

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

October 29, 2025
9:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

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|--|------------|
| 1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>M. Ware</i>) | 9:45 a.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 9:45 a.m. |
| • Approval of Agenda | |
| • Approval of Proceedings from August 2025 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 9:50 a.m. |
| 4. Law Enforcement Committee Report on Commercial Tagging Program
Ten-Year Review (<i>J. Mercer</i>) Possible Action | 10:00 a.m. |
| 5. Consider Addendum III to Amendment 7 for Final Approval Final Action | 10:20 a.m. |
| • Review Options and Public Comment Summary (<i>E. Franke</i>) | |
| • Advisory Panel Report (<i>E. Bochenek</i>) | |
| • Consider Final Approval of Addendum III to Amendment 7 | |
| 6. Lunch | 12:00 p.m. |
| 7. Continue to Consider Addendum III to Amendment 7 for Final Approval
Final Action | 1:15 p.m. |
| 8. Other Business/Adjourn | 5:00 p.m. |

The meeting will be held at Hyatt Place Dewey Beach (1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, Delaware; 302.864.9100) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details.

MEETING OVERVIEW

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
October 29, 2025
9:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Chair: Megan Ware (ME) Assumed Chairmanship: 1/24	Technical Committee Chair: Tyler Grabowski (PA)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Sgt. Jeff Mercer (RI)
Vice Chair: Chris Batsavage (NC)	Advisory Panel Chair: Eleanor Bochenek (NJ)	Previous Board Meeting: August 6, 2025
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS (16 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from August 2025

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Law Enforcement Committee Report on Commercial Tagging Program Ten-Year Review (10:00-10:20 a.m.) Possible Action

Background

- In August 2024, the Board tasked the Plan Review Team (PRT) with reviewing the striped bass commercial tagging program since it has been over a decade since program implementation.
- The PRT and state commercial tagging contacts met on July 24 and July 30, 2025 to receive an overview of each state's tagging program and discuss observations and differences across programs. A summary of the meeting discussion was presented to the Board in August 2025 and a written report is now available (**Briefing Materials**).
- In August 2025, the Board requested the Law Enforcement Committee meet to review the above report and discuss any further LEC recommendations on point of tagging and potential improvements to state commercial tagging programs. The LEC met on October 10, 2025 to address this Board request (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- LEC Report by J. Mercer.

Possible Board action for consideration at this meeting

- Consider potential changes to state commercial tagging programs.

5. Draft Addendum III (10:20 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:15-5:00p.m.) Final Action

Background

- Draft Addendum III proposes options to define the method for measuring total length of a striped bass, change the point of tagging for commercial fishery tagging programs, change the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational season baseline, and implement a 12% reduction in fishery removals to increase the probability of rebuilding the stock by the 2029 deadline **(Briefing Materials)**. It was approved for public comment in August 2025.
- Public comment was gathered in late August and early September through public hearings **(Briefing Materials)** and written comments **(Supplemental Materials)**.
- The Advisory Panel reviewed the draft addendum on October 9 and October 16 **(Supplemental Materials)**.
- Since the draft addendum allows the Board to modify New York's specified closure during wave 2 or wave 6 to account for New York's existing seasons, New York state staff conducted analyses to inform any potential modification **(Supplemental Materials)**.

Presentations

- Overview of options and public comment summary by E. Franke.
- Advisory Panel Report by E. Bochenek, Chair.

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Select management options and implementation dates.
- Approve final document.

6. Other Business/Adjourn (5:00 p.m.)

Atlantic Striped Bass

Activity level: High

Committee Overlap Score: Medium (TC/SAS/TSC overlaps with BERP, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, horseshoe crab, shad/river herring)

Committee Task List

- TC-SAS-TSC – Conduct the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment, including Data Workshop in 2025, Methods Workshop in early 2026, and Assessment Workshop in mid-2026
- TC – June 15: Annual compliance reports due and data deadline for benchmark assessment

Technical Committee (TC) Members: Tyler Grabowski (PA, Chair), Lars Hammer (ME), Gary Nelson (MA), Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI), Kurt Gottschall (CT), Caitlin Craig (NY), Brendan Harrison (NJ), Margaret Conroy (DE), Alexei Sharov (MD), Luke Lyon (DC), Ingrid Braun-Ricks (PRFC), Shakira Goffe (VA), Robert Corbett (NC), Jeremy McCargo (NC), Tony Wood (NMFS), Jimmie Garth (USFWS)

Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) Members: Margaret Conroy (DE, Chair), Gary Nelson (MA), Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI), Mike Celestino (NJ), Alexei Sharov, Brooke Lowman (VA), John Sweka (USFWS), Tyler Grabowski (PA), Katie Drew (ASMFC), Samara Nehemiah (ASMFC)

Tagging Subcommittee (TSC) Members: Gary Nelson (MA), Jessica Best (NY), Brendan Harrison (NJ), Ian Park (DE), Angela Giuliano (MD), Beth Versak (MD), Jim Gartland (VIMS), Stuart Welsh (WVU), Mike Mangold (USFWS), Julien Martin (USGS)

DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting

August 6, 2025

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

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Adjournment	55

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of May 6, 2025** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to approve the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP Review for the 2024 fishing year and state compliance report** (Page 7). Emerson Hasbrouck; second by David Sikorski. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 7).
4. **Move to remove the 18% reduction option in Section 3.4 (Option D&E)** (Page 31). Motion by John Clark; second by Nichola Meserve. Motion passes (Page 32).
5. **Move to remove in Section 3.4 Option C (0% commercial reduction and 14% recreational reductions)** (Page 32). Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by David Sikorski. Motion passes (Page 34).
6. **Main Motion**
Move to remove no-targeting closure options for the ocean (Page 35). Motion by Marty Gary; second by Matt Gates. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend
Move to amend to include “with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated” at the end of the sentence (Page 41). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Emerson Hasbrouck. Motion passes (Page 43).

Main Motion as Amended
Move to remove no-targeting closure options for the Ocean with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated (Page 44). Motion passes (Page 44).
7. **Main Motion**
Move to remove in Section 3.4 option B: Options CB2, CB3, CB5 (Page 44). Motion by David Sikorski; second by John Clark. Motion to Amend.

Motion to Amend
Move to amend to remove “CB3” (Page 45). Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by Mike Luisi. Motion passes (Page 45).

Main Motion as Amended
Move to remove in Section 3.4 option B: Options CB2 and CB5 (Page 45). Motion passes by unanimous consent (Page 45).
8. **Move to remove no-targeting closure options for the Chesapeake Bay with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated** (Page 46). Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by Doug Grout. Motion passes (Page 47).
9. **Move to add an option for tagging at first point of landing in Section 3.2** (Page 48). Motion by John Clark; second by Dave Borden. Motion passes by unanimous consent (Page 50).

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10. **Main Motion**

Move to remove in Section 3.3 Option D (25% uncertainty buffer for the Maryland season baseline season (Page 51). Motion by David Sikorski; second by John Clark. Motion to Amend.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to add “and Option B (MD baseline with no buffer)” to the end of the sentence (Page 52). Motion by Nichola Meserve; second by Doug Grout. Motion fails (Page 54).

Main Motion

Move to remove in Section 3.3 Option D (25% uncertainty buffer for the Maryland season baseline)
Motion passes (Page 54).

11. **Move to approve Draft Addendum III for public comment as modified today** (Page 54). Motion by John Clark; second by Mike Luisi. Passes by unanimous consent (Page 54).

12. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 55).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for C. Wilson (AA)	Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)
Rep. Allison Hepler (LA)	Kris Kuhn, PA, proxy for t. Schaeffer (AA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (NH)	John Clark, DE (AA)
Nichola Meserve, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for L. Fegley (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Robert Brown, MD, proxy for R. Dize (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Matthew Gates, CT, proxy for Justin Davis (AA)	Pat Geer, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Rep. Joe Gresko, CT (LA)	Daniel Ryan, DC
Marty Gary, NY (AA)	Ronald Owens, PRFC
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Rick Jacobson, US FWS
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Max Appelman, NMFS

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Tyler Grabowski, Technical Committee Chair	Lt. Jeff Mercer, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.
Mike Celestino, Stk. Assmnt. Subcommittee Chair	

Staff

Bob Beal	Emilie Franke	Chelsea Tuohy
Toni Kerns	Caitlin Starks	Katie Drew
Tina Berger	Tracy Bauer	Jeff Kipp
Madeline Musante	James Boyle	Samara Nehemiah

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The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Wednesday, August 6, 2025, and was called to order at 1:15 p.m. by Chair Megan Ware.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MEGAN WARE: Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to call to order the Striped Bass Board. Before we start, we're just going to announce the Commissioners that are on the webinar for folks.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: On the webinar we have Steve Train from the state of Maine.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR WARE: Okay, that was easy. We will start with Approval of the Agenda. Are there any additions or modifications to the agenda? Dan.

MR. DANIEL MCKIERNAN: Yes, I just want to mention on the record, my delegation has two members today in the absence of the legislative delegate I'm sitting at the seat, but I have no name tag and I won't be commenting.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for that clarification, Dan. Not seeing any other hand, the agenda is approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR WARE: We'll move on to the proceedings from May, 2025. Are there any edits to those proceedings? Seeing none; the proceedings are approved by consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR WARE: We're next going to proceed to public comment. This is for items not on the agenda, so if folks are hoping to comment on the addendum this would not be the time for

that. We have three names so far, so we're going to start with those, and we'll give folks three minutes each. I have Captain Newberry first, if you want to come up to the public comment microphone.

I next have Captain Hardman and then Tom Fote. If you are in the room or on the webinar and also want to give a public comment, if you could raise your hand now, that would be helpful. Captain Newberry, you can start whenever you're ready.

CAPTAIN ROBERT NEWBERRY: My name is Captain Robert Newberry; I'm the chairman of Delmarva Fisheries Association. It is good to be here today, Madam Chair, members of the staff and commissioners. What I'm going to be talking about today is a situation that we have in the Chesapeake Bay, which as we all know is a hatchery and nursery ground for all the striped bass up to 70%. We've got a major problem. Right now, it's hypoxia. It is the highest since the records have been kept in the Bay since 1985. There has only been an incident 9 out of 41 times where the hypoxia has been at this level and early as May. They didn't have it in May this year. Our temperatures have been warm.

Our major problem in the Bay, Ladies and Gentlemen, is pollution. For people to say that it's the nitrogen and phosphorous from the farmers. I'm a farmer myself, phosphorous is \$700.00 a pound, I didn't use an ounce of it this year. We follow your feed, all farmers in Maryland are compliant with our nutrient management.

We have buffer zones; we have step water ways. None of our material, it cost so much now, we're going to put in the Bay. Where is this coming from? Try the 20 million gallons in the past month that came out of Back River, the spills that came out of the James River, the Potomac River, the Patapsco River in Maryland.

We have a problem with the striped bass, you know the young of the year is bad. Well, I'll tell you how bad it is right now, and if anybody wants to see the pictures, I'll be plenty glad enough to show them. Our crabbers are crabbing in four feet of water right now, but they are still throwing back 20 to 30

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bushels of dead crabs every day. They are suffocating.

The crabs are up on the rock piles, trying to get out of the bad water. It's not because of what Mother Nature has done. In '84 when it was bad, it was because it was a drought. Now, we've had more rain. Everybody knows how humid and how rainy it's been, and specifically the Chesapeake Bay Region for the past year, this past summer.

Every time it rains, the Back River Waste Water Treatment Plant averages about a 7 to 10 million gallons spilled of raw human waste into the Chesapeake Bay it is unacceptable, unacceptable. Right now, my guys, a lot of my watermen have conjunctivitis in their eyes from the pollution. They are working in a cesspool; it's disgusting.

I would like to see the Technical Group possibly put an amendment on this Addendum, to consider what is going on in this area. Somebody needs to come in. The EPA won't do anything, our MVE won't do anything. DNR is trying to do what they can do, but you know their hands are tied.

Where we're suffering is, is with our fish, with our crabs, with our clams, with our oysters. This is not a good thing to have. It is not because Mother Nature is doing this. You know it's the millions and millions of gallons of raw waste going into our Bay. Two of our local beaches are already closed down.

I thank you very much for the time, and if there is a chance that we can put this in as an amendment on the Addendum to have this considered by the ASMFC when it goes to public comment, if it does, I would appreciate it. Thank you very much.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for the comment. Next, I have Captain Hardman, and then Tom Fote, you are on deck for the next comment.

CAPTAIN BRIAN HARDMAN: Thank you for having me. I am Brian Hardman from the Maryland Charter Boat Association. I can contest to what Rob said about the bacteria in the water. I spent last Thursday and all of Saturday night in the Emergency Room having an antibiotic IV drip.

But as Rob has said, I'm going to reiterate some of the same things, but the Chesapeake Bay is in very bad shape right now. There are large areas of bacteria and a lot of dead zones with no oxygen. One of the main culprits, which he had said, is discharge from these treatment plants, and it seems that they are never being held accountable.

Nobody, as far as the political action groups in Maryland, are holding them accountable, the local governments, in order to try to have this taken care of. This has been going on a couple times a year every year, and actually, it seems like it is getting worse. In order to have a good rockfish spawn, we've got to have two things, good water and leave the female spawning fish alone.

This past April we left the fish alone and did have good water. I think we had a record spawn coming off this year. The restrictions and reductions in our fishing industry does not address the pollution problems. The charter boat fleet is down 70 to 85%, so we're being devastated with this, and this bad water doesn't help at all. In order to have a good spawning success, we need to just leave these female fish alone and try to get this water cleaned up. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for your comments. Finally, Tom Fote, it is your turn.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: My name is Tom Fote, Jersey Coast Anglers Association and New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen Club. I wish to agree with what both of the captains said. Pollution is a real serious problem, and has been for the last 45 years that I've been dealing with the Chesapeake Bay.

I'm looking at some good news about Congressman Rob Wittman and Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth

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did, in putting a bill in to address the blue catfish problem in the Chesapeake Bay. I think this is also an extreme problem dealing with the fishery that has nothing to do with what we catch, but basically eats everything that comes out, whether it's blue claw crabs, whether it's oysters, whether it's anything else that swims in the Chesapeake.

Unlike, blue claw crab, striped bass and menhaden, they're all native species. This blue catfish is basically an invasive species. The other thing I think we should be looking at is the relationship between males and females. We know we have plenty of females, the spawning stock biomass is big enough to produce the highest young of the year. We have enough males on the spawning ground.

I know we have problems in pollution again, with the endocrine disrupt, that is basically affecting the sexuality of male fish. We know it's in the Potomac River with small mouth. Was it happening with striped bass, that was not as productive. Since we mainly harvest male fish in the Chesapeake Bay, the catch is mainly made up of male fish, should we be doing something more to protect the male fish, since we seem to have plenty of female fish? Thank you very much for the time.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Tom. Those are our public comments today. We're going to move on to Agenda Item Number 4, which is Approval of our FMP Review and State Compliance Reports for 2024. Emilie is going to present, and then we will be looking for a motion at the end of this.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FMP REVIEW AND STATE COMPLIANCE FOR THE 2024 FISHING YEAR

MS. FRANKE: I will be going over the FMP Review today. I will just very briefly cover the status of the stock, just a brief review of the FMP measures, the status of the fishery, and then I'll get into the PRT comments and

recommendations. As far as the status of the stock, the 2024 stock assessment update had a terminal year of 2023.

Spawning stock biomass was just below the threshold and below the target. Fishing mortality was between the target and the threshold. The 2027 benchmark stock assessment is currently in progress; it has just started. We will keep the Board updated as that process moves forward. For the FMP for 2024, for the first couple months of 2024 we were still under the emergency action.

Then Addendum II came into effect on May 1st. Those Addendum II measures were a 7% reduction in commercial quotas. For the ocean recreational fishery, it's one-fish at 28-to-31-inch slot. There was no change to the seasons. There were some separate recreational measures, which we'll discuss a little bit later for the New York Hudson River, the Pennsylvania spring slot fishery, and the Delaware Bay summer slot.

Then for the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, it is one-fish at a 19–24-inch slot, and there was no change to the seasons through the Addendum. Then as far as the recreational fillet requirements, there were two new requirements. If a state does allow at-sea or shoreside filleting of striped bass, racks have to be retained, and the possession is limited to no more than two fillets per legal fish.

Moving on to the status of the fishery. Last year in 2024, so 2024 total removals were about 4.1 million fish. This is about a 27% decrease from 2023. You can see on the screen here the proportion of removals for each sector. In 2024, commercial harvest and dead discards was about 15, a little over 15%.

Then recreational harvest and release mortality were each about 42%, so combined almost 85% of the fishery removals. Here you can see the time series, recreational harvest in light blue, release mortality in the darker blue, and then the commercial harvest and dead discards is that red line over time.

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You can see that the commercial harvest and discards has been relatively stable over time. Commercial harvest in 2024 was about the same as it was in 2023. On the recreational side you can see at the end of the time series you can see 2024 removals decrease from 2023, and even further decrease from that peak that we saw in 2022.

A little bit more detail on the commercial fishery. Last year the commercial fishery coastwide ocean and Chesapeake Bay combined harvested about 4.3 million pounds of striped bass. That was about 604,000 fish. Again, I mentioned that similar to the 2023 harvest level a very slight increase by weight in number. Then as far as the commercial quota utilization, the ocean used about 76% of the total quota, but again a big chunk of that unused quota is due to lack of fish available in North Carolina, and those states that don't allow commercial fishing.

But most states that do allow harvest in the ocean used over 96% of their quotas. Then in the Chesapeake Bay in 2024, about 94% of the Bay quota was utilized. This is a little bit higher than has been utilized in recent years, I believe in 2023 about 84% of the quota was utilized.

There were a couple of overages in 2024. You see that bottom table in blue lists the state with the commercial quota overage. New York had a slight overage, and then the Maryland ocean Chesapeake Bay also had a slight overage in 2024. But the cumulative ocean quota was not exceeded, and the cumulative Chesapeake Bay quota was not exceeded. That's the table there in green.

For the recreational fishery, in 2024 about 1.7 million fish were harvested, just a little over 15 million pounds. This is about a 34% decrease by number from 2023. As far as live releases, about 19 million fish were released alive, so we have our 9% assumption about how many of those fish will die from that interaction.

About 1.7 assumed to have died, and that is about a 27% decrease from 2023. As far as how the removals break down by mode. In each region in the ocean, about 97% of removals are from private and shore modes, and about 3% are from the for-hire modes. In the Chesapeake Bay, about 77% are from private and shore, and about 23% of the removals are from for-hire.

You can see here the last 10-years of coastwide recreational harvest that's in blue; you can see that peak in 2022 as the 2015s were coming through and we have sort of been decreasing since then. Then you can see in that green dashed line is the release mortality sort of been on a stable and then decline in the past few years for the release mortality.

Just thinking about things by region, the ocean, the Chesapeake Bay. In 2024 we did see a decrease in catch and effort in both regions. We did see larger decreases in the Bay in 2024, going from '23 to '24. For harvest there was about a 54% decrease in the Bay in 2024, and about a 28% decrease in the ocean.

Similar, decreases for the number of live releases, 29% for the Bay, 26% for the ocean. Then as far as effort in 2024, we saw about a 40% decrease in directed trips in the Chesapeake Bay, and about a 10% decrease in directed trips in the ocean. We can see here on this figure, this is directed trips from MRIP over time for the ocean in blue, and the Chesapeake Bay in red. You can see for the ocean it was relatively stable for a while. We had that peak again in 2022 with those 2015s coming in, and then it has been decreasing the past two years.

For the Bay, stable but sort of slight decrease over time there. The PRT, you know every year reminds the Board that there are likely several factors that contribute to these changes in catch and effort, including changes in regulations, the availability of different, including changes in regulations, the availability of different year classes, angler behavior, stock abundance, availability nearshore et cetera. Just a couple things to keep in mind for last year. In the ocean we did see those decreases, and those 2015s were growing out of that 28-to-31-inch

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slot. Then in the Chesapeake Bay in general, there have just been a general lack of strong year classes. The strong year classes have sort of long left the Bay.

Then last year we had that new 19-to-24-inch slot, and a change in the Maryland for-hire bag limit as well. I just want to note for the North Carolina Albemarle Sound, Roanoke River fisheries, based on their most recent assessment the stock is overfished, experiencing overfishing along with several years of very low recruitment.

Just a reminder, North Carolina did implement a harvest moratorium in the Albemarle and Roanoke fisheries effective in 2024. I just want to remind the Board about the Amendment 7 recruitment trigger, which we look at every year. If any of the four juvenile abundance indices used in the assessment is below 75% of values from the high recruitment period or three consecutive years, then we have to be using reference points using the low recruitment assumption, which we already do.

We are currently using the low recruitment assumption in our assessments. The recruitment trigger continues to be tripped, tripped again this year. We looked at the past three years and New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia all tripped the trigger. Again, we're already operating under the lower recruitment assumption, so nothing is going to change at this point, but worth knowing the trigger is still being tripped.

Here you can see in the top left is the New York Hudson River. The past two years have been under their trigger level, so hasn't quite tripped the trigger yet in New York. You can see that New Jersey, that's the Delaware River JAI, the past four years have been under that trigger level. For Maryland, of course the last six years have been under that trigger level.

Then the bottom right corner is Virginia, the last few years have been under the trigger level as

well. I'll give PRT comments and recommendations. The PRT found that all states in 2024 implemented programs that are consistent with the FMP, except for a couple of inconsistencies here. The first is that the Potomac River has not implemented the recreational filleting requirements for Addendum II.

PRFC noted there was an error in their regulations, so they are working on getting that language implemented by September, next month. Then both New York and Maryland have those commercial quota overages in 2024, and those states are taking most of the payback in 2025, based on the preliminary harvest estimate they had at the time, when they were planning for their 2025 fisheries.

However, once the final harvest estimates came back there was essentially a slightly larger overage than originally indicated, so those states were also taking sort of the remaining portion of that payback in 2026. Maryland did note this in an implementation plan for Addendum II, but the PRT just wants to point out to the Board that the FMP does require the payback to be taken in the following year. The PRT recommend that the Board discuss this issue of determining quota overages based on preliminary harvest estimates, you know the PRT recognizes that final estimates may not always be available when you're planning for your next year's fishery. But this is something the Board should be aware of and perhaps discuss, you know should states try to account for any expected increase in their final estimate. Something the PRT wanted to point out to the Board.

Then just a couple other additional comments. Maryland has proposed to discontinue their annual spring trophy report. They submit both their compliance report and an additional report detailing the trophy fishery. However, the Maryland trophy fishery is now closed, and the slot limit in the Bay essentially avoids older fish.

Maryland is proposing to discontinue that report, so I'll ask during discussion if anyone has any questions about that or comments to bring those up. But that trophy report started back in 2004. That was back

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when the trophy fishery was actually managed by a quota that changed every year, so that is sort of the origin of that report. Then also, just a note that there has been a research priority to develop a spawning index for the Hudson River, and that is going to be discussed during this benchmark assessment. Happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thanks, Emilie, let's do any questions or comments that Board members may have on this. Yes, Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: Before we spend too much time discussing the quota overages on the commercial fishery, I just want to remind the Board that the 2024 season, it was different in that we sent our quota for the following year to our fishermen and then the quota changed. The quota changed after our permit holders had already started fishing in their new calendar fishing year.

We had a large discrepancy between quota in hand and quota in theory, coming from the Board. It took almost the entire, we lucked out a little bit, because we had a lot more quota out there than what was caught. However, we did exceed the ASMFC set quota for that particular year. We have every intention to pay that back.

But the reason for my point is that this is not a pattern that for my point is that this is not a pattern that you'll continue to see. We manage our commercial fishery very tightly. Quotas are distributed to individuals, and we thinking back 15 years or so, I don't know that we've ever exceeded the quota. This is a fluke, for lack of a better word.

CHAIR WARE: I think Emerson Hasbrouck, was it your hand? Go for it, Emerson.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Emilie for your presentation. Earlier on in your presentation you had a table about commercial mortality and recreational mortality. Do you mind just putting that up again? Yes, that table,

thank you. I just wanted to look at that for a minute. In 2024, for recreational mortality, it is equivalent between the fishing mortality caused by harvest and the fishing mortality caused by releases, is that right? Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I just had a follow up question on the quota overages. I noticed that New York had one, and the way the PRT report, it sounded like they were paying back over two years. My question for New York, have you ever had to pay back over a two-year period before if you've gone over? What was the reason for doing it over two years, when the plan says it has to be paid back the next year?

MR. MARTIN GARY: I think the answer to have we ever had that happen before, the answer is no, because we haven't had an exceedance in over a quarter century. We have a pretty lengthy track record of being under the quota commercially, comfortably. I'll just tell everybody at the Board. We had a discussion in our Marine Resources Advisory Council, because of that track record, a little bit of frustration that we're too comfortably under.

They asked us if we could possibly tweak the buffer that we used, using our fishery dependent data, mean weights we get in the fish markets. It's like a lot of folks do that have commercial fisheries, to see if we can get closer to the quota but not exceed it. We did that, and I think a couple of factors in retrospect, you don't know for sure how it works out.

But our slot is 26 to 38 inches, so if you look at those year class contributions that are probably in that fishery, '14s and '15s are probably on the upper end of that slot. They are larger fish; they are driving the weight up. We think that was a big contributor to kind of nudging us over a little bit. But also, the 26-inch lower portion of the slot probably offered some accessibility to the '15-year class.

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You know we were hoping to come up under, certainly not at or over, but we nudged over, so we're going to have that reduction, pay it back, and we might be able to pay it back this year, because we did adjust our buffer back. It's very possible that we may be able to get it all paid back this year. We'll see how the performance plays out this year if that makes sense. I think that would be the answer to your question, if that helps.

CHAIR WARE: Joe, last word, go for it.

MR. JOE CIMINO: Now that Emerson is bringing this back up, I have a question as well. You know this Board tried very hard to, well to protect year classes that we thought were most available, and yet within the release mortality we are still higher, or excuse me, we're still lower than we were for a time period.

Actually, curious if there was a discussion on how we came down in release mortality. We're only targeting harvest restrictions. We were doing our best to protect the year classes that we felt were most available, and yet the release mortality, which is still very high, it needs to be addressed.

But it is lower than the discussions we were having after the last assessment, you know that greater than 50% of all mortality was release mortality. Were there discussions on how that has kind of come down, even though we're doing everything we can to, what I would think is to make that the biggest challenge.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so we just go back to the PRTs point that there are a lot of factors. It could be that we've seen the decrease in effort, so maybe there are just fewer people fishing so there are fewer releases. If with these strong year classes there have been more slot size fish available, so people have to release fewer fish to find a fish to harvest. I think there are several factors, you know that influence whether live releases go up or down each year. I can't pinpoint one.

CHAIR WARE: Not seeing any more hands, I think we would be looking for a motion to approve the FMP Review and State Compliance Report. I'll just note as a part of that, I think it's the Maryland Trophy Report is what you call it. They don't have a trophy fishery anymore, so I would assume part of that would be them no longer submitting that report. Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: Move to approve the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP Review for the 2024 Fishing Year and State Compliance Reports.

CHAIR WARE: Great, motion by Emerson, do we have a second? Dave Sikorski. I don't think we need too much discussion on this. **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, any abstentions? Okay, motion approved by unanimous consent.** We are now going to move on to Agenda Item 5, which is a report on our Commercial Tagging Program, it's a Ten-Year Review.

Just to remind folks, the Board had requested that the Plan Review Team work on this review of the commercial tagging program, so Emilie is going to present. I don't think there is a specific action required today, but definitely we can have a conversation.

REPORT ON COMMERCIAL TAGGING PROGRAM TEN-YEAR REVIEW

MS. FRANKE: As the Chair just mentioned, last summer during the FMP review process the Board tasked the Plan Review Team with reviewing the commercial tagging program. This was a recommendation that came out of the PRT and the FMP reviews, so the Board did task us with that.

It has been over a decade since the tagging program was implemented through the FMP, so that was sort of the impetus to review the program operation, review the program components, now that it has been a long time since the program was first implemented through the FMP. The PRT and the commercial tagging contacts from each state

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with a commercial fishery met via webinar on July 24 and July 30 to do this review.

Each state also provided a pretty comprehensive, written overview of their striped bass commercial tagging program, and that was included in your supplemental materials. I just really want to thank all of the state commercial tagging contacts for all their time on this. They are listed here on the screen, for providing those overviews to the group and to the Board, and also to the Plan Review Team as well.

There were four objectives of this two-day meeting. The first was to inform the Board, again those summaries that were put together of each state tagging program. The second objective was to look across programs, so to report any key observations or takeaways across all the state programs, including common challenges and the various metrics that are used by each state. Just looking across the programs, what are some commonalities and differences that we took away. The third objective was to share information, an opportunity for all the states with commercial fisheries to hear about the programs in other states, common issues, challenges, solutions. Then the fourth was to streamline reporting. There is one component of the tag report that has been an optional component that we also asked for in the compliance report, so just minimizing duplicate information as tasking states for the same information twice.

I'm just going to get into a brief background on what is in the FMP regarding commercial tagging. I'll go into a summary of the July discussion on the key observations across state programs. We are developing a written report, this discussion just happened last week, so there is no written report yet. But we will of course distribute that when and if it's ready.

As far as the FMP, Addendum III to Amendment 6 implemented these uniform coastwide requirements for commercial tagging programs,

starting in 2013 and 2014. It's worth noting that most states actually already had commercial tagging programs in place for a long time before these FMP requirements.

These requirements outlined some uniform program components for every state, and then we've maintained the same requirements for commercial tagging under Amendment 7. Obviously, the overall goal is to limit the illegal harvest of striped bass, it is unlawful to sell or purchase a commercially caught striped bass that does not have a commercial tag.

States can choose to implement commercial tagging at the point of harvest or the point of sale. States are required to allocate tags to permit holders based on a biological metric, and this is intended to prevent quota overages. States also must require that permit holders turn in unused tags and provide an accounting report for any unused tags before the next fishing season, so accounting for all of your tags, whether they were used, not used and returned, missing, broken, lost, et cetera.

Then the original Addendum III did recommend that if permit holders can't account for their unused tags, then that individual should not be issued a permit for the next year. The FMP outlines that tags must be tamper evident. They are valid for one year or one fishing season only, and they must be inscribed with the year, the state, and a unique number associated with a current holder.

Then, when possible, they could also be inscribed with the size limit. Then tags remain affixed to the fish until processed for consumption. Then each state is required to submit a commercial tagging report 60 days prior to the start of the fishery each year, and that report includes a picture of the tags for the upcoming season, a description of the color, the style, the number of tags that have been issued or printed.

How the number of tags was determined, that biological metric that is used, a summary of any changes to the program, and then these reports have been asking also for tag accounting. This has

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been optional for the previous year, but because these reports are submitted sometimes while that previous year fishery is still ongoing, that tag accounting is usually pretty preliminary and changes as the states get final information. Last week the PRT and the state tagging contacts agreed that it didn't make sense to ask for that tag accounting in these tagging reports, pending any feedback to the contrary from the Law Enforcement Committee, but we'll be asking for the tag accounting in the state compliance report when more of that final data are available. I'm going to get into now some of the observations from the group on sort of commonalities and differences across all of these state tagging programs.

First, just to remind the Board, striped bass commercial fisheries really vary by state, in terms of the different management systems, whether the state uses an individual quota or not, different gears, different seasons, and the number of participants really varies across the states. As far as point of tagging, three states currently tag at the point of sale, four states currently tag at the point of harvest, and one state currently tags at the point of landing and at the weigh stations.

All states use the average weight of fish to convert their quota into number of fish, aka the number of tags for the upcoming season. There is a varying degree of complexity with how states do this. Some states are accounting for different average weights by gear type. There is at least one state that is actually looking at average weight by individual harvester.

There are different types of quota allocation, so are quota holders getting equal shares? Some states do a full share versus a part share. There is also some inherent uncertainty, in terms of predicting the next season's average weight compared to the current season. The states try to account for this by ordering extra tags, just in case, you know the average weight decreases and there is sort of a lot more smaller fish.

Then one state also notes they take into account the anticipated size that are targeted by harvesters for certain markets. Then harvesters are all required to return any unused tags, or provide a report accounting for where all those unused tags, what happened to those tags, were they lost, broken, et cetera.

In terms of the percent of tags unaccounted for, so these are tags that are not returned and tags that are not accounted for as lost or broken. All of these unaccounted tags for most years about 1 to 3 percent for most states. A few states the past few years had maybe 5 or 6 percent, and then for the COVID years, '20 and '21, there were higher rates of unaccounted tags. There were more tags unaccounted for, due to some of the challenges of tag return and accounting with in-person interactions because of COVID.

As far as some common challenges that states have faced, the first is just planning. First, the cost of tags has been increasing for a lot of states, so states have had challenges with the cost increasing, and potentially having to switch vendors, and also a long lead time for tag production and shipping. There are also time constraints for states that don't have a gap between their seasons.

If a season is ending in December of 2024 and the next season starts in January, 2025, you're still completing tag accounting from the current year, and then if the Board is making decisions late in the year about quota for the next year, that is a challenge when planning for the next season's number of tags. One state also noted the time that harvesters are renewing their license, and paying for the number of tags for the next year happens before they know what the final quota will be for next year. Other common challenges, just in general, operation from an administrative standpoint that the tag distribution return accounting processes are all very administratively demanding, and they do require significant staff time, and again, the COVID years did effect tag return and tag accounting, and so there were more tags unaccounted for during those years. Then some differences across programs.

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First, there are differences in how tags are distributed. Sometimes the state orders the tags, received the tags, and then distribute the tag to harvesters, whether they come in person to pick it up, they are mailed to the harvester, or maybe the state drops them off. There are other states where the tag vendor actually ships the tag directly to the harvesters, and the state works with the vendor to verify who is receiving tags.

There are differences in the physical style of tags. There were some questions about, are all the styles the same degree of tamper evident? One state had noted an issue with a particular style of tag in the past. There are also differences in tag reporting requirements. Some states maybe just have a harvester report; other states have harvester and dealer reports.

Some states have harvester and weigh station reports, and then states collect slightly different information, so there is at least one state that collects individual tag data, so you know the weight of one fish with an individual tag. Other states are asking for how many tags did you use this trip, or how many tags did you sell this day.

One state asking only for total pounds, so not asking for a number of tags. There are also differences in terms of consequences for delinquent reporting or not reporting their tag accounting. For most states those harvesters, if they are delinquent in their reporting get a reduced or even zero tags for the following year. Other states it's the law enforcement's responsibility to work on the citations.

Then one state actually has a per tag fine for any tags that aren't returned. There are also some differences in the ability to verify how many tags were used. Again, one state is tracking the individual tag serial numbers, other states have multiple reports coming from the harvester and weight station or harvester and dealer, or some states have one harvester or dealer report with how many tags were used.

The states also noted that if harvesters are landing fish in a different state that could make it difficult to verify the number of tags used. There are also some differences in fish that are kept for personal use. All states require that any fish kept for personal use have to be reported. This is actually a new requirement for one state as of later this year.

A couple states do not require tagging a fish that is kept for personal use, and so not counted toward the quota, and then there are some states that actually require harvesters still bring fish to the weigh station or the dealer before they can take it home for personal use. Overall, big picture, there are of course several differences across the programs.

All states have recognized various challenges and made an effort to address them, but overall, the group felt it's been generally successful these programs in meeting the goals of the FMP. Of course there is always these ongoing challenges in potential improvement. The last thing I just want to go over is given the current Draft Addendum III consideration about the point of tagging. The group did look at those states that currently do point of sale, and their information they provided about the potential switch to point of harvest tagging from point of sale. Just a reminder with the Draft Addendum. There have been concerns that waiting to tag until point of sale could increase the risk of illegal harvest, so the Draft Addendum is considering requiring tagging at the point of harvest.

We will discuss later today potentially expanding that to consider point of landing as well. But as I mentioned, there is all these differences among the state management systems, so it is difficult to determine whether making the switch would decrease that illegal harvest in every state.

As far as the Law Enforcement Committee, the Law Enforcement Committee majority supports tagging at point of harvest, but there is an opposing opinion within the LEC that does support continuation of the point-of-sale tagging, so we'll also get into this a

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little bit more during the Draft Addendum discussion.

Basically, during the review the three states that currently tag at point of sale, so Massachusetts, Rhode Island, North Carolina, noted some common challenges if they were to switch to point of harvest. All three states noted that their commercial fisheries are not managed via individual quotas. Potentially thousands of harvesters could be eligible to receive tags, compared to the dozens of dealers that they currently distribute tags to.

They noted a challenge would be staff capacity to administer the tagging program with that magnitude of increase in the number of people receiving tags, and just the number of tags in general. Because their fisheries are not managed by individual quotas, it is difficult to predict how many tags each harvester would need.

Maybe you end up distributing too many tags upfront, with a lot of them going unused, or a lot of people are asking for additional tags during the season. Then Rhode Island also noted some additional concerns, specifically about tags slowing down the processing time for their floating fish trap fishery, concerns about less time with quota monitoring, given that their dealer monitoring is kind of making 24 hours.

Then also concern about tags from inactive commercial licensees who might be eligible to receive tags, being potentially given to recreational fishers, for example. Then Massachusetts also noted some concerns about distributing tags to harvesters throughout the state. Overall, it would be a big undertaking to change these programs.

The Board would need to account for sufficient time for these states to make that switch, if it were required under Draft Addendum III. With that I'm happy to take any questions. Again, you know this discussion just occurred last

week, so we will share a written report once that is available. But I am happy to take any questions at this point.

CHAIR WARE: I'll extend my kudos to the states that listened into a lot of the presentation. I thought folks did a really good job on those calls, so thanks for the efforts. We'll do questions and comments or discussion at this point. Any questions or comments from Board members? John Clark, we'll start with you.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Just wanted to follow up on that personal use without tagging the fish. Did the Law Enforcement Committee comment on that, and it just seems like a very big avenue to allow hitherto obviously unreported commercial landings there, and a very difficult situation for law enforcement to actually enforce. I was just curious whether they had comments about that.

MS. FRANKE: No, the Law Enforcement Committee has not commented on that. I think the next step would be to provide the report once it's finished in Law Enforcement Committee, and the next time they meet I could provide them with the same presentation.

MR. CLARK: Could you say again how many states actually allow fishermen to take a personal use untagged fish?

MS. FRANKE: That would be three.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola.

MS. NICHOLA MESERVE: Thank you for the presentation, Emilie. I listened into both calls, and they were very informative from a state that may have to look down the road towards point of harvest tagging, so I appreciated the opportunity to see how the other states have implemented their programs.

It did strike me the number of differences among the states and the inconsistencies. I for one would be interested in having the report, as you mentioned it would go to the Law Enforcement

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Committee to look at, to review all the state reports and the PRT report, and to reconsider or at least review the prior recommendation that it made about point of harvest vs. point of sale. I don't think they had all the details of the differences among the programs when they made that recommendation.

I think there is also the potential that they may have some other recommendations about how to improve the accountability and enforceability of commercial harvest in the tagging program by looking at some of the inconsistencies in the state programs. I would look forward to additional review from the Law Enforcement Committee that we could receive in time for final action on Draft Addendum III.

CHAIR WARE: Craig Pugh.

MR. CRAIG D. PUGH: I tag fish, I've tagged fish for a long while. I have some experience with others in my fishery being arrested. Prosecution seems to be quite difficult at point of harvest. What is your interpretation of point of harvest? Some of the interpretation from Law Enforcement was as soon as you lift the net from the water onto your boat, meaning that they could arrest you for each and every fish that entered your boat. That was the interpretation brought before our judicial body in the state of Delaware. It caused great heartache.

We at that point decided to do a bill, House Bill 79 in 2015 that looped us from point of harvest to before landing, meaning that that fish now has the time to be identified, it has time to be measured. There is also a safety factor involved. We have a tag that is a one-way tag. It only goes in one way. If you try to force it the other way, you destroy it. We rarely take days off. We fish in 30 or 40 mile an hour weather. This means that you take a knee and your eye is off the sea. There is a true safety factor in how you tag the fish at point of harvest.

We found it to be a much safer process to get to a river or what is a little more accommodating, and then tag our fish at that point. Culling of fish goes on as you do that, but the interpretation from enforcement was very, very difficult with this. You must understand that immunity is part of enforcement.

Whether or not they interpret it right or wrong, they have immunity. They were handing out these violations like M&Ms at Halloween. That was the reason for the change in the law and the process, and I will tell you that when we went through that process in our Legislature in 2015, that both committee houses were unanimous votes in favor of before landing, and both house votes were unanimous votes, overwhelmingly unanimous.

Four votes unanimous for before landings, mainly because of the abuses that our commercial fishery had incurred before that. That was the reason for that. In my case I support state choice here. We chose to do that, it was supported by our legislature wholeheartedly, so it would take quite a bit to change this over back to point of harvest again, and then allow them to conduct this abusive role that they used to conduct on us.

One more comment before John is that some of the rhetoric at the last meeting I found to be insulting and prejudicial. One comment was, commercial gets away with things. Do you all agree with that? I find that to be insulting. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Another prejudicial statement made on the record here in this body.

If you believe in that then I believe you may have some prejudicial issues. This was applied as a nurturing and a mothering sort of effect that this would be applied that way, but I can tell you that experience on my level as a commercial fisherman and through this tagging practice, it's just bad parenting if allowed to go on. Serious consideration has to be made here, these were four unanimous votes against point of harvest that we had applied to us for many, many years. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: John Clark, any other hands on this before we do a wrap up? John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Just for the record, I just wanted to say that our department did oppose the change to point of landing, but I've been clear, and when I put this forward to point of harvest or point of landing in everything that I've suggested here and leave that up to the Board. I don't deny what Craig is saying, there could have been some overinterpretation of our point of harvest in the past, but I don't believe that that was widespread.

CHAIR WARE: Craig, do you want a 30 second rebuttal to that, and then we're going to wrap it up.

MR. PUGH: In there I've also brought, before we did the House bill was our lead commissioner from our administration did put out a letter to our Commissioner from the House, which that person stated that we would be out of compliance if we changed to that. The result was, they were willing to lie to go forward, and continue to what had happened.

To what expense if the expense was to the fishery and to those people fishing, mainly because to prosecute, if your choice was a violation then it is also incumbent on you to pay for the expungement and to go through that process, even if you can get through that process of expungement. There is a lot of unnecessary parts that plague our fishery with point of harvest.

CHAIR WARE: I just want to acknowledge, I think this is an ongoing conversation. We obviously don't have the written report today. I think the next step is getting that written report, being able to digest that. I did hear several requests for an LEC review of that written report when it's available.

I think we'll try and make that happen for the annual meeting. We'll have to do some scheduling work to get that before the Striped

Bass Board, but just wanted to acknowledge I heard that and we'll try and make that happen. Final word, David.

MR. DAVID V. D. BORDEN: Just a follow on to your statement. If this goes back to the LEC For review, which I support, I think it should be reviewed. Then the question is, should their recommendation go to a PDT or it's like there are a couple of steps. If we want to use this information, are we going to ask for additional input from another committee, and if so, why not ask for the input from the committee now, so we get the LEC to review it and then whatever committee we're going to send it to for additional action, so if you could comment on that or staff.

MS. FRANKE: I think, you know we'll have this written report from the meeting. The LEC can have a meeting to discuss all these observations and any input from the LEC. I think it would come back to the Board to decide, okay we have this report. Looking across programs we have input from the LEC, what do we want to do with that? Is the Board trying to make changes to the requirements? That would be a management action. I think it would come back to the Board to decide where to go from there.

MR. BORDEN: That basically means we go to the next meeting, get the Enforcement report, and then decide where we're going to send it from there. It just stretches things out that's all. I was thinking, there are elements of this report that are not enforcement related, they are more PDT type actions, and should we refer to both of these committees at the same time? Let the Enforcement people conclude their deliberations and then send it to the PDT to get some type of action.

CHAIR WARE: I think the best route is to come back to the Board. We don't actually have a PDT technically right now, because we don't have an addendum or some sort of action on a lot of those topics. I am also cognizant that Emilie may be doing a road show with me now in the annual meeting that will probably take up some of her time. I would recommend we get the written report, we

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come back at the annual meeting. Then if folks want to task the PDT at that point, I think that is what I'm going to recommend. All right, final comment from Craig, and then we're going to move on.

MR. PUGH: Now I've said my piece it is time to rebuild. This is okay, I understand the accounting part of this. But what really conducts the behavior of a fisherman on a bigger level is the Lacey Act and how it applies to this. How the Lacey Act applies to this truly worries the fishermen of whether it's worth it or not to take advantage of the system. It's the bigger driver in behavior than the tagging system itself. I hope that's helpful.

CHAIR WARE: All right, on that note I think we're going to wrap up this agenda item and we've still got a pretty big one ahead of us.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF DRAFT ADDENDUM III ON FUTURE MANAGEMENT MEASURES, COMMERCIAL TAGGING, AND TOTAL LENGTH MEASUREMENT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to have us move on to Draft Addendum III. We're considering this for potential approval for public comment.

I think everyone acknowledges that the document is way too long at this point to effectively take out for public comment. The name of the game today if folks want to approve this is paring it down. We'll start with a TC report from Tyler, our TC Chair. There will be time for questions after that TC report, and then Emilie will provide an overview of the Addendum.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON STOCK PROJECTIONS

MR. TYLER GRABOWSKI: I will be providing a Technical Committee report, both on Draft Addendum III, as well as the inclusion of the Maryland Baseline Analyses in this presentation. The Technical Committee and

Stock Assessment Subcommittee met in June of this year to address tasks for Draft Addendum III, again, updating the stock projections incorporating that final 2024 MRIP data, as well as that reviewing the Maryland Proposal for that recreational season's baseline changes.

I'll first start with the updated stock projections. We initially presented on the projections in the spring using the preliminary MRIP removal data, as well as the projected 7% reduction to the commercial fishery based off Addendum II. What I'm going to present on right now is the updated projections, using the final 2024 MRIP removals, as well as including the preliminary 2024 commercial landings.

The preliminary recreational removals were roughly 3.22 million fish. However, with the updated MRIP data coming in, it increased those recreational removals to 3.45 million fish, which is roughly a 7% increase in total recreational removals. This was driven in three segments, a 12% increase in the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational harvest from the preliminary to final.

Increase of 29% in the New York recreational harvest estimate, and then also a 34% increase in the New York recreational release estimate from preliminary to final. I do want to note that other states did have very small changes that you can see in the document, but these were the three largest changes.

Focusing in on the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational harvest, most of this increase was seen in Waves 3 through 5 in the charter mode, as additional VTR data were added, which resulted in higher estimates of effort in the Bay. For New York, most of this increase was seen in the private rental boat mode in Wave 6, and this is due to an increased estimate of Wave 6 effort as additional FES records were added. As you can see, the preliminary effort was roughly 450,000 angler trips. However, with this updated data it brought it more in line with the 2022 and 2023 estimates of about 850,000 angler trips.

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Those two factors drove that roughly 7% increase the most. Moving forward, this is basically what we're going to call the final or base run of the projections. For this run, this uses for the removals of 2024 the final MRIP and preliminary commercial like I mentioned. Recruitment is drawn from the low recruitment regime, which has been historically used from 2008 to 2023.

Fishing mortality for 2025 is projected as a 17% increase from 2024, as that 2018-year class enters the current slot fishery. Then using fishing mortality of 2024, from 2026 through 2029, as those '18s grow out of that ocean slot fishery. What this does is the final 2024 MRIP data increased due to that increase in 2024 fishing mortality.

What that in turn did is propagate through the projections, resulting in higher reduction options, because of the number of removals that occurred in 2024. Obviously, a higher F in 2024 factored into that projected 17% increase for 2025, results in a higher F as well in 2026 through 2029, as compared to the prior projections using that preliminary data.

As you can see here in the graph, the final or base run is the new and updated in black, using that final MRIP data, whereas the preliminary is in the gold, and as you can see, that increase from 2024 moving forward through 2029 with that updated data. When we look at it projecting out, we can see that with that preliminary MRIP data we had a roughly 50% chance of rebuild by 2029. With this final or base run for 2024, moving forward, it takes it down to a roughly 30% chance of rebuild by 2029.

But I do want to note that based on both of these projections, the stock does continue to increase to the target and potentially exceed it, using the current information. Just to summarize, like I mentioned, the probability of rebuild using that preliminary data was roughly

50%. However, with this base or final data we're looking at a 30% chance of rebuild.

In terms of removals under current management action, we can see that roughly 200,000 more fish are projected to be harvested in 2026. In that preliminary MRIP data analyses, it was a roughly 1% reduction was needed to achieve F rebuild, with a 50% likelihood in 2029. However, that increased to roughly 12% reduction using this updated information. In terms of the buffer aspect, it went from a roughly 7% reduction needed to a 18% reduction needed, giving us a higher probability of achieving rebuild.

These stock projections represent the TCs best assumptions about what may happen under status quo management. But like the TC typically does, it is very hard to predict future fishing mortality, how effort may change under different management actions, and also noting that recruitment moving forward is highly uncertain, given that these analyses use the 2008 through 2023 recruitment indices. The Board previously also requested sensitivity runs to see how fishing mortality and recruitment using different recruitment metrics extend the base run projections to 2035. What the TC and staff did was use the most recent six years of very low recruitment instead of that low recruitment regime, and then also projected a moderate F value for 2026, combining both 2024 and 2025s projected and realized fishing mortality, using that to project forward through 2026 through 2029.

The TC just wanted to note that these sensitivity runs are more pessimistic scenarios compared to the base run, and that they do not encompass the possibility of more optimistic scenarios, given that fishing mortality potentially may decrease the levels lower than what was seen in 2024 through 2025 to 2035.

Obviously, there is a chance to go in the other direction, but these are just the options that were recommended and run by the Technical Committee. This is kind of a Punnett square of the different scenarios that were run. The base case is what I've

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been previously describing in the upper left. In the upper right, using the same projected fishing mortality from 2024, using that to project 2026 through 2029.

However, in this scenario, a very low recruitment regime was used. In the bottom left we held the same recruitment of 2008 through 2023. However, we increased F using the average 2024 and 2025. In the lower right recruitment and F were both changed. I just want to note that all these projections do go out to 2035.

As you can see again, we'll start with the black line up top. That is the base case that we are using with the final MRIP data. If you look at the blue line, that is again using that same low recruitment. But increasing fishing mortality just slightly, using the average of '24 and '25. However, when you look at the orange and pink lines, or yellow and pink lines, excuse me.

That is using the very low recruitment. As you can see, it differs from using an extended recruitment regime in that projections have the spawning stock biomass beginning to decrease around 2030, 2031, when that low recruitment regime is utilized. The trajectory of the spawning stock biomass depends on the recruitment scenario.

Low recruitment, as I mentioned, spawning stock biomass continues to increase. However, in using the very low recruitment, the spawning stock biomass begins to decline after 2030, as those strong year classes die off and are replaced by the weaker year class. Then just another note, under a slightly higher F than the base run probability of rebuilding by 2029 decreases.

Moving forward to the Maryland Recreational Season Baseline Analyses. The TC and SAS initially reviewed the Maryland Baseline Season proposal in March of 2025. Per Board recommendation, Maryland updated methodology to incorporate TC

recommendations as well. Then the Board requested review of this new document with updated methods, the assumption of constant effort and the potential impacts on pre-spawned fish.

The new baseline would modify the duration and timing of seasons in the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland's portion, while calculated to maintain the same level of removals as 2024, in essence a net neutral proposal. One point of clarification is that that the current spawning closures would not be affected in this new baseline analyses. All current closures would remain intact, in terms of areas. Maryland's proposed baseline season would first change the April no-targeting fishery to allow catch and release fishery. It would change May 1st through May 15 from no targeting to allowing harvest. Maryland would also shift the summer no targeting closure from July to August and extend this closure, and then also close the December harvest season a few days earlier. Again, keeping it net neutral from 2024 levels.

Opening the April season from the no targeting to allow catch and release, the assumption is that the number of releases per trip will increase. Obviously, now that anglers have the ability to potentially fish for striped bass. The challenge for the TC and Maryland is how many trips per day will this increase, in terms of effort.

The initial attempt was to use a historical reference period to estimate this change in effort. However, Maryland's prior spring seasons are not directly applicable, since harvest was also allowed in the past, Maryland's previous trophy season, during this time period. Maryland's method assumes constant effort in that the same number of trips per day would occur moving forward as 2024.

However, there is an expected increase in effort when opening a no-targeting closure to allow catch and release. But it is difficult to quantify the potential increase that this action would do. The TC and SAS noted the difficulty of predicting effort increases without historical reference periods, and we could not develop a quantitative assumption for

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effort increases that was any more defensible than the assumption of constant effort that Maryland proposed.

Based on this, the TC and SAS accepted Maryland's methods for calculating new season baseline, and recommended the proposal highlight this uncertainty of predicting how effort would change when opening a currently closed season in the spring. At the previous meeting, the Board expressed concern about potential impacts of allowing catch and release angling on pre-spawned fish in the month of April.

The current literature on striped bass is limited, and the outcomes are mixed. One such study stated that there would be no behavioral change to these pre-spawned fish. However, one study did say that fish did leave spawning grounds after release. Then results for other species found similarly inconclusive results. The effect of catch and release fishing on the spawning success is a source of uncertainty for this proposal. With that I will take any questions from the Board.

CHAIR WARE: We'll start with questions. Yes, Bill Hyatt.

MR. WILLIAM HYATT: Tyler, you described the base run. You described that it doesn't hit the target by 2029, but it does eventually. You described it as the Technical Committee's best assumptions wrapped up in there. Then you went on and talked about what you characterized as the more pessimistic scenarios based upon very low recruitment.

You showed that they never hit the target and then subsequently declined. I think my question is, why the Technical Committee chose to characterize the base run as your best assumptions, given that the conditions that that base run is based on haven't occurred in six years. If you could just address that a little bit.

MR. GRABOWSKI: Thank you for that question. I think the fair scenario is to extend it, given that recruitment has been up and down in that 2008 to 2023 period. Not every year has been a high year. It does take into account the most recent low years as well. By 2029, in terms of that base run, those poor recruitment years from 2019 to present will not really impact the spawning stock trajectory by 2029, so those fish won't recruit to the spawning stock biomass for 2029.

But as you see, as it projects out to 2035, those fish are recruiting to the spawning stock biomass, and that is why you're seeing the dip. The intent was to see by 2029 for the rebuild, and those most recent year classes would just not show up in those projections. Katie, if you have anything further to add.

DR. KATIE DREW: Yes, I would say I think that sort of low recruitment regime was based on the change point analysis that was conducted about, can we identify a new regime on that front. That was why we've been sticking with the 2008 to 2023 regime. I think we'll probably have a better sense by the time we get to 2029, whether this is a real new normal, or if it is just a series of low runs interspersed with the occasional strong year class, like we've seen from 2008 to 2023.

As Tyler was pointing out, it doesn't have a big impact on that rebuilding deadline. What matters is what happened beyond that and that's like the further out you go there is also so much more uncertainty about other aspects. The TC considered the sort of short term the most realistic, and it is not strongly affected by that recruitment scenario to the rebuilding deadline.

CHAIR WARE: Next, I have Jay.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: I'll start with a comment, but then I have an actual question. Just a lot of appreciation. I think there was really good work done there, laid out really clearly. It was kind of easy to track, like the logic and how you guys are stepping through these. In particular, you gave us a lot of contexts now for, you know I think there was

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some sense a meeting ago, when we were looking it was about 1% reduction versus 7%. I think folks were kind of like, you know this clarifies for me anyways that we're kind of on the right track. We should be doing something, and I think you helped us understand a little bit that at a context of risk that we have, you know depending on. I think it kind of gets at what Bill is maybe thinking, you know with his question, and that is there are some pretty negative repercussions if we're like wrong on some of the assumptions there.

I appreciate all that work; it helped me a lot. I just wanted to make that comment. But the question, I'm going to jump into the weeds here a little bit. It was just shocking that from the preliminary to the final effort for New York, like it doubled, and that's a big state, so lots of additional charts in there.

Did you guys identify like what happened there? Can we anticipate like that big of a difference between preliminary and final on some routine basis? That's a big jump, and I'm hoping somebody like drilled into that, to kind of understand where that came from, so thanks.

DR. DREW: I'll jump in, because we talked to MRIP about this. Obviously, there is with the change to the new FES survey, we switched from a telephone survey, where once you stop calling people the survey is done to this new effort, the mail-based survey, where you mail these cards out and people mail them back in on their own timeline.

As we go through and do the Wave estimates, Wave 2, 3, 4. They are constantly getting those cards back, and they are updating those effort estimates, and that can carry through, so when we get preliminary Wave 3 estimates we also get an update on the Wave 2 preliminary estimate. Waves 2 through 5 are being constantly cleaned and those new data are being incorporated, et cetera.

Wave 6 doesn't really have that multiple cleaning additional data process added to it. What happens this time, which is unusual, and MRIP said it was unusual, is that usually they get that first wave of cards back and its people who are like, I'm enthusiastic to tell you about how much fishing I did.

Then you get cards back later that are like, oh right, no I didn't fish. Whereas this time around it was the opposite, so you got a lot of cards back that said, I didn't really fish in Wave 6 in New York and that all went to the preliminary data, so it looked like sort of the average number of trips that people were taking was low.

When we got that new additional data back that was after the preliminary but before the final deadline for Wave 6, it was changed this year. Possibly people were holding on to those cards longer to have trips later in the wave and more effort later in the wave. We can't know why exactly.

But basically, that we got more cards back where people said, yes, I fished this wave than we have in the past, or that there was a higher number of average trips than we have in the past for the final numbers. I do think maybe if we had looked into this a little closer in the moment, we would have seen that discrepancy and then like, 400,000 trips does not seem right for New York in Wave 6.

I think there is, and obviously it is still within the overall confidence intervals of that preliminary estimate, it just gets propagated through our projections more aggressively than maybe something a small difference should be. For management purposes, that 7% difference isn't huge for this year, but it has implications down the road.

I think maybe the lesson to take away from this is, we should be cautious about those Wave 6 numbers, especially for a fishery like striped bass, where you do get a lot of effort in Wave 6 in certain states, and to maybe look at that a little more closely. Then just expect kind of with this switch to

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the FES there is still the potential to be pulling in new data through different sources that there was not in the past.

DR. McNAMEE: Thank you very much, Katie, that's awesome. I think that kind of clears it up, and thank you, like I agree with the flag that you've raised there. It's probably something we want to focus on. Even the technical look at it, I think is good. Just be sort of suspicious about this kind of mail lag is a feature. There is probably something we want to think about. I can almost imagine like a Bayesian approach to it where you have sort of your prior and then you let the kind of incoming data inform that prior and move it if needed. But that's a little too wonky, but I guess the idea is probably we should think about that and have a method for dealing with that Wave 6, because of this lag in the mail data.

DR. DREW: Correct, and just thinking about when do we need to have these data, should we even be using these preliminary data in some respect? How should we be handling that, or like what is the benefit of doing things like, let's wait for the next preliminary set of data or like things like that I think are also valuable. But we can tell MRIP to try the Bayesian approach as well.

CHAIR WARE: All right, I have John Clark and then Mike Luisi.

MR. CLARK: Thank you for the excellent presentation, Tyler. I'm just following up on, I had the same concern that Jay brought up, but mine is more from ongoing skepticism of MRIP and especially with the public. When you see the changes for all the other states range from minus 3 to 3%, and then New York is 29%.

Yes, I get it, that is the effort survey. But was any ground truthing done? Was anybody talking to people in New York and saying, oh yes, it was crazy. People were going out striped bass fishing all through November and

December. Because my recollection is that the cold weather came on pretty early this year.

You would think that if New York had so much great striped bass fishing in Wave 6, some of that would have, especially for northern New Jersey, would have showed up there. But it doesn't. I mean with every other species as I've said in the past, when we see anomalous MRIP data we tend to say, well let's work something out with that. But when it's striped bass, no that's God's honest truth right there, 29% increase. I just don't buy it.

DR. DREW: Well, I would like to be clear. I think the anomalous part was the preliminary data, where effort was half of what it has been historically in 2022 and 2023, and we didn't look at that and didn't talk about that or didn't flag it at any point. Instead, MRIP has corrected that and brought it back into line with the historical data. It's higher than the preliminary numbers, but I think it's now more in line with what we have seen historically for this fishery in the past.

MR. CLARK: Right, but I'm just saying that as I said, typically when we see something like that, we might just kind of average things out, rather than just jump it up that much.

CHAIR WARE: I have Mike Luisi and then Joe Cimino.

MR. LUISI: My question is for Tyler, and Tyler, thanks for the presentation. Maybe if you can go back. I think it might help to go back to your slide, where you showed the projected assumption of the 2025 removals increasing by, I think you said 17%. There it is. The question I have has to do with the fact that we are not considering the actions in Addendum II right now as a result of an assessment coming out indicating that we are overfishing, and we need to reduce our fishing mortality to a certain level. That would be a simpler calculation on returning to the fishing mortality target. In this case we are forecasting and predicting the future, and hoping that we're guessing correctly, and if we don't guess correctly what happens, is the question that I have. While I understand we're doing our

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best to try to use information, harvest information, year class information from historical striped bass fisheries and applying that, which is the indicator for this 17% increase in overall removals in 2025.

That is part of the projection. That is part of what is getting us to this 12% reduction which is needed to be at a 50% probability of achieving that target. What if that spike doesn't happen? What if we're 20% below 2024 for removals this year? We're going to have preliminary information on catch through Wave 4 in October.

We're kind of dancing around, in my opinion, this line of whether or not action is needed or not. The preliminary numbers were what they were. We're now at 12%, we're looking at a 12% reduction. We've heard from the Technical Committee that the 10% or less of a reduction is kind of unquantifiable.

It's hard to determine whether or not there is any success in that. I feel like we're on this fine line and we're using data that we don't have, and we're projecting for the future and forecasting, and we're hoping that it's all right, but if it ends up being different what do we do? The question, I guess, is anyone tracking any of that?

Is anyone looking at information in 2025 now, to determine whether or not that assumption, are we on target to reach that point at some point in the future? Has anyone done any type of projection for 2025, just looking out to see where we might end up?

DR. DREW: Right now, only Wave 2 is available for 2025, and it is a little lower than it has been in previous years. However, for sure, we could present you guys with okay, here is our projection for waves based on Wave 2 through 4. Perhaps you remember, we did this all of last year, where we kept adding the waves to predict 2024 data.

We gave you a range of 2024 potential final estimates, and as we added more data those estimates came down, and then the final numbers came out and they were higher than we had projected, based on Waves 2 through 5. I guess we could present you with data through Waves 2 through 4 in October, and you guys could look at that and think about that.

Maybe think about the fact that we blew past that when we tried to do this the last time. What is that going to tell you? How does that affect your risk assessment for this species? I think you guys just need to rip the Band-Aid off at some point and make a decision. We can keep bringing you new data, but new data collection doesn't stop, and we're never going to catch up to where we are and where we need to be.

CHAIR WARE: I have Joe Cimino, then Marty, and I think there was Matt, and then we're going to move on to Emilie's presentation.

MR. CIMINO: I think mine was just kind of a counterpoint, and maybe just a confirmational question to this. It does play into something in the document regarding the idea of a split mode. I recall something like this happening, Katie, with black sea bass years ago. I think John Maniscalco and I and maybe Jason even back then was still on the Monitoring Committee.

You know that is a species where everyone has federal VTR requirements, this isn't. I'm kind of curious, are there actually loopholes? Like this might have been brought in through VTRs, but are there loopholes where there are plenty of for-hire charter actions that aren't even required to be doing those VTRs?

You know the magnitude of this kind of bump may be different than a species like bluefish or striped bass. I'm just wondering, I apologize, do you think my thinking is correct on that, that it's possible that there are striped bass for-hire loopholes that would maybe change the MRIP estimates, or at least this kind of change in an MRIP estimate compared to species that are required to report?

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DR. DREW: There are states that do not have specific for-hire reporting VTR or logbook programs for striped bass are covered by the for-hire survey under MRIP. Even if they are not required to report at the VTR level, they will still be surveyed by the effort and incorporated into that estimate.

CHAIR WARE: Marty and then Matt.

MR. GARY: My comments are just following Johns. I think the question you asked John, if anybody in New York taken a look at Wave 6 numbers, and we did. Those numbers are eye popping and we took a hard look at it, and they are in line with what we've seen in the last few seasons. Yes, the south shore west end fishery was epic. I got out there a couple of times to see it myself, so we're in concurrence that that is accurate representation.

CHAIR WARE: Matt Gates.

MR. MATTHEW GATES: I'll just add to that a little bit. We have a volunteer angler survey that looks at catch and length data ongoing throughout the season, and we've looked at the harvest lengths, the catch lengths for this season, and it does look like there is a peak right in the slot limit, about 27% of our catch this season has been within that slot limit. I do expect at least some bump in the harvest.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Matt. I think that was a good discussion on our TC report. I'm going to, for the sake of time, move us on to our Draft Addendum presentation from Emilie. We also had an AP meeting, so that report is going to be integrated into this presentation.

MS. FRANKE: I will be going over the Draft Addendum presentation. We did go over this, obviously, at the last meeting, so I'm not going to get too much into the front matter of the Draft Addendum, in terms of the background information. I'm really going to focus on going through each of the four issues, the statement of the problem, and the options. Throughout

the presentation I'll also highlight comments from the PDT and the memo that was in materials, and also comments from the Advisory Panel members as well. The Advisory Panel met on July 28, via webinar, to review the updated management options. The AP Chair could not make it today, so I will provide those AP member comments throughout the presentation. Again, timeline for the Addendum. We're here in August.

The Board is considering approving the document for public comment. If it were approved, we will have a public comment period and public hearings, probably starting in late August through the month of September, and then in October the Board is meeting some time, October 27 through 30, to select final measures and then states would implement the regulations following.

Again, I'm not going to get into the details of the background section, there is a lot of information here, sort of all the typical status of the stock, status of the fisheries. There are also sections looking at the seasonality of recreational catch and effort, because that is relevant to seasonal closures.

Social and economic considerations, equity considerations and analysis of other species that are caught and targeted. In the striped bass fishery if you're thinking about what other species might be available if there is a closure. There are also some examples of some current Maryland and North Carolina striped bass closures.

A couple of these sections have been updated since May, just simply updated with the final MRIP estimates and the 2024 commercial estimates and also, of course the updated projections. We added a description of the very low recruitment sensitivity run to provide some context on how that assumption of that recruitment affects the stock trajectory.

I just want to point out here a couple of AP member comments that were sort of general comments. One AP member did note some concern that the socioeconomic section does not sufficiently convey the negative impacts of the Addendum II measures,

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particularly the one-fish bag limit for the Maryland for-hire fleet.

Then one AP member did discuss sort of thinking about the background information and commercial removals estimates some concern about how we're estimating commercial discards, and also concern about the low fish weight for the Maryland commercial fishery. There is some more context that staff provided in the AP memo, but I'm happy to answer questions on that if there are any.

That was sort of the front material, going to get into the four issues with the options here. Obviously, Section 3.3 on the Maryland season is new since the May meeting, and then of course 3.4 with the reduction has been updated based on the new projections and the higher reductions for 2026.

The first section measuring total length, this has not changed. The FMP currently does not define total length, how to measure total length for striped bass. The regulations vary by state. There is some concern that not having a consistent method of measurement is undermining conservation, the consistency particularly with these narrow slot limits. This Draft Addendum considers coastwide requirements for this definition. Option A, status quo, the FMP does not define total length of a striped bass. Option B there would be some mandatory elements for each state. All states must require that you squeeze the tail when you're measuring striped bass, just using a straight-line measurement, the fish is laid flat and the mouth is closed. The FMP provides a definition states can use.

States can also submit if they have current regulatory language that meets these requirements and also submit that for consideration. That hasn't changed. Now getting into commercial tagging. Obviously, we just talked about this in the last agenda item. Again, there is some concern that waiting to tag

a striped bass until point of sale could increase the risk of illegal harvest.

This Draft Addendum considers requiring commercial tagging at the point of harvest, with the goal of improving enforcement and compliance. Again, this would impact three states, and every state is different, in terms of their management system and their current tagging program, so it's difficult to determine whether to switch, what the impact would be for every state.

Again, the Law Enforcement Committee majority supports tagging at point of harvest to improve enforcement the total time the species is in possession. There is an opposing opinion supporting continuation of point of sale, and concern about sort of those extra tags being available, potential trading among harvesters.

Option A, status quo, states can choose if they currently can between point of harvest or point of sale. The Option B here is to require commercial tagging at the point of harvest, and the Board could consider delaying implementation of this requirement until '27 or '28 to account for all the changes to switch that current point of sale programs.

One Board discussion point for discussion today is to consider, does the Board want to expand this option to allow tagging at the point of landing? Again, the FMP does not define point of harvest. One state, as was mentioned, does currently tag at point of landing, so the Board needs to discuss today, should the Addendum be expanded to consider point of landing tagging in addition to point of harvest tagging.

A couple of AP member comments here. One AP member is just generally concerned about how the new tag allocation process would work for states that have to switch to point of harvest, and one AP member does support expanding the option to consider point of landing due to those safety concerns from the industry.

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Another point the Board will discuss, there has been some additional text that has been proposed for this section, noting that tagging at point of harvest could be considered an unquantifiable reduction. We'll get to that during the discussion. The PDT does note that there is no data available showing how switching to point of harvest would impact removals.

But again, we'll get into that detail in that proposed text during the discussion. Then one other point for the Board to consider is, would these new commercial tagging requirements apply to North Carolina's Albemarle Sound fishery. The Roanoke River doesn't have a commercial fishery, so we're really just talking about the Albemarle Sound. When the original commercial tagging addendum was implemented, those applied to the Albemarle Sound, Roanoke River. However, since then the FMP has changed to defer Albemarle Sound management to North Carolina. North Carolina obviously has their own Albemarle Sound Roanoke assessments, they have their own reference points, their own management measures to meet those reference points. It's unclear to staff whether a change to the commercial tagging requirements would impact the Albemarle Sound or just the North Carolina ocean fishery. The Board should clarify this before we go out to public comment. That covers commercial tagging.

Again, there is a couple discussion points for the Board to consider during discussion. Now I'm going to get into the Section 3.3, this is the Maryland Recreational Season. As far as the background here that Maryland provided, their striped bass seasons have become increasingly complex over time.

There has been some stakeholder desire to adjust the season to allow more fishing opportunity in the spring, when conditions are favorable for lower release mortality. The Draft Addendum considers a new recreational season baseline for Maryland to simplify the seasons

and then realign the fishing access based on that stakeholder input and release mortality rates.

Just to note, if Maryland changes their baseline, any new rebuilding reductions, so those reductions we'll talk about later. That is going to be on top of the new baseline. Again, as the TC Chair mentioned, a new baseline would modify how long, the timing, and what type of season occurs throughout the year in Maryland Chesapeake Bay.

But that new baseline season is calculated to be net neutral compared to 2024. It is not estimated to increase removals from 2024. Just to note that the existing spawning closures in Maryland are not affected by this new baseline. Again, you heard the TC accepted Maryland's methods, but they also highlighted the uncertainty of how effort would change if you're opening a no-targeting closure to allow catch and release.

The Draft Addendum, in addition to just considering changing to the new baseline, considers adding an uncertainty buffer. The intent here is to increase the chance of success that this new season is actually staying neutral, this actually would not increase removals. There is an option for a 10 percent or a 25% buffer.

These buffer levels are based on the buffers that we have in Amendment 7 for CE proposals. In Amendment 7, if you have a CE proposal for a non-quota managed fishery there is a 10% buffer, and that buffer goes up to 25% if you have PSEs over 30. Again, this Maryland season option is not a CE program, but this was used as sort of a reference for where else do we have buffers in the FMP. Where can we look to for what type of buffer you could be looking at.

In terms of PSEs, Maryland did provide the PSEs in their proposal. You can see they are sort of by year, and then for harvest and releases, and I've color coded the PSEs so you can see. Most PSEs for harvest are less than 30, they are green. There are a couple over 30 in yellow. For releases it's a little bit more variable by year. Again, this is also broken down by wave.

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There are a couple more PSEs in the yellow category over 30 for releases, but when you pool the data together, 21 through 24, which Maryland did do for part of their analysis, those PSEs actually go down to less than 30. What are the options here? What does this look like? Option A is status quo. Maryland does not change their baseline. Addendum II status quo, Maryland is required to keep the same season that they had in Addendum II, which is the same as 2022. If there is a new rebuilding reduction coming up, that 12 or 18 reductions, then Maryland would use their current season and add those new closures on top of it.

Option B is for Maryland to change their baseline. They would change to their new baseline season, and then again if there is a reduction that would actually be on top of their new baseline. For the uncertainty buffers, first for Option C, this is a 10% uncertainty buffer. Maryland would still implement their new baseline. They would add any rebuilding reductions from the next section, except Maryland would have to take a slightly higher reduction than the other states, because they would have this buffer.

If it's a 12% reduction, 10% of 12% is about 1%, so Maryland ends up taking a 13% reduction instead of a 12% reduction to have that buffer. Now the other sort of complex part of this is, what if the Board decides to stay status quo for the reductions? Let's say the Board decides not to take a reduction, but Maryland still wants to change their season. There still has to be a buffer.

For this option, basically Maryland would have to change their baseline to be slightly more conservative than 2024. In this case they would have to be 2% more conservative than 2024, by shortening one of their harvest seasons. How did we get to 2%, 2% is 10% of the reduction that Maryland took back during Addendum VI, which is when they put in place some of these closures originally.

I know there is a lot of percent there, but that is how the 10% buffer would apply. Very similar for the 25% buffer, there is just a little bit more of a buffer, obviously. Again, if there is a reduction, Maryland takes a slightly higher reduction than the other states. If there is not a reduction, Maryland's new season has to be a little bit more conservative than their current season.

Here is what sort of their current season is. Option A, on the left, you can see their current season. Yellow means catch and release. Red means no targeting, green means you can harvest. Then on the right is what their new baseline would look like. Again, this is just the baseline. If there is any reduction there would be closures on top of that, but this is just comparing what they're proposing to change.

They would open up April to catch and release. They would extend the harvest period in May, but then they would extend their no-targeting closure in August, and they would close harvest a little bit earlier at the end of the year. A couple AP member comments here. One AP member was concerned about allowing catch and release of pre-spawned fish.

One member was concerned about introducing this uncertainty amidst a reduction. Then one AP member recommends that the PDT or TC review what part of the season should be subject to the uncertainty buffer if there is no reduction. I mentioned if there is no reduction Maryland, under the buffer options would have to be a little bit more conservative than 2024. They proposed to do that by shortening harvest in Wave 3 or Wave 6, so this AP member was hoping the TC could discuss that. That is the Maryland section. I'm going to move on now to the last but longest section. This is the reduction in removals. Again, for rebuilding by 2029, we estimate fishing mortality to increase this year, decrease back down to 2024 levels next year.

There is this continued concern about low recruitment, and so this Draft Addendum considers measures implemented in 2026, designed to increase the probability of rebuilding by 2029.

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Option A, status quo, this is no reduction. This is estimated to have a 30% probability of rebuilding. Option B and C is our 12% reduction category, to get to a 50% probability of rebuilding.

Option B is both sectors taking even reduction, 12% and 12%. Option C is commercial take 0 reduction, so commercial takes no reduction and then recreational takes a 14% reduction to account for that. Options D and E is our 18% reduction category. Again, this is to get to the 60% probability of rebuilding.

Option D is the even sector reductions; Option E is no commercial reduction. This is sort of the big picture options here. Just a couple big picture comments from the PDT and AP. The PDT recommends that the Board decide which percent reduction to move forward for public comment, so picking either the 12% or the 18% to move forward to public comment.

However, there were two AP members that supported keeping both reductions in the document, just to keep that range of options, and also for the Board to be able to consider any new information they might have in October. For example, it's likely by that point we might know the result of this year's Maryland JAI survey at that time.

Again, a couple more AP comments. One AP member just again noted the uncertainty of these projections and for the overlapping confidence intervals in all of these different projection runs. Then two AP members just noted support to the Addendum, keeping in options for the commercial taking no reduction, due to the fact that the commercial sector is managed by strict accountability measures.

Getting to the options, how are we actually achieving these reductions? For the commercial quota, again we have options for either no reduction, that's our current commercial quotas, either a 12% reduction or an 18% reduction. Those are just all the quotas

with those various reductions. That table is in the document.

For the recreational sector, how are we getting there? For the ocean it would be seasonal closures to meet the reduction. We're looking at coastwide or regional closures with a New England and a Mid-Atlantic region. One question the document considers is where should Rhode Island be, New England or Mid-Atlantic.

There is also an option for a mode split on size limits. For the Chesapeake Bay there are more options to consider, because in the Bay there actually are a few options that achieve the reduction by changing the size limit only, so there are some options for changing just the size limit, other options for changing the seasons. We're looking at separate closures for Maryland and Virginia. An Addendum does not propose any changes to the bag limit, so one fish coastwide bag limit, there are no changes proposed there. For mode split there are options you'll see for both regions where we consider a wider slot limit for for-hire. If you have a wider slot limit for for-hire with status quo size limits for private and shore, that would slightly increase removals.

All modes would take a slightly longer closure to account for that slight increase in for-hire removals. You end up with different size limits by mode, but you still have the same season by mode. For season closures, a couple things to think about again. The tradeoff is, do you want a shorter closure during your peak season, or a longer closure during the slower season?

The document considers both no targeting and no harvest closures, and there are two assumptions for no targeting closures, which depend on angler behavior. One assumption assumes that all trips that previously targeted striped bass would still happen. People would still go fishing, but they would shift their target species.

They would maybe catch fewer striped bass, but they would still incidentally release striped bass. Another assumption assumes that people or trips

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that previously targeted only striped bass would no longer occur. Those trips just wouldn't happen, and so therefore you are zeroing out those releases. Those are two different assumptions about how anglers might respond to a no-targeting closure.

One thing that I don't think was clear in the draft that I will make sure is clear before the draft goes out for public comment is that all states within an ocean region, so if you're in the New England region you have the same closure date as all of the other states in the New England region. The process for determining those dates, I think the Board will have to think about.

You know in October the Board would pick, okay, this region is going to close in Wave 4. But then the Board has to pick what are the actual dates. I don't think it's realistic to assume the Board could make those dates decision at the October meeting. I think it would be more like the region would have to decide those dates by the time implementation plans are due.

Just one AP member comment on closures. One member was concerned that no-targeting closures are still even being considered, when enforcement has noted that they are unenforceable. Okay, so getting into the ocean recreational options. What do they look like? For the ocean it's pretty straightforward.

Basically, for each reduction you have everyone stays status quo size limit and we take a season closure to meet the reduction. For 12% we have status quo size limit and we take a 12% season closure, or you can widen the slot limit for for-hire, and everyone takes a slightly longer closure, so a 13% closure.

This is the same for all of the ocean options. The reduction just gets higher, so you have the 12% reduction, the 14% reduction if commercial doesn't take a reduction, and then you have the 18% and the 21%. Again, the same type of

ocean option, just for different reduction levels. Something for the Board to discuss today is the impact of seasonal closures on the three area fisheries in New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, The New York Hudson River, Pennsylvania's spring slot and Delaware summer slot have specific measures through Addendum II. Hudson River has a 23-to-28-inch slot limit, they are open from April to November. Pennsylvania spring has one-fish at 22 to less than 26 from April to May, and Delaware summer slot has a one-fish at 20 to 24 in July and August.

These are all measures to Addendum II. These are fisheries that typically target smaller fish, due to fish availability, and also to avoid in some cases spawning fish. These fisheries typically occur in sort of a discreet timeframe. All the ocean options would keep the size limits for these fisheries the same if they were in Addendum II.

The question is, how the new seasonal closures impact these fisheries. For example, if you're thinking about the Pennsylvania spring slot, if you have a fall closure that is obviously not going to overlap the spring slot at all. If you have a spring closure for the Mid-Atlantic region, that is going to overlap the Pennsylvania fishery and possibly there will be a disproportionate impact to that specific fishery.

As written, these three fisheries could choose to implement whatever their regions closure is, or they could submit alternative measures to achieve their reduction, so do specific calculations for that fishery to show how they would meet the reduction in their fishery. This would be subject to TC review. This is what was done in the last addendum.

Basically, the Board just needs to consider potential equity issues. This is specific to New York, Hudson River and Pennsylvania spring slot, so these are not covered by MRIP. Delaware is already incorporated into MRIP, so already covered by the season closure analysis. But basically, New York Hudson and Pennsylvania spring slot may not be impacted by new closures, or they might be impacted disproportionately.

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It's just for the Board to think about how this would work for these fisheries. The Board could choose to be very specific in the Addendum about how to address this, but the Board should think about this. For the Chesapeake Bay, as I mentioned there is a few more options, because there are some options where you can just change the size limit and achieve the reduction.

For the 12% reduction all modes could go to 20 to 23 inches, keep the same seasons. You could split it by mode so private shore goes to a three-inch slot, for-hire keeps the five-inch slot, or you could expand the for-hire slot even. Then I also have options where, instead of changing size limits you take a reduction on the season side.

As I mentioned, there are several combinations if we move on to the 14% reduction. Again, all modes could go to 19 to 22 inches, or you could split by mode, or you could instead of changing the size limits take the reduction with a season closure. I'm happy to get into the details of each of these options if folks want, just trying to sort of be mindful of time here.

As we get up to the higher reductions there are sort of fewer options for the Bay. They would have to go to minimum sizes, so all modes could go to a 23-inch minimum size. They could split the minimum size by mode, or again they could just take the reduction with a season closure. Something for the Board to think about for the Bay is these high minimum sizes. For example, a 24-inch minimum would meet that highest reduction, but that is well above the entire current slot limit, so we didn't include it for Board consideration, but the Board could put it in. There is an option where by mode the modes would have completely different upper and lower slot bounds. Private and shore would be 20 to 23, for-hire would be 19 to 24, so the PDT was wondering if there is more enforcement or compliance challenges when there is not even an upper or lower bound in common.

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Similarly, you know if there are similar enforcement challenges with having different minimum sizes by mode. Those are all the options, in terms of how we get there. You know, are we changing a size limit or are we taking a closure? Then the question becomes, when is the closure? There are several tables in the document that lay out all of the options.

For each region and each Chesapeake Bay state, for each of the reductions. There is a table for each level of reduction and then each table you can find the ocean region or the Chesapeake Bay state, and look for each wave, how many days would you have to close on top of your current season to meet the reduction?

I'm obviously not going to go through every table, I'm just going to show you one as an example. This is showing to achieve a 12% reduction, you know there is one option if you want a coastwide closure for the ocean, everyone closed at the same time, and then there are options for the Maine through Mass region, options for the Rhode Island through North Carolina region.

You sort of scroll over and you say, okay for Wave 3 for Maine through Mass, if we assume we are doing our no-harvest closure and you close for the entire wave, that's 61 days. That won't even meet your reduction. That's why that cell is shaded in red. Again, you have to look at what type of closure, no targeting or not harvest, and then which wave you're interested in.

For Maryland the tables look a little bit different, because there has to be an option for Maryland under its current season, Maryland under its new baseline, and Maryland under its new baseline with a buffer. There are a lot of options for Maryland. One thing you'll notice is that some closure options have two waves listed, so that means you have to close for the specified number of days in both waves, so closing in Wave 2 and Wave 4, for example.

This is intended to address the equity of combining several states into a region. You are ensuring that

every state at least feels the impact in part of the closure. You can see here for Rhode Island through North Carolina as an example, the first option for the first no-targeting assumption. You would close for 20 days in Wave 2, and you would close for 20 days in Wave 3.

There are several options there as well. The Board noted at the last meeting that the Addendum should include some language that if closing an entire wave does not meet the reduction, then the Board could extend the closure into the preceding or following wave. This could be maybe a few extra days in the next wave, or maybe it's a few extra weeks, it really depends on the wave.

The Draft Addendum, there is no way to list all the possible options here. This is something that would have to be calculated in October if the Board says, we're interested in selecting closing during Wave 5, closing that entire Wave 5, plus however many additional days we need in Wave 4 to meet the reduction. We would just do that calculation on the spot. There is no way we can show all of those closure combinations in advance. A couple of other notes PRFC and DC can choose to match, or choose the same wave as either Maryland or Virginia. Then during final addendum approval, we talked about this at the last meeting. The Board has some flexibility to maybe change North Carolina's required closure to be different than the other states in its region, because North Carolina fish are only available in Waves 1 and 6.

The Board also has flexibility to possibly change New York's required closure duration for Wave 2 or Wave 6. This is because New York is already closed for part of Wave 2 or Wave 6, so there is this question about what is the most equitable way to proceed if New York's region has to close during Wave 2, but they are already closed for a lot of Wave 2. How do we proceed here? That is a question the Board would have to figure out by the October meeting.

That's it for the reduction section. Again, I just want to bring everyone back for the big picture outline here. We have status quo, we have the 12% reduction options and the 18% reduction options, so the big picture. Just a couple final AP comments. One AP member is concerned that recruitment here is the real problem.

There have been multiple reductions, so we need some more research on what's impacting recruitment in the Bay. Then one AP member just noted that when we're compiling comments it would be helpful to separate, when possible, comments by mode, to understand how much of each sector or mode supports an option. Okay that's it, I'm happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WARE: Well, I will start with kudos to Emilie for the presentation and all the work that the PDT has done. I'm also hoping people are gathering how untenable it would be to take this out for public hearings with a, I think it was a 35-minute presentation and about 20 tables of a 2-page table. What I would like to do is I would like to break this up. I'm going to start with Section 3.4, which is the section on the percent reduction.

What I'll do for each section is we'll start with questions, and then we'll go into motions. What I would like to do is for Section 3.4 we'll do questions, and then we have a specific PDT question over a 12 or 18%. Let's try and tackle that, and then we'll do a bio break. Then we'll come back and continue with the motions. That is what I'm hoping to get through before we break. Any questions on Section 3.4, which is again the percent reduction and all of those season tables. Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I wanted to see if my interpretation is correct about something within the range of options presented. The Board has that flexibility, it says in the document, to select something within a range of options. This is a question about a specific number of days in a wave.

For example, Maine through Massachusetts could implement 44-day closures in Waves 3 and 5, no harvest, to receive a 12% reduction, or all of Wave 3

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or all of Wave 5, something like that. But is it within the realm of options for the region in the end to say, rather than 44 days exactly in Wave 3 and Wave 5, if we could achieve 12% through 30 days in Wave 3 and 50 days in Wave 5, is that within the range of options here, or does it have to be the exact options in the tables right now? I think my interest lies in the fact that there may be particular holidays that we want to make sure are included in the number of days that are left open, for example.

MS. FRANKE: I think that it might be helpful to include a sentence to that effect, if that is what you would like to see. Basically, those options with the two waves are calculated to have the same number of days closed in each wave. I think as long as, if you want to change that so that instead of 44 and 44 it ends up being 30 and 50. I think as long as the 30 and 50 still gets you to the reduction. Like we would have to use the spreadsheet to make sure.

I think it would be up to the Board to decide if that is acceptable, and if so, I think we should include a sentence in the document that says something to the effect of, states could for the dual wave closures, the options show having the same number of days closed in each wave. The states could adjust the distribution of days in each wave, as long as it meets the total reduction. I think we could add a sentence, and if that is what you would like to, I would recommend adding a second so that is clear. We would just have to make sure that it still adds up to the reduction.

CHAIR WARE: Toni, for some reaction to that.

MS. TONI KERNS: I think Emilie is correct. You are almost going down the road of you're just saying, hey region, you need to meet a 12% reduction, come tell us how you're going to do that. Then if you're doing that, then how much time does that add on later on, because then you're saying, hey TC, now you need to review all of these proposals from these states to make sure that they've met that 12% reduction. Even

though I know we've created some tables already, but you're still going to have to like go back and make sure it's all been done correctly.

MS. FRANKE: I think the Board would still have to make that decision at the October meeting, just basically between now and the October meeting, if someone was interested in an option like that. We have the spreadsheets that would tell us however you wanted to divide up the days.

But I think we just need to make that a part of the addendum allowing states to deviate from 44 and 44 to something else. We just need to add language to the document saying, states could choose exactly what's in the table for the dual-wave options or they could craft alternative number of days, as long as it meets the reduction in the selected wave.

CHAIR WARE: Follow up, Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: Yes, my intent would be that that decision would have to be made at the Board meeting in October, not that is part of the implementation plan. You would still be leaving the October meeting saying it's going to be this number of days. Like you said, with the adjacent waves there might be some calculations having to be happening during the October meeting.

But you would have the opportunity to confirm that the reductions were being made, and something that is in the range of options here. It's impossible that the PDT could have crafted every single alternative of a number of days between Waves 3 and Wave 5, just for example. I feel like it's within the range of options to try to make some common-sense seasons, rather than opening on June 3rd, let's make it June 1st. You know something that helps the compliance enforcement as well, takes those patches into consideration.

CHAIR WARE: What I'm going to recommend is, let's hear the questions and see what we pare down, and then I've written a note and we can come back to that if we so desire. I had Bill Hyatt, and then I think Marty was next after that.

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MR. HYATT: Yes, this is just a quick up follow up conversation to this discussion. I'm hearing states and regions being used interchangeably. Is the idea when the reduction would be across two waves that that would have to be consistent across the region? Okay.

CHAIR WARE: Good clarification. Marty.

MR. GARY: I apologize, have we entertained questions with any of the bullets up on the slide now? Is that correct.

CHAIR WARE: I would like to focus on the reduction and removal section for questions.

MR. GARY: Okay, I'll pass, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: I think I saw Mike Luisi, you're all good. David Borden, did you have a question? Yes, you're up.

MR. BORDEN: This is just for clarity purposes. Emilie, the reductions are 12 and 18%, is it the intent to apply that equally to both user groups, both commercial and recreational, or is there a potential to cut recreational on one level, and commercial at the other? If it's the latter, is that noted within the document now?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so there are specific options for even reductions, and then there is a specific option for commercial taking 0% and recreational taking the rest, essentially.

MR. BORDEN: But could we pick, for instance, we've done this in the past. Could we pick another option that is in between for one of the user groups? In other words, you've got a range of options, 0 and 12%, can we pick a number between that? It's been taken to hearings and we've done it before.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so I would say, and Toni just to confirm. The document has an option for commercial taking 0% and an option for commercial taking 12%. If the Board in the end wanted to pick something between 0 and 12,

that would be within the range. I will say, yes, but I will say the recreational options, so I would say for right now it is either 12 and 12 commercial and rec, or it's 0 commercial, 14 recreational.

If you pick something between 0 and 12 for commercial, maybe recreational could go down to 13. But I don't think we would be able to really do that on the fly. But I think recreational would have to be either 12 or 14, and you could pick something in the middle for commercial 0 to 12, does that make sense?

MR. BORDEN: I'm not advocating a particular outcome; I'm just talking about process. If there is an intent or a possibility to pick a number in between, I think we should note it with a sentence, just one sentence. The Board can pick a number between these values. Just so the public knows.

MS. FRANKE: There is a general statement in the document about picking within a range of options. If it comes up at public hearings, I'm happy to clarify, but there is a general statement in there about picking the range of options.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout, I think your hand was up and then Joe, you're next.

MR. GROUT: My question was in response to what Nichola was talking about that you said we're going to take up afterwards, it would be better if I ask it then.

CHAIR WARE: Great. Joe.

MR. CIMINO: I just wanted to actually follow up on what David just asked. My assumption would be that if we dropped the notion of recreational taking the full reduction, then what he had just asked of that is something in between would no longer be possible. All that would be presented to the public was an even split, and there would be no range to go in between anymore, is that correct?

MS. FRANKE: Right. Right now, the document has an even split, 12 and 12 or commercial 0, recreational 14. I think you're saying, if for some

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reason the Board took out 0/14 today then right. I guess there would still be a range of status quo, which is 0 to 12. There would still be a range if you're looking at status quo or 12. Does that make sense?

Okay, I think Toni helped clarify. If you took out 0 commercial, 14 rec, then you're left with status quo or 12 and 12. If you were thinking about commercial taking less than 12. At that point the max for recreational in the document is only 12, so if you lower commercial you are no longer reaching your goal of 12%, so maybe that helped clarify it, thank you, Toni.

CHAIR WARE: These are great questions. Any other questions from the Board on this? What I would like to do is move into specifically addressing this 12, 18 or 0 percent reduction in the document and then we'll take a break. I don't know if anyone has a motion on this, but if they would like to make a motion on the percent reduction option, now would be the time to do that. It will go to the public for two comments if we get a motion. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I'll get the ball rolling, sure. I would like to remove the 18% option. I guess I would move to remove the 18% reduction options from the document. If I get a second, I will address that.

CHAIR WARE: Great, is there a second to that motion? Nichola, great. We're going to pause to allow staff to get that on the board. Could we get you to just read that into the record, John.

MR. CLARK: Gladly. **Move to remove the 18% reduction option at Section 3.4, Option D and E.**

CHAIR WARE: We had a second from Nichola Meserve, so we'll go into discussion on this motion. Any rationale, John?

MR. CLARK: Yes, the origin of the 60% reduction was for demonstration purposes, I

recall. The Board just asked to see that, and I was a little surprised to see it become a full-blown option in this, and I just think given the complexity of this document as it is, throwing that in there, I just think it's more than we need at this point. I just think we have plenty on the table by considering even a 12% option.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola, as seconder, any rationale?

MS. MESERVE: Thank you, yes. I'm just in favor of this for the sake of trying to balance rebuilding objectives along with the socioeconomic impacts of the actions that we're considering. Also taking into consideration the uncertainty of the projections, and noting that we do have another chance to respond to stock status after the 2027 benchmark assessment if we need to, prior to the 2029 rebuilding deadline.

CHAIR WARE: Comments from the Board members, I saw Joe's hand.

MR. CIMINO: I support this motion. I think we've tried very hard. I've asked Katie and Mike on staff at NJDEP to try and explain to the public that 50% is not a flip of the coin. It means so much more than that, and that area of probability of rebuilding is, I think, appropriate for what we're trying to do here.

As we continue to move forward, I would continue to suggest that we continually explain that to the public, that when we say 50% probability of rebuilding we're not talking about a flip of the coin, we're talking about a very wide swath of development.

CHAIR WARE: Jason.

DR. McNAMEE: I want to pile on what Joe just said and add, so that the 50%, just like Joe said, not a coin flip, it's the most likely outcome. That is what that means, it's the peak of the distribution. You know it means that the most likely scenario, with all of the uncertainties we have is to achieve that reduction, the goal that we're trying to achieve.

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Sixty percent, I understand what people are trying to do there. They want to be the more precautionous. The 50% choice isn't arbitrary, there is a reason that that is selected, 60%, well why not 55%, why not 70%. It gets arbitrary at that point, because we don't have a refined way of prescribing more risk aversion at this point. I support the motion.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to go to the public for two quick comments on this. I'll look to anyone in the room want to make a comment on this motion? Seeing none, any in here? All right, easy-peasy, we'll bring it back to the Board. Is there any need to caucus on this? Just raise your hand if your state needs to caucus. Yes, okay, one minute caucus. I'm going to check in with our friends that requested a caucus, are you guys good? Okay, so we're going to call the question here. We're asking if we should remove the 18% reduction options in Section 3.4. **All states in favor, please raise your hands.** We're going to just read them. Yes, Toni, if you don't mind that would be great.

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, DC, Maryland, Delaware, Maine and New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: Any opposition to the motion?

MS. KERNS: NOAA Fisheries.

CHAIR WARE: No, Connecticut.

MS. KERNS: Connecticut, no, they didn't have their hand up.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?

MS. KERNS: NOAA and Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? The motion passes 13 to 1 with 2 abstentions. We're going to take a break. We'll come back at 3:55, so it's

a 7-minute break. If you have a motion in Section 3.4 to either remove or change something, if you could give that to staff during the break that would be great. Thank you.

(Whereupon a recess was taken.)

CHAIR WARE: I call the Striped Bass Board back to order here. I appreciate everyone getting motions in. We wanted to just take a few more minutes to get those typed up, but we are going to get started again, if folks could take a seat. We got several motions in, which is great. We've ordered them just by topic just by topic to kind of get some organization for this. We're still on the topic of percent reductions, and I'm going to turn to Nichola for another motion on percent reductions.

MS. MESERVE: I would like to make a motion to remove Option C from Section 3.4, and that is the 14% recreational reduction, 0% commercial reduction.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have a motion by Nichola Meserve, is there a second? Dave Sikorski. Rationale, Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: Yes. Some of the prior questions identified, even without this 14-0 split there could still be an opportunity for the Board to pick something less than 12% for the commercial fishery. I'm not saying I support that, just that it is an opportunity that allows for a lesser for commercial fishery without placing it on the recreational fishery. This option for the 14% recreational reduction puts all the responsibility on the recreational fishery to help rebuild the stock. Part of our statement of the problem here is that we're responding to a lack of strong year classes since 2018, and that is something that all the stakeholders should be responsible for responding to, and sharing in the recovery of this stock.

I support moving forward with taking this out and being able to focus conversation at public hearings on the 12% and how we achieve it, because there is going to be a lot of discussion about how to get to that 12% without having to have the argument

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about this 14% option all on the backs of the recreational fishery.

CHAIR WARE: Dave, as seconder, any rationale?

MR. DAVID SIKORSKI: I think we've done this quite a few times, where we leave some folks out of reductions. We've done it in our home state and we've done it as a Board. I think it's just important to show the public that we're serious about this moving forward.

As Ms. Meserve mentioned, we still have flexibility to make decisions like we made before, where we do not place a full reduction on the commercial fishery. If the Board chooses to do that at that point, I too do not support that at that time. But I think moving forward for the public, this will provide the most clarity, and again not put it on the backs of the recreational fishers.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to go to Emilie for a comment.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, just for clarity and just to make sure that it was understood what I had said earlier. Yes, the Board absolutely, if you take out this option then in the document you have status quo, and then a 12-12. Yes, it is within the Board's purview to take something less than 12 for commercial, but if you do that, then let's say you pick 6% for commercial, that is 6% commercial combined with 12% rec won't get you quite to the total 12. That's the Board's prerogative; I just want to make that clear.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you for that. All right, so we are looking for comments on the motion. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I oppose this motion, when we get to the commercial tagging. One of the things I was hoping we could try to head something like this off was by showing the recreational sector that we are doing everything we can to provide the fullest possible accounting for every fish caught commercially.

Once again, our recreational side is all based on estimates. We don't know what will happen with changes in regulations, whether we will get a 14% some years. It could end up being much more, other years much less. But we know that every pound we take away from the commercial fishery is revenue we're taking away from our commercial fishermen.

They since 2014 have seen, I think we're close to 50%, 40 to 50% of the quota has been taken away. Once again, as I said, I think if we can show on the recreational, to the recreational community that we are doing everything we can to make sure that every striped bass taken commercially is accounted for. I think that keeping the 0% option in there is valid and viable. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments on this motion from the Board. Chris Batsavage.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Yes, I support the motion. As I've said in the past, on the commercial side it's a reduction in quota and a reduction in landings, so it's not exactly the same as the reductions we're looking at for the recreational fishery. Also, we look at how we deal with reductions with other fisheries, the commercial and recreational components. I think we've used equal reductions in every case. I can't think of any that we don't.

Probably the closest example to striped bass would be bluefish, where it's about 85, 86% recreational and the rest commercial. We take equal reductions. Then the final part is, although we know the ratio coastwide is that for striped bass, it's just like the bluefish, it's not an equal ratio commercial/rec across the coast.

We know it's a higher component of commercial removals in the Bay, just like with bluefish it's a higher percentage of commercial removals than North Carolina, for instance. I think going with the equal reductions removes some of the uncertainty, and improves our chances of meeting our stock rebuilding goals.

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CHAIR WARE: Not seeing any other hands. Hold on one second, Nichola. Do you folks need a caucus on this motion? Yes, one, so Nichola I'll give you final word and then a one-minute caucus.

MS. MESERVE: Thank you for the second bite. I just wanted to respond to something that John had said about the commercial fishery quotas are knocked down about 50% from the hay day, and I'm glad you brought that up, because I've been thinking about how the same can be said for the recreational fishery. The access as they head back from two fish at 28 inches or one fish in a very narrow slot limit. I think we are in a place where it has been equitable to some degree how much each fishery has responded to the need to rebuild.

CHAIR WARE: John, you get 30 seconds to respond.

MR. CLARK: I would just say I certainly get that, and that is true, Nichola, but I would just say that you know we have people, very small-scale fisheries in Delaware, and there are guys that depend on this income, and it's a little different when they are just not able to make it. Thanks.

CHAIR WARE: One minute caucus and then we're going to vote. Is everyone okay to vote? Just as a reminder, we're voting on whether to remove Option C, which is 0% commercial reduction, 14% recreational reduction. **All those in favor of this motion, please raise your hand.**

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, DC, New Hampshire, Maine.

CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.

MS. KERNS: New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission and Delaware.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions, it's the two services. Any null votes? Give us a second to count. **Motion passes 8 to 6 with 2 abstentions.** Emilie is just going to provide a clarification on the sentence around the commercial percent reductions.

MS. FRANKE: Just what I said earlier, I think it would be helpful to put that in writing in the Addendum that if the Board chooses to implement a commercial reduction less than 12%, which they can, then the total reduction would be slightly less than 12%. I just think it would be helpful to put that into the Addendum, so that is my plan.

CHAIR WARE: I'm going to move us, still in this section, but to the topic of closures, because we did receive some motions on that. If you had a motion on the topic of closures, now would be the time to raise that.

MR. GARY: I would like to ask, if I could, Madam Chair, just a quick question of you and Emilie, and I have one for Jeff Mercer if I could, and I'll have a motion after that. I guess the first question is, as Emilie illustrated in her presentation, most recently recreational contribution fishing mortality is 85 percent, commercial is 15%.

Of that rec fishing mortality about half of that is recreational discard mortality. My question, is the only tool available to this Board to affect a reduction in that recreational discard mortality of these no-targeting closures? Is that our only tool available to us?

MS. FRANKE: I think that is the only quantifiable tool at this moment in time it's the no-targeting closures intended to reduce the number of live releases.

MR. GARY: Thank you, Emilie, I appreciate it. That's what I thought and that is what I wanted to hear, have the whole Board hear, have the public hear, and then also have the public hear I have a question for Jeff, he's hopefully online, or Kurt's in the room, I know as well. I just wanted to hear it from them, have the Board hear and have the public hear the

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characterization of the enforceability challenges, what those perspectives are from Law Enforcement.

I don't know that there was a formal memo or a letter, maybe there was. But my concerns are the enforceability that will be reflected in my motion, but I want the Board and the public to hear it directly from the LEC, so Jeff or Kurt.

MR. JEFF MERCER: This is Jeff. Yes, the LEC has weighed in on this multiple times at this point. We believe that no-targeting closures would be very difficult to enforce, particularly consider striped bass often overlap with other recreationally target species like bluefish. Any regulations that require us to prove intent is difficult to enforce in general, and even more difficult to prosecute. In the guidelines for resource managers on enforceability of fisheries management, it went dead last out of the 27 management measures that were read. To my knowledge, even though there has been a prohibition on targeting in the EEZ for over a decade, there have been no targeting specific cases that have been successfully prosecuted that didn't also include the possession of a striped bass. I think that in and of itself indicates how easily it is to enforce and prosecute.

MR. GARY: All right, thank you, Jeff. Madam Chair, my **motion would be to remove all nontargeting closure options for the ocean**, the coast only, and the Chesapeake Bay would be exempted. That is my intent, and Emilie, I don't know if you've got that captured in a different way. If that captures my intent, and I think it does, I would be happy to add a rationale if I can get a second to that.

CHAIR WARE: Let's see if you have a second. Matt Gates, so some rationale, Marty.

MR. GARY: The main rationale, of course, is the lack of enforceability. As Jeff mentioned, the LEC has come out about this pretty strong. I spent a lot of time talking to the Law

Enforcement officers at DEC. We've already seen the data from MRIP for Wave 6, we have a tremendous amount of effort in the fishery in Wave 6 on the south shore.

I've been out there, I've asked them point blank, if we put in a nontargeting closure, how do you see that playing out? They just can't write any tickets unless they are in possession. As Jeff mentioned, it applies in a lot of cases in the EEZ, et cetera. The enforceability is the main issue. I exempted the Chesapeake Bay because I spent a lot of my career working there.

I had a direct relationship to the nontargeting closures that were implemented in my previous agency at PRFC. Because of the extreme environmental conditions that occur during the summertime, the hypoxic volumes and the high-water temperatures, it's an incredibly arduous time for striped bass, and so I support the Bay jurisdictions desire to have those closures in place.

When I was at PRFC, I did have concerns about no targeting. I conveyed those to the Commission at the time; they implemented no targeting measures against my recommendation. I just wanted a closure there. But again, their measures in the Bay jurisdictions are because of these extremely hostile environmental conditions, so I support exempting them.

Then lastly, I would just say, I think the other thing that is missing here, and my other point for making this motion is, in my discussions with the public, they are not really exposed to a holistic discussion from this Board, a really robust discussion. I am hoping that a whole bunch of folks will add in their perspectives on this. I know there are perspectives that we are going to hear that will oppose this, and I think the public needs to hear this.

If the motion fails, that's fine, it stays in the document and then we'll have this debate again in October. But at least then the public will understand the different perspectives from the Board members. Then we'll have two discussions about this and not just one in October. That was

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my other rationale, I just would want to have a really good holistic discussion of this issue. I'll stop there.

CHAIR WARE: Marty, while you have the microphone, can I just get you to read that motion into the record?

MR. GARY: Yes, Ma'am. I move to remove no targeting closure options for the ocean.

CHAIR WARE: I'll go to Matt Gates as the seconder.

MR. GATES: Not a lot I can add to what Marty just said, other than I would like to get good productive comments when we go out to the public hearing. I think if we keep this in there, judging by what my inbox looks like right now, we'll get a lot of comments against this, and not really focused on collecting the productive comments later on. That's all.

CHAIR WARE: Please raise your hand if you would like to comment on this motion. I will start with Dave Sikorski and then Joe.

MR. SIKORSKI: Marty, those were spot on comments, and I really appreciate you bringing up your Chesapeake Bay experience, because that is germane to something we're talking about here today in Maryland's Baseline Proposal, which I support the changes on for some of those reasons. It's also, I think about our participation in the workgroup that talked about this topic.

The conclusion was that when environmental conditions support no targeting closures, we should be using them as a Board. But otherwise, they are not enforceable, and they are not likely to meet the conservation gains that we need. Quickly back to Maryland, because I have the microphone.

I mentioned at previous Board meetings for many years now about the impact that no targeting closures can have on the sport fishing

economy, especially portions of it that purposely try to target cold water periods or periods of the year when they know that their impact is limited. There is a lot we have to learn on that.

But I think it's important to remember that in a recreational fishing community and support the industries, especially the supporting components like the tackle shops, which are a key part of it. They are selling hope for people to go fishing. That is so important for our coastal economies up and down the coast.

In the Chesapeake Bay we've learned our lessons, we're hoping for some relief on that and there may not be a complete agreement on that today, or into the future. But as managers, I think we need to rise above some of the smaller details, and really recognize what we can or cannot impact that means something, to saving these fish and leaving more fish in the water, but not completely wiping out the economic opportunity, which drives the reason that we're here. I support this motion.

CHAIR WARE: Joe Cimino and then Emerson.

MR. CIMINO: Oddly, I'm going to say I agree with Dave, but completely disagree with this motion. My career started being a technician in both New York and North Carolina.

CHAIR WARE: All right, we're going to take a 30 second break for audio restructuring.

MR. CIMINO: The hero of the day is Katie. Just for the record, New York did that. I'm sorry, Madam Chair, I'll get back on track here. You know I've said this before. I feel silly that I have to keep saying it. But this is about winning hearts and minds. It's the only way to actually reduce the amount of effort.

To not have this discussion, to me, whether or not we go with no targeting closures is completely inappropriate. We have lessened, apparently, the amount of catch and release discard mortality. But at one point very recently, it was 50% of the total mortality, and as the question went to Emilie, this is

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the only way that we have a chance of addressing that.

I agree with Dave, that people need that chance to continue to fish for this species. I think if folks are conscientious and moving off of those fish at an appropriate time, then that is an entirely different discussion. I've been around enough that I've seen, and I don't disagree with Law Enforcement, but I don't like that they are treating this as a responsibility on them and not a management decision.

They can't enforce it, so please don't do it. Not necessarily asking you to do that. I've seen situations in Virginia, where you have gillnets that are sitting in the water forever, and it's just an abomination. You know you have lost gear for other species as well. There are egregious instances, where if you don't have something on the books and you can't do anything, it becomes almost an embarrassment to management.

I think that is another reason to have this discussion. Sure, maybe the case has never been made. But if any of you believe that the no targeting in the EEZ hasn't reduced the amount of effort in the EEZ, I would be shocked, and I would love to hear it. Because I think there is absolutely at the very least a shame factor of fishing in the EEZ.

Sure, yes, it comes to the actual tickets are based on possession. But that doesn't mean that we aren't explaining something else to the public. The fact that we need to reduce release mortality on this species, it's the only way to help this species. I can't imagine not taking that out to the public.

CHAIR WARE: I have Emerson and then Roy Miller, You're next.

MR. HASBROUCK: I'm opposed to this motion, and I think we should keep it in the document. But I look forward to this discussion around the Board today to hear what other people think,

and have a thorough discussion about this issue. I want to say at the start that my consideration for no targeting has nothing to do with different components of the for-hire fishery, nor how they are conducted.

That's not the issue. Emilie, there is a table in the Addendum, Table 3, yes, that's the table, thank you. In New York and most other states, you can see that 70 to 90% of the recreational striped bass trips were trips only releasing striped bass. Only 10 to 30% up and down the coast of striped bass trips retained any striped bass. The overwhelming percent of striped bass recreational trips are for catch and release only, 70 to 90% of the trips. In the table in the FMP review, you pointed out that in 2024 that 42% of the recreational mortality was from harvest and 42% from release mortality, so they are equal. We have half of the recreational fishing mortality coming from discards.

Further, we have 70 to 90% of the striped bass fishing trips are trips that only release fish, none kept. We're here again as a Board, discussing reductions in fishing mortality, because at the current rate, we're not going to have the 50% probability of rebuild by 2029. You know we're discussing a possible 12% reduction in fishing mortality through seasonal closures.

If the closures are only about no harvest, and do not include no targeting, we are only addressing one-half of the recreational fishing mortality, and only 10 to 30% of the striped bass trips in the ocean up and down the coast. We're only addressing half the problem. How do we address the other half of recreational fishing mortality in 70 to 90% of the trips?

We have over recent years reduced landings in the recreational fishery by 32%, but we have not addressed mortality of catch and release fishing. That mortality, discard mortality in the catch and release fishery is not reduced by slot sizes or minimum sizes or maximum sizes, or even seasons, if those closed seasons do not include no targeting.

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I know that no targeting is not enforceable, and I mean no disrespect to the Law Enforcement Committee, and I value and respect their guidance. But other measures such as circle hooks and no gaffing, are likewise almost impossible to enforce. But we adopted them to help the resource. A colleague who sat around this table for many years offered some advice.

Many of you know Jim Gilmore. Jim calls it the 80-10-10 Rule. For something that is difficult to enforce, 80% of the anglers will do the right thing for the resource and abide by the regulations. 10% won't really know what's going on or understand the regulation, and 10% will willingly violate it.

I've got faith that anglers conducting the 70 to 90% of striped bass trips will do the right thing, to do their part to help rebuild the resource. As Nichola just pointed out in her motion, all stakeholders need to participate in rebuilding. If no targeting is not the right measure to have the 70 to 90% of trips do their part to help get us to a rebuilt stock, then what is the approach? I'll be listening for an answer as we rebuild this stock.

CHAIR WARE: Roy Miller and then Mike Luisi.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: Without intentionally trying to be repetitious, I would want to harken back to what Joe said. I don't understand the nuance or the differences in having an EEZ no-targeting closure and not having a no-targeting closure just inside the EEZ. We've had a no targeting closure in the EEZ for a long time now.

As I recall it was originally a federal measure, but this Commission also used it as a management tool in the recovery of our stocks. As my colleague, John, pointed out, what's the difference between the EEZ and inshore waters? Therefore, I'll just sum up quickly. I kind of agree with what Joe and Emerson said in regard to the no targeting closures.

CHAIR WARE: Mike Luisi and then Bill Hyatt.

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MR. LUISI: In the interest of time, I will say that the comments that Joe and Emerson and others have made against the motion, I agree, and I support the comments that they made. The one thing that I'll throw out there that maybe could become part of a future discussion has to do with some sort of tradeoff for not doing no targeting closures.

We have a discard mortality issue; no targeting closures are one way to getting at that. If the public feels that that is too much, and they choose to do longer no harvest closures, perhaps the public that doesn't want to do the no targeting would be okay with trading off a bit of abundance. What I'm getting at that is the reference points that we use for management are set at a point that we've barely achieved our desired target abundance since the moratorium.

We've only just managed to kind of touch it and then we fell back down. I think by leaving no targeting in place in the Addendum, to go out to public comment, could be another mechanism to start having the discussion about what as a public are you willing to give to have the access, but maybe not the same amount of biomass that has been difficult for us as a Board to achieve, based on our management measures.

CHAIR WARE: Bill Hyatt and then Doug Grout.

MR. HYATT: I'm going to speak in favor of this motion, support of this motion. Not only are nontargeting closures unenforceable, but they also incentivize gamesmanship. They incentivize gamesmanship both in what anglers are willing to report about what they are pursuing, and they incentivize gamesmanship in what anglers are willing to report about what they caught.

It's not going to be every angler. Most anglers are going to remain to be honest. But there is going to be a significant number that under a no targeting closure are out there fishing for bluefish in our area, and if they happen to catch striped bass, they are going to be less than willing to report that striped bass.

I'm concerned that that type of gamesmanship further undermines the estimates that we're going to get, the estimates that we rely upon throughout MRIP, through our angler surveys. That adds on, in my mind, to the unenforceability, and there is a very strong reason for not going in this direction. Again, I support the motion.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout and then Dennis Abbott.

MR. GROUT: I would support this motion to try to make it a little bit more manageable, but I certainly could understand if we went with getting rid of one of the two types of nontargeting closures. I also wanted to make a point that I think the catch and release probably has done things to reduce catch and release mortality by a large percentage of them going to circle hooks. We just don't get credit for that savings, because we don't have the ability to look at the percentage of people actually doing it and how to apply that to the MRIP estimates. There is a recreational catch and release public has been trying to reduce recreational release mortality. The other argument that I have, at least in our little northern part of the range is, that really inshore there isn't any other options, except for a tiny bit of flounder fishing in Wave 3, and a tiny, tiny, tiny bit of bluefish that show up in August. If we were to go to a no targeting, we would essentially really end up with people not fishing within the inshore area of New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: I have Dennis Abbott and then Chris Batsavage.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: I'm quite conflicted over this particular issue at this time. When I arrived at this meeting, I was pretty much in favor of supporting a motion like this, if it would appear. In New Hampshire, as Doug just quoted, if we have a no-targeting situation, people might as well tie up their boats and not go fishing, because there is nothing to go fishing for.

But again, we're only one part of the fishery. I will support this motion. We'll probably end up nulling this out, or whatever. But I think that it's worth sending it out to get more public opinion. This probably could be the most effective way of achieving a savings in the fishery. Again, that is where I stand on this.

CHAIR WARE: Chris Batsavage and then Nichola Meserve.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, I support this motion for many of the reasons given, kind of adding to that. The unenforceability and concerns over compliance, I worry about the assumptions made that a shorter number of days are needed for a no targeting closure, as opposed to a no harvest closure. I don't know if that will come to pass in the ocean, as opposed to in the Bay.

Similar to Doug's comments, about gear modifications. The Release Mortality Workgroup talked about gear modifications, and decided that research isn't quite ready for management yet. But we know that it is being voluntarily applied and adopted by anglers. You know looking at the Mass DMF study and modifying lures to reduce the chances of mortality of fish that are released.

It adds a lot of uncertainty, as we're relying on an unknown amount of voluntary action, as opposed to regulations. I think until we have more concrete information on gear modifications, that is probably the best approach for now, as opposed to this large scale no targeting closures that really haven't worked in any other situations.

CHAIR WARE: Nichola Meserve and then David Borden.

MS. MESERVE: Most of my points have been made about the enforceability and uncertainty in savings calculations. But I did hearken back to the Recreational Release Mortality Workgroup report, and their comments that no targeting closures are more enforceable when they are implemented in discrete times and areas, and where there are few other species to target. That is really not the case

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that we're envisioning them in this document, or the closures for fishing in general. I don't think that is something we want to start talking about right now. But it does get to the point of what does no targeting, have you defined no targeting, and how would each state define no targeting in the regulations? That is not something that we've talked about yet, and I know there is a bit of controversy about how you define no targeting, and how those enforcement cases are made.

But Chris got to my last point, really, about the fact that no targeting closures are not the only tool that we have to reduce release mortality. That might be all that is in the document right now, but we are conducting research in Massachusetts to try to get to some quantifiable savings from different types of tackle choices that could be made.

I am looking forward to, I am sure there is going to be more discussions about that in the future. But for the time being, you know the equity concerns that are presented with harvest closures alone, I just think that they are outweighed by the compliance enforcement and calculated savings that come along with the no targeting closure options. I do support the motion.

CHAIR WARE: David Borden and then Adam Nowalsky.

MR. BORDEN: I support the motion, Marty's motion for the logic. It's the same logic he echoed. I'm not going to repeat it. But other than to say, that I think we disregard the advice of our Enforcement Committee at our own peril on this particular issue. They basically said, it's unenforceable, and they've given us good logic for that position.

I think we should heed the advice. I also note, as Nichola and others have noted, that the coastal fisheries are multispecies fisheries. It's not unusual to catch five or six different species in the same school of Bay anchovies, if you're

fishing off of that. I think that it's almost impossible to avoid having a bycatch of bass in that type of situation.

The final point is that I think the exemption for the Chesapeake states is warranted, because a lot of those states, Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission have gone to great extents over the last four or five years on educational programs, to try to lower the discard mortality. They are working on the issue, particularly in the high-water temperature regime, which staff analysis are analysis by Mass Marine Fisheries, basically, indicated that that was a problematic timeline. I think this is a justified motion, I hope it passes.

CHAIR WARE: Adam Nowalsky and then we're going to go to the public.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: From the five-year period from 2017 to 2021, as we saw earlier, release mortality exceeded harvest mortality. After a brief flip in 2022, those two lines have now trended back together again, and we saw in 2024 that once again, recreational release mortality equals recreational harvest mortality.

If that trend continues, we'll be back to killing more fish for the sake of catch and release, not actually using them through harvest. I truly question that utilization of any resource. Hearing the conversation around the table thus far, we've heard comments that this concept of no targeting should at least go out to the public. We've heard concerns about perhaps the conservation benefit is expressed as too great in the document. I'm actually going to seek a middle ground here, Madam Chair, by making a motion to substitute, and my motion to substitute is to remove the no targeting options for the ocean, with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated.

CHAIR WARE: All right, give us a second. We're going to pause on going to the public for right now, given we've got a new motion, but we will get on that. Adam, we're getting the recommendation that this might be better as a motion to amend,

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adding just that you're specifically removing one type of the no targeting closures. Are you okay with that?

MR. NOWALSKY: Yes, I believe that captures my intent satisfactorily, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Can I get.

MS. FRANKE: I just want to sort of double confirm, so you want to remove that first column from the table, right, and keep the furthest two?

MR. NOWALSKY: Technically, it's the middle column from the table, but it is the first of the no targeting columns.

MS. FRANKE: Perfect, thank you.

CHAIR WARE: While you're at it, Adam, can I get you to read that into the record.

MR. NOWALSKY: **I move to amend to include, with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated at the end of the sentence.**

CHAIR WARE: You have a second from Emerson Hasbrouck. Any additional rationale, Adam?

MR. NOWALSKY: Again, I just want to reiterate that there has been a lot of conversation around the table about whether or not these trips would actually occur. I think the concept that people will be out targeting something else is really more realistic here. I think this strikes a reasonable middle ground, hearing the conversation.

That we want to get some more conversation, and hear from the public about the impacts of the release mortality on the conservation of these species, while putting forth to the public that we more accurately understand what the impact of this actually will be, and how angler behavior will actually take place on the water.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson, as the seconder, any brief rationale?

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, I'll be brief. This really coincides with what I said before in opposition to Marty's motion. This is even consistent with that, but we're still keeping in a component about no targeting. I think this probably eliminates the least realistic reduction that we would get from those two different scenarios.

CHAIR WARE: We've had a really robust discussion so far. I'm going to see if folks who have not commented previously on the no targeting topic, would like to comment on the motion to amend. Daniel Ryan, did you want to comment? Go for it.

MR. DANIEL RYAN: I will support this motion. I was prepared to oppose the previous motion. I totally agree with the comments from Joe and Emerson. I do believe this is not scientific at all, but when Maryland closed the spring trophy season, one of my shameful hobbies is to watch Facebook Marketplace for fishing gear.

There was a flood of fellows who were getting rid of all of their big, trophy recreational fishing gear at a cheap price, so I got some of that. Now, I use them to create fun little mobiles for my baby grandbabies right now, in a fisheries theme. That's about all they are worth. While I agree with the Law Enforcement assessment that it is not enforceable, angler attitudes and behaviors do change, based on law.

There is a large portion of anglers that will simply do the right thing because it's a law. I've seen that as one who fishes the Bay often. I've seen that as one who used to fish bass tournaments. I've fished my whole life, and just as Mr. Q was offended when there were assumptions made about the commercial community, we should be equally offended when we make assumptions about how the recreational angling community will respond when there is a law put in place, so I can support this motion.

CHAIR WARE: Any Board members who have not spoken on no targeting closure topic in general yet? Okay, we're going to go to the public. If you would like to make a comment in the room, please raise your hand, and/or on the webinar. Mike, you can kick us off there, Mike Waine. Just to clarify, we're going to take one in the room, one on the webinar, two minutes each.

MR. MIKE WAINE: Two minutes. I appreciate the discussion on this topic, interesting justification from the original motion maker that has kind of a double go at it here. I'm pretty torn. I do not like no targeting closures, because of the economic impacts it would have to the tackle shops, that as Mr. Sikorski said, you know sell fishing tackle to the hope of going out and catching fish.

But at the same time, we're trying to rebuild this fishery, or excuse me this population. The release mortality represents 50% of the total mortality, give or take. How will we rebuild if the Board does not take action to address 50% of the mortality? Is it realistic? It's not just no targeting. This document also considers not taking a reduction on the commercial fishery, which would be another 10% of the mortality.

It also looks at giving the for-hire fleet a conservation pass, which is another few percentage points. This document considers not taking a reduction on 60 plus percent of the total mortality in this fishery, and yet we're still planning to rebuild. Nobody is even talking about that. They're talking about the enforceability. How will we do this? How will we rebuild this fishery, turning a blind eye to the mortality? I don't have a good solution, but I don't think, I guess I'm out of time.

CHAIR WARE: I see Charles Witek, the first hand raised on the webinar. Charles.

MR. CHARLES WITEK: One of the points that people seem to miss is that there are no better or worse types of mortality. A lot of the times for the recreational fishery, we keep focusing

on, well we have to reduce release mortality. No, we have to release total mortality. Whether the best way to do that is to reduce harvest mortality or release mortality, we just want to go to the most effective way.

A dead bass is a dead bass, which from an economic perspective maybe we're better off using that bass, theoretically eleven times before it dies, if we believe that 9% perspective, the 9% figure, rather than killing it once and taking it away from the public. Actually, release fisheries are more economically beneficial, and when the stock is as low as it is now, we probably should be saying, how can we get the greatest benefit from what we have?

That doesn't mean ending a harvest fishery completely, but it means showing the release fishery some respect. Because I can tell you, the enforceability issue is very real. Right now, in the EEZ in November, you can go off my inlet, Fire Island Inlet, and if the bass are in the EEZ, you will see five- or six-party boats surrounded by 50 to 100 private boats, fishing in the EEZ and ignoring the reg completed.

It's nice to think people will do the right thing, they won't. With striped bass being the only fish available in much of the northeast, and the only fish often available to sport fishermen, because the blue fishing is terrible. If you make an assumption that the no target is going to reach the reductions you think it's going to reach, the measure is bound to fail, because a lot of fishing will be going on. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Charles. All right, well, Marty, your goal was robust discussion. I think we have exceeded that. Congratulations on that. I am going to call a caucus. One minute caucus, because I know, I think Maine needs to caucus. We'll come back and vote. I'm going to ask folks to take a seat.

As a reminder, we are voting on the motion to amend, in this case. All the states, or jurisdictions, I should say, in favor of the motion to amend, we are still caucusing. Okay, we are now ready to vote. As a reminder, we are voting on the motion to amend.

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All jurisdictions in favor of the motion to amend, please raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, NOAA Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service and New Jersey and Rhode Island.

CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.

MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Maine.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions? Any null votes?

MS. KERNS: New York.

CHAIR WARE: The motion to amend passes 9 to 6 with 1 null vote. We're going to give staff a second to rejigger the screen here for our main motion. I'm just going to go to Emilie now. All right, we're going to Emilie.

MS. FRANKE: Just to be very clear. This is only for the ocean, this main motion is now proposing to eliminate one of the no targeting assumptions for the ocean. For the Bay we still have both assumptions in the document. Just clarifying where we are. Obviously, this motion hasn't been voted on yet.

CHAIR WARE: I'll go to some hands. Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: This is my problem to start with is assumption means a couple of things to me. But by removing that one column in the table, what does that do to the rest of the table? The amount of days gets reduced to meet the 12% or whatever it is, it doesn't affect the rest of the table at all?

MS. FRANKE: Right, so in the document there is a column for how many days you have to close for no harvest. There is a column for how many days you have to close for a no targeting,

assuming all striped bass only trips are eliminated, and there is a column showing how many days you have to close for no targeting. If you assume people just switch target species. By removing one column, you're just taking that assumption off the table, so you are still left with a no targeting closure, but your assumption is they switch target species.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout.

MR. GROUT: Would I be able to make a motion to amend this?

CHAIR WARE: Yes, you can.

MR. GROUT: I would like to make a motion to amend that we have a no targeting closure option that would split the difference between the striped bass trips, switch targets and striped bass only trips are eliminated, essentially have a new column that would average the two. I'll be glad to give, if I can get a second to this motion, I will be glad to provide my rationale behind it.

CHAIR WARE: Two clarifying questions, Doug. Is this for the ocean or ocean and Chesapeake Bay?

MR. GROUT: Ocean.

CHAIR WARE: Ocean, and is it a straight up average between the two numbers?

MR. GROUT: Yes.

CHAIR WARE: Give staff a second, and we will get that on the screen. Doug, could I get you to read that into the record, please?

MR. GROUT: Move to amend, replace the two sets of recreational no targeting season closure options for the single set that averages the results of the two existing sets for the ocean.

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to this motion? I am not seeing a second to the motion, Doug, so the **motion fails for lack of a second.** We are back to the motion to remove the no targeting closure option for the ocean, with the assumption that

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striped bass only trips are eliminated. Are there any other modifications that are proposed to this motion? Does anyone need a caucus on this motion? Maine needs to caucus, thank you for that indulgence. I think we're ready to vote on this motion. **All those in favor of this motion, please raise your hand.**

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, DC, Delaware, Maryland, Maine and New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: Anyone opposed?

MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions? Any null votes?

MS. KERNS: New York.

CHAIR WARE: The motion passes, 12 in favor, 3 opposed with 1 null vote. I am aware of, I think one more motion on this section, in regards to the Chesapeake Bay options. Is anyone interested in making that motion? This is, I think, for size limits. Dave Sikorski.

MR. SIKORSKI: Move to remove in Section 3.4, Option B; Chesapeake Bay Options CB2, CB3, and CB5, which I think is consistent with what I provided staff, but my notes have gotten messy.

CHAIR WARE: All right, give us a second here. Great, you read that into the record. That's a motion by Dave Sikorski, is there a second, by John Clark, thank you. Dave, some rationale?

MR. SIKORSKI: Yes, I think as we look to some of the different options with the size limit changes, they are confusing, having them be different between different portions of the recreational fishery is an issue. The public has long opposed that in the Bay. I've heard from a lot of people that would not like that difference

between the different opportunities to go recreational fishing.

To trim down the document and stick with what is a consistent, and I think reasonable size limit option. We will continue to have CB1 and CB4, which provide two different options for the public to weigh in on for Chesapeake Bay measures, but remove some of these ones that divide our community.

CHAIR WARE: As second, John, any rationale?

MR. CLARK: No, I just wanted to give Mr. Sikorski, who knows the fishery so well, a chance to explain why he made the motion.

CHAIR WARE: Just want to clarify, this is removing mode split options in the Chesapeake Bay, so everyone knows what those options are. Looking for comments from the Board on this motion. No comments. Do folks need time to caucus? Okay, I think we're ready to vote. I don't want to rush folks, but we need to caucus. Okay, 30 second caucus. While folks are maybe still caucusing, I do think we've had a hand raised from the Board on a comment, so Mike Luisi, I'll go to you for a comment. If folks still need to caucus after that just raise your hand.

MR. LUISI: I wasn't caught off guard by this, but Dave and I have been talking, and I understand the rationale about keeping the Chesapeake Bay section clean, not having any type of sector split in there. We talked at length about bag limit differences, and now we're at a point where we're talking about size limit differences.

While I think that they would be very challenging for us to implement, I would like there to be some ability for the public, the charter public to comment on those options that provide them additional flexibilities in moving into 2026. Therefore, I'm not going to support this motion to remove all three of those options, just because I would really like to have a discussion, and have something for the public to comment on regarding those splits in the Bay.

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CHAIR WARE: Nichola, comment?

MS. MESERVE: I feel like I'm wading into something here. I think the PDT did raise a concern, I believe with Action CB2, because it has different minimum and maximum size limits in between the two modes. I also kind of question whether the juice is worth the squeeze of Option CB5, where it's only a one-inch difference in the slot limit. I think my preference would be if there is interest from Maryland to keep one option in there, to have it be CB3. I would **move to amend to remove CB3 from the prior motion.**

CHAIR WARE: You have a second from Mike Luisi, so just give us a second to get that on the screen.

MS. FRANKE: To be clear, you want to remove CB3 from the motion, not from the document.

CHAIR WARE: Okay, so we have a motion to amend on the screen. Motion by Ms. Meserve, do you have any additional rationale, Nichola? I'll check in with Mike Luisi. Any rationale on this?

MR. LUISI: Yes, thank you, Nichola. I was going to do the same thing. I was waiting to see if anybody else had any other comments. But I certainly agree, and I think this leaves in the option to generate the discussion around split modes in the Bay for this Addendum.

CHAIR WARE: Comments from the Board. Pat Geer.

MR. PATRICK GEER: I actually have a question. Our stakeholders have routinely said they are not interested in a mode split. If that happened to pass, would we be mandated to do the mode split, or can we just keep both for-hire and private the same size limits?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, you could not do a mode split, we would just need to confirm that whatever you're choosing for all modes is more

conservative or the same as what's proposed in the option.

MR. GEER: All right, thank you.

MS. FRANKE: On the screen now, I know we've been just talking about the option numbers here. The options, just to remind you what we're looking at for the Chesapeake Bay.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments from the Board on our motion to amend? I'm not seeing any. Does anyone need time to caucus? No, okay, we're going to call the question on this. **All those in favor of the motion to amend.**

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and then Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, DC, Maryland, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: Any opposition? Any abstentions?

MS. KERNS: Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries.

CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? All right, so the motion passes in favor with 14, and 2 abstentions. I'm just waiting for the amended motion on the screen, and then we'll continue conversation. Okay, so we have our amended motion here. Does anyone need to caucus on this? Is there any opposition to this motion?

Seeing none; this motion passes by unanimous consent. I should check, is there any abstentions? Not seeing any. Okay, motion passes by unanimous consent. We are rounding the corner, the end of our percent reduction conversation. I just wanted to check in. Something the PDT applied was the area specific fisheries in the Hudson and Pennsylvania.

I think how it would work as it is currently written; those areas could submit proposals for whatever the percent reduction is that ultimately passes in

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this document. If that is not what folks want, this would be the time to be discussing that. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I don't have a problem with that; I just wish the document would point out that the Delaware CE fishery is different than the other two. As pointed out in the document, it does have MRIP coverage, so we have that. But also, it is pursued during July and August on resident striped bass, where the other two fisheries are actually.

Again, I'm not criticizing them. But they do take place during the spawn. They do expose striped bass to being hooked and released during the spawning season. I just wish that I can make that clear, because I think our fishery is one that is different qualitatively than the other two.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so I think some of that language is in the memo, so we can take language from the memo and add it to the Draft Addendum.

CHAIR WARE: You have another motion? Okay, go for it, Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I just want to check, so we removed one set of the no targeting calculations for the ocean, but we didn't address it for the Chesapeake Bay. Given all the uncertainties that there are with the calculations for no targeting closures, I would like to make the same motion for the Chesapeake Bay.

Remove the set of, maybe you can help me track this case on the other motion, but to remove the set of Chesapeake Bay no targeting options that are based on striped bass only trips being eliminated. That narrows down the two columns in the same way that we already have for the ocean targeting options.

CHAIR WARE: All right, give us a second on that. Nichola, can I get you to read that into the record?

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MS. MESERVE: Thank you for helping me wordsmith. **Move to remove no-targeting closure options for the Chesapeake Bay with the assumption that striped bass only trips are eliminated.**

CHAIR WARE: There was a second by Doug Grout. Any rationale, Nichola, in addition to what you said? Doug, any rationale you want to provide?

MR. GROUT: Just that it makes the document a little bit simpler and clearer.

CHAIR WARE: Any comments on this motion? Seeing none; oh, Mike, do you want to make a comment?

MR. LUISI: If you're calling on me, I can try to come up with a comment. I wasn't necessarily ready for this one, but what I will say is that Chesapeake Bay and the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay is a different animal than anywhere else on the coast, when it comes to striped bass intent, or intentions for striped bass fishing. I feel like when we have striped bass only trips eliminated. Some of the fishing is striped bass only trips. That's all the trips that there are.

By removing that portion out of there, I feel like we're not capturing the fishery, the reality in the fishery that we have in Maryland. I would prefer to leave that in there, because so many of our trips are focused on striped bass. If striped bass is closed the trip does not happen. They are not going out looking for some other type of resource. With that point, I'm not going to support the motion to remove that from the options in the Bay.

CHAIR WARE: Joe Cimino.

MR. CIMINO: I don't disagree with Mike; I spent plenty of time there. I think that they are in a different situation than what we're seeing in the ocean fishery. I do think that in a lot of the instances, the number of days is so small, that I think it's at least a reasonable motion, and I do support it. I do think, with all due respect to the group that put this together, these are very tough

assumptions. In general, I support the notion that people may still be fishing. Since the number of days are so small, in most instances, I would support it.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments? Does anyone need a caucus on this motion? Seeing none; we are going to call the question here. **Everyone in favor of the motion, please, raise your hands.**

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, DC, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.

MS. KERNS: Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission and New York.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions? Any null votes? Maryland, do you want to clarify what your vote is?

MR. LUISI: Yes, I'm sorry, I was taking notes. We vote no.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you. The motion passes 12 to 4. The last thing that I have on my list is just returning to Nichola's comment from earlier about a sentence in the document regarding the range of alternatives on a number of days if it has dual wave closure. I think we can work with staff to include something like that. If there are any concerns with that, please let us know, otherwise we will work to craft that. Let's go to Matt Gates.

MR. GATES: Are they going to provide guidelines for how we would select it? Things like, sort of the two-week closure being sort of minimum. Is that something that would be included in that?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so that is a great point. Basically, from what Nichola was saying. When

final options are selected, so in October, if the Board is considering one of those options where you close in two waves. The Board can either choose to do the number of days that's in the table, which is spread evenly between the two waves, or the Board can choose to change how many days are in each wave. Maybe the Board wants to put more days in one wave and fewer days in the other. I just want to point out, and will point out in the Addendum that the total days closed might change, because it depends on the wave you're looking at. Let's say it's 25 and 25; that's 50 days total. If you start distributing it differently in different waves the total might change.

I just want to make sure that's clear, and to your point, I think based on the Board's decision at the May meeting, where the Board decided it should be minimum 14 days. It might make sense to say that it would have to be at least 14 days in a wave. Is that helpful?

MR. GATES: Yes, that clarifies it, thanks.

CHAIR WARE: Doug Grout.

MR. GROUT: A comment I was going to make on that, to help us make this decision at the Board meeting, it might be helpful if members of a state could get a copy of that table that does the calculations, so that we could kind of look at it ahead of time and caucus with whatever states you're going to be grouped with, to see if we can come up with something ahead of time, so that we're not sitting here trying to make the decisions at the actual meeting.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so I think leading up to the October meeting, Board members are thinking about these dual wave closures, and changing how many days are closed in each, or if they are thinking about an option where you want to close an entire wave, plus one of the adjacent waves, to definitely let staff know as soon as possible, so we can work with you to show you the calculations in advance. But yes, you can also share the spreadsheet if you would like.

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CHAIR WARE: Okay, just based on body language, I'm going to suggest we do a five-minute bio break again. Then we're going to come back and do commercial tagging, and then the Maryland Baseline Season and total length. Again, I'm going to ask if you have motions on any of those three topics, please provide those to staff. We will be back at 5:29.

(Whereupon a recess was taken)

CHAIR WARE: If we could get Board members back to the table, that would be great. Our next topic is going to be the commercial tagging. Just to kind of set the stage on what we need to talk about with commercial tagging. It was a question from the PDT about point of landing, so we need to discuss that.

They have a question about the North Carolina fisheries, and how they're incorporated or not into this. Then I do think we had a motion submitted from a Board member on this. I'm actually going to start with the North Carolian portion of this, and Chris, I'm just going to go to you as a representative of that state.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, it is my understanding that just through the more recent actions in this FMP that Albemarle Sound is not really connected to the management like it used to be in the past. However, as we consider tagging requirements, if we choose to go point of harvest or point of landing, whatever, as opposed to point of sale, and that is applied to the ocean portion of North Carolina. We would also apply that to Albemarle Sound as well. We wouldn't have two different tagging requirements for the commercial striped bass fishery in our state. We want it consistent. It will be much easier for enforcement and much easier for the commercial fishery to know that the requirements are the same, whether they are fishing in Albemarle Sound, if and when that fishery opens again, and in the ocean when fish decide to pay us a visit in our state waters again.

CHAIR WARE: I think the proposal I heard there is not to include Albemarle Sound in this, but just a recognition that North Carolina would expand whatever is decided on here to all of their fisheries for consistency. Is everyone okay with that? All right, not seeing any objection, so that is how we're going to proceed there. Next topic was the point of landing, and if we want to expand the point of harvest option to also include point of landing, so I'll see if there are any motions on that. John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Yes, I would like to move that point of harvest, point of landing, that both options be put in the document. I guess I would just move to include point of landing as part of the point of harvest.

CHAIR WARE: Great, just give us a second to get something on the screen here.

MR. BORDEN: He's making a motion, right. I'll second the motion for discussion purposes.

CHAIR WARE: Great, thanks, David. All right, John, could I just get you to read that into the record.

MR. CLARK: Certainly. **Move to add an option for tagging at first point of landing in Section 3.2.**

CHAIR WARE: There was a second by David Borden. John, any rationale from you?

MR. CLARK: Yes, as my colleague, Craig Pugh, pointed out as an actual commercial fisherman, that point of harvest can be dangerous for commercial fishermen that are attempting to make sure they get to their nets every day, so that there is not discard mortality. It makes things safer for them, and is a nice compromise between having to tag them right there, but still allowing enforcement to come right to the dock and check them there, and make sure.

I would just use our small state as an example. Our Natural Resources Police know where the fish will be landed. I think, Craig, you would agree with that, and that they can come to the point of landing and

check the fish there. As Craig said, It's a safety issue.

CHAIR WARE: David, any rationale?

MR. BORDEN: I just wanted to add, I seconded for discussion purposes, so John would have a chance. The only thing I would add a concern about it is that I think that ought to be defined, first point of landing. Is that what the intent is, John?

MR. CLARK: Yes, it is, Dave.

MR. BORDEN: It's prior to taking fish out of a boat.

MR. CLARK: Right, before the fish are on the dock.

MR. BORDEN: That needs to be clearly stated within the document, that's all.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, David, for that clarification. We're going to go to comments from Board members. Mike Luisi and then Craig Pugh.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, Madam Chair, I support the motion. I think with that definition of point of landing, I think we're in a good place. In the state of Maryland, we went through an exercise, trying to define when our tags on fish were to be placed. We started at the harvest discussion, and that led to us ultimately having a rule in place that requires those fish to have tags before they are landed.

Due to safety and other concerns, fishermen can get back to close to the dock or even before they tie off at the dock. They can stop what they are doing and tag the fish that they have. We went through all the discussion about the harvest, and realized that that was a really difficult enforceability issue with us. Therefore, I'll support this moving forward.

CHAIR WARE: Craig Pugh.

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MR. PUGH: Mike explained what our statute says, and it is before landing, not necessarily point of landing. I guess now is the time to decide what the language should read, and then what suits everybody the best. But that was our choice also, was before landing, before you put ashore was the understanding of the statute, and that seems to work for us.

It seems to work very well for us. It gives us a consideration of weather, it gives us time to call and size, so it works fairly well. But it also gives the opportunity before you put ashore for enforcement, for you to expose your catch, so they can check out serial numbers, the length, and whatever they need to know also.

CHAIR WARE: I have Nichola and then Emerson.

MS. MESERVE: I do support including this as an option. I just wanted to point out that we do have a small amount of shore-based commercial harvest, so the definition would have to be slightly different than before it comes off the boat for any shore-based commercial harvest. I would also point out that the perceived benefits of harvester tagging, that includes reducing high grading. You know that perceived benefit is not there when you're not tagging until the boat gets to the dock.

CHAIR WARE: Emerson and then Adam.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Madam Chair, but I did not have my hand up, sorry.

CHAIR WARE: Sorry, Emerson, was there someone else in that corner? Okay, Adam, and then Loren Lustig.

MR. NOWALSKY: Can you or Delaware again just clarify for me what we're doing to make this consistent with the Delaware regulation, which says, as I understand it, shall be tagged before landing is my belief from what I heard so far, and this says tagging at point of landing and then Nichola has got the concern. I just want to make sure whatever option we bring forward in this document is what is in the best interest of everyone

for consideration at the annual meeting. I'm not clear that it is as this is written.

MS. FRANKE: What I've heard is that tagging at point of landing essentially means point of landing is like the last possible time you can tag. It's, you have to have the tag on before you are offloading the fish, as Delaware says, before you put ashore. For the shore-based fishermen, it might be just immediately upon harvest. Just noting that if you're fishing from shore then it's immediately upon harvest. Does that make sense?

CHAIR WARE: Adam, any reactions to that?

MR. NOWALSKY: I think my request here tonight is just I have high confidence in staff, can work with the individuals affected here to make sure that the language encompasses all the needs, in order to make that option viable.

CHAIR WARE: Excellent. I echo that high confidence. Loren Lustig.

MR. LOREN W. LUSTIG: Just a point of clarifying. I believe someone here suggested that the word first appear just before point of landing. I think it was well received, but I haven't seen it put up on the motion. Is that a friendly motion to be considered?

CHAIR WARE: Would you like to make that a friendly motion, Loren?

MR. LUSTIG: Well, I'm not the originator of the idea, but I will do it as a motion if that is reasonable and acceptable, and if I get a second. Thank you.

CHAIR WARE: I think let's check in with John Clark. Do you have any concerns?

MR. CLARK: What was the actual? I heard Loren wanted to add a word to first point of landing, is what you said?

CHAIR WARE: That's correct.

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MR. CLARK: If that helps people understand what we've been discussing here, sure, that's fine.

CHAIR WARE: David, how do you feel about that?

MR. BORDEN: I was the one that suggested it. It's fine to put first, if it's okay with the maker of the motion we can simplify this and just put first point of landing, and then define what that is in the document, okay?

CHAIR WARE: Great, thanks, Loren. Those are all the hands I have. Any other comments from the Board? Seeing none; do folks need opportunity to caucus? No, I'm going to try, **is there any opposition to this motion? Any abstentions? All right, seeing none this motion passes by unanimous consent.** I think I had just received one more motion on commercial tagging. I'm checking in with that person to see if they would still like to make that motion.

MR. CLARK: I assume you're referring to the, yes, I just wanted to add some text. I guess, Emilie I know, was changing some of the wording because part of what I had added has already been eliminated from the document. In any event, I could start explaining the purpose of this was just to, as going back to when this has come up.

Once again, it's not to impugn commercial fishermen, and it's certainly not to criticize those states that have point of sale tagging now. It's just once again a question of enforceability and confidence that the commercial fishery is maintaining the quota. There is a lot of text there that I just wanted to add.

Make it as an unquantifiable reduction the closer we get to like the point of landing to tag the fish. My thinking again is, well I guess at this point, now that it's up there as a motion, just to add this text to the document, should I read it and then see if we get a second, or try to get a second first?

CHAIR WARE: Let's have you read it.

MR. CLARK: What I had originally requested putting this in there for was because there were options in there that already said there would be zero reduction to the commercial fishery. Just a little background. To justify that I just wanted some wording in there to say, and of course where it says require and tagging at point of harvest I had point of landing in there also.

Can be considered an unquantifiable reduction in commercial removals, because it strengthens the enforceability of commercial quotas. The Board has approved unquantifiable reductions and recreational removals in recent years, for example, the gaffing prohibitions 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 of striped bass removals, Option B, by providing an unquantifiable reduction in commercial landings justifies a smaller reduction for the commercial sector. If I can get a second, I would further elaborate on that.

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to this motion?

MR. CLARK: Well, in that case I guess I won't say anything up front.

CHAIR WARE: All right, so that motion fails for lack of a second, but I appreciate you reading it into the record nonetheless.

MR. CLARK: If I could just say once again, I know as we've discussed with recreational fishermen, most commercial fishermen are upholding whatever the rules are. But we know from millennia of experience with human nature that there are certain people, if you give them an inch they will take a yard, and if you give them a yard, they'll take a mile. Once again, the whole point of this is just to hopefully increase confidence of the public that the commercial fishery is only taking the

commercial quota, and I think that alerting the public to that is helpful.

CHAIR WARE: I'll check in. Any other motions from the Commercial Tagging Section? I'm not aware of any. Okay, excellent. We're going to move on to the Maryland Baseline Section. I have received a few motions on that. Dave Sikorski, do you want to kick us off?

MR. SIKORSKI: I would like to move to remove the 25% buffer option in that section.

CHAIR WARE: Great, give us a second here. I need you to read what is on the screen, the motion.

MR. SIKORSKI: **Move to remove Section 3.3 Option D, the 25% uncertainty buffer for the Maryland season baseline.**

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to this motion? John Clark, thank you. Rationale.

MR. SIKORSKI: As staff mentioned earlier in the presentation about this topic, when you look at the PSE it's below 30, it is not CE, plain and simple. Maryland, as I spoke about the last meeting, the DNR has worked through an important process with our recreational stakeholders, to discuss resetting our baseline, to provide different access and opportunity to address discard mortality in a different way.

From the lessons we've learned by having a season that is all over the calendar. The proposal in this document provides changes of seasons where waves change in MRIP, and I think that is something that I've learned for a long time is the best way to use MRIP, you know smaller than the wave level.

I think this gives us an opportunity to reset our perspective in the Chesapeake Bay moving forward. The buffers in some ways are almost punitive. If you look at what has already happened with reductions in effort, reductions in overall take, removals in the Chesapeake recreational fisheries, we're really doing our part to reduce our impact on this stock, or even going above and beyond that.

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I think additional buffers at the level of 25% are germane to conservation equivalency proposals like we've agreed to as a Board. But this isn't conservation equivalency. The 10% buffer does, by staying in the document, provides opportunity for the public to speak to a buffer, and that is specifically why I've only targeted the 25% for removal in this case. I would ask your support.

CHAIR WARE: I'll go to the seconder, John Clark. Any rationale?

MR. CLARK: Well, I once again wanted to, unlike myself, I didn't think Dave would jump in and give an explanation without a second. I wanted to make sure he had a second, and I thought he made some good points there. Thanks, Dave.

CHAIR WARE: We're looking for Board comments on this motion. Adam Nowalsky.

MR. NOWALSKY: Just looking for a memory refresher here about any PDT comment. The buffers were percent buffers of reduction, as I recall. We took out the 18% reduction, so we're left with the 12% reduction. The only buffer potentially left now in the document is 10% of 12%, which would be 1.2%. I'm just wondering, again if I don't remember, because it seems like days ago at this point, if the PDT had any comments about the viability of even having that small of a buffer at this point, and it being calculable. Is it being realistically attainable? I would appreciate any insight in memory refreshing.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so your math is correct, exactly. If Maryland were to implement their new baseline, and everyone is taking a 12% reduction, with the uncertainty buffer, Maryland would actually be taking a 13% reduction, because they're adding on that extra percent. The PDT didn't have a discussion on is that 1% or is it viable. I think that is a question to the Board, is whether they want to proceed with this buffer.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments from the Board? Nichola.

MS. MESERVE: I came prepared to oppose this motion, to remove that higher buffer level. The pooled Maryland data does all have TFCs lower than 30, but that pooled data gives you the daily catch rates, that as applied to the 2024 data, which does have TFCs at the wave level above 30, and also above 40, which would make it a non-viable CE proposal at all, because Amendment 7 doesn't allow CE proposals with TFCs and MRIP data with TFCs above 40.

While this is not a CE proposal, it is all the data you would use in a CE proposal, it has all the methods you would use in a CE proposal, it just is going through the Addendum as opposed to being a proposal. It is subject to additional scrutiny. You don't have to follow the Amendment 7 rule, but I am concerned about the uncertainty that is associated with the great number of seasonal changes that are in the Maryland proposal.

That said, we did just vote to use the more conservative assumption when it comes to calculating the no targeting closures. I do feel that that provides a little bit of buffer. I can support this, but I would also feel more comfortable if we removed the no buffer scenario from the document as well, which would leave us with one alternative option for Maryland that applies a small buffer to increase the likelihood that their baseline is net neutral, i.e. conservationally equivalent. With that said, I will move to amend to add Option B, which for clarity would be the no buffer option.

CHAIR WARE: We have a motion to amend by Nichola. Once it's fully typed, I'll have you read it into the record.

MS. MESERVE: **Move to amend to add Option B, Maryland Baseline with no buffer at the end of the sentence.**

CHAIR WARE: Is there a second to this motion? Doug Grout. Any additional rationale? Doug, any rationale from you as the seconder?

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The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

MR. GROUT: Yes, in addition to what Nichola had said. The other thing that I was concerned about with the very good proposal that they had to change the seasons, and I certainly support that. But one of the assumptions is that when we go from a no targeting to a catch and release, that there is going to be no change in the number of trips.

Even the Technical Committee had concerns about that assumption. But they didn't have a quantifiable way of determining how much of an increase that increase in effort would be. Having a buffer like this kind of helps me feel fully comfortable with the Maryland proposal here.

CHAIR WARE: Any other comments on the motion to amend? Dave Sikorski.

MR. SIKORSKI: I used this word a moment ago and I think I'm going to use it again and it's punitive. I've been thinking about the margin of error and all the data we're using across this entire fishery. This is just a key case where Maryland is trying to reset things and provide some more balance, and we've got to give more. Now knowing that we're going to have to give more probably, when we all decide on the reduction in October.

Just simply the balance across the calendar that the baseline provides without a buffer is a, what most stakeholders agreed upon. We don't have 100% agreement. The majority of those that have been affected by the closures implemented in 2020, have made major efforts, to the point of actually organizing a brand-new recreational fishing group, guides group, because of the loss that they've had.

We're at the point with stakeholders arguing about one day here, one day there, which when we go back to our data we manage by is like almost embarrassing, one day here, one day there, 1% here, 2% there. I just simply ask that as we take this document out to the public, we stick with the original motion, we move forward

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with the baseline option that Maryland proposed, that works best for our stakeholders, and is most consistent with the months on the calendar. January 1st, catch and release. May 1st, harvest. We have a no target period that if we have to do reductions, I will support more no targeting reductions, to have the best impact possible in protecting these young fish, so they can recruit into the fisheries that the rest of the coast benefits from.

Harvest again September 1st. Balancing on the calendar is good for everyone, it is good for us in management moving forward. I think the motion to amend, takes that away and adds more on top of it. It mixes up our calendar even further, which is really the intent of us trying to present this baseline in the first place. I would ask your opposition to this motion in support of the underlying.

CHAIR WARE: Robert Brown.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN: I've got a substitute motion to put in.

CHAIR WARE: You cannot substitute on a motion to amend, so we need to dispose of the motion to amend first, and then I can go to you first.

MR. BROWN: Okay, thanks.

CHAIR WARE: Yes, no worries. Okay, I'm going to do a 30 second caucus and then we'll vote. Does anyone need additional caucus time? We're going to call the question, again this is on the motion to amend, so adding Option B to the end of the original motion. **All those in favor, please raise your hand.**

MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Connecticut, North Carolina, New Hampshire.

CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.

MS. KERNS: New York, New Jersey, Virginia, PRFC, DC, Maryland, Delaware, Maine.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, NOAA Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania.

CHAIR WARE: Any null votes? All right, so the motion to amend fails 4 to 8 with 4 abstentions. We're back to our original motion. I will go to Robert Brown for a substitute.

MR. BROWN: Yes, I would like to substitute that 3.3 to remove the Maryland new baseline from the Addendum III.

CHAIR WARE: Robert, can we get that read into the record, and just confirming, you want to remove that entire section from the Addendum, is that correct?

MR. BROWN: I wanted to remove the whole thing. Should I wait?

CHAIR WARE: Great, so I'll have you read that into the record.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Move to substitute, remove the entire Section 3.3 Maryland Recreational Seasonal Baseline.

CHAIR WARE: Thank you, is there a second to this motion? All right, I am not seeing a second, so that motion fails for lack of a second. We are now again back to our original motion to remove the 25% buffer option for the Maryland Season Baseline. Is there any further discussion on that motion? Does anyone need to caucus on that motion? We're going to call the question. **All those in favor of removing the 25% buffer option, please raise your hand.**

MS. KERNS: Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, sorry, wrong arm, just Virginia no North Carolina. PRFC, DC, Maryland, Delaware. Did I miss anybody? Maine.

CHAIR WARE: All those opposed.

MS. KERNS: New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island.

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board. The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

CHAIR WARE: Any abstentions?

MS. KERNS: Massachusetts, Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries.

CHAIR WARE: The motion passes, 10 to 3 with 3 abstentions. Are there any other motions on the Maryland Season Baseline? I'm not sure I'm aware of any others. Great. We'll move on to our final section, which is total length. I'm not aware of any motions on the total length section. Does anyone have a motion on that section? Excellent, so we are now to the point of considering whether to approve our document we've amended today for public comment. Would anyone like to make a motion to that affect? John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Please, let's do this fast. **Move to approve Draft Addendum III for public comment as modified today.**

CHAIR WARE: Mike Luisi seconded that. I just want to thank everyone's patience. We had a lot of motions today. I think we made good progress in making this a bit more manageable for the public hearings. I appreciate everyone's extra time here. Any rationale, John Clark or Mike Luisi, any rationale from you guys?

MR. CLARK: Yes, I think it's just time.

CHAIR WARE: Any need for discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Any abstentions? Motion passes by unanimous consent.** I suspect Emilie will be in contact with folks about the public hearing schedule, so if you could just be prompt in responding to her. I know we don't have a ton of time between now and annual meeting. This is a lot of work to go on the road. Please help her get those scheduled as quickly as we can. Doug Grout, do you have a comment?

MR. GROUT: Yes, as we get ready to go out to public hearing. I made the comment at the last meeting that because we've gone through six years at least of very poor recruitment, and even though we're using a Rowe recruitment scenario. I think

we have to be very clear to the public, that if we continue to have low recruitment beyond these six years, that even though we may achieve our target of rebuilding the stock, it will only be for a very short period of time.

Even though we're going through all of these options to try and reduce fishing mortality and improve our fishery, we could be, I think it's important that we really make this clear to the public that despite what we're going to go through here, we could end up below our target shortly after we get through, we attain it. Because I think we'll be in a new productivity scenario.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR WARE: Thanks, Doug, any other comments. I'll check in with Emilie. I think we've accomplished everything we needed, so we're looking for a motion to adjourn. Everyone's hand should be up, all right, excellent. We are adjourned.

MR. CLARK: Many thanks to the Chair and to the coordinators.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 6, 2025)



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Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Ten-Year Review Meeting Report

October 2025

State Commercial Tagging Contacts: Story Reed (MA), Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI), Caitlin Craig (NY), Jordan Zimmerman (DE), Jodi Baxter and 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 (PRT Chair, ASMFC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke (FMP Coordinator), Kurt Blanchard (Law Enforcement Committee Coordinator)

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board tasked the Plan Review Team (PRT) with reviewing the striped bass commercial tagging program since it has been over a decade since the program was implemented. Requirements for striped bass commercial tagging programs were implemented in 2013 via [Addendum III to Amendment 6](#) to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass and are maintained in [Amendment 7](#) (section 3.1.1).

The PRT and state commercial tagging contacts met via webinar on July 24 and July 30, 2025, with the following meeting objectives:

1. Inform the Board: Compile a summary of each state's tagging program.
2. Look Across Programs: Report any key observations and takeaways across programs, including common challenges faced by multiple states and the various biological metrics used to determine the number of tags for each season.
3. Share Information: Opportunity for states to share best practices and information on common issues, challenges, and solutions.
4. Streamline Reporting: Minimize duplicate information submitted in annual commercial tagging reports vs. annual state compliance reports. Confirm what information is most useful to law enforcement in tagging reports (e.g., tag color) vs. what is more relevant in state compliance reports (e.g., tag accounting).

Each state provided a written overview of their tagging program enclosed in the *Appendix* and presented an overview of their state program during the meeting. This report summarizes the subsequent discussion of observations and differences across state commercial tagging programs for striped bass.

FMP Requirements

[Addendum III to Amendment 6](#) was approved in 2012 to implement uniform, coastwide requirements for striped bass commercial tagging programs to be implemented in 2013 or 2014, depending on the state. These same requirements are maintained in the FMP currently under [Amendment 7](#) (section 3.1.1). While the coastwide FMP requirements were implemented in 2013 and 2014, many states already had commercial tagging programs in place, with some in place for decades preceding the coastwide FMP requirements.

The goal of the coastwide commercial tagging requirements implemented by the states is to limit the illegal harvest of striped bass by making it unlawful to sell or purchase commercially caught striped bass without a commercial tag. The FMP allows states to choose to implement commercial tagging at the point of harvest or the point of sale. Note that at the time of this report writing, the Board is considering whether to make a change that would require commercial tagging at the point of harvest or point of landing through Draft Addendum III. The Board is expected to make a decision on this topic in October 2025 with potential implementation in 2027 or 2028 if that change is made.

Per the FMP, states are 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 an accounting report for any unused tags prior to next fishing season to account for the disposition of all tags issued to that permit holder (used, unused, broken, lost, etc.). The FMP recommends that if permit holders cannot account for unused tags, then that individual will not be issued a permit for the next year.

The FMP outlines specific requirements for the tags themselves. Tags must be tamper-evident and valid for one year/one fishing season only. They must be inscribed with at least the year, state, and a unique number associated with the permit holder. When possible, the tags should be inscribed with the size limit. Tags must remain affixed to the fish until processed for consumption.

Each state is required to submit a commercial tagging report to the Commission every year by 60 days prior to the start of its commercial fishery. The reports are then shared with the Law Enforcement Committee. The report must include a picture of the tags for the upcoming season and a description of color, style, and inscription. The report must also include the number of tags issued/printed and the biological metric used to determine the number of tags. The report must also note any changes or issues with program implementation. An optional report component is to include tag accounting from the previous year (number of tags issued, used, returned, unaccounted for, etc.). At the time of the annual report submission, the previous year's tag accounting is often preliminary.

Meeting Consensus Point: The PRT and State Commercial Tagging Contacts agreed that including the optional preliminary tag accounting for the previous year is not a useful component of the tagging reports due to the preliminary nature of the information. Pending any objection from the Law Enforcement Committee, the group agreed that the annual state

tagging reports should no longer ask for that information and instead each state should provide near-final tag accounting in their annual striped bass compliance report submitted to the Commission.

Characteristics of State Tagging Programs

The PRT and State Commercial Tagging Contacts discussed key characteristics of the state tagging programs briefly summarized here. More details on how each state program operates are available in the state program overviews in the Appendix.

Varying Striped Bass Fisheries and Point of Tagging

Striped bass commercial fisheries vary widely by state, with different management systems (primarily whether or not a state manages with individual quotas), different gears, different seasons, and the number of commercial harvesters who participate in the fishery (Table 1).

As of the time of this report, three states implement commercial tagging at the point of sale, four states at the point of harvest, and one state requires two tags (one at the point of landing and one at the weigh station). It should be noted that while Maryland does tag at the point of harvest for some gears, other gears are required to tag by point of landing (see the definition in the following section).

Table 1. State Tagging Program Key Characteristics

State	Tag at Point of Harvest or Sale	2024 Commercial Tags Issued	2024 Participants Receiving Tags	Individual Fishing Quotas
MA	Sale	51,240	129	No
RI	Sale	10,030	18 plus Confidential # Floating Fish Trap	No
NY	Harvest	59,502	379	Yes
DE	Landing*	17,300*	165 ⁺	Yes
MD	Harvest	441,000 [^]	805 [^]	Yes
PRFC	Harvest	87,713	263	Yes
VA	Harvest	188,700 [^]	362 [^]	Yes
NC	Sale**	0	0	No

* Delaware's number of tags listed are the tags issued to and used by harvesters to tag before the fish are landed. Tags are also issued to weigh stations where a second tag is attached to each striped bass, such that each fish has two tags.

+ Delaware's gill net fishery (111 licensees) account for >99% of Delaware's commercial striped bass harvest; the remaining licensees (54 in 2024) are hook-and-line only licensees that often choose to transfer their allocated tags to the gill net fishery.

[^]Initial number of Maryland and Virginia participants receiving tags and initial number of tags issued, which may change during the season due to quota transfers/leases and requests for additional tags.

** North Carolina has reported 0 commercial striped bass harvest from the ocean in over a decade. No tags were issued or used. Tags are on hand to issue if fish come inside three miles.

For states that tag at the point of sale, striped bass must be tagged immediately upon receipt by the dealer. For states that tag at the point of harvest or point of landing, states have defined the following definitions of when the tag must be affixed to the striped bass:

New York: Immediately after removing said striped bass from their gear and prior to attending another piece of gear.

Delaware: Before landing or putting on shore.

Maryland: (1) Immediately to a striped bass harvested by hook and line; (2) Within 200 yards of the pound net to a striped bass harvested from a pound net; or (3) Before removing a striped bass from a boat or removing a boat from the water, to a striped bass harvested by any other gear.

Potomac River Fisheries Commission: As soon as feasible and in no event shall any commercially caught striped bass be removed from the Potomac River or from the boat at the point of landing, whichever occurs first, without said tag being permanently affixed. The words “as soon as feasible” as used herein shall mean for the i) Commercial Hook & Line fishery – as soon as the fish is taken and before it is put into the cooler or storage area; ii) Pound Net fishery – as soon as the fish are taken and before the boat leaves the net site; and iii) Gill Net fishery – as soon as each separate piece of net is fished and before the boat leaves the net site.

Virginia: At the place of capture, and before leaving the place of capture.

Biological Metric

For the biological metric to determine the number of tags for each season, all states use average weight to convert quota pounds to number of fish (i.e., number of tags). There is a varying degree of complexity for this calculation with some states accounting for different average weights by gear type, different average weights by individual harvester, and different types of quota allocation (e.g., equal shares, full vs. part shares). One state also takes into account the anticipated size of striped bass targeted for certain markets. States note there is inherent uncertainty in whether the next season’s average fish weight will be similar to the current season’s average weight. States account for this uncertainty by ordering extra tags to have on hand if more tags are needed due to smaller fish size. Some states with individual quotas did note that this uncertainty in average size can lead to issuing too many or too few tags resulting in quota overages or underages.

Tags Unaccounted For

Per the FMP, states require tag recipients (harvester or dealer) to return unused tags at the end of the season and provide an accounting report for any unused tags prior to the next fishing season to account for the disposition of all tags issued to that harvester or dealer (used, unused, broken, lost, etc.). After this tag accounting, there are some tags that remain unaccounted for, which are tags that are not returned and that have not been reported as

lost/broken. In recent years, these unaccounted tags comprise about 1% to 3% of the total tags issued for most states, with a few states around 5-6% in some years. During COVID in 2020-2021, there was a higher percentage of unaccounted tags in many states due to COVID-related challenges with the tag return and accounting process (e.g., disruptions to the typical in-person tag return and reporting protocols).

Common Challenges

Many states noted the increasing cost of tags in recent years and long lead time for tag production and shipping, which requires the number of tags for the next season to be calculated and ordered months in advance. A few states also noted occasional instances of tag quality issues and errors by the vendor that had to be addressed. Some states, particularly those with no gap between seasons (e.g., 2024 season ends December and 2025 season starts January), noted the challenge of planning for the next season while the current season is still ongoing. In that case, tag accounting for the current season cannot be completed before the next season starts and data from the current season, including the number of tags used and average weight, is still accumulating. Some states also noted that any changes to commercial quota decided by management late in the year make it difficult to plan for the next season, since adjustments to the quota changes the number of tags needed for the season and distributed to each tag recipient. One state also noted license renewal (when harvester pays for number of tags) occurs before the next year's quota is finalized.

In addition to the administrative challenges of planning for next year's tags as described above, the actual process of distributing tags, facilitating the tag return process, and completing tag accounting and auditing each year is administratively demanding and requires significant staff time for each state.

Differences Across Programs

The PRT and State Commercial Tagging Contacts identified differences across state tagging programs and how they are implemented as summarized here. Table 2 on page X shows these differences by state. More details on how each state program operates are available in the state program overviews in the Appendix.

Tag Distribution Process: In some states, the state agency itself orders the tags, the state agency receives the tags from the vendor, and then the state agency distributes the tags via in-person pick-up, state drop-off, or by mail. In other states, the tag vendor ships tags directly to harvesters after verification from the state agency on eligible participants to receive tags. Tags may be distributed by providing the harvester/dealer with all of their tags up front in one batch or tags may be distributed in small amounts throughout the season. In the case where the tag vendor ships directly to the harvester, it was noted that errors have been documented including the harvester receiving the wrong number of tags, or tags with incorrect unique serial numbers.

Physical Style of Tags: Some states use the standard plastic cap/ball style truck seals, and some states use the rectangular-grip truck seals with a metal locking mechanism. Both types are

marketed as tamper evident. One state noted past issues with the standard plastic truck seals where harvesters were able to manipulate the tag to remove it from a fish and then reuse the tag. The tag types may differ in tensile strength (tags with metal inserts often have greater tensile strength) which may affect the risk of tag breakage. For any tag type, there is a risk of tag breakage if the fish is picked up by the tag. Harvesters/dealers must report broken tags as part of their tag accounting.

Tag Reporting and Verification: In some states, striped bass harvest is reported in one harvester report. In other states, harvest is reported from multiple sources which allows for additional verification (e.g., harvester report and dealer report; harvester report and weigh station report). States also have different requirements for the type of information that must be reported for striped bass harvest. One state with point of sale tagging requires reporting on individual tags including the date of purchase, the weight of each individual fish, the tag serial number, the harvester name, and the harvester license number. Most states require reporting of the total number of tags used in addition to the total poundage. One state requires only the total poundage to be reported (not the quantity of tags used). Some Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions noted the difficulty of verifying tags used if fish are landed in a different state.

Consequences for Delinquent Tag Reporting: In most states, if a tag recipient has not accounted for all tags issued in the prior year, that harvester or dealer would receive a reduced number of tags from the state agency or no tags for the following year, depending on the degree of delinquent reporting. One state noted that while the agency can reduce the number of tags issued to a harvester based on unaccounted tags from the previous year, the state has not deducted any tags in recent years; this tag deduction mechanism was paused due to COVID-related issues and has not been reestablished. In two states, delinquent tag reporting is handled directly by law enforcement based on enforcement fines and commercial penalty schedule.

Personal Use: All states require striped bass that are kept for personal use to be reported. Some states also require bringing fish to a weigh station or dealer before taking the fish home for personal use. Five states do require fish kept for personal use to be tagged, and three states do not require fish kept for personal use to be tagged (and therefore are not counted toward the quota).

Meeting Consensus Point: The PRT and State Commercial Tagging Contacts noted there are several differences across states' striped bass commercial tagging programs. It seems that all states have recognized various state-specific challenges and have made an effort to address these challenges. Overall, the striped bass commercial tagging programs have successfully met the goals of the FMP to implement coastwide commercial tagging requirements. There are still ongoing challenges and potential improvements to be made.

Potential Changes for Point of Sale Programs (Draft Addendum III)

As of August 2025, through Draft Addendum III, the Board is considering whether to require commercial tagging at the point of harvest or point of landing instead of allowing states to

choose point of harvest or point of sale. The Board is expected to make a decision on this in October 2025 with potential implementation in 2027 or 2028 if that change is made.

This potential change would have the biggest impact on the three states that currently implement commercial tagging at the point of sale: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and North Carolina. Those three states noted anticipated challenges and program changes if they were to switch to point of harvest or point of landing commercial tagging. More detailed information from each of these three states are available in the state program overviews in the Appendix.

The potential change would require these three states to distribute tags to harvesters instead of to dealers. The three states noted their commercial fisheries are not managed via individual quotas and potentially thousands of harvesters could be eligible to receive tags, compared to dozens of dealers who currently receive tags. As an example, Rhode Island distributed tags to 18 dealers in 2024 for their general category fishery. If Rhode Island transitioned to point of harvest tagging, ~ 1,000 license holders have a license and/or endorsement that authorizes the commercial harvest of striped bass and therefore would be eligible to receive tags.

The three states noted concern about the staff capacity needed to administer the tagging program with that magnitude of increase in number of participants and number of tags. The three states also noted the difficulty of predicting how many tags each harvester would need since there are no individual quotas. This may lead to states either distributing too many tags at the beginning of the season with many tags going unused, or too few tags would be distributed and there would be many in-season requests for more tags which would be an additional process for harvesters and state staff. In either case, these states would have to order and distribute significantly more tags to accommodate a harvester tagging program.

Currently, Massachusetts' commercial striped bass fishery is open-entry with nearly 4,600 permits issued in 2025. To successfully administer harvester tagging, Massachusetts would potentially have to go to limited entry and reduce the number of participants to a more manageable number based on past fishing activity. This process could take up to two years. Rhode Island also noted additional concerns that tagging at point of harvest would slow down processing times for its floating fish trap fishery, which is a high-volume fishery processing a high volume of striped bass from each trap with the ability to quickly return any fish outside the size limit to the water. Increased processing time from harvester tagging may result in dead discards. Rhode Island also noted concern about less timely quota monitoring from harvester reports as compared with the current dealer reports that are updated within 24 hours of purchase with an incentive to report on time in order to receive any additional tags. Rhode Island also noted concerns about tags from inactive commercial licensees being used by recreational fishers and/or used out of season.

Massachusetts noted additional concerns about tag distribution and tag return processes since harvesters are more widespread throughout the states than dealers.

Meeting Consensus Point: The PRT and State Commercial Tagging Contacts agreed that switching a state commercial tagging program from point of sale to point of harvest or point of landing would be a significant change and states would need sufficient time to make all the necessary program changes.

Table 2. Summary of Differences Discussed Among Tagging Programs

State	Point of Tagging	# of 2024 Participants Receiving Tags	Tag Distribution Process	Reports Indicating Tag Use	Tag Information Reported	Consequences for Delinquent Tag Reports	Personal Use Fish
MA	Sale	129	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	End-of-season tag accounting report	None/Pounds of Fish only	No Tags for Next Season	Reported
RI	Sale	18 plus Confidential # Floating Fish Trap	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	Dealer Reports tag data that can be checked against harvester reports for date sold and pounds	For each tag used: date of purchase, fish weight, tag serial number, harvester name, harvester license number	Reduced or No Tags for Next Season	Reported
NY	Harvest	379	Harvester Receives Tags from Vendor Directly (Agency tells vendor how many tags for each person)	Harvester Reports and Dealer Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per trip	Reduced or No Tags for Next Season	Reported and Tagged
DE	Landing and Weigh Station	165+	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	Harvester Reports and Weigh Station Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per day	Reduced or No Tags for Next Season	Reported and Tagged

State	Point of Tagging	# of 2024 Participants Receiving Tags	Tag Distribution Process	Reports Indicating Tag Use	Tag Information Reported	Consequences for Delinquent Tag Reports	Personal Use Fish
MD	Harvest	805^	Harvester Receives Tags from Vendor Directly (Agency tells vendor how many tags for each person)	Harvester Reports and Weigh Station Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per day	Enforcement Fines/License Penalties Issued by Natural Resources Police	Reported and Tagged
PRFC	Harvest	263	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	Harvester Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per day	Reduced or No Tags for Next Season- 1:1 Tag Penalty	Reported and Tagged
VA	Harvest	362^	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	Harvester Reports and Dealer Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per day	Fines for missing tags that cannot be accounted for	Reported and Tagged
NC	Sale	0	State Agency Receives Tags from Vendor and State Agency Distributes	Dealer Reports	Quantity of Tags Used and Pounds of Fish per day	Enforcement Citations Issued by Marine Patrol	Reported (as of December 2025)

+ Delaware's gill net fishery (111 licensees) account for >99% of Delaware's commercial striped bass harvest; the remaining licensees (54 in 2024) are hook-and-line only licensees that often choose to transfer their allocated tags to the gill net fishery.

^ Initial number of Maryland and Virginia participants receiving tags and initial number of tags issued, which may change during the season due to quota transfers/leases and requests for additional tags.

Appendix

Enclosed are the state overviews of each striped bass commercial tagging program prepared for this commercial tagging review.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
Massachusetts

Massachusetts

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):

Open entry

2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):

Point of sale

3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags

If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.

Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Participants Receiving Tags
2020	170*
2021	131
2022	124
2023	128
2024	129

*In 2020, there was a spike in harvesters purchasing the Retail Boat Seafood Dealer permit in order to act as their own dealer and sell fish straight off the boat during COVID.

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

Rod & reel (no other gears authorized)

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota	Open Seasons*
Rod & Reel	35" minimum size	15-fish Boat-based permits, 2-fish for all other	683,773 lbs	- June 16–September 30: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, with Thursday added on August 1 if $\geq 30\%$ quota remains - October 1–November 15: Monday–Friday if quota remains

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* In 2024, the de facto season was Tuesdays & Wednesdays, June 16 –August 13 (2024 quota filled)

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

The Massachusetts commercial striped bass endorsement is an open entry endorsement. 4,555 endorsements have been issued in 2025. Typically, only about a quarter of issued striped bass endorsements are active in a year. The tradition of open access participation in this fishery has been intended to foster the cultural and historical aspects of the fishery and to support those that may be interested in pursuing fishing as an occupation or as a gateway to other employment in the marine economy. This works in MA given the highly restrictive rules on gear, season/days, and possession limit. Transitioning to point-of-harvest tagging in Massachusetts would necessitate DMF to limit entry and not renew the majority of permits given current administrative resources.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

An average weight of commercially harvested fish from the prior year is used to convert the current year quota in weight to number of fish. Generally, about twice as many tags are ordered as projected to be used to ensure sufficient supply under the dealer-tagging based approach. Tags are distributed to dealers who have declared their intent to act as primary purchasers of striped bass that year according to their prior year purchases, plus a buffer to minimize the need to fulfill in-season requests for additional tags. Buyers with no/limited history receive a minimum default number of tags. Requests for additional tags are fulfilled after reviewing the buyer's in-season transactions, with the amount of tags provided based on their activity level and remaining quota amount.

For example, for the 2025 season, an average weight of 22 lb/fish (based on preliminary 2024 landings/reported tag use and market sampling) was used to estimate that the Commonwealth's 2025 quota of 683,773 lb will require approximately 31,081 tags to fill. DMF ordered a total of 65,000 tags, allowing us to stage extra tags at both our Gloucester and New Bedford offices in case seafood dealers need more throughout the season. DMF reviewed the 2024 purchase history of each Primary Buyer authorized for striped bass purchases and established an initial tag issuance based on the total pounds purchased and an average weight of 22 lb/fish, plus a 20% buffer. Authorized primary buyers with no or limited purchase history received a default initial issuance of 20 tags. Subsequent tag issuances will be completed upon request based on the Primary Buyer's in-season transactions (as

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

documented by SAFIS dealer reporting records) and the remaining quota level. An average of 30 in-season requests for additional tags were fulfilled the prior two years.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	46,520	2.98% (1,388)
2021	46,760	1.78% (834)
2022	58,560	1.09% (640)
2023	54,560	1.05% (574)
2024	51,240	1.02% (525)

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

Tags are distributed during the month of May before the fishery opens in mid-June. Depending on dealer location, tags are delivered by DMF staff/Environmental Police, mailed, or picked up at a DMF office.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

No.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

No.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Approximately 2-3 weeks after the season closes, DMF mails an accounting report to each dealer that received tags during the season. The reports identify the number of tags issued to the dealer and the total weight of striped bass they reported purchasing, and asks for the number of tags being returned, the number of tags lost,

and the number of tags damaged. The signed accounting reports and any unused tags are required to be returned to a DMF office within 30 days. DMF staff follow up with phone calls, emails, and letters if needed. DMF then audits the number of tags returned against the calculated number of tags a dealer should have remaining based on the landings reported to the SAFIS database.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Discrepancies and delinquent reports are followed up on and dealers found out of compliance may be denied tags the following year. Denial of tag issuance occurs infrequently but the threat acts as a solid deterrent to violating the tag accounting requirements. Delinquent reports have most frequently originated from dealers with no or minimal striped bass purchasing history who receive the default allotment. Dealers who are out of compliance with their SAFIS dealer reporting requirements are not allowed to renew for the following year until their reporting is completed.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution: **During COVID, there was a significant delay in receiving our tag orders from Cambridge Security Seals. Over the past few years that delay is gone and we have received our tags in 2-3 weeks. Between 2016 and 2025 the cost of a tag rose from \$.05 to \$.0906. DMF pays for the tags.**

In terms of distribution, DMF staff now reach out to smaller dealers or dealers with no recent primary buyer history to confirm they want tags before staff drop them off. This minimizes the number of inactive dealers receiving tags and, consequently, the number of unused tags that need to be returned.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

We have found that it is much easier to recover tags and accounting reports if the striped bass season closes before Labor Day. After Labor Day, seasonal businesses close and we spend more time reaching out to businesses to recover tags. With our current quota, regulations, and fish availability the season has been closing prior to Labor Day for the past several years. Fishery dynamics in 2018–2020 that lead to the fishery not taking its quota and thus not closing until December 31

prompted DMF to adopt a November 15 default closure date to aid in tag accounting prior to the end of the year and the onset of the permit renewal season.

DMF's commercial harvester and dealer reporting forms collect the weight of striped bass sold, but not the number of fish, which necessitates the use of average fish weights to conduct tag accounting processes. Consideration is being given to modifying these forms to collect the number of striped bass sold. This would also aid in the enforcement of the striped bass possession limits (which are in numbers of fish).

Enforcement:

Other:

2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point or harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.

The biggest challenge for Massachusetts in transitioning to point of harvest tagging would be the open entry nature of our permit system. For the past three years we have issued over 4,500 commercial striped bass endorsements. At current staffing levels we could not administer a point of harvest tagging program to that many permit holders. We would likely need to limit entry and then reduce the number of permit holders to somewhere between 400 and 500. Administering a tagging program to that number of permit holders would be more feasible. Were DMF to limit entry to the fishery under a harvester tagging requirement, we do not anticipate adopting an Individual Fishing Quota management approach like every other point of harvest tagging state has (and already had when coastwide tagging was instituted). This means that DMF would likely be in a position of needing to either distribute many more tags than required to fill the quota or having to fulfill many in-season requests for additional tags (or both). Additionally, harvesters are more widespread throughout the state, including remote locations (i.e., Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket) than primary buyers, further burdening the process of tag distribution and return.

D. Program Successes

1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.

In recent years, DMF received feedback from law enforcement that in some instances striped bass were being dropped off at seafood dealers after hours and in some instances the harvesters were affixing the dealer tags to the fish themselves. In response to this, DMF updated its tagging regulations in 2024 to specifically require both the commercial harvester and primary buyer dealer be present at the primary sale and the fish must be tagged immediately. Law enforcement reports this activity stopped and some dealers started having staff stay later to accept fish after the regulation change.

2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

The current tagging program has been successful at increasing accountability at primary buyer dealers and throughout the supply chain. For example, untagged striped bass found at a restaurant or seafood market are easily identified as potentially illegal. This reduces the ability of harvesters to make “back door” deals and not sell to a permitted primary buyer. Law enforcement, however, still deals with illegal commercial harvest by both permitted and unpermitted harvesters at a modest level.



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Division of Marine Fisheries

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TO: Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, ASMFC

FROM: Nicole Lengyel Costa, RI DEM, Striped Bass TC Member

DATE: July 18, 2025

SUBJECT: 2025 Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

Please find a copy of Rhode Island's 2025 overview of the striped bass commercial tagging program. Red text throughout this report indicates confidential data. All floating fish trap data, and total commercial pounds landed are confidential. If you have any questions, you may contact me directly at 401.423.1940.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

RHODE ISLAND

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):
RI has a limited entry fishery. New licenses are only issued based on the retirement of existing licenses. An exit:entry ratio and detailed prioritization for issuance can be found at: <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/250-90-00-2>
2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):
Point of sale. Several harvesters are also licensed dealers; therefore, some tagging is already occurring at point of harvest.
3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags
If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.
Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Participants Receiving Tags	
	General Category	Floating Fish Trap
2020	23	3
2021	20	C
2022	18	C
2023	18	C
2024	18	C

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):
General category: All gears except gillnet and floating fish trap are allowed. The most common is rod & reel.
Floating fish trap: Restricted to floating fish traps.
5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota	Open Seasons
General Category	34"	5 fish pp or 5 fish/vsl	84,465	6/11 – 6/20; 7/9 – 12/31*
Floating Fish Trap	26"	Unlimited**	54,002	4/1 – 12/31

* Closed Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday throughout. Only open until quota reached.

**Once eighty percent (80%) of the seasonal allocation is projected to be harvested, the possession limit shall be five hundred (500) pounds per floating fish trap licensee per calendar day.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

The general category (GC) fishery is typically less than 14 days, it was only 8 days on 2025. The GC fishery operate in June – early July and then closes. In some years when the floating fish trap (FFT) quota is not fully harvested by September 15, the RIDEM may transfer pounds to the GC and re-open the GC fishery. There is typically a 2-3 month closure before a GC re-opening. As a result, dealers keep their unused tags after the initial closure because they may need them again in the fall for a re-opening. During this closure period, it is common for tags to be inadvertently discarded or lost.

For 2025, we will be encouraging dealers to return unused tags after the initial GC closure to avoid tag losses. We will then re-issue tags in the fall should the fishery re-open.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

Number of tags printed: Based on the striped bass biological data collected in 2024, the average weights of general category and floating fish trap striped bass were used to estimate the number of tags needed. Based on our Amendment 7 quota (148,889 lbs; 90,822 lbs GC; 58,067 lbs FFT) that would equate to ~4,000 general category and 10,000 floating fish trap tags respectively. The DMF always orders extra tags for a buffer as the number of tags used each year can vary with fish size.

Number of tags issued: Dealers are given an initial allotment of tags based on how timely their reporting was the previous calendar year, e.g., 25-200 tags at a time. Dealers may receive additional tags only if they submit tag reports for each tag they have already used and are up to date with their required Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) reporting requirement. Dealers are required to report to SAFIS within 24 hours of purchase so staff can accurately track the commercial quota. If a dealer fails to report in a timely fashion, their allotment amount will be reduced.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	13,760	7%
2021	13,640	12%**
2022	16,210	3%
2023	12,610	1%

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

2024	10,030	3%
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**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

*** See section C(1) for further details on 2021*

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

Tag distribution begins ~ 1 month prior to the start of a commercial season and occurs throughout the season. Tags are available for pickup M-F, 8:30 – 4pm, at two RIDEM offices in Jamestown and Narragansett.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

No

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

Yes, for each fish purchased, the dealer must report:

- Date landed
- Pounds
- Tag #
- Fisher name
- Fisher license #

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Dealers are required to submit data reports for all tags used and any unused tags by January 1 the following calendar year. Data reports may be emailed, faxed, mailed or dropped off in person. Unused tags may be mailed back or dropped off in person.

An access database is used to track all striped bass tags distributed, returned as unused, and reported as used. RIDEM staff query the database following the January 1 deadline each year and reach out to dealers to request data reports and unused tags.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

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Dealers who fail to account for all of their tags, or submit dealer reports late when the season is open, may be restricted the following calendar year. Restrictions may include receiving a reduced number of tags or no tags at all. Dealers who have had their tag allotment reduced, may have it increased again once they demonstrate improved compliance.

For 2026, Marine Fisheries staff plan to coordinate with our Division of Law Enforcement to ensure increased compliance with returning tags and data reports from 2025.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

- In 2021, following the covid-19 pandemic, tag distribution changed to reduce the risk of staff becoming sick. The tagging database was queried to determine the number of striped bass typically used by a dealer in a year. The full number of tags was then given to the dealer. This method of distribution ended due to increased non-compliance of returning unused tags and dealers reporting they lost tags when given larger amounts initially.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

- Changes in staff responsibility for the tagging program from 2020 – 2021 led to less rigorous audits in those years and consequently, the % of tags unaccounted for in those years increased.

Enforcement:

- Tagging program staff and DLE intend to work closely in 2026 to ensure increased compliance for returning unused tags and data reports for 2025.

Other:

2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point of harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.

If RI is required to transition to tagging at the point of harvest, there will be several negative consequences and the administrative burden of the program will drastically increase.

- RI currently distributes tags to 18 individuals for our general category fishery. If harvester tagging is required, the number of individuals who will receive

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

tags will significantly increase. Since RI does not have an ITQ, a striped bass license, or a striped bass endorsement, RI will be forced to issue tags to any individual with a license authorized to catch and retain striped bass. In 2025, there are currently 1,017 license holders who would be authorized to receive striped bass tags with harvester-required tagging. At a possession limit of 5 fish/person/day, and a commercial general category season that typically lasts a minimum of 8 days, RIDEM may have to distribute 40,680 tags just for the general category fishery. In 2024, 5,030 tags were issued to the general category fishery. This is a potential increase of 35,650 tags that would need to be distributed and accounted for.

- Data from our tautog tagging program, which has point of harvest tagging, shows a similar pattern where the number of tags issued is significantly more than the number of tags used.
 - The tautog tagging program consistently issues ~25,000 tags each year to ~300 harvesters that end up using 12-13k tags.
 - Based on what we have seen with the tautog program, we expect we will have to purchase and distribute significantly more tags if we switch to point of harvest tagging as explained above.
- Our floating fish trap fishery is a high-volume fishery that operates under an unlimited possession limit. Having to tag at the point of harvest would significantly impact their operations by increasing the processing time of catch. The nature of this fishery makes it a very clean fishery with little discards due to their ability to quickly return regulatory discards to the water alive. Increased processing time for catch could impact this aspect of their operation and cause unnecessary dead discards. In recent years, floating fish trap harvesters have also been licensed dealers and typically tag fish at the point of landings.
- Having to purchase an additional 35-40k tags each year will increase costs to RIDEM by \$3500.
- The increased number of tags that would need to be distributed would lead to an increased burden for auditing tags. Staff spend a significant amount of time auditing the tagging data and reaching out to dealers to request that they return their tagging data and unused tags. At this point in time, RIDEM does not have the staff and resources to perform the same auditing procedures if the number of individuals receiving tags and number of tags distributed were to increase to the level described above. This would lead to an increased number of tags that are unaccounted for and could increase illegal activity.
- Switching from dealer to harvester reporting would decrease our ability to closely track our striped bass quota to prevent quota overages. Striped bass dealers are currently required to report landings to SAFIS within 24 hours of purchasing to facilitate quota monitoring and projections. Given that the general category fishery only lasts ~ 8 days, timely quota monitoring is important for preventing overages. The striped bass tagging program is used

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

to ensure compliance with the 24-hour dealer reporting rule. Dealers who are non-compliant with the 24-hour SAFIS reporting are not issued additional striped bass tags until they enter compliance. If tagging is harvester based, RIDEM staff will have to resort to taking legal administrative action against the dealer. This is a long process and would not allow for any immediate action to prevent quota overages.

- For example, Dealer A receives 200 striped bass tags. The season opens on Tuesday and Dealer A buys 75 fish on Tuesday and 100 fish on Wednesday. With only 25 tags left, Dealer A comes into the office to get more striped bass tags on Thursday. Staff check our dealer compliance file and see that Dealer A has not reported any striped bass to SAFIS for Tuesday or Wednesday. Dealer A will be refused additional tags until they submit SAFIS reports and provide documentation to prove reports have been submitted.
- If harvesters are required to tag fish, when Dealer A does not report their landings to SAFIS, there is no immediate mechanism to force them to report or even if we know that they are withholding reports. Dealer A ends up reporting their landings the following week, 7 days late, and RI exceeds their annual quota. Administrative action to suspend Dealer A's license could take 6+ months.
- RI DEM DLE is concerned that with up to 40k additional tags being distributed, including to fishers who are not currently active but have a license authorizing the harvest of striped bass, these tags could be placed on fish prior to being sold on the illegal market, making them indistinguishable from a legally sold fish through a licensed dealer. These tags could also be attached to the fish after the season has closed or by recreational fishers who obtained tags from a non-active commercial license holder. Our enforcement efforts would then be focused on the disposition of unused and unreturned tags (attached to illegal market fish, lost, broken) months after these fish were harvested and these cases would be a challenge to prosecute.

D. Program Successes

1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.
 - Successes: Increased compliance with dealer reporting that prevents quota overages
 - Challenges: getting dealers to return unused tags and data reports. Staff will be working closely with DLE in 2026 to increase compliance with returning unused tags and data reports.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

RI has had a commercial tagging program since 1990, 24 years prior to ASMFC requiring tagging programs. We have consistently had the same program as far as distribution and accounting with the exception of 2021 as described above.

RI views our program as a success with little evidence to support ongoing illegal activity. Additionally, there is no overlap in our commercial and recreational size limits and our GC season is extremely short only lasting 8 days in 2025.

In states that have individual quotas, there is great incentive to sell striped bass in an illegal market and have no record of your individual quota utilization. Point of harvest (POH) tagging gives enforcement the opportunity to prevent this practice and is essential for states with individual quotas. RI does not have individual quotas.

In Rhode Island, the only specific enforcement concerns that POH tagging could help to address is striped bass legally harvested by licensed commercial fishers being sold on the black-market and/or not being reported. However, the RIDEM Division of Law Enforcement believes that this is not a significant issue and very few fish are meeting this outcome.

Most fish being sold at an illegal market are from non-commercial recreational fishers and POH tagging would do little to aid in the enforcement of this issue and could exacerbate it. Recreational fishers would not be allowed to take a commercial-sized striped bass (there is no overlap in sizes like tautog) whether the fish were tagged at POH or not. The same enforcement efforts and actions are going to take place to combat illegal sales of recreational striped bass if there is POH or POS tagging.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
New York

New York

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):

Limited entry permit system with non-transferable individual fishing quotas (through tag allotments).

Commercial Striped Bass Harvester Permits (CSBHP) are an “endorsement” on the New York Food Fishing License (FFL). In order to have a CSBHP, you must have a FFL. Permits may only be transferred to immediate family members (as defined by NY law), or in the event of a death of a permit holder, a one-time transfer to non-family members is permitted.

Each CSBHP holder is assigned either a “full” or “part” share of tags. This is determined based on percent of income that comes from commercial fishing activity.

2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale): Harvest

3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags

If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.

Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Participants Receiving Tags
2020	407/*
2021	410/392
2022	394/376
2023	396/382
2024	392/379

New York does not issue tags based on gear type. Each CSBHP holder who is in good standing with the department and has renewed on time is eligible to order tags. Not all permit holders buy tags.

The table lists out the “number of participants eligible to purchase tags”/ “number of participants who actually purchased tags”.

**Don’t have the second metric easily accessible for 2020 due to a database change.*

**Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
New York**

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

“Striped bass may be taken for commercial purposes by the following gear types only: hook and line, pound net, trap net, gill net with mesh size of 6.00 to 8.00 inch stretched mesh, or as by-catch in otter trawls. It is unlawful to use gill nets to take striped bass, or to possess striped bass while tending any gill net in Great South Bay, South Oyster Bay, or Hempstead Bay. Otter trawl by-catch is limited to 21 striped bass per vessel per trip and must be boxed separately. Gill nets with mesh sizes less than 6.00 inches, or greater than 8.00 inches, are limited to a by-catch of 7 striped bass per trip and must also be boxed separately. All other types of gear are prohibited for the use in taking striped bass, including, but not limited to, haul seines and spears.”

The average percentage of landing by gear from 2020-2024 is as follows:

Gillnet (64%), Hook and Line/Hand Line (24%), Trawl (6%), and Fixed Nets (5%).

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota	Open Seasons
*	Not less than 26" TL nor greater than 38" TL	By tag allocation	595,686	May 15-December 15

** Striped bass may be taken for commercial purposes by the following gear types only: hook and line, pound net, trap net, gill net with mesh size of 6.00 to 8.00 inch stretched mesh, or as by-catch in otter trawls.*

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

The biological metric used for determining the number of tags is the average weight of fish which comes from NY's fisheries dependent sampling program. Commercially caught fish from markets are weighed, total length is measured, and scales are collected for ageing.

Only data from NY caught/tagged fish is collected. Length and age frequencies of these fish are also used to inform the predicted weight for the next year when calculating tag numbers.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
New York

In addition to the biological metrics, the following factors are considered when calculating the total number of tags issued: the number of permit holders who have renewed, current split between full and part share permit holders, and the amount of tags that went unused and were returned to the department.

Example of how tags are calculated yearly:

Table 3. 2025 Striped Bass Tag Distribution Calculation	
Quota (lbs)	580307
av weight (lbs) per fish market sampling	11.3
2024 comm permits issued	394
# full shares 2024*	316
# part shares 2024*	78
# tags (quota/avg lb per fish)	51354.60177
# tags+ 8% returns (based on 2024 returns)	55462.96991
# tags/394 permit holders	140.7689592
part share allocation (20% of 140)	28.15379183
part share total tags	2195.995763
full share total tags (total tags- part share tags)	53266.97415
full share allocation	168.5663739

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	62430	^
2021	67991	1.6%
2022	61000	1%
2023	61601	0%
2024	59502	0.5%

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

^don't have the 2020 unaccounted for tags easily accessible due to data base change

**Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
New York**

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

NYSDEC provides Cambridge Security Seals with the list of permit holders and the serial numbers they are assigned. Permit holders purchase their tags directly from Cambridge Security Seals. Cambridge Security Seals has requested an 8-10 week lead time for production, so tag numbers and permit information is sent to the company in late February in order for tags to be in hand by the May 15th start date.

Since DEC does not directly distribute tags to the fishermen, once permit holders receive their tags they must sign and return an "Acknowledgement of Receipt of Tags" form that attests to them receiving the correct number of tags and the correct serial numbers.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

Tags are currently not allowed to be transferred between individuals in New York and the tag holder MUST be present if the tags are being filled. New York's Marine Resource Advisory Council (MRAC) and DEC are considering amending regulations to allow tag transfer between commercial striped bass harvester permit holders in the future.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

Commercial fishers must submit vessel trip reports (VTR) for each commercial fishing trip that is taken. VTRs must have the pounds of striped bass landed and the number of tags used. It is not required by regulation that the serial numbers of tags are recorded on VTRs, but it is encouraged.

Additional information collected on the VTRS include:

Harvester Reporting:

Vessel Name	Average Tow/Soak Time	Date Sold
State Reg or Vessel Doc #	NMFS Statistical Area Fished	Port and State Landed
Permit Type and Number	LAT/LONG or Loran of Area	Date/Time Landed
Date/Time Sailed	Fished	
# of Crew	Average Depth	
# of Anglers	Species Fished	
Gear Fished	Pounds of each Species	
Mesh/Ring Size	Kept/Discarded	
Quantity of Gear	Dealer Permit # or Sales	
Size of Gear	Disposition	
# of Haul	Dealer Name	

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New York

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Unused tags must be returned to the department by December 20 (or 5 days after the close of the commercial season). Tags may be returned in person or by mail. Returned tags are counted by staff and serial numbers are checked. Any permit holder who has two or more tags unaccounted for are notified by mail of their discrepancy. Mailings continue until the discrepancy is resolved. If the permit holder is unable to account for the tags, a signed letter stating that tags are lost is required and held in their file.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Permit holders are NOT eligible to receive tags for the current year if they have not resolved reporting and tag compliance issues from the previous year or if they have missed the Commercial Striped Bass Harvester Permit renewal deadline. According to regulation, DEC can deduct the number of tags issued to a fisher if they have not accounted for all the previous year; however, this has not been done since at least 2020, if not earlier.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

- Starting in 2015 and due to staffing and logistical constraints at DEC, the department switched from distributing tags in house to having permit holders order tags directly from Cambridge Security Seals.
- The 2022 season saw delays in permit holders receiving their tags in time for NY's May 15 opening date, due to production issues with the tag vendor. This issue caused significant economic impact to fishermen who did not have their tags on opening day. For the 2023 commercial fishing season, the tag vendor increased production lead time for tags from 4 weeks in 2022 to 8-10 weeks. To avoid a delay in 2023 and to accommodate the new production lead time, New York distributed tag order material earlier than the past (late February) to give permit holders ample time to purchase tags before the start of the commercial fishing season and to ensure equitable opportunity for commercial harvesters. DEC has maintained this earlier timeline since 2023 but this has resulted in needing to estimate the number of used/unused tags for the previous fishing year, as well as the number of permit renewals for the current year.

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New York

- New York's regulations (prior to March 7, 2023) stated a \$0.25 price cap on commercial tags. This price cap had become an issue for NY's tag vendor, as they had not had a price increase in many years. To address this issue and to maintain a functioning commercial tagging program, New York filed an emergency rule making in 2023 to remove the \$0.25 price cap. This measure allows for flexibility in the future and avoid subsequent regulatory changes in order to work with tag manufacturers.
- Cambridge Security Seals has had QA/QC issues resulting in permit holders receiving the wrong number of tags or set of serial numbers. Although this has happened consistently the last several years, it appears to be a small percentage of orders based on what has been reported to the department by the permit holders.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

- There have not been any major issues with tag accounting or return of unused tags over the past ten years.
- Staffing and departmental changes, as well as the development of new commercial fisheries databases since 2018, have caused some minor inconsistencies when calculating final numbers year-to-year, but overall the transition has been smooth and percentage of "unaccounted for" tags remains low.
- Tag deductions are a mechanism the department can use to help with tag accounting and compliance, but since at least 2020 tags this has not been utilized. This first began because of administrative and logistical issues related to COVID and has yet to be reestablished as part of the program.

Enforcement:

- Within the last ten years, Law Enforcement requested that the permit numbers be printed on the commercial tag. Law Enforcement has found this effective.

Other:

- In 2024, NY went over commercial harvest by ~15k pounds. This is likely due to both fish availability (2015 and 2018 year class in the slot) and also heavier fish. Additionally, in 2024 DEC was less conservative with their "unused tag rate" buffer. This was driven by a requests by the Marine Resources Advisory Council and their concern with consistent underharvest of commercial quota in NY prior to 2024.

From 2024 Tagging Report:

"In previous years, including 2023, tag determinations were based on an observed trend in the fishery which showed an 8% return rate of tags. This 8% has been used as a buffer to increase finalized tag allocations. The quota utilization rate has been increasing in recent years, but still falls short of full utilization. For 2024, we are using an 11% tag

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New York**

return rate/buffer for our tag allotment calculations. This percentage was selected in consideration of the 4,000 unaccounted for 2023 tags (as of January 2024 when the allotments were calculated) and with the assumption that half of the tags will be returned, and half will be used. While this is a slightly less conservative approach, the tag utilization trends, the size and numbers of available fish projected to fall in the 26-38" slot size, and the consistent underharvest from the commercial fishery provides confidence that we will not overharvest during the 2024 season. Additionally, to safeguard against overharvest, our regulations allow us to close the fishery if the harvest is projected to be over quota, despite issuance of tags to all permit holders."

- 2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point or harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.**

The Addendum III option that may require point of harvest tagging will not affect New York as point of harvest tagging is already required in New York.

D. Program Successes

- 1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.**

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

- To eliminate the need to estimate the number of permit renewals each year, DEC is proposing a regulatory change to amend the permit renewal deadline from April 15 to February 15. This will provide more precise metrics for calculating tag allotments.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

- DEC commercial data management staff continually work on ways to improve data entry methods to have more timely and precise tag accounting.
- DEC staff is developing a protocol to begin docking tags in a standardized way, including keeping detailed records of permit holders who are late on reporting or who consistently lose tags.
- DEC is exploring switching tag distribution back to in house rather than directly from the tag company. This will allow for greater oversight over the tags, reduce QA/QC concerns from the tag company, and make it easier to reinstate the tag docking protocol.

Other:

- Quota was reduced in 2025 to account for the 2024 overage

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New York

- For 2025 tag calculations, the “unused tag rate” buffer was returned to 8% (down from 11% in 2024) since quota was more fully utilized than past years. This reflected what was seen in the fishery.
- Besides 2024, NY has generally harvested under quota, indicating the yearly tag allotment calculation system has been successful.

2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

According to NYSDEC and Law Enforcement staff:

“We are happy with our current tags and point of harvest tagging as a deterrent of illegal sales. I agree, the change of having the permit number on the tag to make sure the tags are being used by the actual holder has had an impact on the illegal sharing of tags. We are never going to be able to stop all illegal harvest and sales, but the system does have a significant impact.”

“It minimizes illegal harvest. There is likely poaching and illegal commercialization ... hear most often anecdotal comments about restaurant sales.”

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Delaware

DELAWARE

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. **Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):** ITQ, limited entry
2. **Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):** Point of tagging was changed by the legislature from harvest to “before landing or putting on shore” in 2015.

3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags

If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.

Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Receiving Tags				# Receiving Tags		
	GN	HL	Total		GN	HL	Total
2016	111	122	233	2021	111	141	252
2017	111	131	242	2022	111	133	244
2018	111	150	261	2023	111	130	241
2019	111	138	249	2024	111	130	241
2020	111	128	239	2025	111	126	237

4. **Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):** Three types of gear are used to harvest Delaware’s commercial quota. The primary gear is anchored gill net. Three to five licensees fish only drift net annually. Lastly, hook and line harvest is responsible for less than 1% of the annual total quota.

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota (lbs)	Open Seasons
Anchor Gill Net	≥20"	None	Per license 1134, Total 125,876	Feb 15 - April 27*
Drift Gill Net	≥20"	None	Per license 1134, Total 125,877	Feb 15 - May 31*
Hook and Line	≥28"	None	Per licence 51, Total 6,625	April 1 - Dec 31

*if <98% of quota is caught during spring season, then DE opens a fall GN season beginning November 15 with a min size of 28"

6. Optional: Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

Although Delaware issues 111 commercial Striped Bass gill net licenses annually, only 35 to 40 are fished annually due to ITQ. Transfers must occur prior to the season start date which reduces the number of fishers whose tags Delaware has to track. Delaware also incorporates weigh stations which serve as a second point of harvest verification. Weigh stations are responsible for attaching a second tag to each fish and call in each licensed fisher's catch daily. Tag color for both fisher and weigh station tags changes on a rotating basis every year.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

DDFW uses metrics such as average weight from previous years' landings and estimated year class strength of striped bass recruiting to the commercial gear to inform the decisions on the number of tags needed for the upcoming season. However, these biometrics do not describe the future year's tag needs completely. Due to the manner in which tags are administered by DDFW licensing, an overage must be built in to provide for multiple weigh stations and all 111 licensees receiving the same amount of tags initially, regardless of fishing effort, latency, or transfers. Furthermore, while the spring gill net fishery targets larger (>26") striped bass that can be sold in NY, the size limit for this fishery is 20" and the fishery will target smaller fish under certain conditions, so the number of tags ordered must also account for that situation.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued GN	# Tags Issued HL	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	16,650	896	<1
2021	16,650	846	<1
2022	16,650	931	<1
2023	16,650	650	<1
2024	16,650	650	0

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution?

Tags are ordered in November so they are available for distribution to fishers February 1st of each year for the February 15th start date.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

Tags can be transferred between individuals but such transfers must be done prior to the start of the season. Each quota is allocated 150 tags with unique numbering. When a quota is transferred, tags with specific numbers assigned to that quota are given to the individual licensee in which the quota is transferred to.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

Cumulative weight and number of fish is reported for each licensed individual via an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system daily and again via monthly fisher reports. Catch date, license number, cumulative weight and number of fish are reporting elements.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Fishers return tags to the Division when their quota is filled. The number of tags returned is checked against IVR reports and harvest logs.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Unused tags, including broken tags, are required to be turned into the Division along with a Daily Striped Bass Catch Report by June 30th of the year. Non-compliant individuals are not issued quota for the following year.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

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Product quality went down and price went up using former vendor. A new vendor is now used, resulting in a more reliable product at a lower cost. Fisher tags have a tensile strength of roughly 110 lbs while weigh station tags are not nearly as strong. Price of tags will increase with quality and strength of tag type. Weigh station tags are much cheaper as they do not have the strength of fisher tags.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

Fishers are required to turn in any unused tags after the season. This includes the small proportion (<1%) of broken or defective tags. Over the years, the Division has had very few instances of tag loss – blown overboard, out of vehicles, etc. but these losses have been called in immediately by the fisher.

Enforcement:

Enforcement officers routinely check fishers at landing sites and weigh stations. On the water inspections have occurred but are not common.

Other:

2. **For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point or harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.**

D. Program Successes

1. **Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.**

Weigh stations present a conflict of interest in some cases. But having a weigh station is generally viewed as a privilege and the Division, in conjunction with enforcement, heavily scrutinizes weigh station applications and the number of weigh stations is capped.

2. **Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?**

Providing independent verification and generally doing more to abate illegal harvest, DE feels that any illegal activity has been minimized. It is DE's belief that multiple means of verification minimizes illegal activity.

MARYLAND

Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):
Maryland currently manages limited entry ITQ (Individual Transferable Quota) fishery. For many years there was a small limited entry derby fishery (Common Pool) being managed in parallel with the ITQ. However, the last year for Common Pool was 2024. In 2025 and forward, ITQ is the only option.
2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):
“At harvest”. Per Maryland’s regulation, fish must be tagged (1) Immediately to a striped bass harvested by hook and line; (2) Within 200 yards of the pound net to a striped bass harvested from a pound net; or (3) Before removing a striped bass from a boat or removing a boat from the water, to a striped bass harvested by any other gear.
3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags
If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.
Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Coastal Participants Receiving Tags Initially at the Beginning of the Season	# Bay Participants Receiving Tags Initially at the Beginning of the Season
2020	45	802
2021	44	786
2022	45	777
2023	44	746
2024	47	758

*Number of participants changes throughout the year based on transfers of permits/share/allocation, and tags. “# of Participants Receiving Tags” in the table above are the amount of people issued tags at the beginning of each season.

*The maximum number of permits available to the fishery is 1,231. A commercially licensed harvester must also have a permit in order to fish for striped bass.

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

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Gill Net (Drift and Anchored, anchored only allowed in Ocean)

Hook -n- Line (Bay only)

Pound Net (Bay only)

Haul Seine (Bay only)

Otter and Beam Trawl (Ocean only)

Pound net and gill net are used more commonly in the Bay Fishery. Gill net is most commonly used in the coastal fishery.

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear/Region	Size Limit	Trip Limit	2024 ASMFC Quota	Open Seasons
Chesapeake Bay: pound net	18-36" TL	none for ITQ	1,344,217 pounds*	June 1-Dec 31
Chesapeake Bay: haul seine	18-36" TL	none for ITQ		Jan1-Feb 29, June 1-Dec 31
Chesapeake Bay: hook and line	18-36" TL	none for ITQ; common pool 250 lbs/permittee/week		June 1-Dec 31; common pool- 2 days out of the month only
Chesapeake Bay: gill net	18-36" TL	none for ITQ; common pool 300 lbs/permittee/week		Jan1-Feb 29, Dec 1-31; common pool- 2-3 days out of the month only
Atlantic Ocean: gill net and trawl	24" TL min	none	82,857 pounds**	Jan 1-May 31, Oct 1-Dec 31

*The 2024 Chesapeake Bay quota of 1,445,394 pounds was already allocated to permit holders prior to when Addendum II reductions were made. Any overage will be subtracted from the 2026 quota.

**The 2024 Chesapeake Bay quota of 89,094 pounds was already allocated to permit holders prior to when Addendum II reductions were made. Any overage will be subtracted from the 2025 quota.

***Common Pool openings/limits dependant on available quota each month. Common Pool is no longer an option in 2025 and forward.

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

- Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

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Average fish weight by fishery location and gear type. DNR's field biologists sample fish at check stations to determine this.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	500,320	9.8%**
2021	525,000	17.9%**
2022	442,850	3.8%
2023	441,600	6.5%
2024	441,000	5.9% (Preliminary)

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

***Tag return began at the start of 2020, however, when the COVID pandemic started in mid-March, the process of tag return was halted. There was a two-year tag return process in 2022 of which permittees were asked to return unused tags from both 2020 and 2021. Information from the industry to MDNR reported discarding tags thinking the tag return process would not occur given the continuing pandemic.*

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

From July 1 to July 14, staff calculate what each permittee is required to pay for tags. This is done using each permittee share percentage, a guesstimate on the upcoming years quota, and a guesstimate on the per tag cost.

DNR's license renewal and permit declaration period runs from July 15 to September 15. At this time permittees pay for their tags.

After the quota is officially set, staff then determine how many tags each permittee requires in mid October to mid November. Using DNR biologist data on weight per fish per fishery and gear, this is divided into each permittees allocation pounds to determine the number of tags required.

In late November to early December, staff provide the vendor with a list of permittee, their mailing address, and then number of tags required for each permittee. The vendor produces the tags and ships them to the permittee via certified mail. The return address

on the shipments is DNR's address so that staff are aware of undeliverable tags. The vendor supplies DNR with the unique tag numbers for each permittee.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

Yes, tags are able to be transferred between permit holders. Permit holders are required to fill out this form and submit it to MDNR.

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/documents/2025_Tag_Transfer_Form.pdf

Permittees are required to fill out the tag sequence numbers being transferred and the total number of tags being transferred. Permittees also provide a total number of fish harvested at the time of requesting a transfer.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state?

This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

No. MDNR biologists will sample striped bass at check in stations to obtain data on pound per fish, etc...

Permittees and Check Stations are only required to provide total poundage and total number of fish per day on the permit holders permit card.

Permittee are also required to send in either monthly paper harvest reports, daily electronic harvest reports, or use SAFIS to report. The fish are required to be weighed and counted at check stations. Check stations are required to either send in weekly paper reports or daily electronic reports.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Permit holders are notified of tag return bins placed around the state. These bins are placed at locations such as Natural Resource Police field offices, MDNR fisheries field offices, major landing locations, etc... The unused tags are required to be dropped off in these bins by March 31 along with a signed Tag Return Affidavit. DNR staff collect the tags multiple times at each location during the tag return period. These unused tags are then returned to MDNR's office, identified to the assigned permit holder, and counted.

If tags are lost by the permit holder, thus unable to be returned to MDNR, an incident report must be submitted to Maryland's Natural Resource Police. This report is sent to MDNR's permitting staff.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Maryland Natural Resources Police would handle enforcement of non-compliance in their normal course of business. There are fines and administrative penalties (i.e., license suspension or revocation) that are tied to different types of violations. The Fine and Bond Schedule is available [here](#), which lays out the fines that would be administered by the Maryland District Court, and the commercial penalty schedule is available [here](#). Any striped bass violation that leads to at least 10 points results in the suspension of the licensee for the next practicable quota year in the striped bass fishery. Any violation or set of violations that result in an individual having 35 points or more on their license would lead to revocation from Maryland's commercial fisheries.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

The time between ASMFC setting the annual quota and tag distribution can be short some years. Furthermore, the vendor producing the tags is requiring more time in order to complete orders before mid-December.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

This is very time consuming for staff.

Enforcement:

Maryland would expect that the Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) would have accurate input on enforcing our tag program and will defer this question to them.

Other:

Considering the vendor produces tags in bags of 100, there can be quite a lot of unused tags leftover at the end of the harvest year. This can seem wasteful to some in the industry. On average, 20% of the tags are returned unused.

MDNR's license season runs from September 1 to August 31. This is different from ASMFC striped bass harvest season (January 1 to December 31). When permit holders are renewing their licenses and permits, they are required to pay for tags at

this same time. The differences between ASMFC harvest season and MDNR's license season requires MDNR to guesstimate the upcoming quota to determine what each permit holder is required to pay for tags (based on their percent share) during the pre-season declaration window.

The license year/calendar year issue as described above also means that there are often concerns about getting tags to individuals on time. In Maryland, this is a huge concern because commercial harvest opens starting on January 1 when the market is often at its highest. In addition, because permittees are using last year's tags up until December 31 and then the present year starting on January 1, this means permittees need to be very careful to grab the tags with the right year starting on January 1.

Tags are increasing in cost.

The Tag Compliance report is due prior to when MDNR has not completed collecting and processing unused tags. If the report deadline could be extended to mid-summer this would make all the information available within the report.

2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point or harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.

N/A

D. Program Successes

1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like to highlight from the past ten years.
The current challenges of the tagging program are mostly related to the timing of quota decisions made by the Board and staff resources used to collect and record all of the unused tags. In order for Maryland to address these challenges, MDNR would need changes to the 'quota year' and the requirements to collect all unused tags and account for them to the specific individual. While this would help MDNR, it is understood how this concept could be difficult for other states and it would ultimately reduce individual accountability which isn't something desired.
2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

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The current tagging program is a success when compared to the program operating during the derby fishery (pre-2015). MDNR staff are not aware of any ongoing sources of illegal harvest related to the tagging program. Similar to the question above about enforcement, LEC feedback should be sought out to provide details on current/ongoing illegal harvest related to tagging.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025
PRFC

Potomac River Fisheries Commission
Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):

The Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) manages the striped bass tagging program by limiting entry for various gear types. The gear types include gill net, pound net, hook and line, fyke net and haul seine.

2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):

Point of harvest – striped bass tags must be applied as soon as feasible and in no event shall any commercially caught striped bass be removed from the Potomac River or from the boat at the point of landing, whichever occurs first, without said tag being permanently affixed. The words “as soon as feasible” mean for the i) Commercial Hook & Line fishery – as soon as the fish is taken and before it is put into the cooler or storage area; ii) Pound Net fishery – as soon as the fish are taken and before the boat leaves the net site; and iii) Gill Net fishery – as soon as each separate piece of net is fished and before the boat leaves the net site.

3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags

If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.

Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

	# Participants Receiving Tags
2020	267
2021	265
2022	265
2023	258
2024	263

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

Gear types: **gill net, pound net, hook and line**, fyke net and haul seine. **Bolded are most common.**

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota	Open Seasons
Hook & Line	Jan. 1 – Feb. 14: 18.0" min. Feb. 15 - Mar. 25: 18.0" - 36.0" slot Jun. 1 – Dec. 31: 18.0" min.	NA	76,222 lbs.	Jan. 1 – Mar. 25, 2024 Jun. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024
Pound Net	Feb. 15 - Mar. 25: 18.0" - 36.0" slot Jun. 1 – Dec. 31: 18.0" min.	NA	118,806 lbs.	Feb. 15 - Mar. 25, 2024 Jun. 1 - Dec. 15, 2024
Misc. Gear (Haul Seine & Fyke Net)	Feb. 15 - Mar. 25: 18.0" - 36.0" slot Jun. 1 – Dec. 31: 18.0" min.	NA	12,786 lbs.	Feb. 15 - Mar. 25, 2024 Jun. 1 - Dec. 15, 2024
Gill Net	Nov. 7 - Dec. 31, 18.0" min Jan. 1 - Feb. 14, 18.0" min Feb. 15 - Mar. 25, 18.0" - 36.0" slot	NA	349,405 lbs. *	Nov. 6 - Dec. 31, 2023 Jan. 1 – March 25, 2024

* Gill net quota does not reflect the 7% reduction in 2024 due to the season ending March 25, 2024. The 7% reduction is reflected in the next gill net season (2024-2025).

6. *Optional: Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.*

Since 2008, the PRFC has managed the gill net fishery on a split year season to improve the procedure for issuing tags for the gear. For example, the 2024 quota year's gill net season began on November 6, 2023 and ended March 25, 2024. Prior to the split year season, the procedure was extremely cumbersome and required significant staff time during the busiest time of the year for the PRFC office. To better serve the stakeholders and improve the efficiency of the tagging program, the PRFC shifted to a split year season which allowed for a shift of the gill net tag issuance to occur in November ahead of the license renewal period for the other gear types and for gill net tag reconciliation to occur in April once the license renewal period has ended.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

The PRFC uses the average weight of a fish by gear type for the last full year of data to calculate how many tags should be issued to each license/licensee for the next season. Pound

net, hook and line, fyke net and haul seine can harvest for most of the year which requires PRFC to use the average weight of fish from the 2023 season to allocate tags for the 2025 season. Gill net is only a 5-month season thus the reporting for this gear is near-final by the time the next season begins so the 2023-2024 season's average weight of fish can be used to calculate the allocation for the 2024-2025 season.

The PRFC submits orders for next year's tag shipment in July and are typically received by the Commission in October. The tags are then organized and checked for quality control prior to issuing to harvesters. The following formula is used to calculate the number of tags ordered and allocated to each harvester by gear type.

The PRFC commercial striped bass quota for 2025 is 532,761 pounds. The gill net, pound net and hook & line fisheries are limited entry and are allocated tags per license. Note one person may hold multiple of one or more types of these licenses. Miscellaneous gears such as fyke net and haul seine are allocated per qualified licensee. To be considered a qualified licensee, the harvester must have reported landing any fish species in the gear for at least three consecutive years before being eligible to harvest striped bass from that gear.

GN quota = 324,947 lbs. H&L quota = 76,222 lbs.

PN quota = 118,806 lbs. Misc. quota = 12,786 lbs.

		<u># of Tags Ordered</u>
GN:	324,947 lbs. / 7.3 (2023-2024 avg. weight of fish) = 44,513 tags	GN: 46,000
	44,513 tags / 710 GN licenses = 63 tags/license	
PN:	118,806 lbs. / 4.8 (2023 avg. weight of fish) = 24,751 tags	PN: 26,000
	24,751 tags / 100 PN licenses = 247 tags/license	
H&L:	76,222 lbs. / 4.9 (2023 avg. weight of fish) = 15,555 tags	H&L: 19,000
	15,555 tags / 205 H&L licenses = 75 tags/license	
Misc:	12,786 lbs. / 5.4 (2023 avg. weight of fish) = 2,367 tags	Misc: 4,000
	HS (60%) = 1,420 tags / 14 (# qualified licensees) = 100 tags	
	FN (40%) = 946 tags / 12 (# qualified licensees) = 78 tags	

Note: The PRFC orders approximately 1,500 additional tags for each gear to account for replacing any lost, broken, or defective tags. For the hook and line gear, the PRFC orders a larger buffer of ~3,500 tags due to a policy that allows a gill net license to be converted into a hook and line license during the renewal season. Historically this policy only converted 3-5 licenses annually, but for the 2024 and 2025 renewal periods over 45 licenses in total have been converted. This unexpected change in behavior in 2024 required the Commission to place an additional order in January 2024 to guarantee there were enough tags for this gear given the influx of participants. Since the trend from 2024 continued into the 2025 renewal period, the Commission now orders enough tags to accommodate an additional 30 licenses in the fishery.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# Tags Issued	Percent of Tags Not Accounted For*
2020	80,718	0.43%
2021	81,370	0.19%
2022	83,616	0.24%
2023	79,368	0.39%
2024	87,713	0.53%

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

All tags must be picked up in-person at the PRFC office by the harvester or a designee and sign that they have received the correct sequences of tags. For the gill net fishery, harvesters can pick up tags and renew their licenses beginning November 1st in preparation for the season to begin the second Monday in November. For pound net and fyke net, the nets must be set and verified by law enforcement prior to any tags being issued for these gears which is first legal beginning February 15th each year. For haul seine, the net must be verified and sealed by PRFC staff prior to tags being issued. For hook and line gear, tags can be issued at the time of license renewal beginning December 1st for the season to begin January 1st. For all gears, prior to issuing tags for the next season, all tags must be accounted for from the previous season. See question #6 for more details about the accounting process.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

Tags are only allowed to be transferred between participants of the Hook and Line Exchange Program where hook and line licensees may opt-in to receive tags from those licensees who do not intend to fish either their whole or partial quota allocation. The licensee receiving tags must have reported use of 100% of their personal tag allocation, be up to date on harvest reporting, and have no fishing violations or tag accounting issues for the past three years to be able to receive any additional tags. All transfers of tags must be done in person at the PRFC office so that the sequencing of tags is accounted for properly in our database.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

Harvesters are required to report trip level data including species, market grade category, gear, quantity of tags, total poundage, area fished, port of landing, and effort on their mandatory weekly harvest reports. PRFC does not collect any additional data on a per tag/fish basis.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Harvesters are encouraged to return any unused tags to the office once the season is over and prior to the start of the next fishing season. For example, the gill net season ends March 25th each year, so many harvesters return unused tags in April and May. For the other gears, most of the unused tags are returned to the Commission at the time of renewal for the next season. All returned tags are kept in office until July 1 of the following year to allow for auditing should a harvester note a discrepancy with their count compared to the database. After July 1, the returned tags and any unissued tags are disposed of at the local landfill.

Prior to issuing tags for the next season, harvester must account for all tags that were issued to them from the previous season. If there are any discrepancies, a one-for-one penalty is applied to next season's allocation. For example, if 20 tags remain unused for a harvester from the 2025 season and they have completed all their reporting for the season, 20 tags will be audited from their 2026 season allocation to reconcile for the unaccounted tags. If the harvester can supply the missing tags at any point throughout the 2026 season, PRFC staff will release tags equivalent to what was returned, up to the current year's allocation. If the harvester believes the number of unaccounted tags is a data error in the system, they can opt in to an official audit where PRFC staff validate all physical harvest reports against the database. If the records were entered correctly into the database, a \$25 administrative fee is collected from the harvester and a one-for-one penalty is applied to the next season's allocation. If there were data entry errors on part of the PRFC staff, no fee is applied. If the submitted reports differ from what the harvester believes is accurate, they must provide proof via buyer/dealer tickets and their logbook to qualify to amend a report.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Beyond the typical audit process occurring at license renewal, the PRFC may call to a hearing any harvesters who are delinquent in their harvest reporting for any species. The Commission may also call individuals who have outstanding remaining tag balances or if there is suspicious activity regarding the use of their tags. At the hearing, the Commission may revoke striped bass privileges, suspend licenses, place licensees on probationary periods, refuse to issue tags, and/or audit tags from future seasons depending on the severity of the case.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

- 1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.**

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

Manufacturer issues: Since the beginning of the striped bass tagging requirement, the PRFC used the vendor Tyden Brooks to produce the tags. In 2023, the company unexpectedly was unable to produce the order at a reasonable price due to having a new high volume order taking priority over routine annual orders. There was a very short deadline to find a replacement vendor but by reaching out to other states, a new supplier was found in time for the season to start. Since 2023, the Commission has purchased tags from Sierra Group LLC and have been satisfied with the quality and experience. It is also important to note that striped bass tags are purchased by the PRFC with funding from a five-year NOAA grant and no cost of the product is passed on to the harvester.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

The majority of tags are returned at the time of renewal for the next season's license. This is one of the busiest times for PRFC staff thus returned tags are not always able to be sequenced due to the volume staff receives during a short timeframe. Most often, PRFC staff only have time to count the quantity of tags returned and verify against the remaining tag balance. This can lead to some data entry errors that are difficult to research as the sorting of the returned tags is not an easy endeavor. To address this issue, the Commission is creating a return log that requires the harvester's signature to help cut down on the confusion of tag returns in the future.

Enforcement:

There are three jurisdictions that manage waters of the Potomac River and its tributaries: PRFC, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Virginia Marine Resources Commission. PRFC regulations are enforced jointly by the Maryland Natural Resources Police and the Virginia Marine Police. Since many of the harvesters hold licenses of the other state/jurisdictions, PRFC, MD, and VA each have regulations in place that prohibit a harvester from possessing another state/jurisdiction's striped bass tags while fishing in the respective area. This is largely one of the bigger enforcement issues in the Potomac River since the boundaries that define the territories, although physically demarcated, require more effort on the enforcement side to intercept in the right jurisdiction.

Timing of Commercial Quota Modifications:

Due to the split year gill net season, changes to commercial quota past October each year become extremely difficult for the PRFC to accommodate due to the current tag allocation procedure where the PRFC staff issues most tags in November. The gill net fishery is allocated 61% of the PRFC's total quota. Of all the gear types harvesting striped bass, the gill

net fishery utilizes the greatest proportion of their quota thereby placing the Commission in a position to potentially overharvest if commercial quotas are reduced by a significant amount. To try to combat this, when the ASMFC Striped Bass Board motioned to revise the 2025 commercial quota in October 2024, the PRFC had opted to withhold 5 tags from each gear type until after the Board's final decision in December 2024. Pre-emptively withholding tags due to the potential board action created great confusion with the stakeholders and required harvesters to return to the PRFC to retrieve the 5 withheld tags previously. If final decisions are made by the October Annual Meeting, the PRFC can act to reduce tag allocations within a few weeks.

2. **For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point of harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.**

Not applicable.

D. Program Successes

1. **Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.**

Since the beginning of the program, the PRFC has worked to create a more efficient tagging program by using color-coded sequenced tags, switching to a split year gillnet season and exploring new vendors to reduce cost of materials. For other details about overcoming challenges, see the above section 'Program Challenges and Changes'.

2. **Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?**

Yes, the current tagging program is seen as a success in minimizing illegal harvest. The use of tamper-proof sequenced tags has allowed law enforcement to trace individual fish back to the harvester. Additionally, the use of different colored tags for each gear also aids law enforcement as a visual way to inspect harvester behavior from a distance. The tag auditing process has allowed the PRFC to hold each harvester accountable from year to year. The PRFC is not aware of any sources of illegal commercial harvest as related to the tagging program.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Marine Resources Commission

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Fort Monroe, VA 23651

Stefanie K. Taillon
Secretary of Natural
and Historic Resources

Jamie L. Green
Commissioner

Virginia

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):
Limited Entry ITQ program. The only current way to enter the program is by purchasing or leasing quota (poundage) from another participant.
2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):
Harvest
3. Number of Participants Receiving Commercial Tags

of Participants Receiving Tags

	Chesapeake Bay Area	Coastal Area
2020	348	26
2021	342	26
2022	339	25
2023	339	25
2024	337	25

*These numbers are initial allocation for the season, does not include transfers. *

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

Most common gears are gill net and pound net. Virginia also has harvest from Hook & Line (rod and reel), fyke net and a small amount from fish pot. Anyone who holds Virginia Commercial striped bass quota can harvest striped bass from any gear they are licensed for.

An Agency of the Natural and Historic Resources Secretariat

www.mrc.virginia.gov

Telephone (757) 247-2200 Information and Emergency Hotline 1-800-541-4646

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

VIRGINIA CHESAPEAKE BAY FISHERY

GEAR	SIZE LIMIT	TRIP LIMIT	QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
ALL GEAR	18" MIN	NONE	983,393	JAN 16 THROUGH DEC 31
	MAX SIZE 28" FROM MARCH 15 THROUGH JUNE 15			

VIRGINIA COASTAL
FISHERY

GEAR	SIZE LIMIT	TRIP LIMIT	QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
ALL GEAR	28" MIN	NONE	116,282	JAN 16 THROUGH DEC 31

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

For the purposes of assigning tags to a person for commercial harvest in the Chesapeake Bay area and the coastal area, the individual commercial harvest quota of striped bass in pounds shall be converted to an estimate in numbers of fish. Using this average weight of striped bass harvested by the permitted person during the previous fishing year, the number of striped bass tags issued to each person will equal the estimated number of fish to be landed by that individual for the following year. Staff will then add 10% of the individual allotment for each person.

For any person whose reported average coastal area harvest weight of striped bass in the previous fishing year was less than 12 pounds, a 12-pound minimum weight shall be used to convert that person's harvest quota of striped bass, in pounds of fish, to harvest quota in number of fish.

Chapter 4 VAC 20-252, "Pertaining to Atlantic Striped Bass" Section 150 C,D,E

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

	# OF CHESAPEAKE TAGS ISSUED*	PERCENT OF BAY TAGS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR	# OF COASTAL TAGS ISSUED*	PERCENT OF COASTAL TAGS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR
2020	176,900	6.4	8,450	5.3
2021	184,250	2.7	7,650	4
2022	190,900	2.4	7,500	6.5
2023	191,250	3.4	7,300	0.84
2024	181,600	2	7,100	1.5

*This number does not include additional tags which were issued later in the season (upon request) to commercial striped bass quota owners who have not achieved their quota.

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution?

- Tags are ordered from the manufacture July/August of the previous year.
- Tags are delivered early October.
- Tags are bagged up for each harvester by VMRC staff approx. mid November.
- Tags are distributed in the second week of January of the fishing year. Season opens January 16.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

Yes, tags are allowed to be transferred between harvesters/quota holders. When quota transfers take place, the participating individuals are required to bring any allocated tags to the office. Staff then reallocates the tags to go with the reallocation of quota. All transfers take place in front of VMRC staff, and a notarized form is required.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state?

Yes, the VMRC requires that each harvester reports daily harvest, in pounds, of striped bass and number of tags used.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

- Each harvester/quota holder is required to turn in any unused tags within 30 days of harvesting their quota or by the second Thursday in January. Tags may be returned in person or by mail.
- Harvesters are sent a letter in October of each year stating their current tag accounting for that year. At this time, they can contact VMRC if they have any discrepancies in their records before the fall season begins.
- Harvester reports are audited using striped bass buyer reports. Any Virginia licensed buyer that wishes to purchase striped bass directly from a harvester must also get a Striped Bass Buyer Permit. One of the requirements for this permit is a monthly report that contains the ID number, date, pounds and number of tags purchased from each harvester.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements.

- Any unused tags that cannot be turned in to the commission shall be accounted for by the harvester submitting an affidavit to the commission that explains the disposition of the unused tags that are not able to be turned into the commission. Each person shall be required to pay a processing fee of \$25, plus \$0.13 per tag, for any unused tags that are not turned in to the commission.
- Any harvester requesting a quota transfer or additional tags must be up to date on their mandatory harvest reports. If they are not, staff will deny the transfer until the reports are turned in.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution:

- Over the past ten years the timeline for procurement has been challenging, longer processing and ship times have pushed the dates for ordering tags earlier in the past few years. Virginia has a bid process that allows companies with production overseas, transit times have been difficult. We have also seen a price increase.
- Preparation of tags has been challenging especially over the past few years due to late Board decisions on commercial reductions.

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags:

- This process has historically been difficult in Virginia due to the short time between the season closure and the next season opening. (closed Dec 31 and reopens Jan 16)
- Difficulties arise due to our small staff and the number of harvesters. (Approx 400)
- Month to month tag accounting has improved due to improved computer databases and online reporting.

Enforcement:

- VMRC operates on a harvester-based reporting system. Currently the only check and balance to this is monthly striped bass buyer reporting. Unfortunately, this does not capture the fish that are sold out of state or retail sales.
- In Virginia, one challenge is the close jurisdictions of PRFC, Virginia and Maryland. Per Virginia regulation, harvesters cannot have other jurisdictions tags on board the vessel but this is an issue that Law enforcement runs into.

2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point of harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.

N/A

D. Program Successes

1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.
 - Better communication between VMRC fisheries staff and Law Enforcement in the field.
 - VMRC law enforcement has worked with federal partners over the past ten years to prosecute Lacey Act cases involving illegal Virginia harvested striped bass being sold over state lines into Maryland.

2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

Yes, Virginia's administrative tag accounting, regulations and Law enforcement work in the field all lends itself to a successful commercial striped bass program. Monthly online harvester reporting allows LE and staff a more real time view of what's occurring in the fishery.

Sources of illegal commercial harvest

- Commercial sale of untagged fish.
- Incorrect reporting of weights, especially to out-of-state buyers.

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

[NORTH CAROLINA]

Overview of Striped Bass Commercial Tagging Program

A. Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Overview

1. Type of Management (e.g., ITQ, limited entry, etc.):

Other than a cap on the maximum number of commercial licenses available in NC there are no limits to who can participate in any fishery if you have a NC Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL) or a Retired SCFL (RSCFL). For fiscal year 2024 there were 3,922 SCFLs and 1,354 Retired SCFLs licenses sold or issued. Of those licenses issued, 1,851 licenses were used to land seafood at a licensed seafood dealer.

2. Point of Tagging (harvest and/or sale):

At the point of sale. Licensed seafood dealers must also obtain a free Striped Bass Dealer Permit each year in order to buy striped bass from a licensed SCFL or RSCFL holder.

3. Number of Participants (i.e. dealers) Receiving Commercial Tags

If a state has gear-specific tags, it is optional to list participants by gear type. At a minimum, please provide some insight into the prevalence of different gears in question #4.

Maryland and Virginia please separate Ocean vs. Chesapeake Bay.

North Carolina issues striped bass commercial tags to the dealers to affix at the point of sale. NC does not have gear specific tags. No striped bass have been landed from the Atlantic Ocean since 2012, although dealers still get the free Striped Bass Dealer Permit just in case. NC no longer gives dealers striped bass tags for the Atlantic Ocean, although we buy them and have them on hand in the event striped bass are present in NC coastal waters 0-3 miles and we open the harvest season.

Year	Atlantic Ocean # Participants (dealers) Receiving Tags	ASMA # Participants (dealers) Receiving Tags
2000	25	43
2001	39	43
2002	38	37
2003	33	37
2004	51	27
2005	57	35
2006	34	37
2007	46	33
2008	40	34
2009	21	29

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

2010	19	32
2011	21	26
Year	Atlantic Ocean # Participants (dealers) Receiving Tags	ASMA # Participants (dealers) Receiving Tags
2012	4	22
2013	0	25
2014	0	31
2015	0	29
2016	0	30
2017	0	28
2018	0	28
2019	0	28
2020	0	27
2021	0	23
2022	0	18
2023	0	15
2024	0	0

4. Gears Used (please indicate which are most common):

Atlantic Ocean: Gill net, beach seine, and trawl. When the fishery was still active the gill net gear had the most participants due to the inexpensive nature of constructing gill nets compared to the expense of trawls and the beach seine gear.

ASMA: In 2023 gill nets accounted for 88%, pound nets 10%, and other gears 2% of the striped bass harvest.

5. 2024 Commercial Measures:

NC did not open the Atlantic Ocean to the harvest of striped bass. If NC did, the measures that would have been implemented are below.

Atlantic Ocean

Gear	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota	Open Seasons
Beach seine	28" min	50 fish per day	91,603 lb	Was usually December
Gill net	28" min	10-20 fish per day	91,603 lb	Was usually January
Trawl	28" min	50-100 fish per day	91,603 lb	Was usually February

6. *Optional:* Provide any additional information about the commercial fishery the state would like to explain.

None.

B. Biological Metric, Number of Tags, and Program Operation

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

1. Describe the biological metric used to determine the number of tags printed and issued to participants:

Average pounds per fish harvested based off previous year divided by the quota. We order extra tags because we never know how many tags each individual dealer is going to use.

2. Number of Tags Issued and Tags Not Accounted For:

Fishing year	Fishery	Number of participants	Number of tags printed	Number of tags issued	Number of tags used	Number of tags returned	Number of tags missing
2023	Ocean	36	25,000	0	0	0	0
	ASMA	39	15,000	6,560	4,322	2,238	0
	CSMA	26	0	0	0	0	0
2022	Ocean	40	25,000	0	0	0	0
	ASMA	41	15,000	9,000	4,824	4,256	20
	CSMA	28	0	0	0	0	0
2021	Ocean	40	25,000	0	0	0	0
	ASMA	45	12,000	10,480	6,552	3,919	9
	CSMA	27	0	0	0	0	0
2020	Ocean	42	25,000	0	0	0	0
	ASMA	46	40,000	30,000	26,900	3,073	27
	CSMA	28	0	0	0	0	0
2019	Ocean	40	25,000	7,500	0	7,500	0
	ASMA	49	40,000	40,000	33,229	6,749	22
	CSMA	36	10,000	0	0	0	0
2018	Ocean	38	25,000	8,300	0	8,300	0
	ASMA	49	40,000	33,890	27,735	6,119	36
	CSMA	38	10,000	5,850	3,788	2,014	48
2017	Ocean	40	25,000	4,140	0	4,140	0
	ASMA	50	40,000	29,085	17,659	11,408	18
	CSMA	39	10,000	7,100	4,386	2,694	20
2016	Ocean	44	18,000	4,140	0	4,140	0
	ASMA	51	33,000	36,013	31,141	4,814	58
	CSMA	41	8,000	5,942	4,166	1,769	7

The two reasons for tags not getting returned are they broke and dealer threw them away or they were lost.

**Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that were not returned/not reported as lost.*

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

3. What is the process and timing for tag distribution? E.g., tags distributed by mail during the month of November before the fishery opens on January 1.

Tags are delivered by hand directly to dealers by either Marine Patrol or Fisheries Management staff. Dealers are brought more tags if they need them throughout the year. We do not give a dealer all the tags they may use throughout the season all at one time.

4. Are tags allowed to be transferred between individuals? If so, how are transfers monitored?

We normally order enough extra tags so we do not have to do that. When dealers receive tags, they have to sign documentation that lists the tag numbers that they were issued. Those data (tag numbers issued to each dealer) are maintained in a database.

5. Does the state require data about the use of each tag to be reported back to the state? This could include sale date, poundage of each fish tagged, etc.

NC requires each dealer to report the number of tags used and the pounds landed on a daily basis throughout the harvest season.

6. Describe the process for returning and auditing unused tags.

Once the harvest season concludes, DMF staff return to each dealer to collect any leftover tags. They then reconcile these retrieved tags with the initial delivery numbers and the number of tags used. In most years, there are minimal discrepancies.

7. Describe how the state responds to non-compliance with commercial tagging or reporting requirements (e.g., failure to return unused tags, submit mandatory reports, etc.)?

Marine Patrol will issue citations for failing to report striped bass tags used and pounds landed on a daily basis. Dealers report each day for the previous day. Each Monday they report for tags used Fri-Sun.

C. Program Changes and Challenges

1. Identify any major changes and challenges with the commercial tagging program over the past ten years. Feel free to use the following categories to organize various issues or modify/add categories as needed.

Tag Procurement/Distribution: None

Tag Accounting/Return of Unused Tags: None

Enforcement: None

Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Tagging 10-Year Review - Summer 2025

Other: As striped bass have been absent from North Carolina's coastal ocean waters (0-3 miles) since 2012, we respectfully request that the next tag order for this species be produced without the year indicated. This would provide a cost saving measure by negating the need to purchase new tags each year when there are no landings. If landings occur, then for the following year we would either order tags with the year on it tags that were a different color from the previous year.

2. For states who tag at the point of sale: Since Draft Addendum III includes an option to require tagging at point or harvest, identify any major challenges the state's commercial tagging program may encounter by transitioning to point of harvest.

Requiring striped bass to be tagged at the point of harvest would be a major challenge for NC, especially when the A-R stock recovers and harvest is reopened. NC currently does not have a way to limit the number of participants in a fishery. That action would require legislative approval and there would likely be considerable push back from the industry. Therefore, we would have to develop a tag dispersal and accounting system for SCFL and RSCFL holders that meets the commercial tagging requirements and uses staff time and resources efficiently.

D. Program Successes

1. Identify how challenges are being addressed/resolved and any other major successes the state would like highlight from the past ten years.

None.

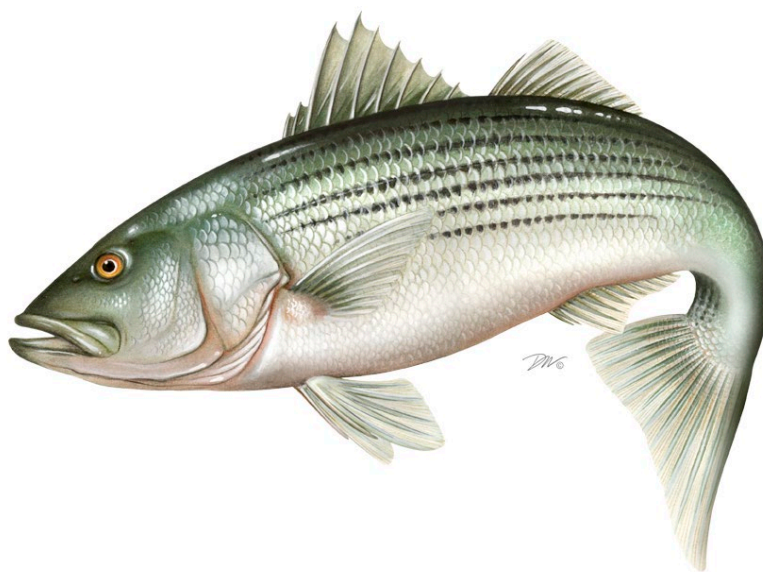
2. Would the state deem its current tagging program as a success in minimizing illegal harvest? Are there ongoing sources of illegal commercial harvest?

Yes, NC deems the current tagging program a success. NC does not feel there is any significant commercial harvest of striped bass that are illegally sold (i.e. sold and not reported through the tagging program) to either individuals, seafood dealers, or restaurants. There is currently no rule or statute in place that requires seafood harvested in a commercial fishing operation to be sold. A person holding a SCFL or RSCFL can legally harvest striped bass at the allowed commercial trip limit and take them home to keep for personal consumption. So there is a possibility of some unreported harvest. If it is not sold to a licensed seafood dealer that harvest will go unreported. However NC feels this situation is minimal. Starting December 2025, a new state law will require all fish that are commercially harvested to be reported to a dealer, regardless of if that fish is sold or not. <https://ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H600v8.pdf>.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

DRAFT ADDENDUM III TO AMENDMENT 7 TO THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

***Recreational and Commercial Management Measures,
Commercial Tagging Programs, Defining Total Length Measurement***



August 2025



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Public Comment Process and Proposed Timeline

In December 2024, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum III to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass to consider recreational and commercial management measures to support rebuilding the stock by 2029. The Draft Addendum also considers point of tagging for commercial tagging programs (point of harvest, point of landing, or point of sale), a coastwide definition of ‘total length’ as it applies to striped bass size limit regulations, and changes to the Maryland recreational season baseline. This Draft Addendum presents background on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (Commission) management of Atlantic striped bass; the addendum process and timeline; a statement of the problem; and management options for public consideration and comment.

The public is encouraged to submit comments regarding the proposed management options in this document at any time during the addendum process. The final date comments will be accepted is **Friday, October 3 at 11:59 p.m. EST**. Comments may be submitted by mail, email or online. If you have any questions or would like to submit comments, please use the contact information below.

1. **Mail:** Emilie Franke, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200A-N, Arlington, VA 22201
2. **Email:** comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Striped Bass Draft Addendum III)
3. **Online via the public comment form:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z3WLHF3>
4. **Online via comment box:** <https://asmfc.org/actions/atlantic-stripped-bass-draft-addendum-iii-2026-measures-to-support-rebuilding/>
5. **At public hearings** (see the [Action Tracker page](#) for hearing schedule)

Date	Action
December 2024	Board initiated the Draft Addendum
February 2025	Board provided additional guidance on scope of options for development
February – July 2025	Plan Development Team developed Draft Addendum document and Board modified options
August 2025	Board revised and approved Draft Addendum III for public comment
Late August – October 3, 2025	Public comment period, including public hearings
Late October 2025	Board reviews public comments, selects management measures, final approval of Addendum III

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Atlantic striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) are managed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) in state waters (0–3 miles) and through NOAA Fisheries in federal waters (3–200 miles). The management unit includes the coastal migratory stock from Maine through North Carolina. State waters fisheries for Atlantic striped bass are currently managed under Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and its Addenda (I and II). Harvesting or targeting striped bass in federal waters has been prohibited by NOAA Fisheries since 1990.

In December 2024, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) initiated Addendum III to Amendment 7 to support rebuilding the stock to its target spawning stock biomass level by 2029. The Board initiated the draft addendum via the following approved motion:

Move to initiate an addendum to support striped bass rebuilding by 2029 in consideration of 2024 recreational and commercial mortality while balancing socioeconomic impacts. Options should include, if needed, a range of overall reductions, consideration of recreational versus commercial contributions to the reductions, recreational season and size changes taking into account regional variability of availability, and no harvest versus no target closures. Final action shall be taken by the annual 2025 meeting to be in place for the 2026 recreational and commercial fisheries.

In February 2025, the Board requested a number of changes to the document, including

- options to achieve a 60% probability of rebuilding in addition to options for a 50% probability of rebuilding
- the development of recreational mode split options
- clarified that options should not consider changes to possession limits
- provided direction on the type of recreational size limits and scope of seasonal closure options to consider
- added an option to consider commercial tagging at the point of harvest instead of allowing states to choose between tagging at the point of harvest or point of sale
- added an option to consider standardizing the definition of ‘total length’ to address concerns about the lack of consistent measurement of striped bass for regulatory compliance, particularly within narrow slot limits.

In May 2025, the Board added an option to consider changing Maryland’s recreational season baseline. In August 2025, the Board added an option to consider commercial tagging by the first point of landing and removed the options to achieve a 60% probability of rebuilding.

2.0 OVERVIEW

2.1 Statement of the Problem

Atlantic striped bass were declared overfished in 2019 and are subject to a rebuilding plan that requires the stock to be rebuilt to its spawning stock biomass target by 2029. The most recent stock projections estimate an increase in fishing mortality in 2025 due to the above average

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2018 year-class entering the current recreational ocean slot limit, and there is concern about the lack of strong year-classes behind the 2018 year-class. Adjusting the subsequent 2026 management measures could increase the probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029.

The Atlantic Striped Bass FMP's commercial tagging measures have been in place for over a decade. Currently, states with commercial fisheries choose whether to tag harvested fish at the point of harvest or the point of sale, or between those points, such as when the fish are landed. There are concerns that waiting to tag harvested fish until the point of sale could increase the risk of illegal harvest, so this addendum considers whether states would implement commercial tagging at the point of harvest or by the first point of landing with the goal of improving enforcement and compliance. This would impact three states that currently implement tagging at the point of sale. However, differences among states' commercial management systems and how each state manages its current tagging program make it difficult to determine whether requiring the same type of tagging program across all states would decrease the risk of illegal harvest in every state.

Maryland's striped bass regulations have become increasingly complicated over time, including a complex suite of season closures throughout the year. In addition, the current understanding of release mortality rates and environmental stressors within Chesapeake Bay has resulted in some Maryland stakeholders' desire to adjust seasons to better take advantage of fishing opportunities when conditions are favorable to lower striped bass release mortality. This addendum considers a new recreational baseline season to simplify Maryland Chesapeake Bay regulations, which could help improve compliance and enforcement, as well as re-align access based on stakeholder input and release mortality rates. This new baseline would modify the duration and timing of various seasons throughout the year and is estimated to maintain the same level of removals as compared to 2024 levels (i.e., net neutral). Any coastwide reductions to support stock rebuilding would be added on to the new baseline. To address uncertainty associated with this analysis, some options consider adding an uncertainty buffer to increase the new baseline's probability of success in achieving equivalency (i.e., not increasing removals) with the current season.

The Atlantic Striped Bass FMP specifies size limit regulations in total length (TL), but it does not define a specific method for measuring TL. Consequently, current state regulations vary on how to measure a striped bass for regulatory compliance. There is concern that the lack of coastwide standards for the method of measurement is undermining the intended conservation, consistency, and enforceability of the size limits. This addendum considers establishing mandatory elements for the states' regulatory definition of TL as it applies to striped bass size limits for the recreational and commercial fisheries.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Status of the Stock

Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) are estimated on a regular basis and compared to target and threshold levels (i.e., biological reference points) to assess the

status of the striped bass stock. The 1995 estimate of female SSB is used as the SSB threshold because this is when the stock was declared recovered and important stock characteristics, such as an expanded age structure, were also reached by this year. The female SSB target is equal to 125% of the female SSB threshold. The associated F threshold and F target are calculated to achieve the respective SSB reference points in the long-term.

The most recent assessment was an update completed in 2024 with data through 2023, including a partial year of fishery data under the 2023 Emergency Action. The [2024 Stock Assessment Update](#) found the stock was not experiencing overfishing in 2023 ($F = 0.18$, below the threshold of 0.21 but above the target of 0.17) but remained overfished (female SSB = 191 million pounds, just below the threshold of 197 million pounds and below the target of 247 million pounds; Figure 1 and Figure 2). This was the same stock status as the prior 2022 Stock Assessment Update. Both the 2022 and 2024 assessments used the “low recruitment assumption” to calculate the reference points (per Amendment 7’s requirement under a tripped recruitment trigger), which resulted in a lower, more conservative F target and threshold compared to the 2018 benchmark assessment. Although below the threshold and considered overfished, female SSB in 2023 increased since the prior assessment and was still estimated to be well above SSB levels from the 1980s, when the stock was considered collapsed (Figure 1).

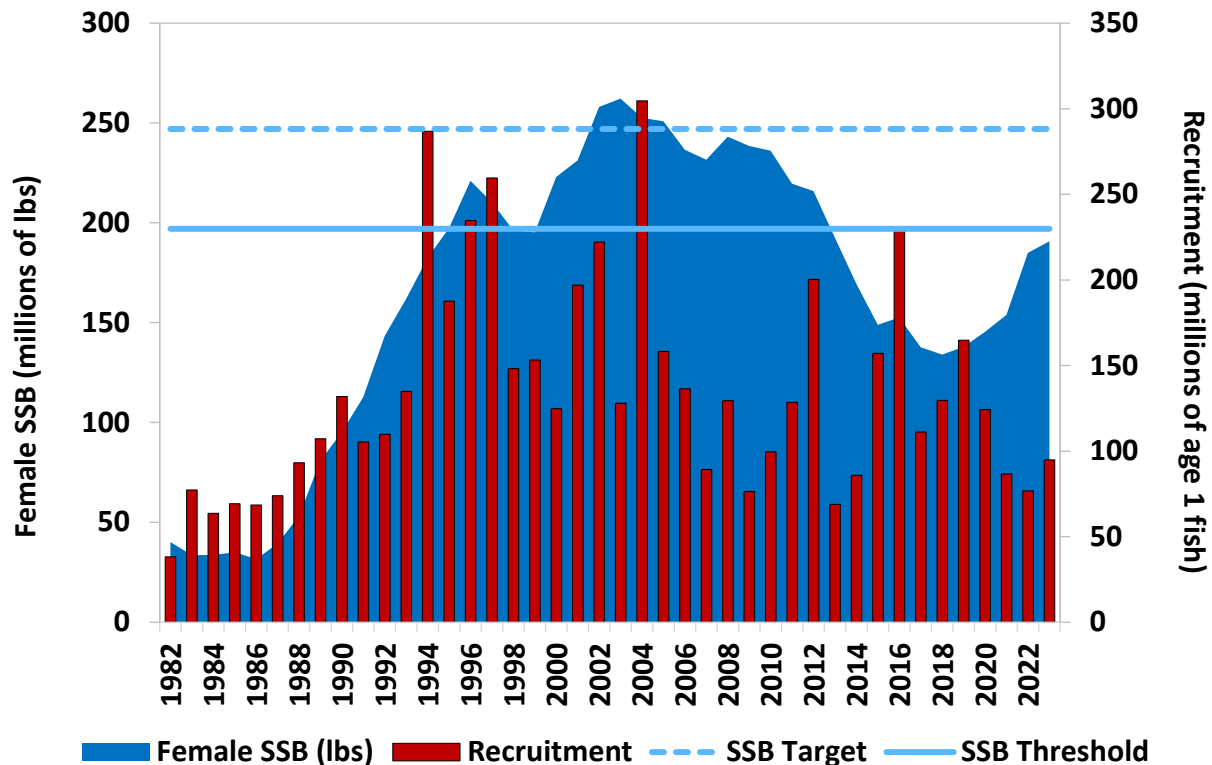


Figure 1. Atlantic striped bass female spawning stock biomass (blue) and recruitment (red), 1982-2023. Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update.

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The assessment also indicated a period of strong recruitment (numbers of age-1 fish entering the population) from 1994–2004, followed by a period of low recruitment from 2005–2011, although not as low as the period of stock collapse in the early 1980s (Figure 1). This period of low recruitment contributed to the decline in SSB that the stock has experienced since 2010. Recruitment of age-1 fish was high in 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019 (corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2018 year classes, respectively); however, estimates of age-1 striped bass were below the long-term average for seven of the last ten years.

The next stock assessment for striped bass is a benchmark stock assessment—in which the assessment input data and methods are fully re-evaluated—scheduled for peer review in Spring 2027. The 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment will include data through 2025.

Stock projections were updated in May 2025 to estimate 2024 fishing mortality based on final 2024 recreational catch estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and initial 2024 commercial harvest estimates from the states.

The [Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee](#) (TC) reviewed assumptions about fishing mortality levels from 2025 through 2029 included in the projections. Under status quo management, 2025 fishing mortality is predicted to increase as the above average 2018 year-class enters the current recreational ocean slot limit, followed by a predicted decrease in fishing mortality in 2026 as the 2018 year-class starts to grow out of that ocean slot limit with a lack of strong year classes following (Figure 2). For the 2025 increase, the TC determined the best assumption is a 17% increase from the 2024 level based on the observed 17% increase from 2021 to 2023 when part of the 2015 year-class was still in the newly reduced ocean slot limit. The TC noted the magnitude of increase may be overestimated since the 2018 year-class is not as strong as the 2015 year-class was. For 2026 through 2029, the TC determined the best assumption is a decrease back to the 2024 fishing mortality level in 2026 and maintain that level through 2029 noting this is a reasonable assumption under the same narrow slot limit with an above-average year-class growing out of the slot (Figure 2).

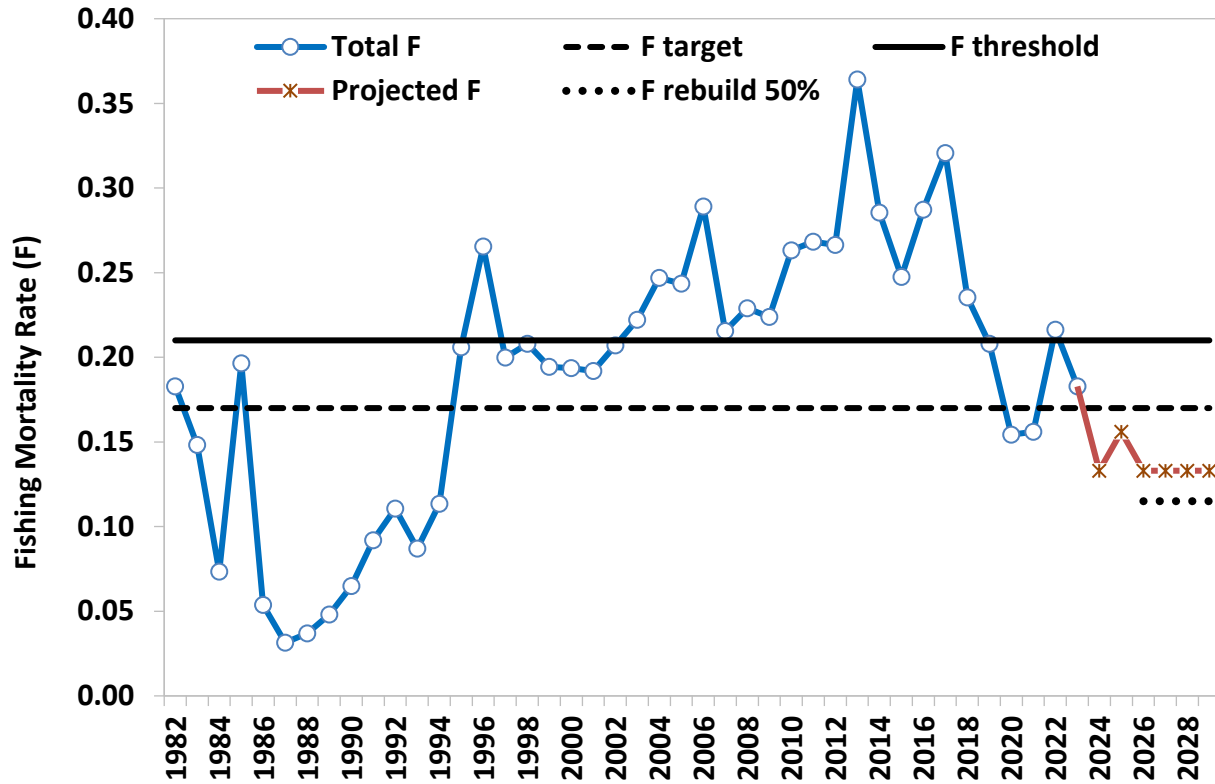


Figure 2. Atlantic striped bass fishing mortality from 1982-2023 from 2024 Stock Assessment Update (blue), estimated 2024 fishing mortality (orange), and projected fishing mortality for 2025-2029 (orange).

With the estimate of 2024 fishing mortality, the above assumptions about 2025-2029 fishing mortality under status quo management, and the same low recruitment assumption as the assessment, the projections estimate a 30% probability of being at or above the SSB target in 2029 (Figure 3). This would require a 12% reduction in 2026 removals to achieve the level of fishing mortality that would result in a 50% probability of SSB being at or above the SSB target in 2029 (*F_rebuild 50%*) or an 18% reduction in 2026 removals to achieve the level of fishing mortality that would result in a 60% probability (*F_rebuild 60%*). The TC continues to highlight several major sources of uncertainty in the projections and the difficulty of predicting future fishing mortality rates.

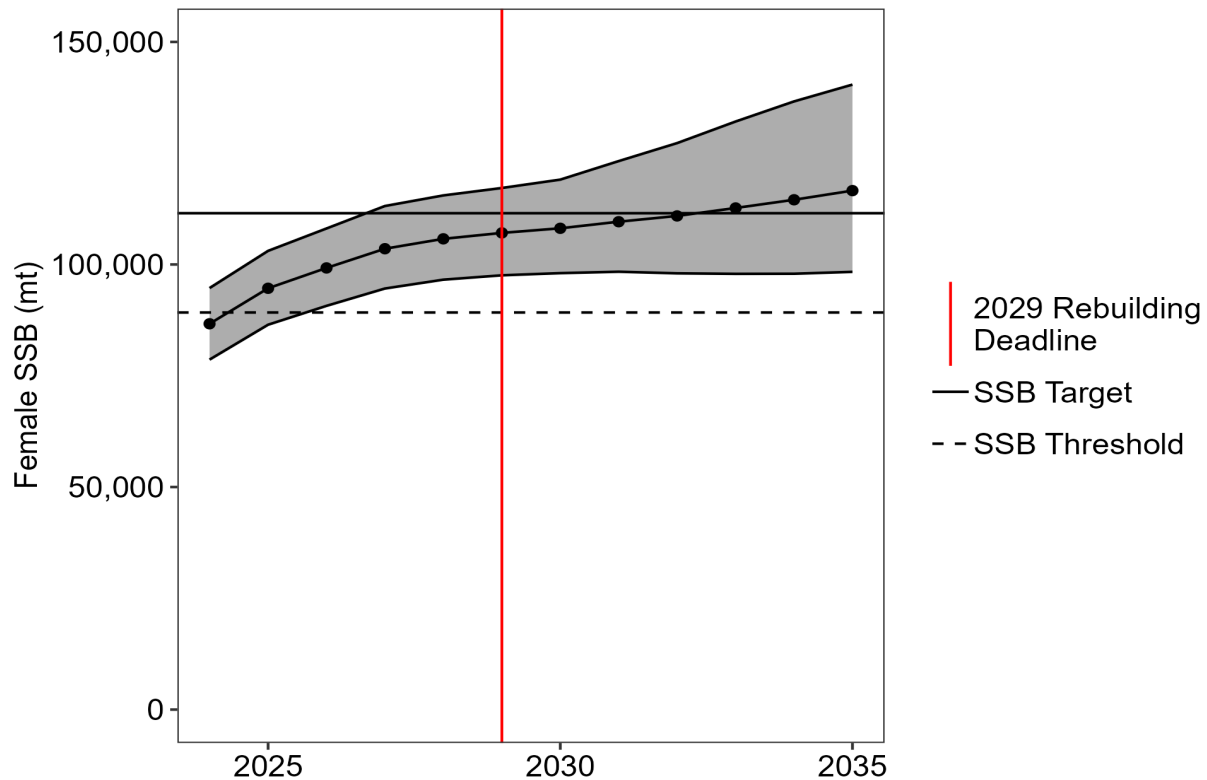


Figure 3. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) trajectory based on Technical Committee assumptions about 2025-2029 fishing mortality under status quo management and using the same low recruitment assumption as the stock assessment. Shaded area indicates 95% confidence intervals.

In addition to the base projections described above, the Board requested sensitivity runs to provide additional context, including runs that extend the projections beyond 2029 and use a 'very low' recruitment assumption based on the most recent six years of very low recruitment. The base run uses the low recruitment assumption from the stock assessment (future recruitment drawn from 2008-2023) and indicates SSB will continue to increase after 2029 under the assumed fishing mortality rates. In the scenarios where future recruitment is drawn from the very low recruitment regime (2019-2024), SSB will begin to decline after 2030 as the 2015 and 2018 year-classes continue to die off due to natural and fishing mortality and are replaced by the weak 2019-2024 year-classes. The projected trajectory of SSB after 2029 varies depending on the recruitment scenario, with SSB continuing to increase after 2029 under the low recruitment regime and SSB declining after 2029 in the very low recruitment scenario.

2.2.2 Status of Management

Atlantic striped bass were declared overfished in 2019 and are subject to a rebuilding plan that requires the stock to be rebuilt to its spawning stock biomass target by 2029. In 2020, Addendum VI to Amendment 6 implemented management measures designed to achieve an 18% reduction in fishery removals to reduce fishing mortality. Those measures were in place until 2023, when the Board approved an emergency action in May of that year to change the recreational size limit in response to the unprecedented magnitude of 2022 recreational

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harvest, which was nearly double that of 2021, and associated updated stock rebuilding projections. Specifically, the Board's May 2, 2023 emergency action required all states to implement a 31-inch maximum size limit for their striped bass recreational fisheries (excluding Chesapeake Bay striped bass trophy fisheries) as soon as possible and no later than July 2, 2023, while maintaining all other measures. The 31-inch maximum size limit was intended to reduce harvest on the strong 2015 year-class. In effect, the emergency action reduced the ocean recreational slot from 28" to <35" to 28" – 31" and added a 31" maximum size to Chesapeake Bay's recreational measures. The emergency action was effective until May 1, 2024, at which point it was replaced by Addendum II to Amendment 7 measures.

Addendum II, approved in January 2024, was designed to reduce removals by 14% to support stock rebuilding. For the ocean recreational fishery, the Addendum implemented a 28" to 31" slot limit, 1-fish bag limit, and maintained 2022 season dates for all fishery participants; this maintained the same ocean recreational measures adopted under the 2023 emergency action. For Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, the Addendum implemented a 19" to 24" slot limit, 1-fish bag limit, and maintained 2022 season dates for all fishery participants. For the commercial fishery, the Addendum reduced commercial quotas by 7% in both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay. To address concerns about recreational filleting allowances and compliance with recreational size limits, the Addendum established two requirements for states that authorize at-sea/shore-side filleting of striped bass: racks must be retained and possession limited to no more than two fillets per legal fish. Finally, to enable an expedited response process to upcoming stock assessments, the Addendum established a mechanism allowing the Board to respond to a stock assessment via Board action if the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029 with a probability greater than or equal to 50%. All Addendum II measures were required to be implemented by the states no later than May 1, 2024.

2.2.3 Status of the Commercial Fishery

From 2020-2024, the commercial sector accounted for, on average, 13% of total removals per year in numbers of fish. The commercial fishery is managed by a quota system resulting in relatively stable landings since 2004 (Figure 4). There are two regional quotas; one for Chesapeake Bay and one for the ocean region, which includes other bays, inland rivers, and estuaries. In 2024, the ocean commercial striped bass quota was 2.2 million pounds with roughly 1.7 million pounds harvested in the ocean region. New York and Maryland (ocean) exceeded their state quotas in 2024. In Chesapeake Bay region, the 2024 commercial striped bass quota was 2.8 million pounds, and roughly 2.6 million pounds were harvested. While the full Chesapeake Bay quota was not exceeded, Maryland exceeded their portion of Chesapeake Bay quota. Refer to Appendix A for 2024 commercial fishery regulations by state, including size limits, trip limits, gear restrictions, and seasons.

The ocean region regularly underutilizes its cumulative commercial quota due to the lack of striped bass availability in some state waters (particularly North Carolina, which holds 13% of the ocean quota, yet has had zero ocean harvest since 2013) coupled with prohibitions on commercial striped bass fishing in Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New Jersey (which collectively share about 10% of the ocean commercial quota). The ocean commercial quota

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utilization was 76% in 2024, which was about the same as ocean quota utilization in 2021-2023. In the ocean, most states that allow commercial harvest utilized >96% of their ocean quota in 2024 with the exception of North Carolina which had zero ocean harvest.

In Chesapeake Bay, quota utilization in 2024 was about 94%, which was an increase from 2021-2023 quota utilization of 84%.

From 2004-2014, coastwide commercial landings averaged 6.8 million pounds per year. From 2015-2019, commercial landings decreased to an average of 4.7 million pounds due to implementation of reduced quotas through Addendum IV. From 2020-2024, coastwide commercial landings decreased again to an average 4.1 million pounds due to further reduced quotas through Addendum VI to Amendment 6 and Addendum II to Amendment 7.

Since 1990, commercial landings from the ocean fishery have accounted for an average 40% of total coastwide commercial landings by weight, with the other 60% coming from Chesapeake Bay. The proportion of commercial harvest coming from Chesapeake Bay is much higher in numbers of fish (roughly 80%) because fish harvested in Chesapeake Bay have a lower average weight than fish harvested in ocean fisheries.

Of total commercial harvest (combined ocean and Chesapeake Bay) by weight in 2024, Maryland landed 33%, Virginia landed 22%, Massachusetts landed 15%, and New York landed 14%. Additional harvest came from the Potomac River (10%), Delaware (3%), and Rhode Island (confidential).

Ocean commercial size limits, seasons, and gear types vary by state. Along the Atlantic coast, current legal minimum size ranges from 20" to 35". In general, lower minimum sizes exist in the Mid-Atlantic (where fish are primarily harvested by a combination of drift and anchor gill nets), while New England states have larger minimum sizes and predominantly use hook and line. In the ocean region, only New York currently has a commercial slot size with lower and upper bounds (26–38"). Chesapeake Bay commercial size limits and gear types are more uniform with an 18" minimum size for Bay states, although Maryland has a year-round maximum size (36") while the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) and Virginia have seasonal maximum size limits of 36" and 28", respectively. All three Bay states use a combination of pound nets, gill nets, and hook/line gears.

How each state manages their commercial quota varies (e.g., some states manage their quota through an individual quota system), and one state (New Jersey) currently reallocates its commercial quota to the recreational sector through a quota-managed recreational bonus program.

Participation in each state's commercial fishery has varied over time (Table 1). There are likely several factors contributing to year-to-year participation in the fishery. These factors could include changes in available quota, state licensing and/or permitting, striped bass availability,

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other species availability, individual socioeconomic circumstances, changing demographics in the fishery, closed areas, and individual quota transfers/consolidation where applicable.

Table 1. Number of commercial harvesters landing striped bass by state from 2015-2024. Source: MADMF, RIDEM, NYSDEC, DENREC, MDDNR, PRFC, VMRC.

	MA	RI	NY	DE*	MD Ocean	MD Ches. Bay	PRFC	VA Ocean	VA Ches. Bay
2015	1,154	293	362	51	26	493	253	19	277
2016	1,233	267	370	45	23	494	253	18	267
2017	1,224	286	379	42	33	505	251	18	257
2018	1,308	269	345	41	33	464	215	19	260
2019	1,226	268	283	40	32	462	214	18	240
2020	658	231	346	38	44	414	204	18	218
2021	732	234	377	41	40	447	199	18	212
2022	1,038	256	376	40	41	419	209	17	231
2023	1,046	236	375	37	40	447	200	19	228
2024	940	261	377	37	43	415	187	17	230

*DE number of gill net harvesters only, which account for >99% of Delaware's commercial striped bass harvest.

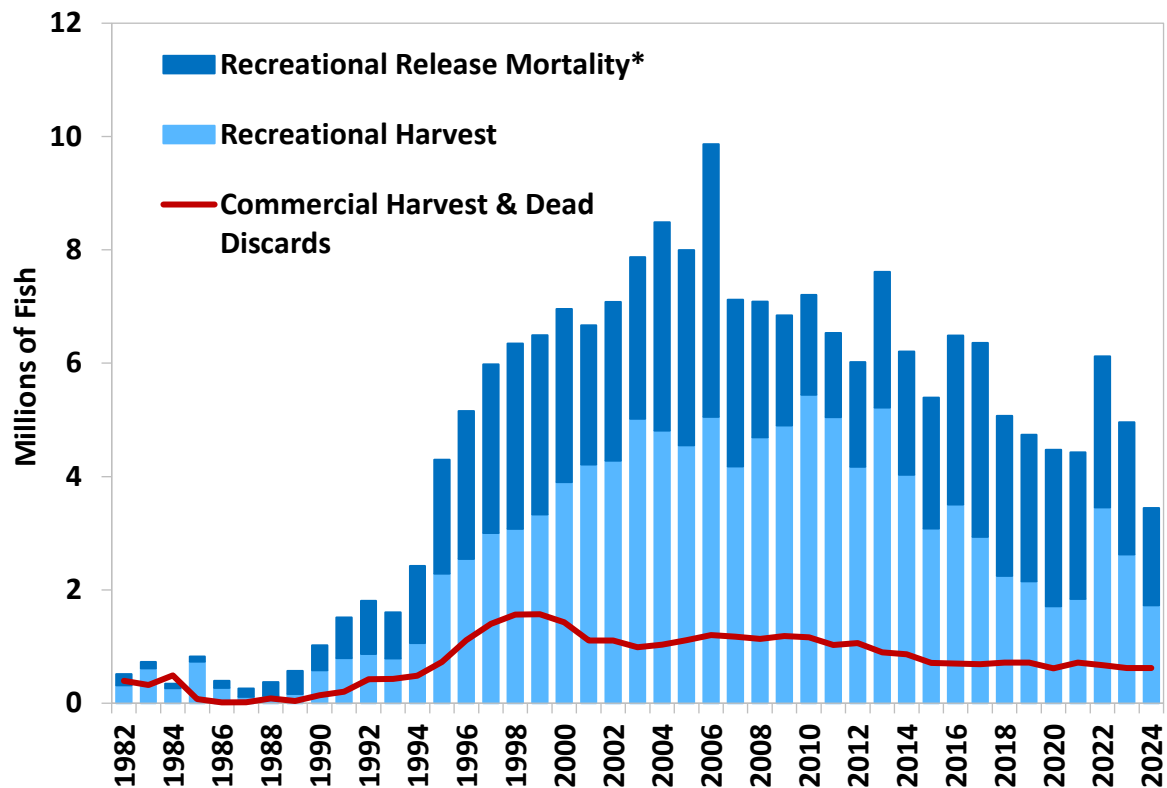


Figure 4. Atlantic striped bass commercial landings (line) and dead discards and recreational landings and release mortality (bars) from 1982-2024. *9% of fish released alive assumed to die from being caught. Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update and State Compliance Reports.

2.2.4 Status of the Recreational Fishery

The majority of striped bass fishery removals are from the recreational sector, accounting for 87% of total removals on average per year in numbers of fish from 2020-2024. The recreational fishery is managed by bag limits, minimum size or slot size limits, and closed seasons (in some states) to restrict harvest. Gear restrictions are also in place to increase the chance of survival after a striped bass is released alive in the recreational fishery. Recreational removals (harvest and release mortality) account for a vast majority (85-90% each year) of total striped bass fishery removals (recreational and commercial sectors combined).

Total Recreational Removals

Total recreational removals (harvest and release mortality) coastwide were estimated at 3.4 million fish in 2024, which is a 31% decrease from recreational removals in 2023 (Figure 4). This coastwide decrease in total recreational removals was a combination of a decrease in both harvest and live releases. Combined private vessel/shore modes accounted for 97% of ocean recreational striped bass removals in 2024, while for-hire components (charter and head boats) accounted for about 3% of ocean removals. In Chesapeake Bay, private vessels/shore modes accounted for 77% of Bay recreational removals in 2024, while for-hire modes accounted for 23%.

Live Releases

The vast majority of recreational striped bass catch (over 90%) is released alive either due to angler preference or regulation (i.e., closed season, undersized, oversized, or already caught the bag limit). The stock assessment assumes, based on previous studies, that 9% of fish that are released alive die as a result of being caught. In 2024, recreational anglers caught and released an estimated 19.1 million fish, of which 1.7 million are assumed to have died. This represents a 26% decrease in live releases coastwide from the 2023 level (Figure 4). By region in 2024, a reduction in live releases was observed in both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay, 26% and 29%, respectively.

Recreational Harvest

Recreational harvest in 2024 decreased to 1.7 million fish (15.3 million pounds) from the 2023 level of 2.6 million fish (23.9 million pounds), which is a 34% decrease by number (Figure 4). Relative to 2022 when recreational harvest spiked, 2024 harvest is 50% lower. By region, both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay saw a decrease in recreational harvest in 2024 relative to 2023, with the Bay seeing a larger reduction of 54% and the ocean seeing a 28% reduction. The larger reduction in recreational harvest in Chesapeake Bay could be attributed, at least partly, to the implementation of a Bay-wide 19"-24" slot limit in 2024 under Addendum II, and to the lack of strong year-classes available in the Bay in 2024. In the ocean, the size limit did not change between 2023 and 2024, but most of the remaining fish from the strong 2015 year-class (age-9 in 2024) had likely grown out of the narrow 28"-31" ocean slot limit by 2024, potentially contributing to the decrease. However, it is important to note that changes in effort can also impact harvest.

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In 2024, New Jersey landed the largest proportion of recreational harvest in number of fish (36%), followed by New York (25%), Massachusetts (15%), and Maryland (13%). The proportion of coastwide recreational harvest in numbers from Chesapeake Bay has been the lowest since the stock recovered in the 1990s (20% in 2022, 22% in 2023, and 16% in 2024). This decrease in the proportion of recreational harvest from Chesapeake Bay in recent years, and therefore increased proportion of ocean recreational harvest, aligns with the availability of the strong 2015-year class in the ocean fishery in 2022-2023, implementation of a Chesapeake Bay-wide slot limit in 2024, and decrease in Maryland's for-hire bag limit from 2-fish to 1-fish in 2024. Additionally, as the last above average year-class (2018) move out of Chesapeake Bay after 2023, there are no strong year classes following.

For recreational harvest by mode, the magnitude of change from 2023 to 2024 differs between the for-hire modes and the private-shore modes by region. Private-shore harvest in 2024 decreased by 29% in the ocean and 60% in Chesapeake Bay. For-hire harvest in the ocean remained about the same as in 2023, while for-hire harvest in Chesapeake Bay decreased by 40% in 2024. The ocean saw larger decreases in these modes from 2022-2023, when recreational harvest decreased by 50% in the for-hire modes and 25% for the private-shore modes.

Recreational Effort

Similar to the change in recreational harvest, the number of trips directed at striped bass (primary and secondary target) also shows a larger reduction in the Bay as compared to the ocean (Figure 5). In 2024, the number of striped bass directed trips in Chesapeake Bay region decreased by about 40% relative to 2023, while the number of striped bass directed trips in the ocean decreased by about 10%. Overall, the total number of coastwide striped bass directed trips in 2024 decreased by 14% from 2023 and is the lowest number of directed trips in the past decade.

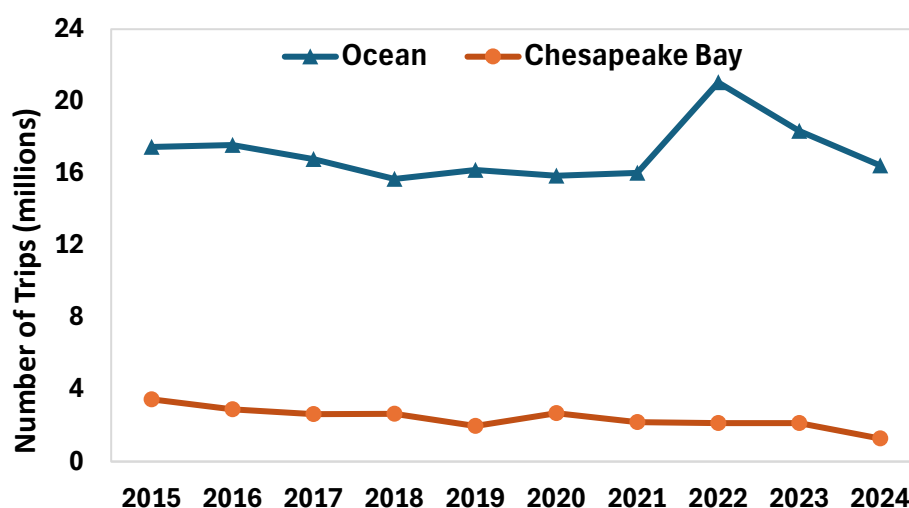


Figure 5. Number of striped bass directed trips (primary or secondary target) for the ocean in blue and Chesapeake Bay in orange from 2015-2024. Source: MRIP.

For directed trips by mode, private-shore directed trips in 2024 decreased by about 10% in the ocean and decreased by 42% in Chesapeake Bay. For-hire directed trips in the ocean in 2024 decreased by about 16%, while for-hire directed trips in Chesapeake Bay, approximated as the Inland area defined in MRIP, decreased by 13%. In Maryland specifically, the number of Maryland Chesapeake Bay for-hire trips catching striped bass are tracked via for-hire logbooks which indicate a 43% decrease from 2023 to 2024. Again, these data indicate larger reductions in recreational harvest and directed trips in Chesapeake Bay from 2023 to 2024. The ocean region saw larger reductions from 2022 to 2023.

Factors Contributing to Catch and Effort Trends

Overall, there are several factors that contribute to trends in recreational catch and effort, including management measures, year class availability, overall stock abundance, nearshore availability of bait and striped bass, and angler behavior. The relatively strong 2015-year class moving into the ocean and becoming available to the ocean slot (i.e., those 2015-year class fish surpassing 28-inches), was likely the primary driver of increased ocean recreational catch in 2022. The subsequent emergency action in 2023 intended to reduce harvest of the 2015-year class likely contributed to the harvest reduction observed in 2023. The 2015 year-class grew out of the ocean slot by 2024 (i.e., surpassing 31-inches) likely contributing to the decreases in ocean recreational catch in 2024. In Chesapeake Bay, a combination of the five-inch recreational slot limit implemented in 2024 and the lack of strong year classes available after the 2018 year-class moved into the ocean likely played a role. Angler effort and behavior are also important to consider. When more fish are available in the fishery, effort can often increase in response. When narrower size limits are in place or less fish are available in the fishery, anglers may change their behavior and level of effort.

2.2.5 Social and Economic Considerations

For the commercial sector, reductions in quota would likely reduce profits for striped bass commercial harvesters and may increase the consumer price of striped bass. The impacts of a quota reduction will vary depending on individual harvester circumstances, such as what portion of a harvester's current business is dependent on striped bass and the ability to switch to commercial fisheries for other species. Since there have been multiple striped bass commercial quota reductions in the past decade, harvesters may have already had to diversify their businesses and/or could eventually reach a point where harvesting striped bass is no longer profitable.

For the recreational sector, changes in seasonal closures, size and bag limits, and other measures affect important attributes of a recreational fishing trip, such as when during the year an angler is allowed to keep a fish. In turn, these changes in trip attributes will modify the utility (i.e., level of satisfaction) an angler expects to obtain from the fishing trip (McConnell et al. 1995, Haab and McConnell 2003). As a result, the angler may shift target species, modify trip duration or location, or decide not to take the trip and do something else instead. These behavioral responses lead to changes in directed fishing effort, with accompanying changes in harvest, fishing mortality, and angler welfare.

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A reduction in effort could have a negative impact on the regional economy and businesses associated with the fishing industry for striped bass. This may only be a short-term response, and stock dynamics will dictate any longer-term effects on the resource and the angling community. Impacts on for-hire businesses will likely vary depending on individual business circumstances. If changes in seasonal closures or size limits reduce the number of striped bass trips for-hire businesses are able to book, the economic impacts will likely depend on whether the business can switch to target other species that are of interest to anglers. Managers have to weigh potential negative effects on anglers and businesses with potential long-term positive effects on the stock and future fishing experience.

Angler response to recreational seasonal closures is difficult to predict. There are two types of seasonal closures being considered: no-harvest and no-targeting. If striped bass harvest is prohibited during a closure, anglers could choose to catch-and-release striped bass, target another species, or choose not to fish at all. If targeting striped bass is prohibited, anglers could target another species or choose not to fish at all. Individual angler preferences and availability of other species are a few of many factors that would shape angler response to seasonal closures. See the following sections 2.2.6 through 2.2.8 for context on the seasonality of the recreational striped bass fishery and other species commonly caught and targeted with striped bass.

Research into striped bass anglers' preferences and behavior found that angler preferences vary. One study indicates the average striped bass angler prefers to catch and keep larger fish (Carr-Harris and Steinback 2020). Applying this to a 28" to 31" slot limit, anglers would likely prefer to keep a fish greater than 31" rather than having to release it, which means that in the short-term, a narrow slot limit like 28" to 31" may reduce effort (i.e., reduce trips) from those anglers seeking to bring fish home in the cooler. Conversely, any high minimum size or slot limit options (e.g., 37" to 40" slot) may be desirable for striped bass anglers who prefer to keep a larger fish, but this size limit would make it more difficult for shore anglers to catch a legal sized fish, given the smaller size of fish generally available inshore, which may also reduce effort and raise environmental justice issues.

To evaluate the effects of management options in the future, a bioeconomic model could be developed for striped bass to assess impacts of management options and feedback between fish stocks and angler decision-making, as currently done for other species such as summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. Assessing the fishery impacts and potential success of proposed policy measures requires a predictive bioeconomic model that links angler participation and decision-making to changes in management measures, stock levels, and fishing conditions (Holzer and McConnell 2017, Lee et al. 2017). While there is some past striped bass work on angler preferences that could inform a potential bioeconomic model (Carr-Harris and Steinback 2020, Murphy et al. 2019), resources are needed to fully develop the economic component of the model to incorporate with the biological model. [Amendment 7](#) outlines those and other socioeconomic research needs.

2.2.6 Seasonality of Recreational Catch and Effort

Recreational catch, including harvest and live releases, were analyzed by state and wave to inform timing of state recreational fisheries throughout the year. MRIP data were pooled from 2021 through 2024 from Maine through North Carolina to identify commonalities between states regarding availability of fish (total catch), harvest, and effort (directed striped bass trips). Data from 2023 were not included in the ocean analysis due to the mid-year regulatory change from the ASMFC adopting the narrow 28" to 31" recreational slot limit through emergency action. North Carolina MRIP data were not included since North Carolina only attributes waves 1 and 6 ocean recreational catch to the ocean stock and that catch has been minimal (zero recreational harvest for several years, 2021-2022 releases were 0.1% of total ocean releases, zero 2024 releases). State-by-state descriptions of catch by wave are available in Appendix F.

For all states in the ocean fishery, total recreational catch was dominated by live releases (Table 2) and trips that caught striped bass are dominated by those only releasing striped bass (Table 3). It should be noted that North Carolina is the only state to conduct MRIP sampling in wave 1 (Jan-Feb). Massachusetts through Virginia conduct MRIP sampling from wave 2 (Mar-Apr) through wave 6 (Nov-Dec), while Maine and New Hampshire only conduct MRIP sampling from wave 3 through wave 5 (May-Oct).

Table 2. Percent of total striped bass catch that are live releases for each state and wave in the ocean region. Source: MRIP 2021-2022-2024 data.

Wave	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD Ocean	VA Ocean	NC Ocean*
Wave 1 (Jan/Feb)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	100%
Wave 2 (Mar/Apr)	X	X	100%	100%	100%	93%	91%	98%	100%	0%	0%
Wave 3 (May/June)	98%	98%	96%	95%	93%	87%	84%	100%	100%	100%	0%
Wave 4 (July/Aug)	97%	97%	91%	92%	92%	86%	97%	97%	100%	100%	0%
Wave 5 (Sep/Oct)	99%	96%	94%	95%	98%	81%	89%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Wave 6 (Nov/Dec)	X	X	100%	100%	100%	93%	87%	99%	100%	0%	100%

X indicates MRIP sampling does not occur during that wave.

*NC only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during waves 1 and 6 to be part of the coastal migratory stock.

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Table 3. Proportion of trips landing striped bass and trips only releasing striped bass (i.e., no harvest) for all 2021-2024 trips that caught striped bass.

	% Trips Landing SB	% Trips Only Releasing SB
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

In the northern states of Maine and New Hampshire, peak catch (number of fish) and effort (millions of trips) occur in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) (Figure 6, Table 4).

The states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware all have some level of catch in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) (Figure 6). Peak catch and effort vary by state for Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Massachusetts catch peaks in waves 3 – 4 (May-Aug), Rhode Island catch peaks in wave 3 (May-Jun), and both states have peak effort in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) (Figure 6, Table 4). Connecticut catch peaks in wave 2 (Mar-Apr) with effort peaking in wave 3 (May-June).

In the Mid-Atlantic states, availability occurs in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with New York, New Jersey, and Delaware all having peak catch in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) and effort varying by state (Figure 6, Table 4). Effort in New York is consistent in waves 2 – 3 (Mar-Jun) and 5 – 6 (Sep-Dec). New Jersey effort is high in wave 2 (Mar-Apr) and peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) and Delaware effort is high in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) and peaks in wave 2 (Mar-Apr). Peak catch and effort for Maryland and North Carolina in the ocean peak in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) while in Virginia, peak catch occurs in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) but peak effort occurs in wave 5 (Sep-Oct) for the ocean fishery. It should be noted that PSEs for Delaware through North Carolina can be relatively high.

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Table 4. Proportion of each state's directed striped bass trips by wave in the ocean region.

Source: MRIP data 2021-2022-2024.

Wave	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD Ocean	VA Ocean	NC Ocean*
Wave 1 Jan/Feb	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	19%
Wave 2 Mar/Apr	X	X	5%	21%	23%	22%	27%	32%	11%	0%	0%
Wave 3 May/June	27%	25%	28%	23%	29%	22%	20%	22%	31%	0%	0%
Wave 4 July/Aug	47%	43%	39%	25%	19%	13%	4%	8%	3%	0%	0%
Wave 5 Sep/Oct	26%	32%	22%	19%	18%	20%	15%	9%	10%	54%	0%
Wave 6 Nov/Dec	X	X	6%	12%	10%	23%	34%	29%	45%	46%	81%

X indicates MRIP sampling does not occur during that wave.

*NC only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during waves 1 and 6 to be part of the coastal migratory stock.

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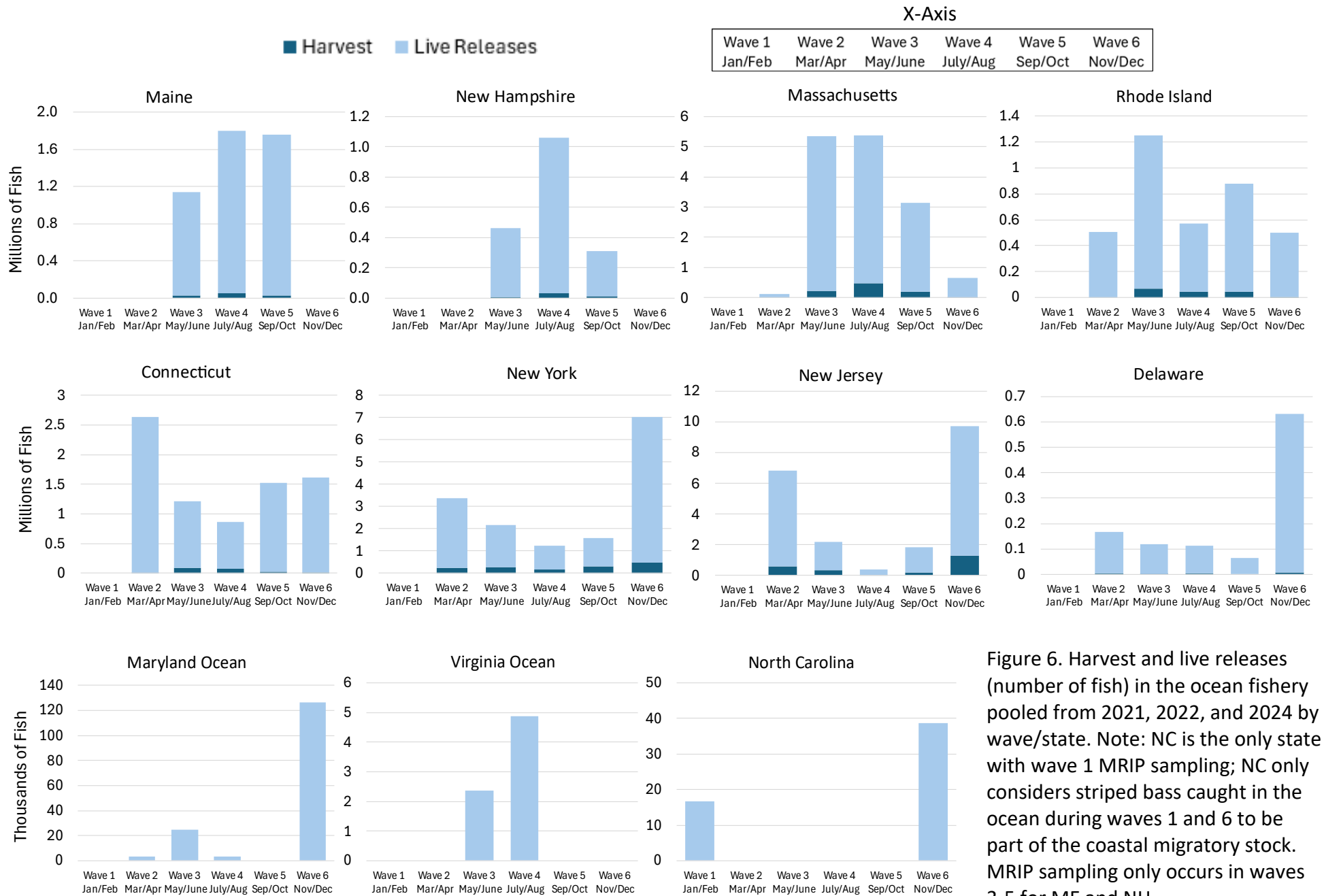


Figure 6. Harvest and live releases (number of fish) in the ocean fishery pooled from 2021, 2022, and 2024 by wave/state. Note: NC is the only state with wave 1 MRIP sampling; NC only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during waves 1 and 6 to be part of the coastal migratory stock. MRIP sampling only occurs in waves 3-5 for ME and NH.

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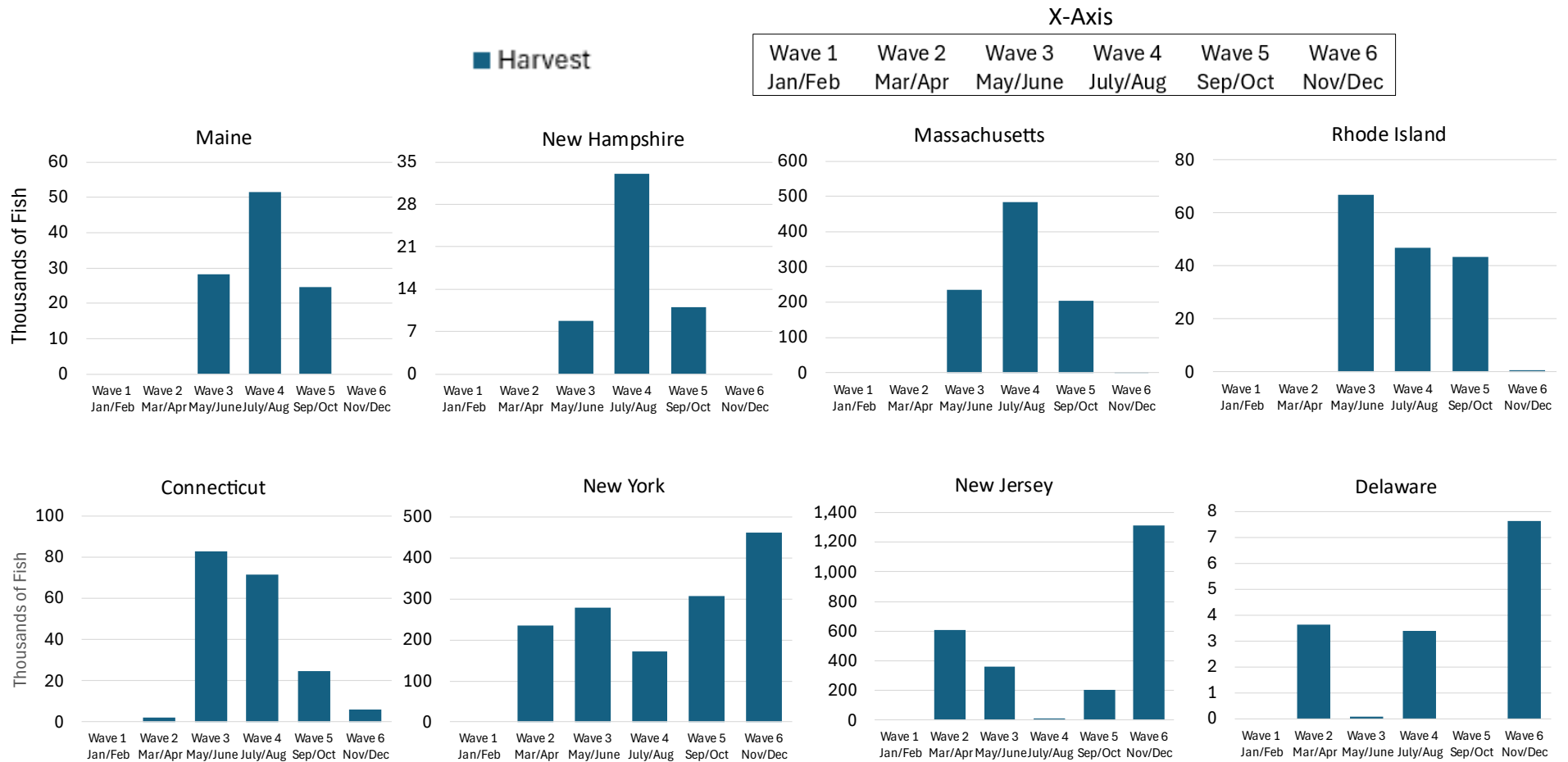


Figure 7. Harvest in the ocean fishery pooled from 2021, 2022, and 2024 by wave/state. Maryland Ocean, Virginia Ocean, and North Carolina have zero ocean harvest so are not shown. Note: NC is the only state with wave 1 MRIP sampling; NC only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during waves 1 and 6 to be part of the coastal migratory stock. MRIP sampling only occurs in waves 3-5 for ME and NH.

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In Chesapeake Bay fish are available in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with peak catch occurring in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) (Figure 8). Harvest and effort for Maryland and Virginia peak in wave 3 (May-Jun) and wave 6 (Nov-Dec), respectively (Figure 9, Figure 10). Note this analysis covers the time period after implementation of no-targeting closures for part of wave 2 (Mar-Apr) and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) in Maryland Chesapeake Bay; the timing of peak harvest and effort in Maryland Chesapeake Bay prior to these closures (pre-2020) may have been different.

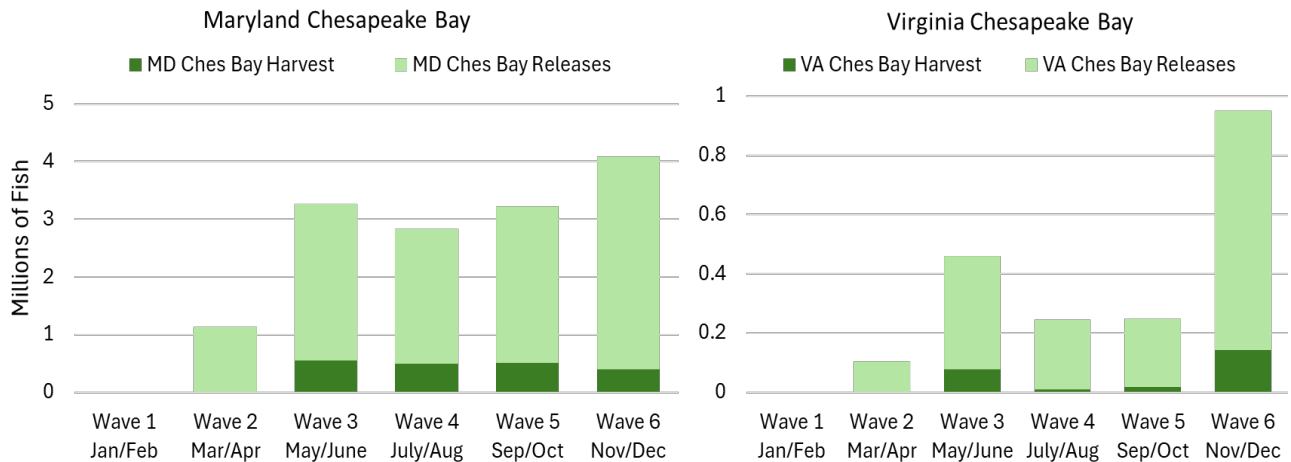


Figure 8. Recreational harvest (dark green) and live releases (light green) in the Chesapeake Bay (MRIP Inland for MD and VA) pooled from 2021-2024 by wave/state. Source: MRIP. Note: MRIP sampling does not occur during wave 1 in MD and VA.

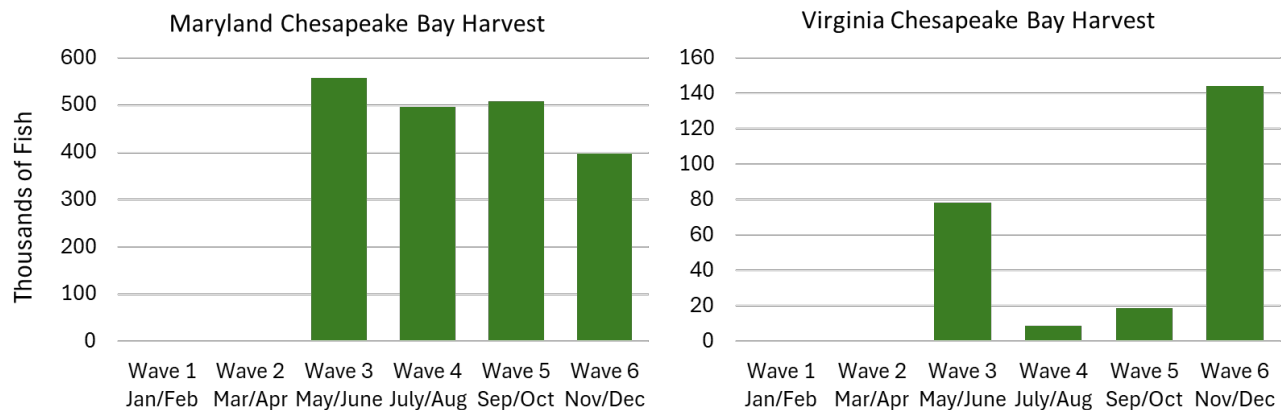


Figure 9. Recreational harvest in the Chesapeake Bay (MRIP Inland for MD and VA) pooled from 2021-2024 by wave/state. Source: MRIP. Note: MRIP sampling does not occur during wave 1 in MD and VA.

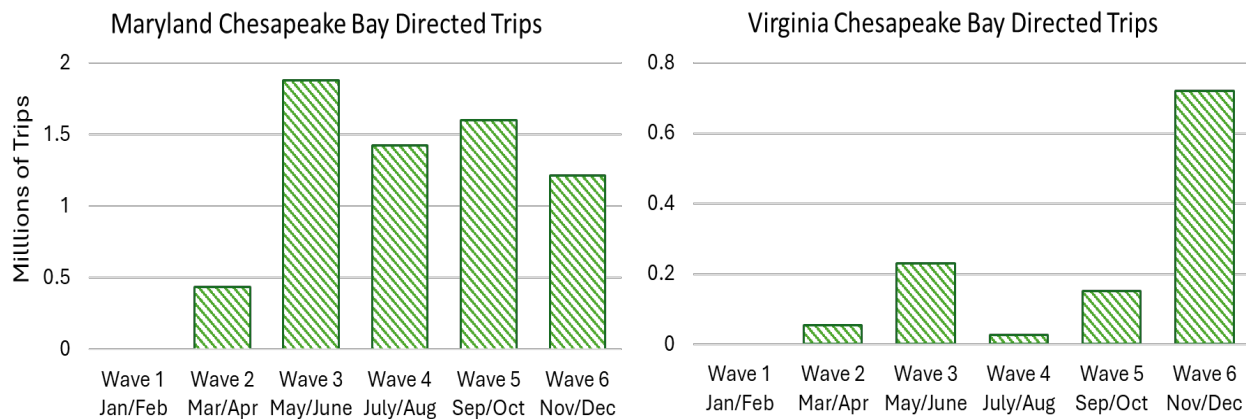


Figure 10. Striped bass directed trips (primary or secondary target) in the Chesapeake Bay (MRIP Inland for MD and VA) pooled from 2021-2024 by wave/state. Source: MRIP. Note: MRIP sampling does not occur during wave 1 in MD and VA.

2.2.7 Equity Considerations for Ocean Regions and Chesapeake Bay Season Closures

Ocean Regional Approach 1: Maine – Massachusetts and Rhode Island – North Carolina

The states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts all have the majority of their total catch (Figure 6), all of their harvest (Figure 7), and 89 – 100 % of their directed trips (Table 4) in waves 3 – 5 (May – Oct.). A seasonal closure (either no harvest or no targeting) in waves 1 (Jan-Feb), 2 (Mar-Apr), and/or 6 (Nov-Dec) for these states will not be impactful, therefore options in the draft addendum were limited to waves 3 – 5 (May – Oct.). All three states have their peak catch and harvest occurring wave 4 (Jul-Aug) however Massachusetts comprises 85% of harvest, 64% of releases, and 65% of total catch in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) for these states combined.

For the Rhode Island through North Carolina ocean region, total catch peaks in Rhode Island in wave 3 (May-Jun); CT in wave 2 (Mar-Apr); New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and North Carolina in wave 6 (Nov-Dec); and Virginia in wave 4 (Jul-Aug). As peak total catch varies by state across four waves, a no-targeting closure in a single wave to reduce total removals in this region is likely to be inequitable. As a result, a closure across two waves, for example requiring all states to implement closures in wave 3 (May-Jun) and wave 6 (Nov-Dec), may be more effective in addressing equity concerns.

Harvest peaks in wave 3 (May-Jun) for Rhode Island and Connecticut; wave 6 (Nov-Dec) for New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland; with no ocean harvest occurring in either Virginia or North Carolina. As a result, a single-wave no-harvest closure for this region would not have equal impacts across all states. A no-harvest closure across two waves in this region could address inequity closures. For example, a no-harvest closure in waves 3 (May-Jun) and 6 (Nov-Dec) would impact all states in the region with Rhode Island and Connecticut being more impacted by the wave 3 (May-Jun) closure and New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and North Carolina being more impacted by the wave 6 (Nov-Dec) closure.

Ocean Regional Approach 2: Maine – Rhode Island and Connecticut – North Carolina

Under this regional approach, Rhode Island would be shifted and included with the northern states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. However, unlike Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts which have peak catch, harvest, and effort in wave 4 (Jul-Aug), Rhode Island peak catch and harvest occur in wave 3 (May-Jun) with nearly equal peak effort in waves 3 (May-Jun) and 4 (Jul-Aug). A no-targeting or no-harvest closure in a single wave under this region may not be equitable across all states. Additionally, by Rhode Island being included in this region, they would likely have a different seasonal closure than Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. This may create challenges in the state waters around Block Island as anglers from Rhode Island through New Jersey fish in these waters and would be following different regulations. The Law Enforcement Committee noted concern about different seasons for states around Block Island Sound.

For Connecticut through North Carolina, inequities would likely still exist among these states with a single wave no-harvest or no-targeting closure for the same reasons outlined in Regional Approach 1.

Chesapeake Bay State Closures

In Chesapeake Bay, both Maryland and Virginia have peak catch in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) which could translate into an equitable single-wave no-targeting closure. Harvest in Maryland is consistent in waves 3 – 6 (May-Dec) with Virginia peak harvest occurring in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) followed by wave 3 (May-Jun). A single-wave no-harvest closure in these states could also be equitable depending on the wave chosen. It may be equitable for Maryland and Virginia to close during different waves based on existing closures that differ between the two states (e.g., Virginia is already closed for the entirety of wave 4 while Maryland sees some harvest and releases during that wave).

2.2.8 Other Species Commonly Caught and Targeted in the Striped Bass Recreational Fishery

Effects of striped bass seasonal closures on angler behavior are highly speculative, but a possible result of such closures could be anglers switching effort to other species. This analysis considers which species are often targeted on the same trip as striped bass and which species are often caught on trips that also catch striped bass. While this may provide some insight into which other species may be available to anglers if striped bass seasonal closures are implemented, it is important to note that some of these species are only co-targeted and caught with striped bass because anglers are already targeting striped bass. If anglers are no longer targeting striped bass, anglers may not necessarily switch to these other species. They may choose not to take the trip at all or switch to other species that are not commonly caught with striped bass.

Additionally, it is important to note that bait species are often part of the total catch caught on the same trip as striped bass (Table 5). For some states like Maine and New Hampshire, bait species comprise a majority of catch on trips that also caught striped bass. Anglers are likely targeting/catching bait to then use for targeting striped bass later in the trip. If that is the case,

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implementation of striped bass seasonal closures may impact the catch of bait species as well during the closure period.

MRIP data from 2021 through 2024 for both the ocean fishery and Chesapeake Bay fishery were compiled by state and by wave to explore *a)* the top ten species reported as either primary or secondary targets on trips that also targeted striped bass, and *b)* the top ten species caught on trips that also caught striped bass. State-specific figures and a summary by region are available in Appendix G.

Table 5. For trips that caught striped bass, the percentage of total fish caught that were either striped bass, other non-bait species, or bait, by state summed for 2021-2024.

	% Striped Bass	% Other Non-Bait Species	% Bait Species
ME	43.4	3.2	53.3
NH	45.7	6.5	47.9
MA	57.1	15.5	27.5
RI	61.1	37.1	1.7
CT	57.5	32.4	10.1
NY	54.8	37.0	8.2
NJ	75.5	20.9	3.7
DE	43.0	55.1	1.9
MD Ocean	83.5	13.5	3.0
VA Ocean	24.2	75.8	0.0
MD Ches. Bay	42.6	49.8	7.6
VA Ches. Bay	34.9	58.4	6.7

2.2.9 Examples of Recent Recreational Seasonal Closures: Maryland and North Carolina

Striped bass seasonal closures have recently been implemented in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and North Carolina's Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River. While the specific impacts of these closures may not be directly comparable to new closures considered in this addendum, particularly for the ocean, these closures provide insight into changes in effort and angler behavior. Several factors, including angler preferences (harvest or catch-and-release fishing), accessibility of fishing areas, and availability of other species, will contribute to any changes in catch and effort from a closure.

In Maryland Chesapeake Bay, as part of Maryland's conservation equivalency program for Addendum VI to Amendment 6, striped bass no targeting closures were implemented starting in 2020 for April 1-30 (half of wave 2 (Mar-Apr)) and for 16 days during wave 4 (Jul-Aug). In 2020, the wave 4 (Jul-Aug) closure was August 16 through August 31, and from 2021 onward, the closure has been July 16 through July 31. In addition to these closures, Maryland implemented other recreational management changes at the same time, including a shortened trophy season (starting May 1 rather than the third Saturday of April) and reduced bag limit for

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private boat and shore anglers (2 fish to 1 fish). The charter bag limit stayed at 2 fish for charter boat anglers if the charter boat was enrolled in the charter electronic reporting system.

MDDNR reviewed MRIP data for striped bass directed trips, harvest, and live releases in inland waters to compare effort and removals in wave 2 (Mar-Apr) and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) for the five years prior to the no targeting closures (2015-2019) to the four years since the no targeting closures were implemented (2020-2023). There was a decrease in directed fishing effort for striped bass in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay during those waves in the years since the closures were implemented. During wave 2 (Mar-Apr) when the month of April was closed to targeting, MRIP indicates a 67% decrease in striped bass directed trips in wave 2 (Mar-Apr) across all modes in the years since the closure was implemented. During wave 4 (Jul-Aug) when the summer season was closed to targeting for two weeks, MRIP indicates a 24% decrease in striped bass directed trips in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) across all modes in the years since the closure was implemented. An additional review of for-hire data collected by MDDNR through the FACTS reporting program indicates total for-hire trips decreased by 74% during the summer closure relative to the two weeks prior to the closure.

Harvest, live releases and total removals estimates also declined after Maryland's no targeting closures were implemented, particularly for private boat and shore modes. It is important to note that other factors (e.g., fish availability, year-class strength, and the private angler trip limit changing from 2 fish to 1 fish) are also contributing to these results. To reduce the effects of changing fish availability and year class strength, the proportions of directed trips, harvest, and live releases by wave were explored and also showed a decrease in directed fishing effort, harvest, and live releases after the no targeting closures were implemented. Further, the realized reductions from the closures met or exceeded the predicted reductions. Anglers reported targeting other Bay species more heavily during the closures, such as white perch, spot, and bluefish during the summer closure, as compared to prior to the closures when striped bass was the most targeted species.

In North Carolina, as part of the State's management of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) striped bass stock, the recreational season has been shortened in recent years as a result of poor stock status. Most recently, a harvest moratorium was implemented in 2024. The most recent A-R stock assessment, the 2022 Stock Assessment Update (Lee et al. 2022), indicated the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring along with very low juvenile recruitment for several consecutive years.

In response, North Carolina implemented multiple management changes including reducing the total allowable landings (TAL), implementing a slot limit, reducing creel limits, new gear restrictions, and shortening seasons. Over the past few years, the Roanoke River Management Area (RRMA) striped bass recreational season has changed from a two-month harvest season to fourteen days in 2021 (seven days in two separate zones), four days in 2022, and six days in 2023. The Albemarle Sound Management Area (ASMA) striped bass recreational harvest season closed earlier each year as the quota decreased and was reached sooner. In 2024, a harvest

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moratorium for the commercial and recreational sectors in both management areas was implemented.

Since harvest restrictions shortening the recreational season have been implemented in the RRMA, effort during the traditional harvest period (March-April) has decreased. In the Upper Roanoke River, where there are few other species to target besides striped bass, effort decreased approximately 50% when the harvest season was shortened and decreased by another 50% with the full moratorium in 2024 (NCWRC unpublished data). Estimated number of angler trips targeting striped bass during March and April in the upper river averaged approximately 10,000 anglers from 2015 through 2020 but dropped to approximately 5,000 anglers in 2021 through 2023 and 2,300 anglers in 2024. Anglers participating in the Upper River fishery were assumed to be participating with the intent of harvesting a striped bass, not just catch-and-release.

In the Lower Roanoke River, although other species are available like catfish, white perch, sunfish, shad, or largemouth bass, striped bass targeted effort decreased more sharply than in the upper river when the season was shortened and there was minimal effort in 2024 with the moratorium. Lower river anglers targeting striped bass averaged approximately 12,000 trips per year from 2015-2020, but that effort decreased when the seasons were shortened (4,852 in 2021, 2,604 in 2022, and 3,110 trips in 2023). In 2024, only 244 targeted striped bass trips were estimated in the lower Roanoke River due to the harvest moratorium.

Effort during May, which is the typical catch-and-release season, on the upper Roanoke River has not shown the same decreases, likely in part due to different anglers participating in the different fisheries. Additionally, the number of guided trips has persisted due to the popularity of the catch-and-release fishery. The decrease in effort, along with a reduction in the daily creel limit from two fish to one fish, in the RRMA markedly decreased the number of striped bass landed in 2021-2023 (NCDMF 2024). However, the trend in the number of striped bass released in the RRMA remained similar to years with unrestricted seasons and is more related to availability and year class strength rather than effort.

In the ASMA, trip level effort during the traditional recreational harvest period (October through April) remains variable with the recent season restrictions. Like the RRMA, the number of for-hire trip intercepts in the ASMA has remained consistent as well as shore mode fishing; however, private boat intercepts have decreased approximately 30% from 2020-2021, 36% from 2021-2022, and 15% from 2022-2023 (NCDMF unpublished data). There was a decrease in the number of trips in 2023, but not to the same magnitude as the decrease in RRMA effort. However, even with the decrease in trips, the annual angler hour effort has not decreased. ASMA effort has historically varied year-to-year depending on striped bass abundance and year-class strength, and on the availability of other species like red drum and spotted sea trout. In general, there is a wider variety of species available in the Albemarle Sound than in the Roanoke River. However, if there is a combination of striped bass closures and low availability of other species in a particular year, that could contribute to lower effort and anglers may choose to fish somewhere else.

3.0 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

This document proposes management changes for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The striped bass ocean fishery (also referred to as “ocean region”) is defined as all fisheries operating in coastal and estuarine areas of the U.S. Atlantic coast from Maine through North Carolina, excluding Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) management areas. The Chesapeake Bay fishery is defined as all fisheries operating within Chesapeake Bay. This document does not propose changes to the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River fisheries, which are managed separately by North Carolina.

When the Board takes final action on the addendum, there is the opportunity to select any measure within the range of options that went out for public comment, including combining options across issues.

Since the stock is currently overfished, conservation equivalency (CE) programs will not be approved for non-quota managed recreational fisheries, with the exception of the Hudson River, Delaware River, and Delaware Bay recreational fisheries. The Board has discretion whether to approve CE programs for quota-managed fisheries.

3.1 Method to Measure Total Length of a Striped Bass

The Atlantic Striped Bass FMP has specified size limits in total length (TL) since the original FMP’s approval in 1981 but does not define a specific method for measuring TL for regulatory compliance. This has resulted in inconsistent state regulations and is of developing interest since the adoption of mandatory maximum size limits in the recreational striped bass fishery. Some states require squeezing the upper and lower fork of the tail, some states allow angler discretion on whether to squeeze the tail, and some states require the tail be left natural or fanned out. The total length measurement that is obtained from a striped bass differs among these three orientations of the tail (i.e., squeezed, left natural, or forcibly fanned out), whereby pinching the tail makes the fish longer and fanning the tail makes the fish shorter compared to the natural length.

A recent analysis by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries to quantify the relationship between these different measurements indicated that while there is a minor difference between a natural and pinched tail measurement (estimated 0.29”), there is a more substantial difference between a natural and forcibly fanned tail measurement which also depends on fish size (e.g., a 32.38” fish measures 31” when the tail is forcibly fanned, difference of 1.38”; Appendix B.). Consequently, loosely defined methods of TL measurement or where anglers have discretion on whether to forcefully fan the tail to make the fish shorter can effectively allow harvest of striped bass that are over the maximum size limit. This undermines the intended conservation of the management measure. Additionally, the differences among the states’ definitions of TL mean that some striped bass which must be released in certain states would be allowed to be retained in other states, which is contrary to the intended consistency of a coastwide size limit.

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Further review of the states' regulatory definition of total length for striped bass demonstrated several other inconsistencies that may be of interest to address. First, not all states establish that the length measurement be taken as a straight line (as opposed to over the curve of the fish' body). Second, some states specify that the fish needs to be laid on its side and/or laid as flat as possible. Third, not all states specify that the mouth of the fish must be closed.

The Law Enforcement Committee supports consistent, specific, and easily understood language on how to measure striped bass TL, which would be especially beneficial in shared waterbodies where anglers may be fishing in multiple states' waters. Although standardizing the method of measuring TL would greatly improve consistency for regulatory compliance, there could be continued inconsistencies. For example, the rack of a fillet fish may measure slightly differently than the whole fish would have using the same method of measurement. The Law Enforcement Committee noted that filleted racks would be measured in the same manner as a whole fish. Additionally, the measurement may be inconsistent between types of measuring devices (i.e., using a measuring board vs. a measuring tape).

Option A. Status Quo: No Definition of Total Length

No definition in the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Striped Bass related to the method of measuring total length of a striped bass.

Option B. Mandatory Elements for Total Length Definition

This option would establish mandatory elements for each state's regulatory definition of striped bass total length measurement for compliance with size limits. All states would require these four elements in their definition: 1) squeezing the tail; 2) a straight-line measurement; 3) the fish is laid flat; and 4) the mouth is closed. This applies to both the commercial and recreational sectors. States may implement the following language or submit alternative language in their implementation plans 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

The Atlantic Striped Bass FMP's commercial tagging measures have been in place since 2012 and allows states with commercial fisheries to choose whether to tag harvested fish at the point of harvest or the point of sale. One state currently specifies tagging between those points, at the point of landing, due to safety concerns raised by industry about tagging at point of harvest.

Currently, three states implement tagging at the point of sale only: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and North Carolina. There is concern that waiting to tag harvested fish until the point of sale increases the risk of illegal harvest. However, differences among states' commercial management systems and how each state manages its current tagging program (Table 6) make

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it difficult to determine whether requiring the same type of tag program across all states would decrease the risk of illegal harvest in every state.

To increase tag accountability, if harvesters or dealers do not return unused tags, most states with commercial tagging programs note the harvester or dealer is not able to receive the next season's tags or they receive a reduced number of tags until unused tags have been returned or a record of tag accounting/tag disposition has been submitted.

The majority opinion of the Law Enforcement Committee noted support for commercial tagging at the point of harvest to improve enforcement of possession from the total time the species is in possession, reduce the ability to high-grade, and increase accountability. Some LEC members noted the administrative burden of distributing tags to individual fishers, especially when a state's fishery is not managed with individual quotas. Concerns about sharing tags among fishers were also noted if tagging programs switched to the point of harvest, and it should be considered whether trading tags could potentially outweigh (or even increase) an illegal market fish. The [March 2025 Law Enforcement Committee meeting summary](#) details the Committee's input on this topic.

Table 6. State Tagging Program Key Characteristics

State	Tag at Point of Harvest or Sale	2024 Commercial Tags Issued	2024 Participants Receiving Tags	Individual Fishing Quotas
MA	Sale	51,240	129	No
RI	Sale	10,030	18 plus Confidential # Floating Fish Trap	No
NY	Harvest	59,502	379	Yes
DE	Both*	16,650 ⁺	111 ⁺	Yes
MD	Harvest	441,000	805	Yes
PRFC	Harvest	87,713	263	Yes
VA	Harvest	188,700	362	Yes
NC	Sale**	0	0	No

* DE number of tags listed 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.

+ DE number of gill net harvesters only, which account for >99% of DE's commercial striped bass harvest.

** NC has reported 0 commercial striped bass harvest from the ocean in over a decade. No tags were issued or used. Tags are on hand to issue if fish come inside three miles.

Option A. Status Quo Point of Harvest or Point of Sale

States or jurisdictions with a commercial striped bass fishery may choose to implement their commercial tagging program at either the point of harvest or the point of sale.

Option B. Commercial Tagging At the Point of Harvest

States or jurisdictions with a commercial striped bass fishery would implement their commercial tagging program at the point of harvest (i.e., immediately upon possession or within specific parameters outlined by the state).

Option C. Commercial Tagging By the First Point of Landing

States or jurisdictions with a commercial striped bass fishery would implement their commercial tagging program by the first point of landing (i.e., before offloading and/or before removing the vessel from the water). If fishing from shore, tagging would occur immediately upon possession.

Appendix C. lists current state definitions for tagging at point of harvest and point of landing.

Note: If Option B or C is implemented for commercial tagging, the Board may consider delaying implementation of this measure until 2027 or 2028 to allow a delayed implementation plan to account for the extensive administrative and regulatory changes for those states that currently implement point-of-sale tagging.

3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

Since 2015, Maryland has modified regulations for Chesapeake Bay recreational striped bass fishery seven times, with changes including size, bag limit, and season modifications as well as gear and targeting restrictions. These changes have built off regulations that were previously in place for each action, resulting in newer regulations becoming increasingly complicated through time, including a complex suite of season closures throughout the year. In addition, the current understanding of release mortality rates and environmental stressors within Chesapeake Bay has resulted in some Maryland stakeholders' desire to adjust seasons to better take advantage of fishing opportunities when conditions are favorable to lower striped bass release mortality (i.e. cooler water with less hypoxia).

To simplify Maryland's Chesapeake Bay regulations to improve compliance and enforcement and re-align access based on stakeholder input and release mortality rates, this section considers a new recreational baseline season for the Maryland Chesapeake Bay. This new season baseline would only modify the duration and timing of various seasons throughout the year; this season baseline issue does not address changes to the size or bag limits. Additionally, the baseline options do not affect any of Maryland's spawning area closures that are in effect March through May. Those existing spawning area closures will remain in place, unchanged.

The Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) accepted Maryland's methods for calculating the new season baseline and highlighted the uncertainty of predicting the change in effort associated with opening a currently closed season. The proposed new baseline proposes opening the current April no-targeting closure to allow catch and release. The proposed baseline assumes the number of trips per day will be the same as in 2024 while accounting for an increase in the number of releases per fish if catch-and-release is allowed. The TC noted that an increase in effort would be expected with a season opening from no-targeting to allowing

catch and release; however, the TC agreed that it is very difficult to predict how much effort would increase, especially without an applicable historical reference period. In the past when April was open to fishing, there was harvest allowed for part of the month, not just catch-and-release fishing as proposed here. Additionally, effort has varied from year-to-year even under the same regulations. The TC could not develop a quantitative assumption about how effort would change when the season is opened from no-targeting to catch-and-release that was any more defensible than the assumption of constant effort, and so accepted the use of that assumption in this case.

The proposed new recreational season baseline is estimated to maintain the same level of removals as compared to 2024 levels (i.e., net neutral compared to the current season). The new baseline season would 1) change the month of April from no-targeting to allowing catch-and-release; 2) change May 1-15 from no-targeting to allowing harvest; 3) shift the summer no-targeting closure from July to August and extend the closure from 16 days to 31 days; and 4) close the harvest fishery five days earlier in December. Any additional season closures required for any reduction to support stock rebuilding in the next section (Section 3.4) would be added on top of the new baseline.

To address the uncertainty associated with this analysis, some options consider implementing the new baseline with an uncertainty buffer. The uncertainty buffer is intended to increase the new baseline's probability of success in achieving equivalency (i.e., not increasing removals) with the current season. The 10% uncertainty buffer level considered in the options is consistent with the uncertainty buffer in Amendment 7 for conservation equivalency programs. In Amendment 7, a 10% buffer is applied for recreational conservation equivalency programs, which increases to a 25% buffer if percent standard errors (PSEs) greater than 30 are used. Although this Maryland season baseline would not be a conservation equivalency program, there are similar concerns about uncertainty in the calculations, particularly since the new baseline would change the duration and/or type of closure in multiple waves. The PSEs for MRIP estimates used in the Maryland recreational season baseline analysis are listed in Appendix D. The PSEs for single year, wave-specific estimates of harvest are mostly less than 30 with a few instances of PSEs between 30 and 45. The PSEs for single year, wave-specific estimates of releases are evenly split between PSEs less than 30 and PSEs between 30 and 50, with only two waves out of the four years with PSEs greater than 50. When 2021-2024 data are pooled together, all wave-specific PSEs are less than 30 (Appendix D.).

There is also uncertainty around the effect of catch-and-release fishing on spawning success (from the proposed opening to catch-and-release in April) given the very limited information on this topic.

Option A. Status Quo (No New Baseline Season)

If this addendum does not establish a coastwide reduction in removals (Section 3.4 Option A), Maryland would maintain the same Chesapeake Bay recreational seasons that were in place in 2022 (as specified by Addendum II). If a coastwide reduction in fishery removals is established through this addendum (Section 3.4 Option B), Maryland would maintain the same Chesapeake

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Bay recreational seasons that were in place in 2024 plus any additional season closures required by the new reduction.

Option B. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

Maryland would implement the new recreational season in Table 7 calculated to be net neutral (i.e., not increase removals relative to 2024 levels) plus any additional season closures required by any new reduction in this addendum (Section 3.4).

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

Maryland would implement the new recreational season in Table 7 calculated to be net neutral (i.e., not increase removals relative to 2024 levels) plus any additional season closures required by any new reduction in this addendum (Section 3.4) plus an additional 10% buffer of that reduction (e.g., 12% reduction + 1.2% buffer = 13% reduction).

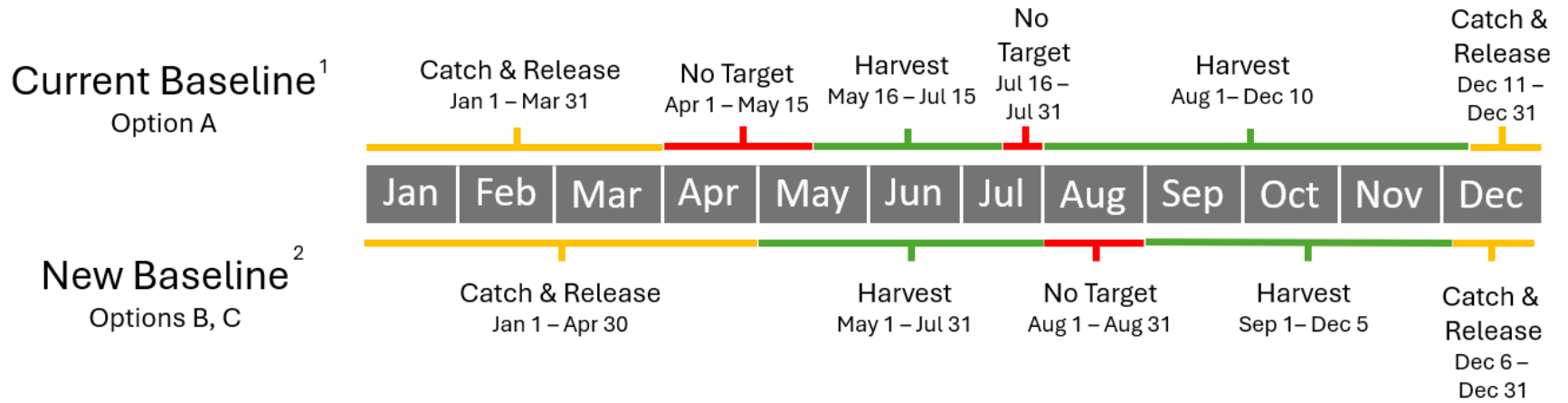
If this addendum does not establish a coastwide reduction in Section 3.4, Maryland would implement the new baseline season with an adjustment in either wave 3 or wave 6 to be 2% more conservative than the 2024 season (i.e., shorten spring harvest season to start May 6 instead of May 1 OR shorten fall harvest season to end November 26 instead of December 5). This 2% buffer is 10% of the 20.6% reduction that Maryland implemented through Addendum VI conservation equivalency via the spring and summer no-targeting closures that are now being considered for changes through this addendum.

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Table 7. Maryland Chesapeake Bay 2024 season baseline and new season baseline option. The accompanying figure displays the same information in timeline format.

Option A. 2024 Baseline	Option B/C. New Baseline
<i>Plus any additional closures to meet rebuilding reduction</i>	<i>Plus any additional closures to meet rebuilding reduction plus additional reduction from buffer (B. no buffer; or C. 10% buffer)</i>
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

Timeline Visual of Maryland Baseline Season Options



¹ Plus any additional closures to meet rebuilding reduction.

² Plus any additional closures to meet rebuilding reduction plus additional reduction from buffer. (B. no buffer; C. 10% buffer).

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

This issue proposes management changes for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries designed to reduce fishery removals to increase the probability of rebuilding the stock to the spawning stock biomass target by the 2029 deadline. Based on assumptions described in Section 2.2.1, projections indicate a 12% reduction in 2026 total removals is required to achieve F_{rebuild} 50% (the level of fishing mortality to rebuild the stock by 2029 with a 50% probability). The TC continues to highlight several major sources of uncertainty in the projections and the difficulty of predicting future fishing mortality rates.

It should be noted TC emphasizes that the outcome of management changes designed to achieve small changes (i.e., reductions or liberalizations of less than 10%) would be difficult to measure given the uncertainty in the MRIP estimates. Total removals are not known within 10%, so a reduction of less than 10% would not be statistically distinguishable from no reduction at all (i.e., status quo measures).

For commercial fisheries, changes to the commercial quotas are considered. All options apply the percent reduction to the quotas in place in 2024. All commercial quotas are in pounds. No changes to commercial size limits are being considered; states must maintain commercial size limits in place in 2024.

For ocean recreational fisheries, only season closures are considered. No changes to ocean size limits are considered. For Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries, changes to the size limit and/or season closures are considered. All size limits are in total length. No changes to the recreational bag limit are being considered (1 fish per person per day for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay). For seasonal closures, the number of days closed indicated in the options are new days closed (i.e., in addition to any days already closed during 2024). If Maryland implements the new season baseline in Section 3.3, the number of days closed are new days closed in addition to the new baseline season dates.

The ocean region options propose maintaining status quo size limits for the three area-specific fisheries listed below with these fisheries being subject to any season closures selected for New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware in the ocean region. Or, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware may submit in their implementation plans area-specific recreational measures to achieve the same percent reduction as the recreational sector in these area-specific fisheries:

- New York: the Hudson River management area.
- Pennsylvania: the state's April–May slot fishery in the lower Delaware River/Estuary.
- Delaware: the state's July–August slot fishery in Delaware River/Bay.

These area-specific fisheries have historically targeted smaller fish to protect spawning females, as in the Hudson River and Pennsylvania spring slot fisheries, and/or due to availability of smaller resident fish, as is the case in the Delaware summer slot fishery. These fisheries all occur primarily over a two-month period in the spring or summer. While Delaware's summer slot fishery is covered by MRIP sampling, the Hudson River and Pennsylvania fisheries are not covered by MRIP and therefore are not accounted for in the season closure analysis.

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For seasonal closure options in the ocean region and Chesapeake Bay states, one of the primary tradeoffs to consider is whether to implement a shorter closure during peak striped bass season or implement a longer closure during the slower season. Another consideration is what type of closure to implement: a no-harvest closure or no-targeting closure. Angler response to a closure (e.g., target other species, do not go fishing) is difficult to predict, especially for a no-targeting closure. The following assumptions were made for the options in this document:

- No-Targeting Closure: Assumes all trips that previously targeted striped bass would still occur but would shift to targeting other species where they release striped bass at a non-targeted rate (i.e., incidentally). All striped bass releases from non-targeted trips would still occur (i.e., anglers targeting other species incidentally catching and releasing striped bass).
- No-Harvest Closure: Assumes all striped bass trips still occur and previous harvest estimates are calculated as new releases.

It is also important to note that a no-harvest closure may affect angler behavior in a way that reduces the number of trips that release striped bass or reduces the number of striped bass released per trip, in which case the reduction from a no-harvest closure may be higher than estimated in this document. One additional factor to consider is if few alternative species are available during a given closure period, which may contribute to a trip not occurring at all as compared to switching target species.

For recreational mode split options, the season closures would be the same for all modes, but size limits would differ between the for-hire modes (FH = charter and head boat) and the private/shore modes (PS = private vessels and shore anglers).

Option A. Status Quo

The ocean commercial fisheries and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries would continue to be managed by their Addendum II quotas (Table 9) and commercial size limits.

Ocean recreational fisheries are constrained by a 1-fish bag limit and a slot limit of 28" to 31", with the following exceptions:

- New York Hudson River management area: 1 fish at 23" to 28"
- Pennsylvania Apr–May slot fishery in lower Delaware River/Estuary: 1 fish at 22" to <26"
- Delaware July–Aug slot fishery in Delaware River/Bay: 1 fish at 20" to 24"

Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries are constrained by a 1-fish bag limit and a slot limit of 19" to 24". Chesapeake Bay recreational spring trophy fisheries are managed by the same size and bag limits as the ocean fishery (1 fish at 28" to 31") with the 2022 trophy season dates.

States would maintain the same recreational seasons that were in place in 2022.

Approved conservation equivalency programs would remain in place.

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Option B: Even Sector Reductions: Commercial -12% and Recreational -12%

Commercial quotas would be reduced by 12% (Table 9). Options O1 – O2 for the ocean and Options CB1 – CB3 for Chesapeake Bay in Table 8 specify recreational measures designed to achieve a 12% reduction via changes to size limits and/or season closures.

Note: If the Board specifies a less than 12% commercial quota reduction during final approval of the addendum, then the total combined reduction across both sectors would be less than 12%.

Table 8. Recreational Measures for Option B. Even Sector Reductions to achieve 12% Total Reduction (12% reduction for each sector). All fisheries are constrained by a 1-fish bag limit. Each option achieves at least 12% recreational reduction.

Option B. Ocean Recreational Fishery -12%				
	Modes	Size Limit	Season Closure	Season Closure Table
O1	All	Status Quo 28" to 31" [0%]	-12%	Table 10
O2	Split For-Hire Exemption	PS: Status Quo 28" to 31" FH: 28" to 33" [+1%]	-13%	Table 11
<i>Note: All ocean options maintain status quo size limits for NY Hudson River, PA lower Delaware River spring slot, and DE Delaware Bay/River summer slot unless those states propose alternative measures for these fisheries.</i>				
Option B. Chesapeake Bay Recreational Fishery -12%				
	Modes	Size Limit	Season Closure	Season Closure Table
CB1	All	20" to 23" [-12%]	Same seasons as 2024	NA
CB2	Split For-Hire Exemption	PS: 19" to 22" FH: 19" to 25" [-13%]	Same seasons as 2024	NA
CB3	All	Status Quo 19" to 24" [0%]	-12%	Table 10

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Table 9. Commercial quotas (pounds of fish) for each option in the addendum. Status quo reflects current Addendum II commercial quotas.

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

Recreational Seasonal Closure Tables

Below are season closure tables accompanying recreational reduction options:

- Table 10: Closures for 12% reduction for all modes (Option B)
- Table 11: Closures for 13% reduction for all modes (Option B Ocean Mode Split O2)

All states within an ocean region (New England and Mid-Atlantic regions), or for the entire ocean region if the 'All Ocean' closure option is selected, would have the same closure dates. Closure dates would be determined by the Board by the time implementation plans are due after final approval of the addendum.

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.

Some closures are dual-wave closures where closures occur in two waves to meet the reduction. During final approval of the addendum, if the Board is considering a dual-wave closure, the Board may choose to close for the number of days listed in Table 10 or Table 11 for

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each wave in the dual-wave option or the Board may change how many days are closed in each of the selected waves (no less than 14 days closed in a wave) to meet the total reduction, which could change the total number of days closed.

During final approval of the addendum, the Board may decide to modify New York's specified closure duration if the Mid-Atlantic region or entire ocean region is selected to close during wave 2 or wave 6 since New York is already closed for part of those waves. New York's ocean fishery is open from April 15 through December 15 with catch-and-release fishing allowed while the season is closed. This means New York is open for harvest for 16 of 61 days during Wave 2 (Mar-Apr) and 45 of 61 days in Wave 6 (Nov-Dec). New York's Hudson River season is open two weeks earlier, from April 1 through November 30. Since New York is already closed for most of Wave 2, any new harvest closure during New York's current open window of April 15-30 will impact a larger portion of New York's wave 2 fishery as compared to the same closure impacting a smaller portion of other states' wave 2 fisheries. Any new harvest closure in wave 6 during New York's current open window of November 1-December 15 would also impact a larger portion of New York's fishery as compared to other states, but it would have a lesser impact than wave 2. The Board will need to determine how any new wave 2 or 6 closures would apply. For example, if a 14-day closure is implemented during Wave 6 and the other Mid-Atlantic states close from December 18-31, would New York implement the 14-day closure starting December 2 (i.e., shift their current first day of closure, December 16, back 14 days)? For any Wave 2 closure in the Mid-Atlantic, would New York only close for a maximum of 16 days, which would eliminate its Wave 2 fishery? From an enforcement perspective, NY's existing closure already contributes to different season dates between neighboring states.

During final approval of the addendum, the Board may also decide to specify North Carolina's closure in a different wave than the rest of the Mid-Atlantic region or entire ocean region. North Carolina only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during Wave 1 and Wave 6 (Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec) to be part of the coastal migratory stock. North Carolina ocean catch in Waves 1 and 6 has been very low, with no harvest since 2011 and very low release estimates for five of the last thirteen years (the other eight years' estimates were 0 releases). The Board will consider if North Carolina should align its closure with the Mid-Atlantic region, even if the closure is not during Wave 1 or Wave 6 when coastal migratory striped bass may be available, or if North Carolina should implement the same-length closure during Wave 1 or Wave 6 and potentially differ from the other Mid-Atlantic states.

In Chesapeake Bay, PRFC and DC can each choose whether to implement their closure during the same wave as Maryland or the same wave as Virginia. Although complete alignment among the four Bay jurisdictions is difficult given the current differences in seasons, Bay jurisdictions should coordinate to align seasons as much as possible. Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions should consider whether new closures could be added to existing closures and whether the type of existing closure (no-targeting vs. no-harvest) should be consistent in a wave.

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Percent standard error (PSE) values for harvest and live release estimates by region and by mode are available in Appendix D. For ocean regional closures, context on state-specific impacts from a regional closure are available in Appendix E.

Table 10. Recreational season closures for 12% reduction for all modes (number of days closed on top of 2024 season). This corresponds to options O1 and CB3 under Option B.

Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes <i>RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.</i> <i>If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.</i>			
Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
All Ocean	Wave 3 & Wave 6	22	31
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
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
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
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

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Closures for 12% Reduction for All Modes <i>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.</i>			
Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
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
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%)
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%)
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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Table 11. Recreational season closures for 13% reduction for all modes (number of days closed on top of 2024 season). This corresponds to Option O2 under Option B which is a mode split for the ocean.

Closures for 13% Reduction for All Modes Number of Days Closed on top of 2024 Season <i>RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.</i> <i>If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.</i>			
Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
All Ocean	Wave 3 & Wave 6	23	33
ME-MA	Wave 3	61 (-10%)	61 (-9%)
ME-MA	Wave 4	42	44
ME-MA	Wave 5	56	61 (-8%)
ME-MA	Wave 3 & Wave 5	33	48
RI-NC	Wave 2	40	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 3	61 (-12%)	61 (-9%)
RI-NC	Wave 4	62 (-4%)	62 (-3%)
RI-NC	Wave 5	61 (-8%)	61 (-6%)
RI-NC	Wave 6	28	39
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 3	25	43
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 4	33	61 (wave 2) 62 (wave 4)
RI-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 5	28	50
RI-NC	Wave 3 & Wave 6	20	28
RI-NC	Wave 4 & Wave 6	25	34
ME-RI	Wave 3	58	61 (-9%)
ME-RI	Wave 4	43	47
ME-RI	Wave 5	52	61 (-8%)
ME-RI	Wave 3 & Wave 5	28	46
CT-NC	Wave 2	38	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	27	37
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 3	25	43

Closures for 13% Reduction for All Modes Number of Days Closed on top of 2024 Season <i>RED cell indicates closing the entire wave will not achieve the reduction; partial reduction is listed.</i> <i>If two waves are listed, the season is closed for that number of days in EACH wave.</i>			
Region	Waves	No Targeting	No Harvest
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 4	33	60
CT-NC	Wave 2 & Wave 5	28	48
CT-NC	Wave 3 & Wave 6	20	27
CT-NC	Wave 4 & Wave 6	24	33

4.0 COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE

If approved, states must implement Addendum III according to the following schedule to be in compliance with the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate FMP:

[Month, Day, Year]: States submit implementation plans to meet Addendum III requirements.

[Month, Day, Year]: Board reviews and considers approving state implementation plans.

[Month Day, Year]: States implement regulations.

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Appendix A. 2024 Management Measures by State

Table A1. Summary of Atlantic striped bass **commercial** measures under Addendum II to Amendment 7 as of May 1, 2024. State implementation plans were approved in March 2024 and May 2024. Please refer to each state's regulations for additional details.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	ADDENDUM II 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.	683,773 lbs. Hook & Line only.	6.18-9.30 (or when quota reached); open fishing days of Tuesday and Wednesday, with Thursday added on August 1 if >30% quota remains. Cape Cod Canal closed to commercial striped bass fishing.
RI	Floating fish trap: 26" minimum size unlimited possession limit until 80% of quota reached, then 500 lbs. per licensee per day	Total: 138,467 lbs., split 39:61 between the trap and general category. Gill netting prohibited.	4.1 – 12.31
	General category (mostly rod & reel): 34" min. Five (5) fish per person per calendar day, or if fishing from a vessel, five (5) fish per vessel per calendar day.		6.11-6.20; 7.9-12.31, or until quota reached. Closed Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays throughout.
CT	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program in CT suspended indefinitely in 2020.		
NY	26"-38" size; (Hudson River closed to commercial harvest)	595,868 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"	200,798 lbs.	5.15 – 12.31 (permit required)

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STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	ADDENDUM II QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
PA	Commercial fishing prohibited		
DE	Gill Net: 20" min in DE Bay/River during spring season. 28" in all other waters/seasons.	Gillnet: 132,501 lbs. Split between gill net and hook and line. 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: 4.1-12.31, 200 lbs./day trip limit
MD	Chesapeake Bay and Rivers: 18-36" Common pool trip limits: Hook and Line - 250 lbs./license/week Gill Net - 300 lbs./license/week	1,344,216 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: 82,857 lbs.	1.1-5.31, 10.1-12.31
PRFC	18" min all year; 36" max 2.15-3.25	532,761 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> : 11.9.2021-3.25.2022 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	914,555 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota)	1.16-12.31
	Ocean: 28" min	116,282 lbs.	
NC	Ocean: 28" min	274,810 lbs. (split between gear types)	Seine fishery was not opened Gill net fishery was not opened Trawl fishery was not opened

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Table A2. Summary of Atlantic striped bass **recreational** size limits, bag limits, and seasons under Addendum II to Amendment 7 as of May 1, 2024. State implementation plans were approved in March 2024 and May 2024. Please refer to each state's regulations for gear/fishing restrictions in that state.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL)/REGION	BAG LIMIT	OPEN SEASON
ME	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year, except spawning areas are closed 12.1-4.30 and C&R only 5.1-6.30
NH	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
MA	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
RI	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
CT	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year
NY	Ocean and Delaware River: 28" to 31"	1 fish/day	Ocean: 4.15-12.15 Delaware River: All year
	Hudson River: 23" to 28"	1 fish/day	Hudson River: 4.1-11.30
NJ	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	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 tribs
PA	Upstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 28" to <31", 1 fish/day		All year
	Downstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 28" to <31", 1 fish/day* *except from 4.1-5.31: 22" to <26", 1 fish/day		All year. 1 fish/day at 22" to <26" slot from 4.1-5.31

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STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL)/REGION	BAG LIMIT	OPEN SEASON
DE	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year. C&R only 4.1-5.31 in spawning grounds. 20" to 24" slot from 7.1-8.31 in DE River, Bay & tributaries
MD	Ocean: 28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs^	C&R only	1.1-2.28, 3.1-3.31, 12.11-12.31
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs^	No targeting	4.1-5.31, 7.16-7.31
	Chesapeake Bay: 19" to 24" 1 fish/day^		5.16-5.31
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs: 19" to 24", 1 fish/day^		6.1-7.15, 8.1-12.10
PRFC	Summer/Fall: 19" to 24"		1 fish/day
DC	19" to 24"		1 fish/day
VA	Ocean: 28" to 31"		1 fish/day
	Bay Spring/Summer/Fall: 19" to 24"		1 fish/day
NC	Ocean: 28" to 31"		1 fish/day

^ MD Susquehanna Flats: C&R only 1.1-3.31 and 12.11-12.31; No targeting 4.1-5.31; 1 fish at 19"-24" slot 6.1-7.15 and 8.1-12.10; No targeting 7.16-7.31



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Appendix B.

Striped Bass Total Length Measurement Analysis

Ben Gahagan, Recreational Fisheries Program Leader

December 2024

To examine the implications of Massachusetts' current striped bass total length measurement definition—specifically, that anglers have discretion to either squeeze or leave fanned the upper and lower fork of the tail to measure the tail extremity—DMF biologists made a series of measurements on live and dead bass in the fall of 2024. During the annual USFWS striped bass tagging effort off Cape Cod, Recreational Fisheries Program staff took measurements from 413 striped bass with the tail naturally fanned (i.e., the tail was not manipulated to increase spread) and with the tail pinched. Age and Growth Project staff took measurements from 80 striped bass that were collected in the Recreational Rack data collection program. With these striped bass, measurements were made with the tail spread to the greatest extent possible and pinched. All measurements were rounded to the nearest 0.5 cm and then converted to inches.

The collected data were analyzed to create relationships between the three length types (pinched, natural fan, and forced fan) so that pinched lengths and predicted lengths for natural and forced fanning could be used to evaluate the potential increase in harvestable size due to current measurement regulations. Relative to a natural fanned length, pinching slightly increased the measured length while forcing the fan produced a larger decrease in measured length. Additionally, the increase in pinched length was almost constant as fish size increased while the decrease from forcing the caudal apart grew larger with fish size. Taken in combination, the ability to pinch or forcefully fan the caudal fin expands the current three-inch slot limit, relative to a natural fanned-length, by at least 1.67" (27.71" – 32.38"; Figure B1).

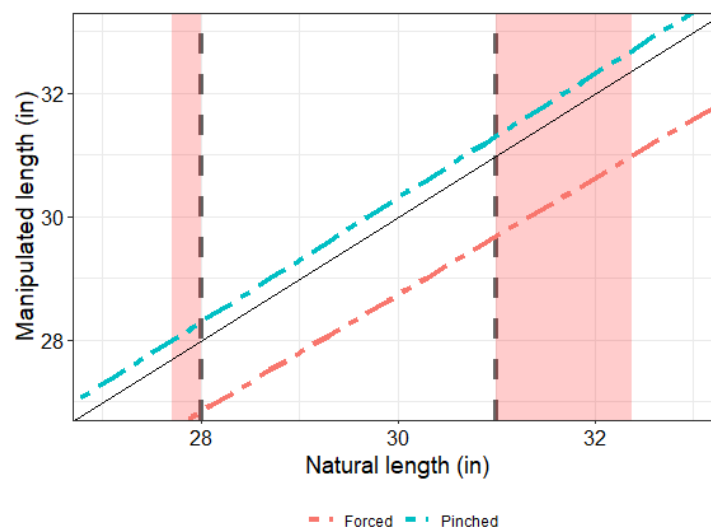


Figure B1. Potential increase in slot size (shaded red) by allowing both pinched (teal dashed line) and forced fanning (orange dashed line) measures for striped bass. A 1:1 line (thin black line) is provided for reference.

Appendix C.

Current State Regulatory Language Defining Point of Harvest or Point of Landing for Striped Bass Commercial Tagging

New York: Immediately after removing said striped bass from their gear and prior to attending another piece of gear

Delaware: Before landing or putting on shore

Maryland: (1) Immediately to a striped bass harvested by hook and line; (2) Within 200 yards of the pound net to a striped bass harvested from a pound net; or (3) Before removing a striped bass from a boat or removing a boat from the water, to a striped bass harvested by any other gear.

Potomac River Fisheries Commission: As soon as feasible and in no event shall any commercially caught striped bass be removed from the Potomac River or from the boat at the point of landing, whichever occurs first, without said tag being permanently affixed. The words “as soon as feasible” as used herein shall mean for the i) Commercial Hook & Line fishery – as soon as the fish is taken and before it is put into the cooler or storage area; ii) Pound Net fishery – as soon as the fish are taken and before the boat leaves the net site; and iii) Gill Net fishery – as soon as each separate piece of net is fished and before the boat leaves the net site.

Virginia: At the place of capture, and before leaving the place of capture

Appendix D.**Percent Standard Error (PSE) for Seasonal Closure Options and Maryland Baseline Season Options**

Table D1. Percent standard error (PSE) for MRIP estimates of striped bass harvest and live releases pooled across states, modes, and years (2021-2022-2024 for ocean; 2021-2022-2023-2024 for Chesapeake Bay). Data pooled using methodology provided by MRIP in 2024. PSEs shaded based on MRIP's guidance: MRIP cautions use of the estimate in fisheries management when the PSE is over 30 (yellow) and does not support use of the estimate when the PSE exceeds 50 (red). PSE 30 or below is green. The higher an estimate's Percent Standard Error, or PSE, the larger the margin of error and uncertainty around the estimate.

Region	Mode	Harvest					Live Releases				
		2	3	4	5	6	2	3	4	5	6
ME-MA	All Modes		12.1	10.4	17.9	103.9	63.3	9.2	8.7	10.6	68.2
	For-Hire		20.6	14.6	28.3			16.5	15.3	25.5	
	Private/Shore		13.3	11.7	18.4	103.9	63.3	9.4	9.0	10.7	68.2
ME-RI	All Modes		10.4	9.7	16.2	84.3	54.3	8.2	8.2	9.6	41.2
	For-Hire		17.4	13.9	25.0			15.4	14.7	23.0	64.9
	Private/Shore		11.5	10.9	16.6	84.3	54.3	8.5	8.5	9.7	41.2
RI-VA	All Modes	18.1	12.9	13.5	18.9	12.4	16.8	8.8	12.3	11.7	14.4
	For-Hire	30.3	11.5	13.3	18.8	9.9	25.5	13.4	13.1	26.5	12.7
	Private/Shore	18.2	14.3	15.9	19.4	12.7	16.8	9.1	12.9	12.1	14.5
CT-VA	All Modes	18.1	14.0	15.5	20.2	12.4	17.1	10	14.4	13.2	14.8
	For-Hire	30.3	12.3	14.2	20.1	9.9	25.5	14.1	14.0	27.2	12.7
	Private/Shore	18.2	15.6	18.7	20.7	12.7	17.1	10.4	15.2	13.7	14.9
CB-MD	All Modes		11.6	13.9	17.2	14.3	21.5	15.1	18.5	15.0	22.0
	For-Hire		12.1	12.7	16.6	22.1	71.3	15.8	16.4	24.1	29.5
	Private/Shore		17.8	20.3	21.6	17.3	21.5	16.1	19.5	15.4	22.8
CB-VA	All Modes		30.7	74.5	40.9	32.8	60.0	33.4	43	30.1	26.7
	For-Hire		93.0	119.4	31.7	26.6		93.0	65.2	34.8	34.3
	Private/Shore		31.1	94.5	43.5	34.1	60.0	34.6	45.4	33.5	26.8

PSEs for Maryland recreational season baseline analysis on the following page.

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Table D2. MRIP estimates of harvest and releases by year and wave used in the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational season baseline analysis. Percent standard errors (PSEs) are presented to describe the precision of the estimates.

		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

Appendix E.

Regional Ocean Closures and State-Specific Reductions Example

This table is intended to provide context to understand how uniform closures across each ocean region would impact individual states. This draft addendum calculates options to achieve equal reductions by region. The only way to achieve equal reductions by state in the ocean would be to calculate state-specific closures which are not being pursued. For Chesapeake Bay, the closure options in Section 3.4 are calculated at the state level.

The following table provides the estimated reductions by ocean state for a 14-day closure in each wave. The reductions scale linearly, so a 28-day closure would result in double the reduction listed in the table. This table is intended to provide context on state-specific impacts from a regional closure. For example, in wave 3 for a 14-day no-targeting closure (striped bass only trips eliminated) for Maine through Massachusetts, the estimated reduction in Maine is 4.2%, in New Hampshire is 4.2%, and in Massachusetts is 5.1%.

The state-specific reductions depend on the distribution of harvest and releases by wave for each state, the type of removals in each state (percent harvest vs. percent release mortality), and the breakdown of trips that release striped bass for no-targeting closure calculations in each state (trips only targeting striped bass, trips targeting striped bass and another species, trips not targeting striped bass). Note that conducting these analyses at the state-level instead of the region-level reduces the sample size and increases the PSE and the uncertainty in the reduction calculations, particularly for Delaware, Maryland Ocean, and Virginia Ocean which have low fishing activity and therefore limited data.

	Ocean State	No Targeting	No Harvest
Wave 2 14-day closure	Ocean	-3.3%	-1.6%
	ME	0.0%	0.0%
	NH	0.0%	0.0%
	MA	-0.1%	0.0%
	RI	-1.4%	0.0%
	CT	-5.7%	0.0%
	NY	-3.9%	-1.8%
	NJ	-5.6%	-3.0%
	DE	-0.4%	-0.7%
	MD	0.0%	0.0%
	VA	0.0%	0.0%
	NC	0.0%	0.0%

	Ocean State	No Targeting	No Harvest
Wave 3 14-day closure	Ocean	-2.8%	-2.0%
	ME	-2.8%	-1.1%
	NH	-1.2%	-0.9%
	MA	-2.9%	-2.3%
	RI	-5.9%	-2.9%
	CT	-3.4%	-2.0%
	NY	-2.5%	-2.1%
	NJ	-2.3%	-1.8%
	DE	-0.1%	0.0%
	MD	0.8%	0.0%
	VA	0.0%	0.0%
	NC	0.0%	0.0%
Wave 4 14-day closure	Ocean	-1.9%	-1.6%
	ME	-5.0%	-2.1%
	NH	-7.3%	-3.2%
	MA	-3.7%	-4.6%
	RI	-2.3%	-2.0%
	CT	-2.6%	-1.7%
	NY	-1.5%	-1.3%
	NJ	0.0%	-0.1%
	DE	-1.4%	-0.6%
	MD	0.0%	0.0%
	VA	0.0%	0.0%
	NC	0.0%	0.0%

	Ocean State	No Targeting	No Harvest
Wave 5 14-day closure	Ocean	-2.1%	-1.5%
	ME	-6.2%	-1.0%
	NH	-2.8%	-1.1%
	MA	-2.9%	-2.0%
	RI	-3.9%	-1.9%
	CT	-1.2%	-0.6%
	NY	-2.8%	-2.4%
	NJ	-1.4%	-1.0%
	DE	0.0%	0.0%
	MD	0.0%	0.0%
	VA	0.0%	0.0%
	NC	0.0%	0.0%
Wave 6 14-day closure	Ocean	-4.8%	-3.4%
	ME	0.0%	0.0%
	NH	0.0%	0.0%
	MA	-0.5%	0.0%
	RI	-1.7%	0.0%
	CT	-3.5%	-0.1%
	NY	-3.2%	-3.6%
	NJ	-8.5%	-6.6%
	DE	-9.0%	-1.4%
	MD	-14.0%	0.0%
	VA	0.0%	0.0%
	NC	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix F.

State-Specific Recreational Seasonality Summary

Recreational catch (harvest and live releases) was analyzed by state and wave with MRIP data pooled from 2021, 2022, and 2024 for the ocean and 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 for Chesapeake Bay. Massachusetts through Virginia conduct MRIP sampling from wave 2 (Mar-Apr) through wave 6 (Nov-Dec), while Maine and New Hampshire only conduct MRIP sampling from wave 3 through wave 5 (May-Oct). North Carolina is the only state to conduct MRIP sampling in wave 1 (Jan-Feb).

Maine

Fish are caught in waves 3 – 5 (May-Oct) with total catch peaking in waves 4 – 5 (Jul-Oct). Wave 4 (Jul-Aug) and wave 5 (Sep-Oct) total catch are nearly equal in magnitude with their combined total catch making up 76% of total catch for Maine. Harvest in Maine peaks in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 49% followed by wave 3 (May-Jun) at 27% and wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 25%.

New Hampshire

Fish are caught in waves 3 – 5 (May-Oct) with total catch peaking in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) and making up 58% of total removals for New Hampshire. Harvest in New Hampshire peaks in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 63% followed by wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 21% and wave 3 (May-Jun) at 17%.

Massachusetts

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in waves 3 – 4 (May-Aug). Wave 3 (May-Jun) and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) total catch are nearly equal in magnitude with their combined total catch making up 73% of total catch for Massachusetts. Harvest in Massachusetts peaks in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 52% followed by wave 3 (May-Jun) at 26% and wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 22%.

Rhode Island

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 3 (May-Jun) making up 34% of total catch for Rhode Island. Harvest in Rhode Island peaks in wave 3 (May-Jun) at 42% followed by wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 30% and wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 27%. Rhode Island does have wave 6 (Nov-Dec) harvest, but the magnitude is trivial and comprises < 0.5% of the total harvest for Rhode Island.

Connecticut

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 2 (Mar-Apr) making up 34% of total catch for Connecticut. Harvest in Connecticut peaks in wave 3 (May-Jun) at 44% followed by wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 38%, wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 13%, and wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 3%.

New York

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 46% of total catch for New York. Harvest in New York also peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 32% followed by wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 21%, wave 3 (May-Jun) at 19%, wave 2 (Mar-Apr) at 16%, and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 12%.

New Jersey

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 46% of total catch for New Jersey. Harvest in New Jersey also peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 53% followed by wave 2 (Mar-Apr) at 24%, wave 3 (May-Jun) at 14%, wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 8%, and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 1%.

Delaware

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 58% of total removals for Delaware. Harvest in Delaware also peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 52% followed by wave 2 (Mar-Apr) at 25%, wave 4 (July-Aug) at 23%, and wave 3 (May-Jun) at 1%. Delaware has no wave 5 (Sep-Oct) harvest and although the wave 3 (May-Jun) harvest is 1%, that equates to < 100 fish for Delaware.

Maryland Ocean

Fish are caught in wave 2 (Mar-Apr), wave 3 (May-June), wave 4 (Jul-Aug), and wave 6 (Nov-Dec). Total catch peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 78% of total catch for Maryland Ocean. Total catch are entirely live releases with no harvest occurring in Maryland Ocean.

Virginia Ocean

Fish are caught in wave 3 (May-Jun) and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) with total catch peaking in wave 4 (Jul-Aug) making up 67% of total catch for Virginia Ocean. Total catch are entirely live releases with no harvest occurring in Virginia Ocean.

North Carolina

North Carolina only considers striped bass caught in the ocean during waves 1 (Jan-Feb) and 6 (Nov-Dec) to be part of the coastal migratory stock. Total catch peaked in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 70% of wave 1 and 6 ocean catch for North Carolina. Total catch is entirely live releases with no harvest in the ocean during these waves for several years. 2021-2022 live releases were 0.1% of total ocean releases and 2024 releases were zero.

Maryland Chesapeake Bay

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 28% of total catch for Maryland. Harvest in Maryland is similar across waves 3 – 6 (May-Dec) with peak harvest in wave 3 (May-Jun) at 28% followed by wave 5 (Sep-Oct) at 26%, wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 25%, and wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 20%.

Virginia Chesapeake Bay

Fish are caught in waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) with total catch peaking in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) making up 47% of total catch for Virginia. Harvest in Virginia peaks in wave 6 (Nov-Dec) at 57% followed by wave 3 (May-Jun) at 32%, 5 (Sep-Oct) at 7%, and wave 4 (Jul-Aug) at 4%.

Appendix G.

Other Species Analysis and Figures

MRIP data from 2021 through 2024 for both the ocean fishery and Chesapeake Bay fishery were compiled by state and by wave to explore *a)* the top ten species reported as either primary or secondary targets on trips that also targeted striped bass, and *b)* the top ten species caught on trips that also caught striped bass. This section summarizes results for species most commonly targeted/caught with striped bass.

New England: species targeted on trips that also targeted striped bass

In New England, waves 4 (Jul-Aug) and 5 (Sep-Oct) tend to have the highest diversity of species co-targeted with striped bass. In Maine and New Hampshire, a majority of trips targeting striped bass and trips where striped bass are caught, are also targeting/catching bait species. When fishing in the ocean, anglers from Maine and New Hampshire often target groundfish, but will actively look for opportunistic fishing (striped bass and bluefish) if they happen upon them working a school of baitfish. Most anglers supply their own bait and will begin their trip fishing for baitfish. This is why a large proportion of the total catch on trips where striped bass are caught in Maine and New Hampshire is baitfish, mainly Atlantic mackerel and Atlantic menhaden. In Maine and New Hampshire, when bait fish are removed from the analysis, pollock is the majority of non-bait catch.

Aside from baitfish in Maine and New Hampshire, bluefish is the most co-targeted species with striped bass in New England across most waves. Both scup and summer flounder are reported as targeted in Massachusetts through Connecticut, and in higher proportions as you move southward. Black sea bass is reported as targeted with higher proportion in waves 3-5 (May-Oct) in Rhode Island and Connecticut, but only during waves 3 (May-Jun) and 4 (Jul-Aug) in Massachusetts. Rhode Island and Connecticut have similar trends in proportions of reported targeted species, with some notable variation in the proportion of reported targeting of tautog between the waves. Tautog is targeted in relatively small proportion in all waves in Massachusetts.

New England: species caught on trips that also caught striped bass

In New England, waves 2 (Mar-Apr) and 6 (Nov-Dec) generally show minimal amounts of other species caught with striped bass, with most other species being caught consistently during waves 3-5 (May-Oct). Bluefish, black sea bass, summer flounder, and scup are commonly caught from Massachusetts through Rhode Island on trips where striped bass is also caught from waves 3 -5 (May-Oct). During waves 2 – 6 (Mar-Dec) in Massachusetts, Atlantic mackerel, is caught in the highest proportions compared to other species. Atlantic mackerel is not reported south of Rhode Island, with the dominant bait species switching to Atlantic menhaden south of this state.

Mid-Atlantic: species targeted on trips that also targeted striped bass

Overall, there is high variability of reported targeted species throughout the Mid-Atlantic states with some notable overlap occurring between neighboring states. From New York through

Maryland, bluefish remains the dominant species that is reported as targeted on trips that also target striped bass. Bluefish are reported as targeted in all states in all waves, except Maryland which only reports co-targeting in some waves. Summer flounder are reported as targeted in New York through Delaware in relatively large proportions during waves 3-5 (May-Oct), and during wave 2 (Mar-Apr) in New York. Black sea bass are only reported as targeted in notable proportions in New York and New Jersey, although both in relatively low proportion compared to other species. During wave 6 (Nov-Dec) all states have a relatively high proportion of trips targeting tautog, particularly Delaware.

Mid-Atlantic: species caught on trips that also caught striped bass

Bluefish are caught in all the Mid-Atlantic states on trips that also caught striped bass. New York and New Jersey both have the highest proportion of catch as black sea bass and bluefish through most waves. These states also both have notable catches of summer flounder and tautog in waves 3-6, with the addition of scup in New York and white perch in New Jersey during this timeframe. Summer flounder are caught in small amounts in Delaware, and only during wave 4 (Jul-Aug) in Maryland. Similar to the New England states, there is notable variation in tautog catch between states and waves, however, tautog are caught in all states New York through Delaware during wave 6 (Nov-Dec). White perch are caught during all waves in both New Jersey and Delaware, which may be catch in Delaware Bay.

Chesapeake Bay: species targeted on trips that also targeted striped bass

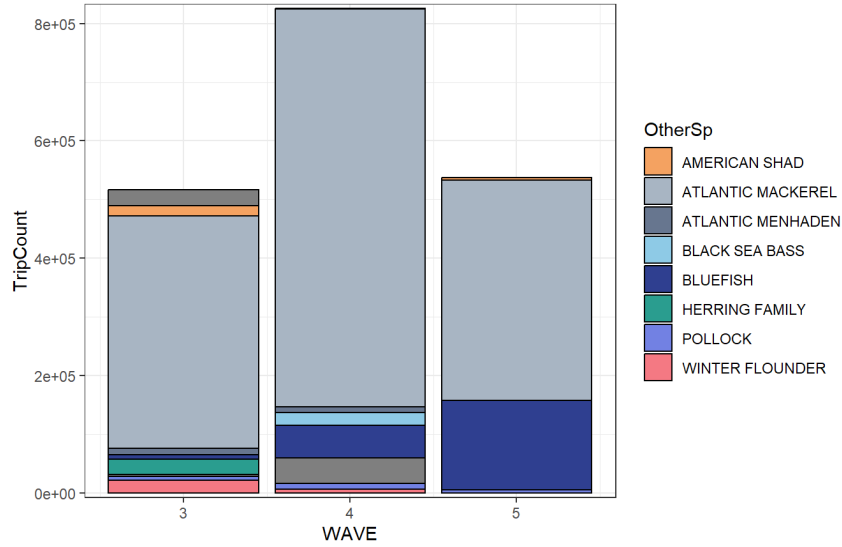
White perch and red drum are commonly targeted with striped bass in Chesapeake Bay, with white perch being reported more frequently in Maryland and red drum more frequently in Virginia. Blue catfish are targeted in significant proportion during waves 3-6 (May-Dec) in both states. Spot are targeted in relatively large proportion in Maryland during waves 3-5 (May-Oct), although this is likely the result of being used as bait while fishing for striped bass. Overall, Maryland has more variety of species that are reported as targeted with striped bass in each wave than in Virginia, though part of that may be due to the striped bass recreational fishery being closed in the summer and early fall in Virginia.

Chesapeake Bay: species caught on trips that also caught striped bass

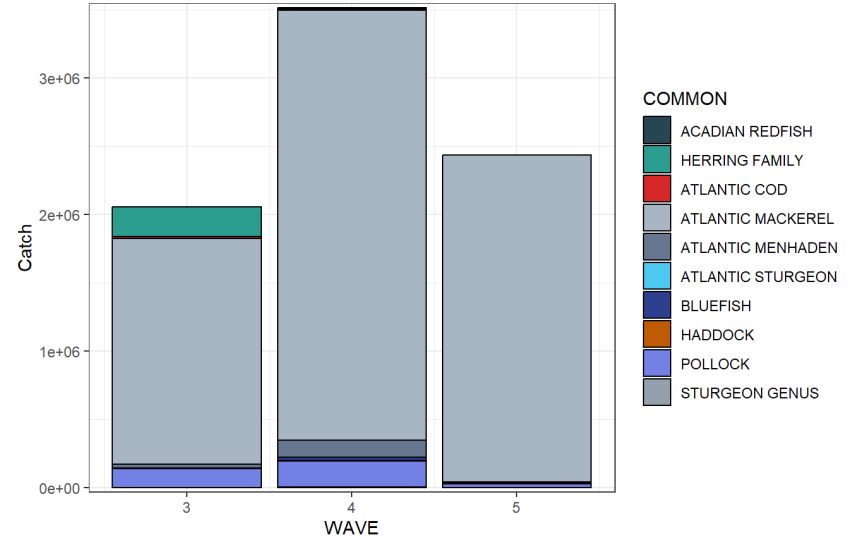
White perch are caught during all waves in Maryland with particularly high catch during waves 3 -5 (May-Oct). Virginia had white perch reported for waves 2 -6 (Mar-Dec), but at much lower proportions than what was seen in Maryland. Blue catfish were caught, but at relatively low proportions in both states for all waves except wave 2 (Mar-Apr) in Virginia. Atlantic croaker made up a large proportion of total catch in Virginia for waves 3 (May-Jun) and 4 (July-Aug). Spotted sea trout were caught in small proportions in Maryland during waves 4 (Jul-Aug) and 5 (Sep-Oct) but it was caught during all waves in Virginia with the highest proportion during waves 5 (Sep-Oct) and 6 (Nov-Dec). Red drum catch was low in Maryland but increased in Virginia from waves 3 – 6 (May-Dec). In both Maryland and Virginia, waves 3 -5 (May-Oct) show greater diversity in total catch than compared to waves 2 (Mar-Apr) and 6 (Nov-Dec).

Maine

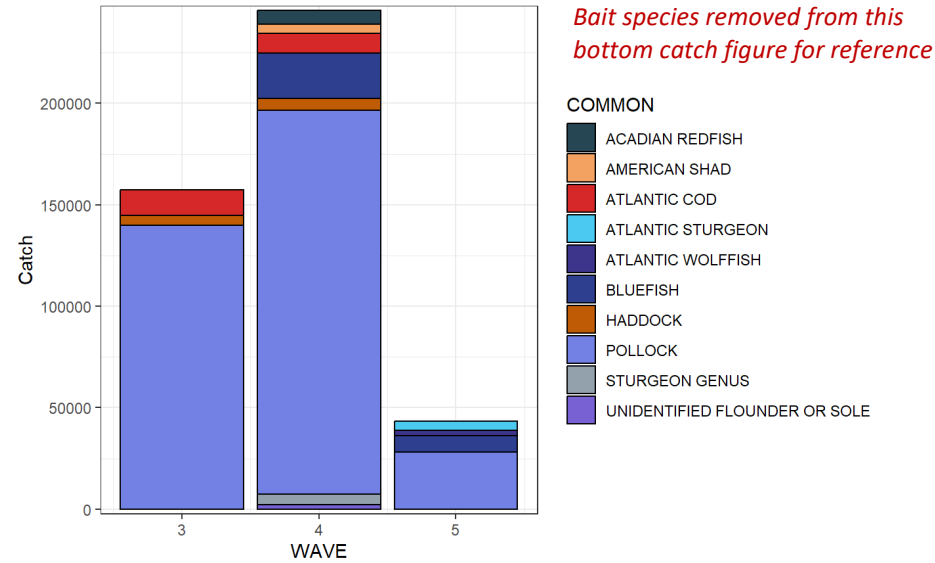
Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): ME



Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): ME

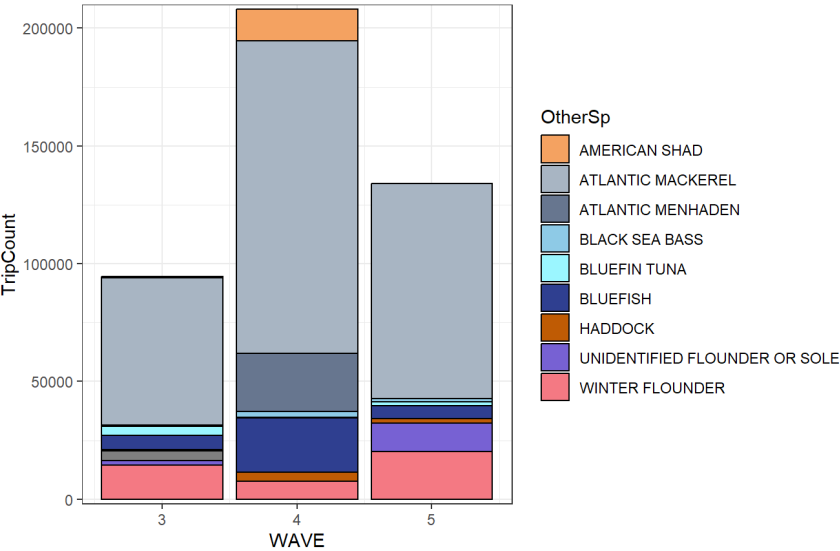


Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): ME

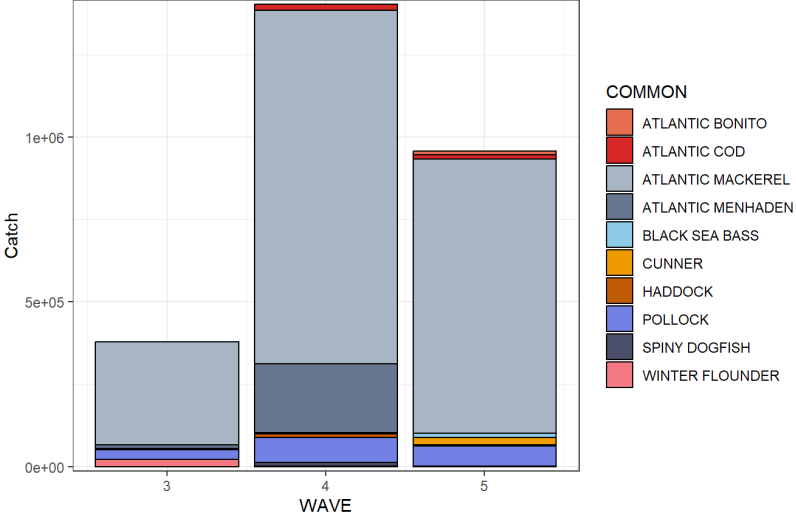


New Hampshire

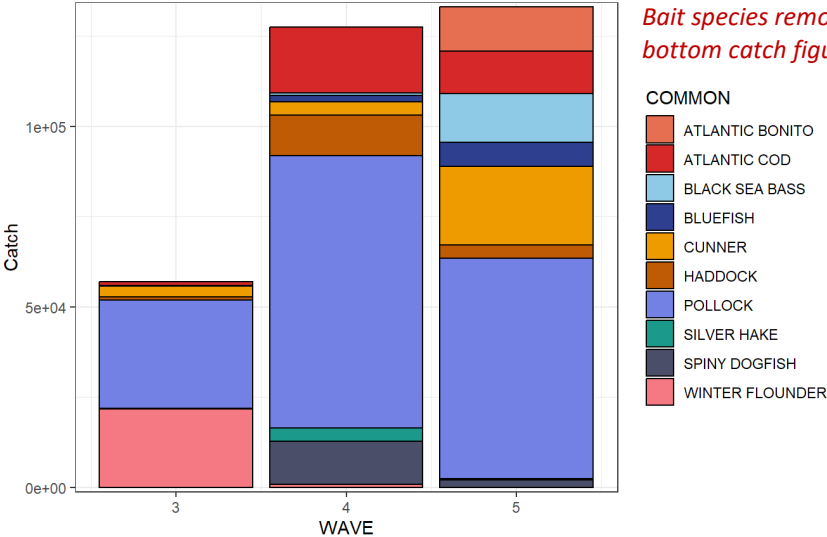
Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NH



Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NH

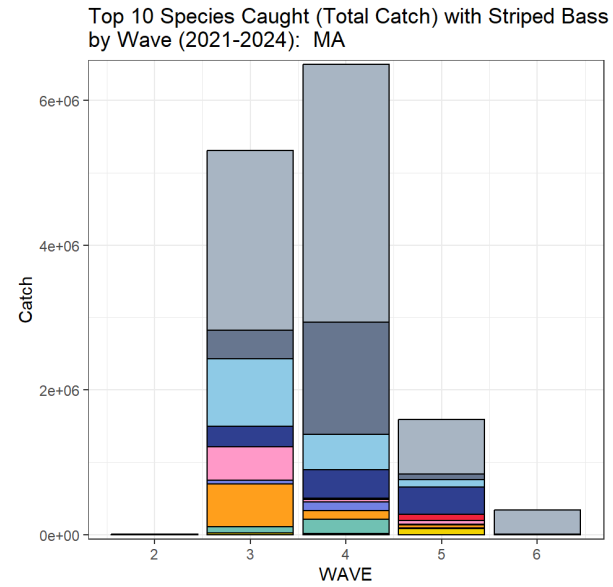
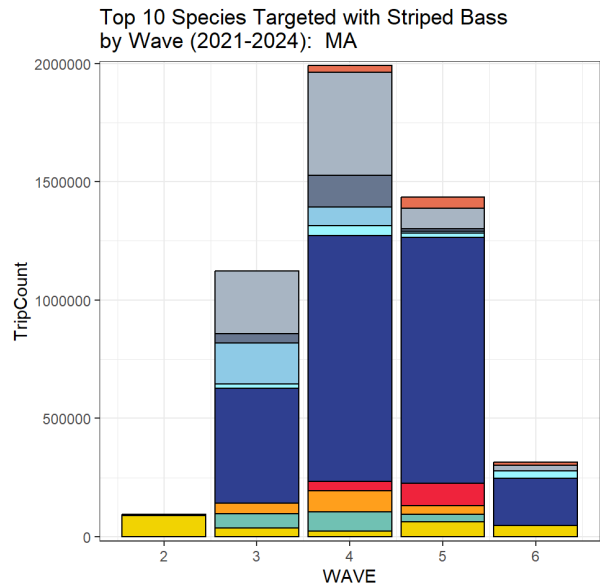


Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NH

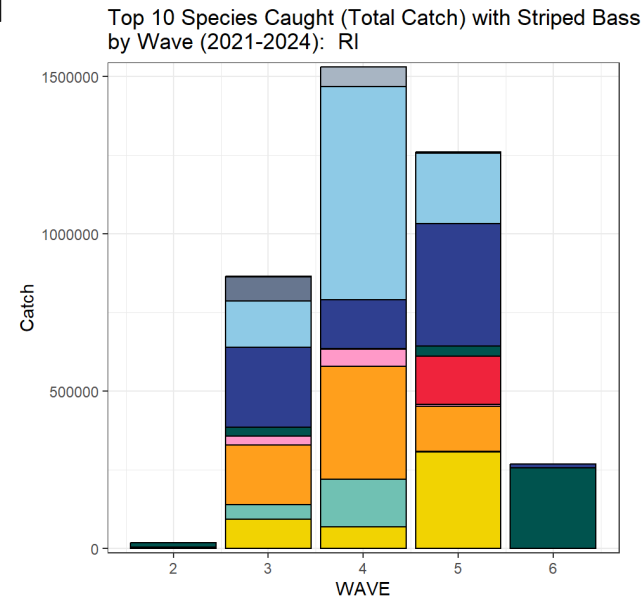
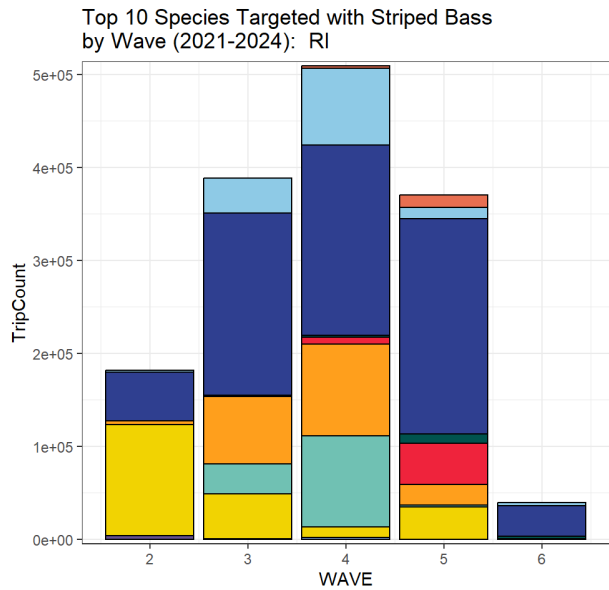


*Bait species removed from this
bottom catch figure for reference*

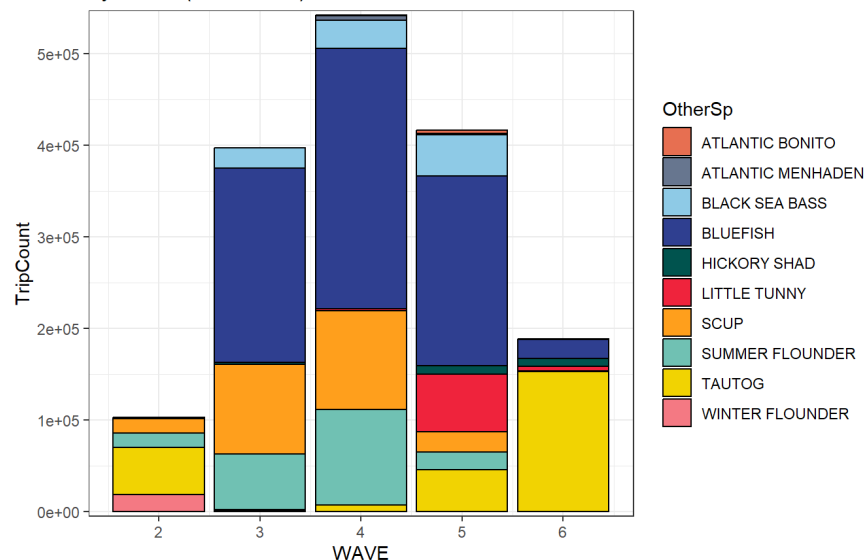
Massachusetts



Rhode Island

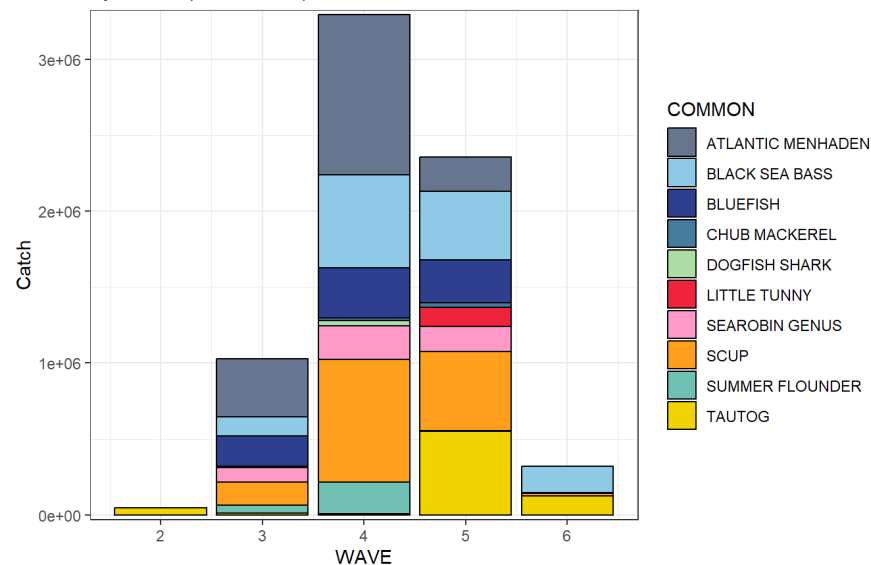


Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): CT

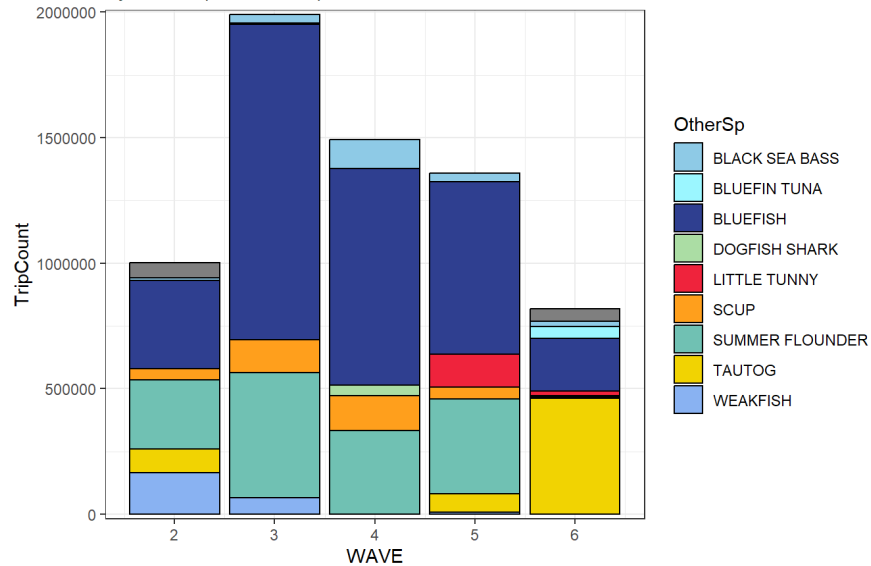


Connecticut

Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): CT

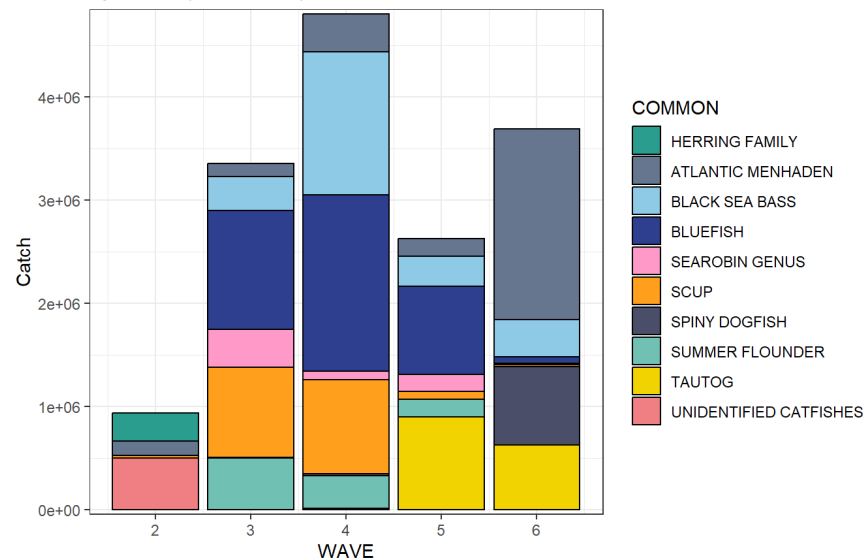


Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NY

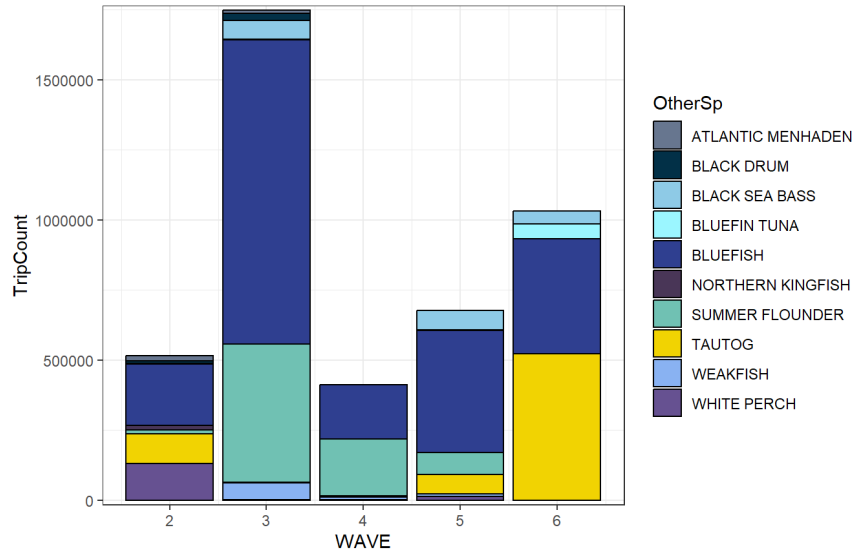


New York

Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NY

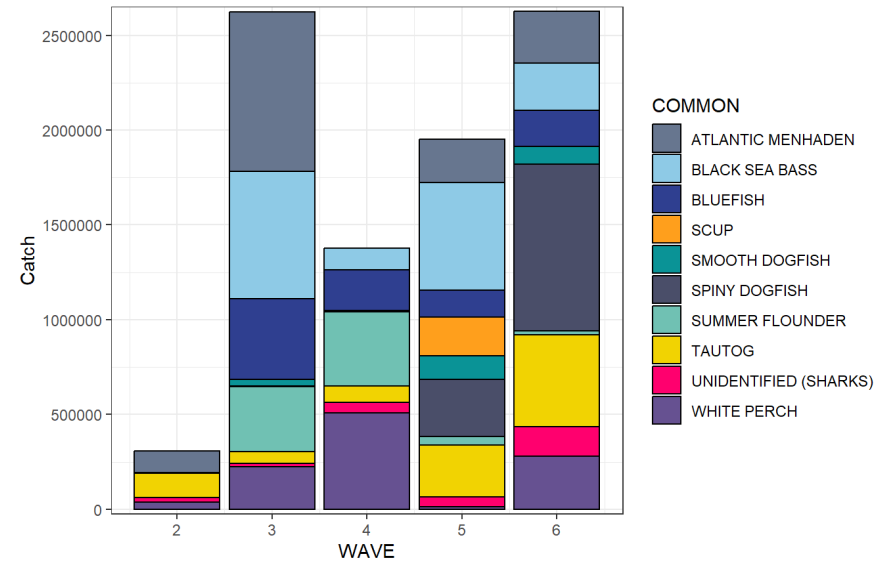


Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NJ

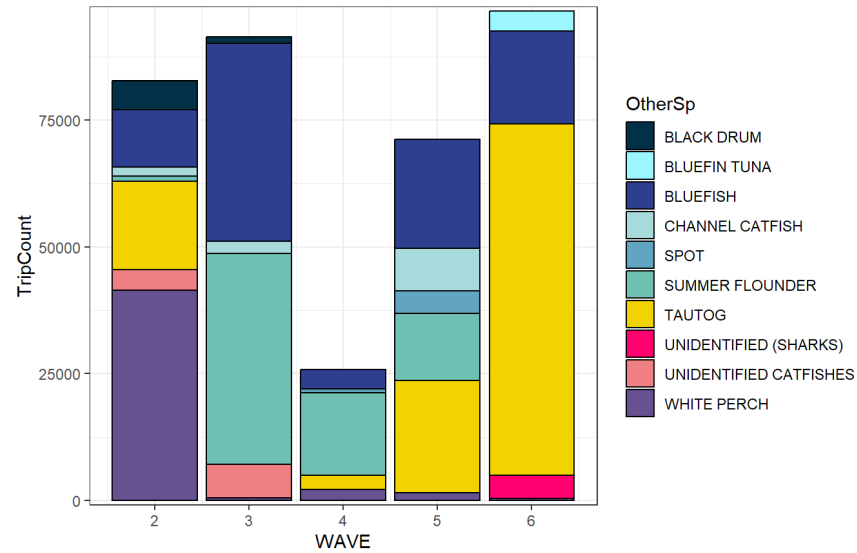


New Jersey

Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): NJ

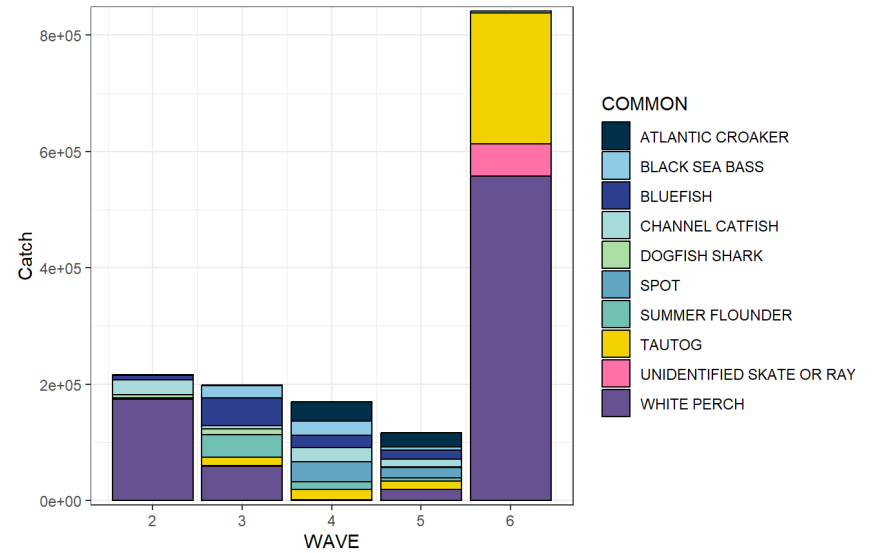


Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): DE



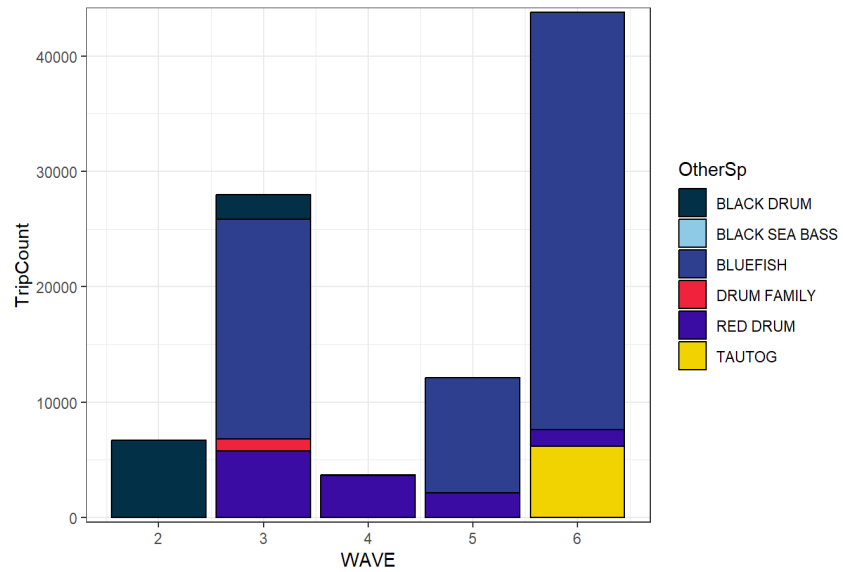
Delaware

Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): DE

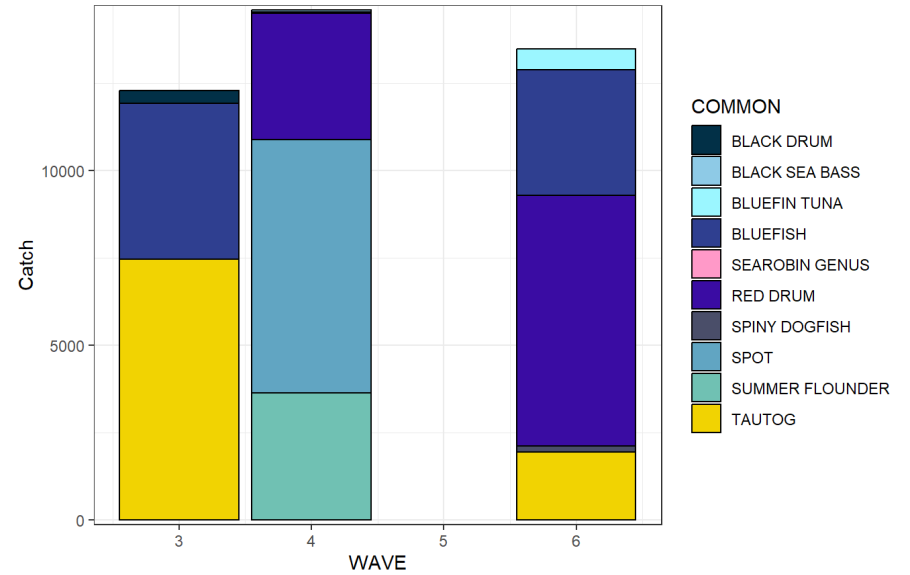


Maryland Ocean

Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): MD

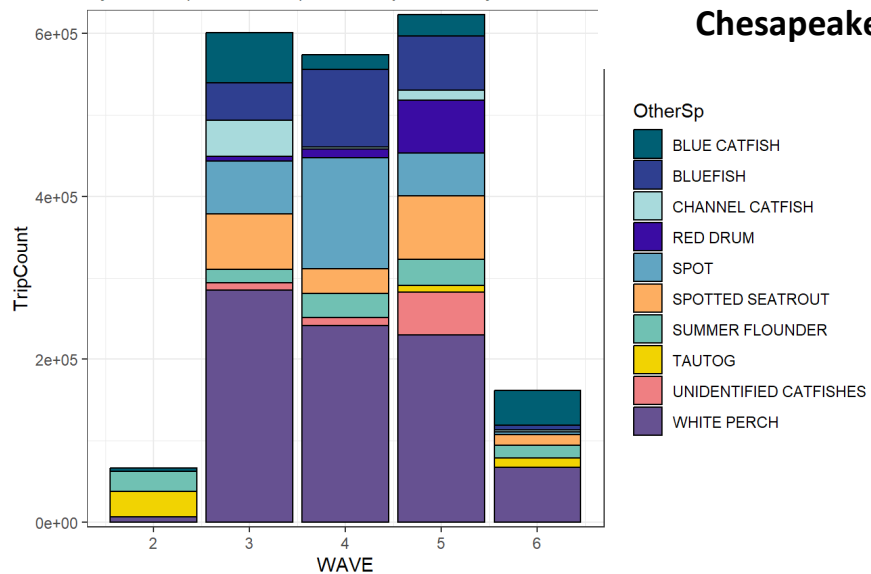


Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024): MD



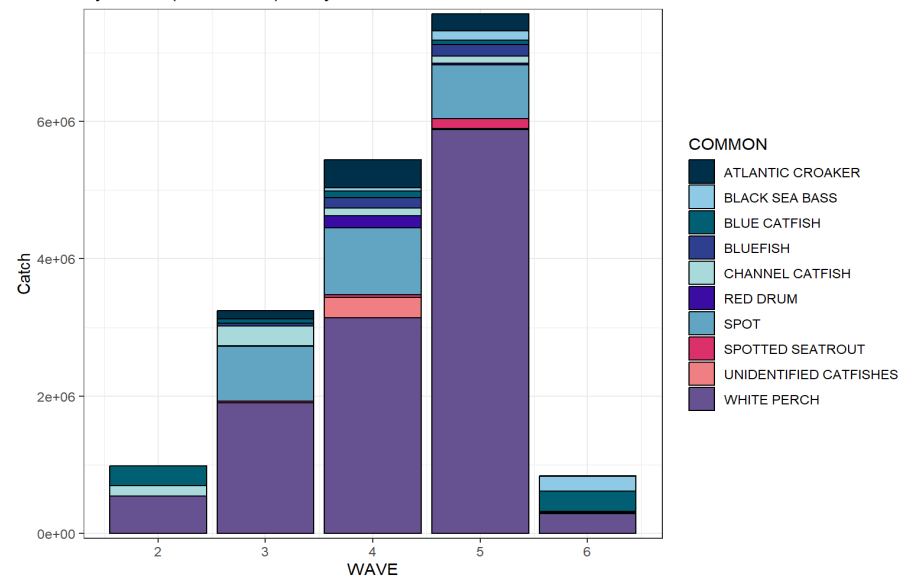
No figures available for Virginia ocean or North Carolina ocean due to limited data.

Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024) - Chesapeake Bay: MD

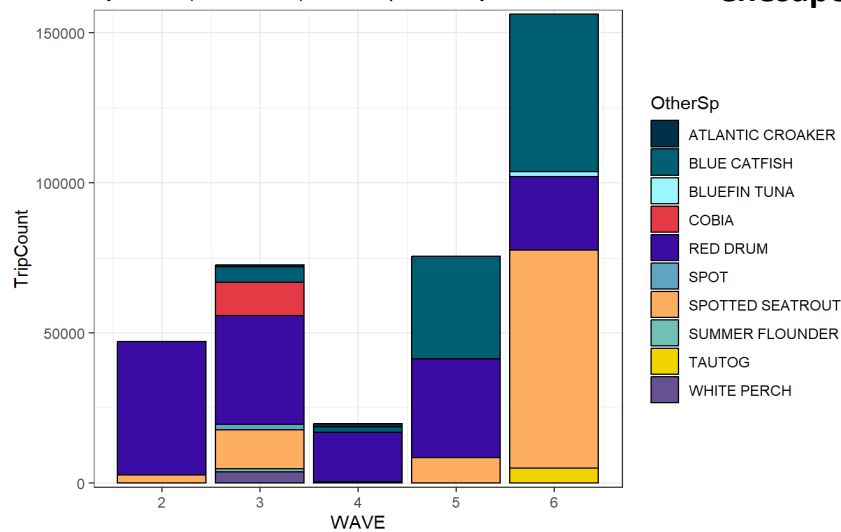


Maryland Chesapeake Bay

Top 10 Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024) - Bay: MD

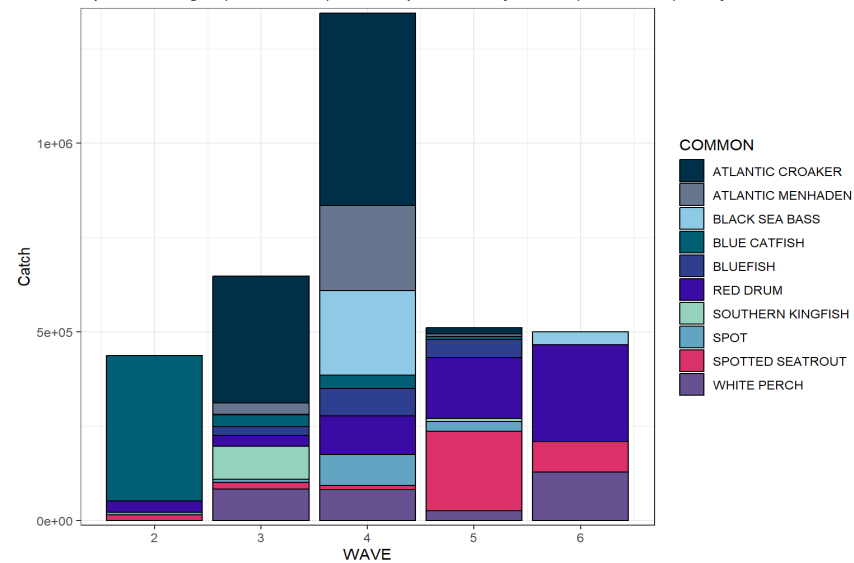


Top 10 Species Targeted with Striped Bass
by Wave (2021-2024) - Chesapeake Bay: VA



Virginia Chesapeake Bay

Species Caught (Total Catch) with Striped Bass by Wave (2021-2024) - Bay: VA





Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfmc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

FROM: Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator

DATE: October 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Draft Addendum III Public Hearing Summaries

Seventeen public hearings for Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III were held from September 8, 2025 through September 30, 2025. Eleven hearings were conducted in-person only (with a virtual listen-only link available for three states), three hearings were conducted in a hybrid format with attendees participating in-person and via webinar, and three hearings were conducted via webinar only.

State	Location	Public Attendees
ME	Yarmouth	16
ME	Webinar	61
NH	Portsmouth	14
MA	Woburn*	66
MA	Buzzards Bay*	77
RI	Narragansett/ Webinar	49
CT	Old Lyme	38
NY	Kings Park/Webinar	217
NY	New Paltz	16
NJ	Manahawkin	73
PA	Bristol*	71
DE	Dover/Webinar	11
MD	Wye Mills	182
MD	Annapolis*	64
DC/PRFC	Webinar	18
VA	Fort Monroe	14
General	Webinar	114

**Virtual listen-only link available.*

Across all hearings, public attendance was 1,101 people (includes double counting of those who attended multiple hearings). This total does not include Board members, state staff, or Commission staff, and does not include individuals listening via virtual listen-only links at the Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Maryland (Annapolis) in-person hearings.

M25-87

Each public hearing summary is enclosed ordered from north to south. Each hearing summary lists the number of public participants who attended the hearing and lists the number of people who spoke in favor of each option or indicated support via show-of-hands as requested by some commenters at some hearings. Not all attendees provided comments. In-person sign-in and webinar attendance lists are provided following each hearing summary.

Note: A summary of all public comment (written and hearing comments) received by ASMFC on Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III will be available no later than supplemental materials for the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Maine Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 9, 2025 – Yarmouth, ME
16 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Megan Ware (MEDMR)

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns

Attendees were a mix of private recreational anglers and for-hire captains and guides.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

5 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting it is a no-brainer to have a common definition.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

3 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging).

Other concerns were raised regarding the amount of fish being caught in the Chesapeake Bay by the commercial fishery.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

2 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

3 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting an equal reduction for both sectors.

Type of Closure

9 people support no harvest closures. 3 of those 9 spoke specifically in support of a no-harvest closure year-round (i.e., harvest moratorium).

Commenters noted that no targeting closures could not be enforced, they are economically catastrophic to the Maine fishing industry and tourism industry, and there are many that find joy in just going out fishing.

Other Comments

- The predation of striped bass by seals and sharks is not being accounted for but likely has a significant impact on the population, and it should be better accounted for in the population estimates.

- The fishery can come back with proper management and there are some things that are going right. Several comments on how it has been positive to see the return of striped bass to Maine waters relative to what was seen in the late 80's and early 90s. They don't want their kids/grand kids to not know what it means to catch a striped bass.
- There was a general concern that the Bay is undergoing changes due to climate change and other issues that make it problematic for striped bass recruitment.
- Suggestion to move harvest to fish greater than 45 inches and then the for-hire boats could also have a trophy fish.
- Consider allowing a keeper and then require the person to stop fishing after taking the keeper.
- Encouraged by the Board's action to have projection with low recruitment values but disappointed that we cannot better model and include in the projections angler behavior changes based on management changes and fish availability.
- There should be an effort to improve angler education on release and handling practices.
- The Board should stop Omega from catching the menhaden.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
TWO MEN'S SHEDS		SACO ME
FRED & SARA BOGUE	REC	PHILIPSBURG ME
Chris Gelli	Kennebec Angler	Bath ME
Tom Harralby	REC	Newcastle, ME
Robbie's Salvage	REC	Saco Maine
TIM ADAMS	Rising Tide/Oxbow	PORTLAND, NEWCASTLE, OXFORD
MEL GRASWOLD	SOUL FLY	"
MICHAEL ROSS	REC	WESTBROOK ME
STEVE HEMKENS	REC	PORTLAND, ME
Kevin McVath	REC	YARMOUTH, ME
Alex James	REC	Yarmouth, ME
Kurt Simard		Freeport ME
JAY VILLANI	CAKOBAY ANGLER	PORTLAND
TRIP FALLON	MAD RIVER CHADWICK CATERERS	THORNBURG ME
Josh Thelin	All Points Fly Shop	Scarborough, ME
Ken & ARABEE	GUIDE	Kennebunkport, ME

Maine Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 10, 2025 – Webinar
61 public attendees
(see enclosed attendee sheet)

Hearing Officer: Megan Ware (MEDMR)

Hearing conducted by MEDMR staff.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

4 people support Option B (new FMP definition).

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

5 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). Participants supported tagging at point of harvest to reduce chances of high grading, trading, or other fraudulent activities.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option B (new baseline).

3 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer). A couple participants noted they thought the buffer should be 15% due to uncertainty.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

7 people support Option B (12% reduction). All participants who spoke indicated a need for a reduction to meet the 2029 deadline.

Participants stressed concern for the stock decline. Those who commented supported conservation of Atlantic Striped Bass, many calling for management to go beyond what Addendum III management options aim to achieve. Some voiced that the Board should consider management with a greater than 50% probability of achieving rebuilding. Participants were interested in equity across sectors, including commercial, private recreational, and for-hire recreational sectors.

Ocean

2 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

A few commenters stressed the objection to different slot limits per sector was to further protect the 2018-year class which will be out of the current slot limit in 2026.

Chesapeake Bay

While no one commented in support of specific Chesapeake Bay options, many comments noted general opposition to mode splits.

Type of Closure

5 people support no harvest closures. Some commenters even went further to support a moratorium on harvest.

Participants did not support no targeting seasons. Economic concerns, enforceability, ineffectiveness, and eliminating a group that is vocal about conservation interests were emphasized as reasons. Several participants pointed out that their business (e.g. tackle shops, food and beverage businesses, boat manufacturers, gear producers, etc.) would be significantly affected by a no targeting closure. Many stressed the seasonal nature of their income revolving around people traveling to the area to participate in striped bass fishing. These participants felt people will still travel to the area to participate in catch and release fishing.

Other Comments

- Multiple participants voiced concern about catch and release mortality. They emphasized a need for further gear modifications and best management practices to decrease delayed mortality and educate the public.
- There was concern that estimates are flawed and have a great uncertainty.
- A few participants mentioned Addendum III is a very dense and complicated document. They remarked they struggled to digest the information in the document and were concerned the Atlantic Striped Bass Board members would also struggle with the document. Participants thought the ASMFC presentation and ME DMR staff did well in explaining these complex topics and questions. However, there was concern that decisions would be made without full understanding of the issues.
- Additionally, a couple participants remarked that the current system of management is too complex and confusing. Several commenters indicated coastwide consistent measures would make enforcement and management easier.

Maine Public Hearing - Webinar
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 10, 2025
Webinar

Webinar Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	State
Aleva	Geoffrey	ME
Batsavage	Chris	NC
Bellavance	Rick	RI
Bishop	Roy	
Blanchette	Thomas	
Boland	John	ME
Boudreau	Nick	ME
Brown	Leslie	AZ
Bryand	Mike	ME
Carney	Brian	NJ
Cote	James	ME
Decosta	Pedro	NY
Deutchsh	Jim	NY
Dimek	Walter	ME
Dudus	Roman	CT
Durgin	Dan	ME
Durgin, Sr	Dan	ME
Ellis	Mark	RI
Emhiser	Bill	ME
Farris	Jay	ME
Fenton	Meghan	ME
Flora	Corrin	ME
Glassanos	George	NY
Gary	Marty	NY
Greenhauser	Dana	ME
Hammer	Lars	ME
Jackson	Todd	ME
Jacobs	Mike	NY
Johnson	Tom	ME
Kane	Raymond	MA
Kindseth	Bruce	RI
Marchetti	Henry	ME
Mendel	Matthew	PA
Meserve	Nichola	MA
Michaud	Patrick	ME

ME Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Mozitis	Chris	NJ
NIBLACK	ISAAC	ME
Noonan	Chris	ME
Normoyle	Dennis	NY
Norris	George	ME
Pappas	Tom	ME
Pecci	David	ME
Peters	Derek	ME
Pitney	Eliot	ME
Pollock	Quinn	ME
Porter	Zach	ME
Prawer	Nick	ME
Reardon	Jeff	ME
Roberts Mort	Karen	NY
Rosa	Capt Bryan	ME
Rowell	Raymond	MA
Sarcona	Tony	ME
Schaefer	Kyle	ME
Surowitch	Jonathan	NJ
Swayze	Jeffrey	NH
Swift	Robert	PA
Tirado	Lou	ME
Tiso	Gary	NY
Tragakes	Alex	ME
Travers	Scott	RI
Trudeau	Jeff	ME
Waine	Mike	NC
Wallace	Eric	ME
Ware	Megan	ME
Whalley	Benjamin	ME
Yanders	Robert	ME
Zanelli	Bart	RI

New Hampshire Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 8, 2025 – Portsmouth, NH
14 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Renee Zobel (NHFG)

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns

Attendees were a mix of private recreational anglers and for-hire captains and guides. Commenters included a representative from the American Saltwater Guides Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

8 people support Option B (new FMP definition).

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

8 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). There was a general concern that too much illegal activity was going on in the commercial fishery and tagging at harvest would help curb this activity.

There were also other concerns raised specifically at the MA commercial fishery which the commenter said was too easy to get a license for, too many female breeders are allowed to be caught, and the allowance for a personal use fish goes unaccounted for and creates more potential illegal activity.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option A (status quo baseline).

7 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

8 people support Option B (12% reduction). The support was for equal reduction from both the commercial and recreational fishery with the full 12% reduction.

Ocean

8 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

While most commenters did not speak to a specific comment for the Chesapeake Bay, the majority of commenters spoke in opposition to mode splits.

Type of Closure

8 people support no harvest closures.

Many people spoke against no targeting closures due to the lack of enforceability of a no targeting closures as well as the economic destruction a no targeting closure would create on both the fishing and coastal tourism business. People also commented that the season closures will be hard enough on the for-hire sector due to the already short season (June to September) in New Hampshire but a no targeting closure on top of it would be extremely difficult. Catch and release fishing generates more economic benefits than a dead fish.

Ocean Closure Regions

7 people support grouping Rhode Island in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Closure Timing

1 person supported closing during wave 4.

Other Comments

- Several comments that the fish are no longer available in NH waters. Many people have reported they have caught the smallest number of fish on record for them. This is for both keepers and fish being released. There was general agreement that the good biomass that we have now needs to be protected to get good recruitment.
- There was a concern that Maryland is fishing on spawning fish. Additionally, there is a desire for there to be better science to understand why there have been so many poor years of recruitment in the Bay e.g. warming of the bay and changing water conditions.
- There was also a concern that too much menhaden are being harvested in the Bay by Omega.
- The Commission should have done more to protect the 2018 year class. The more recent changes have done nothing to help the stock and these proposed measures will also not help.

Portsmouth, NH

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Massachusetts Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 25, 2025 – Woburn, MA
66 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Nichola Meserve (MADMF)

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns

Attendees were a mix of commercial industry, bait and tackle shops, private recreational anglers, and for-hire captains and guides.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

12 people support Option A (status quo no FMP definition).

5 people support Option B (new FMP definition). Several of the comments focused on keeping the definition clear and making it as easy and quick to measure the fish as possible. Some suggested a bump board could help. A uniform definition would close any loopholes that have been created.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

11 people support Option A (status quo state choose point of tagging). There was overall concern from several commenters that a change in the point of tagging would result in the state having to move to a limited entry program for the commercial fishery. Many people were not in favor of limited entry.

5 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). Commenters noted point of harvest tagging would provide the maximum opportunity for dishonest fisherman to get caught and the honest fisherman to keep fishing.

1 person supports Option C (point of landing tagging).

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

11 people support Option A (status quo baseline).

1 people support Option B (new baseline).

4 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

34 people support Option A (status quo no reduction) from a show-of-hands (more than half the room).

During the hearing a person asked for a show of hands for how many people in the room supported status quo and over half the room raised their hand (more than 33 people). Many of these individuals run or work on a for-hire boat. During this show of hands the following comments were made: Changes to measures would be economically devastating to their businesses at this time. Any season closures would kill their business that is already on the margins. These same individuals also spoke to the data and urged the Board to not take action without including the results of the 2025 harvest since there has been a 50% decline in wave 3 harvest. They also commented the SSB is increasing with the measures that are in place so it would be ok to wait to review the data.

4 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting equal reductions for both sectors so both sectors have equitable impacts.

2 people support less reduction for the commercial fishery because of the sector's smaller removals compared to the recreational fishery.

Ocean

2 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

Type of Closure

5 people support no harvest closures.

The comments on the types of closures focused on not wanting no target closure due to the fact they are economically destructive to the fishery and associated businesses, whether that be directly related to fishing e.g. bait and tackle shops for-hire boats or indirectly related e.g. the tourism industry, hotels, restaurants.

Closure Timing

1 person supports closing wave 4 from ME-MA because it is the highest water temperatures and the highest harvest so shorter closure.

2 people support keeping wave 4 open, as it is a very important time of year for the recreational fishery and the local economy. A closure then would be devastating economically.

Other Comments

- Several commenters spoke about the 9% release mortality rate and that it was too high.

- Several individuals spoke in favor of additional gear restrictions that would improve release mortality rates as well as increased angler education for better handling of fish. One person suggested a class be required prior to getting your license or online videos to better understand the best fish handling practices for better survival of released fish.
- Others commented that the Commission should be more accountable to achieve its goals.
- Some commented that there is not a fishing problem but an environmental problem.
- One commenter did not want to see any action until a full economic analysis has been conducted on the proposed options. Particularly a full analysis of no targeting closures which, as many individuals commented, would have a significant economic impact. There was a concern that if the fishery closes the infrastructure that supports it would be lost forever. These measures risk the coastal communities that count on striped bass fishing and not understanding the full risk with an analysis is a non-starter.
- Some commenters were concerned that while they are seeing big fish now there are no small fish which will be a problem in a few years when the big fish are gone. There seems to be a decline in the viability and productivity of fish under the slot limit.
- Concern was raised regarding the predation of striped bass by seals and sharks and the impact on the population. Not only are they eating the striped bass but also all the bait fish that striped bass feed on.
- There was a lengthy discussion on the science and available data and how the proposed measures may or may not improve the population. Many in the group thought since the SSB is currently rising there should be no action until after the 2027 assessment which would include data from years that would have been impacted by the most recent management actions (smaller slot which has resulted in a 50% decline of wave 3 removals in 2025).
- General consensus that the whole group enjoys striped bass, wants it to survive and prosper and for the future generations to enjoy these fish.
- The Board should heed the lessons from history for short-term gains verse the long-term viability of the stock.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 25, 2025

Woburn, MA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Mike Zelzinga	Fishbucket Sport Fishing SBCBA	Boston, MA
Jeremy Fortado	Boston Fish Charters	Boston, MA
Joe Dwyer	Self	Dorchester, MA
Will Santiago	Boston Bass Charters	Boston MA.
Scott Edwards	Keeper Fishing Charters	Marblehead, MA
Brian Cloutier	FRIGGY'S LUBZWORKS	Beverly, MA
JEFF HANSON	SELF	DANVERS MA
NATE Good	SELF	SALEM MA
Peter B. Santini	IGA Fishing	Everett, MA
James Brennan	Strike Sport Fishing	Medford, MA
Judah Marcus	Trinacria FLV	Boston
Riccardo Buzzanga	Trinacria	Boston
Erik Christiansen	Great Marsh Outfitters	Groveland, MA
ROBERT SAVINI	C.J. Victorian Fishing	Wichkop MA
Billy Eichler		Stonham
James Goodhart	Shedbourne Charters	Newburyport
BRENDAN MCMANUS Sr.	Katherine Ann	Lynn, MA
Brendan McManus Jr.	Katherine Ann	Lynn, MA
Roger Brown	Dagger	Danvers, MA
Mike Tambone	Plum Island Surf	No Andover, MA
STEPHEN DESISTO	PLUM ISLAND SURFCASTER	Worcester, MA
Michael Keiselbach		Leominster
Ronald Powers	Outdoor Media	Stonham, MA

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Mike Miesse	TEAM Mako	Newburyport, MA
Steven Robichaux	Recreation/PISC	Haverhill, MA
Dennis Ambrose	Commercial Fisherman	Medfield MA
John Nolen	Sweet & Salty Charters	Winthrop, MA
Pete Schirer		Andover
Anna Schirer		Andover
Bob Bachelde		Medford, MA
Steve Volpe	NISOF	Marblehead, MA
Erick Attridge	Kayaker	Gloucester, MA
Tim McCarthy	Shore Angler	Framingham, MA
Bractord Lumb	ROC	Worcester, MA
Lynn Alves	Self	Woburn MA
Peter Bechtolt	Hooked on Tail Sports	Beverly MA
John Bearwain	Hooked On Tail Sportfish charters	Beverly MA
Christopher Borgatti	Backcountry Hunters & Anglers	Beverly, MA
AARON CAPTAO		BEVERLY, MA
Vinny Giurleo	Concord Outfitters	Concord, MA
Arthur Ples	Boston Fish Tales	Winthrop MA
Georgette Henrich	Plum Island Surfcasters	Draught, MA
Justin Barton Jr		Billerica, Mass 01821
TOM Carlisle	Commercial/Rec	Saugus MA
Anna Carlisle	Commercial/Rec	
Danna RMA	Com / Rec	Boston MA
Paul Guzzo	INDEPENDANT	Billerica MA
Mike Guro	Tony Fish Co	Boston, MA
Austin Schofield	Rec / for hire	Boston, MA
Dennis Alerio	WATER Save Strips	Chelmsford
Chris Mayo	INDEPENDANT	Billerica
Nikole Harmony	North Atlantic Traders	Lynn, MA
David Lynch		Haverhill MA

Massachusetts Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 30, 2025 – Buzzards Bay
77 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Nichola Meserve (MADMF)

Hearing conducted by MADMF staff.

Attendees were a mix of for-hire, private recreational anglers, commercial industry, and tackle shop. Commenters included representatives from Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association, Cape Cod Charter Boat Association, and the Massachusetts Commercial Striped Bass Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

1 private angler supports Option A (status quo no FMP definition) noting the proposed requirements would increase release mortality.

11 people support Option B (new FMP definition). Commenters were a mix of for-hire, private anglers, and a tackle shop. Comments noted Massachusetts has already adopted this definition and it would provide consistency and fairness coastwide. One person noted the issue of fanning the tail to keep a slot size fish must be addressed. One person agrees with uniformity but would prefer fork length measurement. One person noted that measuring is easy enough when using a measuring board.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

4 people support Option A (status quo state choose point of tagging). Commenters in support were for-hire and commercial industry. Comments noted concern about implications for permit issuance. One person noted tagging on a boat would be a hassle and another person noted tautog point-of-harvest tagging as a real hassle.

5 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). Commenters were private anglers and a tackle shop. Comments noted this would help prevent illegal and misrepresented commercial harvest and address recreational harvest under the guise of commercial fishing. One person noted it would help clean up some illegal sales and the need for saving as many fish as possible right now.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

4 people support Option A (status quo baseline). Commenters were for-hire and private anglers. One person noted the season should not change as the fishery is harvesting mostly males right

now. One person noted distrust of the intent and the calculations of being net neutral and there is too much uncertainty while trying to rebuild the stock.

2 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer). Commenters were a private angler and tackle shop.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

18 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Commenters were mostly for-hire as well as a few private anglers and commercial industry.

Comments noted that fishing mortality is not the real issue; the real issues are Chesapeake Bay environmental issues, water quality, predation (blue catfish and seals), menhaden harvest, and decline in herring stocks. Recreational closures cannot be implemented fairly and the economic impacts warrant waiting for the 2027 stock assessment results, including reconsideration of the biological reference points. There are sufficiently conservative measures already in place, SSB is trending upward, and 95% of fish are already released. Trying to reduce to F rebuild is not statistically significant and the data are also pending MRIP recalibration. The flawed MRIP data are overestimating catch and better data would show there has been enough reduction already.

Many commenters noted the negative economic impacts of a reduction and season closures. Some comments noted the impact on the charter industry would be severe. Harvest and trips are already way down. Some comments noted they would prefer a longer rebuilding timeline (specifically by 2032) over drastic economic impacts, and that the ten-year rebuilding timeline is arbitrary. One comment noted there is too much private angler non-compliance.

2 commenters in support of status quo noted there should especially be no reduction for the commercial sector because of its small contribution to removals. The commercial season is already very short.

7 people support Option B (12% reduction). Commenters in support were private anglers and a tackle shop. Some commenters noted the importance of equal reductions by sector and one person noted the number of commercial permits should be reduced.

Commenters noted there are not enough fish and not enough stock productivity/recruitment to support the current effort and removal rate. The risk is too great to do nothing and they are seeing signals of a declining population, including a decline of smaller fish and shrinking abundance and distribution. Comments noted the long-term outlook is not good and this reduction is the minimum needed considering the weak year classes entering the SSB soon.

Ocean

3 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

5 people support O2 (28-33" for-hire/28-31" private-shore/13% season closure all modes). 4 of these commenters are for-hire captains and noted they are opposed to a reduction, but if there is one, the for-hire exemption is needed and for-hire should also be exempt from any season closures because of its minor contributions to removals.

Chesapeake Bay

No comments.

Type of Closure

5 people support no harvest closures. Comments opposed no-targeting closures noting compliance and enforcement concerns. One commenter noted that this does prioritize catch-and-release fishing but that is what is driving most of the economic value, and no harvest closures will have less of an impact on all participants.

3 people support no targeting closures. These for-hire captains do not support a reduction but if there is one, they noted catch-and-release anglers must contribute to the reduction.

Ocean Closure Regions

2 people support grouping Rhode Island in the New England region.

Closure Timing

- 1 person noted summer/fall closures would be devastating to businesses.
- 1 person noted opposition to any wave 4 closure because that time is too important.
- 1 person noted closures should be in waves 1, 2, or 6 only.
- 1 person noted closures should be small blocks of time to reduce impact.
- 1 person noted support for a closure during wave 4.

Other Comments

- Concern about Chesapeake Bay environmental issues, water quality, blue catfish predation, and menhaden harvest.
- Need to focus on what is hindering spawning.
- Support for re-starting hatchery programs instead of taking a reduction.
- Focus effort on education about reducing release mortality.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 30, 2025

Buzzards Bay, MA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Frank Leonard Greiner Jr.	Cape Cod Sportsman, Inc.	Harwich MA
Mike Armstrong		Danvers MA
Philip Calvert	Lady J Sportfishing	Wareham MA
KEN SHWARTZ	TSBC	Mattapoisett, MA
Wayne Hawes	TSBC	Portsmouth MA
JACK ILLINGWORTH	MSBA	Abington MA
Alex Cameron		Westport MA
Dick Bell		
Tim Silva	Com'l Bass Fishers	N. Truro
Eric d'Hedouville		Portsmouth MA
Mark Cannell		Duxbury MA
Christian Giardinini		Bourne MA
Sheryl St. Louis	Com Bass Assoc	Chatham
Tom Gold		N. Truro MA
CRAIG PASTORIAN	ASMFC	Orleans, MA
Joseph Wille	North Eastern Anglers	Fairhaven, MA
Roy Davis	Salt of the Earth	Wareham MA
Brett Mills	On Fire Sportfishing	Grafton, MA
Bob Hussey	Erin H Charles	Wellfleet MA
Wendy Parquette	MSBA	Hyannis

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Brian Kelly	RPS Fishing	Plymouth, MA
Luhe Contel	OBSESSION Sportfishing	Plymouth MA
George Sousa	Rumba Duck Fishing	HAZARD MA SS
Aidan McCormack	-	Scituate MA
PAUL CADD	-	FALMOUTH MA
MICHAEL PIERDINO	SBCB4	PLYMOUTH, MA
Jeffrey Perry	First Light Sportfishing	Dennis, MA
Jason Perry	Rising Sun Sportfishing	Dennis, MA
Jonathan Foley	Boston Sportfishing Clubs	Hingham, MA
STEVEN DESIO	Phum Island Sportfishing	WATERFIELD MASS
Mike Abdou	MAGIC	CHATHAM
Joel Bois	Bois Family Fisheries	Yarmouth
Carl Bois	Topspin Fishing	Nantucket
BOB DELOSA	ACBACE CHARTERS	NANTUCKET
Scott Riddle	Althea K Sportfishing	Nantucket
Matt Mike	-	Rutland
MARK PETIT	Plymouth Charters	PLYMOUTH MA
Diogo Gadoi	Gorilla tactics	Cape Cod
Michael Fowler	Bad Dog Sportfishing	Dennis MA
JIM SELVESTRO	CAPT JIM'S	FALMOUTH MA
Pete Kaizer	Althea K	Nantucket
Glen Chatfield	gw Customs	Wansham
GARY HOLE	Long Cut	Seabrook
Dan Perry	-	Dartmouth, MA
Cullen Lundholm	Cape Star Charters	Sandwich, MA
Tyler Piny	Flatliner Charters	Kingston, MA
Capt Buddy Vandenberg	Jonathan's Charters	Aquinnah MA
Gary Vanden	"	"
Capt Bob	-	-
Michael Harney	Emma Tad Shirts	Yarmouth MA

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Patrick Pagante	MSBA	Hyannis MA
Ari Stanathoni	—	Wareham MA
Lena Saventz	—	Wareham MA
Richard COTTr	PVBSC	Ludlow MA
Eddie ODonnell	—	Scituate, MA
Dave Martius	MA DMF	Mattapoisett MA
John HARVEY	For Hire Captain	Wellfleet, MA
Jeffrey Schofield		Duxbury MA
Jacob Smith	FOR Hire	Plymouth
Zan CATALA	FOR Hire	Plymouth
ANDY HORVATH	NA	Sagamore beach
DAVID HOBSON	WAVELENGTH	Plymouth MA
JACK HOBSON	FOR HIRE	Plymouth MA
Brian Curry	Commercial SBCEBA	Merrimack, MA
Mike Lundholm		Sagamore Beach
SEAN COBELL		Boston, MA
AVERY REVERE	For Hire	Barnstable, MA
Keith Roberts	Falmouth Fishermen's Assoc.	Falmouth MA
Willy Hotalu	CCCBA	Falmouth MA
Jeff Agan	Band Z	"
Anthony Romano		Kingston, MA.
Chris Ballerini	Back of the Bay Charter	Kingston, MA
Bill Proctor	MSOA/FALMOUTH	Pocasset, MA
Zeke Cohen	JACK'S Custom K&B	Westport, MA
KEN BAUGHMAN	comm. Rod & Reel	Woods Hole, MA
Douglas Brown	Temperance Sport Fishing	Eastham, MA
John Mead	For Hire Captain	Eastham, MA
Michael Hogan	Flying Mist Charters	Falmouth, MA
Robbie Tartaglia	Happy Lure Co	Buzzards Bay, MA

Rhode Island Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 16, 2025 – Narragansett, RI and Webinar
49 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet and webinar attendees)

Hearing Officer: Jason McNamee (RIDEM)

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns, Chelsea Tuohy

Attendees included a mix of private recreational anglers, for-hire operators and crew, and commercial industry. Commenters included representatives from the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association, Rhode Island Commercial Rod and Reel Association, Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association, American Saltwater Guides Association, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

3 people support Option A (status quo no FMP definition). Commenters noted concern about the difficulty of measuring a fish on a boat and having more flexibility in the definition is better and safer.

5 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting support for consistency. One commenter noted hope that enforcement would provide some leeway.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

4 people support Option A (status quo state choose point of tagging). Commenters noted that dealers are well-positioned to tag the fish and also commented on Rhode Island's fishery specifically. The season is very short (only 9 days this year) and creating a new tagging program for an 8-9 day season would not be beneficial and does not make sense. Concern about issuing tags before the fish are actually caught. Increasing law enforcement and penalties could be used instead to ensure compliance with current tagging programs.

2 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging).

2 people support Option C (point of landing tagging).

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

2 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer). Some commenters noted the importance of a buffer as high as possible (even higher than 10%) due to concern about increase in effort from the season changes.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

5 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Commenters were for-hire operators/crew.

Commenters note fishing mortality is already at a 30-year low and the assessment already uses a low recruitment projection. The management options will add to existing inequity, and the catch-and-release fishery has contributed nothing to stock rebuilding so far while the harvest fishery has been cut. There is also concern about variability in MRIP, for example with the change from preliminary to final MRIP data for 2024; using these data for management decisions will have drastic consequences. In addition, the initial 2025 MRIP data are lower than expected. The current measures are working with big fish everywhere, and one commenter noted the possibility that there are too many striped bass as a density-dependence issue.

One commenter noted the rebuilding concept has been blown out of proportion putting more economic harm on a small sliver of the industry, and for-hire is important to provide access to fishing for people and the ability to harvest a fish. The Board should wait until the benchmark assessment is completed to consider action, including considering new reference points.

One commenter noted specifically that the commercial sector should not take a cut and the mortality in the recreational fishery is high.

5 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting support for an equal reduction for all sectors. Commenters in support were mostly private anglers.

Commenters noted the dire state of the stock and risk to the population if action is not taken. With six to seven years of failed spawns, this reduction is needed to lessen the blow of what is coming in the future. One commenter noted there has been a drop-off already in participation and the goal should be to keep fish in the water to drive participation and the recreational economy, which brings millions of dollars to the RI economy alone.

Ocean

1 person supports O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to any mode split option.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB1 (20-23" all modes with no additional season closure) or CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to any mode split option.

Type of Closure

5 people support no harvest closures. Commenters noted concerns about enforceability of no targeting closures when striped bass fishing overlaps with similar fisheries for other species. One commenter also noted the difficulty of measuring the impact of no targeting closures. One commenter noted concern about the assumption that all trips would still occur under no

targeting closures, as he would not take as many trips in a no targeting scenario. The number of trips drives the economy and there would be a huge economic cost of no targeting closures.

2 people support no targeting closures noting that is the only equitable option if there is a closure so the catch-and-release fishery can contribute to the reduction.

Ocean Closure Regions

2 people noted concern about the regions in general and would support each individual state setting their own closure dates as long as they meet the objective.

1 person noted concern about both regional groupings for Rhode Island. Rhode Island is different from the Massachusetts fishery timing, so the New England region does not make sense. Rhode Island is similar to Connecticut, but different from other states like New Jersey. If you close wave 6, Rhode Island is not affected but it would drastically affect New Jersey. If you close wave 3, 4 or 5, it would destroy the entire Rhode Island industry.

2 people support grouping Rhode Island in the Mid-Atlantic region because the Rhode Island industry would be devastated by the New England closure options.

Closure Timing

1 person noted that if closures are implemented, the closure should be the least number of days possible.

2 people noted that water temperatures should be considered when determining closures dates, and closures should occur when temperatures are high (wave 4) associated with higher release mortality rates.

Other Comments

- The real issue is why recruitment is so low and concern about lack of baitfish (menhaden herring) and what is driving striped bass recruitment.
- Concern about shark predation.
- One commenter noted that low recruitment is what happens when the population is at carrying capacity and without baitfish, other predators will now feed on young-of-year striped bass. Support for closing the menhaden reduction fishery to rebuild ocean carrying capacity.
- Concern about illegal harvest of fish below the slot limit.
- In hindsight, the slot limit should have been adjusted year by year to protect the strong year class.
- Release mortality can be reduced by looking at gear types and the number of hooks used.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Nick Bocchino	RICRRA	Charlestown, RI
Bruce Kinsman		NARRAGANSETT RI
RAMON	NARRAGANSETT	EAST PROV
Rick Bellavance	RICPBA	NK RI
Rich Hittinger	RISAA	Warwick, RI
Scott Travers	RISAA	COVENTRY, RI
Dave Prockop	Rec.	Providence, RI
MICHAEL HACKETT	The Fisherman	Providence RI (NARRAGANSETT)
DAVE ANDERSON	The Fisherman	Providence, RI
Ken Booty	RICRRA	LINCOLN RI
Dan McCone	FRESH JIG CHARTERS	North Kingstown RI
Michael Wadley	Backcountry Hunters + Anglers	Saunderstown RI
Peter Randall	C-Devil Sportsfishing	Wakefield RI
RAY RAMOS	SELF	N. STONINGTON, CT.
Peter Jenkins	Saltwater Edge	Newport, RI

Rhode Island Public Hearing – Narragansett, RI
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 16, 2025
Hybrid

Webinar Attendees:

Name
Al Caletti
Al Williams
Alexander Colantonio
Alexander Perkins
Andy Dangelo
Bart Zanelli
Bob Gorecki
Chelsea Tuohy
Chris Dodge
Chris Herz
Christine McKiernan
Cory Blount
Daniel Costa
David Borden
David Sikorski
Dawn Wood
Dee Fay
Gary Bryson
Ian McGregor
Jake Hardy
Jake Naso-Kushner
James Boyd
James Buchok
Jason Jarvis
Jeri Buzzetta
Jerry Morgan
John Lake
Ken Reynolds
Kurt Blanchard
Lawrence Buckingham
Marty Gary
Michael Luisi
Michael O'Grady
Michael Porco
Mike Waine

RI Webinar Attendees

Name
Nichola Meserve
Nicole Lengyel Costa
Robert Aaronson
Robert Malouin
Scott Olszewski
Sean Weber
Stu Meltzer
Tim Riley
Tj Harris
Tom Lafazia
Tony Guarino

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns, Chelsea Tuohy

Connecticut Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 15, 2025 – Old Lyme, CT
38 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Matt Gates (CTDEEP)

ASMFC Staff: Toni Kerns, Chelsea Tuohy

Attendees were a mix of for-hire and private anglers. Commenters included representatives from the American Saltwater Guides Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

10 people support Option A (status quo no FMP definition) noting the priority is to measure fish quickly so the fish can be released quickly and safely. Squeezing the tail is time consuming, increases handling time, and raises mortality rates especially in the summer and rough seas.

5 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting this is common sense and needed for consistency.

1 person commented he was unsure about this section noting it may be difficult to measure when fishing out on the rocks.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

7 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). One commenter noted point of harvest would be easier to enforce and is concerned that if not point of harvest tagging, then commercial harvesters may be holding on to tags for longer. One commenter noted concern about the Massachusetts commercial fishery.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option B (new baseline).

7 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer) noting the new baseline would improve compliance and be more easily understandable for anglers. One commenter supports increasing the buffer to 15%.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

16 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Commenters were for-hire captains. Comments noted for-hire has been taking cuts over the years and is only 3% of ocean fishery removals. For-hire provides access to those who do not have boats and want to harvest a fish

and put food on the table, and all the reductions have fallen on the shoulder of for-hire and those who harvest striped bass. The for-hire industry supports other fisheries businesses that rely on for-hire customers. For-hire businesses are seasonal, and a season closure would kill businesses. The science and data are flawed, and there are a lot of striped bass available now. SSB has been increasing, and the real problem is figuring out why recruitment has been so low. Catch-and-release is the big problem here and they have not contributed to rebuilding. There should be fair and balanced regulations.

8 people support Option B (12% reduction). Commenters were mostly private anglers. Some commenters highlighted equal reductions for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Commenters noted the need to take action now to be able to support the fishery and stock in the long-term beyond 2029, especially given the recent low recruitment. Commenters noted seeing declines in the population and lack of fish, and surfcasters noted seeing first signs of decline on the shoreline with fewer fish. One commenter noted 50% probability of rebuilding is not sufficient and should aim for 60%.

Ocean

2 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

9 people support a modified version of O2 with a wider slot limit for for-hire (28-33") as well as no closures for for-hire. Private/shore would maintain the 28-31" and implement season closures. Commenters note support for mode management to manage for-hire mode separately. One commenter noted that increasing the slot would be beneficial since more fish are killed trying to find one within the current 3-inch slot.

Chesapeake Bay

No comments.

Type of Closure

4 people support no harvest closures noting that no targeting closures are unenforceable and would take away from businesses. No targeting closures would stop people from going fishing and that is unfair. There are strong economic impacts for catch-and-release fishing with a fish worth more alive than dead.

7 people support no targeting closures for private/shore noting that if closures are implemented, the catch-and-release fishery needs to contribute to the reduction.

Ocean Closure Regions

5 people support grouping Rhode Island in the Mid-Atlantic region noting the need for consistency among RI-CT-NY, especially for Long Island Sound.

1 person supports grouping Rhode Island in the New England region, but does acknowledge that it would be more consistent to group Rhode Island in the Mid-Atlantic region for RI-CT-NY.

1 person opposes any regional groupings as it will be unfair to some states.

Closure Timing

1 person supports closing during wave 6 for 26 days.

2 people support closing at the end of wave 6.

Other Comments

- Several commenters noted support for a recreational tagging program (similar to pheasant stamps) with each angler having a harvest limit per year. There are ways to make this fair to everyone. For example, you could only tag up to one fish per day and there could be special tags for a bigger fish.
- There should be a release limit, no treble hooks, only two hooks per lure, limited harvest days during week (e.g., no harvest on Tuesdays).
- The real issue is pollution impacting the fishery. Raw sewage is being dumped into the Connecticut River and that needs to be taken into account and addressed.
- The addendum should be focused on the reasons for low recruitment and failed spawns, including pollution, blue catfish predation, gill net fisheries, and menhaden harvest.
- Concern about predation, especially brown sharks but also seals and cormorants.
- The recreational release mortality rate is likely less than 9% most of the time.
- Concern about Omega Protein harvest of menhaden.
- There is recruitment occurring along the coast in areas other than the Hudson and Chesapeake Bay.
- Concern that MRIP data and survey data are inaccurate. For-hire trip reports should be used to inform management.
- Concern the closure tables in the draft addendum document are confusing, particularly for the dual-wave closures people do not understand the number of days listed are the days in EACH wave (not spread across the two waves).
- The draft addendum is too complex, hard to understand, and not enforceable.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 15, 2025

Old Lyme, CT

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
TONY NOTARO	Luckyhook charter	Clinton
MIKE KRAEMER		N. BED. CT.
Doug Parker	Good Company II	New London, CT
J.S. Karbowks	Rock & Roll Charter	Clinton, CT
Mark Bug	Lucky Strike Charter	NANTIC CT
Lynn Stant	Flying Connie	Clinton, CT
ERNEST W. CELOTTO JR	REEL ONE IN	NORWALK CT.
Mike Pirri	Flying Connie	Clinton CT
Jim Roberts		Old Saybrook
PATRICK HUBAN	ALBATROSS FLY FISHING	NORWALK, CT
Mark Klewechik		Old Lyme, CT
George Bullock	CT Surfcasters Assn.	Westbrook, CT
William Fox	CT Surfcasters	Middletown CT
Gerry Beers	Drifter Charters	Lyme, CT
JOBY LAPINSKI		OLD LYME CT
Tom Cusack	MIAMI CHARTERS	NANTIC.
Rick Roy	Marlinton's Sportfishing	New London
Brian Sittlow	Rec Angler	Westerly, RI
PATRICK ABATE	CT SURFCASTERS	MADISON, CT
Greg Dubrule	BLACKHAWK	NANTIC CT

New York Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 22, 2025 – New Paltz, NY
16 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Gregg Kenney (NYSDEC)

Hearing conducted by NYSDEC staff.

Attendees included recreational anglers, for-hire industry, and conservation organizations.

Two presentations were made: The recorded YouTube presentation of Draft Addendum III by Emilie Franke and a Hudson River specific presentation by Jessica Best, NYSDEC. Hudson River O The Hudson River specific options were generated by DEC staff to meet a 12% reduction and get feedback from the public on general reduction types. It was made clear to participants that the specifics of Hudson River proposals would still need to be approved by the ASMFC Technical Committee and Atlantic Striped Bass Board. The Hudson River options included Option A Slot Reduction, Option B No targeting closure and Option C a no harvest closure. Questions on both presentations were fielded by Jessica Best, Gregg Kenney (NYSDEC), and Marty Gary (NYSDEC, ASMFC Administrative Commissioner).

Seven participants provided comments. Few commenters commented directly on the coastwide aspects of Addendum III.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

1 person supports Option B (new FMP definition).

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

1 person support Option B (point of harvest tagging).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

7 people support Option B (12% reduction). Implied, but not necessarily expressed, in all comments was a consensus against 3.4 Option A, Status Quo. Two participants expressed the desire to take more aggressive cuts to improve the likelihood of recovery by 2029.

Hudson River Options

Most comments from participants concerned the Hudson River specific options. Four participants expressed a preference for option C, a no harvest closure. One participant preferred Option A, a slot reduction. One participant indicated a preference for both a slot reduction AND a no-targeting closure. One participant indicated that they supported any of the Hudson River reduction options.

DEC/ ASMFC Public
Meeting
9/22/25



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Name	Email
Jim Martin	
Ed Skorpyski	
JUSTIN Cocks	
JAMES JOHNG	
Walter Johng	
James A. Boniface	
Doug Rockwell Sr.	
Joseph Diamond	
Wiek Kulick	
Matt Best	
Lou Merlino	
Joseph A Raddy	
ATTILIO CONTINI	
SWAN G & KONZEL ^{CAPT. STUS} _{CHANDLER}	
Anthony P. Hone	
Michael Butts	

New York Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 17, 2025 – Kings Park, NY and Webinar
217 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet and webinar attendees)

Hearing Officer: Marty Gary (NYSDEC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Toni Kerns, Madeline Musante

Attendees were a mix of for-hire, private anglers, and some commercial industry. Commenters included representatives from the Montauk Boatmen and Captains Association, Captree Boatman's Association, North Fork Captains Association, New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and Long Island Commercial Fishing Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

2 people support Option A (status quo no FMP definition) noting this has never been a problem.

9 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting the need for better data tabulation and the need to set the definition in stone.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

10 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging) for consistency among states.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

6 people support Option A (status quo baseline) noting catch-and-release fishing should not be opened in the spring, and changing the season should not be considered during rebuilding given the potential for increased effort and catch.

3 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

17 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Comments were from charter captains and one private angler and one tackle shop.

Comments noted any reduction and season closure threatens businesses and job security. Comments noted the target is unreachable because that was the peak of striped bass, and getting halfway there is acceptable. Comments also noted the data are flawed and are not good estimates, especially since private anglers are not required to report their catch. One comment noted action should be delayed until all 2025 data and 2025 young-of-year surveys are available. Comments noted the local biomass has increased best in recent years.

Comments noted none of the options presented are equitable to all parts of New York's fisheries and New York would be taking a more than 12% cut in some of the waves. Comments noted the reduction will not achieve anything since the issue is failed spawning. One comment noted overregulation is a threat to fishing and regulations have pitted anglers against each other.

12 people support Option B (12% reduction) with most comments noting equal reductions for the commercial and recreational sectors. Comments were from private anglers and two charter industry. Comments noted ongoing concerns about weak year classes and a low probability of rebuilding by 2029. If a reduction is not taken now, position for reductions would be worse later on in the long-term. Comments noted the need to rebuild by the 2029 deadline and keep to that deadline with decisive Board action.

2 people support commercial taking no reduction noting quotas have already been reduced over the past several years and the commercial fishery is more accountable with tagging and quota monitoring. This is a recreational issue, private anglers specifically, with a lot of recreational effort. Commercial and for-hire provide food for people to take home and should not be held accountable for the private recreational fishery.

Ocean

12 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to participate in the fishery. One commenter noted concern about allowing a 28-33 slot for for-hire which would target the 2018 year class, and although for-hire is a small portion of the fishery, they are able to find the fish.

3 people support a modified O2 with 28-33" for-hire, 28-31" private-shore, and 13% season closures for private-shore only. For-hire should be excluded from season closures. Commenters noted for-hire should be distinguished from private-shore and for-hire is only 3% of ocean fishery removals. A 12-13% season closure should not apply to for-hire which is such a small component of the fishery. The for-hire industry is important providing a service to patrons, allowing customers to bring fish home for their family, and businesses cannot afford any more cuts. Two commenters noted the loss of charter business in Montauk with captains leaving the business or downsizing vessels. There are downstream effects on the rest of the economy when for-hire businesses suffer. One comment also noted private anglers have a higher mortality rate than for-hire that should be measured.

Chesapeake Bay

7 people support CB1 (20-23" all modes with no additional season closure).

2 people support CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

Type of Closure

8 people support no harvest closures noting the negative economic impact of no targeting closures in reducing trips, affecting local businesses, and not allowing family experiences of

going fishing. No targeting closures are also unenforceable. No harvest closures would maintain the economic benefits of catch and release fishing. Striped bass releases include releases from those who are targeting striped bass to take a fish home, so everyone is contributing to the number of releases. The problem was not caused by catch-and-release anglers.

1 person supports no targeting closures (shortest closure possible) if closures are implemented to ensure that catch-and-release anglers also feel the sacrifice and contribute to the reduction. They noted that most people will comply with the closure if in place.

Ocean Closure Regions

Several comments noted states should not be grouped together into any regions because of the migratory nature of striped bass.

Closure Timing

1 person supports a wave 6 closure that does not apply to for-hire.

1 person noted a wave 6 closure would decimate the Long Island Sound fishery.

1 person noted opposition to any closure in October or November.

Several comments noted none of the closures are equitable with no closure that would be fair to all of New York's striped bass fisheries. It was also noted New York would be taking a more than 12% cut in waves 2, 3, or 6.

Other Comments

- The charter industry wants to provide more data and is disappointed by lack of progress on this front.
- Hatchery programs for striped bass should be considered again to support the stock.
- The FMP does not properly address catch and release mortality. Regulations are hurting commercial fishermen, tackle shops, and charter operations.
- Concern about what is happening in Chesapeake Bay with low recruitment, including environmental conditions.
- The current narrow slot has done more harm than good since anglers spend more time targeting striped bass and releasing more fish to find a slot size fish.
- Analysis should be done to account for for-hire captain and crew not harvesting a fish in achieving the reduction. This was a previous rule in New York but then was changed to allow captain and crew the opportunity to keep their daily limit.
- Young striped bass are found where all the bait (sand eels) are.
- Concern about menhaden harvest and lack of menhaden affecting striped bass.
- Even if abundance is good locally, this does not mean abundance is high everywhere else along the coast.
- One person questioned whether protecting the largest striped bass is a good strategy if there is an age at which female striped bass are no longer viable spawners.

- Recommend implementing a tag program for recreational anglers (similar to New Jersey trout stamp program) to limit the harvest of striped bass.
- Disappointed in data collection methods that sample the same places every year when the fish are moving.
- Haul seine sampling should be done on the Connecticut and Peconic Rivers.
- Preliminary 2025 MRIP data should be presented to the Board at the October meeting.



SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Mark DeJag	For Hire / MRAC	
Donald Wehrs	For Hire (Celtic Quest)	
Joe DeVito	Captree Boatmen Association	
Sam Keresztes	Laura Lee Fleet	
Steve Ruiz	November Row Charters	
Ed Chiofalo	Commercial Fisherman	
John Gillin	commercial fisherman	
Walter Czeka	W.C. Fishing Corp	
Jimmy Higgins	Island Princess	
JAMES MCSWIGIN	TAIL WRAPPED SPORTFISHING	
Sue Wallace	All Island Surfcasters	
Larry Pacifico	All Island Surfcasters	
PAUL ESPOSITO	LAURA LEE FLEET	
PAUL LAMORTE	ALL ISLAND SURFCASTERS	
Pete LAUDA	YARBOROCK CHARTERS	



Public Meeting Sign In Sheet

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name/Affiliation	Mailing Address	Contact Number	E-mail
Rick LaTorre			
Matt Swanson			
Matt Cutoir			
Ken Garstka			
Mark McGowan			
Phil McGowan			
Kieran Morris			
Mike Banks			
Art Boyd			
Tom Bucci			
Rob Cannon			

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Zach Williams	Capt Eddie B. III	
Ken Higgins	Captree Pride	
Philip KESS	NORTH FORK CAPTAINS	
JASON Brunden		
Nicole Gaines	Striper surf club	
Richard Grein	Traditional Surfcasters	
Rob Rapisarda	North Brookhaven Sport Fish	
Steve Schumacher	N.B.S.F.C.	
Jim COURTNEY	NBSFC	
Patrick Gillen	Captree Capt. Gillen	
Lara Thomas	Island & Bay Princess	
JOHN MUDYNIA	FARRAULT STRIPER CLUB	
Dave Polak	Capt Gillen	
John I. Miodynia		
Jordan Talmage		
HERBERT J. Hahn	Coldspringchester's	
Eriz Malone		
Thomas Sclafani	High Hill	



SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
CHARLES WITOK		
Billy THE GREEK		
MIKE CAMPANELLI		
MIKE PERRONE		
Albert Albano		
Donald DiCostanzo		
Lloyd Kee		
Tony VERNOCA		
Ross Savine		
Jill Marozza-Ruz		
Shawn Gerwey	Black Rock Fishing	
BRIAN Millen	GRAY Fish TAG Research	
Anthony DARRIAD	EBBTIDE FISHING	
Matt Broderick	The Fisherman Mag	
Michael Caruso	The Fisherman Mag	

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Tygalore Tucker		
WUNO DeCoste	Tygalore Tucker	
JAMES SCHREIDOR	JAMES JOSEPH FISHER	
Shawn Morenberg		
Frank Wells		

New York Public Hearing – Kings Park, NY
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 17, 2025
Hybrid

Webinar Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	State
Alter	Steven	NY
Angelora	Robert	NY
Antonucci	Robert	NY
Artopiades	Daniel	NY
Bady	Michael	NY
Barbato	Carmine	NJ
Berg	Robert	NY
Bertoli	Richard	NY
Best	Matt	NY
Bird	Brian	NY
Bjelke	Anthony	NY
Blanchard	Kurt	RI
Brady	Bonnie	NY
Breitstone	Jack	Ny
Brick	Scott	Nj
Brother	Oh	Ny
Buchta	Kelly E	NY
Buckingham	Lawrence	NJ
Burkert	Kevin	NY
C	Nick	NY
Cancelliere	Nick	NY
Carbonette	Joe	NY
Carothers	Beattie	NY
Carroll	Michael	ma
Carta	Will	CT
Casella	Benjamin	NJ
Cavazzini	Roberto	NY
Cecco	Anthony	NY
Charleston	Ryan	NY
Claps	Vincent	NY
Cole	Gary	NY
Connor	Brian	NY
Curatolo- Wagemann	Scott	NY
Cusimano	Tom	NY
Decosta	Pedro	NY

NY Kings Park Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
DeFelice	Louis	CT
Dearborn	Melissa	NY
Detwiler	Bryon	NY
Deutchsh	Jim	NY
Dimitriades	Kyriakos	NY
Dougherty-Johnson	Bran	NY
Eakin	Wes	NY
Eidman	Capt. Paul	NJ
Estrada	Daniel	NY
Evans	Julie	NY
Fenton	Mitchell	NY
Ferrigno	Mike	NY
Feustel	Chris	NY
Flanagan	David	NY
Flora	Corrin	ME
Forsyth	Devon	NY
Francis	Les	NY
Friedrich	Anthony	MD
Froelich	Matthew	NY
Froelich	Timothy	NY
Gary	Marty	NY
Genova	Jason	NJ
Genova	Jason	NJ
Genovese	Joseph	Ny
Giglietta	Joe	NY
Gilber	Matt	NY
Gilmore	Jim	NY
Giunta	Daniel	NY
Goncalves	Frank	MA
Gordon	Jesse	NY
Grenci	Leonard	NY
Hueth	Gregory	NJ
Haasz	STEVE	NJ
Hasbrouck	00-Emerson	NY
Hejducek	Kenny	NY
Hernandez	Brian	NY
Holmes	Ken	NY
Huang	S D	NY
Jacobs	Mike	NY
Johng	Walter	NJ
Johnson	Rachel	NY

NY Kings Park Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Junior	Justin	NY
Kenney	Gregg	NY
Killen	Brian	NY
Kusior	Lawrence	NY
Larusso	Louis	NY
Larizadeh	Jack	NY
Lasala	Thomas	NY
Leigh	Stuart	New York
Lein	Arthur	NJ
Lilienthal	Brian	NY
Lopes	Monty	NY
Lorino	Daniel	NY
Luciano	John	NY
Luisi	Michael	MD
Moore	Garrett	NY
Madsen	Carl	NY
Maniscalco	John	NY
Mann	Cody	RI
Mantione	John	NY
Manzione	Nicholas	NY
McKiernan	Dan	MA
Mealy	Clifford	NY
Meserve	Nichola	MA
Mezan	Richard	NY
Mikelbank	JAMES	NY
Mondello	Benny	NY
Morehouse	Christian	NY
Morgan	Jerry	CT
Mullery	Brendan	NY
Murray-Coppolone	James	NY
Nanan	Travis	NY
Nash	James	New York
Niederauer	Paul	NY
Noonan	Christopher	NH
Northcote	Derrick	NY
O'Connor	James	NJ
ONeill	Charles	NY
ONeill	Charles	NY
Ortiz	Andrew	NY
Pace	Nicholas	CT/NY
Passie	John	NY

NY Kings Park Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Palmer	Cary	NY
Pinto	Mike	NJ
Pirri	Michael	CT
Potts	Michael	NY
Regan	Timothy	NY
Regan	Dan	NY
Richards	Shannon	NY
Ries	Brad	NY
Ritner	Thomas	My
Rivera	Alberto	NY
Rose	Charles	NY
Roth	Andrew	NY
Salinas	Pablo	NY
Sayers	Robert	NY
Schnebly	Steven	NY
Schuller	Zachary	NY
Schumaker	Michael	NY
Secor	Chris	RI
Shapley	Dan	NY
Sharrott	Joan	NY
Sikorski	David	MD
Smith	Carolyn	NY
Spies	Chris	NY
Spiratos	Stefanos	NY
Start	SHERWIN	ME
Steel	Jim	NY
Stormer	David	NY
Strauss	Steven	CT
Streifeneder	ElizaBeth	NY
Sullivan	Owen	NY
Swanson	Tim	NY
Swesty	Frank Douglas	NY
Taylor	Mark	NJ
Thomas	Matthew	
Trapani	Sal	NY
Truehart	Tom	NY
Tzanides	Vasilios	NY
Vasu	Meg	NY
Vavra	Taylor	NY
Villalobos	Eric	NY
Waaland	Justin	NY

NY Kings Park Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Waine	Mike	NC
Weinbuch	John	NY
White	Erich	MA
Wright	Michael	NY
Yatchenya	Steven	NY
Zandoli	Valerie	NY
Zenel	Arek	NY
Z	Erik	MD

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Toni Kerns, Madeline Musante

New Jersey Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 16, 2025 – Manahawkin, NJ
73 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Joe Cimino (NJDEP)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke

Attendees were a mix of for-hire, private anglers, and tackle shops. Commenters included representatives from the Village Harbour Fishing Club, Berkeley Striper Club, Monmouth Beach Cartoppers, Fish Hawks Saltwater Anglers, and Hi-Mar Striper Club.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

6 people support Option B (new FMP definition).

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

4 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging). One commenter noted his second choice would be Option C (point of landing tagging).

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

2 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

30 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). 18 people spoke in favor of status quo and one commenter asked for a show-of-hands for those who support status quo and about 30 people raised their hand. Commenters were a mix of for-hire, private anglers, and tackle shops.

Many commentors questioned the reliability of the data, estimates, and projections and noted there are more fish in recent years than ever before. Commenters noted fishing mortality is at a 30-year low and SSB is increasing. Many comments noted the current SSB target is unattainable. Commenters noted SSB has only reached the target a few times and that the factors that led to that are likely not present in the fishery today. Some suggested the threshold should be the target, or the target should be between the current target and threshold. One commenter noted that the idea that the proposed options would increase SSB which will lead to stronger year-classes is an incorrect assumption since high SSB does not always lead to strong year classes. Commenters note the real issue is failed recruitment and a reduction does not address that.

Comments noted concern there is no economic data on the impact of season closures. Season closures would be severe and will impact many businesses and coastal communities. A 12% reduction in fishery removals means a much greater than 12% impact on businesses. Businesses would take a huge hit with these seasonal closures, possibly 30% of the peak season. This would put many out of business. Due to single species management and the seasonal closures of other species, there are certain times of year where striped bass is the only thing to fish for so striped bass closures will be detrimental to businesses.

Commenters noted concern about the use of MRIP data. For example, the 7% change from preliminary to final MRIP estimates changed the discussion from no reduction to 12% reduction. Some commenters prefer to wait to consider action until after the benchmark assessment is completed and new MRIP estimates are available before resorting to seasonal closures.

Comments noted desire for striped bass to be protected for future anglers but not by limiting access to today's anglers. Conservation needs to be done the right way with reliable science and measures that actually work. This reduction would be a knee-jerk reaction. There hasn't been enough time between actions for the regulations to make an impact. Poor recruitment is the issue and driven by outside factors, which would not be solved by a reduction.

2 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting an equal split for commercial and recreational. Commenters were a private angler and fishing club. Comments noted that management has to be nimble and reactive. The weak year-classes will be entering the SSB soon and expect the SSB to decrease as that occurs.

Ocean

2 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

1 person supports O2 (28-33" for-hire/28-31" private-shore/13% season closure all modes) if a reduction is implemented.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB1 (20-23" all modes with no additional season closure) or CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

Type of Closure

1 person supports no harvest closures noting no-targeting closures are unenforceable.

1 person supports no targeting closures if a reduction were implemented noting everyone should contribute to the reduction including catch-and-release anglers.

Closure Regions

Several comments noted the regional season closures are not equitable. New Jersey will take a larger proportion of the reduction. Some comments noted New Jersey should be its own region.

Closure Timing

1 person supports closing in wave 2 and wave 4. Wave 2 would protect fish in Raritan Bay and wave 4 would close when the temperatures are higher associated with higher release mortality rates.

1 person noted the recreational bonus program should not be affected by season closures because it is based on commercial quota. The tradeoff of not having the commercial fishery was to have the bonus program available.

Other Comments

- Concern about some commercial fisheries harvesting large fish, like in Massachusetts.
- Need to quantify the benefit of circle hooks. Tackle shops changed their inventory and had old inventory go to waste and it's all for nothing since that could not be quantified.
- Need to re-examine the 9% assumption; charter captains have a much lower release mortality rate. Support for looking at varying rates throughout the year
- The real issue is recruitment in the Chesapeake Bay, including concern about blue catfish predation, pollution, lack of menhaden, and climate change. Taking a reduction does not address that. There are plenty of larvae around but the problem is they are not surviving to age-1.
- Angler education, especially about fish handling and release techniques, needs to be increased.
- One commenter noted the false belief that sacrifices now will result in getting more fish/quota back later. Look at black sea bass, scup for example. Our sacrifices will not get us more fish. If you go down 12%, it will be hard to get that back.
- One commenter noted industry pressure against a reduction instead of stewardship. He noted his experience fishing on a for-hire vessel that targeted and harvested striped bass in the EEZ while using prohibited "snag & drop" fishing gear/methods.
- Natural resources are part of New Jersey's culture and identity. Need an open and transparent management process with every stakeholder at the table.
- ASMFC should use social media to post information about upcoming meetings and public hearings.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Public Hearing
Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment
Sign-In Sheet

1 of 3

Date: September 16, 2025

Location: New Jersey - Manahawkin Township Fire Co.

Name	Affiliation	City, State
Phil Kaplan	Village Harbor Fishing Club	LEHT, NJ
TOM ADIARDI	Black Pine Radio	LEHT NJ
JAY TRINTER	NONE	WARETOWN NJ.
Frank Macaluk	N-J Council Divers Clubs	Westmore NJ
Dan Uchida	ASU Out Doors	Tronto NJ
Scott Thomas	Grump's Tackle, Tupperware Navy, Yacking Yaks Kofaks	Toms River NJ
Justin Campbell	Dark Horse Charter Fishing	Atlantic Highlands, NJ
Dan Russo	Asbury Park Fishing Club	Ocean, NJ
Scott Jewell	Dark Horse Charter Fishing	Atlantic Highlands NJ
Scotty Lex Puller	Berkely Striper Club	Old Am. Tow.
Paul Yungmans	Shank River Surf Club	Petersburg, NJ
Steve V. Chikla	none	
Mike Taffuni	Visitor for MTG.	Manahawkin NJ
Eugene ZAZENSKI	Hi Mar Striper	Oceanport NJ
Ted Grob	18 North Maple Ave	Freeholder.
CLAY EMERSON	NONE	Manahawkin, NJ
DAVE ARBACH	NONE	Hammonton, NJ
Pete Bonifera	NONE	Seaside Park NJ
Chris LeLang	NONE	Brick NJ
Phil Sciorchio, Jr	None	Manchester NJ
Phil Sciorchio, Jr	Tackle Box, Inc	Hazlet, N.J.
Nick Honachetsky	Saltwater Underground	Lanarkville, NJ
John Kravchak	Berkeley Striper Club	Seaside Park NJ
Scott Kulaszewski	XTC Sport Fishing	Belmar N.J.
Andy Nolan	Ruthless charters/tackle	Belmar N.J.
Matt Forrester	Tupperware Navy/grumpies	Little egg harbor

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Public Hearing
Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment
Sign-In Sheet

2 of 3

Date: September 16, 2025

Location: New Jersey - Manahawkin Township Fire Co.

Name	Affiliation	City, State
J. R. Wain	Freelance	Tom River, NJ
Victor A Hartley	Y&C Hartley Fishing	Keyport, NJ
Greg O'Connell	ASAC	Mays Landing, NJ
Jim Hutchins	The Fisherman	Brick, NJ
Greg Cudnik	Fishermen's Headquarters	Ship Bottom, NJ
HARRY BROWNE	Muscles Mago/HEYAL Fishing	Middletown NJ
Mark A Taylor	JCAA	Tom River, NJ
Tom Forte	SBA NJ	Tom River NJ
NICK CICERO	FOLSOM CORP	Pt Pleasant NJ
John C Sanchez	Berkley Striper Club	Seaside Park, NJ
Eleanor Bochenek	angler NJ	Villas, NJ
David Ewell	Yakkity Yaks Kayaks	Seaside Park, NJ
David Riback	Queen Mary	Point Pleasant Beach NJ
Cole Riback	Queen Mary	Point Pleasant Beach NJ
Steve Palmer	SINGLES BAIT & Tackle	BEACH HAVEN, NJ
John DeBona	The Fisherman	BRICK, NJ 08723
Timothy Dulos	Tupperware Navy	Brick, NJ 08723
Brian Walters	Tupperware Navy	Beckhold NJ
Dominic Tarr	J.S.S.	Allentown, NJ
Fletcher Chayes	Two Rivers Charters	Oceanport NJ
Fletcher Chayes	Monmouth Beach Cartoppers	Monmouth Beach NJ
JUSTIN THENO	ALLEN'S DOCK	NEW GREYNA, NJ
Braden Nip	Fishermen's Source LLC	Ocean NJ
Tamar Leone	Folsom Corp	Manahawkin NJ

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Public Hearing
Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment
Sign-In Sheet

3 of 3

Date: September 16, 2025

Location: New Jersey - Manahawkin Township Fire Co.

Name	Affiliation	City, State
Paul Harte	SEAB BIL FISH	Cliffon, NJ
Ed VALITUTTO	VHFC	
John Suebing	VHFC	LEH, NJ
Phil SIMON	VHFC	SKILLMAN NJ
CHUCK DISHIAN	VHFC	LANOKA HARBOR, NJ
STEPHEN MACHLAGA	HI-MAR STRIPER CLUB	MIDDLETOWN NJ
MICKEY SHERRY	FISH HAWKS	N.J.
Pat Donnelly	NSMFC	NJ
John Tiedemann	NSMFC	NJ
Tom McMahon	SELE	Breechwood NJ
George Bucci	Cape Atlantic Striper Club	Ocean City, NJ
SAM MARCINO	HI-MAR STRIPER CLUB	ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ
Mike Adams	Atlantic City Fishing Trips	Atlantic City
Jason Noonan	Cape Atlantic Striper club	NJ
Brian Staszew	Fishermen's Supply	Pt Pleasant NJ
Mike BOGAN	"GAMBLER"	Pt. Pleasant.
Loni Forsyth	Golden Eagle	Belmar
Carl Hartmann	AMERICAN ANGLER	Dumont NJ
Rusty Heinemann		Thorofare NJ
Lee Petrenko	None	Trenton NJ
Roy Boag	Rec. Angler / reg.	Sea Girt N.J.
STEVE SPINELLI	SKYLARKEN CHALLENGERS	BELMAR
SAM RASICHO	MARY M III	BARNECOT LIGHT
Jerome Townsend	Secretary King's Office	Toms River, NJ

Pennsylvania Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 24, 2025 – Bristol, PA
71 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Tyler Grabowski (PFBC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke

Attendees were a mix of for-hire, private anglers, and tackle shops who fish the Delaware River from Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

No comments.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

1 person supports Option B (point of harvest tagging).

1 person supports Option C (point of landing tagging).

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option A (status quo baseline) noting the spring fishery should remain closed to protect the large spawners.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

6 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Comments were from for-hire, private anglers, and tackle shops.

Commenters noted that any season closures would close down tackle shops and charter businesses and livelihoods that depend on this fishery. Comments noted the MRIP data are off by 30-40% and the 9% release mortality estimate is outdated. The data are incorrect and this reduction is based on reporting errors. One commenter noted the Board should wait for more information from the 2027 benchmark assessment, including new reference points as the current reference points are too high. Fishing mortality is already at a 30-year low with a very small difference between the current F and F rebuild.

One commenter noted the stock is already rebuilding and increased in size. One commenter noted reduction measures are not useful until pollution is addressed, and fish are moving offshore because there is no suitable habitat within 3 miles. One commenter noted the northern states are getting punished for poor planning in the southern states and ongoing

menhaden harvest. One commenter noted the need to ease up on the recreational side and cut on the commercial side.

Ocean

1 person supports O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to mode splits.

Chesapeake Bay

No comments.

Type of Closure

2 people support no harvest closures noting no targeting closures are not enforceable and people will say they are fishing for another species. One commenter noted spawning fish still need to be protected from release mortality.

Closure Timing

1 person noted that every potential season closure affects New Jersey except wave 4.

1 person noted a specific example that a 22-day closure represents about \$25,000 for their business and about a quarter of the business is striped bass.

2 people support implementing closures during the spawning season.

Other Comments

- Concern about menhaden harvest and questions about striped bass dead discards in the menhaden fishery.
- Concern about illegal fishing and need for more enforcement, especially if no-targeting closures are implemented.
- Concern about lack of habitat and the need for breach replenishment.
- The Delaware River industry has never recovered since herring closed.
- Support for managing for-hire and commercial together.
- Having different regulations for the Delaware River between Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware is confusing.
- Consider moving the slot to protect the year-class as it moves through. In order to keep opportunity for harvest, there may have to be a lower slot and an upper slot.
- Concern the commercial fisheries are harvesting large fish.
- Concern about the bloodworm fishery targeting large females in the spring.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 24, 2025

Bristol, PA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --would you
like
to
comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Michael Blair	PFBC	SEPA
Steven Zeigler	PFBC	SEPA
HARRY WIREBACH	DRFA	PA
Brian Scott Moore		PA
Kevia INGRAM	DRSFA	PA
Heidi Keebler	Finseeker River Guide Serv.	PA
Tim Keebler	Finseeker River Guide Serv.	PA
Jim Hutchinson	THE FISHERMAN MAG.	BRICK, NJ
Bob Bolger		Newtown, PA
George Schauer	the fisherman mag	Pocono PA.
Chuck Many		Annandale, NJ
HARRY BROWN		MIDDLETOWN, NJ
AJ MOTTOLA		LANGHORNE, PA
Pari Yorker	DRFA	LAUSDALE, PA
Dave Wermuth	DRFA	Levittown PA
Rob Huebner	DRFA	Langhorne, PA.
Max Rubinstein		Yardley, PA
Bill Udo	Mark New Surf Farm	Levittown, NJ
Armen Avedisian		King of Prussia, PA
Robert Zoran	Sport first, g outlet	360 NJ/PA
Ryan Sackowitz	Salty degenerate Lures	Hamilton NJ
Tom Ferrante	DRFA	Croydon PA.
Mike Michelis		Fairless Hill, PA
Joel Rosario		Tullytown PA

[illegible]

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
James Buonanno Jr		Berlington NJ
Ryan Matejick		Levittown PA
William Schroy		Levittown PA
William Hirschman		Traverse PA
Shawn Smith		Bristol PA
Bill Davies		Levittown PA
Josh Keller		Langhorne PA
Jason Curley		Richboro, PA
Jon Ream		Levittown, Pa
ERIC GRZBOWSKI		PHILADELPHIA, PA
Colton Cornell		Bristol, PA
Bentley Cornell		Bristol, PA
Nathan Cornell		Bristol, PA
NATE CORNELL		Bristol, PA
Jan Gordon		Berks, PA
ROBERT LEE		PHILA. PA
KEVIN HOPKIN		PHILA. PA
ANTHONY OMROD		LANGHORNE PA.
SCOTT JOFFRE		Falls Township PA
SCOTT FEGLEY		YARDLEY, PA
Matthew Parylakis		Hamilton NJ
Tom Strenski		Bensalem PA
Joey Bittner		Morrisville, PA
Joe Downey		Lafayette Hill PA
Nathan Sicchio		Conshohocken, PA
SEAN BETNAM		Conshohocken PA
Connor Riley		Bensalem PA
Joseph Passerella		Bordentown, NJ
PETE MARCOLINO		Phila. PA.
Marc Fischer		Warminster, PA
Colin Archer	Te Awaige Angler	Titusville NJ
Robert Coles	Keystone Lures	Quakertown, PA

JOHN PEDRICK

DRFA

Charles Bay

DRFA

GREG SOUTHEY

DRFA

Doug Ralston

Surf fosherman

Luke Ralston

Surf fisherman

PETER ANTONIOWICZ

DRFA

RICH MANSON

DRFA

Delaware Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 18, 2025 – Dover, DE and Webinar
11 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet and webinar attendees)

Hearing Officer: John Clark (DNREC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Alexander Law, Toni Kerns

Two people provided comments, one commercial harvester and one recreational angler.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

2 people support Option B (new FMP definition). One commenter noted the Law Enforcement Committee supports consistent language and the definition makes sense from a biological perspective. One commenter noted all states should be consistent and there could be problems if the state where a commercial harvester is selling their fish measures fish differently.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

1 person supports Option B (point of harvest tagging). This recreational angler noted this is a no-brainer to potentially decrease the risk of illegal harvest and ensure the quotas are being followed.

1 person supports Option C (point of landing tagging). This commercial harvester noted it could be extreme to require point of harvest depending on multiple factors. The commenter noted Delaware has the most strict tagging requirements tagging the fish two times: once before landing and again at the weight station.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option A (status quo baseline). This commercial harvester noted that Maryland already closed the trophy season to protect the spawning stock and it does not make sense now to open the spring to catch and release.

1 person supports Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer). This recreational angler noted the buffer is needed as extra protection for the stock and the fishery which is relying on successful recruitment.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

1 person supports Option A (status quo no reduction). This commercial harvester noted both sectors have already implemented all the prior management actions from the Commission and the fishery is not in as bad of shape as people think. The commenter noted zero confidence in

the Commission and what brought striped bass back the first time was a moratorium and mother nature. The commenter noted that slot limits may have backfired since now people have to catch a lot of fish to find a slot-size fish, whereas before they could catch a keeper fish more quickly. For the commercial sector, the commenter noted a loss of 58% of quota since 2011.

1 person supports Option B (12% reduction). This recreational angler noted what would really ruin businesses is a moratorium, so there needs to be an investment now to take a reduction for long-term success. The commenter wants to see conservative regulations to leave fish for the future. Although improvements to MRIP are coming and may change things, a reduction is still needed now. The angler noted disappointment in the lack of action to protect the 2018 year class and does not want to kick the can down the road.

Ocean

1 person supports O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes). This recreational angler noted opposition to any mode splits and noted for-hire should be grouped with everyone else.

Chesapeake Bay

No specific comments on Chesapeake Bay options, though one commenter noted general opposition to mode splits.

Type of Closure

1 person supports no harvest closures. This recreational angler noted no-targeting closures are unenforceable.

Ocean Closure Regions

1 person supports grouping Rhode Island in the New England region based on the timing of those fisheries.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 18, 2025

Dover, DE

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Delaware Public Hearing – Dover, DE
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 18, 2025
Hybrid

Webinar Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	State
Hardy	Jake	NY
Kane	Raymond	MA
Krell	Morgan	DE
Mulholland	James	DC
Meyers	Steve	VA
Miller	Roy	DE
Nelson	Eric	MA
Ruger	Charles	NY
Simon	Waynesley	DE
Waine	Mike	NC
Wooleyhan	Lisa	DE
Yenkinson	Harvey	NJ

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Toni Kerns, Alexander Law

Maryland Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 22, 2025 – Wye Mills, MD
182 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Mike Luisi (MDDNR)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke

Attendees were primarily for-hire and commercial industry and a few members of county and local government. Commenters included representatives from Maryland Watermen's Association, Maryland Charter Boat Association, and Delmarva Fisheries Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

No comments.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

No comments.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

181 people support Option A (status quo baseline) via a show-of-hands requested by a commenter of all public in attendance; all support status quo except for one person. Comments noted strong concern about opening catch-and-release in the spring. April was closed a few years ago and then the trophy fishery was closed to protect spawning fish. Opening up catch-and-release would be going in the wrong direction and would be a threat to future recruitment.

Comments noted the scientific review for this issue was extremely insufficient and inadequate and did not account for the stress on females from catch-and-release. Females will release their eggs under stress and those eggs will be lost if the spring season is opened. Females will be stressed from catch-and-release and will not lead to successful spawns. The goal is to maintain the fishery and the broodstock, not subject spawning females to more fishing.

One commenter noted that instead of giving back fish to commercial or for-hire, the baseline proposal would give fishing to a catch-and-release sector that has no effect on the economy.

One commenter noted a safety concern of not enough Natural Resources Police patrolling in the spring if opened for catch-and-release.

1 person supports Option B (new baseline).

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

182 people support Option A (status quo no reduction) via a show-of-hands requested by a commenter of all public in attendance; all support status quo.

Comments noted current regulations have not been working and the Commission is not using all available science. Commercial and for-hire are united in opposition to the reduction. Comments noted commercial quotas have already been cut by 58% over the past several years with cut after cut. These decisions affect commercial and for-hire career and business decisions and the way local economies look. The new reduction would negatively affect livelihoods without proper justification given the uncertainty in the calculations and projections. The effect of the 2024 change from 2-fish to 1-fish for charter boats was already catastrophic. The Board needs to consider if it is willing to sacrifice these businesses to reach the 2029 rebuilding date. The fishery has been dying with all of these cuts with the Maryland industry shouldering a disproportionate economic burden with current spawning protections in place and supporting the primary nursery. Continued reductions seem punitive and less impactful than on northern states.

Comments noted the current reference points are arbitrary and too high and the target has not been reached. The fishery would not be able to maintain the stock at the target even if it was reached. There are a lot of striped bass out there now with big fish and small fish coming back, and things are not as bad as they were during the moratorium. Harvesters are able to catch them now after setting only a few nets. The issue is a shortage of menhaden and blue catfish predation.

Comments noted current science is not being used and there should be more studies on menhaden, blue catfish, pollution, water quality, ecosystem factors, etc. Cannot take a reduction when these factors need to be considered, and the Commission should be proactive instead of reactive. There are decades of data available that have not been used or paid attention to and watermen are first-line environmentalists who have offered to help DNR with monitoring. There has been no pollution study or socioeconomic study, and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee does not know what to do for the next stock assessment, and this affects everyone in the room financially.

Comments noted concern about MRIP data and current data being off by 30-40%. There is concern management is based on such data with that margin of error. Recreational anglers are not accountable for their catch, while for-hire and commercial have established reporting systems in place.

One comment also noted concern about fairness from state to state with these options.

One comment noted the example of Gulf of Mexico pollution clean-up efforts to support a healthy redfish population, and the same should be implemented in this case.

Other Comments

- Maryland needs to revisit a hatchery program, and each state should provide hatchery-fish back into the system.
- General distrust and lack of confidence in the Commission management process and science and data.
- Other states should not be telling Maryland how to manage.
- Opposition to the Commission's voting process allowing other states, primarily northern states, to control what is going on in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Coastwide uniformity is often at the cost of slower adaptive management.
- Regional adaptive management is needed to allow Chesapeake Bay specific management where regions show different trends. Maryland would maintain monitoring and spawning protections and northern states would take reductions if their numbers are lower.
- Watermen hardship and attrition need to be documented alongside biological targets.
- Stock assessments should take into account environmental drivers like the Atlantic multidecadal oscillation.
- Concern about striped bass dead discards in the menhaden fishery and lack of menhaden for striped bass to forage.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public CommentAtlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 22, 2025

Wye Mills, MD

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Drugs Levasseur	Fools Gold	Stevensville, MD
Rick Pedrick	Jade Lady	Chister, MD
Brian Hardman	MCBA	Stevensville MD
JAY JACOBS	House of Delegates	Rock Hall MD
Pete McCarthy	Kentner Marina	Stevensville
Perry Davidson	EXCALIBUR	Cordova MD
Dawn Mask Penney	Self, Waterman	Calvert Co., MD
CRAIG MASK	SELF/MASKSEAFOOD	CALVERT CO PORT REPUBLIC M.
Andrew Collins	migrator Fishing & Hunting	Stevensville, MD
Jeannie Haddaway	Picco Talbot	Watermen Eastern
HERMAN HADDAWAY	MCBA	NEAR H., MD
Rick Martin	MWA	Rock Hall MD
Hubbard Kendall Jr	MWA	Rock Hall MD
Robin Merchant	MWA	Rock Hall
Charlie Bryan	CB Charters	Centreville, Md.
Lisa Sellman		Kent Island
Denny Cwisz		Kent Island
CIRBY DEAN	—	EAST NEW MARKET, MD
Leroy Abey	Self Waterman	Secretary MD
Marc Mancini	Self	Near H. MD
Ian Horner	Self	QA
Dwight Pitney	Waterman	Rock Hall.
CHUCK WOODFEND	SAWYER	Rock Hall

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Andrew Aus	Maverick Charters LLC	Queerstown, MD
Jordan Graves	Talbot Waterman	Tilghman, MD
Thomas Harms	GAILING GUIDES	ROCK HALL, MD
Charles Rice	Misty Charters	Rock Hall MD
Lowell Keller	Recoial	Kent MD
Cherie Plummer	lik novel	Kent MD
Francis Hemslay	Great Wine Charters	Kent Island, MD
James Wheeler	Commercial	Dorchester, MD
Charles Clark	Commercial	Kent MD R/H
Rebecca Clark	Commercial	Kent MD R/H
Paul Collette	Commercial	Kent MD
Violet Collette	Commercial	Kent MD
Jessie Austin	Charter	Kent MD
Kathy Armstrong	Commercial	Rock Hall MD
Dore Grimes	Commercial	Centreville Md.
Joanne Chek	Rowe Boat	Tolchester Tolchester, MD
Pamela Oudey	Charter Boat	GLEN BURNIE
Don Toller SR.	Talbot Waterman	Easton, Md
Lance Rowe	Rowe Boat Sportfishing	Rock Hall, MD
DANIEL VIMM	RECREATIONAL	SALISBURY MD.
Bev & Billy Bentou	Commercial	Centreville MD
Wm Berger.		
James Peck	mare	Quintessence
James Peck	mare	Rock Hall
TRANS SPY	mare	Rock Hall
Frederick 1/2	Wm	TILGHMAN MD

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Justin Kaufman	Biff Charters	Chester, MD
Jeff Soble	OAC WATERMAN	MD
Bob Flynn	Deale Captains Association	Deale MD.
Bobby Bramble	BuckTALES CHARTER	Rock Hall Md.
Kenny Morris	LEAD DOG CHARTER	Stevensville MD
Victoria Brown	St Mary's Co. Watermen	St. Mary's MD
Robert T. Brown	St Mary's Co. Maryland Watermen Assn.	St. Mary's & Annapolis MD
Jeff Harrison	Talbot Watermen Assoc.	Tilghman Md.
Blair Baltus	Baltimore County Watermen Assoc.	Essex, Md.
Bruce Carroll		Easton Md
Robin Harrison	Talbot Watermen	Tilghman MD
Mark Galasso	Maryland CBA	Grasonville MD.
Bob Wagner	Dorchester	Cambridge Md
Dean Trice	Dorchester	Cambridge Md.
Ben Morley	KCWA	Rock Hall MD
SHAWN PERFIT	MCBA	CHESAPEAKE BCH, MD
DANNY PERFIT	MCBA	SOLOMONS, MD
JOHN MOTO WIDARAK	MCBA	TILGHMAN, MD
Jason Seman	Maryland Fish and Hunting	Centerville MD
Luke Seman	"	"
Wayne Gortner	Geeting Guide Serv.	Rock Hall, MD -
Leon Washburn	OAC watermen	Grasonville Md
Chuck White	KCWA waterman	Rock Hall Md.
Gail Mays	KCWA-UBCCA	Rock Hall, MD
Jeff Mays	KCWA-UBCCA	Rock Hall MD
Chris White	CRITCHELSON WAT	Sherwood Md
James W. W. W.	SELF	Galestown Mgt
Jerome Gamm	SELF	Tilghman Md
Jeff Pap	Jeff Papp	Baltimore County
JOE LAPPIN	SELF, WATERMAN	Herndon MD
Genny Haggerty	SELF, WATERMAN	Worton MD
MARTY MARLEY	"	"

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
BRIANNESSER	WATERMAN	KENT (ROCK HALL)
Sammy Delph	"	Crempton
Susan Asch		
DAVE Quale	CHARTER BOAT	Glen Burnie
JASON KOFF	CHARTER BOAT	Essex MD
SEWELL "Toby" FRET	CCA, SFC, TELIC, MBFC	OXFORD MD.
Chris Rayhoe	Waterman	QA
Doug Rayhe	Waterman	QA
Rale Rayhe	Wife	QA
Mike Leber	Office of Congressman Harris	
Murray Lemuth	TWT Fish (Charter)	MD
Tucker White	Waterman (SFC)	MD
Craig Ruth	Waterman	Rock Hall MD
Gaven Luengo	Waterman	Queen Anne
John Smith		Church Hill
Bill Moore	Charter	Worton, MD
Cage Ruth	Charter	Kent Island
Ralph Shields	Rec.	Kent Island
Buddy Carra		
Bud Lewis	Waterman	Cambridge
Curtis Hoover	MDF-H	Stevensville, MD
Luke Patterson	Maryland Fish & H, L	Denton, MD
Peyton Giannakis		Church Hill, MD
Logan Roschrock	Waterman	Grasonville
Braden Roschrock	Wife	Grasonville
Robert Shiflet		Centreville MD
Donald Perry	KWA	Kent

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Troy Roth		Stevensville
Diane Ruhl		Centerville
J. R. Ruhl	Elkton	Easton MD
Diane Scott Deemer	Black buty	Chesapeake, MD
Capt. Robert Neuberger	JFA	Shady Side, MD
Capt. Mason Hallock	Bay Hunter	District 3 FB
Delegate Tom Hutchinson		Rock Hall
Debbie Hays	Waterman	Rock Hall, MD
Jimmy Price	Chapman's	Kent Chestertown
Richard Mazzella	Fox Point Farm	Cent Rock Hall
Kate Hays	Gun Smoke Charters	Rock Hall
Owen Hall	Rock Hall Fishing Charters	Rock Hall MD
Brady Pierce	Rock Hall Fishing Charters	Stevensville, MD
Nick Cockran	Great Wye Charters	Tilghman, Md
Haider Wilson	Waterman	Trappe MD
Chris Ledman	Waterman	Rock Hall MD
Brian Councill	Councill Charters	Rock Hall MD
Robert Fletcher	Bondt Charters	Rock Hall MD
Scott R. Armstrong	Commercial Fisherman	Chestertown MD
Arthur Leonard	Commercial Fisherman	Deale MD
Virginia Leeman		Trappe, MD
Drew Payne	Worm Charters	Easton, MD
Elizabeth Ferguson	Rural Life Museum/self	Salisbury, MD
Roger Ruby	Mary Anne Charters	Denton, MD
Janet Wain	Anne Fishelman	Rock Hall MD
Marion Kaufman	Jape Lady Charters	Kent Island MD
Johnny Mark	State Snake	
Tegan White	Waterman (13640)	
Mike Middleton	Kodiak Charters	
Christy Wilkins	QACWA	

[illegible]

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Jerry Spler		MD
Ticky Stark Key		MD
Dan Ann		MD
Sue Hampton		MD
Johnny Murphy		MD
Frank Updike	Naturally Lit Charters	MD
Bobby Marshall	CLAS ACT	MD
PICKENS	CHARTERBOAT	MD
Tommy Hallock	Hallocks Grace Charters	MD
Albert Nickerson		MD
Douglas Hayman		MD
Norman Porter		MD
John Hambleton		MD
Justin Seman	MD Fishing/Hunting	MD
Troy Wilkins	QAC Watermen's Assoc	MD
Brandon Moore	Charter Boat	MD
Stephanie Shields	Chasin tail Charters	Stevensville, MD
John F. Perce	Kent County Commissioners Office	Chesapeake, MD
Troy White	Charter Boat	MD
Jacob Connell	Charter Boat	MD
Jeff M	Charter Boat	MD
Mouchie	QAC	Stevensville
Jason Vli	Waterman	MD
Ben Wheeler	Waterman	MD
Bobby Sweet	Wholly Lady	MD
Justin Heavener	Waterman	MD
Elj Heavener	Waterman	MD
ALBIE KIMBLE	Citizen	MD
Steve Bell	Real Nantux Charters	MD
Pan Dierkor		MD

Maryland Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 23, 2025 – Annapolis, MD
64 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Mike Luisi (MDDNR) and Carrie Kennedy (MDDNR)

Hearing conducted by MDDNR staff.

Attendees were a mix of for-hire, commercial industry, private anglers, and conservation organizations. Commenters included representatives from Baltimore County Waterman's Association, Delmarva Fisheries Association, Upper Bay Charter Boat Association, Maryland Waterman's Association, Deale Captains Association, Maryland Charter Boat Association, American Sportfishing Association, Annapolis Anglers Club, Maryland Light Tackle Fishing Guides, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

No comments.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

1 person supports Option B (point of harvest tagging).

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

9 people support Option A (status quo baseline). Commenters were for-hire captains. Comments noted female spawners should not be stressed in the spring and should be protected. Recruitment is already low, and the spawners should be left alone and opening the season would defeat the purpose of protecting the spawners in Maryland. There would be too much stress on the spawners and they will lose their eggs. One comment noted the new baseline is not helpful for the for-hire fleet since it would not increase access; people are not fishing in April due to weather, school, etc. and people do want to fish in August. Charter fleet was never in support of the proposed baseline and it has undermined public confidence.

5 people support Option B (new baseline). Commenters were for-hire captains, fishing guides, and private anglers. Comments noted support for a simpler, more enforceable season that promotes access and protects businesses and conservation. One comment noted wave 2 releases would be less than .01% of the entire coastwide stock and the associated estimated release mortality would be very small. Spawning grounds will remain closed. One comment noted a buffer is not needed since the weather already serves as a buffer and any buffer would be punitive with no measurable impact. One comment highlighted there is no data to show catch-and-release impact on spawning success. One comment noted the need to not revert back to the 2022 season baseline.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

16 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Commenters were for-hire captains.

Comments noted the decrease in business and effort since the last reduction, including boats sold and captains seeking part-time employment, and customers are less willing to pay for one fish. Comments noted the reduction is a knee-jerk reaction that would be devastating to businesses. Fish are currently available but measures are driving away fishermen. Fishing is what brings people to this area and now businesses cannot sustain themselves.

One comment noted fishing mortality is at a 30-year low and MRIP is unreliable for use in management. Any season closures would hurt marinas, charters, tackle shops, etc. One comment noted commercial has already taken a 46% reduction in quota and cannot take any more cuts; the recreational sector is taking way more fish. One comment noted the biological reference points are too high and there are a lot of fish available now.

2 people support Option B (12% reduction). Commenters were anglers club and conservation organization. Comments noted the low probability of rebuilding under status quo and the need to be as conservative as possible to increase the change of success. Comments also noted the need to stick to the 10-year rebuilding plan in the FMP and rebuild by 2029. The work to protect the last few good year-classes through the past reductions must be protected.

Ocean

No comments.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

Other Comments

- Recruitment is the real issue, not fishing effort.
- Concern about blue catfish predation, water quality impacts, plankton availability, and temperature impacts on recruitment.
- Need to incorporate water quality into the stock assessment.
- Restart hatchery efforts for striped bass.
- Need for a socioeconomic impact study and ecosystem-based management.
- Additional education on proper catch and release techniques is needed.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 23, 2025

Annapolis, MD

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Jim Collier	Megabyte Charters	Mayo MD
Doug Duvall	TIME OUT	Mill Creek
Don Applegate		Stevensville
Peter Harkedge	Kent MARR	Stevensville MD
	MARR	
ROBERT THACKER	MEGABYTE CHARTERS	EDGEWATER MD
Kevin McHougwin	Annapolis Angler Club	Annapolis MD
Neal Cohen	self	Annapolis, MD
Robert T. Brown	Maryland Watermen Assoc.	Annapolis MD
Victoria Brown	Maryland Watermen Assoc.	Annapolis MD
Billy Williams	MEGABYTE CHARTERS	MD
Dave Bell	Chasin Dreams Sportfishing	Middle River, MD
Lenny Rudaw	Rudaw's Fishing	Annapolis, MD
Don Cocnavitch	Backdraft Charters	BALTO. Md.
Dan Dierker	KCWA	Kent County MD
Malcolm Grahame	Griffins Guide Service	West River, MD
Jonathan Bland	Bay Breeze Guide Service	Annapolis, MD
Pat Love	Back Creek Charters	Annapolis, MD
Matt Bercraft	HUB Tackle	Annapolis MD
Allison Colden	CBF	Annapolis
Greg Shute	ifishmd.com	Annapolis

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 23, 2025

Annapolis, MD

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Bob Munro	MCBA	ches. Beach, MD
Stuart Gammage	Tight Lines Charters	Edgewater, MD
Bobby Rhodes	BONNIE SUE	Deale, MD
CHRIS EDMONSTON		Severna Park, MD
Blair Baldus	President Baltimore County Watermen's Assoc.	Essex, MD
Steve Retallik	Balto Co. Watermen's	Middle River MD
GENE WILLIAMS	" " "	" " "
DAVID SIKORSKI	ASAF MD LEADER	MD
Stephen Griffin	Griffing Guide Service	Lothian, MD
Jon Griffiths	Potomac River Trophies	MD
BRAD Foxwell	Chesapeake Fishing Adventures	MD
LISA Foxwell	Chesapeake Fishing Adventures	MD
JOE Lippincott		Annapolis
Capt. Robert Newberry	DEA	Chestertown, MD
Peter Bishwine		Annapolis, MD
Charles Albatt	Shirley Anne	Annapolis MD
CRAIG MASK	SELF/MASKS EATON	PORT REPUBLIC, MD
GIRBY DEAN	—	EAST NEW MARKET, MD

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 23, 2025

Annapolis, MD

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
FRANK CARVER	LOUSEN UP CHARTERS	DRATE, MD.
STEVE CHAIT	Fishin' MAGICIAN	EDGEWATER MD.
Shane Cole	Tight Times Charters	Edgewater MD
MIKE SMOLEK	Upper Bay Charter Capt	Edgewater, MD
MARK BROWN	UPPER BAY CHARTER CAPT. ASSOC.	MIDDLE RIVER MD
Russ Green	UPPER BAY CHARTER CAPT	ESSEX, MD.
Tyler Williams	Finnaholic Charters	Essex, MD
Bernie Williams	Finnaholic Charters	Essex, MD
Robert Krausman	Galloway Charters	Middle River
Kevin Nestor	GALLOWAY CHARTERS	Middle River
J.T. Brase		Riva, MD
Chuck Riddick		Joppa MD.
Robert Stichel	Reds 510	Natco MD.
DAVID FISCHER	GoldFish Charters	PASADENA MD
BREMAN SHURE	ESSEX MD COM	ANNAPOLIS MD
Giovanni Gargano	Griffini Guide Service	Annapolis, MD
Josh Pasyniowski	Good Fish Outdoors	Annapolis, MD
TOM WEAVER	FISH WITH WEAVER	ANNAPOLIS MD
Scott Bannick	Rock on Charters Fishing	CHESAPEAKE Beach MD
Eddie Weber	High Octane Custom Bait	Annapolis MD

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District of Columbia and Potomac River Fisheries Commission Public Hearing – Striped Bass
Draft Addendum III
September 25, 2025 – Webinar
18 public attendees
(see enclosed webinar attendee list)

Hearing Officer: Daniel Ryan (DDOE) and Ron Owens (PRFC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Alexander Law

Four people provided comments: two recreational anglers from DC/Potomac, one charter captain from Massachusetts, and a representative from the Maryland Waterman’s Association.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

2 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting support for consistency.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

2 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging) noting this is best for the stock.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports Option A (status quo baseline). This commenter noted opening up catch-and-release fishing in the spring during spawning season is a bad idea. If the fish are caught in the staging area before they get up to the spawning grounds, the fish will be worn out by the time it is released and there will be mortality. This will impact the eggs in those fish and impact the future of the stock. The females need to be protected until the fish spawn.

2 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer) noting the buffer is necessary if catch-and-release fishing is allowed in April.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

1 person supports Option A (status quo no reduction). The commenter noted there should not be a reduction for either sector, commercial or recreational.

The commenter noted the biological reference points are too high, and many scientists at the time of the last benchmark noted the stock would not be able to maintain that high standard. The stock has only reached the target for a few years and there has been a long period of it being low, and the target and threshold are too high to maintain. The population naturally goes up and down. The population is already recovered from the 1980s all-time low, and now the stock is doing well and there are so many striped bass that now there are more crew out on the water to catch them. Both sectors have already done everything they can for past

reductions. In the Chesapeake Bay, the new 1-fish bag limit is really hurting for-hire businesses. In the ocean, customers can justify paying for just 1 fish because it's a larger fish, but in the Bay it is just one small fish.

2 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting support for equal reductions by sector. Commenters noted that lowering thresholds to allow more fishing is not science and is not the answer; the high standards need to be maintained. One commenter noted his business relies on the fish being there to target and wants the species to survive. The commenter noted the stock rebounded after the last moratorium, and if this action fails, another moratorium may be on the table.

Ocean

2 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting that no one should be exempt from the reduction.

Chesapeake Bay

2 people support CB1 (20-23" all modes with no additional season closure).

Type of Closure

1 person supports no harvest closures noting no-targeting closures are unenforceable.

Closure Details

1 commenter noted the Commission needs to make smart choices about summer closures and make sure states with shared water bodies have the same regulations.

Other Comments

- One commenter noted there are already efforts to reduce mortality with the slot limit, the 1-fish bag limit, and only using rod and reel in the Massachusetts fisheries. The commenter noted mortality from catching a single fish per day or a few times per week with a rod and reel is not the issue; the real mortality issue is when people use nets which wipes out the population.

District of Columbia and Potomac River Fisheries Commission Public Hearing – Webinar
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 25, 2025
Webinar

Webinar Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	State
A	Eric	MD
Addonizio	Gerard	NY
Braun-Ricks	Ingrid	MD
Briggs	Robert	MA
Brown	Robert T	MD
C	Ben	MA
Dammeyer	Micah	DC
Farino	Richard	VA
Friedrich	Tony	MD
Gordon	Ian	PA
Gwaltney	Greg	MD
Law	Alexander	DC
Ledoux	Alex	RI
McIntyre	Corey	MA
O'Donnell	P. J.	DE
Owens	Ronald	PRFC
Roberts	Thomas	DE
Ryan	Daniel	DC
Smith	Steve	MD
Soliwoda	Frank J	NY
Tines	Casey	MA
Waite	Tyler	MA

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Alexander Law

Virginia Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 9, 2025 – Fort Monroe, VA
14 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Joe Grist (VMRC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke

Attendees were primarily a mix of commercial industry and private anglers. Commenters included representatives from Twin Rivers Waterman's Association, Virginia Waterman's Association, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

3 people support Option B (new FMP definition) noting this is a no-brainer and need a uniform system for measurement.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

3 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging) to prevent any illegal activity before landing or sale.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

1 person supports support Option A (status quo baseline) noting the spring season should not be open for catch-and-release of large spawning fish. Maryland's dead discards are greater than Virginia's entire quota and they should not kill the large breeders.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

1 person supports Option B (12% reduction) noting equal reductions for each sector and the need for action to achieve rebuilding by 2029. The comment noted six consecutive years of failed spawning and the need to take the opportunity to rebuild in the near-term to maintain biomass in the long-term.

6 people support no reduction for the commercial sector. Commenters were commercial harvesters and private anglers.

Comments noted the recreational sector is the problem with excess mortality and very little penalty or accountability. The commercial sector is accountable via quota monitoring, reporting, and paybacks and is a small portion of total removals. The commercial fishery has been consistently under the quota and is very well-regulated. The commercial fishery in Virginia has taken steps to protect the stock like changing mesh size to target smaller fish and mandatory reporting in place for decades. The issue is recreational release mortality,

particularly recreational fisheries in northern states catching the larger fish, and uncertainty with MRIP and faulty data. In the commercial fishery, there has been diminishing participation and the quota is already less than half of what it was. Further reductions in quota would have social and economic consequences down the road. Comments noted the draft addendum has not considered the social and economic impacts.

One commenter noted the current management has resulted in a de facto reallocation between the sectors that is currently only 10% commercial instead of 50% commercial and it is unacceptable and unwarranted to punish the commercial sector.

Ocean

No comments.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

2 people noted opposition to any mode split option (CB2) noting recreational is recreational no matter what type of vessel.

Type of Closure

1 person supports no targeting closures to get the most bang for the buck and to address release mortality.

Closure Timing

1 person supports all states closing until May 1 to give all fish a chance to spawn. Fish are not worth much that time of year and it could increase recruitment.

Other Comments

- Concern about blue catfish predation on striped bass and ecological issues in the Chesapeake Bay overall.
- The reference points are too high and the target is hard to reach.
- Concern about horse-trading among states when making management decisions.
- Concern striped bass are preying on blue crabs and impacting that fishery.
- Harvested fish have gotten smaller in Virginia due to changes in net size requirements which has resulted in cheaper fish. This does not make economic sense and the quota is not being caught. This new net size does not improve female spawning stock numbers.
- Other states should not be regulating management in Virginia. The block vote of other more northern states is impacting what is happening in Virginia.
- Concern that narrow slot limits are resulting in more discards and higher mortality.
- Need to reduce release mortality through additional gear restrictions, etc.

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September 9, 2025

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General Public Hearing – Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 29, 2025 – Webinar
114 public attendees
(see enclosed webinar attendees)

Hearing Officer: Toni Kerns (ASMFC)

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Toni Kerns, James Boyle

Attendees were from states coastwide. Commenters included private anglers, for-hire, a tackle shop, and commercial harvester from MA, CT, NY, NJ, PA, and DE, as well as representatives from American Saltwater Guides Association and Hudson Riverkeeper.

Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length

2 people support Option A (status quo no FMP definition) noting this would increase stress on the fish and will increase release mortality. The priority should be to release fish as quickly as possible. One comment noted this definition would make criminals out of honest fishers trying to measure in such a narrow slot.

8 people support Option B (new FMP definition) for consistency along the coast.

Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging

7 people support Option B (point of harvest tagging) noting concern about chain of custody if tagging occurs at the dealer.

Section 3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

7 people support Option C (new baseline with 10% uncertainty buffer). Some commenters would support a buffer larger than 10%. Comments noted the buffer would account for uncertainty in effort changes. One commenter noted support for changing the baseline is contingent on the full 12% reduction being implemented as well.

Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

4 people support Option A (status quo no reduction). Commenters were for-hire and guide, tackle shop, and commercial.

Comments noted the real issue is failed spawning in the Chesapeake Bay and associated environmental factors, blue catfish predation, and menhaden harvest; a cut in fishery removals will not address those issues. Comments noted any closure would have detrimental economic impacts and would hurt businesses beyond recovery. Livelihoods have been taken away and there is a need to save the industry. Comments noted there has not been an

observed decline in the fishery on the water and are still catching a range of sizes and not seeing a gap in year-classes.

Two commenters noted preliminary 2025 data indicate lower catch than estimated in the projections, which would change the reduction, so the 12% reduction is not justified. One commenter noted if SSB is already on an increasing trend, the rebuilding deadline should be pushed back. One commenter noted with the 2018 year class moving out of the slot, the fishery is self-regulating and harvest will decrease. One commenter noted that support for a reduction is often coming from catch-and-release anglers who have not been impacted by past cuts to harvest.

12 people support Option B (12% reduction) noting equal reductions for both sectors.

Commenters were private anglers, for-hire and guides, and organizations.

Comments noted the 30% probability of rebuilding under status quo is unacceptable, and lack of action would take fish away from future generations. The Board needs to take strong, decisive action to protect the stock. Comments noted the six years of failed spawns and low SSB with a lack of small fish, as well as decreasing participation indicating potential future collapse of the fishery. Comments noted mismanagement has ruined the population and one comment noted the fishery is leaning heavily on the migratory stock which is not sustainable.

Comments noted the focus should be on the needs of resource, not focused on self-interest to take more fish, and if the stock keeps declining, then businesses will have nothing. Abundance drives opportunity in the economy. One comment noted anglers are responsible for mortality, not predators. One comment noted the Chesapeake Bay commercial fishery has not taken a significant commercial quota reduction in some time. Some commenters noted a coastwide moratorium may have to be considered in the future.

Ocean

7 people support O1 (28-31" all modes with 12% season closure all modes) noting opposition to any mode split. One commenter noted the for-hire fishery is only accessible to people with significant means.

Chesapeake Bay

1 person supports CB1 (20-23" all modes with no additional season closure).

1 person supports CB3 (19-24" all modes with 12% season closure all modes).

Type of Closure

8 people support no harvest closures noting no targeting are unenforceable and would have negative economic impacts. One commenter noted past public comment has been clear in opposition to no-targeting closures.

1 person supports no targeting closures noting that release mortality will increase under no-harvest closures.

Ocean Closure Regions

1 person supports grouping Rhode Island-Connecticut-New York in the New England region.

Closure Timing

1 person supports closing during the winter in CT, similar to NY's season. The commenter noted concern that these neighboring states already have different seasons.

Other Comments

- The real issue is conditions in the Chesapeake Bay, including environmental conditions, menhaden harvest, pollution, and blue catfish predation.
- Concern about shark predation.
- Concern about MRIP data. Two commenters noted concern that not enough people are surveyed by MRIP.
- Concern the Commission is not doing anything to address pollution and environmental factors, especially in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Important to consider the condition fish are in when they are released, especially spawning fish, and should be incorporated into future analyses.
- Concern about poaching and illegal fishing.

General Public Hearing – Webinar
Striped Bass Draft Addendum III
September 29, 2025
Webinar

Webinar Attendees:

Last Name	First Name	State
Al-Amin	Taqy	Indonesia
Amelia	Sinta	Indonesia
Andrejko	Ron	NJ
Andrejko	Xyron	NJ
Aqilah	Faiq	Indonesia
Ayu Ramadhina	Nazhira	West Java, Indonesia
Baryshyan	Matthew	RI
Bass	Matt	MA
Batsavage	Chris	NC
Bellavance	Rick	RI
Berry	Todd	NH
Best	Matt	NY
Blinken	David	NY
Borgatti	Christopher	MA
Bravo	Peter	CT
Brust	Jeffrey	NJ
Buckingham	Lawrence	NJ
C	Gary	MA
Califano	Anthony	PA
Casella	Ben	NJ
Celestino	Michael	NJ
Chou	Luyen	NY
Chugger	Wombat	RI
Cloutier	Brian	MA
Cobelli	Sean	MA
Connor	Brian	NY
Corbett	Heather	NJ
Cox	Justin	PA
Coyle	Carson	CT
Cudnik	Greg	NJ
Curtin	Brad	MA
Cuttita	Chris	NY
D.	Matt	CT
DeFelice	Lou	CT

General Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
DeMelo	Lindsey	MA
Decosta	Nuno	NY
DelGozzo	Vinny	NJ
Dintaman	Evan	MD
Dudus	Roman	CT
Elles	London	NJ
Esposito	Joseph	CT
Fadliansyah	Vicki	Indonesia
Fathiana Barzan	Eneng Bella	Indonesia
Flora	James	NY
Fox	Carrie	VA
Friedrich	Anthony	MD
Fuda	Tom	CT
Gardner	Robert	MA
Griffin	Steve	MD
Grout	Douglas	NH
Hueth	Gregory	NJ
Haasz	Steve	NJ
Hardy	Jake	NY
Harrison	Brendan	NJ
Hatt	Joshua	Nova Scotia
Hihi	Chouaib	NJ
Holt	Ken	MA
In The Questions	I Make Comments	MD
Jacobus	Matthew	MA
Jaskiel	Jacob	MA
Jenkins	Richard	MA
Jones	Nick	MN
Jordan	Robert	NY
Junior	MJ	CT
Kameen	Paul	PA
Kane	Raymond	MA
Khamada Budiman	Faza	Indonesia
Knutsen	Kevin	NJ
Koob	Elise	MA
Lindsay	Tyrone	MA
Lopes	Monty	MA
Love	Pat	MD

General Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Manzione	Nicholas	NY
Marchetti	Henry	ME
Maulana	Pandu	Indonesia
McCrickard	Alex	VA
McDermott	Sean	CT
Means Harvest !	Access Just	ASA
Melton	Richard	NJ
Meserve	Nichola	MA
Monast	Gerry	NY
Montefusco	Nick	NJ
Nathaniel	Christian	Indonesia
Nelson	Eric	MA
Nur Fadillah	Fitri	Indonesia
O'Neill	Tyler	DE
Papciak	John	NY
Parent	Mike	NJ
Pereira	Ryan	RI
Pirri	Michael	CT
Poston	Will	VA
Ralston	Dylan	NJ
Rhein	Noah	MA
Roberge	Owen	ME
Rollins	Steve	ME
Rosenwaks	Gaelin	NY
Rostkowski	Jason	PA
Roy	Michael	CT
Rubner	Cody	MA
Rudman	Patrick	ME
Schubmehl	Brian	MA
Sciortino	Phil	NJ
Sedotti	Mark	NY
Sheffield	Phillip	CT
Shop Owner	New Jersey Pizza	NJ
Sikorski	David	MD
Sikorski	David	MD
Smolek	Michael	MD
Stefanick	Zachary	NJ
Stormer	David	NY
Susca	Peter	CT

General Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Tumminia	Steve	NY
Trenches	The	MA
Tucker	William	VA
Vavra	Taylor	NY
Waine	Mike	NC
Wallace	Captain Eric	ME
Ware	Megan	ME
Weaver	Tom	MD
Weinbuch	John	NY
Wetzel	William	NY
Whalley	Ben	ME
White	Kyle	MA
Williams	Capt brian	NJ
Woodring	Jeff	CT
Woods	Michael	RI
Yemma	John	MA
Zapf	Daniel	NC

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Toni Kerns, James Boyle