

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the 2027 ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment
Board Approved May 2025

1. Identify relevant ecosystem influences on the stock. Characterize the uncertainty in the relevant sources of data and their link to stock dynamics. Consider findings, as appropriate, in addressing other TORs. Report how the findings were considered under impacted TORs.
2. Investigate all available fisheries independent and dependent data sets, including life history, indices of abundance, and tagging data. Describe the spatial and temporal distribution of the data. Characterize the uncertainty in the data. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of the data sources and justify inclusion or elimination of datasets.
3. Estimate commercial and recreational landings and discards. Characterize the uncertainty in the data and spatial distribution of the fisheries. Review new MRIP estimates of catch, effort and the calibration method if available.
4. Use an age-based model to estimate annual fishing mortality, recruitment, total abundance and stock biomass (total and spawning stock) for the time series and estimate their uncertainty. Provide model diagnostics, retrospective analysis of the model results and historical retrospective. Provide estimates of exploitation by stock component and sex, where possible, and for total stock complex. If multiple models have been considered, compare results and performance and justify choice of preferred model.
5. Use tagging data to estimate mortality and abundance and provide suggestions for further development.
6. Update or redefine biological reference points (BRPs; point estimates or proxies for B_{MSY} , SSB_{MSY} , F_{MSY} , MSY). Define stock status based on BRPs by stock component where possible.
7. Explore new methods to predict future catch or F . Provide annual projections of catch and biomass under these scenarios. Projections should estimate and report annual probabilities of exceeding threshold BRPs for F and probabilities of falling below threshold BRPs for biomass.
8. If a minority report has been filed, explain majority reasoning against adopting approach suggested in that report. The minority report should explain reasoning against adopting approach suggested by the majority.
9. Review and evaluate the status of the Technical Committee research recommendations listed in the most recent SARC report. Identify new research recommendations. Recommend timing and frequency of future assessment updates and benchmark assessments.