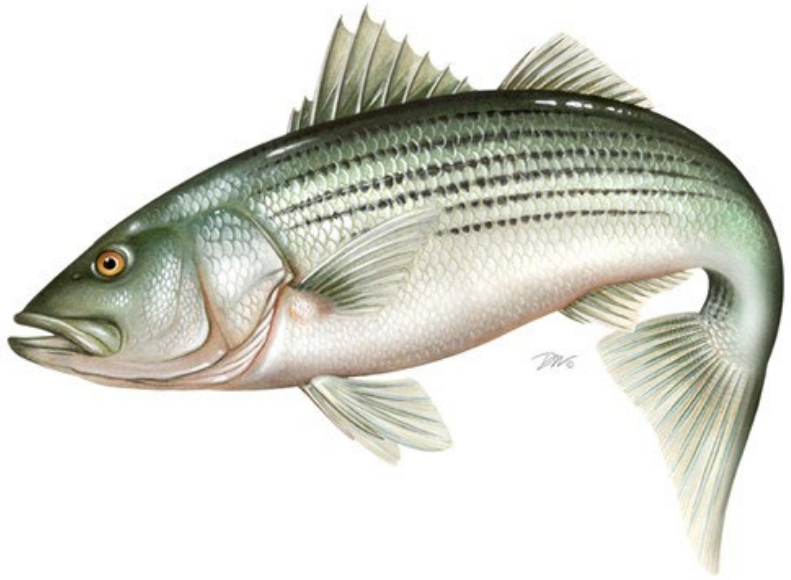
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Public Hearings – September 2025



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Presentation

- Overview of ASMFC
- Draft Addendum III
  - Timeline
  - Four Issues: Statement of the Problem and Proposed Options
- How to Provide Public Comment

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ASMFC Overview

- Formed in 1942 – Interstate Compact
- 15 Atlantic coast states: ME – FL
- Coordinates management 0 – 3 miles from shore
- Deliberative forum for states
- 3 Commissioners from each state
- Each state has one vote

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ASMFC Overview

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board includes:

- Maine through North Carolina
- District of Columbia
- Potomac River Fisheries Commission
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft Addendum III

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 final MRIP estimates
August 2025	Board considers approving for public comment
Late Aug – Oct 3, 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.

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Draft Addendum Outline

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Statement of the Problem/Background

3.0 Proposed Management Options

4.0 Compliance Schedule (TBD by Board)

Full Draft Addendum III document:

Draft Addendum Outline

3.0 Proposed Management Options

3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

3.2 Commercial Tagging: Point of Tagging

3.3 Maryland Recreational Season Baseline

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals

3.1 Measuring Total Length

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Total Length (TL)

- FMP specifies size limits in total length (TL), but does not define TL
- Varying regulations across states 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
- Law Enforcement Committee supports consistent, specific language
- Draft addendum considers coastwide definition of TL for striped bass (both sectors)

Total Length (TL)

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 would require: 1) squeezing the tail; 2) a straight-line measurement; 3) the fish is laid flat; and 4) the mouth is closed.

Total Length (TL)

- 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: Point of Tagging

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Commercial Tagging

- States with commercial fisheries can choose tagging at point of harvest or tagging at point of sale; FMP requirement since 2012
    - One state specifies tagging at the point of landing (between harvest and sale) due to safety concerns raised by industry about tagging at point of harvest
- 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 or by the first point of landing
    - Goal of improving enforcement and compliance

Commercial Tagging

- Potential change would impact the three states with current point-of-sale tagging (MA, RI, NC)
- Differences among state commercial management systems and current tagging program → difficult to determine whether this change would decrease the risk of illegal harvest in every state

Commercial Tagging

Option A. Status Quo. Commercial tagging at the point of harvest or point of sale

Option B. Commercial tagging at the point of harvest

- Immediately upon possession or within specific state parameters

Option C. Commercial tagging by the first point of landing

- Before offloading and/or before removing the vessel from the water.
- If fishing from shore, tagging would occur immediately upon possession.

For Options B and C, Board may consider 2027 or 2028 implementation to account for administrative and regulatory changes switching from point of sale.

3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

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Maryland Rec. Season

- 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

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Maryland Rec. Season

- New baseline would modify duration/timing of seasons in Maryland Chesapeake Bay
  - Existing March-May spawning closures not affected
- Calculated to maintain the same level of removals as 2024 (net neutral)
- Technical Committee accepted Maryland's methods for calculating new baseline; highlighted uncertainty of predicting how effort would change if opening a current no-targeting season to allow catch-and-release

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Maryland Rec. Season

- To address uncertainty, one option considers an uncertainty buffer to increase the chance of success of the new baseline season staying net neutral (not increasing removals)
- With the uncertainty buffer, some of the closures would be slightly longer than without the buffer

Maryland Rec. Season

Option A. Status Quo (No New Baseline)

- No change to the Maryland Chesapeake Bay baseline season
- If there is a new coastwide rebuilding reduction, Maryland would add new reduction closures on top of the 2024 season

Option B. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

- Maryland Chesapeake Bay would implement the new baseline season (calculated to be net neutral)
- If there is a new coastwide rebuilding reduction, Maryland would add new reduction closures on top of the new baseline

Maryland Rec. Season

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

- Maryland Chesapeake Bay would implement the new baseline season plus a 10% uncertainty buffer
- If there is a new coastwide rebuilding reduction, Maryland would add new reduction closures on top of the new baseline PLUS extra 10% of the reduction (13% reduction instead of 12% reduction)
- If there is no rebuilding reduction, Maryland would implement the new baseline season but adjust the baseline to be slightly more conservative than the 2024 season (2% more conservative)

MD Season

Option A. 2024 Baseline*	Option B/C. New Baseline*
Catch and Release Jan 1 – Mar 31	Catch and Release Jan 1 – Apr 30
No Targeting Apr 1 – May 15	
Harvest May 16 – July 15	Harvest May 1 – July 31
No Target July 16-31	
Harvest Aug 1 – Dec 10	No Target Aug 1 – Aug 31
	Harvest Sep 1 – Dec 5
Catch and Release Dec 11 – Dec 31	Catch and Release Dec 6 – Dec 31

***These season dates may change with the addition of new closures to meet the rebuilding reduction plus additional reduction from uncertainty buffer**

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Stock is subject to rebuilding plan to be at or above the spawning stock biomass target by 2029
- Projections estimate increased fishing mortality in 2025 as the above-average 2018 year-class enters the ocean recreational slot limit, followed by decrease in 2026-forward as the 2018s move out of the slot
- Concern about lack of strong year-classes behind the 2018s

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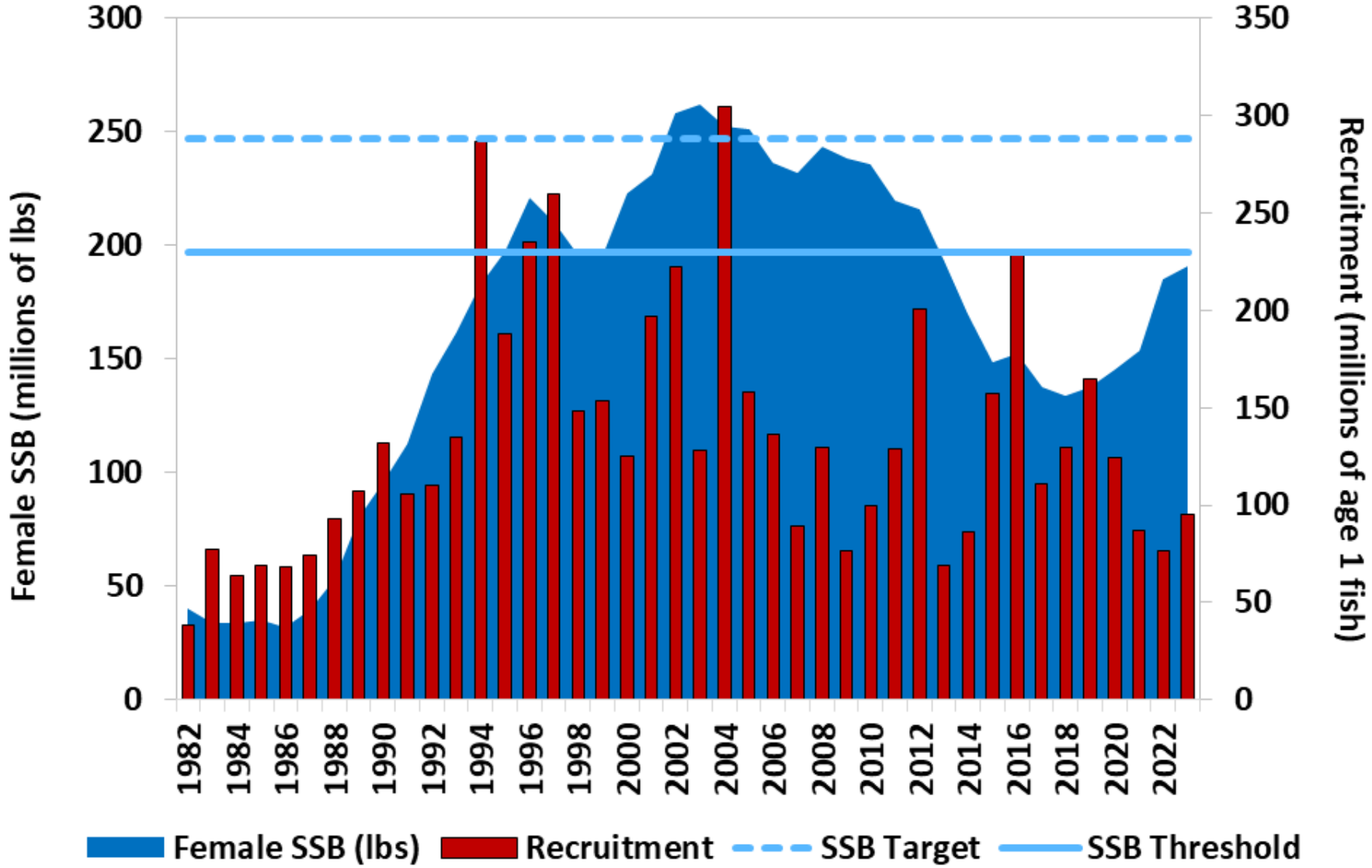
Figure 1. SSB and Recruitment



Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Under status quo, estimated 30% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029
- Draft addendum considers management measures designed to achieve a 50% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029

→ 12% reduction in fishery removals

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Should there be a reduction in fishery removals?
- What measures should change to meet the reduction?
- What should recreational season closures look like?

Reduction in Fishery Removals

Should there be a reduction in fishery removals?

- Option A. Status Quo. No Reduction.
- Option B. 12% Reduction in Fishery Removals
  - 12% reduction for the commercial sector
  - 12% reduction for the recreational sector

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What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

- Commercial quota reduction

State/Region	Option A. Status Quo No Quota Reduction	Option B. -12% Quota Reduction
Ocean Commercial Quotas (Pounds)		
Maine	143	126
New Hampshire	3,289	2,894
Massachusetts	683,773	601,720
Rhode Island	138,467	121,851
Connecticut	13,585	11,955
New York	595,868	524,364
New Jersey	200,798	176,702
Delaware	132,501	116,601
Maryland	82,857	72,914
Virginia	116,282	102,328
North Carolina	274,810	241,833
Ocean Total	2,242,373	1,973,288
Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota (Pounds)		
Chesapeake Bay Total	2,791,532	2,456,548

Table 9.

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

Ocean Recreational Fishery -12%			
	Modes	**Size Limit**	**Season Closure**
O1	**All**	Status Quo 28” to 31” *[0%]*	-12%
O2	**Split For-Hire Exemption**	Private/Shore: Status Quo 28” to 31” For-Hire: 28” to 33” *[+1%]*	-13%

Table 8.

Note: No change to the 1-fish bag limit.

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Note on New York Hudson River fishery, Pennsylvania spring slot fishery, and Delaware summer slot fishery
- Historically target smaller fish to protect spawning females and/or due to availability of resident fish → smaller size limits in FMP
- Ocean options would maintain status quo smaller size limits
- These fisheries would be subject to the season closure selected for their larger state OR could submit alternative measures to achieve the reduction in that specific fishery

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

Chesapeake Bay Recreational Fishery -12%			
	Modes	**Size Limit**	**Season Closure**
CB1	**All**	20” to 23” *[-12%]*	Same seasons as 2024
CB2	**Split For-Hire Exemption**	Private/Shore: 19” to 22” For-Hire: 19” to 25” *[-13%]*	Same seasons as 2024
CB3	**All**	Status Quo 19” to 24” *[0%]*	-12%

Table 8.

Note: No change to the 1-fish bag limit.

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Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

- Type of closure
- No-Targeting Closure: no directed fishing for striped bass; harvest and catch-and-release fishing for striped bass are prohibited
- No-Harvest Closure: harvest of striped bass is prohibited but catch-and-release fishing for striped bass is allowed

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Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

- Geographic scope
- Ocean: coastwide closure or regional closure (New England & Mid-Atlantic)
  - All states in a region/coastwide would have the same closure dates
  - Should Rhode Island be part of the New England or Mid-Atlantic region?
- Chesapeake Bay: closures by state (Maryland and Virginia)
  - PRFC and DC choose their closure during the same wave as MD or VA

Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

- Timing

Wave 1	Jan-Feb
Wave 2	Mar-Apr
Wave 3	May-Jun
Wave 4	Jul-Aug
Wave 5	Sep-Oct
Wave 6	Nov-Dec

Note: Wave 1 only an option for NC; no MRIP data for other states.

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Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

- Tradeoff: shorter closure during peak season or longer closure during slower season
- For the ocean, some options divide the closure between two waves (dual-wave closure)
  - Tables calculate how many days to close in each of the two waves for an even split (same number of days closed in each wave)
  - Board could change how many days are closed in each wave (e.g., if the Board wanted longer closure in one wave and shorter in the other)

Recreational Options

Recreational season closure tables

(# of days closed on top of current seasons)

- Table 10. Closures for -12% reduction for all modes
- Table 11. Closures for -13% reduction for all modes
  - Ocean Mode Split O2 (wider for-hire slot)

Recreational Options

Recreational season closure tables

- Dual wave closures: two waves are listed with the number of days closed in EACH wave
- Red indicates that closing an entire wave does not achieve the reduction
  - 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

All Ocean

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes			
Region	**Waves**	**No Targeting**	**No Harvest**
All Ocean	Wave 3 & Wave 6	22	31

See Table 11 for 13% closures for the Ocean mode split option.

Ocean: New England

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes Dual waves are closed the # of days in each wave			
Region	**Waves**	**No Targeting**	**No Harvest**
ME-MA	Wave 3	61 (-10%)	61 (-9%)
ME-MA	Wave 4	39	41
ME-MA	Wave 5	51	61 (-8%)
ME-MA	Wave 3 & Wave 5	30	44
ME-RI	Wave 3	54	61 (-9%)
ME-RI	Wave 4	40	44
ME-RI	Wave 5	48	61 (-8%)
ME-RI	Wave 3 & Wave 5	26	42

See Table 11 for 13% closures for the Ocean mode split option.

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Ocean: Mid-Atlantic RI-NC

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes
Dual waves are closed the # of days in each wave

Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
RI-NC	Wave 2	37	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 3	61	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 4	62 (-4%)	62 (-3%)
RI-NC	Wave 5	61 (-8%)	61 (-6%)
RI-NC	Wave 6	26	36
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 3	23	40
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 4	31	57
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 5	26	46
RI-NC	Wave 3 & Wave 6	18	25
RI-NC	Wave 4 & Wave 6	23	31

See Table 11 for 13% closures for the Ocean mode split option.

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Ocean: Mid-Atlantic CT-NC

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes
Dual waves are closed the # of days in each wave

Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
CT-NC	Wave 2	35	61 (-10%)
CT-NC	Wave 3	61 (-11%)	61 (-8%)
CT-NC	Wave 4	62 (-3%)	62 (-3%)
CT-NC	Wave 5	61 (-7%)	61 (-6%)
CT-NC	Wave 6	25	34
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 3	23	39
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 4	30	56
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 5	26	45
CT-NC	Wave 3 & Wave 6	18	25
CT-NC	Wave 4 & Wave 6	22	30

See Table 11 for 13% closures for the Ocean mode split option.

Note on NY and NC

- New York: If wave 2 or wave 6 closure is selected, Board may modify how many days New York would close since New York is already closed for part of those waves
- North Carolina: Board may specify North Carolina's closure in a different wave than the rest of the Mid-Atlantic/coast
  - North Carolina only considers striped bass in the ocean during waves 1 and 6 to be part of the coastal migratory stock

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Chesapeake Bay: Maryland

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes			
Region	**Waves**	**No Targeting**	**No Harvest**
MD Bay	Wave 3	37	40
MD Bay	Wave 4	33	37
MD Bay	Wave 5	37	47
MD Bay	Wave 6	26	40
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 3	30	33
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 4	31 (-11%)	31 (-10%)
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 5	37	48
MD Bay New Baseline	Wave 6	26	35 (-10%)

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Chesapeake Bay: Maryland

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes			
Region	**Waves**	**No Targeting**	**No Harvest**
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 3	32	36
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 4	31 (-11%)	31 (-10%)
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 5	40	52
MD Bay New Baseline + 10% buffer = 13%	Wave 6	28	35 (-10%)

Chesapeake Bay Virginia

Table 10. Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes			
Region	**Waves**	**No Targeting**	**No Harvest**
VA Bay	Wave 3	17	21
VA Bay	Wave 4	Already closed all of Wave 4	
VA Bay	Wave 5	28 (-5%)	28 (-4%)
VA Bay	Wave 6	16	22

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Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Should there be a reduction in fishery removals?
- What measures should change to meet the reduction?
- What should recreational season closures look like?

How to Provide Public Comment

Resources

Draft Addendum III Information (including public hearing schedule) on Action Tracker webpage:

https://asmfc.org/actions/

YouTube Presentation Recording

ASMFCvideos
220 subscribers

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Public Comments

Deadline for Public Comments is Friday, October 3 at 11:59 p.m.

Email: comments@asmfc.org (Subject: Striped Bass Draft Addendum III)

Mail to: Emilie Franke
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Online via the public comment form

Online via the comment box on Action Tracker webpage

Please contact Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org with any questions.