

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

November 11, 2026

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

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| 1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>C. Batsavage</i>) | 1:30 p.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 1:30 p.m. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of Agenda• Approval of Proceedings from August 2026 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 1:35 p.m. |
| 4. Update on Revised Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey Estimates for Striped Bass (<i>K. Drew</i>) | 1:45 p.m. |
| 5. Discuss Work Group on Future Atlantic Striped Bass Management (<i>C. Batsavage</i>) | 1:55 p.m. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steering Committee Recommendations• Discuss Work Group Next Steps | |
| 6. Update on 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment (<i>K. Drew</i>) | 2:25 p.m. |
| 7. Other Business/Adjourn | 2:30 p.m. |

This meeting will be held at The Hotel Viking (One Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI; 844.806.4895) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details.

MEETING OVERVIEW

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

November 11, 2026

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Chair: Chris Batsavage (NC) Assumed Chairmanship: 2/26	Technical Committee Chair: Tyler Grabowski (PA)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Sgt. Jeff Mercer (RI)
Vice Chair: Nichola Meserve (MA)	Advisory Panel Chair: Eleanor Bochenek (NJ)	Previous Board Meeting: August 6, 2026
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS (16 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from August 2026

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Revised Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey Estimates for Striped Bass (1:45-1:55 p.m.)

Background

- NOAA Fisheries published updated recreational fishing effort and catch estimates, including for striped bass, reflecting the improved 2026 Fishing Effort Survey Design.

Presentations

- Overview of Revised Striped Bass MRIP Estimates by K. Drew

5. Work Group on Future Striped Bass Management (1:55-2:25 p.m.)

Background

- In October 2025, the Board approved the establishment of a Work Group (WG) on future striped bass management considering recent low recruitment and impacts on the stock as those weak year classes mature. The Board included a list of tasks for the WG to address.
- In May 2026, the Board agreed to wait until after the 2027 benchmark stock assessment is complete to address the assessment-related tasks. The Board also established a Steering Committee to provide guidance on the WG tasks and timelines.
- The Steering Committee met via webinar on September 10 and October 1 to discuss recommendations and proposed next steps for the WG (**Briefing Materials**).

Presentations

- Overview of Steering Committee Recommendations by C. Batsavage

Board guidance for consideration at this meeting

- Next steps for the Work Group

6. Update on the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment (2:25-2:30 p.m.)**Background**

- The 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment is underway. The Assessment Workshop took place in August 2026.
- The NRCC peer review is being scheduled for late May/early June 2027.

Presentations

- Update on the Benchmark Assessment by K. Drew

7. Other Business/Adjourn (2:30 p.m.)

DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting

August 6, 2026

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

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INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of May 4, 2026** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to recommend the ISFMP Policy Board approve and send the striped bass offshore aquaculture comment letter to NOAA Fisheries as modified today** (Page 6). Motion by Joe Grist; second by Jason McNamee. Motion passes by consent with 2 abstentions (NOAA and US FWS) (Page 7).
4. **Move to approve the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year and state compliance reports** (Page 11). Motion by John Clark; second by Mike Luisi. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 11).
5. **Move to approve Mike Waine of North Carolina to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel** (Page 13). Motion by Adam Nowalsky; second by Doug Grout. Motion carries by unanimous consent (Page 14).
6. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 14).

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ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for C. Wilson (AA)	Jordan Zimmerman, DE (AA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	John Clark, DE, proxy for R. Miller (GA)
Renee Zobel, NH (AA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Michael Luisi, MD (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Robert T. Brown, MD, proxy for R. Dize (GA)
Nichola Meserve, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)	David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Joe Grist, VA (AA)
Rep. Sarah Peake, MA (LA)	Del. Adele McClure, VA (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Ben Dyar, SC, proxy for B. Keppler (AA)
Shanna Madsen, CT (AA)	Chris McDonough, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Robert LaFrance, CT proxy for Rep. Gresko, CT (LA)	Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
Marty Gary, NY (AA)	Erika Burgess, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Gary Jennings, FL (GA)
Sen. Monica Martinez, NY (LA)	Daniel Ryan, DC
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Ron Owens, PRFC
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)	Max Appleman, NMFS
Kris Kuhn, PA, proxy for T. Scheaffer (AA)	Lowell Whitney, US FWS
Loren Lustig, PA (GA)	

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

Ex-Officio Members

Jeff Mercer, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.

Staff

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

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The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Thursday, August 6, 2026, and was called to order at 8:30 am by Chair Nichola Meserve.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR NICHOLA MESERVE: Good morning, 8:30, so we're going to get started and call the August 6, 2026 meeting of the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board to order. I am Nichola Meserve; I'm an administrative proxy from Massachusetts. Chris Batsavage is your real chair, he couldn't be here in person today, so for ease of meeting facilitation you are stuck with me.

He'll be back next meeting, I hope. I am going to first recognize that we have some of our Commissioners from South Carolina through Florida joining us this morning, given Agenda Item Number 4, when we'll be talking about the offshore aquaculture letter. Next turn to Toni, to let us know any of our Board members that are online.

MS. TONI KERNS: We have Chris Batsavage, Ron Owens, Dave Sikorski, Sarah Peake, and then Erika Burgess from Florida.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR MESERVE: We'll turn to Agenda Item 2, Approval of the Agenda. Are there any additions or modifications to the agenda this morning? Seeing none; we'll consider the agenda approved by consent, and move on to the proceedings from May, 2026 that need to be approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR MESERVE: We did receive a couple minor corrections from Doug Grout on Page 9 that would be incorporated. Are there any other edits to the proceedings from May, 2026? Seeing none; we'll consider those approved as modified by consent, move on to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR MESERVE: This is an opportunity for the public to comment on items that are not on the agenda, and we'll look to the audience, in person. I see one hand and any online? Not seeing any there, so if you would like to come up to the microphone, sir and take two minutes for your comments. There is a public microphone right here, just hit the button, the light will turn on, and please introduce yourself.

MR. ROGER ANDERSON: Good morning, my name is Roger Anderson. Probably what I have to say may seem kind of parochial to you, because you are responsible for the entire Atlantic region of striped bass. I reside in Manassas, Virginia, but we have had property on the, I'm going to say in the Matthews County part of Virginia, waterfront property since 1980. We've been fishing this area for 50 years, so I consider myself somewhat of a recreational fisherman. It is particularly concerning to me, and other Virginia recreational fishermen, that gillnetting of rockfish is allowed on your spawning grounds.

As personally recognized and witnessed by my neighbor, netters were taking numerous large rockfish close to shore at the inlets of creeks and coves in the vicinity of our properties during February of 2026. They were discarding smaller rockfish, whereas otherwise it would have required tagging.

As a conservation measurement it is reasonable to restrict the rockfish season for recreational fishing, which ended in 31 December. We were allowed to keep one rockfish per day at a reasonable slot limit. However, commercial fishermen could continue to gillnet for rockfish through close to the end of March.

We consider this to be preposterous and we consider it to be a significant effect on the future spawning of rockfish in our areas. We specifically, the effect that I've personally seen, my neighbors have personally seen, since I do a lot of hook and line fishing, and I do put out minnow traps in the

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summer. There is the almost absence of rockfish in our minnow traps this summer. Previous years I had caught quite a few.

I do catch a lot of rockfish in my traps, this year there was hardly any at all. We respectfully request that you immediately modify regulations to prohibit all rockfish gillnets in their spawning grounds beginning February, 2027 through the spawning season. We consider this critically needed to allow the restoration of the rockfish population. Every year action is not taken results in another lost critical spawning season. We don't want a study, we want action.

CHAIR MESERVE: If you can try to wrap up in the next 20 seconds or so, please.

MR. ANDERSON: Secondly, we request that it should be illegal for gillnets to discard any rockfish caught in gillnets. All rockfish should be tagged, kept and reported. I can understand why the commercial fishermen discard the smaller rockfish, as all fish kept require a tag, and the more weight per pound is in the larger fish. We all must sacrifice in order to save this valuable food source.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you for attending our meeting today and voicing your concern, take that into consideration. Seeing as there are no other hands for public comment.

CONSIDER COMMENTS TO NOAA FISHERIES ON ITS DOCUMENT: CHARTING A COURSE FOR STRIPED BASS: SCIENCE AND REGULATORY INNOVATION FOR OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE

CHAIR MESERVE: We can move on to Agenda Item 4 to Consider Comments to NOAA Fisheries on its Document Charting a Course for Striped Bass Science and Regulatory Innovations for Offshore Aquaculture. This is an action item for us.

The Board will be considering any edits to the letter and then forwarding it to the Policy Board for review as well. These comments were drafted by staff after compiling written information from Board members, after NOAA Fisheries had

requested feedback on the Draft Technical Memorandum regarding Offshore Striped Bass Aquaculture. We will begin with a brief overview of the comment letter by Emilie.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: Just a little bit of background here today. As Chair stated in February, NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture provided a presentation to the Board on the Draft Technical Memorandum. NOAA Fisheries is seeking feedback from the Commission, and so we had 8 commissioners provide pretty detailed written feedback to staff over the past few months.

We compiled all those comments into the draft letter that was in your meeting materials for today. Overall, of the comments from the commissioners there is a lot of overlap, and there were a lot of concerns noted that the draft memo does not adequately address several issues, including economic, regulatory, enforcement, biological and ecological issues associated with potential offshore aquaculture of striped bass.

The commissioners also noted concerns about the risk to the wild population to seafood markets, protected species and marine ecosystems, as well as concerns about some of the regulatory and financial considerations. As you probably saw, the letter is pretty detailed, so I am not going to go over every single sentence in the letter.

But I am just going to go through some high-level summary of the various sections that the commissioners commented on. First there were comments on enforcement concerns, concerns that the striped bass aquaculture in the EEZ would create additional enforcement responsibilities. Since the EEZ is currently closed to striped bass fishing there was concern that offshore striped bass aquaculture could be used as a cover for some illegal fishing.

Comments noted there wasn't enough detail provided in the memo on the traceability, monitoring, compliance or enforcement aspects here, and that it wasn't clear which agency would be responsible for the enforcement and monitoring.

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Next are the economic concerns. The Commissioners noted the potential for any striped bass aquaculture product to potentially flood the seafood markets and reduce the value of wild caught striped bass.

This would have impact on the wild fishery and on the harvesters. There were concerns that the memorandum didn't attempt to quantify those consequences, and that there needed to be an analysis of these types of market impacts. As far as user conflicts, the comments noted that this needed to be addressed in greater detail.

They noted that access to traditional fishing grounds would be reduced, and just in general needed more detail on what the offshore striped bass aquaculture farms would look like, and sort of what uses would be allowed or not allowed around those areas. As far as project siting there were some comments on the actual project sites themselves.

There was concern that the memo underestimated the challenges, sort of engineering and operational challenges needed for potential offshore striped bass net pens. There were a couple comments noting that changing ocean conditions would likely shift where the most suitable production areas would be into the future.

It wasn't clear how the regulatory framework would address this issue. There were also some comments that noted that the areas that were identified as potentially suitable for potential striped bass aquaculture would also be highly susceptible to severe weather events. You need more information on the measures to minimize damage in those cases, and sort of what the impacts would be. There are also comments that the potential sites are being proposed outside of the aquaculture opportunity areas process. There was not a lot of information on what the public input process would be.

As far as aquaculture industry specifics, there were some questions from commissioners, first noting that any regulatory framework would need to be

informed by the realistic operational practices and industry needs. Trying to understand better what the aquaculture industry is looking for here.

Commissioners noted that we need to evaluate the cost and scale required to support the economic viability of these potential operations, so sort of what would the profitability margin be. For ecological concerns some comments noted that the memo didn't address the concern that forage fish would be part of the feed, and also there were comments on the potential effect of these potential offshore sites on essential fish habitat.

For a protected species, some of the Commissioners noted that the memorandum had pretty limited information on the potential for entanglement and other interactions. They were looking for some more information there. As far as the biological risks, the comments noted concern about disease transmission, parasites, escapements and potential genetic interactions with the wild population.

Also, concerns about any therapeutants, antibiotics used and that is essential exposure for the wild population there. The comments noted that more information is needed on actually implementing genetic tracking and practice, what would that look like? Also, the comments noted that the risk of escapement or catastrophic failure of potential operations, for example due to a severe storm, is a real risk and should be given more consideration.

As far as the policy and regulatory roles, the comments noted that the memo was a little bit vague on sort of what this would all look like, and that there would need to be further discussion on which agencies would have oversight of bio security and potential impacts on the wild stock. The role of the Commission and states was sort of mentioned in the memo, but the commissioners noted it wasn't really clear how input from the Commission would be used in this process.

The conclusion of the letter, the draft letter notes that given these risks and unresolved issues that the Commission did not support moving forward with consideration of offshore striped bass aquaculture

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at this time. That is all I have; I am happy to take questions. But again, several Board members submitted pretty detailed comments, so I would look to you all as well based on what you submitted.

CHAIR MESERVE: Are there questions from Board members about the content of the letter? Jay McNamee.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: Yes, we submitted pretty extensive comments from Rhode Island and you've captured them all. I really like the content of the letter. Just kind of like looking at the materials. I just wanted to throw something out and see if people pick up on it or not. I really like the letter and I'm guessing there is like a timeliness to this, so we should probably just get it out. But two of the sections, specifically user conflicts and project siting, they are separate sections in the letter, and I was just kind of thinking, really those two sections are about marine spatial planning.

We comment on that a number of times in the letter. The information that they sent us is really focused on site suitability, specifically for temperature for striped bass. Like that is the extent of it, but I think the points that we're trying to make in the letter is that there is like a lot more. The ocean is becoming a very busy place.

I guess what I was wanting to throw out there, does it matter, should we put those two sections under like a broader category of, you know a lack of marine spatial planning associated with where they were kind of proposing this stuff, or are people happy with it, and let's just get it out the door? I'm leaning towards the latter, but just wanted to offer the thought, in case folks thought it was important.

CHAIR MESERVE: I do think, Jay, that if the Board is interested to have the Policy Board look at it in about an hour and approve it, and the timeliness is the factor that any edits will need to be pretty specific, in order for staff to accommodate them. If it's just the Board changing a heading and putting some of the sections together, I think staff could probably accommodate that pretty easily, would be

my take. But if you are overall, if you would like that or are okay with that, I think the more significant edits might impact that timeline.

DR. McNAMEE: Just a follow up. No, I appreciate that. I was thinking about that too, because I hadn't like drafted up something. I was like, this is too much. You know if people thought like a higher-level heading and then the two subsections that already exist, which are good, I like them.

Maybe it doesn't even matter, I am probably overthinking it. I had a lot of coffee this morning, so I'm fine with that. But I again, I didn't know if the term marine spatial planning was important, kind of putting it in there, that is why I wanted to offer it.

CHAIR MESERVE: I'm going to turn to Joe Grist.

MR. JOSEPH GRIST: First let's monitor Jay's coffee intake this morning, please. I think actually I agree with Jay's suggestion if it's manageable in the next hour, but otherwise I am good with how it is crafted now. I think it definitely conveyed many of our opinions from around the table that we've all offered, and we've repeatedly stated over this last year.

Previously when they came before us, I think it was maybe at the February meeting, at the State Directors meeting in New Orleans. I think we've been making this point very clear to the Federal Government, and they seem to keep needing to be reminded of our points. I'm looking forward to seeing this go out, and once again stating the same thing again. We don't want this.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you, Joe, so I think based on both those comments what staff is going to do is maybe get with you after the meeting quickly, Jay, and make sure that they can just insert a short sentence or two that would kind of capture what you have in mind. This will be going to the Policy Board next, so everyone will have a chance to look at it again there. Is there any objection to that revision? Seeing none; Megan Ware.

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MS. MEGAN WARE: Just a quick suggestion on the letter. I thought it was strong. Keeping it focused to striped bass offshore aquaculture I think is key here, as opposed to someone being able to interpret this to broader offshore aquaculture.

I think just making sure anytime we use the phrase offshore aquaculture it says striped bass offshore aquaculture or in some of the conclusionary statements at the very end in those last few paragraphs, adding the word striped bass to every sentence, I think is helpful, just so it is super clear what we're referencing in this letter.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you for that, Megan, that one is certainly easy enough, and staff have already kind of combed through the letter and found about 15 places where they could insert striped bass to make it very clear that this letter is specific to striped bass offshore aquaculture. I see two hands online, Chris Batsavage and then Erika Burgess, so Chris, go ahead.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Yes, I agree with the other comments regarding the fact that the letter, I think is in pretty good shape with some minor edits considering the short turnaround time. I would like to make one more suggestion, which I think would be minor, but maybe not necessary. But for the enforcement concerns there is language in there about integration of vessel monitoring systems for commercial boats.

Just make sure there is no illegal harvest in the EEZ, and we talked about the issues with that. The letter doesn't express the fact that I believe vessel monitoring systems are pretty expensive for small boats, right off the top as far as purchasing it, but also for the subscription to keep it running. I don't know if that needs to be added or not, or does the Board think there is enough meat on the bones, so to speak in this letter to just kind of work with what we have?

CHAIR MESERVE: Well, it is a meaty letter, but I think that would be something worth adding and could be done pretty quickly. If there is no objection to adding a sentence about the cost of

VMS, we'll add that as well, and turn to Erika Burgess.

MS. ERIKA BURGESS: I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the discussions today, and the opportunities that we had in February. I have to admit, I was a little surprised by the conclusion of those letters that was presented to the Board. My takeaway from the February conversation was that there were a lot of concerns, a lot of lacking information.

I thought the outcome was going to be a letter saying that more information was needed and more points needed to be considered, rather than an outright opposition to this, full stop. I am curious, because it wasn't transparent to me at the February meeting if members of the Board could put on the record a more-clear through line of how they went from wanting more information to making the decision to oppose this venture.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you for that, Erika. I think that the process was laid out in terms of that the comments were collected by staff and put into the letter. But I would turn to the Board members, really to ask if the concluding statements of the letter are what you supported in your comments and they are reflected here. If there is a disagreement on that, then I think we will be looking at a motion at some point to approve the letter as modified today and move from there. Did I see a hand from Shanna Madsen?

MS. SHANNA MADSEN: I just wanted to express the same sentiments that my colleague across the table did, Mr. Grist. We are in full support of the way that this letter concludes. I would have love to have seen this with a different species, but with striped bass, quite frankly I am at a full stop on this.

CHAIR MESERVE: Any other comments? Thank you, Marty, go ahead.

MR. MARTIN GARY: I wanted to compose my thoughts. Several of the Commissioners noted I have a crabby tie on today, and I am going to try to keep my comments productive. But this is our third

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discussion of this issue related to striped bass aquaculture offshore in the Atlantic coast of the U.S. New York was one of the contributors to the 8 letters that were submitted, and I agree with everything that was discussed here and the revisions and the modifications discussed.

From a technical perspective we're in lock step with that. I don't want to necessarily sturdily pile on, but I think we're here assembled. The Board members have had the privilege to discuss the management of this species, with all the supporting technical people that provide the insight to our management for this species, and the public.

I don't know how many people online, but typically we have hundreds. This is our flagship species, and we are arguably entering the most challenging period of time for this species in the last half century. Everybody hearing those, in the next year and a half, we're going to have some very difficult discussions for this species.

I myself have been working with this animal since day one of my career, more than 40 years ago, and there are people on this Board that have a greater depth of experience and knowledge than I do. But of all the people I've talked to, Board members, the technical folks that we all work with, the constituents. I have yet to hear one person say this is a good idea.

I am trying to understand where the idea comes from for this species in this place to go forward, when the entire community is in lockstep in their opposition to this. I just want to reiterate. I think Joe said succinctly, we are not in support of it. I think that's the end game. Maybe I'm wrong and somebody else will step up, but I've worked around, I've talked to a lot of folks.

I have yet to reach one person who thinks this is a good idea. My passion is spilling out of here a little bit, but this is the third time we've discussed it, and we're about to embark on a really difficult time for this species that we all care so much about. I'll just end it right there. The letter speaks for itself; I think

it is well done. I appreciate, Emilie, your synopsis of that and I'll stop there, Madam Chair.

CHAIR MESERVE: In consideration of our time allotment, as well as providing an opportunity for any public comment, I would look to the Board for a motion at this time. Staff does have something drafted to make it easy if anyone would care to make that motion. Joe Grist, could you read that into the record for us?

MR. GRIST: I would be happy to. **Move to recommend the ISFMP Policy Board approve and send the striped bass offshore aquaculture comment letter to NOAA Fisheries as modified today.**

CHAIR MESERVE: I see a second from Jay McNamee.

MR. GRIST: And half the room.

CHAIR MESERVE: Any further discussion, Joe. I know you already got up there with some comments, but you're welcome to provide more if you like.

MR. GRIST: No, I think comments around the table speak for themselves, good consensus report for this. Again, well done for staff to help us put this all together.

CHAIR MESERVE: Jay, any further remarks?

DR. McNAMEE: Nothing more, thank you.

CHAIR MESERVE: Looking for any further Board hands. Not seeing any; I do want to provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment on this, if there is anyone. In the back, please come to the microphone, introduce yourself.

MR. DAVID O'BRIEN: Thank you, Board. My name is David O'Brien; I am with NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture. I just wanted to come here and give a few remarks. First and foremost, I appreciate being invited to come today and say a few comments, and really want to express my gratitude to everyone at

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ASMFC who put so much thought and effort into this, not just this letter but over the past what two years or so we've been having these conversations.

The feedback is very much appreciated; we want to make sure we work very closely with the ASMFC on all aspects of aquaculture in the Atlantic. I want to make sure that I relay a couple of things just for awareness. First of all, we will take your comments, looking forward to seeing them. We've seen the draft, of course, on your website.

Look forward to the final version. We'll be sure to go through those more carefully and incorporate the comments as appropriate. There are a lot of great comments in there, into a final version of that Tech memo. That is a next step for us to take on. But also want to point out two other things. There are a number of things we're working on and I won't go down the whole list, of course. But two things in particular I want to highlight for this group today.

One is, that I know in your letter you highlighted the value of aquaculture opportunity areas or ALA's. That is our flagship effort for aquaculture in marine waters, not just offshore but a lot of this is focused on offshore. I wanted to point out that there actually is an effort, an opening right now as an RFI went out, a request for information went out just about a week ago, I believe, asking for comments on the next round of ALAs somewhere in the country, it's not moving into the Atlantic, certainly.

But we expect some comments from, perhaps the folks around this table or your constituents. I'll make sure that is out there if some people want to add additional thoughts on any aspect of aquaculture, really, where it should go, where it shouldn't go, including striped bass. We welcome your comments during that process.

The other thing I wanted to point out is, there are some comments again in the letter about the market implications of striped bass aquaculture. For awareness, we are in the process of launching a new cooperative institute for aquaculture called sea farm, it is CI Farm, and one of the first projects out

of the gate will be to look at the market implications of striped bass aquaculture in the context of commercial and recreational fishing.

Now this is not limited to this particular conversation. Striped bass aquaculture is happening already in other parts of the country, other parts of the world. It's happening in Mexico, in coastal ponds and in the Gulf, for example. This is a timely conversation regardless of what happens for offshore aquaculture in ASMFC jurisdiction.

I will make sure we are listening to those concerns and questions, and we are taking steps to address them. With that again, thank you very much, appreciate your comments. Looking forward to continuing to work with you.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you for attending today, Mr. O'Brien, that is some very helpful information for us to have as well, and hope the Board members will look for that RFI and for the comments if you have them. Are there any other members of the public online, I'm not seeing any hands, or in the room.

Do the Board members need a moment to caucus on the motion? Seeing no shaking of the heads for that, **is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, any abstentions? Two from NOAA Fisheries and Fish and Wildlife Service. The motion carries by consent with two abstentions.**

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND STATE COMPLIANCE FOR THE 2025 FISHING YEAR

CHAIR MESERVE: That will bring us to Agenda Item Number 5, to Consider Approval of the FMP Review and State Compliance for the 2025 Fishing Year. Emilie will lead us through a presentation of this, and then we'll be looking again for a motion to approve the document. Go ahead, Emilie.

MS. FRANKE: I will give our typical FMP Review presentation starting with quick status of the stock. Based on our 2024 stock assessment update the stock is overfished but not experiencing overfishing.

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This assessment had a terminal year of 2023. We are of course working on the next Benchmark Stock Assessment, which will have a terminal year of 2025.

We'll hear an update from Dr. Drew right after this about the timeline of that assessment. As far as the FMP, you know we are still under these Addendum II to Amendment 7, the management measures which were implemented to achieve a reduction. As a reminder, those were implemented in May of 2024 with commercial quotas having a 7% reduction. The ocean fishery is at a 1 fish at a 20-to-31-inch slot. There are some different measures for the New York Hudson River, the Pennsylvania Delaware River and the Delaware River and Bay in Delaware. In the Chesapeake Bay the measures are 1 fish at a 19-to-24-inch slot, and then we had those two recreational filleting measures as well.

Then of course at the end of last year the Board approved Addendum III for Amendment 7, which allowed Maryland to change its recreational season baseline, which Maryland chose to do. Then states had to implement the total length definition by January 1st of next year, and then we also have commercial tagging by the first point of landing, which needs to be implemented by the end of 2028.

Moving on to status of the fishery. What did the fishery look like last year in 2025? In 2025, total removals were about 3 million fish. This is about a 25% decrease from 2024. You can see here this is part of the table we have in the FMP Review showing the breakdown of removals by sector. You can see here the commercial sector; the proportion of total removals is a little bit higher this year.

That is because there was a greater decrease on the recreational side in 2025 than there was on the commercial side. For the commercial fishery in 2025, the fishery harvested about 4.2 million pounds. Again, this is a decrease from 2024, it is about a 4% decrease by weight, about an 11% decrease by number.

As far as the commercial quota utilization last year, the ocean utilized about 75% of its quota. Of

course, largely that underutilization is due to the lack of availability of fish in North Carolina, so North Carolina had zero landings for their ocean fishery.

Of course, a couple states do not allow commercial fishing so they are not using their quotas. But however, most of the ocean states that do allow commercial fishing used over 95% of their quotas last year. Chesapeake Bay used about 89% of its quota last year, and there were no state quota overages in 2025.

Here is a time series of commercial landings since 2015, you can see the top line is coastwide. That next sort of dotted line is the Chesapeake Bay, and the bottom dashed line is the ocean. You sort of see that dip in 2020, and then landings have remained relatively stable, a little bit decreasing, not surprising given the quota management.

On the recreational side, last year in 2025 harvested about 1.4 million fish or about 11.2 million pounds. This is about a 17% decrease by number from 2024 about a 27% decrease in weight. About 11.7 million fish were released alive, and based on our assumption of that 9% release mortality, about 1 million of those are assumed to have died from that fishing interaction.

These live releases were about a 39% decrease from 2024. Here is a time series since 2015. The dark blue line is recreational harvest; the dashed green line is release-mortality. Again, for harvest you can see that peak in 2022, with the 2015-year class coming through, and it's been declining since then, sort of similar with release, you can see that very slight peak in 2022, but that has also been declining since then. As far as directed trips last year, there are about 16.3 million trips with striped bass as either a primary or secondary target. This is about an 8% decrease from 2024, and overall, the coastwide directed trips for striped bass is the lowest in the past decade last year. Again, the time series, you can see that dark blue line is the ocean directed trips, you know a clear decrease since that peak in 2022.

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The bottom orange line is the Chesapeake Bay, also sort of a decrease over time with a slight increase in 2025, but still low for the time series. As usual the PRT notes there are several factors that are likely contributing to the catch and effort levels. Specifically for last year the PRT talked about bad weather and high winds, especially in early fall, and lack of available slot size fish in peak season.

This is specifically for New York and New Jersey. Decreases in those two states last year really drove that coastwide decrease that we saw. Some of the other states in New England were either sort of stable from 2024 or even a slight increase, but those large decreases that we saw in New York and New Jersey really drove that decrease in 2025.

Then in the Chesapeake Bay, the PRT talked about the lack of strong year classes for the past several years and also the Addendum II measures that have been implemented since 2024 are likely contributing to the low harvest we're seeing in the Bay for '24 and '25. For North Carolina, Albemarle Sound, Roanoke River areas. North Carolina provides us with updates.

But this is actually the same update since last year. Their last stock assessment indicated the stock is overfished and overfishing was occurring, with very low recruitment. North Carolina implemented a harvest moratorium starting in 2024 for these two areas, and that is still in place. Another part of the FMP Review every year is the recruitment trigger from Amendment 7.

You may recall that if any of the 4 juvenile abundance indices used in the stock assessment is below 75% of sort of our high recruitment period, then the F reference points we use must use the low recruitment assumption. We are already doing that; we are already using the low recruitment assumption.

This trigger was tripped again, but we are already operating under low recruitment assumption. The trigger was tripped, we reviewed the last 3 years of values, '23, '24 and '25 and actually all 4 indices tripped the trigger this year. Here on the screen,

you can see the 4 indices. New York Hudson River is in the top left.

Next to it is the New Jersey Delaware River Index, the bottom left is Maryland/Chesapeake Bay, and then the bottom right is Virginia, you can see those red circles are all of the years where those indices have been below their trigger level. As far as PRT comments and recommendations.

First, the PRT noted that all states in 2025 did implement management and monitoring consistent with the FMP. Then a couple of discussion point with the PRT this year. The PRT did note the issue of determining commercial quota overages based on preliminary harvest estimates. The PRT brought this to the Board's attention last year, there were overages in 2024 in New York and Maryland, so those two states adjusted their 2025 quotas based on preliminary harvest estimates, and then a little bit later when final harvest estimates were available, determined that there was an additional overage amount, which those states then planned to take in 2026.

With the compliance reports this year, sort of the PDT just noted how that played out. New York did reduce their 2025 quota based on their preliminary overage amount, which was about 15,000 pounds. Their final data indicated an additional 600 pounds of overage.

But New York noted that when they completed their reporting for 2025, they were under by more than their total overage, so they did not take any additional quota reduction in 2026. Maryland did reduce their 2025 quotas based on their preliminary overage amounts, and then followed with a 2026 quota reduction based on those additional overage amounts.

The PRT also had a brief discussion on the New Jersey Stiped Bass Bonus Program tags. As a reminder, New Jersey's bonus program is an approved conservation equivalency program and participants can harvest 1 fish between 24 inches and less than 28 inches per permit. Only 14% of issued permits were used in 2025.

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The PRT did have a brief discussion on what happens to any of the unused Bonus Program tags. For-hire participants in New Jersey are required to return the tags, while private anglers are not required to return them. The PRT noted that this is inconsistent with the strict tag return requirements for the commercial fishery.

This is obviously not a commercial fishery, but the program is based on commercial quota, so the PRT wanted to point that out. But New Jersey did indicate that there is some ongoing discussion on how to improve reporting from private anglers for this program. That's all I have; I am happy to take any questions.

CHAIR MESERVE: Great thorough review. Of all the FMP reviews we look at this is one of the meatier ones for striped bass. I do appreciate the PRT digging in a little bit about how the 2025 harvest differed from what our assumptions had been about a year ago. I'll turn to the Board for questions and I see Robert Brown.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN, SR: I've got a question, you were talking about Maryland harvest on the commercial part was 89%, which is 11% which was not caught. I heard you say that was because of low abundance of rockfish. Did I hear you correctly on that?

MS. FRANKE: The PRT talked about the several factors possibly driving this low harvest. I think the PRT discussion was a little more focused on the recreational fishery. There wasn't specific discussion on why 11% of the Bay quota wasn't utilized last year.

MR. BROWN: Okay, one of the reasons we have it with our commercial fishery, it's the way it's set up. If it is set up so we don't catch our quota, because there is no rollover if you don't catch it, but the problem is the way it is set up in Maryland, we don't allocate enough for everybody. You allocate your quota and somebody doesn't catch it full, not because there is not the fish there, it's because we've got some people who aren't fishing, we've

got some people who started fishing early and then stopped and shifted over, go to oystering or whatever. The way it is set up, if they only allocate exactly the amount that we are to catch, we will never catch it, because there are a few people who don't fish anymore. Some people have such a low quota that they are not using it. That is one of the reasons that we are below.

The problem I have with it is this 11% that is not caught, not that we're not catching them. The problem I have with it is, we don't get no credit for not catching the fish. I'm not talking about a rollover, but when the following season comes you have two or three years. It's been a number of years; I don't know how many years in Maryland.

I think it's only been maybe two years since we've been doing this that we went over our quota, of course we paid it back. The last time we paid it back, we went over our quota was because the allocation came at the crawl to the cut that we had to take, and that threw us over a couple percent, which we did pay back.

But I think that we need to get credit for not catching those fish when it comes to further times when we get a cut. Well, you didn't catch it for the past so many years, and now you've got to have a cut because things are bad. It just doesn't seem fair that we get cut so hard, and we are the most restricted, the commercial fisherman is. I mean we have to tag our fish; we have to weigh our fish; we've got to carry them to a check-in station.

All this stuff we do, we are so heavily regulated, and yet the recreational fisher, what do they have? MRIP. Everyone in here knows that MRIP is far from being a perfect situation. It's not real science, and I just wanted to bring this to everybody's attention. Thank you.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you, Robert, for the insights into the commercial harvest results there. I did see another hand from Loren.

MR. LOREN W. LUSTIG: Thank you to the presenter for a very interesting report. In one of your early

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slides, I took note, I think the title was something like catch effort levels, and it related to angler behavior, which I found to be a very interesting phrase. Could you expand on what is the consideration there as it relates to angler behavior, and I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question.

MS. FRANKE: I think it can mean a lot of different things. I think one example is when the fish are more available, we tend to see an increase in effort, so folks are choosing to take trips when the fish are more available versus when they are not. I think it can mean a lot of different things. I think that is one example the PRT comes back to is sort of how does effort change, based on when the fish are available.

MR. LUSTIG: Follow up if that's okay. The word behavior often would indicate some perhaps maladaptive behavior like poaching or disregard of slot limits, that sort of thing. That was what I was wondering about.

MS. FRANKE: Got it. The PRTS, I think definition or use of the term behavior wasn't referring to things like poaching, referring more to angler's decisions on whether or not to go fishing.

CHAIR MESERVE: Appreciate that clarification, any other questions from the Board? Jason McNamee.

DR. McNAMEE: It's in the report and I think you mentioned it as well, Emilie, in the presentation about the New Jersey tagging program. The report says they are working on something, so I just wondered if the folks from New Jersey might want to offer what they are considering to help.

But the issue is I think, the issue tags have been there is no requirement to turn them in. I don't know what leverage they have to get those tags back, like you have in a commercial fishery, for instance. I am just curious as to what they are thinking about with respect to that tagging program and how they might improve it to sort of help with this issue of these tags just kind of disappearing after they are issued.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thanks for the question, Jay, similar one. I don't know if you caught all that Joe, as you are just coming back into the room, but Jason was asking about the Bonus Program and the types of improvements that New Jersey was considering to improve the tag accountability.

MR. JOE CIMINO: The reason why it exists for charters is they are actually given like a bag of tags. With the remainder of the program for private anglers it was a single tag going out to folks. I think it may have been more administration type stuff than anything else, but it is something that we're working on, considering several different options.

One of the things that we're really interested in is just understanding the usage. Why are so many folks asking for them and not using them. Part of that tends to be, I think, kind of combined trips with folks, and so not all the tags are used. Can they all start coming back? That is what we're looking into, are we capable of handling and requiring if every individual gets the same tag back to us, worried about reporting lost tags and how to handle it kind of stuff now.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thanks, Joe, for that response there. I think it would be worth, the next time that New Jersey submits its conservation equivalency proposal for that program, that would be an opportunity to look at exactly what is being done, and whether or not there ought to be any improvements, what New Jersey is talking about now. Any further questions from the Board? Not seeing any, would anyone care to make a motion to approve the document. John Clark, go ahead.

MR. JOHN CLARK: I'm going to wait for it to pop up here. Don't make me adlib. **Move to approve the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year and state compliance reports.**

CHAIR MESERVE: I see a second from Mike Luisi, thank you, is there any further discussion. Seeing none, **is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none are there any abstentions? No, okay, the motion is approved by unanimous consent.**

UPDATE ON 2027 BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT

CHAIR MESERVE: We will move on to Dr. Drew's update on the 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment.

DR. KATIE DREW: This will be pretty quick. First of all, we are having our Assessment Workshop in essentially two weeks, the week of August 24. There is a webinar option if people would like to listen in to that. But I think the bigger update is that as you know we were scheduled to go through the Spring SARC, and originally with monkfish.

But given that the monkfish Research Track is indefinitely on hold, we spoke to the NRCC and they are willing to move our review date back to late May, early June, to give us more time to include the new MRIP numbers, so that we are not quite so crunched for time when they come out, essentially.

During our Assessment Workshop we'll have more time to really fold those numbers in and understand how that can pass the assessment. That means the Board will receive the new assessment in August of next year instead of May, as was originally scheduled. Happy to take any questions on that or the rest of the assessment.

CHAIR MESERVE: Any questions? John Clark.

MR. CLARK: I think the word is around that you are going to be reconsidering the recreational release mortality. I was just wondered if briefly you could state how that may affect the estimates of the stock size.

DR. DREW: I think it is hard to say right now. We are considering changing the estimate of release mortality. As you all know, we use a constant 9% rate across space and across time and across ages. The Dean et al work out of Massachusetts suggests that the rate is lower than that.

But I think probably the more important impact is that it is a function of size of the fish, so that smaller fish have a lower release mortality, older larger fish have a higher release mortality, which is consistent

with some other work that has been done on that in the past. I think that would change not just the scale of the population, the way that moving to a straight 4%, 5% rate would.

But it is essentially going to change the catch at age as well, so that we will have fewer small fish in the catch at age and more old fish in the catch at age. That combined with the potential scale change in MRIP, and how that is distributed across modes and across time of year. I think it is really too hard to say, but there will most likely be a scale change, but I think it is really difficult to say how that will play out or what that would say about trend or status at this point.

CHAIR MESERVE: Any other questions about the timeline or the assessment? Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: I'm just sitting here thinking about the timing of any action that would come from the result of the benchmark. In August, not that we have any control over that, but I feel like an August report is going to be challenging if there is some type of action that is needed and we want to do it quickly. We've gone through the process of making changes within a season and we've seen just through the FMP report, whether it was an emergency action years ago. We took commercial and recreational reductions while we were already within a season a few years back, and that caused challenges and complications with our commercial management. I'm just wondering if staff have been talking about a way.

Would there be a way that we could preload something a little bit, so that when we receive information in August. If that information leads to us having to consider taking reductions, and I'm kind of anticipating that, as I think most of you are, based on what we just saw about our coastwide recruitment.

It's been pretty poor for years, and I don't anticipate we are going to be looking at review that is going to be positive. Just thoughts about, if we were going to take action, is there any way we could in 2028, without really throwing a wrench

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into kind of states developing fishing guides. All of the material, everything that goes out for a year is significant for striped bass. Just asking if there has been any thought and consideration as to the timeline for action?

DR. DREW: We talked about that a little, I think. Obviously, in our opinion, it's more important that you guys receive the best scientific information than like rush through to get something that you would then rush into management. But the other thing to consider is, I think the Board Workgroup, and sort of the longer-term planning, and also the potential for things like new reference points.

I think there are probably going to be larger questions that come to you about the long-term future that a short, immediate response in 2028 is maybe not what you would want, even if you got this in May. I think it is certainly something to consider, and the Board should be ready in August to like think through these things and discuss. I don't know that there will be a way, or even if a quick action in '28 would be beneficial to the long-term plans that this Board needs to make.

MR. LUISI: Appreciate that answer, thank you

MS. FRANKE: I'll just add a different point on sort of the long-term action versus immediate response. But as far as from a process perspective, the mechanisms for response, of course do you have an addendum or an amendment. If you have the stock assessment in August and the PDT were to come back with a draft addendum in October, and the Board approved that for public comment.

Of course, final action wouldn't be until the winter of 2028, unless there were some sort of special meeting. But I also want to point out that in Addendum II there is the Board action provision, which is still in play. It says that if an upcoming stock assessment prior to the 2029 rebuilding deadline indicates the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029, with a probability of 350% the Board could respond via Board action. Again, it sort of gets back to Katie's point of immediate versus

long-term action, but that Board action provision is still there.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you, both. Anything further, any further questions? Yes, Marty.

MR. GARY: Question for Katie. Is it too preliminary to understand whether or not, related to natural mortality for the upcoming assessment, any emerging science will read its way into the stock assessment? I'm thinking specifically mycobacteriosis in the Chesapeake Bay.

DR. DREW: I think we're definitely going to take another shot at that, especially with the spatial model, which gives us more ability to sort of take what we know about what is happening in Chesapeake Bay versus the ocean and do some stuff there. I think it is too early to decide whether that is going to be the base case, or whether that is just going to be a sensitivity run. But it is definitely something that we are looking into, given kind of the trends that we see coming out of our tagging models and other sources of information

CHAIR MESERVE: Not seeing any further hands, that's good. We're bumping up against our time.

REVIEW AND POPULATE ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP

CHAIR MESERVE: I am going to move to the next item and turn to Tina Berger to review a nomination for the Advisory Panel.

MS. TINA L. BERGER: I offer for the Board's consideration the nomination of Mike Waine, with the Commercial Sportfishing Association as a representative from North Carolina, he replaces John Worthington.

CHAIR MESERVE: Thank you, is there a motion on the Advisory Panel nomination? Adam Nowalsky.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: **I move to approve Mike Waine of North Carolina to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel.**

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CHAIR MESERVE: Is there a second, Doug Grout, thank you. **Any opposition to the motion? Abstentions? Seeing none; the motion carries by unanimous consent**, welcome, Mike. That brings us down to other business.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR MESERVE: Any other business to come before the Board? Seeing none; is there a motion to adjourn? So moved and second, and we will consider Board meeting adjourned. Thank you all for your time this morning.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 9:30 am on Thursday, August 6, 2026)



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
FROM: Steering Committee for the Work Group on Future Management
DATE: October 23, 2026
SUBJECT: Next Steps for Work Group

In October 2025, the Board established a Work Group (WG) on future striped bass management. The WG is intended to discuss management beyond 2029 considering the impact of recent low recruitment as those weak year classes become the majority of the spawning stock biomass in the coming years. There are six WG tasks per the October 2025 Board motion:

1. Review biological reference points and consider recruitment-sensitive, model-based approaches;
2. Formally review hatchery stocking as both a research tool and a management tool for striped bass with cost analysis;
3. Evaluate the potential for other river systems to contribute to the coastal stock;
4. Explore drivers of recruitment success/failure in Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and the Hudson in light of changing climatic and environmental conditions, including potential impacts from invasive species;
5. Explore the reproductive contribution of large and small female fish and the implications of various size-based management tools;
6. Methods to address the discard mortality in the catch and release fishery.

In [May 2026](#), the Board agreed to wait until after the 2027 benchmark stock assessment is complete to address the assessment-related tasks (biological reference points, other river spawning areas, recruitment drivers, reproductive contribution/size-based management). The Board also decided to establish a Steering Committee (WGSC) to provide guidance on the WG tasks and timelines. The Steering Committee members are Chris Batsavage (Chair, NC), Nichola Meserve (MA), Shanna Madsen (CT), Marty Gary (NY), John Clark (DE), and Mike Luisi (MD).

The WGSC met via webinar on September 10 and October 1 to discuss recommendations and proposed next steps for the WG tasks.

WG Composition and Timelines

As outlined in the May 2026 staff memo ([M26-40](#)), there are various options for forming the WG and/or sub-groups to address the tasks. These options include forming a WG of only Board members, forming a WG of Board members, Advisory Panel members, and Technical

Committee members, or forming a WG of the Board, AP, TC, and members of the public. There could also be sub-groups to address specific tasks.

The hatchery stocking task and recreational release mortality task are not directly tied to the assessment, aside from obtaining the updated time series of recreational removals with the new recreational release mortality rate. The other four tasks (biological reference points, other river spawning areas, recruitment drivers, reproductive contribution/size-based management) are assessment-related. The 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment is scheduled for peer review in early June 2027 and presentation to the Board in August 2027.

The WGSC recommendations are as follows:

- For the hatchery stocking task (task #2), the WGSC recommends forming a hatchery stocking sub-group. This sub-group could include one representative from each state, which could be state staff or other experts. After nominations are received and approved by the Board, the sub-group could begin work.
- For the recreational release mortality task (task #6), the WGSC recommends utilizing the Striped Bass Advisory Panel (AP) as the starting point for discussion. The Striped Bass AP could meet in early 2027 prior to the 2027 Spring Meeting. The Board and/or AP should consider whether additional expertise beyond the current AP membership is needed to address the task.
- For the biological reference points (task #1), the WGSC recommends conducting a management objectives workshop, which would include discussion of biological reference points, after the assessment is complete. Workshop participants can be discussed at a later date.
- For the other river spawning areas (task #3), recruitment drivers (task #4), and reproductive contribution/size-based management (task #5), the WGSC recommends addressing these tasks after the assessment to be informed by the stock assessment report and input from the TC-SAS. The potential members of a core WG and/or sub-groups can be discussed at a later date.

The WGSC had extensive discussion about whether additional progress could be made before the assessment is complete, aside from progress on the hatchery stocking task recreational release mortality task. The WGSC discussed a possible workshop or stakeholder input process before the assessment is complete to collect input on the broader question of “how do we move forward with striped bass management?”. The goal would be to gather perspectives on management objectives and priorities at a big-picture level before considering the specific data on stock status and projections. The WGSC recognized the motivation to make progress on this WG as soon as possible, map out stakeholder perspectives, and be prepared to take action as quickly as possible after the assessment. However, the WGSC also recognized that collecting this input after the assessment might be more valuable when Board members and stakeholders

have the full picture of the stock, the range of possible reference points is known¹, and to avoid having the same discussion multiple times. Ultimately, the WGSC recommends waiting until after the assessment to begin these discussions on management objectives and priorities, which could be addressed at the management objectives workshop noted above. In addition to the workshop, the Board could discuss an additional process to gather public input after the assessment (e.g., survey).

Hatchery Stocking Task Recommendations

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

The WGSC identified information that could inform WG discussions on this task and identified the following topics/reports to be compiled if available:

- 1996 ASMFC reports
 - Special Report No. 50 of the ASMFC: Recommendations Concerning the Stocking Striped Bass in Atlantic Coastal Waters (Upton 1996)
 - Special Report No. 53 of the ASMFC: Evaluation of Anadromous Striped Bass Enhancement Efforts with Emphasis on Chesapeake Bay Stocking Activities (Upton & Mangold 1996)
- 2017 Maryland DNR Report
 - Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission Request to Investigate Resumed Stocking of Tidal Striped Bass in Chesapeake Bay (MDDNR 2017)
- North Carolina: available information on recent striped bass stocking in the Roanoke River
- North Carolina: available information on recent striped bass stocking in the Tar-Pamlico Sound, Neuse River, and Cape Fear Rivers
- New York: available information on historical stocking in the Hudson River
- Delaware: available information on the American shad hatchery, particularly related to public engagement/public interest
- Current/Future State Resources: query the states to determine what state resources may be available to support striped bass stocking/hatchery capabilities
- Small Localized Stocking Examples: available information or examples on localized striped bass stocking (e.g., Patuxent River) vs. a coastwide approach
- Large-Scale Examples Outside the East Coast: available information or examples (e.g., red drum in Texas)

¹ The intent of the Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) is to develop a method for evaluating a range of biological reference points to present to the peer review panel. The goal is to provide the Board with the ability to select biological reference points after the assessment so the Board and stakeholders can consider tradeoffs between fishing mortality and abundance/ biomass/age structure, etc. to determine which meets their management objectives. Per the Board guidance to the SAS from the [May 2026](#) meeting, the SAS will explore both empirical-based reference points and model-based reference points. The final options for reference points that the Board could consider will depend on model performance and outcomes from the peer review.

- Genetic Implications and Mixing of Chesapeake-Delaware: available scientific information

The 1996 ASMFC reports and the 2017 MDDNR reports were available to WGSC members prior to the call. Based on initial review of these reports, WGSC members expressed concern about the feasibility of a coastwide striped bass stocking effort. These reports indicate there would be a high cost and substantial challenges to start a new coastwide stocking program with potentially low return and minimal benefit to the stock. The WGSC also noted concern about potential stocking of striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay given the current concerns about survivability for young fish and the questions about the drivers of recent low recruitment.

WGSC members note there may be minimal existing resources for a new, large striped bass stocking effort. The WGSC recommends querying each state and relevant federal agencies to determine what state resources/existing infrastructure may be available to support a future striped bass hatchery stocking program. Federal hatcheries were a significant component of historical striped bass stocking, but federal resources may be very limited for a future striped bass stocking effort. Additionally, any current state hatchery capacity may be designated to other species supported by specific grants or recovery programs.

The WGSC recognized that the WG/sub-group could have a more in-depth discussion about these concerns, the objectives for any future hatchery stocking program, and incorporating the additional information to be compiled. The WGSC also notes there is public interest in discussing this topic. In addition to considering a large-scale hatchery program focused on the coastwide stock, the WGSC noted that smaller localized programs could also be discussed (e.g., Patuxent River). The WGSC developed a list of considerations for the WG to consider regarding a future stocking program (Appendix A.).

For the hatchery stocking task, the WGSC recommends forming a hatchery stocking sub-group. This sub-group could aim to include one representative from each state, which could be state staff or other experts. After nominations are received and approved by the Board, the sub-group could begin work.

Regarding the research component of this task, the WGSC recommends the TC discuss this. For example, could research in a hatchery setting be useful to address current stock research questions (e.g., recruitment drivers)?

If the Board needs to prioritize WG tasks, the WGSC recommends this task be a lower priority given initial concerns explained above about the feasibility of a new hatchery stocking program. The WGSC recognizes that prioritization may not be necessary since this task requires different expertise than other tasks. The sub-group working on this hatchery stocking task may not have much overlap with striped bass TC-SAS members who may work on other tasks.

Next Steps for Hatchery Stocking Task

- Compile available reports and materials listed above and make them publicly available.
- Query the states and federal agencies about available state resources/infrastructure.
- States submit nominations for the hatchery stocking sub-group.

Recreational Release Mortality Task Recommendations

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

The WGSC identified information that could inform WG discussions on this task:

- Updated time series of recreational harvest and dead releases based on the revised MRIP estimates and applying the new release mortality rate (Appendix B.)
- Striped Bass Board Work Group on Recreational Release Mortality [Report](#) to Striped Bass Management Board (October 2024)
- MADMF study on recreational release mortality rate (Dean et al. In Review)
- MADMF study on circle hooks vs. J-hooks ([Dean et al. 2024](#))
- UMass Amherst studies on recreational release mortality ([Dinkelacker et al. 2025a](#); [Dinkelacker et al. 2025b](#))

The WGSC noted the need to circulate and become familiar with the findings from these new studies. Given conclusions of the prior work group on recreational release mortality and the seasonal closure options previously developed for public comment, the WGSC clarified its interpretation of this task is to consider specific gear/tackle modifications to increase the probability of survival after a striped bass is released (rather than focusing on seasonal closures to reduce effort).

The WGSC noted that the updated time series of recreational harvest and dead releases, while not available during its discussions but now available in Appendix B., will likely change our understanding of the relative contribution of recreational release mortality to total striped bass removals. The new MRIP estimates of harvest and live releases are lower across the time series and the stock assessment will apply a new, lower, length-based recreational release mortality rate from the MADMF study (Dean et al. In Review) that averages about 4% across all fish compared to the previously used rate of 9%. The stock assessment will also apply a higher release mortality rate for releases in the Chesapeake Bay during July-August.

Accordingly, the WGSC recommends that the Board review the updated time series and scale of recreational release mortality (Appendix B.) and re-confirm its interest in discussing methods to address release mortality. Contingent upon a positive outcome, the WGSC recommends utilizing the Striped Bass AP as the starting point for discussion. The overall WG task is to discuss methods to address recreational release mortality, and the AP could discuss specific questions to inform that task, including:

- Which gear/tackle modifications may be better suited for angler education/best practices and which may be better suited for regulations?
- Which gear/tackle modifications would likely have a high compliance rate? Which would have a low compliance rate?
- Are there regional differences in fishing practices that need to be considered?
- For implementation of new gear/tackle regulations, should a phase-in or delayed timeline be considered to allow the industry to adapt?

The Striped Bass AP could meet in early 2027 prior to the 2027 Spring Meeting. The WGSC recommends each state review their AP seats, if needed, to ensure they are filled. The current AP roster is enclosed in Appendix C.

Next Steps for Recreational Release Mortality Task

- Compile available reports and materials listed above.
- Board to discuss the updated time series of recreational removals (Appendix B.).
- Schedule a Striped Bass AP meeting for 2027. The Board and/or AP should consider whether additional expertise beyond the current AP membership is needed to address the task.

References

- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). 2024. Striped Bass Board Work Group on Recreational Release Mortality: Report to Striped Bass Management Board.
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- Maryland Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission Request to Investigate Resumed Stocking of Tidal Striped Bass in Chesapeake Bay. MDDNR Fishing and Boarding Services. July 2017.
- Upton, H.F. 1996. Special Report No. 50 of the ASMFC: Recommendations Concerning the Stocking Striped Bass in Atlantic Coastal Waters. Report from the Striped Bass Stocking Subcommittee of the ASMFC. March 1996. 59p.
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Appendix A.

Considerations for the Work Group/Sub-Group Regarding a Striped Bass Stocking Program

Annual striped bass recruitment has been poor for most of the past decade. The nursery areas of the Chesapeake, Delaware, and Hudson supported much larger year classes of striped bass in the recent past, so perhaps increasing the number of striped bass fingerlings in the nursery areas though stocking hatchery-reared fingerlings could help increase the adult striped bass population. ASMFC Special Reports 50 (Recommendations Concerning the Stocking of Striped Bass in Atlantic Coastal Waters) and 53 (Evaluation of Anadromous Striped Bass Enhancement with Emphasis on Chesapeake Bay Stocking Activities), both released in 1996, provide detailed accounts of the striped bass stocking efforts during the 1980s and 1990s and discuss the pros and cons of striped bass stocking programs. Based on those reports and programs focused on stocking other species into the wild to enhance the adult population, any stocking program must consider the following points:

1. Capacity – Is there existing hatchery capacity that can be shifted to produce striped bass fingerlings? If not, are any government or private entities willing to fund a new hatchery? Regardless of whether there is existing hatchery capacity or new hatcheries would need to be built, capacity ties in with the major consideration of:
2. Cost – Hatchery operations are expensive and building new hatcheries is extremely expensive. The Work Group may want to consider the cost – benefit for hatchery produced striped bass. For example, what is an acceptable production cost per striped bass fingerling stocked? ASMFC Special Reports 50 and 53 (Upton 1996; Upton and Mangold 1996) estimated an average cost of \$1 per stocked fingerling in 1995 dollars (roughly \$2.20 in 2026 dollars), but it must be noted that cost was based on existing hatchery capacity. Cost per fingerling will depend on:
3. Size of fingerlings to stock – Larger fingerlings typically have better survival than small fingerlings but the cost per fingerling goes up with size. ASMFC Special Reports 50 and 53 (Upton 1996; Upton and Mangold 1996) suggested that stocking a mix of Phase I (smaller, less expensive to produce) and Phase II fingerlings was the best combination. As important as size at stocking is where to stock:
4. Stocking locations – Stocked fingerlings may compete with wild fingerlings and density dependent mortality could reduce the effectiveness of a stocking effort. ASMFC Special Reports 50 and 53 (Upton 1996; Upton and Mangold 1996), in reviewing striped bass stocking efforts, found the largest impact of stocked fingerlings in small, heavily stocked systems like the Patuxent River, as stocked fingerlings made up close to 35% of striped bass in age 1 samples the year after stocking but the impact was negligible in large systems like the Potomac. Striped bass are highly cannibalistic and the reports also found that predation on fingerlings by adult striped bass was substantial as stocked fingerlings composed 29 – 83% of food by weight of the stomach contents of adults

sampled near the stocking area, especially during first week of stocking. Timing of stocking is also a crucial factor:

5. Stocking period – Stocking fingerlings of the same size as wild fingerlings during the same period that wild fingerlings are at peak abundance in the stocking area can lead to competition between the stocked and wild fingerlings. This can lead to density dependent effects – slower growth, higher susceptibility to predation and disease, and lower condition – and thus higher mortality, which may greatly reduce the population benefits of stocking. Texas has been stocking red drum fingerlings, which the state produces in the millions at several large hatcheries, in its many coastal bays for close to 50 years (Texas stocked its billionth red drum fingerling in 2024). Texas Parks and Wildlife reports that stocking red drum fingerlings ‘out-of-phase’, that is stocking the red drum fingerlings at a time when they wouldn’t compete with wild fingerlings, led to enhancing the red drum population in certain bays by an average of 21.5% over their estimate of the wild red drum population (McEachron et al. 1998). However, stocking was more effective in some bays than others. Stocking at large scale also raises concerns about the fitness of the hatchery reared fingerlings:
6. Genetics – The hatchery environment is obviously much different than the wild and traits that confer advantages for fingerlings in the hatchery may be deleterious in the wild, causing high post-release mortality. Stocked fingerlings that survive to adulthood in the wild may have genes that lower the adult’s fecundity or the survival of its gametes, larvae or juveniles.

References

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- Upton, H.F. 1996. Special Report No. 50 of the ASMFC: Recommendations Concerning the Stocking Striped Bass in Atlantic Coastal Waters. Report from the Striped Bass Stocking Subcommittee of the ASMFC. March 1996. 59p.
- Upton, H.F. and M. Mangold. 1996. Special Report No. 53 of the ASMFC: Evaluation of Anadromous Striped Bass Enhancement Efforts with Emphasis on Chesapeake Bay Stocking Activities. March 1996. 89p.

Appendix B.

Striped Bass Recreational Harvest, Live Releases, and Release Mortality

Table 1. New estimates in number of fish of recreational harvest, recreational live releases, recreational dead releases, and recreational removals; commercial harvest is included for comparison purposes. Recreational estimates are for Maine through Virginia plus North Carolina Ocean Waves 1 and 6. Source for Recreational Harvest and Live Releases: NOAA Fisheries, Recreational Fisheries Statistics Query, October 2026. Source for Recreational Dead Releases: ASMFC, October 2026 based on recreational release mortality rates from Dean et al. (In Review). Source for Commercial Harvest: State Compliance Reports, 2026.

	MRIP 2026 Calibration from Improved Fishing Effort Survey and Updated Release Mortality Rates from Dean et al. (length-based release mortality rates ranging from 3.8% to 5.4%, except for Chesapeake Bay Wave 4 which ranges from 7.6% to 10.2%)				Commercial Harvest
Year	Rec. Harvest (#)	Rec. Live Releases (#)	Rec. Dead Releases (#)	Rec. Removals (# Harvest+ Dead Releases)	Commercial Harvest (#)
1982	200,514	1,411,781	58,312	258,826	359,773
1983	333,686	698,251	36,318	370,004	271,874
1984	144,085	452,877	21,340	165,425	466,965
1985	361,518	588,576	26,532	388,050	68,848
1986	170,546	767,076	33,400	203,946	6,352
1987	76,166	1,063,967	45,872	122,039	3,727
1988	77,155	1,291,370	53,665	130,820	27,601
1989	106,707	2,167,961	95,028	201,735	3,908
1990	209,327	2,430,931	112,408	321,735	93,888
1991	387,019	4,088,943	188,062	575,081	158,491
1992	358,304	4,931,951	217,256	575,561	256,476
1993	392,050	5,138,223	243,342	635,392	314,526
1994	519,746	8,186,693	391,511	911,257	325,401
1995	1,044,399	10,854,480	447,520	1,491,919	537,412
1996	1,266,474	14,662,952	624,081	1,890,555	854,102
1997	1,339,679	15,457,560	663,527	2,003,206	1,076,561
1998	1,305,269	15,326,881	644,067	1,949,335	1,215,219
1999	1,319,004	13,843,215	582,920	1,901,924	1,223,572
2000	1,889,422	16,485,333	715,346	2,604,768	1,216,812
2001	1,856,888	13,375,550	577,962	2,434,850	931,412
2002	1,793,846	13,950,228	591,419	2,385,264	928,085
2003	2,471,630	15,610,542	691,781	3,163,411	854,326
2004	2,144,254	19,357,712	833,726	2,977,980	879,768

	MRIP 2026 Calibration from Improved Fishing Effort Survey and Updated Release Mortality Rates from Dean et al. (length-based release mortality rates ranging from 3.8% to 5.4%, except for Chesapeake Bay Wave 4 which ranges from 7.6% to 10.2%)				Commercial Harvest
Year	Rec. Harvest (#)	Rec. Live Releases (#)	Rec. Dead Releases (#)	Rec. Removals (# Harvest+ Dead Releases)	Commercial Harvest (#)
2005	2,452,212	19,556,976	846,741	3,298,953	970,403
2006	2,749,489	27,300,868	1,142,180	3,891,669	1,047,648
2007	2,481,563	18,858,505	807,015	3,288,578	1,015,114
2008	2,708,561	16,062,572	714,944	3,423,505	1,027,824
2009	2,366,117	11,723,400	520,709	2,886,826	1,050,055
2010	3,059,911	11,316,086	532,360	3,592,271	1,031,448
2011	2,784,603	9,087,941	389,634	3,174,237	944,777
2012	2,218,770	10,965,921	505,615	2,724,385	870,684
2013	3,150,621	15,683,211	694,717	3,845,339	784,379
2014	2,799,893	16,612,849	784,642	3,584,535	750,263
2015	2,120,714	16,682,383	736,984	2,857,698	621,952
2016	2,504,293	23,635,807	1,046,194	3,550,487	609,028
2017	1,959,415	26,655,076	1,145,227	3,104,642	592,670
2018	1,699,185	21,551,843	967,966	2,667,152	615,649
2019	1,594,325	21,169,733	965,940	2,560,265	652,777
2020	1,289,577	22,480,752	992,844	2,282,422	581,832
2021	1,417,329	20,286,403	881,607	2,298,936	644,204
2022	2,442,708	20,435,596	887,071	3,329,779	622,335
2023	1,795,767	18,295,704	828,566	2,624,333	600,631
2024	1,212,496	13,111,145	584,459	1,796,955	611,704
2025	1,139,855	9,160,771	417,351	1,557,205	548,410

Table 2. Percent change of the new estimates in number of fish of recreational harvest, recreational live releases, recreational dead releases, and recreational removals from the previous estimates. Recreational estimates are for Maine through Virginia plus North Carolina Ocean Waves 1 and 6. Source for Recreational Harvest and Live Releases: NOAA Fisheries, Recreational Fisheries Statistics Query, October 2026. Source for Recreational Dead Releases: ASMFC, October 2026 based on recreational release mortality rates from Dean et al. (In Review).

Percent Change in the New Estimates (MRIP 2026 Calibration & Dean et al. Release Mortality Rates*) from the Previous Estimates (MRIP Pre-2026 Calibration & 9% Release Mortality Rate)				
Year	% Change in Rec. Harvest	% Change in Rec. Live Releases	% Change in Rec. Dead Releases	% Change in Rec. Removals (Harvest+ Dead Releases)
1982	-37%	-34%	-70%	-49%
1983	-46%	-44%	-68%	-49%
1984	-45%	-49%	-73%	-52%
1985	-51%	-44%	-72%	-53%
1986	-37%	-45%	-73%	-48%
1987	-33%	-34%	-68%	-53%
1988	-40%	-53%	-78%	-65%
1989	-34%	-52%	-77%	-65%
1990	-64%	-51%	-75%	-69%
1991	-52%	-49%	-74%	-62%
1992	-59%	-53%	-77%	-68%
1993	-50%	-43%	-70%	-60%
1994	-51%	-46%	-71%	-62%
1995	-54%	-51%	-78%	-65%
1996	-49%	-49%	-76%	-63%
1997	-52%	-53%	-78%	-65%
1998	-55%	-58%	-80%	-68%
1999	-58%	-60%	-81%	-70%
2000	-50%	-51%	-77%	-62%
2001	-54%	-51%	-76%	-63%
2002	-55%	-55%	-79%	-65%
2003	-48%	-51%	-76%	-59%
2004	-53%	-52%	-77%	-64%
2005	-45%	-49%	-75%	-58%
2006	-44%	-49%	-76%	-60%
2007	-37%	-42%	-73%	-52%
2008	-38%	-40%	-70%	-49%

	Percent Change in the New Estimates (MRIP 2026 Calibration & Dean et al. Release Mortality Rates*) from the Previous Estimates (MRIP Pre-2026 Calibration & 9% Release Mortality Rate)			
Year	% Change in Rec. Harvest	% Change in Rec. Live Releases	% Change in Rec. Dead Releases	% Change in Rec. Removals (Harvest+ Dead Releases)
2009	-50%	-46%	-73%	-57%
2010	-43%	-42%	-70%	-50%
2011	-44%	-45%	-74%	-51%
2012	-45%	-47%	-73%	-54%
2013	-39%	-41%	-71%	-49%
2014	-31%	-31%	-64%	-42%
2015	-31%	-35%	-68%	-47%
2016	-28%	-29%	-65%	-45%
2017	-33%	-30%	-67%	-51%
2018	-24%	-31%	-66%	-47%
2019	-26%	-26%	-63%	-46%
2020	-25%	-27%	-64%	-49%
2021	-23%	-29%	-66%	-48%
2022	-29%	-31%	-67%	-46%
2023	-32%	-30%	-65%	-47%
2024	-30%	-31%	-66%	-48%
2025	-20%	-21%	-60%	-37%

*Release mortality rates applied from Dean et al. (In Review) are length-based rates ranging from 3.8% to 5.4%, except for Chesapeake Bay Wave 4 which ranges from 7.6% to 10.2%.

Table 3. Proportion of recreational removals by harvest and dead releases. Source for Recreational Harvest and Live Releases: NOAA Fisheries, Recreational Fisheries Statistics Query, October 2026. Source for Recreational Dead Releases: ASMFC, October 2026 based on recreational release mortality rates from Dean et al. (In Review).

	MRIP 2026 Calibration from Improved Fishing Effort Survey and Updated Release Mortality Rates from Dean et al.*		MRIP Pre-2026 Calibration and 9% Release Mortality Rate	
Year	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases
1982	77%	23%	62%	38%
1983	90%	10%	85%	15%
1984	87%	13%	77%	23%
1985	93%	7%	89%	11%
1986	84%	16%	68%	32%
1987	62%	38%	44%	56%
1988	59%	41%	34%	66%
1989	53%	47%	28%	72%
1990	65%	35%	57%	43%
1991	67%	33%	53%	47%
1992	62%	38%	48%	52%
1993	62%	38%	49%	51%
1994	57%	43%	44%	56%
1995	70%	30%	53%	47%
1996	67%	33%	49%	51%
1997	67%	33%	48%	52%
1998	67%	33%	47%	53%
1999	69%	31%	50%	50%
2000	73%	27%	56%	44%
2001	76%	24%	62%	38%
2002	75%	25%	59%	41%
2003	78%	22%	63%	37%
2004	72%	28%	55%	45%
2005	74%	26%	57%	43%
2006	71%	29%	50%	50%
2007	75%	25%	57%	43%
2008	79%	21%	65%	35%
2009	82%	18%	71%	29%
2010	85%	15%	75%	25%
2011	88%	12%	77%	23%
2012	81%	19%	69%	31%

	MRIP 2026 Calibration from Improved Fishing Effort Survey and Updated Release Mortality Rates from Dean et al.*		MRIP Pre-2026 Calibration and 9% Release Mortality Rate	
Year	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases	% of Rec. Removals from Harvest	% of Rec. Removals from Dead Releases
2013	82%	18%	68%	32%
2014	78%	22%	65%	35%
2015	74%	26%	57%	43%
2016	71%	29%	54%	46%
2017	63%	37%	46%	54%
2018	64%	36%	44%	56%
2019	62%	38%	45%	55%
2020	57%	43%	38%	62%
2021	62%	38%	42%	58%
2022	73%	27%	56%	44%
2023	68%	32%	53%	47%
2024	67%	33%	50%	50%
2025	73%	27%	58%	42%

*Release mortality rates applied from Dean et al. (In Review) are length-based rates ranging from 3.8% to 5.4%, except for Chesapeake Bay Wave 4 which ranges from 7.6% to 10.2%.

Appendix C.
Striped Bass Advisory Panel Roster October 2026

Maine	Peter Fallon	For-Hire
Maine	Bob Humphrey	For-Hire
New Hampshire	Peter Whelan (Vice Chair)	Recreational
Massachusetts	Craig Poosikian	Commercial
Massachusetts	Patrick Paquette	Recreational
Rhode Island	Andrew Dangelo	For-Hire
Rhode Island	Peter Jenkins	Recreational/Tackle shop
Connecticut	Kyle Douton	Recreational/Tackle shop
Connecticut	Toby Lapinski	Recreational
New York	Julie Evans	Commercial, For-Hire
New York	Bob Danielson	Recreational
New Jersey	Tom Fote	Recreational
New Jersey	Eleanor Bochenek (Chair)	Recreational, Fishery scientist
Pennsylvania	<i>Vacant</i>	Recreational
Delaware	Leonard Voss	Commercial
Delaware	Steven Smith	Recreational
Maryland	Charles Green	For-Hire
Maryland	<i>Vacant</i>	Recreational
Virginia	Kelly Place	Commercial
Virginia	Bill Hall	Recreational
District of Columbia	Will Poston	Recreational
Potomac River Fisheries Commission	Dennis Fleming	Recreational, Commercial
North Carolina	Jamie Lane	Commercial
North Carolina	Mike Waine	Recreational

From: [Emilie Franke](#)
To: [Emilie Franke](#)
Subject: FW: Striped Bass Fishery Concerns
Date: Friday, October 23, 2026 2:53:57 PM

From: Rick Drew <rpdraw@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2026 3:14 PM
To: Emilie Franke <EFranke@ASMFC.org>
Subject: [New] [External] Striped Bass Fishery Concerns

Dear Emilie,

I hope this email finds you well. As I trust you know I am a fan of yours and appreciate the difficulty of your job. That said there are some very serious issues with our Striped Bass fishery. Please see below.

I am writing you regarding my ongoing concerns regarding our precious Striped Bass fishery. Clearly, the Atlantic Striped Bass fishery is in very bad shape. Much worse than everyone, myself included realized going into this year. It appears the science used to estimate Striped Bass biomass was badly flawed. Frankly, I am shocked to see what shallow science was used for such an important metric of measurement. Recreational participation has been overstated and commercial participation understated as a percentage of removals.

Please refer to the video below for a quick and light look at what seems to have happened. My friend made this video.

<https://striperrecount.gotoneapp.com/>

I have done quite a bit of research on Striped Bass over the years and other than the young of year index charts, I don't see the passionate science that was compiled many years ago. I will send you some of these documents in my next email. I believe that I may have sent them before. Furthermore, my understanding is that in addition to underestimating bio mass, the data on bi-catch both recreational and commercial is inaccurate. Recreational bi-catch was over-stated and commercial bi-catch has been understated. I believe some models like NYS tagging records do not have any provision for bi-catch?

I am also attaching a video of a gill net from an East Hampton, NY Ocean Beach with over-slot Striped Bass in the net dead on the beach taken yesterday October 18th. The net may have dragged up on the beach due the weight of the fish and rough sea conditions. Many people are upset with lack of oversight of the south shore-Long Island gill net fishery which is acknowledged due to a lack of NYS DEC funding. The gill net fishery is not sustainable and makes little sense at a time when a multi-billion dollar Striped Bass fishery is in jeopardy. I will send you the economic study on Striped bass in my next email or two

based on file size.

I have taken 5 fishing trips for Striped Bass this September and October finding very few Striped Bass across eastern Long Island waters.

In summary, I find myself somewhat frustrated and confused by the lack of solid science, lack of oversight and the lack of willingness to engage members of the public in open discussion on this matter. Over the years I have submitted comment and similar emails without any follow up from a single board member. There are many brilliant, successful people in the Striped Bass fishing community that are willing to help, but honestly feel like we've been asked to sit quietly on the sidelines while certain groups work to figure it out? I sincerely hope this will change, as will the direction of Striped Bass management from optimizing take when the numbers are down and oversight is lacking, to truly rebuilding the fishery in a responsible manner. Please share this submission with the Striped Bass commission board members.

I am available any time to review this important matter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Rick Drew
631-903-0751

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From: [Emilie Franke](#)
To: [Emilie Franke](#)
Subject: FW: [External] Concerned Fisherman
Date: Friday, October 23, 2026 2:28:42 PM

From: Duncan Fox <duncangfox@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2026 5:09 PM
To: Info (ASMFC) <info@ASMFC.ORG>
Subject: [External] Concerned Fisherman

Hi ASMFC,

I am reaching out because i'm very concerned about three things. One being the amount of brown sharks in Long Island Sound and around Block Island. I have never seen so many brown sharks in these waters. They have made it so impossible to fish for striped bass or any fish really. I have brought countless brown sharks to the boat this year and even more striped bass bitten in half. Secondly, the number of striped bass i've seen throughout the spring until now is very concerning. I love fishing for these fish but i think there needs to be a moratorium while figuring out how to manage the brown shark infestation. Thirdly, my concern is there are no bunker. I know the industrial fishing of bunker in Chesapeake Bay has been overharvested by millions of tons.

I have never reached out to you before which shows my dire concern.

Best,
Duncan

--

Duncan Fox
Duncangfox@gmail.com
(203) 912-0715

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From: [Sal Muto](#)
To: [Emilie Franke](#)
Subject: [External] Striped Bass Managment
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2026 5:28:45 PM

Mr. Franke for what it is worth I am a 58 year old man that has fished the northeast for striped bass since I could think for myself. Ive always practiced catch and release and only kept when accidental mortality occurred. I've seen these fish and these fisheries go from near extinction to a strict moratorium status that brought back the stock in 10 years. Only to purposely reverse it all to be at the brink of extinction again.

Please let's correct the overfishing, commercial takes and the allowance commercial trawlers to decimate the bait fish stock to the point of non-existence.

We've proven a turnaround is possible in a decade why not let history repeat itself.

THE TIME IS NOW TO GIVE THE STRIPED BASS GAMEFISH STATUS!

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From: jcvarch@aol.com
To: [Comments](#)
Cc: [Emilie Franke](#); [Joe Cimino](#); [Jason E. Mcnamee](#)
Subject: [New] [External] Atlantic Striped Bass — Suggestions for Additional Conservation Measures
Date: Sunday, October 18, 2026 9:13:29 AM

To the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board,

I am a recreational saltwater angler who regularly fishes in New Jersey and Rhode Island. I recently reviewed the updated recreational fishing estimates and the Atlantic Saltwater Guides Association's analysis of striped bass catch rates.

The reported decline from approximately 2.48 striped bass per trip in 2017 to 0.89 in 2025 is extremely concerning, particularly given the continued poor spawning recruitment and the stock's existing overfished status.

I would encourage the Board to consider additional conservation measures without eliminating recreational fishing opportunities.
Specifically, I would suggest:

1. Temporarily eliminating or substantially reducing recreational harvest until the spawning population shows sustained recovery.
2. Considering artificial-lures-only regulations for recreational striped bass fishing to reduce deep hooking and associated release mortality.
3. Substantially reducing commercial harvest during the rebuilding period, while encouraging aquaculture as an alternative source of seafood.

I recognize that catch-and-release fishing still results in mortality, particularly from handling, exhaustion, and predation. However, reducing intentional harvest and deep-hooking injuries would address two avoidable sources of mortality while preserving the recreational fishery.

Please include these comments in the materials distributed to the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board for its November 2026 meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jensen C. Vasil

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