



Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful
restoration well in progress by 2015

Horseshoe Crab Plan Review Team Report North Carolina Transfer Request



Horseshoe Crab Management Board
3 May 2012



Transfer Request



- North Carolina exceeded its quota of 24,036 crabs in 2011
 - ▣➤ Blue Crab Trawl Fishery
 - ▣➤ New Proclamation Authorities went into effect April 1, 2011
 - ▣➤ Overage occurred prior to the date
- Requested transfer of 3,500 crabs from Georgia
- Request reviewed by Shorebird and Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panels, Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee, and reviewed & summarized by Plan Review Team



Comments



- Future continued transfers – *de facto* quota redistribution
- Uncertainty within genetics of how related or unrelated populations are
- Shorebird use of GA and NC seashores, although not likely eating eggs
- No biomedical impact
- Pushing fishery demand elsewhere



Conclusion



- In summary, the PRT recommends approval of the transfer request, given the small number of crabs and the regulatory steps North Carolina has taken to provide greater control over the allowed harvest. However, consistent overages, whether in Delaware Bay or in other coastal areas, should not be permitted to use the Addendum II transfer measures to allow a *de facto* increase in a state's quota, but rather be remedied through deductions in a state's quota the following year.



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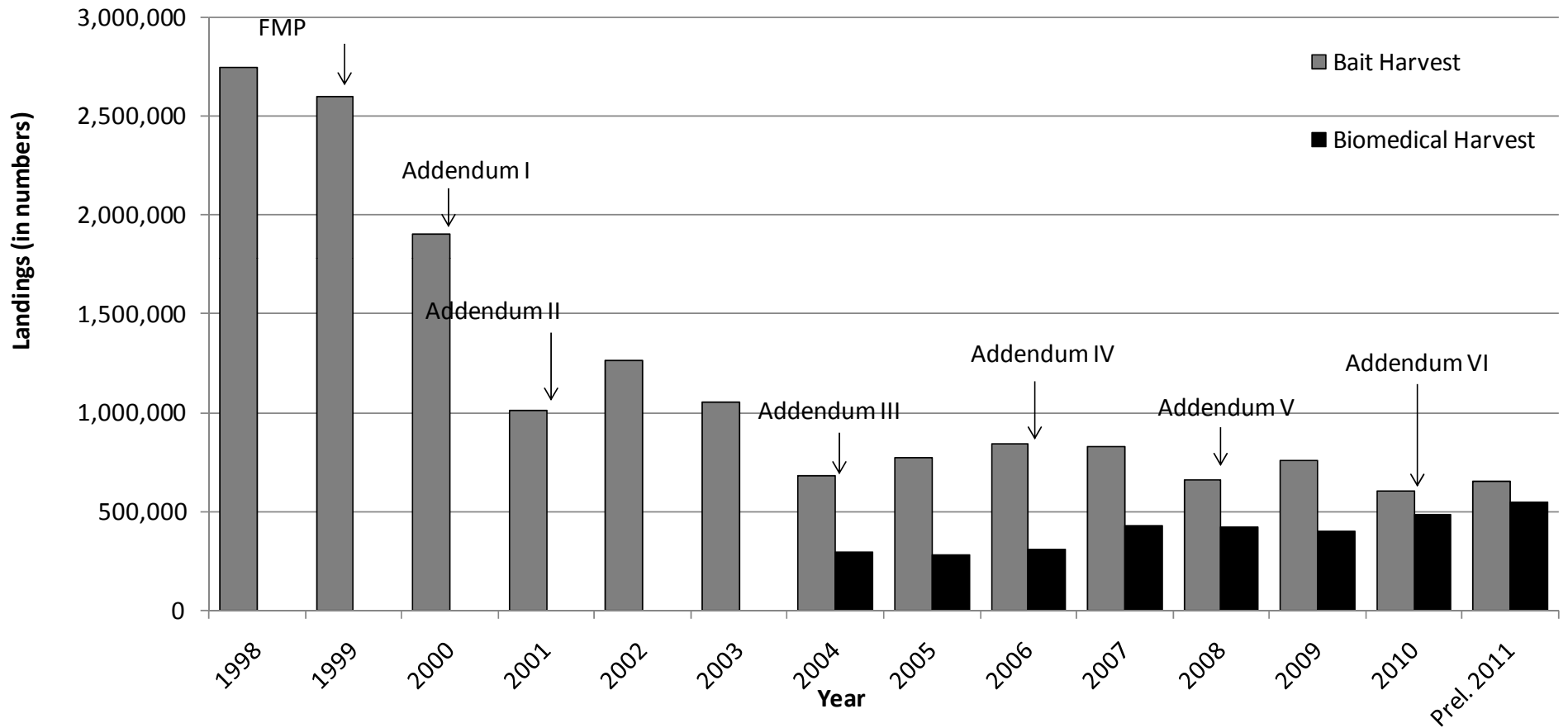
Horseshoe Crab 2012 Fishery Management Plan Review



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Yearly Total Harvest





2011 Bait Fishery



- Coastwide Landings: 650,539 crabs
 - Up 45,991 crabs (7.6%) from previous year
- Increases in MA, DE, NY, and NC



2011 Biomedical Harvest



- Reported number of Crabs Brought to Biomedical Facilities: 628,476
 - 28.7% increase over past 5-year average
- Crabs used as bait and bled: 83,312
 - 11.3% increase over past 5-year average
- Coastwide mortality estimated: 80,827
 - Threshold trigger to consider action: 57,500
 - 7.2% increase in mortality since 2010 (12.4% increase in bled biomedical crabs)
 - **PRT recommends continued work on and implementation of BMPs**



State Compliance



- **PRT recommends all states be found in compliance**
- **DC did not submit a CR**
 - **PRT recommends DC, as well as PRFC, take steps to be removed from the Board**
- **Virginia's overages, noted last year, are full and accounted for**
- **Other concern: import of Asian HSCs for bait**
 - **PRT recommends Board continue to monitor and investigate management opportunities**



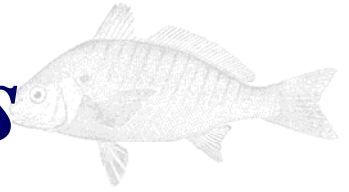
Additional Concerns



- Recording gender of catch
 - **PRT recommends all states record gender, whether required under Add. III**
- Need for data from the Virginia Tech Survey
- **PRT recommends all tagging programs, approved by the state, coordinate with the USFWS tagging program**
- Other concern: import of Asian HSCs for bait
 - **PRT recommends Board continue to monitor and investigate management opportunities**



Request for *de minimis*



- ME, NH, PRFC, SC, GA, FL
- NJ qualified but did not request
- **PRT recommends all requests for *de minimis* be granted**



Questions

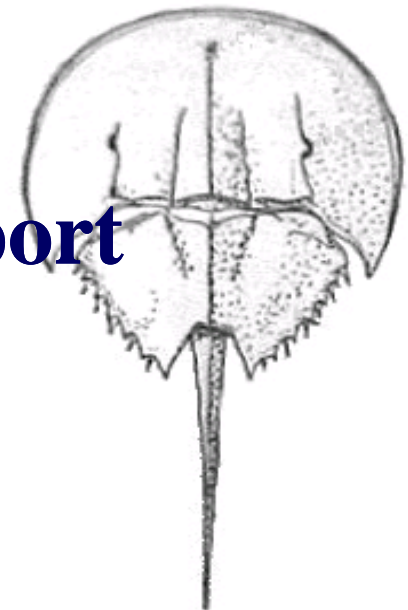


Questions?



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Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee Report



Horseshoe Crab Management Board
3 May 2012



HSC TC



- Met 3 April, 2012 in Baltimore, MD
- Transfer Request from NC
- Pre-ARM Coastal and State Indices Update
- USFWS Horseshoe Crab Tagging Program



Indices Update



- Past and current concerns about external impacts of horseshoe crab management in Delaware Bay
 - NY and MA saw increased harvests in mid-2000s
- **Recommend Board task the TC and the SASC to gather, review, and summarize available coastal and state indices**
- Relative status of populations
- Relatively minimal time and effort



Tagging Program



- Established to standardize and expand tagging efforts to obtain data useful for stock-level analyses
- Ongoing since 1999, growing from 10,000 tags per year to 30,000 (2011)
- More than 195,000 tags released; ~ 28,000 recaptures



Issues with Current Program



- Tags supplied free of charge and costs are becoming too large for USFWS to support trend
- No set requirements for recording who, what, or why
- Resighting efforts are inconsistent and often given much less consideration than tagging effort



Resighting Data Issues



- Phone calls reporting tags consuming staff time
- Reward pins: adequate supply for 2012 but future costs uncertain; investigating options
- Mechanisms for using tag/resight data for management not established



Revised Application Process



- Keep requirement that tag requests be annual
- NEW: Study design must address at least one management objective:
 1. Sub-population structure
 2. Estimate movement/migration rates
 3. Estimate survival/mortality
- NEW: Resighting effort must be proportional to initial tag release effort
- NEW: Year-end summary report



Geographical Distribution



- **NEW: Stratify tag distribution**
 - NE to Long Island Sound: 7,500
 - Southern NY/NJ coast: 3,500
 - Delaware Bay/Delmarva: 7,500
 - Southeast: 1,500
- Maintain a coastwide focus in tagging effort
- Strata based on current demand for tags and data; alter to meet future management needs



Recommendations



- **Accept Revised Program Guidelines for use by USFWS**
- **All states, when considering scientific collection permit applications for tagging, encourage and/or require applicants to work through the USFWS tagging program**
- **USFWS print web address on tags and publicize to encourage electronic reporting**



Additional Considerations



- Continue to support and promote coastwide tag program. Consistency in the program format is vital to future use of data for management purposes.
 - Public interest vital to resighting
- Possibility for expanded program effort
 - Case-by-case basis
 - Encourage donation of sufficient resources to cover tagging and resighting costs to USFWS



Questions



Questions?