ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

HORSESHOE CRAB
(*Limulus polyphemus*)

2025 Fishing Year



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

Approved November 2026

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

Date of FMP Approval:	December 1998
Addenda:	Addendum I (April 2000) Addendum II (May 2001) Addendum III (May 2004) Addendum IV (June 2006) Addendum V (September 2008) Addendum VI (August 2010) Addendum VII (February 2012) Addendum VIII (November 2022) Addendum IX (May 2025)
Management Unit:	Entire coastwide distribution of the resource from the estuaries eastward to the inshore boundary of the EEZ
States with Declared Interest:	Massachusetts – Florida, Potomac River Fisheries Commission
Active Boards/Committees:	Horseshoe Crab Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, and Plan Review Team; Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee; Adaptive Resource Management Subcommittee

Goals and Objectives

The Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crabs (FMP) established the following goals and objectives.

2.0. Goals and Objectives

The goal of this Plan is to conserve and protect the horseshoe crab resource to maintain sustainable levels of spawning stock biomass to ensure its continued role in the ecology of the coastal ecosystem, while providing for continued use over time. Specifically, the goal includes management of horseshoe crab populations for continued use by:

1) *current and future generations of the fishing and non-fishing public (including the biomedical industry, scientific and educational research);*
2) *migrating shorebirds; and,*
3) *other dependent fish and wildlife, including federally listed (threatened) sea turtles.*

To achieve this goal, the following objectives must be met:

(a) prevent overfishing and establish a sustainable population;

(b) achieve compatible and equitable management measures among jurisdictions throughout the fishery management unit;

(c) establish the appropriate target mortality rates that prevent overfishing and maintain adequate spawning stocks to supply the needs of migratory shorebirds;
(d) coordinate and promote cooperative interstate research, monitoring, and law enforcement;
(e) identify and protect, to the extent practicable, critical habitats and environmental factors that limit long-term productivity of horseshoe crabs;
(f) adopt and promote standards of environmental quality necessary for the long-term maintenance and productivity of horseshoe crabs throughout their range; and,
(g) establish standards and procedures for implementing the Plan and criteria for determining compliance with Plan provisions.

Fishery Management Plan Summary

The framework for managing horseshoe crabs along the Atlantic coast was approved in October 1998 with the adoption of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Horseshoe Crabs. The goal of this plan is to conserve and protect the horseshoe crab resource to maintain sustainable levels of spawning stock biomass to ensure its continued role in the ecology of coastal ecosystems while providing for continued use over time.

In 2000, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum I to the FMP. Addendum I established a state-by-state cap on horseshoe crab bait landings at 25 percent below the reference period landings (RPL's), and *de minimis* criteria for those states with a limited horseshoe crab fishery. Those states with more restrictive harvest levels (Maryland and New Jersey) were encouraged to maintain those restrictions to provide further protection to the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population, recognizing its importance to migratory shorebirds. Addendum I also recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) prohibit the harvest of horseshoe crabs in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) within a 30 nautical mile radius of the mouth of Delaware Bay, as well as prohibit the transfer of horseshoe crabs in federal waters. A horseshoe crab reserve was established on March 7, 2001, by NMFS in the area recommended by ASMFC. This area is now known as the Carl N. Shuster Jr. Horseshoe Crab Reserve (Figure 1).

In 2001, the Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum II to the FMP. The purpose of Addendum II was to allow the voluntary transfer of harvest quotas between states to alleviate concerns over potential bait shortages on a biologically responsible basis. Voluntary quota transfers require Technical Committee review and Management Board approval.

In 2004, the Board approved Addendum III to the FMP. The addendum sought to further the conservation of horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird populations in and around the Delaware Bay. It reduced harvest quotas and implemented seasonal bait harvest closures in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, and revised monitoring components for all jurisdictions.

Addendum IV was approved in 2006. It further limited bait harvest in New Jersey and Delaware to 100,000 crabs (male only) and required a delayed harvest in Maryland and Virginia.

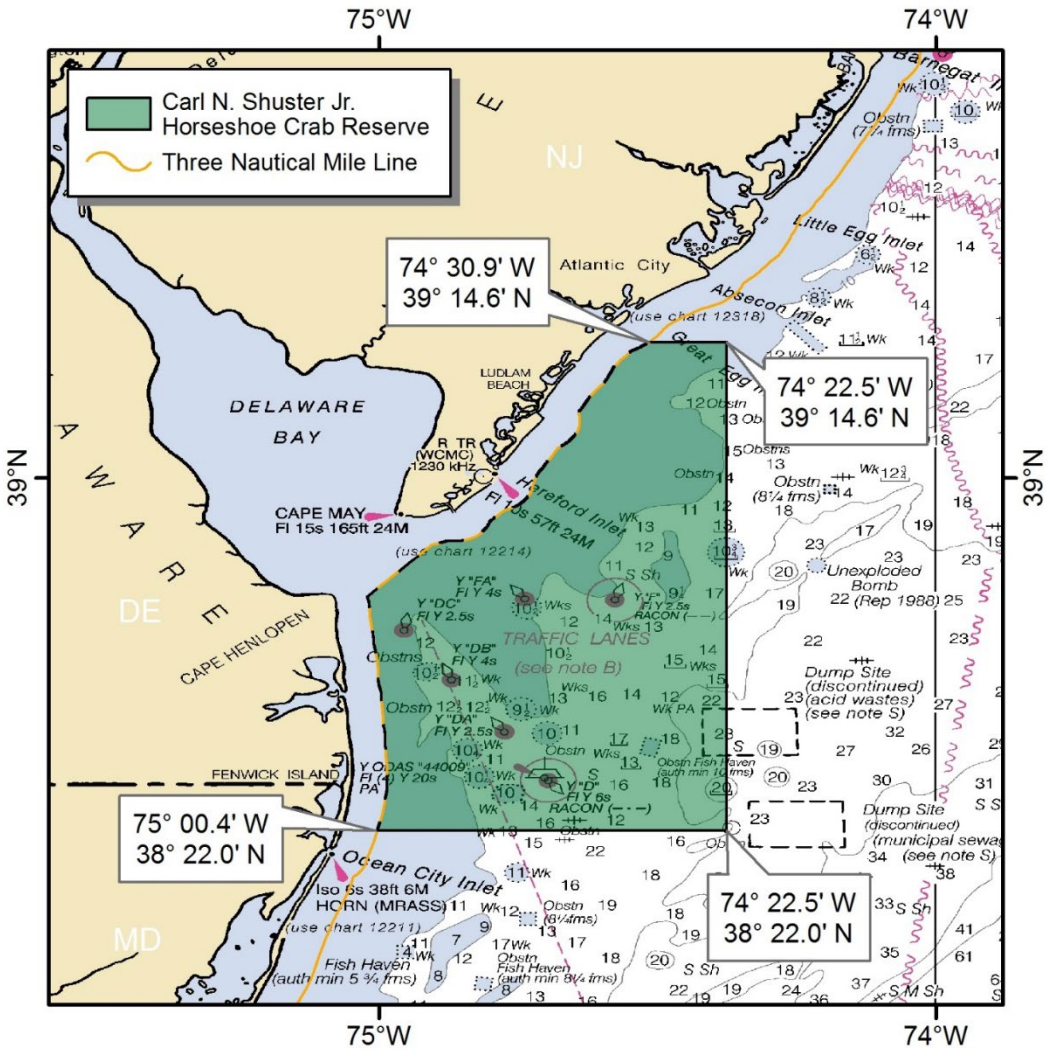


Figure 1. Carl N. Shuster Jr Horseshoe Crab Reserve.

Addendum V, adopted in 2008, extended the provisions of Addendum IV through October 31, 2010.

In early 2010, the Board initiated Draft Addendum VI to consider management options that would follow expiration of Addendum V. The Board voted in August 2010 to extend the Addendum V provisions, via Addendum VI, through April 30, 2013. The Board also chose to include language allowing them to replace Addendum VI with another Addendum during that time, in anticipation of implementing an Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework.

The Board approved Addendum VII in February 2012. This addendum implemented an ARM framework for use during the 2013 fishing season and beyond. The framework considers the abundance levels of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds in determining the optimized bait harvest level for the Delaware Bay states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia (east of the COLREGS).

The ARM Framework underwent a revision process in 2021 to incorporate more available data and update the software platform. Several improvements were made to the ARM Framework during this revision. The ARM Revision improves the population models for horseshoe crabs and red knots by incorporating Delaware Bay region-specific data collected over the past few decades. Horseshoe crab population estimates from the Catch Multiple Survey Analysis (CMSA) model used in the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment were incorporated into the ARM Revision. Additionally, the ARM Revision includes more sources of horseshoe crab removals than the previous version, adding mortality in the biomedical industry and commercial discards from other fisheries. The maximum number of male and female horseshoe crabs the ARM Revision can recommend remains the same at 210,000 females and 500,000 males. However, harvest recommendations under the ARM Revision are now based on a continuous scale rather than the fixed harvest packages in the previous Framework. Also, the harvest of females is decoupled from the harvest of males so that each are determined separately. While additional data and model improvements are used in the ARM Revision, the conceptual model of horseshoe crab abundance influencing red knot survival and reproduction remains intact with the intent of ensuring the abundance of horseshoe crabs does not become a limiting factor in the population growth of red knots. The Board accepted the ARM Revision and Peer Review for management use in January 2022.

Addendum VIII was approved in November 2022. Addendum VIII adopts the changes to the ARM Framework as recommended in the peer-reviewed 2021 ARM Framework for use in setting annual specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay-origin.

Addendum IX was approved in May 2025 and allows the Board to set multi-year specifications for up to three years until 2031 based on the ARM Framework. In interim years when the ARM is not used, the Board will manage maximum male harvest limits based on Delaware Bay region spawning survey data. Addendum IX also reestablishes a harvest closure for the Delaware Bay region states from January 1 through June 7, and clarifies the policy included in Addenda VII and VIII for applying Maryland and Virginia harvest caps.

II. Status of the Stock and Assessment Advice

A benchmark stock assessment was completed and approved for management use in 2019[1]. This assessment was the first to successfully apply a stock assessment model to a component of the horseshoe crab stock. A Catch Multiple Survey Analysis (CMSA) model, a stage-based model that tracks progression of crab abundances from pre-recruits to full recruits to the fishery, was applied to female crabs in the Delaware (DE) Bay region (New Jersey-Virginia). This model

[1] The 2019 benchmark stock assessment report is available at: http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5cd5d6f1HSCAssessment_PeerReviewReport_May2019.pdf

estimated regional female crab abundance using relative abundance information from the Virginia Tech Benthic Trawl Survey, New Jersey Ocean Trawl Survey, and Delaware Adult Trawl Survey, and estimates of mortality including natural mortality, commercial bait harvest, commercial discard mortality, and mortality associated with biomedical use. While reference points were not approved to determine stock status, the CMSA population estimates were recommended as the best estimates for female horseshoe crab abundance in the DE Bay region.

Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) models, similar to those used in previous assessments, were applied to all regions. ARIMA models were fit to fishery-independent survey indices trends of abundance in each of the regional horseshoe crab populations: Northeast (Massachusetts-Rhode Island), New York (Connecticut-New York), DE Bay, and Southeast (North Carolina-Florida). No definitions for overfishing or overfished status have been adopted by the Management Board. However, the assessment characterized the status of each regional and the coastwide population based on the percentage of surveys within a region (or coastwide) having a >50% probability of the terminal year being below the ARIMA reference point. The ARIMA reference point was the 1998 index for each survey. "Poor" status was defined as >66% of surveys meeting this criterion, "Good" status was defined as <33% of surveys, and "Neutral" status was defined as 34–65% of surveys.

An assessment update was completed in May 2024[2]. The updated CMSA model estimates were approximately 40 million mature male and 16 million mature female horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay region in 2022. The CMSA model results indicate that mature female horseshoe crabs have been steadily increasing in the region since the implementation of the initial ARM Framework in 2012. The ARIMA models used to determine stock status for the four regions and the coastwide horseshoe crab populations were also updated. The current stock status indicates that the Northeast region is in a neutral state, and the New York region continues to be in a poor state, with three out of four surveys being below 1998 reference points. Based on the ARIMA results, the Delaware Bay, Southeast, and coastwide populations are in good condition, an improvement since the 2019 benchmark.

III. Status of the Fishery

Bait Fishery

Historically, horseshoe crab bait fisheries have operated coastwide from Massachusetts to Florida, with most of the landings coming from the Mid-Atlantic states. The timing of harvest has varied from state to state, depending on seasonal horseshoe crab spawning migrations (to beaches in the spring, and to deeper waters in the winter). Many states regulate horseshoe crab fisheries with various season/area closures, including spring and lunar closures to protect

[2]The 2024 stock assessment update can be found here: https://asmfc.org/resources/stock-assessment/horseshoe-crab-stock-assessment-update-2024/

spawning horseshoe crabs. Some states, including New Jersey and South Carolina, have completely closed their commercial bait fisheries. New Jersey has prohibited commercial harvest of horseshoe crabs for bait in state waters since 2006. Connecticut prohibited the hand-harvest of horseshoe crabs in 2023, closing the commercial hand-harvest bait fishery in state waters. This greatly reduced harvest overall since much of the bait fishery was from hand-harvest; no harvest from trawls has been reported in the last two years.

Coastwide reported bait landings in 2025 totaled 488,887 crabs excluding confidential landings. This is 30% of the ASMFC coastwide quota of 1,609,030 crabs (Table 1, Figure 2) and represents an 11% decrease from 2024 landings of 550,909 crabs. Landings increased in Delaware and North Carolina but decreased in all other states with commercial harvest. Connecticut harvest decreased to zero in 2024 and 2025 following the ban on hand-harvest of horseshoe crabs in state waters implemented in October 2023.

Table 1. Annual commercial horseshoe crab bait landings by jurisdiction. "C" indicates confidential landings.

Jurisdiction	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ*	DE*	MD*	PRFC	VA**	NC	SC	GA	FL	TOTAL
ASMFC Quota 2024	330,377	26,053	48,689	366,272	173,014	173,014	255,980	0	172,828	24,036	0	29,312	9,455	1,609,030
State Quota 2025	140,000	14,655	48,689	150,000	0	169,170	255,980	-	172,828	24,036	0	29,312	9,455	1,014,125
Landings by Year														
2014	130,316	13,841	20,634	134,370	0	168,044	148,269	0	145,266	24,557	0	0	2,046	787,342
2010	56,514	18,729	30,036	125,368	0	62,519	161,545	0	146,857	9,938	0	0	993	612,499
2011	89,382	12,502	20,538	147,035	0	107,583	167,053	0	121,650	27,127	0	0	0	692,870
2012	124,648	20,570	18,958	184,721	0	102,322	169,087	0	151,887	22,885	0	1,789	0	796,867
2013	148,717	18,058	21,503	169,739	0	163,582	240,688	0	156,761	26,569	0	5,745	0	951,362
2014	130,316	13,841	20,634	134,370	0	168,044	148,269	0	145,266	24,557	0	0	2,046	787,342
2015	117,611	7,867	19,632	145,324	0	151,262	27,494	0	102,235	24,839	0	0	264	596,528
2016	110,399	20,676	21,945	176,632	0	109,836	157,013	0	128,848	25,197	0	0	689	751,235
2017	134,707	3,415	19,944	195,717	0	201,132	237,146	0	160,643	25,161	0	0	1,394	979,259
2018	159,002	1,889	21,870	138,223	0	126,065	66,647	0	144,047	10,998	0	0	C	668,741
2019	172,664	C	17,588	167,181	0	170,713	118,471	0	146,687	13,463	0	0	0	806,767
2020	163,695	C	15,942	63,367	0	124,803	61,165	0	24,031	3,672	0	0	0	456,675
2021	156,013	1,706	17,492	97,860	0	172,927	181,044	0	112,497	2,145	0	0	C	741,684
2022	135,731	C	1,343	111,481	0	147,558	84,627	0	89,748	500	0	0	C	570,988
2023	139,746	2,314	3,297	130,658	0	168,208	186,466	0	107,166	934	0	0	C	738,789
2024	139,970	C	0	141,451	0	85,530	74,353	0	109,136	468	0	0	C	550,908
2025	137,261	C	0	76,077	0	122,526	56,517	0	96,506	C	0	C	C	488,887

*Male-only harvest

**Virginia harvest east of the COLREGS line is limited to 81,331 male-only crabs. Virginia harvest east of the COLREGS in 2025 was confidential.

Reported coastwide landings since 1998 consistently show more male than female horseshoe crabs harvested annually. Several states presently have sex-specific restrictions in place which limit or ban the harvest of females. The American eel pot fishery prefers female horseshoe crabs as bait, while the whelk (conch) pot fishery is less dependent on females. States with greater than 5% of coastal landings are required to report sex for at least a portion of their bait harvest; for 2025 these states include Massachusetts, New York, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Excluding Massachusetts data[3], these states reported that 81% of bait landings were male, 15% were female, and 4% were unclassified in 2025.

The majority of reported commercial horseshoe crab bait landings in 2025 were taken using trawl, hand, and dredge gear types. Other gears that account for the remainder of the harvest include rakes, hoes, and tongs, fixed nets, and gill nets.

Biomedical Use

The horseshoe crab is an important resource for research and manufacture of materials used for human health. Several companies along the Atlantic Coast process horseshoe crab blood for use in manufacturing Limulus Amebocyte Lysate (LAL), and biomedical collections occurred in five states (MA, RI, NJ, MD, VA, SC). Addendum III requires states where horseshoe crabs are collected for biomedical purposes to collect and report total collection numbers, crabs rejected, crabs bled (by sex) and to characterize mortality.

The Plan Review Team (PRT) annually calculates total coastwide collections and estimates mortality associated with biomedical use. In 2025, 1,031,504 horseshoe crabs were collected coastwide solely for biomedical purposes[4] (Table 2). This represents a 3.8% decrease from 2024. Of the total biomedical collections in 2025, males accounted for 59%, and females comprised 41%. Some crabs were rejected prior to bleeding due to mortality, injuries, slow movement, and size (mortality observed while crabs were going through the biomedical process is included under 'Observed Mortality' in Table 2). Approximately 3.4% of crabs collected solely for biomedical purposes were observed and reported as dead from the time of collection up to the point of release.

[3] Massachusetts harvester data were not provided. The report will be updated with data provided at a later date.

[4] This does not include bait crabs borrowed for bleeding and then returned to the bait market; these are counted against state bait quotas. The dual use of horseshoe crabs harvested for bait is encouraged as a conservation tool. Facilities that bleed horseshoe crabs to manufacture LAL can utilize crabs from the bait market in what is often referred to as the "rent a crab" program. Permitted bait harvesters and/or dealers can "rent" crabs caught for the bait industry to the bleeding facility; these crabs are returned to the bait vendor after bleeding. These crabs are caught under bait permits, are counted against the bait quota of the state of origin, and must comply with that state's regulations for bait harvest. The dual use of crabs in this program can reduce overall harvest, may decrease overall mortality, can provide the LAL manufacturers with an additional source of raw material, and may offer harvesters and dealers opportunity within this secondary market.

During the 2019 benchmark stock assessment, a meta-analysis of literature estimates was performed to estimate post-bleeding mortality of horseshoe crabs. Although many of these studies did not implement biomedical best practices, these values are the only available estimates of mortality experienced after bleeding. Based on the literature review, post-bleeding mortality is estimated at 15%. Tagging data were used in the assessment to compare survivorship between crabs that were and were not bled. These results indicated some decrease in short-term survivorship, but greater long-term survivorship for bled crabs. These results are likely attributable to the culling process used by biomedical facilities to select healthy crabs for bleeding.

Post-bleeding mortality, calculated as 15% of the number of bled biomedical-only crabs (not from the bait market), for 2025 was estimated to be 141,971 horseshoe crabs. Total biomedical mortality (observed mortality plus post-bleeding mortality) for 2025 was estimated at 177,777 horseshoe crabs. The total estimated mortality from biomedical collections represents approximately 26.6% of the 2025 total directed use mortality (666,664 crabs), which includes both total biomedical mortality and removals for bait. While the biomedical proportion of the total directed use mortality increased slightly, the overall directed-use mortality decreased by 9% from 2024 to 2025 (Figure 3).

Table 2. Numbers of horseshoe crabs collected, bled, and estimated mortality for the biomedical industry. Numbers shown are for crabs collected solely for biomedical use. Mortality of bled crabs that later enter the bait industry is included in bait harvest.

Year	Crabs Collected	Crabs Bled	Post-Bleeding Mortality	Observed Mortality	Total Mortality
2010	480,914	412,781	61,917	6,829	68,746
2011	545,164	486,850	73,028	24,139	97,166
2012	541,956	497,956	74,693	7,370	82,063
2013	464,657	440,402	66,060	5,447	71,507
2014	467,897	432,340	64,851	5,658	70,509
2015	494,123	464,506	69,676	5,362	75,038
2016	344,495	318,523	47,778	1,004	48,782
2017	483,245	444,115	66,617	6,056	72,674
2018	510,407	479,142	71,871	5,588	77,459
2019	637,029	589,361	88,404	12,789	101,193
2020	697,025	649,546	97,432	8,907	106,339
2021	718,809	667,951	100,193	11,911	112,104
2022	911,826	828,181	124,227	21,693	145,920
2023	1,113,644	1,038,673	155,801	22,431	178,232
2024	1,073,329	1,008,943	151,341	33,352	184,693
2025	1,031,504	946,473	141,971	35,806	177,777

**Some biomedical collections were reduced in 2016 due to temporary changes in production.*

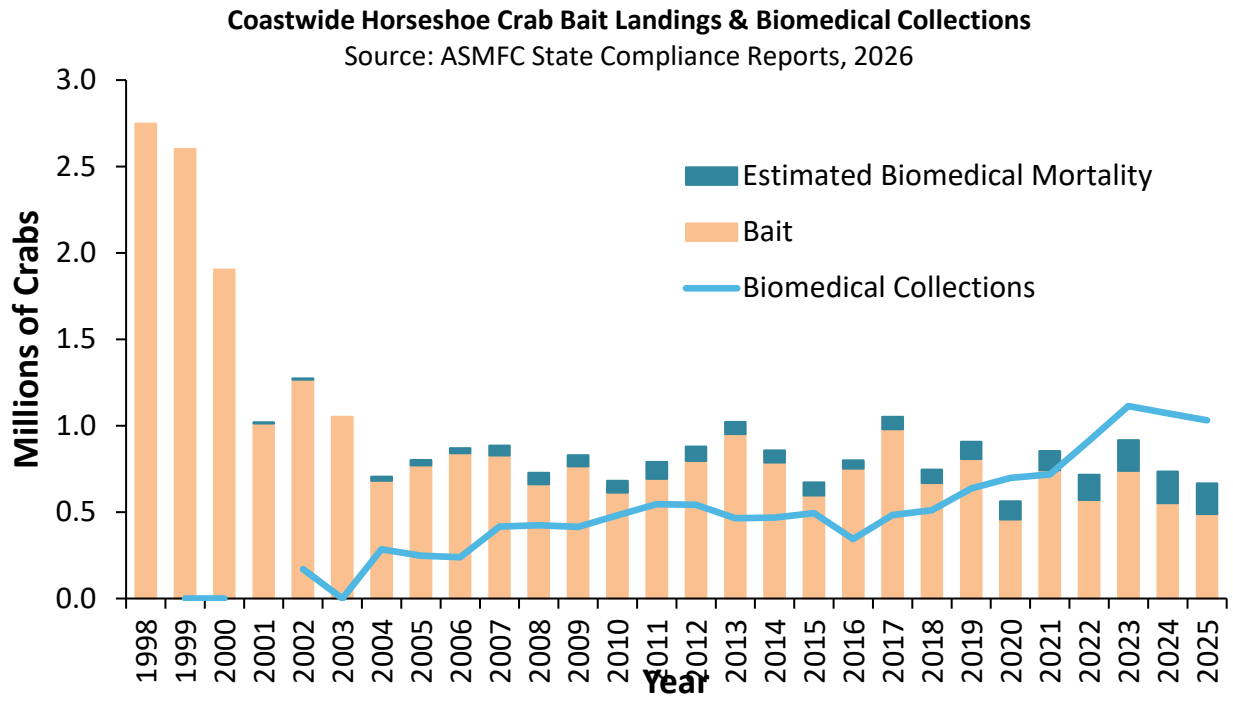


Figure 2. Annual horseshoe crab bait harvest, biomedical collections, and biomedical mortality.
*Biomedical collections are annually reported to the Commission and include all horseshoe crabs brought to bleeding facilities except those that were harvested as bait, "rented" by biomedical facilities and counted against state bait quotas.
*Crabs collected solely for biomedical crabs are returned to the water after bleeding; a 15% mortality rate is assumed for all bled crabs that are released. This number plus observed mortality reported annually by bleeding facilities via state compliance reports equals the 'Estimated Biomedical Mortality.'

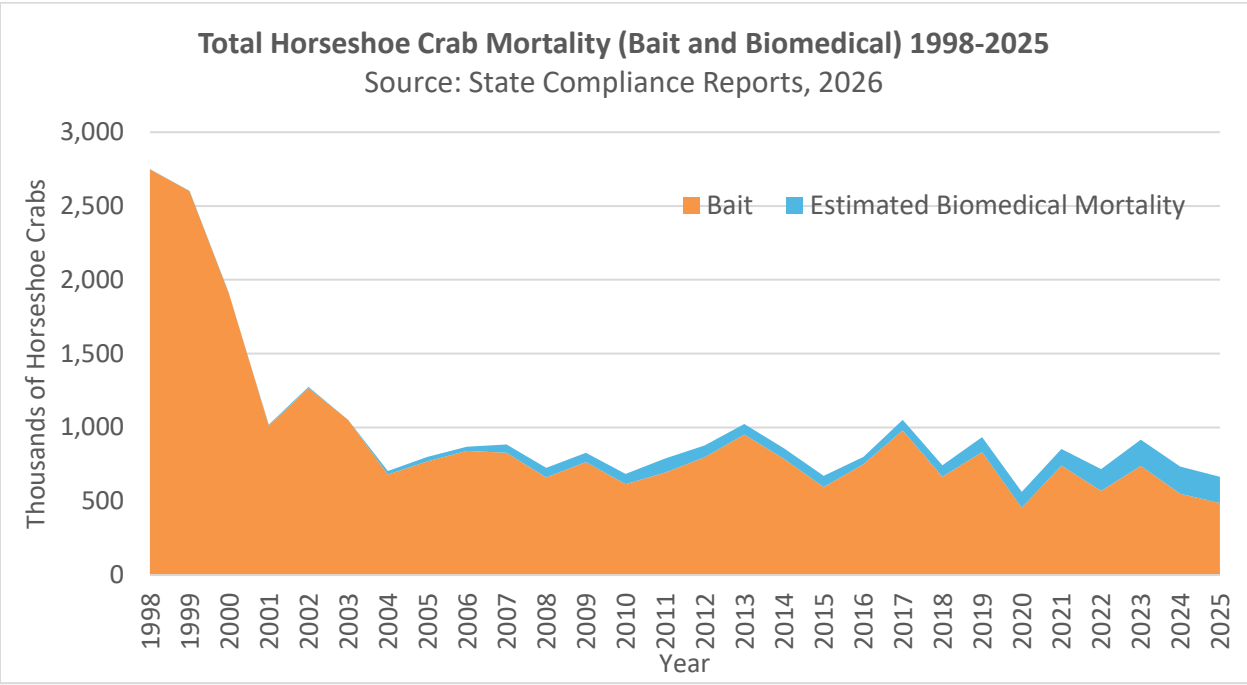


Figure 3. Total Annual Horseshoe Crab Mortality from Bait and Estimated Biomedical Mortality.

In 2023, a work group appointed by the Board reviewed and updated the *Best Management Practices for Handling Horseshoe Crabs for Biomedical Purposes*[5]. The work group included technical committee and advisory panel members with expertise in horseshoe crab biology, ecology, and biomedical processing. The purpose of the BMPs is to recommend broadly applicable industry standards that are expected to minimize mortality and injury of horseshoe crabs associated with the biomedical process.

IV. Status of Research and Monitoring

The Horseshoe Crab FMP set forth an ambitious research and monitoring strategy in 1999 and again in 2004 to inform future management decisions. Despite limited time and funding there are many accomplishments since 1999. These accomplishments were largely made possible by forming partnerships between state, federal and private organizations, and the support of hundreds of public volunteers.

Addendum III Monitoring Program

Addendum III requires affected states to carry out three monitoring components:

1. All states who do not qualify for *de minimis* status report monthly harvest numbers and subsample a portion of the catch for sex and harvest method. In addition, those states with annual landings above 5% of the coastwide harvest report all landings by sex and harvest method. Although states with annual landings less than 5% of annual coastwide harvest are not required to report landings by sex, the PRT recommends all states require sex-specific reporting for horseshoe crab harvest.
2. States with biomedical collections are required to monitor and report collection numbers and mortality associated with the transportation and bleeding of the crabs.
3. States must identify spawning and nursery habitat along their coasts. All states have completed this requirement, and a few continue active monitoring programs.

Virginia Tech Research Projects

The Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey (VT Survey) has been sampling horseshoe crab to estimate relative abundance since 2002, except for the years 2013-2015, due to a lack of funding. The survey was conducted in 2025 and is in progress for 2026. Funding sources beyond 2026 continue to be explored. The lower Delaware Bay area of the survey was not sampled in 2022-2024 as increased operational costs resulted in limitations to time on the water, but sampling resumed in 2025.

For the Delaware Bay Area (DBA), the 2025 survey results indicate that mean stratified catch-per-tow values for immature females and males increased significantly in 2025 from 2024 but

[5] Best Management Practices for Handling Horseshoe Crabs for Biomedical Purposes can be found here: https://asmfc.org/resources/management-special-report/best-management-practices-for-handling-horseshoe-crabs-for-biomedical-purposes/

remained consistent with patterns observed since 2016. Catch-per-tow of newly mature females continued to show a substantial rebound from pre-2024 levels following a revision in the sampling protocol to probe for eggs in ambiguous females, as recommended by the ARM Subcommittee and DBETC in early August 2024. Newly mature males showed a decrease in catch-per-tow. Catch-per-tow of mature females and males declined from their 2024 values, becoming more similar to abundance levels seen in earlier years. There continues to be a significant correlation between stratified mean catches of mature males and mature females, and immature males and females, but not for newly mature individuals.

2025 is the first year the Lower Delaware Bay was sampled since 2021, and the data suggests an increase in catch-per-tow across all demographic groups between these two years. Mean stratified catch-per-tow values for immature females and immature males more than doubled from 2021. Mature females more than doubled in mean catch-per-tow between 2021 and 2025, while mature males saw a substantial increase. Catch-per-tow of newly mature males and females also increased compared to 2021.

The indices from this survey, along with the New Jersey Ocean Trawl and Delaware Fish and Wildlife Adult Trawl Survey indices, are used to estimate horseshoe crab abundance in the ARM Framework to produce optimal harvest limits for the upcoming year.

Spawning Surveys

The Delaware Bay spawning survey was completed for the 26th consecutive year in 2025. Twelve beaches in Delaware and ten beaches in New Jersey were sampled. Peak spawning occurred during the first lunar period (May 10-14) in Delaware and during the third lunar period (June 9-13) in New Jersey. Bay-wide male and female spawning activity has exhibited an increasing trend across the 26 year time-series, and the increasing trend is statistically significant since 2010 for males.

Tagging Studies

The USFWS continues to maintain a toll-free telephone number and a website for reporting horseshoe crab tag returns and assists interested parties in obtaining tags. Tagging work continues to be conducted by biomedical companies, research organizations, and other parties involved in outreach and spawning surveys. Beginning with the 2013 tagging season, additional efforts were implemented to ensure that current tagging programs are providing data that benefits the management of the coastwide horseshoe crab population. All existing and new tagging efforts are required to submit an annual application to be considered for the USFWS tagging program and all participants must submit an annual report along with their tagging and resighting data to indicate how their tagging program addresses at least one of the following objectives: determine horseshoe crab sub-population structure, estimate horseshoe crab movement and migration rates, and/or estimate survival and mortality of horseshoe crabs. The PRT recommends all tagging programs approved by the states coordinate with the USFWS tagging program, in order to ensure a consistent coastwide program to support management.

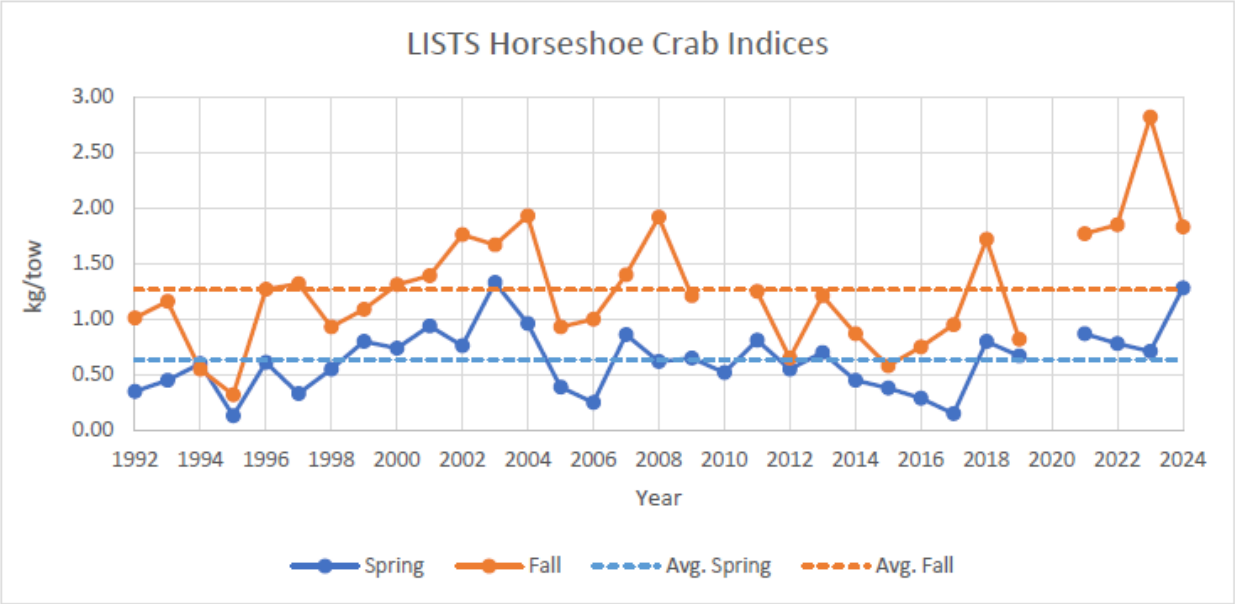
From 1999 through 2025, 472,560 horseshoe crabs have been tagged and released through the USFWS tagging program along the Atlantic coast, and 76,838 unique crabs have been recaptured. Horseshoe crabs have been tagged and released from every state on the Atlantic Coast from Florida to New Hampshire. In the early years of the program, tagging was centered around Delaware Bay; however, tagging has expanded and increased in Long Island Sound and the Southeast. Tagging information from this database is used in the Stock Assessment to define stock structure, estimate total mortality, and characterize impacts of biomedical use on horseshoe crab mortality.

New York Region Monitoring

Following the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment, which characterized the status of the horseshoe crab population in the New York region as "Poor", the Board directed the PRT to monitor fishery-independent surveys in this area to track progress of state management actions toward improving this regional population. During the assessment, five surveys were included in the ARIMA model to characterize this population. One of these, the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP), includes sample areas outside of the New York region, making it too data-intensive to specify the regional index on an annual basis. The most recent information from the state-conducted surveys used in the assessment is summarized below, but can be viewed in greater detail in the Connecticut and New York state compliance reports. The Western Long Island (WLI), Little Neck Bay and Manhasset Bay seine surveys were combined in the assessment to form a single index, but are shown below separately. None of these beach seine surveys were completed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in 2021. Figures 5-8 show the annual index for each survey over the time series until 2025.

Connecticut

- Long Island Sound Trawl (LISTS) (Fall) – 2024 index – The 2022 and 2023 surveys were limited in April and June due to staff limitations and in June because of mechanical issues with the research vessel. In 2025, LISTS did not operate due to boat operation issues that persisted throughout the year. Both the spring and fall 2024 indices were above the timeseries average of 0.63 kg/tow and 1.28 kg/tow, respectively. Following several years of decline, the spring index showed a small increase in 2024 (1.28 kg/tow). In contrast, the fall index declined from its time-series peak of 2.82 kg/tow to 1.83 kg/tow; although it remained above the fall time-series average.



No sampling was conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19. For more detail on the LISTS procedures and sampling visit Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (ct.gov) for the most recent report.

Figure 4. LISTS Horseshoe Crab Indices, 1992-2024. LISTS did not operate in 2025 due to boat operation issues.

New York

- Peconic Trawl – 2025 index = 0.31 (delta distribution average catch per unit effort [CPUE]), increase from 2024.
- WLI Jamaica Bay Seine (all horseshoe crabs) – 2025 index = 0.64 (geometric mean), increase from 2024.
- WLI Little Neck Bay Seine (all) – 2025 index = 0.66 (geometric mean), decrease from 2024.
- WLI Manhasset Bay Seine (all) – 2025 index = 1.93 (geometric mean), increase from 2024.

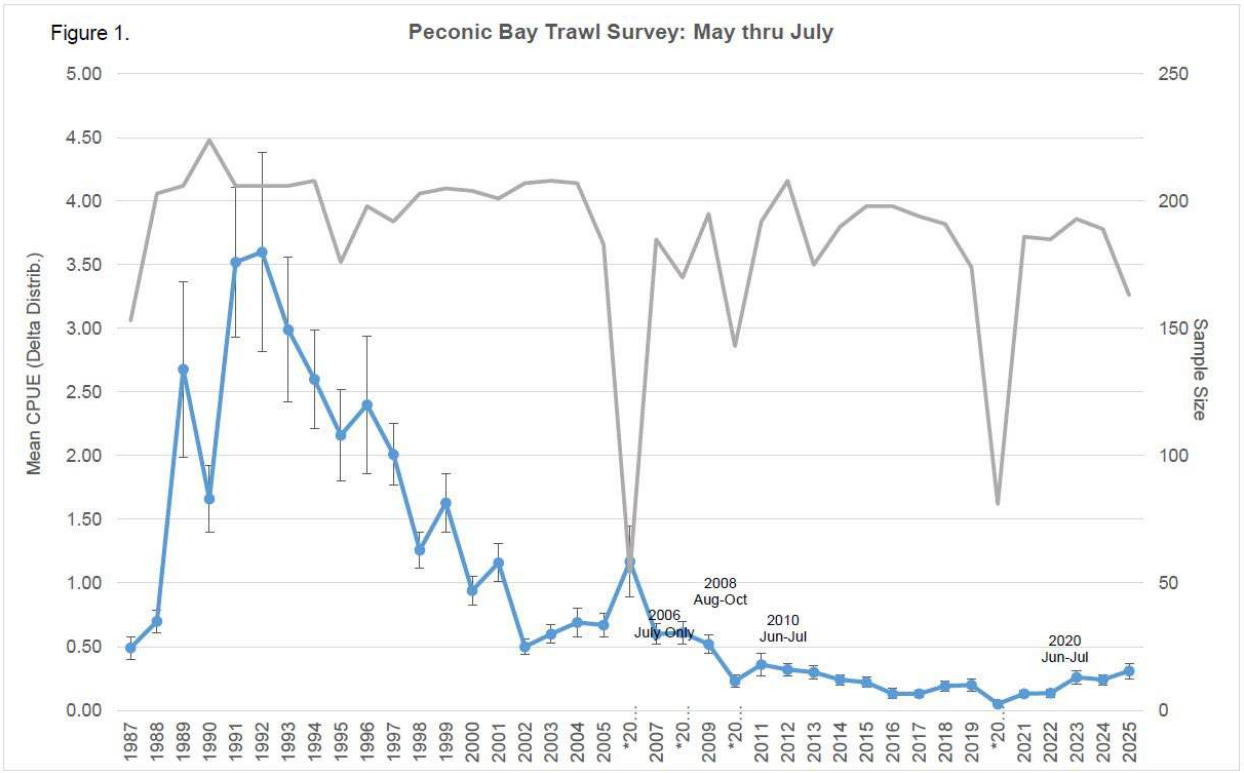


Figure 5. Peconic Bay Trawl Survey: May through July, 1987-2025. (Gray line=sample size, blue line=mean CPUE).

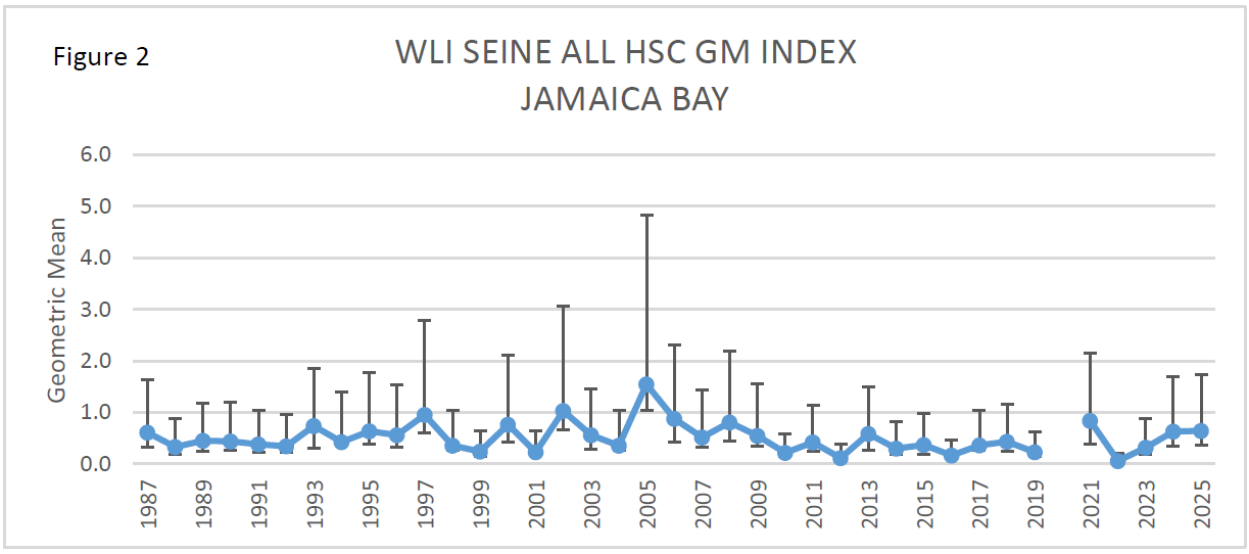


Figure 6. NYSDEC WLI Jamaica Bay Beach Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2025. *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.

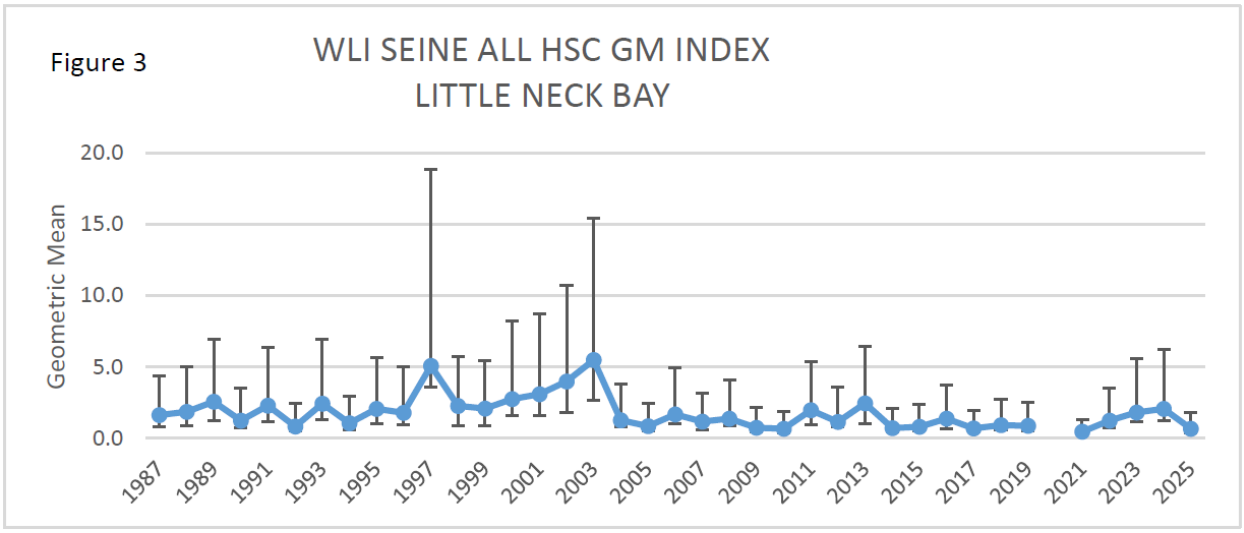


Figure 7. Little Neck Bay Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2025. *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.

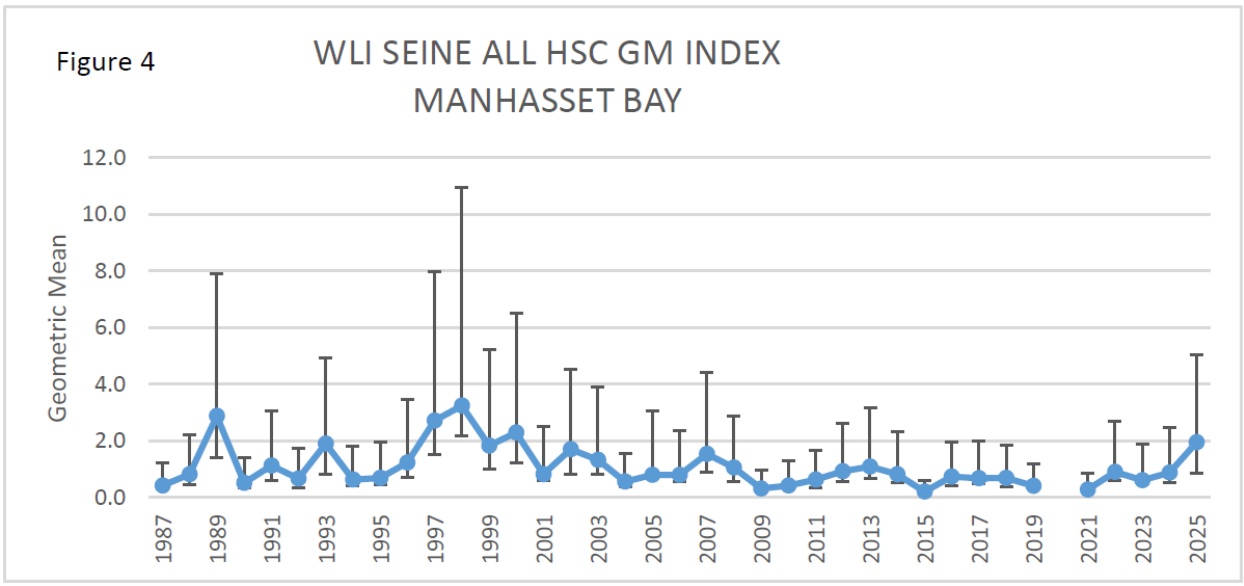


Figure 8. Manhasset Bay Seine Survey All Horseshoe Crab GM Index, 1987-2024. *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 sampling did not begin until July.

V. Status of Management Measures and Issues

ASMFC

Initial state harvest quotas were established through Addendum I. Addendum III outlined the monitoring requirements and recommendations for the states. Addendum IV set harvest closures and quotas, and other restrictions for New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, which were continued in Addenda V and VI.

In February 2012 the Board approved Addendum VII to implement the ARM Framework; it was implemented in 2013. The ARM Framework was updated in 2021, and the Board adopted use of the revised ARM Framework through Addendum VIII in 2022. Addendum VIII maintains the Addendum VII allocation mechanism to divide the Delaware Bay optimized harvest output from the ARM Framework among the four Delaware Bay states (New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia east of the COLREGS line).

State-specific charts outlining compliance and monitoring measures are included in Section VII. Massachusetts did not report all required data to ASMFC by the required deadline. The PRT finds that all other jurisdictions are in compliance with the FMP and subsequent Addenda in 2025.

Changes to State Regulations

- In New York, a bill was signed by the State Governor on February 13, 2026, to enact changes providing for a phase-out of the take of horseshoe crabs, allowing time for industry to transition. This phase-out will begin in 2026, with the quota reduced to 75% of the current voluntary quota level in 2026, 50% in 2027, and 25% in 2028, followed by a full moratorium which goes into effect on January 1, 2029.

Alternative Baits

Trials testing effectiveness of alternative baits to horseshoe crab for the American eel and whelk fisheries have previously been conducted. Additionally, a survey of bait usage in the eel and whelk fisheries was conducted in 2017. This survey is available at: https://asmfc.org/resources/management-technical-committee/horseshoe-crab-technical-committee-report-on-bait-use-surveys-of-the-american-eel-and-channeled-whelk-fisheries-october-2017/.

Shorebirds

The USFWS received petitions in 2004 and 2005 to emergency list the red knot under the Endangered Species Act. In fall 2005, it was determined that emergency listing was not warranted at the time. As part of a court settlement, the USFWS agreed to initiate proposed listings of over 200 species, including the red knot. In fall 2013, the USFWS released a proposal for listing the red knot as threatened. In January 2015 the USFWS designated the red knot as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

In 2022 the USFWS conducted an analysis of the changes to horseshoe crab management that would occur under the 2021 ARM Revision to determine the likelihood of impacts to the red knot. The finding from analysis is that there is a < 1% chance of a red knot population decline due to the implementation of potential female harvest under the revised ARM. Therefore, the Service concluded that take, defined under the Endangered Species Act as killing or injuring, of red knots is not likely.

The red knot has been listed as an endangered species in the State of New Jersey since 2012.

VI. PRT Recommendations and Research Needs

State Reporting of Biomedical Data

States with biomedical collections are required to report data on the number of crabs collected, transported to facilities, bled, and observed mortalities. Some companies have operations and/or collect horseshoe crabs from multiple states. To improve the clarity of biomedical data, the PRT recommends that state compliance reports identify the biomedical companies collecting crabs in their state waters, as well as those operating LAL manufacturing facilities in their state, and report biomedical numbers by company.

De Minimis

States may apply for *de minimis* status if, for the last two years, their combined average horseshoe crab bait landings (by numbers) constitute less than one percent of coastwide horseshoe crab bait landings for the same two-year period. States may petition the Board at any time for *de minimis* status, if their fishery falls below the threshold level. Once *de minimis* status is granted, designated States must submit annual reports to the Board justifying the continuance of *de minimis* status.

States that qualify for *de minimis* status are not required to implement any horseshoe crab harvest restriction measures, but are required to implement components A, B, E, and F of the monitoring program (Section 3.5 of the FMP; further modified by Addendum III). Since *de minimis* states are exempt from a harvest cap, there is potential for horseshoe crab landings to shift to *de minimis* states and become substantial, before adequate action can be taken. To control shifts in horseshoe crab landings, *de minimis* states are encouraged to implement one of the following management measures:

1. Close their respective horseshoe crab bait fishery when landings exceed the *de minimis* threshold;
2. Establish a state horseshoe crab landing permit, making it only available to individuals with a history of landing horseshoe crabs in that state; or
3. Establish a maximum daily harvest limit of up to 25 horseshoe crabs per person per day. States which implement this measure can be relieved of mandatory monthly reporting, but must report all horseshoe crab harvests on an annual basis.

The following states have been removed from the Management Board since its formation: Pennsylvania (2007), Maine (2011), and New Hampshire (2014). South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida are requesting continued *de minimis* status for the 2025 fishing season based on the 2023-2024 season landings, and meet the FMP requirements for being granted this status (Table 1). The PRT recommends granting these jurisdictions *de minimis* status.

Biomedical Threshold

The 1998 FMP established a biomedical mortality threshold of 57,500 crabs that, if exceeded, requires the Board to consider management action. This threshold has been exceeded in all but

one year since 2008. Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment indicate that levels of biomedical mortality prior to 2017 (the terminal year of data used in the assessment) did not have a significant effect on horseshoe crab population estimates or fishing mortality in the Delaware Bay region.

In 2020 the Board tasked the PDT to review the threshold for biomedical use to develop biologically-based options for the threshold and to develop options for action when the threshold is exceeded. It also tasked the PDT to review the best management practices (BMPs) for handling biomedical catch and suggest options for updating and implementing BMPs. The PDT concluded that given the lack of coastwide population estimates for horseshoe crabs, it is not possible to develop a biologically-based threshold for biomedical mortality. Thus, the PDT did not recommend a change to the threshold. Based on this information the Board determined no action is warranted. A Board-appointed work group was formed in 2023, which reviewed and updated the best management practices for biomedical handling to further reduce stress, injury, and mortality to horseshoe crabs collected for biomedical purposes.

Funding for Research and Monitoring Activities

The PRT strongly recommends the funding and continuation of the VT benthic trawl survey. Sampling in recent years has had to be reduced due to increased costs. This effort provides a statistically reliable estimate of horseshoe crab relative abundance that is essential to continued ARM implementation and use of the CMSA stock assessment model.

Discard Mortality Estimation

Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment indicate that discard mortality may be significant, of similar or greater magnitude than bait harvest. The Review Panel's report indicated that these estimates could be further refined to reduce their uncertainty and more precisely characterize this mortality source. The PRT recommends the Board take steps to increase access to and use of data from the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP), allowing for improved monitoring and estimation of discard mortality.

Improvement of the New York Regional Population

Results of the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment and 2024 update indicate a "Poor" status for the New York regional population, due to negative trends in regional abundance indices. New York and Connecticut have indicated that they will take actions within their states to improve this population. The PRT and Board have recommended such actions so that this population's status may improve.

Effective October 1, 2023, Connecticut prohibited all hand-harvest of horseshoe crabs and their eggs within the state. New York implemented two additional lunar closures for May and June, resulting in a total of four 5-day lunar closures around the full and new moons in 2025. On February 10, 2025, a bill was introduced in New York State legislation, which stated that "no person shall take horseshoe crabs, including for commercial and biomedical purposes." This bill was signed with amendments by Governor Hochul on February 13, 2026. The Governor reached

an agreement with the Legislature to enact changes providing for a phase-out of the take of horseshoe crabs, allowing time for industry to transition. This phase-out will begin in 2026, with the quota reduced to 75% of the current voluntary quota level in 2026, 50% in 2027, and 25% in 2028, followed by a full moratorium which goes into effect on January 1, 2029.

The PRT will continue to annually report regional indices of abundance so that progress of management actions may be tracked through the annual FMP Reviews.

VII. State Compliance and Monitoring Measures

MASSACHUSETTS		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	330,377 (140,000)	330,377 (140,000)
Landings	139,746	--
Other Restrictions	Bait: 300 crab daily limit year round; limited entry; Biomedical: 1,000 crab daily limit and 200,000 annual quota; Conch pot and eel fishermen: no possession limit Mobile gear: 75 crab trip limit, exempted from "no-fishing days"; All: April 15-June 7 spawning closure; 7" PW minimum size; Pleasant Bay Closed Area	Bait: 300 crab daily limit year round; limited entry; Biomedical: 1,000 crab daily limit and 200,000 annual quota; Conch pot and eel fishermen: no possession limit Mobile gear: 75 crab trip limit, exempted from "no-fishing days"; All: April 15-June 7 spawning closure; 7" PW minimum size; Pleasant Bay Closed Area
Landings	137,261	-
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes, plus weekly dealer reporting through SAFIS	Yes, plus weekly dealer reporting through SAFIS
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Yes – w/NPS and USFWS; Pleasant Bay, Monomy NWR, Waquoit Bay	Yes – w/NPS and USFWS; Pleasant Bay, Monomy NWR, Waquoit Bay

RHODE ISLAND		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	26,053 (14,655)	26,053 (14,655)
Other Restrictions	- Daily possession limit: 60 crabs per permit - Bait Fishery Closure: May 1-May 31 - Biomedical Fishery Closure: 48 hours prior to and 48 hours following new and full moons during May. - Biomedical quota and best management practices	- Daily possession limit: 60 crabs per permit - Bait Fishery Closure: May 1-May 31 - Biomedical Fishery Closure: 48 hours prior to and 48 hours following new and full moons during May - Biomedical quota and best management practices
Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes, weekly call in and monthly on paper	Yes, weekly call in and monthly on paper
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes, since 2000	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No

CONNECTICUT		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	48,689	48,689
Other Restrictions	- Hand-harvest of horseshoe crabs or eggs in state waters prohibited, effective Oct. 1, 2023 - Daily possession limit of 150 crabs	- Hand-harvest of horseshoe crabs or eggs in state waters prohibited - Daily possession limit of 150 crabs
Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	No – exempt under Addendum III because landings are < 5% of coastwide total	No – exempt under Addendum III because landings are < 5% of coastwide total
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes, since 1999 (methods differ from DE Bay survey)	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Yes, in collaboration with local universities (Sacred Heart University since 2015)	Yes

NEW YORK		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	366,272 (150,000)	366,272 (150,000)
Other Restrictions	Ability to close areas to harvest; seasonal quotas and daily harvest limits. Four 5-day lunar closures around the full and new moons in May and June. Daily trip limits.	Ability to close areas to harvest; seasonal quotas and daily harvest limits. Four 5-day lunar closures around the full and new moons in May and June. Daily trip limits. Phase-out of bait and biomedical harvest with quota reduced by 75% per year.
Landings	76,077	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Yes	Yes

NEW JERSEY		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de miminis*	Does not request *de miminis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	164,364 (male only) (0)	173,014 (male only) (0)
Other Restrictions	Bait harvest moratorium	Bait harvest moratorium
Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No
Monitoring Component B_5 Egg abundance survey	Yes, no longer mandatory	Yes
Monitoring Component B_6 Shorebird monitoring program	Yes	Yes

DELAWARE		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	173,014 (male only)	173,014 (male only)
Other Restrictions	Closed season (Jan 1 – June 7) Daily collection limit	Closed season (Jan 1 – June 7) Daily collection limit
Landings	122,526 (male only)	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (daily call-in reports & monthly logbooks)	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No state program but has assisted in the past with various Delaware Bay horseshoe crab tagging initiatives	No
Monitoring Component B_6 Shorebird monitoring program	Yes	Yes

MARYLAND		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	255,980 (male only)	255,980 (male only)
Other Restrictions	Season closure until May 1, catch limits, no harvest Saturday and Sunday	Season closure until June 8, catch limits, no harvest Saturday and Sunday
Landings	56,517 (male only)	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (weekly reports for permit holders; monthly for non-permit holders)	Yes (weekly reports for permit holders; monthly for non-permit holders)
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Yes	Yes

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Ability to close fishery if *de minimis* threshold is reached	No horseshoe crab fishery	No horseshoe crab fishery
Daily possession limit <25 for *de minimis* state		
HSC landing permit		
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	0	0
Other Restrictions	None	None
Landings	0	0
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes - weekly	Yes - weekly
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

VIRGINIA		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota (Voluntary State Quota)	172,828 (81,331 male-only east of COLREGS line)	172,828 (81,331 male-only east of COLREGS line)
Other Restrictions	Closed season (January 1 – June 7) for federal waters. Harvest of horseshoe crabs east of the COLREGS line limited to trawl gear and dredge gear.	Closed season (January 1 – June 7) for federal waters. Harvest of horseshoe crabs east of the COLREGS line limited to trawl gear and dredge gear.
Landings	96,506	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	No	No
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No

NORTH CAROLINA		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	Did not request *de minimis*	Did not request *de minimis*
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	24,036	24,036
Other Restrictions	Fishery closure May 1-July 19. Trip limit of 50 crabs; Proclamation authority to adjust trip limits, seasons, etc.	Trip limit of 50 crabs; Proclamation authority to adjust trip limits, seasons, etc.
Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	No	No
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No

SOUTH CAROLINA		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	*De minimis* status granted for 2025.	*De minimis* requested for 2026 and meets criteria.
Ability to close fishery if *de minimis* threshold is reached	No horseshoe crab bait fishery	No horseshoe crab bait fishery
Daily possession limit <25 for *de minimis* state		
HSC landing permit		
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	0	0
Other Restrictions	None	None
Landings	0	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes (Biomedical)	Yes (Biomedical)
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Yes	Yes
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	Yes	Yes

GEORGIA		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	*De minimis* status granted for 2025.	*De minimis* requested for 2026 and meets criteria.
Ability to close fishery if *de minimis* threshold is reached	Yes	Yes
Daily possession limit <25 for *de minimis* state	25/person; 75/vessel with 3 licensees	25/person; 75/vessel with 3 licensees
HSC landing permit	Must have commercial shrimp, crab, or whelk license; LOA permit required	Must have commercial shrimp, crab, or whelk license; LOA permit required
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	29,312	29,312
Other Restrictions	None	None
Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Not Applicable	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	No	No
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No

FLORIDA		
	2025 Compliance	**2026 Management Proposal**
***De minimis* status**	*De minimis* status granted for 2025.	*De minimis* requested for 2026 and meets criteria.
Ability to close fishery if *de minimis* threshold is reached	Yes	Yes
Daily possession limit <25 for *de minimis* state	25/person w/ valid saltwater products license; 100/person with marine life endorsement	25/person w/ valid saltwater products license; 100/person with marine life endorsement
HSC landing permit	See above	See above
Bait Harvest Restrictions and Landings		
ASMFC Quota	9,455	9,455
Other Restrictions	Daily possession limit	Daily possession limit
Landings	Confidential	--
Monitoring Component A_1		
Mandatory monthly reporting	Yes	Yes
Characterize commercial bait fishery	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component A_2		
Biomedical reporting	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Required information for biomedical use of crabs	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Monitoring Component B_2 Continue existing benthic sampling programs	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_3 Implement spawning survey	Yes	Yes
Monitoring Component B_4 Tagging program	No	No