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Revised MRIP Estimates for Striped Bass

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November 11, 2026

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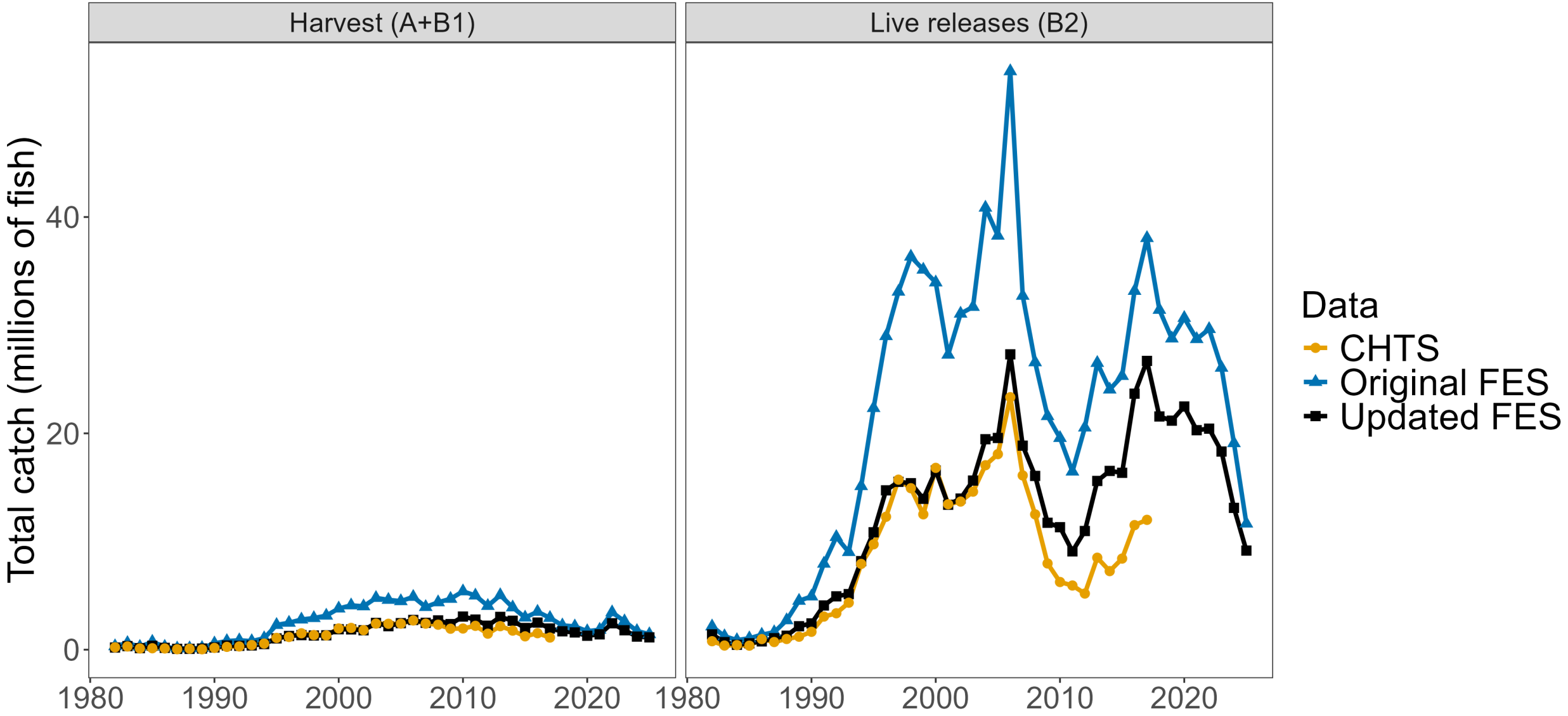
MRIP Calibration History

- 2018: CHTS to original FES calibration
  - Switch from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey to the mail-based Fishing Effort Survey for shore and private/rental boat modes
  - Incorporated into the 2019 benchmark for striped bass

- 2026: Original FES to updated/improved FES calibration
  - Improvements to the mail survey itself and to the CHTS to FES calibration
  - Will be incorporated into the 2027 benchmark for striped bass

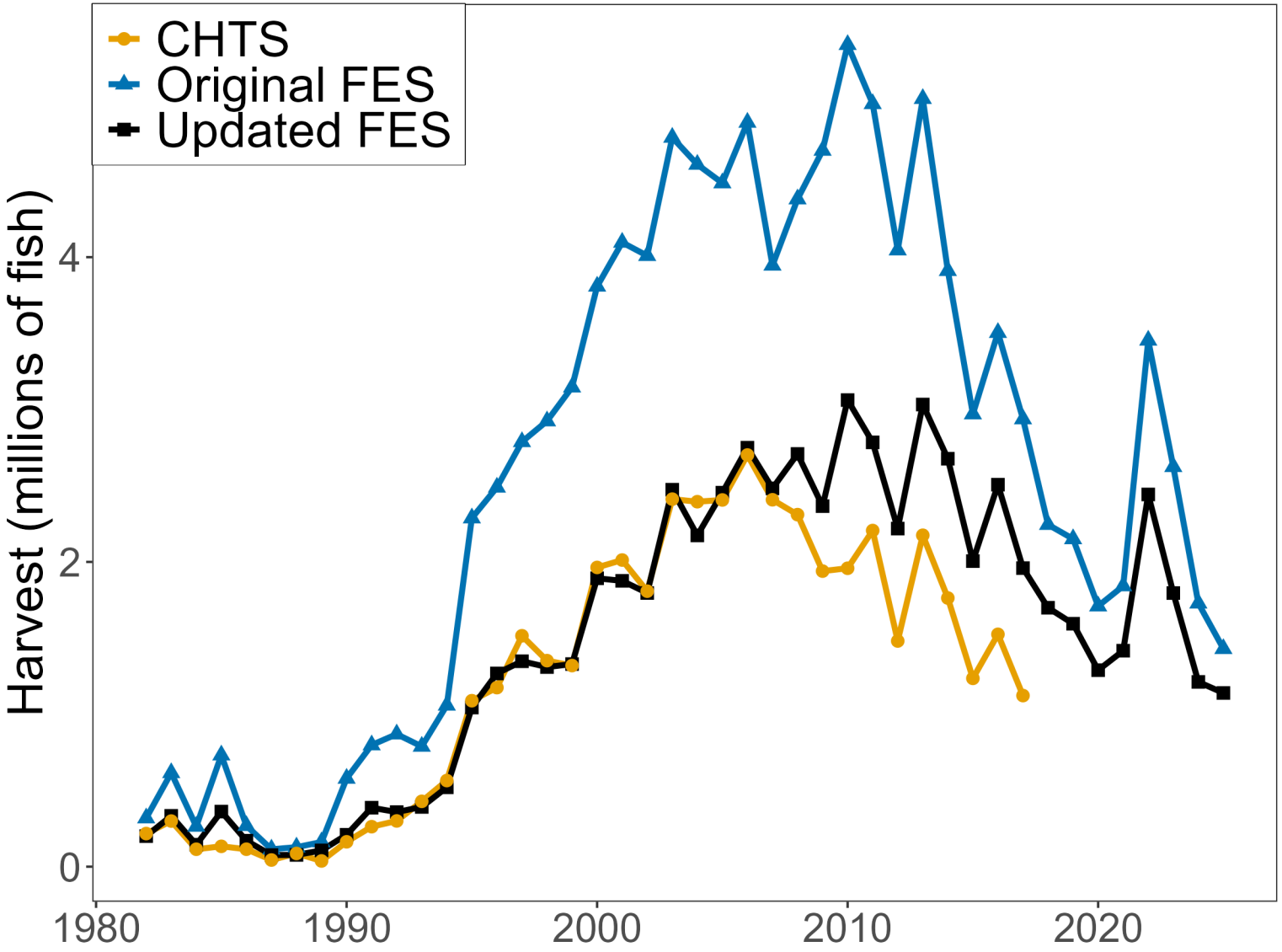
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Total Catch



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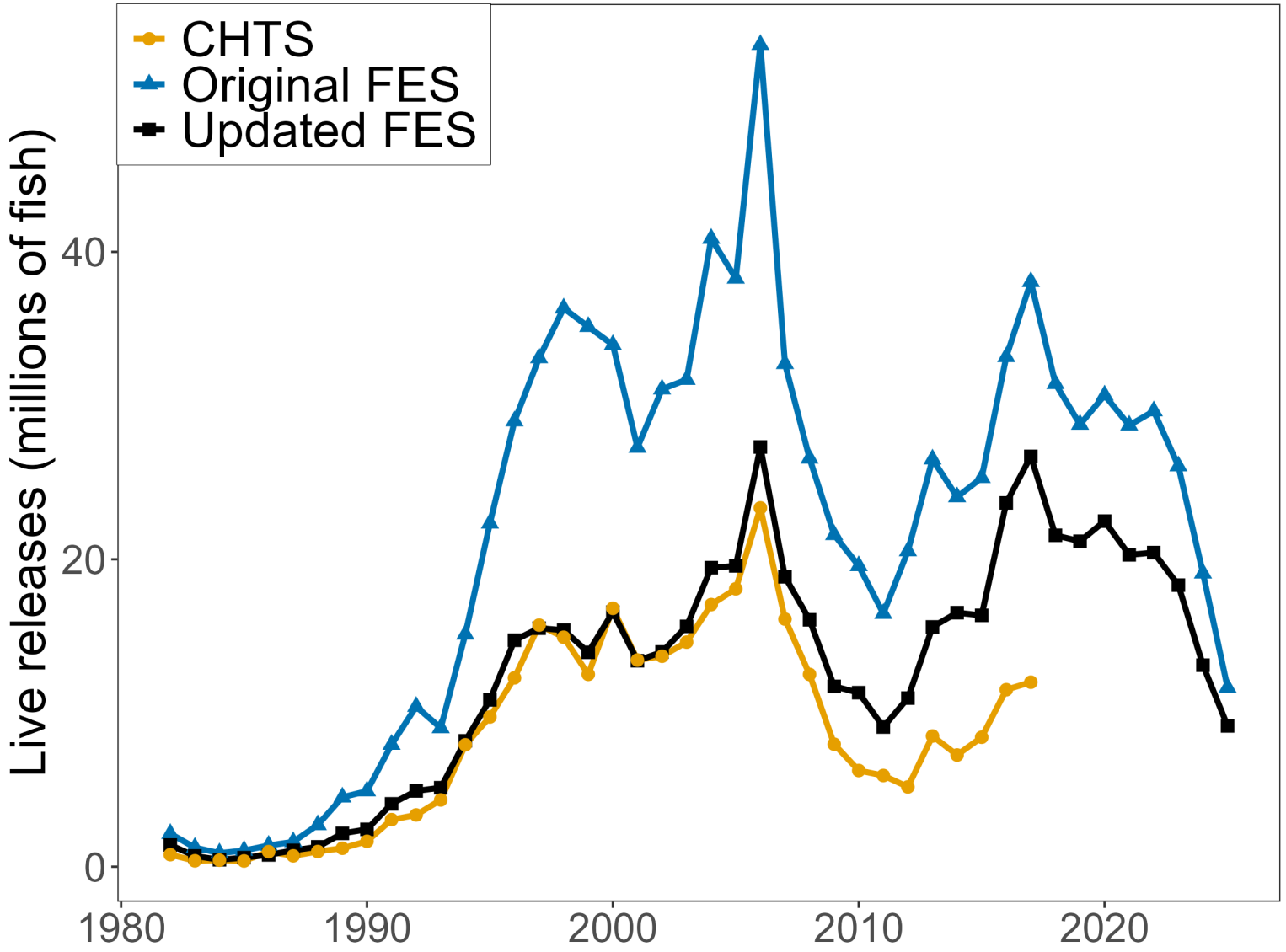
Harvest (A+B1)



Percent Change (updated FES relative to original FES)	
Overall	-43%
1982-2017	-45%
2018-2025	-27%

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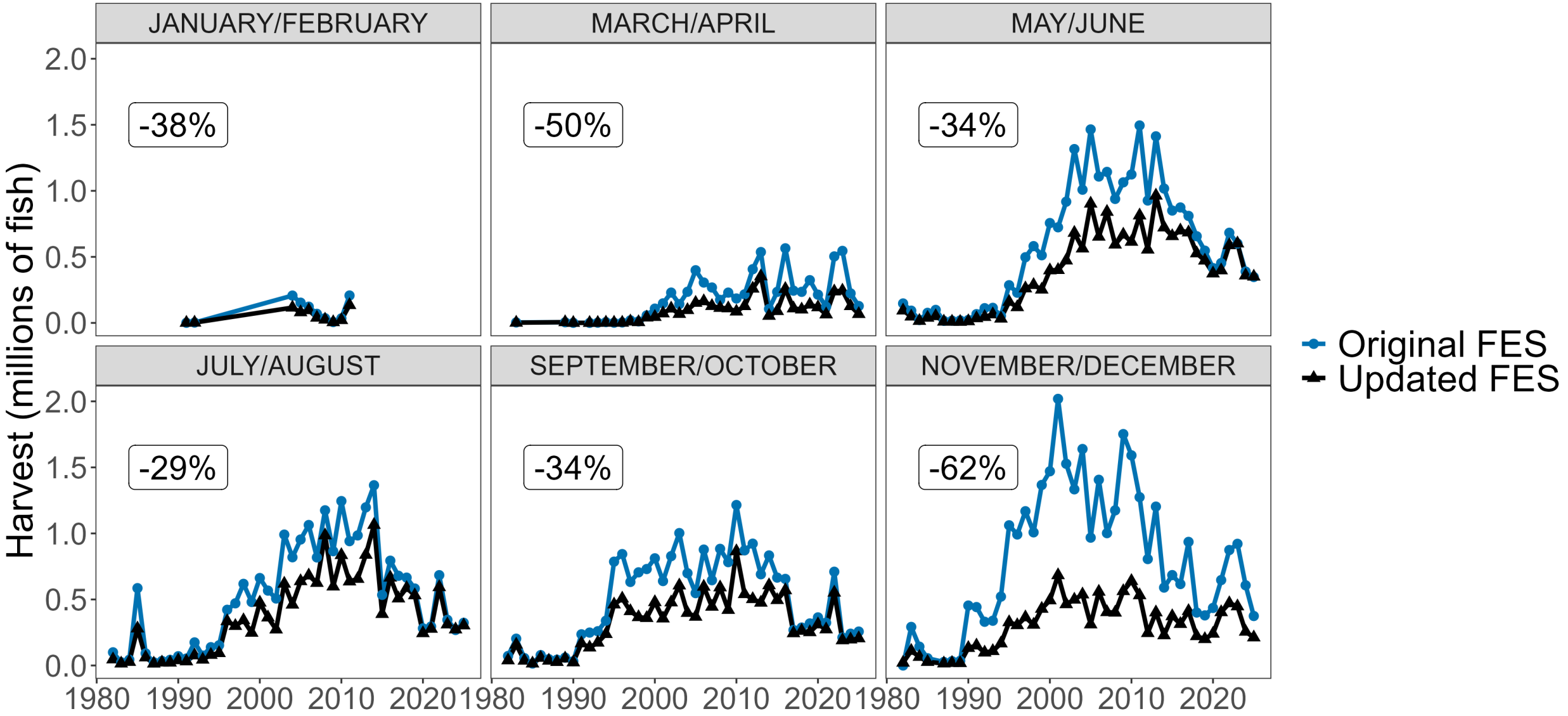
Live Releases (B2)



Percent Change (updated FES relative to original FES)	
Overall	-43%
1982-2017	-46%
2018-2025	-29%

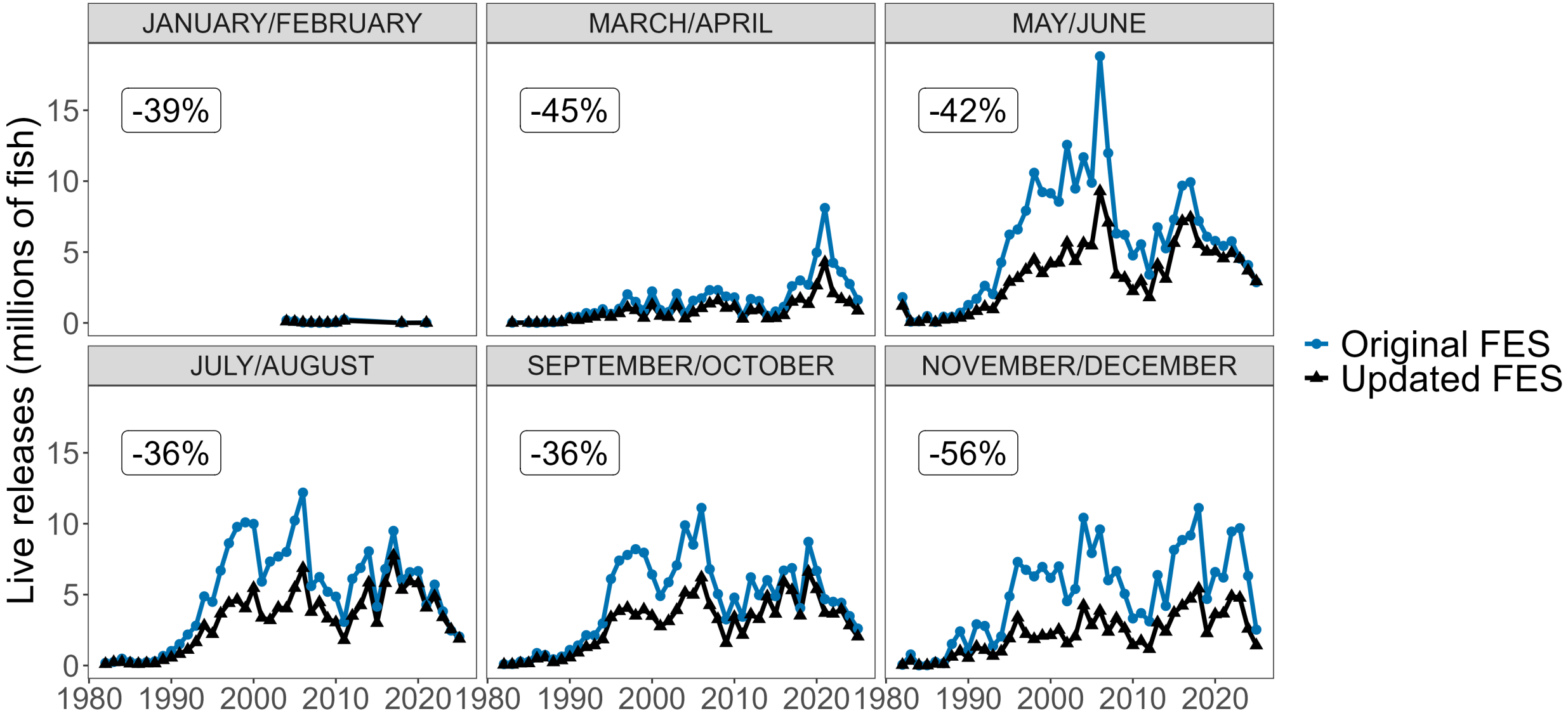
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Harvest (A+B1) by Wave



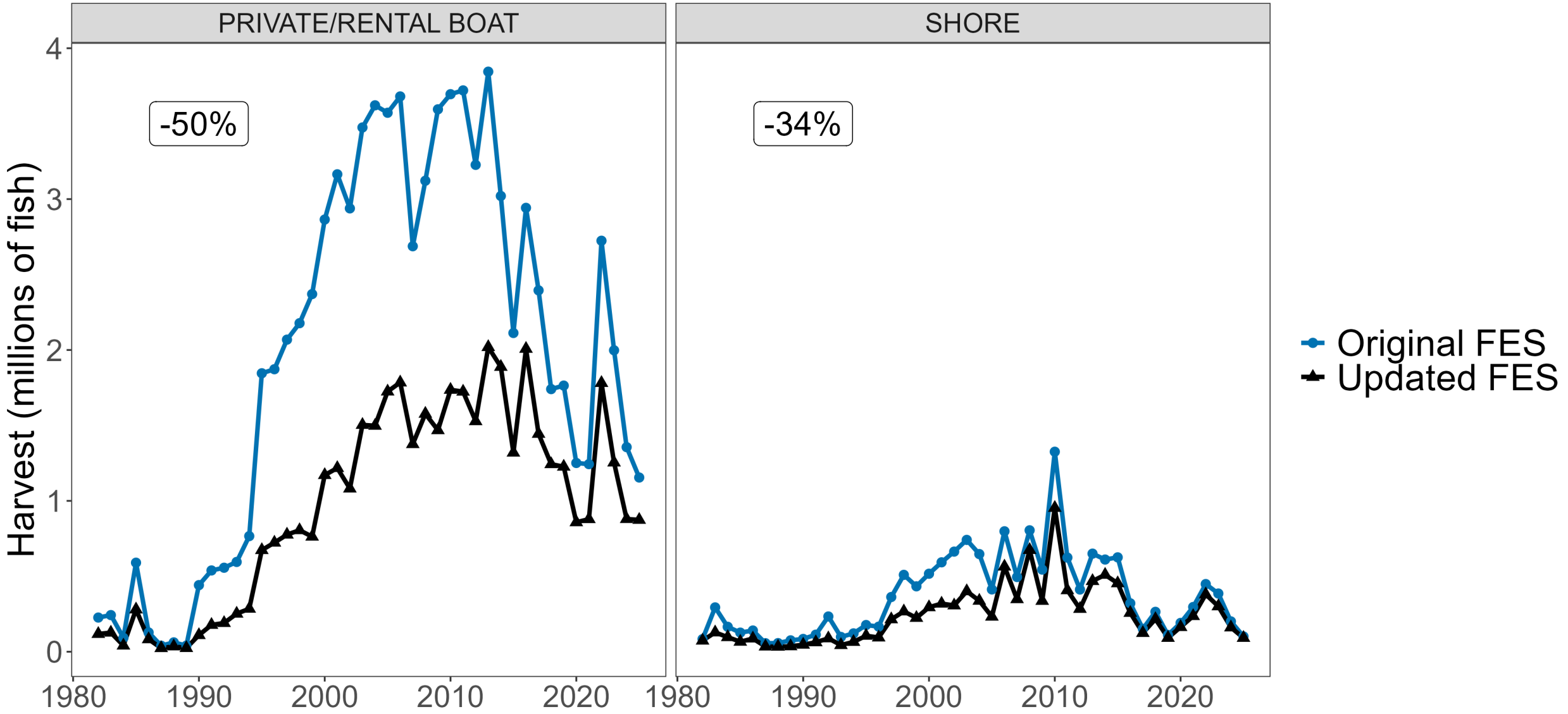
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Live Releases (B2)



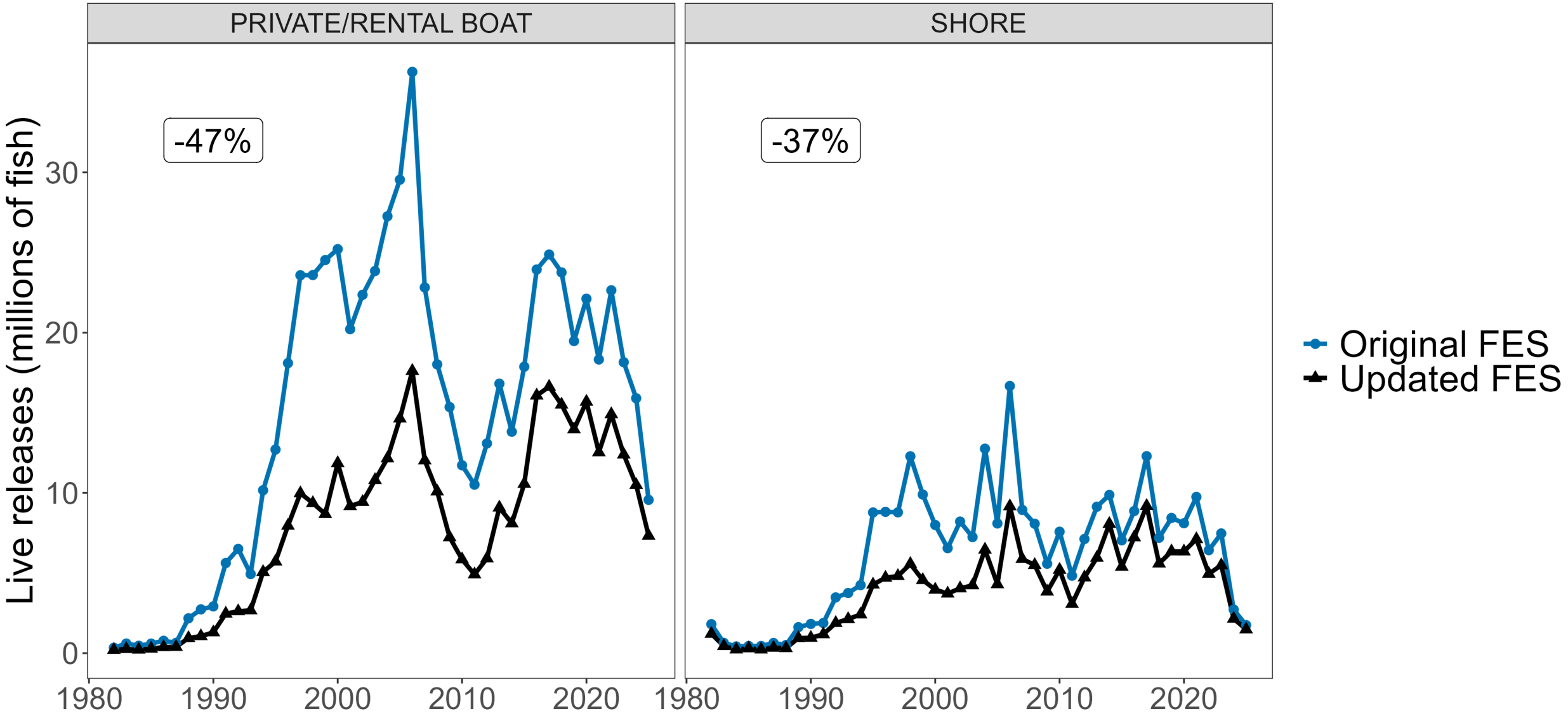
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Harvest (A+B1) by Mode



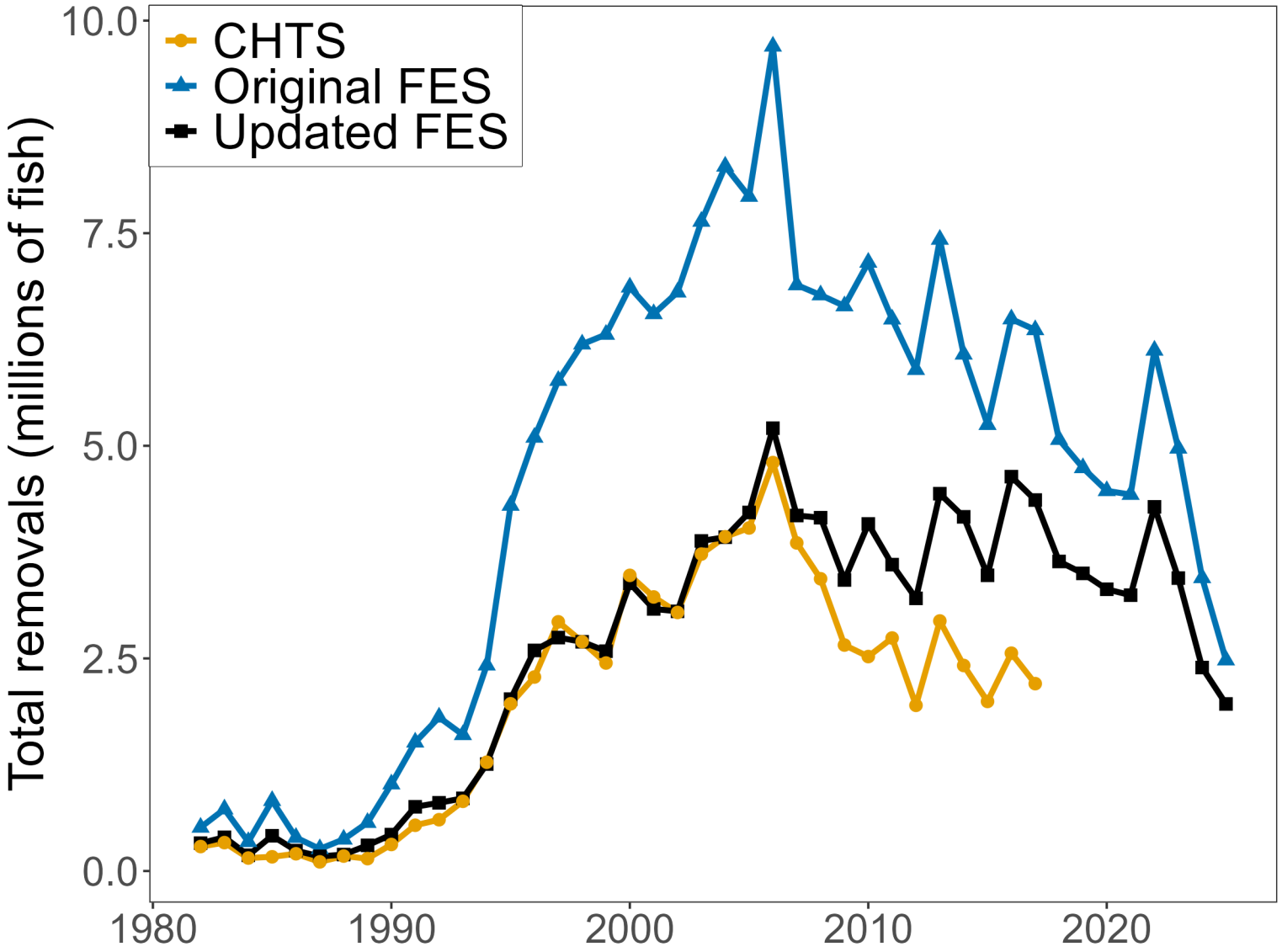
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Live Releases (B2) by Mode



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Total Removals



Percent Change (updated FES relative to original FES)	
Overall	-43%
1982-2017	-46%
2018-2025	-28%

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Calibration Data



https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/data-tools/recreational-fisheries-statistics-queries

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Atlantic Striped Bass Work Group on Future Management: Steering Committee Recommendations

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

November 11, 2026

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Background

- October 2025: Board established WG on future management to discuss management beyond 2029 considering the impact of recent low recruitment
- May 2026: Board established a Steering Committee to provide guidance on WG tasks and timelines
- Steering Committee is Board Chair plus a Board member from each spawning area/region
  - Chris Batsavage (Chair, NC), Nichola Meserve (MA), Shanna Madsen (CT), Marty Gary (NY), John Clark (DE), Mike Luisi (MD)

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WG Tasks

1. Review biological reference points (BRPs) and consider recruitment-sensitive, model-based approaches.
2. Review hatchery stocking as a research and management tool, with cost analysis.
3. Evaluate potential for other river systems to contribute to the coastal stock.
4. Explore drivers of recruitment success/failure across Chesapeake Bay, Delaware River, and Hudson River.
5. Explore reproductive contribution of large vs. small female fish and size-based management implications.
6. Discuss methods to address discard mortality in catch and release fishery.

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Background

- May 2026: Board provided guidance to SAS on reference points; Board agreed to wait until the 2027 benchmark assessment is complete before addressing assessment-related tasks
- Sep-Oct 2026: Steering Committee (WGSC) met via webinar to discuss recommendations and next steps for WG tasks
- **Today: Does the Board agree with WGSC recommendations? Any modifications to proposed path forward?**

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Hatchery Stocking Task

Formally review hatchery stocking as both a research tool and a management tool for striped bass with cost analysis.

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Hatchery Stocking

- WGSC identified reports/information to be compiled
- WGSC expressed initial concern about feasibility of coastwide stocking effort
  - Reports from 1980s/1990s stocking indicate high cost and substantial challenges with potentially minimal benefit to stock
  - Current concern about stocking in Chesapeake Bay and survivability of young fish

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Hatchery Stocking

- Existing resources may be limited for a new stocking program

→ WGSC recommends querying each state and relevant federal agencies to determine available resources and existing infrastructure

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Hatchery Stocking

→**For in-depth discussion, WGSC recommends forming a hatchery stocking sub-group**

- Sub-group could include one representative from each state
- Collection of reports/information to be compiled
- WGSC developed a list of considerations to start discussion
- Sub-group should discuss the objectives of any future hatchery stocking program
- Sub-group could also discuss small, localized stocking programs in addition to coastwide stocking program

- Hatcheries as a research tool? → TC discussion

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Hatchery Stocking

- If the Board needs to prioritize WG tasks, the WGSC recommends this task be a lower priority given initial concerns about the feasibility of a new hatchery stocking program.

- WGSC recognizes that prioritization may not be necessary; this task requires different expertise than other tasks so minimal staff overlap with other task work.

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Recreational Release Mortality Task

Methods to address discard mortality in the catch and release fishery.

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Rec. Release Mortality

- WGSC's interpretation of this task is to consider specific gear/tackle modifications to increase the chance of survival after a striped bass is released

- WGSC identified information to be compiled including:
  - Updated time series of recreational removals
  - Recent studies on recreational release mortality
  - 2024 Work Group on Recreational Release Mortality Report

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Rec. Release Mortality

- Updated time series of recreational removals (Appendix B of Memo)
- Estimates of harvest and live releases decreased (revised MRIP)
- Applied a lower, length-based release mortality rate from Dean et al. to determine dead releases
  - Previous rate: 9%
  - New rate: 3.8% to 5.4% depending on fish length
  - New rate for Wave 4 Chesapeake Bay: 7.6% to 10.2% depending on fish length
- Changes our understanding of the relative contribution of dead releases to striped bass removals

	MRIP 2026 Calibration from Improved Fishing Effort Survey and Updated Release Mortality Rates from Dean et al.		MRIP Pre-2026 Calibration and 9% Release Mortality Rate	
Year	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases
2015	74%	26%	57%	43%
2016	71%	29%	54%	46%
2017	63%	37%	46%	54%
2018	64%	36%	44%	56%
2019	62%	38%	45%	55%
2020	57%	43%	38%	62%
2021	62%	38%	42%	58%
2022	73%	27%	56%	44%
2023	68%	32%	53%	47%
2024	67%	33%	50%	50%
2025	73%	27%	58%	42%

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Rec. Release Mortality

→WGSC recommends the Board review the updated time series and re-confirm interest in considering methods to reduce release mortality.

- Today? Next Meeting?

→WGSC recommends the Striped Bass Advisory Panel be the starting point for discussion.

- Which gear/tackle modifications may be better suited for angler education vs. regulations?
- Which modifications would have a high compliance rate vs. low compliance rate?
- Are there regional differences in fishing practices to consider?
- Should a phase-in or delayed timeline of new gear/tackle regulations be considered to allow the industry to adapt?

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Rec. Release Mortality

- Striped Bass AP meeting could be scheduled for early/mid 2027
- WGSC recommends each state review their AP seats to ensure they are filled, if needed
- Board/AP should consider whether additional expertise beyond the current AP membership is needed to address this task

Assessment-Related Tasks

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Tasks Related to Assessment

- Task: Review biological reference points (BRPs) and consider recruitment-sensitive, model-based approaches.
- Board provided guidance to SAS in May 2026 to pursue both empirical-based and model-based reference points
- WGSC Recommendation: Conduct a management objectives workshop after the assessment to include discussion of reference points. Possible options for reference points will be determined by the stock assessment/peer review.

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Tasks Related to Assessment

Remaining Tasks

- Evaluate potential for other river systems to contribute to the coastal stock
- Explore drivers of recruitment success/failure across Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and Hudson River
- Explore reproductive contribution of large vs. small female fish and size-based management implications

- WGSC Recommendation: Work on these after the assessment.

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Timeline Discussion

- WGSC discussed whether additional progress could be made before the assessment is complete
- Could there be a workshop or stakeholder input process before the assessment to ask "how do we manage moving forward"?
  - Motivation to make progress, map out stakeholder perspectives, and be prepared to take action quickly after the assessment
  - However, more valuable to collect input after the assessment when we have the full picture of the stock, know the options for reference points, and to avoid duplicating discussions

→WGSC recommends waiting until after the assessment to begin discussion on management objectives and priorities

Questions

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Board Discussion

Does the Board agree with the WGSC's recommendations?

Hatchery Stocking Task	Form a sub-group. Work can begin after sub-group nominations are submitted/approved by the Board.
Reducing Recreational Release Mortality (Gear/Tackle Changes)	Board review updated time series and re-confirm interest in this task. Schedule an AP meeting to start discussion. Consider whether additional expertise is needed.
Biological Reference Points	Conduct a management objectives workshop after the assessment.
Other Rivers, Recruitment Drivers, Reproductive Contribution/Size-Based Management	Work on these tasks after the assessment.