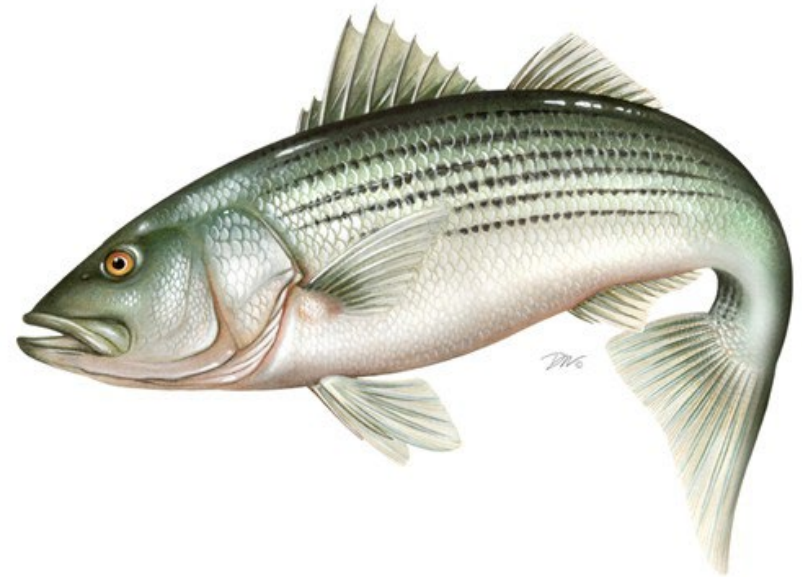




**Atlantic States  
Marine Fisheries**  
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# FMP Review for Atlantic Striped Bass 2024 Fishing Year

August 6, 2025



- Status of the Stock
- Status of the FMP
- Status of the Fishery
- PRT Comments and Recommendations

**Board action for consideration: Approve the FMP Review for fishing year 2024 and state compliance reports.**

# Status of the Stock

- 2024 Stock Assessment Update: overfished but not experiencing overfishing
- Data through 2023

	SSB mil lbs.	<i>F</i>
2023	191	0.18
Threshold	197	0.21
Target	247	0.17

- **2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment in progress**

- January – April 2024: Amendment 7 plus Emergency Action
- May 1, 2024 – forward: Addendum II
  - Commercial: Quotas -7% reduction; no change to size limits
  - Rec. Ocean: 1 fish at 28" to 31"; no change to seasons
  - Separate rec measures for NY Hudson River, PA Delaware River spring slot, DE Delaware River/Bay summer slot
  - Rec. Chesapeake Bay: 1 fish at 19" to 24"; no change to seasons

# 2024 Management Measures

- Addendum II Recreational Filleting requirements:

*For states that authorize at-sea/shore-side filleting of striped bass, requirements for racks to be retained and possession limited to no more than two fillets per legal fish.*





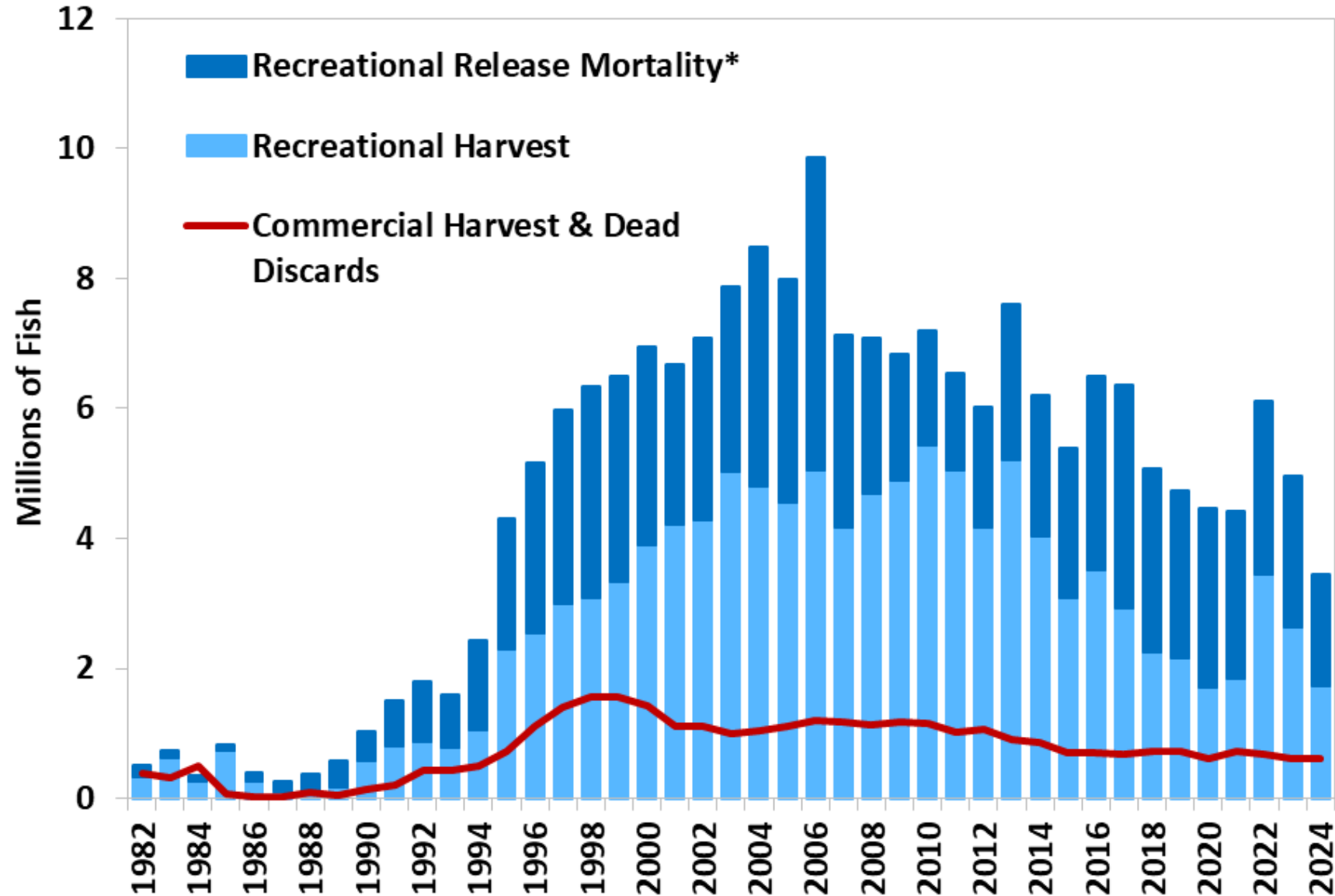
# Status of the Fishery

# Status of the Fishery

- 2024 total removals = 4.1 million fish
- 27% decrease from 2023 removals

Year	Commercial		Recreational	
	Harvest	Dead Discards	Harvest	Release Mortality
2020	11%	1%	33%	54%
2021	12%	2%	36%	50%
2022	9%	1%	51%	39%
2023	11%	<1%	47%	42%
<b>2024</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>

# Status of the Fishery



\*9% of fish released alive assumed to die from being caught.



- **Commercial Fishery in 2024**

- Harvested 4.3 million lbs. (~604,000 fish)
- Similar to 2023 harvest level (+2% by weight; +1% by number)

- **Commercial Quota Utilization in 2024**

- Ocean utilization of 76% (underutilization due to lack of availability in NC and no commercial fishing in four states)
- Most ocean states allowing harvest used >96% of their quotas
- Chesapeake Bay utilization of 94% (higher than recent years)
- State quotas exceeded in New York, Maryland Ocean, Maryland Chesapeake Bay

# Commercial Fishery

Region	2024 Quota	2024 Harvest
Ocean	2.2 million pounds	1.7 million pounds
Chesapeake Bay	2.8 million pounds	2.6 million pounds

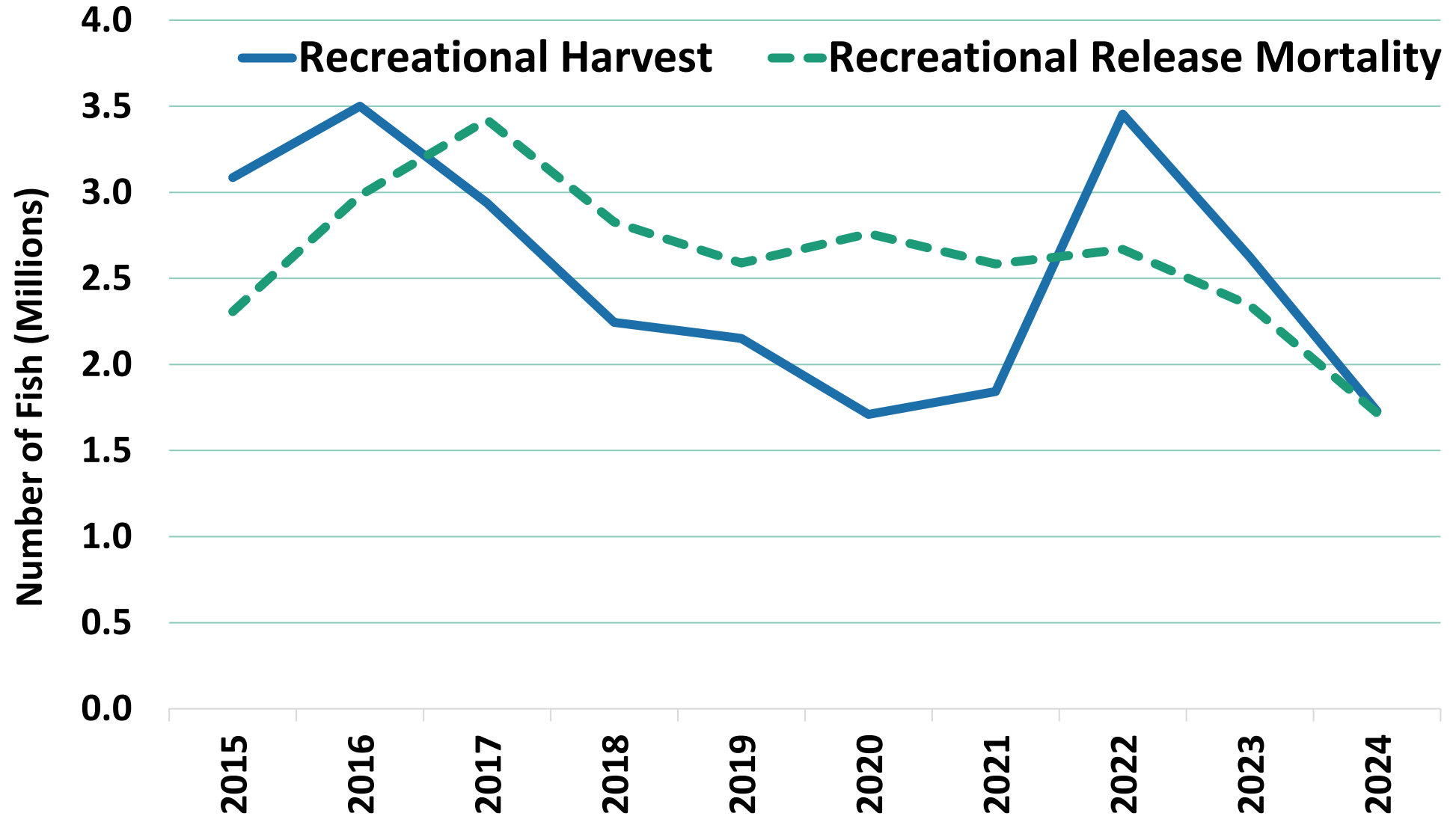
States with Overage	2024 Quota	2024 Overage
New York	595,868 pounds	~16,000 pounds
Maryland Ocean	82,857 pounds	~6,000 pounds
Maryland Ches Bay	1,344,216 pounds	~6,000 pounds

- **Recreational Fishery in 2024**

- Harvested 1.73 million fish (15.3 million pounds)
- Harvest -34% from 2023
- Released alive 19.1 million fish → 1.7 million fish assumed to have died
- Released alive -27% from 2023
- Removals by Mode Ocean: 97% Private/Shore and 3% For-Hire
- Removals by Mode Ches Bay: 77% Private/Shore and 23% For-Hire



# Recreational Fishery



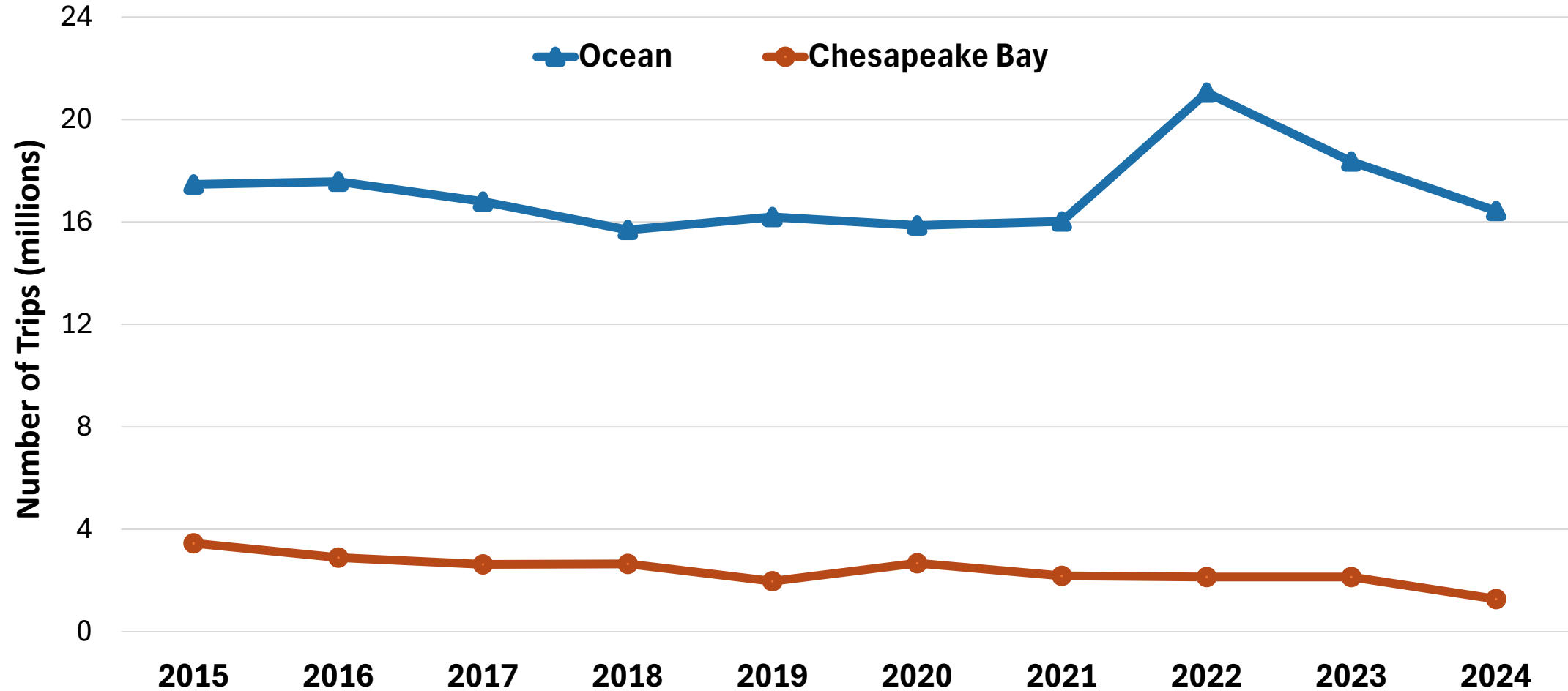
- **Recreational Catch and Effort By Region**
  - Decrease in catch and effort in both regions
  - Larger decreases in Chesapeake Bay from 2023 to 2024
  - Harvest: -54% Chesapeake Bay; -28% Ocean
  - Released Alive: -29% Chesapeake Bay; -26% Ocean
  - Directed Trips: -40% Chesapeake Bay; -10% Ocean





# Recreational Fishery

Striped Bass Directed Trips (Primary or Secondary Target)



- Several factors likely contributing to catch and effort including management measures, year class availability, angler behavior, stock abundance, nearshore availability, etc.
- 2024 considerations
  - Ocean decreases: 2015 year-class growing out of 28-31" slot
  - Chesapeake Bay decreases: lack of strong year-classes available in the Bay, new 19-24" slot and reduced Maryland FH bag limit in 2024

# North Carolina A-R Fisheries

- 2022 NC A-R Stock Assessment Update: stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring along with very low juvenile recruitment for several consecutive years
- North Carolina implemented harvest moratorium in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Management Areas effective January 2024



# Recruitment Trigger

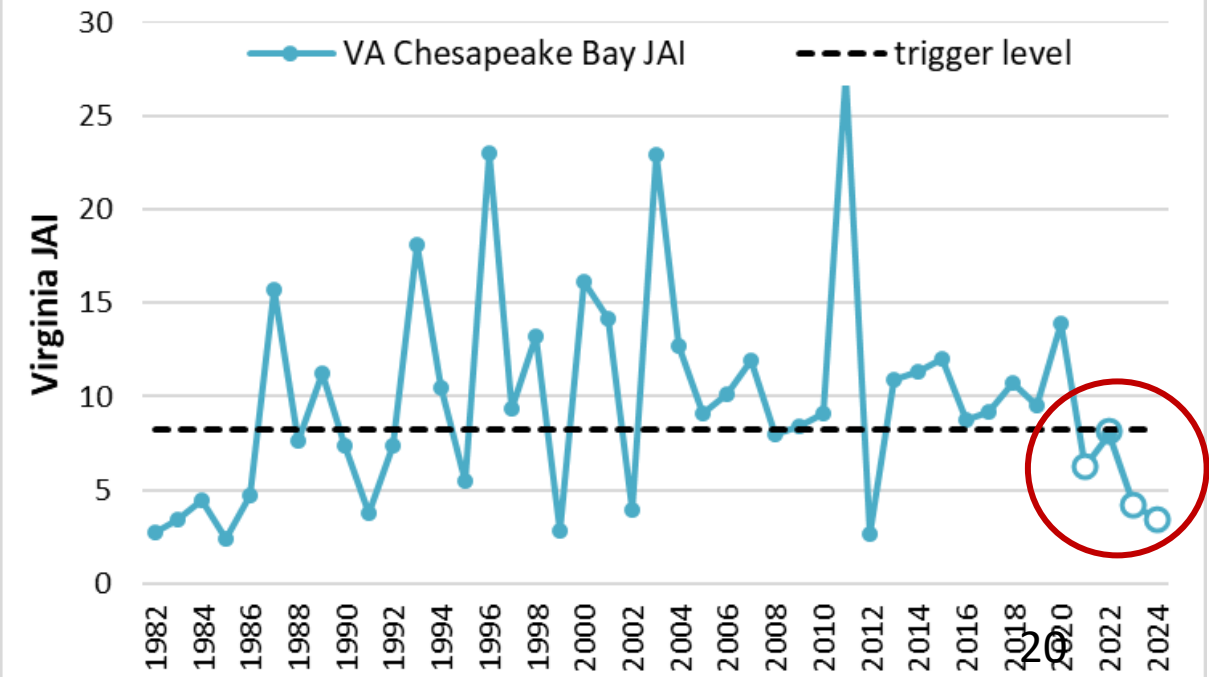
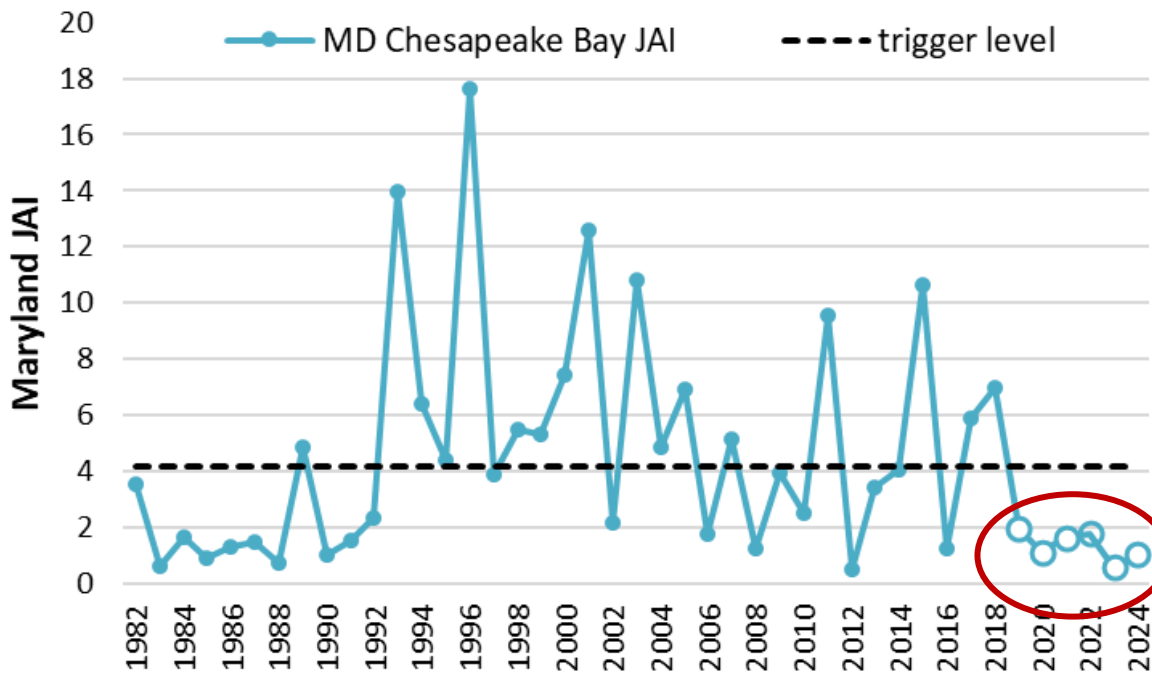
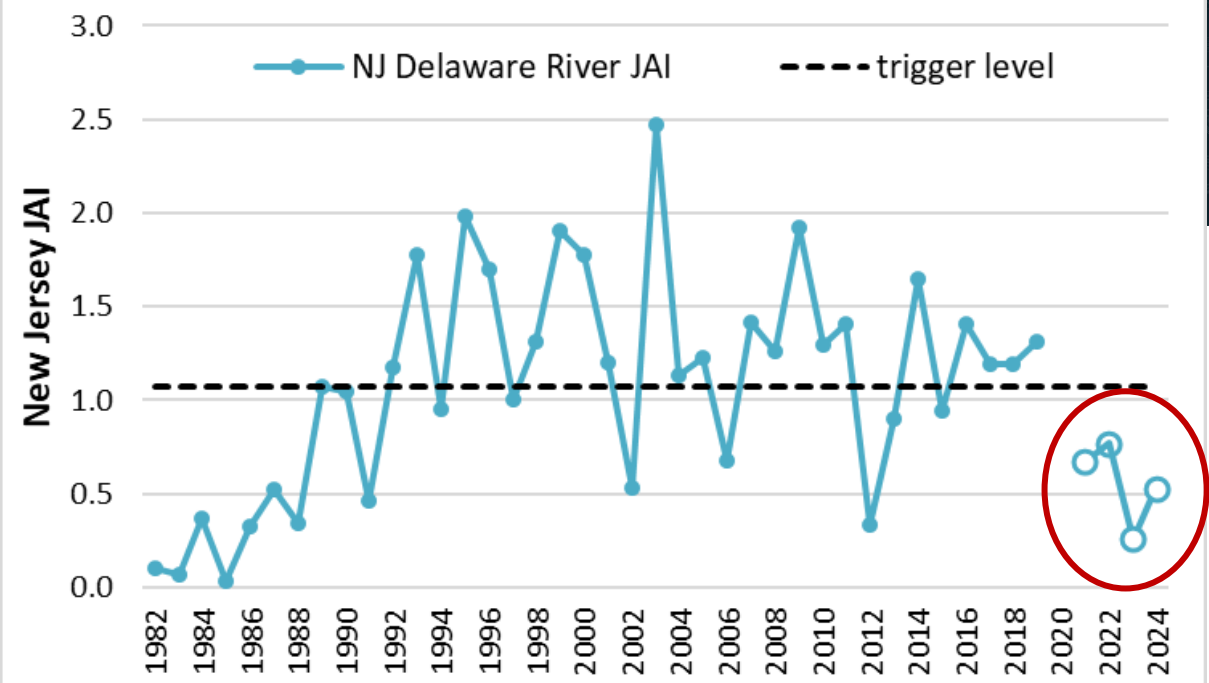
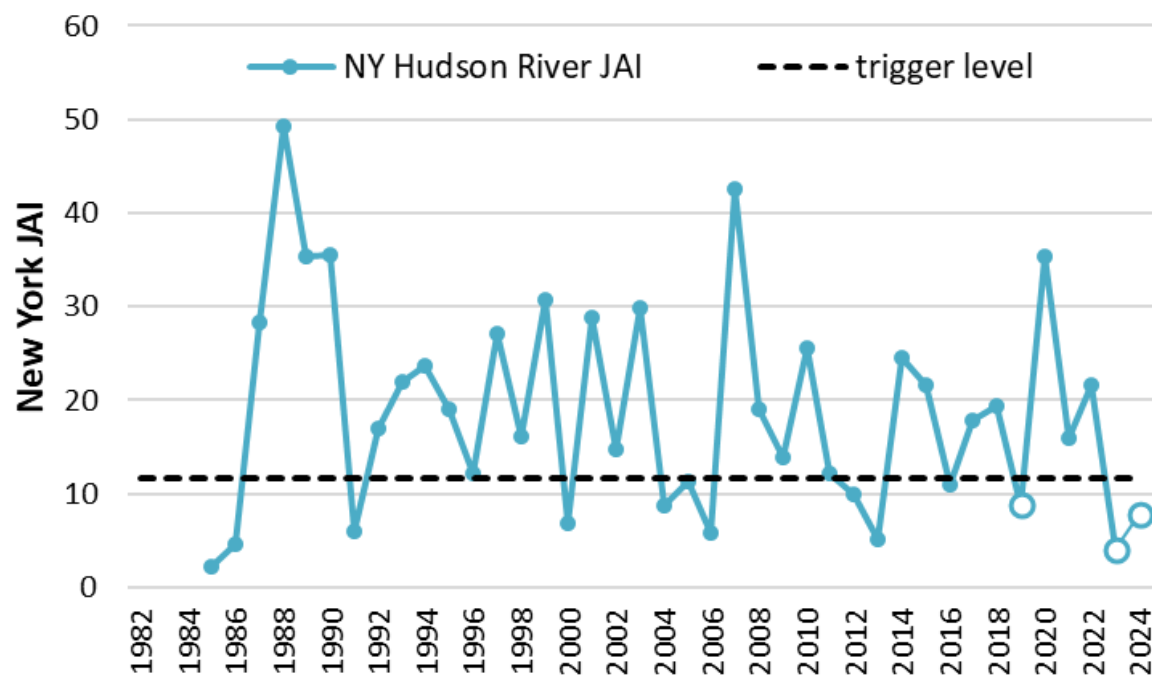
# Amend. 7 Recruitment Trigger

- IF any of the four JAIs used in the assessment (NY, NJ, MD, VA) is below 75% of all values from 1992-2006 (high recruitment period) for three consecutive years...
- THEN interim  $F$  reference points calculated using the low recruitment assumption will be implemented



# Amend. 7 Recruitment Trigger

- Recruitment trigger tripped again this year
- Reviewed 2022, 2023, 2024 JAI values → New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia trip the trigger
- Already operating under the low recruitment assumption in the 2024 assessment





# PRT Comments and Recommendations

All states in 2024 implemented management and monitoring in consistent with the provisions of the FMP except for:

- PRFC has not implemented recreational filleting requirements. PRFC noted error in regulations, so currently no language on recreational filleting. Will be addressed at September 2025 PRFC meeting.
- NY and MD addressing 2024 quota overages by taking most of the payback in 2025 based on preliminary 2024 harvest estimates. The remaining portion of the payback will be taken in 2026 based on final 2024 harvest estimates.
  - MD noted this in implementation plan

- PRT recommends the Board discuss the issue of determining quota overages based on preliminary harvest estimates
- Final harvest estimates may not be available to determine full quota overage when planning for next year's fishery
  - Should states try to account for any expected increase in final estimates when determining overage amount from preliminary estimates?



- Maryland proposed to discontinue annual spring trophy harvest report since the trophy fishery is now closed and Bay slot limit avoids older fish
  - Spring trophy report was first required in 2004 when trophy fishery managed under a quota that changed annually
- Research priority of developing a Hudson River spawning index is being considered during the 2027 benchmark assessment.

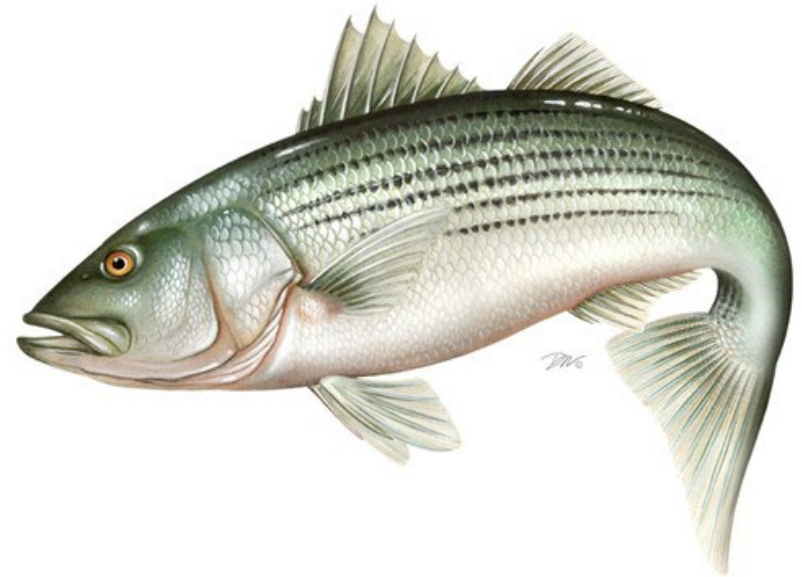
# Questions?



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# Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review

August 6, 2025



- In August 2024 Striped Bass Management Board tasked the Plan Review Team with reviewing the commercial tagging program
  - PRT recommendation from FMP Review
- Over a decade since the tagging program was implemented through the FMP
- Review program operation and program components

- Each state provided a written overview of striped bass commercial tagging program (Board Supplemental Materials)
- PRT and state commercial tagging contacts met via webinar on July 24 and July 30, 2025



## State Tagging Contacts

- Story Reed (MA)
- Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI)
- Caitlin Craig (NY)
- Jordan Zimmerman (DE)
- Jodi Baxter/Casey Marker (MD)
- Ingrid Braun-Ricks (PRFC)
- Jill Ramsey (VA)
- Charlton Godwin (NC)

## Plan Review Team

- Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI)
- Jesse Hornstein (NY)
- Brendan Harrison (NJ)
- Jordan Zimmerman (DE)
- Beth Versak (MD)
- Emilie Franke (ASMFC)

## Meeting Objectives

1. Inform the Board: Compile a summary of each state's tagging program.
2. Look Across Programs: Report any key observations/takeaways across programs, including common challenges faced by multiple states and the various biological metrics for number of tags.
3. Share Information: States share best practices and common issues, challenges, and solutions.
4. Streamline Reporting: Minimize duplicate information (tag accounting) submitted in annual commercial tagging reports vs. annual state compliance reports.

- FMP Background on striped bass commercial tagging
- Summary of July discussion on key observations across state programs
- Written report will be developed soon



# FMP Background on Striped Bass Commercial Tagging

- Addendum III to Amendment 6 implemented uniform, coastwide requirements for commercial tagging programs starting in 2013/2014
  - Most states had tagging programs in place before FMP requirements
- Those same requirements are maintained under current Amendment 7 management



- Goal: limit illegal harvest of striped bass
- It is unlawful to sell or purchase commercially caught striped bass without a commercial tag

- States can choose to implement commercial tagging at point of harvest or point of sale
- States required to allocate tags to permit holders based on a biological metric → intended to prevent quota overages
- States must require permit holders to turn in unused tags or provide accounting report for any unused tags prior to next fishing season (account for all tags as used, unused, missing, broken, lost, etc.)
- FMP recommends that if permit holders cannot account for unused tags, then that individual will not be issued a permit for the next year

- Tags must be:
  - Tamper-evident
  - Valid for one year/one fishing season only
  - Inscribed with at least year, state, unique number associated with permit holder; when possible, inscribe with size limit
- Tags must remain affixed until processed for consumption

# Commercial Tagging Reports

- States required to submit commercial tagging report by 60 days prior to start of fishery
  - Picture of tags and description of color, style, inscription
  - Number of tags issued/printed
  - Biological metric used to determine the number of tags
  - Summary of any changes or issues with program implementation
  - Optional: previous year tag accounting (often preliminary)

# Commercial Tagging Reports

- States required to submit commercial tagging report by 60 days prior to start of fishery
  - Picture of tags and description of color, style, inscription
  - Number of tags issued/printed
  - Biological metric used to determine the number of tags
  - Summary of any changes or issues with program implementation
  - Optional: previous year tag accounting (often preliminary)
    - PRT/state tagging contacts agreed to no longer ask for tag accounting in tag report (pending LEC feedback); only ask for tag accounting in the later compliance reports when more tag accounting data available





# Observations Across State Tagging Programs

- Striped bass commercial fisheries vary by state
  - Different management systems (individual quotas vs. not)
  - Different gears
  - Different seasons
  - Number of participants
- Point of Tagging
  - 3 states at point of sale
  - 4 states at point of harvest
  - 1 state at point of landing and at weight stations

- All states use average weight to convert quota pounds to number of fish (number of tags)
  - Varying degree of complexity with some states accounting for different average weights by gear type, different average weights by individual harvester, different types of quota allocation (e.g., equal shares, full vs. part shares)
  - Inherent uncertainty on next season's average fish weight compared to current season; states account for this by ordering extra tags
  - One state takes into account anticipated size targeted for certain markets

- Harvesters required to return unused tags or provide accounting report for any unused tags prior to next fishing season (account for all tags as used, unused, broken, lost)
- Percent of Unaccounted Tags (tags not returned/not reported as lost/broken)
  - For 2022-2024: ~1-3% for most states with a few states around 5-6% in some years
  - For COVID years 2020-2021: more tags unaccounted for due to COVID challenges with tag return/accounting

## Common Challenges: Tag Planning

- Increasing cost of tags and long lead time for tag production/shipping
- Time constraints for states with no gap between seasons (e.g., 2024 season ends December and 2025 season starts January)
  - Tag accounting is still ongoing when the next season starts
  - Board decisions late in the year make it difficult to plan for next season's quota/ number of tags
  - One state also noted license renewal (when harvester pays for number of tags) occurs before next year's quota is finalized



## **Common Challenges: Administrative Operation**

- Tag distribution, return, and accounting/auditing is administratively demanding and requires significant staff time
- COVID years 2020-2021 affected tag return and tag accounting process for many states → more tags unaccounted for

# Differences Across Programs

- Differences in tag distribution process
  - State orders tags, receives tags, and distributes tags via in-person pick-up, state drop-off, or mail
  - Tag vendor ships tags directly to harvesters after verification from states on participants
- Differences in physical style of tags
  - Are all styles the same degree of tamper-evident?
  - One state noted issue with cap/ball tags and ability to reuse them

# Differences Across Programs

- Differences in tag reporting requirements
  - Harvester and/or dealer reporting; harvester plus weigh station reporting
  - Individual tag data; total tags per trip/sold; only total pounds per trip/sold (not reporting quantity of fish)
- Differences in consequences for delinquent reporting
  - Reduced or zero tags for the following year; citations from law enforcement
  - One state has a per tag fine for unreturned tags

# Differences Across Programs

- Differences in ability to verify tags used
  - Tracking individual tag serial numbers in reporting; multiple reports (e.g., harvester plus weigh station) with quantity of tags used; one harvester or dealer report with quantity of tags used
  - Difficult to verify if landing in a different state

# Differences Across Programs

- Differences in fish kept for personal use
  - All states require personal use fish to be reported
    - New requirement for one state as of Dec 2025
  - Three states do not require tagging fish kept for personal use/not counted toward quota
  - Some states require bringing fish to weigh station/dealer before taking home for personal use



- Several differences across state programs
- All states have recognized various challenges and made an effort to address them
- General success meeting the goals of the program; ongoing challenges and potential improvements

# Observations Across State Tagging Programs: Draft Addendum III and Current Point-of-Sale Tagging

# Draft Add III Background

- States with commercial fisheries can choose tagging at point of harvest or tagging at point of sale
- Concerns that waiting to tag until point of sale could increase risk of illegal harvest
- Draft addendum considers requiring commercial tagging at the point of harvest with goal of improving enforcement and compliance
  - Note: Board discussion later today about point of landing
- Differences among state commercial management systems and current tagging program → difficult to determine whether point-of-harvest tagging would decrease the risk of illegal harvest in every state

# Draft Add III Background

- Majority opinion of Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) supports tagging at point of harvest to improve enforcement from total time the species is in possession, reduce the ability to high-grade, and increase accountability
- Opposing opinion within LEC supports continuation of point-of-sale tagging noting concerns about fishers trading tags under point of harvest system → would tag trading potentially increase illegal market fish?
  - Also noted administrative burden of distributing tags, especially for states not managing with individual quotas

# Changes from POS to POH

- MA, RI, and NC currently tag at point of sale and noted changes/challenges if required to switch to point of harvest:
  - Their commercial fisheries are not managed via individual quotas
  - Potentially thousands of harvesters could be eligible to receive tags compared to dozens of dealers who receive tags currently
  - Challenge: staff capacity to administer tagging program with that magnitude of increase in number of participants and number of tags
  - Challenge: cannot predict how many tags each harvester will need (no individual quotas) → distribute too many tags up front with many going unused or distribute too few up front with many in-season requests for more tags



# Changes from POS to POH

- MA, RI, and NC currently tag at point of sale and noted changes/challenges if required to switch to point of harvest:
  - RI additional concerns about tags slowing down processing time for floating fish trap fishery, less timely quota monitoring, concern about tags from inactive commercial licensees being used by recreational fishers and/or used out of season
  - MA additional concerns about tag distribution with harvesters more widespread than dealers

# Changes from POS to POH

- Big undertaking to change programs → would need sufficient time to do so if Board required point-of-harvest tagging



# Questions?

Written report will be developed soon



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Marine Fisheries**  
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# Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee Report: Draft Addendum III Tasks

Tyler Grabowski, TC Chair

August 6, 2025

- Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) met in June 2025 to address tasks for Draft Addendum III
  - Update stock projections incorporating final 2024 MRIP estimates
  - Review Maryland's proposal for recreational season baseline





# Updated Stock Projections

# Timeline of Data Used

- Spring 2025 Projections
  - Recreational: preliminary 2024 MRIP removals
  - Commercial: projected 7% reduction based on Add. II
- Summer 2025 Projections
  - Recreational: final 2024 MRIP removals
  - Commercial: preliminary 2024 landings

- Preliminary Recreational Removals: 3.22 million fish
- Final Recreational Removals: 3.45 million fish
- Change: +7% increase
- Driven by:
  - +12% increase in MD Bay rec. harvest estimate from prelim. to final
  - +29% increase in NY rec. harvest estimate from prelim. to final
  - +34% increase in NY rec. releases estimate from prelim. to final
- Other states had very small changes

- MD Bay recreational harvest
  - Most increase from changes in Charter mode (Waves 3-5) as additional VTR data were added, resulting in higher estimates of effort
- NY recreational catch
  - Most increase from changes in Private/Rental boat mode (Wave 6)
  - Due to increased estimate of Wave 6 effort as additional FES records added
    - Preliminary Wave 6 effort: 442,911 angler-trips
    - Final Wave 6 effort: 845,711 angler-trips
    - Recent years: 1.09M (2023) and 867,384 (2022)

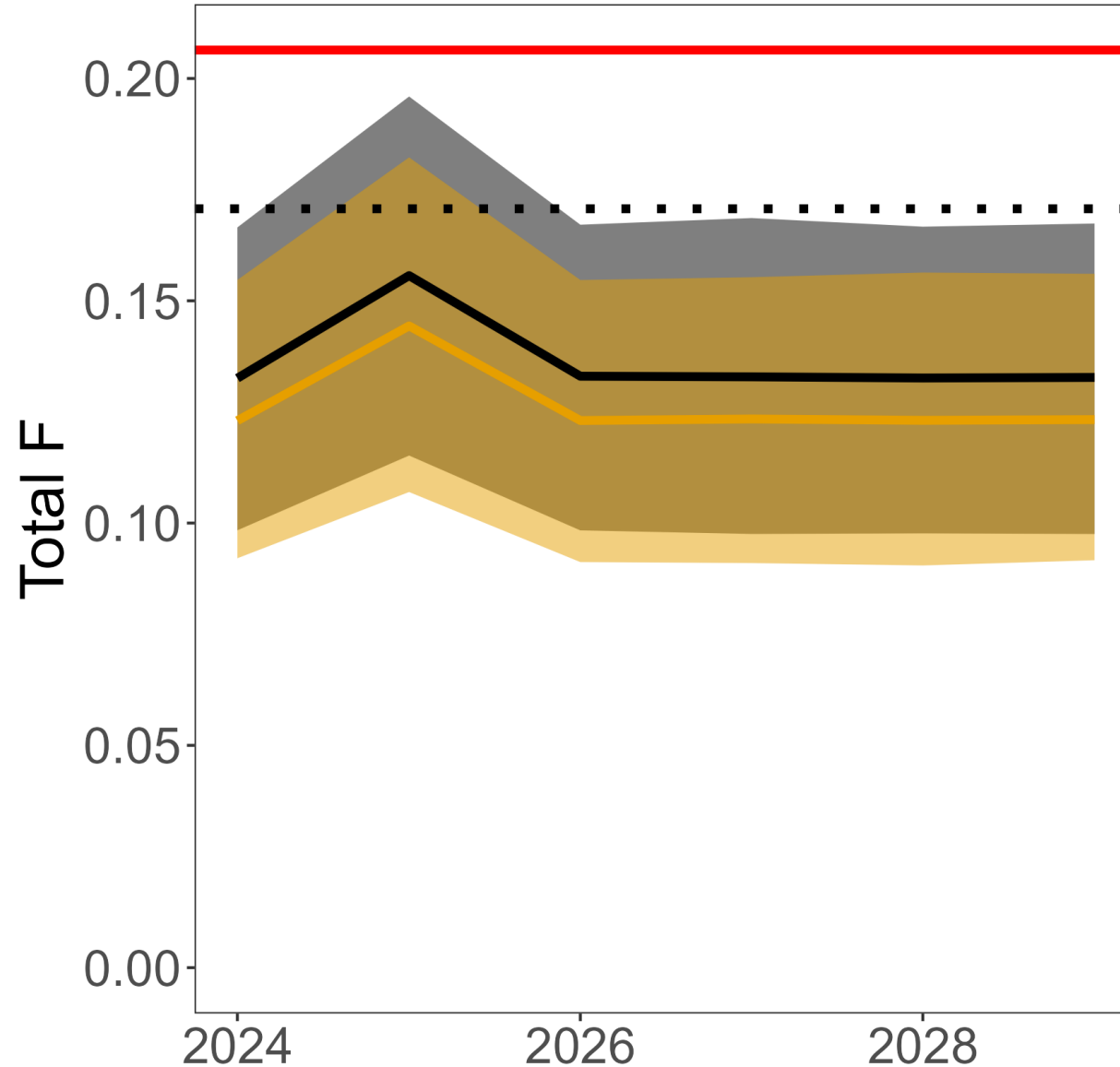
- Final MRIP data incorporated into projections
- Base run
  - 2024 removals: final MRIP + preliminary commercial
  - Recruitment: drawn from 2008-2023 (low recruitment regime)
  - F\_2025: 17% increase from F\_2024 as 2018 year-class enters ocean slot limit
  - F\_2026-2029: F\_2024 as 2018s grow out of the ocean slot limit



- Final 2024 MRIP data → increased 2024 fishing mortality
- Propagated through the projections resulting in higher reduction options
- Higher  $F$  2024 → Higher  $F$  in 2025 → Higher  $F$  in 2026 – 2029 as compared to prior projections



# Updated Projections



## Reference Points

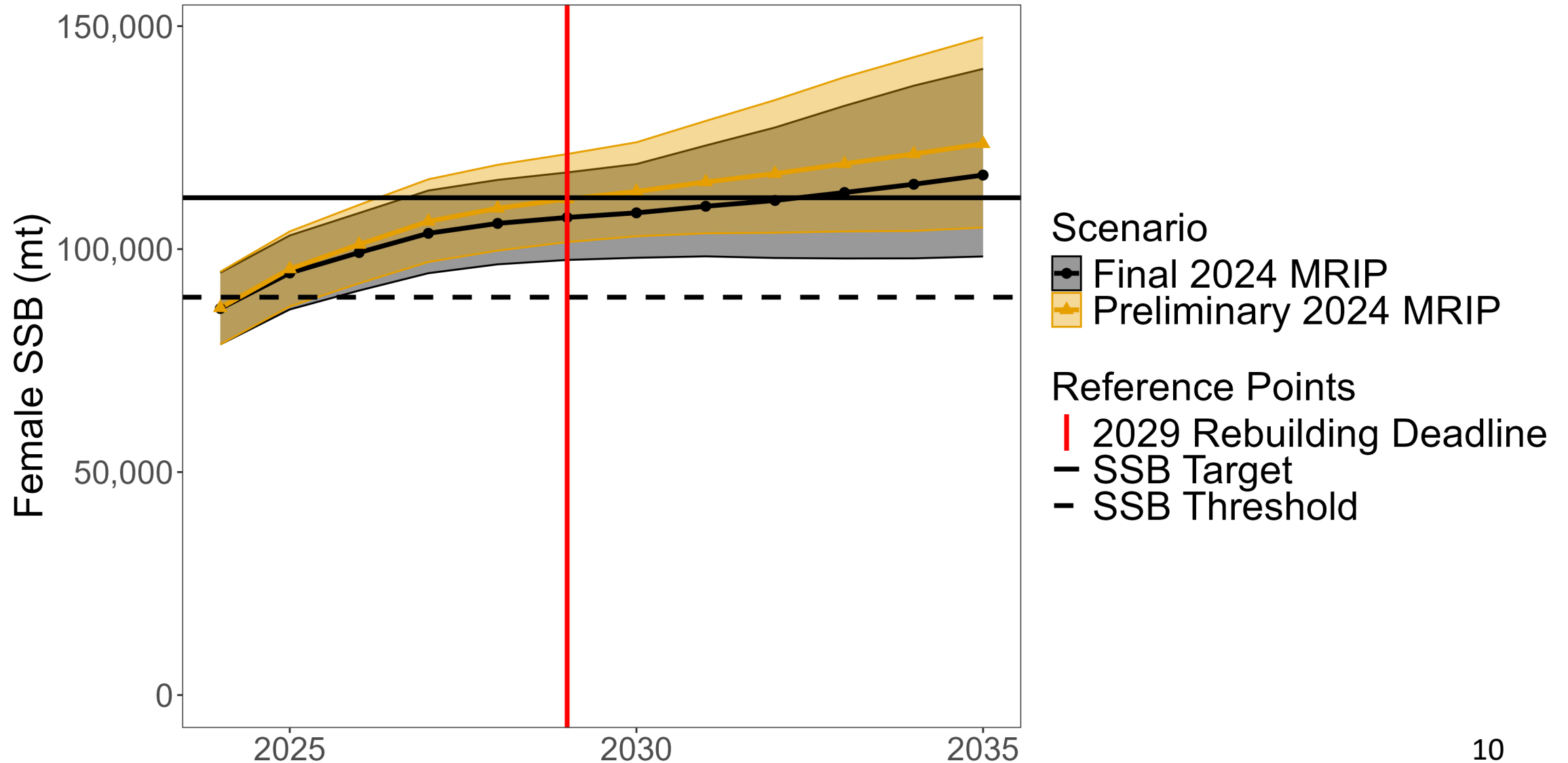
- · F Target
- F Threshold

## Scenario

- Final 2024 MRIP
- Preliminary 2024 MRIP



# Stock Projections



# Stock Projections

	Spring 2025: Preliminary MRIP	Summer 2025: Final MRIP
Prob. of Rebuild by 2029	49%	<b>30%</b>
2026 Removals under Status Quo	3.54 million fish	<b>3.75 million fish</b>
2026 Reduction in Removals to achieve <i>F<sub>rebuild</sub></i> 50%	-1%	<b>-12%</b>
2026 Reduction in Removals to achieve <i>F<sub>rebuild</sub></i> 60%	-7%	<b>-18%</b>

- Stock projections represent the TC's best assumptions about what may happen under status quo management
- **TC notes predicting future fishing mortality, effort, and recruitment is highly uncertain**



- Board requested sensitivity runs
- Extend base run projections to 2035
- Use the most recent 6 years of very low recruitment instead of the 2008-2023 values
- Project a moderate  $F$  value for 2026 onwards (i.e., higher than the  $F$  projected for 2024 but lower than the  $F$  target)

- TC notes these sensitivity runs are more pessimistic scenarios compared to the base run; do not encompass possibility of more optimistic scenarios (e.g.,  $F$  in 2025-2035 being lower than  $F$  in 2024)

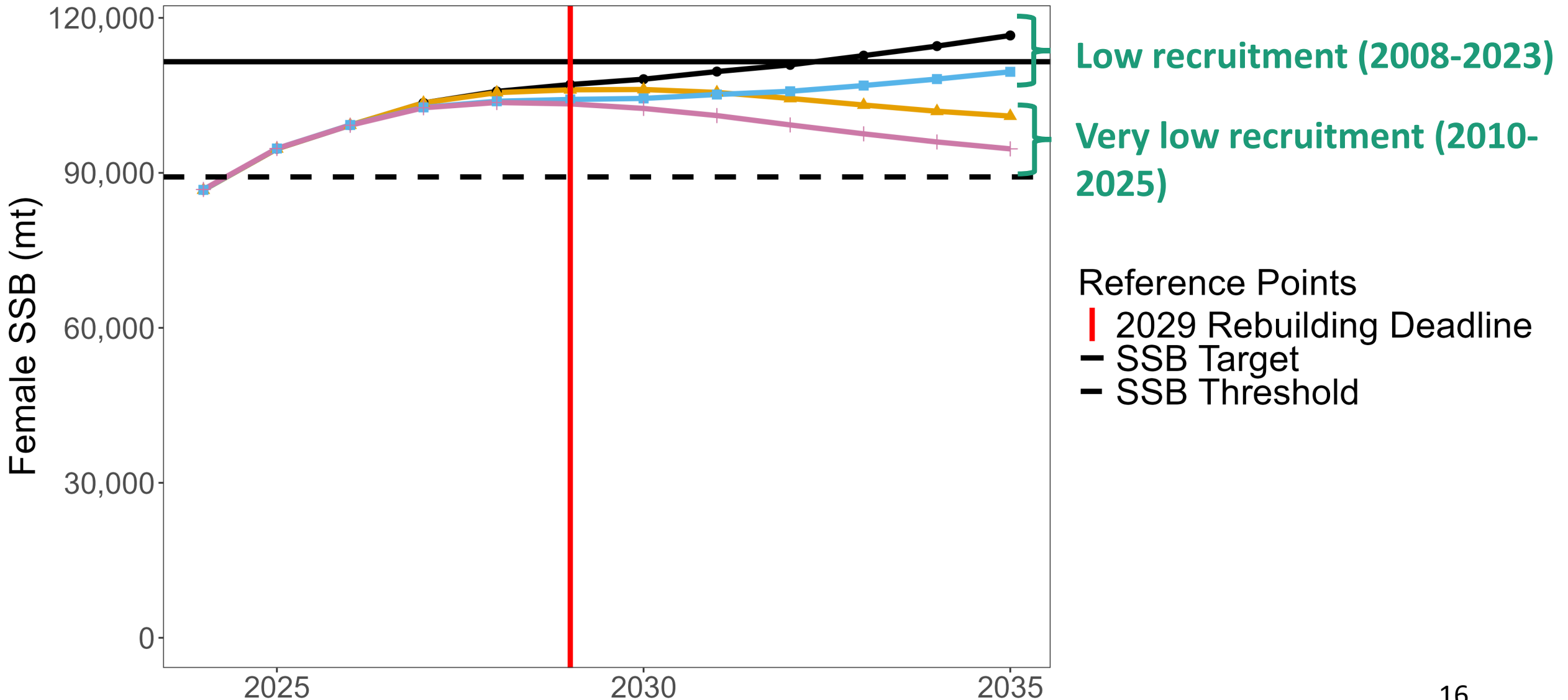
# Updated Sensitivity Runs

	Low Recruitment	Very Low Recruitment
<b>F2026-2029 =F2024</b>	<b>Base case</b> Recruitment: 2008-2023 $F_{2026-2029} = 0.133$	Recruitment: 2019-2025 $F_{2026-2029} = 0.133$
<b>F2026-2029 =Moderate F (Average of 2024-25)</b>	Recruitment: 2008-2023 $F_{2026-2029} = 0.144$	Recruitment: 2019-2025 $F_{2026-2029} = 0.144$

→ All projections go out to 2035



# Updated Sensitivity Runs



- Trajectory of SSB depends on the recruitment scenario
  - Low Recruitment (2008-2023): SSB continues to increase
  - Very Low Recruitment (2019-2024): SSB begins to decline after 2030 as strong year-classes die off and replaced by weaker year-classes
- Under a slightly higher  $F$  than the base run, probability of rebuilding 2029 decreases





# Maryland Recreational Season Baseline

- TC-SAS initial review of Maryland's baseline season proposal in March 2025
- Maryland updated methodology to incorporate TC recommendations
- Board requested June 2025 review:
  - Updated methods
  - Assumption of constant effort
  - Potential impacts on pre-spawn fish

- New baseline would modify duration/timing of seasons in Maryland Chesapeake Bay but calculated to maintain the same level of removals as 2024 (i.e., net neutral)
  - Existing spawning closures not affected

- Maryland's proposed baseline season would:
  - Change April from no-targeting to allowing catch-and-release
  - Change May 1-15 from no-targeting to allowing harvest
  - Shift summer no-targeting closure from July to August and extend closure
  - Close the December harvest season a few days earlier

- Opening April season from no-targeting to allowing catch-and-release → assume the number of releases per trip will increase
- Challenge: effort assumption (how many trips per day)
- Ideally, use historical reference period to estimate effort change
- Maryland's prior spring seasons are not directly applicable since harvest was also allowed in the past (trophy season)



- Maryland methods assume constant effort (same number of trips per day as 2024)
- Expect an increase in effort when opening a no-targeting closure to allow catch-and-release, but difficult to quantify potential increase
- TC-SAS noted the difficulty of predicting effort increase without historical reference period
- TC-SAS could not develop a quantitative assumption for effort increase that was any more defensible than assumption of constant effort

- TC-SAS accepted Maryland's methods for calculating new season baseline and recommend the proposal highlight uncertainty of predicting how effort would change when opening a currently closed season

- Board expressed concern about potential impacts of allowing catch-and-release in April on pre-spawn fish
- Data on striped bass is limited and outcomes mixed
  - One study said no behavioral change, one said fish left spawning grounds after release
- Results for other species similarly inconclusive
- **Effect catch-and-release fishing on spawning success is source of uncertainty**



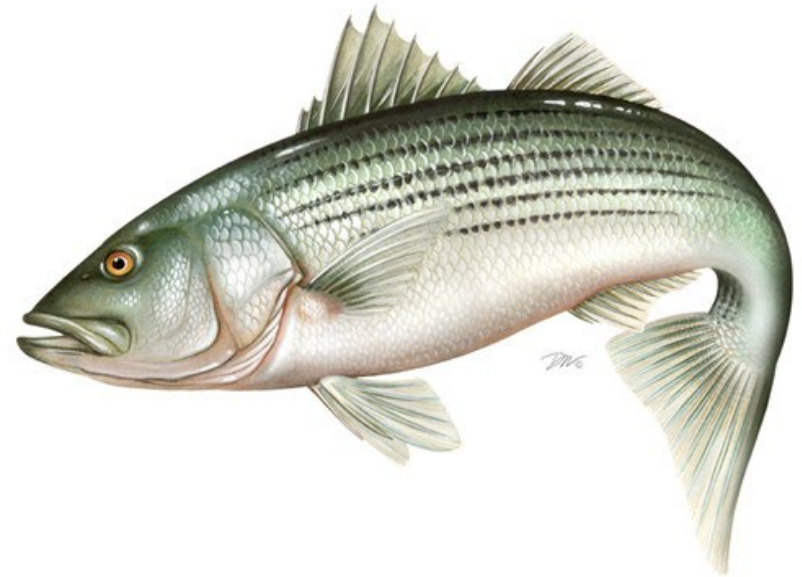
# Questions



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# Draft Addendum III for Board Review

August 6, 2025





- Timeline
- Draft Addendum Outline
- Each Issue: Statement of the Problem and Options
  - PDT memo comments
  - AP member comments
    - AP met via webinar on July 28 to review the updated management options



Date	Action
December 2024	Board initiated Draft Addendum III
February 2025	Board provided guidance on scope of options
Feb – April 2025	PDT developed options and draft document
May 2025	Board revisions to document
May – July 2025	PDT updated document with Board revisions and updated projections with final MRIP estimates
<b>August 2025</b>	<b>Board considers approving for public comment</b>
Late Aug – Sept 2025	Public comment period
October 2025	Board reviews public comment, selects measures, final approval of Addendum III
2026 and later	States implement regulations

*Note: This timeline is subject to change per the direction of the Board.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

## **2.0 Statement of the Problem/Background**

- Status of the Stock
- Status of Management
- Status of the Fisheries
- Seasonality of Rec. Catch/Effort
- Social and Economic Considerations; Equity Considerations for Regions
- Other Species Caught/Targeted in Striped Bass Rec. Fishery
- Examples of MD and NC Striped Bass Season Closures

## 1.0 Introduction

Updated section

## 2.0 Statement of the Problem/Background

- Status of the Stock
- Status of Management
- Status of the Fisheries
- Seasonality of Rec. Catch/Effort
- Social and Economic Considerations; Equity Considerations for Regions
- Other Species Caught/Targeted in Striped Bass Rec. Fishery
- Examples of MD and NC Striped Bass Season Closures

# AP Member Comments

- One AP member concerned socioeconomic section does not sufficiently convey negative economic impacts of Addendum II measures, particularly 1-fish bag limit for the Maryland Chesapeake Bay charter fleet
- One AP member concerned about commercial discard estimates decreasing over time relative to harvest, and concern about Maryland's low average commercial fish weight



## **3.0 Proposed Management Options**

3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

3.2 Commercial Tagging: Point of Sale vs. Point of Harvest

3.3 Maryland Recreational Season Baseline

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals

## **4.0 Compliance Schedule**

## **3.0 Proposed Management Options**

Updated/new section

3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

3.2 Commercial Tagging: Point of Sale vs. Point of Harvest

3.3 Maryland Recreational Season Baseline

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals

## **4.0 Compliance Schedule**



## 3.1 Measuring Total Length

# Statement of the Problem

- FMP specifies size limits in total length (TL), but does not define TL
- Current regulations vary by state on how to measure striped bass TL for compliance
- Concern that no standard method of measurement is undermining the conservation, consistency, and enforceability of size limits
- Draft addendum considers coastwide requirements for state regulatory definitions of TL for striped bass (both sectors)
- Law Enforcement Committee and supports consistent, specific language

## **Option A. Status Quo: No Definition of Total Length**

## **Option B. Mandatory Elements for Total Length Definition (Both Sectors)**

- Adopt mandatory elements for each state's definition of striped bass TL
- All states must require: 1) squeezing the tail; 2) a straight-line measurement; 3) the fish is laid flat; and 4) the mouth is closed.
- States may use the following language or submit alternative language



- States may use the following language or submit alternative language for Board consideration:

*Total length means the greatest straight line length in inches as measured on a fish (laid flat on its side on top of the measuring device) with its mouth closed from the anterior most tip of the jaw or snout to the farthest extremity of the tail with the upper and lower fork of the tail squeezed together.*



## 3.2 Commercial Tagging

# Statement of the Problem

- States with commercial fisheries can choose tagging at point of harvest or tagging at point of sale; FMP requirement since 2012
- Concerns that waiting to tag until point of sale could increase risk of illegal harvest
- Draft addendum considers requiring commercial tagging at the point of harvest with goal of improving enforcement and compliance
- Change would impact three states (MA, RI, NC)
- Differences among state commercial management systems and current tagging program → difficult to determine whether point-of-harvest tagging would decrease the risk of illegal harvest in every state

# Commercial Tagging

- Majority opinion of Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) supports tagging at point of harvest to improve enforcement from total time the species is in possession, reduce the ability to high-grade, and increase accountability
- Opposing opinion within LEC supports continuation of point-of-sale tagging noting concerns about fishers trading tags under point of harvest system → would tag trading potentially increase illegal market fish?
  - Also noted administrative burden of distributing tags, especially for states not managing with individual quotas

**Option A. Status Quo. States can choose point of harvest or point of sale**

**Option B. Require commercial tagging at the point of harvest**

- Consider delaying implementation until 2027 or 2028 to account for administrative and regulatory changes to switch from point of sale



- Board Discussion: Point of Landing
- Is the intent of the option to allow tagging at point of landing or just at point of harvest?
- FMP does not define point of harvest (i.e., immediately upon possession or within specific parameters outlined by various state regulations)
- One state currently tags striped bass at point of landing (i.e., before landing or putting on shore)

# AP Member Comments

- One AP member concerned about new tag allocation and distribution process if switching to point of harvest
- One AP member supports expanding the option to consider tagging at point of landing to address safety concerns about point of harvest tagging

# Commercial Tagging Text

- Board Discussion: Additional Text Proposed
- Board member proposing text for this section noting tagging at point of harvest can be considered an unquantifiable reduction in commercial removals
- PDT notes there are no data available showing how switch to point of harvest tagging would impact commercial removals or illegal harvest; impacts may differ by state

- Board Discussion: NC Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R)
  - Only commercial fishery in Albemarle Sound
  - Original Add III to Am6 tagging requirements applied to A-R, but Add IV to Am6 deferred A-R management to NC
  - A-R quotas/size limits/seasons based on A-R assessments and reference points
  - Unclear whether changes to underlying commercial tagging requirements would impact A-R or just the NC ocean fishery
  - PDT recommends the Board clarify this



## 3.3 Maryland Recreational Season Baseline



# Statement of the Problem

- Maryland's striped bass seasons increasingly complex over time
- Some stakeholder desire to adjust seasons to allow fishing opportunities in the spring when conditions are favorable to lower release mortality
- Draft addendum considers a new recreational season baseline to simplify Maryland Chesapeake Bay seasons and re-align access based on stakeholder input and release mortality rates
- Any rebuilding reductions would be added on to new baseline

- New baseline would modify duration/timing of seasons in Maryland Chesapeake Bay but calculated to maintain the same level of removals as 2024 (i.e., net neutral)
  - Existing March-May spawning closures not affected
- TC accepted Maryland's methods for calculating new baseline; highlighted uncertainty of predicting effort change from opening a currently closed season, especially without a historic reference period with the same regulations

- Some options would add uncertainty buffer of 10% or 25% to increase chance of success of new season staying net neutral (not increasing removals)
- 10% and 25% levels based on buffers in Amendment 7 for CE proposals for non-quota managed fisheries
  - 10% for CE proposals for non-quota managed fisheries
  - 25% for CE proposals with  $PSE > 30$

		Harvest (A+B1)		Releases (B2)	
Year	Wave	Harvest Estimate	PSE	Release Estimate	PSE
2021	2			272,771	44.2
	3	196,571	17.7	985,977	25.0
	4	140,112	26.9	849,772	37.7
	5	144,129	21.6	918,297	22.7
	6	102,890	23.1	869,453	29.5
2022	2			117,909	36.2
	3	140,995	21.6	966,481	29.1
	4	151,059	27.1	702,055	26.4
	5	250,956	31.7	1,011,618	28.7
	6	99,184	21.6	491,463	30.9
2023	2			437,296	21.1
	3	156,525	28.2	534,970	27.7
	4	129,309	25.9	575,292	37.2
	5	61,020	22.7	526,736	32.5
	6	155,405	28.1	1,058,626	35.8
2024	2			305,037	60.8
	3	64,196	15.5	214,832	27.8
	4	76,437	30.5	213,752	31.1
	5	51,984	22.8	262,664	34.7
	6	39,994	44.1	1,267,226	51.3

**MRIP Maryland Inland PSEs by wave and by year for striped bass harvest and releases.**

**When 2021-2024 pooled together, pooled PSEs by wave are less than 30.**



## **Option A. Status Quo (No New Baseline)**

Addendum II status quo is Maryland Chesapeake Bay keeps same season as 2022. For any new rebuilding reduction in this addendum, Maryland Chesapeake Bay uses the current 2024 season as baseline with new rebuilding closures on top of that.

## **Option B. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline**

Maryland Chesapeake Bay implements new baseline season (calculated to be net neutral) plus any additional season closures required by new rebuilding reduction in this addendum.



## Option C. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline + 10% Uncertainty Buffer

Maryland Chesapeake Bay implements new baseline season plus any additional season closures required by rebuilding reduction plus additional 10% buffer of that reduction (e.g., 12% reduction + 1.2% buffer = 13% reduction).

If there is no rebuilding reduction in this addendum, Maryland Chesapeake Bay implements new baseline season but it must be 2% more conservative than the 2024 season (achieved by shortening wave 3 or wave 6 harvest season).

- 2% = 10% of the 20.6% reduction from Maryland Addendum VI reduction when the original no-targeting closures were implemented

## **Option D. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline + 25% Uncertainty Buffer**

Maryland Chesapeake Bay implements new baseline season plus any additional season closures required by rebuilding reduction plus additional 25% buffer of that reduction (e.g., 12% reduction + 3% buffer = 15% reduction).

If there is no rebuilding reduction in this addendum, Maryland Chesapeake Bay implements new baseline season but it must be 5% more conservative than the 2024 season (achieved by shortening wave 3 or wave 6 harvest season).

- 5% = 25% of the 20.6% reduction from Maryland Addendum VI reduction when the original no-targeting closures were implemented

# MD Season

## Option A. 2024 Baseline\*

Catch and Release  
Jan 1 – Mar 31

No Targeting  
Apr 1 – May 15

Harvest  
May 16 – July 15

No Target July 16-31

Harvest  
Aug 1 – Dec 10

Catch and Release  
Dec 10 – Dec 31

## Option B/C/D. New Baseline\*

Catch and Release  
Jan 1 – Apr 30

Harvest  
May 1 – July 31

No Target  
Aug 1 – Aug 31

Harvest  
Sep 1 – Dec 5

Catch and Release  
Dec 6 – Dec 31

**\*Plus any additional closures to meet rebuilding reduction plus additional reduction from buffer (C. 10% buffer; or D. 25% buffer)**

# AP Member Comments

- One AP member concerned about allowing catch-and-release of pre-spawn fish
- One AP member concerned about introducing uncertainty of season change amidst a reduction
- One AP member recommends the PDT/TC review what portion of the season would be subject to the uncertainty buffer if no reduction
  - Draft addendum proposes shortening harvest in wave 3 or wave 6, but TC could discuss



## 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals



# Statement of the Problem

- Stock subject to rebuilding plan to be at or above the spawning stock biomass target by 2029
- Projections estimate increased fishing mortality in 2025 followed by decrease in 2026 due to above-average 2018 year-class moving through the ocean slot limit
- Concern about lack of strong year-classes behind the 2018s
- Draft addendum considers implementing measures in 2026 designed to achieve a reduction to increase the probability of rebuilding by 2029

# Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Option A. Status Quo. No Reduction. } 30% prob.  
of rebuild

# Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Option A. Status Quo. No Reduction. } 30% prob. of rebuild
  - Option B. Even Sector Reductions: Comm -12% and Rec -12%
  - Option C: No Commercial Reduction: Comm -0% and Rec -14% }
- 50% prob. of rebuild

# Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Option A. Status Quo. No Reduction. } 30% prob. of rebuild
- Option B. Even Sector Reductions: Comm -12% and Rec -12%
- Option C. No Commercial Reduction: Comm -0% and Rec -14% } 50% prob. of rebuild
- Option D. Even Sector Reductions: Comm -18% and Rec -18%
- Option E. No Commercial Reduction: Comm -0% and Rec -21% } 60% prob. of rebuild

# PDT and AP Member Comments

- PDT recommends the Board decide which percent reduction to move forward for public comment: -12% options (B-C) or -18% options (D-E).
- Two AP members support bringing both the -12% and -18% options to public comment to have a range of options and consider 2025 Maryland JAI results in October



# AP Member Comments

- One AP member noted the uncertainty and overlap of confidence intervals comparing projections using preliminary vs. final MRIP data
- Two AP members support the addendum including options for the commercial sector taking no reduction; commercial sector underutilizes its quota and is managed by strict accountability measures (i.e., quota paybacks)

State/Region	Options A. Status Quo & Options C/E No Quota Reduction	Option B. -12% Quota Reduction	Option D. -18% Quota Reduction
<b>Ocean Commercial Quotas (Pounds)</b>			
Maine	143	126	117
New Hampshire	3,289	2,894	2,697
Massachusetts	683,773	601,720	560,694
Rhode Island	138,467	121,851	113,543
Connecticut	13,585	11,955	11,140
New York	595,868	524,364	488,612
New Jersey	200,798	176,702	164,654
Delaware	132,501	116,601	108,651
Maryland	82,857	72,914	67,943
Virginia	116,282	102,328	95,351
North Carolina	274,810	241,833	225,344
Ocean Total	2,242,373	1,973,288	1,838,746
<b>Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota (Pounds)</b>			
Chesapeake Bay Total	2,791,532	2,456,548	2,289,056

**Commercial  
Quota Options:  
No Reduction,  
-12%, or -18%**

# Recreational Options

- Ocean options: season closures to meet reduction
  - Coastwide or regional closures (New England and Mid-Atlantic)
  - Should RI be part of New England or Mid-Atlantic region?
  - Mode split on size limits
- Chesapeake Bay options: size limit changes or seasonal closures to meet reduction
  - Closures by Chesapeake state: Maryland and Virginia
  - Mode split on size limits
- No change to daily bag limit (1 fish coastwide)

# Rec. Mode Split Considerations

- Mode Split on Size Limits: For-Hire Exemption
  - Wider slot limit for FH with all modes taking a slightly longer closure to account for FH size limit
  - Different size limit but same seasons for all modes

# Season Closure Considerations

- Tradeoff: shorter closure during peak season or longer closure during slower season
- Type of closure: No-Harvest or No-Targeting
  - No-Harvest closure longer than No-Targeting closure
- No-Targeting closure impacts depend on angler behavior
  - No-Targeting Assumption 'SB Trips Switch Target' assumes all trips previously targeting striped bass would occur but would shift target species
  - No-Targeting Assumption 'SB-only Trips Eliminated' assumes trips previously targeting only striped bass would no longer occur



# Season Closure Considerations

- All states within an Ocean region (New England and Mid-Atlantic regions) would have the same closure dates
- Dates will be determined by the Board soon after final approval of the addendum (implementation plans)

# AP Member Comments

- One AP member concerned that no-targeting closures are still being considered even though enforcement notes they are unenforceable

# Ocean Recreational Options

- **A. Status Quo (28-31", 1 fish, 2022 seasons)**
- **B. -12% Rec. Reduction**
  - O1. Status Quo 28-31" and -12% season closure
  - O2. PS 28-31"/FH 28-33" and -13% season closure
- **C. -14% Rec. Reduction (no comm. reduction)**
  - O3. Status Quo 28-31" and -14% season closure
  - O4. PS 28-31"/FH 28-33" and -15% season closure

# Ocean Recreational Options

- **D. -18% Rec. Reduction**
  - O5. Status Quo 28-31" and -18% season closure
  - O6. PS 28-31"/FH 28-33" and -19% season closure
- **E. -21% Rec. Reduction (no comm. reduction)**
  - O7. Status Quo 28-31" and -21% season closure
  - O8. PS 28-31"/FH 28-33" and -22% season closure

# Ocean Options: NY/DE/PA Areas

- Board Discussion
- New York Hudson River, Pennsylvania spring slot, Delaware summer slot fisheries implemented area-specific measures through Addendum II
  - NY Hudson River: 1 fish at 23-28" from Apr 1-Nov 30
  - PA spring slot lower Delaware River/Estuary: 1 fish at 22-<26" from Apr 1-May 31
  - DE summer slot Delaware River/Bay: 1 fish at 20-24" from July 1-Aug 31



# Ocean Options: NY/DE/PA Areas

- Ocean options would maintain Addendum II size limits for these fisheries
- Timing of new season closures in the addendum may or may not overlap with these fisheries (Mid-Atlantic or coastwide)
  - Example: wave 5 closure would not overlap with PA spring slot, but wave 2 closure would overlap
- As written, these three fisheries could choose to implement the selected closure OR could submit alternative measures to achieve the reduction (subject to TC review)

# Ocean Options: NY/DE/PA Areas

- PDT notes potential equity issues
  - Particularly for the NY Hudson River and PA spring slot since no/limited MRIP coverage
  - DE summer slot is covered by MRIP so already incorporated in the season analysis
- NY Hudson and PA spring slot may not be impacted by new addendum closures, or may be impacted disproportionately

# Ocean Options: NY/DE/PA Areas

- Board should consider how seasonal closures should apply to these fisheries
- Board could be more specific in draft addendum
  - Example: Close the same proportion as Mid-Atlantic region
  - If Mid-Atlantic closure closes 5% of Mid-Atlantic's total season, then NY Hudson River and PA spring slot would close 5% of their open days

# Chesapeake Recreational Options

- **A. Status Quo (19-24", 1 fish, 2022 seasons or new baseline for MD)**
- **B. -12% Rec. Reduction**
  - CB1. 20-23" and same season as 2024
  - CB2. PS 20-23" / FH 19-24" and same season as 2024
  - CB3. PS 19-22" / FH 19-25" and same season as 2024
  - CB4. Status Quo 19-24" and -12% season closure
  - CB5. PS 19-24" / FH 19-25" and -13% season closure

# Chesapeake Recreational Options

- **C. -14% Rec. Reduction (no comm. reduction)**
  - CB6. 19-22" and same season as 2024
  - CB7. PS 19-22" / FH 19-24" and same season as 2024
  - CB8. Status Quo 19-24" and -14% season closure
  - CB9. PS 19-24" / FH 19-25" and -15% season closure



# Chesapeake Recreational Options

- **D. -18% Rec. Reduction**

- CB10. 23" minimum and same season as 2024
- CB11. PS 23" min. / FH 21" min. and same season as 2024
- CB12. Status Quo 19-24" and -18% season closure
- CB13. PS 19-24" / FH 19-25" and -19% season closure

- **E. -21% Rec. Reduction (no comm. reduction)**

- CB14. Status Quo 19-24" and -21% season closure
- CB15. PS 19-24" / FH 19-25" and -22% season closure

*FH=For-Hire and PS=Private/Shore*

# Chesapeake Bay Size Limits

## Board Discussion

- High minimum sizes
  - 24" minimum not included: would meet -21% reduction but overshoots and is above the entire current slot limit
  - Did include 23" minimum for Board consideration
- CB2. PS 20-23" and FH 19-24"
  - Different upper and lower slot limit by mode
  - Enforcement/compliance challenges (compared to other options with one side of the slot in common)
- CB11. PS 23" minimum and FH 21" minimum
  - Similar enforcement/compliance challenges with different min. sizes?

## Recreational season closure tables

### **(# of days closed on top of current seasons)**

- Closures for -12% reduction for all modes (B even sectors)
- Closures for -13% reduction for all modes (B even sectors FH size exemption)
- Closures for -14% reduction for all modes (C no comm)
- Closures for -15% reduction for all modes (C no comm FH size exemption)
- Closures for -18% reduction for all modes (D even sectors)
- Closures for -19% reduction for all modes (D even sectors FH size exemption)
- Closures for -21% reduction for all modes (E no comm)
- Closures for -22% reduction for all modes (E no comm FH size exemption)



## Closures for -12% Reduction for All Modes Number of Days Closed on top of 2024 Season

*RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.  
If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.*

Region	Waves	No Target (SB only trips eliminated)	No Target (SB trips switch targets)	No Harvest
All Ocean	Wave 3 & Wave 6	17	22	31
ME-MA	Wave 3	35	61 (-10%)	61 (-9%)
ME-MA	Wave 4	24	39	41
ME-MA	Wave 5	38	51	61 (-8%)
ME-MA	Wave 3 & Wave 5	19	30	44
RI-NC	Wave 2	32	37	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 3	54	61	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 4	62 (-5%)	62 (-4%)	62 (-2%)
RI-NC	Wave 5	61 (-10%)	61 (-8%)	61 (-6%)
RI-NC	Wave 6	20	26	36



## Closures for -12% Reduction for All Modes Number of Days Closed on top of 2024 Season

*RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.  
If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.*

Region	Waves	No Target (SB only trips eliminated)	No Target (SB trips switch targets)	No Harvest
MD Bay	Wave 3	31	37	40
MD Bay	Wave 4	29	33	37
MD Bay	Wave 5	33	37	47
MD Bay	Wave 6	25	26	40
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 3	25	30	33
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 4	30	31 (-11%)	31 (-10%)
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 5	34	37	48
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 6	25	26	35 (-10%)
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 3	27	32	36
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 4	31 (-12%)	31 (-11%)	31 (-10%)



# Season Closure Notes

- Some closure options are dual wave = close X days in wave A and close X days in wave B
  - New England and Mid-Atlantic dual wave option
  - Address equity of combining several states into a region; all states impacted by at least one part of the closure

# Season Closure Notes

## Closures for -12% Reduction for All Modes

### Number of Days Closed on top of 2024 Season

*RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.*

*If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.*

Region	Waves	No Target (SB only trips eliminated)	No Target (SB trips switch targets)	No Harvest
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 3	20	23	40
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 4	27	31	57
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 5	23	26	46
RI-NC	Wave 3 & Wave 6	15	18	25
RI-NC	Wave 4 & Wave 6	18	23	31

# Season Closure Notes

- If closing an entire wave does not achieve the reduction, the Board may choose to extend the closure into the preceding or following wave to meet the reduction
  - Could be a few extra days or a few extra weeks in preceding/following wave
  - Draft addendum does not list all the possible options, only general language
  - Calculation would be done during final option selection at October meeting if Board were considering this type of option

# Season Closure Notes

- PRFC and DC can each choose whether to implement closure during the same wave as Maryland or Virginia (Chesapeake Bay)
- During final addendum approval, Board may specify NC's required closure in a different wave than the Mid-Atlantic/coastwide closure (due to NC fish availability only in waves 1/6)
- During final addendum approval, Board may modify NY's required closure duration if wave 2 or wave 6 is selected for Mid-Atlantic/coastwide closure (due to existing NY season closures)

# Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Option A. Status Quo. No Reduction.
- Option B. Even Sector Reductions: Comm -12% and Rec -12%
- Option C. No Commercial Reduction: Comm -0% and Rec -14%
- Option D. Even Sector Reductions: Comm -18% and Rec -18%
- Option E. No Commercial Reduction: Comm -0% and Rec -21%



# AP Member Comments

- One AP member noted recruitment is the real problem. There have been multiple reductions and recruitment has not improved. Need research on what is impacting recruitment in the Chesapeake Bay.
- One AP member recommends separating public comments by sector/mode (e.g., private recreational anglers, charter captains, commercial harvesters, etc.) to understand how much of each sector/mode support an option
  - E.g., X percent of charter captains who submitted comments support Option A



# Questions



# Board Discussion Topics from PDT

## **Commercial Tagging**

- Point of landing
- NC fisheries
- Additional text

## **Reduction in Removals**

- Two reductions: -12% and -18%
- Chesapeake Bay size limits
- NY/PA/DE area fisheries
- Any other topics from Board?

# Additional Text for Section 3.2

From J. Clark:

Option B [requiring tagging at point of harvest] can be considered an unquantifiable reduction in commercial removals because it strengthens the enforceability of commercial quotas. The Board has approved unquantifiable reductions in recreational removals in recent years (e.g. gaffing prohibition) to offset the reductions needed through other recreational measures. If the public and Board decide to pursue an option in Section 3.4 requiring further reductions in striped bass removals, Option B, by providing an unquantifiable reduction in commercial landings, justifies the selection of either 3.4 Option C or E as either of those options in conjunction with Option B will result in both sectors reducing removals.





# Extra Slides

# Striped Bass Trips

**Table 3. For all 2021-2024 trips that caught striped bass, proportion of trips landing striped bass and trips only releasing striped bass (i.e., no harvest). Source: MRIP**

	<b>% Trips Landing SB</b>	<b>% Trips Only Releasing SB</b>
ME	9	91
NH	11	89
MA	20	80
RI	13	87
CT	12	88
NY	29	71
NJ	35	65
DE	4	96
MD Ocean	5	95
VA Ocean	0	100
MD Ches. Bay	29	71
VA Ches. Bay	23	77