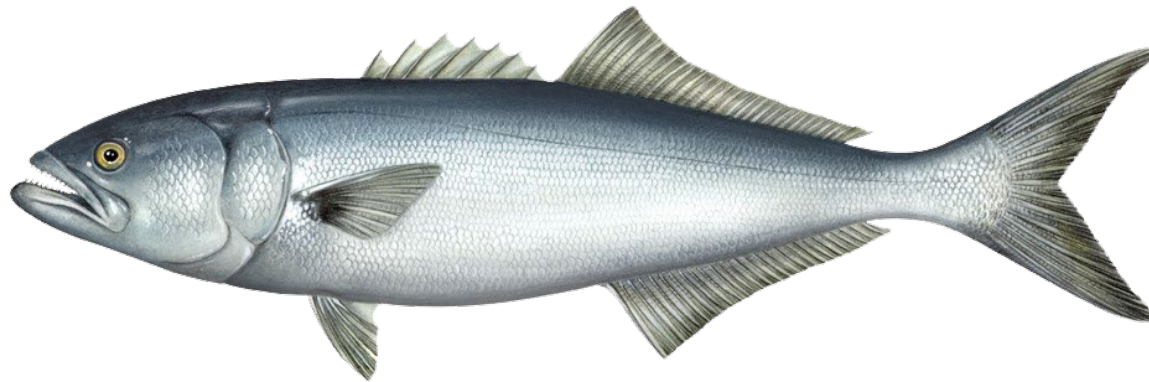




Bluefish Conservation Equivalency Proposals for the 2020 Recreational Fishing Season



**Bluefish Management Board
February 4, 2020**

Outline



- Background
- Technical Committee Review of Bluefish Proposals
- Law Enforcement Committee Report
- Questions and Board Discussion



Background



- December 2019: The Board approved and the Council recommended a coastwide 3-fish bag limit for private and shore-based anglers and a 5-fish bag limit for for-hire fishermen.
- The Commission's Conservation Equivalency (CE) Policy allows states to submit alternative measures for state waters that achieve the same reduction in recreational landings that would have been achieved under the coastwide regulations.

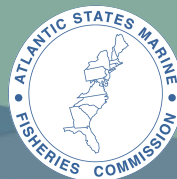
Conservation Equivalency Criteria



TC met via conference call on Dec 16th to set CE criteria

- All reductions calculated in pounds of fish
- Preferred data set and timeframe = MRIP (2016-18)
- If percent standard error (PSE) values exceed 50, data should be pooled across years
- Seasonal closures need to be for an entire wave
- Non-compliant harvest data included in analysis
- Account for reductions from multiple measures via $(A+B) - (A*B)$

Conservation Equivalency Criteria



State specific reductions as per Table 1 of the CE guidelines memo:

Table 1. State Reductions

State	%Reduction (pounds)
MAINE	0.00%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0.00%
MASSACHUSETTS	-20.08%
RHODE ISLAND	-43.81%
CONNECTICUT	-25.25%
NEW YORK	-26.26%
NEW JERSEY	-27.68%
DELAWARE	-20.01%
MARYLAND	-29.80%
VIRGINIA	-26.19%
NORTH CAROLINA	-32.80%
SOUTH CAROLINA	-36.69%
GEORGIA	-8.13%
FLORIDA	-18.65%

Proposal Review Call Summary



- TC met via conference call on January 23rd
- Georgia, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Connecticut submitted proposals to adjust 2020 measures
- The TC recommended approval of the methodologies used to develop Georgia and New Jersey's proposals.

TC Comments on CE Process



- High level of uncertainty in percent reductions
 - Predicting angler behavior is challenging
 - Variability in size structure & distribution of bluefish
- Easier to predict reduction achieved by simple changes to measures

TC Comments on CE Process



		Predicted/required reduction in harvest	
		Separate modes	Aggregate modes
a)	State	mode_fx = 3,4,5,7	mode_fx=(4,5) & (3,7)
	CONNECTICUT	-16.5%	-23.8%
	DELAWARE	-16.6%	-18.7%
	FLORIDA	-20.0%	-18.6%
	GEORGIA	-8.2%	-8.1%
	MARYLAND	-16.2%	-16.6%
	MASSACHUSETTS	-11.4%	-19.0%
	NEW HAMPSHIRE	0.0%	0.0%
	NEW JERSEY	-27.2%	-27.7%
	NEW YORK	-23.4%	-26.3%
	NORTH CAROLINA	-32.7%	-32.8%
	RHODE ISLAND	-15.6%	-43.8%
	SOUTH CAROLINA	-34.8%	-36.5%
	VIRGINIA	-27.4%	-26.2%
b)	Coastwide (state-specific avg wt)	-23.9%	-25.3%
	Coastwide (avg wt by mode)	-27.1%	
	Coastwide (all states combined)	-27.5%	-28.6%

Georgia Proposal



- 2019 Measures
 - Size: 12” minimum size
 - Bag: 15 fish
 - Season: Open all year
- 2020 Proposed Measures:
 - Size: 12” minimum size
 - Bag: 15 fish
 - Wave 2 (March/April) season closure
 - Projected reduction of 13.10%
 - Meets CE reduction requirement of 8.13%

New Jersey Proposal



2019 Measures

no min size, 15 fish bag, and open all year

2020 Proposed Measures:

- Include adjustments to min size, bag limit, and seasonal closures
- All options meet the required reduction of 27.68%

New Jersey Proposal Cont'd



Option	Size Limits	Bag Limits	Mode	Season	Percent Reduction
1	-	3	Private/shore	Open All Season	Net = 27.74%
	-	5	For-hire		
2	-	3	All modes	Open All Season	27.85%
3	-	8	All modes	Closure Sept 1 – Oct 31	28.77%
4	15" min	4	All modes	Open All Season	28.84%
5	≥ 9" and < 36"	10	All modes	Open All Season	27.88%
6	-	5	All modes	Closure March 1 – April 30 & Sept 1 – Oct 31	30.65%
7	15" min	6	All modes	Closure July 1 – Aug 31 & Nov 1 – Dec 31	28.07%
8	-	8	Private/shore	Closure Sept 1 – Oct 31	Net = 28.17%
	-	15	For-hire		

Law Enforcement Committee Comments



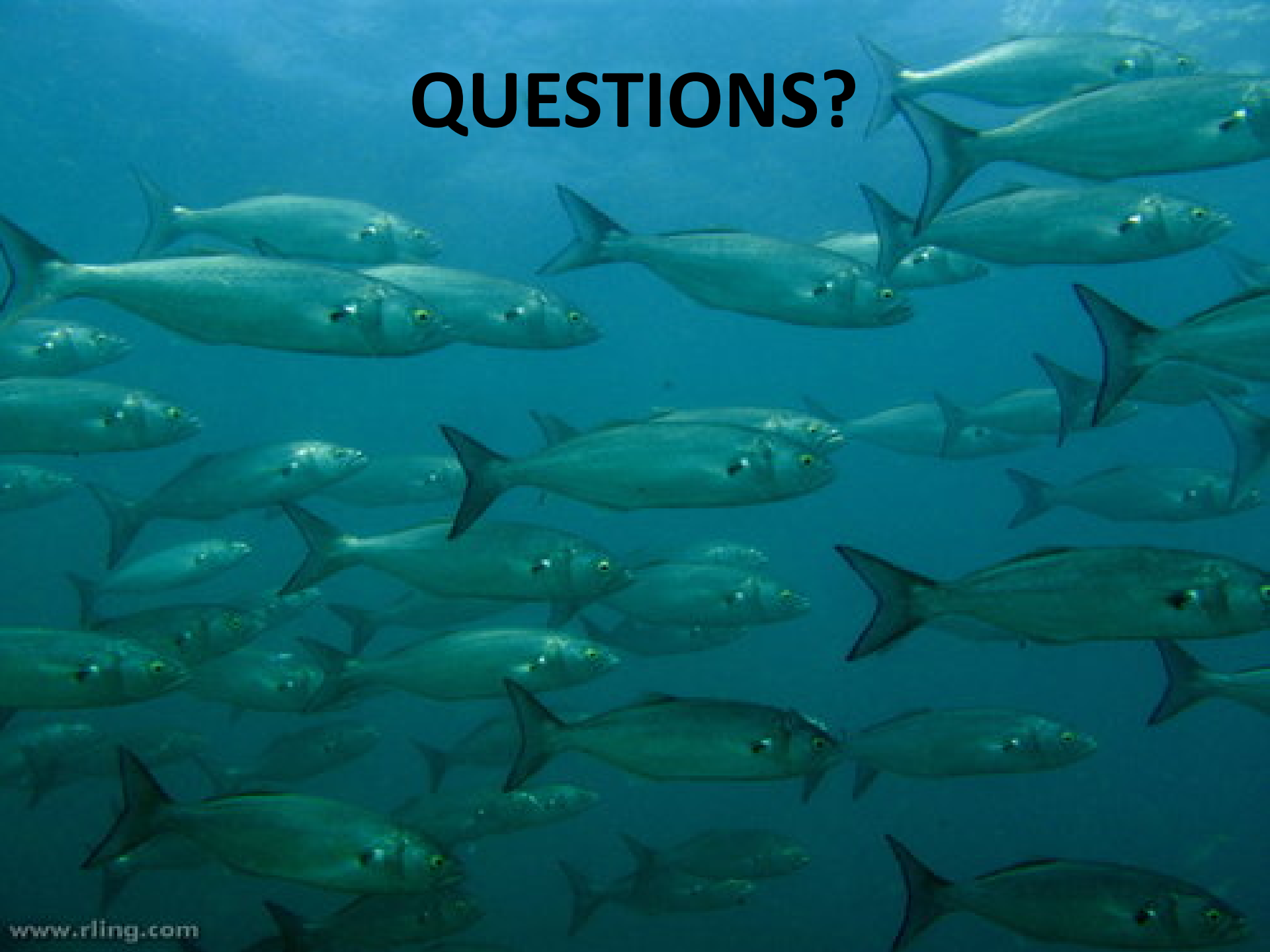
- The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met on January 23rd
 - Reviewed state CE proposals for both Striped Bass and Bluefish
- General Comments on regulation changes
 - Education/outreach effort
 - Changes lower compliance
 - Warnings vs. citations

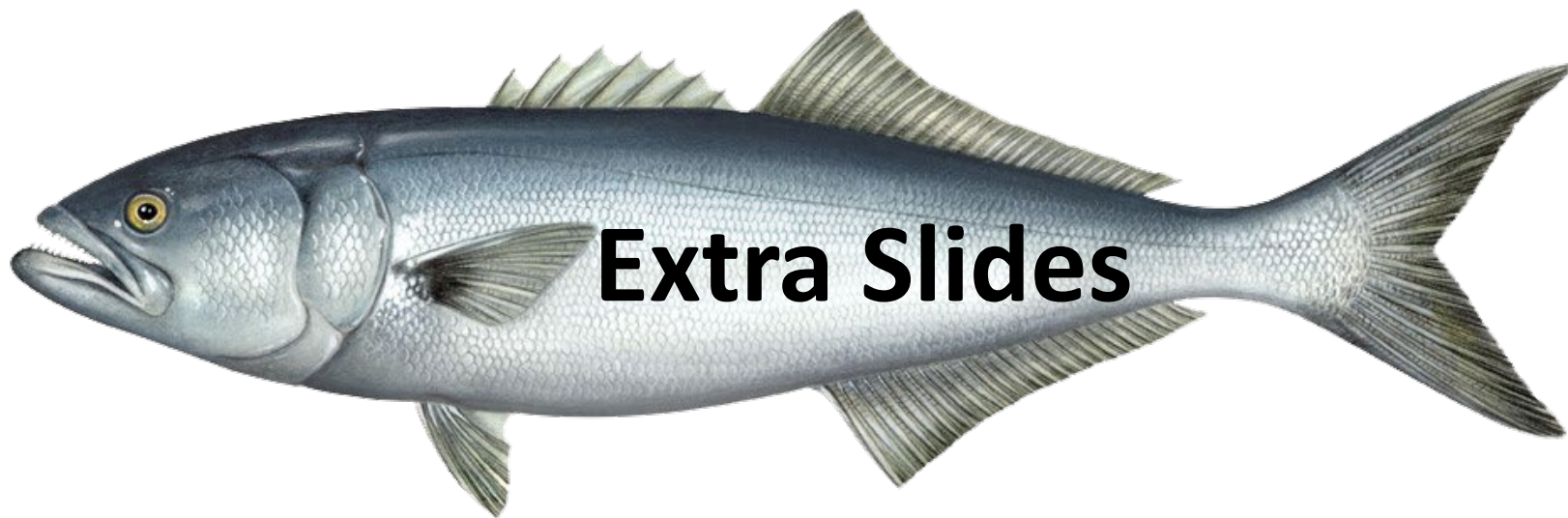
LEC Comments Continued



- Differing regulations by mode
 - Complicates enforcement
 - Differentiating between modes is a challenge for officers on land
- Seasonal Closures
 - Increases unintentional non-compliance
- Enforcement of shared water bodies or neighboring states
 - Emphasis on consistency
 - Creates problems with possession enforcement

QUESTIONS?





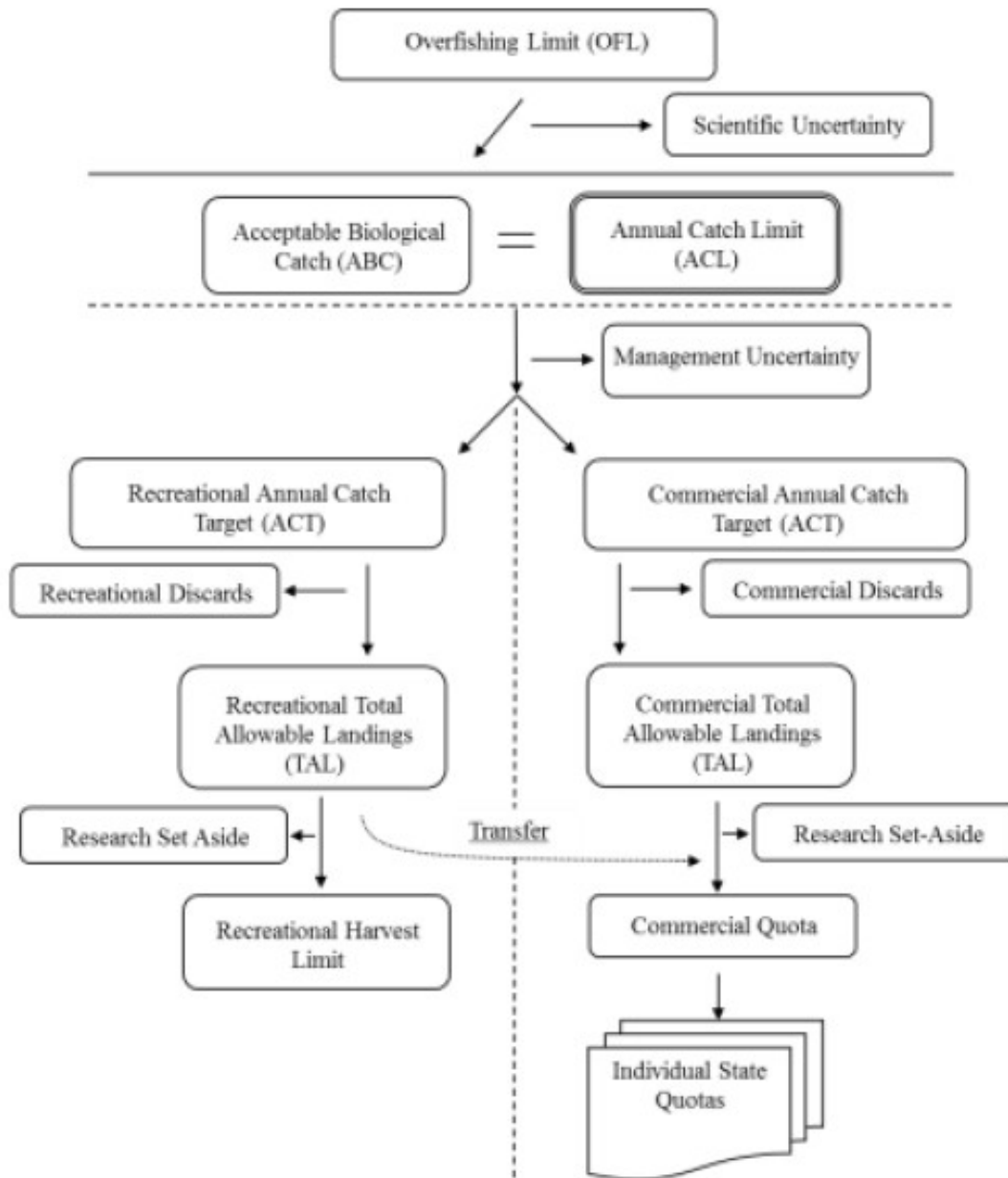
Extra Slides

Extra Slides



- 2019 wave 1-5 landings = 15.83 million lbs
- 2019 projected total landings = 17.22 m lbs
 - 2019 RHL = 11.62 million lbs
 - 2019 harvest projected to exceed 2019 RHL by 48.15%
- 44.93% reduction required from 2019 projected harvest to achieve 2020 RHL

Atlantic Bluefish Flowchart





**State by state
avg. harvest
(2016-2018)
shown as a
percent of
coastwide
harvest**

State	3-yr Average harvest
MAINE	0.00%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0.00%
MASSACHUSETTS	4.26%
RHODE ISLAND	1.60%
CONNECTICUT	3.13%
NEW YORK	18.15%
NEW JERSEY	24.97%
DELAWARE	3.90%
MARYLAND	1.63%
VIRGINIA	1.47%
NORTH CAROLINA	13.85%
SOUTH CAROLINA	2.30%
GEORGIA	0.11%
FLORIDA	24.63%
Total	100.00%