

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Tautog Management Board

*August 4, 2026
2:45 – 4:45 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. Gates</i>) | 2:45 p.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 2:45 p.m. |
| • Approval of Agenda | |
| • Approval of Proceedings from May 2026 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 2:50 p.m. |
| 4. Consider Approval of Draft Addendum I for Public Comment:
Measures to Address Changes in Stock Status for New Jersey-New York Bight
and Delaware-Maryland-Virginia Stock Units (<i>J. Boyle</i>) Action | 3:00 p.m. |
| 5. Review Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool Scores (<i>K. Drew</i>) Possible Action | 4:30 p.m. |
| 6. Other Business/Adjourn | 4:45 p.m. |

The meeting will be held at The Westin Crystal City, 1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA; 703.486.1111, and via webinar; click [here](#) for details

MEETING OVERVIEW

Tautog Management Board

August 4, 2026

2:45 - 4:45 p.m.

Chair: Matt Gates (CT)	Technical Committee Chair: Sandra Dumais (NY)	Law Enforcement Committee Representative: Brian Scott (NJ)
Vice-Chair: Rich Wong (DE)	Advisory Panel Chair: Vacant	Previous Board Meeting: May 4, 2026
Voting Members: MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NMFS (9 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from May 2026

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 should use the webinar raise your hand function and the Board Chair will let you know when to speak. 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 Board 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. Consider Approval of Draft Addendum I for Public Comment: Measures to Address Changes in Stock Status for New Jersey-New York Bight and Delaware-Maryland-Virginia Stock Units (3:00-4:30 p.m.) Action

Background

- In response to the 2025 assessment update, the Board initiated an addendum to address the changes in stock status for NJ-NYB and DMV.
- The Plan Development Team (PDT) incorporated the Board's guidance from May into the Draft Addendum (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- Overview of Draft Addendum I to Amendment 1 by J. Boyle

Board Actions for Consideration

- Approve Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 for public comment

5. Review Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool Scores (4:30-4:45 p.m.) Possible Action

Background

- In October 2025, the Board requested the TC run the Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool in the projections to determine harvest reductions necessary to reach the F target.
- In May 2026, the Board reviewed the results of the Risk and Uncertainty Tool, which includes a series of scores that represent Board priorities, and requested the opportunity to update the Board scoring (**Briefing Materials**).

Presentations

- Results of Board Survey of Risk and Uncertainty Tool Scores by K. Drew

6. Other Business/Adjourn

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting**

May 4, 2026

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

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1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of October 2025** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to continue forward with the addendum process and not delay for the re-calculated MRIP data** (Page 9). Motion by Jay McNamee; second by Emerson Hasbrouck. Motion passed (Page 13).
4. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 19).

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ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Bob Glenn, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
Ray Kane, MA (GA)	Monica Martinez, NY (LA)
Sarah Peake, MA, proxy for Rep. Armini (LA)	Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Richard Wong, DE, proxy for J. Clark, DE (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Matthew Gates, CT, proxy for S. Madsen (AA)	Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for K. Charbonneau (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Robert LaFrance, CT, proxy for Rep. Gresko (LA)	Joe Grist, VA (Acting AA)
Jesse Hornstein, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)	Chris Wright, NMFS

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

Ex-Officio Members

Sandra Dumais, Technical Committee Chair	Brain Scott, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.
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Staff

Bob Beal	Caitlin Starks	Katie Drew
Toni Kerns	Tracey Bauer	Jeff Kipp
Tina Berger	James Boyle	Samara Nehemiah
Madeline Musante	Chelsea Tuohy	Jainita Patel

The Tautog 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; Monday, May 4, 2026, and was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Matthew Gates.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MATTHEW GATES: Good morning, everybody. We're going to get started with Tautog Board. My name is Matt Gates; I'm the Administrative Proxy for Connecticut. I'm joined up here by Commission staff, James Boyle, Tautog Plan Coordinator. Katie Drew, the Stock Assessment Scientist, Mr. Beal and Ms. Kerns. On my left is Law Enforcement Representative Brian Scott of New Jersey. I think Toni is going to go over who is joining us online.

MS. TONI KERNS: I believe today we just have Monica Martinez online, and she is the new Commissioner from New York; so welcome, Monica. We're super happy to have you here with us, and Sandy Dumais is the TC Chair; who is also online.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR GATES: The first thing we've got to do as usual is approval of the agenda. Does anyone have any proposals to changes to the agenda? All right; seeing none we'll call that approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR GATES: Next, does anyone have any edits to the proceedings of the 2025 Annual Meeting back in October? Okay, I don't see any, nobody online. Okay, thanks, I think we can approve the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR GATES: Start of each Board meeting we provide the opportunity for the public to make comments on items not on the agenda. Any individuals wishing to speak at this time should

use, either the webinar raise your hand, or in the room you can raise your hand. If anybody wants to speak from the public now, now is your chance. I don't see anybody so we'll move on.

REVIEW TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON BOARD TASKS

CHAIR GATES: The first item to deal with today is the Technical Committee Report. Sandy Dumais from New York will provide that, Committee Chair.

MS. SANDY DUMAIS: Good morning, everyone. This morning, we are going to report on the Board task to the Technical Committee, including the projections to reach the fishery mortality target. The run through of the risk and uncertainty tool, and the analysis we looked at, the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia fishery independent data.

Also, we will request guidance from the Board regarding the timing of the next step, with regard to the recalibrated MRIP estimates that are coming out later this summer.

HARVEST PROJECTIONS TO REACH FISHING MORTALITY TARGET

MS. SANDY DUMAIS: Start right in with the projections. In the 2025 Stock Assessment it showed that overfishing was occurring in New York Bight and DelMarVa Region, and DelMarVa was also overfished. Mass and Rhode Island and Long Island Sound were not overfished and not overfishing. To address overfishing in New York Bight and DelMarVa the Board requested that the TC look at projections that had a 50% probability of achieving the F target in 2028 or 2030.

RISK & UNCERTAINTY DECISION TOOL

MS. SANDY DUMAIS: The Board also requested that the TC use the Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool to calculate an ultimate probability for achieving the F target. The SAS used the recent three-year average catch for 2025 and 2026, and then they calculated what level of catch was needed in 2027 and 2028, or '27 to 2030 that would be able to reach a 50%

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probability of being at or below the F target in 2028 or 2030.

Calculated the percent projection by comparing the level of catch needed for 2027-2030 to the three-year average catch of 2022-2024. This graph shows the recreational removals for each of the regions. The dash line is the average, the 2022-2024 average, and it shows that for DelMarVa they are slightly above the recreational removals are slightly above. The New York/ New York Bight is slightly below the three-year average.

The red triangles are the preliminary 2025 estimates. Those are most likely in most cases, if not all cases going to keep going up as those estimates are updated to be finalized. For New York Bight, in order to reach the probability of reaching F target 50% by 2028, the percent reduction of removals needed was estimated to be 44% reduction, and to reach the target by 2030 it was 40% reduction.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND-VIRGINIA FISHERY- INDEPENDENT DATA

MS. SANDY DUMAIS: For the DelMarVa Region there was estimated to be no removals needed, probably because they have some very strong year classes coming that are entering the exploitable biomass the next few years. Here are the projections. For New York Bight, if New York Bight stays at status quo, it is estimated that the SSB target is going to continue to decline and go down below the threshold and the target, a threshold eventually.

With DelMarVa at status quo the SSB will be still below the threshold, but it's going to continue to increase throughout the timeline. I'm going to pause here to see if there are any questions, clarification or if the Chair would like me to continue with this, or do they want to have some discussion first?

CHAIR GATES: I think we can take any questions now on what Sandy has presented so far, if

anybody has any. I don't see any questions, Sandy, so you can continue.

MS. DUMAIS: For the Risk & Uncertainty Tool. The TC provides scores for the uncertainty and risk parameters including stock status, model uncertainty, management uncertainty, environmental uncertainty and ecosystem importance. The results give a recommended probability for F being at or below the F target in 2028 or 2030.

It is generally higher than 50% for both regions, it is higher than 50% for both regions. The TC calculates reductions associated with those probabilities. I will say that we did not ask the Board. The Board also provides weighting to the different things. They had done that in 2021; we did not ask them to repeat that process so they remained the same. Now the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences, CESS provides scores on socioeconomic considerations, commercial and recreational importance of the fishery in each region, as well as the short term and long-term impacts of the reductions associated with the TC scores.

This generally tends to push them back up against the estimates that have gone through the first run through, but we'll see what the results for that were. The TC CESS scores are weighted based on scores provided by the Board and we did not ask them to repeat that. For New York Bight, the projections, the probability of reaching the F target in 2028 and 2030 were 64% and their percent reduction needed to reach those was 50% for 2028 and 44% for 2030.

For the DelMarVa Region the probability of reaching the F target was 66% and the reductions needed for 2028 was 8% and 2030 was 4%. As we all know, the fishery management plan mandates a 50% reduction and we cannot go below 50%. I'm going to pause here again to see if there is any discussion regarding what was just presented.

CHAIR GATES: Any questions from the Board? No, I don't see any questions, so you can continue, Sandy, thank you.

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MS. DUMAIS: The TC took a look at some of the fishery independent surveys that are beginning to come up in the DelMarVa Region, and the Stock Assessment Model only uses 1 fishery dependent CPUE index. Since none of the fishery independent indices have been available during the benchmark assessment it has captured tautog reliably.

But Maryland/Delaware have started some new surveys that may be more suitable for monitoring tog. This is the Maryland DNR SAV Habitat Survey and they started this in 2012. We've been using standard methods since 2015, and this is a haul seine that targets young of the year tog and SAV habitat.

The survey has been successful in capturing young of the year tog with 65% of all hauls positive for tog. It appears to be well correlated with the assessments estimate of recruitment. You can see from the graph that it seems to be correlating pretty well with the recruitment estimate for the survey.

This is the Delaware Ventless Trap Survey that was started in 2018. The ventless traps are deployed in Delaware Bay and in the ocean. Both are high relief (artificial reefs) and on low relief (sandy bottom). It has a 64% to 83% positive sets in high relief habitat, and it captures both juvenile and adult tog.

Now the index in both regions, the Bay versus the Ocean has been variable and without a significant trend from 2018 to 2025. There is no strong correlation with the assessment estimates of SSB, but the selectivity of the gear may make it harder to compare cost of index with multiple ages. The ocean seems to match slightly better than the Bay.

For SSB that would possibly make sense, considering that they are probably catching less juveniles in the Ocean versus the Bay. Delaware could probably speak better than I, that would be my guess. The TC/SAS recommends bringing both of these indices forward for the next

benchmark assessment. The young of the year index provides empirical support for the model's estimates of increasing recruitment in recent years. The Delaware Index is flatter and does not show the same strong correlation in increasing pattern in SSB that the model is estimating.

The next benchmark is slated to start work in late 2026 or early 2027 with an anticipated peer review of 2029. The high priority objectives for the benchmark are to investigate and resolve the retrospective issues that we've been having with the tog assessment. Incorporate new fishery independent surveys, including the pot and trap surveys and the young of the year index in the DelMarVa Region and to incorporate the new MRIP numbers that we're going to see later this year. Board Guidance, should I pause here?

CHAIR GATES: We can pause here if you like.

MS DUMAIS: Well, there is one more slide that we need to consider, if you don't mind, actually.

CHAIR GATES: All right, go ahead and finish up.

MS. DUMAIS: The question is, do we wait for the MRIP calibrations or not to implement the changes or implement this Addendum? The assessment and the projections will not be updated with the new MRIP data. We are not going to be rerunning the assessment or these projections. The new length frequency catch-per-trip catch by wave data could be used to develop new size limit, bag limit, seasons as options for the Addendum.

However, waiting for the recalibrated data, which is anticipated in August, would delay implementation. The projections that we did at the beginning of this presentation would need to be updated to assume status quo for 2025 through 2027, instead of 2025 through 2026, and that may change the percent reduction needed.

We would still use uncalibrated status quo numbers to align with the assessment. That is, things you need to consider as you're deciding whether to

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implement now or delay until after the MRIP calibration, and that's it, thank you.

CHAIR GATES: Any questions from the Board?
Jason McNamee.

DR. JASON McNAME: Thanks, Sandra, good presentation, a lot of good stuff to cover. I didn't have questions on some of the earlier stuff, I have comments on those, but I'll save those for now. But I was curious about the two surveys and have a couple of questions there. First was on that Maryland SAV Survey and I was wondering.

Is it like purely young of the year or does it catch some 1s and 2s in there as well? Was that survey kind of treated to account for that? I was just kind of curious about that. I have another comment on the ventless, but I'll hold it for now.

CHAIR GATES: Katie, can you field that?

DR. KATIE DREW: Sure, I'll jump in. The Maryland Young of Year Survey is predominantly young of year. I think there may be 1 or 2, but it is filtered down to treat it as a young of year survey.

CHAIR GATES: Yes, go ahead, Jason.

DR. McNAMEE: I just asked a question, having worked on the Rhode Island Seine Survey, which was predominantly young of the year for a long time. We would get some bigger fish once in a while, they kind of snuck up into the shallow areas. Yes, I think it is important to just make sure those are being treated.

Sort of a similar comment for the ventless trap, I agree with the recommendation to keep both of these actually for the next assessment. I think these are great, that they've gotten some more fishery independent information to work with down there, so that is a positive for the species. But I wondered, so the ventless traps, just having seen the other ventless trap surveys

and how they are used for different assessments.

I think there is a number of things. You know I agree with the statement about the selectivity and how that gives that kind of direct comparison to like the MRIP CPUE makes that challenging. The fact that it's not correlated particularly well doesn't concern me too much at this point. Definitely keep it.

But then, getting to kind of the root of my comment/question. You know has that been treated, like bringing in environmental covariates. Also like, I'm not sure how it is set up, if it's in like a trawl kind of thing. But the position of the pot matters. Well, there is like all these things that you can sort of model. That's my question, is it just at this point kind of like a mean or is it modeled?

DR. DREW: At this point it is just the geometric mean that was presented. I think definitely during an assessment we would want to do a real deep dive on both of these to consider standardization or other factors, or how to subset the data to make it as robust and index as possible.

CHAIR GATES: I see Bill Hyatt next.

MR. WILLIAM HYATT: Just a question on the timing, just want to make sure I'm understanding this correctly. If we wait for the recalibrated data it puts things off by a meeting, but still any changes would be expected to be implemented during '27. Am I thinking of that correctly or am I missing something there?

MR. JAMES BOYLE IV: Yes, so the interpretation of Amendment I says that if it has to be implemented a second year, since the Board received the overfishing status at the annual meeting at the end of 2025, it is within the FMP to take final action in 2027 for implementation in 2028. Depending on how fast they can implement then that does create some wiggle room on what meeting you can choose in 2027, but that is the timeline. The timeline, if we wait for the new MRIP data and it is on time in September, this Board could theoretically be looking at a draft for public comment at the annual

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meeting instead of in August, and be going to final action in the winter of 2027.

CHAIR GATES: Next, I saw Emerson.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Sandy, for your presentation. My question is similar to Bill's, and I'm not sure if it is more appropriate to ask it here or the next agenda item, but I'm going to ask it now. The timeline, the 3- or 5-year timeline, when does that kick in? Does that kick in when we finalize and approve the Addendum, or does it kick in at the end of this year? Does it kick in at the beginning of 2027? What is the timeline we're working on?

MR. BOYLE: The 3 to 5 years was the timeline requested by the Board, so the TC was running those projections to say to achieve 50% of choosing the F target or 11% which are mutual. By 2028 being 3 years from receiving the overfishing status for 2030 would be 5 years from receiving the overfishing status. That is not in the FMP, it's not in Amendment 1 that it has to be in 3 to 5 years. Whatever the Board wants to see in terms of projections, that is where that timeline comes from.

CHAIR GATES: You have follow-up, Emerson?

MR. HASBROUCK: It's up to our discretion when we start that timeline, and it is also up to our discretion what the timeline is going to be? Am I interpreting that correctly?

MR. BOYLE: Yes, if it's a Board's discretion what the timeline for the probability of achieving the F target being at least 50% is. The measures to achieve that have to be implemented in the second year by Amendment 1, so in 2028.

CHAIR GATES: Jason, you have another question?

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, also back to Bill's comment. Just to remind the Board. It seems like there may not be a severe consequence to

waiting for the MRIP recalibrated numbers, but there then becomes a disconnect, so everything we're kind of working on is old MRIP. That is what was used in the assessment.

They are not going to redo the assessment in this timeframe. They'll be working on it but it won't be ready. Just keep that in mind that if we're inclined to wait for the recalibrated MRIP, at least in my opinion it creates a disconnect between the information that we're working on for the reductions and then this new harvest information. Actually, someone can correct me if that is not right, but I think that is right.

DR. DREW: Right, the projections and the assessment results will all be in the same currency. I think it's just a question of, like when we are evaluating the size limit that would get you to that reduction, then there is a potential that that is not exactly the same data that we used to connect to create that initial estimate. Yes, so I think it's up to the Board to determine, do you want to consider that or not, when you are developing the options versus the projections.

CHAIR GATES: Emerson again.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, I'll try not to ask too many questions. Similar to what Jay was talking about. Then with the recalibrated data, if it shows a reduction in recreational catch, that could lead to a reduction in SSB, but we're not going to know that until the next assessment sometime in the future, three or four, five year later, in terms of where we are relative to the reference points, is that right?

DR. DREW: There is the potential that what we've seen in the past with the previous recalibration was that, yes, it changed the scale of the population, but it didn't necessarily change status, so that yes, you would estimate SSB is likely going to be lower. But that would also mean recruitment is lower and our reference points will be lower as well.

Would that change alone change status? We can't tell until we do that assessment, until we do the

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next assessment, which again would likely be the benchmark, so we will be wrapping in a lot of other changes, including the new fishery independent data that may also impact stock status and where we are.

CHAIR GATES: Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: Just a simple question. It says the anticipated delivery date is August. How comfortable are we with it will be August, as opposed to a little delay, which we're getting very used to delays on a regular basis.

DR. DREW: I mean this is the most recent timeline estimate that we have from MRIP, which we got a couple weeks ago. I think we are not anticipated to have another Government shutdown in that window for this Agency. But obviously, for sure we can't say 100% it's going to be August, there is a possibility that it will be delayed somewhat. But this is sort of their best guess. This is what they are working towards, based on the information and what they anticipated to happen, at least on their capacity and workload timeline window.

CHAIR GATES: I think if there are no more questions we can move on to Considering the Guidance to Plan Development Team for Draft Addendum I, and I think James has a presentation for us on that.

MR. BOYLE: Yes, I'll just get the discussion started. First, after receiving no objections, here is the approved PDT membership. We'll work with the Technical Committee in drafting and analyzing options to achieve the necessary reductions. The AP met on April 21st to review the 2025 Stock Assessment Update and provide comments ahead of the Board meeting today to consider giving direction to the Plan Development Team for Draft Addendum I.

Two members representing Delaware and New York were able to attend and provide comment. Regarding the assessment, both members had

comments regarding fishery independent surveys. One member, the Delaware member commented that the assessment is missing out on the Delaware pot and trap survey and that Maryland and Virginia both have their own tagging program, which would provide additional data. He also noted that changes in effort were reflective of harvesters targeting blue fin tuna, instead of tautog in 2023 and 2024, before it turning to tautog in 2025 in the wave data. The other member, the newer member commented that the same surveys in the New Jersey/New York Bight are not accounting for the species moving to other areas. Particularly they referenced new habitat created from bridge restoration and are therefore not reflecting the current stock.

Additionally, he advocated for the creation of a commercial rod and reel survey given there is a significant portion of the fishery using that gear both commercially and recreationally. Regarding the Addendum. Both AP members support the status quo for both regions. One, the Delaware member acknowledged that the projected reductions in that region are relatively small, but would not support an increase in the size limit.

Both believe the size limits already allow for ample opportunity for fish to reproduce before harvest. Additionally, the Delaware member commented that management options should allow for them to be applied to any wave, so the fishery may choose when the closures or reductions are applied to make them least destructive.

The New York member also added that the size limit already causes significant post release mortality due to the number of fish being released, and that they are concerned that increasing restrictions in the New Jersey, New York Bight could push effort from New York harvesters into Long Island Sound.

Then finally, my last slide is a quick reminder of the direction in Amendment 1. The FMP stipulates that alternative management measures are implemented the second year after receiving overfishing status as we've just discussed. By that guideline, the Board should take final action in 2026

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or 2027 in time to implement measures for the 2028 fishing year.

As mentioned, if there are no further delays in MRIP recalibration, waiting for those values could push the timeline by one meeting cycle where the Board would be considering the Draft Addendum for public comment at the 2026 Annual Meeting, with potential final action at the 2027 winter meeting.

Additionally, Amendment 1 notes that each region or state must identify specific measures in the management document and not just for the implementation plan phase of the implementation. We're looking for guidance on whether the Board wants to wait to use the new MRIP estimates, and what other management measures to include in the Addendum for analysis. The PDT will then draft those measures along with the Technical Committee, to achieve at least a 50% probability of achieving the F target. With that I can take any questions or discussion.

CHAIR GATES: Any questions for James?

MR. RICHARD A. WONG: Thanks, James, for the presentation. I would strongly urge that we wait to use the recalibrated MRIP data, because for one, I don't think the MRIP Survey has done a very good job with estimating Delaware's harvest. For example, we had wind last fall that just blew and blew and blew. We had much less effort. However, our MRIP harvest estimate went up threefold. There is something we have concerns about. But this new, the recalibration, from what I understand about the new estimates is that they mostly largely effect the shorter waves more than the summer waves, and that certainly applies to our tautog fishery in the south. Most of our effort and harvest is the spring and the fall. It's not in the summertime. I would just urge that we try that we wait for the recalibration.

CHAIR GATES: I see Jason McNamee next.

DR. McNAMEE: First, just a quick question for James. I can put focus for this action on New York/New Jersey Bight and DelMarVa. But do we have to ask for something explicitly in this document. Like if Mass/Rhode Island wanted to do something. Not trying to meet a target or anything like that, but wanted to take some sort of precautionary action, for instance.

Would we need the document to say something with respect to that, or is that something the two states can just sort of develop together and do? I'm trying to sort that out so I don't miss an opportunity to at least put a placeholder in.

MR. BOYLE: I believe that states could do it together, potentially through a conservation equivalency with Amendment 1. But there is in the motion that initiated Addendum I, it was a stipulation that we could have measures for Long Island Sound or Massachusetts/Rhode Island for other reasons. It could go in here as well. I think it would be fine either way. I'll defer to Toni if I'm missing something.

MS. KERNS: Sorry. If states want to be more conservative, you can be more conservative at any point in time that you want to. If you would like to use the Addendum as a public outreach process for the two states, then I would recommend going ahead and working with the PDT to put whatever options you pull together, and we can do that for you. Otherwise, you are going to do your own public process through your states and then send in information to us, so that we know what you're doing.

CHAIR GATES: Follow up, Jason?

DR. McNAMEE: Just a follow up, and to complicate. Thank you for that and to Rich's comments a couple minutes ago. I think all of the kind of attributes that you referenced that I am not disagreeing with. But I have concern about delaying and using the recalibrated MRIP numbers, because I just have this feeling that when the PDT starts to do their work, if they start to do that work with the recalibrated MRIP numbers.

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I just see a million questions kind of spinning up when they are trying to sort of connect now this new data stream that wasn't a part of the assessment and all of the metrics that we're trying to meet. I don't think we gained too much from waiting for that recalibrated MRIP data, and I think there is a lot of risk in doing that. I am not a proponent of waiting for that recalibrated data.

CHAIR GATES: Bill Hyatt.

MR. HYATT: I hear what Jay is saying, and I think it is that if we move ahead now, we're basically using the recalibrated data for everything. If we wait until the annual meeting then we're using the pre-calibrated for one part of the process to determine the problem, and the recalibrated to solve the problem. Jay is saying that there are concerns with that. Is there anything that the Technical Committee or any folks can add regarding those concerns? I think you were saying that in essence it is changing the scale, but the direction stays the same with pre-calibrated or recalibrated. I am just wondering what those concerns are and how significant they might be.

DR. DREW: I think the inclusion of the new MRIP numbers in the assessment, in the assessment and in the update in the projections would have more of an impact than the choice to use recalibrated or non-recalibrated data in the development of the options. But this is just based on previous performance of the last time the MRIP numbers were recalibrated.

We can't say for sure until we see what the final numbers are like, but in terms of, is this going to change the size structure of the catch significantly. Is this going to change the catch per trip significantly? Is this going to change the seasonality of, you know like how much a trip is worth in one wave versus another in terms of reducing catch for season limits.

I think that is probably less significant than when we finally would do the update or the

benchmark with the new data. I think the information that we get by waiting versus not waiting is probably not going to be significant on the options themselves, but would have more of an impact when we finally do the update or the benchmark. Having said that, we haven't seen the numbers yet, so I don't know, it's hard to say at this point.

CHAIR GATES: Bob Glenn.

MR. BOB GLENN: I have another follow up question for Katie. Katie, is it fair to say that the recalibrated MRIP estimates could change the magnitude of the reductions necessary, potentially in either direction?

DR. DREW: It could, but we won't know that until we rerun the assessment with the new data.

MR. GLENN: But it's an unknown, it could. Okay, thank you.

CHAIR GATES: Jesse Hornstein.

MR. JESSE HORNSTEIN: Just so I'm clear. If we waited for the recalibrated MRIP data the projections would be rerun, correct? Is that what Sandy had said earlier?

DR. DREW: We would rerun the projections to assume that we would remain status quo in 2026. Right now, the projections are run, assuming that you would implement at the start of 2026, so the new landings would occur in '26 and '27 and then '28 or 2030. If we wait, we will have to assume status quo for 2026 as well.

However, we would again be using the uncalibrated numbers for this entire process. There would need to be a small adjustment to the projection basically to say, we're staying at that status quo level one year longer. That status quo level is going to be the same as it is in the current projections and the same as it was in the assessment update. It will be a small change to the projection. It may increase the reduction needed, because we wait an extra year to get down to that target '27 or that target '28 value

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as 2030 value. We would need a small update to the projections that will not include the recalibrated data.

CHAIR GATES: I don't see any hands, but we have had sort of two comments on which way to go here and one is to wait and one is to not wait. In order to move this along. Oh, I have one more comment from Mr. Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: I don't know if this is going if this is going to turn into a comment or a question; it's 9:40 on Monday morning, so doing the best to try to get started with the week and listening to all of this discussion about the recalibration issue. I just want to make sure that I am clear. The way that I'm hearing it right now, the recalibration is going to happen while we're in this process.

If we decide to delay today or not, we're going to get new information at some point between today and when we take final action. That new information, the way that I am understanding it, is not going to change the options in the document. It's only going to be used by us as a way to look at trends and perhaps ground truth what we're already using to build the Addendum into some type of reduction in the two areas that we're talking about.

I'm sitting here thinking, I don't know why we would delay to wait for information that isn't going to change anything after we get it. We're going to use it as a ground truthing. Maybe we look at the trends to determine if they're similar, even though the scale might be different. You just want to kind of make sure that as these data change that it doesn't blow the whole understanding of our tautog fishery resource out of the picture that we currently have.

If that were to happen, if the new calibrated data don't line up and really throws us completely off track, then I think we need to rethink, we need to start over again. But I am inclined now to just keep this moving forward,

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and let's just let the process happen and see where we are as we check in with one another at the summer and annual meeting and the winter meeting. Let's just see what happens. But I don't like the idea that we would need to delay, just to wait for that information.

CHAIR GATES: I think we still have two options; we'll probably need a motion from someone to get the discussion going and resolved. If anybody is willing to make that motion, I will entertain that now. Jason McNamee.

DR. McNAMEE: I will **move that we do not delay for the recalibrated MRIP data**, keep it that simple if that works.

CHAIR GATES: I saw Emerson Hasbrouck, are you seconding it? I see Emerson seconding it. I think we've heard some rationale from Jason already. I will look to Emerson if he has anything else he would like to add now.

MR. HASBROUCK: There isn't much to add to what has already been discussed, but I think we need to move forward on this. I don't think it's going to make that much of a difference as we go forward. If we delay, then it just adds another year with status quo. We don't know what that is going to do. I don't like walking in two different currencies, in effect. Let's just move forward with this and we'll see what the benchmark assessment shows.

CHAIR GATES: Bob Glenn.

MR. GLENN: I think from my perspective I just have concerns that although I understand all the options on the table don't really change, as far as our management tools are concerned. I am just concerned that the recalibrated MRIP estimates could affect the magnitude of the reductions necessary in one direction or the other.

I think that uncertainty gives me some pause as to moving forward right now, at this point. I think a delay makes some sense, to better understand how the MRIP recalibration is going to affect that before sending the PDT forward to come up with

measures, given that that could really impact the magnitude.

CHAIR GATES: Katie Drew has a comment.

DR. DREW: I would just say that we won't know what the impact of the recalibrated MRIP is on the reduction that we need until we do another assessment. Whether that is an assessment update or whether that is the benchmark. Just waiting for those numbers won't tell us anything about what the right reduction is.

I think it would, when we do the reduction, like it comes out and say, oh great, we're 30% lower, doesn't mean that we're 30% of the way there. We would be doing that comparison again at like status quo would be the new calibrated status quo, compared to where we need to get to. We won't know what the change in the projections would be until we redo the assessment. I don't know if the Board would want to talk about changing the assessment schedule to get that information sooner, but yeah.

MR. GLENN: Follow up, if I may. Katie, thanks for that, I think that's helpful. Can you just remind me what the assessment schedule is again?

DR. DREW: We are currently scheduled to have the benchmark peer reviewed in 2029; the Board would receive it in 2029. We will start work on that like late this year or early next year.

CHAIR GATES: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I've already spoken and provided my support for the process of not delaying. I am still though, you know looking at what Mr. Glenn just mentioned. I am wondering from a staff perspective. The last thing in the world that I want to do is to ask staff to do things twice. But it doesn't sound like we would have to do things twice. But maybe some clarity around from a staff perspective, if you started

tomorrow on working through this Addendum, coming up with options. When these recalibrated data are ready in August and we're all looking at them to determine whether or not the trends are the same. Does it mean that you now have to go back and redo all of the options again? The way I understood it was the recalibrated data would not necessarily be used in any way until the next benchmark to determine status.

DR. DREW: We have the potential to use it in the options that we developed, so that we could wait until the numbers come out in August, which will be, MRIP has not specified when in August, but my guess would be it would be after the first week of August, after this Board meets and potentially approves the Addendum for public comment.

After the new MRIP numbers come out we could use the new MRIP calibrated numbers when we do, for example, a size limit analysis to say, if we increase the size limit one inch, what does that look like in terms of the percent reductions, or if we want to shorten the season by two weeks. What is that in November/December versus January/February or March/April? What does that look like in terms of the reductions?

I do not anticipate that that recalibrated data would have a significant impact on those options. But of course, it is too early to say yet. I will say, my concern would be that I think the Board either has to commit now or not, because if we go forward with not waiting, with not using the recalibrated numbers, they will come out while this Addendum is out for public comment.

Then the Board can have this, you can do a comparison of those numbers and the trends when we get back together in November, and the Board can decide what to do then. I would prefer for us not to put a lot of time and effort into developing these options, developing this Addendum, sending it out for public comment and the Board coming back in November and they are like, no.

In terms of the amount of work, changing your mind would double our work load, unless the Board

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wanted to commit to one thing and carry that through. Ideally, we would only do it once. The other thing would be, you know if we are the question of when, do we have to stick to this '28 or '30 option? If there are other things that the Board would want to consider on the projection front.

Other options, things like that, would that delay. If there is additional work that we want to task the TC with prior to our August meeting, then maybe it makes sense to wait for those numbers in that change and get it all done later. Long story short, I guess the question is, how much of a workload change or is this for the Technical Committee, and we would like to make it as little reduplication as possible while still meeting your needs.

CHAIR GATES: That was a lot. Mike Luisi, do you have a follow up on that?

MR. LUISI: Yes, just a quick follow up, Mr. Chairman. It would be my preference that when the public see the options that they see the options that we're going to decide on, not see the options and then have them change, even slightly, after new data come out.

Whatever that means, however we have to get to that point with this motion, if this motion doesn't delay, but then maybe. We knew we were going to have to deal with this, we knew that there was going to be some addendum, some amendment that was going to be happening right upon the point in time when all of these recreational catch data were being recalibrated. Just want to make sure we thought through, and make sure that we're as efficient as we can be with staff that are going to be working on this. Now I'm not sure where I am with this motion, although I don't want to delay it.

I don't want the public to see two sets of options, because that just makes it harder for me to have to communicate that to the public. Any help is being requested to understand that

a little more and how this motion effects that ultimate piece in time when the public gets this.

DR. DREW: The numbers will not be out before our August meeting, which is ideally when this would be approved for public comment. On the other hand, if they are delayed significantly, maybe they won't come out until after this is approved for final implementation.

However, right now we are looking at a scenario where ideally the Board would provide some guidance to the PDT. The PDT will do the options with the uncalibrated numbers. The options will be presented to you in August, the first week of August. You will send this out for public comment.

Depending on what MRIP has told us at that time, there is the potential that we could at least provide you know maybe delay the release of the document until we can at least say, here is the total numbers and here are the trends, and not be the options, but at least not have these numbers come out and have the document separate, whatever.

But then I think you could say, we're just going to keep going forward with these options and just recognize that this is a source of uncertainty, and we'll go forward with the uncalibrated numbers, everything is in the same currency. Then approve it in November for implementation in 2026.

You know I think you can change your mind on this at any point, in terms of if you are unhappy with the results and the calibration when you come back in November and rerelease it again with changes and things like that. But I think there is a path forward to commit to unrecalibrated the whole way. It is going to be a source of uncertainty and we're going to go for it, or delay.

MR. LUISI: That was helpful, thank you very much.

CHAIR GATES: I see Bob had his hand up.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Just, the Board should go wherever they want with this motion, not trying to steer that. But working

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backwards, if the document was approved at our annual meeting, which is the second week of November this year, you know obviously it won't affect the 2026 fishery.

It will affect 2027, or if this document happens to be delayed one cycle and wait for some more insight from MRIP, and it was approved at the winter meeting, which is the last week of January this year. Do the states still have time to get the regulations in place by 2027? Is there a big difference between November and January, as far as final approval for the states affecting the 2027 fishery. I just don't have a sense of how long it takes each of the states to get tog regulations in place, each state is different. I think that is kind of what we're talking about here potentially is November versus January on final approval and then the hard work happens at all the state level for getting these in place. Just food for thought. What is the best path forward, I'm not sure. Clearly the 2026 fishery is not going to be affected and this is 2027.

CHAIR GATES: One thought I have and I'll use this opportunity to say it. What happens if MRIP gets delayed further? If we delay now and then MRIP delays even further, where does that leave us for action at all this year? I saw Joe Cimino had his hand raised.

MR. JOE CIMINO: I support the motion. Katie has already pointed out that we're already turning right around and ready to go again, and yet I still feel like, you know I think we need to look at the potential for this being a species that gets a benchmark perhaps sooner than 2029, if possible, even bumping other species if necessary. I think we should look at 2028.

It's a quiet room, it's a small table right now, but it is an important recreational species to a lot of us. The MRIP recalibration, several states have some surveys that will be coming online that will be able to be included in a new benchmark, I'm hoping including New Jersey, who has a ventless trap survey as well, that kind

of suggests that if that data was included, SSB looks better, fishing mortality is a little lower, important for the New York/New Jersey Bight area.

I don't want to delay this. I think Bob brought up a really important point of like the timing of regulations. As we're moving forward, I think that in the meantime knowing that like we're actually going to be able to incorporate data. The reason why I don't support this is as Mike Luisi had pointed out is like, we're not necessarily going to have information that is going to help us until we get a benchmark. I think we really need to push that.

CHAIR GATES: Bill Hyatt.

MR. HYATT: Just quickly. I just want to say I want to say I support this motion. There is a huge amount of variability in the tog fishery anyway. When you consider that amount of variability doesn't worry me too much that there might be some difference between the recalibrated numbers, so I think move forward now.

CHAIR GATES: I think we can probably move on to the voting on this, but before we do, the wording up on the board I think has changed a little bit since we started. Jason, do you agree with the wording, can you read that into the record for us.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, that looks fine, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR GATES: Could you read it in for us?

DR. McNAMEE: Oh, got you, sure. **Move to continue forward with the Addendum process and not delay for the recalculated MRIP data.**

CHAIR GATES: Does anybody need to caucus before we move to a vote on this? I don't see any need for a caucus, Toni, do you want to do the role? All right, **all those in favor, please raise your hand.**

MS. KERNS: Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and NOAA Fisheries.

CHAIR GATES: All those opposed.

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MS. KERNS: Massachusetts and Delaware.

CHAIR GATES: Any abstentions, null votes, no. We had 7 to 2 in favor, so this motion carries.
Toni Kerns.

MS. KERNS: I just wanted to address Joe's request that we look at the timing of the benchmark. I think what we'll do is we'll go back and look at the timing, potentially get the Assessment Science Committee together and then come back with a proposal of what we could adjust at the Policy Board.

Either in August, if we can get a meeting done in time for that, and if not then we can at least make a recommendation to let you know what we're thinking and then the Policy Board could reevaluate that schedule at the annual meeting at the normal timeline, but we may be able to bump it up.

DR. DREW: The Assessment Science Committee will be meeting in May virtually, so we can bring this to them and come up with a new assessment schedule that would address this concern.

CONSIDER GUIDANCE TO PLAN DEVELOPMENT TEAM FOR DRAFT ADDENDUM I

CHAIR GATES: Next item that we're going to, we need some direction for the PDT on what specific management measures we want them to look at. I don't know if anybody has thoughts on that, it's things like looking at size limits and bag limits to achieve those reductions. This plan is a little unique, I think that the actual measures have to be in the Addendum. Jason.

DR. McNAMEE: Potentially taking us on a tangent that you don't want, so you can stop me. But I was thinking about one of those things that we need to decide on is we've got two versions of, you know just sticking with the 50% probability of achieving whatever target versus the Risk & Uncertainty Policy. I've got a comment on that, unless you want me to wait.

CHAIR GATES: I think we can start with that.

DR. McNAMEE: Thinking a little bit about this, and kind of seeing finally how it played out. I've had a couple of thoughts. I think at this point what we've said, with respect to the Risk & Uncertainty Policy in this process is we're going to kind of run it parallel, and not necessarily be bound by it, which I'm fine with.

To save some work for the PDT, you know I think they should focus on just that 50%, which is the only other option that kind of came up. That being said, thinking about the Risk & Uncertainty Policy, how it has kind of played out here. It's just my sense that people are not going to like what it said, which is fine and I understand that. But this whole system was developed to be iterative in nature, and so what I would like to do is not have it be in this document and create confusion for the public, when they are kind of looking at things.

But for the Board, I would like us to keep working through specifically, with respect to the iteration I was just talking about a moment ago has to do with, in particular, the social science and economic elements within the risk policy. We got recommendations from the CESS, which are good recommendations.

However, I think it is in the purview of the Board to disagree with those and want to modify them in some way, shape or form. That is one thing, maybe folks are ready today to make those comments. I'm guessing that they are not, but maybe we can think about that and have that discussion at the next meeting, you know when this item is still up for discussion, so that folks can go back and look at what the CESS said about these things, and then offer maybe a different score even, and kind of work through that.

This will just give us that exercise of doing this iteration and help us with the timing, because I think this timing is not right. We should have come to this meeting ready to do that sort of thing, except we didn't know that. It's okay, that is what

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this experiment is for. If you'll indulge me, just another comment on this topic.

We've been working on this at the Commission for a while, its had fits and starts. The New England Council has picked up a very similar type of process. It's simplified from what we're looking at, and so that might be something else we want to think about in particular when it comes to the socioeconomic information, I think.

I agreed with, we sort of put in this short term/long term concept in there, but now we had a suspicion that this was going to happen, they basically just offset each other. My guess is that probably would be persistent with this. I would encourage folks to look at what the New England Council has done, they like simplified that, you know have these two. I think we might want to think about that as well.

There are a couple of other elements that I think folks would like in what the New England Council is doing with the risk policy. Theirs isn't completely set yet either. It's got a little further out, I think, closer to utilization than we have here at the Commission. It's good to kind of look at those examples and learn from them. I won't rattle on about this. I could. If you want me to, I will. But those are just two things, so I would love to keep talking about this in the context of tautog, but not have it rolled into the actual document at this point.

CHAIR GATES: Dr. Drew.

DR. DREW: The other thing that, as you said the Board could consider adjusting through this process is the weightings, and that was our intent behind the short term/long term. You could weight them differently, if you would like, which might resolve that issue. But I think we could also, if the Board is interested in continuing the process, we could check back in with the Board, maybe via a survey to evaluate the weights as well as the socioeconomic scores and then essentially report back to you about

that at the August meeting, to see how all that went. But again, as you said, not include that in the document, just as a report back on the process.

CHAIR GATES: Yes, I think providing some kind of survey or something, for the Board to work on in between would be helpful, instead of just sending us home to think about it. I might not. We have one suggestion is to stick with the 50% probability. We have one, we've sort of resolved one, unless we hear somebody speak in opposition to that. What kind of more direction does the PDT need? Mike.

MR. LUISI: Are you still looking for just some general ideas on options and things like that, because I have a couple that I could offer. In discussing this at home, our staff and I haven't had the chance really to talk much with Delaware and Virginia about this, but one of the things that we were thinking about was establishing an option in our DelMarVa Region that has a bag limit that is the same for all the states in the region.

Right now, we're close, but Maryland's bag limit adjusts in the summer to be reduced, it's a reduced bag limit. Perhaps we could use this as an opportunity to try to find something that aligns with the three states in our region in moving forward. In addition to that, just as an added extra precaution, something that my staff thought was something that's being used in the Massachusetts/Rhode Island area.

I believe you guys have like a trophy fish; you are only allowed one fish over a certain size limit. Fishermen in Maryland often referred to our tautog fishery as a world class fishery. One of the suggestions coming from our public stakeholders is that we should be considering maybe limiting how many of the largest of the fish we can take off the reef at any one particular time.

A trophy size, where only one fish could be captured above a certain size limit could offer an extra level of protection, continue with this model of having this world class fishery that people come from all over the east coast to engage in. I would

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like to see those develop as staff are working through options for the DelMarVa Region.

MR. BOYLE: We have a bag limit that is the same across all states and a trophy regulation similar to that in Rhode Island for DMV specifically. Is that something that the Board would like to see for both regions, and also, so I guess a few things.

If that is something you want to see in New Jersey/New York Bight as well, is there anything else you want to see, in terms of seasons or anything like that or size limits? There is the 2028 and 2030 timeline still matched up with what the Board wants, in terms of how these are drafted and analyzed, and then do you want to see something in Massachusetts/Rhode Island for consistency as well? Those are my three questions.

CHAIR GRANT: Jesse.

MR. HORNSTEIN: I would like to shoot for the 2030 timeline. It's a big reduction we're going to be asking the public to take, and if we can spread it out over a few years I think that would be the most palatable. Then as far as seasons and bag limits.

This is going to pull apart the Sound and the Bight Region in New York, which creates this kind of uncomfortable tension between those two areas. If there is any way to keep those measures as close together matching as feasible, I just ask that they try and work to keep those matching up, at least maybe in timeframe or bag limits, whatever can be done.

CHAIR GRANT: Joe Grist.

MR. JOSEPH GRIST: I appreciate my friend from the north making that suggestion about adjoining possession limits. I also know that for Virginia/Maryland to match up on possession limits, it represents something like a 50% cut in our possession limit. Last year that's an 8 to

10% reduction. If we're going to be looking at everything,

I mean definitely maybe adjustments to the season, something of that nature would be more beneficial for our perspective, unless Maryland is willing to meet us halfway and come up a little bit. But looking at the season length would be a good approach for us. I'm not sure whether to touch size limit or not. I feel we've got size limit at a pretty good spot right now, but season would be a good one in there.

CHAIR GATES: Rich Wong.

MR. WONG: I agree with Virginia, and I do appreciate Mike Luisi's and Maryland's sentiment, trying to have the same possession limit. But even as close as Maryland, Delaware and Virginia are, tautog is in in so incredibly localized. I don't see the real strong reason to have the same regulations; you know across all three states. Also, that would represent 50% cut in our bag limit as well. It probably wouldn't work very well for us in Delaware; it wouldn't be very popular for our anglers.

CHAIR GATES: Just a follow up with Rich, we hear one thing that work. Is there any direction you would like to provide on what might work for you guys?

MR. WONG: Yes, I mean if we have to take the reduction the season would probably be preferable, and as Jesse pointed out, the farther rebuild, so we can spread it out.

CHAIR GATES: Jason McNamee.

DR. McNAMEE: First, just a quick comment. I've heard a couple of folks offer that they would love to try and get some consistency within their regions. I just wanted to offer that I built a little tool to kind of make that judgment, at least for the black sea bass process. But I offer that if folks want to, first I would love for it to get out a little further, to get some review of it.

I just made it and we sort of used it as a guide. I would love for other folks to take a look at it, beat it up a little bit. I think it's pretty slick, but it's worth getting some extra eyes on it. But that might be a helpful tool for folks, so just to kind of offer that is out there, and I'm happy to share it. Maybe, James, I can send it to you if you don't have it already. Yes, so then Mass/Rhode Island, I have not talked to my friends in Massachusetts directly about this, in passing a couple of times.

I told them I was nervous about our harvest rates going up and our biomass levels coming down. I would love for us to at least have the opportunity to discuss this, potentially add it into the Addendum if we can come to agreement. The seasons I think are pretty locked in and pretty conservative as it stands now.

I guess I would just be looking at bag limit and minimum size as potential adjustments we could make to kind of slow the decline in the biomass in our area. Again, I think what we're asking for here is just to have it in the Addendum for now, so that we can discuss this and put together a couple of options based on those two metrics if they agree to that.

CHAIR GATES: Any other? Bob Glenn.

MR. GLENN: I just wanted to offer support for Jason's comments on keeping flexibility in the Addendum to allow Massachusetts/Rhode Island to take a look at our management framework and see those opportunities there to look at the season and bag limits to potentially address what looks like some increased harvest rates or declining biomass.

CHAIR GATES: We've got some comments for each region. I'll look to technical folks; do we have sufficient comments to develop options for consideration in August?

DR. DREW: Yes, I think so. If there is anything you guys think about afterwards, you can reach

out to us and to the PDT. But obviously, sooner would be better than later.

CHAIR GATES: Thanks, folks. I see Jesse's hand go up. You're moving on to a different topic, right? If Jason McNamee can go first that would be great.

DR. McNAMEE: Tangentially related to what we were just talking about. First, just to say I support kind of looking at the assessment schedule and seeing if there is some way, because there is obviously interest in the kind of change in MRIP. I think it matters to tautog being such a highly recreational species.

I think that is important to get that assessment as quickly as we can, understanding there is going to be tradeoffs and we'll have to make those judgments as to whether it is prioritized or not. I support that. One thing I was wondering though, so this is a benchmark that we're going into, and I'm just noting that right now the way we're running the assessment is, each spatial unit is its own assessment.

Each is in its own box and there is no swimming between the boxes at this point. I wondered, and I apologize, I feel like this is one of those things that I say over and over again, but I think there are some techniques now that exist, you know thinking specifically about WAM, stock synthesis can also do this. But having one synthetic model with spatial units that allows some exchange, even if it is really small. I don't know, I like that idea better. I'm not sure, I didn't see that on the slide, that's why it popped into my head. I hope maybe that is one of the things that the benchmark is going to look at, so yes that is my comment.

DR. DREW: Yes, I think reevaluate stock status, not stock status, but maybe stock definitions could be on that list, as well as something like WAM or stock synthesis that does allow movement or migration within the model. Obviously, if we bump the benchmark up too soon, I think that will limit what we can explore on that front.

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I think probably the big data gap would be developing those migration rates to parameterize the model. But I think it's definitely something that the TC and the SAS would be very interested in looking at, if the time and the data support it.

CHAIR GATES: Jesse.

MR. HORNSTEIN: Also like to, and this until it's been discussed. Also like to see the PDT develop options to go out for a second type of tautog tag to be used in the commercial tagging program. Unfortunately, in New York we continue to hear about negative impacts that the kind of strap tag has had on businesses of some of our permit holders that participate in the live market.

The intent of this would be let it be at the discretion of a state to offer a secondary tag to their harvesters, which would allow us to stay status quo who want to stay status quo, but also if it was provided to harvesters would allow harvesters the option to select the tag that meets the needs of their business.

New York previously conducted testing of various tag types, went with a number of tag types and we didn't find a suitable tag to move forward with. Our goal here would be to fund an independent study, so we've got a broader range of tag types and sizes to make sure that a tag does not impact fish kept in live storage until they are sold for consumption, that it is a user-friendly tag and that a secondary tag also meets the goals and objectives of the tagging program.

Something like this is likely to require significant financial support, you know we would like to see this move forward in the Addendum and ultimately in the FMP, so there is some certainty that this is a possibility moving forward. Then before a secondary tag is selected, it would still have to go through the approval from the TC Board and LEC as

required. I'm happy to make a motion on this if that is necessary as well.

CHAIR GATES: Bill Hyatt.

MR. HYATT: A question, just follow up question on what Jesse just said. Is this a suggestion that this be in the Addendum, simply to recognize that New York is doing this study, or is there more to it than that?

CHAIR GATES: Jesse.

MR. HORNSTEIN: I think this would be in the Addendum as options to allow for this secondary tag to be used, once one ideally is eventually selected.

CHAIR GATES: Right now, the plan only allows for one tag to be used on the coast. This would be adding a second tag to the roster of possible tags. Bob Glenn.

MR. GLENN: Yes, I guess I just would express a little bit of concern on opening up the tag question again. This is something that this Board had looked at repeatedly and discussed. I think certainly if New York is interested in coming up with an alternative tag, I think the Board could be supportive of that, I guess.

But without knowing what that tag is ahead of time, I have some concern about putting it into this Addendum now. It would seem to me as a matter of process, it would make sense to do the study, come up with the results and that we have a workable tag. Then once we know that, it seems to me that the Board would be in a better position to support adoption of an alternative tag.

As opposed to preemptively putting it in the Addendum now, not knowing whether or not we actually have another tag that will work. Then I guess, if I may, just a follow up would be a question of process. Maybe this is for Toni. Can this be something that is handled under conservation equivalency, should New York come up with an alternative tag that works?

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CHAIR GATES: Toni.

MS. KERNS: I think there are two issues here. One, New York is looking to use 2 tags instead of 1 tag, and then whether or not this Board is okay with using 2 tags or not is the question. It's having that out there. I think the Addendum process would put the option for the Board to be able to allow, through Board action the approval of a second tag.

It doesn't guarantee the use of that second tag, if approved it would just be a Board action to make a decision for that year to use a second tag. The other part that could come out of this is that the Board can go through this in the Addendum process in that timeframe New York would be looking at different tags.

Then you guys could decide, we're going to stop using the tag we're currently using and switch for everyone to go to this alternative tag that New York may or may not be able to come up with during their testing process. It's sort of multiple things that are going on. Off the top of my head, thinking through. I don't want to say absolutely no conservation equivalency tags, but I don't know how conservation equivalency would work with a tag, because it's not really equivalent. It would be hard to come up with equivalency in a tag process.

I think what you want to be able to do is, what we would do through the Addendum process is have all the appropriate bodies be commenting on, what does it mean if we use two tags? How does that impact enforcement? How does that impact the health of the fish that are being contained, et cetera. We would go back and look at all of that and come to the Board, but this Addendum would only provide it as a tool in the tool box for the Board to utilize through Board action.

CHAIR GATES: All right, Jason McNamee then I have Bill Hyatt.

DR. MCNAMEE: I appreciated Bob's comments. I'm pretty much okay with what Jesse is talking about here, sort of a deliberative process looking and collecting data. The clarification of yes, it would, whether it is in the Addendum or not, it would come back for Board action. We as a group would approve or not some alternative.

I would just want to add, I think this particular aspect of the rules that we have on this fishery enforcement is a really important component. I mean it's what it's for, so their agreement that yes, there are like 2 different types of tags, as long as they are tagged it's okay, or not. I want to hear from them on this as well. Then I guess I just defer.

It seems like maybe from Toni's comments, just sort of making them that it would be like maybe the cleanest to have at least this notion of the tag in the document. I'm okay with that, but if it is not necessary, it would be nice to like not have an extra thing in the document, if it's not needed. I'm not sure on that aspect of it. But generally, sorry prattling on, but the concept is okay, as long as it is rigorous and the Board votes on it in the end, whether or not we approve its use or not.

CHAIR GATES: My understanding, what Jesse is asking for is for us to consider the possibility of using a second tag, and that the Board would then come back later after they've done their study and approve or not that tag, as used as a secondary tag.

MS. KERNS: But having it in the Addendum, it doesn't guarantee that the Board will say yes to the second tag, it just is the tool to allow for it.

CHAIR GATES: Jesse.

MR. HORNSTEIN: Would it just be cleaner if I make this as a motion? I would go out to the Board and ask, is there any objection to including this in the Addendum, before we did that. Joe Cimino.

MR. CIMINO: No objection. I would like to know if the Law Enforcement Subcommittee feels that this exploration is worthwhile. I believe they are discussing it this week. I would say just contingent

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upon their acceptance of this pursual, then I have no objections.

CHAIR GATES: I think we would have an opportunity to, at the August meeting, before this goes out to public comment, if we want to pull anything out of the Addendum at that time, we could pull it out then. Jesse.

MR. HORNSTEIN: I'll just add too, yes, I think adding the secondary tag option to provide some adaptability and flexibility to the program. We constantly hear about management needs to be more adaptable and flexible, even heard about it this morning, being more adaptable and flexible. I think this, you know at its worst it will say that a secondary tag is allowed, doesn't mean one needs to, you know if one is not approved. It would still allow in the future for continued development of research to be done, so that if one is ever found that meets all the needs can be utilized. It also provides flexibility of states who may not have issues right now, but you never know what the future brings, so should issues arise in the future it would allow themselves or an alternative tag to their harvesters as well.

CHAIR GATES: I saw Bill Hyatt, you had your hand up earlier, no. Any other business on this topic? Roy Miller.

MR. MILLER: Could you quickly review for me what the timeline is, in terms of going out to public hearing for this Addendum?

MR. BOYLE: The process will be to bring a draft document back for Board review in August, to consider approving for public comment. If approved, then we'll be back in the annual meeting for final action.

CHAIR GATES: Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: I'm a little confused here on process. I'm not sure where we are. Jesse had a motion to introduce relative to this topic, and then we started to debate whether or not he

should introduce that motion, and it flashed up on the screen a couple of times and then went away.

In the 12 years I've been on this Commission, I don't recall ever debating whether or not somebody could introduce a motion, or are we to the point where we don't need a motion and we're going to include this in moving forward, you know to allow for a second type of tag. Where are we with this?

CHAIR GATES: Thanks, Emerson, sorry for that confusion. I think my intent was just debating whether we needed a motion or not to include this in the Addendum. Since there was no opposition to include, I didn't hear anybody speaking against it. I think we can just have it by staff and just include it in the Addendum to work on it. Thank you for that question though.

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, thank you for the clarification.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR GATES: If that is all on this topic, I think we can move on to Other Business. Does anybody have any other business to come before the Tog Board? Okay, so with that, I think we are ready to adjourn. Thank you, everybody, and have a good rest of the meeting.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.
on Monday, May 4, 2026)

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Tautog Board Risk and Uncertainty Weighting Results

July 20, 2026

Introduction

Although the Tautog Management Board elected to use the FMP-mandated 50% probability of achieving the *F* target for the development of Addendum I to Amendment 1, the Board expressed an interest in continuing the process of applying the Commission's Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool. The next step is for the Board to consider adjusting the weighting of the different scores within the tool and the socioeconomic scores themselves.

To that end, an online survey was distributed to the Tautog Board, and the results were used to update the Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool.

Results

Three Commissioners from the New Jersey-New York Bight region completed the survey.

Overall, the weightings were similar to the weightings established by the Board in 2021, during the first pilot application of the tool to tautog (Figure 1). The main differences were slightly lower weight for the uncertainty scores and slightly higher weight for the short-term socioeconomic impacts. Applying the revised weights to the technical and socioeconomic scores developed by the Tautog Technical Committee (TC) and the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) resulted in very little change to the recommended probability output by the tool (Table 1).

Commissioners also provided input on the socioeconomic scores. The scores used in the first iteration of the tool were developed by CESS on the basis of specific metrics about the commercial and recreational fisheries in each region, and the scale of the proposed management change. Commissioners scored the short-term socioeconomic impacts on both the commercial and recreational fisheries more negatively than the CESS did (Figure 2). In addition, while the CESS scored the long-term socioeconomic impacts of the proposed management change as positive, balancing out the short-term negative impacts, Commissioners scored the long-term socioeconomic impacts for both fisheries as slightly negative overall (Figure 2). The CESS noted in their report that the “long-term socioeconomic impacts” factor was difficult to interpret and recommended additional discussion on how to assess this factor, which may be contributing to the differences between the CESS and the Board on this score. The revised socioeconomic scores had a more significant impact on the recommended probability from the tool, resulting in the recommendation that management action should have a 58% probability of *F* being at or below the *F* target for the NJ-NY Bight region, compared to the first iteration of the tool, which recommended a 64% probability (Table 1).

Next Steps

The Board will review these results during the Summer 2026 Board Meeting and may choose to revise them further based on Board discussion. The Board may also provide feedback to the Risk and Uncertainty Work Group at this meeting to continue development of the tool.

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool recommended probability for different weightings and socioeconomic scores

Scenario	Recommended Probability
TC/CESS scores + 2021 Board weights	64%
TC/CESS scores + 2026 Board weights	63%
TC scores + 2026 Board weights + Board scores	58%

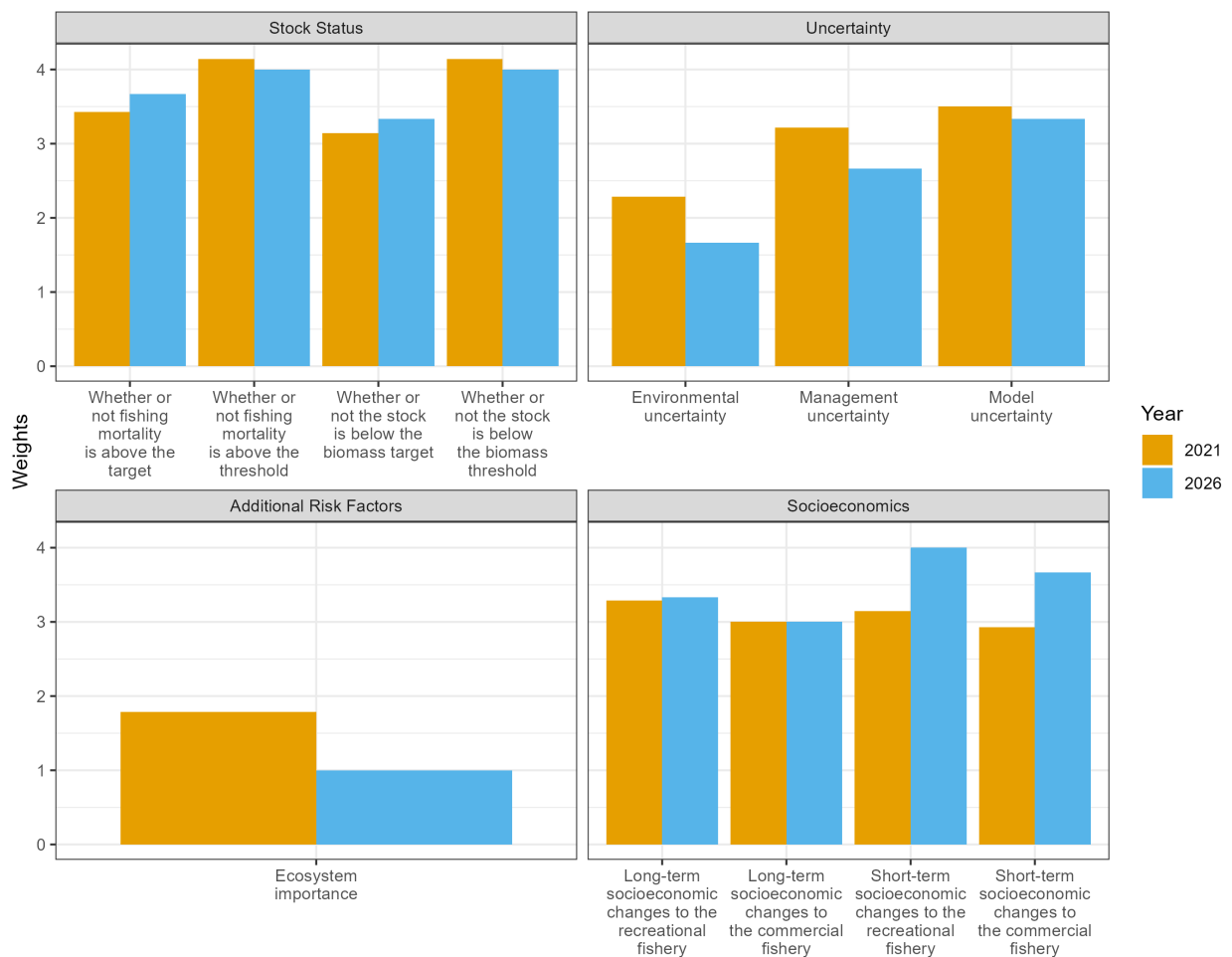


Figure 1. Board weights for the components of the Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tool from 2026 compared to 2021.

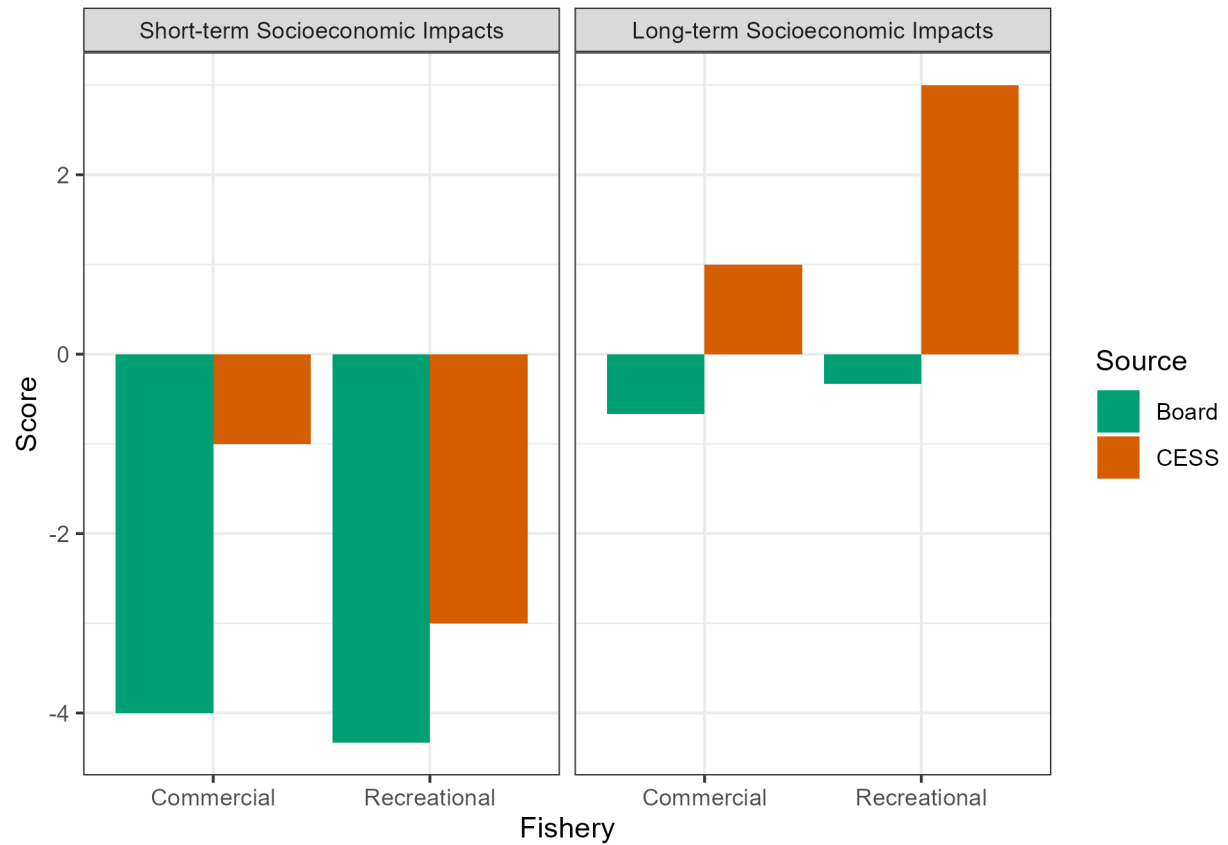


Figure 2. Comparison of socioeconomic scores for the NJ-NY Bight region from the CESS and Board members.