



Technical Committee Report on Commercial Discards of Weakfish

Presented to Weakfish Management
Board

October 24, 2018

Board Task



- *Move to task the Technical Committee to review weakfish discard data from the Northeast [Fisheries] Observer Program and from vessel trip reports (VTRs), analyze landings data to see if the occurrences of commercial trips approaching the 100-lb trip limit have increased, and to characterize the fisheries with substantial weakfish discards to see if different trip limits could be implemented to turn discards into landings and/or if fishing modifications could be made to minimize discards.*

Motion by C. Batsavage, second by J. Clark.

Data Sources/Methods

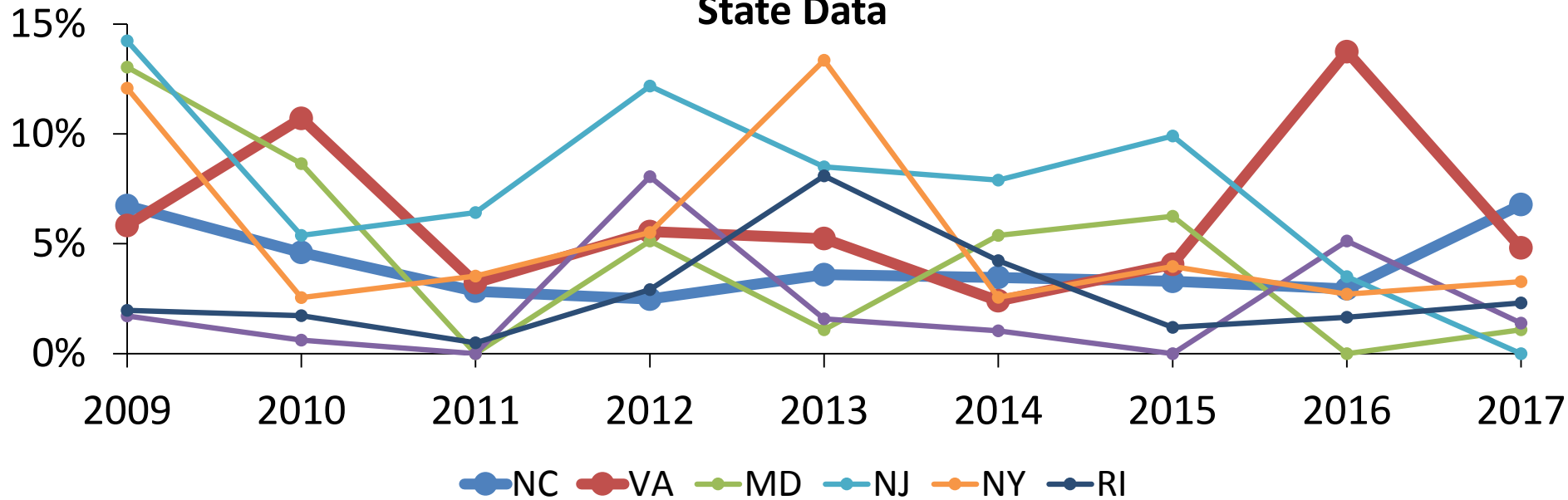


- Trip-level commercial state data
- NOAA Fisheries Vessel Trip Reports
- Northeast Fisheries Observer Program
- Subgroup of Weakfish TC gained confidential access for reviewing data
- # & % trips \geq 100 pounds
- # & % of pounds from trips \geq 100 pounds
- Also looked at gill net gear-specific & trips \geq 90 pounds

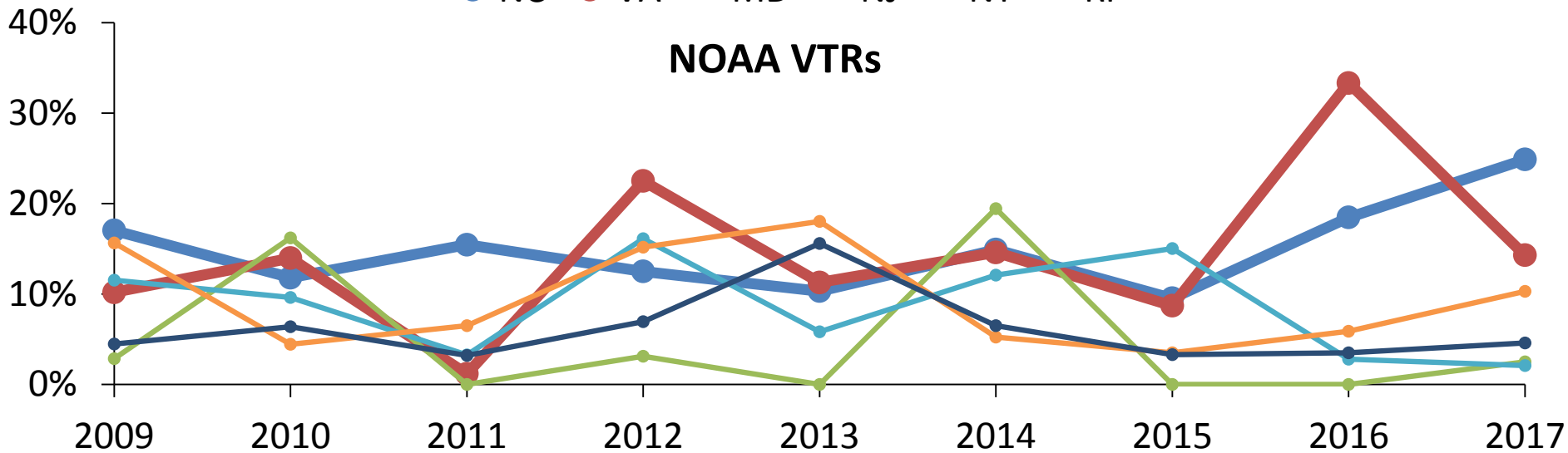
Percentage of Trips \geq 100 pounds



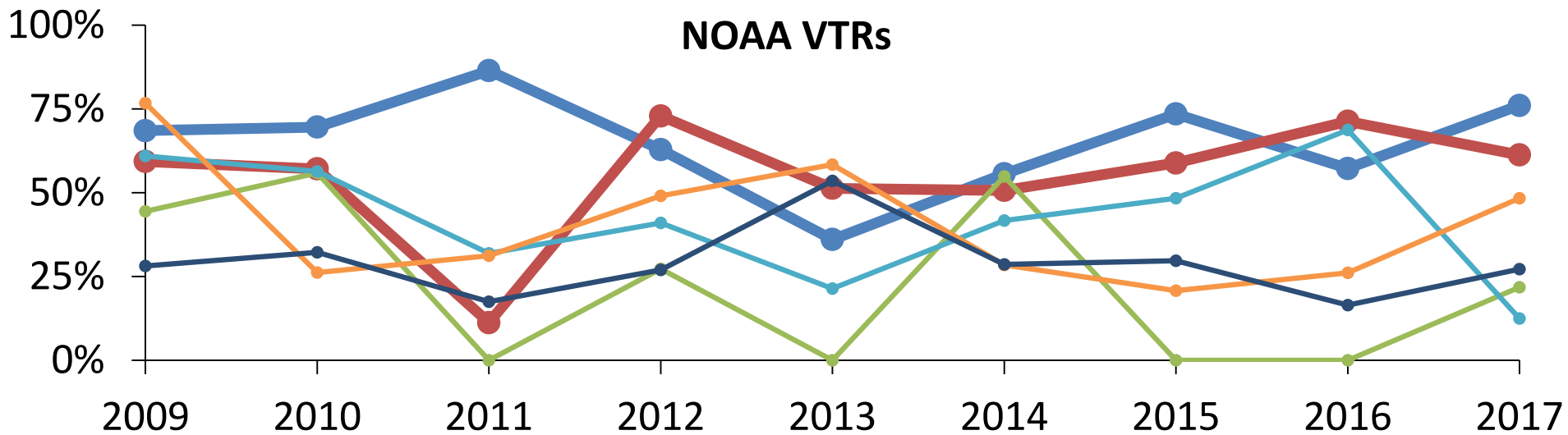
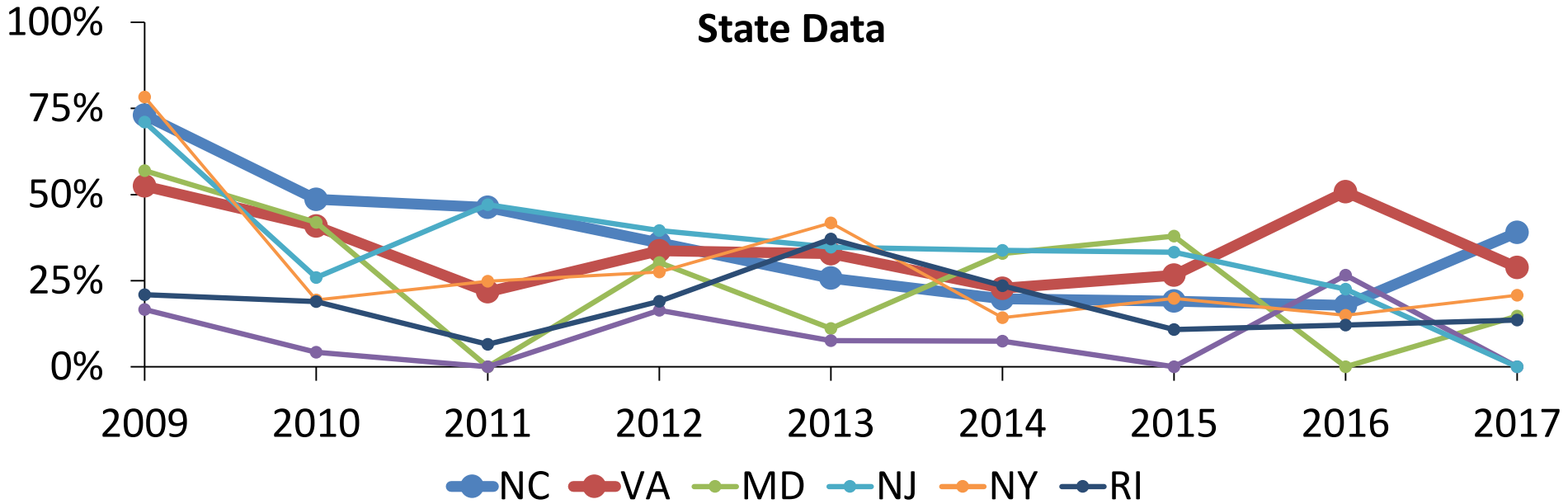
State Data



NOAA VTRs



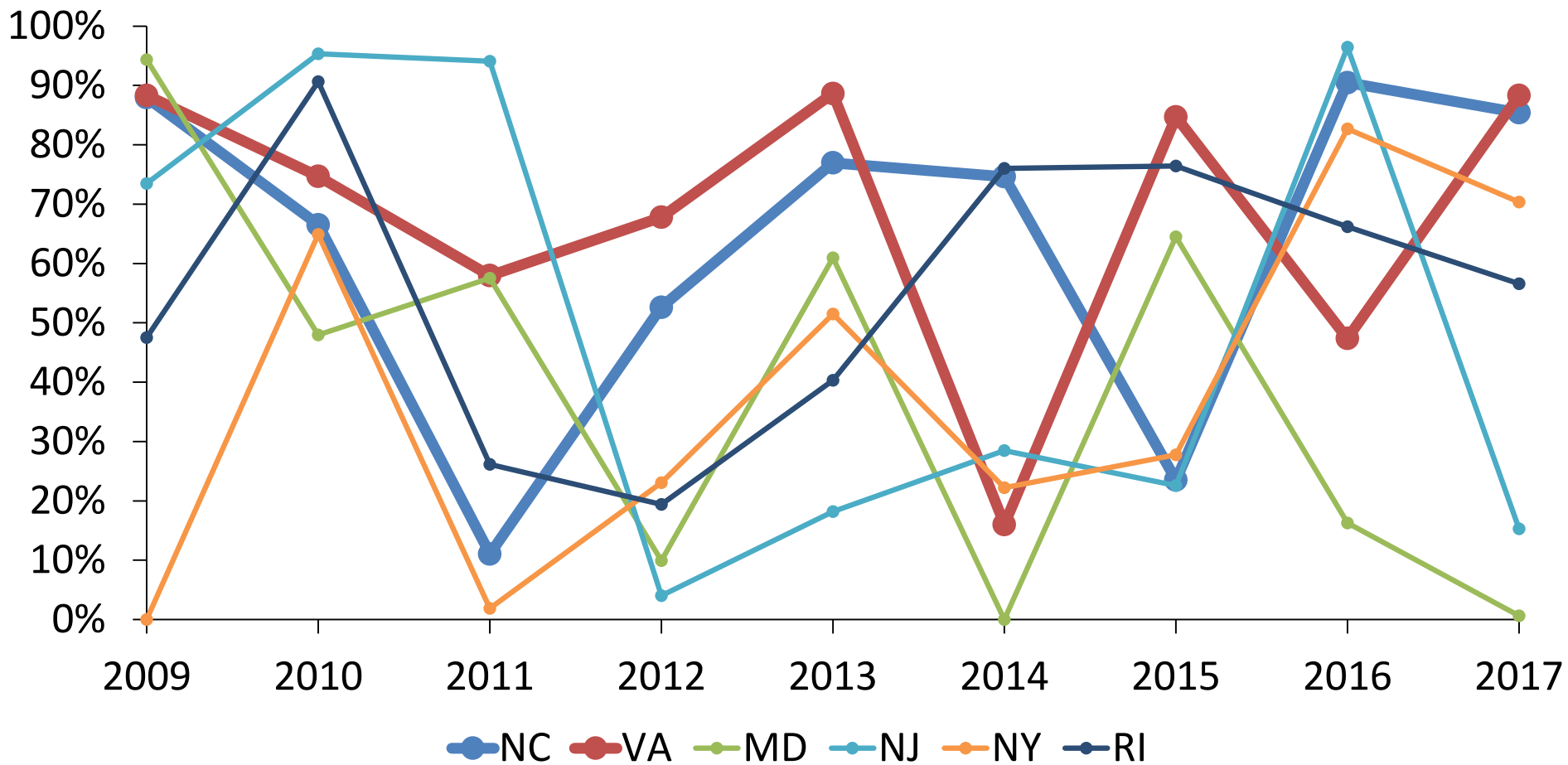
% Pounds Caught on Trips \geq 100 pounds



% Weakfish Pounds Discarded



NOAA Fisheries Observer Program

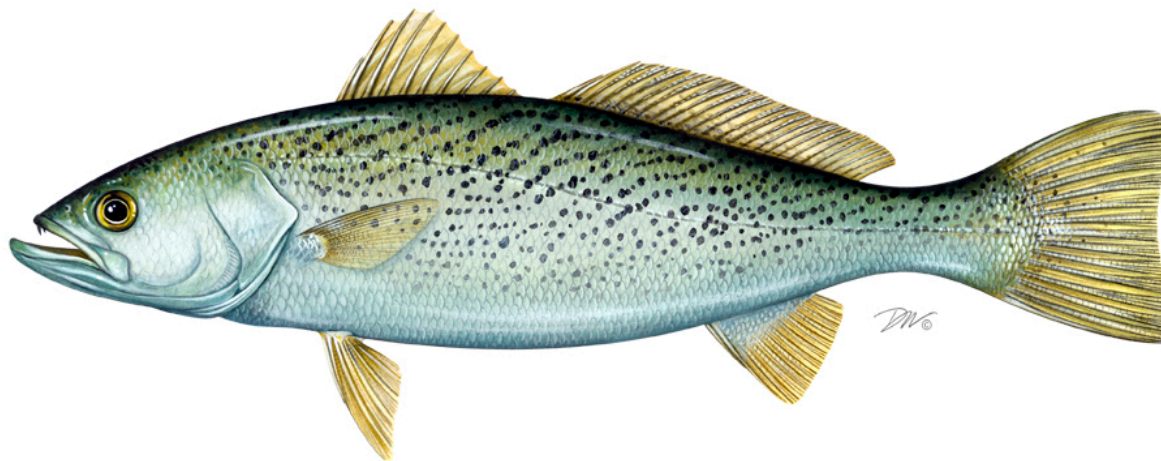


Conclusions



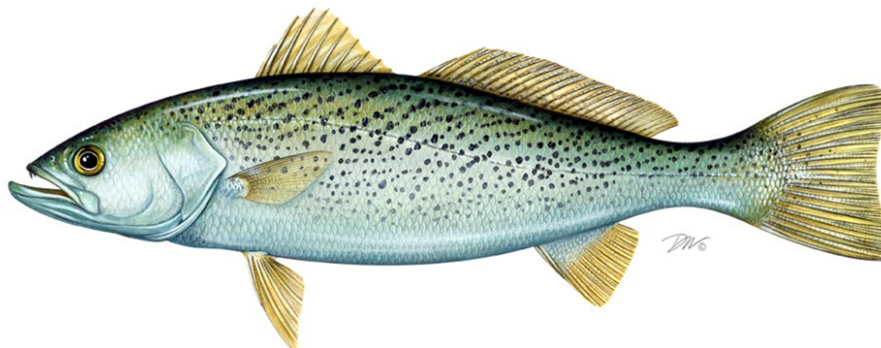
- No increasing trend in discards that would be cause for concern
- Single year increases for VA (2016) and NC (2017) corroborate reports but do not suggest a longstanding increase
- No recommended management changes at this time
- If reports of increase persist in future years, could be reinvestigated in future

Questions?



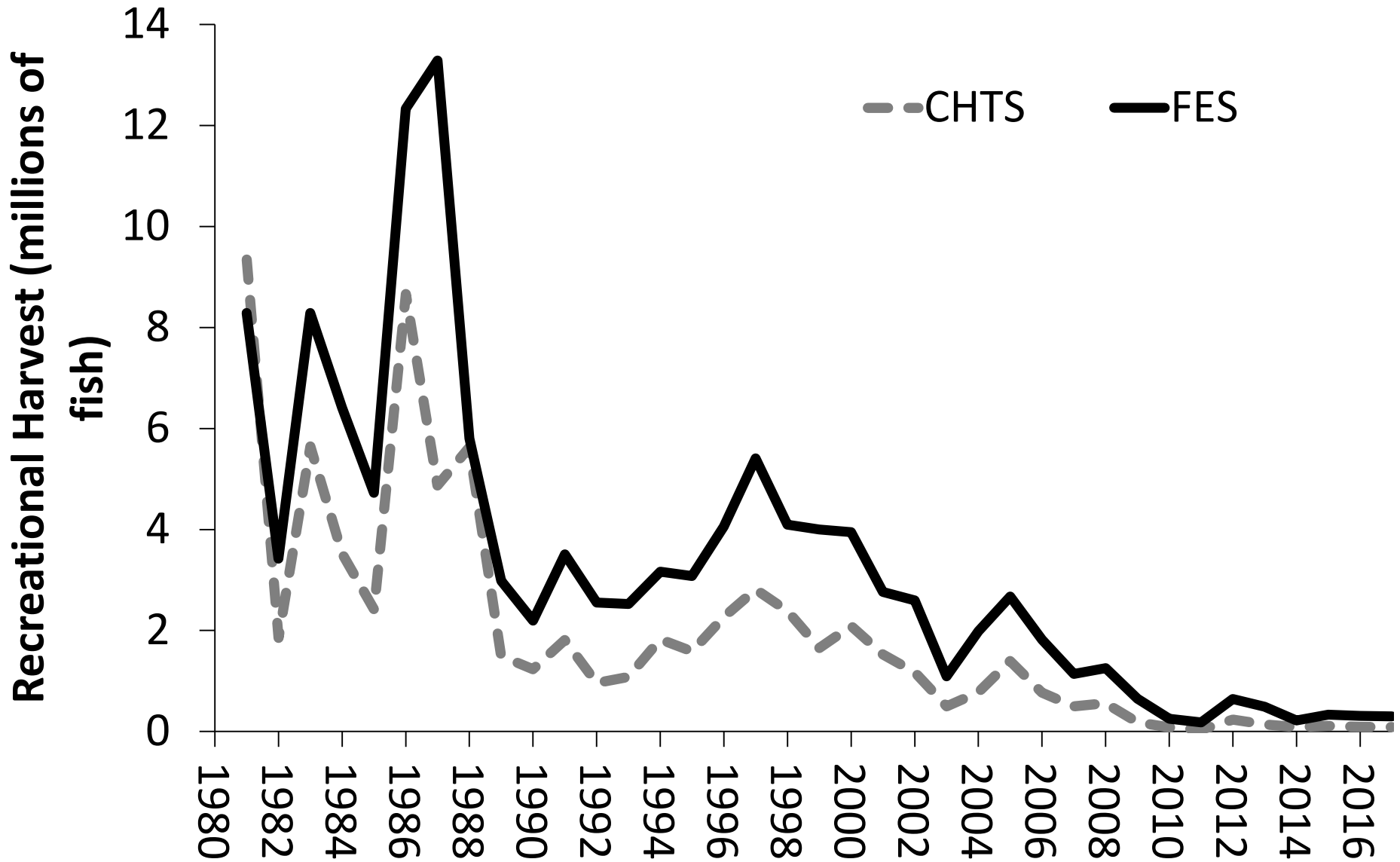


Weakfish 2018 FMP Review

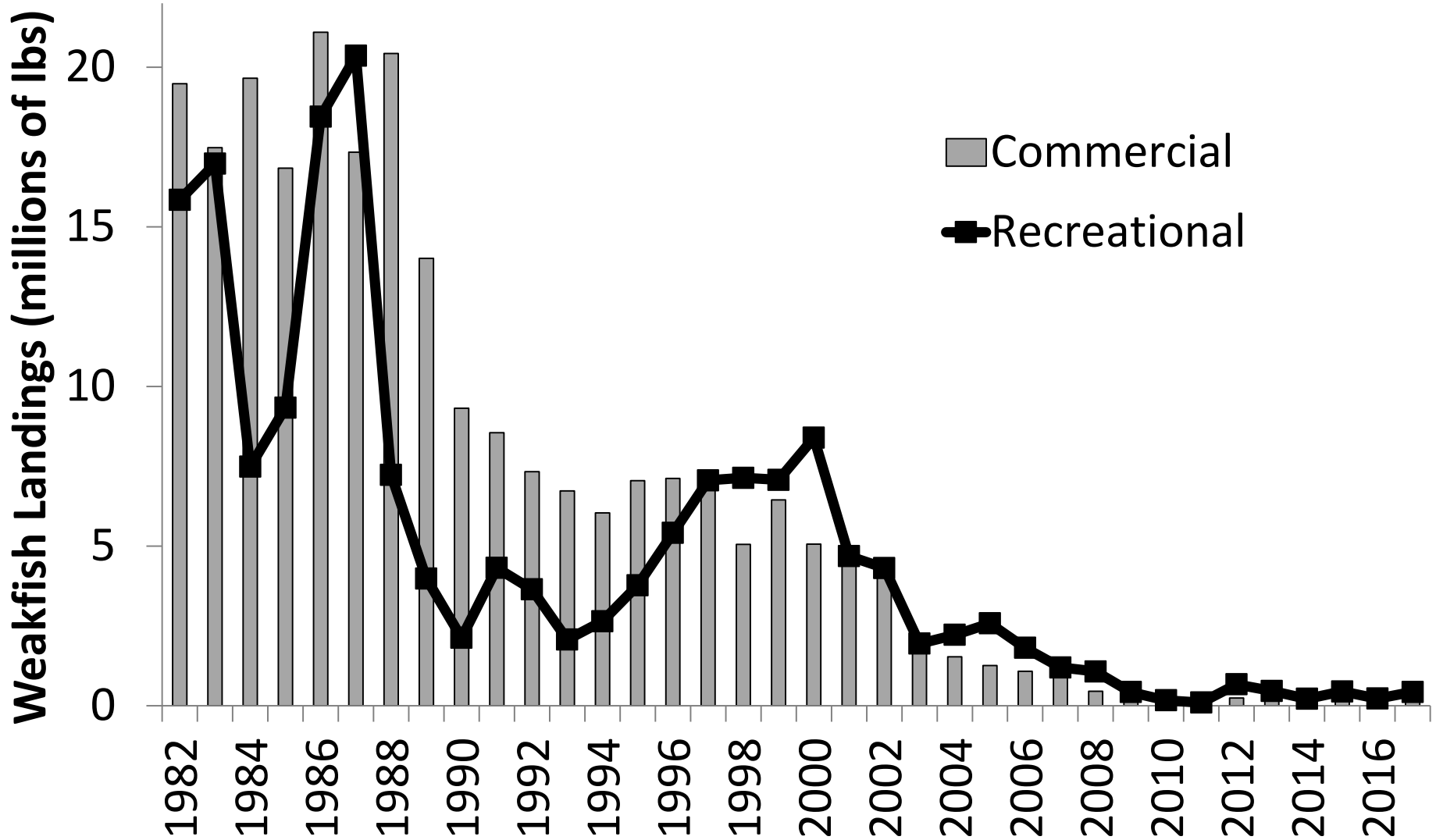


Weakfish Management Board
October, 2018

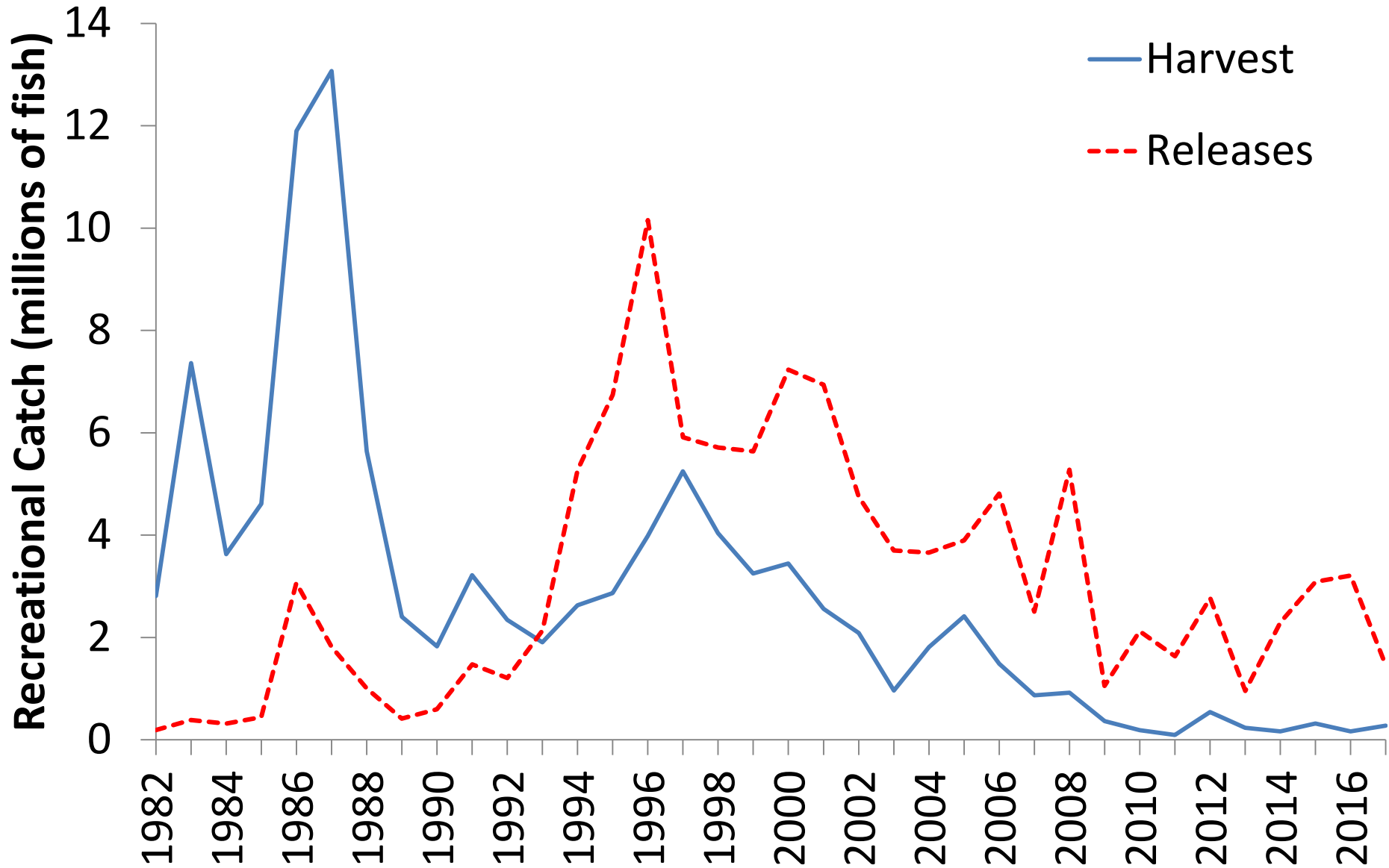
Status of the Fishery



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Biological Sampling



	Samples Required		Samples Completed		Fisheries Sampled
	Ages	Lengths	Ages	Lengths	
MA*	0	0	0	0	NA
RI	16	33	68	248	commercial, RIDFW Trawl Survey
CT*	0	0	0	0	NA
NY	42	84	48	48	commercial (GN, TR, PN, H&L)
NJ	27	18	57	116	NJ Ocean Trawl Survey/ research surveys
DE	8	14	15	16	commercial (GN)
MD	2	2	27	27	commercial (PN)
PRFC	0	0	0	0	NA
VA	74	115	253	2,813	commercial (GN, PN, HS)
NC	156	217	359	1,248	commercial (SN, GN, PN, HS, TR, H&L), recreational
SC	12	0	107	727	fishery independent, recreational
GA*	0	0	0	0	NA
FL*	0	0	0	0	NA

* = *de minimis* state

Management Triggers



	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD
2013-2017	2,305	17,413	4,379	76,373	127,776	11,774	19,009
2017	5,283	17,243	3,956	48,693	231,100	3,719	6,686
% change	129%	-1%	-10%	-36%	81%	-68%	-65%

	PRFC	VA	NC	SC	GA	FL
2012-2016	11	64,212	181,073	51,636	12,503	1,535
2016	5	41,996	141,384	58,510	47,776	2,237
% change	-52%	-35%	-22%	13%	282%	46%

Status of Management



- Amendment 4 (2002)
 - Established biological reference points
 - States required to implement rec and com management measures to achieve F target
- Addendum I (2005)
 - Biological sampling program
- Addendum II (2007)
 - 6 fish bag limit and 150 lb bycatch allowance
 - Management triggers
- Addendum III (2007)
 - Modified BRD certification language
- Addendum IV (2009)
 - 1 fish bag limit, 100 lb trip limit, 100 lb bycatch limit, 100 undersized fish per trip allowance
 - SSB30% target and SSB20% threshold

Status of the Stock



- 2016 Stock Assessment
 - Stock is depleted
 - Overfishing is not occurring
 - F is stable and modest
 - M remains high
 - Low Z from 2011-2014 corresponds to small increase in SSB
- Next assessment: 2019 (update)

State Compliance



- All states are in compliance with Amendment 4 and Addendum I-IV
- *De Minimis*
 - 2 year average, combined rec and com, 1%
 - Requests: MA, CT, and FL
 - CT landings are 1.07% of coastwide total

Recommendations



Management

- The PRT recommends the Board approve the 2018 Weakfish FMP Review, state compliance reports, and de minimis status for MA, CT, and FL.
- The PRT recommends that the Board task the SAS with conducting an assessment in 2019 that updates reference points to reflect the MRIP transition to the mail-based, Fishing Effort Survey.
- Maintain sampling requirements derived by CHTS recreational estimates until a new assessment is completed.

Questions or Comments?

