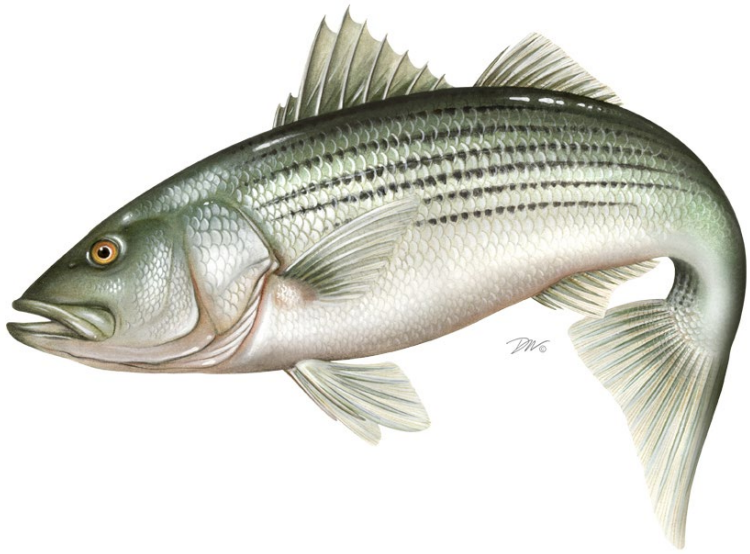
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS
(Morone saxatilis)

2025 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Atlantic Striped Bass Plan Review Team

Approved August 6, 2026

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

Date of FMP Approval:	Original FMP – 1981
Amendments:	Amendment 1 – 1984 Amendment 2 – 1984 Amendment 3 – 1985 Amendment 4 – 1989; Addendum I – 1991, Addendum II – 1992, Addendum III – 1993, Addendum IV – 1994 Amendment 5 – 1995; Addendum I – 1997, Addendum II – 1997, Addendum III – 1998, Addendum IV – 1999, Addendum V – 2000 Amendment 6 – 2003; Addendum I – 2007, Addendum II – 2010, Addendum III – 2012, Addendum IV – 2014, Addendum VI -2019 Amendment 7 – 2022; Addendum I – 2023
Management Unit:	Migratory stocks of Atlantic striped bass from Maine through North Carolina
States With Declared Interest:	Maine - North Carolina, including Pennsylvania
Additional Jurisdictions:	District of Columbia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Active Boards/Committees:	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Tagging Subcommittee, Plan Review Team, and Plan Development Team

Original FMP and Amendments 1-5

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) developed a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass in 1981 in response to poor juvenile recruitment and declining landings. The FMP recommended increased restrictions on commercial and recreational fisheries, such as minimum size limits and harvest closures on spawning grounds. Two amendments were passed in 1984 recommending additional management measures to reduce fishing mortality. To strengthen the management response and improve compliance and enforcement, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (P.L. 98-613) was passed in late 1984. The Striped Bass Act[1] mandated the implementation of striped bass regulations passed by the Commission and gave the Commission authority to recommend to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior that states be found out of compliance when they failed to implement management measures consistent with the FMP.

[1] The 1997 reauthorization of the Striped Bass Act also required the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior provide a biennial report to Congress highlighting the progress and findings of studies of migratory and estuarine Striped Bass. The ninth such report was recently provided to Congress (Shepherd et al. 2017).

The first enforceable plan under the Striped Bass Act, Amendment 3, was approved in 1985, and required size regulations to protect the 1982 year-class – the first modest size cohort since the previous decade. The objective was to increase size limits to allow at least 95% of the females in the 1982 year-class to spawn at least once. Smaller size limits were permitted in producer areas than along the coast. Several states, beginning with Maryland in 1985, opted for a more conservative approach and imposed a total moratorium on striped bass landings for several years. The amendment contained a trigger mechanism to relax regulations when the 3-year moving average of the Maryland juvenile abundance index (JAI) exceeded an arithmetic mean of 8.0 – which was attained with the recruitment of the 1989 year-class. Also, in 1985, the Commission determined the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) stock in North Carolina contributed minimally to the coastal migratory population, and was therefore allowed to operate under an alternative management program.

Amendment 4, implemented in 1989, aimed to rebuild the resource rather than maximize yield. The amendment allowed state fisheries to reopen under a target fishing morality (F) of 0.25, which was half the estimated F needed to achieve maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The amendment allowed an increase in the target F once spawning stock biomass (SSB) was restored to levels estimated during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The dual size limit concept was maintained (coastal versus producer areas), and a recreational trip limit and commercial season was implemented to reduce the harvest to 20% of that in the historic period of 1972-1979. A series of four addenda were implemented from 1990-1994 to maintain protection of the 1982 year-class.

In 1990, to provide additional protection to striped bass and ensure the effectiveness of state regulations, NOAA Fisheries passed a final rule (55 Federal Register 40181-02) prohibiting possession, fishing (catch and release fishing), harvest, and retention of Atlantic striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with the exception of a defined transit zone within Block Island Sound. Atlantic striped bass may be transported through this defined area provided that the vessel is not used to fish while in the EEZ and the vessel remains in continuous transit, and that the fish were legally caught in adjoining state waters.

In 1995, the Atlantic striped bass migratory stock was declared recovered by the Commission (the A-R stock was declared recovered in 1997) and Amendment 5 was adopted to increase the target F to 0.33, midway between the existing F target (0.25) and F_{MSY}. Target F was allowed to increase again to 0.40 after two years of implementation. Regulations were developed to achieve the target F (which included measures to restore commercial harvest to 70% of the average landings during the 1972-1979 historical period) and states were allowed to submit proposals to implement alternative regulations that were deemed conservationally equivalent to the Amendment 5 measures. From 1997-2000, a series of five addenda were implemented to respond to the latest stock status information and adjust the regulatory program to achieve each change in target F.

<u>Amendment 6</u>

In 2003, Amendment 6 was adopted to address five limitations within the existing management program: 1) potential inability to prevent the Amendment 5 exploitation target from being exceeded; 2) perceived decrease in availability or abundance of large striped bass in the coastal migratory population; 3) a lack of management direction with respect to target and threshold biomass levels; 4)

inequitable effects of regulations on the recreational and commercial fisheries, and coastal and producer area sectors; and 5) excessively frequent changes to the management program. Accordingly, Amendment 6 completely replaced the existing FMP for Atlantic striped bass.[2]

The goal of Amendment 6 is "to perpetuate, through cooperative interstate management, migratory stocks of striped bass; to allow commercial and recreational fisheries consistent with the long-term maintenance of a broad age structure, a self-sustaining spawning stock; and also to provide for the restoration and maintenance of their essential habitat." In support of this goal, the following objectives are included:

1. Manage striped bass fisheries under a control rule designed to maintain stock size at or above the target female spawning stock biomass level and a level of fishing mortality at or below the target exploitation rate.
2. Manage fishing mortality to maintain an age structure that provides adequate spawning potential to sustain long-term abundance of striped bass populations.
3. Provide a management plan that strives, to the extent practical, to maintain coastwide consistency of implemented measures, while allowing the States defined flexibility to implement alternative strategies that accomplish the objectives of the FMP.
4. Foster quality and economically viable recreational, for-hire, and commercial fisheries.
5. Maximize cost effectiveness of current information gathering and prioritize state obligations in order to minimize costs of monitoring and management.
6. Adopt a long-term management regime that minimizes or eliminates the need to make annual changes or modifications to management measures.
7. Establish a fishing mortality target that will result in a net increase in the abundance (pounds) of age 15 and older striped bass in the population, relative to the 2000 estimate.

Amendment 6 modified the F target and threshold, and introduced a new set of biological reference points (BRPs) based on female SSB, as well as a list of management triggers based on the BRPs. The coastal commercial quotas were restored to 100% of the states' average landings during the 1972-1979 historical period, except for Delaware's coastal commercial quota which remained at the level allocated in 2002[3]. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two-fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay fisheries, North Carolina fisheries that operate in the A-R, and states with approved alternative regulations. The Chesapeake Bay and A-R regulatory programs were predicated on a more conservative F target than the coastal

[2] While NOAA Fisheries continues to implement a complete ban on the fishing and harvest of striped bass in the EEZ, Amendment 6 includes a recommendation to consider reopening the EEZ to striped bass fisheries. In September 2006, NOAA Fisheries concluded that it would be imprudent to open the EEZ to striped bass fishing because it could not be certain that opening the EEZ would not lead to increased effort and an overfishing scenario.

[3] The decision to hold Delaware's commercial quota at the 2002 level is based on tagging information that indicated F on the Delaware River/Bay stock is too high, and uncertainty regarding the status of the spawning stock for the Delaware River/Bay.

migratory stock, which allowed these states/jurisdictions (hereafter states) to implement separate seasons, harvest caps, and size and bag limits as long as they remain under that F target. No minimum size limit can be less than 18 inches under Amendment 6. The same minimum size standards regulate the commercial fisheries as the recreational fisheries, except for a minimum 20 inch size limit in the Delaware Bay spring American shad gillnet fishery.

States are permitted the flexibility to deviate from these regulations by submitting conservation equivalency proposals to the Plan Review Team (PRT). All proposals are subject to technical review and approval by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management (Board). It is the responsibility of the state to demonstrate through quantitative analysis that the proposed management program is equivalent to the standards in the FMP, or will not contribute to the overfishing of the resource.

Five addenda to Amendment 6 have been implemented. Addendum I, approved in 2007, established a bycatch monitoring and research program to increase the accuracy of data on striped bass discards and recommended development of a web-based angler education program. Also in 2007, President George W. Bush issued an Executive Order (E.O. 13449) prohibiting the sale of striped bass (and red drum) caught within the EEZ. Addendum II was approved in 2010 and established a new definition of recruitment failure such that each index would have a fixed threshold rather than a threshold that changes annually with the addition of each year's data. Addendum III was approved in 2012 and requires all states with a commercial fishery for striped bass to implement a uniform commercial harvest tagging program. The Addendum was initiated in response to significant poaching events in the Chesapeake Bay and aims to limit illegal harvest of striped bass.

Addendum IV was triggered in response to the 2013 benchmark assessment, which indicated a steady decline in SSB since the mid-2000s. The Addendum established new F reference points, and changed commercial and recreational measures to reduce F to a level at or below the new target. Chesapeake Bay fisheries were required to implement lower reductions than coastal states (20.5% compared to 25%) since their fisheries were reduced by 14% in 2013 based on their management program. The addendum maintained the flexibility to implement alternative regulations through the conservation equivalency process. This practice has resulted in a variety of regulations among states. All states promulgated regulations prior to the start of their 2015 seasons.

Addendum VI was initiated in response to the 2018 benchmark assessment which indicated the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing[4]. Approved in October 2019, the Addendum aimed to reduce total removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels in order to achieve F target in 2020. Specifically, the

[4] In February 2017, the Board initiated development of Draft Addendum V to consider liberalizing coastwide commercial and recreational regulations. The Board's action responded to concerns raised by Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions regarding continued economic hardship endured by its stakeholders since the implementation of Addendum IV and information from the 2016 stock assessment update indicating that F was below target in 2015, and that total removals could increase by 10% to achieve the target F. However, the Board chose to not advance the draft addendum for public comment largely due to harvest estimates having increased in 2016 without changing regulations. Instead, the Board decided to wait until it reviews the results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment before considering making changes to the management program.

Addendum reduced all state commercial quotas by 18%, and implemented a 1 fish bag limit and a 28"to less than 35" slot limit for ocean fisheries and a 1 fish bag limit and an 18" minimum size limit in Chesapeake Bay to reduce total recreational removals by 18% in both regions. The Addendum's measures were designed to apply the needed reductions proportionally to both the commercial and recreational sectors, although states were permitted to submit alternative regulations through conservation equivalency that achieve an 18% reduction in total removals statewide. The Board reviewed and approved management options for 2020 on a state-by-state basis in February, and all states promulgated regulations by April 1.

Addendum VI also required the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait to reduce release mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries. States are encouraged to promote the use of circle hooks through various public outreach and education platforms to garner support and compliance with this important conservation measure. In October 2020, the Board approved state implementation plans for circle hook requirements, with the caveat that no exemptions to Addendum VI mandatory circle hook requirements will be permitted. Circle hook regulations were required to be implemented no later than January 1, 2021. In March 2021, the Board approved a clarification on the definition of bait and methods of fishing[5] that require circle hooks, which must be implemented by states as part of Addendum VI compliance. Per Commission standards, states could implement more restrictive measures. The Board also approved guidance on how to address incidental catch of striped bass when targeting other species with non-circle hooks with bait attached. This guidance was not a compliance criterion since incidental catch was not originally part of Addendum VI.

Amendment 7

Amendment 7 was approved in May 2022, and consolidates Amendment 6 and its associated addenda into a single document. The purpose of Amendment 7 is to update the management program to align with current fishery needs and priorities given the status and understanding of the resource and fishery has changed considerably since implementation of Amendment 6 in 2003. Amendment 7 builds upon the Addendum VI to Amendment 6 action to address overfishing and initiate rebuilding in response to the overfished finding from the 2018 stock assessment, requiring the Board to rebuild the stock by 2029. Amendment 7 established new requirements for the following components of the FMP: management triggers, conservation equivalency, additional measures to address recreational release mortality, and the stock rebuilding plan.

For management triggers, Amendment 7 established an updated recruitment management trigger that is more sensitive to low recruitment than the previous trigger, and it required a specific management response to low year-class strength. The response requires re-evaluation of the fishing mortality management triggers to account for low recruitment. If one of those triggers trips after reevaluation, the Board is required to take action to reduce fishing mortality. Amendment 7 also updated the spawning stock biomass triggers by establishing a deadline for implementing a rebuilding plan. The

[5] Definition of Bait and Methods of Fishing: Circle hooks are required when fishing for striped bass with bait, which is defined as any marine or aquatic organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof. This shall not apply to any artificial lure with bait attached.

Board must implement a rebuilding plan within two years of when a spawning stock biomass trigger is tripped.

For conservation equivalency (CE), Amendment 7 does not allow CE to be used for most recreational striped bass fisheries when the stock is overfished. Amendment 7 also provided constraints around the use of Marine Recreational Information Program data for CE proposals and defines the overall percent reduction/liberalization a proposal must achieve, including required uncertainty buffers. These restrictions are intended to minimize the risks due to uncertainty when CE is used for non-quota managed striped bass fisheries.

For recreational release mortality, Amendment 7 established a new gear restriction which prohibits gaffing striped bass when fishing recreationally. This is in addition to the existing circle hook requirement when fishing recreationally with bait. Additionally, Amendment 7 required striped bass caught on any unapproved method of take (e.g., caught on a J-hook with bait) must be returned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury. This provision, which is related to incidental catch, was previously a recommendation in Addendum VI to Amendment 6.

For stock rebuilding, Amendment 7 addressed the 2022 stock assessment and how it would inform efforts to meet the 2029 stock rebuilding deadline. Given concerns about recent low recruitment and the possibility of continued low recruitment, Amendment 7 required the 2022 stock assessment's rebuilding projections to use a low recruitment assumption to conservatively account for that future possibility. Amendment 7 also established a mechanism for the Board to respond more quickly to the 2022 assessment results if action was needed to achieve stock rebuilding by 2029.

All provisions of Amendment 7 were effective May 5, 2022 except for gear restrictions. States had to implement new gear restrictions by January 1, 2023. Amendment 7 also maintained the same recreational and commercial measures specified in Addendum VI to Amendment 6, which were implemented in 2020. As such, all approved Addendum VI conservation equivalency programs and state implementation plans are maintained until such measures are changed in the future.

Addendum I to Amendment 7

Addendum I to Amendment 7 was approved in May 2023 to allow for voluntary ocean commercial quota transfers contingent on stock status. The addendum was developed to provide some, more immediate relief to states seeking a change to their commercial quota after the Board decided that changes to the commercial quota system would not be considered in the then ongoing development of Draft Amendment 7. When the stock is overfished, no quota transfers will be allowed. When the stock is not overfished, the Board can decide every one to two years whether it will allow voluntary transfers of ocean commercial quota. The Board can also set criteria for allowable transfers, including a limit on how much and when quota can be transferred in a given year, and the eligibility of a state to request a transfer based on its landings.

2023 Emergency Action

In May 2023, the Board approved an emergency action to change the recreational size limit, effective initially for 180 days from May 2, 2023 through October 28, 2023. This action responds to the extreme

magnitude of 2022 recreational harvest, which was nearly double that of 2021, and new stock rebuilding projections, which estimate the probability of the spawning stock rebuilding to its biomass target by 2029 drops from 97% under the lower 2021 fishing mortality rate to less than 15% if the higher 2022 fishing mortality rate continues each year.

The Board implemented the emergency 31-inch maximum size limit to reduce harvest of the strong 2015 year-class. The 31-inch maximum size limit applies to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the May Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries which already prohibit harvest of fish less than 35 inches. All bag limits, seasons, and gear restrictions will remain the same. As of July 2, 2023, all jurisdictions implemented regulations consistent with the required 31-inch maximum size limit.

In August 2023, the Board extended the emergency action through October 28, 2024 or until the implementation of Addendum II to Amendment 7 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan, whichever comes first. The extension of the emergency action provided the Board time to develop and finalize Addendum II, which was approved in January 2024 with an implementation date of May 1, 2024. Therefore, Addendum II replaced the emergency action upon its implementation by the states by May 1, 2024.

Addendum II to Amendment 7

Addendum II to Amendment 7 was approved in January 2024 to reduce fishing mortality in 2024 and support stock rebuilding. For the ocean recreational fishery, the Addendum implements a 28” to 31” slot limit, 1-fish bag limit, and maintains 2022 season dates for all fishery participants; this maintains the same ocean recreational measures adopted under the 2023 emergency action. For the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, the Addendum implements a 19” to 24” slot limit, 1-fish bag limit, and maintains 2022 season dates for all fishery participants. For the commercial fishery, the Addendum reduces commercial quotas by 7% in both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay.

To address concerns about recreational filleting allowances and compliance with recreational size limits, the Addendum establishes two requirements for states that authorize filleting of striped bass: racks must be retained and possession limited to no more than two fillets per legal fish. Finally, to enable an expedited response process to upcoming stock assessments, the Addendum establishes a mechanism allowing the Board to respond to a stock assessment via Board action if the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029 with a probability greater than or equal to 50%. All Addendum II measures were required to be implemented by the states no later than May 1, 2024.

Addendum III to Amendment 7

Addendum III to Amendment 7 was approved in October 2025 to modify requirements for commercial tagging programs, define a standard method of measuring total length for size regulations, and allow Maryland to change its Chesapeake Bay recreational season baseline if the state so chooses. For commercial tagging, the Addendum requires commercially-harvested striped bass to be tagged by the first point of landing. The three states that will need to switch their tagging program from point of sale to point of landing have until the end of 2028 to make that change. For measuring total length, the Addendum specifies that when measuring total length of a striped bass it must be a straight-line

measurement with upper and lower fork of the tail squeezed together. This definition applies to both sectors. States that do not have the new definition in place already have until January 1, 2027 to make changes to their state regulations. For Maryland's Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, the Board approved Maryland's ability to change its recreational season baseline (i.e., the timing, type, and duration of striped bass closures throughout the year) if the state so chooses. Maryland did decide to change its recreational season to the new baseline described in the addendum and implemented the new season in 2026.

The Board considered a 12% reduction in fishery removals through Draft Addendum III. After lengthy deliberation and considering public comments that were sharply divided on the issue, the Board decided to maintain status quo and not move forward with the reduction. The Board noted the severe economic consequences of the proposed reduction, the low fishing mortality rate in 2024, and preliminary indications of lower catch in 2025. However, the Board continued to express concern about the 7 consecutive years of low recruitment in Chesapeake Bay and the impact on the stock as those weak year-classes become the majority of the spawning stock biomass after 2029. To address this, the Board approved the establishment of a Work Group to consider these upcoming stock and management challenges beyond 2029.

II. Status of the Stocks

The biological reference points (BRPs) currently used for management are based on the 1995 estimate of female spawning stock biomass (SSB). The 1995 estimate of female SSB is used as the SSB threshold because many stock characteristics (such as an expanded age structure) were reached by this year and the stock was declared recovered. The SSB target is equal to 125% of SSB threshold.

The accepted model is a forward projecting statistical catch-at-age (SCA) model which uses catch-at-age data and fishery-dependent and -independent survey indices to estimate annual population size, fishing mortality, and recruitment (NEFSC 2019a). Indices of abundance track relative changes in the population over time while catch data provide information on the scale of the population size. Age structure data (numbers of fish by age) provide additional information on recruitment (number of age-1 fish entering the population) and trends in mortality.

In November 2024, the Board reviewed the results of the 2024 Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update (ASMFC 2024), which uses the same peer-reviewed SCA model from the last benchmark assessment. The 2024 assessment indicated the resource is still overfished but not experiencing overfishing relative to the updated reference points. Female SSB in the terminal year (2023) was estimated at 191 million pounds, which is below the SSB threshold of 197 million pounds and below the SSB target of 247 million pounds (Figure 1). F in 2023 was estimated at 0.18, which is below the F threshold of 0.21 and above the F target of 0.17 (Figure 2). The updated fishing mortality reference points take into account the period of low recruitment the stock has experienced in recent years.

The assessment also indicated a period of strong recruitment (numbers of age-1 fish entering the population) from 1994-2004, followed by a period of lower recruitment from 2005-2011 (although not as low as the early 1980s, which likely contributed to the decline in SSB in recent years) (Figure 1).

Recruitment of age-1 fish was above-average in 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019 (corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2018 year-classes), but estimates of age-1 striped bass were below the long-term average for 7 of the last 10 years. Recruitment in 2023 was estimated at 95 million age-1 fish, below the time series average of 137 million fish.

The next stock assessment for striped bass is a benchmark stock assessment—in which the assessment input data and methods are fully re-evaluated—scheduled for peer review in Spring 2027. The 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment will include data through 2025 as well as the revised MRIP time series.

III. Status of the Fishery in the Ocean and Chesapeake Bay

Total Removals

In 2025, total Atlantic striped bass removals (including commercial harvest, commercial dead discards, recreational harvest, and recreational release mortality) were estimated at 3.0 million fish, which is a 25% decrease by number from 2024 total removals and a 55% decrease from the recent peak removals in 2022 (Table 3; Figure 5). This 2025 decrease from 2024 was driven by decreases in both sectors, with commercial harvest down 11% by number, recreational harvest down 17% by number, and recreational live releases down 39% by number. In 2025, the commercial sector accounted for about 18% of total removals in numbers of fish (18% harvest and <1% dead discards), and the recreational sector accounted for about 82% of removals in numbers of fish (47% harvest and 35% release mortality) (Table 4, Figure 5).

Commercial Fishery

The commercial fishery (ocean and Chesapeake Bay) harvested an estimated 4.2 million pounds (about 543,000 fish) in 2024, which is a 4% decrease by weight and 11% decrease by number from 2024 (Table 6, Table 7, Figure 7).

Since 1990, commercial landings from the Ocean fishery have accounted for an average 40% of total coastwide commercial landings by weight, with the other 60% coming from Chesapeake Bay. The proportion of commercial harvest coming from Chesapeake Bay is much higher in numbers of fish (roughly 80%) because fish harvested in Chesapeake Bay have a lower average weight than fish harvested in Ocean fisheries.

Of total commercial harvest (combined Ocean and Chesapeake Bay) by weight in 2024, Maryland landed 31%, Virginia landed 22%, Massachusetts landed 16%, and New York landed 13% (Figure 6). Additional harvest came from the Potomac River (11%), Delaware (3%), and Rhode Island (confidential).

In 2025, the Ocean commercial striped bass quota was 2.2 million pounds with 1.7 million pounds harvested in the Ocean region. In the Chesapeake Bay region, the 2025 commercial striped bass quota was 2.8 million pounds, and 2.5 million pounds were harvested (Table 14).

The Ocean region regularly underutilizes its cumulative commercial quota due to the lack of striped bass availability in some state waters (particularly North Carolina, which holds 13% of the Ocean quota,

yet has had zero Ocean harvest since 2013) coupled with prohibitions on commercial striped bass fishing in Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New Jersey (which collectively share about 10% of the Ocean commercial quota). The Ocean commercial quota utilization was 75% in 2025, which was about the same as Ocean quota utilization in 2021-2024. In the Ocean, most states that allow commercial harvest utilized >95% of their Ocean quota in 2025 with the exception of North Carolina which had zero Ocean harvest.

In Chesapeake Bay, quota utilization in 2025 was about 89%, which was an increase from 2021-2023 quota utilization of 84% but below the 2024 utilization of 94%.

Quota utilization is important to consider when calculating reductions in commercial removals for management actions. As quota utilization changes from year to year, the realized reduction in commercial removals will change.

The PRT notes there are several factors that contribute to changes in commercial harvest levels from year-to-year aside from changes to the quota level. Year-class availability could be a factor, particularly in the ocean. If stock abundance is increasing overall, that could also contribute to more fish being available. Availability also depends on when and how long striped bass stay within state waters (vs. offshore in the EEZ) during the season.

Looking across several years, commercial landings have generally decreased as quota has decreased, with the exception of 2024. From 2004-2014, coastwide commercial landings averaged 6.8 million pounds per year. From 2015-2019, commercial landings decreased to an average of 4.7 million pounds due to implementation of reduced quotas through Addendum IV. From 2020-2023, coastwide commercial landings decreased again to an average 4.2 million pounds due to further reduced quotas through Addendum VI to Amendment 6 and Amendment 7. In 2024-2025, commercial landings averaged 4.3 million pounds, a slight increase despite the Addendum II quota reduction.

Recreational Fishery

Total Recreational Removals

Total recreational removals (harvest and release mortality) coastwide were estimated at 2.5 million fish in 2025, which is a 28% decrease from recreational removals in 2024 (Table 8). This coastwide decrease in total recreational removals was a combination of a decrease in both harvest and live releases (Figure 8). Combined private vessel/shore modes accounted for 93% of Ocean recreational striped bass removals in 2025, while for-hire components (charter and head boats) accounted for about 7% of Ocean removals. In Chesapeake Bay, private vessels/shore modes accounted for 89% of Bay recreational removals in 2025, while for-hire modes accounted for 11%.

Live Releases

The vast majority of recreational striped bass catch (over 90%) is released alive either due to angler preference or regulation (i.e., closed season, undersized, oversized, or already caught the bag limit) (Figure 9). The stock assessment assumes, based on previous studies, that 9% of fish that are released alive die as a result of being caught. In 2025, recreational anglers caught and released an estimated 11.6 million fish, of which 1.0 million are assumed to have died. This represents a 39% decrease in live

releases coastwide from the 2024 level. By region in 2025, a reduction in live releases was observed in both the Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, 39% and 9% decrease, respectively. The decrease in the Ocean was much larger than the decrease in the Chesapeake Bay in 2025.

Recreational Harvest

Recreational harvest in 2025 decreased to 1.4 million fish (11.2 million pounds) from the 2024 level of 1.7 million fish (15.3 million pounds), which is a 17% decrease by number (Figure 8, Table 9, Table 10). Relative to 2022 when recreational harvest spiked, 2025 harvest is 59% lower. By region, recreational harvest in the Ocean decreased by 30% to the lowest harvest in the past few decades. Recreational harvest in the Chesapeake Bay increased by 54% from the time series low in 2024; however, the 2025 harvest is still the second lowest in the past few decades. The Chesapeake Bay time series low recreational harvest in 2024-2025 could be attributed, at least partly, to the implementation of a Bay-wide 19"-24" slot limit in 2024 under Addendum II, and to the lack of strong year-classes available in the Bay. In the Ocean, the size limit did not change between 2023 and 2024-2025, but most of the remaining fish from the strong 2015 year-class (age-9 in 2024) had likely grown out of the narrow 28"-31" Ocean slot limit by 2024, potentially contributing to the 2024 decrease. The 2018 year-class was expected to move through the ocean slot limit in 2025, however, large decreases in New York and New Jersey harvest (61% and 41% decreases, respectively) drove the overall 2025 decrease in ocean recreational harvest. Bad weather and high winds in 2025, particularly in early fall, likely contributed to low harvest in both states. Additionally, anecdotal information from New Jersey indicates the slot size fish (28" to 31") were not available during the peak fishing season. Effort, detailed below, also contributes to catch levels each year.

In 2025, Maryland (27%) and New Jersey (26%) landed the largest proportions of recreational harvest in number of fish, followed by Massachusetts (18%), New York (12%), Rhode Island (6%), and Maine (4%). The proportion of coastwide recreational harvest in numbers from Chesapeake Bay was 29% in 2025. This is slightly higher than the low Chesapeake Bay proportions in recent years (20% in 2022, 22% in 2023, and 16% in 2024). The decrease in the proportion of recreational harvest from Chesapeake Bay in recent years, and therefore increased proportion of Ocean recreational harvest, aligns with the availability of the strong 2015 year-class in the Ocean fishery in 2022-2023, implementation of a Chesapeake Bay-wide slot limit in 2024, decrease in Maryland's for-hire bag limit from 2-fish to 1-fish in 2024, and lack of strong year-classes in the Bay since the 2018 year-class. The increase in the proportion of Chesapeake Bay harvest in 2025 is attributed to the Bay's increased harvest in 2025 while Ocean harvest decreased.

For recreational harvest by mode, the magnitude of change from 2024 to 2025 differs between the for-hire modes and the private-shore modes by region (Table 11). Private-shore harvest in 2025 decreased by 35% in the Ocean while increasing by 109% in the Chesapeake Bay. However, as stated above, this Chesapeake Bay was an increase from low harvest in 2024; total harvest in Chesapeake Bay in 2025 is the second lowest in the past few decades. For-hire harvest in the Ocean increased by 55% to a level higher than 2023-2024 but lower than the peak in 2022. For-hire harvest in Chesapeake Bay decreased by 35% in 2025, differing from the increase in private-shore harvest in Chesapeake Bay.

Recreational Effort
Aligning with 2025 recreational harvest, the number of trips directed at striped bass (primary and secondary target) decreased in the Ocean in 2025 and increased in the Chesapeake Bay (Table 12). In 2025, the number of striped bass directed trips in the Chesapeake Bay region increased by about 52% compared to 2024, but is still the second lowest in the past decade behind only 2024. The number of striped bass directed trips in the Ocean decreased by about 12% from 2024. Overall, the total number of coastwide striped bass directed trips in 2025 decreased by 7% from 2024 and is the lowest number of directed trips in the past decade.

For directed trips by mode, private-shore directed trips in the Ocean in 2025 decreased by 13% and in the Chesapeake Bay increased by 59% (Table 13). For-hire directed trips in the Ocean in 2025 increased by 12%, while for-hire directed trips in Chesapeake Bay decreased by 30%.

Factors Contributing to Catch and Effort Trends
Overall, there are several factors that contribute to trends in recreational catch and effort, including management measures, year-class availability, overall stock abundance, nearshore availability of bait and striped bass, weather, and angler behavior. The relatively strong 2015 year-class moving into the Ocean and becoming available to the Ocean slot (i.e., surpassing 28-inches), was likely the primary driver of increased Ocean recreational catch in 2022. The subsequent emergency action in 2023 intended to reduce harvest of the 2015 year-class likely contributed to the harvest reduction observed in 2023. The 2015 year-class grew out of the Ocean slot by 2024 (i.e., surpassing 31-inches) likely contributing to the decreases in Ocean recreational harvest in 2024. In Chesapeake Bay, a combination of the five-inch recreational slot limit implemented in 2024 and the lack of strong year-classes available after the 2018 year-class moved into the Ocean likely played a role in low Bay harvest in 2024-2025. In the Ocean in 2025, bad weather and high winds, particularly in early fall, and lack of available slot size fish during peak season likely contributed to low harvest in New York and New Jersey, which drove the decrease in Ocean harvest. Angler effort and behavior are also important to consider. When more fish are available in the fishery, effort can often increase in response. When narrower size limits are in place or less fish are available in the fishery, anglers may change their behavior and level of effort.

IV. Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Management Area

While striped bass in North Carolina's ocean waters are managed under the Interstate FMP, the Interstate FMP formally defers management of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) stock to the state of North Carolina using A-R stock-specific BRPs approved by the Board (NCDMF 2013, 2014). North Carolina is required to inform the Commission of changes to striped bass management in the A-R System.

<u>Status of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock</u>
The most recent A-R stock assessment, the 2022 Stock Assessment Update, uses a forward-projecting fully-integrated, age-structured statistical model estimating population parameters and reference points for the A-R striped bass stock for 1991-2021 (Lee et al. 2022). The 2022 stock assessment is an update of the 2020 Benchmark Stock Assessment (Lee et al. 2020). The 2020 benchmark stock

assessment model was peer reviewed by an outside panel of experts and approved for management use by the Board in May 2021. The 2022 assessment update was also peer reviewed in January 2023.

The A-R stock is managed using reference points for female spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (*F*) with threshold values based on 35% spawning potential ratio and target values based on 45% spawning potential ratio. The 2022 assessment estimated female SSB in 2021 (terminal year) was 16.1 metric tons, which is below the SSB threshold of 125 metric tons. The assessment estimated *F* in 2021 was 0.77, which is above the *F* threshold of 0.22. These results indicate the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring (Figure 3, Figure 4). Abundance indices indicate continued stock decline, and juvenile recruitment, in particular, has been very low for several consecutive years.

	Target	***Threshold***	***Terminal Year (2021) Estimate***
Female SSB	164 metric tons	125 metric tons	16 metric tons
Fishing Mortality (F)	0.14	0.20	0.77

NC Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan

Estuarine striped bass in North Carolina are currently managed under Amendment 2 to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and its subsequent revision and recent supplement (NCDMF & NCWRC 2022, NCDMF 2024). The plan is jointly developed between the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). Amendment 2, adopted in 2022, lays out separate management strategies for the A-R stock and the estuarine (non-migratory) Central and Southern striped bass stocks in the Tar-Pamlico, Neuse, and Cape Fear rivers. Management programs in Amendment 2 for the A-R stock utilize annual total allowable landings (TAL), daily possession limits, open and closed harvest seasons, gill net mesh size and yardage restrictions, seasonal small mesh gill net attendance requirements, single barbless hook requirements in some areas, minimum size limits, and a no-harvest slot limit in the Roanoke River to maintain a sustainable harvest and reduce regulatory discard mortality in all sectors.

Based on the results of the 2022 stock assessment, the resulting total allowable landings (TAL) level needed to reduce fishing mortality to its target is effectively too low to manage. For this reason and due to continued concern about stock decline and low recruitment, North Carolina implemented a harvest moratorium in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Management Areas (ASMA and RRMA) effective January 2024 via the adaptive management framework under Amendment 2 of the NC Estuarine Striped Bass FMP (NCDMF 2024). In addition, the 2023 fall recreational and commercial seasons in the Albemarle Sound did not open because there is little quota remaining and because of stock status concerns.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Amendment 7 (approved May 2022) and its addenda, as well as the 2023 emergency action effective through April 2024, set the regulatory and monitoring measures for the coastwide striped bass fishery for 2025. Amendment 7 requires certain states to implement fishery-dependent monitoring programs

for striped bass. All states with commercial fisheries or substantial recreational fisheries are required to define the catch and effort composition of these fisheries. Additionally, all states with a commercial fishery must implement a commercial harvest tagging program.

Amendment 7 also requires certain states to monitor the striped bass population independent of the fisheries. Juvenile abundance surveys are required from Maine (Kennebec River), New York (Hudson River), New Jersey (Delaware River), Maryland (Chesapeake Bay tributaries), Virginia (Chesapeake Bay tributaries), and North Carolina (Albemarle Sound). Spawning stock sampling is mandatory for New York (Hudson River), Pennsylvania (Delaware River), Delaware (Delaware River), Maryland (Upper Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River), Virginia (Rappahannock River and James River), and North Carolina (Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River). NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina are also required to continue their tagging programs, which provide data used to determine survivorship and migration patterns.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues

Ocean Commercial Quota

In 2025, the ocean cumulative commercial quota was 2.2 million pounds (sum of all state quotas). There were no quota overages in 2025. Table 14 outlines 2025 quotas and harvest.

Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota

In 2025, the Chesapeake Bay-wide quota was 2.8 million pounds and was allocated to Maryland, the PRFC, and Virginia based on historical harvest per their mutual agreement. In 2025, the Bay-wide quota was not exceeded and no individual jurisdictions exceeded their portion of the quota. Table 14 outlines 2025 quotas and harvest.

Conservation Equivalency Programs

There is one approved conservation equivalency (CE) program under Addendum II: the New Jersey Striped Bass Bonus Program (SBBP). New Jersey's approved CE plan allows the state to allocate its commercial quota to its recreational bonus program that has been in place since 1990. The SBBP currently allows participants to harvest 1 fish at 24" to less than 28" per permit. NJ calculates the total number of issuable permit/tags by converting the quota to number of fish based on mean weight; in addition, as an added conservation measure, NJ will apply a buffer by using the rounded-up mean weight of the largest fish possible under the slot. This results in a lower maximum than using the average weight alone.

In 2025, a total of 20,415 SBBP permits were issued and 2,896 were used, which is a 64% decrease from 2024. The percent of tags used (14%) is a decrease from the percent used from 2023-2024 (37% and 32%).

The PRT discussed what happens to unused NJ SBBP tags. For-hire SBBP participants must return tags, while private anglers are not required to return their unused tag. The PRT notes this is inconsistent with the strict tag return requirements for the commercial fishery. While the SBBP is not a commercial fishery, it does use the state's commercial quota. New Jersey noted ongoing discussions within the

state on how to improve reporting from private anglers related to SBBP tag use and may consider changes to the program in the future to improve overall compliance with the program.

Chesapeake Bay Spring Harvest of Migrant Striped Bass

Historically, recreational fishermen in Chesapeake Bay were permitted to take adult migrant fish during a limited seasonal fishery, commonly referred to as the Spring Trophy Fishery. From 1993 to 2007 the fishery operated under a quota. Beginning in 2008, the Board approved non-quota management until a stock assessment indicates that corrective action is necessary to reduce *F* on the coastal stock. Through 2023, the Spring Trophy Fishery was managed via bag limits and minimum sizes in Maryland and the Potomac River. The Commonwealth of Virginia closed the spring trophy season beginning in 2019, and Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission closed the spring trophy season beginning in 2024.

Wave-1 Recreational Harvest Estimates

Evidence suggests that North Carolina, Virginia, and possibly other states have had sizeable wave-1 (January/February) recreational striped bass fisheries beginning in 1996 (NEFSC 2019b). MRIP, formerly the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), has sampled for striped bass in North Carolina during wave-1 since 2004 (other states are not currently covered during wave-1). Virginia harvest in wave-1 is estimated for stock assessment via the ratio of landings and tag returns in wave-6 and regression analysis (refer to the methods described in NEFSC 2019a for more detail).

However, based on fishery-independent data collected by NCDMF, ASMFC and USFWS, striped bass distributions on their overwintering grounds during December through February have changed significantly since the mid-2000s. The migratory portion of the stock has been well offshore and shifted north in the EEZ (>3 miles) affecting both Virginia's and North Carolina's striped bass winter ocean fisheries in recent years. Furthermore, North Carolina has reported zero recreational striped bass harvest during wave 1 and wave 6 in the ocean for 2012-2025, and Virginia has reported zero recreational ocean harvest for eleven of the last twelve years (note MRIP sampling does not occur in Virginia during wave 1). Similarly, North Carolina's commercial fishery has reported zero striped bass landings from the ocean since 2013.

Amendment 7 Commercial Fish Tagging Program

Section 3.1.1 of Amendment 7 includes compliance requirements for monitoring commercial fishery harvest tagging programs, which have been required through the FMP since 2013. In 2025, all states implemented commercial tagging programs consistent with the tagging program requirements. Table 15 describes commercial tagging programs by state.

The PRT continues to emphasize the importance of tag accounting to account for unused tags at the end of each fishing year in all states. Due to the early deadlines for commercial tagging reports (60 days before the commercial fishery opens), tag accounting for the previous year is often preliminary or not yet available at that time. To address this, the PRT reiterates the importance of states reporting all tag accounting results in their annual state compliance reports (i.e., tags issued, tags used, tags returned, tags missing/broken/reported lost, tags not accounted for).

The PRT and state commercial tagging contacts met in July 2025 to conduct a ten-year review of the commercial tagging program as previously recommended by the PRT and as tasked by the Board in August 2024. That ten-year review of commercial tagging report is available here.

Addendum II Recreational Filleting Requirements

Addendum II established two requirements for states that authorize filleting of striped bass: racks must be retained and possession limited to no more than two fillets per legal fish. All states have implemented regulations per the approved Addendum II state implementation plans.

Juvenile Abundance Index Analysis

The following states are required to conduct striped bass young-of-year juvenile abundance index (JAI) surveys on an annual basis: Maine for the Kennebec River; New York for the Hudson River; New Jersey for the Delaware River; Maryland for the Maryland Chesapeake Bay tributaries; Virginia for the Virginia Chesapeake Bay tributaries; and North Carolina for the A-R stock.

The PRT and the Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) annually review the JAIs per the recruitment trigger specified in the FMP. As of May 2022, the new Amendment 7 recruitment trigger is effective and reads as follows:

> If any of the four JAIs used in the stock assessment model to estimate recruitment (NY, NJ, MD, VA) shows an index value that is below 75% of all values (i.e., below the 25th percentile) in the respective JAI from 1992-2006* (which represents a period of high recruitment) for three consecutive years, then an interim F target and interim F threshold calculated using the low recruitment assumption will be implemented, and the F-based management triggers will be reevaluated using those interim reference points. If an F-based trigger is tripped upon reevaluation, the striped bass management program must be adjusted to reduce F to the interim F target within one year.

The 2026 review of JAIs evaluates the 2023, 2024, and 2025 JAI values (geometric mean) per the Amendment 7 recruitment trigger. All four state JAIs (New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia) met the criteria of the Amendment 7 recruitment trigger (Figure 10). New York's (Hudson River) JAI values for 2023 (4.04), 2024 (7.85), and 2025 (8.27) were below its trigger level of 11.70. New Jersey's (Delaware River) JAI values for 2023 (0.26), 2024 (0.53), and 2025 (0.78) were below its trigger level of 1.07. Maryland's JAI values for 2023 (0.57), 2024 (1.06), and 2025 (1.57) were below the Maryland JAI trigger level of 4.16. Virginia's JAI values in 2023 (4.26), 2024 (3.43), and 2025 (5.12) were below its trigger level of 8.22. These states trip the recruitment trigger, requiring F reference points using the low recruitment assumption to be calculated, which was already done for the 2024 stock assessment update and current reference points. The reference points from the 2022 stock assessment update also used the low recruitment assumption.

Maine's JAI (Kennebec River) and North Carolina's JAI (Albemarle-Roanoke) are not part of the recruitment trigger, but are still required monitoring for those states (Figure 11). Maine's JAI has been below its recruitment failure since 2019, and North Carolina's JAI was below its recruitment failure level from 2018-2023 but increased in 2024 and 2025. In 2024, North Carolina stocked 2.4 million striped bass at the fry stage, and 427,176 striped bass at the Phase-I stage into the western Albemarle

Sound nursery area. In 2025 North Carolina stocked 201,140 striped bass at the fry stage, and 68,726 striped bass at the Phase-II stage into the western Albemarle Sound nursery area. All fish are marked in the hatchery using Parentage Based Tagging (PBT) techniques that allows for future genetic analysis of fin clips to determine the percentage of wild versus hatchery reared fish collected during the sampling seasons.

Law Enforcement Reporting

States are asked to report any law enforcement issues that occurred the previous season in annual compliance reports. The most common issue noted in state compliance reports is striped bass above or below the slot limit.

The PRT noted the Massachusetts report of five commercial permits being sanctioned in 2025 through adjudicatory proceedings for commercial striped bass violations occurring in 2024. These included violations of: the closed commercial fishing days, the size or possession limits, the prohibition on high-grading, the circle hook requirement, and the prohibition on possessing fish unlawfully taken in another jurisdiction. Three individuals were ineligible to renew their commercial striped bass endorsements for one year; one individual had their commercial striped bass endorsement permanently revoked; and one individual had their commercial permit and all regulated fishery endorsements permanently revoked.

VII. Plan Review Team Comments and Recommendations

A summary of 2025 fishery regulations by state is provided in Table 1 and Table 2. Each state's commercial tag monitoring program is described in Table 15 and state compliance with fishery-independent and fishery-dependent monitoring requirements are summarized in Table 16.

Based on annual state compliance reports (ASMFC 2026), the PRT determined that all states in 2025 implemented a management and monitoring program consistent with the provisions of the FMP.

The PRT notes the following **additional comments**:

- The PRT notes the issue of determining quota overages based on preliminary harvest estimates. Final commercial harvest estimates may not be available to determine the full amount of a quota overage before planning for the next year's fishery, as with 2024 quota overages in New York and Maryland. New York and Maryland adjusted their 2025 quotas based on the overage amount indicted by preliminary 2024 harvest estimates. Later, after planning for the 2025 fishery was complete, final 2024 harvest estimates indicated an additional overage amount which the states planned to pay back in 2026.
    - In this year's compliance reports for 2025, New York indicated the 2025 commercial quota was reduced based on the preliminary 2024 overage amount (15,561 pounds). Final harvest data indicated an additional overage of 604 pounds. New York noted its 2025 underage was greater than the total 2024 overage (15,561+604), and so no additional quota reduction was taken in 2026.

    - In this year's compliance reports for 2025, Maryland indicated the 2025 commercial quotas were reduced based on the preliminary 2024 overage amount (5,840 for the ocean and no overage for Chesapeake Bay). Its 2026 quotas were reduced based on the additional overage amount determined by the final 2024 harvest data (213 pounds for the ocean and 43,910 pounds for Chesapeake Bay). Maryland previously noted that the pre-Addendum II quotas were already allocated to permit holders when the Addendum II reductions were made, so there were more tags allocated in 2024 than the new 2024 reduced quotas.
- While the New York spawning stock monitoring program in the Hudson River does meet the FMP's fishery-independent monitoring requirements, it does not provide an index of relative abundance to characterize the Hudson River stock which was identified as a high priority research recommendation at SAW 66. A new index is being considered during the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

VIII. Research Recommendations

Research recommendations were developed by the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment Subcommittee and the 66th SARC and are listed in the final stock assessment report starting on report page 569 (NEFSC 2019a).

IX. References

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X. Tables

Table 1. Summary of 2025 Atlantic striped bass commercial measures. Please refer to each state's regulations for additional details. Source: 2025 State Compliance Reports. Minimum sizes and slot size limits are in total length (TL). *NJ commercial quota reallocated to recreational bonus fish program.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	ADDENDUM II QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
ME	Commercial fishing prohibited		
NH	Commercial fishing prohibited		
MA	35" minimum size (measured with new TL definition); no gaffing undersized fish. 15 fish/day with commercial boat permit (only while on listed vessel); 2 fish/day with rod and reel permit.	683,773 lbs. Hook & Line only.	6.16-11.15 (or when quota reached); through Sept 30, open fishing days of Tuesday and Wednesday only, with Thursday added on August 1 if 30% quota remains; Oct 1-Nov 15, Mon-Fri open days. Closed days include July 3, July 4, and Labor Day. Cape Cod Canal closed to commercial striped bass fishing.
RI	Floating fish trap: 26" minimum size unlimited possession limit until 80% of quota reached, then 500 lbs. per licensee per day	Total: 138,467 lbs., split 39:61 between the trap and general category. Gill netting prohibited.	4.1 – 12.31
	General category (mostly rod & reel): 34" min. Five (5) fish per person per calendar day, or if fishing from a vessel, five (5) fish per vessel per calendar day.		6.10-12.31, or until quota reached. Closed Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays throughout.
CT	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program in CT suspended indefinitely in 2020.		
NY	26"-38" size; (Hudson River closed to commercial harvest)	580,307 lbs. Pound Nets, Gill Nets (6-8"stretched mesh), Hook & Line.	5.15 – 12.15, or until quota reached. Limited entry permit only.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL) and TRIP LIMITS	ADDENDUM II QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
NJ	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program*: 1 fish/permit at 24” to <28”	200,798 lbs.*	5.15 – 12.31 (permit required)
PA	Commercial fishing prohibited		
DE	Gill Net: 20” min in DE Bay/River during spring season. 28” in all other waters/ seasons. No trip limit.	132,501 lbs. Split between gill net and hook and line. No fixed nets in DE River.	Gill net: 2.15-5.31 (2.15-3.30 for Nanticoke River) & 11.15-12.31; drift nets only 2.15-28 & 5.1-31
	Hook and Line: 28” min; 200 lbs./day trip limit		Hook and Line: 4.1–12.31,
MD	Chesapeake Bay and Rivers: 18–36”	1,344,216 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota)	Bay Pound Net: 6.1-12.31 Bay Haul Seine: 1.1-2.28; 6.1-12.31 Bay Hook & Line: 6.1-12.31 Bay Drift Gill Net: 1.1-2.28, 12.1-12.31
	Ocean: 24” minimum	Ocean: 77,017 lbs.	1.1-5.31, 10.1-12.31
PRFC	18” min all year; 36” max 2.15–3.25	532,761 lbs. (split between gear types; part of Bay-wide quota)	Hook & Line: 1.1-3.25, 6.1-12.31 Pound Net & Other: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15 Gill Net: 11.9.2021-3.25.2022 Misc. Gear: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15
VA	Chesapeake Bay and Rivers: 18” min; 28” max size limit 3.15–6.15	914,555 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota)	1.16-12.31
	Ocean: 28” min	116,282 lbs.	
NC	Ocean: 28” min	274,810 lbs. (split between gear types)	Seine fishery was not opened Gill net fishery was not opened Trawl fishery was not opened

Table 2. Summary of 2025 Atlantic striped bass recreational size limits, bag limits, and seasons under Addendum II to Amendment 7 as of May 1, 2024. Please refer to each state's regulations for gear/fishing restrictions in that state. Source: 2026 State Compliance Reports. Minimum size and slot size limits are in total length (TL).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL)/REGION	BAG LIMIT	OPEN SEASON
ME	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year, except spawning areas are closed 12.1-4.30 and C&R only 5.1-6.30
NH	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
MA	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
RI	28" to <31"	1 fish/day	All year
CT	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	All year
NY	Ocean and Delaware River: 28" to 31"	1 fish/day	Ocean: 4.15-12.15 Delaware River: All year
	Hudson River: 23" to 28"	1 fish/day	Hudson River: 4.1-11.30
NJ	28" to 31"	1 fish/day	Closed 1.1 – end of Feb in all waters except in the Atlantic Ocean, and closed 4.1-5.31 in the lower DE River and tribs
PA	Upstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 28" to <31", 1 fish/day		All year
	Downstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 28" to <31", 1 fish/day* *except from 4.1-5.31: 22" to <26", 1 fish/day		All year. 1 fish/day at 22" to <26" slot from 4.1-5.31

STATE	SIZE LIMITS (TL)/REGION	BAG LIMIT	OPEN SEASON
DE	28” to 31”	1 fish/day	All year. C&R only 4.1-5.31 in spawning grounds. 20” to 24” slot from 7.1-8.31 in DE River, Bay & tributaries
MD	Ocean: 28” to 31”	1 fish/day	All year
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs^	C&R only	1.1-2.28, 3.1-3.31, 12.11-12.31
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs^	No targeting	4.1-5.15, 7.16-7.31
	Chesapeake Bay: 19” to 24” 1 fish/day^		5.16-5.31
	Chesapeake Bay and tribs: 19” to 24”, 1 fish/day^		6.1-7.15, 8.1-12.10
PRFC	Summer/Fall: 19” to 24”		1 fish/day
DC	19” to 24”		1 fish/day
VA	Ocean: 28” to 31”		1 fish/day
	Bay Spring/Summer/Fall: 19” to 24”		1 fish/day
NC	Ocean: 28” to 31”		1 fish/day

^ MD Susquehanna Flats: C&R only 1.1-3.31 and 12.11-12.31; No targeting 4.1-5.31; 1 fish at 19”-24” slot 6.1-7.15 and 8.1-12.10; No targeting 7.16-7.31

Table 3. Total removals (harvest plus discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish, 1998-2025 calendar years. Note: Harvest is from State Compliance Reports/MRIP (Query June 2026), discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Commercial		Recreational		Total Removals
	Harvest	Dead Discards*	Harvest	Release Mortality	
1998	1,215,219	359,876	2,915,390	3,259,133	7,749,618
1999	1,223,572	348,807	3,123,496	3,140,905	7,836,779
2000	1,216,812	213,504	3,802,477	3,044,203	8,276,995
2001	931,412	182,703	4,052,474	2,449,599	7,616,188
2002	928,085	198,124	4,005,084	2,792,200	7,923,493
2003	854,326	129,223	4,781,402	2,848,445	8,613,396
2004	879,768	154,995	4,553,027	3,665,234	9,253,023
2005	970,403	147,004	4,480,802	3,441,928	9,040,137
2006	1,047,648	159,914	4,883,961	4,812,332	10,903,855
2007	1,015,114	158,718	3,944,679	2,944,253	8,062,765
2008	1,027,824	105,275	4,381,186	2,391,200	7,905,484
2009	1,050,055	131,583	4,700,222	1,942,061	7,823,921
2010	1,031,448	133,375	5,388,440	1,760,759	8,314,022
2011	944,777	82,175	5,006,358	1,482,029	7,515,339
2012	870,684	199,927	4,046,299	1,847,880	6,964,790
2013	784,379	116,919	5,157,760	2,393,425	8,452,483
2014	750,263	114,049	4,033,746	2,172,342	7,070,400
2015	621,952	84,840	3,085,725	2,307,133	6,099,651
2016	609,028	92,260	3,500,434	2,981,430	7,183,151
2017	592,670	100,349	2,937,911	3,421,110	7,052,041
2018	615,649	100,491	2,244,765	2,826,667	5,787,571
2019	652,777	84,827	2,150,936	2,589,045	5,477,585
2020	581,832	60,363	1,709,973	2,760,231	5,112,399
2021	644,204	89,484	1,841,902	2,583,788	5,159,378
2022	622,335	44,624	3,454,021	2,667,846	6,788,826
2023	600,631	16,965	2,624,429	2,343,556	5,585,581
2024	611,704	17,287	1,728,744	1,718,439	4,076,174
2025	543,381+	15,402	1,430,099	1,049,497	3,038,379

* Commercial discards for 2024-2025 were estimated by applying the 2023 discard-to-landings ratios for each region. The entire time series for commercial dead discards will be re-estimated as part of the 2027 stock assessment.

+ Maryland and Virginia commercial landings for 2025 are considered preliminary.

Table 4. Proportion of total removals (harvest plus discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish, 1998-2025. Note: Harvest is from State Compliance Reports/MRIP (Query June 2026), discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Commercial		Recreational	
	Harvest	Dead Discards*	Harvest	Release Mortality
1998	16%	5%	38%	42%
1999	16%	4%	40%	40%
2000	15%	3%	46%	37%
2001	12%	2%	53%	32%
2002	12%	3%	51%	35%
2003	10%	2%	56%	33%
2004	10%	2%	49%	40%
2005	11%	2%	50%	38%
2006	10%	1%	45%	44%
2007	13%	2%	49%	37%
2008	13%	1%	55%	30%
2009	13%	2%	60%	25%
2010	12%	2%	65%	21%
2011	13%	1%	67%	20%
2012	13%	3%	58%	27%
2013	9%	1%	61%	28%
2014	11%	2%	57%	31%
2015	10%	1%	51%	38%
2016	8%	1%	49%	42%
2017	8%	1%	42%	49%
2018	11%	2%	39%	49%
2019	12%	2%	39%	47%
2020	11%	1%	33%	54%
2021	12%	2%	36%	50%
2022	9%	1%	51%	39%
2023	11%	0.3%	47%	42%
2024	15%	0.4%	42%	42%
2025	18%	0.5%	47%	35%

* Commercial discards for 2024-2025 were estimated by applying the 2023 discard-to-landings ratios for each region. The entire time series for commercial dead discards will be re-estimated as part of the 2027 stock assessment.
Note: Percent may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5. Total harvest of Atlantic striped bass by sector, 1998-2025 calendar years. Note: Harvest is from State Compliance Reports/MRIP (Query June 2026). Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Numbers of Fish			Pounds		
	Commercial	Recreational	Total	Commercial	Recreational	Total
1998	1,215,219	2,915,390	**4,130,609**	6,551,623	29,603,199	**36,154,822**
1999	1,223,572	3,123,496	**4,347,068**	6,485,079	33,564,988	**40,050,067**
2000	1,216,812	3,802,477	**5,019,289**	6,715,044	34,050,817	**40,765,861**
2001	931,412	4,052,474	**4,983,886**	6,266,953	39,263,154	**45,530,107**
2002	928,085	4,005,084	**4,933,169**	6,152,583	41,840,025	**47,992,608**
2003	854,326	4,781,402	**5,635,728**	6,750,799	54,091,836	**60,842,635**
2004	879,768	4,553,027	**5,432,795**	7,340,822	53,031,074	**60,371,896**
2005	970,403	4,480,802	**5,451,205**	7,120,647	57,421,174	**64,541,821**
2006	1,047,648	4,883,961	**5,931,609**	6,780,541	50,674,431	**57,454,972**
2007	1,015,114	3,944,679	**4,959,793**	7,047,179	42,823,614	**49,870,793**
2008	1,027,824	4,381,186	**5,409,010**	7,190,800	56,665,318	**63,856,118**
2009	1,050,055	4,700,222	**5,750,277**	7,217,484	54,411,389	**61,628,873**
2010	1,031,448	5,388,440	**6,419,888**	6,996,713	61,431,360	**68,428,073**
2011	944,777	5,006,358	**5,951,135**	6,789,792	59,592,092	**66,381,884**
2012	870,684	4,046,299	**4,916,983**	6,516,761	53,256,619	**59,773,380**
2013	784,379	5,157,760	**5,942,139**	5,819,678	65,057,289	**70,876,967**
2014	750,263	4,033,746	**4,784,009**	5,937,949	47,948,610	**53,886,559**
2015	621,952	3,085,725	**3,707,677**	4,829,997	39,898,799	**44,728,796**
2016	609,028	3,500,434	**4,109,462**	4,848,772	43,671,532	**48,520,304**
2017	592,670	2,937,911	**3,530,581**	4,816,423	37,952,581	**42,769,004**
2018	615,649	2,244,765	**2,860,414**	4,795,679	23,069,028	**27,864,707**
2019	652,777	2,150,936	**2,803,713**	4,254,547	23,556,287	**27,810,834**
2020	581,832	1,709,973	**2,291,805**	3,607,681	14,858,984	**18,466,665**
2021	644,204	1,841,902	**2,486,106**	4,306,781	15,781,510	**20,088,291**
2022	622,335	3,454,021	**4,076,356**	4,323,762	35,800,246	**40,124,008**
2023	600,631	2,624,429	**3,225,060**	4,218,988	23,937,530	**28,156,518**
2024	611,704	1,728,744	**2,340,448**	4,361,830	15,322,884	**19,684,714**
2025	543,381[+]	1,430,099	**1,973,480**	4,170,193[+]	11,213,134	**15,383,327**

+ Maryland and Virginia commercial landings for 2025 are considered preliminary.

Table 6. Commercial harvest by region in pounds (x1000), 1999-2025 calendar years. Source: State Compliance Reports. ^Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Ocean								Chesapeake Bay				Grand Total
	MA	RI	NY	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	PRFC	VA	Total	
1999	766.2	119.7	491.8	187.1	62.6	614.8	391.5	2,633.7	2,274.8	653.3	923.4	3,851.4	6,485.1
2000	796.2	111.8	542.7	140.6	149.7	932.7	162.4	2,836.0	2,261.8	666.0	951.2	3,879.0	6,715.0
2001	815.4	129.7	633.1	198.8	113.9	782.4	381.1	3,054.3	1,660.9	658.7	893.1	3,212.6	6,267.0
2002	924.9	129.2	518.6	160.6	93.2	710.2	441.0	2,977.6	1,759.4	521.0	894.4	3,174.9	6,152.6
2003	1,055.5	190.2	753.3	191.5	103.9	166.4	201.2	2,662.1	1,721.8	676.6	1,690.4	4,088.7	6,750.8
2004	1,214.2	232.3	741.7	182.2	134.2	161.3	605.4	3,271.2	1,790.3	772.3	1,507.0	4,069.6	7,340.8
2005	1,102.2	215.6	689.8	173.1	46.9	185.2	604.5	3,017.4	2,008.7	533.6	1,561.0	4,103.3	7,120.6
2006	1,322.3	221.4	688.4	179.5	91.1	195.0	74.2	2,771.8	2,116.3	673.5	1,219.0	4,008.7	6,780.5
2007	1,039.3	240.6	731.5	188.7	96.3	162.3	379.5	2,838.1	2,240.6	599.3	1,369.2	4,209.1	7,047.2
2008	1,160.3	245.9	653.1	188.8	118.0	163.1	288.4	2,817.7	2,208.0	613.8	1,551.3	4,373.1	7,190.8
2009	1,134.3	234.8	789.9	192.4	127.3	140.4	190.0	2,809.1	2,267.3	727.8	1,413.3	4,408.4	7,217.5
2010	1,224.5	248.9	786.8	185.4	44.8	127.8	276.4	2,894.7	2,105.8	683.2	1,313.0	4,102.0	6,996.7
2011	1,163.9	228.2	855.3	188.6	21.4	158.8	246.4	2,862.5	1,955.1	694.2	1,278.1	3,927.3	6,789.8
2012	1,218.5	239.9	683.8	194.3	77.6	170.8	7.3	2,592.0	1,851.4	733.7	1,339.6	3,924.7	6,516.8
2013	1,004.5	231.3	823.8	191.4	93.5	182.4	0.0	2,526.9	1,662.2	623.8	1,006.8	3,292.8	5,819.7
2014	1,138.5	216.9	531.5	167.9	120.9	183.7	0.0	2,359.4	1,805.7	603.4	1,169.4	3,578.5	5,937.9
2015	866.0	188.3	516.3	144.1	34.6	138.1	0.0	1,887.5	1,436.9	538.0	967.6	2,942.5	4,830.0
2016	938.7	174.7	575.0	136.5	19.7	139.2	0.0	1,983.9	1,425.5	537.1	902.3	2,864.9	4,848.8
2017	823.4	175.3	701.2	141.8	80.5	133.9	0.0	2,056.1	1,439.8	492.7	827.8	2,760.3	4,816.4
2018	753.7	116.8*	731.4	155.0	79.8	134.2	0.0	1,970.9	1,424.3	449.4	951.0	2,824.7	4,795.7
2019	586.1	144.2	327.3	132.6	82.8	138.0	0.0	1,410.9	1,475.2	417.3	951.1	2,843.6	4,254.5
2020	386.9	115.9	518.2	138.0	83.6	77.2	0.0	1,319.8	1,273.8	400.3	613.8	2,287.9	3,607.7
2021	732.1	130.3	600.9	140.3	88.7	119.9	0.0	1,812.1	1,351.5	411.3	731.9	2,494.7	4,306.8
2022	770.4	100.0*	588.6	139.2	88.9	121.7	0.0	1,808.8	1,363.7	428.5	722.8	2,515.0	4,323.8
2023	677.3	80.6*	616.6	140.0	84.6	122.7	0.0	1,721.9	1,319.0	363.6	814.5	2,497.1	4,219.0
2024	662.8	86.6*	617.1	130.0	88.9	114.4	0.0	1,699.9	1,388.1	448.0	825.9	2,661.9	4,361.8
2025	683.4	100.7*	558.2	130.3	76.4+	110.6+	0.0	1,659.8	1,219.8+	477.6	813.1+	2,510.4	4,170.2

*Rhode Island general category harvest (mostly rod and reel) shown only for 2018 and 2022-2025; floating fish trap landings confidential in those years.

+ Maryland and Virginia commercial landings for 2025 are considered preliminary.

Table 7. Commercial harvest and discards by region in numbers of fish (x1000), 1999-2025 calendar years. Source: Harvest is from State Compliance Reports, discards is from ASMFC. ^Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Ocean								Chesapeake Bay				Discards**			Grand Total Removals
	MA	RI	NY	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	PRFC	VA	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	
1999	40.9	11.6	49.9	34.8	10.2	48.7	21.1	217.2	776.0	90.6	139.8	1,006.3	316.3	32.5	348.8	1,572.4
2000	42.1	9.4	54.9	25.2	13.3	54.5	6.5	205.8	787.6	91.5	132.0	1,011.0	180.7	32.8	213.5	1,430.3
2001	45.8	10.9	58.3	34.4	11.1	42.3	25.0	227.7	538.8	87.8	77.1	703.7	139.7	43.0	182.7	1,114.1
2002	49.8	11.7	47.1	30.4	10.2	38.8	23.2	211.3	571.7	80.3	64.7	716.8	146.7	51.4	198.1	1,126.2
2003	56.4	15.5	68.4	31.5	11.6	10.5	5.8	199.6	427.9	83.1	143.7	654.7	95.6	33.6	129.2	983.5
2004	63.6	16.0	70.4	28.4	14.1	10.4	31.0	233.9	447.0	92.6	106.3	645.9	108.4	46.6	155.0	1,034.8
2005	60.5	14.9	70.6	26.3	6.1	11.3	27.3	217.1	563.9	80.6	108.9	753.3	84.6	62.4	147.0	1,117.4
2006	70.5	15.4	73.6	30.2	10.9	11.5	2.7	214.9	645.1	92.3	95.4	832.7	96.2	63.7	159.9	1,207.6
2007	54.2	13.9	78.5	31.1	11.6	10.6	16.8	216.7	587.6	86.5	124.3	798.4	93.3	65.4	158.7	1,173.8
2008	61.1	16.6	73.3	31.9	14.0	10.8	13.4	221.0	580.7	82.0	144.1	806.8	62.7	42.6	105.3	1,133.1
2009	59.4	16.8	82.6	21.8	12.5	8.9	9.0	211.1	605.6	89.6	143.8	839.0	58.8	72.8	131.6	1,181.6
2010	60.4	15.7	82.4	19.8	5.4	9.4	13.7	206.8	579.2	90.6	154.9	824.7	39.6	93.7	133.4	1,164.8
2011	58.7	14.3	87.4	20.5	2.1	12.2	10.9	206.0	488.9	96.1	153.7	738.7	34.8	47.4	82.2	1,027.0
2012	61.5	15.0	67.1	15.7	6.9	10.8	0.3	177.3	465.6	90.7	137.0	693.4	26.9	173.0	199.9	1,070.6
2013	58.6	13.8	76.2	17.7	7.6	10.0	0.0	183.8	391.5	78.0	131.0	600.5	37.3	79.6	116.9	901.3
2014	58.0	10.5	52.9	14.9	8.5	10.0	0.0	154.8	362.2	81.5	151.8	595.5	50.4	63.7	114.0	864.3
2015	42.3	11.3	45.6	11.0	2.6	7.7	0.0	120.4	298.3	71.0	132.2	501.5	34.9	49.9	84.8	706.8
2016	48.0	11.7	51.0	8.8	1.2	7.6	0.0	128.3	284.9	73.7	122.2	480.8	42.4	49.9	92.3	701.3
2017	41.2	10.1	61.6	9.5	3.5	7.6	0.0	133.5	263.6	67.5	128.0	459.2	78.1	22.3	100.3	693.0
2018	37.8	4.6*	52.2	11.4	3.5	6.9	0.0	116.4	286.4	64.4	148.4	499.3	56.6	43.9	100.5	716.1
2019	29.6	7.3	28.5	8.2	3.3	6.9	0.0	83.9	356.7	62.6	149.6	568.9	15.9	68.9	84.8	737.6
2020	19.6	5.0	48.1	8.4	3.4	4.42	0.0	89.0	299.9	66.6	126.4	492.9	19.2	41.2	60.4	642.2
2021	36.9	4.6	58.8	9.2	3.6	6.6	0.0	119.6	310.4	68.0	146.2	524.6	11.6	77.8	89.5	733.7
2022	33.0	3.9*	53.9	8.2	3.4	6.3	0.0	108.6	295.3	71.7	146.7	513.7	3.1	41.5	44.6	667.0
2023	29.9	2.6*	55.5	7.4	3.6	5.9	0.0	104.9	284.3	60.7	150.7	495.7	3.7	13.3	17.0	617.6
2024	30.1	3.5*	56.0	8.3	4.0	5.9	0.0	108.0	299.9	67.4	136.4	503.8	3.8	13.5	17.3	629.0
2025	32.4	3.3*	48.6	7.9	3.3+	5.8+	0.0	101.4	262.7+	62.8	116.4+	442.0	3.6	11.8	15.4	558.8

** Commercial discards for 2024-2025 were estimated by applying the 2023 discard-to-landings ratios for each region. The entire time series f will be re-estimated as part of the 2027 stock assessment. *RI general category harvest only for years when floating fish trap are confidential. + MD and VA landings preliminary.

Table 8. Total recreational catch, releases, and release mortality in numbers of fish by region (x1000), 1999-2025. Source: MRIP (Query June 2026). Estimates exclude inshore harvest from NC.

Year	Harvest (A+B1)			Releases (B2)			Total Catch (A+B1+B2)			Release Mortality (9% of B2)		
	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total	Ocean	Bay	Total
1999	1,758	1,366	3,123	26,139	8,760	34,899	27,897	10,125	38,022	2,353	788	3,141
2000	2,198	1,604	3,802	25,090	8,734	33,824	27,289	10,338	37,627	2,258	786	3,044
2001	2,758	1,294	4,052	21,073	6,145	27,218	23,831	7,440	31,270	1,897	553	2,450
2002	2,756	1,249	4,005	23,653	7,371	31,024	26,409	8,620	35,030	2,129	663	2,792
2003	3,124	1,658	4,781	20,678	10,971	31,649	23,802	12,628	36,431	1,861	987	2,848
2004	3,078	1,475	4,553	27,868	12,857	40,725	30,946	14,332	45,278	2,508	1,157	3,665
2005	3,182	1,299	4,481	28,663	9,580	38,244	31,845	10,879	42,724	2,580	862	3,442
2006	2,789	2,095	4,884	41,239	12,232	53,470	44,028	14,327	58,354	3,711	1,101	4,812
2007	2,327	1,618	3,945	25,135	7,579	32,714	27,462	9,196	36,659	2,262	682	2,944
2008	3,025	1,356	4,381	21,878	4,691	26,569	24,904	6,046	30,950	1,969	422	2,391
2009	2,898	1,803	4,700	16,740	4,838	21,578	19,638	6,641	26,279	1,507	435	1,942
2010	3,906	1,483	5,388	13,606	5,957	19,564	17,512	7,440	24,952	1,225	536	1,761
2011	3,617	1,389	5,006	12,644	3,823	16,467	16,261	5,212	21,473	1,138	344	1,482
2012	3,071	975	4,046	11,242	9,290	20,532	14,314	10,265	24,578	1,012	836	1,848
2013	3,723	1,435	5,158	19,463	7,131	26,594	23,186	8,565	31,751	1,752	642	2,393
2014	2,276	1,758	4,034	15,107	9,031	24,137	17,382	10,789	28,171	1,360	813	2,172
2015	1,770	1,316	3,086	15,419	10,216	25,635	17,189	11,532	28,721	1,388	919	2,307
2016	1,817	1,683	3,500	17,794	15,333	33,127	19,611	17,016	36,627	1,601	1,380	2,981
2017	1,738	1,200	2,938	28,963	9,050	38,012	30,701	10,249	40,950	2,607	814	3,421
2018	1,195	1,050	2,245	22,739	8,669	31,407	23,933	9,719	33,652	2,046	780	2,827
2019	1,342	809	2,151	21,131	7,636	28,767	22,473	8,445	30,918	1,902	687	2,589
2020	923	787	1,710	22,710	7,959	30,669	23,633	8,746	32,379	2,044	716	2,760
2021	1,189	653	1,842	24,281	4,427	28,709	25,470	5,081	30,551	2,185	398	2,584
2022	2,756	697	3,454	26,031	3,611	29,643	28,788	4,309	33,097	2,343	325	2,668
2023	2,036	588	2,624	22,363	3,676	26,040	24,400	4,264	28,664	2,013	331	2,344
2024	1,459	270	1,729	16,486	2,608	19,094	17,945	2,878	20,823	1,484	235	1,718
2025	1,015	416	1,430	9,300	2,361	11,661	10,315	2,776	13,091	837	212	1,049

Table 9. Recreational harvest by region in pounds (x1000), 1999-2025. Source: MRIP (Query June 2026). ^Estimates exclude NC inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean												Chesapeake Bay			Grand Total
	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	VA	Total	
1999	196	181	4,995	1,904	1,327	7,414	9,473	312	3.8	110	339	26,256	2,323	4,986	7,309	33,565
2000	347	109	4,863	2,008	890	7,053	9,768	925	0.0	416	277	26,656	3,503	3,892	7,395	34,051
2001	446	334	7,188	2,044	1,101	5,058	12,314	695	314	382	1,082	30,959	2,928	5,376	8,304	39,263
2002	775	322	10,261	2,708	1,251	5,975	9,621	589	0.0	1,135	998	33,634	2,643	5,563	8,206	41,840
2003	458	466	10,252	4,052	2,666	10,788	12,066	763	14	392	966	42,882	5,246	5,964	11,210	54,092
2004	554	268	9,329	2,460	2,229	6,437	13,303	870	57	1,067	6,656	43,230	4,860	4,941	9,801	53,031
2005	546	384	7,541	3,155	3,133	11,637	14,289	680	7.7	487	3,947	45,808	7,753	3,860	11,614	57,421
2006	610	244	6,787	1,569	2,854	9,845	12,716	586	2.8	921	2,975	39,109	6,494	5,071	11,565	50,674
2007	422	93	7,010	2,077	2,786	10,081	8,390	207	0.0	516	1,965	33,547	5,249	4,027	9,277	42,824
2008	607	182	8,424	970	2,273	18,000	12,407	847	0.0	1,690	750	46,150	5,639	4,877	10,515	56,665
2009	781	222	9,410	2,185	1,458	7,991	17,040	940	138	48	187	40,399	8,672	5,340	14,012	54,411
2010	218	238	9,959	2,102	2,323	18,190	17,454	895	107	206	1,198	52,891	6,482	2,059	8,541	61,431
2011	245	659	11,953	3,066	981	13,151	15,715	605	8.6	308	4,467	51,157	6,220	2,214	8,435	59,592
2012	152	432	14,941	2,096	1,835	13,096	11,551	644	21	1.7	0.0	44,768	3,819	4,670	8,488	53,257
2013	331	831	9,025	4,428	4,236	16,819	19,451	1,073	1,051	67	0.0	57,313	5,137	2,607	7,744	65,057
2014	423	203	7,965	3,402	2,665	13,998	8,886	381	159	0.0	0.0	38,083	8,877	989	9,866	47,949
2015	132	202	7,799	1,394	2,585	8,695	9,982	340	28	0.0	0.0	31,156	7,786	957	8,743	39,899
2016	189	191	3,731	1,776	912	12,053	12,790	86	7.2	0.0	0.0	31,735	10,912	1,024	11,936	43,672
2017	318	394	5,664	1,655	1,560	8,885	10,886	666	0.0	1.8	0.0	30,030	7,309	613	7,922	37,953
2018	142	130	4,925	1,121	1,165	3,453	7,012	33	0.0	0.0	0.0	17,982	4,683	404	5,087	23,069
2019	415	291	2,698	2,300	685	7,072	6,674	44	7.3	0.0	0.0	20,187	3,145	224	3,370	23,556
2020	180	29	776	483	830	2,202	6,584	16	0.0	0.0	0.0	11,100	3,480	280	3,759	14,859
2021	89	36	1,826	597	201	1,492	8,313	132	0	0	0	12,686	2,682	414	3,095	15,782
2022	590	240	5,288	779	1,294	10,695	13,508	39	0	0	0	32,434	3,083	288	3,371	35,805
2023	510	287	3,212	575	769	5,171	10,730	0	31	0	0	21,285	2,195	458	2,653	23,938
2024	318	234	2,414	360	526	4,395	6,070	12	0	0	0	14,328	833	161	995	15,323
2025	556	173	2,496	780	362	1,652	3,615	54	0	0	0	9,689	1,428	96	1,525	11,213

Table 10. Recreational harvest by region in numbers of fish (x1000), 1999-2025. Source: MRIP (Query June 2026). ^Estimates exclude NC inshore harvest.

Year	Ocean												Chesapeake Bay			Grand Total
	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC^	Total	MD	VA	Total	
1999	37.5	9.9	327.1	116.6	88.2	450.9	657.1	28.3	1.6	14.1	26.4	1,757.8	530.9	834.8	1,365.7	3,123.5
2000	77.3	6.0	306.2	156.8	84.0	494.6	939.8	88.3	0.0	27.2	18.1	2,198.3	810.9	793.3	1,604.2	3,802.5
2001	91.9	23.5	551.0	149.8	78.2	364.2	1,267.5	70.6	64.1	36.7	60.7	2,758.1	513.3	781.1	1,294.4	4,052.5
2002	135.2	28.1	723.5	181.5	92.5	439.3	957.6	65.7	0.0	76.4	56.3	2,756.1	464.4	784.6	1,249.0	4,005.1
2003	99.7	41.3	797.2	226.4	181.7	678.4	942.8	75.7	0.9	29.3	50.4	3,123.8	816.0	841.6	1,657.6	4,781.4
2004	118.3	22.1	666.7	159.6	134.5	458.1	1,042.1	66.6	11.0	75.9	323.2	3,078.1	657.5	817.4	1,474.9	4,553.0
2005	118.3	35.5	536.1	195.6	202.6	854.6	958.1	48.8	3.6	34.2	194.9	3,182.2	815.5	483.1	1,298.6	4,480.8
2006	140.9	20.9	483.2	129.3	168.3	614.8	972.2	44.5	0.4	80.6	134.2	2,789.0	1,342.0	753.0	2,094.9	4,884.0
2007	95.5	8.1	471.9	135.8	163.9	602.8	722.2	17.2	0.0	28.0	81.8	2,327.1	1,127.3	490.3	1,617.6	3,944.7
2008	133.4	11.9	514.1	73.4	132.8	1,169.9	791.0	67.7	0.0	94.4	36.9	3,025.4	779.7	576.1	1,355.8	4,381.2
2009	146.5	17.3	695.0	138.4	100.3	574.2	1,141.5	64.8	10.2	3.0	6.5	2,897.7	1,094.4	708.1	1,802.5	4,700.2
2010	37.3	21.4	808.2	162.0	170.2	1,449.0	1,091.4	61.4	12.5	25.3	67.1	3,905.9	1,139.3	343.2	1,482.6	5,388.4
2011	48.5	54.2	873.5	202.2	91.1	1,005.3	1,038.9	43.7	0.8	51.2	207.6	3,617.1	1,112.1	277.2	1,389.3	5,006.4
2012	31.4	37.3	1,010.6	130.7	137.1	927.5	742.4	51.3	2.9	0.3	0.0	3,071.5	716.7	258.1	974.8	4,046.3
2013	73.3	63.2	658.7	308.3	269.6	902.5	1,324.2	70.6	48.4	4.4	0.0	3,723.2	1,136.7	297.9	1,434.5	5,157.8
2014	86.4	16.5	523.5	172.0	131.8	804.5	501.9	26.2	12.6	0.0	0.0	2,275.5	1,627.0	131.2	1,758.2	4,033.7
2015	14.4	10.0	485.3	67.0	140.8	406.8	600.3	41.9	3.5	0.0	0.0	1,770.1	1,108.0	207.7	1,315.7	3,085.7
2016	14.2	17.6	230.1	128.4	63.3	697.7	659.6	5.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	1,817.2	1,545.1	138.1	1,683.2	3,500.4
2017	22.0	37.7	392.3	59.8	94.9	477.3	626.4	27.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	1,738.3	1,091.6	108.0	1,199.6	2,937.9
2018	16.0	13.4	389.5	39.2	85.5	181.7	465.3	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,194.6	993.3	56.8	1,050.1	2,244.8
2019	38.0	14.7	195.6	104.1	67.1	498.0	412.9	10.9	1.0	0.0	0.0	1,342.2	764.1	44.6	808.7	2,150.9
2020	19.0	3.2	67.2	36.9	71.2	203.7	520.1	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	922.9	734.8	52.2	787.0	1,710.0
2021	12.7	4.4	179.1	57.7	21.2	137.8	766.2	9.496	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,188.6	583.7	69.6	653.3	1,842.9
2022	57.6	23.4	479.9	66.4	116.2	882.9	1,126.5	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,756.8	642.2	55.0	697.2	3,454.0
2023	62.8	36.1	343.8	51.9	78.9	500.4	959.3	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	2,036.1	502.3	86.0	588.3	2,624.4
2024	34.4	25.2	257.8	33.6	51.6	433.0	622.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,459.2	232.6	36.9	269.5	1,728.7
2025	60.5	18.4	262.4	87.2	37.8	168.1	369.7	10.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1014.5	390.7	24.9	415.6	1430.1

Table 11. Recreational harvest and recreational release mortality by mode for 2022-2025. Source: MRIP (Query July 2026).

Year	Private-Shore Harvest	For-Hire Harvest	Private-Shore Release Mortality	For-Hire Release Mortality
OCEAN				
2022	2,619,253	137,595	2,305,198	37,608
2023	1,967,001	69,135	1,984,532	28,172
2024	1,390,267	68,928	1,453,785	29,936
2025	907,413	107,100	810,430	26,507
CHESAPEAKE BAY				
2022	553,480	143,694	310,919	14,121
2023	416,900	171,393	319,434	11,417
2024	166,780	102,769	222,757	11,962
2025	348,744	66,842	207,948	4,612
COASTWIDE				
2022	3,172,733	281,289	2,616,117	51,729
2023	2,383,901	240,528	2,303,966	39,589
2024	1,557,047	171,967	1,676,542	41,897
2025	1,256,157	173,942	1,018,378	31,118

Table 12. Number of directed trips for Atlantic striped bass (primary and secondary target) from Maine through North Carolina (excluding inshore NC) for 2020-2025. Source: MRIP (Query July 2026).

Year	Ocean	Chesapeake Bay	Coastwide Total
2020	15,859,277	2,678,922	**18,538,199**
2021	16,017,420	2,183,568	**18,200,988**
2022	21,044,439	2,132,346	**23,176,785**
2023	18,358,961	2,133,807	**20,492,768**
2024	16,434,248	1,276,206	**17,710,454**
2025	14,392,108	1,942,023	**16,334,131**

Table 13. Number of directed trips for Atlantic striped bass (primary and secondary target) by mode from Maine through North Carolina (excluding inshore NC) for 2022-2025. Source: MRIP (Query July 2026).

Year	Private-Shore Directed Trips	For-Hire Directed Trips
OCEAN		
2022	20,814,563	229,876
2023	18,191,509	167,453
2024	16,293,296	140,952
2025	14,234,132	157,975
CHESAPEAKE BAY		
2022	2,023,852	108,494
2023	2,016,729	117,078
2024	1,174,869	101,338
2025	1,871,508	70,516

Table 14. Results of 2025 commercial quota accounting in pounds. Source: 2026 State Compliance Reports. 2025 quotas set by Addendum II to Amendment 7 with New York and Maryland quotas reduced due to 2024 overages.

State	2025 Quota	2025 Harvest	2025 Overage
Ocean			
Maine*	143	-	-
New Hampshire*	3,289	-	-
Massachusetts	683,773	683,431	0
Rhode Island	138,467	General Category: 100,737 Floating Fish Trap: Confidential	0
Connecticut*	13,585	-	-
New York	580,307	558,217	0
New Jersey**	200,798	-	-
Delaware	132,501	130,320	0
Maryland	77,017	76,418+	0
Virginia	116,282	110,644+	0
North Carolina	274,810	0	0
Ocean Total	**2,220,972**	**1,659,767**	**0**
Chesapeake Bay			
Maryland	1,344,216	1,219,755+	0
Virginia	914,555	813,119+	0
PRFC	532,761	452,835	0
Bay Total	**2,791,532**	**2,485,709**	**0**

Note: North Carolina's fishing year is December-November; PRFC's fishing year for gill nets is November-March.

* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota.

** Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with re-allocation of quota to the recreational fishery.

+ Maryland and Virginia commercial landings for 2025 are considered preliminary.

Table 15. Status of Commercial Tagging Programs by state for 2025.

State	Total Participants	Tags Issued	Tags Used	Tags Returned/ Broken	Tags Reported Lost/Not Accounted For[1]	Point of Tag (sale/ harvest)	Biological Metric[2] (Y/N)	Year, State and Unique ID on Tag (Y/N)	Size Limit on Tag (Y/N)	Tag Colors	Annual Tag Color Change (Y/N)
MA	115	55,120	32,399	22,141	580	Sale	Y	Y	Y	one tag color	Y
RI GC only[3]	20	4,870	3,287	974	609	Sale	Y	Y	N	two tag colors by gear	Y
NY	374	53,172	48,621	4,308	243	Harvest	Y	Y	N	one tag color	Y
DE*	241	17,280	7,895	9,385	0	Both	Y	Y	N	Harvest: two tag colors by gear Sale: one color	Y
MD AtlOc	46	7,250	3,348	3,497	405	Harvest	Y	Y	N	two tag colors by area	Y
MD Ches Bay	746	420,420	TBD ±	TBD ±	TBD ±						
PRFC	274	75,901	64,378	10,716	408	Harvest	Y	Y	N	five tag colors by gear	N
VA AtlOc	24	7,200 +	5,838 +	1,138 +	224 +	Harvest	Y	Y	Y	two tag colors by area	Y
VA Bay	337	171,900 +	116,448 +	52,099 +	3,353 +						
NC	0	0	0	NA	NA	Sale	Y	Y	Y	three tag colors by area	N

[1] Tags not accounted for refers to unused tags that are not returned/not reported as lost.

[2] States are required to allocate commercial tags to permit holders based on a biological metric. Most states use the average weight per fish from the previous year, or some variation thereof. Actual biological metric used is reported in Annual Commercial Tag Monitoring Reports.

[3] Rhode Island tag information only listed for the general category (GC) fishery, which is mostly rod/reel. Floating fish trap harvest is confidential.

*The table notes Delaware's tags issued to and used by harvesters. Tags are also issued to weigh stations where a second tag is attached, such that each fish has two tags.

± Maryland's tag accounting for Chesapeake Bay is not yet available. Commercial licensees are required to return unused tags to the Department each year to allow a thorough audit of tag use. This audit is often delayed due to staffing issues.

+ Virginia's tag accounting updated August 2026.

Table 16. Status of compliance with monitoring and reporting requirements in 2025. JAI = juvenile abundance index survey, SSB = spawning stock biomass survey, TAG = participation in coastwide tagging program, Y = compliance standards met, N = compliance standards not met, NA = not applicable, R = recreational, C = commercial.

Jurisdiction	Fishery-independent Monitoring		Fishery-dependent Monitoring		Annual reporting Status
	Requirement(s)	Status	Requirement(s)	Status	
ME	JAI	Y	-	NA	Y
NH	-	NA	-	NA	Y
MA	TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
RI	-	NA	composition (C&R), catch & effort (R), tag program	Y	Y
CT	-	NA	composition, catch & effort (R)	Y	Y
NY	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
NJ	JAI, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (R)	Y	Y
PA	SSB	Y	-	NA	Y
DE	SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C), tag program	Y	Y
MD	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
PRFC	-	NA	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
DC	-	NA	-	NA	Y
VA	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y
NC	JAI, SSB, TAG	Y	composition, catch & effort (C&R), tag program	Y	Y

XI. Figures

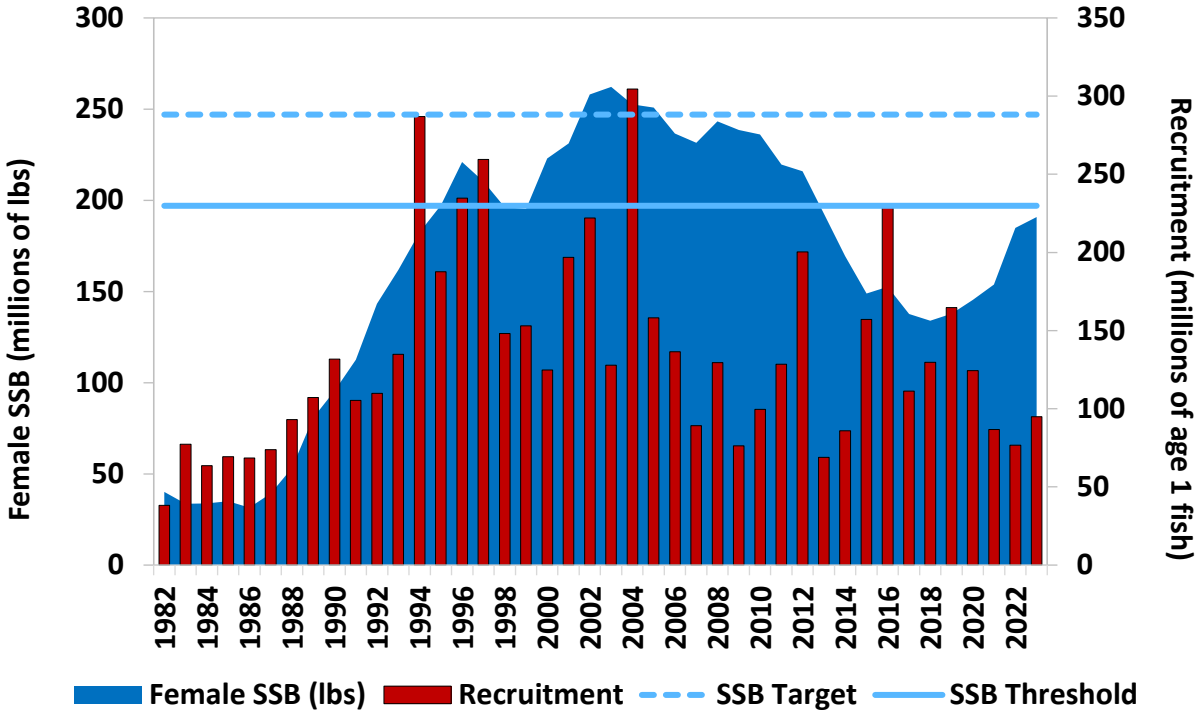

Figure 1. Atlantic striped bass female spawning stock biomass and recruitment, 1982-2023. Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update.

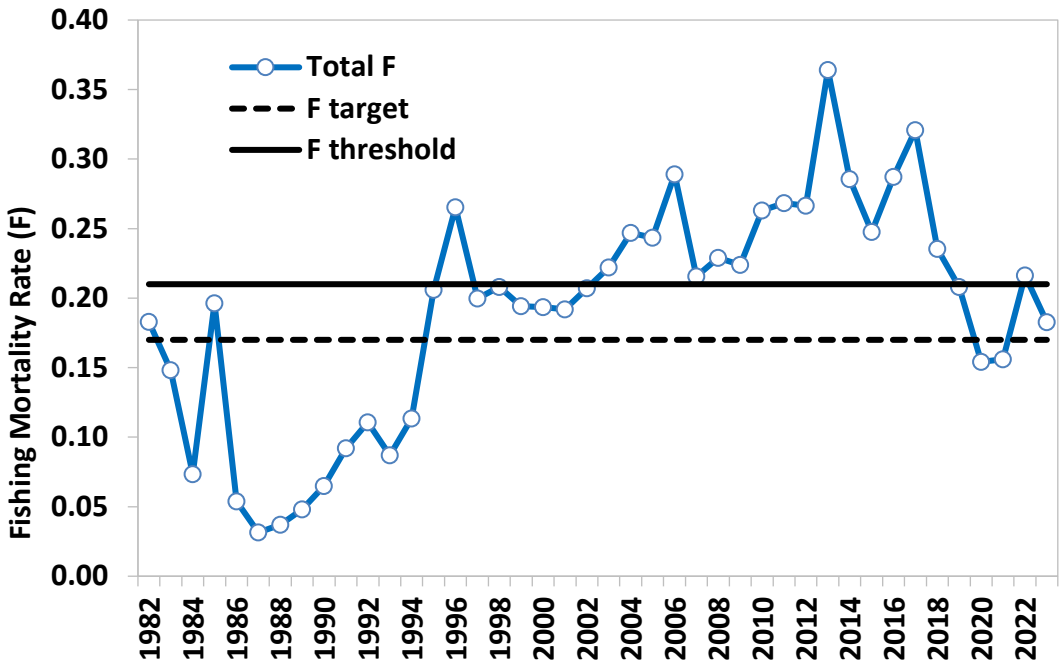

Figure 2. Atlantic striped bass fishing mortality, 1982-2023. Source: 2024 Stock Assessment Update.

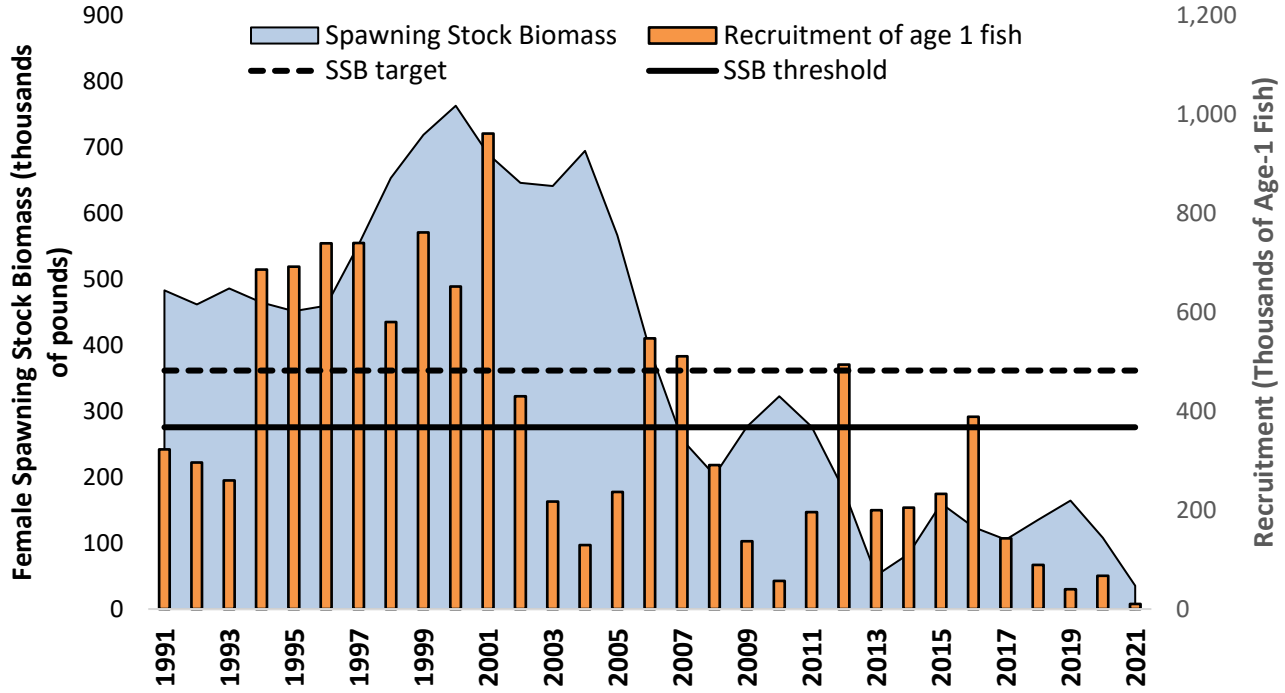

Figure 3. Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River striped bass female spawning stock biomass and recruitment (abundance of age-1), and biological reference points, 1991-2021. Source: 2022 A-R Stock Assessment (Lee et al. 2022).

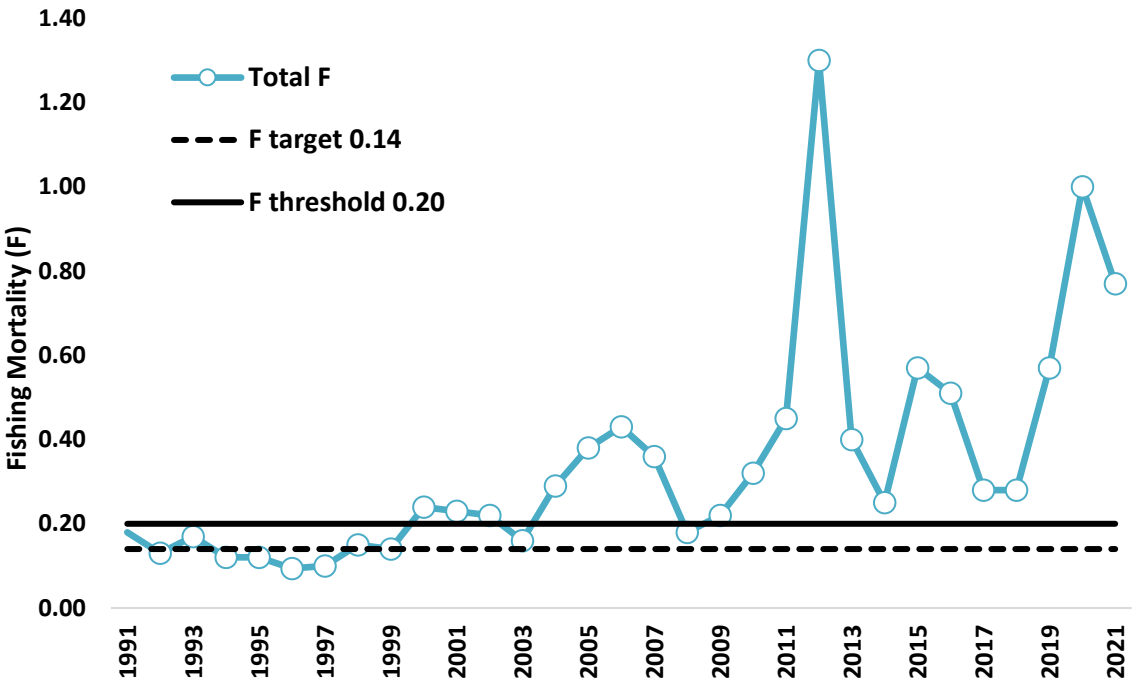

Figure 4. Albemarle Sounds-Roanoke River striped bass fishing mortality (F) estimates, and biological reference points, 1991-2021. Source: 2022 A-R Stock Assessment (Lee et al. 2022).

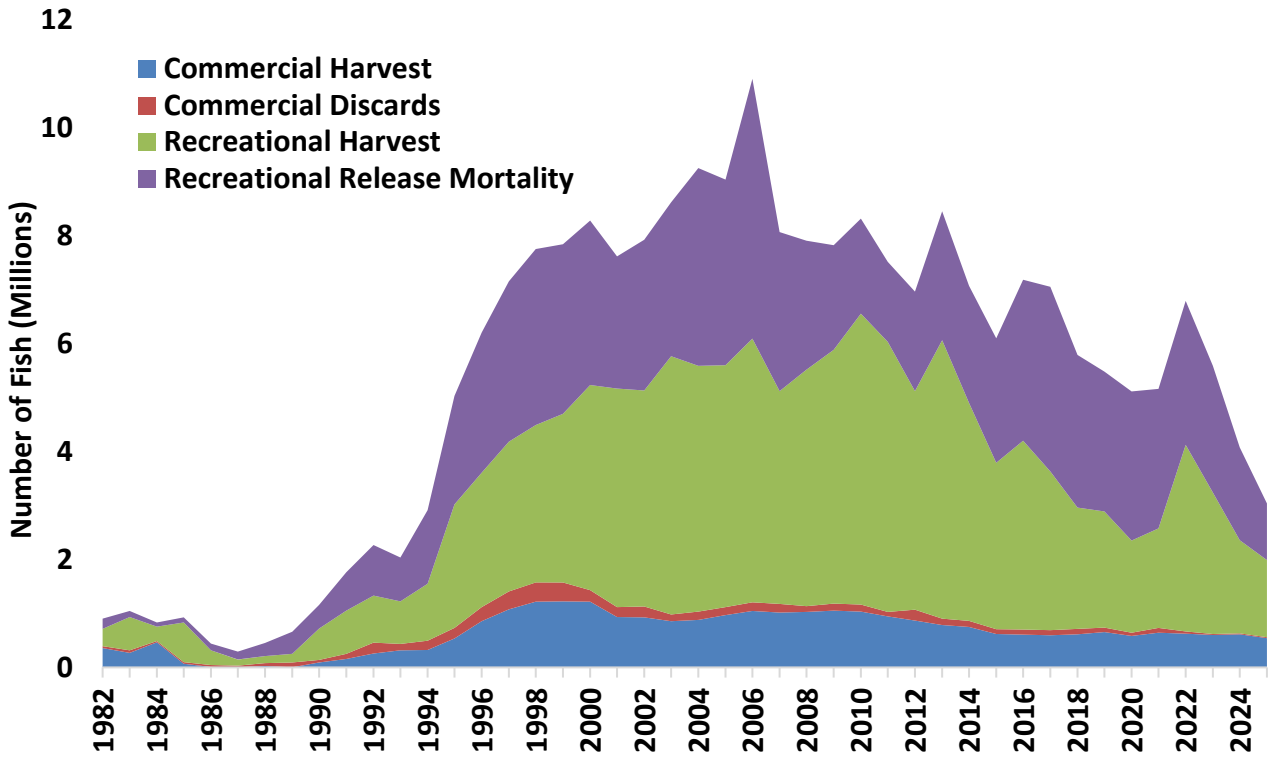

Figure 5. Total Atlantic striped bass removals by sector in numbers of fish, 1982-2025. Note: Harvest is from State Compliance Reports/MRIP, discards/release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore harvest from A-R.

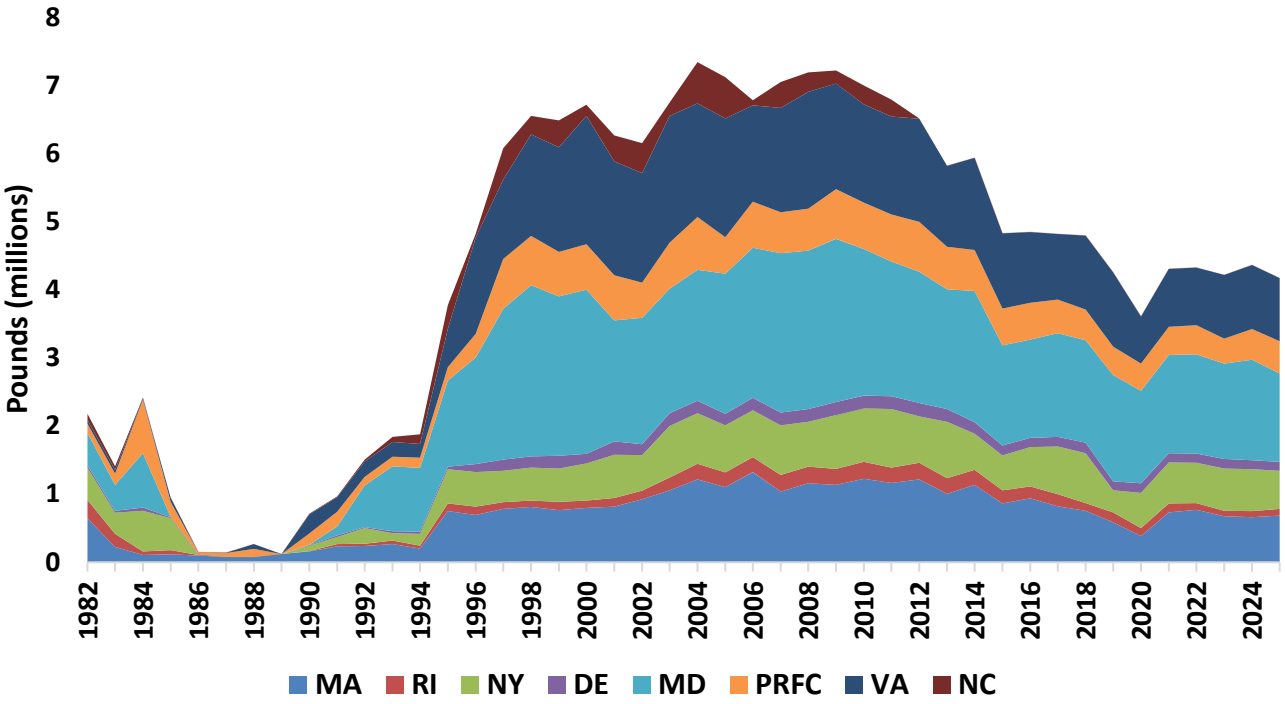

Figure 6. Commercial Atlantic striped bass landings by state in pounds, 1982-2025. Source: State compliance reports. Commercial harvest and sale prohibited in ME, NH, CT, and NJ. NC is ocean only.

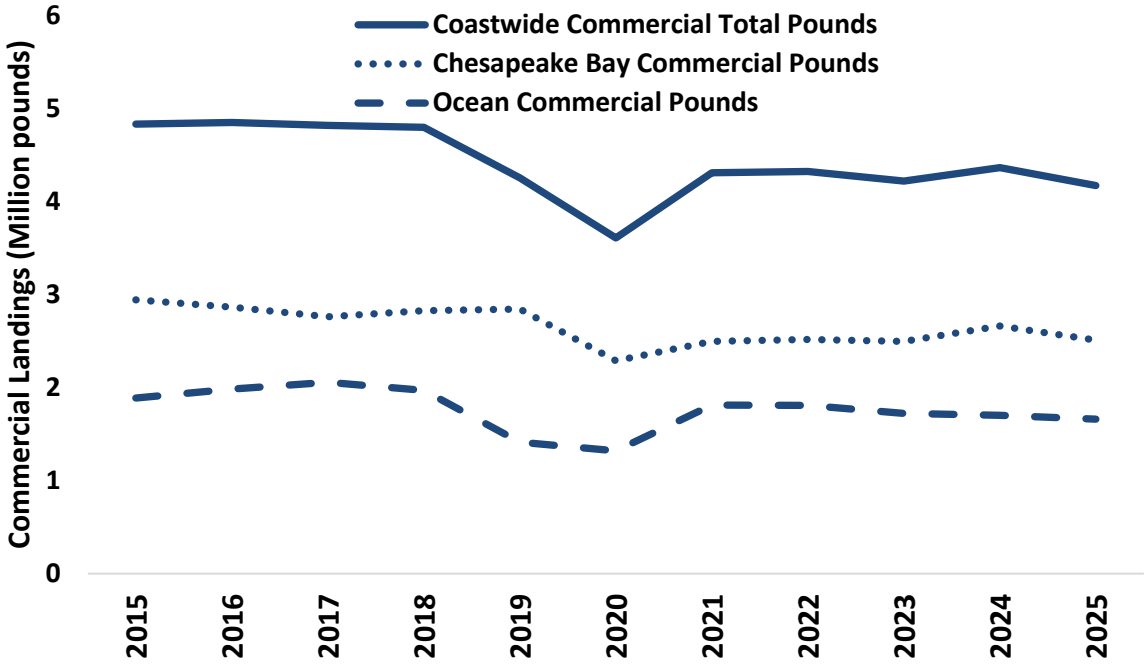

Figure 7. Commercial harvest by region for 2015-2025. Source: 2026 State Compliance Reports.

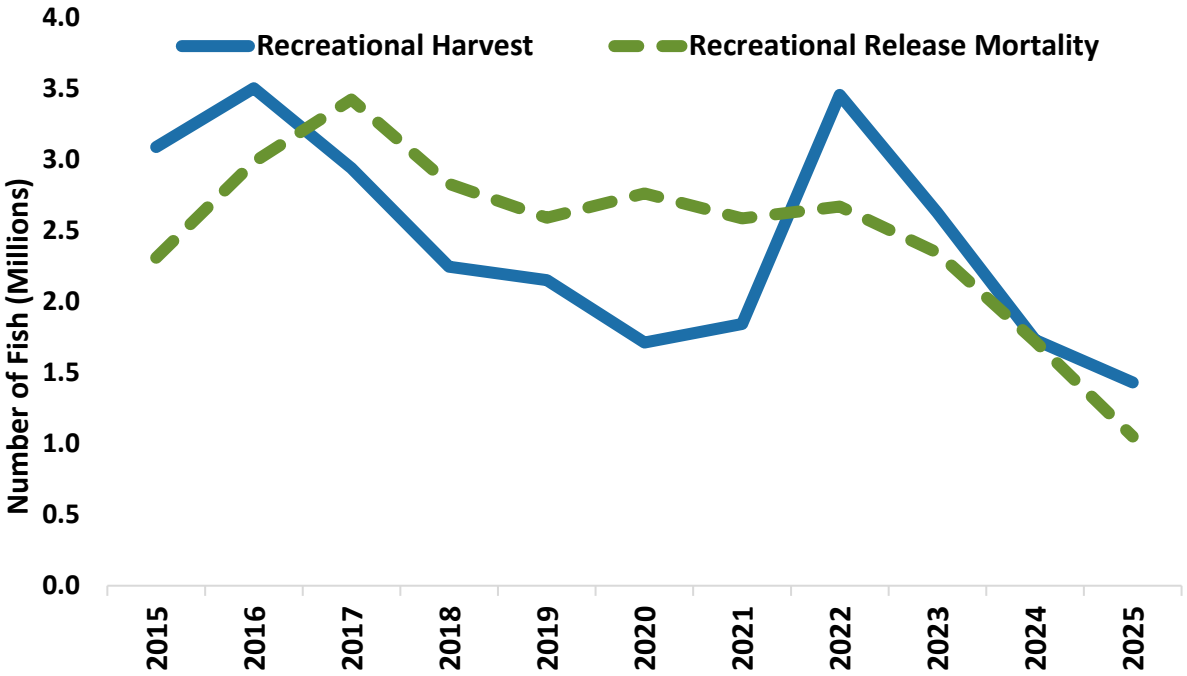

Figure 8. Coastwide recreational harvest and recreational release mortality from 2015-2025. Source: MRIP (Query June 2026).

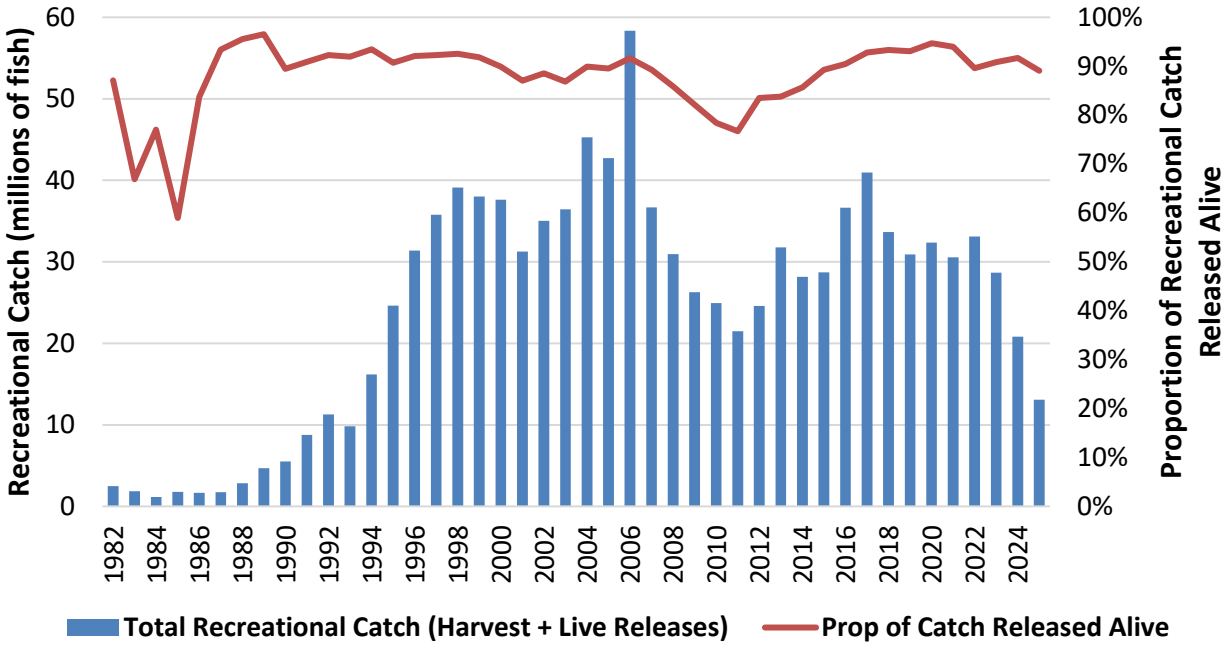

Figure 9. Total recreational catch and the proportion of fish released alive, 1982-2025. Source: MRIP (Query June 2025).

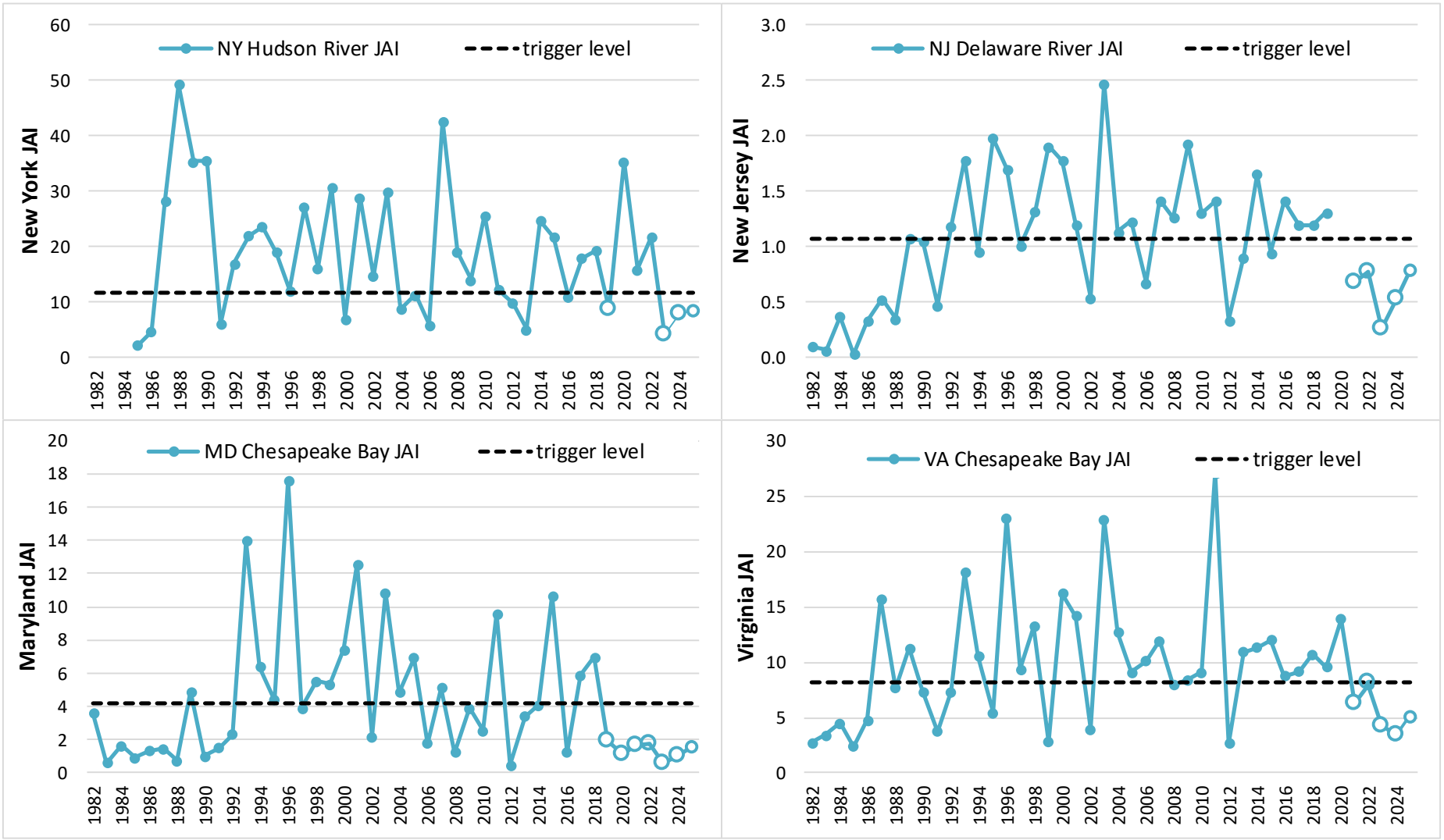

Figure 10. Juvenile abundance indices for New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia for 1982-2025 with recruitment trigger analysis for recent years. An open circle in the last three years indicates a value below the recruitment trigger level. The recruitment trigger is tripped if a JAI is below the trigger level for three consecutive years. Source: 2026 State Compliance Reports.

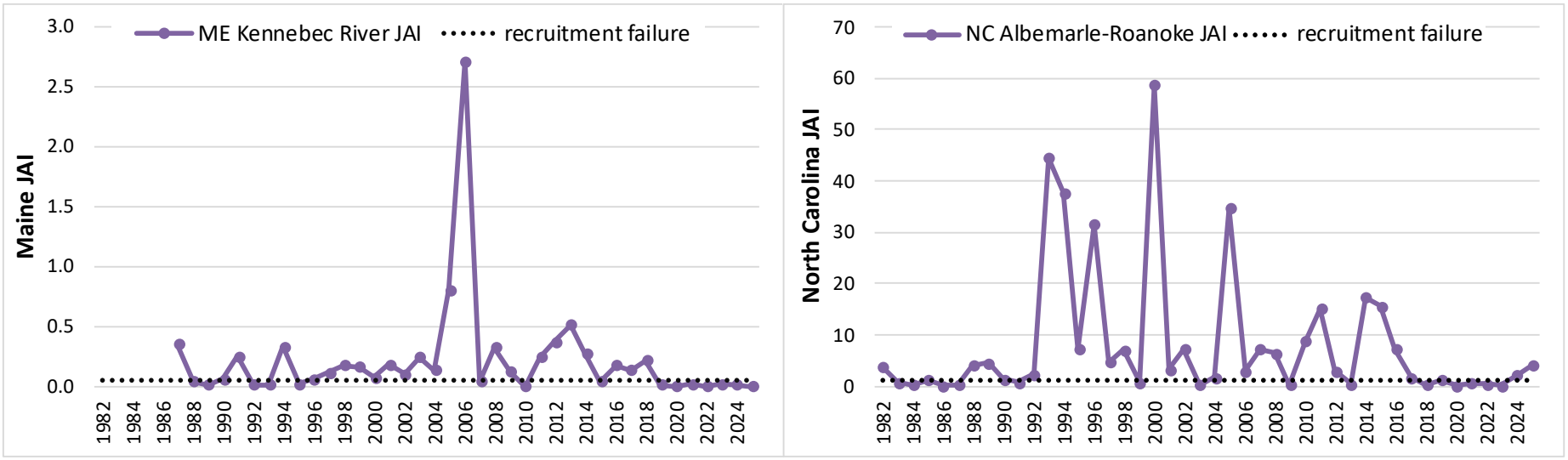

Figure 11. Juvenile abundance indices for Maine and North Carolina from 1982-2025 noting the level of recruitment failure. Source: 2026 State Compliance Reports.