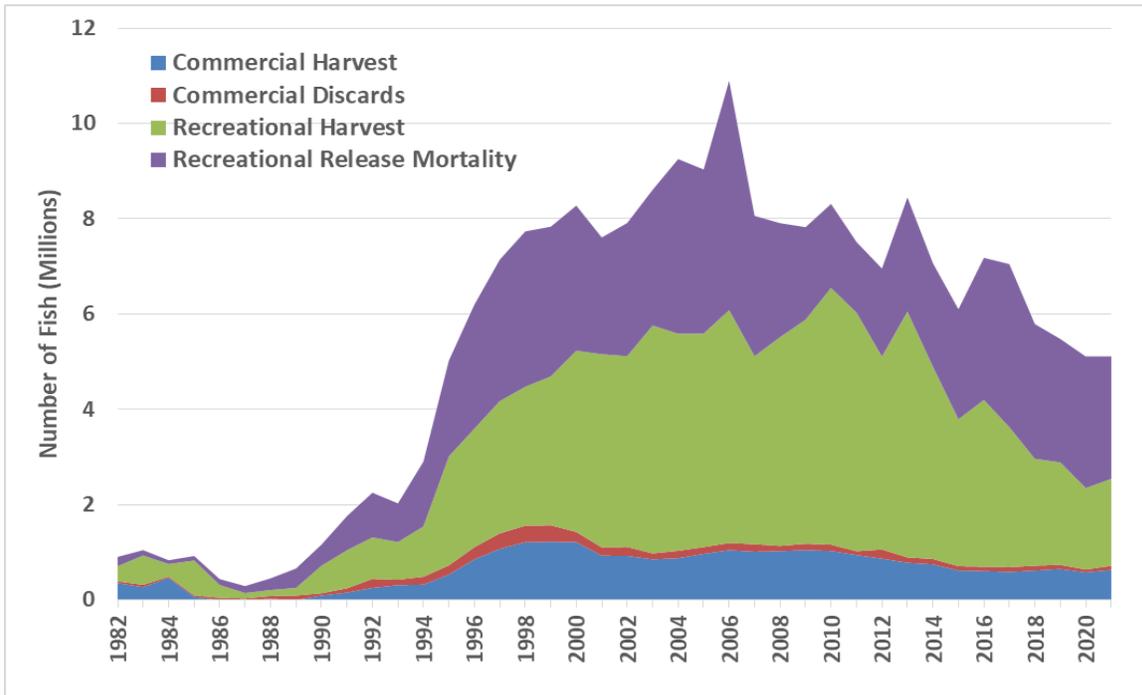


Figure 6. Commercial Atlantic striped bass landings by state in pounds, 1990-2021. Source: State compliance reports. Commercial harvest and sale prohibited in ME, NH, CT, and NJ. NC is ocean only.

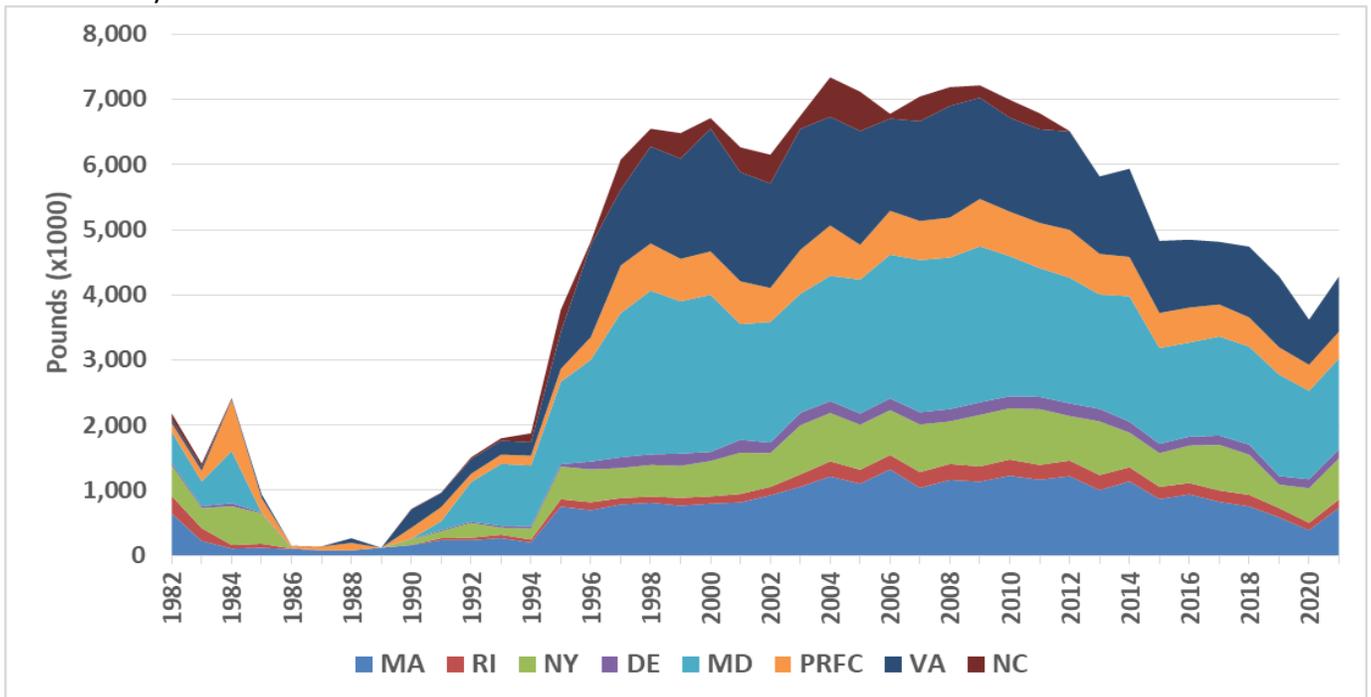


Figure 7. Total recreational catch and the proportion of fish released alive, 1982-2020. Source: MRIP/ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from A-R.

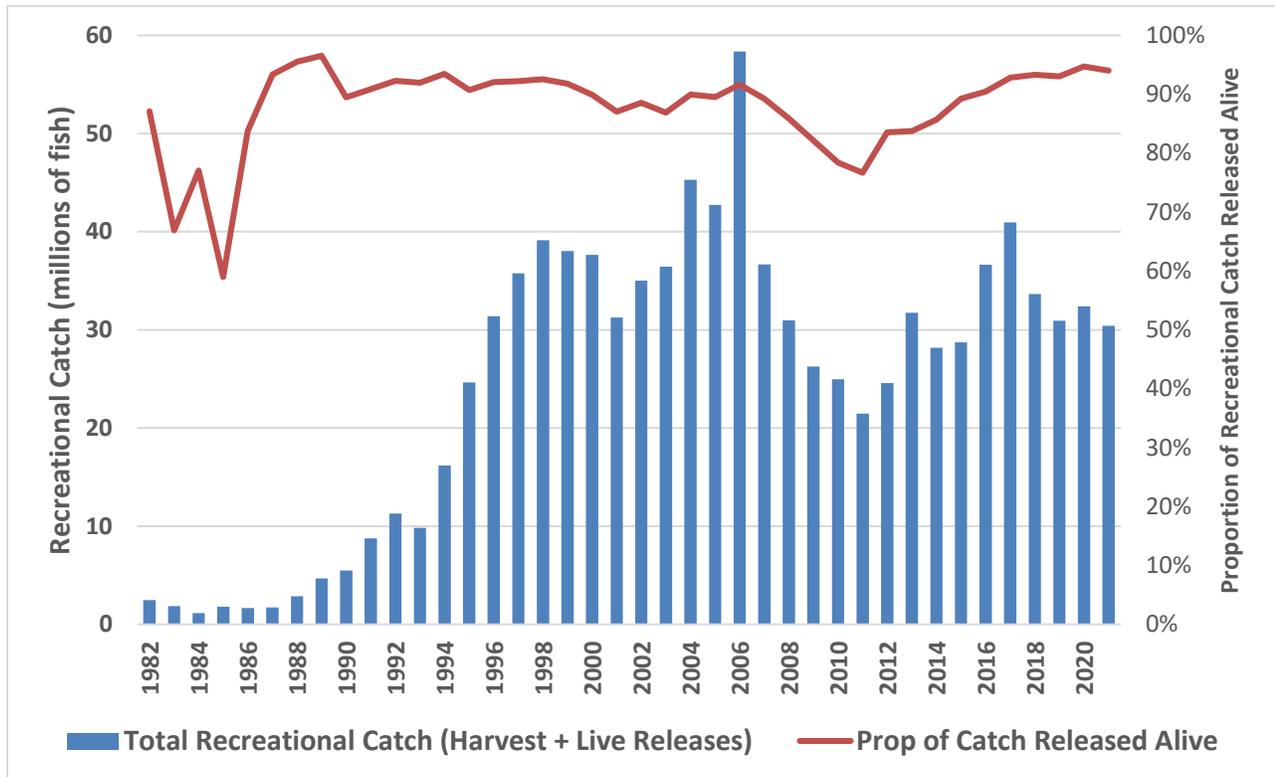


Figure 8. Juvenile abundance indices for New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia for 1982-2021 with recruitment trigger analysis for 2019-2021. An open circle in the last three years indicates a value below the recruitment trigger level. The recruitment trigger is tripped if a JAI is below the trigger level for three consecutive years. Source: 2022 State Compliance Reports.

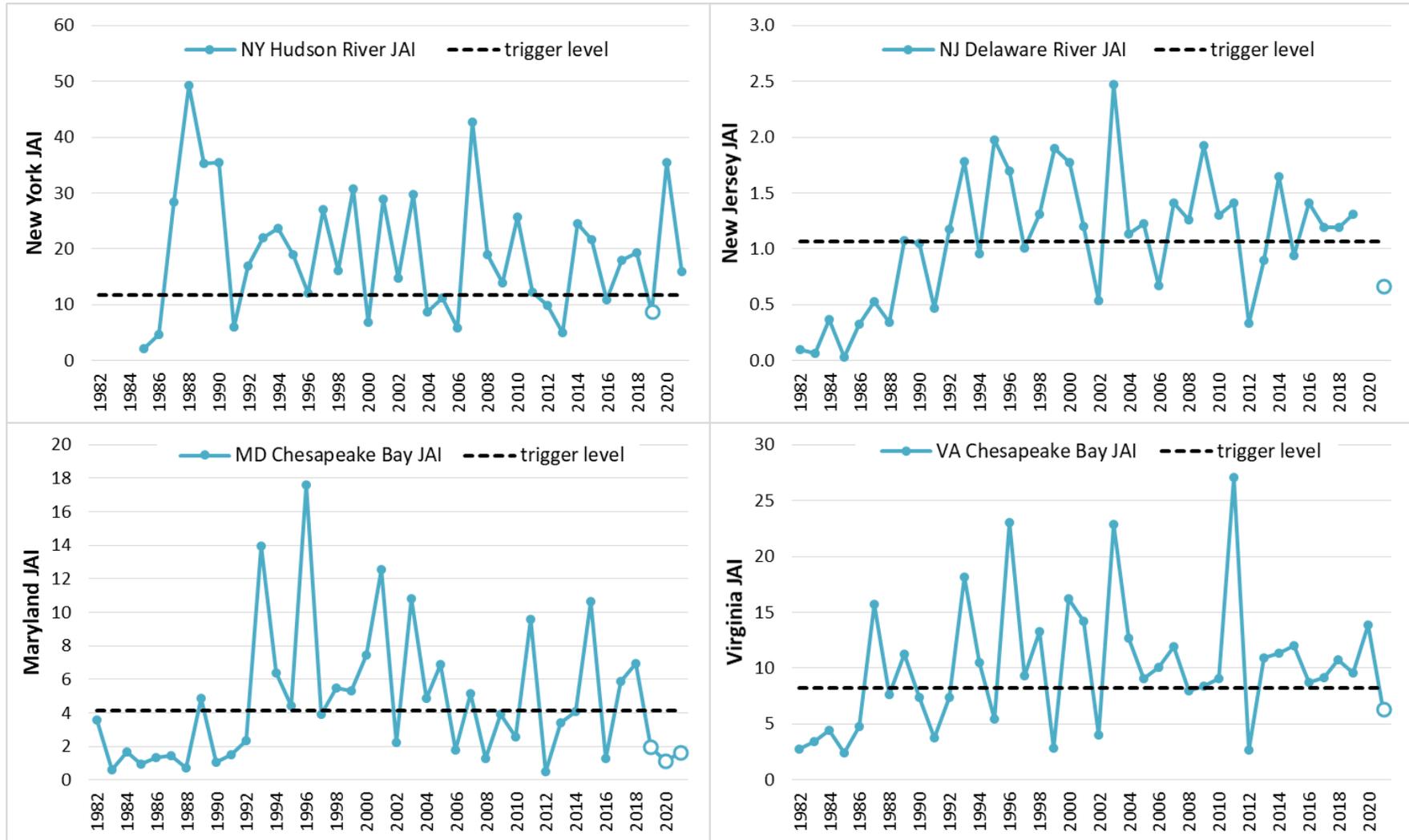
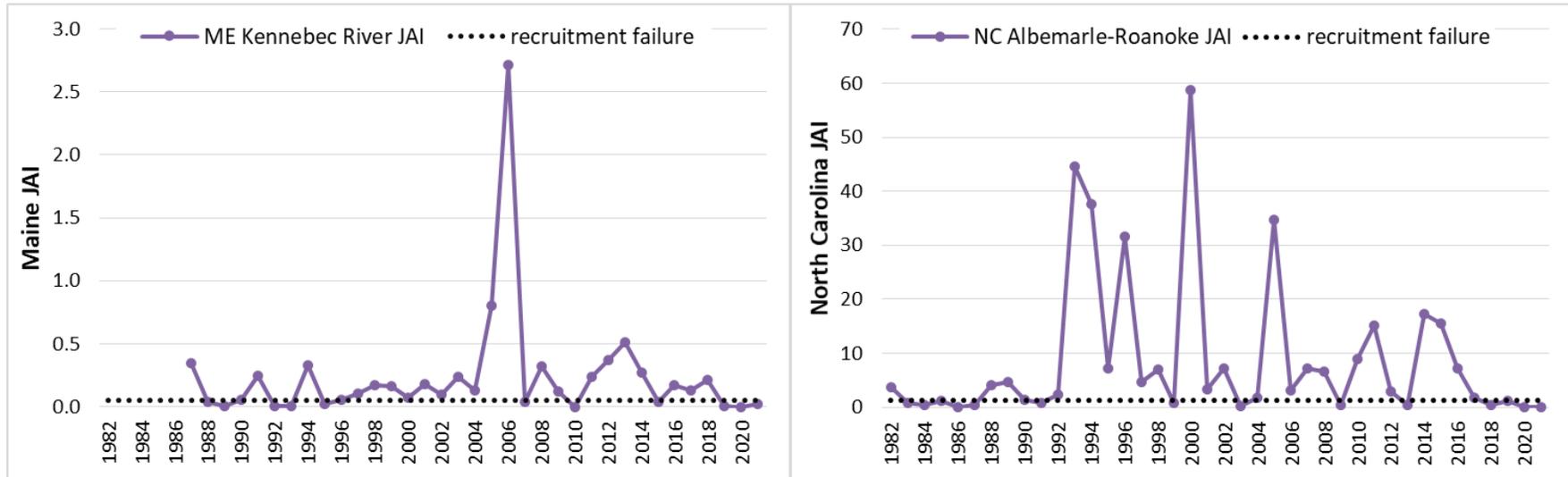


Figure 9. Juvenile abundance indices for Maine and North Carolina from 1982-2021 noting the level of recruitment failure. Source: 2022 State Compliance Reports.



From: Allen Delaney <aedelan76@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 20, 2022 3:55 PM
To: info <info@asmfc.org>
Subject: [External] Stripped Bass regulations for 2023

Good Afternoon,

I would like to add my two cents towards altering the stripped bass (Rockfish) regulations for next year.

I once asked a Maryland DNR officer what I should do if I gut hook a rockfish and it's under-sized. Her advice: Throw it back.

I think that if a rockfish is gut hooked while trolling during the trophy season, it should be kept regardless of size. If the angler is checked by DNR and the officer sees the fish could not be saved, no fine would occur. How many of these fish, which are going to die regardless, are thrown overboard only to die a slow death? I doubt many fishermen would go to the trouble of purposely jamming a lure into the fish's throat to make it appear gut-hooked.

If a 32" fish is gut hooked, keep the fish, but that's your fish for the day.

I hope you take this suggestion seriously.

Sincerely,

Allen Delaney
Prince Frederick, MD