

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

February 8, 2022

1:00 – 1:45 p.m.

Webinar

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 (*J. Davis*) 1:00 p.m.
2. Board Consent 1:00 p.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Public Comment
3. Consider Harvest Reduction Target for the Black Sea Bass Recreational Fishery **Possible Action** 1:05 p.m.
 - Review Technical Committee Recommendations (*J. Davis*)

Motions Made Via Email

Main Motion

Move to specify a 24% reduction in harvest compared to the 2018-2021 average incorporating the Technical Committee’s analyses of the MRIP data to achieve the coastwide 2022 RHL for black sea bass, and adjust the non-preferred coastwide measures for consistency to: 14-inch minimum size, 5 fish possession limit, and open season of May 15-October 2.

Motion by Ms. Meserve, seconded by Mr. Batsavage.

Substitute Motion

Move to substitute to specify a 20.7% reduction in harvest compared to the 2018-2021 average incorporating the Technical Committee’s analyses of the MRIP data to achieve the coastwide 2022 RHL for black sea bass, and adjust the non-preferred coastwide measures for consistency to: 14-inch minimum size, 5 fish possession limit, and open season of May 15-October 8.

Motion by Mr. Gorham, seconded by Mr. Sikorski.

4. Other Business/Adjourn 1:45 p.m.



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board
FROM: Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee
DATE: February 1, 2022
SUBJECT: Harvest Reduction Target Recommendation for the Black Sea Bass Recreational Fishery

The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call on January 31, 2022 to review progress on a modified Thompson Tau outlier identification and smoothing analysis for black sea bass recreational harvest estimates, and recommend a revised reduction target to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board). The methods, concept, and preliminary results of the modified Thompson Tau analysis were presented to the Board at their January 25th meeting.¹

The TC recommends the Board consider a revised reduction target for black sea bass of 24% compared to 2018-2021 average harvest.² This recommendation was reached by consensus after considering the full range of potential reductions that resulted from adjusting the parameters of the Thompson Tau analysis, including adjustments to the probability level for detecting outliers and the method for smoothing outliers. In addition, the TC agreed to log-transform the MRIP harvest data before applying the Thompson Tau outlier identification analysis because the method assumes a t-distribution (a symmetrical distribution similar to the normal) and catch data are typically overdispersed, closer to a log-normal distribution. The full range of reductions considered by the TC ranged from 20.7% to 26.8%. The 24% reduction was the average of all the approaches considered and the TC agreed by consensus the combination of parameters resulting in a 24% reduction were appropriate for this analysis. While there was some disagreement among TC members about which methods constituted the most appropriate confidence level for the detection of outliers, the TC agreed that a reduction target between 20.7% and 26.8% would be viable for management.

Once the Board has voted on the new black sea bass reduction target, the TC will update the analysis with the outlier identification and smoothing parameters that produce results equivalent to the new target. This will allow the TC to utilize the smoothed data that corresponds with the Board approved reduction target when developing regional proposals for 2022 recreational black sea bass measures.

¹ The presentation given to the Board may be found [here](#).

² 2021 wave 6 harvest was projected using similar methods to those approved by the Monitoring Committee.



Smoothing outliers in MRIP black sea bass harvest estimates

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea
Bass Management Board

January 25, 2022

Background

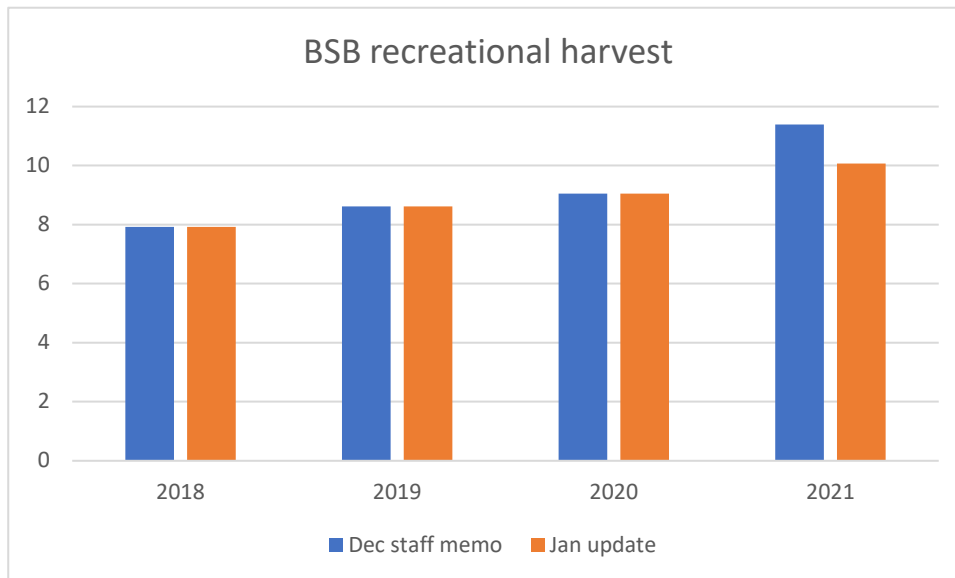


- Board / Council motion to reduce recreational BSB harvest by 28% to achieve 2022 RHL (6.74M lbs)
- TC developing standardized methods to evaluate recreational management options
- Received updated 2021 harvest projections
- Noticed some apparent anomalies with MRIP harvest estimates
- Both could affect magnitude of required harvest reduction

2021 harvest projections



- Preliminary W5 data made available
- Replace previous W5 projection; re-estimate W6 projections

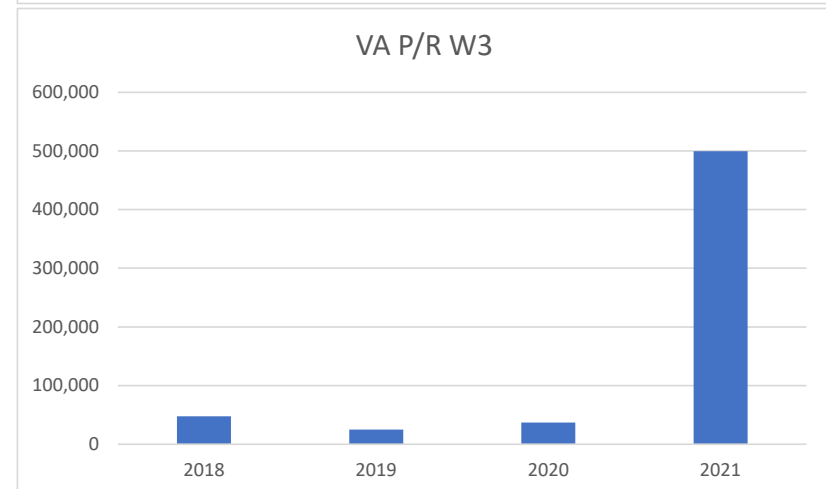
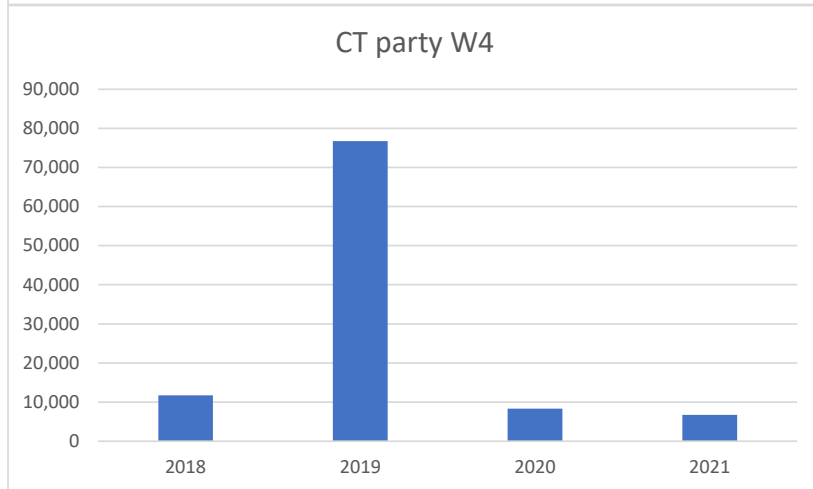
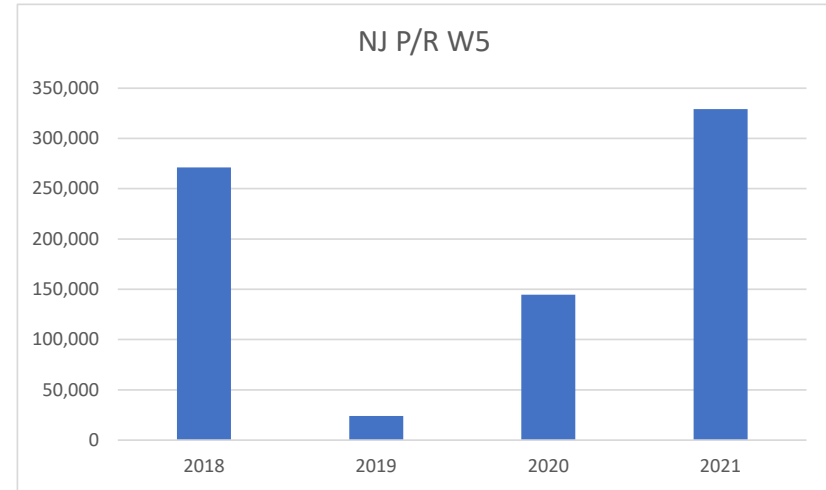
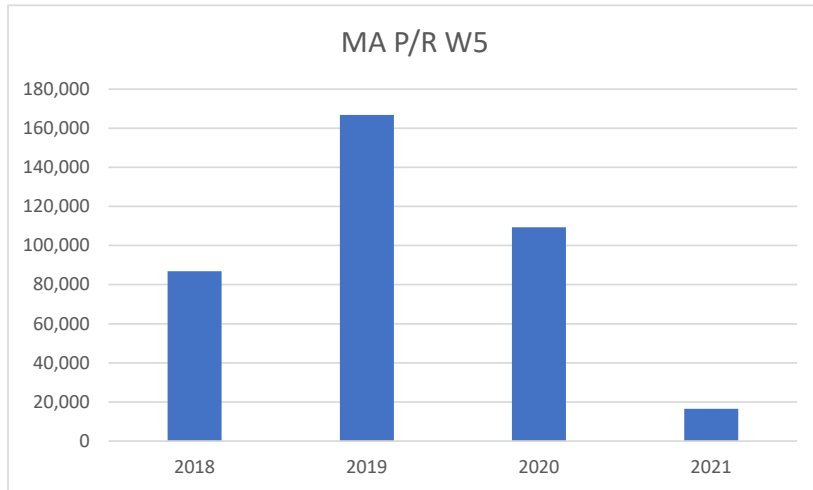


	Harvest (M lbs)	
	Dec staff memo	Jan update
2018	7.92	7.92
2019	8.61	8.61
2020	9.05	9.05
2021	11.33	10.07
2022 RHL	6.74	6.74
Redux needed	27.0%	24.4%

Data evaluation



- Visual inspection of raw MRIP data identified potentially anomalous estimates



Data considerations



- Regulations remained relatively unchanged from 2018 – 2021
- Expectation that harvest would be similar across years
- Possible reasons for anomalous values
 - Stock abundance / availability
 - Angler behavior
 - Sample size

Identification of outliers

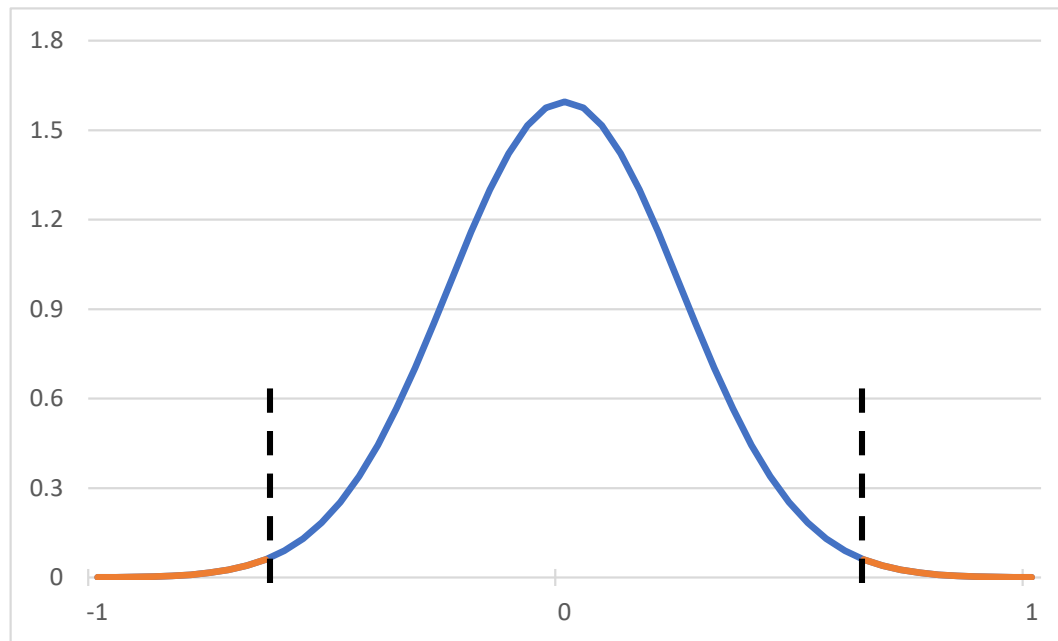


- Consider quantitative / statistical methods to identify outliers
- Revisit previous TC analysis to rescale NY and NJ 2017 party/charter estimates
 - March 2018 meeting materials
- Modified Thompson's tau analysis

Thompson's tau



- Modified Thompson's tau analysis
 - Based on student's t-distribution
 - Identifies both high and low values
 - Can set probability level for detection



Treatment of outliers



- Thompson's tau only identifies outliers
- Several options for how to treat them
 - Keep them
 - Remove them entirely
 - Replace them
- If replacing them, need objective method to determine replacement value
- Have investigated several replacement methods, but still deliberating

Methods



- MRIP harvest data 2018-2021
 - 2021 W6 projected
- State/year/wave/mode
 - Consistent with 2017 analysis
 - Scaled values can be used in development of state management options
- Outliers evaluated at 80%, 90%, and 95% probabilities
- Replacement
 - Probability distributions that include/exclude outlier value
 - Next closest value, with/without scaling

Preliminary results

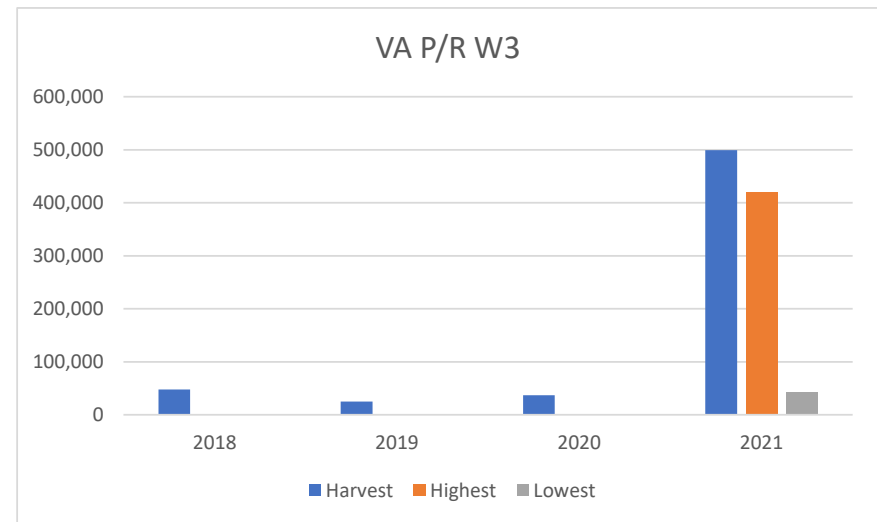
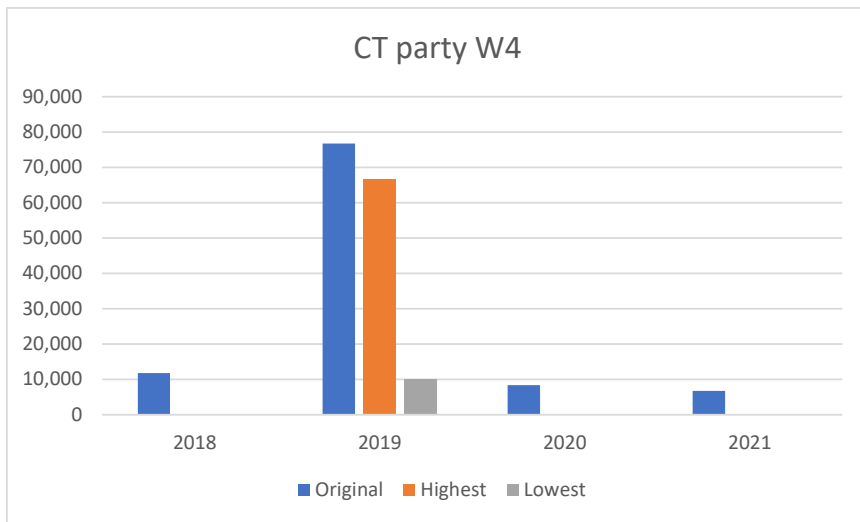
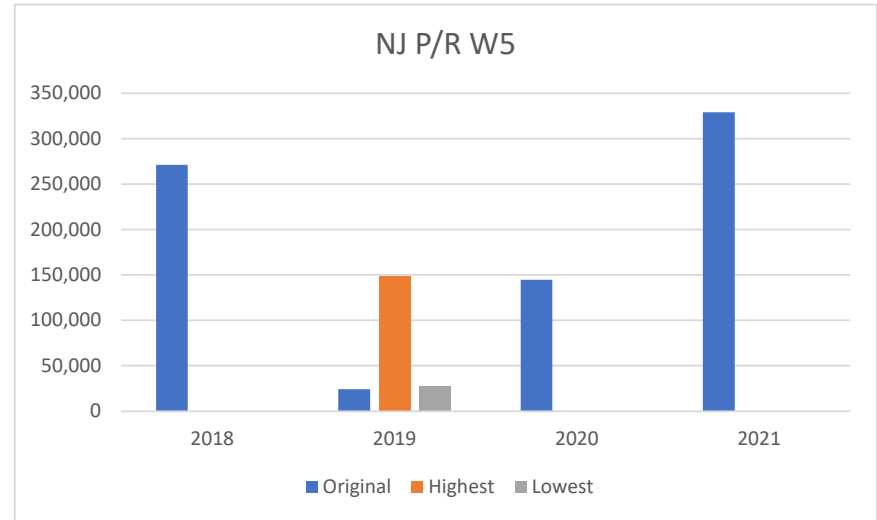
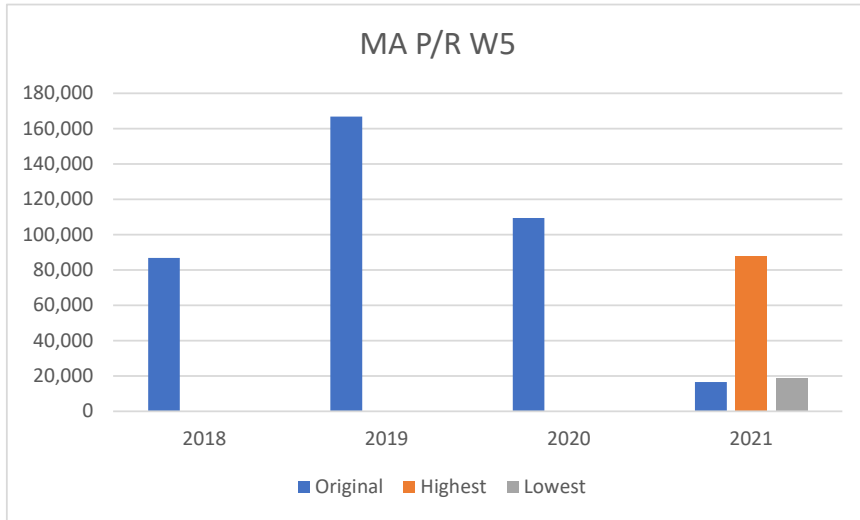


Number of outliers by year				
Year	Good	High	Low	Grand Total
2018	110	1	10	121
2019	111	3	9	123
2020	110	6	4	120
2021	99	8	12	119

Number of outliers by wave				
Wave	Good	High	Low	Grand Total
1	3	1		4
2	19		1	20
3	115	8	9	132
4	111	3	5	119
5	107	2	11	120
6	75	4	9	88

Number of outliers by mode				
Mode	Good	High	Low	Grand Total
Charter Boat	119	5	12	136
Party Boat	119	4	9	132
Private/Rental	132	5	11	148
Shore	60	4	3	67

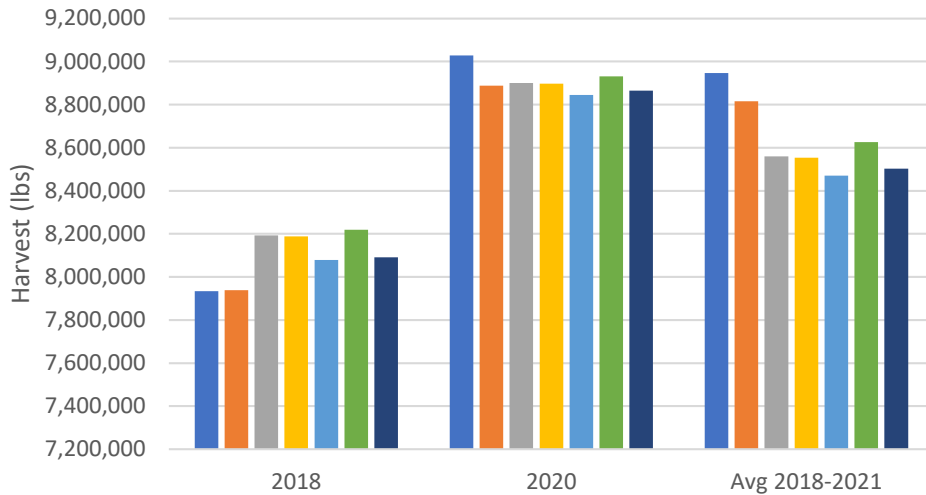
Preliminary results



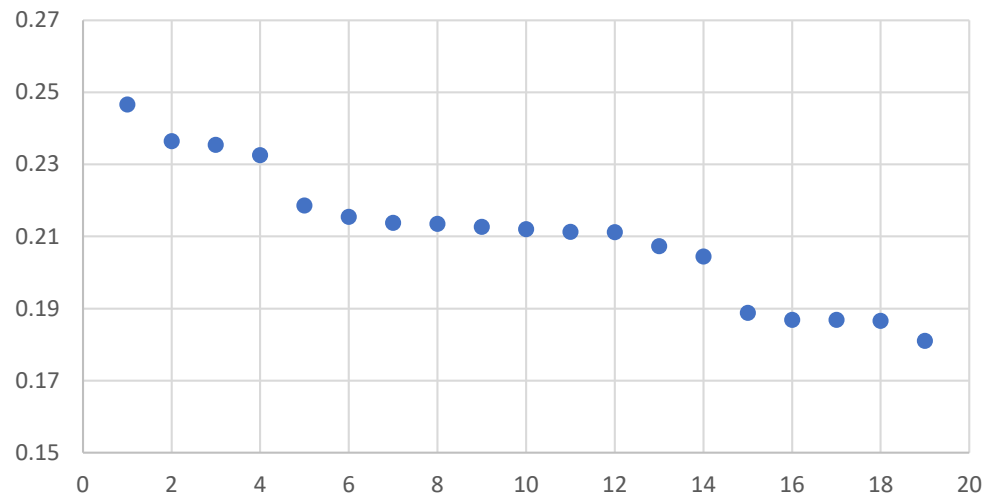
Preliminary results



Annual harvest (lbs)



Reduction required



Items ready for Board consideration



- Consider approval of TC criteria for developing regional proposals for SF and BSB 2022 recreational measures
- Consider rescinding the December 2021 BSB recreational management motion
 - Consider tasking TC to discuss the Thompson Tau outlier and smoothing analysis and recommend a new reduction percentage for BSB

Revised Timeline for BSB



- **December:** Board/Council decided to pursue regional conservation equivalency to achieve the RHL.
- **January:** TC met to recommend guidelines for the states to use in developing regional proposals
- **January Commission Meeting:** Board approves methodology for developing regional proposals. **Board rescinds December motion for BSB, and tasks TC with determining new percent reduction recommendation for BSB**
- **Late-January:** TC meets to review outlier analysis and recommend a new percent reduction for BSB
- **February:** Board considers TC analysis and approves new reduction target % for BSB (via email vote/webinar meeting/defer to TC recommendation)
- **February 8th Council Meeting:** Council considers rescinding December motion
- **February 21:** Regions submit proposals
- **Late-February:** TC reviews proposals
- **Early March SFSBSB Board Meeting:** Board reviews state proposals, TC recommendations, and establishes final measures.
- **March:** Commission sends a letter to the Regional Administrator certifying the Board-approved measures, in combination, will achieve but not exceed the RHL.

Questions??



Dustin C. Leaning

To: Robert Beal
Subject: RE: [External] RE: 2022 Scup & Black Seabass

From: Frank Blume <fblume@att.net>
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2022 10:51 AM
To: Robert Beal <Rbeal@asmfc.org>
Subject: [External] RE: 2022 Scup & Black Seabass

Mr. Robert Beal
Commissioner of the AFMSC.

RE: 2022 Scup & Black Seabass

Dear Mr. Beal

The Connecticut Charter and Partyboat Association is writing to you with deep concerns regarding overregulating our Scup and Black Seabass harvest. When a species is overfished, and overfishing is occurring it is easier to digest cuts. But that's simply not the case in 2022 with robust Scup and Seabass stocks. We represent boats that sail from many CT ports. Our Eastern CT boats rely on accessing Scup and Seabass in federal water then return back into CT. Our understanding is if a 60% reduction in Scup harvest isn't met, NOAA would terminate our boats from catching Scup in federal waters and close it the entire year. Again, with strong stocks, it has been pointed out that closing federal waters for scup only corresponds to a 5% savings in harvest. This inflicts an unnecessary hardship shared by our Captain's small businesses, their crews and customers seeking access to the fish they have enjoyed for generations and to which their businesses have been built around. There will also be a substantial negative economic impact felt by all the shoreline businesses supporting our fleet of boats; i.e. marine fuel, deli's, tackle shops and restaurants that rely on our businesses as part of the seasonal local economy.

The Black Seabass assessment shows the stock to be two times greater than the spawning stock biomass required. After 4 years of consistent regulations and fishing license sales are down, yet harvest data is grossly higher and on the rise. This is another indication data produced by Mrip is false and shouldn't be used. Our fisheries managers recognized Mrips unobtainable data and applied smoothing of the outliers and this process produced a small savings. If greater restrictions are applied, many of our charter and party boats will go out of business over this. Therefore, it's imperative to wait for the active stock assessment results this year before making drastic harvest cuts and to keep with status quo regulations.

Another option is to fast track the "Harvest Control Rule," where our stocks can be managed by consistent regulations and stock assessments instead of cooked up Mrip math problems. We understand a lot of work needs to be performed in a very short period of time, but the benefits can quickly save our 2022 season, and avoid economic impacts.

New Mrip produced a wave of problems for the recreational sector. Mrip's recreational effort is so high the fish added (from the re-calibration) the recreational harvest limit virtually evaporated. At this exact same time the commercial sector saw liberated quota and gained them a large profitable addition. As of now the Commercial sector in CT will increase their harvest from very restrictive limits in 2019 to a 120 fish per trip **increase** in 2022. As stated above, the greatest metric showing Mrip's recreational effort is wrong. **Annual fishing license sales are down.** How can we allow random post cards to speak louder than numbers of purchased fishing licenses?

This winter both for-hire and recreational anglers suffered: a greater than 50% reduction in Cod fish, a two-year moratorium on Mako shark and now possible reductions on perfectly healthy stocks of Scup and Seabass. Collectively these cuts will lead to many for-hire boats going out of business and those that do not, will only be able to target Striped Bass, putting unnecessary pressure on that species. Please consider all possibilities to preclude and correct these restrictions on our healthy stocks.

Captain Frank Blume