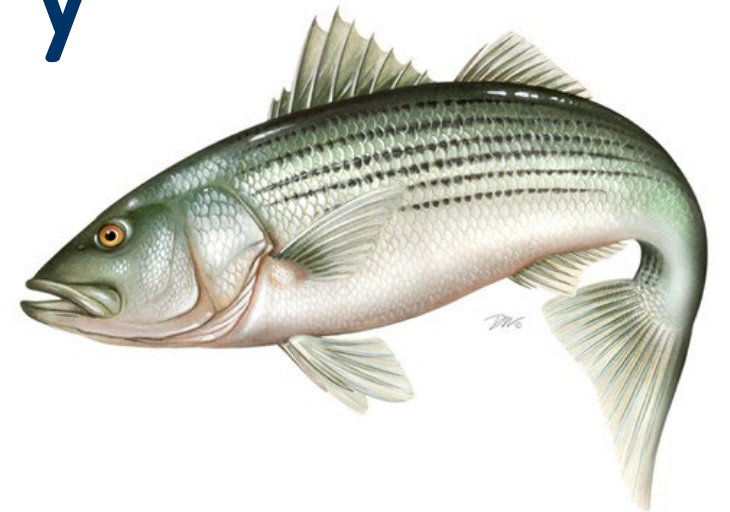




Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries
COMMISSION

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III Options and Public Comment Summary

October 29, 2025



- Timeline
- Section 3.3 Maryland Recreational Season Baseline: Options and Public Comment Summary
- Section 3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding: Options and Public Comment Summary
 - Requested Information: 2025 Preliminary MRIP Data
- AP Report on Sections 3.3 and 3.4



Date	Action
December 2024	Board initiated Draft Addendum III
February 2025	Board provided guidance on scope of options
Feb – April 2025	PDT developed options and draft document
May 2025	Board revisions to document
May – July 2025	PDT updated document with Board revisions and final MRIP estimates
August 2025	Board approved for public comment
Late Aug – Oct 3, 2025	Public comment period
October 29, 2025	Board reviews public comment, selects measures, final approval of Addendum III
2026 and later	States implement regulations

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

4,496 written comments received through October 3

- 59 organizations
- 1,464 comments through 12 form letters/multi-signatory letters
- 2,973 individual comments
 - 47% via email/website comment box
 - 53% from the public comment form

- 17 public hearings from September 8-30
 - 11 in-person
 - 3 hybrid
 - 3 webinar
- 1,101 public attendees
 - Some attended multiple hearings
 - Not including listen-only links

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



3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

Maryland Rec. Season

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

Maryland Rec. Season

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

Maryland Rec. Season

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

Option A. Status Quo (No New Baseline)

- If no rebuilding reduction and status quo Maryland season baseline, FMP measures for seasons do not change → Addendum II measures stay in place which maintain 2022 recreational seasons (does allow trophy season)
 - Maryland has chosen to be more conservative by closing trophy season
 - Continues to be a Maryland decision on trophy season
- If there is a new coastwide rebuilding reduction and status quo Maryland season baseline, Maryland would add new reduction closures on top of the 2024 season (no trophy season)

Option B. New Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

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

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

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

MD Season

Option A. 2024 Baseline*

Catch and Release
Jan 1 – Mar 31

No Targeting
Apr 1 – May 15

Harvest
May 16 – July 15

No Target July 16-31

Harvest
Aug 1 – Dec 10

Catch and Release
Dec 11 – Dec 31

Option B/C. New Baseline*

Catch and Release
Jan 1 – Apr 30

Harvest
May 1 – July 31

No Target
Aug 1 – Aug 31

Harvest
Sep 1 – Dec 5

Catch and Release
Dec 6 – Dec 31

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

Public Comments: MD Season

	Option A. Status Quo Baseline	Option B. New Baseline	Option C. New Baseline with Uncertainty Buffer
Written Total	466	1,270	1,178
Hearing Total	216	9	42

Public Comments: MD Season

	Option A. Status Quo Baseline	Option B. New Baseline	Option C. New Baseline with Uncertainty Buffer
Written Total	466	1,270	1,178
Hearing Total	216	9	42

- Majority of written comments support Option B. New Baseline or Option C. New Baseline with 10% Uncertainty Buffer
- Majority of hearing comments support Option A. Status Quo

Those supporting Option A. Status Quo MD baseline note:

- Concern about allowing catch and release fishing on pre-spawn and spawning females in April
- Would result in additional mortality and stress from handling negatively impacting ability to spawn
- This impact on spawning females was not sufficiently considered or reviewed

Public Comments: MD Season

Those supporting Option B. New Baseline note:

- New baseline would simplify the season
- Allow more access and economic opportunity when release mortality rates are lower in the spring
- Longer summer closure would be beneficial for the stock

Those supporting Option C. New Baseline plus 10% Buffer note:

- Uncertainty around predicting increase in effort
- Some support a buffer larger than 10%

3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

Reduction in Fishery Removals

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

Reduction in Fishery Removals

- Under status quo, estimated 30% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029
- Draft addendum considers management measures designed to achieve a 50% probability of rebuilding the stock by 2029
 - 12% reduction in fishery removals



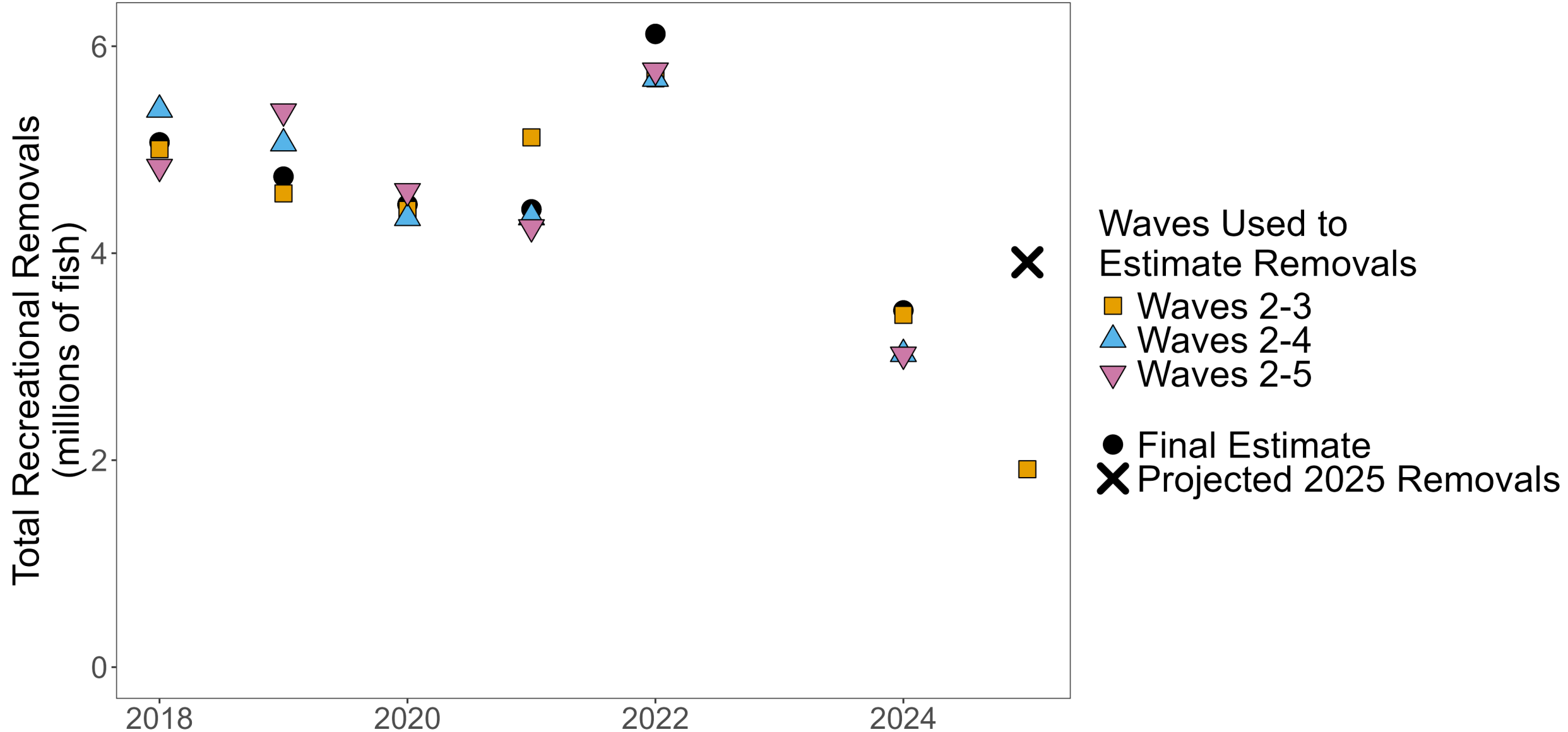
Information Requested: 2025 Preliminary MRIP Data

Requested Info: 2025 MRIP Data

- Preliminary 2025 MRIP estimates available through Wave 3 (through June)
- Wave 4 not yet available
- 2025 striped bass removals through Wave 3 are 44% lower than 2024 striped bass removals through Wave 3
- Wave 2-3 data is typically 36% of annual removals
- Using Wave 2-3 data to predict final removals → some years overestimate, some years underestimate, some years similar



Requested Info: 2025 MRIP Data





Section 3.4 Options

Reduction in Fishery Removals

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

Reduction in Fishery Removals

Should there be a reduction in fishery removals?

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

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

- Commercial quota reduction

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

Table 9.

Reduction in Fishery Removals

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

Reduction in Fishery Removals

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

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

Table 8.

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

Reduction in Fishery Removals

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

Reduction in Fishery Removals

What measures should change to meet the 12% reduction?

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

Table 8.

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

Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

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

Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

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

Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

- Timing

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

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

Season Closure Considerations

What should recreational season closures look like?

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

Note on NY and NC

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

Public Comments: Reduction

	Option A. Status Quo No Reduction	Option B. 12% Reduction	No Commercial Reduction
Written Comments	2,392	1,694	15
Hearing Comments	330	81	13

- Majority of comments support Option A. Status Quo No Reduction

Those supporting Option A. Status Quo No Reduction note:

- Fishing mortality is already below the target
- Proposed reduction in fishing mortality is statistically indistinguishable
- MRIP concerns: uncertainty, ongoing revision of effort estimates, preliminary 2025 MRIP estimates are low
- Stock is doing well and observing a high abundance of fish
- Reference points are too high and not biologically achievable

Public Comments: Reduction

Continued: Support of Option A. Status Quo No Reduction note:

- Current restrictive regulations are working, and action should wait until 2027 benchmark is complete
- Severe negative economic impacts of any closures outweigh the data uncertainties
- Any action would harm fishing-related businesses and local economies
- Real issue is low recruitment and conditions in Chesapeake Bay

Public Comments: Reduction

Those supporting Option B. 12% Reduction note:

- Act quickly to maximize the probability of rebuilding by 2029
- Most comments note equal reductions by sector
- Six consecutive years of poor recruitment and long-term risk to the stock if action is not taken
- Given current low recruitment, preserve the future of the stock and fishery
- If no action now, future action may be more restrictive
- Some comments support aiming for a >50% probability of rebuild

Public Comments: Reduction

Some comments note there should be no commercial reduction:

- Already multiple quota reductions in recent years
- Commercial fishery has strict accountability measures in place including harvest reporting and quota paybacks

Public Comments: Rec Measures

	O1. 28-31" all modes; 12% closure	O2. FH 28-33"; PS 28-31"; 13% closure	CB1. 20-23" all modes	CB2. FH 19-25"; PS 19-22"	CB3. 19-24" all modes; 12% closure
Written Comments	1,680	245	1,031	174	782
Hearing Comments	43	18	12	0	9

Public Comments: Rec Measures

	O1. 28-31" all modes; 12% closure	O2. FH 28-33"; PS 28-31"; 13% closure	CB1. 20-23" all modes	CB2. FH 19-25"; PS 19-22"	CB3. 19-24" all modes; 12% closure
Written Comments	1,680	245	1,031	174	782
Hearing Comments	43	18	12	0	9

- Majority of comments support O1 for the ocean
- Majority of comment support CB1 or CB3 for Chesapeake Bay

Public Comments: Rec Measures

- Those supporting **Ocean O1** and **Chesapeake Bay CB1 or CB3** note strong opposition to any mode splits. Concern allowing one segment to have additional harvest opportunity.
- Some in favor or **O2 or CB2**, and some support for a modified O2 with the wider slot limit and for-hire exemption from any season closures noting:
 - For-hire industry is important part of local economies providing access for customers and putting fish on the table.
 - Businesses already declining and further restrictions detrimental.
 - Some support for managing modes separately.

Public Comments: Closures

	No-Harvest Closures	No-Targeting Closures
Written Comments	Ocean: 1,909 Ches. Bay: 1,631	Ocean: 197 Ches. Bay: 392
Hearing Comments	62	16

- Majority of comments support no-harvest closures

Those supporting no-harvest closures note:

- Strong opposition to no-targeting closures which are unenforceable
- Prohibiting catch-and-release would be devastating to fishing communities and businesses
- Limiting a culturally important pastime of fishing for striped bass
- No-harvest closures helped rebuild the stock in the 1980s, and some commenters would support a full harvest moratorium now

Public Comments: Closures

Those supporting no-targeting closures note:

- Catch-and-release fishery also needs to be addressed, not just the harvest side

Comments on ocean region split:

- 95 comments support grouping RI with New England region
 - Many also support adding CT and NY to New England region as well
- 32 comments support grouping RI with Mid-Atlantic region

Public Comments: Closures

Comments on season closure specifics:

- Some note proposed regions/closures are not equitable for all states and would prefer state-by-state closures
- Some support closures during spawning season and/or during summer when release mortality is higher
- Some comments support closures during peak season (wave 4 in New England and wave 6 in Mid-Atlantic), but some oppose closures during these peak times noting severe economic consequences
- Varying comments on specific closure timing for different states/regions

Common Additional Topics Raised:

- Concern about menhaden harvest
- Investigate Chesapeake Bay conditions impacting recruitment success (water quality, predation, etc.)
- Support for striped bass hatchery and stocking
- Concern about commercial fishery targeting large females and commercial net gears
- Support for ending striped bass commercial harvest
- Support for ending NJ bonus program

Common Additional Topics Raised:

- Concern about predation on striped bass (sharks, seals, blue catfish)
- Need for increased angler education on best handling practices
- Support for additional gear restrictions

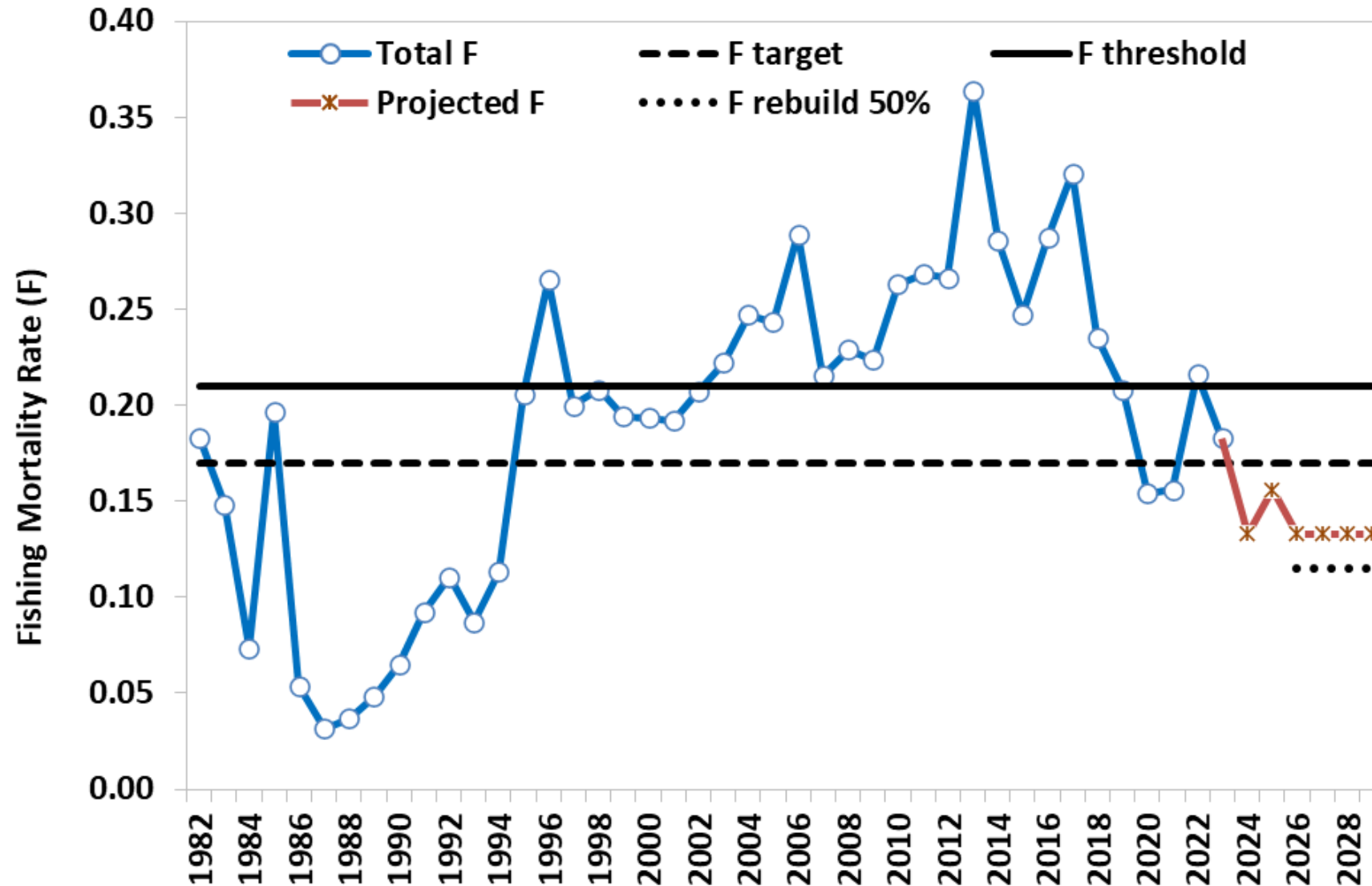


Questions



Extra Slides

Figure 2. Fishing Mortality

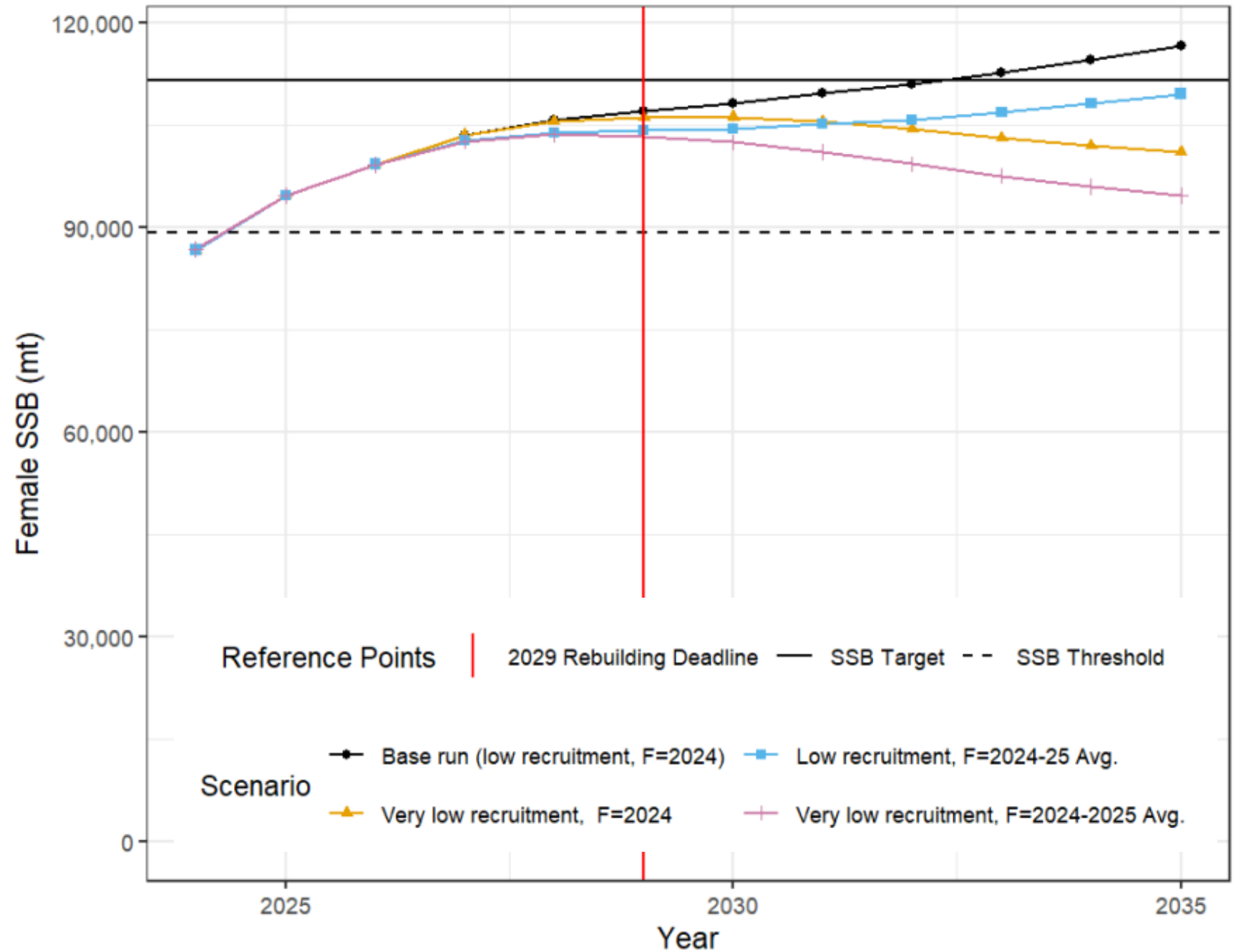


Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update and Technical Committee projected fishing mortality

	2024 Removals	F2024	F2025	F2026-2029	Prob. Rebuild 2029
Waves 2-3 (Oct. 2024)	3.89 million fish	0.126	0.148	0.126	43%
Waves 2-4 (Dec. 2024)	3.67 million fish	0.119	0.139	0.119	57%
Prelim (Mar 2025)	3.80 million fish	0.123	0.144	0.123	49%
Final (May 2025)	4.07 million fish	0.133	0.156	0.133	30%



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION





Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel Report: Draft Addendum III Sections 3.3 and 3.4

Eleanor Bochenek, AP Chair

October 29, 2025

- AP met via webinar on October 9 with 16 AP members in attendance
 - 4 AP members submitted comments via email (incorporated into this presentation)
- AP discussed options for the Maryland Recreational Season Baseline and Reduction in Fishery Removals



3.3 Maryland Chesapeake Bay Recreational Season Baseline

AP Comments: MD Season

7 AP members support Option A. Status Quo:

- Concern about allowing catch and release on spawning females in spring
- Concern about making this change during a rebuilding plan
- Concern about data uncertainty, calculation assumptions, and predicting increased effort
- Concern from MD AP member about the original summer closure being a tradeoff for a 2-fish bag limit, but not getting those days back after moving to 1-fish

2 AP members noted if the baseline were to change, the 10% buffer from Option C should be applied



3.4 Reduction in Fishery Removals to Support Stock Rebuilding

9 AP members support Option A Status Quo No Reduction:

- Reduction does not address real issues of low recruitment, environmental conditions, predation, etc.
- For-hire and commercial industries are already disappearing from multiple past reductions and current restrictive measures
- Negative economic impacts outweigh potential reward
- Any season closure would devastate the for-hire industry
- Commercial fishery may no longer be profitable with more cuts
- Fishermen have been promised results for a long time; management system is not working

Support for Option A Status Quo No Reduction (continued):

- 2025 MRIP data so far indicate lower removals than assumed by the projections
- Concern about MRIP accuracy
- No other data source for private anglers; for-hire and commercial reporting is more accurate
- Wait until the 2027 benchmark assessment is complete to consider any change

Support for Option A Status Quo No Reduction (continued):

- Questioned whether SSB target is attainable
- When the target was met in the early 2000s, the fishery and environmental conditions were very different than now

7 AP members support Option B 12% Reduction:

- Striped bass are the lynchpin of the economy and want to ensure a fishery for the future
- Not taking a reduction now would lose time to reach the target
- If no action now, bigger reduction in the future
- Poor recruitment for six consecutive years; priority should be protecting the stock
- Board cannot control environmental factors, only fishing mortality

Support for Option B 12% Reduction continued:

- Effort control is a necessary reality with a shrinking stock; fishery must shrink as there are fewer fish available
- There will always be data variability and uncertainty goes both ways
- Observations of a poor summer fishery in New England with no small fish, and surfcasters seeing a decline in the fishery
- Concern that recent SSB increase shown in pounds (fish getting older/larger) is misleading, and the increase is not the same in number of fish

AP Comments: Reduction

2 AP members note there should be no commercial reduction:

- Commercial sector is strictly regulated and held accountable to its quota
- Already multiple quota cuts in recent years

1 AP member observed differences in the views of tackle manufacturers based on their business focus:

- Surf/light tackle tend to support a reduction while others do not

3 AP members noted opposition to mode split options

6 AP members support no-harvest closures:

- Opposed to no-targeting closures due to enforceability concerns, including the Law Enforcement Committee's position that no-targeting closures are difficult to enforce
- No-harvest closures minimize economic impact by still allowing the economic driver of catch and release fishing and supporting associated businesses
- Concern about the calculations and assumptions for no-targeting closures

AP Comments: Season Closures

1 AP member supports no-targeting closures if there is a reduction:

- Most fishermen would follow the rules; the EEZ has been closed to targeting for years
- No-targeting closures would impact all recreational anglers, including catch and release

AP Comments: Season Closures

Individual AP members noted the following on closures:

- Large region closures do not seem equitable for all states
- Seasons should be continuous with a start/end date; short closures mid-season will not be effective
- Group RI with Mid-Atlantic since fishery is more similar to CT/NJ than New England
- RI decision is complex; even within a state, fishery timing can differ (e.g., MA fishery timing can differ by 6 weeks between north and south ends of the state)

AP Comments: Season Closures

Individual AP members noted the following on closures:

- Any MA closure should protect the spring schoolies
- Any closure in the summer would devastate MA for-hire fleet
- If striped bass closes in March or April, no other species available to target in NJ

AP Comments: Other Topics

- Several AP members support increased angler education on proper handling/release
- A few AP members noted concern about blue catfish predation and need to support blue catfish harvest in the Bay
- 1 AP member recommends re-establishing hatchery stocking program for striped bass
- 1 AP member concerned about public comments on reducing menhaden harvest noting menhaden is important bait for other fisheries; taking a cut in other fisheries for the sake of striped bass defeats the point of mitigating socioeconomic impacts



Questions?



**Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries**
COMMISSION

Law Enforcement Committee Report to Striped Bass Management Board

October 29, 2025

- LEC conducted a virtual meeting on October 10, 2025, to discuss a request by this Board to review the PRT's report on Commercial Tagging Ten-Year Review.
- Specifically, to review the report and discuss any further LEC recommendations on point of tagging and potential improvements to state tagging programs.

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board tasked the PRT with reviewing the striped bass commercial tagging program since it has been over a decade since the program was implemented.

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

- Inform the Board: Compile a summary of each state's tagging program.
- 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.
- Share Information: Opportunity for states to share best practices and information on common issues, challenges, and solutions.
- 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 and presented an overview of their state program during the meetings. This report summarizes the subsequent discussion of observations and differences across state commercial tagging programs for striped bass.

- Current state programs are effective and each in their own way offer a level of protection to the resource.
- Meet the spirit of Addendum 3 to Amendment 6 of the Atlantic Striped Bass ISFMP and Amendment 7.
- Follow Recommendation's from the 2012 Interstate Watershed Taskforce Investigation.

- **Point of Tagging**

- POH tagging is a must for an ITQ fishery
- POS tagging programs work when used in conjunction with other management measures that promote a clear difference between recreational and commercial harvest.
- POL – Delaware – reported good compliance in a small-scale fishery. If a POL provision were to be considered more widely, law enforcement would recommend that a clear and consistent definition of landing be used.

- **Tag Distribution** – No major LEC concerns.

- PRFC process seems to provide the best process for a POH state.

- **Tag Accountability** – All jurisdictions have a process in place to account for the lost, damaged, or delinquent tags.

- ✓ The LEC can support the PRT / State Contacts recommendation to offer tag accounting in the SB Compliance Reports.

- **Tag Traceability** – While this report did not specifically address tracking tag numbers, the LEC wanted to emphasize the importance of being able to trace a tag back to the fisher. Most states with a POH program seem to follow this practice, but not all states with a POS program allow for tags to be traced to the fisher.

TAGGING, LABELING OR MARKING OF MARINE SPECIES

Definition: *The act of placing an approved manufactured tag, label, or a manipulation/alteration of the respective marine species for the purpose of marking a marine species for a management purpose.*

Average Overall Rating: 4.00

Recommendation:

- *The tag should be an approved device that is identifiable, traceable, and tamper proof.*
- *The tag should be placed on a marine species in a location that will cause least harm to the species whether alive or dead.*
- *When any alteration to a marine species (i.e., fin clipping, v-notching or other) the requirement should be consistent among all jurisdictions.*
- *Improved documentation and labeling of fish and fish products would enable law enforcement to track such products back to the harvester and/or the initial purchaser and to intercept unlawful seafood product at various points between harvest and final sale for consumption.*



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Thank you!

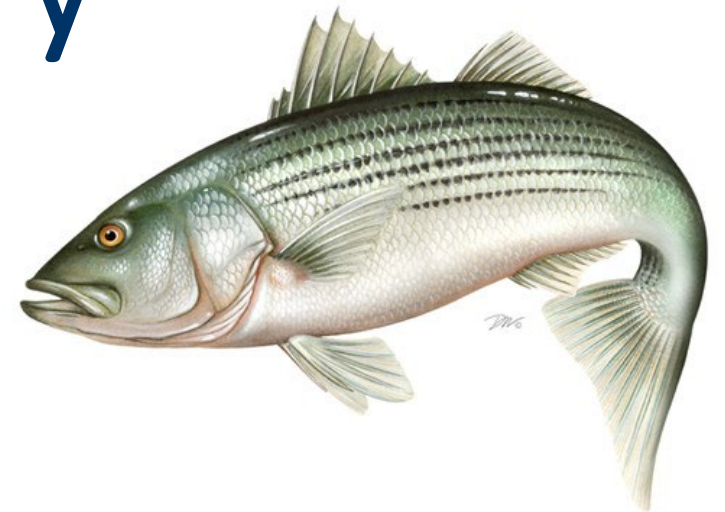
QUESTIONS?



**Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries**
COMMISSION

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum III Options and Public Comment Summary

October 29, 2025



- Section 3.1 Method to Measure Total Length: Options and Public Comment Summary
- Section 3.2 Commercial Tagging Point of Tagging: Options and Public Comment Summary
- AP Report on Sections 3.1 and 3.2



3.1 Measuring Total Length

Total Length (TL)

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

Option A. Status Quo: No Definition of Total Length

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

- Adopt mandatory elements for each state's definition of striped bass TL
- All states would require: 1) squeezing the tail; 2) a straight-line measurement; 3) the fish is laid flat; and 4) the mouth is closed.

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

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

Public Comments: Total Length

	Option A. Status Quo No FMP Definition of Total Length	Option B. Elements for FMP Total Length Definition
Written Comments	271	1,778
Hearing Comments	30	74

- Majority of comments support Option B. Elements for FMP Total Length Definition

Public Comments: Total Length

- Those supporting **Option A. Status Quo No FMP Definition** note concern this would slow down handling time and potentially increase mortality; priority should be releasing fish as quickly as possible.
- Those supporting **Option B. Elements for FMP Definition** note importance of standardization and consistency, especially with narrow slot limit.



3.2 Commercial Tagging: Point of Tagging

Commercial Tagging

- States with commercial fisheries can choose tagging at point of harvest or tagging at point of sale; FMP requirement since 2012
 - One state specifies tagging at the point of landing (between harvest and sale) due to safety concerns raised by industry about tagging at point of harvest
- Concerns that waiting to tag until point of sale could increase risk of illegal harvest
- Draft addendum considers requiring commercial tagging at the point of harvest or by the first point of landing
 - Goal of improving enforcement and compliance

Commercial Tagging

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

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

Option B. Commercial tagging at the point of harvest

- Immediately upon possession or within specific state parameters

Option C. Commercial tagging by the first point of landing

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

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

Public Comments: Comm. Tagging

	Option A. Status Quo States Choose	Option B. Point of Harvest	Option C. Point of Landing
Written Comments	244	1,300	428
Hearing Comments	19	65	5

- Majority of comments support Option B. Point of Harvest Tagging

Public Comments: Comm. Tagging

- Those supporting **Option A.** **status quo states choose point of tagging** note point of harvest tagging is not appropriate for every state given different management systems.
- Those supporting **Option B.** **point of harvest** tagging note this would help limit illegal activity and increase accountability.
- Those supporting **Option C.** **point of landing** tagging note it would be favorable given safety concerns with point of harvest tagging.



Questions

Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel Report: Draft Addendum III Sections 3.1 and 3.2

Eleanor Bochenek, AP Chair

October 29, 2025

- AP met via webinar on October 16 with 11 AP members in attendance
 - 4 AP members submitted comments via email (incorporated into this presentation)
- AP discussed draft addendum options for Measuring Total Length and Commercial Tagging



3.1 Measuring Total Length

AP Comments: Total Length

8 AP members support Option B. Standard Definition:

- Need standardization and consistency along the coast, including from a scientific perspective
- Important with the narrow slot limit and to close any loopholes

3 additional AP members also support Option B. Standard Definition but prefer fanning the tail:

- Unclear how hard to pinch the tail
- Fanning the tail is a more natural position

AP Comments: Total Length

- AP members on the call agree that law enforcement should be trained on how to measure a fish



3.2 Commercial Tagging: Point of Tagging

AP Comments: Commercial Tagging

3 AP members support Option A. Status Quo States Choose Point of Tagging:

- There will always be some level of illegal harvest no matter what the tagging program is
- Each state should figure out what works best for their fishery
- Tag distribution process if switching to harvester tagging is unclear
- In RI, point of harvest tagging does not seem appropriate for such a short season (8-9 days)
- In MA, concern about how the number of eligible harvesters would be reduced from current 4,500 to ~450 given limitations on administering tagging program at point of harvest/landing

Support for Option A. Status Quo States Choose Point of Tagging continued:

- Safety concerns about point of harvest tagging also apply to hook-and-line fisheries (many people fishing at night with boat traffic, rough conditions)

AP Comments: Commercial Tagging

5 AP members support Option B. Point of Harvest Tagging:

- Illegal commercial activity is occurring, and this option would help law-abiding harvesters
- Help address high-grading
- Low-hanging fruit to implement point of harvest tagging for all states
- Definition could be specific (“tag prior to resetting gear”) to allow harvesters to get to a safer location to tag
- Commercial fishing is a business and tagging is part of the business requirements; separates it from recreational

Support for Option B. Point of Harvest Tagging continued:

- Acknowledge MA has many challenges if switching from current point of sale
- Concern about the MA fishery harvesting large fish and how easy it is to get a permit
- Quota monitoring would switch to tracking harvester reports instead of dealer reports; look to other fisheries as examples

AP Comments: Commercial Tagging

4 AP members support a combination option with point of harvest tagging for hook-and-line and point of landing for other gears:

- Safety concerns for gears like gill nets and pound nets
- Hook and line should be able to tag right away
- Tagging before the dealer would limit illegal activity
- Given limited enforcement capacity, all fish tagged ASAP
- Concern about the MA fishery harvesting large fish and how easy it is to get a permit
- NJ's bonus program is good example of requiring immediate tagging for hook-and-line



Questions?