

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

October 30, 2019

2:45 – 5:45 p.m.

New Castle, New Hampshire

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.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*M. Armstrong*) 2:45 p.m.
2. Board Consent 2:45 p.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Proceedings from August 2019
3. Public Comment 2:50 p.m.
4. Addendum VI for Final Approval **Final Action** 3:00 p.m.
 - Review Options and Public Comment Summary (*M. Appelman*)
 - Review Advisory Panel Report (*M. Appelman*)
 - Review Law Enforcement Committee Report (*K. Blanchard*)
 - Consider Final Approval of Addendum VI
5. Review Criteria for Development of Conservation Equivalency Proposals (*K. Drew*) 5:30 p.m.
6. Other Business/Adjourn 5:45 p.m.

The meeting will be held at Wentworth by the Sea, 588 Wentworth Road, New Castle, NH; 603.422.7322

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

MEETING OVERVIEW
Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Meeting

October 30, 2019

2:45 – 5:45 p.m.

New Castle, New Hampshire

Chair: Mike Armstrong (MA) Assumed Chairmanship: 02/18	Technical Committee Chair: Nicole Lengyel (RI)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Kurt Blanchard (RI)
Vice Chair: David Borden (RI)	Advisory Panel Chair: Louis Bassano (NJ)	Previous Board Meeting: August 8, 2019
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 2019

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. Addendum VI for Final Approval (3:00 – 5:30 p.m.) Final Action

Background

- The Board initiated Draft Addendum VI in April 2019 in response to the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment which found the Atlantic striped bass stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing.
- Draft Addendum VI proposes changes to commercial and recreational measures to reduce fishing mortality to the target level in 2020, and the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait to reduce release mortality in recreational fisheries
- The Board approved Draft Addendum VI for public comment in August. Public hearings were held in ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, PRFC, DC, VA, and NC.
- The Public Comment Summary Report will be provided in **Supplemental Materials**
- The Law Enforcement Committee met September 20 and the Advisory Panel meets October 16 to provide recommendations on Draft Addendum VI. Both reports will be available in **Supplemental Materials**

Presentations

- Review of options and public comment summary by M. Appelman
- Review Advisory Panel report by M. Appelman
- Review Law Enforcement Report by K. Blanchard

Board Actions for Consideration

- Consider final approval of Addendum VI

5. Review Criteria for Development of Conservation Equivalency Proposals (5:30 – 5:45 p.m.)

Background

- Draft Addendum VI proposes to maintain flexibility for states to pursue alternative regulations through conservation equivalency.
- The Technical Committee met October 10 to develop criteria for the development of conservation equivalency proposals **Supplemental Materials**.

Presentations

- Review Technical Committee Report by K. Drew

6. Other Business/Adjourn

Atlantic Striped Bass

Activity level: High

Committee Overlap Score: Medium (TC/SAS/TSC/PDT overlaps with ERP, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, horseshoe crab, shad/river herring)

Committee Task List

- PDT – facilitates the adaptive management process by preparing and developing plan addendum or amendment
- SAS/TC – various taskings relating to management response to 2018 benchmark and to review submitted conservation equivalency proposals
- TC – June 15th: Annual compliance reports due

TC Members: Nicole Lengyel (RI, TC Chair), Kevin Sullivan (NH, Vice Chair), Alex Aspinwall (VA), Alexei Sharov (MD), Carol Hoffman (NY), Charlton Godwin (NC), Ellen Cosby (PRFC), Gail Wippelhauser (ME), Gary Nelson (MA), Brendan Harrison (NJ), Jason Boucher (DE), Jeremy McCargo (NC), Kurt Gottschall (CT), Luke Lyon (DC), Peter Schuhmann (UNCW), Gary Shepherd (NMFS), Steve Minkinen (USFWS), Bryan Chikotas (PA), Katie Drew (ASMFC), Max Appelman (ASMFC)

SAS Members: Mike Celestino (NJ, SAS Chair), Nicole Lengyel (RI, TC Chair), Alexei Sharov (MD), Gary Nelson (MA), Gary Shepherd (NMFS), John Sweka (USFWS), Justin Davis (CT), Hank Liao (ODU), Katie Drew (ASMFC), Max Appelman (ASMFC)

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

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
August 8, 2019**

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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Other Business/Adjourn.....45

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INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda** by Consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of April 2019** by Consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to adopt Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment** (Page 25). Motion by David Borden; second by Ritchie White. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to include an option under Section 2.2.6 that conservation equivalency will not be permitted while the Atlantic Striped Bass stock is overfished or experiencing overfishing (Page 26). Motion by Dennis Abbott; second by John McMurray. Motion fails (Page 31).

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to add two suboptions under section 3.1.2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30" minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections (Page 31). Motion by Emerson Hasbrouck; second by Chris Batsavage. Motion passes (Page 33).

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to remove from the Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal (Page 38). Motion by Jim Gilmore; second by Megan Ware. Motion carried (Page 38).

4. **Main Motion as Amended**
Move to add two-suboptions under section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30" minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different section; remove from Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal; and adopt Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment as modified today. Motion carried (Page 42).
5. **Main Motion from May 2019**
Move to initiate an Amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan to address the needed consideration for change on the issue of fishery goals and objectives, empirical/biological/spatial reference points, management triggers, rebuilding biomass, and area-specific management. Work on this amendment will begin upon the completion of the previously discussed addendum to the management plan.

Move to Amend from May 2019: Move to amend to add reallocation of commercial quota between states.
6. **Move to postpone to the Spring Meeting 2020** (Page 43). Motion by Mike Luisi; second by Marty Gary. Motion carried (Page 44).
7. **Motion to adjourn** by consent (Page 45).

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ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)
Sen. David Miramant, ME (LA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)
G. Ritchie White, NH (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)
Mike Armstrong, MA, proxy for D. Pierce (AA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)
Justin Davis, CT (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)
Sen. Craig Miner, CT (LA)
Jim Gilmore, NY (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
John McMurray, NY, proxy for Sen. Kaminsky (LA)
Heather Corbett, NJ, proxy for J. Cimino (AA)
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)

Russ Allen, NJ, Governor Appointee proxy
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Andrzejczak (LA)
Andy Shiels, PA, proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)
Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Stewart Michels, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Mike Luisi, MD, Administrative proxy (AA)
Russell Dize, MD (GA)
Phil Langley, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)
Bryan Plumlee, VA (GA)
Sen. Monty Mason, VA (LA)
Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for S. Murphey (AA)
Mike Blanton, NC, proxy for Rep. Steinberg (LA)
Martin Gary, PRFC
Derek Orner, NMFS
Bryan King, DC

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

Ex-Officio Members

Staff

Robert Beal
Toni Kerns
Max Appelman

Lisa Havel
Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Katie Drew

Guests

Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)
Josey Cline, ASA
Genevieve Croker, Delmarva Fisheries
Tony DiLernia, MAFMC
Joan Dize, Tilghman, MD
Russell Dunn, NOAA
Pete Himchak, Omega Protein
Arnold Leo, E. Hampton, NY
Chip Lynch, NOAA
Julia Mason, Ofc. of Sen. Markey, DC
Meredith Mendelson, ME DMR
Mike Millard, US FWS

Chris Moore, CBF
R. Newberry, Delmarva Fisheries
Patrick Paquette, MSBA
Kelly Place, Williamsburg, VA
Claire Richer, Ofc. of Sen. Markey, DC
Tim Sartwell, NOAA
Dave Sikorsky, CCA MD
Mike Simpkin, NMFS
Tom Sminkey, NOAA
Jack Travelstead, CCA
Mike Waine, ASA
Charles Witek, W. Babylon, NY

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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; Thursday, August 8, 2019, and was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Michael Armstrong.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL ARMSTRONG: Good morning everyone. I would like to call to order the Striped Bass Board. I'm Mike Armstrong, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, your Chair. I think we'll have a busy meeting, so we'll try and stay on track. Remember at the end point what we hope to achieve is to sign off on sending the Addendum for public hearing. That is the goal of this meeting, so we'll try and move forward with that as best we can.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: You all have an agenda, are there any additions, replacements, substitutions needed for the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: You have the proceedings from April of 2019, any amendments, additions to the proceedings? Seeing none, the proceedings are approved by consensus.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: At this point we'll accept public comment, again on issues that are not on the agenda today. Anything that has to do with the Addendum and the items within the Addendum will be out of order for public comments. I hope folks understand that when they come up. I have three people signed up. First is Charles Witek.

CHARLES A. WITEK III: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as you know that my name is Charles

Witek, recreational fisherman from West Babylon, New York. I've been a participant in the striped bass fishery since the mid-1960s. I've seen the good times and the bad times, and given that you'll be dealing with this topic for the next few months, and maybe the next few years if you move forward with the Amendment.

I thought I would just mention a few topics I would like you to think about in those times when you address the management issues. The most important one of those is that whatever you do, your management issues should match the actual use of the fishery. You know we have a striped bass fishery. We have a very well managed commercial fishery.

That's fine, but the commercial fishery only makes up a very small part of the harvest. Even if 2017 caught the recreational fishery at its extreme large size compared to the commercials, the fact remains this is primarily a recreational fishery, and more than that it is primarily a private boat and surf recreational fishery. From 2014 to 2019 there were about 87 million trips directed at striped bass, 86 million of those trips were from the two sectors I mentioned, and those sectors tend to release their fish. When you manage this fishery, you know we've heard a lot of conversations over the last few months that are we harvesting enough fish, should the regulations allow greater harvest if there was a new Amendment, a new Addendum? But harvest isn't how you manage a recreational release fishery. You manage that for abundance. You rebuild the stock to target.

You do it within the terms of the management plan, because recreational fishermen are seeking encounters, and harvest is only secondary. That is something you always need to remember that pounds on the dock matter far less than fish in the ocean, when you manage a recreational fishery.

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The other thing that I would note, and I'm keeping these comments as short as I can, is that I have heard talk about initiating a new amendment that could, depending on what you decide, reduce the biomass target, which would lead to an attenuation of the size structure of the spawning stock. You would lose older fish, and it would increase the chance of a stock collapse, particularly at the low levels we're facing today. Now, I fished through a stock collapse. I don't think that is anything we want to see again.

We can avert it very easily where we are now. But I would just like to remind everyone here on the Board that while you may think of yourselves as representatives to the state, as you may think of yourselves as representatives of a sector. More than anything else, you're stewards of a public trust resource, and it's your duty as you sit here to manage that resource in a way that restores abundance to the population, and assure us that a stock collapse will not happen again.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Robert T. Brown.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN: Robert T. Brown, President of the Maryland Watermen's Association. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk. I want to talk a little bit about the history about what has happened with our rock fishery. But I'm not going to go into the past as much as I have done many times before, as you've already heard it.

You know we had an open fishery, no limits, you know wide open fishery. Since 1982, when we opened up this rock fish fishery, we've made some hard choices in here. It's been all good for the fish. When it's good for the fishermen, it's good for the fish also. One of the things we have is a few years ago we had a 25 percent reduction for the ocean, and trophy season in the Bay, and a 20.5 reduction on the Chesapeake Bay fishery itself.

This was hard for us, but however we made some assumptions, the Watermen did on this. Well you know, we'll have this for three years, and possibly our quota will come back. We'll get some of it back. Well, we made a wrong assumption. In fisheries management there are so many assumptions into it that sometimes things don't come out exactly like you want them to.

I just want to say that our stocks in our rivers are very good. I was glad to hear the discussion yesterday, when they talked about depletion, because the word depletion has been used a whole lot in this rockfish here lately of the spawning stock. It's not depleted. It's far, far from where it was in 1982. In 1982, I don't know how low it was but it was the lowest that was ever recorded. Our stocks are still in good shape. As to the reason why they have gone down a little bit, I don't think it's because of harvest. If you go back and look at your young-of-the-year class back from like 2008 up to about 2013/2014, we had some bad years of recruitment.

However, back in 2014, the young-of-the-year class was 11. In 2015, it was 24.2. In 2016, it was a bad year that year, it was 2.2. It wasn't because we didn't have spawning stock in there. Mother Nature plays a big control in everything that happens out there. Maybe the water was not fresh enough up far enough, maybe it was too much salt, and maybe it wasn't enough plankton in there for the fish to survive on.

In 2017, we were at 13.2, and in 2018, it was 14.8. These were all, makes our average above the average year class. As long as we have these young fish coming along, we're heading in the right direction. One of the reasons is because some of the hard decisions that you all have made here in the past. I want to thank you for that.

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I didn't agree with all of them, because it hurt. But sometimes when you leave the room and nobody's happy that is when you're the closest to being right. As far as it goes, I heard the gentlemen ahead of me talking about our fishery collapsing. We are so far from that it's not even recognizable.

I just want to say that the Maryland Watermen's Association wants our fishery to remain the same as it is. We only catch a small portion of the fish, I think it's 8 percent of the fish we harvested, and we had a 2 percent death rate. We are well within our compliance, and we are opposed to anything that would change that at this time. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ross Squire.

MR. ROSS SQUIRE: Good morning, my name is Ross Squire and I'm the President of the New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing. I'm also the founder of the 132 Pledge on Facebook, which has about 2,300 conservation minded anglers as members. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

My comments today are more about the frustrations and the disappointments and the loss of confidence that many in the recreational sector feel, in how you manage this very important resource. Amendment 4 failed to achieve its intended goal, and I believe that much of this failure was predictable, preventable, and largely self-inflicted.

My hope is that my comments will lead to changes in how you manage striped bass, and how you live up to the charter of ASMFC. Addendum IV had two primary goals, rebuild the fishery and protect the 2011 year class. Since 2015, the great majority of the ocean states have significantly under harvested striped bass, which makes us wonder whether the fishery was actually in worse shape than we originally thought.

As has been well chronicled, and no matter how some might attempt to sugar coat it, Maryland contributed nothing in the way of harvest reductions. Based on MRIP estimates, Maryland killed close to 2.5 million more striped bass than were indicated in Addendum IV. A significant number of these were part of the 2011 year class. Digging deeper finds the true problem. The conservation equivalency proposal presented by Maryland was analyzed and approved by the Technical Committee. The problem is that the impact of the CE proposal on a 2011 year class, the fourth largest since 1954, was not considered. It makes many of us question how scientists from states up and down the coast could not factor in the impact on the very year class that Amendment 4 was intended to protect. That was error number one.

The second critical error was a lack of any action when deficiencies in the Maryland analysis came to light. The stock assessment updates conducted clearly showed that Maryland was overharvesting, and that the 2011 year class was being hammered. This Board took no action. Right then and there Addendum IV was doomed.

We are where we are today in large part due to these two errors. These are not insurmountable, and I offer the following. The first, any conservation equivalency proposal and analysis must take into account its impact on every year class, especially around key spawning areas. Second, addendum goals and objectives should be managed actively, and continuously measured, and if interim actions are required to meet the goals, they must be taken.

This is Management 101. Third, the standard of 50 percent probability of success for addendum options just seems inadequate. This fishery is too important to the recreational and economic impacts of everyone up and down the coast.

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Finally, states should not be rewarded for not meeting their harvest reductions.

For any state grossly not meeting their harvest reductions, subsequent harvest reductions should be based on the quota that they originally had, not on their overage. It just defies logic. The success story that's been told about modern fisheries management and the rebuilding of the striped bass fishery can no longer be told the same way.

It has to now include the fact that it was rebuilt, and then managed in a way that had the fishery become severely depleted. Under your management we're not overfished, and overfishing is occurring. I speak for many in the recreational sector when I say that we truly hope that lessons have been learned, and that we can once again tell a story of how the Commission effectively restored the striped bass fishery to the benefit of all the constituencies. I appreciate your time.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you that concludes our public comments.

CONSIDER DRAFT ADDENDUM VI FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Moving to Item 4; considering Draft Addendum VI to send for public comment. Max.

MR. MAX APPELMAN: I will run through Draft Addendum VI. I want to first acknowledge the Plan Development Team for their time and effort over the last few months, a pretty quick turnaround, and I think they put together a really good document for you all to consider today. The second thing I want to do is just make sure we all are on the same level, regarding what happened to Draft Addendum V. We're working on Number 6 here.

Where is Addendum V? Recall back in 2017 there was a series of events that essentially led to the Board initiating an addendum. That was Draft Addendum V. It was developed; it was

brought back to the Board for review. It ended up not going out for public comment, but nonetheless it exists on the record. There is Draft Addendum V for public comment in meeting materials, and so the count continues and we are now on Draft Addendum VI. Here is a little quick review of the Addendum timeline. Again today, the Board will consider approving Addendum VI for public comment. If approved there will be a pretty quick turnaround to get this out to the public, when public hearings will be held August through September.

In October at annual meeting the Board will review public comment, and select final measures, and then the intended implementation schedule so far has been for January of 2020. Here is an outline of the Addendum, and I will walk through each of these sections. There is a lot of important background information that I'm going to get through, so please bear with me, and we'll start with statement of the problem.

Back in May the Board reviewed the results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which indicated the stock is overfished and is experiencing overfishing. By accepting that benchmark for management use, the reference point triggers in Amendment 6 relating to fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass reference points are tripped.

Therefore, the Board initiated Draft Addendum VI to address overfishing status. However, there has been discussion already regarding rebuilding the biomass, a tabled motion that will be brought back to the table after this agenda item. Those discussions have already commenced. Also at the May meeting there was a lot of discussion around the high proportion of removals attributed to recreational releases, release mortality, and therefore the section also highlights that issue as well. You'll see that recurring throughout the presentation.

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This section reviews the status of the stock; again the latest assessment is the 2018 benchmark. It shows that the stock is overfished and overfishing relative to the current reference points, which are based on the 1995 estimate of female spawning stock biomass. The 1995 value is used as the threshold, because many favorable stock conditions were reached by that year.

It was also the year that the stock was declared rebuilt. SSB target is set at 125 percent of that. I wanted to note the impact of the new MRIP removals estimates on spawning stock biomass. The new estimates are roughly two to three times higher than the estimates used in previous stock assessments, and resulted in higher estimates of female SSB, and therefore higher estimates for our reference points.

That makes it very difficult to compare the results of the 2018 benchmark to past assessments. The F reference points are designed to achieve the respected SSB reference points in the long term, and you can see the values on the right hand side of the table. This is Figure 1 from the draft Addendum, showing female SSB in recruitment time series. The bars are the recruitment estimates and that corresponds to the right hand axis in millions of fish, and then on the left hand axis you have the female spawning stock biomass in thousands of metric tons.

The solid line is the threshold, and the dash line is the target. The takeaway here is that SSB reached its peak around 2003, and has been declining since then. SSB has been below the threshold level since about 2013. Regarding recruitment, there have been periods of low and high recruitment throughout the time series. From the period of 2005 to about 2011, this was a period of lower recruitment, which certainly contributed to the decline in SSB that the stock has experienced in recent years. Of note are the high estimates in 2012, 2015, and 2016. Those corresponding, as they are

estimates of Age 1 fish, they are corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes. I'll try to be clear about that as I go through this presentation; try not to interchange between recruitment values and years classes. It can be a little confusing, but I'll do my best. Also note though that those strong year classes were sort of sandwiched by less strong or low recruitment estimates.

This is Figure 2 from the draft Addendum showing your fishing mortality time series. The takeaway here is that F rate has been above the threshold for a number of years, 13 of the last 15 years, and in 2017 you can see above the threshold. This section highlights more recent history of the FMP, namely that the fisheries managed under Amendment 6, and its addenda, the most recent being Addendum IV, which currently sets the regulatory program for striped bass.

That addendum was initiated in response to the 2013 benchmark, which did not find the stock to be overfished or overfishing. However, fishing mortality was above target for a number of years, and spawning stock biomass was similarly below target, and that also tripped management action. As part of that addendum new F reference points were established, the ones that I just went over a few slides ago that link to the SSB reference points.

It also implemented a suite of measures aimed to reduce F to that new target. As a reminder, federal waters remain closed to striped bass fishing. NOAA Fisheries has been directed to review this federal moratorium in consultation with the Commission, although I don't have any updates there as of late.

This section is pretty straightforward reviewing the status of the fishery, the relative contributions of the different sectors to total removals and the magnitude of those estimates. Just to orient to the figure, this is in

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millions of fish. At the bottom in the blue, it looks blue up there, it is commercial harvest.

The next color above that is commercial discards. The green is recreational harvest, and then the top color is recreational release mortality. As you can see, the current fishery is predominantly recreational. In 2017, total striped bass removal, so that being commercial and recreational harvest plus discards and release mortality for both sectors were estimated at 7.1 million fish, 90 percent of which was attributed to the recreational sector. In 2018, total removals came down to 5.8 million fish, but still 88 percent of that is attributed to the recreational sector.

Side barring now, looking at the commercial sector in particular. The fishery is managed via a quota system, which has resulted in relatively stable landings since 2004, which is the year when Amendment 6 was fully implemented. From 2004 to 2014, landings harvest averaged 6.8 million pounds, roughly 1 million fish during that time.

That has come down to 4.8 million pounds, roughly 600,000 fish, following the implementation of Addendum IV and those harvest reductions. Majority of the harvest does come from Chesapeake Bay. Roughly 60 percent by weight or 80 percent in numbers of fish, indicating that more, smaller fish are coming from the Bay, as opposed to the ocean fishery where fewer, larger fish tend to be caught there. Commercial dead discards account for 2 percent of total removals that being commercial and recreational combined. But as a proportion of commercial removals only it's about 13 percent. A few extra notes regarding the commercial sector, unlike the Chesapeake Bay commercial fishery, the ocean commercial fishery regularly underutilizes its quota. This is mainly attributed to gamefish status in several states. Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New Jersey don't

have commercial fisheries, although they do hold about 10 percent of the ocean quota.

Additionally, striped bass have not been available off the coast of North Carolina. In recent years there has been no reported ocean harvest of striped bass off North Carolina, which also holds about 12 percent of the ocean quota. About 22 percent of the ocean quota is underutilized every year.

Shifting gears now, focusing on the recreational sector. Unlike the commercial sector, which is managed through a quota system, the recreational management program does not have a harvest limits. Instead it's managed through bag limits and size limits, which has allowed recreational effort and therefore removals to change or fluctuate from year to year, with resource availability and other social and economic factors.

From 2004 to 2014 under Amendment 6, harvest averaged 4.6 million fish, and that has dropped to 2.9 million fish on average under the provisions of Addendum IV and those harvest reductions. Similarly, a large proportion of harvest does come from Chesapeake Bay; roughly 33 percent annually under Amendment 6, and then that has since increased since 2015 to about 45 percent annually, reflecting some of those strong year classes pulsing through the fisheries.

It's been mentioned already, but recreational dead releases make up a large portion of total removals, because most of the catch is released. Roughly 90 percent of annual recreational catch is released alive, and that's what this figure is trying to show. The bars are total catch in millions of fish, and then the red line across the top that is the proportion of that catch that is released alive, and you can see it's relatively high across the entire time series.

In 2017, 38 million striped bass were released alive, resulting in an estimated 3.4 million dead

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releases; and that's based on an assumption in the assessment where 9 percent of our releases are assumed to die as a result of being caught, so 3.4 million dead releases in 2017 that equated to roughly 48 percent of our total striped bass removals that year. In 2018, an estimated 49 percent of total removals were attributed to dead releases that estimate being 2.8 million fish.

This section is sort of lessons learned from Addendum IV; it's a performance review essentially of that Addendum, what happened after it was implemented. Just a quick refresher, the Addendum implemented harvest reductions again to bring fishing mortality down to that new target, and essentially states were required to achieve a 25 percent reduction from 2013 removals in the ocean fishery, and Chesapeake Bay fisheries implemented regulations to achieve a 20.5 percent reduction from 2012 levels.

The reductions came in the form of reduced quotas for the commercial sector, and changes in bag limits and minimum sizes for the recreational sector. Those new measures went into place prior to the 2015 fishing season. In 2016, following the first full year of measures under Addendum IV, the Plan Review Team compared the actual removals estimates in 2015 to those predicted during the development of Addendum IV to evaluate whether the reductions needed to bring that back down to the target had been achieved. Those results indicated that the observed reduction in 2015 was very close to what was predicted on a coastwide level.

Similarly, the commercial reduction was very close to what was predicted. However, the recreational reduction in the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries diverged significantly from the predicted values. It was later determined that changes in effort, changes in the size and the age structure, and the distribution of the 2011 year class were the

most significant variables contributing to that difference observed between the observed harvest and the predicted values during the development of Addendum IV.

At the time of this analysis the 2011 year class was the largest recruitment event since the early 2000s, and those fish first become available to the inland fisheries, including Chesapeake Bay. It made sense that the 2015, the harvest estimates went up in the Bay, and the harvest estimates sort of came down along the ocean, canceling out. Therefore you met that reduction on a coastwide level.

But as those fish continued to grow, they migrate out to the ocean, they become increasingly available to the ocean fisheries, and that led to significant increases in removals in both regions in 2016 and 2017 under the same management program. Roughly an 18 percent increase relative in 2016, and then in 2017 it was a 15 percent increase relative to 2015.

Also of note is that a decrease in effort in 2018 resulted in an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017, again under the same management measures. This is the challenge of predicting removals under different management scenarios, particularly for the recreational fishery when changes in effort, angler behavior, and the availability of strong year classes can have such a large effect on catch and on harvest.

Also, this was the time when the Board explored an addendum that would relax striped bass regulations across the coast, based on information coming from the 2016 assessment update which showed F was below target in 2015, indicating some room to increase removals. Again at that time preliminary estimates from 2016 came out, and with that information the Board did not move forward with the Addendum.

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This section is highlighting the socio-economic impacts that should be considered when pursuing changes in management. The take-home is that commercial and recreational sectors will be impacted differently because of their different contributions to the local economy. Generally speaking, the harvest reductions are likely to have a short term negative impact on the economy, on angler welfare.

However, positive long term impacts stemming from stock recovery and increases in catch down the road, will likely outweigh those short term impacts. The next section in the draft Addendum highlights management program equivalency, which has been commonly referred to as conservation equivalency or CE. This allows states to develop alternative measures that address unique or very specific state or regional differences, while still achieving the same level of conservation for the resource. Several states do currently use conservation equivalency for striped bass; an example is to propose closed seasons, to have lower minimum sizes, or perhaps an increased bag limit. Under Amendment 6, a state may pursue conservation equivalency for any mandatory compliance measure. There are a few restrictions in Amendment 6, and this draft Addendum does maintain that flexibility.

If this document were to be approved for public comment, the TC will develop criteria for conservation equivalency during the public comment period, and would be a quick turnaround to get that information back out to the states so they can have that when considering the development of a CE proposal.

Keep in mind that the Commission also has a Conservation Equivalency Technical Guidance Document, and please consult that document if pursuing conservation equivalency down the road. I just went through all the background information there, and we can start moving into the proposed management options, which

include the recreational and commercial fishery measures, as well as the circle hook provision, and then continuing to wrap up with compliance schedule.

The first things to review are the harvest projections. The Development Team used the same forward projecting methodology that was used in the 2018 benchmark, in order to estimate the level of removals; that being total removals, commercial and recreational, plus dead discards from both sectors. When I referred to removals that's what I'm referring to.

To estimate the removals needed to achieve F target in 2020 with a 50 percent probability that being guidance given by the Board, and to identify the percent reduction from 2017 levels, again that being guidance from the Board, the 2017 is our reference year in these calculations. The results indicate that an 18 percent reduction from 2017 is needed to achieve F target in 2020. Recall back in May seeing that number was a 17 percent reduction. That was based on preliminary removals estimates.

These calculations are based on final removals estimates. That number changed slightly. Additionally, the Development Team used an average removal from 2016 to 2018 as a proxy for removals in 2019, and sort of in an effort to account for that interannual variability that we've seen over the last few years.

Now, while this Addendum is strictly designed to address overfishing in the short term, the projections do indicate that additional reductions may be needed, in order to achieve the female spawning stock biomass target in ten years, which is prescribed under the Amendment 6 management triggers.

Okay, so the Development Team is putting forward three different scenarios per the guidance of the Board, three different options. Option 1 is status quo. Option 2 is a suite of

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options where the desired reductions are applied equally or proportionally to the two sectors, based on 2017 levels.

The third option is a suite of measures where the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector, and the PDT believes that this concept sort of reflects the Board's discussion in May, and the intent of the motion that was passed by the Board. These scenarios are mutually exclusive, meaning that under each scenario or option there are suboptions for each fishery and region, so commercial option for the Chesapeake Bay and ocean fisheries, as well as recreational options for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay.

Keep in mind throughout all of this that there are no proposed changes to North Carolina's FMP for the Albemarle Roanoke Fisheries. There are also no changes to the commercial size limits proposed or to the quota transfer provision, which transfers are currently not permitted in the FMP. Okay so working through this Decision Tree.

Under Option 1, status quo there essentially would be no change in management. Striped bass fisheries would continue to be operating under the provisions of Addendum IV, which keep in mind is not designed to achieve an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017 levels. By selecting Option 2, now the desired percent reduction is applied equally to both the commercial and recreational sectors, so both sectors would take an 18 percent reduction from 2017 levels.

The commercial quota under this option is reduced by 18 percent, and there are suboptions for the ocean recreational fishery, and suboptions for the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery, which I'll move into in a few slides here. First with the commercial quota, this is for the ocean. We have the

Addendum IV quota for reference in the first column.

We have 2017, the harvest also for reference in the second column there, and then the option is on the right hand side, and again it is an 18 percent reduction to the Addendum IV quotas. A couple notes here. One is that some states have reduced quotas through conservation equivalency under Addendum IV, and these calculations are based on that already reduced quota.

In the case of Rhode Island, New Jersey and Maryland, they would not have to resubmit conservation equivalency to maintain those programs. That has already been built into this. Again, it is assumed that the commercial size limits would remain the same as they were in 2017. The important assumption here, the caveat is that an 18 percent reduction in quota can achieve an 18 percent reduction in total removals, if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017.

You can see even those states with commercial fisheries not fully utilizing their quota in 2017. However, if they were to fully utilize their quotas in 2020, if fish suddenly appeared off of North Carolina, and they report harvest in 2020, or if some of these states without commercial fisheries start having a commercial fishery that percent reduction would be lower. The expected reduction could be less than 18 percent. I also want to note that the PDT did explore applying the reductions based on the numbers of fish harvested.

But again, because the ocean fishery underutilizes its quota, and because the Bay fishery harvests more fish than the ocean, it actually would change the allocation of the quota within states and between regions, and for that reason the PDT chose to apply the reductions to the quota, as was done with Addendum IV, and in this way every state takes an equal cut. Moving to the Chesapeake Bay

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commercial quota, again the same comments and caveats apply here. The commercial size limits would remain unchanged; an 18 percent reduction in quota can achieve an 18 percent reduction in total commercial removals, with the assumption that fisheries will perform the same as they did in 2017, which I will add it is a reasonable assumption. The PDT feels that it's a reasonable assumption. Looking back over the last few years the active fisheries have utilized the same relative amount of its quota, so it appears to be a reasonable assumption.

Of note here, so in Addendum IV, the Bay-wide quota is what is specified. However, I'm showing jurisdiction-specific quotas, which aren't specified in the Addendum. This is based on the allocation for the agreement that seems to be in place in Chesapeake Bay. Assuming that that remains the same, this is what the Bay quotas would look like under Option 2. Okay I'm going to move into the recreational fishery suboptions.

First a few points to make. One is that these calculations used MRIP data, taking that data at face value. To characterize the catch in 2020, the PDT used 2016 and 2017 data, pooled those two years together, and that was an attempt to account for year class strength. If we think about the strong 2014 and 2015 year classes, they'll be five and six years old in 2020.

Similarly, in 2016 and 2017, the 2011 year class was five and six years old. We felt that that was a reasonable proxy for characterizing the catch in 2020. Also of note, we made an assumption about compliance in 2020. In Addendum IV, the assumption was 100 percent compliance, but here we're assuming the same level of noncompliance that occurred in the reference years would occur in 2020.

More specifically that the proportion of harvest of undersized fish in those reference years would also occur in 2020 that being sublegal fish that were harvested illegally or sublegal fish

that were harvested legally through existing conservation equivalency programs. That will come up again in my presentation.

Okay, so first with the ocean suboptions under Option 2. The idea here is that the slate would be wiped clean, and all states would implement the selected suboption in its ocean fishery, with a few exceptions that I'll cover in the next slide. All of these suboptions on the screen propose a 1-fish bag limit and maintain the same seasons, the same trophy fish seasons and regulations that were in place in 2017.

The first suboption is a 35-inch minimum size, which gets you an 18 percent reduction relative to 2017. The second suboption is a 28-inch to 34-inch slot limit. That is sort of tied to guidance given by the Board looking for a slot limit where the lower bound is 28 inches, and essentially what does that upper bound look like.

Here to achieve at least an 18 percent reduction, the slot is 28 to 34 inches, and then the last option in this table is a slot of 32 to 40 inches, again based on Board guidance, wanting to see what an upper bound of 40 inches got you. That is a lower bound of 32 inches, roughly a 21 percent reduction from 2017 levels.

Of note, under the third option here, trophy fisheries that are occurring in the ocean under this option would be capped at a 40-inch minimum size that being the upper bound of the slot limit. That would put an upper bound on the trophy fishery as well, so I believe Virginia has an ocean trophy fish season, and so that regulation would change to 36 to 40 inch slot under that third suboption.

As I mentioned on the last slide, there are a few exceptions to these suboptions. The first one being that Delaware could maintain the 2-fish bag limit at 20 to 25 inch slot during the summer Delaware Bay fishery. The reason for that is that the harvest, those fish are

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accounted for in the calculations that have been done.

This is based on that noncompliance assumption, where undersized fish, so in the case of the ocean fishery, fish below 28 inches that were harvested in the reference years. That would continue to occur, and it's very difficult to tease out which ones were harvested illegally or legally through a conservation equivalency program like this.

For that reason Delaware could roll that those measures under into these suboptions, although that is the purview of the Board to decide if that would be permitted. Additionally, Connecticut and New Jersey, which I neglected to mention that they allocate their commercial quota, because they do not have commercial fisheries to the recreational sector, and they've implemented these bonus programs through conservation equivalency.

Those bonus program regulations are also lower minimum sizes than the current 28 inches. They would also be carried over into these suboptions, although depending on which commercial quota option is selected, the number of tickets or permits or vouches, or however those programs work. Those would have to be reduced to match whatever the new commercial quota was, or is.

Lastly, catch from Pennsylvania's waters, as well as the Hudson River, are not covered by MRIP. Since these calculations used MRIP data, New York would have to come forward with a proposal to achieve an 18 percent reduction for its Hudson River management program under all of these suboptions, and similarly Pennsylvania would have to come forward with a proposal to achieve those reductions in its state waters.

Moving to the Chesapeake Bay suboptions, again the same concept here, the idea is that the slate would be wiped clean, and all Bay

jurisdictions would implement the selected suboption. Suboptions 1 and 2 in this table maintain the same seasons and the same trophy fish season and regulations that were in place in 2017.

The first suboption reduces the bag limit to 1 fish, and also reduces the minimum size to 18 inches, which is sort of reflecting that historic minimum size that was in place prior to Addendum IV. The second suboption maintains a 2-fish bag limit, but increases the minimum size to 22 inches.

You can see the respective projected reductions under those options on the right. Suboptions B-3 and B-4 in this table propose 2-fish bag limits, and also maintain the same fishing seasons as 2017, but the trophy fish seasons would be eliminated under the suboptions, and states would have to come forward with CE proposals to reinstate those trophy fish seasons if they chose to do so. B-3 is an 18 inch to 23-inch slot, which gets you a 19 percent reduction, again reflecting that sort of historic minimum size limit, and then the last option is a 20 inch to 24 inch slot, also getting you a 19 inch reduction and reflecting more or less the minimum size that's in place right now. Okay, moving to the third scenario which is Option 3. Again here the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector. That is a 1.8 percent reduction, meaning that the recreational sector must take a 20 percent reduction in order to make up the difference.

Just so everyone understands where that 1.8 percent came from, we recall that in 2017, 10 percent of the total removals came from the commercial sector, so this 1.8 percent is 10 percent of the total percent reductions needed at being 18 percent, so it's the product of those two numbers.

Again, if the commercial sector is reduced by 1.8 percent then the commercial sector must be reduced by 20 percent, in order to achieve your

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overall 18 percent reduction in removals. Option 3 and Option 2 are sort of set up in the same way, and I'll go through each of those sector and region options.

Beginning again with the ocean commercial quota under Option 3, the same approach was taken here. Commercial size limits will remain the same. You have your Addendum IV quota up there for reference, your 2017 harvest there for reference, and the option for the commercial quota is there on the right hand side, again a 1.8 percent reduction relative to the Addendum IV quotas.

I'm not going to reiterate all the caveats that I did the first go around, but just remember that this option can achieve a 1.8 percent reduction total removal if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017. Moving to the Chesapeake Bay under Option 3, same comments and caveats again, you can see the respective quotas if the same allocation agreement is in place in 2020.

Moving through these a little quicker, having done it already under Option 2. Moving into the recreational fishery suboptions under Option 3, now the only major difference here again is that these are designed to achieve at least a 20 percent reduction, whereas under Option 2 they are designed to achieve at least an 18 percent reduction.

Again, the same concepts, the idea is that the slate would be wiped clean. All states would implement a selected suboption with the same exceptions for Delaware in Delaware Bay, Connecticut and New Jersey regarding its bonus fish programs, and New York for the Hudson, and Pennsylvania for its state waters.

Option 1 in this table, Suboption 1 is a 36-inch minimum. It's about a 1 inch increase relative to the 18 percent reduction option. Then you can see the two slot limit options, 28 inches to 33 inches. As the second suboption and third

suboption is 32 inches to 40, 32 to 40 inch slot. Also of note that you can sort of slide the slot limit around, and achieve more or less the same projected reduction.

The PDT moved forward with these, again based on Board guidance, wanting to see what a 28 lower bound looks like, what does a 40 inch upper bound look like. There could be a number of different slot limit suboptions in this table; it's really how many you want. For the Chesapeake Bay under the suboptions for Chesapeake Bay, under Option 3 there are a few more here. I'm going to walk through them. The first two suboptions maintain the same seasons and trophy fish season, and regulations that were in place in 2017, and drop the bag limit to 1fish. The first suboption maintains the same size limits that were in place last year. Maryland would maintain its 19 inch minimum size; PRFC, D.C. and Virginia would maintain a 20 inch minimum size.

This is projected to achieve a 29 percent reduction in removals. You can see by just lowering the bag limit the savings that you get from that. Of note the PDT did do these calculations based on 2017 measures, when all jurisdictions had a 20-inch minimum size, and that actually achieves a slightly higher reduction.

For the sake of this Addendum, we're just putting forward more or less status quo size limits and reducing the bag limit. Suboption 2 in this table is repetitive to what was seen under Option 2, and it's a 1-fish bag limit at 18 inch minimum size that gets you a 20 percent reduction. Suboptions B-3 through B-5 of this table maintain a 2-fish bag limit, also maintain the same seasons and trophy regulations that were in place in 2017, except under these options the trophy season could not start prior to May 1.

There are some open days in April, I believe, and in order to meet the desired reduction

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those days had to be cut from the analysis, in order to achieve the 20 percent reduction. Under these three options the trophy fish season would change to not be able to start before May 1, so 23 inch minimum is the third option. The fourth is an 18 to 22 inch slot, and the fifth is a 20 to 23 inch slot.

You can see the projected reductions on the right. Then the last suboption in this table maintains 2-fish bag limit and maintains the same seasons, the same trophy fish season as well, although it would put a cap on the trophy fish measures at 40 inch maximum size on those size limits. A couple notes before we move on to the next slide, the next options in the document.

It's important to keep in mind that these suboptions for the recreational fishery are designed to reduce harvest and overall removals. They are not necessarily designed to reduce or address effort and release mortality. Essentially the PDT had to make some assumptions regarding effort in 2020. These calculations assume that effort is constant, meaning that the same amount of trips encountering striped bass in the reference year, will occur in 2020.

By doing that the proposed measures actually are projected to increase releases. Essentially all the fish that were harvested between the current minimum size limit and the proposed minimum size limit, are now being thrown back and are adding to our pile of releases, and because of that releases go up.

Your release mortality goes up, and therefore larger reductions in harvest are required to offset that expected increase and releases, in order to achieve the overall reduction in total removals. In order to address both harvest and release mortality, additional effort controls should be considered to reduce the number of fishing trips that encounter striped bass. The closed seasons have been an effective tool to

reduce effort in some areas and seasons. However, the PDT did not develop closed seasons for this Addendum, primarily because the impacts are expected to have very different results, depending on the state and fishery. While closed seasons could be very effective in regions when striped bass is the only viable fishing choice, closed seasons may have little or no impact in fisheries that operate as catch and release, or in areas where other species are available for harvest.

Lastly, the last bullet here is in regards to slot limits. The PDT notes the conservation benefits of implementing slot limits that being protecting larger, older fish, may not be realized if effort is concentrated on fish within the slot, thus reducing the number of fish that may survive to grow out of the slot, and potentially reducing the population of larger, older fish over time.

Now we're moving into the circle hook provisions, there are just a few slides left. It's been mentioned several times that recreational release mortality does account for a considerable amount of removals in the striped bass fishery, and the use of circle hooks has been identified as a method to reduce discard mortality, release mortality in recreational fisheries.

This is what spurred the Board to request this Addendum consider options regarding the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait, to reduce discard mortality. The Commission does have a special report on circle hooks; Special Report Number 77 was developed in 2003 with a number of different bodies contributing to the development of that document.

In there the Commission defines circle hooks as a non-offset hook, where the point is pointed perpendicularly back towards the shank, and the term non-offset means that the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank. I stole

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this picture from Maryland, so thank you Maryland for the picture. I work better with visuals, and I hope it provides a good visual.

On the left you have a standard J hook, where the shank and the hook are parallel to each other. The circle hook is the second picture. You can see the barb is turned perpendicular to the shank, and then non-offset is the green checkmark where they are in the same plane, and then offset being not in the same plane, with the red X through it. It's my understanding that as I said, a number of different bodies weighed in on the development of this document, and the LEC was one of those.

Members from the LEC contributing believed that this definition would hold muster, would be enforceable if regulatory action was taken on circle hooks. A couple things to keep in mind, first is that factors other than hook type can certainly have an effect on release mortality rates. Water temperature, air temperature, those are big ones. Salinity, hook size, fish length, hooking location, and there are certainly others that are not listed here that could impact release mortality rate.

Additionally, it's unknown how many anglers are currently using circle hooks, so figuring out what that added benefit would be, or added savings would be if circle hooks were mandated would be difficult. Then of course enforceability and compliance are also concerns, and should be taken into account when developing strategies to improve release mortality, specifically depending on which anglers these regulations would apply to, whether they be to those strictly targeting striped bass, or to all anglers in that region or state. With all that in mind the PDT is putting forward three options here, the first option being status quo, where essentially it's already in Amendment 6. It is recommended that states promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach programs.

Option B would require states to implement regulations requiring the use of circle hooks, as defined by the Commission with the intent of reducing striped bass discard mortality in their recreational fisheries. This option again is a regulatory requirement, but it does give states the flexibility to develop regulations with its constituents that address the specific needs of their fisheries.

The PDT intentionally left out language regarding fishing with bait, sort of learning from what Maryland went through recently that it's clear that it can be difficult to define what bait is sometimes. Leaving that out here and leaving it up to the states to define what bait is, or what it means to their respective fisheries.

Additionally under this option, states are also encouraged to promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach. Option C would require states to promote the use of circle hooks through public education and outreach campaigns, and this option differs from status quo being that this would be a requirement to promote the use of circle hooks, and status quo is merely a recommendation to promote the use of circle hooks.

This is the last slide I have here, essentially reminding the Board that they will have to set an implementation schedule for this Addendum during final approval at Annual Meeting. The dates here are merely suggestions based on what the intended timeline has been thus far. Assuming this Addendum is approved at Annual Meeting, approval of state implementation plans could occur at the February, 2020 meeting.

Working backwards from that implementation plans would have to be submitted no later than November 31. Again as I noted, if this document is approved today for public comment, the TC will get together, develop criteria for conservation equivalency, and get that out to the states as soon as possible, so

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they would have that information well before this deadline.

Then again the Board will have to specify a full implementation date; I've left it blank here. But again the intent thus far has been to implement these regulations prior to the 2020 season. That concludes my presentation. I'm sure there are questions out there, I'm happy to take those, thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I would also like to thank the PDT for the enormous amount of work that went into this. I think we have a good document here. I'm sure there is some discussion we need to have, with the ultimate goal to get a motion to approve this to bring it for public hearing. That being said, let's start with questions first for Max, any questions? Rob O'Reilly.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: Thank you, Max. I do have a question, but if I may I would like to make what I think is a correction. Max, I think you indicated that Virginia had a trophy season in the ocean. This past spring Virginia eliminated all trophy fisheries, including the ocean. I just wanted to clear that up. I think that's what I heard you say. If that's okay I would like to make that correction.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to clarify, these are all based on 2017 measures. In 2017, it is my understanding that Virginia did have an ocean trophy.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, and they're gone now.

MR. APPELMAN: That is where that comment came from.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you Max, and my question is it wasn't talked about specifically, but Virginia in discussions, as many of the states have been in discussions for several months. One thing that you said, Max was based on the lessons learned, talking about Addendum IV. What

we're wondering is the 50 percent probability of reaching the target F.

Why wasn't there thoughts, and maybe there was, about having a higher probability of reaching the target F, and in fact to have options that would show the amount of reductions that might be required with say a 75 percent probability versus a 50 percent probability. We don't know in Virginia whether it's a mechanistic situation.

Is it a situation with the modeling itself, or is it sort of an historical approach that you know somewhere back about 1993 it was decided that you had to have a 50 percent probability on the federal side. We do remember that. I'm wondering with the comments that we heard, not a lot but we heard a few today.

We certainly are getting a lot of e-mails, everyone is getting e-mails. It seems that we don't want to replicate what we just have gone through with now our fifth year for Amendment 5. The question is, did the TC talk about having something higher probability than 50 percent? I'll leave it at that. We just don't know that's why I'm asking.

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks for that question. The short answer is that that 50 percent probability comes as guidance from the Board, and so the TC or PDT did not look at other probabilities in their projections for this Addendum. It has sort of been a default, I believe is that 50 percent.

I think the Commission is working on a Risk and Uncertainty Policy that would sort of get to that what is that probability that should be given to our Development Teams for guidance that is still in development? But I think that process would help with the concerns and questions that you have.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: John McMurray.

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MR. JOHN G. McMURRAY: Max, you mentioned additional reductions may be needed to rebuild. You also mentioned that rebuilding was a requirement of Amendment 6 if the stock was overfished. There was a figure in the document, Figure 5. If you have access to that could you put it up? While you're working on that I could go ahead and make my point, and try to expedite this, or ask my question. Okay there it is. It looks like 2033 is when the stock would be rebuilt under this 18 percent reduction, and under a fishing mortality rate of 0.2. I know there was some discussion of this at the last meeting. I thought I had asked for some analysis of what sort of reduction we'd be looking at to get us to F rebuild, to get us to rebuild within ten years.

I don't see that in here, but was there any discussion of that? I'm asking this question; because I'm sure you guys got the same e-mails that I did. People are wondering why we're not abiding by the Amendment 6. Amendment 6 is very clear that we must rebuild, not it should rebuild. I'm wondering why that wasn't considered.

MR. APPELMAN: There was discussion at the May meeting; you know what does this mean for rebuilding the biomass. Considering that this Addendum aims to address overfishing in the near term, we did take that opportunity to explore, when would SSB reach our reference points while fishing at F target? That is what this figure is coming from.

Certainly the further you go out with these projections the more uncertain things get, if you look at the confidence intervals around that median value. It asymptotes near the end there around 2033. But again, it wasn't the intent of this Addendum to explore measures that would rebuild the biomass within a 10-year timeframe. It was to address overfishing in sort of the near term. That's why we didn't develop any options for that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, John?

MR. McMURRAY: Thank you for that. My intent is not to jam up the timeline on this, and that's the last thing I want to do. But I feel compelled to ask this question. If we were to have some consensus around the table, and ask you guys to go back and do that analysis, and figure out for us what percent reduction we would need to rebuild in ten years, and have a suite of options that would allow that to happen. What sort of effect would that have on the timeline?

MR. APPELMAN: A pretty big effect.

MR. McMURRAY: That's it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: Great job, Max on the presentation. Could you go to your slide, it was the last slide before you got into the circle hooks.

MR. APPELMAN: Kirby is on it.

MR. LUISI: Okay that's it, yes. You made a couple of really important points while you were summarizing this, and I was scribbling down as fast I could some of the things you said. I just want to make sure that I'm clear. On Page 1 of the document it's clear that the focus of this Addendum should be on total removals, and the options that the PDT developed for the recreational fisheries, including the commercial fisheries, were focused on total removals. You did a great job of making sure that the word harvest wasn't the only thing that accounted for those total removals. However, the suboptions for the recreational fishery in this case are designed to reduce total removals, but I believe what I heard you say is that the focus there was mostly on harvest, because you're going to have increased releases given most of the options that are there.

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With increased releases you're going to have more release mortality. As you know, the state of Maryland has gone to great lengths over the last few years to try to reduce the amount of release mortality that's happening in the Chesapeake Bay and along the coast. We've put forth an effort to mandate the use of circle hooks, which was mentioned here earlier.

We've reduced our minimum size, in that same effort to try to reduce release mortality. Over this past year we have implemented a weather alert system, for days when it would be recommended that fishermen be mindful of the heat and the time period during the day for which they're fishing, in an effort to reduce release mortality.

We're putting together education videos and outreach, in order to reduce release mortality. I hope it's clear that there is an interest on the part of the state of Maryland to reduce release mortality, and we're putting a lot of effort into that now, because effort and release mortality are not part of the suboptions for what we can consider.

What would be the avenue that our state could take? Would it be conservation equivalency? Would we use conservation equivalency to prepare a recreational program that would maintain our focus on release mortality and trying to reduce that level, in an effort to maintain and comply with the goals of the Addendum?

MR. APPELMAN: I'll start with saying that the PDT worked within the bounds that it had, meaning that the recreational fishery is currently managed through bag limits and size limits, so those were the tools that the PDT had to work with. As you say, managing effort to get at your releases is something that the Board needs to really think about.

Also how to manage effort in this fishery, and get guidance to the PDT if they want to look at effort measures, measures towards effort. The

other answer to your question I think is that states have used closed seasons, for example, to reduce effort and get different regulations in place through conservation equivalency, so two sorts of answers there.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Mike.

MR. LUISI: We're not suggesting, I'm not suggesting that the PDT do any extra work here. I don't want to influence any timeline. I think it's really important that we maintain the timeline we're on. But it's clear then that if we wanted to put together a package for conservation equivalency for consideration by the Board, not only to address effort, but perhaps address the release mortality issue that that would be something under the provisions of 2.2.6, which is the management program equivalency section of the document.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Katie.

DR. KATIE DREW: Yes, for sure you can submit a conservation equivalency program that would reduce the release mortality, and use that to achieve your 18 percent reduction. However, I would say I think the TC is going to be hesitant to endorse things that are difficult to quantify. Things like educational programs or using circle hooks, or things like that where it's harder for us to say what is the actual effect of these measures this educational approach on actually reducing release mortality.

Something like season limits or closed days, if you actually close the fishery during days when temperature is too high, as opposed to just saying, maybe don't go fishing. That I think the TC and the PDT would be much more open to. I think we're focused on things that will have a concrete, demonstrable quantitative benefit on reducing how many fish you're throwing back alive.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, understood.

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CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: If I could editorialize just a bit while I have the bully pulpit. Keep in mind, I think an assessment ago before this the stock was okay, we hadn't hit the trigger. We were all shocked around this table to see the results of the addition of the new MRIP data, which gave a whole different complexion to what the stock trajectory has been. This Board did a good job. We reacted, and our reaction was to drop F as quickly as possible.

That is what this Addendum is about. Now looking at the B-2s, the discard, and looking at the SSB and the trajectory. This Board has got to look at that and over the next couple of meetings we'll look at that. But the goal of this one, to me we wanted to get F down as quickly as possible, before the next fishing season. I think this Addendum does a good job in that respect. Adam.

MR. ADAM NOWALSKY: Building on this topic of the concern of dead releases. All of the tables in the document about the recreational reductions, the last column that indicates percent reduction from removals that incorporates a reduction in harvest, and I'm assuming that reduction in harvest is actually higher than the percent reduction needed because there is a comparable shift in increase in discards as a result.

Is there a reason that would preclude us from including those two additional columns, where we see the percent reduction from removals? One column that shows the contribution from the reduction in harvest, and the second column would be the reduction as a contribution from dead releases.

MR. APPELMAN: We can add those in there. Since this was again aimed at reducing total removals that's why you had that one column relative to total removals.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom Fote.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: I'll save most of my questions for later on, actually comments for later on. My concern here is everybody is talking about protecting bigger fish, and I know a few percent of the people that actually take fish home to eat that don't like taking 36 inch, because they think they're protecting the fish at 35 inches. They try to take the smaller 30-inch fish now. Now we're basically going to shift the focus on taking the bigger females. Of course this year I actually saw a 36 inch male that somebody had caught, which was to me unusual, because I never saw a 36 inch male before. That is one of the consequences. That doesn't get figured into the overall reduction that we're supposed to be doing.

Again, I don't see 2018 mentioned here at all. I see the numbers, but I don't see the fact that it was a 25 percent reduction, which was what we really needed, was more than actually what we needed for the 17 percent reduction. It should be basically stated that that will be part of the discussion; I guess when we start approving this plan at the Annual Meeting.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to respond to the 2018 levels. I think it was an 18 percent, but nonetheless there was a note in the presentation and in the draft Addendum that that largely had to do with a decrease in effort that was seen, not just at trips directed at striped bass, but across all recreational fisheries in 2018.

I think there is an assumption there that if this Board expects that effort will be at that lower reduced level moving forward, and then perhaps you know the current management program is okay and meets that reduction. However, if that's not the assumption, if effort is going to spring back up to what it has been over the last decade or so, then you would expect removals to go up again in 2019 and beyond.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, Tom.

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MR. FOTE: I mean 2019 is a bigger reduction than last year. People are not taking the same amount of trips. There are many factors that are involved in that but the trips are going down, and this is directed stripe bass trips, and you see it all over the coast. Every captain I talk to basically says the same thing, unless people are basically actively fishing in a whole bunch of areas.

That's a trend that's going on, which actually started in 2016. We started seeing a reduced number of trips for striped bass. We actually have the lowest number of trips of striped bass in the last couple of years. I don't know why you assumed that that is not going to be the downward trend. There is nothing to show that it might go up.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris Batsavage then Jim Gilmore.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Going back to the conservation equivalency issue, in the document it says the TC will develop criteria for conservation equivalency in the Addendum after it's approved. I was wondering if that means, I guess there are going to be certain bounds, as far as what could be considered for conservation equivalency.

Such as if there was a slot limit put forth with a maximum of 40 inches or 34 inches, and states couldn't come up with a conservation equivalency that allows for a larger fish, things of that nature. Just trying to get a sense of what you have in mind with that statement, just to make sure that everyone is kind of working under the same set of guidelines and that measures that are equivalent on paper are approved that actually work in practice.

DR. DREW: We wouldn't restrict anything in terms of the measures that you could look at. We wouldn't say you have to have a maximum of this or a minimum of this. The focus would

be on making sure that everybody is using the same datasets, the same years so that everything is equivalent that you're using the best available data, and that if you have additional supporting data you explain why you're using that.

If the TC feels that's appropriate so that people aren't using well we're basing ours off of 2013 data and we're basing ours off of 2017 data. We're going to prescribe sort of the datasets, the year ranges, and the criteria that you should be looking at; in terms of making sure that everybody is using the same method for conservation equivalency. But we won't be prescribing the specific measures that you could look at for your state.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Jim.

MR. JAMES J. GILMORE: Max, you may have said this, but I just want to make sure I've got it clear. If we implement the 18 percent reduction based upon one of the options, but then on top of that we were to add in some of those non-quantifiable measures such as circle hooks or education or whatever. Is it a valid assumption that that would improve the 50 percent probability? I know we can't quantify it, but I would assume that we would improve that if those measures were implemented.

DR. DREW: Yes, I think there would be an unquantifiable but beneficial approach of implementing circle hooks, or implementing education, implementing outreach programs to reduce total effort, to reduce release mortality. I think it may not necessarily show up in terms of how we calculate total removals.

But ideally it would show up, the population would experience that in the reduction of fishing mortality, and further on down the road we'd be able to see that response in the indices in the age structure of the population, and we would see the population response, rather than something specifically on paper. But the assumption is certainly that any kind of

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additional conservation efforts on top of this reduction in total removals would be beneficial to the population.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Andy Shiels and then Mike Luisi.

MR. ANDREW SHIELS: I am misunderstanding what we're doing today I think, based on some comments I've heard and I think what Max said. What I think I heard Max say was that this effort, this Addendum VI is designed to reduce the overfishing that's occurring in the year 2020. I think he said more than once that this is not designed or to address the spawning stock biomass issue.

That being the case, I heard John McMurray ask a question, and the projection is it would take 13 years, based on the numbers we have in front of us. While we're sitting here I dug into Amendment 6, and I would like to read what it says under 2.6.2 Stock Rebuilding Schedules. Then I have a question. If at any time the Atlantic striped bass population is declared overfished and rebuilding needs to occur, the management board will determine the rebuilding schedule at that time. The only limitation proposed under Amendment 6 is that the rebuilding schedule is not to exceed 10 years. There are two really important parts.

If at any time, and I think any time was when perhaps in February or April, when we received the data telling us that overfishing and the population is overfished. That is when we received that data. That could be any time. The Board will determine when the schedule for rebuilding will occur. My question is, as I'm starting to understand what we're proposed to do today, when is any time, and what are we going to do next regarding the spawning stock biomass?

Is there going to be a discussion today about that? Is there going to be action taken today? Is there going to be a timeframe or a milestone

set today so that this is done within ten years, or are we going to wait a year or two and speed things up so we can get it done with the remaining seven years? That's my question. What's the timeframe for the spawning stock biomass part of this?

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks, Andy. I'm just thinking back to the May meeting when this information was presented to the Board. The decision was to do a quick, fast Addendum, address overfishing. Then also there was a motion made to address rebuilding the biomass. That motion is back on the table today for the Board to consider. But I think, I mean the clock is sort of ticking, and the ten year clock began in May when the information was presented to the Board.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for another opportunity for a question. I raised my hand after Chris Batsavage brought up an issue under conservation equivalency, and I think you'll see the common thread in where I'm thinking right now, as far as making sure I'm clear and we are clear about what we can use conservation equivalency for.

My question is because it's not stated specifically under 2.2.6, would a state have the ability to allocate the necessary reduction of 18 percent to the sectors, and the sectors meaning that you know on your flow chart, which was really nicely done. It kind of gives you a sense of Option 1, 2, and 3.

There are two different ways that the Board could decide how those allocations of reductions could go, either equally or proportionally, smaller percentage to the commercial. The Board will decide on that ultimately, but if a state would like to modify that allocation of the reduction to those sectors, is that something currently under conservation equivalency that can be applied?

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Meaning, if the state of Maryland decided it wanted to increase the reduction from 1.8 percent to 5 percent for the commercial fishery, or make it 0 percent for the commercial fishery. Would we be able to put that into a conservation equivalency plan? Meaning that you have to account for that change with the other sector, and I think it's very important for our state to understand if that's something that we can do, because we've been discussing this externally with a lot of our different user groups. We would like the document to actually state that so when we go to public hearing it is clearly defined that we could use that under conservation equivalency.

MR. APPELMAN: Thanks, Mike. I think that is the purview of the Board really. I mean by selecting an option as you said, let's take the equal reduction approach. The Board is saying that the reductions will be applied and that a portion or that allocation is set in that option. If states want the flexibility to alter that through conservation equivalency, I think we need consensus around the table on that and to put that language in there.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, we'll come back to that. I would be of the opinion that this Addendum assigns the quota to the state, and what the state wants to then do with it is up to the state, but we'll come back to that to that; to that point, Tom.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to make a correction real quick, a majority of this table, to put that language and that understanding into this document.

MR. FOTE: I'm not sure we can do that. We've been around this discussion a couple of times when they wanted to transfer other quotas of commercial fish with certain fisheries on that. It's not stated in any of the plans that that is the viable way of doing it. I can remember discussion going on that we're not, because one

time we wanted to do commercial to this, because they wanted to utilize their quota and we could not do it.

We've been told that also in the trophy tag program and things like that when you use the commercial. It's a different category. I remember the long discussion we had, because I was trying to do something years ago. It really has not been allowed previously, and I'm sure if we look back to the history of that we'll basically find it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I've got Ritchie then Justin then Jay. Ritchie White.

MR. G. RITCHIE WHITE: I wanted to expand on the issue that Andy and John raised about the rebuilding and the ten year. Maryland, I don't remember if it was a motion or brought up the desire to begin an amendment process. I think we agreed to delay that until after this Addendum is complete.

I've been certainly getting a lot of e-mails about don't start an amendment; it will mean that you're going to be less conservative. An amendment doesn't mean less or more conservative, and I'm certainly going to support an amendment, and I'm going to support an amendment to be more conservative.

That is how we address what you raised, Andy. We'll look at more structural parts of striped bass management in an amendment, and hopefully it will be more conservative so we won't have to undergo the issues we're undergoing now. Put something in place so the stock stays in a good situation.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We'll be talking about that at the next agenda item. Justin Davis.

DR. JUSTIN DAVIS: Katie, I'm wondering if you can comment on some of the challenges that might be inherent to assessing a conservation equivalency proposal that's based on either

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reductions in release mortality through use of things like circle hooks, or angler education or reductions in effort.

Given that usually when we're looking at how changes in size limits might influence catch or harvest we're using the MRIP data, the amount of catch and the size structure of that catch. But I would imagine that if we're looking at a proposal that's thinking about reducing effort, we would have to use the effort side of the MRIP survey. I'm wondering if that lends itself as easily to assessing conservation equivalency.

DR. DREW: Sure that's a good question. I think in terms of things like angler education requiring the use of circle hooks, things like that. The problem is that we can't quantify right now how many people are actually using circle hooks to begin with. If 90 percent of your fishery is already using circle hooks, are you going to see that benefit on paper if you now require that 10 percent and maybe that 10 percent doesn't comply?

How do you translate that into an actual number that you could say, previously our release mortality rate was 9 percent, now it's 5 percent. I don't think the TC feels that our data on what is the current use of circle hooks, what is the current use of best angler practices, in terms of obviously how you handle the fish also makes a big difference in terms of survivability, regardless of what hook type you're using.

Things like how many experienced anglers are there versus how many people go out there, grab that fish by the gill and wave it around, take a picture and then throw it back. How do you change that? How do you quantify that on an educational standpoint? We don't have the data set up now to even know what our baseline is, let alone what you would actually expect to get out, in terms of improving handling behavior, improving circle hook usage.

I think that's something you know, we would love to have information on, and if the Board wanted to go forward and start developing programs to kind of quantify that we would support it. I think the TC would feel you can't just sort of wave a magic wand and be like, boom circle hooks, and our release mortality is 5 percent now instead of 9 percent.

I think we would be hesitant to endorse that as an actual quantifiable way of saying; well we're using circle hooks so now we can have a longer season or a higher size limit, or a bigger slot whatever. But we would definitely say yes that's going to reduce your fishing mortality in some way likely.

On the other side, in terms of how do you reduce effort, because that's what we really need to do to reduce this release mortality in a quantifiable way is reduce the number of trips that are encountering striped bass, and throwing them back alive. Things like seasons are a potential option.

We do have the MRIP data on the seasons, and what we're making with that assumption is that if you close the season those trips won't happen, or the harvest during that season won't happen, but also potentially trips during that season won't happen, which can give us a little bit of a better handle on effort and things like that. Seasons are definitely on the table, because we can quantify that data either through the MRIP as a whole, or through the effort side, with kind of the caveat of course that just because you close that season it depends on what else is happening. In your fishery what other fisheries are open?

Are you truly eliminating those trips or you're changing the targeting behavior and they may still encounter striped bass? I think those are the kinds of things that we would be looking at when people bring us conservation equivalency programs to reduce that release mortality. Really what we're looking for is how you can

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reduce the number of trips that are catching and releasing striped bass.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, I've got Jay then John then Ray then Emerson. Jay McNamee.

MR. JASON McNAMEE: First just complements to the PDT for a really thoughtful document. I think most of my questions were in the document, and so I didn't have any. But I've got one. It was something I thought I understood, and now I think maybe I don't. In the tables there are comments about these trophy fisheries.

What I'm now confused about is the way I originally interpreted it was in the analysis that was done there was an assumption made on 2017, when those trophy fisheries wherever they existed were in place. What I'm not clear on is if they are assumed to then persist, and are incorporated into the calculations for the reduction. Just in case I wasn't clear there.

Do the in particular the slot limit options anticipate that there are going to be trophy fisheries in the future in the places that they existed. I'm not talking about, I feel differently about some of I guess they call them bonus fisheries, where they're taking a quantified quota, tagging those out and there is high accountability there. I feel differently about those, but trophy fish are used I feel another way about them. Hopefully that is understandable.

MR. APPELMAN: Yes the short answer is that the existing trophy fisheries are predominantly in Chesapeake Bay, are accounted for in these calculations. You can see in some of the options the trophy fishery is eliminated from those options. Some of them they are modified, either the season has been shortened to allow that fishery to continue, but still meet the required reduction.

In some of them the slot limit example, if the slot upper bound is in the same range of where that trophy fish minimum size was it now puts a cap on the upper bound of that. It changes the regulation in some of the options, but the season will remain the same. It has been accounted for. The only ocean trophy fishery I'm aware of is Virginia.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: To Ritchie's comment. We don't need an amendment to rebuild or to be more or less conservative with the reference points. The only thing we need an amendment for is to change the goals and objectives, and I think that's where things get sticky. But I had a question about the slot limits, and that was the intent of raising my hand. I understand a certain part of the recreational fishing community has been asking for them, and the intent is good to try to protect those older, larger more fecund females. But Max, you mentioned this in your presentation that over time if you focus effort on that handful of year classes those fish might not get there.

I'm also well aware, not only from my time on the water but from my time here that release mortality goes up with the size of fish. Particularly now, when you have Facebook and Instagram, and everybody wants a picture of that trophy. Was any of that taken into consideration with your corresponding percent reductions with the slot limits?

MR. APPELMAN: No, none of those little nuances are accounted for here. The assessment assumes a 9 percent release mortality rate across the board. That's based on a number of studies, sort of an averaging of those studies. That's what is used in assessment that's what the PDT used in their analyses. Apology to Virginia again, I know there is no ocean trophy fishery this year.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Follow up, John?

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MR. McMURRAY: Not necessarily a follow up, but a comment. I think it's important to point out here that those alternatives, those options are more risky. They are intuitively more risky. I want to say that on the record.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Ray Kane. Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: Thank you Max for your presentation. Max, did I hear you say that even though the document includes two different options for slot sizes, two different suboptions under two different options for slot sizes that there could be variations in those slot sizes, and the results of different slot sizes would be similar to what's listed in the document?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes. I think that's a reasonable assumption that you could shift, you know say for example it's a 6-inch slot, you could shift that up and down on the ruler and get sort of the same predicted reduction, more or less. We kept it simple and to the sizes that the Board gave us guidance on.

Minimums of 28 and 32, upper bound of 40, and what that kind of equates to in the form of a slot limit. But if there is an option that is not represented in these tables that you feel should be, you know especially when you go out to public comment. We could probably add that relatively quickly, assuming that it still meets that desired reduction.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Alternatively, if the option is not explicitly in the Addendum now but it's equivalent by just sliding the slot, would we be able to do that after the public hearings, or does it have to be on the document? That's a Toni question.

MS. TONI KERNS: I think to be cleanest, anything that is not in the document and you want to put those regulations in place, you will

need to apply for conservation equivalency to do so, unless it has a measure in there that is not allowed. If you want something that is not in the document now, you need to let us know today or within a week. Because we will not have a lot of extra time to add things to the document, because I assume that the entire coast will want hearings, and so it will take us a little while. Conservation equivalency will need to be applied for, for anything that is not in the document, to keep it clean.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, but I'm not referring to individual states, I'm talking about this Board. Say we go to public hearing and for some reason we don't want 28 to 33, we want 29 to 34. Can we make that decision without having it in the document now?

MS. KERNS: It has to be within the range of the issues that had gone out for public comment, options that had gone out for public comment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well that clears it up.

MS. KERNS: That's why I think if you want something additional that is not in the document, you need to tell us now so that we can add it to the document today, or by Friday.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: To follow up on that. When Toni just said tell us now. Do you want me to give you a suggestion right now, or do you want to wait until we discuss whether we're going to adopt or modify the Addendum?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let's wait a few minutes. We've got a few more people to go through, and these are more general questions. Then we'll come back to that. David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. BORDEN: I was just going to ask, Mr. Chairman to you. Are you ready for a motion, or would you like to take more

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questions? I'm happy to make a motion when you feel the need for a motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We are not done with questions, but I would entertain a motion to focus our discussion. Would you like to make that motion?

MR. BORDEN: I'll move adoption of Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for striped bass for public hearing purposes.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second? Ritchie White, second discussion.

MR. BORDEN: The only comment I'll make, I'll echo Jason's comment. I think the staff and the PDT have done an excellent job of really fleshing out clear options that I think the public can weigh the differences fairly easily. To Emerson's point, if there are other options that need to be in here, I would hope people would make a motion to amend. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: To this point, Dennis.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Yes, I have a motion to amend this motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead.

MR. ABBOTT: I've been waiting all morning for this. I'm kind of a new guy around the table; I've only been here 23 years. Twenty-two years ago I was drafted to sit on the Striped Bass Board, prior to us taking action to find a seat for everyone here. There is an old phrase, a fine kettle of fish, and I think that we find ourselves in that kettle right now.

After a lot of thought and being who I am, I've decided to step into these dangerous waters, but maybe not. Striped bass are experiencing overfishing and are overfished according to the latest assessment. We're here today to meet the obligations of Amendment 6. Many anglers

through the years have expressed to me and others the strong displeasure with varying regulations.

Its disparity is principally due to the generous application of conservation equivalency. I may be wrong, but I don't know of any conservation equivalency application that isn't really intended to increase mortality of striped bass. In my many years in the State Legislature, I always held the belief that when one is advantaged someone else is going to be disadvantaged.

We're here today in part because some of us have been advantaged, and we're all here to pay the piper. I think the public should be given an opportunity to make their voices heard. It's time to take a meaningful action, so **I wish to add a section to Paragraph 2.2.6 to consider the non-application of any conservation equivalency while we're overfished and overfishing is occurring.** I've given the staff this motion. If I have a second I'll briefly speak to it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second? Second by John McMurray.

MR. ABBOTT: Thank you, John. I urge you to support my motion to allow the public the opportunity to speak on this subject, and I know that many of you operate under various political pressures and sometimes it's hard. Sometimes it is time to step up and do things that are right for the situation at hand. The situation I think is dire, and I think extreme action is required. I think the time is now.

In the future when we prepare a new amendment, we can then consider a conservation equivalency with rigid sideboards which achieve our objectives. There would be a burden on the TC to review whatever conservation equivalencies that already, prior to even approving this Addendum that are in the works.

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We haven't even approved it, and I'm sure that states are figuring out how they're going to manipulate the Addendum to their own benefit, as we generally do. I was quite pleased with Katie Drew's recent comments a few moments ago about having more, stricter applications in the subject of conservation equivalency.

We really have to tighten up how we do that. I urge you just to allow this to go into the Addendum so that the general public that speaks to all of you through e-mails and whatever methods, to give them an opportunity to speak on this subject. I thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further comment, John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: I wanted to qualify my support for this, and I'm just saying this now, so I haven't had a whole lot of time to think about it. We're just putting this out to the public right now for comment. I'm not opposed to conservation equivalency, and my support of this might paint the picture that I am. But I think with it has to come some sort of accountability. If it doesn't work then the state that implements it has to be accountable. We saw how that played out, and Ross mentioned it in his comments. That is where my support lies right now.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: Well Dennis, I've been sitting around the table about six more years or seven more years, since 1990. I've been dealing with Striped Bass Board meetings since about '87, so I've been around a few more than you have on this. Every state has different constituency and different fisheries.

What we try to do is accommodate the fisheries in those particular states. That's what conservation equivalency is about. We're not looking to skate the issue. We're not looking to basically get an edge, but we're looking to address the fishermen that we basically

represent. You know everybody is talking about e-mails they get.

You know a form e-mail is very simple to get out. But go out and talk to the people on the street. Go out and talk to the people that fish on the docks and the piers, you know the ones that aren't basically sitting behind a computer, basically out fishing and basically looking to take a fish home to eat it and things like that.

I represent all those people, from the catch and release fishermen to basically guys that want to take something home to eat. When I took this job I knew I was going to wind up making one group mad sometimes and making another group upset. Well that's why I get paid the big bucks, zero. I'm looking at taking on the force that basically does that.

I grew up fishing on Canarsie Pier and Steeplechase Pier in Brooklyn. That's what people wanted to do. They don't have the same opportunity as people in boats that basically fish for striped bass. They always caught smaller fish. What we try to address is that we don't unequally hinder those people on the docks and piers.

That is why Connecticut put a certain easing of the fishery on summer flounder, so those people that don't see big fish could actually harvest fish. We did the same thing in Island Beach State Park in New Jersey, because they don't see the big fish. You're trying to accommodate all the fishermen in your state, not just the ones that have big boats and get out to fish, or not the ones that just want to catch and release.

I'll get into that topic a little later, but we try to represent all of them. You try to do that conservation, but you're not looking for an edge, you're not looking to catch any more fish than you are allowed to catch. Sometimes it's more restricted by what you have to do to do that. You make it, well it's not a 20, it is a 22

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percent reduction. But this will make the things work. As I said, I'm looking to make the best source, and also working with the other states that I know they have similar problems and more problems. It's easy when you come from a state that just has striped bass, and they get in there and everybody fishes pretty much the same, and you have a small group of anglers. When you start representing 800,000 in-state anglers and 500,000 out-of-state anglers, you are trying to accommodate the tourists and everybody else that comes in to a state.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I will say that I do agree that the discussion around conservation equivalency should be had, but this isn't the time and place for it. We're in the middle of an addendum process, for which it's been on a fast track. We had a PDT develop options in a matter of a few weeks to put before the Board, over maybe two or three conference calls. There weren't any social and economic considerations on those measures that were put forth.

They were put forth simply because they achieved a number on paper. There needs to be a deeper consideration when states take on management change. The conservation equivalency program as defined under 2.2.6 states that it's an integral component to the Commission's fisheries management program, particularly for striped bass, and that it allows states flexibility to develop alternative regulations to address specific state or regional, and I'd say even social and economic differences in those fisheries.

It's critical that the states have the ability at this point in this Addendum process to craft rules that meet the needs of their fishermen, as long as those rules are achieving the goals and objectives of the FMP. It's not that the state draws something up and it disappears, it's not considered, it's not reviewed, and it's not evaluated. It goes through a thorough review

process where the Technical Committee weighs in.

Then the Board has the ability to either approve or deny a state's conservation equivalency proposal, and get public input on it as well. Again, I think that this idea, bringing this to the public, getting feedback from the public. This should be something that we include in the Amendment that we'll be discussing later. I think this is a bigger thing that we need to think more thoroughly about, and the impacts that something like this will have on the states, if they're not able to use conservation equivalency in Addendum VI.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, Jay McNamee.

MR. McNAMEE: Maybe I'll start by saying I would be really interested in seeing public feedback on an option like this in the Addendum. But here is the glitch for Rhode Island. The way that I interpret what's up on the board right now would apply not just to recreational, but also to commercial.

The state of Rhode Island has had a conservation equivalency in place for our commercial fishery – it's really small – based on a yield-per-recruit analysis with high accountability with a quota, but it's on the commercial fishery. It has been effective for us, it has worked well. It's been in place since 2014. Because of the way this is worded at least, I would have trouble supporting it. But again, I'm interested in hearing additional feedback. I got a lot of e-mails that were of a particular type of comment on this. I wouldn't mind expanding that to see if that kind of holds with additional public comment. However, this wording is problematic for Rhode Island. If it were an option to add into an amendment, I would be supportive of that to give us some more time to think of maybe a better way to word something like this.

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CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Megan Ware.

MS. MEGAN WARE: A question for the maker of the motion. It's currently Section 2.2.6 is outside of the management options in the document. Is the idea that this is a statement in the Addendum, or is it the idea that this would be two management alternatives as status quo, and then Option 2 being not permitting conservation equivalency. I likely have a follow up after that.

MR. ABBOTT: My original intent was to include an option of status quo, or what I have there. In talking with Max, he suggested that we just place that in the document to include that as a statement. Is that not correct?

MR. APPELMAN: That was my intent of the motion that it would be status quo, which would allow conservation equivalency, and then the alternative would be what the motion reads.

MR. ABBOTT: While I have the microphone. I just want to repeat that I want to give the public an opportunity to weigh in on this. If this goes into the Addendum at this point, it's still going to come back and allow you folks to vote on the final action, whether you want to go status quo, or listen if the public overwhelmingly or in some part gives you a different opinion. If nothing else it might lead you and help you in the preparation of a later amendment.

MS. WARE: Just to follow up on that. Thank you for the clarification on that. Obviously in Maine we have concerns about the status of the stock, both overfishing and overfished. But I'm a little nervous about not allowing states the flexibility to put forward quantifiable conservation equivalency proposals, similar to what Jay was mentioning. If we could work on the language maybe a bit to include that word quantifiable that might help a little bit. But right now I have some concerns.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ritchie White.

MR. WHITE: When Dennis brought this idea up to me, I said that at this point I would not be in favor if this was voting on a final action. I'm always in favor of bringing things to the public, and I voted consistently on things that I opposed, but put them out to the public to get public input. I certainly support this. I guess there would have to be overwhelming public support for me to support this in the final document.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Rob O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Virginia would not support this motion. I think Andy Shiels made a good comment earlier, although I know that the reduction in fishing mortality rate is the tantamount to having success with this Addendum. I think if we just have Addendum VI it is certainly not going to satisfy Virginia. We already have grave concerns, not only about our fishery, but more than that the resource itself. If you look at the action we've already taken to eliminate trophy size fisheries. Granted it's not going to be a break-the-bank type of reduction. It's about a half a percent.

We had mandatory reporting for 25 years. We have no idea how many large fish were taken out. We're intent on conservation equivalency to be more progressive than the Addendum is, and the hallmark is the spawning stock, and our efforts will continue as we go forward to have those types of conservation measures.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Phil Langley.

MR. PHIL LANGLEY: I'm new to the Board here, but I'm certainly not new to the fishery. I've had thousands of trips on the water, in the Chesapeake Bay area especially. But I try to stay up to date with what happens up and down the coast in all of our fisheries. I would have to speak against this motion to remove

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conservation equivalency, just because of the fact that it's not a one-size-fits-all in our fishery. These are migratory fish.

Basically every state I feel knows your strengths and weaknesses better than anybody else. I think everybody sitting around this table; we're here because we're all conservation minded. If we see weaknesses within our state that we can make improvements on to better the fishery in the future, I think we need that flexibility to address those issues.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Sorry, we've still got a long list here. Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: I'm going to oppose the motion, because we're not here today to address the new Amendment, which is where this question if it were to come up, should be located. It should be in the new amendment. In other words, should conservation equivalency be allowed or should it not be allowed? That belongs in the amendment. We're changing Amendment 6, which recognizes conservation equivalency, so I don't think that this particular motion is appropriate for our consideration today. Therefore, I'm going to oppose it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Emerson Hasbrouck.

MR. HASBROUCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I did not have my hand up on this issue.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Oh I'm sorry, the other white beard, Craig Miller.

SENATOR CRAIG A. MINER: Sorry, Emerson. I was trying to remember Max's presentation and whether he indicated that previously existing or currently existing conservation equivalency efforts were part of the calculations or part of the considerations in arriving at the schedule of changes that would need to occur. Is conservation equivalency that already exists in the species baked into the TCs evaluation?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes and no. Conservation equivalency measures that had lower minimum sizes than the current minimum size, those because of our assumption of noncompliance and the assumption of fish illegally harvested below that size limit. If that would still continue to occur, those can be carried over. Those are accounted for. But modifications that are still above the current minimum size, those are not factored in. The selected measure would sort of replace those conservation equivalency programs.

SENATOR MINER: As a follow up, if this motion were to pass would there be work required to reevaluate changes recommended for those states that have conservation equivalency in this species? It doesn't seem perspective to me, it seems inclusive the way it's drafted.

MR. APPELMAN: I don't see any additional work here. I think this is more to the point of depending on this, would conservation equivalency be permitted under this Addendum while the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. It would alleviate any work for this if it does go through in the end.

SENATOR MINER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Justin Davis. You did have your hand up though, right, yes, Russell Dize?

MR. RUSSELL DIZE: I would be against this amendment. Equivalency is equivalency, and I think the states need this tool in their toolbox to manage the fishery. But amongst this gloom and doom, I'm going to say I'm a commercial waterman, 60 years on the Chesapeake Bay. I've never seen in all my life as many small striped bass, we call them rockfish at home. At Taormina that's about the center of the Chesapeake Bay, and on the Maryland portion.

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We use clams as bait for our trotline to catch crabs with, and every day about twelve or one o'clock, we have a feast for the small menhaden, I mean small I want to say rockfish and I'm trying not to say it, so I'll say menhaden, but small rockfish that are gathered to get the bait that we throw over. There are hundreds of them, and every boat has that.

There are so many small rockfish in our portion of the Bay that when you're going down the trotline to dip crabs, sometimes you'll dip a rockfish up. As a little ray of sunshine, we have them in the pipeline. Now, whether they mature and get out of the Bay and get on the coast is another thing, because these are small fish, anywhere from 8 inches to say 14 inches.

Maryland got this good numbers; even with so wet a year this year and last year. We got all the water coming down the Susquehanna River. The fresh water has killed all the oysters in the upper Bay; it stopped the crabs from going to the upper Bay this year. They're just starting to get into the upper Bay.

It's not all Maryland's fault. This is coming from Pennsylvania and New York, down to Susquehanna Valley, down the Susquehanna River. To get in 2018, a 14.8 was fantastic with that much fresh water. I hear a lot of gloom and doom, but I do see a ray of sunshine with all these small rockfish in our portion of the Bay.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Millard.

MR. MIKE MILLARD: I was inclined to support this Amendment under Ritchie White's theory that it's rarely if ever a bad idea to go out to the public with an option, and hear what they have to say. But then listening to Roy Miller, I wonder and I would ask staff, if this is a procedural issue? Can you adopt, could you ever adopt an option in an addendum that is at odds with the amendment?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Mike, I'll try to answer that. I don't think it's necessarily at odds with the underlying amendment, Amendment 6. I think it would modify some of the provisions and flexibility provided in Amendment 6. The question is, I think is restricting conservation equivalency kind of in bounds for an addendum.

I would argue yes, but there are arguments around the table that have been made that folks feel this may be part of Step 2, which may be an amendment down the road. The Board can do this if they want, but that doesn't mean you have to do it. It is at the pleasure of the Board right now whether they can or can't do it, or want to, or don't want to.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're close to moving the question, last word, Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: The last word, okay. My count is not looking too good for this motion. But even if it fails I am encouraged by the maker's statement about putting more teeth into conservation equivalency. I'm interested in that. Recent history maybe will support my opinion, but the other thing that I'm also encouraged.

Even if this fails is Ms. Drew's statement about tightening the requirement to apply and get approval for conservation equivalency. If this fails I think we have some way forward, even if this fails. I liked going out to the public, but I probably will oppose the motion knowing that the intent is to tighten the reins on conservation equivalency right away.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're going to move the question. I need two minutes to caucus. Are we ready? **Let me read it into the record. Motion to amend to include an option under Section 2.2.6 that conservation equivalency will not be permitted while the Atlantic Striped Bass stock is overfished or experiencing overfishing. Just to clarify, this**

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will be an option in the Addendum with the other side of the option being status quo. All in favor raise your hand, opposed, null, abstentions. The motion fails 2 to 12, 2 abstentions. Jim.

MR. GILMORE: While we're on the conservation equivalency train. Max had brought up during the presentation about there are states that currently have conservation equivalency that would kind of get a bye in this Addendum. However, and I think we said we had to make a decision on that. I just wanted to bring that up, and I'm not sure how to resolve it. But at this point it is my preference. I will preface this by saying I have no problem with the states that are going for conservation equivalency that have done it before.

I understand the way it was done, but I think it would be cleaner if that anybody under the new rules would essentially have to recalculate their conservation equivalency, and maybe Max, you know this better than I do. But the last time we did it I don't think all of the numbers were done the same. For instance, when we did the effort on the Hudson River, we did 16 percent fish guard mortality. I think some of the other states had 9 percent, so it wasn't exactly the same. I believe it would be cleaner if everybody just, if they are going to do conservation equivalency that all the states submit those proposals, especially when it was considering that if we were using 16 percent and other states were using 9 percent, and we're talking about warmer weather and increasing mortality. Probably everybody should recalculate those numbers, just so we and the public understand it that we're not giving a bye to any state that we're going to look at the numbers again.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We're back to the main motion, so try and keep your comments this way, so Emerson then Adam, then Marty and then Rob.

MR. HASBROUCK: I would like to move to add two options to the Addendum or two suboptions rather, a suboption 2-A4 and a suboption 3-A4 to look at a slot size of 30 to 36 inches.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let's get that on the board.

MR. APPELMAN: Just a point of clarification here. We might have done those calculations already, so I think the question is does it meet the required reduction? We would have to verify that it meets the desired reduction. Pending that they meet, is that something that we could add to the motion?

MR. HASBROUCK: Yes, go ahead

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, so the discussion is this will need to be reanalyzed, because it doesn't quite fit with the others, but it can be done very quickly. Is there a second to the motion? Chris Batsavage seconds, discussion.

MR. HASBROUCK: There has been interest by recreational anglers in New York to evaluate this slot size, so I would just like to bring that out to public comment, and based on what Toni had said earlier this is the time to get that in there, if it meets the required reduction.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I have a list of people who had their hand up, but I assume it's not towards this. To this motion to amend, I'll go through the list and if you want to address it then you can. Adam.

MR. NOWASKY: I would like to speak towards the main motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Marty Gary to the main motion or this one? Rob O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: I have a proposed addition relative to what the ISFMP Director invited us to do, as far as before we finalize this if we have any added components to bring them to the Board. That is my request, so it's more fitting with the main motion, I think.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I'll hold.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: This is really not necessary, because if you want to put a 30 and 36 inch slot limit in, basically conservation equivalency approves the same thing, so that is what you're already able to do without putting another option in there. I think it's redundant.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris Batsavage.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, assuming that this meets the required reductions, it fills the gaps and gives us a broader range of slot limits. What's intriguing about this is it still provides for a decent size range of fish that could be harvested, but it increases the minimum size a little bit, but then has a slot size.

It falls between the 34 and 40 inch, and what's intriguing about the 36 compared to the 40 is just thinking about red drum management. You kind of increase the chance for a fish to escape from recreational harvest, and be part of the adult spawning stock that it will have a lot less harvest on it. I think it's worth having in there, assuming it meets the required reductions.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further discussion, Justin Davis.

DR. DAVIS: I guess I have a question for the maker of the motion. I'm wondering if the primary interest here is in having a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum, because the options that we already have in the document basically operate off of a slot limit with a 40 inch

maximum, which was part of the original direction to the Board, and then another option with a 28 inch minimum.

I can imagine a scenario here where the analysis is done and it says well a 30 to 36 won't work, but a 30 to 35 would. Then I can imagine that we wouldn't necessarily be able to include that in the Addendum, because it's not part of this motion. This motion specifies 30 to 36. I'm wondering if it might make more sense to change this motion to say a slot size limit with a 30 inch minimum, if that is the primary interest of the fisherman who wants this slot limit.

MR. HASBROUCK: It's not necessarily just a 30 inch minimum, it's another option. As Chris had said before, it's kind of between that 28 inch minimum and the 40 inch maximum, so it kind of fits in the middle there. I put it up there so that New York could have that option if it wanted, without having to go through conservation equivalency.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to add to those comments. I think what Justin is getting at is that this option in the motion might not meet that reduction. Therefore, it would disappear and it wouldn't be in the document. I think if we're looking for another slot in the middle of those two, with a 30 inch lower bound.

The question is really what is the upper bound that meets that desired reduction? If you are okay with the idea that this could disappear if it doesn't meet that desired reduction, then it's fine. But if you really are intent on having another middle slot option, I suggest modifying it to meet that intention.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: **Then I'll change the wording there. Chris, let me know if you're good with this. To include a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum size, and a maximum size to meet the required reduction of those two different**

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sections. Then the maximum may be different between the 18 percent and the 20 percent.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris, are you okay with the new wording?

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes I am.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I've noticed some hands in the audience, and I will call on a couple public comments. I'm going to wait until we're back to the main motion fully amended, and ready to vote. Is there further discussion on this motion to amend? When this is finally done I'll read into the record. Do we need to caucus? The motion is move to amend to add two suboptions under, oh still perfecting.

I'll read slowly. **Okay, move to amend to add two suboptions under Section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot size limit with a 30 inch minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections. Are we ready for the vote? All in favor, okay opposed, null, abstention. The motion passes unanimously.** Back to the main motion, Rob O'Reilly, I believe you had.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, I'm again following up on what Toni Kerns said earlier that if you wish to try and add anything it has to be done now. I looked through the document, and if I'm incorrect please let me know, but I don't see a table that specifically indicates by state the recreational harvest and dead discards and total removals.

I know there was a question earlier, a request earlier on the reductions to include which were harvest removals, but I'm speaking about on a state specific basis, and I bring this up because last meeting we lamented the dead discard issue quite a bit. This meeting we started it again. We have different modes of fishing geographically.

Virginia has had the information by state for many months, and I think it is something that I wouldn't use the word transparent, I would use the word obvious that the states should see, so they realize where the discard mortality is really more pronounced than in other areas. I do think this is necessary.

It does so happen that if you are in Virginia and you look from 1990 until the present, we mapped out all the states. Virginia ranks either first lowest, second lowest, third lowest, and in one year fifth lowest. But that tells you something about the fishery in Virginia. Even in the good times of 2003 to 2006, when the fishery could barely be constrained, the recreational fishery, including the bad times from 2007 to the present. I think that's a piece of information that is missing, and I think now the way the Addendum VI portrays that situation, it lumps everything together. It's an aggregate approach, so that's my request and I thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: To be clear, we're just adding a table of state-by-state recreational landings and discard. Is there anyone opposed to adding that? Seeing no opposition we'll add that by consensus. Okay, Marty.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Just a clarifying question about conservation equivalency and how it applies to seasonal closures. Our jurisdiction at Potomac River Fisheries Commission, along with the district, although I'm asking for our jurisdiction, does not have MRIP specific estimates. The fish that are caught in PRFC jurisdictional waters are assumed to be landed in Maryland or Virginia. My question is does that preclude us from pursuing conservation equivalency that includes seasonal closures?

DR. DREW: No it would not. I think generally for the PRFC and for D.C. we tend to assume that because the landings do happen in areas that are encountered by MRIP, we use those regions as proxies for what you would expect.

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You can use that information that is available as a representation of what you would expect to have. Alternatively, if you have your own additional non MRIP data sources that the TC feels are robust enough, you could also submit based on those data sources as well.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Andy Shiels.

MR. SHIELS: For the benefit of the public, as we go out to the public this fall, and for the benefit of the document. I just would like to make a request that we put some effort into the verbiage to explain what that 50 percent probability means. We discussed it earlier. I brought it up at a previous meeting.

I can tell by the comments that I'm seeing out on the internet, letters that are coming my way, chatter that I see that the public, and maybe not everybody around the table, I'll raise my hand. We still don't understand exactly what that means, and I think we're making assumptions that we all know what it means but the public doesn't.

I think making it very clear how the 50 percent was arrived at, what the 50 percent means, both in this document and when you go out and you do public presentations, take some time to do a Power Point slide that explains exactly what that means. For better or for worse, the public will better understand it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any objection to adding some elaboration of the 50 percent? Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: It started the 50 percent at a court case that was on summer flounder that they started using, and we started making sure everything was at least 50 percent. At points we've used higher than 50 percent on certain species, but that's where it came out of, a judge, because we sometimes with summer flounder years ago were using 38 percent or something like that. They said it should have at

least a 50 percent probability of accomplishing it. But that was in the summer flounder lawsuit that basically went on in 1992 or 3, something like that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Before I vote, before we take this up as our final action to move this document along. I just want to go back and revisit the comments I made earlier regarding a state's ability to provide an equivalency based on the allocation of the reduction to the different sectors, as it applies to the document.

We can certainly take your advice, Mr. Chairman, since you are the all-knowing Chairman of this Board that you see no problem in a state handling its responsibility in the manner that it sees fit. I want to make sure it's clear. Max said we need a consensus or a majority opinion on that point. But before we move this I need to be clear on that before we finish.

MR. APPELMAN: My feedback is the same as it was before. If there is no objection to putting that explicit language in that management equivalency section, great. If there is some objection then I think we would have to go to a motion to add that language.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there objection to that further clarification of the conservation equivalency? Doug.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I would just like to have what he is asking clarified, or at least put up on the board somehow, so that I can determine whether I can object or not.

MR. LUISI: I can certainly do that. If you want to put up, let's just put up one of the commercial tables. Let me look and see which one it is, maybe the 1.8 percent reduction option for Chesapeake Bay commercial quota, if you could put that up from the presentation.

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CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Jim, did you have a comment on this?

MR. GILMORE: It's after this; it was just getting back to another clarification, so I'll wait.

MR. LUISI: Okay so here is the table in the document, and let's just say that in October the Board selects Option 3, and goes down the road of suggesting that the reduction to the recreational fishery I think was 20 percent, and the commercial fishery was 1.8 percent. If you look at the difference between Addendum IVs quota and that 1.8 percent reduction, you get 26,494 pounds, so that is the reduction amount that the commercial fishery in our state would be reduced by.

If there is an intention by a state to take the 26,000/27,000 pounds that they are responsible for reducing that fishery by. Converting that into an amount of fish for the recreational fishery, and you can make that clear in their proposal for conservation equivalency, it adds to the recreational reduction that's needed, but it's the decision of the state to make that call. That wouldn't just be for us, it would be for all the states as they want to apply those reductions. I think it gives a state an ability to manage that responsibility for reduction in its own way, based on the needs of its sectors and its fishermen. I would like that language if possible to be clear under the conservation equivalency section, so that when we go to public hearings on this it can be reported out as such.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ritchie.

MR. WHITE: Just to be clear to understand this then, so the Technical Committee then would review that proposal. If they did not find it was equal then it would not work. Is that your understanding, Mike of the process?

MR. LUISI: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike, you're just talking about adding language in the conservation equivalency that clarifies this specific thing would be okay. I'm not sure when I was cut off, so you would like language put in that clarifies that the mechanism that you talked about for conservation equivalency. Does anyone have a problem with adding that in, seeing no objection that will be added by consensus. Doug, you're all set?

MR. GROUT: At some point I have a question to add, it's a modification to the conservation equivalency for clarity, but there may be some people ahead of me.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, I just have Adam Nowalsky.

MR. NOWALSKY: I think at this point it's clear that the motion on the board needs to be amended to reflect as modified today, given the changes that we've made so far beyond just the addition of the options. But as I referenced earlier, I would like to see a change to the document that would add two columns to the tables, where the removals are to identify both what portion is coming from, what that option offers as a reduction in harvest and as a change in discard mortality would be helpful.

I would also like to see some language change in 2.2.5 under socioeconomic impacts, specifically the first paragraph, and the second paragraph talks about that there is expected negative short term impacts, but the long term impacts will be positive. I think most of us around the table agree with that sense in theory, but the reality is what we've experienced is that when we continue to take these changes there is a loss of interest in the fishery, particularly on the recreational side.

There is a loss of infrastructure that often occurs on the commercial side, and there aren't many cases in the last ten year in particular,

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where we're getting back what we hoped to. Again, I think in theory we agree with it, but I would like to see something added to these sections that reflects that there is an anticipated loss of interest and infrastructure that may not allow the long term expected benefit to be reaped as expected, and as outlined in this section.

MR. APPELMAN: Just trying to recap that a little bit. The idea that these reductions would be such that loss of interest in the fishery, we may not realize that long term benefit of this from angler welfare perspective.

MR. NOWALSKY: The last paragraph I think talks about angler welfare, the first paragraph specifically talked about economic jobs and value, so it would be reflected in both of those cases.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is everyone okay with that language? John McMurray.

MR. McMURRAY: I guess I'm okay with the language, but I would request that we also add language if there is a much greater loss of interest when there is no fish around to catch, because this fishery is really driven by opportunity to catch fish, not how small of a fish you could catch. I've been in it a long time, and that's really the truth about the striped bass fishery.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well, I'm not sure how to deal with that John. We're sort of rewriting things on the fly, and I don't think we can do that right now. But I understand your point. Jim Gilmore.

MR. GILMORE: Maybe I wasn't clear before, but my comments before were to the main motion that currently. Maybe I'll rephrase it differently. Currently the document says that conservation equivalency measures for the Delaware Bay or the Delaware River would not

have to be resubmitted, and my comment was that I think that they should.

Anybody that's going to want to do a conservation equivalency should have to resubmit the calculations, because they were not done consistently. Either we can agree, talk about that or I can put a motion up just to amend that so that any conservation equivalencies that are being presented by a state would have to resubmit their calculations justifying the use of conservation equivalency. Up to you how you want to handle it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. APPELMAN: I just want to get some clarification on this too, so I have up on the screen basically those exceptions to the suboptions. These are the measures that exist now that would carry over more or less into all these suboptions, so the one you're referring to is Delaware. Again yes, it's been accounted for in our calculations.

It is a question to the Board if they want to allow that measure to be rolled over or resubmit, in which case as you said it might shake out to be about the same thing anyways, but going through that process to vet it that is up to the Board. But I'm asking about Connecticut and New Jersey's programs, which are a reallocation of the commercial quota, so those would be reduced in terms of number of tags that they could issue. But here we're assuming that the size limits stay the same, so are you just speaking to Delaware's situation or to all three of those?

MR. GILMORE: Well, primarily Delaware but I think all of them should be done. It's a little bit more work, but we're going out to the public, and I've already gotten questions from this about why are they getting a bye and we're not, you know that type of thing. Well why do we have to recalculate them?

It's just easier. Again, I preface this by I think these are all going to fly. I don't have any opposition to them getting conservation equivalency. It just makes the document cleaner that we all recalculated the numbers under a consistent set of rules, and that it would just be a cleaner way to put the document out.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any objection to what Jim is proposing? Stewart Michels.

MR. STEWART MICHELS: Well it's just a matter of backing those numbers out. Those numbers are reflective in this analysis that was put forward right by the PDT. How are we going to back those numbers out then to accommodate for them? If it provides any assurance that this is a summer slot, and to date it only affects resident males in the system, and it wouldn't affect the ultimate goal, which is reducing mortality on female spawning stock biomass. It just creates a lot of work for us, and I think as Max pointed out, I don't think it's really going to get us anywhere.

DR. DREW: Just from the technical side. It would basically be just a standard state conservation equivalency program. You have all of the data available to show that during this segment of time, if you still allowed that harvest you would still see the same reductions that you would see just from going to the whatever new set of reductions is put into place for the coast.

That having that slot fishery would still give you on, a statewide level, the same percent reduction that we're seeing from all of the other that we're expecting from the larger overall change. As you say it is a very small component of your fishery, and it's a very small component of the overall harvest. I think on paper you will be able to get that back in without a problem, but it would just mean that you would need to formally resubmit a conservation equivalency program, as would

any other state that is sort of not rolled over now.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead Jim.

MR. GILMORE: Just the two issues before again was that we were using different discard mortality percentages when we did the calculations previously. Secondly, you know we have to redo them on the Hudson because MRIP doesn't cover the entire Hudson. It doesn't cover the entire Delaware also, so there are just some additional factors in this that I think again it just would be cleaner if we did it. I don't think it's a lot of work Stew, if it was I wouldn't propose it. But I think it's just a cleaner way to do it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: It doesn't look like we have consensus on this, so it would need to be a motion I guess, Jim.

MR. GILMORE: Are you ready? **Move that all states planning to use conservation equivalency submit justification for each proposal in the addendum, just for each proposal, leave it at that. Conservation equivalency should submit justification for each proposal. Okay, all states planning to use conservation equivalency should submit justifications for each proposal.**

MR. APPELMAN: Point of clarification. I don't think that really gets at what you're getting at, which is that under the suboptions Delaware is able to roll over this lower slot in Delaware Bay during the summer. I think the intent is to get rid of that ability to roll over that. In which case they would get in line with all the rest of the states and have to submit for CE if they want to change from whatever is selected. Is that?

MR. GILMORE: Do you just want a motion to remove that section? Isn't that easier?

MR. APPELMAN: I think so.

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MR. GILMORE: **Okay, Kirby if you can just say a motion to remove, I don't know what to say, I don't have it in front of me. But remove it from the draft document.**

MR. APPELMAN: **Jim, would that also apply to the Connecticut and New Jersey bonus fish, which I'm realizing now that it didn't make it into the document, but it needs to be in there that those two bonus program slot limits would also carry over for Connecticut and New Jersey.**

MR. GILMORE: Yes, because again we all should be doing the same thing.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is that it, Jim?

MR. GILMORE: Close enough, a little longer but that's fine.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is there a second, second by Megan Ware, discussion? Jason.

MR. McNAMEE: I'm trying to catch up here, I'm not sure I completely understood what is going on here. Maybe I'll say how I'm understanding it and that is, we're now asking, there was a comment in the Draft Addendum that kind of gave a pass to a couple of states because they've had conservations equivalencies that were approved at some point that have kind of propagated through time.

If we're now asking them to redo those, I just make the point that that is work for probably the Technical Committee member, and if we expect them to potentially work on an amendment and whatever is going to be in that we're piling up a bunch of work that I don't know has a lot of technical value. The amendment part does, the other part I'm not sure does. I just wanted to make that comment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Further comment on the motion. I need one moment to caucus.

MR. APPELMAN: Mr. Gilmore could you just read the language up there to yourself and let us know that that's good.

MR. GILMORE: Yes that's fine if Megan's okay with it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let me read it in. Move to amend to remove from the Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal. Roy Miller.

MR. MILLER: I am requesting clarification of the motion. We've discussed two specific measures for conservation equivalency, the Delaware Bay slot size and also the Connecticut and New Jersey trophy seasons. The way this motion reads to me, it's nonspecific for whose proposal we're talking about. Is that the way I'm reading this? In other words, does it also encompass Maryland's circle hook and educational program? In other words, do you have to re-justify any preexisting conservation equivalency program that you had in place under Amendment 6?

MR. APPELMAN: Yes. Based on whatever measure is selected in the end, all states have to come forward with CE, in order to put in alternative measures to that selected measure. The three examples in the document that sort of rolled over existing CE would now be wiped clean by this statement. It's an even playing field for everybody in all regions and fisheries now.

DR. DREW: To add to that. Things like the circle hook provisions and the education, so these regulations cover specifically the sizes. In this case Maryland's. Depending on the regulation that was chosen, the 19 for Maryland and the 20 for everybody else in the Bay, if that option is chosen that would stay, as would the

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associated circle hook or educational provisions as well.

If we go to for the Bay everybody goes to 20 inches and we put in a slot, Maryland if they wanted to go back to the 19 inch would have to resubmit that conservation equivalency proposal as well. They are not grandfathered into the specific calculations, the same way that some of these other coastal or ocean fishery minimum sizes were.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I need to be absolutely clear. Whatever is selected in the Addendum, there will be an option selected at some point in October. If Maryland has a different plan that what is selected, we'll put together a full package of conservation equivalency, which may or may not include circle hooks. I don't know that yet. We're likely not going to change that rule, so it will stay in place. But everything will be packaged up together. We can't assume that we're fishing under some reduced level of mortality because of a previously submitted plan, correct? Okay.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: **All right let's vote, all in favor, okay opposed, null, abstention, the motion passes 11 to 4, 1 abstention.** That brings us back up to the next motion. Stand by; we need to amalgamate all these things now. All right this is it. This is now the main motion as amended several times, and I am required to read this into the record. **Let me read it in first.**

Move to add two-suboptions under section 3.1 2-A4 and 3-A4 to include a slot limit with a 30 inch minimum size limit and a maximum size limit that meets the required reduction for the two different sections; remove from Draft Addendum VI language that exempts states with minimum size fish lower than the FMP standard from conservation equivalency so that all states are required to submit a conservation equivalency proposal; and adopt

Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass FMP for public comment as modified today. Doug.

MR. GROUT: Hopefully what I'm going to suggest here won't require a motion. I'm looking at in Section 3.2 we have a couple options where we're either going to mandate the use of circle hooks or promote the use of circle hooks. What I would like to have for clarification in there is the fact that we're talking about the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait for striped bass.

Because quite frankly, if you put a circle hook on a fly or a lure, you aren't going to get the reduction you're looking for. The whole thing behind circle hooks, the benefit of circle hooks is when you're fishing with bait, as opposed to J hooks. I think if we could just add that wording when fishing with bait for striped bass in both Option B and Option C, just as a clarification. I think there will be some benefits behind that going out to the public.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to clarify, so as it reads, Option B for example, implement regulations requiring the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait. That's the place where it would go in?

MR. GROUT: Yes that's fine, or you could say circle hooks as defined above when fishing with bait for striped bass.

MR. APPELMAN: Either way is fine.

MR. GROUT: Yes either way. The same thing under C, the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait for striped bass.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: David Miramant.

SENATOR DAVID MIRAMANT: If it needs a second we'll second that and if it doesn't, I support that.

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CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Any disagreement with adding that in? **Seeing none, we adopt it by consensus.** All right, are we ready to vote? Yes. Patrick Paquette.

MR. PATRICK PAQUETTE: Patrick Paquette, I am a member of the Striped Bass AP. I've been a past President and then the Government Affairs Officer for the Massachusetts Striped Bass Association since 2001. I've been attending this meeting for I don't know, almost as long as Tom Fote. I would like to make a couple of comments based on the motion you're about to make, just to make sure a few things that I did not hear as said.

I'm not going to repeat a bunch of stuff that you guys have debated; I value your time as much as my own. Nine percent release mortality is a good thing. It's one of the best release mortality numbers in all the fisheries management in the northeast. To realistically think we're going to get that release mortality down, although we should always be making strides for that. From a management point of view that may be unrealistic, especially when I don't hear you talking about a goal as to where you would like to get with that release mortality.

Any data in the document that is surrounding removals, and that shows removals should very clearly show the number of trips tied to those removals. My understanding is that discard mortality is not factored into commercial quota calculations. Pound nets, gill nets, hook and line release in my own state, they all have a discard mortality tied to them.

When you get into things like the proposal you discussed about Maryland, and what Maryland is talking about doing, discard mortality needs to be very clearly understood when you start swapping the fish back and forth between sectors. Based on Toni's comment answering to Dr. Armstrong's comments about what would and would not be able to be voted upon when

this comes back from public, I see this as a very, very narrow scope to document. Social and economic impacts of this document are massive. I've heard an hour's discussion about the small summertime fishery in Maryland, and I've heard zero discussion that you are today when you vote this, and limit the options of what can, you are going to significantly impact, if not wipe out, a multi-million dollar tournament structure up and down the east coast.

Hundreds of thousands of hotel rooms, visitor trips, private vessels, the tournament fishing on the east coast for striped bass is about to be reduced by probably 90 percent. Multi-million dollars in local impact, and we had no discussion of it here today. There is not much in here for people to talk about.

The same thing when it comes to impact. It's about one of the primary reasons that people do fish, and people fish for large fish. The word trophy has definitely got to do with where you're at. But I saw no option. My understanding in my experience as a Master is somebody who fished in two different parts of Massachusetts as a charter captain, the hunt for very large fish, the elusive 50 pound fish.

I would love to see an option in this document that the public could at least comment on a true trophy fish; 50 inch fish barely ever survive release. There is data around those, what we refer to as super cows, 50 inch fish. I believe that if you analyzed a 50 inch option along with some of these slot limits that you would see almost no difference in impact, because of how low that number is.

However, as you all know the ability of fishermen, fishermen fish on hope. Sportfishing fishes on hope. I would really appreciate it if you could at least let the public comment on a true fish of a lifetime opportunity. That is a big part of for-hire fishing, and a big part of private fishing. Conservation equivalency plans that do

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not work should face some sort of automatic accountability measure.

In Federal FMPs those kinds of automatic accountability measures that are known up ahead by those states, those are regular in Federal FMPs, they should be in this. I would also suggest that the people around the table, based on what these slot limits look like, do a little bit of research about a building phenomenon in U.S. fisheries, something called a dude trip.

I'm not a fan of dude trips, but make no mistake about it. When you take trophy fish, truly the hunt for big fish, yes there are about ten different TV programs under those names. When you take the hunt for big fish out of striped bass fishing, commercial anglers, and commercial fishers in Louisiana and in Alabama, are actually basically selling mate slots on their boat.

They let then the fishermen buy from dealers onshore. Please look into what a dude trip is, because dude trips are coming to the northeast very soon, because those people that can access when the size limit is different for the commercial fisher than it is for the private recreational fisher. Dude trips will become a viable thing for businesses in the northeast.

The last thing I want to tell you is the biggest one. The public expected to comment on the 50 percent likelihood of success of this document. The public commented many members of the public and organizations did prior to this document that they wanted to see options that meet the ten year rebuilding of Amendment 6. You've had at least two Commissioners around this. But because these things are not in the document, the public is not going to be able to comment on that and you're not going to be able to consider it when it comes back. You're already going to waste a lot of the public's time, because you've got dozens

of documents that say, hey we've got a problem with the 50 percent.

Hey, we've got a problem with not meeting the ten year. But you're taking that off the table. The public wants to comment on these things, and you're not giving them that opportunity. I have a problem with this document. This document I do not believe would meet the federal standard of a wide range.

Last but not least, if we miss. I want you to really think about this, and you're going to hear this in a lot of comments after the public comments. If management misses, and I'll be honest, I wonder if the environmental factors affecting the species are going to allow us to get the reduction we want at all.

But if we miss, anglers in the northeast are going to lose May or September or both. If we don't achieve this and the decline continues, you're getting ready to flip a coin on 50 percent of losing September or May, and that's going to be devastating to sportfishing in the northeast. Thanks, and I hope you listened to some of this stuff, because this document is significantly incomplete.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Yes sir, briefly please.

CAPTAIN ROBERT NEWBERRY: My name is Captain Robert Newberry, I'm Chairman of Delmarva Fisheries; located in Chestertown, Maryland. We represent commercial, recreational and packing and industries through the seafood industry on the Delmarva Peninsula. One thing that is a concern to me, we're looking at this conservation equivalence.

In the Chesapeake Bay, being the diverse ecosystem that we are. What's driving this conservation equivalence happens to be the fact of the fishing mortality, or basically the overfishing of the fish and the overfishing of the biomass. One thing, it's kind of a comment and

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a question. Maybe Max might be able to help me on this.

One of the factors in the definition of overfishing is not just strictly harvest, it can be following severely on episodic events like the freshet that we've had in the Chesapeake Bay, a 300 year record of fresh water. It can be pollution, it can be temperature. There are several different variances.

I was very interested to see if the TC is going to consider, when we submit conservation equivalences, if it is based on some of these episodic events in the definition of overfishing, if the TC will consider the fact of the pollution problems that we have in the Chesapeake Bay, the freshet that we have that would apply to the conservation equivalence.

It's not just our overfishing, it is like maybe, I would say 70 percent, maybe 60 percent, but 40 percent is like you know we have an area in Baltimore that has dumped over 2.5 billion gallons of pollution into the Bay in the past year. If that is going to be figured, if the definition of overfishing that is a factor in the definition of why overfishing is occurring, or overfished is occurring. I was wondering if the TC would be considering that when we submit out conservation equivalences.

DR. DREW: No. The conservation equivalency is only to say these regulations will result in the same percent reduction in total fishery removals as the proposed measure, so we're not considering any additional mortality from pollution, from any other environmental sources. The conservation equivalency is strictly focused on the fishery removals.

CAPTAIN NEWBERRY: The one thing with the dead zones and the benthic zones that we have in the Bay that are increasing right now, because of the temperature and the weather and the fresh water. When I look at the definition of how we get to overfishing, and the

definition is consider some of these environmental events. I think that should be, just my opinion that should be considered in when we do our conservation equivalence, so thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are we ready to vote? Very ready, all in favor, do you want to caucus? Caucus, two minutes. All right, we're going to call the question. **All in favor, thank you, opposed, null, abstention. The motion passes unanimously.**

CONSIDER POSTPONED MOTION FROM THE APRIL 2019 MEETING

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, Item 5, it's up to the Board. What do we want to do with this? I would suggest we need to move this down the road quite a bit until we're done with the Addendum. Mike Luisi.

MR. LUISI: I think we were in the same spot last time. We were either over the time limit or we had five minutes left when I made this motion to consider the initiation of an amendment. I'm not going to speak to that again. I think it's very important that we consider the long term success, and the long term management of this fishery. However, again we're faced with time limitations.

Based on our discussion yesterday, I talked with the Chair about what I foresee moving ahead. We have an October annual meeting where we'll be dealing with this addendum; Addendum VI probably will take some time. There is going to be conservation equivalency programs, and measures that are going to be needed to be considered at the winter meeting, which will likely take a great deal of time.

I'm thinking, Mr. Chairman that it may be best to postpone this motion and the consideration of the initiation of an amendment until the spring meeting of 2020. If you're okay with it, I would make that motion to postpone consideration of the initiation of the amendment to, I guess it will be the spring

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meeting of 2020, or move to postpone, what's up on the board.

The intent of the motion originally was to wait until Addendum VI had kind of cleared the decks before we begin the discussion. But I think just the motion in itself, and the initiation of an amendment is going to require a great deal of discussion, given what's been talked around about the table. Another idea that we may want to think about is putting together a small working group between now and May, to flesh out a little bit of what this amendment might look like, just something to consider.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Is that enough of a motion to do what we need to do? All right, is anyone opposed?

MR. LANGLEY: We have a motion to amend; I believe that should be addressed first, before the main motion. I may be incorrect but that is my assumption.

MR. APPELMAN: Mike, is your intent to postpone both of these, the main motion and the motion to amend?

MR. LUISI: Just as we did in May. My motion is to postpone the whole action, because I believe that there will be additional items such as conservation equivalency that may be brought up. We don't have time to get into that full debate today.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Emerson.

MR. HASBROUCK: If we delay any discussion about an amendment until next May, does that mean we essentially now have nine years to rebuild spawning stock biomass, or we will have nine years to rebuild?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well, we will be rebuilding at an F of 0.2. It just becomes more and clearer as time goes along, if we can do it in ten years. It's not like we're getting behind the

eight ball by delaying it for six months, or whatever.

MR. APPELMAN: The ten year timeframe, the clock is ticking on that yes.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: All right, let's have a vote on the motion, all in favor.

MS. WARE: Could we have two minutes for caucus, please, 30 seconds.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Yes. Andy.

MR. SHIELS: Before we take a vote could I add a comment or ask a question?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Sure.

MR. SHIELS: Do you want me to wait until they're done caucusing, or just jump in?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we're done.

MR. SHIELS: This brings me right back to where I was two hours ago, and so my concern then was that the Addendum that we just approved going out for public comment was not going to address the spawning stock biomass part. I read the section of Amendment 6 that says where we're supposed to do that. Emerson asked the question, now we're nine years and counting. We're going to go out to the public with only half of the story. What are we going to tell and convey to the public, either in the news releases that go out after today, or when we go out to the public in the next two months. Well, you have to wait until May or August or next year at the Annual Meeting, before we actually do anything on the spawning stock biomass part. I cannot vote for this in good conscience.

Although I know that we have no time left today that there is no time afforded for it at the October meeting, I can't support this in good conscience, because I'm helping to contribute

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to violating what's in Amendment 6. I have to vote against this for that reason, and I want that on the record.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: The reason we're going this route is because an amendment would be six months or a year from now, and so we're starting rebuilding now. We have a projection that gets us to 95 percent of the SSB target in ten years, and we'll be above the trigger in four or five years. We're being very progressive. We have to relook at it and make sure we hit it by ten, but we're coming very close, and we're moving forward in management quite a bit with this Addendum. Yes.

MR. SHIELDS: Just a brief follow up, and I'm not going to be argumentative, only that when I recapped what I thought Max said was that what we just passed was dealing with the overfishing part, but was not dealing on the spawning stock biomass rebuild. That's what I understood, and so that is not gelling with what I'm hearing right now. I'll stop at that.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: **Yes let's vote, are you all ready. All in favor raise your hand, opposed, null and abstention. The motion passes 11 to 5.** Tom Fote.

MR. FOTE: I disagree with Andy vehemently on this. We are dealing with the spawning stock biomass. This is what the rules are basically put in place so you can reach the target. We're not looking at whether it's going to accomplish in ten years or not, we have a 95 percent in doing that. Do we need to fine tune it?

You also forget that we got hit with a bunch of data, and I've been sitting around this table a long time. I said to Dirk before, I said what's going to happen three years from now when they reevaluate what they just did with MRIP, and tell us while we were wrong here, we've got to change here and change there, because they've done that to us over and over again.

We should be taking a right path, and again we need to deal with hook and release mortality. I can't accept the comments that we can't do anything about it, because people are going to fish. If we start basically going to look at what's happening, people right now are out fishing in Bays and estuaries where the water is 90 degrees, and they tell me well they're only catch and release fishermen.

I'm saying, you're catch and kill fishermen. With a 30 or 40 percent hook and release mortality, people that are conservation minded are not fishing in Bays and estuaries with 80 degree water right now for striped bass. I applaud Maryland for what they did by putting in that weather alert, and we should be doing that in the Delaware River when the water gets between 80 degrees for both New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I'm looking at a whole bunch of other issues that need to be covered under an amendment. Also, we are 40 million pounds higher than we produced the highest young of the year. We managed in 2011 and 2015, to produce, and '14 also, record year classes. It's not the spawning stock biomass that's the problem, it's a whole bunch of other issues like catch and release and other things that are going on that are causing the high mortality and environmental issues, which sometimes we don't have the control over. That's where I'm going to leave it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Doug.

MR. GROUT: Yes. I just wanted to make two points, one that I do think when we pass this Addendum, if we take the measures that are in this Addendum, we will start rebuilding the stock. There is clearly an indication we're reducing F back to the target. The reason I voted against postponing is because I think we can start the Amendment even sooner. I think we can start discussion at a minimum in January. If I was still going to be here, I might make another motion to try and un-postpone it.

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CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well we're thankful about that Doug. All right we're done with this item.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2019 FISHERY
MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND
STATE COMPLIANCE**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: The next item we're going to eliminate, we will be doing the FMP Review by e-mail, is that correct?

OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURN

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Which leaves us to other business, any final comments other business? Yes, sir.

MR. J. BRYAN PLUMLEE: My name is Bryan Plumlee. I just wanted to recognize Rob O'Reilly for his 32 years of service for the Commonwealth. I had the pleasure of serving on the State Management Board while Rob was the Chief of Fisheries. He was terrific. Jack Travelstead is here.

I think he would agree with me that Rob has been universally recognized as a source of great information and fairness for the Commonwealth, and I didn't want to let him slip away from his last meeting without us recognizing all the good work he has done, so thank you, Rob. (Applause) Just so he can relax a little bit, I want everyone to know that applications close out on Monday, so please submit.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let the record show that was a standing ovation. Any other business, seeing none we are adjourned?

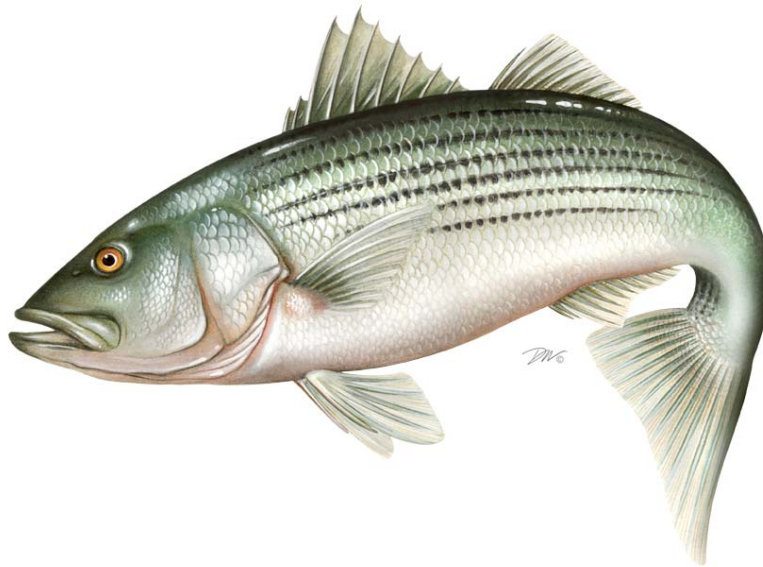
(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 12:15
o'clock p.m. on August 8, 2019)

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Draft Addendum for Public Comment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

**DRAFT ADDENDUM VI TO AMENDMENT 6 TO THE
INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS**



August 2019



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Draft Addendum for Public Comment

Draft Addendum for Public Comment

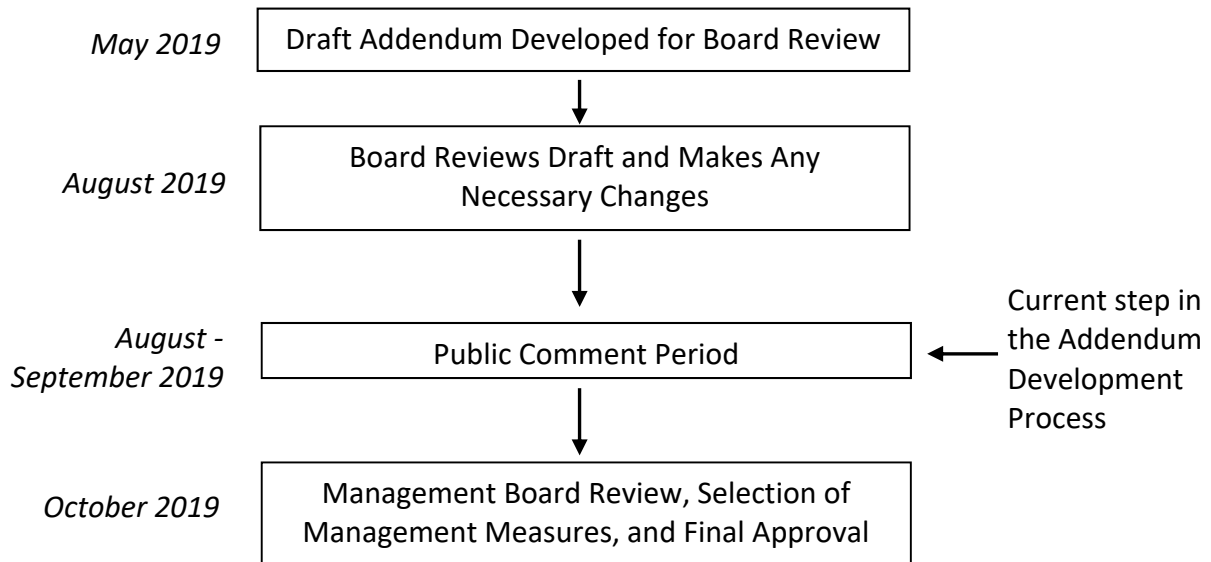
Public Comment Process and Proposed Timeline

In May 2019, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) initiated the development of an addendum to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass to consider changes to coastwide commercial and recreational regulations to address overfishing. This Draft Addendum presents background on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission) management of striped bass; the addendum process and timeline; and a statement of the problem. This document also provides management options for public consideration and comment.

The public is encouraged to submit comments regarding this document at any time during the public comment period. The final date comments will be accepted is **October 7, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.** Comments may be submitted at state public hearings or by mail, email, or fax. If you have any questions or would like to submit comment, please use the contact information below. Organizations planning to release an action alert in response to this Draft Addendum should contact Max Appelman at 703.842.0740.

Mail: Max Appelman, FMP Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland Street Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Email: comments@asmfc.org
(Subject: Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI)
Phone: (703) 842-0740
Fax: (703) 842-0741



Draft Addendum for Public Comment

1.0 Introduction

Atlantic striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) are managed through the Commission in state waters (0-3 miles) and through NOAA Fisheries in federal waters (3-200 miles). The management unit includes the coastal migratory stock between Maine and North Carolina. Atlantic striped bass are currently managed under Amendment 6 (2003a) to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Addenda I–IV.

At its May 2019 meeting, the Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP to consider coastwide changes to commercial and recreational regulations to bring fishing mortality to the target level. The Board's action responds to results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass which indicates the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing.

2.0 Overview

2.1 Statement of the Problem

The 2018 benchmark stock assessment indicates the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing relative to the updated reference points defined in the assessment. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 68,476 metric tons (151 million pounds), which is below the SSB threshold of 91,436 metric tons (202 million pounds). Total fishing mortality (F) was estimated at 0.31, which is above the F threshold of 0.24. The benchmark assessment and its single-stock statistical catch-at-age model was endorsed by the Peer Review Panel and accepted by the Board for management use.

By accepting the assessment for management use, the reference point management triggers in Amendment 6 have been tripped. In response, the Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum VI to address overfishing status and consider measures to reduce F back to F target. Accordingly, Draft Addendum VI proposes alternative measures for the commercial and recreational fisheries aimed to reduce total removals by 18% compared to 2017 levels in order to achieve F target in 2020. Other management issues including (but not limited to) reference points and rebuilding the biomass, will be addressed in a subsequent management document.

Roughly 90% of annual Atlantic striped bass recreational catch is released alive, of which 9% are estimated to die as a result of being caught (referred to as “release mortality” or “dead releases”). Catch and release fishing has been perceived to have a minimal impact on the population, however a large component of annual striped bass mortality is attributed to release mortality – accounting for roughly 48% of total removals in 2017 (49% in 2018). The current recreational striped bass management program uses bag limits and size limits to limit the number of fish that are harvested. However, these measures are not designed to reduce fishing effort and subsequent release mortality. While the proposed measures herein result in lower overall removals, the majority of them also increase dead releases. In order to address dead releases, effort controls that are better designed to reduce the number of fishing trips that encounter striped bass should be considered (e.g., closed seasons).

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2.2 Background

2.2.1 Status of the Stock

The 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass is the latest and best information available on the status of the coastwide striped bass stock for use in fisheries management. The assessment was completed and peer-reviewed at the 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SAW/SARC) meeting in November 2018. The accepted model for use in striped bass stock assessment is a forward projecting statistical catch-at-age (SCA) model which uses catch-at-age data and fishery-dependent and -independent survey indices to produce annual estimates of female SSB, F, and recruitment.

The results of the 2018 benchmark indicate that the Atlantic striped bass stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Female SSB in 2017 was estimated at 68,576 metric tons (151 million pounds), which is below the SSB threshold of 91,436 metric tons (202 million pounds) (Figure 1). Female SSB peaked in 2003 and has been declining since then; SSB has been below the threshold level since 2013. Total F in 2017 was estimated at 0.31, which is above the F threshold of 0.24 (Figure 2). Total F has been at or above the threshold in 13 of the last 15 years of the assessment (2003-2017). Recruitment in 2017 was estimated at 108.8 million age-1 fish, which is below the time series average of 140.9 million fish (Figure 1). Striped bass experienced a period of lower recruitment from 2005-2011 which contributed to the decline in female SSB that the stock has experienced since 2010. Recruitment was high in 2012, 2015, and 2016 (corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes), but estimates of age-1 striped bass were below average in 2013, 2014, and 2017.

The reference points currently used for management are based on female SSB levels during the 1995 reference year. The 1995 reference year is used as the female SSB threshold because many stock characteristics (e.g., an expanded age structure) were reached by this year and the stock was declared rebuilt. The female SSB target is 125% of SSB threshold. To estimate the associated F reference points, population projections are made using a constant F and changing the value until the female SSB threshold and target are achieved. For the 2018 benchmark, the reference point definitions remained the same, but the values have been updated. The 2018 benchmark was the first assessment for striped bass to use the improved Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) survey methods to estimate recreational fishery catches. The new MRIP removals estimates are on average 2.3 times higher than recreational removals used in previous stock assessments, resulting in higher estimates of female SSB and, therefore, higher estimates for the SSB reference points.

2.2.2 History of the Fishery Management Plan

The first Interstate FMP for Atlantic Striped Bass was approved in 1981 in response to declining juvenile recruitment and landings occurring along the coast from Maine through North Carolina. The FMP and subsequent amendments and addenda focused on addressing the depleted spawning stock and recruitment failure. Despite these management efforts, the Atlantic striped bass stock continued to decline prompting many states (beginning with

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Maryland in 1985) to impose a complete harvest moratorium for several years. State fisheries reopened in 1990 under Amendment 4 which aimed to rebuild the resource rather than maximize yield. The stock was ultimately declared rebuilt in 1995 and as a result, Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP was adopted which relaxed both recreational and commercial regulations along the coast.

The Atlantic striped bass stock is currently managed under Amendment 6 and its subsequent addenda, the most recent being Addendum IV which implemented new commercial and recreational regulations beginning with the 2015 season (ASMFC 2014). The addendum was initiated in response to the findings of the 2013 benchmark stock assessment which triggered management action; female SSB was below the target for two consecutive years and F was above the target in at least one of those years (ASMFC 2003a). Although the stock was not overfished, a steady decline in female SSB had occurred since the mid-2000s. The addendum established new F reference points (target and threshold) and a suite of regulatory measures aimed to bring F back down to the new F target. All states/jurisdictions (hereafter states) were required to implement regulations to achieve a 25% reduction from 2013 removals in the ocean fishery, and Chesapeake Bay fisheries implemented regulations to achieve a 20.5% reduction from 2012 removals. To achieve this, the ocean commercial quota was reduced by 25% and the Chesapeake Bay commercial quota was set at 2012 harvest, less 20.5%. For the recreational fishery, states implemented a 1 fish bag limit with a minimum size of 28 inches in the ocean fishery, and Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions submitted implementation plans to achieve the required reductions. Several states also had conservation equivalency proposals approved which allowed them to adopt different management programs while still achieving the required reductions.

The U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ; 3-200 miles) has been closed to the harvest, possession and targeting of striped bass since 1990, with the exception of a defined route to and from Block Island in Rhode Island which allows for the transit of vessels in possession of striped bass legally harvested in adjacent state waters. A recommendation was made in Amendment 6 to reopen federal waters to commercial and recreational fisheries. However, NOAA Fisheries concluded opening the EEZ to striped bass fishing was not warranted at that time. Following the completion of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, NOAA Fisheries, in consultation with the Commission, is directed to review the federal moratorium on Atlantic striped bass, and to consider lifting the ban on striped bass fishing in the Federal Block Island Transit Zone (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018).

2.2.3 Status of the Fishery

Atlantic striped bass is arguably the most iconic finfish on the Atlantic coast and has supported valuable fisheries for centuries. The current fishery is predominantly recreational with the sector accounting for roughly 90% of total harvest by weight since 2004 (commercial and recreational harvest, combined; Table 1). In 2017, total striped bass removals (harvest and dead discards/release mortality from both sectors) were estimated at 7.06 million fish, 90% of which was attributed to the recreational sector (Table 2; Figure 3). In 2018, total removals were estimated at 5.8 million fish, with 88% attributed to the recreational sector.

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Commercial Fishery Status

The commercial fishery is managed via a state-specific quota system based on average landings during the 1970s, resulting in relatively stable landings since 2004. From 2004 to 2014, coastwide commercial landings averaged 6.8 million pounds (1 million fish) annually (Table 1; Table 2). From 2015-2018, commercial landings have decreased to an average of 4.8 million pounds (611,000 fish) due to implementation of Addendum IV and a reduction in the commercial quota. In 2017, commercial landings were estimated at 4.8 million pounds (592,670 fish). In 2018, commercial landings were estimated at 4.7 million pounds (622,451 fish). Commercial dead discards (the portion of commercially caught striped bass that are released and assumed to die) account for approximately 13% of total commercial removals in numbers of fish since 2004. In 2017, commercial removals (landings plus dead discards) accounted for 10% of total removals (commercial plus recreational) in numbers of fish, and 12% of total removals in 2018.

The majority of commercial striped bass landings come from Chesapeake Bay; roughly 60% by weight annually since 1990, and 80% in numbers of fish. The differences between landings in weight and in numbers of fish is primarily attributed to availability of smaller fish and lower size limits in Chesapeake Bay relative to the ocean fishery.

Unlike the commercial fishery in Chesapeake Bay, the ocean fishery regularly underutilizes the quota. The ocean quota underage is mainly attributed to designated game fish status in several states including Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New Jersey which collectively share about 10% of the commercial quota in the ocean region. Furthermore, the underage has increased in recent years since migratory striped bass have not been available to the ocean fishery in North Carolina resulting in zero harvest since 2012 (North Carolina holds 13% of the ocean quota).

Recreational Fishery Status

The Atlantic striped bass recreational fishery is managed via bag limits and minimum size limits in order to constrain fishing mortality. Approximately 90% of recreational catch is released alive (Figure 4) – either due to angler preference (i.e., catch and release fishing) or regulation (e.g., undersized, or the angler already caught the bag limit). The assessment assumes, based on previous studies, that 9% of the fish that are released alive die as a result of being caught.

Total recreational removals (harvested fish plus released fish that died as a result of being caught) increased from a low of 2.7 million pounds (434,665 fish) in 1984 to a high of 75.8 million pounds (7.6 million fish) in 2013. Total removals decreased to an average of 53.5 million pounds (5.8 million fish) since the implementation of Addendum IV in 2015. In 2017, recreational removals were estimated at 53.7 million pounds (6.4 million fish). Of those removals, 37.9 million pounds (2.9 million fish) were harvested (Table 3). In 2017, 38.0 million striped bass (equivalent to 176 million pounds) were released alive resulting in an estimated 3.4 million dead releases (15.8 million pounds), which accounted for 48% of total striped bass removals in numbers of fish (Table 4). In 2018, 49% of total removals were attributed to dead

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releases (2.8 million fish or 12.3 million pounds). Recreational dead releases make up a large portion of total removals because most of the catch is released.

A large proportion of recreational harvest comes from Chesapeake Bay. From 2004-2014, 33% of recreational harvest in numbers of fish came from Chesapeake Bay. From 2015-2018, that percentage increased to 45%, likely as a result of the strong 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes moving through the fishery.

2.2.4 Performance of Addendum IV and the Effects of Changes in Effort and the Availability of Strong Year Classes

In 2016, following the first full year under Addendum IV measures, the Striped Bass Plan Review Team compared observed removals in 2015 to the reference period (2013 for the ocean fishery and 2012 for Chesapeake Bay) to evaluate whether the reductions needed to bring F back down to the target had been achieved. The results indicated the overall reduction was nearly the same as the predicted reduction on a coastwide level. The observed commercial reduction was very close to the predicted reductions, but the observed recreational reduction in the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries diverged significantly from the predicted values. Recreational fisheries in the ocean saw a greater reduction than what was predicted, while recreational fisheries in Chesapeake Bay experienced an increase in harvest relative to the reference period. Upon further review, the Technical Committee (TC) identified changes in effort and changes in the size, age structure, and the distribution of the 2011 year class in the ocean relative to the Chesapeake Bay as the most significant variables contributing to the large differences in the observed harvest compared to that predicted by the TC during the development of Addendum IV (ASMFC 2016). At that time, the 2011 year class was the largest recruitment event since the early 2000s. Those fish continued to grow and migrate to the ocean, becoming increasingly available to ocean fisheries and leading to significant increases in removals in 2016 and 2017 under the same management program¹. It should also be noted that decreased effort in the ocean fishery in 2018 resulted in roughly an 18% reduction in total removals relative to 2017 (and a 5% reduction from 2015 levels) under the same management measures. The decrease in effort was observed across all recreational fisheries, not just effort directed at striped bass. These annual fluctuations in catch (and in fishing mortality) under constant regulations highlight the effect of changes in effort and strong year classes on future catch, and the degree of uncertainty associated with bag and size limit analyses.

It is difficult to account for changes in effort and the impacts of emerging year classes in bag limit and size limit analyses, and harvest reduction calculations. The 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes (corresponding to the 2012, 2015, and 2016 recruitment estimates) have all been above average with the 2015 year class being the largest recruitment event since 2004. It is expected that the availability of the 2014 and 2015 year classes in 2020 will be similar to what was

¹ A stock assessment update in 2016 also indicated that Addendum IV successfully reduced F below the target in 2015. As a result, the Board initiated Draft Addendum V to consider relaxing coastwide measures to bring F back up to the target level. However, the Board withdrew Draft Addendum V from consideration after preliminary MRIP estimates revealed that 2016 removals increased without changing regulations.

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observed for the 2011-year class in 2016 and 2017. These strong year classes become available to the Chesapeake Bay fishery first and become more readily available to the ocean fishery as they grow and begin to migrate to the ocean. While strong year classes are a positive sign for the population, the abundance of undersized striped bass often leads to anglers catching and releasing a larger number of fish, thus driving up the number of recreational releases. When considering management changes, it is important to consider the impact such changes could have on strong year classes and to account for the emergence of strong year classes to the extent possible in supporting analyses.

2.2.5 Socioeconomic Impacts

Overall, there are many potential socioeconomic impacts that could result from striped bass harvest reductions. In general, the reduction in striped bass removals is likely to translate into a short-term negative impact on the regional economy and jobs associated with the fishing industry for this species. However, the positive long-term economic impacts stemming from stock recovery and subsequent catch increases in successive years will likely outweigh the short-term impacts.

The impacts associated with the reduction in removals will be different for the commercial and recreational sectors, primarily because the two sectors do not contribute equally to the local economy. A recent 2019 report from Southwick Associates² indicates 97% of total economic contribution associated with striped bass fishing came from the recreational sector in 2016. According to the report, total revenues in the commercial sector (from Maine to North Carolina) were \$19.8 million that year, while total expenditures in the recreational sector amounted to \$6.3 billion. The contribution of the commercial sector to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) when attempting to account for all industries involved in harvesting, processing, distributing, and retailing striped bass to consumers, was \$103.2 million and supported 2,664 regional jobs. In comparison, the contribution of the recreational sector to the region's GDP was \$7.7 billion and supported 104,867 jobs. Importantly, the report acknowledges that it is not intended to be used to set fishery regulations, but rather to demonstrate the economic significance of striped bass to local economies. It should also be noted that these numbers are an average for the entire region and actual economic impacts are expected to vary by state.

The dollar values above refer to economic impacts, not to the economic value (or net economic benefit for society) associated with the recreational and commercial fisheries. While data required to quantify these measures are not currently available, the effects of changes to the striped bass management program approved through this addendum can be qualified as follows: for the recreational sector, increased minimum size limits or other restrictions can lead to decreased availability of legal sized striped bass which can lead to increased effort and an increase in dead releases. Conversely, increased fishing restrictions could result in a reduction in number of recreational trips which could translate into a reduction in angler welfare. For the

² While this is a useful source of updated information, it is not peer-reviewed and, therefore, the methods behind the report's figures should be considered accordingly.

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commercial sector, a reduction in quota will likely reduce profits and may increase the consumer price of striped bass. However, as in the case of the economic impacts (and assuming increased restrictions do not permanently deter stakeholders from the striped bass fishery), these effects are expected to be outweighed by the positive effects on anglers', harvesters', and consumers' welfare associated with stock recovery in successive years.

2.2.6 Management Program Equivalency

The use of management program equivalency (hereafter referred to as "conservation equivalency") is an integral component of the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program, particularly for Atlantic striped bass. Conservation equivalency allows states flexibility to develop alternative regulations that address specific state or regional differences while still achieving the goals and objectives of the FMP. Under Amendment 6 to the Striped Bass FMP, a state may submit a proposal for a change to its regulatory program for any mandatory compliance measure. It is the responsibility of the state to demonstrate the proposed management program is equivalent to the measures selected through this addendum. All conservation equivalency proposals are subject to TC review and Board approval.

Several states currently use conservation equivalency. For example, the use of closed seasons have been used as an effective tool to implement smaller size limits or increased bag limits while still achieving the same quantified level of conservation. Note the PDT did not develop closed season options for the ocean or Chesapeake Bay regions because the impacts are expected to vary by state and fishery. While closed seasons could be very effective in regions and seasons when striped bass is the only viable fishing choice, closed seasons may have little or no impact in fisheries that operate as catch and release, or in areas where other species are available for harvest. For example, Atlantic mackerel and bluefish are commonly caught with striped bass, so trips that target those species may still catch striped bass and contribute to striped bass release mortality even if striped bass are not targeted or retained.

States should consult the Commission's Conservation Equivalency Technical Guidance Document before considering the development and submission of conservation equivalency proposals. If this document is approved for public comment, the TC will develop criteria for conservation equivalency with this addendum.

3.0 Proposed Management Options

The striped bass ocean fishery is defined as all fisheries operating in coastal and estuarine areas of the U.S. Atlantic coast from Maine through North Carolina, excluding the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River (A-R) management areas. The Chesapeake Bay fishery is defined as all fisheries operating within Chesapeake Bay. This document does not propose changes to the A-R management program.

The proposed recreational management options herein were developed using MRIP catch and harvest estimates. To account for year class strength, the Plan Development Team (PDT) used catch-at-length data from 2016 and 2017 to characterize the catch in 2020. The PDT also assumed the same level of non-compliance observed in 2016 and 2017 will occur in 2020,

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including undersized fish harvested legally through conservation equivalency. States may voluntarily implement management programs that are more conservative than those required herein. As noted, several states currently implement conservation equivalency programs in order to have management measures that meet the needs of their state's fishery (see *Appendix 1* for a summary of striped bass regulations by state and fishing sector in 2017).

Projecting Harvest Reductions to Achieve the Fishing Mortality Target

The PDT used the same forward projecting methodology that was used in the 2018 benchmark assessment to estimate the removals needed to achieve F target (0.20) in 2020 with a 50% probability. The projections account for the uncertainty in the stock assessment estimates of striped bass abundance and recruitment, and so for a given level of removals in 2020, there is some uncertainty about the F rate that results. A 50% probability of achieving F target means that in 2020, the projected F rate will be centered around F target, with a 95% chance that F will be between 0.17 and 0.23. There is also a 95% chance that F will be below F threshold in 2020, meaning that striped bass will not be experiencing overfishing even if F is above F target. Importantly, there is a 99.8% chance of F being lower than F in 2017 ($F_{2017} = 0.31$) (Figure 5).

The projections were made using final 2018 landings and dead discard estimates, and average removals from 2016-2018 were used as a proxy for 2019 to account for interannual variability in removals. Results indicate an 18% reduction from 2017 total removals is needed to achieve F target in 2020. If the stock continues to be fished at F target, female spawning stock biomass is projected to be above the SSB threshold by 2023 and be at 93% of the SSB target in 2027 (Figure 6). Additional reductions may be needed to achieve the female SSB target within the timeframe required by the Amendment 6 management triggers (i.e., the stock rebuilding schedule cannot exceed 10 years).

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

The following section outlines three management scenarios (including status quo) that are designed to reduce total removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels in order to reduce F to the target in 2020. These scenarios, which are mutually exclusive, include (1) status quo; (2) an 18% reduction in total removals where the desired percent reductions are applied equally (proportionally) to both the commercial and recreational sectors; and (3) an 18% reduction in total removals where the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector.

Note for all commercial fishery quota options: *quotas are allocated on a fishing year basis. In the event a jurisdiction exceeds its allocation, any overage of its annual quota will be deducted from the state's allowable quota in the following year. None of the scenarios propose changes to existing commercial size limits or the quota transfer provision.*

Note for all recreational fishery options: *the options herein are designed to reduce harvest and total removals; they are not designed to address effort, and in effect, release mortality. The proposed measures are projected to increase releases because effort is assumed to be constant (i.e., the same level of fishing trips encountering striped bass in 2016 and 2017 will occur in*

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2020). Accordingly, to offset the expected increase in releases, larger reductions in harvest are needed in order to achieve the desired overall reduction in total removals. To reduce both harvest and release mortality, additional effort controls should be considered to reduce the number of fishing trips that encounter striped bass. Additionally, the long term conservation benefits of implementing slot limits (i.e., protecting larger, older fish) may not be realized if effort is concentrated on fish within the slot limit, thus reducing the number of fish that survive to grow out of the slot. While the PDT expects fish larger than the slot limit will be protected, concentrating effort within the slot limit may reduce the number of fish that are able to grow out of the slot thus potentially reducing the population of larger, older fish over time.

When providing input on this document, please first identify your preferred management scenario (Option 1, 2, or 3) and then select your preferred management measures within that scenario. All three scenarios present management options for each fishery and management area combination (recreational measures for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries and commercial quotas for the ocean and Chesapeake Bay fisheries). All recreational options assume the same fishing seasons as in 2017, unless otherwise noted. All commercial quota options assume the same commercial size limits as in 2017.

Adopted options (other than status quo) would supersede Addendum IV, Sections 3.1 and 3.2, and replace corresponding sections in Amendment 6.

Option 1: Status Quo

The language of Addendum IV, Sections 3.1 and 3.2 would remain in place. In essence, if Option 1 is selected, Atlantic striped bass fisheries will continue to operate under the provisions of Addendum IV. It should be noted this option does not meet the projected reductions needed from 2017 levels to achieve F target in 2020.

Ocean Recreational Fishery

All coastal fisheries (excluding Chesapeake Bay and the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River) will be constrained by a one fish bag limit and 28-inch minimum size limit. Any jurisdiction submitting a proposal for conservation equivalency must demonstrate through quantitative analysis that its proposal achieves at least a 25% reduction in harvest (including estimated dead discards) from its ocean recreational fishery. All conservation equivalency proposals are subject to Technical Committee review and Board approval.

Note: the Chesapeake Bay spring trophy fishery is part of the coastal fishery for management purposes.

Chesapeake Bay Management Area Recreational Fishery (Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission and Virginia)

The Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions will submit a management program that achieves at least a 20.5% reduction from 2012 harvest (including estimated dead discards) in the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery for Technical Committee review and Board approval.

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The Chesapeake Bay fisheries reductions were based on 2012 harvest because the Bay-wide quota had already been reduced by 14% in 2013, in keeping with the Bay commitment to raise or lower quotas, with definitive changes in the exploitable stock biomass as approved by the FMP. The commercial Chesapeake Bay fisheries' quota reduction meant harvesters were provided 14% less tags or pounds of harvestable quota in 2013, as compared to 2012 and the 2013 recreational summer and fall quotas were reduced by 14% compared to 2012.

Ocean Commercial Fishery

The table below indicates each states commercial quota in pounds. These quotas reflect a 25% reduction from the previous Amendment 6 quotas.

State	Status Quo Addendum IV Quota (Pounds)	2017 Harvest For Reference
Maine*	188	-
New Hampshire*	4,313	-
Massachusetts	869,813	823,409
Rhode Island^	182,719	175,312
Connecticut**	17,813	-
New York	795,795	701,216
New Jersey**^	241,313	-
Delaware	145,085	141,800
Maryland^	98,670	80,457
Virginia	138,640	133,874
North Carolina	360,360	-
Coastal Total	2,854,706	2,056,068

* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota to the recreational fishery.

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

^ Addendum IV quota reduced through conservation equivalency for RI (181,572 lbs), NJ (215,912 lbs), and MD (90,727 lbs)

Chesapeake Bay Management Area Commercial Fishery (Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission and Virginia)

The Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions will submit a management program that achieves at least a 20.5% reduction from 2012 harvest in the Chesapeake Bay commercial fishery for Technical Committee review and Board approval. A 20.5% reduction from 2012 harvest results in a Chesapeake Bay commercial quota of 3,120,247 pounds.

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Option 2: Equal Percent Reductions

An 18% reduction in total removals relative to 2017 levels to reduce F to the target in 2020 where the desired percent reduction is applied equally (proportionally) to both the commercial and recreational sectors; both sectors would take an 18% reduction from 2017 levels. Under all sub-options, states have the flexibility to develop alternative regulations through conservation equivalency, including the allocation of the required reductions between the commercial and recreational sectors.

Recreational Fishery Management:

The tables below provide a suite of options for both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries. Size limits are in total length. Bag limits are per person per day. The Board will choose one option from each table, and all states would be required to implement the selected sub-option for striped bass fisheries in their respective state waters.

Sub-Option 2-A: Ocean Recreational Fishery (All jurisdictions would implement).

Under all sub-options, New York would be required to submit a proposal that achieves an 18% reduction in removals relative to 2017 levels for the Hudson River management area, and Pennsylvania would be required to submit a proposal that achieves an 18% reduction in its state waters (catch from Pennsylvania and the Hudson River is not covered by MRIP).

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy Fish/Season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
2-A1	1	35" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 [^] (see Appendix 1)	-43%	+3%	-18%
2-A2	1	28"-35" slot		-46%	+3%	-19%
2-A3	1	30"-38" slot		-44%	+3%	-18%
2-A4	1	32"-40" slot		-49%	+4%	-21%

[^]Under sub-option 2-A3 and 2-A4, ocean trophy fish fisheries would be capped with a 38" and 40" maximum size limit, respectively.

Sub-Option 2-B: Chesapeake Bay Recreational Fishery (MD, PRFC, DC and VA would implement).

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy Fish/Season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
2-B1	1	18" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 (see Appendix 1)	-40%	+4%	-20%
2-B2	2	22" min		-34%	+4%	-18%
2-B3	2	18"-23" slot	Same seasons as 2017 but <u>without</u> trophy fish season [^]	-36%	+5%	-19%
2-B4	2	20"-24" slot		-35%	+5%	-19%

[^]Under sub-options 2-B3 and 2-B4, states would be required to submit for conservation equivalency to reinstate a trophy fish season.

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Commercial Fishery Management

This option is an 18% reduction from the Addendum IV quotas (in pounds) after accounting for approved conservation equivalency programs.

The following table presents quotas for both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries. Note this option can achieve an 18% reduction from 2017 levels if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017. However, there is potential for commercial removals to increase relative to 2017 if active fisheries fully utilize their quotas in 2020.

State	Addendum IV Quota	2017 Harvest	18% Reduction
Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota[^]			
Maryland	1,471,888	1,439,760	1,206,948
PRFC	583,362	472,719	478,357
Virginia	1,064,997	827,848	873,298
Chesapeake Bay Total	3,120,247	2,740,327	2,558,603
Ocean Commercial Quota			
Maine [*]	188	-	154
New Hampshire [*]	4,313	-	3,537
Massachusetts	869,813	823,409	713,247
Rhode Island ^{^^}	182,719	175,312	148,889
Connecticut ^{**}	17,813	-	14,607
New York	795,795	701,216	652,552
New Jersey ^{**^^}	241,313	-	177,048
Delaware	145,085	141,800	118,970
Maryland ^{^^}	98,670	80,457	74,396
Virginia	138,640	133,874	113,685
North Carolina	360,360	-	295,495
Ocean Total	2,854,706	2,056,068	2,312,579

*Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota to the recreational fishery.

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

[^]Jurisdiction-specific quotas for Chesapeake Bay are based on the 2017 allocation of the Bay-wide quota.

^{^^}Addendum IV quota reduced through conservation equivalency for RI (181,572 lbs), NJ (215,912 lbs), and MD (90,727 lbs). An 18% reduction is calculated relative to these reduced quota.

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Option 3: The Commercial Sector Takes a Smaller Percent Reduction

An 18% reduction in total removals relative to 2017 levels to reduce F to the target in 2020 where the commercial sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the recreational sector. In this option, the commercial sector will take a 1.8% reduction in quota [the product of the percent total reductions needed (18%) and the proportion of 2017 removals from the commercial sector (10%)]. The commercial percent reduction in numbers of fish is subtracted from the total reductions needed to achieve F target in 2020 to calculate the reduction the recreational sector must take. This reduction is subtracted from the 2017 recreational removals estimate to calculate the new target percent reduction for recreational removals (20%). Under all sub-options, states have the flexibility to develop alternative regulations through conservation equivalency, including the allocation of the required reductions between the commercial and recreational sectors.

The rationale for this suite of options is the commercial fishery is managed via a static quota system which keeps effort and removals relatively constant from year to year, while the recreational management program does not have a harvest limit. This has allowed recreational effort and, therefore, removals to increase with resource availability and other social and economic factors.

Recreational Fishery Management:

The tables below provide a suite of options for both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries. Size limits are in total length. Bag limits are per person per day. The Board will choose one option from each table, and all states would be required to implement the selected sub-option for striped bass fisheries in their respective state waters.

Sub-Option 3-A: Ocean Recreational Fishery (All jurisdictions would implement).

Under all sub-options, New York would be required to submit a proposal that achieves an 18% reduction in removals relative to 2017 levels for the Hudson River management area, and Pennsylvania would be required to submit a proposal that achieves an 18% reduction in its state waters (catch from Pennsylvania and the Hudson River is not covered by MRIP).

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy fish/season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
3-A1	1	36" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 (see Appendix 1)	-48%	+4%	-20%
3-A2	1	28"-34" slot		-52%	+4%	-22%
3-A3	1	30"-37" slot		-51%	+4%	-21%
3-A4[^]	1	32"-40" slot		-49%	+4%	-21%

[^]Under sub-option 3-A3 and 3-A4, ocean trophy fish fisheries would be capped with a 37" and 40" maximum size limit, respectively.

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Sub-Option 3-B: Chesapeake Bay Recreational Fishery (MD, PRFC, DC and VA would implement).

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy Fish/Season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
3-B1[^]	1	MD: 19" min PRFC, DC, VA: 20" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 (see <i>Appendix 1</i>)	-48%	+4%	-29%
3-B2	1	18" min		-40%	+4%	-20%
3-B3	2	23" min	Same seasons as 2017 <i>except</i> the trophy season starts no earlier than May 1	-42%	+6%	-20%
3-B4	2	18"-22" slot		-48%	+6%	-21%
3-B5	2	20"-23" slot		-47%	+6%	-20%
3-B6	2	22"-40" slot	Same seasons as 2017; same trophy season and minimum sizes <i>except</i> with a 40" max size limit	-39%	+5%	-21%

[^]Sub-option 3-B1 drops the bag limit to 1-fish but maintains 2018 size limits. The PDT notes that a higher percent reduction is projected relative to 2017 size limits (i.e., when all fisheries were at a 20" minimum).

(COMMERCIAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT OPTION FOR OPTION 3 ON NEXT PAGE)

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Commercial Fishery Management

This option is a 1.8% reduction from the Addendum IV quotas (in pounds) after accounting for approved conservation equivalency programs.

The following table presents quotas for both the ocean and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries. Note this option can achieve a 1.8% reduction from 2017 levels if active commercial fisheries perform the same as they did in 2017. However, there is potential for commercial removals to increase relative to 2017 if active fisheries fully utilize their quotas in 2020.

State	Addendum IV Quota	2017 Harvest	1.8% Reduction
Chesapeake Bay Commercial Quota[^]			
Maryland	1,471,888	1,439,760	1,445,394
PRFC	583,362	472,719	572,861
Virginia	1,064,997	827,848	1,045,827
Chesapeake Bay Total	3,120,247	2,740,327	3,064,083
Ocean Commercial Quota			
Maine [*]	188	-	185
New Hampshire [*]	4,313	-	4,235
Massachusetts	869,813	823,409	854,156
Rhode Island ^{^^}	182,719	175,312	178,304
Connecticut ^{**}	17,813	-	17,492
New York	795,795	701,216	781,471
New Jersey ^{**^^}	241,313	-	212,026
Delaware	145,085	141,800	142,473
Maryland ^{^^}	98,670	80,457	89,094
Virginia	138,640	133,874	136,144
North Carolina	360,360	-	353,874
Ocean Total	2,854,706	2,056,068	2,769,454

*Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota to the recreational fishery.

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

[^]Jurisdiction-specific quotas for Chesapeake Bay are based on the 2017 allocation of the Bay-wide quota.

^{^^}Addendum IV quota reduced through conservation equivalency for RI (181,572 lbs), NJ (215,912 lbs), and MD (90,727 lbs). A 1.8% reduction is calculated relative to these reduced quota.

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3.2 Circle Hook Provision

This section proposes options regarding the use of circle hooks when fishing with bait to reduce striped bass discard mortality in recreational fisheries.

Discard mortality accounts for a considerable amount of removals in the Atlantic striped bass fishery along the east coast. The latest assessment assumes 9% of fish that are released alive die as a result of being caught (Diodati and Richards 1996), although there is some evidence it may be higher, particularly in the summer months. Management measures that increase the minimum size limit or reduce bag limits can lead to an increase in the number of striped bass released.

The use of circle hooks by anglers targeting striped bass with bait, live or chunk, has been identified as a method to reduce the discard mortality of striped bass in recreational fisheries. The ASMFC defines circle hooks as “a non-offset hook where the point is pointed perpendicularly back towards the shank” (ASMFC 2003b). The term non-offset circle hook means the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank (e.g. when the hook is laying on a flat surface, the entire hook and barb also lay flat). When a circle hook begins to exit the mouth of a fish, the shape causes the shaft to rotate towards the point of resistance and the barb is more likely to embed in the jaw or corner of the fish’s mouth. Circle hooks can reduce rates of “gut-hooking” and lower the likelihood of puncturing internal organs if the hook is swallowed.

Caruso (2000) found discard mortality was reduced by 12.5% by using circle hooks compared to j-hooks in Massachusetts waters and the incidence of potentially lethal wounding was low with circle hooks. Lower discard mortality was also estimated on the Hudson River with circle hook usage when compared to j-hooks (Millard et al. 2005). Within Chesapeake Bay, Lukacovic and Uphoff (2007) collected data on striped bass hooking mortality using natural cut bait on j-hooks and circle hooks. The study found that j-hooks were 3.7 times more likely to result in deep-hooking than circle hooks, and deeply-hooked fish were 17 times more likely to die when released.

While circle hooks have been demonstrated to reduce hooking mortality rates, factors other than hook type can also affect the release mortality rate. These other factors include water temperature (Nelson 1994; Wilde et al. 2000; Millard et al. 2005), air temperature (Lukacovic and Uphoff 2007), salinity (RMC 1990), hook size (ASMFC 2003b), fish length (Lukacovic and Uphoff 2007), and hooking location (Nelson 1994; Millard et al. 2005; Lukacovic and Uphoff 2007). Additionally, it is unknown how many anglers currently use circle hooks, resulting in uncertainty on how many additional fish could be saved if mandatory circle hook measures are put in place. Enforceability and compliance are also concerns depending on how regulations are implemented, specifically depending on which anglers these regulations would apply to (e.g., to only those targeting striped bass, or all bait fishing in a state).

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If Option B or Option C is selected, the Board must specify an implementation schedule. The schedule should consider state legislative and regulatory/public outreach development processes, including consultation with its stakeholders and user groups.

Option A. Status Quo

The language from Amendment 6, Section 5.3.1 would remain in place:

The states/jurisdictions are recommended to encourage the use of circle hooks to reduce the mortality associated with hooking and releasing striped bass. A number of studies have been conducted that have demonstrated that release mortality is decreased significantly with the use of circle hooks. In order to promote the use of circle hooks, states are encouraged to develop public relations/education campaigns on their benefits.

Option B. States/jurisdictions would be required to implement regulations requiring the use of circle hooks, as defined above, with the intent of reducing striped bass discard mortality in their recreational fisheries when fishing with bait. States have the flexibility to develop regulations that address specific needs of their fisheries. In order to promote the use of circle hooks, states are encouraged to develop public education and outreach campaigns on their benefits when fishing with bait.

Option C. States/jurisdictions would be required to promote the use of circle hooks by developing public education and outreach campaigns on their benefits when fishing with bait. States/jurisdictions must provide updates on public education and outreach efforts in annual state compliance reports.

4.0 Compliance Schedule

If approved, states must implement Addendum VI according to the following schedule to be in compliance with the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate FMP:

XXXXXX: States submit proposals to meet requirements of Addendum VI.

XXXXXX: Management Board reviews and takes action on state proposals.

[Month Day, Year]: States implement regulations.

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5.0 Literature Cited

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6.0 Tables and Figures

Table 1. Total removals (harvest and discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in pounds, 2004-2018. Note: Harvest is from ACCSP/MRIP, dead discards and release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore catch and harvest from North Carolina.

Year	Commercial		Recreational		Total Removals
	Harvest	Dead Discards	Harvest	Release Mortality	
2004	7,335,116	1,262,136	54,221,282	14,307,082	76,144,795
2005	7,121,319	1,078,391	57,587,212	14,412,620	79,581,675
2006	6,785,006	1,333,235	50,674,893	16,303,942	74,333,557
2007	7,047,195	1,181,533	42,841,560	12,680,939	63,054,061
2008	7,190,685	953,364	56,665,831	12,436,713	76,637,612
2009	7,216,792	1,076,465	54,411,882	11,236,287	73,903,661
2010	6,996,713	920,564	61,528,673	10,833,398	80,236,228
2011	6,789,792	809,577	59,592,631	7,569,260	74,729,834
2012	6,516,868	1,411,621	53,257,096	8,046,178	69,269,469
2013	5,819,678	901,326	65,057,882	10,731,891	82,432,216
2014	5,937,949	1,167,696	47,949,041	8,177,402	63,484,692
2015	4,830,124	1,031,887	39,899,162	11,621,265	57,294,717
2016	4,831,442	1,085,060	43,687,890	11,655,870	61,229,668
2017	4,803,867	1,110,833	37,896,893	15,818,534	59,392,844
2018	4,714,661	870,348	23,069,028	12,343,941	40,997,978

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Table 2. Total removals (harvest and discards/release mortality) of Atlantic striped bass by sector in numbers of fish, 2004-2018. Note: Harvest is from ACCSP/MRIP, dead discards and release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore catch and harvest from North Carolina.

Year	Commercial		Recreational		Total Removals
	Harvest	Dead Discards	Harvest	Release Mortality	
2004	879,768	160,196	4,553,027	3,665,234	9,258,224
2005	970,403	145,094	4,480,802	3,441,928	9,038,227
2006	1,047,648	158,260	4,883,960	4,812,332	10,902,201
2007	1,015,226	166,397	3,944,679	2,944,253	8,070,556
2008	1,027,837	108,962	4,381,186	2,391,200	7,909,184
2009	1,049,959	128,191	4,700,222	1,942,061	7,820,433
2010	1,031,430	133,064	5,388,440	1,760,759	8,313,693
2011	944,777	87,924	5,006,358	1,482,029	7,521,088
2012	870,606	191,577	4,046,299	1,847,880	6,956,361
2013	784,379	112,097	5,157,760	2,393,425	8,447,661
2014	750,263	121,253	4,033,747	2,172,342	7,077,604
2015	623,313	101,343	3,085,725	2,307,133	6,117,515
2016	607,084	105,119	3,500,434	2,981,430	7,194,066
2017	592,670	108,475	2,934,293	3,419,651	7,055,089
2018	622,451	90,092	2,244,766	2,826,667	5,783,976

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Table 3. Total recreational harvest of Atlantic striped bass by state in numbers of fish, 2004-2018. Harvest is from MRIP. *Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

Year	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ^	DE	MD	VA	NC*	total
2004	118,305	22,104	666,703	159,552	134,502	458,148	1,042,093	66,567	668,512	893,302	323,239	4,553,027
2005	118,323	35,480	536,058	195,580	202,636	854,633	958,051	48,815	819,052	517,320	194,854	4,480,802
2006	140,868	20,865	483,187	129,264	168,265	614,759	972,248	44,453	1,342,324	833,543	134,184	4,883,960
2007	95,474	8,146	471,873	135,771	163,871	602,845	722,166	17,171	1,127,310	518,275	81,777	3,944,679
2008	133,379	11,884	514,064	73,408	132,755	1,169,855	791,013	67,708	779,700	670,543	36,877	4,381,186
2009	146,497	17,291	694,992	138,357	100,267	574,188	1,141,495	64,776	1,104,647	711,164	6,548	4,700,222
2010	37,299	21,383	808,175	162,049	170,199	1,449,043	1,091,368	61,374	1,151,822	368,584	67,144	5,388,440
2011	48,517	54,202	873,496	202,237	91,104	1,005,255	1,038,894	43,662	1,112,977	328,404	207,610	5,006,358
2012	31,379	37,302	1,010,563	130,689	137,125	927,503	742,420	51,320	719,622	258,376	0	4,046,299
2013	73,345	63,157	658,713	308,312	269,562	902,452	1,324,245	70,635	1,185,023	302,316	0	5,157,760
2014	86,409	16,522	523,531	171,984	131,829	804,490	501,949	26,171	1,639,631	131,231	0	4,033,747
2015	14,434	10,036	485,317	67,036	140,783	406,786	600,269	41,895	1,111,503	207,666	0	3,085,725
2016	14,180	17,627	230,069	128,354	63,334	697,675	659,574	5,892	1,545,587	138,142	0	3,500,434
2017	22,042	37,723	392,347	59,582	94,536	472,321	625,909	27,786	1,091,645	110,402	0	2,934,293
2018	16,025	13,378	389,457	39,169	85,467	181,681	465,289	4,174	993,305	56,821	0	2,244,766

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Table 4. Total recreational releases of Atlantic striped bass by state in numbers of fish x1000, 2004-2018. Recreational releases are from MRIP and a 9% mortality rate is applied to calculate release mortality. *Estimates exclude inshore harvest from North Carolina.

Year	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ^	DE	MD	VA	NC*	Total Releases	Release Mortality (9% of Releases)
2004	1,597	593	13,338	1,899	1,414	4,568	3,685	373	8,748	4,263	247	40,725	3,665
2005	4,729	1,001	9,043	2,052	4,172	3,468	3,078	560	7,492	2,469	179	38,244	3,442
2006	8,059	889	19,279	2,094	2,016	4,407	3,605	685	9,024	3,375	37.2	53,470	4,812
2007	1,927	451	10,840	1,485	1,863	3,011	4,673	597	5,660	2,185	22.5	32,714	2,944
2008	1,157	197	7,496	778	5,063	2,782	3,668	633	3,222	1,547	26.4	26,569	2,391
2009	674	124	5,989	1,070	2,427	2,262	3,503	444	4,011	1,072	1.00	21,578	1,942
2010	522	161	5,090	619	1,416	3,036	2,436	256	5,390	586	51.4	19,564	1,761
2011	453	191	4,036	621	1,571	2,692	2,447	338	3,484	389	245	16,467	1,482
2012	657	164	3,629	1,292	892	2,428	1,822	358	9,001	289	0.00	20,532	1,848
2013	985	295	4,670	2,574	2,312	3,956	4,349	273	6,676	503	0.00	26,594	2,393
2014	1,023	316	6,425	438	740	2,784	2,840	530	8,304	738	0.00	24,137	2,172
2015	824	262	4,471	1,653	1,761	3,682	2,440	309	8,524	1,709	0.00	25,635	2,307
2016	2,162	819	6,299	1,416	1,208	3,739	1,808	218	13,781	1,638	39.2	33,127	2,981
2017	2,719	1,418	12,866	1,543	4,993	2,761	2,316	254	7,788	1,333	5.15	37,996	3,420
2018	2,174	356	5,377	2,180	7,514	1,989	2,756	352	7,458	1,247	3.49	31,407	2,827

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Figure 1. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) and recruitment (age-1 fish), 1982-2017. Source: 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass.

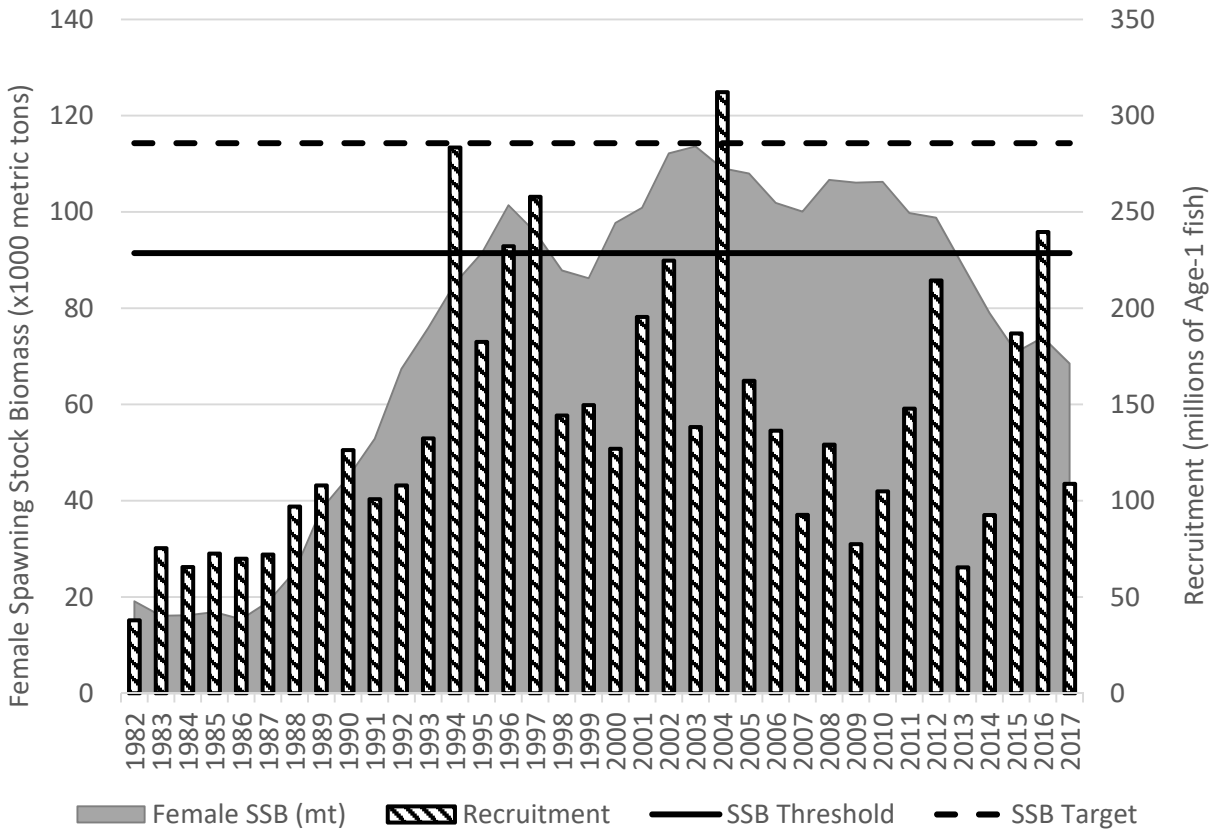
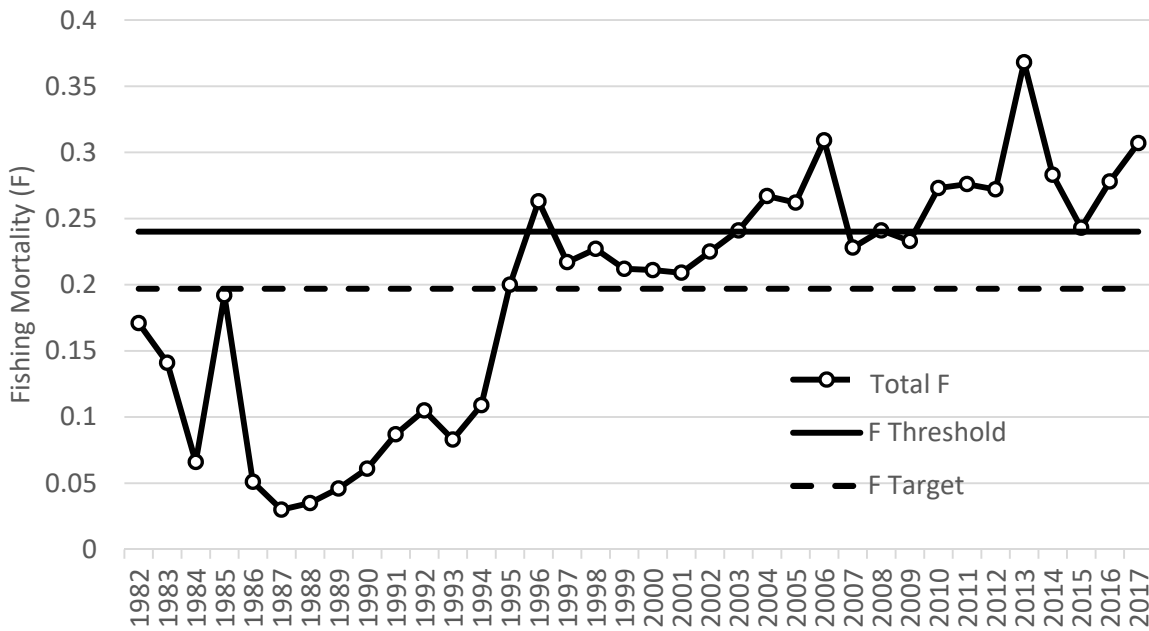


Figure 2. Total fishing mortality (F), 1982-2017. Source: 2018 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass.



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Figure 3. Total striped bass removals by sector in numbers of fish, 1982-2018. Note: Harvest is from ACCSP/MRIP, dead discards and release mortality is from ASMFC. Estimates exclude inshore catch and harvest from North Carolina.

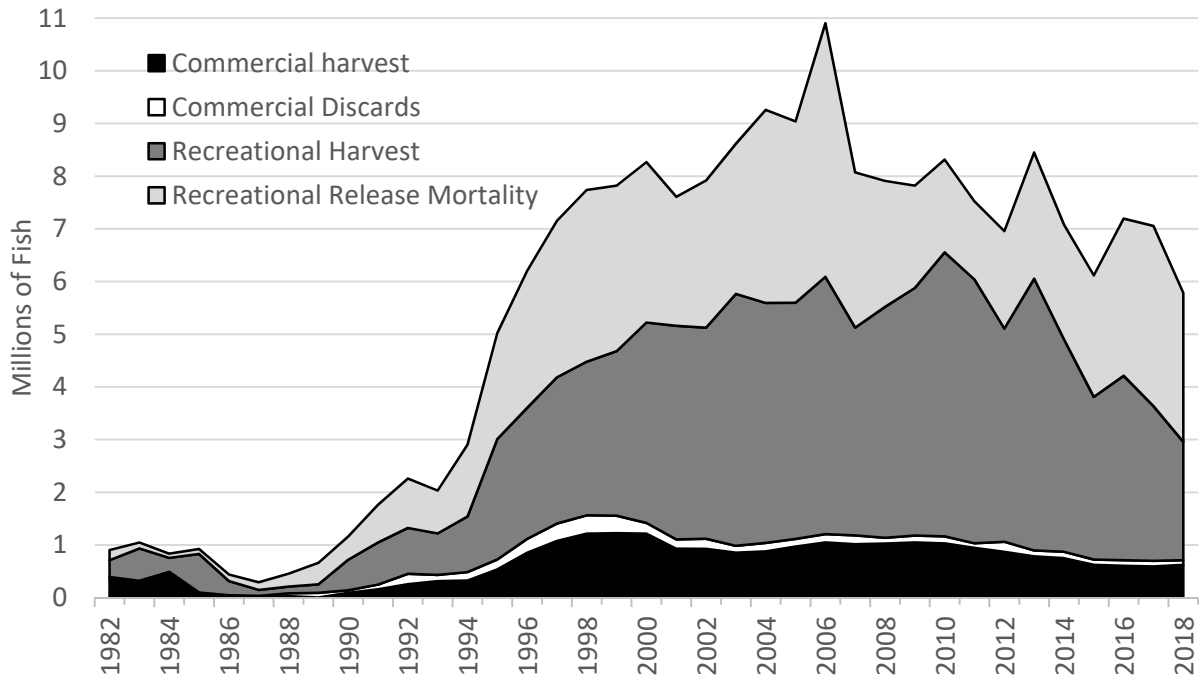
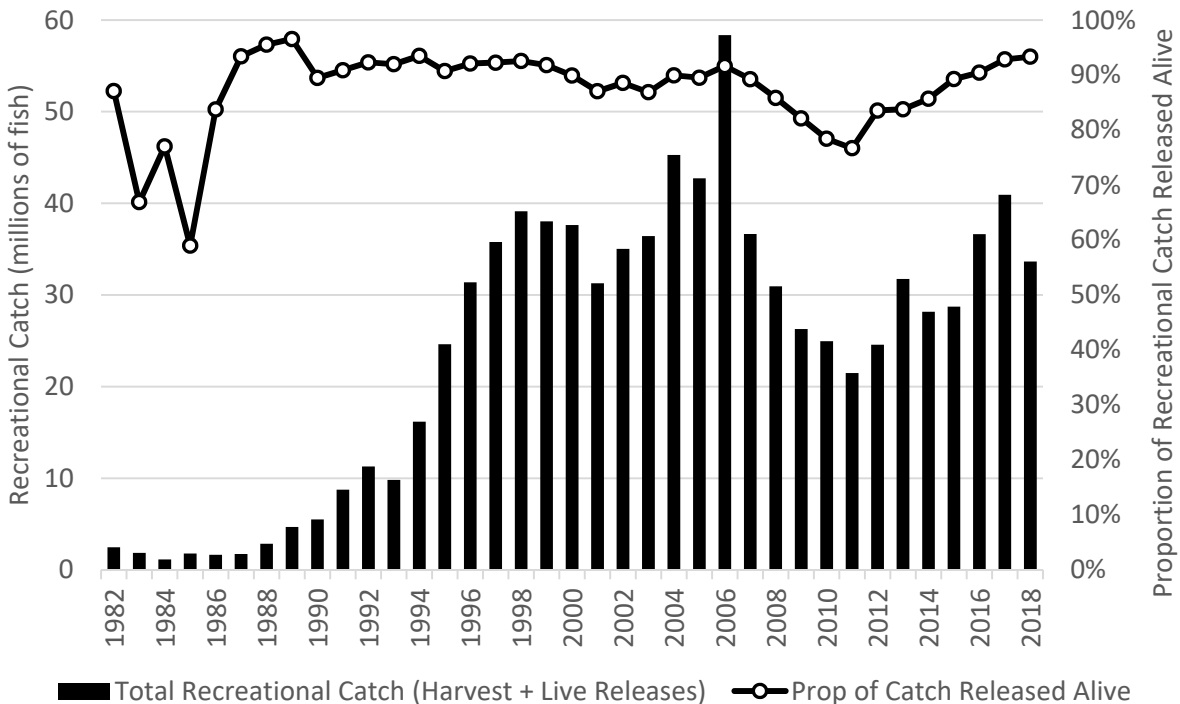


Figure 4. The proportion of recreational fish caught and released alive, 1982-2018. Source: MRIP. Excludes inshore catch from North Carolina.



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Figure 5. Projected fishing mortality and 95% confidence intervals if total removals in 2020 equal an 18% reduction from 2017 removals, plotted with the F target, F threshold, and F in 2017.

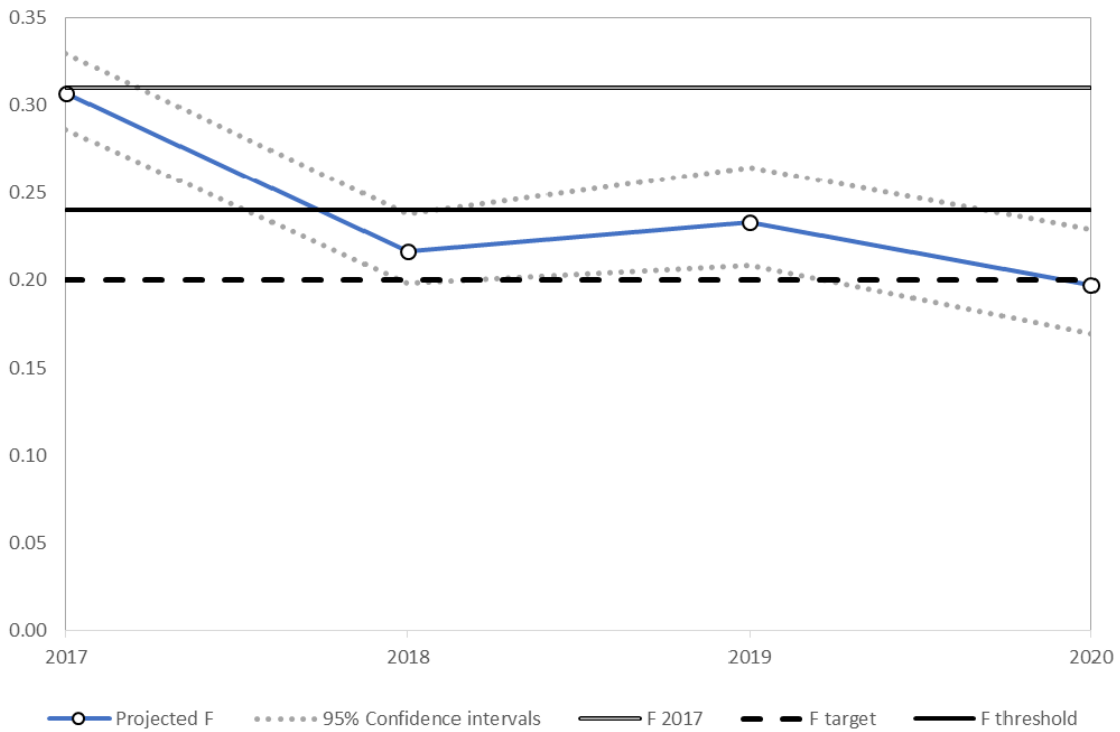
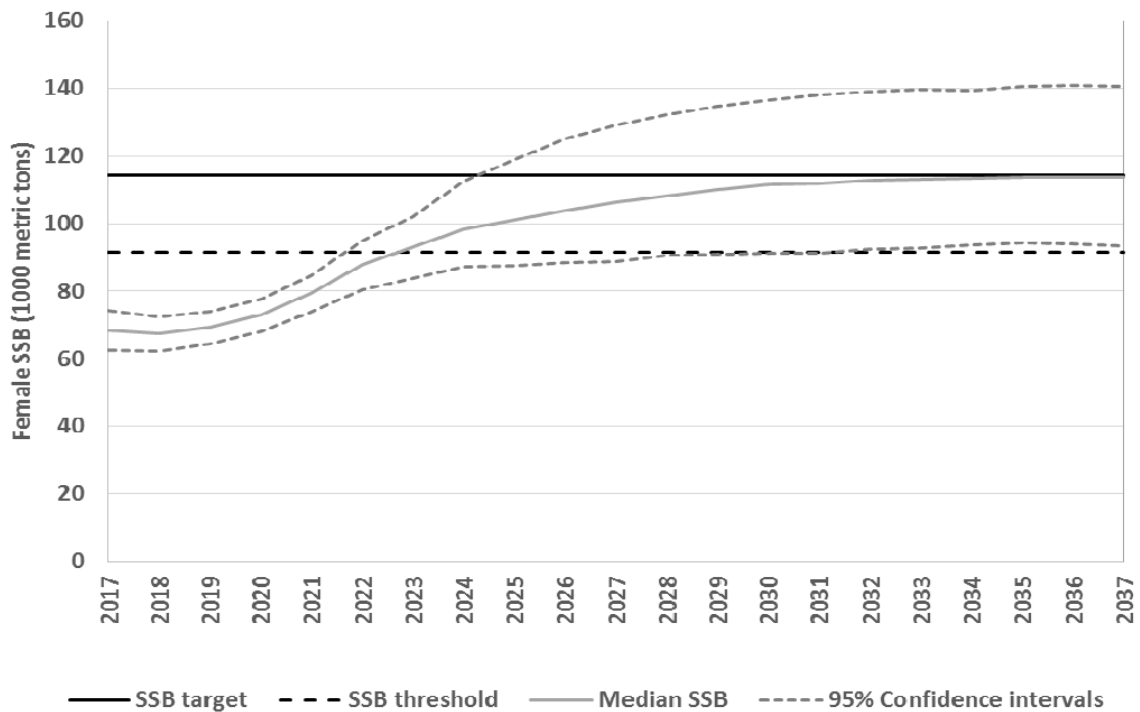


Figure 6. Projecting female spawning stock biomass (SSB) forward until SSB target is achieved while fishing at the fishing mortality target (F = 0.20) beginning in 2020.



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Appendix 1. Summary of Atlantic striped bass regulations in 2017. Source: 2018 State Compliance Reports. Minimum size limits and slot size limits are in total length (TL). *commercial quota reallocated to recreational bonus fish program

Commercial regulations in 2017.

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	SEASONAL QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
ME	Commercial fishing prohibited		
NH	Commercial fishing prohibited		
MA	34" minimum size	869,813 lbs. Hook & line only	6.23 until quota reached, Monday and Thursdays only; 15 fish/day with commercial boat permit; 2 fish/day with rod and reel permit (striped bass endorsement required for both permits)
RI	Floating fish trap (FFT): 26" minimum size General category (GC; mostly rod & reel): 34" min.	Total: 181,540 lbs., split 39:61 between the FFT and GC. Gill netting prohibited.	FFT: 4.1 – 12.31, or until quota reached; unlimited possession limit until 70% of quota projected to be harvested, then 500 lbs/day GC: 5.28-8.31, 9.10-12.31, or until quota reached. Closed Fridays and Saturdays during both seasons.
CT*	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program: 22 – <28" slot size limit, 5.1 – 12.31 (voucher required)		
NY	28"-38" minimum size (Hudson River closed to commercial harvest)	795,795 lb. Pound nets, gill nets (6-8" stretched mesh), hook & line.	6.1 – 12.15, or until quota reached. Limited entry permit only.
NJ*	Commercial fishing prohibited; bonus program: 1 fish at 24 – <28" slot size limit, 9.1 – 12.31 (permit required)		
PA	Commercial fishing prohibited		
DE	Gillnet: 28" minimum size, except 20" min in Del. Bay and River during spring season. Hook and Line: 28" min	Gillnet: 137,831 lbs. Hook and line: 14,509 lbs.	Gillnet: 2.15-5.31 (2.15-3.30 for Nanticoke River) & 11.15-12.31; drift nets only 2.15-2.28 & 5.1-5.31; no fixed nets in Del. River. No trip limit. Hook and Line: 4.1–12.31, 200 lbs/day trip limit

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Appendix 1, commercial regulations in 2017 (continued).

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	SEASONAL QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
MD	Ocean: 24" minimum CB and Rivers: 18–36"	Ocean: 90,727 lbs. CB and Rivers: 1,471,888 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota).	Ocean: 1.1-5.31, 10.1-12.31, Mon- Fri Bay Pound Net: 6.1-12.30, Mon-Sat Bay Haul Seine: 6.1-12.29, Mon-Fri Bay Hook & Line: 6.1-12.28, Mon-Thu Bay Drift Gill Net: 1.2-2.28, 12.1-12.29, Mon-Thu
PRFC	18-36" slot size limit 2.15-3.25 and 18" minimum size all other seasons	583,362 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota). Allocated by gear and season.	Hook & line: 1.1-3.25, 6.1-12.31 Pound Net & Other: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15 Gill Net: 1.1-3.25, 11.13-12.31 Misc. Gear: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15
DC	Commercial fishing prohibited		
VA	Bay and Rivers: 18" min size, and 18-28" slot size limit 3.26–6.15 Ocean: 28" min	Bay and Rivers: 1,064,997 lbs. (part of Bay-wide quota). Ocean: 136,141 lbs. ITQ-system for both areas.	Bay and Rivers: 1.16-12.31 Ocean: 1.16-12.31
NC	Ocean: 28"	360,360 lbs. (split between gear types). Number of fish allocated to each permit holder. Allocation varies by permit.	Seine fishery was open for 120 days, 150 fish/permit Gill net fisher was open for 45 days, 50 fish/permit Trawl fishery was open for 70 days, 100 fish/permit

Draft Addendum for Public Comment

Appendix 1, recreational regulations in 2017. C&R = catch and release

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	BAG LIMIT	GEAR RESTRICTIONS	OPEN SEASONS
ME	28" minimum size	1 fish/day	Hook & line only; circle hooks only when using live bait	All year, except spawning areas are closed 12.1 – 4.30 and catch and release only 5.1 – 6.30
NH	28" minimum size	1 fish/day	Gaffing and culling prohibited	All year
MA	28" minimum size	1 fish/day	Hook & line only; no high-grading	All year
RI	28" minimum size	1 fish/day	None	All year
CT	28" minimum size	1 fish/day	Spearing and gaffing prohibited	All year
NY	Ocean and Delaware River: 28" minimum size Hudson River: 18"-28" slot limit, or >40"	1 fish/day	Angling only. Spearing permitted in ocean waters. Catch and release only during closed season.	Ocean: 4.15 – 12.15 Hudson River: 4.1 – 11.30 Delaware River: All year
NJ	1 fish at 28" to < 43", and 1 fish ≥ 43"		Circle hooks required while fishing with natural bait during springtime spawning ground closure.	Ocean: All year All other waters: 3.1 – 12.31, except spawning ground closure from 4.1 – 5.31 in the lower Delaware River and tributaries
PA	Upstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 1 fish at ≥ 28" minimum size, year round Downstream from Calhoun St Bridge: 1 fish at ≥ 28" minimum size, 1.1 – 3.31 and 6.1 – 12.31 2 fish at 21"-25" slot size limit, 4.1 – 5.31			
DE	28" minimum size, no harvest 38-43" (inclusive)	2 fish/day	Hook & line, spear (for divers) only. Circle hooks required in spawning season.	All year except 4.1-5.31 in spawning grounds (C&R allowed). In Del. River, Bay & tributaries, may only harvest 20-25" slot from 7.1-8.31

Draft Addendum for Public Comment

Appendix 1, recreational regulations in 2017 (continued). C&R = catch and release

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	BAG LIMIT	OTHER	OPEN SEASON
MD	Ocean: 28"-38" slot limit or ≥44" CB Spring Trophy: 35" minimum CB Summer/Fall^: 20" minimum and only one fish can be >28"	Ocean: 2 fish/day CB Spring Trophy: 1 fish/day CB Summer/Fall^: 2 fish/day	See compliance report for specifics.	Ocean: All year CB: C&R only 1.1-4.14^ CB Spring Trophy: 4.15-5.15 Bay Summer/Fall: 5.16-12.20
PRFC	Spring Trophy: 35" minimum Summer/Fall: 20" minimum and only 1 fish can be >28"	Trophy: 1 fish/day Summer/Fall: 2 fish/day	No more than two hooks or sets of hooks for each rod or line	Spring Trophy: 4.15 -5.15 Summer/Fall: 5.16-12.31
DC	20" minimum and only one fish can be >28"	2 fish/day	Hook & line only	5.16-12.31
VA	Ocean: 28" minimum Ocean Trophy: 36" minimum CB Trophy: 36" minimum CB Spring: 20-28" (with 1 fish >36") CB Fall: 20" minimum and only one fish can be >28"	Ocean: 1 fish/day Ocean Trophy: 1 fish/day Bay Trophy: 1 fish/day Bay Spring: 2 fish/day Bay Fall: 2 fish/day	Hook & line, rod & reel, hand line only. Gaffing is illegal in Virginia marine waters. No possession in the spawning reaches of the Bay during trophy season	Ocean: 1.1-3.31, 5.16-12.31 Ocean Trophy: 5.1-5.15 Bay Trophy: 5.1-6.15 Bay Spring: 5.16-6.15 Bay Fall: 10.4-12.31
NC	Ocean: 28" minimum	Ocean: 1 fish/day	No gaffing allowed.	Ocean: All year

^in Susquehanna Flats and Northeast River: C&R only from 1.1-5.3 and 1 fish/day at 20-26" slot size limit from 5.16-5.31



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
FROM: Max Appelman, FMP Coordinator
DATE: October 11, 2019
SUBJECT: Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI Public Hearing Summaries

Twenty one public hearings were held in fourteen jurisdictions. Approximately 888 individuals are estimated to have attended the hearings. Each public hearing is summarized in the following pages. Public hearing summaries are ordered from north to south, and by date. This is then followed by public hearing attendance (sign-in sheets) including any written comment submitted at the hearings.

Note: A summary of all public comment received by ASMFC on Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI will be included in supplemental materials.

M19-080

Kennebunk, Maine

October 1, 2019

15 Attendees

Meeting Staff: Megan Ware (ME DMR)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet

Overview

- All participants strongly supported Option 2: Equal Percent Reductions such that the commercial and recreational sectors both take an 18% reduction. Participants were split on which sub-options should be chosen for the ocean recreational fishery.
- All participants strongly supported the mandatory use of circle hooks, Option B.
- There was agreement that large breeders in the population need to be protected so the population can rebound.
- Many participants voiced concern about the impact of the commercial fishery on the stock, noting this fishery targets large breeding fish and produces high levels of discards.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- All fifteen participants commented in favor of Option 2. Support for specific sub-options was split and is described below:
 - Eight people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1 (35" minimum)
 - One individual (a part of the American Saltwater Guide Association) noted the impacts of a slot limit are up in the air and supported the 35" minimum size as the best measure moving forward.
 - Another individual expressed concern about the enforcement of a slot limit.
 - Four people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A3 (30-38" slot)
 - Those in support commented this slot limit would protect spawning fish and allow the brood stock to increase.
 - One individual noted a 40" fish should never be kept.
 - Another individual commented that an upper size limit would allow large fish to spawn multiple times.
 - Eight people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1 (18" minimum in the Chesapeake Bay)
 - Several individuals noted that while they support the 18" minimum size for the Chesapeake Bay, the entire coast should be subject to a 28" minimum size so that fish are protected in nursery areas and everyone is held to the same standard.
 - One individual supported the 20-26" slot limit that was in place several years ago. He commented that this protected large spawning fish.

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- All fifteen participants (including one individual from the American Saltwater Guide Association) supported a requirement to use circle hooks (Option B).
 - Several individuals noted that Maine already requires the use of circle hooks and other states should meet this standard.
 - One individual noted barbless hooks should be considered to reduce the discard mortality.
 - There was agreement from participants that states should also conduct education on circle hooks and how to release fish. They recommended a short video and quiz be required before obtaining a recreational fishing license. They noted tackle shops sell a wide variety of hooks and so some people may not know which hook to use or the conservation benefits of the circle hook. There was also support for increasing the cost of a recreational license (no higher than \$10) to support these educational efforts.

General Comments

- All participants expressed significant concern about the impacts of the commercial fisheries on the stock.
 - Seven individuals recommended that there be no commercial fishery for stripers.
 - Several expressed concern that, even though the numbers suggest the commercial fishery is responsible for 10% of removals, they are removing large breeding fish which are important for the future of the stock; the value of these fish is overlooked.
 - Two individuals commented they have personally seen the commercial fishery operate and highlighted the high number of boats in a specific area and the high number of discards. One of these individuals commented that many commercial license holders in New England double as a commercial and Charter captain. These boats will buddy up to ensure each boat gets the largest size fish.
 - One individual expressed concern about the illegal selling of fish in the commercial fishery.
- Many participants did not have a high level of confidence in the data and figures presented.
 - One individual noted the graphs presented do not capture reality because they do not include the illegal harvesting and selling of fish that is occurring.
 - Another individual noted the table which shows total recreational release mortality by state suggests Maine has an equivalent or higher release mortality than states such as Rhode Island and New York. This individual didn't think that was correct and had low confidence in the table presented. He highlighted that accurate numbers are needed to ensure a successful plan.
 - One individual recommended the MRIP survey ask anglers about conservation goals. This would provide routine feedback on what fishermen would like to see.
- As noted above, there was strong support for additional education around the size limits, the use of circle hooks, and how to properly release fish. Individuals commented they would

be willing to have a higher cost of a recreational license if that additional money went to education efforts.

- One individual asked that analysis be presented on what the health of the population would look like minus the fishery (i.e. F=0).
 - One individual highlighted the economic value of the recreational fishery. He commented that this economic impact must be considered when making a final decision.
 - One individual recommended there be more scientific collaborations with universities in New England.
 - One individual noted the value of fish in the water needs to be recognized. He noted that a maximum extraction policy does not account for the fact that anglers enjoy time on the water and the memories made fishing.
 - One individual recommended that, in Maine, all tributaries be made catch and release in the spring. He recommended that management plan mimic what is done in the Kennebec River.
-

Yarmouth, Maine

October 2, 2019

Approximately 19 attendees

Meeting Staff: Megan Ware (Maine DMR), Toni Kerns (ASMFC),

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Most commenters spoke in favor of option 2. No comment in favor of option 3. There were three that spoke in favor of status quo in part because there was already a reduction in harvest in 2018 relative to 2017 levels.
- All commenters favored mandatory use circle hooks.
- Some commenters wanted to see Maine use conservation equivalency to provide a better opportunity to catch a fish.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.2 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Three people commented in favor of Option 1. A few commented that the state had already reduced its harvest in 2018 relative to 2017 levels.
 - One commenter was in favor of Maine going back to the 20-26" slot. Even with the current regulations in Maine. It is difficult to keep a fish, the old slot limit allows fishermen to take home a fish.
 - 15 people commented in favor of Option 2, including the Maine Charter Boat Association. Few people spoke directly to why they chose equal reduction but those that did favored equity across the two sectors. There was no support for option 3.

Many commenters felt it was important to note the options will have a much greater impact on Maine fishermen to take home one keeper in comparison to the Mid-Atlantic States and producer areas. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:

- 10 people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - This is the best of the worst options. It is the only option without a slot.
 - This option gives the fish a chance to spawn and it works for a coastwide effort.

Comments Against:

 - There were concerns from some that such a high minimum size would shut Maine fishermen out of the recreational fishery. A 35" minimum size would be a much larger reduction in Maine than 18%, more like a 95% reduction in harvest.
- Four people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A2,
 - Slots allow for a better opportunity for Maine fishermen to take home a keeper. Fishermen should not have to go through so many fish to take just one keeper.
 - Slot allows the large female to breed.
 - Similar slot limits have been successful in other U.S. fisheries like red drum and snook

Comments Against:

 - Some commenters were concerned the slot would focus harvest on breeding fish.
- One person commented in favor of sub-option 2-A4.
 - This person is in-favor of slot limits and the options provided the greatest overall reduction in harvest
 - Similar slot limits have been successful in other U.S. fisheries like king salmon and snook
- The Maine Charter Boat Association commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- 16 people support Option B, it is already a law in Maine.
 - Prior to implementation of mandatory circle hooks in Maine there were many people that spoke against it; however those same individuals now speak out in favor of circle hooks, particularly their effectiveness.
 - Circle hooks brought the release mortality down in Maine. They are effective.

General Comments- also see written testimony behind the sign in sheet

- There is an issue with the fishery but a moderate approach to correct the problem would be best.
- The coastwide regulation will have a different impact depending on the state (smaller or larger harvest reduction). These measures will have a significant impact on Maine harvest but a small impact on the overall population. The Board should consider changes in regulations where there will be the most effective impacts for the stock.

- Should consider making the same circle hook provisions for the commercial fishery as the recreational fishery.
 - There is some desire to use conservation equivalency to create measures that would allow Maine fishermen take home a keeper. Big stripers do not make it above Casco Bay. If you take this fishery away, Maine fishermen will not have another recreational species to fish for. Maine is not like other states where there are many other options for recreational fishermen to choose from.
 - Need to strengthen conservation equivalency review process and need better accountability: should be able to quantify reductions for proposed management measures
 - There was an overall agreement that no one should be fishing on prespawn fish. States like Maryland that have a spring trophy season seems to be insane.
 - There should be a law for a single hook on the back of treble hooks.
 - There is a general disbelief in the MRIP data. There should be a different accounting for the recreational fishery like a stamp or a tag so once you catch your fish you have to tag it and cannot throw it back over (dead) when you catch a bigger fish.
-

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

October 1, 2019

Approximately 24 attendees

Meeting Staff: Doug Grout (NH F&G), Toni Kerns (ASMFC),

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- All commenters spoke in favor of option 2. No comments in favor of status quo or option 3. The group wanted to see the fishery rebuild and get strong again.
- Most commenters favored mandatory use circle hooks noting, however, noting there should be an exception for the tube and worm live bait in New Hampshire.
- A number of participants voiced concerns about the use of conservation equivalency and would like to see it eliminated as an option.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.3 Proposed Management Scenarios

- 15 people commented in favor of Option 2. Few people spoke directly to why they chose equal reduction but those that did favored equity across the two sectors. There was no support for Options 1 or 3. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:
 - 13 people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1, including CCA NH
 - Allows the fish to spawn a few years before you can start to catch them.
 - 2 people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A2

- It prevents harvest of the big fish, allows for a keeper and reduces enforcement issues.
- Good to take a few small fish and put back the big fish.
- There are not many 35" fish in NH so a slot will let you get a keeper.
- It does a little more than the 18% requirement.
- 11 people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1, including CCA NH
- Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B2

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- One person supported Option A
- 16 people support Option B, including CCA NH, because it is viable and proven method to reduce release mortality
 - Several people commented there should be an exception for the tube and worm live bait in New Hampshire.
- Two people support Option C because a mandatory circle hook requirement would be impossible to enforce

General Comments

- It is confusing when New Hampshire and Maine have different regulations. All the states should have the same regulations. Slot limits caused confusion when neighboring states has different regulations. You could not travel between two state waters.
- Slot limits are good when people comply with the law but very bad when there is illegal fishing.
- If all the states have different regulations it becomes harder to assess how the regulations are performing. That is not good.
- I charter about 150 days per season and roughly 50 % is on fly and 50% is on bait. People just want to see a strong fishery and catch some fish.
- While slot limits can be nice having one minimum size just makes more sense for the fishery.
- It would be good to know who produces more eggs, a few big fish or a lot of 28 inch fish.
- I encourage people to use circle hooks in my bait shop. Circle hooks do not work for all fisheries so do not make them mandatory for every fishery. I would like an exception to allow non-circle hooks for tube and worm fishery in NH.
- The Board should consider a regulation to stop fishing when someone has caught their limit.

Woburn, Massachusetts

October 2, 2019

35 attendees

Bourne, Massachusetts

October 3, 2019

62 attendees

(Comments from both hearings were combined into one summary due to their similarity.)

Meeting Staff: Michael Armstrong, Dan McKiernan, David Pierce, Nichola Meserve, Jared Silva (MA DMF)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign-in sheets (sign-in sheets do not reflect full attendance)

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- 9 participants favored Option 1 (Status Quo) for reasons including:
 - Harvest in 2018 dropped by at least 18% from 2017, so the goal is already met.
 - Other factors such as predation (seals, white sharks), water temperature, dragger discards, forage availability, and the health of Chesapeake Bay spawning grounds deserve more review before imposing cuts on the fisheries.
 - The issue can be solved with education about catch and release technique.
- 80 participants favored Option 2 (Equal Percent Reductions) for reasons including:
 - Everyone should share equally in ending overfishing and rebuilding the stock.
 - The commercial fishery has a discard issue too and should not be exempt; commercial discards are much higher than is being estimated.
 - The commercial fishery removes too many large fish, impacting stock productivity and the quality of the fishery for the recreational sector.
 - So-called “equal” reductions actually favor the commercial fishery because of underperformance of the commercial quota and the commercial quota isn’t reduced by expected discards like recreational harvest is.
 - Recreational fishery should not be punished more for being largely a catch and release fishery; 9% release mortality is among the best; recreational fishery drives more economic value than commercial fishery.
 - The clustered nature of commercial fishing effort makes it more damaging to the resource than the diffuse effort of the recreational fishery.
- 10 participants favored Option 3 (Smaller Commercial Reduction) for reasons including:
 - The scale of the commercial fishery indicates it is not the problem; equal reductions will penalize the commercial fishery for a recreational fishery problem.
 - Commercial fishery growth has been capped by quotas while the recreational fishery has not.
- 57 participants favored Sub-Option A1 (35” or 36” Minimum Size Limit) for reasons including:
 - Best option to rebuild the stock; higher minimum sizes have a proven track record of rebuilding striped bass; will allow fish to spawn multiple times before they can be kept.
 - Slot limit will put too much pressure on individual year classes.
 - Will likely decrease effort and do more to rebuild the stock than a slot limit.
 - DMF has said in the past that slot limits likely won’t work to reduce harvest for striped bass; now is not the time to experiment.
 - The mentality of the charter fleet needs to change to selling the experience as opposed to guaranteeing fish to take home. Believe that people will continue to go charter fishing even if probability of taking home a keeper is limited.

- If pick a slot limit, can't keep a once-in-a-lifetime trophy fish.
- 24 participants favored Sub-Option A2 (28–35" or 28–34" Slot Limit) for reasons including:
 - Will protect the largest, most fecund females.
 - The higher minimum size will destroy the charter boat industry; there are not enough fish of that size and clientele will stop booking trips if can't take even one fish home for supper. Only fly fishing guides targeting schoolies for catch and release would survive. Not enough variety of other species to keep on charters north of the Cape. Catch and release may work elsewhere (e.g., FL) but tourism industries are distinct and what works in one place is not indicative of what works in MA. The higher minimum size may work for private anglers in MA who can fish many times a year but not the charter customer that is here on vacation and takes just one trip.
 - The higher minimum size will increase discards more than projected because people will keep fishing until they get a keeper, negating its benefit. Will be easier to catch a fish in the slot limit, so it's more likely to actually reduce removals.
 - Smaller fish taste better and have less toxin accumulation.
- 1 participant favored Sub-Option A4 (32–40" Slot Limit).
- 1 participant favored Sub-Option 2-B1 & 3-B2 (1 fish @18" Minimum Size in Chesapeake Bay).

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- 6 participants favored Option 1 (Status Quo) for reasons including:
 - MA already has a sufficient program in place under the current guidelines. Mandatory use is an overreach of authority.
 - The benefit of requiring circle hooks is unquantifiable.
 - Circle hooks were selected arbitrarily among other gear configuration changes that could do more to save fish; selection of circle hooks as the "low hanging fruit" disproportionately disadvantages certain populations of anglers.
- 45 participants favored Option 2 (Required Implementation) for reasons including:
 - While difficult to quantify the benefit, it is indisputable that circle hooks save fish and that's what is needed now.
 - Circle hooks have an added benefit of safety to anglers.
- An additional 17 participants favored Option 2 (Required Implementation) provided that the requirement can have the same exemptions as MA's circle hook rule to be implemented in 2020, i.e., not applicable to the for-hire fishery and certain configurations like tube & worm; a one-year phase-in period. Rationale included that the charter fleet has a much lower release mortality rate (due to captain experience) than the average private angler; tube and worm does not gut hook fish; and tackle shops and anglers ought to be afforded a year to turn over their supply of hooks. If these exemptions are not possible, these 17 participants would favor Option 3 (Required Promotion).
- 5 participants favored Option 3 (Required Promotion) for reasons including:
 - Enforcement of required use of circle hooks is too difficult between identifying what is being targeted and what is called a circle hook.

- Want to maintain the option of switching to a circle hook after catching a keeper on a j-hook, as is frequently done already.

General Comments

- Would have liked to see even more conservative options. Examples: catch & release only for the recreational fishery; a vessel harvest cap on charter trips that is less than 1 fish per angler.
 - Opposed to allowing conservation equivalency proposals; there should be uniformity along the Atlantic coast.
 - Need enforcement to be increased along with any of these options.
 - Only when people are too discouraged to go fishing will the projected harvest reductions be realized.
 - Separate rules should be considered for the charter fleet (e.g., the slot limit) compared to the private recreational fishery (e.g., the higher minimum size limit). The two groups shouldn't be bundled and one disadvantaged by the other.
 - The current situation of being back to where we were 30 years ago is indicative of mismanagement of this resource; need a paradigm shift.
 - Anglers should be required to watch an educational video about circle hook use and other responsible catch & release techniques when obtaining a saltwater fishing permit.
 - Treble hooks should be prohibited.
-

Narragansett, Rhode Island

September 24, 2019

Approximately 33 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Jason McNamee (RIDEM), John Lake (RIDEM), Chris Parkins (RIDEM), David Borden (Commissioner)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- 21 people commented in favor Option 2; no comments in support of Options 1 or 3
- Participants generally favored mandatory use circle hooks noting, however, states should focus efforts more on angler education regarding safe handling rather than hook type
- A few participants expressed concerns regarding the use of treble hooks noting that the use should be prohibited
- A notable amount of participants voiced concerns about not enough law enforcement officers, high level of poaching, and penalties for violations should be increased

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.4 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Twenty one people commented in favor of Option 2 because all sectors use the resource and should share the burden of harvest reductions equally. There was no support for Options 1 or 3. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:
 - Four people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - Pros and cons with every option, but hard to ignore past history
 - Focus on protecting the smaller fish so they can grow into the spawning biomass and possibly consider a slot limit on larger fish down the road
 - Seventeen people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A4 including the following organizations: RI Saltwater Guides Association, American Saltwater Anglers Association
 - Similar slot limits have been successful in other U.S. fisheries like king salmon and snook
 - Twenty one people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1 because it achieves the greatest reduction for the Chesapeake Bay and overfishing in the Bay has to stop

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Four people support Option B because it is viable and proven method to reduce release mortality
- Seventeen people support Option C because a mandatory circle hook requirement would be impossible to enforce
- All commenters noted that circle hooks alone are not enough to address the issue. States should focus more on aggressive education programs to teach proper fish handling techniques including no gaffing, no photos of fish that aren't being kept, online training modules, etc.

General Comments

- Would like a fourth option for a total moratorium
- Need more funding for law enforcement so they can effectively do their jobs.
- Should consider permit system for striper fishing, or purchase tags for a trophy fish, to raise funds to support wildlife enforcement efforts
- Don't support conservation equivalency. The process is subjective and disparate measures creates winners and losers among the charter/party boat industry, particularly when a neighboring state has a lower size limit or higher bag limit
- Need to strengthen conservation equivalency review process and need better accountability for states that overharvest their targets
- Treble hooks need to go; most destructive fishing method for striped bass
- Would like to barbless hooks to be considered for fly-fishing and other artificial lure
- Should put an end to commercial fishing in order to take away the market and stem poaching

- Catch and release fishing is a good thing, and there is an increasing trend with catch and release fishing among anglers in other fisheries (e.g., bluefish)
-

Old Lyme, Connecticut

September 23, 2019

Approximately 57 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Justin Davis (CTDEEP), Matt Gates (CTDEEP), William Hyatt (Commissioner)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- There was strong support for Option 2, however, there was no consensus on which specific sub-option is best for the fishery and population
- Participants generally favored mandatory use circle hooks noting, however, states should focus efforts on angler education regarding safe handling and increasing survivability to the extent possible.
- Many participants expressed concerns regarding the use of treble hooks
- A notable amount of participants voiced concerns about the high level of poaching going on and commented that there aren't enough law enforcement officers. Also penalties need to be increased significantly.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.5 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Two participants are in favor of Option 1 because there was no opportunity for public input in the option development phase and because all the options will lead to increased releases
- Twenty six participants commented in favor of Option 2. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:
 - Sixteen people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - Don't know how many years fish will be managed in a slot
 - Need to allow fish grow into the SSB
 - Difficult to ignore past history which successfully recovered the fishery
 - Not enough data to support the use of slot limits
 - Seven people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A2
 - A higher minimum size would put charter/party boats out of business, especially if neighboring states have a smaller size limit
 - One person commented in favor of sub-option 2-A3
 - Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A4 because it would protect small fish and give them time to spawn before being harvested, while also protecting large females

- Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1 because it achieves the greatest reduction in Chesapeake Bay
- Three participants commented in favor of Option 3; two in favor of sub-option 3-A1 and one in favor of 3-A2

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Sixteen people are favor the use of circle hooks, of which 12 support Option B. Many participants that favored circle hooks also support a ban on treble hooks

General Comments

- Should have a separate regulation for party/charter boats
- Increase fines for poaching in every state
- If SSB keeps declining, should implement a total moratorium
- Need more funding for law enforcement so they can effectively do their jobs.
- Should consider permit system for striper fishing and giving that money to law enforcement or for drones to aid law enforcement efforts
- Need better accountability for states that overharvest their targets
- Concerning that all the options still allow the harvest of large females
- Challenge ASMFC to manage for the greater good
- Recommend a catch and release only fishery
- The ecosystem is changing fast, populations are shifting range, new predator/prey interactions in the area (seals of the Cape, jellyfish, and other bait present) and environmental conditions are changing; this needs to be accounted for in the assessment and the options
- Treble hooks need to go; most destructive fishing method for striped bass
- No fish over 40" should be kept and these fish should all be released without being hauled on the boat for a picture
- Omega Protein over harvest in the Bay is destroying in fishery at the source
- Would like to see a season limit or daily vessel limit for party/charter boats rather than an angler daily bag limit
- Would like to see more voluntary reported data (angler information) being used in stock assessments and in the decision making process
- Connecticut should close the winter fishery and/or require fishing with barbless hooks
- Would like to see a smaller slot limit with a 16" or 18" minimum because that is the resilient part of the population
- An "apex" predatory like striped bass shouldn't be managed to maximize abundance
- Would like to see different regulations for boat and shore fishing
- Would like to see the commercial fishery go away; the way to put an end to poaching is to take away the market

Bridgeport, Connecticut

September 25, 2019

Approximately 28 attendees

Meeting Staff: Justin Davis (CTDEEP), Matt Gates (CTDEEP), David Molnar (CTDEEP) and Renee St. Amand (CTDEEP)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- There was universal support for Option 2.
- Option 2-A1 (1 fish at 35") was favored by most commenters.
- Options 2-A2 had support from 2 commenters and 2-A4 was supported by one.
- Participants generally favored mandatory use of circle hooks.
- A notable number of participants voiced concern over the high level of poaching going on and commented that there aren't enough law enforcement officers. Penalties need to be increased significantly to ensure compliance.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.6 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Nine participants commented in favor of Option 2. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:
 - Six people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - Need to allow fish grow into the SSB.
 - Difficult to ignore past history which successfully recovered the fishery.
 - There was concern that slots concentrate the mortality on certain sizes (creating "kill zones").
 - Keeps it simple.
 - Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A2.
 - Commenters thought this would protect larger, breeding females.
 - One person commented in favor of a slot of 35"-39" to protect incoming year classes and larger breeders with option 2-A4 as a fall back.
 - Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1 because it will not result in an increase of discards in the Chesapeake Bay the way increasing the minimum size will.

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Five people were in favor of mandatory use of circle hooks.

General Comments

- Increase fines for poaching in every state.
- Need more funding for law enforcement so they can effectively do their jobs.

- Should use funds derived from violations to fund more law enforcement
 - Need better accountability by ASMFC for states that over-harvest their targets and penalize states that exceed their allocation.
 - Challenge ASMFC to manage to the targets and not the thresholds.
 - Omega Protein over-harvest in the Chesapeake Bay is destroying the fishery at its source.
 - Connecticut should consider closing the winter fishery on hold-over stripers.
 - ASMFC should stop single species management and look at the big picture (ecosystem based management).
 - Should consider a “sliding slot” that adapts over time to protect incoming year classes of fish.
-

Bethpage State Park, New York

September 4, 2019

Approximately 180 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Jim Gilmore (NYDEC), Maureen Davidson (NYDEC), John Maniscalco (NYDEC), Stephanie Rekemeyer (NYDEC), Carol Hoffman (NYDEC), John McMurray (LA, proxy)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s). Written comment submitted at the hearing is also enclosed and included as part of the hearing summary.

Overview

- There was strong support for Option 2, however, there was no consensus on which specific sub-option is best; no one commented in support of Option 1 or Option 3
- Commenters generally favored circle hooks noting, however, efforts should focus more on angler education regarding safe handling and increasing survivability to the extent possible
- A notable amount of participants voiced concerns about striped bass poaching and suggested increasing enforcement.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.7 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Nineteen participants commented in favor of Option 2 including the following groups: NY Rec and For-hire Fishing Alliance, NY Coalition for Recreational Fishing, Theodor Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, NY Boatman’s Association, One at 32” Pledge Group, American Saltwater Guides Association, Gateway Striper Club, NY Salty Fly Fishing, NY Fishermen Conservation Association, Montauk Surfcasters, Long Island (??) Associations. Most common reason being that all sectors benefit from the resource, and, therefore, all sectors should share the burden and responsibility of protecting the resource. There was no consensus on which specific sub-option would be best for everyone. The shore and private angler sector generally favors a 35” minimum size while the for-hire/party boat sector

generally does not support a 35" minimum size. Support for specific sub-options are as follows:

- Seventeen people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A1, noting that a similar size limit successfully rebuilt the fishery once before and that all the small fish in the population should be protected. Commenters also questioned whether a slot limit would put too much effort on fish within the slot limit and negatively impact spawning stock biomass down the road.
- Two people commented in favor of sub-option 2-A2, noting that the lower slot limit would work for most boats and a 35" minimum size would put the charter industry out of business
- Eight people commented in favor of sub-option 2-B1, noting that the Bay should be at the same bag limit as the rest of the coast and an 18" minimum size should address the problems the Bay has had with release mortality

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- One person favors Option A. Making the use of circle hooks mandatory is overreaching.
- Eleven people are in favor of Option B. The most common reason being that the use of circle hooks is a proven method to reduce discard mortality and should be required in all recreational striped bass fisheries. Would like to have this phased in to allow tackle shops to get through their inventory.

General Comments

- Need to close all spawning grounds during the spawning season (referring to the Hudson)
- Would support more stringent measures; tighter slots
- Any fish that are not being kept should stay in the water
- Treble hooks should be banned from the striped bass fishery
- Need to address the high amount of poaching going on
- Need more law enforcement officers, stricter penalties, and steeper fines
- Would like to see a ban on bait; artificial baits only
- EEZ closure is loosely enforced, a lot of fishing going on there
- Political appointees should not be part of the management process at ASMFC
- Stricter regulations don't make good fishermen, but they will lead to more and more discards
- Highest rate of discard mortality is with the light tackle surf catch and release fishery
- Best answer to discard mortality is education; should focus resources on angler education and outreach programs to promote the use and benefits of circle hooks and teach anglers how to handle a fish properly
- Would like to see a CE program one fish at 30" minimum size from May 1 – Nov 30, and no retention of bass for captain and crew (NY Rec and For-hire Fishing Alliance)
- Setting a 35" minimum is a contradiction. Going to have to fish all day long and release 50 plus fish to keep one fish. Anglers will cull through tons of fish before catching a keeper

- The fish are further north, and aren't up on the flats because of the high water temps
 - There are pros and cons to each of the recreational sub-options
 - CE compromises the effectiveness of slot limits; need all states to have the same lower and upper limits for the slot options to be effective
 - CE should not be allowed
 - Urge to manage for the benefit of the great majority, recognizing that the ASMFC represents many different stakeholder and user groups
 - The less fish that are handled the better, more fish will be handled with these options which is not a good idea
 - Recommend CE for NY; reduce the season, adopt circle hook regulations, ban gaffing of striped bass, and eliminate the out of season catch and release fishery, and ban crew retention of striped bass on party/charter boats
 - Commercial fish tags should be transferable to party/charter boats on a voluntary basis
 - Transparency in the adaptive management process can be improved
-

New Paltz, New York

September 12, 2019

Approximately 50 attendees

Meeting Staff (all NYSDEC): Jim Gilmore, Maureen Davidson, John Maniscalco, Stephanie Rekemeyer, Wendy Rosenbach, Stephanie Mossey, Jessica Best, Gregg Kenney, Rhianna Bozzi, Caitlin Craig

Meeting participants: see enclosed sign in sheets

Overview

- The first portion of this meeting was the ASMFC presentation of Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the ISFMP for Striped Bass
- The location of this meeting attracted mostly Hudson River anglers. Since the Hudson River was specifically excluded under options 2 and 3, stakeholders were more interested in what may happen in the Hudson River than the different addendum options
- The second portion of this meeting was a general discussion of stakeholder preference regarding the kinds of things that we could consider in conservation equivalency

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Only one commenter specifically identified a preferred management scenario. Their preference was for Option 2.

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- 3 of 18 commenters thought circle hooks should be encouraged but not required. 3 of 18 commenters thought circle hooks should be required. 2 of 18 commenters did not think circle hooks would be effective at reducing mortality. One third (6 of 18) of commenters thought we should minimize release mortality rates through education about catch and release practices.

Hudson River Discussion

Since the Hudson River management is required to submit a separate program to achieve the required reductions, Hudson River anglers were invited to discuss ideas they would support or oppose in order to meet an 18 or 20% conservation equivalency reduction. Eighteen people participated in this discussion. One third of commenters (6 of 18) voiced support for an early closure to the season as an option. Five people supported the idea of eliminating the 40"+ fish from the current Hudson River regulations. Four people indicated that they want to keep the existing slot limit. Three commenters were opposed to delaying the opening of the season in the Hudson River.

Additional comments and discussion included a general concern about the water quality in the Hudson River and other spawning areas for Striped Bass. Five people indicated that they wanted more of a law enforcement presence on the Hudson during striped bass season. Two people felt that anglers should be paying for a fishing license to improve management and law enforcement.

Roselle Park, New Jersey

September 3, 2019

7 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Joe Cimino (NJ DF&W), Heather Corbett (NJ DF&W), Mike Celestino (NJ DF&W), Brendan Harrison (NJ DF&W), Ray Bukowski (NJ DEP), Tom Fote (GA)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet

Overview

- Attendees generally favor harvest reductions to address overfishing and rebuild the biomass
- Everyone in the fishery should take the same reduction; the same responsibility to save this fishery
- Commenters generally favored circle hooks noting, however, efforts should focus more on angler education regarding safe handling and increasing survivability to the extent possible

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

Five people are in favor of Option 2.

- Four people are in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - One person expressed concerns with slot limits that they focus effort on a few year classes of fish
- One person is in favor of sub-option 2-A4
 - Commenters added that season and area closures should be considered with all options because release mortality is dependent on environmental conditions like water and air temperature, salinity, depth, etc.
- Two people are in favor of sub-option 2-B1 for Chesapeake Bay

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Two people are in favor of Option B

General Comments

- Need to do as much as possible to conserve the fishery. When one fishery is diminished, it just puts more pressure on other fisheries in the area that are still viable
- Spawning areas in the Hudson River should be closed to striped bass fishing before, during, and after spawning season (April, May) to protect large spawning females
- Commercial gillnetting in the Chesapeake Bay during the spawn is more harmful than the recreational catch in the Hudson
- Need more consistent regulations across states and jurisdictions
- Would like to see more educational handouts regarding safe handling of fish to address release mortality
- The captain and mates should not count as anglers on for-hire trips (i.e., the per person component of regulations should not apply to the captain and mates)
- Circle hooks might not be the answer because release mortality is largely dependent on how the angler fishes, where and when the fish is caught, and how the fish is handled
- Some circle hooks do more damage to fish than J-hooks (like bunker spoons and mojos)
- Trolling for striped bass is a destructive practice; these fish rarely survive

Ocean City, New Jersey

September 4, 2019

Approximately 41 attendees

Meeting Staff: Joe Cimino (NJ DFW), Jeff Brust (NJ DFW), Heather Corbett (NJ DFW), Mike Celestino (NJ DFW), Brendan Harrison (NJ DFW), Ray Bukowski (NJ DEP), Dave Golden (NJ DFW), Tom Fote (GA)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet

Overview

- Commenters favor harvest reductions and the promotion of catch & release practices to address overfishing and rebuild the biomass
- In contrast, some commenters favor slot size to protect breeding females
- Recreational and commercial sectors should take the same reduction
- Commenters generally favored circle hooks noting, however, efforts should focus on angler education regarding safe handling to increase survivability to the extent possible

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

Six people (including one organization) are in favor of Option 2.

- Three people (including one organization) are in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - Commenters added that season and area closures should be considered to protect spawning fish
 - Concerns that slot limits and Conservation Equivalency programs severely limit effectiveness of coastwide measures
 - Commenter added that smaller females are carrying spawn. Does not see large females entering river systems
- Two people are in favor of sub-option 2-A2
- One person is in favor of Option 2, but did not specify sub-option
 - Commenter added that there should be no trophy seasons and all states should designate striped bass as Game Fish, no commercial fishery
- Two people are in favor of sub-option 2-B1 for Chesapeake Bay

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Eight people (including one organization) are in favor of supporting the use of circle hooks. Commenters added that education is also needed to decrease release mortality

General Comments

- Need to do as much as possible to conserve the fishery. Serious problem, aggressive measures needed.
- Suspend Striped Bass Bonus Program. Adds pressure on strong year classes.
- No longer allow Conservation Equivalency programs. Need more consistent regulations across states and jurisdictions up and down the coast.
- Support for Conservation Equivalency programs. Wants fishery to be available to all anglers, regardless of mode.
- Does not want to lose consumptive component of fishery. Does not want to see fishery move fully to catch & release. Problem is discard mortality
- Protection of forage fish is needed. Reduction of forage fish has led to decline in striped bass population.
- Reduce striped bass bycatch in other fisheries.

- Must promote catch & release and increase awareness of proper handling and catch & release methods to reduce release mortality
 - The captain and mates should not count as anglers on for-hire trips (i.e., the per person component of regulations should not apply to the captain and mates)
 - For-hire captains should be required to go through training to reduce release mortality
 - No gaffing
 - Hold ASMFC to 10-year rebuilding plan
 - Need to reassess the way striped bass is managed. Fear 20% reduction will do nothing.
 - Would like to see reference points adjusted. Have never reached SSB target.
 - Commenter did not like any proposed sub-options and would like to see NJ use Conservation Equivalency to achieve 24"-28" slot and shut down the harvest of older, breeding females
 - Need to increase enforcement
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Manahawkin, New Jersey

September 12, 2019

Approximately 95 attendees

Meeting Staff: Joe Cimino (NJ DFW), Heather Corbett (NJ DFW), Mike Celestino (NJ DFW), Brendan Harrison (NJ DFW), Brian Neilan (NJ DFW), Chad Power (NJDFW), Shanna Madsen (NJ DFW), Jamie Darrow (NJ DFW), Matt Heyl (NJ DFW), Stacy VanMorter (NJ DFW), Ray Bukowski (NJ DEP), Tom Fote (GA), Adam Nowalsky (LA)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Comments and preferences varied regarding options. Opposing opinions on what is best way to conserve species
- Recreational and commercial sector should take same reduction
- Several commenters suggested distrust in data, especially MRIP
- Commenters commonly expressed complete dislike for all options and would like NJ to pursue Conservation Equivalency

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

One person is in favor of Option 1, status quo

- Commenter angered by Board's decision to calculate reductions relative to 2017 numbers since an 18% reduction was already achieved in 2018

17 people are in favor of Option 2 including two groups

- All agreed that reduction should be applied equally across sectors
- 6 people are in favor of sub-option 2-A1
 - Fastest way to restore population is to protect 2014 and 2015 year class
 - Commenters added in the early '90s, the stock was recovered using a larger size minimum allowing smaller fish to spawn multiple times before being harvested. Larger fish may not spawn every year. Smaller fish carry the spawn.
 - Opposed to slot options, especially 2-A2 & 2-A3 because it unfairly punishes trophy/tournament fishermen and it hurts bait and tackle shops
 - Commenter (group Saltwater Guides Association) supported 2-A1 because it was the most conservative option and the option with least total removals. Note that this is an incorrect understanding of table and options. Other commenters in hearings have seemed to be confused by this as well.
 - Breeders are available for harvest in all slot options as well
 - Larger fish have higher release mortality rate
- 4 people (including 1 group) are in favor of sub-option 2-A2
 - Commenter (surf fisherman) noted that large fish (35"+) are not available in the surf or back bays for shore-based fishermen
 - Commenters added for-hire captains are in the business of harvesting fish for customers but also preserving resource. Do not need trophy fish.
 - Protect larger, breeding females
- 2 people (including 1 group) are in favor of sub-option 2-A4
 - More action is needed to conserve striped bass. Options are not doing enough.
- 1 person did not like any options but if had to pick, in favor of 2-A1
- 2 people did not like any options but if had to pick, in favor of 2-A2
 - Commenter added that slot size is a good-eating fish and need to protect breeders

No support for Option 3

Commenters added dislike for all sub-options and offered Conservation Equivalency (CE) suggestions:

- 3 people suggested pursuing CE (2 fish smaller than 28")
 - Commenters would like NJ to pursue CE for two smaller fish (slot or maximum size) so people can catch their limit and stop fishing for the day, therefore decreasing release mortality and protecting breeding fish.
- 4 people suggested pursuing CE (1 fish \geq 28")
 - Commenter suggested 1 fish \geq 28" with closed seasons (summer and spawning times) and take actions to reduce release mortality
 - Allows fishermen to bring home various sized fish instead of targeting specific year classes
- 1 person suggested pursuing CE (2 fish \geq 28")
- 1 person suggested pursuing CE (1 fish 21"-28" slot)

- 1 person suggested pursuing CE (1 fish 24"-28" slot) and trophy tag

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- 2 people are in favor of Option A
 - Commenter added circle hook regulations will be difficult to enforce and would no longer be able to use snag & drop fishing techniques
- 4 people are in favor of Option B
- 4 people support the use of circle hooks
- Commenter suggested offset circle hooks should be allowed – still catch the fish in the mouth. Does not like using non-offset circle hooks.
- Commenter added he has gut hooked more fish with circle hooks than j-hooks
- Commenter added circle hooks are not the solution. Education would be helpful.
- 2 commenters expressed no preference.
- 4 commenters spoke about circle hooks but not in a way that allowed us to discern their preference.

General Comments

- As mentioned before, there seemed to be confusion regarding the table and options. People seemed to be misunderstanding the percent reductions in harvest and total removals. Commenters chose 2-A1 stating it was the most conservative option.
- One commenter stated he previously had a rule on his boat that only a fish between 28"-32" can be kept and throws back any fish larger, yet he is in favor of Option 2-A1 and now he will have a no kill rule on boat
- Trophy seasons in the Chesapeake Bay fisheries need to be eliminated
- Something needs to be done regarding commercial discards; allow them to keep smaller fish and deduct it from commercial quota to reduce commercial dead releases
- States should use bait, tackle, and fuel taxes to raise fish in hatcheries to support the striped bass population
- Striped bass should be made a no-sale "game fish" along entire coast
- Poaching and illegal sale of striped bass in states that allow commercial fishing is a significant problem, especially hook and line fishing in New England
- Striped Bass Bonus Program should be suspended
- Supports the continuation of the Striped Bass Bonus Program, especially at current slot size
- Problems in bays and estuaries (water quality, too shallow and warm)
- Beach replenishment is destroying fishing grounds – both along the beaches being replenished and offshore where the sand is taken from. Since beach replenishment started after Superstorm Sandy, there are no fish along the beaches, but acres of fish can be found offshore
- Does not like any options because if overfishing is occurring there should be no harvest (moratorium)

- Restrictions on black sea bass fishing puts more fishing pressure on striped bass
 - Commenter offered suggestions on improving management: ASMFC should manage fisheries with the main goal of increasing abundance not for Maximum Sustainable Yield, increase penalties for poachers, and increase budgets for enforcement
 - Close Raritan Bay fishing in the spring and noted that if the rivers (spawning areas) are closed, the bays should be closed as well since the fish utilize the bays to access spawning areas in rivers
 - The Delaware estuary spawning run is gone. There have been no fish utilizing this estuary in 6 years
 - There are large schools of striped bass offshore beyond the 3-mile line. Commenters expressed concerns that fish offshore are not getting counted by MRIP or fishery-independent surveys and therefore questioning results of stock assessment
 - Distrust in the data being used for stock assessments. MRIP sample sizes need to be increased.
 - Education is needed to promote better catch and release practices
 - Pollutants, run-off, and other environmental factors are causing low spawning and recruitment events in the Chesapeake and Delaware estuaries. Need to manage bigger picture (including water quality, bait fish availability, etc.)
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Bristol, Pennsylvania

August 28, 2019

Approximately 33 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Andrew Shiels (PA F&B), Bryan Chikotas (PA F&B)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Participants generally support actions to reduce fishing and fishing mortality to rebuild the stock, but there were individuals that expressed opposition to any new management measures without better data, particularly regarding release mortality rates
- There was general support to pursue circle hooks to address release mortality in the fishery

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Two people are in favor of Option1, status quo
- Three people are in favor of Option 2.
 - One is in favor of 2-A1
 - Two are in favor of 2-A3
- One person is in favor of Option 3, and prefers 3-A2 for the ocean fishery and 3-B1 for Chesapeake Bay

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Four people are in favor of Option B
- One person is in favor of Option C

General Comments

- One person recommends catch and release only for two years to rebuild the biomass quickly
 - One person was concerned about the use of treble hooks
 - Pennsylvania staff distributed a draft proposal to reduce the slot fishery in the Delaware system in April and May by 18-20%.
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Dover, Delaware

August 29, 2019

Approximately 17 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), John Clark (DE DNREC), Jason Boucher (DE DNREC), Roy Miller (GA), Craig Pugh (LA, proxy)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s).

Overview

- Attendees representing the commercial sector expressed discomfort with any management options that further reduce the commercial quota

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Seven people are in favor of Option 1, status quo. Comments include:
 - There is low spawning stock biomass but it's not from fishing, it's from poor recruitment and the problem will fix itself when the strong recent year classes grow into the spawning stock biomass
 - Not much fishing mortality coming from the commercial sector
 - There are enough fish out there
 - The proposed bag limits and size limits will only increase mortality
 - The stock is fine; some years the fishing can be tough because of high rainfall, but generally able to catch [my] quota in one day
- Two people (including one organization) are in favor of Option 2.
 - One person (representing the American Saltwater Guides Association, *full comment letter enclosed*) is in favor of sub-option 2-A1 because the stock was rebuilt once before with a similar size limit and 2-B1 is the most restrictive and quantifiable option for reducing harvest in Chesapeake Bay

- One person is in favor of Option 3 because, if reductions must happen, this is the best option for the fishery because recreational fishing is the largest portion of mortality
 - A few people that support Option 1 expressed support for Option 3 if reductions are going to happen
 - One person favors sub-option 3-A1 for the ocean and 3-B2 for Chesapeake Bay

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- One person is in favor of Option A because of enforceability concerns
- Two people (including ASGA) are in favor of Option B. Enforcement is difficult but we need to do everything we can to keep fish alive that we don't keep

General Comments

- It's not appropriate to say overfishing was occurring all those years when we didn't know it at the time; the old assessments didn't show overfishing
- Concerns that Option 3 will create hostility between the commercial and recreational sectors
- ASGA commented that conservation equivalency should not be permitted because it severely limits the effectiveness of coastwide measure
- One person commented that
- One person commented that circle hooks won't save fish from high-grading
- The size limits are getting very limiting and it's getting very hard to keep a fish
- One person recommends a new option of 1 fish at 20"-28" slot and 37"-44" slot (e.g., 20" min, no harvest 29"-36" inches)

Annapolis, Maryland

September 25, 2019

Approximately 60 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Mike Luisi (MDDNR), Toni Kerns (ASMFC)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Majority of participants favored Option 2, however there was significant support for Option 1 and Options 3 also; there was no support for any of the recreational sub-options
- Participants generally support the use of conservation equivalency to develop objective and quantifiable measures that will work for all fishermen in MD
- Participants generally favored the use of circle hooks to address recreational release morality with emphasis on robust education programs across the coast
- Participants expressed strong concerns regarding the accuracy and application of recreational catch and harvest data

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.8 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Nineteen people commented in favor of Option 1, including Maryland Charterboat Association, because status of fish populations is more dependent on environmental factors than fishing effort. Additional comments include:
 - Hard to vote for options in Maryland without knowing what CE options would be
 - Shouldn't vote on any options until we have more information and better data
 - Doesn't matter what we do in terms of fishing measures because the population is driven by environmental conditions
 - Fishermen should be able to work as hard as want to make a living
- Thirty three people commented in favor of Option 2, including the Annapolis Anglers Club, Coastal Conservation Association - Maryland, and Pasadena Sportfishing Group, because all stakeholders should share the responsibility of reductions equally. Additional comments include:
 - Option 3 represents an unbalanced approach to decrease total removals and includes potential increases in harvest from the commercial sector
 - Support the use of conservation equivalency to implement the required reductions in a way that will work for all MD anglers and reduce recreational dead discards
- Sixteen people commented in favor of Option 3, including the Maryland Waterman's Association and Delmarva Fisheries Association, because this is more of a proportional reduction since recreational removals are far greater than the commercial sector. Additional comments include:
 - Would prefer no reductions on the commercial side
 - An 18% reduction in commercial quota will crush the small guys that already have few tags
 - The commercial sector never seems to get quota back
 - The commercial fishery has hard catch limits and payback provisions which is not in place for the recreational fishery
 - To share the burden equally does not mean equal reductions in terms of percentages
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation does not support a particular option, but supports swift action to address overfishing and believes all sectors should contribute to future viability of the fishery as all fishermen are benefactors of the resource regardless of disposition.

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Participants, including Delmarva Fisheries Association and Chesapeake Bay Foundation, generally support the use of circle hooks to address release morality in the recreational sector. Additional comments include:
 - Circle hook requirements are a common sense approach and should be mandatory with a robust education program across the Atlantic coast
 - Circle hook requirements come with enforcement challenges, but Maryland has proven that circle hooks can be implemented successfully

General Comments

- The states and ASMFC should also consider other hook types to reduce release mortality
 - Shouldn't see this as winners and losers, all sectors and states should be in this together
 - Concerns with MRIP and how the data is collected and used in population assessment and subsequent management
 - Commercial harvest comes under quota every year because PRFC doesn't distribute enough tags to fill the quota
 - Southwick Associates economics analysis is biased towards the recreational sector and there needs to be an official economic impact statement
 - Doesn't make any sense to raise the size limit to save the fish; you're culling through more and more fish to get to the bigger fish
 - Need to stop chasing the big fish
 - Conservation Equivalency is doing harm the stock and fishery and should not be allowed unless the program is enforceable, measurable, and actually equivalent to the standard.
 - Conservation Equivalency has created a situation where political views endanger striped bass and have been used to lessen the reductions on industry on a stock that is overfished
 - Conservation Equivalency proposals should only have objective and quantifiable measures and the same standards used to enforce compliance should also apply to CE programs
 - Commercial fishermen have the best equipment to find and catch fish, so we have to consider poor stock condition as reason for not catching the quota
 - Need to consider the people in the fishery with these decisions; to share the burden equally does not necessarily mean equal percentages
 - Maryland has to get this right as the leading producer of striped bass
 - The Draft Addendum is biased against the recreational sector and there should be a suite of options where the recreational sector takes a smaller percent reduction than the commercial
 - 18% reduction from the commercial sector is a huge cut to our income but a drop in the bucket for total removals
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Cambridge, Maryland

October 3, 2019

Approximately 72 attendees

Meeting Staff (MD DNR only): Mike Luisi, Angela Giuliano, Harry Hornick, Lynn Fegley

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Mostly commercial fishermen, some recreational, also interested citizens. Overall conversation centered around commercial opposition to taking any reductions to the

commercial fishery and the lack of accurate harvest estimation for the recreational fisheries. There was also discussion about the resident stock in Chesapeake Bay that is predominantly male and that reducing fishing pressure on these fish will not improve the coast wide SSB. There were a few Chesapeake Bay – specific comments suggesting that July and August be closed due to heat and opposing the trophy season and fisheries that interact with the breeding stock. One person noted that the majority of options raise size limits which will make the discard problem worse.

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- **Option 1:** person said they would prefer Option 1, status quo. No substantive comment
- **Option 2:** 1 person (representing American Saltwater Guides Association) spoke in favor. *Note, no show of hands for those in favor of option 2 was requested. A statement supporting option 2 was offered just before 8pm and arguments erupted during the individual's statement. The meeting was adjourned due to lack of order and the late hour.*
 - The individual who provided comment stated they would submit their statement to the Commission but in summary:
2010-2011 science told us there was a problem with striped bass. Management used robust 2011 year class to hedge bets and reduce reductions. Now, striped bass at 26-year low and ASMFC cannot claim they have recovered anything. The problem is lack of Commission accountability. CE is not achieving goals and is the number 1 threat to striped bass. 2011 year classes did not recruit to SSB and has been decimated which is proof that CE proposals do not work. ASMFC uses a 50% probability of success. This is not good enough. Changes in climate and environment, and predation are not included in models. Cites statistics on recreational economics from department of commerce. The comment that the coast is overfishing is highly inaccurate. Any state that applies for CE should be held accountable. If a CE state goes over, then they should pay back the following year.
- **Option 3:** 34 people (show of hands), including 2 organizations, in favor– public comment opened with those in support of option 3 and included:
 - *Representing Delmarva Fisheries Association:* Best of 3 evils. Since rec fishery is responsible for 90% of mortality then they should be responsible for bigger cut. Equal reduction is ludicrous, and status quo doesn't make sense. Was also interested in conservation equivalency. Wants to require ASMFC to do an economic impact study as required in federal law (cites NEPA). *Note: This individual was present and provided comment at the first hearing in Annapolis.*
 - *Representing Maryland Watermans Association:* 48% of dead fish are from recreational dead discards and Option 3 provides proportional cut which makes sense. Commercial discard estimates are reasonable but questions MRIP discard estimates. Provides scenario where fishing buddies get into competition about who threw back the most fish, so discard estimates get out of hand. So to

require anyone to take an 18% redux on that data is not correct. Cites commercial sector accountability - tags fish, check stations etc. Calls into question the current reference points, suggests they should be revisited. Quoted report from Dr. Desmond Kahn—says if we only have average recruitment, we will never be able to achieve SSB. Also commented on triggers—actions are too severe because of the way the amendment is written RE triggers. Need more flexibility on response to assessment results. Fishery management is really hard and based on a lot of assumptions.

- In these things, there has always been an allowable discard rate because discards are unavoidable. If commercial fishery is within their discard rate, we should be able to keep what we've been doing.
- The cut to the commercial sector 5 years ago was more than 25% and industry is suffering. NE states are way over. Commercial fishermen on coast were told 5 years ago that if they took the cuts, they'd get their fish back, but here we are again. Somehow, the rec sector must be held accountable. Illegal fishing occurring in EEZ is really hard to take. Make rec guys check in their fish. Something needs to be done on rec side. Would prefer Option 1 status quo, but if something has to happen, option 3 is preferred.
- Two individuals simply stated they support this option – one had stories about ecosystem imbalance and invasive species. Rockfish need to be thinned out.

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

1 person in favor of requiring circle hooks by regulation

General Comments

- One individual was concerned that many of the options raise size limits. Thinks that discards will be less with smaller size limits. We're killing a lot of fish to hit their bag limits, particularly in July and August.
- Question on whether we're looking at the Susquehanna Flats catch and release fishery.
- One individual wanted to remove July and August fishing as it is just wasting fish. Also suggested not allowing anglers to keep fish >40" at any time of year. Problem with enforcement on recreational fish—limit days of week (i.e. Mon-Wed) and increase in enforcement. May be easier to enforce. May also want to decrease 50% of cormorants because they eat too many little fish.
- Many comments on why recreational fishery couldn't be more accountable. Either phone calls like for deer or use of tags, like when the fishery reopened in MD after the moratorium.
- Many comments about the fact that the previous regulations did not constrain the recreational fishery enough and that the onus of this action should be on the recreational end.

- Comments about substantial amount of illegal recreational fishing is happening. Question as to whether enforcing and stopping this activity could achieve reduction needed in Maryland.
-

Colonial Beach, Virginia (Potomac River Fisheries Commission)

September 10, 2019

Approximately 31 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Martin Gary (PRFC), Ellen Cosby (PRFC)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Attendees representing the commercial sector favor Option 3 because the data overwhelming demonstrates that recreational fishing is the root of the issue
- Attendees favored the mandatory use of circle hooks, Option B, noting that recreational discard mortality is the only issue that needs to be addressed

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Three people (including the Saltwater Guides Association) are in favor of Option 2.
 - All fishermen are benefactors of the resource and should contribute to continued viability of the resource
 - Two people (Saltwater Guides Association) favor 2-B1. The charter industry has noted that the increased size limit has increased mortality and that they want to get there fish and get off the water, so this option does that for them.
 - One person favors 2-A2 for the ocean region
- Eight people (including MD Waterman's Association) are in favor of Option 3. Notable comments include:
 - The data shows the entire problem is the recreational sector, and an 18% reduction in quota would really hurt our livelihood
 - The only issue that really needs attention is that of recreational release mortality
 - One person supports 3-B2 because it's the same as picking 2-B1 for the rec guys
 - One person supports 3-B4

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- Two people favor Option B because it's a proven way to reduce release mortality. It's imperative that states educate anglers on the benefits of circle hooks, and safe handling of fish, regardless of which option is selected

General Comments

- Conservation equivalency is helpful if used in the right way
 - The ASMFC needs to deal with the issue directly this time, which is recreational fishing
 - Most of the catch and release mortality is coming from light tackle fishing and charter boats live lining and chumming, catching tons of small fish before catching their limit
 - Will get overwhelming comments from the recreational sector because the commercial sector is so small, but the problem is with the recreational side
 - All commercial fish are accounted for, but no concrete numbers on recreational catch
 - The triggers for overfishing aren't appropriate, it takes more than a year to get us here and it will take more than a year to get us out
 - Need to improve the way we collect data on the recreational sector; improve reporting
 - The commercial fishery is a clean fishery, the pound net fishery when done properly is a no kill fishery unless we get some bad water (algae), and there are very few discards in the gill net fishery
 - Would like to see the charter sector managed separately under a quota system; tagging system similar to the commercial sector
 - The real issue is the take of 28" or great fish along the eastern seaboard
 - Need greater recreational accountability
 - Fine to increase minimum sizes in certain jurisdictions, but doesn't make sense for the Bay because all the fish are small and around the same size
-

Anacostia, District of Columbia

September 12, 2019

Two attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Luke Lyon, Bryan King

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- One participant representing American Saltwater Guides Association submitted written comment (see enclosed) supporting Option 2, 2-A1 and 2-B1, and Option B for circle hooks. The second participant supported those same comments.
-

Hampton, Virginia

September 9, 2019

Approximately 24 attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Pat Geer (VMRC), Alex Aspinwall (VMRC)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Majority of attendees represented the commercial sector and favor no change in management because Virginia's quota has already been unfairly reduced over the years
- Attendees support Option 3 as a fall back. Option 1 is still preferred, but willing to take a 1.8% reduction in quota if necessary
- Attendees favored the mandatory use of circle hooks, Option B, noting that recreational discard mortality is the only issue that needs to be addressed

3.0 Proposed Management Program

3.1 Proposed Management Scenarios

- Nine people are in favor of Option 1, status quo. Notable comments include:
 - There is no need to change on the commercial side
 - The commercial sector has suffered from the reductions with Addendum IV and Virginia is such a small player in total harvest
 - The recreational sector is not held accountable for increases in harvest or mortality
 - The scientific community has been wrong for years; there are less people fishing now than ever before, and the increase in fishing mortality isn't real
 - The biomass will go back up once these strong year class recruit into the SSB
- Two people are in favor of Option 2.
 - Conservation minded recreational anglers recognize that they are part of the problem and are willing to take cuts to rebuild the biomass and get the fishery back on track
 - Would prefer to see the cuts applied evenly because all anglers have contributed to fishing mortality
 - One person supports 2-A2 and 2-B2
- Seventeen people are in favor of Option 3 (note: those in favor of Option 1 support this option as a second choice; a fallback). Notable comments include:
 - Many of the same comments noted for Option 1
 - Don't need to do anything, but will tolerate a 1.8% reduction in quota if necessary
 - The only issue that really needs attention is that of recreational release mortality
 - One person supports 3-A2 and 3-B4

3.2 Circle Hook Provision

- About twenty attendees favor Option B noting that release mortality is the only issue that needs to be addressed

General Comments

- Doesn't like what New Jersey and Connecticut have done with their commercial quota

- Recreational mortality is not paid back like the commercial sector (overages are paid back the following year) and the commercial sector should get a credit or increase in quota for the reductions taken in years past
 - Striped bass prey on young blue crabs. Increases in the striped bass population will decimate the blue crab fishery
 - Northern states shouldn't have longer seasons than the Bay states
 - Anglers should not be allowed to remove a striped bass from the water, unless the intent is to keep the fish. All other striped bass should be released without taking it out of the water.
 - Catch and release fishing should be shut down
 - These options are pegging the commercial sector against the recreational sector
 - ASMFC is not addressing real overages or real mortality (referring to individual states recreational fisheries)
 - There is no socioeconomic long term gains for the commercial sector; the commercial sector never gets quota back
 - Recreational anglers are supportive of the VMRC emergency rule, but are confused as to how it will play out with the ASMFC process with Addendum VI
-

Manteo, North Carolina

September 11, 2019

Three attendees

Meeting Staff: Max Appelman (ASMFC), Chris Batsavage (NCDMF)

Meeting Participants: See enclosed sign in sheet(s)

Overview

- Three participants attended to receive information and ask questions, but did not provide comment

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: Oct 2, 2019

Location: Yarmouth, ME

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Jason Farris	MACC / ^{Maine Experience} Guide Service	Bath MAINE
Chris Uraneck		Freeport ME
Dom Pucci	John's Bay Bass Club	Bristol ME
✓ Larry Grinnard	Rec Angler	Jefferson, ME
Barry Gibson	Charter Operator	Boothbay Hbr
MIKE FAULKINGHAM	Charter Capt	South Portland ME
Toby Lacey		Saco ME
Erich Wallace	Chart Capt	Scarborough ME
Bob Humphrey	Charter Capt	Pownal, ME
Nick Popoff	USFWS	Yarmouth, ME
Christie Brown	ME DMR	W Boothbay Hbr ME
Dana Eastman	Tackle Shop	Pontiac
Parker Garrick	" "	South Portland
Mike Roy	Tidal Expeditions	Freeport
ROBIN THAYER	Province Mountain Outfitters	WEST NEWFIELD, ME
Peter Mohler	REC ANGLER	Portland, ME
Zach Whitener	Andromous Adventure Guides	Freeport Maine
George Norris	Tackle Shop	Falmouth, Maine
Doug Jett	Self	Brunswick

Comments on Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI

10/2/2019

My name is Chris Ura-neck and this my own opinion on Draft Addendum VI to end overfishing of striped bass.

I do believe there is a problem with the striped bass fishery and I am glad action is being taken to address it. However, I believe a moderate approach to correcting the problem is the best approach. I have been fishing for stripers in Maine for over 20 years. This past year while I did have a few slow days fishing on most days I was able to find fish or at least some action. Also hearing reports from other fisherman I would hear of people complaining of no fish and not doing well to people catching big fish on the schools of pogies and or catches of large numbers of smaller striped bass. Overall it seemed to be hit or miss fishing this year to me.

I think it is important to note that the options and the predicted reductions in harvest and total removals in this document are for the whole coastal striped bass fishery. They do not necessarily represent how the management measures would affect fishing in Maine.

For example, let's look at sub-option 2-A1, which proposes a 1 fish bag limit with a minimum size of 35" and predicts a reduction in harvest by 43%. There is no way these numbers are correct for Maine. If the size limit was 35" in Maine I believe it would be more like a 95% reduction in harvest. I just don't think we need that drastic of a reduction at this point.

If I had to pick one of the options I think sub-option 2-A2 would be the best. This has a bag limit of one fish and a slot size limit of 28" – 35". Under this option I believe the average fisherman still has a chance of catching a keeper while it protects the bigger breeders who will hopefully be able to spawn.

If I really could get the options I wanted I would like to see the State of Maine develop its own options, which it says in this document we are allowed to do. I think just changing the size limit to 29" or 30" with a bag limit of 1 fish per day coupled with our circle hook law would achieve the desired 18% reduction in total removals here in Maine.

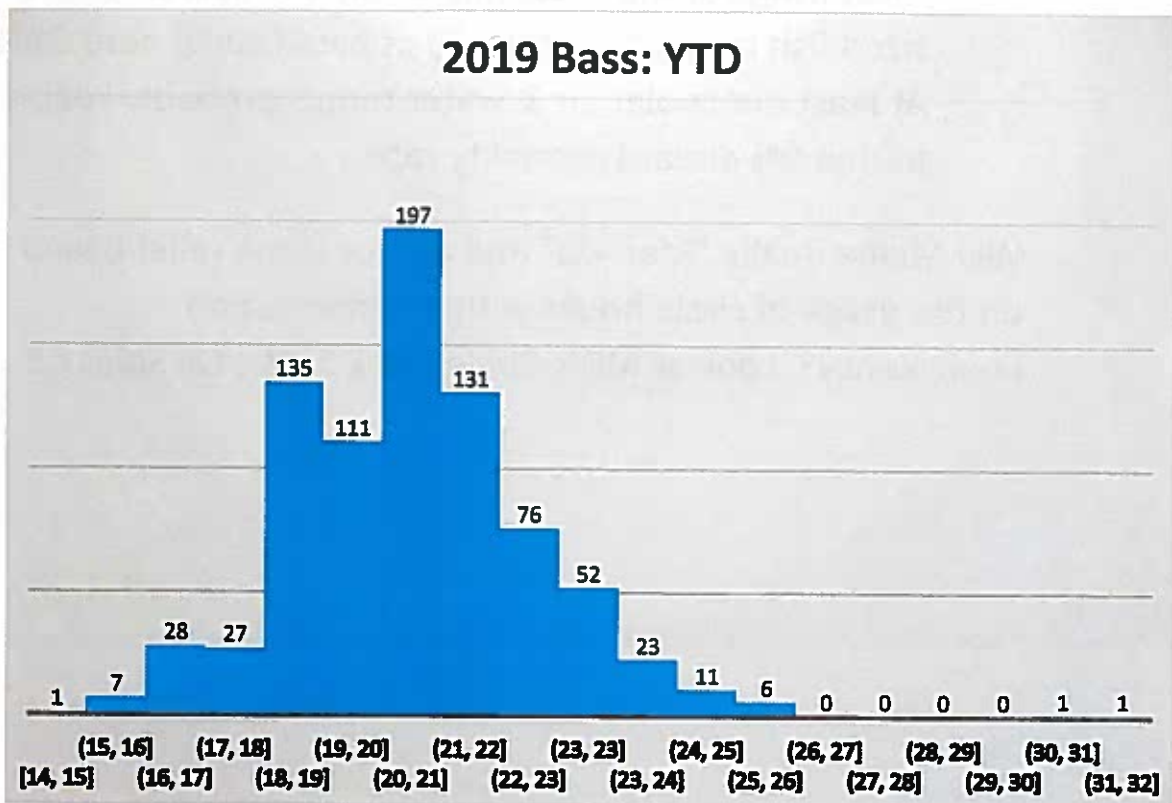
Thank you,

Chris Ura-neck, Freeport, ME

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Ura-neck", written in a cursive style.

D. Pucci 2019 Striper Summary YTD

- Season Start – May 30, 2 days later than latest in prior years
- Season End – Still catching, but main body of local fish departed mid-August.
- Statistics:
 - Once fish arrived 106 Striper Trips, average 2 hrs or less
 - 787 fish caught YTD, 309 < 20", 476 ≥ 20", < 28", 2 ≥ 28"
 - 7.4 Bass caught per outing
 - Mean Length = 20.04"
 - Median Length = 20"
 - Previous years sub 20" fish greatly outnumbered 20+" fish
- Noteworthy items
 - 2 tagged fish caught, HRF & Berkeley Striper Club
 - 1 fish caught with mild mycobacteriosis infection



- Questions for ASMFC/Maine
 - I can't more strongly recommend the 28 – 35" slot. It's time to stop harvesting the prime breeding fish, especially in light of a recent publication that showed a single 20 lb fish has more eggs than 2, 10 lb fish. That being said, I would entertain some sort of trophy tag option by state to let that person who finally caught their 50 lb fish retain it.
 - What exactly are the Maine assumptions for the MRIP data on striped bass?? How close to reality do they feel it is?
 - What suggestions do you have for "reducing fishing pressure on striped bass"?
 - It's not like there are many inshore fishing options in Maine, especially with the almost total moratorium on cod.
 - Based on the coastal dynamics of being the Northern most fringe of the coast migration, the lack of keeper-sized fish makes the majority of bass fishing here C&R. At least our cooler air & water temps probably keep us at that 9% discard mortality rate.
 - Will Maine finally "Man Up" and ask for some relief based on the usage of circle hooks with a Conservation Equivalency? Look at MD's Circle Hook Snake Oil Sales CE.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: October 1, 2019

Location: Portsmouth, NH

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Dale Pike	CCA	Newmarket, NH
Kevin Mullavey		Rye
Bill Blackwell		Dover NH
CLIFF CHADWICK		Hampton Falls NH
✓ Marc Stettner		Portsmouth NH
Christian Stallkamp		Portsmouth NH
Peter Whelan		Portsmouth NH
Lauren Staples		Rochester, NH
EDWARD S. LOKER, DDS		DOVER, NH
Juan Amato		Portsmouth NH
Geno Marconi	Marine Fish Com	Dover
Chris Callahan	Marine Fish Com	Portsmouth
Delayne Brown	NHFA Law Enforcement	Durham FH office
Zak Robinson	CCA - Rising Tide Angler	Portsmouth NH
✓ Tom Briantman	CCA - NH	Dover NH
Ellen Goethel	F/V/Elec Diane	Hampton, NH
Peter Tilton Jr		Hampton, NH
Eric Reed		Exeter, NH
SCOTT SYLVESTER		NEW CASTLE, NH
✓ John McKernan	McKERNAN GUIDE	MADBURY NH
PAUL McTAVIS		North Hampton NH

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: Oct 2

Location: Woburn MA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
James Jewkes	Plum Island Surfcasters	Woburn Ma
Georgette Henrich	PI Surfcasters	Dracut, MA
Kevin Henrich	PI Surfcasters	Dracut, MA
Mark Bannin	PI SC	Middleton MA
James Goodhart	Shadowcaster Charters	Newburyport, MA
✓ Paul Diggins	SBCBA	Marshfield, MA
Jaron Frieden	Lucky 7 Charters	Charlestown, MA
Rob Savino	C.J. Viltman	Worcester MA
* MICHAEL SPINNEY	STRIPERS FOREVER	TAINSEND MA
SEAN CONWAY	Plum Island Surfcasters	WILMINGTON, MA
KALIL BOGHDAY	DMF-MEAC	HAMILTON, MA
Clayton Pallas	Plum Island Surfcasters	PLAISTOW NH
Nicole Beaudet		Winthrop, MA
Scott Babineau		Boston, MA
Charlie Babinan		Malden MA
Brett LaFosse		Nashua, NH
STEPHAN DESISTO	Plum Island SC	Worcester MASS
John Lasofsky	PI SC	Rolling, MA
Nicholas Sney		Concord, MA
Scott Campbell		Boston, MA
Angela Laschi	Plum Island Surfcasters	Methuen MA

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 10/3/19

Location: Bourne, MA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Ross Kessler	MDNF	Mattapoisett, MA
MICHAEL PAULOV	CCF	BREWSTER, MA
TOM SLEDZIK	CCF	HARWICH, MA
BOB MAHONEY	CLF	YARMOUTH, MA
Paul Curuso		Musters Mills, MA
✓ Patrick Pagnelle	MSBA / MBBA	Hyannis MA
WENNY PAQUETTE	MSBA / MBBA	HYANNIS, MA
Bill COTTLE	Cape Cod Salines	Bourne, MA
DAVID PATRY	Steelwagon Park	Marshfield
Paul Cronin	Rec	Norwell, MA
Chris Corbinos	CF Commercial Fishing	Cape MA
MARK GMYREK		BOURNE, MA
✓ KEVIN WHITING	CAPE COD SPATIER	HARWICH MA
Richard Buckler		SANDWICH MA
✓ Bill Proouz	REC	POCASSET MA
✓ DON CIANKO	C.C. CHARTER BOAT ASSOC	SANDWICH MA
BOB AMORALLO	Cape Cod Charter	Plymouth, MA
BOB DYER		WYHAMMA MA
John Thibodeau	STAN GIBBS	BORNE MA
Rick Golden	1620 Anglers	Plymouth, MA
✓ Patrick Carridy	Cape Cod On the Fly	Harwich, MA
BOB CHSTLE		

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 10/3/19

Location: Bourne, MA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
DON CORDIS		Falmouth, MA
ALAN E CORDIS		Falmouth, MA
GEORGE CHRISTMAN		Falmouth, MA
Patrick Corioy		
Tom Heath	BBAC	Wareham
Kim Heath	BBAC	Wareham
Ed ROSEBLOOM	Crossroads Anglers	Foxboro
Dave Peor		Bourne MA ✓
Robert Hussay	ERIN-H Charters	Wellfleet MA
David Waldrip	Stellwagen Bank CBA	Rockland, MA
Doug Fisher	Cape Cod Times	MA
Kevin Downs	Fal. Fisherman ASS	Falmouth, MA.
Sam Mulha		Brewster, MA
Terry Downe		Bourne
Rob WABII		SANDWICHT
Stephen Maljean		
Benj Sousef	PURBA Duce Fish Co	Harwich
Leo Murnie	Stellwagen Bank CBA	Wareham, MA

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/24/19

Location: Narragansett, RI

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
David Borden	RE BA	
JOE BARKER	West Bay Anglers	
Stephen Medeiros	RISAA	
Greg Vespe	Aquidneck Island / Recre	Tiverton NJ
Kurt Rivard	Aquidneck Island Striper Team	Warren, RI
Doug Mac Pherson	RISAA	Pawtucket, RI
David Pollack	RISAA	Wakefield, RI
John Lake	RIDEM	Charlestown, RI
Tom Houde	AQUIDNECK ISLAND STRIPER	TEAM WESTWICK, RI
RICHARD CHATOSKY	DRIFTER CHARTERS	CHARLESTOWN RI
Rich Hittinger	RISAA	Warwick RI
Robert S. Murray	RISAA	Foster RI
JOHN MARTIN	ERRA	WAKEFIELD RI
FRED LECHE	PURAVIDA CHARTER	NARRAGANSETT RI
THOMAS TEUKSBURY	F/V NORTHEASTERN	NEWPORT, RI
Andy Dangelo	Maridee II charters	Pt Judith RI
Peter Jenkins	Saltwater Edge	Newport, RI
Iodd Corajel	FISHWRAPWRITER.COM	Wakefield RI
Ricardo Ferrer	AIST	Cumberland, RI
Damon Phelps	N/A	South Kingstown, RI
RICHARD FERRIS	N/A	Westport RI

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/23/2019

Location: Old Lyme, CT

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Ernest Kulis	Self	Northford CT
KEVIN MAUNE	SELF	NORWICH CT
T.J. Karbowski	Rock & Roll Charters	Clinton
MIKE KRAEMER		N. BFD.
Chris Parisi	Blue Hill Outfitters	Old Lyme / Westbrook
Tom Fucini	Tsunami Tackle/Fulson	Middletown CT
PHIL SHEFFIELD		MYSTIC, CT.
✓ EDUARDO DIAGOSINO	SELF	CHESTER, CT
Greg Dubrule	Blackhawk	Niantic CT
George Bellini	CT Surfcasters Association Squad School	Northford CT
CHARLES CARANO	CT SURFCASTERS TEAM	GUILFORD, CT
Tom Sappin	Self	Lebanon, CT
Mark Philippe	Self	Burlington, CT
Diane Philippe		Burlington, CT
Myron Schulman	self	W. Hartford, CT
Joe Diorio	Joe Diorio/Guy Kervie	New Britain, CT
Sam Johnson	self	East Haddam, CT
Liam Rosati	Angler Adventures	Old Lyme CT
Denny Hood	Angler	Rowe CT.
SARA CHARMON	SELF	MANFIELD, CT
Michael Richardson	Harborman	Norwich CT.

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Steve Garling		Asford CT
Charles Wilson		Wilmington CT
HARRY ABATE		MADISON CT
Ray Van Vaden		Wassford CT
✓ Steve Culton	The Fisherman LLC	Middletown CT
DALE NICHOLSON	TITE FISHERMAN MAGAZINE	
JOHN WALKER	CFFA	Griswold, CT
Carey Pelletier		
Andrew Gade	CT DEEP	Tolland, CT
Jonathan Weeks	Cobra Bait	Haddam, CT
Steve Hasselbacher	Me	Me Norwich, CT
Mike Kelley		Portland, CT
KAMEN LUDAS		Glastonbury, CT
Patrick Kofke		Burlington, CT
Bub Ammel		Theriotville CT
Daniel T. Bayk		Bolton CT
John Patten	CT/RI ASGA	Groton CT
STEVE CURRIER	CT/RI	Old Lyme
Bill Goeben		Bfd CT
Debbie Goeben		Branford CT
CAPT JAY SALVATORE	FV OSPREY	EAST LYON CT
TONY NOTARO	Lucky Hook Charter	Clinton CT
Jason Keenan		New Haven CT
George Stuy	RISA	S. Windsor CT
Bob Mueller		Cayton
Bob Russell	CFFA	Rocky Hill CT
MILCKEY	MORNING STAR	MIDDLETOWN
MIKE STAPSKI	TARTAN II	Niantic CT
Chris Anderson	Lucky Hook Charters	Clinton, CT

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/25/19

Location: Bridgeport

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
Scott Corn	STFD Boat	STFD CT
Bob PLUDA	POAT 5	BRT CT
Jack Wallace	Milford Striped Bass	STFD CT
TONY URBAN	POAT 5	MILFORD CT.
Lindsay Urban		Milford, CT
Tommy St Cyr	Tica Pro Staff	Bpt
MIKE CRASICK		BPT CT
Robert Cohn	CT Surfcasters	Orange CT
Tom Fuda		Shelton CT
Taylor Lyncham	ADWA/Whine	Norwalk, CT
Peter Braw		Milford, CT
Greg McNamara	CT Surfcasters	Clinton CT
Michael Majewski	Fishermans Poedici	Milford CT
William Bellara		FAIRFIELD CT
ROGER GENDRON	CT ISLAND OUTFITTERS	WESTPORT, CT
Jan Devlin	Devlin Fishing	Norwalk, CT.
Aram Berkman	CT Surfcasters	New Haven CT
Theresa Razumatchuk	CT Surfcasters	New Haven CT
Matt DeSole	CT surfcaster	Norwalk, CT
Sam Liketm	CT surfcaster	Norwalk, CT
GIANFRANCO ZAFFERNA	WESTPORT STRIPED BASS CLUB	WESTPORT, CT

SPEAKING



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
✓ Paul Dixon	Capt Paul Dixon@A MAC.com
Andrew Kral	bowhnter11757@yahoo.com
✓ Richard Jensen	NANCY.ANN.CHARTERS@YAHOO.COM
Michael Benzinger	L.Benzinger@aol.com
Ray Curiale	Ray C 513@Gmail
Joe DeVito	Captaindevito@gmail.com
Peter Utschig	P6252@yahoo.com
✓ Jim Levison	JLPhoto@optonline.net
✓ Thomas Fox	tfox@db-eng.com
✓ Jason Marowitz	jmaroz@gmail.com
Scott Ostarich	SOSTARICH@GMAIL.COM
Lee Scott	LSCOTT411@GMAIL.COM
✓ Steve El Noweluman	mb1143f@gmail.com NYRFB
Bryan Soric	Cptbryan@gmail.com
Cara Higgins	Cara.higgins@aol.com
✓ Arnold Leo	a9leo@sover.net
✓ Vincent Fiorillo	VINCEFIORILLO@GMAIL.COM
Kris Magotti	Magtatz@aol.com
CITRIS ARPSTEN	C.ARPSTEN@VERIZON.NET
Tom Schlichter	outdoortom@optonline.net



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
John Shanley	JohnShanley@pkhoo
Citrus Squem	cslavom@pac.com
George Cross	gtcross@verizon.net
CAPT. PETER DOUMA	windwardoutfitters@gmail.com
Jerry Vitello	BoatingVitello@gmail.com
Nicholas Zummo	baseballnz@aol.com
Dennis Bravo	Dbravo56@optonline.net
Joe Werenofsky	captjoe@bloodline.mtk.com
Daniel Reich	captdreich@gmail.com
Lou Falseth	Lfalseth59@verizon.net
Andrea Coruana	SurfCast99@gmail.com
FRANK BAGNASSO	FBAGNASSO@OPTONLINE.NET



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
✓ CHARLOS WITOK	charloswitok@gmail.com
Robert Rapisarda -	Raps@aol.com
Joseph Guttman	MANGOHUNTR1@gmail.com
FRED Colotaro -	fgolotaro@thefisherman.com
Mike Camuso -	
Bob Blessee -	
Frank Schortemeyer	fishinloss@opionline.NET
✓ Sue Bertoline	Suebert2@aol.com
Sergio Diaz	sdiaz_ny@hotmail.com
NEIL ROTHKOPF	neilfish140elm@yahoo.com
RONALD HOFF	BRONH22@YAHOO.COM
Lenny Ferro	JAXIENMAD@aol.com
mike Falk	falkm@nyassembly.gov
Anthony Testa	atesta717@gmail.com
Philip A. KESS ^{FISHY BUSINESS}	PKESS@OPTONLINE.NET
Anna Testa SR	ANTHONY@HSCONS.COM
Dave Prilook	DPRILOOK@gmail.com
✓ Ken Higgins	Captainkenhiggins@yahoo.com
Clyde McMurphy	Gethookedcharters1@gmail.com

MORE NAMES ON BACK →



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
✓ JAMES W SCHWEIDER	FUN4FISH@.com
✓ John Papciak	jpapciak@optonline.net
Paul Niederaver	FVCannonball@gmail.com
Steve MUSSO	SteveMusso@supersteakLoves.com
Walker Gekas	Waletc69@gmail.com
✓ JOE JUDGE	JOSEPH.D.JUDGE@GMAIL.COM
Richard Colombo	RockfishCharters.com
Vince Catalano	SEB LongIslandNYFishing.com
Brian Killen	brian.killen@ycho.com
Sel Cetapano	Sectapano@gmail.com
CARL Lobue	Clobue@tnc.org
PAUL LAMONTE	LANCECAMP5@AOL.COM
ART BORD	ALL ISLAND SUPPERCLUBS

Speakers →



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
John D'Ambrosia	JDGTI@optonline.net
Lawrence Carlucci	Lisurfa@aol.com
Keith Campbell	gonefishing2286@gmail
Anthony Gucciardo	agucciardo11d@gmail.com
Don Musca	
✓ Nick Marchetti	neverenuffishing@hotmail.com
Louis LaRusso	LLarusso@aol.com
✓ Tom Falco	jennyecharters@gmail.com
Jim Kerrigan	hook521@yahoo.com
Pat Kerrigan	_____
John A. PIANA	jabplana@optonline.net
MARK SEDOTTI	MSKDOTT1@HOTMAIL.COM
RYAN Smith	RYAN Smith 51@YAHOO
Joe Bow	JoPlugs@gmail.com
✓ Bill Muller	183 DAKSIDE DR. SMITH TOWN
DANIEL FACELLA	Bass DAN 92 a aol
NICK SAUENE	NOTIMECHANGERS@HOTMAIL.COM
✓ JASON BRUNER	NYTRPT7@aol.com
✓ Antonio Camargo	Antonio Camargo G4@gmail.com
Larry Pacifico	Sag1262@yahoo.com

STAPLING



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
* Craig Centelmo	Craig@vanstaal.com
Thomas CARUSO	TCARUSO@VESTACAST.COM
GERARD MOSCA	SERARYBOY@OPTONLINE.NET
Klaus Cooky Rondinelli	LIBBApresident@gmail.com
Bill JAKOB	MONTAUKSURFCASTERASSOC.PRES
Reed Riemer	
JIM COURTNEY	joanandjim1@verizon.net
MAYL HANAMGOW	mherring@newsday.com
Chris Palank	CPalank@aol.com
Mike Caruso	mcaruso@thefishman.com
* Roy Wea	RUC811@aol.com
Justin Rutcofsky	AustinRutcofsky
John Paduano	
* John Paduano	Sunfrat3505@aol.com
BOGUSLAW TUROWSKI	BOGGIEFISH29@GMAIL.COM
✓ Joe Tangel	NY RF HFA
GEORGE SPIES	SPYGULL@YAHOO.COM
✓ Zm Auer	Z. Auer@yahoo.com
Chris Spies	—



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
Hugh N. Chaney LT	FISHERMAN5240@YAHOO.COM
Joseph Oliveri	JoJo169@VERIZON.NET
Bret McGowan	Bret.McGowan@gmail.com
Patrick Gillen	Patrickg@optonline.net
DANIEL GIUNTA	DoubleDMTK@YAHOO.COM
Kyle Colasanto	Kcolk9@gmail.com



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

Speaking →

NAME	EMAIL
STEVEN P. WALKER	SBSW7881@YAHOO.COM
Donald DiCostanzo	bu22226omb@AOL.COM
TONY VERNOLA	MONKFISH CHARTERS@GMAIL.COM
Albert Albano	aalbano@Lirr.org
JOE Mogavero	Jmogavero77@gmail.com
Ross Squire	rsquire@aol.com
JOE GAWUN	JP GAWUN @ AOL.COM
GARRETT Moon	GARRYM@OONLINE.NET
JAMES NASH	NASHJAMESC@gmail.com
RALPH VIGMOSTAD	RUCOH0@YAHOO.COM
KEN WEINBERGER	KDUB0946@GMAIL.COM
JIM CALLAHAN	JIDERUNR@GMAIL.COM
Lloyd Kee	lloydkee@gmail.com
STEVEN R Withuhn.	CAPTOPHOOK@aol.com.
Mike Jacobs	Mike Jacobs 3100@gmail.com
Michael Brady	mdbmnd1975@gmail.com
Joe Albanese	albanesejj@gmail.com
Joe Pellegrini	Joedroic19@gmail
John Gans	JGANS@TRCP.ORG
Toniann Keiling	toniannkeiling@outlook.com



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

NAME	EMAIL
JOHN MLODYNIA	JOHNMLODYNIA@GMAIL.COM
✓ Mike Dean	mdean329@gmail.com
BOB McDowell	SISUBOB@HOTMAIL.COM
JEFF WILKINSON	Jowilkinson15@yahoo.com
Keith Franz	SNARF446@yahoo.com
✓ Joseph Vanderveldt	Javjrslbvi@gmail.com
John Luniewski	JohnLuniewski@gmail.com
Crescenzo Abbate	Cabbatellactb@gmail.com
✓ Julien Frank	Julienfrank@gmail.com
Jessica Best	jessica.best@de.ny.gov
Matthar Broderick	fishingtheisland1995@gmail.com
Ken Bell	forbelz@aol.com
Derrill William	Derrillw@gmail.com
John Glynn	John.Glynn@aecom.com
Russell Masciotti	
Brendan Vesina	
Thomas P Bell	
John Durante	
Ed Rapp	



SIGN IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

BETHPAGE STATE PARK

Speakers →

NAME	EMAIL
X NEIL DELANOY	NDELANOY@AOL.COM
X ANGEL VENEGAS	Angel13988@AOL.com
FRED BURKHARDT (REC)	fredburkhardt1@gmail.com
X Jens Hromek Zoo Roma	info@surfcasterjournal.com
Halie Meyers	meyers@nySenate.gov
James Miller	Jmiller6464@gmail.com
X Megan Conner	mconner92@gmail.com
James Higgs	67chev@optonline.net
Matt Cator	mattcator@barrail.com
Anthony Crisostomo	ACRISOSTOMO@PATHASSOC.COM
Stephen Roland	Qualityclm@aol.com

1075 Tooker Avenue
West Babylon, NY 11704
September 4, 2019

Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI

Dear Mr. Appelman:

I am taking this opportunity to provide comments on the *Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass* (the "Draft Addendum").

I have been an active and regular participant in the recreational striped bass fishery since the mid-1960s, fishing primarily in Long Island Sound off western Connecticut and in the Atlantic Ocean off the central south shore of Long Island, New York, although I have also fished for striped bass in other areas ranging from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to both the Maryland and Virginia sections of Chesapeake Bay.

The experience gained over that time, and at the various places where I've fished, lead me to ask that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (the "Management Board") take the following actions with respect to the Draft Addendum.

I

WITH RESPECT TO SECTION 3.1, PROPOSED MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS, THE MANAGEMENT BOARD SHOULD ADOPT OPTION 2, EQUAL PERCENT REDUCTIONS, SUB-OPTION 2-A1, A 35-INCH MINIMUM SIZE IN THE COASTAL FISHERY, AND SUB-OPTION 2-B1, A ONE-FISH BAG AND 18-INCH MINIMUM SIZE IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

A

Option 2, equal percent reductions, will equitably distribute the burdens and benefits of ending overfishing

The most recent benchmark assessment of the Atlantic striped bass stock (the "2018 Assessment") found that recreational fishermen were responsible for about 90 percent of striped bass fishing mortality in 2017, the terminal year of the assessment, while commercial fishermen were responsible for the other 10 percent.¹ Assuming that such percentages remain constant, anglers will reap about 90 percent of the benefits gleaned from a recovered stock, while commercials will glean the other 10 percent.

¹ Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2019, 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (66th SAW) Assessment Report, US Dep Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc 19-08; 1170 p. Available from <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/> p. 510.

①

By reducing the fishing mortality attributable to both sectors by the same 18%, anglers will also shoulder 90 percent of the conservation burden, while commercial fishermen will only be responsible for 10 percent of the reductions. That is a fair and equitable approach to ending overfishing.

On the other hand, the Option 3 approach, which would see anglers shouldering 99 percent of the conservation burden while being responsible for only 90 percent of the fishing mortality, is neither equitable nor appropriate. If commercial fishermen will receive 10 percent of the benefits of conservation measures, they should be responsible for 10 percent of the costs of achieving such benefits.

B

Sub-option 2-A1, a 35-inch minimum size, is the preferable way to achieve an 18 percent reduction in the coastal recreational fishery.

Although, on paper, sub-option 2-A1 only achieves the minimum 18 percent reduction, less than two of the slot limit options,² such 35-inch minimum size probably brings the most certainty to the management process.

As noted in the Draft Addendum, the benefits of slot limits in the striped bass fishery are not easily quantified, as there is a distinct possibility that, by focusing harvest on the occasional strong year classes as they pass through the slot, slot limits may have the effect of reducing the number of fish that ultimately survive to escape the slot, and so reduce the number of older, larger females in the spawning stock in the long term.³

Another issue, not directly addressed in the Draft Addendum, is whether slot limits would result in increased release mortality, due to the fact that older, larger striped bass tend to fight harder and longer than smaller fish, are more stressed when brought to the boat or shore, and thus are less likely to survive release unless the angler takes time to properly revive his or her catch before allowing it to swim away. Add the likelihood that such larger fish are more likely to be caught on bait than are smaller fish, and the likelihood that an angler catching a larger fish will keep it out of the water for an extended period in order to take photographs prior to release, and the probable increase in release mortality attributable to a slot limit becomes apparent.

On the other hand, a management strategy built around a 35-inch minimum size is somewhat similar to, although less restrictive than, the strategy that led to the striped bass recovery of 1995,⁴ and thus can be viewed as a tested and successful approach to reducing fishing mortality.

² Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass*, August 2019, p. 11

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9

⁴ Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass*, October 1985

C

Sub-option 2-B1, an 18-inch minimum size and one-fish bag limit, is the preferable way to achieve the needed reduction in the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery.

Fishing mortality in the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery was not sufficiently constrained when the Management Board adopted *Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass* (Addendum IV). While Addendum IV called for a 20.5 percent reduction in fishing mortality attributable to Chesapeake Bay anglers, compared to a 2012 base year,⁵ such reduction was never achieved. Instead, recreational fishermen in the Chesapeake Bay actually *increased* their fishing mortality by more than 50% in 2015,⁶ the first year that regulations adopted pursuant to Addendum IV were in effect, and maintained such excessive harvest levels through 2018.⁷

Much of that fishing mortality was due to release mortality attributable to undersized fish. At the Management Board's October 2016 meeting, a Mr. Phil Langley, president of the Maryland Charterboat Association, objected to the 20-inch minimum size adopted by Maryland, saying that "we saw an abundance of fish. However, most were 16 to 19.75 inches, below the legal harvest size. Most captains I've spoken to were experiencing a 20 to 1 ratio of undersized fish versus kept fish. With an assumed 9 percent mortality, this is 1.8 fish lost for each legal fish harvested."⁸

It is a valid point. When the Management Board was discussing the Draft Addendum at its April 30, 2019 meeting, Michael Luisi, a fisheries manager for the State of Maryland, argued that "I'm a little disappointed and slightly discouraged that we're sitting here talking about options to increase minimum size limits across the board; only knowing that it's going to exacerbate the situation that we are currently in with dead discards being as high as they are."⁹

Sub-option 2-B1, which would reduce the minimum recreational size limit to 18 inches while also reducing the bag limit to a single fish, would appear to be a perfect way to address both Mr. Langley's and Mr. Luisi's concerns. By dropping the size limit to 18 inches, the number of undersized fish being released, and thus the overall release mortality, would be reduced; by reducing the bag limit to a single fish, anglers would fill their bag limit more easily, and would not be forced to catch and release additional striped bass, and so add to the losses from release mortality, while attempting to catch a second legal striped bass.

Thus, sub-option 2-B1 seems to be the most effective way to manage anglers in the Chesapeake Bay.

⁵ Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass*, October 2014, p. 8

⁶ Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee, Memorandum RE: 2016 Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update, October 5, 2016, p. 5

⁷ Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division, September 3, 2019

⁸ Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Proceedings of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Atlantic Striped Bass Management [Board]*, October 24, 2016, p. 1

⁹ Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Proceedings of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board*, April 30, 2019, p. 26

II

WITH RESPECT TO SECTION 3.2, CIRCLE HOOK PROVISION, OPTION B, WHICH REQUIRES STATES TO IMPLEMENT REGULATIONS REQUIRING THE USE OF CIRCLE HOOKS IN BAIT FISHERIES, IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE OPTION

As noted in the Draft Addendum, the use of circle hooks in striped bass bait fisheries substantially reduces release mortality, compared to the use of traditional J-hooks.¹⁰ That is a particularly important consideration in the striped bass fishery, where many of the larger fish are caught on baits such as live eels and menhaden ("bunker").

While some anglers are already voluntarily using circle hooks when fishing with bait, many still employ traditional J-hooks. Here in New York, there is also a substantial contingent of anglers who eschew even those, and instead prefer to use treble hooks when livelining baits such as menhaden. While such treble hooks do provide a higher percentage of hook-ups compared to J-hooks, they also can do far more damage to fish hooked in the gills or gut. The mandatory use of circle hooks would end such abuses in the recreational striped bass fishery.

III

SUMMARY

The striped bass stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. While the Draft Addendum does not, unfortunately, contain any provisions intended to rebuild the stock, it will hopefully end overfishing and so halt the stock's decline. That being the case, I ask that the Management Board take the following actions:

In Section 3.1

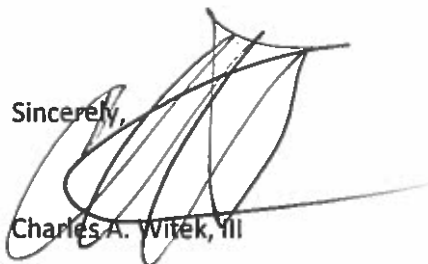
- Adopt **Option 2**
- Adopt **Suboption 2-A1**
- Adopt **Suboption 2-B1**

In Section 3.2

- Adopt **Option B**

Thank you for considering my views on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles A. Witek, III". The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to overlapping loops and lines.

Charles A. Witek, III

¹⁰ ASMFC, Draft Addendum VI, p. 16

Good evening my name is Craig Cantelmo and I represent Van Staal fishing products a manufacturer of fish reels and accessories. I'm also a light tackle guide and father of two boys that are avid fisherman.

The striped bass is worth 8 billion dollars to local communities from North Carolina to Maine and is one of the most important gamefish to recreational anglers that support the tackle industry. Abundance is critical for an angler to have a reasonable expectation of catching a fish and for them to spend money on fishing tackle. We're now seeing the effects of a declining Spawning Stock Biomass and a drop in abundance effecting the number of people actively fishing for striped bass.

As we all came together in 2014 to demand stricter regulations to help protect the striped bass and what many anglers believed was an overfished fishery we hoped that the 25% reduction that only had a 50% chance of succeeding would help. As we've learned the fishery was in a far worse position then ASMFC data represented and today we're here to say we need to ACT and reduce mortality and increase SSB before we're here 5 years from now trying to avoid an even more dire situation.

I believe the following options are required:

Option 2: An 18% reduction applied equally between both the recreation and commercial sectors

Option 2-A1: 1 Fish @35"

This was a very tough choice as many of the slot limits looked appealing to help protect the largest breeding fish in the stock. However, there is no precedence for slot limits in this fishery and we have evidence that 1@36" worked previously to help protect the smallest fish and allow them to reach sexual maturity.

Chesapeake Bay, Option 2-B1: 1 @18"

Option 3.2.B: Mandatory Use of circle hooks

This option is extremely important and should be required when using chunks and live bait to reduce fishing mortality.

If and when conservation equivalency is used measures must be put in place to manage the harvest and we MUST be able to act to make changes to insure that excesses like those that occurred in Maryland with the 2011 year class do not happen again....and if they do they get penalized the following year.

Thank You for your time.

Joe Tangel

New York Recreational & For Hire Fishing Alliance

King Cod...Center Moriches

The NY RFHFA has had a poll posted on our Facebook page for the last 4 days.

We currently have around 1400 members including approximately 100 for hire vessels from New York City to the east end of Long Island, Marinas, Tackle Shops, private boat fishermen, shore bound anglers, and other large organizations such as the Huntington Anglers Club, and the Montauk Boatmen's and Captains Association make up the membership of our organization. So we are a very diverse group.

The options in poll where as follows:

1. A Slot Limit of 1 fish @ 28-35"
No change to season.
2. A Slot Limit of 1 fish @ 30-38"
No change to season.
3. A Slot Limit of 1 fish @ 32-40"
No change to season.
4. 1 fish with a 35" minimum size.
No change to season.

The final option would be a proposed Conservation Equivalency option:

5. 1 fish with a 30" minimum size.
With a season of May 1st. to November 30th.
We also added no retention of Bass for Capt. & Crew to this option if it was needed to meet the required reduction.

The Results:

In 4 days, 169 votes were cast.

The slot limit of one 32-40" fish, received ZERO votes.

The slot limit of one 30-38" fish, received ZERO votes.

1 fish @ 35", no change to season received 3% of the votes, with 5.

The slot limit of one 28-35" fish, no change to season, received 31% of the votes with 53.

The proposed conservation equivalency option of a 30" minimum, with a May 1st – November 30th season received 66% of the votes with 111.

Many of the comments attached to the poll expressed that a 35" minimum size would be devastating to the for hire industry.

Many in the industry have also expressed the desire to bring back the Party/Charter Boat Striped Bass permit, in order to separate from private boat and shore bound modes. This would effectively bring about differential regulations for the industry that harvests a very small number of Striped Bass compared to the rest of the recreational modes.

We hope you will consider this poll and the attached comments when moving forward with the required reduction.

Thank you...



Bay Shore Fishing Corp.

90 Cedar Point Drive
West Islip, NY 11795
(631) 661-1867
www.captree.com

LAURA LEE
CAPT. NEIL DELANOY

September 4, 2019

To: ASMFC

Re: Striper bass addendum comment:

My name is Neil Delanoy. I am commenting for the Captree Boatmen's Association. We take over 300,000 anglers fishing each year. Many of our trips target striped bass.

All the proposed options create a great and unnecessary burden to our operators and patrons.

I would like to suggest Conservation Equivalency as a better way to accomplish the required reduction in mortality. The following tools could be used to get to an 18% reduction:

- 1) Reduce season to May 1 through November 30.
- 2) No retention for the crew of for hire vessels.
- 3) Adopt the state of Maine's circle hook regulations and ban gaffing.
- 4) Eliminate out of season directed catch and release.

I would also note that all the recent and proposed sacrifice has been by the Party and charter boats. Our neighboring states give their commercial allocation to the recreational and for hire side.

We need some relief. There is a win, win option. Make commercial tags transferable to charter and party boats on a totally voluntary basis.

①

Respectfully Submitted,

Neil Delanoy

Executive Director

Captree Boatmen's Association

A small, handwritten mark or signature located in the bottom right corner of the page. It appears to be a stylized, circular scribble.

SIGN-IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019, 6:00PM
 NYSDEC Region 3
 New Paltz, New York

NAME	EMAIL	Would you like to make a public comment?
Richard Booth	reelhapy2@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
JOS WALLNER	JWconstructors@frontiernet.net	<input type="checkbox"/>
BOB TRENZ	OFFTHECHAPTERS@VERIZON.NET	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Beffs	m.c.9022@AOL.COM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adam Haines	hainesam01@mail.buffalostate.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jay Martin	CAPTAIN-JAYMARTIN@YAHOO.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scott Fairchild	FairchildScott1@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JEFF HELMUTH	jhelmuth@dep.nyc.gov	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ralph J. Albino	ra1326@yahoo.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audrey Van Guchtin	audrey.vanguchtin@health.ny.gov	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Wager	Jerwa@earthlink.net	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kenneth Luis	KLuis1337@GMAIL.COM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dan LUSSIER	818 Stage Rd Benson, VT	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lou Merlino	ScrewELouE!@verizon.net	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethen VanSlyke	ethenvanslyke@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
GARY SOTTOSANTI	gansot1951@yahoo.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Butch Klinck		<input type="checkbox"/>
WIK Connors		<input type="checkbox"/>

SIGN-IN SHEET

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019, 6:00PM
 NYSDEC Region 3
 New Paltz, New York

NAME	EMAIL	Would you like to make a public comment?
Kim Doyle	Ca 4 Kim @ Netzero .net	<input type="checkbox"/>
BOBBY TAYLOR	BO.TAYLOR82@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alana Gervs	alana.gervs@health.ny.gov	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALAN + JUDITH JONES	alan+jonesy@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thomas V. Forstner	tvforstner ehvc.rr.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ WERKEMA	SAEKAZER @XAHOO.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dan White	CloudnineCharters@yahoo.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Martin Markowski	Pittsford martyskigt@cloud	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dwain J. Sullivan	SULLIVAN@HIGHLANDS.COM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Nunez	rnunez11@verizon.net	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawrence Kusior	LKusior66@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justin B. Prviksma	prvikj@sage.edu	<input type="checkbox"/>
George JACKMAN	G.JACKMAN@RVERKESPS.ORG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Larry D. Long	lawdrd76@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anthony Pucci	apucci@commodorecc.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Roger Cornell	ZRCORNELL@gmail.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ed Skorzupski	ESKORUPSKI@NYCAP. RR.COM	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/4/2019

Location: Ocean City, NJ

--PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Name	Company/Organization	City, State
Joe Gerace	South Jersey Coastal Fly Anglers	Ocean City, NJ
BOB YEACER	SOMERSET DUNE MARINA	EGG HARBOR TWP. N.J.
MARK CHRISTENSEN		OCEAN CITY NJ
NORM HAFSEUD		
CRAIG PETERS	FISH TALE CHARTERS	MARMORA NJ
Brian Williams	BAD FISH CHARTERS	SCULLVILLE, NJ
Dean Dannerhour		Williamstown, NJ
John Rhin		Mays Landing NJ
Bob Bolger	Cape May Co. Party & Charter Boat Assoc.	Newtown, PA
Ray Forutski	REC, Fishermen	ATCO, N.J.
Fathy Forutski	" "	ATCO N.J.
George Bucci	Cape Atlantic Striper club	Northfield, N.J.
Howard Wore	SSCFA	EHT N.J.
Eleanor Bucherch	Rutgers Univ.	Cape May, NJ
Jim HICKINSON	THE FISHERMAN	BRICK, NJ
John DeBona	THE FISHERMAN	BRICK, NJ
MICK STALEHURD	SHORE-ON FISHING	LIAMOOD, NJ
JAMES Lutz	NEW-RENT SPANT FISH	AVALON, NJ
Jim BECOTTE		
Chip Schummer	Super's Charters	Ocean City NJ
Diane Eggie		Seaville, NJ
Greg O'Connell		Mays Landing, NJ
TRBY Eggie		Seaville, NJ
Tim Kubiet		Egg Harbor Twp, NJ

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 12 Sept. 2019

Location: Stafford Twp Community Center, Manahawick

--PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Name	Company/Organization	City, State
Gary Riethmann		Barnegat NJ
Dustin Strehl	Sea Beast Charters	Leonardo NJ
Ed Studley	—	Tom-River NJ
GENE GILD		BRIDGE LIGHT NJ
Jeremy Johnson		Little Egg Harbor NJ
Paul Hgerfel		Clifton, NJ
BOB WINOC	NJSSFC	JORDAN PARK NJ
Frank Belgouane		Tom's River, NJ
Bob Misak	The Fisherman	
Susan Foti		
Jay Andraos		Brick, NJ
Richard Evan		BRICK, NJ
BOB HAINES		SOUTHAMPTON N.J
Carl Sheppard	Sea Fish	Beach Haven NJ
RON JENSEN		Arco, N.J
JOE RIZZO	NJMFCA	MAYBHA NJ
John DeBona	THE FISHERMAN	BRICK, NJ 08722
John Isdanouay	Coastal Angler Fly Fishing	Beachwood NJ 08722
CARLTON LIEK		Bayville NJ 08721
Jim Hurlbutson	THE FISHERMAN	BRICK, NJ
Malcolm Leslie		Ship Bottom NJ Belvidere
Greg O'Connell	ASAC	lefty.oconnell@yahoo.com
Joanne Pellegrino	NOAA	joanne.pfgw@noaa.gov
Steve Orsobe		TABERWICK, N.J.

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 8/28/2019

Location: Bristol, PA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
RICK MAWSON	DRFA	PHILA, PA.
JTB Newton	DRFA	NY.
JOHN PEDRICK	DRFA	BENSALLEN PA
Michael Blair	PFBC	Bucks PA
David Zimmerman	LD's Bait & Tackle	Bucks PA
MANNY BUTERA	MYSELF	YARDLEY PA
MILKO NILEVO	DRFA	NEWTOWN, PA
PETE MARGOLINA	"	
Bob JACI	DRFA	NEW JERSEY
FRANK BECK	DRFA	South PA
Stan Praskuli		
Ken Levanu		
Nik Hothish		
Rich GASPAN	DRFA	
RON SOTO	DRFA	LEVITOWN PA
WYNNETTE GOODNOW	DRFA	MORRISVILLE PA
Bryan Milkiewicz	DRFA	TITUSVILLE, NJ
Pete Antonowicz	DRFA	LAWRENCEVILLE NJ
MICHAEL ECKSTEIN	DRFA	PHILA PA
Ken Reitz	DRFA	Phila Pa.
Bob Estely	DRFA	LEVITOWN PA
GREG SUTHERS	DRFA	
HARRY WIREBACH	DRFA	LUTN
CHICK		NJ
PHIL KAMENIECKI		

Dear Commissioners

The American Saltwater Guides Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on Addendum VI to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Striped Bass.

Rebuilding the striped bass population is critical for future viability of our businesses. Our lives are intrinsically linked to health of our shared marine resources.

Striped bass are overfished and overfishing is occurring. We have overfished the stock for 11 of the last thirteen years. It is time for all stakeholders to give back to the resource.

We spend our lives on the water and have known there was a problem for almost a decade. We have voiced our concerns. We patiently waited for the stock assessment to be completed. Now, the science paints a picture that is far more daunting than most would have imagined.

As we have mentioned in the past, the flexibility that is permitted at the commission has allowed striped bass populations to plummet to levels not seen since the early nineties. This flexibility is not allowed at the councils. We can be almost certain that striped bass would be in far better shape if managed under a Magnuson Stevens framework. Under the best circumstances, this amendment won't rebuild the stock until 2033. All the while, The Striped Bass Management and Conservation Act mandates rebuilding within a ten-year time frame. This is a glaring example of the lack of accountability with ASMFC.

While we believe more decisive action is required, we also understand the parameters of the comments for this addendum.

We are committed to working within the system.

The American Saltwater Guides Association strongly urges the Commission to adopt the following options to end overfishing and rebuild the stock.

Option 2:

Equal Percent Reductions

We are all stakeholders in this fishery. We all benefit from an abundant population of striped bass and we should all shoulder the burden of rebuilding the stock equally.

Sub-Option 2A-1

1 fish @35" for the Coast Ocean Recreational Fishery

We rebuilt the stock with a similar size and creel limit before.

We know that this approach has a history of success.

Furthermore, conservation equivalency severely limits the potential effectiveness of a slot limit. If all states are not *REQUIRED* to adhere to a maximum size, how can a slot limit possibly work?

Sub-Option 2B-1

1 Fish @ 18" for the Chesapeake Bay

As you are well aware, the recreational sector in Maryland was allowed to grossly overfish because their conservation equivalency proposal was not properly vetted by the Technical Committee. This resulted over a million extra striped bass harvested by Maryland recreational anglers in the last few years.

Sub-option 2B-1 is the most restrictive and quantifiable option for harvest reductions in the Chesapeake Bay. One fish would also address many of the concerns regarding catch and release mortality.

Circle Hook Provision

Option B

If we are truly concerned about catch and release mortality and it is not a "red herring" to take the focus away from overharvest, then we must adopt mandatory circle hook regulations. Peer reviewed science show us that circle hooks greatly improve catch and release mortality numbers. We urge the commission to adopt this measure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/25/19
 Location: Annapolis, MD

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Put a check mark next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
<u>JOHN G. NEELY</u>	<u>MD SFAC</u>	<u>ANNAPOLIS, MD</u>
<u>George O'Donnell</u>	<u>DNR</u>	<u>1c 1/4</u>
<u>Mike Morlock</u>	<u>waterman</u>	<u>Rice Hall</u>
<u>Kim Jeffries</u>	<u>MCBA</u>	<u>Severna Park, Md</u>
<u>Brian Hardiman</u>	<u>UBCCA</u>	<u>Kent Island Md</u>
<u>FRED MENAGE</u>	<u>DSG</u>	<u>Edgewater MD</u>
<u>Tony Vacca</u>	<u>PSG</u>	<u>PASADENA</u>
<u>DON HEINBUCH</u>	<u>PASADENA SPORT</u>	<u>FISHING SENECA BEACHES</u>
<u>MARK EUSTIS</u>	<u>SELF</u>	<u>DAVIDSONVILLE, MD</u>
<u>FRANK ABWER</u>	<u>MCBA</u>	<u>Owings MD</u>
<u>Bob Munro</u>	<u>MCBA</u>	<u>Cyes, Beach, MD</u>
<u>Genevieve Croker</u>	<u>Delmarva Fisheries Soc.</u>	<u>Chestertown, MD</u>
<u>Beth Versak</u>	<u>MD DNR</u>	<u>Annapolis</u>
<u>Lynn Fegley</u>	<u>" "</u>	<u>ANNAPOLIS</u>
<u>Angela Giuliano</u>	<u>MD DNR</u>	<u>Annapolis, MD</u>
<u>Eric Nossif</u>	<u>MD DNR</u>	<u>Annapolis MD</u>
<u>JOHN NEVENS</u>		<u>KENT ISLAND</u>
<u>Rudy Lukacov</u>	<u>self</u>	<u>Kent Island</u>
<u>TOM TANEYHILL</u>	<u>ANNAPOLIS ANGLERS CLUB</u>	<u>ANNAPOLIS MD</u>
<u>Eric Packard</u>		<u>Silamons, MD</u>
<u>Victoria Brown</u>	<u>MWA</u>	<u>Colton Pt, MD</u>

Put a check mark ✓ next to your name if you'd like to provide comment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
ROBERT CHRISTY	PSG	PASADENA MD
TED PEAPOS	PSG	PASADENA MD
Paul Kuludis	CBF	Annapolis, MD
Frank Bonanno	CCA	Baltimore, MD
Billy Gee	MCBA	Deal MD
✓ Robert T. Brown	MWA	Annapolis Md
✓ CRAIG MASK	MWD / ^{MASK} _{SEAFOOD}	PORT REPUBLIC, MD
✓ Dawn Penney	Waterman	Westminster, MD
Ed Linnert	CCA	PURISTOWN MD
Ray Julie	CCA	QUEENSTOWN, MD
Bill Becker	—	Annapolis, MD
John Rodenhiser	—	Arnold, MD
Mike Smolek	MCBA	Edgewater, MD
Mark Egegen	CCA	Edgewater, MD
✓ Kevin M. Megamin	Annapolis Anglers Club	Annapolis
✓ Danny Finkelt	MCBA	Solomons
TIM CAMPBELL	CCA	PHOENIX, MD
DAVID LAJANO	CCA	PHOENIX, MD
DAVID SIKORSKI ✓	CCA	BALTIMORE, MD
Allison Colden	CBF	Annapolis, MD
Keith Grafius	Andy Harris	Taylor Island, MD
Mike Sadler	MCBA	Stevensville MD.
Larry Redden	Fish Talk mag	Edgewater, MD
Brian Councell	Councell Chambers	Rockhall MD
Larry Jennings	CCA/MD	Annapolis, MD

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: October 3, 2019

Location: Cambridge, MD

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
ROBERT M. SHENTON	Mid Shore Fishing Club	Cam, Md.
Bob WITAPUS	Dorcas Sisters Veg	CAMS MD
Ed Miller	Private	Wic Md, Md
Nick Carter	citizen	Greenboro MD
Lennard Wooters		Cambridge Md
JOY WYDLER		
JUSTIN ARON		Church Creek MD
SONNY GWIN	FV Skillyalee	O.C.MD
George TAPPING	R.TA DIANE	O.C. Md.
A. Mc Haddaway	Screaming Eagle Charter	EASTON, MD
Dudley Ann	Waterman	Crisfield Md.
Gordon Ford	waterman	merion MD
ROBERT J. BREWER	IWA	Harrods Md
Burl Lewis	Waterman	Cambridge Md.
L.A. CARSON	HARVESTER	CRISFIELD, MD.
DAVID CROW	WAYMAN	Tilghman Md.
Charles Denton	Friends of Wicomeco	Whitehaven Md
CURBY DEAN		EAST NEW MARKET, MD
Steve Schneider	Mid-Shore Fishing Club	Easton, MD
TOSY FREE	SFAC, CCA, MSFC	OXFORD
CHRIS YOUNG	GEF - IWA	EASTON, MD
Jim Price	Summit	
Captain Steve Mason	Beach to Bay Guide Service	Princess Anne, MD
Thomas L. Powley	waterman	Church Creek Md
Stephen L. Smith	MSFC	CAMBRIDGE, MD.
Walt Britchett	Waterman	Cambridge MD.
Jerry Alrey	Waterman	Secretary MD
GARY L. COMPTON		
Hilary Gibson	Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Cambridge, MD
ANTHONY FRIEDRICH	American Saltwater	MD
	GUIDES ASSOC.	

October 3, 1999

Cambridge, MD

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Name	Company/Organization	City, State
SHAH AMER		BERLIN, MD
Edna Lynn		Snow Hill md
rd Ebo g zickel		Merluke Mass/ Va d.
JERRY LYNSCOTT		Girdeltrac MD
Jannan		TILGHMAN MD
Herb R Honda Floyd		Trappe, MD
HARRY MILLER	MID SHORE FISHING CLUB	Cambridge
Eli m Lee Wilton Jr	Smensick County	md.
DAVE KIRKENDALL		ARNOLD MD
John Lake		Off Curri
Patricia Yellman	Water man	
HARRY POWLEY	STRIPED BASS WORK GROUP	Fishing freely, MD
Jason Wils.	MWA	Tilg
Robbie W.		
DAVEY RIPPLE	MID SHORE FISH	TRAPPE MD
Jan Ruggell Jr	Water man	Heopers Island
Roger Dixie	CCA	Sherrwood Rumbly md
Tim Riley		
David B. Poe		Oxod, MD 21654
Allan Ellis	media	Easton, MD 21601
BOB G FISLER		
JOHN R MARTIN	MARTIN FISH CO.	Ocean City MD
Buddy Fitchett		
CAPT R. NEUBERRY	DFA	Chesapeake, MD.
DAVID SIKORSKI	CCA MD	BALTIMORE, MD
Jeff Harrison	Tilghman Assoc.	Tilghman
John Coffey	CCA	St Michaels
David T. Maginnes	Maginnes Productions	Cambridge MD
Dean Price		Colton Pt, MD
Victoria Brown	MWA	Cambridge, MD 21613
Chris Weber	Water man	

Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment

Date: 9/10/2019

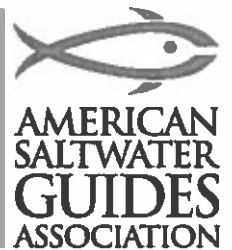
Location: Colonial Beach, VA

-- PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY --

Please put a check mark if you'd like to provide ~~comment~~ comment

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Company/Organization</u>	<u>City, State</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Phil Lawley	PRFC	Dameron, MD
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Robert Ben	MWRP	Annapolis
	Tracey France		Montross VA
	Wayne France		Montross VA
	Dusty Jones		
	Russell Roberts	Midnight Sun Charters	Reedville Va.
	Charles		
	Charles Coyle		
	MONICA Schenemann	PKWWA	Lewisetta VA
	STAN SUTLIFF	CBF	WMBG, VA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Billy Reed	Comm Fish	Col. Sch. Va.
	John Dean	Comm. Fish	Newburg MD.
	Zeb Brunclage	ST MARYS	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bill Kiliwski	Coles Point, VA	Hague, VA.
	Barber Poe	Charles County Watermen	Cobb Island MD
	Victoria Brown	St. Mary's	St. Georges Md.
	Doug Hands	St. MARY	Cottontail Pt MD
	John Bello	VSSA	Cobb Island MD
	Will Robertson	Charles County	ASHBURN VA
	Mary Egan		La Plata MD
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Felish Swan	Charles Co	Charles Point
	Wayne Talle	Comm. Fish	Stubbs
	STENNIS FLEMING		Colonial Beach Va.
	Dennis Stinis		NEWBOLD, MD
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chad Keen	ASCA	Newburg, MD.
	ELLEN COSBY	PRFC	Avenue, MD
	Mike Swann	Charles County	Col. Sch. VA
	Kenny Peterson		Charles
	John T. Dameron	Comm Fish	Kray Gully VA
	Lewis T. Dameron	Comm Fish	Kinsale VA
			Kinsale VA

American Saltwater Guides Association



Promoting Sustainable
Business Through
Marine Conservation

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

**Peter Jenkins,
Chairman**

Board:

**ME, Capt. Kyle Schaefer,
Soul Fly Outfitters**

**NH, Capt. Peter,
Whalen, Shoals Fly
Fishing and Light Tackle**

**MA, Capt. Jamie, Boyle
Boylermaker Charters**

**RI, Capt. Dave Monti, No
Fluke Fishing**

**CT, Capt. Ian Devlin,
Devlin Fishing**

**NY, Capt. Paul Dixon, To
The Point Charters**

**NJ, Capt. Jason Dapra,
Blitzbound Charters**

**DE, Tyler O'Neill,
Norvise**

**MD, Capt. Mark
Galasso, Tuna the Tide
Charters**

**VA, Capt. Chris
Newsome, Bay Fly
Fishing**

**NC, Capt. Tom Roller,
Waterdog Guide Service**

**Washington, DC, Rich
Farino, District Angling**

**Capt John McMurray,
President**

**Tony Friedrich,
VP/Policy Director**

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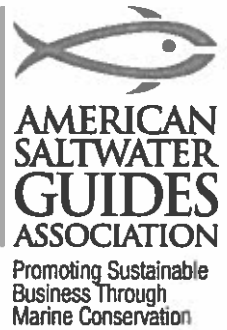
As we have mentioned in the past, the flexibility that is allowed at the Commission has caused striped bass populations to plummet to levels not seen since the early nineties. Under a more rigid framework like that governing the actions of federal fishery management councils, created by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, striped bass would likely not be in this situation. In fact, under the best circumstances, this amendment won't rebuild the stock until 2033. All the while, Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass mandates rebuilding within a ten-year time frame. This is a glaring example of the lack of accountability with ASMFC.



202.744.5013

info@saltwaterguidesassociation.org

American Saltwater Guides Association



**Peter Jenkins,
Chairman**

Board:

**ME, Capt. Kyle Schaefer,
Soul Fly Outfitters**

**NH, Capt. Peter,
Whalen, Shoals Fly
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**MA, Capt. Jamie, Boyle
Boylermaker Charters**

**RI, Capt. Dave Monti, No
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**Tony Friedrich,
VP/Policy Director**

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Option 2:

Equal Percent Reductions

We are all stakeholders in this fishery. We all benefit from an abundant population of striped bass and we should all shoulder the responsibility of rebuilding the stock equally.

Sub-Option 2A-1

1 fish @35" for the Coast Ocean Recreational Fishery

We rebuilt the stock with a similar size and creel limit before. We know that this approach has a history of success. Furthermore, conservation equivalency severely limits the potential effectiveness of a slot limit. If all states are not REQUIRED to adhere to the same slot size, how can a slot limit possibly work?

Sub-Option 2B-1

1 Fish @ 18" for the Chesapeake Bay

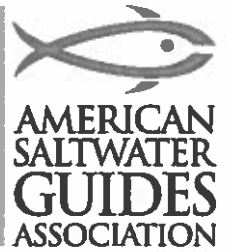
As you are well aware, the recreational sector in Maryland was allowed to grossly overfish because their conservation equivalency proposal was not accurately assessed by the Technical Committee.



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American Saltwater Guides Association



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Business Through
Marine Conservation

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Fishing**

**NC, Capt. Tom Roller,
Waterdog Guide Service**

**Washington, DC, Rich
Farino, District Angling**

**Capt John McMurray,
President**

**Tony Friedrich,
VP/Policy Director**

This is the most restrictive and quantifiable option for harvest reductions in the Chesapeake Bay. One fish would also address many of the concerns regarding catch and release mortality.

Circle Hook Provision Option B

If we are truly concerned about catch and release mortality, and it is not a "red herring" to take the focus away from overharvest, then we must adopt mandatory circle hook regulations. Peer reviewed science shows us that circle hooks greatly improve catch and release mortality numbers. We urge the commission to adopt this measure.

As guides, it feels like we are being hit from all sides. Pollution, climate change, and overharvest are constantly threatening our ability to provide a stable life for our families. This addendum addresses overharvest. We hope that one day soon, we will be proactively addressing all the issues that impact our ability to introduce anglers to the outdoors as well as instill a love and stewardship for the ocean.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment

Tony Friedrich

Tony Friedrich
VP/Policy Director
American Saltwater Guides Association



202.744.5013

info@saltwaterguidesassociation.org

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

380 FENWICK RD, BUILDING 96, FORT MONROE, VA

VMRC COMMISSION ROOM

Monday, September 9, 2019 - 6:30 PM

Public Sign-In Sheet

Please make a check mark next to your name if you intend on making public comment

✓ Douglas F. Jenkins - Tarn River Watersheds WSSO

MICHAEL QUINAN, THOMPSON H. MULLAN

Lynnee A Squires

Bernard Wayne Morris

Stan Simmerman - PSWSFA

Mike Avery - VSSA

Buddy Caron Com. Fishery

Bill Oja Com. Fisheries

J.C. Hudgins - VWA

John Dameron

Curtis Jenkins

David Johnson

Wayne MacMaster

✓ Kelly Place

Ernest Bowden

✓ Danny Bowden

✓ Chris Moore

John Pinder

Camaron Spratt

Charles Dryden

George Trice

Matt Blaylock

Edward Surpin

JEFF JETT

