

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2014

Robert E. Beal  
Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Beal:

As leaders in the Senate who have fought to restore the Chesapeake Bay and support the communities that depend on the Bay, we write to express our concern over the 25 percent reduction in striped bass mortality being considered by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. We believe this reduction will adversely impact Maryland's striped bass fisheries – and could affect entire Bay communities and other fishery industries as a whole – without the benefit of achieving the Commission's desired level of protection to the spawning stock. We understand the health of the striped bass resource affects fishing opportunities throughout the Atlantic coast, and ask the Commission to consider alternative management approaches and to also account for the distinct differences between the Bay and Atlantic coastal fisheries.

The 2013 stock assessment on striped bass indicates that the population is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The Commission is considering action due to concerns over a fishing mortality rate that exceeds the target level, and, the decade long decline in the female spawning stock. Both of these conditions warrant some conservation action, but that action should not be so extreme as to cause undue economic hardship to coastal communities. Despite the recent decline, the spawning stock remains at a level that is documented to be capable of producing strong populations when environmental conditions are right. In fact, female spawning stocks were at this level in the mid-1990s and produced some of the strongest striped bass populations on record. When considering the appropriate management response to these conditions, the Commission must consider the risks to both the resource and affected communities.

The Chesapeake Bay states have been using Bay-specific reference points to manage the striped bass fishery for more than 20 years. This has been an extremely successful approach in which Bay jurisdictions have adjusted an annual Bay-specific quota according to changes in population size, thereby maintaining fishing mortality below the approved target. After the approval of the Benchmark Stock Assessment and the acceptance of the new reference points in October 2013, the Commission's Technical Committee did not have sufficient time to reach consensus on new Bay-specific reference points that account for the male dominated harvest in this region. Nonetheless, an option remains available to use the results of the coastwide stock assessment to produce scientifically sound interim reference points for the Bay fishery. Failure to

manage the Chesapeake Bay fishery based on its unique characteristics will result in management that does not achieve the desired objective because the reduction in harvest will not have commensurate impacts on the health of the female spawning stock biomass.

We realize that the Commission cannot control the male-dominance of striped bass population in the Bay any more than it can dictate the migration patterns of these fish along the Atlantic Coast. However, the Commission does have the ability to ensure that an overly conservative management scheme will not be instituted that could disproportionately impact the Bay compared to other areas and consequently hurt the Bay's fishing industries.

We ask for the Commission's continued support for inclusion of a multi-year approach to reducing fishing mortality to the target level and use an interim biological reference point for the Bay until the Commission's Striped Bass Technical Committee can reconcile the gender discrepancies of the striped bass population between the Bay and Atlantic coast resulting in a dual-area management framework.

We appreciate your consideration to these important requests, and we look forward to working with you in the coming months as the Commission's striped bass guidelines continue to be developed.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

The Commission has received a total of 5 copies of the following form letter.

**From:** [Ron Shamaskin](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass Management  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 15, 2014 8:29:33 PM

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Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear ASMFC Commissioners,

As you know, since the "recovery" of the striped bass twenty years ago, this premier sport fish has become the most sought after species by throngs of dedicated anglers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The prime angling season for the species is eagerly anticipated and fuels an unprecedented economic engine for the entire coastal region. However, every angler is acutely aware that something "is wrong" - angler success has declined drastically over the past several years.

While a long-awaited strong recruitment year occurred in 2011, such an occurrence was an anomaly. The most recent stock assessment (2013) proposed new reference points by which to judge the health of the stock. It indicated for the first time that the fishing mortality was above the target and the spawning stock biomass was below the target. In short, a clear signal that the population is headed in the wrong direction and corrective action is warranted. Fishery scientists have advised managers there should be at least a 31 percent reduction in mortality to return to the target and halt the decline in spawning stock biomass.

Fishing at a rate above the target and nearer the threshold can lead to an age structure with fewer older, "trophy" sized fish. The best way to ensure a healthy number of larger, old fish is to reduce mortality and allow them to live to an advanced age. Anglers along our coast want striped bass restored to a higher level of abundance so they have a better chance of catching a striper and, perhaps a trophy on occasion.

I believe the ASMFC should act as quickly as possible to halt the current decline. That means approving Addendum IV for public hearing, without the three-year phase-in option, at their August meeting, and putting in place measures that achieve at least a 31 percent reduction in harvest in 2015.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Ron Shamaskin  
3525 Salles Ridge Ct  
Midlothian, VA 23113  
804-464-1314

Since the distribution of meeting materials on 7/24, the Commission has received one additional signature on the following petition. Combined signatures total 1,429.

**From:** Shane Yellin [<mailto:shaneyellin@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 15, 2014 7:21 AM

**To:** Mike Waine

**Subject:** Petition for August meeting

Dear Mr Waine and Ms Kerns,

I would first like to say thank you to you and the other ASMFC staff for your responsiveness over the last few weeks. I have collected signatures from over 1,400 people in just two weeks and encouraged many more to make their voices heard. Much of what we have observed in the northeast over the past few seasons mirrors the observations of anglers from the crash and we are seriously concerned. We feel it is critical that we act now to protect the 2011 year class and reduce mortality dramatically for the best long term interest of all participants in the fishery and for the species.

Please add our petition to the meeting materials and consider our plea for a coastwide limit of one fish at 32" and a total mortality reduction of 50%.

Regards,  
Shane Yellin  
617-256-4728

**change.org**

Recipient: AtlanticStatesMarine Fisheries Commission

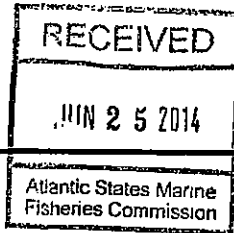
Letter: Greetings,

Save StripedBass from another crash by reducing the recreationalbag limit to one fish over 32" for all anglers in all regions of the fishery and reduce total fishing mortality by 50% in 2015.

Since the distribution of meeting materials on 7/24, the Commission has received 21 additional copies of the following form letter, totaling to 40 form letters received.

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Massapequa, NY 11758-5925  
Tel: 516-647-8492



June 20, 2014

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Officials:

The Coalition For Recreational Fishing is writing this letter to offer comments regarding proposed option changes and striped bass management.

To say that the Coalition is disappointed in a lack of action from ASMFC and its recent approach to striped bass management is an *understatement*. Our disappointment is fueled by several significant factors. First, Amendment 6 (2003) states that when a trigger or triggers are exceeded action **MUST** be taken in **one year**. However, although triggers were exceeded, no action has been taken. Instead, there has been a seemingly endless array of motions that are clearly designed to delay action, alter amendment 6, and obstruct the proper management of the species. These delays run contrary to the ASMFC amendment rules and are potentially even more damaging to the striped bass population as it also struggles against poor recruitment since 2000, Mycobacteriosis disease, and intense fishing pressure on existing year classes. This failure to take action is an outrage. The failure to act is illogical, is a travesty, and recreational fishers up and down the coast demand ASMFC action **now!**

Second, it appears to the world outside of the ASMFC that a well thought out plan for management has been hi-jacked by representatives from the states for purposes of their own greed and the greed of their associates. We demand to know why officials in charge of ASMFC have allowed state representatives to delay action and attempt to misappropriate the plan and amendment 6 that is intended to protect and preserve the striped bass. Did we not learn a painful lesson from the 1980s when delays in action almost brought the species to endangered status?

Third, the ASMFC board has hidden behind a smoke screen of demands for precise statistics, studies of option effects, more studies to study studies, and the possible outcomes of "new" ideas that would permit the increased harvest of male fish purported to be in "excess," and the exploitation of the 2011 Chesapeake year class before, God forbid, it "escapes" from the estuary and enters the coastal migration where all users might enjoy the resource. Have we conveniently forgotten that **MANY MALES** must attend a single female in order to properly fertilize her eggs? As far the 2011 YOY, why should Chesapeake fishermen be allowed a "privileged" harvest and effect future migrations thus depriving coastal anglers of equal opportunity? Every recreational angler knows, albeit in the absence of *precise* data, that the Atlantic Coast population of

striped bass has declined and is declining rather rapidly. All one needs do is go fishing regularly for striped bass and compare recent results with their results from the 1990s in order to appreciate that reality. Also, although much attention is paid to the Chesapeake stock since it is the largest ask any Long Island angler and they'll tell you that the Hudson stock is in even worse shape. In the western Long Island Sound anglers are dependent on the Hudson stock for their overall success. To make matters worse in the Hudson, the highly publicized 2007 Hudson year class has not turned out to be the predicted bonanza. There are some fish caught from this year class, but they are few and far between whether one fishes in Little-Neck Bay, Mid-Sound off Eaton's Neck, or along the Connecticut shore.

Fourth, when we blow away the smog and fog of misdirected studies and debates, the REAL reason for all the delaying tactics is the desire of some people to make MONEY from the killing of striped bass. We ask why ASMFC officials continue to move ahead at a snail's pace in light of the extreme effects a declining population of striped bass has on the millions of non-dollar motivated anglers? Non-dollar motivated anglers sole interests lie in engaging in a sporting interaction with striped bass, a concern for the food species they need, and healthy ecosystems to support vibrant populations of marine life. Of course in the process, striped bass *sportsmen contribute millions of dollars* to coastal and local economies. These local and regional businesses include small family-run operations that have been harshly and extremely affected both by a poor economy nationwide and a decline in the striped bass population. Somehow, this portion of the economy doesn't receive the same emphasis by ASMFC board members as does the demands from those who make money from striped bass. Yet, all studies have shown there is a straight-line connection between the size of the striped bass population and how much money sportsmen spend on their recreation. The Coalition does not represent people who wish to get rich at the expense of the striped bass population. Those who exploit the population are only interested in how many fish they can kill instead of how healthy the population is or the quality of the angling experience of non-dollar motivated fishers. There is an enigma in this and it is short sighted because **all interest groups benefit most when stocks are at the highest levels**. It is shocking in this era of supposed "enlightened" fisheries management to bear witness to the reality that the erroneous time-honored approach in fisheries of the "prisoner's dilemma" is still alive and well when most thought it dead decades ago.

More disappointment.

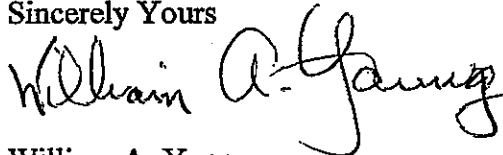
So, with not a single dollar bill of motivation, here is what the Coalition supports and demands. Yes, demands, because the time for tomfoolery and delays has past and the needs of the species **MUST NOW COME FIRST!**

1. We demand immediate action: One year and not 3.
2. We demand a 31% reduction in mortality in one year. Since any plan only has a 50% chance of success, delays will only reduce the odds of success, since more and more fish will have perished.



3. We support a 1 fish at 32" per angler per day-regardless of where, how, and when the fish is caught. We demand this regulation be applied to all venues including party boats and charter boats. Making \$\$ on the fish does not justify providing these harvesters with an advantage. This provision has been a thorn in the sides of the majority of independent recreational fishers and it's time to end this unfair and scientifically unsound practice. Likewise, 1 fish at 32" should be the standard in the estuary as well. The notion that only small fish are caught in the estuary is *nonsense*. All places have their seasons and that's why anglers invest great effort in the estuaries around spawning time. Yet, be it Chesapeake Bay, the Hudson River, or the Connecticut River, it is true that fewer big fish are taken during off-spawning times, but they are caught. Stripers migrate from place to place and each area has its bigger fish season, all anglers in all regions should abide by the same regulations.
4. Minimize the dragger by-catch. Either directed or truly accidental.
5. Take immediate steps to end the *severe* poaching of small fish in the inner cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York.

Sincerely Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William A. Young". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

William A. Young  
President NYCRF

13 additional personal letters are contained in this document.

**From:** Dave O  
**To:** Mike Waine  
**Subject:** Striped Bass  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2014 10:51:02 AM

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Dear Sir,

With regards to the upcoming vote on the Striped Bass Crisis.

First let me say that I am glad you are finally getting around to addressing this issue. I live in Guinea on the Severn River and have been enjoying Striped Bass fishing since I moved here in 2000. Since 2005 the fishing has been getting worse and worse.

It makes no sense to have a commercial fishery in the early spring that takes the spawning mass. I hold a commercial waterman's card and I can tell you that while this early spring fishery has been a god send for the commercial netters, it is clear that the spawning biomass has been harmed by this fishery.

Also, as it is a limited fishery with tags and weight going to those who were lucky enough to get them when they were available, only those above are benefiting from this fishery. Many net boats are fishing other peoples tags and sharing the profits. It makes no sense to me to harm this fishery to the benefit of a few.

The last couple of years, the only local fish caught are the spawners that are heading up the York river. We used to "close our eyes" and pass by these schools on the way to the eastern shore, but the last three years, these are the only fish available to be caught so naturally they are being fished hard.

Please cut the fishery BOTH commercial and recreation as much as you can legally. Please do not do what has recently been done in VA with regards to speckled trout where the recreation fishery was closed but the commercial fishery was not touched. This only engenders hostility between the two groups and sends the wrong message about fishery management.

I urge you to do the right thing which is to close the early spring commercial fishing and cut the fishery BEFORE it is too late.

ALSO while you are working on these matters, Please understand that the loss of menhaden to the benefit of one closely held corporation is literally KILLING the bay.

Thank You

David Onesty



**From:** [Charles Jenkins](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** Saving the Striped Bass  
**Date:** Sunday, July 13, 2014 3:12:21 PM

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At age 86; I have lived to see major shifts in the Chesapeake Bay population of these magnificent fish, from the superabundance of the early 80's to the crash several years later, ultimately reversed by a complete moratorium in Maryland and perhaps Virginia , as well.

The crash has begun again. And while a full moratorium may be avoidable, this is no time for halfway or delayed measures.

I believe the ASMFC should act as quickly as possible to halt the current decline. That means approving Addendum IV , without the three-year phase-in option, thus putting in place measures that achieve at least a 31 percent reduction in harvest in 2015. If it is politically possible, I'd make that number 50%.

I may not be around to see the result, but my children and grandchildren will. Please give them the same great fishing that have enjoyed.

Charles D. Jenkins  
1500 Westbrook Ct Apt 4116  
Richmond, VA 23227

**From:** [Nicholls, Chris](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Cc:** [barry.kanavy](#); [ccantl@joincca.org](mailto:ccantl@joincca.org)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass Draft Addendum  
**Date:** Sunday, July 20, 2014 9:14:11 PM

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Dear Mr. Waine,

I have been a serious Striper Fisherman for over 25 years and a fisherman for almost all of my 50 years. During that time, I have been fortunate enough to have experienced excellent fishing from the coast of Connecticut, to Gardiner's Bay, Montauk and Martha's Vineyard. With serious time on the water, I have learned the prime spots and have become a very successful salt water fly rod angler.

I am writing to you now because during the last few years, things have changed and I am gravely concerned. Over this period, I have fished my home waters of Gardiners', the Peconic Bays and Montauk and have seen previously highly productive fishing spots devoid of everything but sea robins. Whereas I used to be able to catch 5-10 striped bass on a June morning (97% undersized and released unharmed, with barbless single hooks), I caught two fish this entire spring and had a similar result last spring, translating into an approximate 95% reduction in fish caught. I have also noted an increase in the number of fish weirs in my local water.

I am not sure if the increased activity of the baymen, other commercial pressure, the resurgence of sea lion populations or the recreational catch or all of the above are driving this issues but the reality is, we have a big issue. As was also highlighted in the August issue of Soundings Magazine and other similar reports by serious fisherman.

I also read the ASMFC News Release dated May 16,2014. I noted the release stated that the striped bass stocks had not been overfished and that they were currently at 1995 levels in the Chesapeake. However, I wonder if this holds true for the Hudson and other northern stocks of this migratory species. In fact, during the 1995 period I had some of the best striped bass fishing I have seen and the reduction in my catch rates in recent seasons, as stated above, are at the 95% range, if not above it.

I am interested in specifically what ASMFC may be doing in relation the the current state of the striped bass fishery? I am not sure if we need to go back to the 36 inch rule, a slot limit, a change in the commercial regulations or all three but I would like to find out how I can become more active in trying to confront this problem? I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Chris Nicholls  
[220 Middlesex Rd.](#)  
[Darien, CT 06820](#)  
[203 249-5945](#)  
[Chris.nicholls@fticonsulting.com](mailto:Chris.nicholls@fticonsulting.com)

Sent from my iPad

1075 Tooker Avenue  
West Babylon, NY 11704  
July 15, 2014

Mr. James Gilmore  
Chief, Marine Bureau  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
205 North Belle Meade Road, Suite 1  
East Setauket, NY 11733

Senator Philip M. Boyle  
69 West Main Street  
Bay Shore, NY 11706

Mr. Emerson Hasbrouck, Jr.  
Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program  
423 Griffing Avenue, #100  
Riverhead, NY 11901

Dear ASMFC Commissioners:

I am contacting you with respect to the proposed Addendum IV ("Addendum IV") to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (the "Management Plan").

I have been an active participant in the striped bass fishery for well over forty years. Over that time, I have fished through stock collapse and times of abundance. In recent years, I have noted a marked decline in the number of striped bass available to anglers; younger fish, spawned after the dominant 2003 year class, have been particularly notable for their absence.

For that reason, I ask that you support the following actions at the August meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

I

**ADDENDUM IV MUST BE FINALIZED AND SENT OUT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.**

The 2013 Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment (the "Stock Assessment") was presented to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Striped Bass Management Board (the "Management Board") in October 2013. Such Stock Assessment, as revised by the 2013 Update of the Striped Bass Stock Assessment Using Final 2012 Data (the "2013 Update"), clearly represents the "best available science" with respect to the striped bass fishery. However, given the process followed at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission ("ASMFC"), such Stock Assessment has not yet been integrated into

the Management Plan, despite the fact that the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter states that “It is the policy of the Commission that its ISFMP...be based on the best scientific information available...”<sup>1</sup>

Stakeholders had a reasonable expectation that the Management Board would act to recognize the “best scientific information available,” in the form of the Stock Assessment, as soon as practicable. That would have required that a draft addendum be released for public comment in February 2014, if not before (it would not have been unreasonable for a simple draft addendum, containing nothing more than acceptance of the fishing mortality reference points contained in the Stock Assessment, to have been authorized at the October 2013 Management Board meeting).

Not releasing such a draft addendum after the May Management Board meeting was real cause for concern, and understandably led striped bass anglers to begin to wonder whether the Management Board is truly serious about conserving and rebuilding the striped bass resource. Not releasing the draft Addendum IV after the August meeting would be nothing less than unconscionable, and would place ASMFC’s ability to comply with Amendment 6 to the Interstate Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (“Amendment 6”) in serious jeopardy.

## II

### **ADDENDUM IV SHOULD CONTAIN BUFFERS TO ACCOUNT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND MANAGEMENT UNCERTAINTY**

The current proposal to end overfishing, whether properly implemented within one year or phased in over a three-year period, carries with it a 50% chance of failing to meet its goal. Given the many uncertainties inherent in the fishery, including but not limited to the inability to quantify commercial discard mortality, the uncertainties surrounding recreational harvest and the level of illegal harvest in both the recreational and commercial fisheries, there is a substantial possibility that fishing mortality may be understated.

In addition, there is always some level of uncertainty inherent in estimates of recruitment, stock size, natural mortality and other, similar factors.

As a result, basing any plan of ending overfishing on a point estimate that has only a 50% chance of constraining harvest is an unduly risky management strategy.

Provisions that would provide higher levels of certainty, including at least a 60% chance of success and preferably one with a 75% likelihood of ending overfishing, should be added to Addendum IV.

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<sup>1</sup> Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter*, Section I, Paragraph (c), May 2013

### III

#### THE DRAFT ADDENDUM IV FAILED TO CONSIDER A PLAN TO REBUILD THE STOCK TO TARGET LEVELS

Trigger 4), included in Amendment 6, states that “If the Management Board determines that the female spawning stock biomass falls below the target for two consecutive years and the fishing mortality rate exceeds the target in either of those years, the Management Board **must** adjust the striped bass management program to rebuild the biomass to a level that is at or above the target within the timeframe established in Section 2.6.2 [which is ten years]”.

Since SSB<sub>target</sub> is slightly in excess of 72,000 metric tons,<sup>2</sup> and SSB has been below that level since 2006,<sup>3</sup> and since F exceeded F<sub>target</sub> in 2012,<sup>4</sup> managers were obligated to include a plan for rebuilding the SSB to target within ten years. To date, they have shown no inclination to do so.

In order to comply with Addendum 6, such rebuilding plan must be crafted promptly, either in Addendum IV or, if that is impossible if Addendum IV is to be in place in time for the 2015 season, then in a separate addendum authorized at the August Management Board meeting.

### IV

#### FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF AMENDMENT 6 DAMAGES ASMFC’S CREDIBILITY

Section 4.1 of Amendment 6 establishes a number of management “triggers” and states that “Upon reaching any (or all) of these triggers, the Management Board is **required** to alter the management program to assure that the objectives of Amendment 6 are achieved [emphasis added].”<sup>5</sup>

Management trigger 3) is tripped “If the Management Board determines that the fishing mortality target is exceeded in two consecutive years and the female spawning stock biomass falls below the target within either of those years, the Management Board **must** adjust the striped bass management program to reduce the fishing mortality rate to a level that is at or below the target within one year.”<sup>6</sup>

Since F exceeded the F<sub>target</sub> adopted in the Stock Assessment in both 2011 and 2012<sup>7</sup> and biomass was below target in 2012,<sup>8</sup> that trigger was clearly tripped.

It is thus troubling that the Management Board has not only entertained, but passed a motion that would phase in the measures needed to end overfishing over three years, even though Amendment 6 states that it **must** end overfishing within one year.

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<sup>2</sup> ASMFC, *Update of the Striped Bass Stock Assessment using Final 2012 Data*, October 2012e, p. 7

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

<sup>5</sup> Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass*, February 2003, p. 31

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, *Update*, p. 37

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9

As mentioned in Section III, above, trigger 4) was also tripped, and Amendment 6 requires the Management Board to create a rebuilding plan if that occurs.

Yet ASMFC has failed to act on such a plan.

Both the proposed three-year phase in and the failure to act on a rebuilding plan go directly to ASMFC's credibility and stakeholders' faith that ASMFC has the ability—and perhaps more importantly, the *will*—to properly manage fish stocks.

Stakeholders have the right to assume that they can take ASMFC at its word, and that ASMFC will have the integrity to enforce and live up to the terms of its management plans.

At the time that Amendment 6 was being debated, a number of striped bass anglers, myself among them, argued that  $F_{target}=0.30$  was too high, and that a more appropriate level was somewhere below  $F_{target}=0.25$ ; perhaps below 0.20. When  $F_{target}=0.30$  was adopted, we were reassured by our ASMFC Commissioners that we needn't worry about the health of the stock, because the triggers contained in Section 4.1 of Amendment 6 would provide adequate protection.

We are now learning that may have been a hollow promise, and that when, in Amendment 6, ASMFC said that “the Management Board is *required*” to act if a trigger is tripped, and that the “the Management Board *must*” end overfishing within one year and act to rebuild the stock, it didn't really intend the words “required” and “must” to have the meaning that most ordinary people attribute to them— that ASMFC would have to act decisively to end overfishing or begin rebuilding.

We are learning that what ASMFC really meant is that it might act, eventually, if a trigger is tripped, to end overfishing and rebuild the stock at some point in the future, so long as it didn't impose too much inconvenience on anyone, including the folks who are actually responsible for the overfishing in the first place.

We are learning that ASMFC's management plans, including the Management Plan, are really not worth much more than the paper that they're written on, because their terms can be changed at the whim of a Management Board that seems unwilling to live up to the covenant that it made with stakeholders at the time such plans were adopted. We are learning that the Management Board's word, as well as its management style, is flexible, and that ASMFC is willing to violate the public trust when it seems expedient to do so.

I ask that the Management Board accept its responsibility to the striped bass resource and to those who depend upon it, by removing the three-year phase-in option from the draft Addendum IV and moving forward with a rebuilding plan, as it promised to do when Amendment 6 was adopted.

V  
SUMMARY

I ask that New York's ASMFC Commissioners advance the following proposals at the August Management Board meeting:

- Release aAddendum IV, incorporating the Stock Assessment and Update into the Management Plan, for public comment after the August meeting
- Assure that the new management measures included in the Addendum IV contain adequate buffers for scientific and management uncertainty, and include options with a likelihood of success that is no less than 60%, and preferably no less than 75%
- Begin drafting a recovery program as required by Trigger 4 of Addendum 6
- Remove the three-year phase in of regulations needed to end overfishing from the Addendum IV, again in compliance with Amendment 6.

Thank you for considering my views on this matter.

Sincerely,

SS/CHARLES A. WITEK, III

Charles A. Witek, III

CC; Michael Waine  
Steven Heins  
Pat Augustine



**From:** [conesty@aol.com](mailto:conesty@aol.com)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass regulations  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 16, 2014 1:02:49 PM

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Dear Sir,

With regards to the upcoming vote on changing the regulations for taking Striped Bass:

I have been fishing for stripers for more than 40 years. I have watched the population of spawning bass significantly decrease over the last 5 years. Action is urgently needed **NOW** to prevent a population collapse.

At present there is a strong commercial fishery, by nets and charter fisherman, and there is a strong recreational fishery in the spring targeting the spawning mass. This directed fishery on the declining spawning stock is foolish, and should be stopped for both commercial and recreational fishing. It is clear that the spawning biomass has been harmed by this fishery.

This commercial fishery is a limited fishery controlled with tags and weight limits. Only a limited few commercial fisherman who were lucky enough to get them when they were available are benefiting from this fishery. It makes no sense to me to harm this fishery to the benefit of a few.

Please reduce or stop the spring fishery by BOTH commercial and recreation. . Please do not do what has recently been done in VA with regards to speckled trout where the recreation fishery was closed but the commercial fishery was not touched. This only engenders hostility between the two groups and sends the wrong message about fishery management.

I urge you to do the right thing which is to close the early spring commercial fishing and cut the fishery **BEFORE** it is too late.

ALSO while you are working on these matters, Please understand that the loss of menhaden to the benefit of one closely held corporation is literally **KILLING** the bay.

Best regards,  
Carl Onesty

RECEIVED

JUL 23 2014

Atlantic States Marine  
Fisheries Commission

07/19/14

DEAR SIR

I THINK THE ASMFC HAS TO STEP UP AND MAKE A MAJOR MOVE ON THE STATUS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE STRIPED BASS. THE STRIPED BASS HAS BEEN ON A DECLINE SINCE 2006. THE LAST GOOD YOY WAS 2011. THE 2012 YOY WAS THE LOWEST EVER RECORDED.

THE STATE OF MD WAS ALLOWED TO INCREASE THEIR QUOTA BY 14% FOR 2014 EVER THOUGH THEY DID NOT FILL THEIR QUOTA FOR 2013, AND NOW THE 2011 CLASS STRIPPEN WILL NOW BE LEGAL COMM. SIZE.

THE STATE OF MASS. WAS AGAIN GIVEN BACK THEIR QUOTA TO EVER THOUGH THEY WENT OVER THEIR QUOTA FOR 2013, AS OF 7/19/14 MASS HAS ONLY USED 19.8% OF THEIR QUOTA, MASS. USUALLY GOES OVER THEIR QUOTA AFTER 6 WEEKS OF FISHING THEY ARE NOT GOING TO CATCH 80% OF THEIR QUOTA IN THE NEXT 15 DAYS.

I HAVE A COMM. FISH PERMIT IN NY. LAST YR. WAS MY 1ST YR I DID NOT FILL MY PART OF NY QUOTA, AND AS OF 7/19/14 I HAVE YET TO CATCH A COMM. SLOTSIZE STRIPPEN.

THESE FACTS ON IT SHOULD BE AN OBVIOUS INDICATION THAT THE STRIPPEN ARE IN TROUBLE. IF IT TAKES ANOTHER SHUT DOWN AS IN 1986 IT WILL HURT, A 1/3 REDUCTION OF Q IS STILL Q.

Mr. Dennis R. Kelly  
PO. Box 926  
Sag Harbor, NY 11963

THANK YOU  
*[Signature]*

From: captdonnie5@aol.com [<mailto:captdonnie5@aol.com>]  
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 7:53 PM  
To: Mike Waine  
Subject: Striped Bass

Mr Waine,

I am Captain Donnie Mitchell a charter boat captain who usually fishes out of Solomon's, Md. The last 2 summer seasons I have had to move my boat to the upper bay as we don't have any striped bass in the middle bay.

The people from Md DNR have done absolutely nothing about the decline of the striped bass. I fish about 100 trips a year and the decline is Very Clear a limited number of rock fish in a small area that will be wiped out sooner than later.

I urge you and your team to listen to us as we are out there everyday.

Thank You, Capt Donnie

**From:** [Jake Naso-Kushner](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass Management  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 16, 2014 5:55:13 PM

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Dear Mr. Maine:

I am writing this letter to offer comments regarding proposed option changes and striped bass management. I urge the ASMFC to take swift and strong action to protect the striped bass including but not limited to the following:

1. Immediate action in year 1 and not year 3.
2. A 31% reduction in mortality in year 1. Any plan only has a 50% chance of success, delays will only reduce the odds of success, since more and more fish will have perished.
3. I support a 1 fish at 32" per angler per day-regardless of where, how, and when the fish is caught. This regulation must be applied to all venues **including party boats and charter boats**. Making \$\$ on the fish does not justify providing these harvesters with an advantage. Likewise, 1 fish at 32" should be the standard in the estuary as well. The notion that only small fish are caught in the estuary is **nonsense**. All places have their seasons and that's why anglers invest great effort in the estuaries around spawning time. Yet, be it Chesapeake Bay, the Hudson River, or the Connecticut River, it is true that fewer big fish are taken during off-spawning times, but they are caught. Stripers migrate from place to place and each area has its bigger fish season, all anglers in all regions should abide by the same regulations.
4. Minimize the dragger by-catch. Either directed or truly accidental.
5. Take immediate steps to end the **severe** poaching of small fish in the inner cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York.

Yours Truly,

Jake A. Naso-Kushner

**From:** JQ Shaw  
**To:** Mike Waine  
**Subject:** Striped Bass decline  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 16, 2014 10:42:27 AM

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Dear Mr Waine,

I have reviewed the recent data on the decline in striped bass and the increased mortality of this fish due to "over fishing" based on current stock.

I believe the ASMFC should act as quickly as possible to halt the current decline. That means approving Addendum IV for public hearing, without the three-year phase-in option, at their August meeting, and putting in place measures that achieve at least a 31 percent reduction in harvest in 2015.

I hope you agree with my suggestion, and institute immediate measures to reduce harvest and save this fishery.

Sincerely Yours,

James O Shaw Jr MD  
113 Abigail lane  
Williamsburg Va 23185

**From:** [john\\_schnauffer](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 09, 2014 10:27:22 PM

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To The Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council,

Something has to be done now to save the striped bass. Management has to be done now and not later. Please consider reducing the catch limits of this fish. Make it equal for all states for amount of fish that can be kept. One fish at 32" for all, including people fishing charter boats and party boats, would be a great start. Also reducing by-catch limits for commercial boats wouldn't hurt either. I could go on in many other areas that need help to sustain a healthy population for the striped bass, but it has to start somewhere.

It's seems that there is to much concern for the commercial industry to not get hurt by the decisions of the council, than for the actual health of the striped bass. This does not bode well for these great fish! So please take action now, not next year or the following. By sitting on your hands and not doing anything to help increase the stock and the health of the striped bass is a true crime. ACT NOW!!! Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Schnauffer  
111 Yale steet  
Williston Park,NY 11596  
Sent from Windows Mail

I believe the ASMFC should act as quickly as possible to halt the current decline in STRIPED BASS, ROCK FISH. That means approving Addendum IV for public hearing, without the three-year phase-in option, at their August meeting, and putting in place measures that achieve at least a 31 percent reduction in harvest in 2015.

A recent stock assessment proposed new reference points by which to judge the health of the stock. It indicated for the first time that the fishing mortality was above the target and the spawning stock biomass was below the target. In short, a clear signal that the population is headed in the wrong direction and corrective action is warranted. Fishery scientists have advised managers there should be at least a 31 percent reduction in mortality to return to the target and halt the decline in spawning stock biomass.

Fishing at a rate above the target and nearer the threshold can lead to an age structure with fewer older, "trophy" sized fish. The best way to ensure a healthy number of larger, old fish is to reduce mortality and allow them to live to an advanced age. Anglers along our coast want striped bass restored to a higher level of abundance so they have a better chance of catching a striper and, perhaps a trophy on occasion.

THIS IS COMMON SENSE. PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING TO CONSERVE OUR ENJOYMENT OF FISHING FOR ROCK FISH.

THank you, Mary Jane Stout and Dr. Joseph Stout, 9154 Craney Island Road,  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
also property in Middlesex



**From:** [Michael Rowe](#)  
**To:** [Mike Waine](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic Striped Bass Management  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2014 10:04:57 AM

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Mike,

The ASMFC needs to act as quickly as possible to prevent a further decline in the striped bass population in Virginia and elsewhere along the eastern seaboard. As an avid angler, there's no denying that numbers have fallen dramatically in the past five years. It's also evident that an increasing number of fish in the lower Potomac River (where I mostly fish) and the Bay are in poor health.

Here are a few things that I believe need to happen:

1. Protect the menhaden population. Without adequate forage, striped bass don't have a chance.
2. Implement new recreational limits. Personally, I think a one fish per day limit in an 18"-28" slot would be ideal.
3. No fishing before or during the spring spawn. That includes C&R.
4. Better management of the commercial sector.

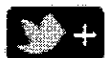
I believe the ASMFC must protect this valuable natural resource by approving Addendum IV for public hearing, without the three-year phase-in option, at the August meeting, and putting in place measures that achieve at least a 31 percent reduction in harvest in 2015.

Regards,

Michael Rowe  
Brokerage Director

IP Brokerage  
1717 Arch Street, Suite 3940  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

215.207.9435 direct  
800.605.8988 x105  
215.207.9454 fax



[www.IPBrokerage.com](http://www.IPBrokerage.com)

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I too am concerned about the declining quality of the striped bass fishery in Virginia (Chesapeake Bay) waters as well as coastal. In the last couple of years I have seen a dramatic drop off in striped bass in the bay during the late fall/early winter season. I believe too many large females are being harvested from these waters by sport fishermen and commercial fishermen. I support responsible fishing practices and practice catch and release. Hopefully, more people will take up this practice and also appreciate the great fishery we have. It can too easily disappear with overfishing and poor practices. I am especially concerned about commercial fishing practices that are more indiscriminate.

Thanks for all that you are doing to protect the striped fishery.

Best Regards,  
Scott

Scott C. Hesaltine  
109 Running Cedar Ln  
Henrico, VA 23229-7841

Cell: 804-306-3513



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**  
**FR: Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee**  
**RE: Reference Points for the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock**  
**DA: July 29, 2014**

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) tasked the Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) with developing stock specific reference points for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River (A/R) striped bass stocks. At the May 2014 Board Meeting, the TC informed the Board that they were unable to come to a consensus on how to calculate a Chesapeake Bay fleet reference point at this time. In addition, the TC did not have a recommendation on reference points for the A/R stock because the North Carolina Stock Assessment was in peer review.

During July the TC received the results of the peer reviewed 2014 North Carolina Stock Assessment. This memorandum details the recommendation for A/R stock specific reference points based on the TC's review.

The A/R striped bass stock contributes minimally to the overall Atlantic striped bass stock complex compared to the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and Hudson stocks (Berggren and Lieberman, 1978; Callihan et al., 2014). Relative to the other producer areas, the A/R stock is smaller in total abundance and does not participate in the coastal migration until older ages (Dorazio et al., 1994; Dunning et al. 2006; NCDMF 2013; ASMFC 2013; Callihan et al., 2014; Kneebone et al., 2014). The female maturation schedule for the A/R stock is also different than the Chesapeake Bay stocks (ASMFC 2013; NCDMF 2013). The Atlantic striped bass coastwide stock assessment does not include landings from the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River, nor independent indices of abundance for the A/R stock because of this limited contribution to the coastwide stock.

Because of the minimal mixing, analysis of data for the A/R stock has provided stock specific estimates of fishing mortality (F) and spawning stock biomass (SSB) for the A/R stock since 1992 (Gibson and Crecco, 1992). Gibson (1995) presented results from a full catch-at-age analysis utilizing a CAGEAN Virtual Population Analysis (VPA), analysis of tagging data, a yield-per-recruit analysis with corresponding fishery reference points, and a population projection. Schaff (1997) updated the Gibson analysis in 1997. Carmichael (1999) further revised the A/R stock assessment utilizing the ADAPT model, which was used to assess the status of the A/R stock relative to F and SSB benchmarks from 1999 through 2006. Since 2010 the Age Structured Assessment Program (ASAP) has been used to assess the A/R stock.

For each assessment, the ASMFC Striped Bass TC has reviewed the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries' (NCDMF) A/R stock assessment and made a recommendation to the Board as to its suitability for management of the A/R stock. Currently under Amendment 6 the A/R stock is managed so as not to exceed a target F of 0.27 based on an 18 inch minimum size limit.

The most recent A/R striped bass benchmark stock assessment (NCDMF 2014) included significant changes to model configuration, estimates of natural mortality, inclusion of mortality to the migratory portion of the stock that occurs outside the management unit, and refinement of independent indices used as model inputs. Following peer review by three independent stock assessment scientists and TC members, the improved model for the A/R stock assessment was approved for management purposes by the TC on July 18, 2014. Reviewers advised to use caution with the terminal year estimates of F and SSB due to the uncertainty and retrospective bias associated with the terminal year point estimate.

The proposed target reference points are  $F_{\text{target}}$  of 0.33 and Female SSB<sub>target</sub> of 965,735 pounds. The 2014 A/R striped bass benchmark assessment indicates the resource is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing relative to the proposed new reference points. However, female SSB declined since the peak in 2003 and is estimated at 835,462 pounds, slightly above the proposed Female SSB<sub>threshold</sub> of 772,588 pounds. Additionally, fully selected fishing mortality (age-4) is estimated at 0.34, below the proposed  $F_{\text{threshold}}$  of 0.41 but above the proposed  $F_{\text{target}}$  of 0.33. The A/R stock experienced a period of strong recruitment of age-1 fish entering the population from 1990 to 2001 (average = 707,794). This was followed by a period of lower recruitment from 2002 to 2010 (average = 528,461), but not as low as the early years when the stock was overfished (1982-1989; average = 245,287). The estimates of recruitment for years 2011 and 2012 should be viewed with caution due to the retrospective bias associated with the estimates in the most recent years of the assessment.

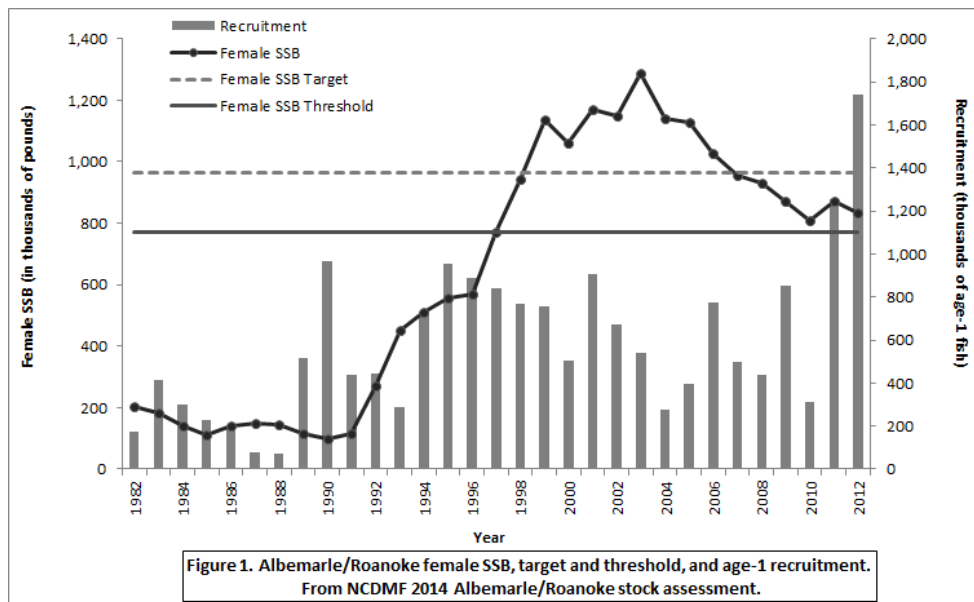


Table 1. Proposed new reference points and TAL from the 2014 benchmark Albemarle/Roanoke stock assessment.			
Reference Point	Fishing Mortality (F)	Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)	Total Allowable Landings (TAL)
Target	0.33	969,496 lbs.	305,762 lbs.
Threshold	0.41	785,150 lbs.	325,905 lbs.

Therefore, due to the differences in life history of the A/R stock, and the ability to develop stock specific reference points for the A/R stock, the ASMFC Striped Bass TC recommendation to the Board is to use the reference points developed through North Carolina's A/R stock assessments for management. The TC will continue to review A/R benchmark stock assessments and make recommendations to the Board as to the appropriateness of each assessment's results for management use.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

**DRAFT ADDENDUM IV TO AMENDMENT 6  
TO THE ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS  
INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN  
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**



**This draft document was developed for Management Board review and discussion. This document is not intended to solicit public comment as part of the Commission/State formal public input process. Comments on this draft document may be given at the appropriate time on the agenda during the scheduled meeting. If approved, a public comment period will be established to solicit input on the issues contained in this document.**

*ASMFC Vision Statement:  
Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

**Board Subcommittee Recommendations are HIGHLIGHTED**

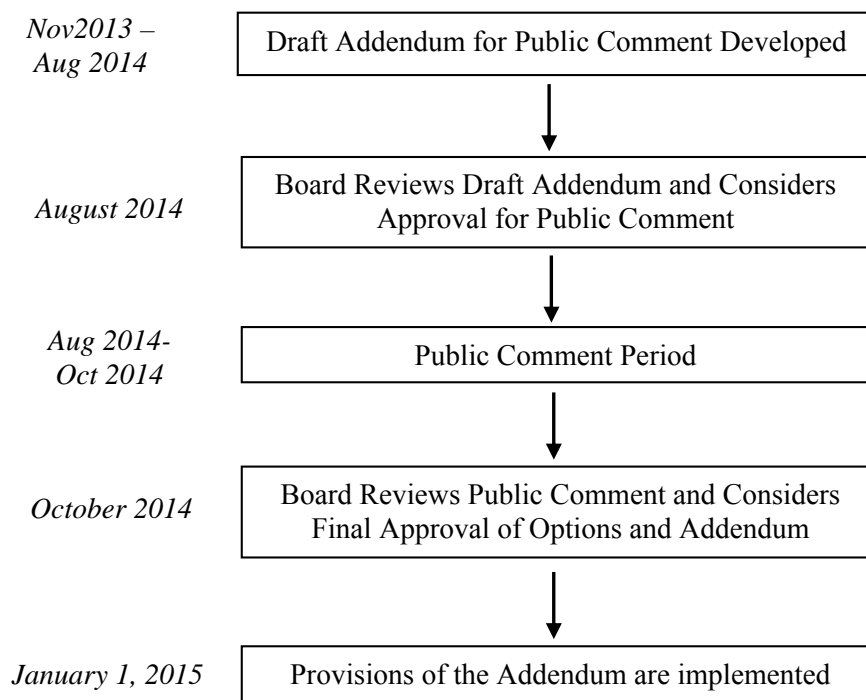
### Public Comment Process and Proposed Timeline

In October 2013, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board initiated an addendum to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic striped bass to consider new biological reference points and management options to reduce fishing mortality to a level that is at or below the new target reference point. This draft addendum presents background on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s management of striped bass, the addendum process and timeline, a statement of the problem, and proposed management options.

The public is encouraged to submit comments regarding this document at any time during the addendum process. The final date comments will be accepted is XXXXX. Comments may be submitted by mail, email, or fax. If you have any questions or would like to submit comment, please use the contact information below.

Mail: Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 North Highland Street Suite 200A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

Email: [mwaine@asmfc.org](mailto:mwaine@asmfc.org)  
Phone: (703) 842-0740  
Fax: (703) 842-0741



## **1.0 Introduction**

Atlantic striped bass are managed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) 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 (2003) to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Addenda I–III.

At its October 2013 meeting, the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) approved the following two motions:

*Move to develop an addendum to adopt the new biological reference points for the coastal fishery as determined by the 2013 benchmark assessment, as well as biological reference points (fishing mortality) for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle/Roanoke stocks.*

*Move to initiate an addendum to develop a range of management measures that reduces fishing mortality to at least the fishing mortality target with implementation in January 2015.*

At its February 2014 meeting, the Board combined the two addenda into one document. As a result, Draft Addendum IV proposes changes to the biological reference points and management options to reduce fishing mortality to a level that is at or below the target within one year (implementation in January 2015).

At its May 2014 meeting, the Board continued the development of Draft Addendum IV by adding consideration of a three year timeframe to reduce F to a level at or below the target as well as management options associated with the three year timeframe. The intent of adding the three year timeframe was to reduce potential social and economic impacts by spreading out the harvest reductions over time while maintaining a January 2015 implementation date.

## **2.0 Overview**

### **2.1 Statement of the Problem**

The 2013 benchmark stock assessment approved by the Board for management use recommended changes to the fishing mortality (F) reference points to be consistent with the spawning stock biomass (SSB) reference points. An addendum to the FMP is required to implement new reference points for management use. Results of the benchmark stock assessment also showed F in the terminal year (2012) was above the new F target, and SSB has been steadily declining below the target since 2006 (Figures 2 and 3). This indicates that even though the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, SSB is approaching its overfished threshold and stock projections show SSB will likely fall below the threshold in the coming years. In addition, a similar downtrend has been observed in total harvest with approximately a 19% decrease since 2008. In response to these concerns, this draft addendum proposes management options that reduce F to a level at or below the target within a one or three year timeframe. The range of options included in this document broadly address several management objectives including conservation of the strong 2011 year class and conservation of large spawning fish (SSB) to enhance the long term sustainability of the striped bass resource and the fisheries that it supports.



## **2.2 Background**

### **2.2.1 Biological Reference Points for Striped Bass**

Biological reference points are used in fisheries management as a measure of stock status and as a reference to evaluate management plan effectiveness. There are two biological reference points used in striped bass management. The first is based on  $F$ , with a threshold value set at maximum sustainable yield (MSY). Managing a population at MSY allows the largest average catch to be taken from a stock without negatively impacting the ability of the stock to replace itself. The second reference point is based on SSB, with a threshold value equal to the SSB value in 1995; the year that the striped bass stock was declared rebuilt. These threshold levels are used to determine when the stock is experiencing overfishing or is overfished, respectively. Target levels for  $F$  and SSB provide additional performance metrics. The current  $F$  target provides a buffer to account for the uncertainty in the estimate of  $F_{msy}$  threshold, while the SSB target corresponds to 125% of the SSB threshold.

The 1995 SSB level has proven to be a useful reference point for striped bass; however, even though  $SSB_{1995}$  is a proxy for  $SSB_{msy}$  they are not the same. In other words, fishing at  $F_{msy}$  does not maintain SSB at the 1995 level. Furthermore,  $F$  has always been maintained below current  $F$  target, yet SSB continues to decline towards its threshold (Figure 2). To address this issue, the 2013 benchmark stock assessment recommended new  $F$  reference points that would maintain SSB at or above its 1995 level. The new method resulted in a fishing mortality threshold of 0.22, corresponding to the SSB threshold of 127 million pounds (57,626 mt), as well as a fishing mortality target of 0.18, corresponding to the SSB target of 159 million pounds (72,032 mt). These SSB target and threshold levels are still based on the SSB value in 1995, as estimated by the 2013 benchmark stock assessment.

This draft addendum proposes to codify the  $F$  reference points contained in the 2013 benchmark stock assessment (ASMFC 2013).

### **2.2.2 Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Areas**

Separate  $F$  reference points for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River were established through conservation equivalency in Amendment 5 to compensate for the smaller minimum size limit granted to both of these management areas. Establishing a lower  $F$  target was intended to enable these management areas to harvest smaller fish without increasing the effects of harvest on the spawning stock.

To ensure the  $F$  in the Chesapeake Bay does not exceed the target, the Bay uses a harvest control model to set an annual Baywide quota. This quota is for both recreational and commercial fisheries for the Bay portions of Maryland, Virginia and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. Use of the harvest control model enables flexibility that allows for the annual Baywide quota to increase or decrease as the exploitable stock biomass increases or decreases. Although the Chesapeake Bay stock has a different management program, it is still a major contributor to the coastal migratory stock and is therefore included in the coastwide assessment and not assessed as an independent stock.

The Albemarle Sound/ Roanoke River (A/R) stock differs in that it contributes minimally to the coastal migratory stock. Additionally the A/R stock is smaller in total abundance relative to the other producer areas and does not participate in the coastal migration until older ages. The female maturation schedule for the A/R stock is also different than the Chesapeake Bay stock (ASMFC 2013; NCDMF 2013). As a result, the A/R stock is not included in the coastwide assessment and is instead assessed independently by the State of North Carolina. This enables the development of A/R stock specific reference points for both F and SSB.

Since new reference points for the coastal migratory stock are being considered from the 2013 benchmark stock assessment, the Board requested options to consider adjusting the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas as well.

### **2.2.3 Ecosystem Considerations**

When fishery management changes are being contemplated, food web relationships should be considered. The implementation of Amendment 6 in 2004 has maintained a fishing mortality rate below the  $F_{\text{target}}$  of 0.3. The success of Amendment 6 allowed the striped bass stock to expand beyond the spawning stock biomass target during this time period. However, the 2013 benchmark stock assessment indicates that spawning stock biomass levels have decreased significantly in recent years. The impacts of biomass levels of predator species on prey species should be considered as the Commission moves toward ecosystem management. Striped bass are predators of other Commission managed species, including weakfish and shad and river herring. As the striped bass population grows the demand on prey species also increases. The increased demand on prey species may have impacts on those species undergoing rebuilding plans (Hartman, K.J. 2003). The current addendum's goal of reducing fishing mortality to target levels may impact predation on other ASMFC-managed species.

## **2.3 Description of the Fishery**

Striped bass have formed the basis of one of the most important fisheries on the Atlantic coast for centuries. However, overfishing and poor environmental conditions led to the collapse of the fishery in the 1980s and a moratorium on harvest from 1985 to 1989. Through the hardship and dedication of both commercial and recreational fishers, the stock was rebuilt and continues to support fishing opportunities along the Atlantic coast.

### **2.3.1. Commercial Fishery Status**

Total and state-specific commercial harvests of striped bass have varied little from year-to-year because of a quota management system that was continued through Amendment 6 in 2004 (refer to Appendix 1 for jurisdiction specific regulations). The total coastal commercial harvest from 2003 to 2013 ranged between 2.53 and 3.15 million pounds (Table 1) and averaged 2.87 million pounds. Massachusetts and New York land on average 65% of the total coastal quota. The average commercial harvest since 2003 (2.87 million pounds) is approximately a 19% underage from the allocated coastal quota in Amendment 6 after accounting for conservation equivalency programs. The coastal quota underage is mainly attributed to game fish status in several states. Additionally, in recent years migratory striped bass have not been available to the ocean fishery in North Carolina, resulting in minimal harvest.

Commercial harvest in the Chesapeake Bay from 2003 to 2013 ranged between 3.29 and 4.40 million pounds and averaged 4.06 million pounds (Table 2). Chesapeake Bay commercial harvest has continued to decline since 2009 because the Bay's quota management program is adjusted based on changes in exploitable stock biomass. The Chesapeake Bay quota has historically been split among the three Bay jurisdictions based on their percent contribution to the 1994 catch as follows, Maryland = 52.359%, Potomac River Fisheries Commission = 15.226%, and Virginia = 32.414%.

Within the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas, commercial harvest (Albemarle Sound only) from 2003 to 2013 ranged from 68,214 to 273,636 pounds and averaged 165,504 pounds (Table 2).

In total, the commercial fishery harvested an estimated 5.82 million pounds in 2013, which is lower than the harvest in 2012 (6.51 million pounds) and also lower than the 2003-2012 average harvest of 7.05 million pounds.

### **2.3.2 Recreational Fishery Status**

The recreational fishery is currently managed with bag and size limits (refer to Appendix 1 for jurisdiction specific regulations). From 2003 to 2013, total coastal recreational harvest has ranged from a high of 31 million pounds in 2006 to a low of 19.2 million pounds in 2012 with an average of 26.4 million pounds (Table 4). Landings from New York (25%), Massachusetts (19%), New Jersey (19%), and Maryland (11%) have comprised approximately 74% of annual recreational landings since 2003. The number of fish released alive increased annually after the passage of Amendment 6 to a high of 23.3 million fish in 2006. Since then, the number of fish released alive has decreased by 77% to a low of 5.2 million fish in 2012. Reasons for the decline may be attributed to a reduction in stock size from the peak in 2003, a decreased availability of fish staying in nearshore areas, and changes in angler behavior in response to socioeconomic factors.

Recreational harvest in the Chesapeake Bay, between 2003 and 2013, has ranged from a high of 5.5 million pounds in 2005 to a low of 2.4 million pounds in 2012 with an average of 3.90 million pounds. The Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River (A/R) recreational quota is set at 275,000 pounds and is divided between the two management areas equally. The average combined harvest in the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River from 2003 through 2013 was 111,598 pounds, less than half the allowable quota (Table 3).

### **2.3.3 Management History**

Since Amendment 4, the foundation of the striped bass management program has been to maintain harvest below a target F. Amendment 6 modified the F targets and thresholds, and also introduced a new set of biological reference points based on female SSB. On a regular basis, SSB and F are estimated and compared to target and threshold levels. These reference points, as well as new management triggers, have enabled the Board to be more responsive to changes in the stock.

Amendment 6 also phased in new regulations for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. In 2004, the coastal commercial quotas for striped bass were restored to the states' historical

average landings during the 1972-1979 base period, a 43 percent increase from the 2002 coastal commercial quotas. In the recreational fisheries, all states were required to implement a two fish bag limit with a minimum size limit of 28 inches, except for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas and states with approved conservation equivalency proposals. Addendum III (August 2012) outlined measures to address illegal harvest of striped bass. States and jurisdictions are required to implement a tagging program for all commercially harvested striped bass within state or jurisdictional waters to better track harvest and minimize poaching.

The 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. A recommendation was made in Amendment 6 to re-open federal waters to commercial and recreational fisheries. However, NOAA Fisheries concluded opening the EEZ to striped bass fishing was not warranted at that time.

## **2.4 Status of the Stock**

In 2012, the Atlantic striped bass stock was not overfished or experiencing overfishing relative to the new reference points defined in the 2013 benchmark assessment. Female SSB was estimated at 128 million pounds (58,200 mt) just above the SSB threshold of 127 million pounds (57,626 mt), and below the SSB target of 159 million pounds (72,032 mt; Figure 2). Total fishing mortality was estimated at 0.20, below the fishing mortality threshold of 0.22 but above the fishing mortality target of 0.18 (Figure 3).

### *Recruitment*

Striped bass experienced several years of strong recruitment of age-1 fish entering the population from 1993-2004, followed by a period of lower recruitment from 2005-2010 (although not as low as the early 1980s, when the stock was overfished). Since the stock was declared recovered in 1995 the recruitment failure trigger (any state's juvenile abundance index value below 75% of all other values in their dataset for three years in a row) has not been met. The 2011 year-class (age-1 fish in 2012) was strong (i.e., abundant; Figure 2); however, overall the 2012 year-class (age-1 fish in 2013) was weak (i.e., low abundance). The 2013 juvenile abundance index was above average for Maine and Virginia, below average for New Jersey and Maryland, and below the 75% quartile for New York and North Carolina.

## **2.5 Proposed Fishing Mortality Reference Points**

*Adopted options (other than status quo) would replace Amendment 6, Section 2.5.1.*

Fishing mortality based reference points are designed to manage the rate at which individual striped bass die because of fishing. If the current  $F$  exceeds the  $F$  threshold, then overfishing is occurring. This means the rate at which striped bass are dying because of fishing (i.e., harvest and dead discards) exceeds the stock's ability to maintain itself at SSB threshold. The value of the  $F$  target is set at a cautionary level intended to safeguard the fishery from reaching the overfishing threshold. The  $F$  target and threshold may change through updated stock assessments because these reference point values are estimated based on the best available data.

This section considers  $F$  reference points for the (1) coastwide population (which includes the Chesapeake Bay, Hudson River and Delaware River/Bay as a metapopulation) (2) Chesapeake

Bay Stock, and (3) Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Stock. Separate F targets for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River were established in Amendment 5 to compensate for the smaller minimum size limit granted to both of these management areas.

**2.5.1 Coastwide Population Reference Point Options**

This section proposes to adjust the F target and threshold, based on reference points developed in the 2013 benchmark stock assessment that were approved by the 57<sup>th</sup> Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC 57) and accepted by the Board in October 2013 for management use.

**Option A: Status Quo, 2011 Stock Assessment Update F Reference Points**

The fishing mortality reference points remain unchanged and are based on maximum sustainable yield as estimated in the 2011 stock assessment update:

Reference Point	Definition	Value (as estimated in 2011 stock assessment update)
Fthreshold	Fmsy	0.34
Ftarget	TC recommended value more conservative than Fmsy	0.30

**Option B: 2013 Benchmark Stock Assessment F Reference Points**

The fishing mortality reference points will be adjusted to be internally consistent with the SSB target and threshold, consistent with the recommendations in the 2013 benchmark assessment:

Reference Point	Definition	Value (as estimated in 2013 benchmark stock assessment)*
Fthreshold	F associated with achieving the SSB threshold	0.22
Ftarget	F associated with achieving the SSB target	0.18

\* The F target and threshold values may change through updated stock assessments because they are estimated based on the best available data.

**2.5.2 Chesapeake Bay Stock Reference Point Options**

This section proposes to adjust F reference points for the Chesapeake Bay management area.

**Option A: Status Quo**

F target is 0.27 as established in Amendment 6. This option is linked to Option A; status quo in section 2.5.1.

**Option B: Use coastwide population F reference points as established in section 2.5.1.**

Due to data and model limitations, the Technical Committee cannot reach consensus on separate reference points for the Chesapeake Bay management area at this time (see TC memorandum; Appendix 2). Previously, the intent of establishing a lower F target in the Chesapeake Bay was to account for the impacts of harvesting a smaller sized fish (i.e., 18 inch minimum) in the Chesapeake Bay. The new coastwide reference points coming from the 2013 benchmark stock assessment (and considered in section 2.5.1) include the effects of the Chesapeake Bay’s harvest

of smaller fish on the coastwide SSB, but do not incorporate data on the sex ratio that exists in the Bay. Therefore, the coastwide population reference points represent the best available scientific advice to manage total fishing mortality on both the coastwide population and the Chesapeake Bay stock component because the Technical Committee is unable to calculate Chesapeake Bay stock specific reference points at this time.

The TC agreed that stock-specific reference points are the ultimate goal for management of this species, and work on developing a sex-specific model that incorporates stock structure should be continued.

### **2.5.3 Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Stock Reference Point Options**

This section proposes to adjust reference points for the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas.

#### **Option A: Status Quo**

F target is 0.27 as established in Amendment 6.

**Option B:** The State of North Carolina will manage the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River (A/R) stock using reference points from the latest North Carolina A/R stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board. If this option is selected, the recreational and commercial fisheries in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River will operate under North Carolina's Fishery Management Plan while the recreational and commercial fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean will continue to operate under the same management measures as the rest of the coastal fisheries.

### **2.5.4 Reference Point Evaluation**

Section 4.1 of Amendment 6 contains management triggers to prevent overfishing the Atlantic striped bass resource and ensure the objectives of Amendment 6 are achieved. The management triggers will be evaluated using recent estimates of F and SSB coming from an updated or benchmark stock assessment.

### **2.6 Timeline to Reduce F to the Target**

At its May 2014 meeting, the Board approved the following motion:

*Move to include in Draft Addendum IV a modification of Management Trigger 3 under Section 4.1 in Amendment 6 to require the Board to adjust fishing mortality to a level that is at or below the target within three years.*

Management Trigger 3 as currently written in Amendment 6 is as follows:

*If the Management Board determines that the fishing mortality target is exceeded in two consecutive years and the female spawning stock biomass falls below the target within either of those years, the Management Board must adjust the striped bass management program to reduce the fishing mortality rate to a level that is at or below the target within one year.*

The intent of replacing the trigger's one year timeframe with a three year timeframe was to provide management flexibility to reduce potential social and economic impacts by spreading out required harvest reductions over time.

**Option A:** Status quo: One year time frame

Management Trigger 3 requires reducing F to a level at or below the target within one year.

*If the Board selects Option A, then the three year timeframe management scenarios presented in section 3.0 are not consistent with reducing F to a level that is at or below the target in one year and would not be viable management options.*

**Option B:** Three year time frame.

Management Trigger 3 will be revised to require reducing F to a level at or below the target within three years instead of within one year.

*If the Board selects Option B, the Board may choose management measures from either the one year or three year timeframe options in Section 3.*

### **3.0 Proposed Management Program**

The coastal area can be defined as the entire management unit (i.e., all coastal and estuarine areas of all states and jurisdictions from Maine through North Carolina) excluding the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas. It should be noted that the current management regime permits the implementation of, Board approved, alternative regulations that are conservation equivalents to regulations approved in this document (see Section 4.6 of Amendment 6 for process). Several states currently implement conservation equivalency programs in order to have management measures to meet the needs of their state's fishery (see Appendix 1). If the Board approves changes to the current striped bass management program through this document, all states would need to re-submit conservation equivalency programs for Board approval. Additionally, states may voluntarily implement management programs that are more conservative than those required herein.

#### **Projecting Harvest Reductions to Achieve F Target**

Stock projections were used to forecast future stock conditions and estimate the harvest level needed to reduce F to the proposed target over a one or three year timeframe. The Technical Committee used a forward projecting methodology to identify the percent reduction from 2013 harvest levels necessary to achieve the proposed F target over a one or three year timeframe. Projection results indicate:

- If total harvest is reduced by 25% starting in the 2015 fishing year, there is a 50% probability<sup>1</sup> F will be at or below its target level within one year.
- If total harvest is reduced by 17% starting in the 2015 fishing year, there is a 50% probability F will be at or below its target level within three years.

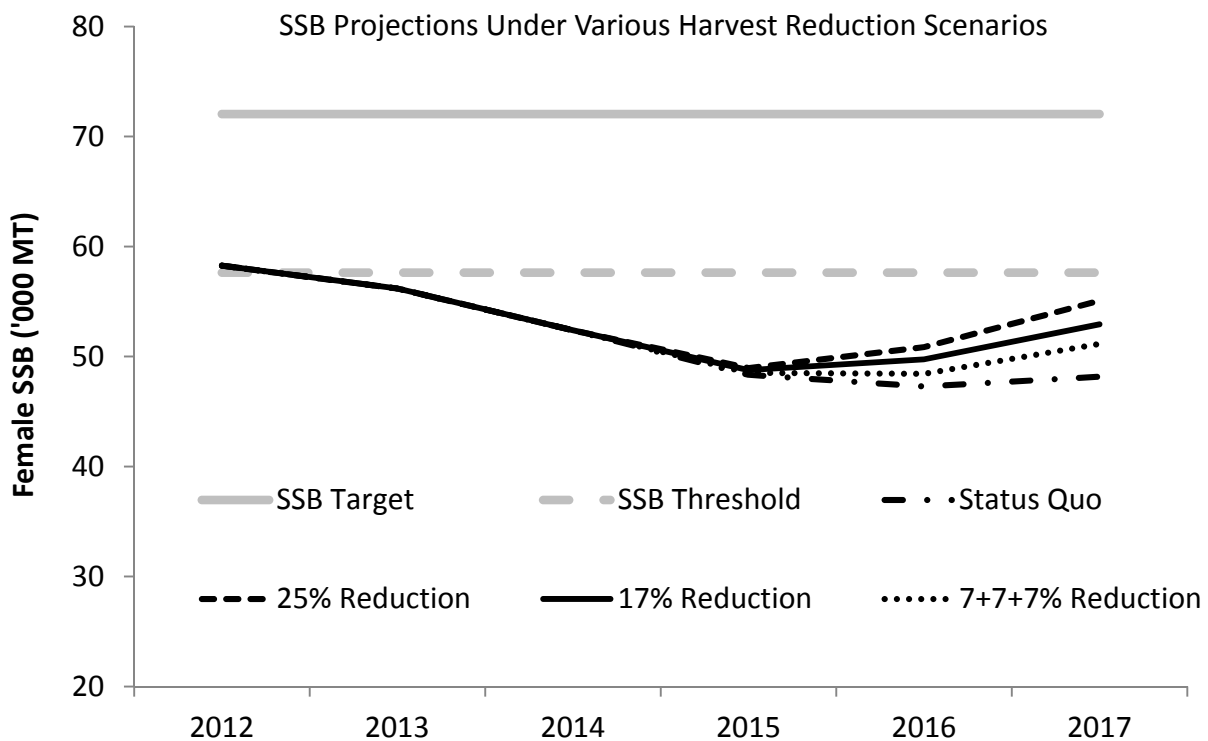
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<sup>1</sup> A 50% probability was the minimum recommended by the TC - a higher probability of being at or below the target would require more restrictive management measures.



- If total harvest is reduced by 7% each year for three consecutive years starting in 2015 to achieve an approximate 20% reduction<sup>2</sup>, there is a 50% probability F will be at or below its target level within three years.
- To contrast these options, if total harvest remains unchanged (status quo), there is less than a 1% probability that F will be at or below its target in one or three years.

It is important to note in all of the harvest scenarios, the probability of the stock being overfished (SSB less than the SSB threshold) is high and increases until 2015-2016. This means despite any reduction in harvest through these proposed scenarios, SSB will continue to decline reaching a low point in 2015-2016 before it begins an upward trajectory towards SSB target (see SSB projection figure below). This trend is driven by the lack of strong year classes currently in the fishery, and the emergence of the strong 2011 year class that matures into the spawning stock in 2016-2017.



### Proposed Management Scenarios

The following section outlines four management scenarios (including status quo) that are designed to reduce F to a level that is at or below its target within a one or three year timeframe. These scenarios, which are all mutually exclusive, include (A) status quo; (B) a 25% harvest reduction from 2013 levels to take place in 2015 to achieve F target in one year; (C) a 17% harvest reduction from 2013 levels to take place in 2015 to achieve F target over three years; and (D) a 20% reduction from 2013 levels taken incrementally through a 7% reduction in

<sup>2</sup> A 7% reduction for three consecutive years is equivalent to an approximate 20% reduction over the three year period. For example: In the first year harvest (100 pounds for this example) is reduced by 7% (100 lb - 7% = 93lb). In the second year, harvest is reduced by another 7% (93lb - 7% = 86.5 lb). In the last year, harvest is reduced by a final 7% (86.5 lb - 7% = 80.4 lbs). So harvest in the last year is 80.4lb and harvest in the first year was 100 lb which means the overall reduction is 19.6% or approximately 20% from the first year.

harvest for each of the three consecutive years starting in 2015 to achieve F target over three years.

As a note for all fishery management quota options: Quotas are allocated on a fishing year basis. In the event that a jurisdiction exceeds its allocation, the amount in excess of its annual quota will be deducted from the state’s allowable quota in the following year.

States with approved conservation equivalency would need to update their proposals if a new quota allocation is chosen. The requirements of Addendum III to Amendment 6 would remain unchanged if the quota allocations are adjusted.

**When providing input on this document, please first identify your preferred management scenario (Option A, B, C, or D) and then select your preferred management measures within that scenario. With the exception of the status quo option, there will be management options for each fishery and management area combination (recreational measures for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries and commercial measures for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries).**

Adopted options (besides status quo) would replace the corresponding sections in Amendment 6.

**Option A: Status Quo**

The status quo option does not meet the projection harvest reductions needed from 2013 levels to reduce F to a level that is at or below its proposed target.

**Recreational Fishery Management**

All jurisdictions will be constrained by a two fish bag limit and 28 inch minimum size limit, except for the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River management areas that are constrained by an 18 inch minimum size limit and a bag limit that maintains target fishing mortality of 0.27. This option is estimated to achieve a 0% reduction from 2013 recreational harvest.

**Commercial Fishery Management**

Coastal Commercial Fishery

Each state will be allocated 100% of the base period (1972-1979) average coastal commercial landings (Section 4.3.2 of Amendment 6). This option is estimated to achieve a 0% reduction from the total 2013 commercial harvest.

	Status Quo	For Reference
State	Am6 Quota (lbs)	2013 Harvest (lbs)
Maine	250*	0
New Hampshire	5,750*	0
Massachusetts	1,159,750	1,002,519
Rhode Island	243,625†	231,280
Connecticut	23,750**	1,479

New York	1,061,060†	823,801
New Jersey	321,750**	6,096
Delaware	193,447	191,424
Maryland	131,560†	93,532
Virginia	184,853	182,427
North Carolina	480,480	0
<b>Coastal Total</b>	<b>3,806,275</b>	<b>2,532,558</b>
% Diff from 2013 harvest	+53	0

\* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota.

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

†Quota reduced through management program equivalency; NY (828,293 pounds) and MD (126,396 pounds) beginning in 2004, RI (239,963 pounds) beginning in 2007.

### Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions would manage striped bass fisheries so as not to exceed a target fishing mortality rate of  $F=0.27$  with an 18 inch size limit. The area to be managed under a target fishing mortality rate of 0.27 is described in Section 2.4.2 in Amendment 6. This option is estimated to achieve a 0% reduction from 2013 commercial harvest.

### Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River

The State of North Carolina will manage the commercial striped bass fishery in the Albemarle Sound so as not to exceed a target fishing mortality of  $F=0.27$ . The striped bass regulations outlined in Amendment 6 for the Albemarle-Roanoke stock will cover the area described in Section 2.4.1. in Amendment 6.

**Option B:** Reduce  $F$  to a level that is at or below the target within one year. This represents a 25% reduction from 2013 total harvest. The desired reduction would be achieved by approximately equal relative reductions to both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

### **Proposed Recreational Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries.*

#### Coastal Recreational Fishery (All jurisdictions would implement)

Option	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction from 2013 harvest
<b>B1</b>	1	28"	n/a	31%
<b>B2</b>	1	28-40"	n/a	26% <sup>3</sup>
<b>B3</b>	2	33"	n/a	29%
<b>B4</b>	2	28-34"	n/a	28%

<sup>3</sup>Reduction estimate limited by data. It is likely the percent reduction is greater than 31% because this option is more conservative than Option B1, but the data available to estimate the percent reduction is limited because only measured fish from MRIP were included in the Option B2 analysis.

<b>B5</b>	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy)	1 fish 28-34"	1 fish $\geq 36$ "	28%
<b>B6</b>	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy)	1 fish 28-36"	1 fish $\geq 38$ "	26%
<b>B7</b>	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy)	1 fish 28-37"	1 fish $\geq 40$ "	26%

**Chesapeake Bay Management Area Recreational Fishery (MD, PRFC and VA would implement)**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Bag Limit</b>	<b>Size limit</b>	<b>Trophy fish</b>	<b>% reduction from 2013 harvest</b>
<b>B8</b>	1	18"	n/a	31%
<b>B9</b>	2	21"	n/a	29%
<b>B10</b>	2	18-23"	n/a	26%
<b>B11</b>	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy or 2 slot)	1 or both 18-21"	1 fish $\geq 36$ "	29%
<b>B12</b>	Chesapeake Bay Recreational Quota of 2,000,915 pounds (no established bag limit, but a minimum size of 18")			25%

**Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Recreational Fishery**

The State of North Carolina will manage the recreational striped bass fisheries in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**Proposed Commercial Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries. It is important to note that not all the management options presented in the tables achieve a 25% reduction from 2013 harvest.*

**Coastal Commercial Fishery**

**Option B13:** Takes a 25% reduction from the Amendment 6 quota. This option does not achieve the proposed 25% reduction from 2013 harvest if all states harvest all of their allowable quota (see table below). However, this option may achieve some level of reduction from 2013 harvest if the fishery performs similar to previous years.

**Option B14:** Takes a 25% reduction from 2013 total commercial harvest and then allocates the remainder to all the states using the same allocation percentages used in Amendment 6. This option achieves the proposed 25% reduction from 2013 harvest (see table below).

**THE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REMOVAL OF OPTION B14.**

	<b>For Reference</b>	<b>OPTION B13</b>	<b>OPTION B14</b>	<b>For Reference</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>Am6 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>25% reduction from Am6 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>25% reduction from total 2013 harvest (lbs)</b>	<b>2013 Harvest (lbs)</b>
Maine	250*	188	125	0
New Hampshire	5,750*	4,313	2,869	0
Massachusetts	1,159,750	869,813	578,742	1,002,519
Rhode Island	243,625†	182,719	121,574	231,280
Connecticut	23,750*	17,813	11,852	1,479
New York	1,061,060†	795,795	529,493	823,801
New Jersey	321,750**	241,313	160,561	6,096

Delaware	193,447	145,085	96,534	191,424
Maryland	131,560†	98,670	65,651	93,532
Virginia	184,853	138,640	92,246	182,427
North Carolina	480,480	360,360	239,771	0
<b>Coastal Total</b>	<b>3,806,275</b>	<b>2,854,706</b>	<b>1,899,419</b>	<b>2,532,558</b>
% Diff from 2013 harvest	+50	+13	-25	0

\* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota.

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

†Quota reduced through management program equivalency; NY (828,293 pounds) and MD (126,396 pounds) beginning in 2004, RI (239,963 pounds) beginning in 2007.

### Chesapeake Bay Management Area Commercial Fishery

*None of the proposed options below are estimated to achieve the proposed 25% reduction from 2013 harvest.*

**Option B15:** The Chesapeake Bay commercial quota would remain at its 2013 level.

**THE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REMOVAL OF OPTION B15**

**Option B16:** Takes a 25% reduction from the 2013 commercial quota.

	For Reference	OPTION B15	OPTION B16	For Reference
<b>Chesapeake Bay</b>	<b>Status Quo</b>	<b>2013 Commercial Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>25% reduction from 2013 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>2013 Harvest (lbs)</b>
	Maintain F=0.27	3,554,699	2,666,024	3,293,337
% Difference from 2013 harvest	N/A	+8	-19	0

### Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Commercial Fishery

The State of North Carolina will manage the commercial striped bass fishery in the Albemarle Sound based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**Option C:** Reduce F to a level that is at or below the target within three years. This represents a 17% reduction from 2013 total harvest starting in the 2015 fishing year. There are not additional reductions in 2016 or 2017, the 17% reduction would be taken all in the first year (2015). The desired reduction would be achieved by approximately equal relative reductions to both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

### **Proposed Recreational Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries.*

Coastal Recreational Fishery (All jurisdictions would implement)

Option	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction from 2013 harvest
C1	2	32"	n/a	21%
C2	2	28-36"	n/a	19%
C3	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy)	1 fish 28-35"	1 fish >=35"	20% <sup>4</sup>

Chesapeake Bay Management Area Recreational Fishery (MD, PRFC and VA would implement)

Option	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction from 2013 harvest
C4	2	20"	n/a	22%
C5	2	18-26"	n/a	18%
C6	2 (1 slot, 1 trophy or 2 slot)	1 or both 18-23"	1 fish >=36"	19%
C7	Chesapeake Bay Recreational Quota of 2,214,345 pounds (no established bag limit, but a minimum size of 18")			17%

Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Recreational Fishery

The State of North Carolina will manage the recreational striped bass fisheries in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**Proposed Commercial Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries. It is important to note that not all the management options presented in the tables achieve a 17% reduction from 2013 harvest.*

Coastal Commercial Fishery

**Option C8:** Takes a 17% reduction from the Amendment 6 quota. This option does not achieve the proposed 17% reduction from 2013 harvest if all states harvest all of their allowable quota (see table below). However, this option may achieve some level of reduction from 2013 harvest if the fishery performs similar to previous years.

**Option C9:** Takes a 17% reduction from 2013 total commercial harvest and then allocates the remainder to all the states using the same allocation percentages used in Amendment 6. This option achieves the proposed 17% reduction from 2013 harvest (see table below).

**THE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REMOVAL OF OPTION C9.**

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<sup>4</sup> Reduction estimate limited by data.

	For Reference	OPTION C8	OPTION C9	For Reference
State	Am6 Quota (lbs)	17% reduction from Am6 Quota (lbs)	17% reduction from total 2013 harvest (lbs)	2013 Harvest (lbs)
Maine	250*	208	138	0
New Hampshire	5,750*	4,773	3,175	0
Massachusetts	1,159,750	962,593	640,474	1,002,519
Rhode Island	243,625†	202,209	134,542	231,280
Connecticut	23,750*	19,713	13,116	1,479
New York	1,061,060†	880,680	585,973	823,801
New Jersey	321,750**	267,053	177,687	6,096
Delaware	193,447	160,561	106,832	191,424
Maryland	131,560†	109,195	72,654	93,532
Virginia	184,853	153,428	102,085	182,427
North Carolina	480,480	398,798	265,346	0
<b>Coastal Total</b>	<b>3,806,275</b>	<b>3,159,208</b>	<b>2,102,023</b>	<b>2,532,558</b>
% Diff from 2013 harvest	+50	+25	-17	0

\* Commercial harvest/sale prohibited, with no re-allocation of quota.

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

†Quota reduced through management program equivalency; NY (828,293 pounds) and MD (126,396 pounds) beginning in 2004, RI (239,963 pounds) beginning in 2007.

#### Chesapeake Bay Management Area Commercial Fishery

*None of the proposed options below are estimated to achieve the proposed 17% reduction from 2013 harvest.*

**Option C10:** The Chesapeake Bay commercial quota would remain at its 2013 level.

**THE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REMOVAL OF OPTION C10.**

**Option C11:** Takes a 17% reduction from the 2013 commercial quota.

	For Reference	OPTION C10	OPTION C11	For Reference
Chesapeake Bay	Status Quo	2013 Commercial Quota	17% reduction from 2013 Quota (lbs)	2013 Harvest (lbs)
	Maintain F=0.27	3,554,699	2,950,400	3,293,337
% Diff from 2013 harvest	N/A	+8	-10	0

#### Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Commercial Fishery

The State of North Carolina will manage the commercial striped bass fishery in the Albemarle Sound based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment that are accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**Option D:** Reduce F to a level that is at or below the target within three years. This represents approximately a 20% reduction from 2013 total harvest achieved with a 7% reduction each year for three consecutive years starting in 2015. The desired reduction would be achieved by approximately equal relative reductions to both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

**Proposed Recreational Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries.*

Coastal Recreational Fishery (All jurisdictions would implement)

**Option D1:** Size limit changes with corresponding implementation year are shown below.

Year	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction
2015	2	30"	n/a	Approximately a 21% reduction from 2013 harvest over three years
2016	2	31"	n/a	
2017	2	32"	n/a	

Chesapeake Bay Management Area Recreational Fishery (MD, PRFC and VA would implement)

**Option D2:** Size limit changes with corresponding implementation year are shown below.

Year	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction
2015	2	19"	n/a	Approximately a 22% reduction from 2013 harvest over three years
2016	2	20"	n/a	
2017	2	20"	n/a	

**Option D3:** Slot limit changes with corresponding implementation year are shown below.

Year	Bag Limit	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction
2015	2	18-35"	n/a	Approximately a 19% reduction from 2013 harvest over three years
2016	2	18-28"	n/a	
2017	2	18-24"	n/a	

**Option D4:** Chesapeake Bay Recreational Quota (Baywide)

Year	Quota	Size limit	Trophy fish	% reduction
2015	2,481,134	18"	n/a	Approximately a 20% reduction from 2013 harvest over three years
2016	2,307,455	18"	n/a	
2017	2,145,933	18"	n/a	

Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Recreational Fishery

The State of North Carolina will manage the recreational striped bass fisheries in the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**Proposed Commercial Fishery Management Options**

*The tables below provide a suite of options for both the coastal and Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries. When providing input on this document, please identify one preferred option each for*



*the coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries. It is important to note that not all the management options presented in the tables achieve an overall 20% reduction from 2013 harvest.*

#### Coastal Commercial Fishery

**Option D5:** Takes a 7% sequential reduction from Amendment 6 quota. This option does not achieve the proposed 20% reduction from 2013 harvest if all states harvest all of their allowable quota (see table below). However, this option may achieve some level of reduction from 2013 harvest if the fishery performs similar to previous years.

	<b>OPTION D5</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>For Reference Am6 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from Am6 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2015 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2016 Quota (lbs)</b>
Maine	250*	233	216	201
New Hampshire	5,750*	5,348	4,973	4,625
Massachusetts	1,159,750	1,078,568	1,003,068	932,853
Rhode Island	243,625†	226,571	210,711	195,961
Connecticut	23,750*	22,088	20,541	19,103
New York	1,061,060†	986,786	917,711	853,471
New Jersey	321,750**	299,228	278,282	258,802
Delaware	193,447	179,906	167,312	155,600
Maryland	131,560†	122,351	113,786	105,821
Virginia	184,853	171,913	159,879	148,688
North Carolina	480,480	446,846	415,567	386,477
<b>Coastal Total</b>	<b>3,806,275</b>	<b>3,539,836</b>	<b>3,292,047</b>	<b>3,061,604</b>
% Diff from 2013 harvest	+50	+40	+30	+21

**Option D6:** Takes a 7% sequential reduction for three years starting from 2013 total commercial harvest using the same allocations as used in Amendment 6. This option achieves the proposed 20% reduction from 2013 harvest (see table below).

**THE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDS REMOVAL OF OPTION D6.**

	<b>OPTION D6</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>For Reference Am6 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2013 Harvest (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2015 Quota (lbs)</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2016 Quota (lbs)</b>
Maine	250*	155	144	134
New Hampshire	5,750*	3,558	3,309	3077
Massachusetts	1,159,750	717,640	667,405	620687
Rhode Island	243,625†	150,752	140,200	130386
Connecticut	23,750*	14,696	13,667	12711
New York	1,061,060†	656,572	610,612	567869
New Jersey	321,750**	199,095	185,159	172197

Delaware	193,447	119,703	111,324	103531
Maryland	131,560†	81,408	75,709	70410
Virginia	184,853	114,385	106,378	98931
North Carolina	480,480	297,315	276,503	257148
<b>Coastal Total</b>	<b>3,806,275</b>	<b>2,355,279</b>	<b>2,190,409</b>	<b>2,037,081</b>
% Diff from 2013 harvest	+50	-7	-14	-20

Chesapeake Bay Commercial Fishery

*None of the proposed options below are estimated to achieve the proposed 20% reduction over 3 years.*

**Option D7:** Takes a 7% sequential reduction from 2013 Chesapeake Bay commercial quota.

	<b>OPTION D7</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Chesapeake Bay</b>	<b>Status Quo</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2013 Quota</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2015 Quota</b>	<b>7% reduction from 2016 Quota</b>
	Maintain F=0.27	3,305,870	3,074,459	2,859,247
% Diff from 2013 harvest	N/A	0	-7	-13

Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Management Area Commercial Fishery

The State of North Carolina will manage the commercial striped bass fishery in the Albemarle Sound based on reference points from the latest North Carolina stock assessment accepted by the Striped Bass Technical Committee and approved for management use by the Board.

**3.1 Commercial Quota Transfers**

*The Board may consider commercial quota transfers for any of the four management scenarios selected above.*

**Option A:** Status quo, no commercial quota transfers.

**Option B:** Commercial quota transfer provision.

Transfers between states may occur upon agreement of two states at any time during the fishing season up to 45 days after the last day of the fishing season. All transfers require a donor state (state giving quota) and a receiving state (state accepting additional quota). There is no limit on the amount of quota that can be transferred by this mechanism, and the terms and conditions of the transfer are to be identified solely by the parties involved in the transfer. The Administrative Commissioner of the agency involved must submit a signed letter to the Commission identifying the involved states, species, and pounds of quota to be transferred between the parties. A transfer becomes effective upon receipt by Commission staff of the signed letters from the donor and receiving states, and does not require the approval of the Commission staff or Board. All transfers are final upon receipt of the signed letters at the Commission. In the event that the donor or receiving member of a transaction subsequently wishes to change the amount or details of the transaction, both parties have to agree to the change, and submit to the Commission signed letters from the Administrative Commissioner of the agencies involved. These transfers do not

permanently affect the state-specific shares of the quota (i.e., the state-specific quotas remain fixed).

Once quota has been transferred to a state, the state receiving quota becomes responsible for any overages of transferred quota. That is, the amount over the final quota (that state's quota plus any quota transferred to that state) for a state will be deducted from the corresponding state's quota the following fishing season.

### **3.2 Commercial Size Limits**

*The Board may consider commercial size limits for any of the four management scenarios selected above.*

#### **Option A: Status quo with Amendment 6**

In each jurisdiction, the commercial fishery is constrained by the same size limit regime established for the jurisdiction's recreational fishery. This means if the Board selects a different size limit for the recreational fishery, the commercial fishery would be constrained to the same size limit.

#### **Option B: Status quo with existing size limits**

All areas will maintain their current minimum size limit for the commercial fishery, including the Chesapeake Bay (18 inch minimum), Albemarle Sound (18 inch minimum) and the Delaware Bay shad gillnet fishery for Delaware (20 inch minimum). This option only applies if the Board selects to change the size limits for the recreational fishery.

## **4.0 Compliance Schedule**

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

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

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

January 1, 2015: States implement regulations. North Carolina will need earlier implementation because their ocean commercial fishery begins on December 1, 2014.

## **5.0 ISSUE 8: Recommendation for Federal Waters**

If options in section 2.5 or 3.0 are adopted through the addendum process, the Board would consider which options, if any should be recommended to NOAA Fisheries for implementation in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

## **6.0 Literature Cited**

ASMFC. 2003. Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. Washington (DC): ASMFC. Fisheries Management Report No. 41. 63 p.

ASMFC. 2013. Update of the Striped Bass Stock Assessment using Final 2012 Data. A report prepared by the Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee. 74 p.

Hartman, K.J. 2003. Population-level consumption by Atlantic coastal striped bass and the influence of population recovery upon prey communities. *Fisheries Management and Ecology* 10:281-290.

**7.0 Tables**

Table 1. Coastal commercial harvest of Atlantic striped bass by state in pounds (2003-2013).

Year	MA	RI	CT*	NY	NJ*	DE	MD+	VA+	NC**	Total Harvest
2003	1,055,439	246,312		753,261	121,410	188,419	98,149	159,786	434,369	3,057,145
2004	1,206,305	245,204		741,668	81,870	181,974	115,453	160,301	421,645	3,154,420
2005	1,104,737	242,303		689,821	29,866	173,815	46,871	184,734	454,521	2,926,668
2006	1,312,168	238,797		688,446	23,656	185,987	91,093	194,934	352,036	3,087,117
2007	1,040,328	240,627		729,743	13,615	188,668	96,301	165,587	424,723	2,899,592
2008	1,160,122	245,988		653,100	7,345	188,719	118,005	164,400	299,162	2,836,841
2009	1,138,291	234,368		789,891	10,330	192,311	127,327	140,420	189,995	2,822,933
2010	1,224,356	249,520		782,402	12,833	185,410	44,802	116,338	272,632	2,888,293
2011	1,163,865	228,163		854,731	16,332	188,620	21,401	158,811	242,600	2,874,523
2012†	1,219,665	239,913	1,062	681,399	6,285	194,324	77,551	170,788	6,226	2,597,213
2013	1,002,519	231,280	1,479	823,801	6,096	191,424	93,532	182,427	-	2,532,558

\* NJ and CT values reflect striped bass harvested recreationally via the Bonus Fish Program

\*\* NC values represent harvest during the December 1-November 30 fishing year

+MD, VA and NC harvest from ocean only. Does not include Chesapeake Bay or Albemarle Sound/ Roanoke River.

†The impacts of hurricane Sandy may have caused lower harvest in 2012 in some states.

Table 2. Total (commercial and recreational) Chesapeake Bay harvest in pounds (2003-2013).

Year	Commercial	Recreational	Total Harvest	Quota
2003	4,169,585	5,335,278	9,504,863	10,500,000
2004	4,156,977	4,277,549	8,434,526	8,417,000
2005	4,102,804	5,484,312	9,587,116	9,285,588
2006	4,008,349	4,859,593	8,867,942	9,590,238
2007	4,206,503	4,228,977	8,435,480	9,590,238
2008	4,369,971	3,539,541	7,909,512	10,132,844
2009	4,403,215	4,065,721	8,468,936	10,132,844
2010	4,092,654	3,173,290	7,265,944	9,489,794
2011	3,925,048	2,914,653	6,839,701	8,825,510
2012	3,924,372	2,402,699	6,327,071	8,825,510
2013	3,293,337	2,667,886	5,961,223	7,589,937

Table 3. Albemarle Sound / Roanoke River annual quota\* and harvest in pounds (2003 – 2013).

Year	Commercial		Recreational	
	Quota	Harvest	Quota	Harvest
2003	275,000	266,555	275,000	90,964
2004	275,000	273,636	275,000	187,288
2005	275,000	232,693	275,000	171,007
2006	275,000	186,399	275,000	120,518
2007	275,000	171,683	275,000	89,125
2008	275,000	74,921	275,000	64,353
2009	275,000	96,134	275,000	106,894
2010	275,000	199,829	275,000	83,507
2011	275,000	134,538	275,000	114,097
2012	275,000	115,940	275,000	159,727
2013	275,000	68,214	275,000	40,094

\* Quota is allocated 25% for the Roanoke River recreational fishery, 25% for the Albemarle Sound recreational fishery, and 50% for the Albemarle Sound commercial fishery

Table 4. Total coastal recreational harvest of Atlantic striped bass by state in pounds (2003-2013).

Year	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	Total
2003	253,910	281,549	5,120,554	1,502,455	1,537,899	4,687,685	4,545,515	303,909	2,975,437	2,789,745	772,981	24,771,639
2004	226,200	98,995	6,112,746	1,386,138	1,617,561	3,727,105	5,548,167	330,623	2,347,752	2,956,310	4,833,112	29,184,709
2005	381,058	281,114	5,097,821	1,732,581	2,173,638	5,537,432	5,958,454	286,777	4,612,417	1,996,840	2,164,859	30,222,991
2006	323,355	179,181	4,832,355	999,300	2,030,878	6,028,409	7,067,533	260,134	3,868,944	3,694,529	1,759,796	31,044,414
2007	232,328	68,142	5,136,580	1,584,354	1,468,499	7,913,817	3,718,451	99,800	3,504,041	2,392,258	876,707	26,994,977
2008	271,768	73,807	5,763,763	751,507	1,868,335	10,925,408	4,696,090	333,149	2,728,048	2,657,976	525,891	30,595,742
2009	329,064	113,705	4,786,895	1,123,434	835,970	5,004,604	4,238,319	275,410	4,278,145	1,791,058	160,922	22,937,526
2010	104,117	67,409	4,270,401	1,096,369	1,259,008	6,997,089	5,382,743	251,853	2,630,802	481,147	453,844	22,994,782
2011	91,705	370,798	3,504,522	1,257,302	758,216	8,969,762	6,197,026	241,149	2,640,309	1,160,914	2,042,981	27,234,684
2012†	57,509	163,804	5,489,928	851,460	814,310	6,540,024	2,376,866	360,106	1,260,490	1,353,351	-	19,267,848
2013	103,106	227,447	4,828,109	3,076,814	2,129,160	6,749,587	4,643,220	248,183	2,377,734	478,750	70,798	24,932,908

Notes: The 2003 to 2006 values for Virginia do not include Technical Committee estimates of wave 1 harvest. The 2013 values do not include Technical Committee estimates of wave 1 harvest and are preliminary. †The impacts of hurricane Sandy may have caused lower harvest in 2012 in some states.

## 8.0 Figures

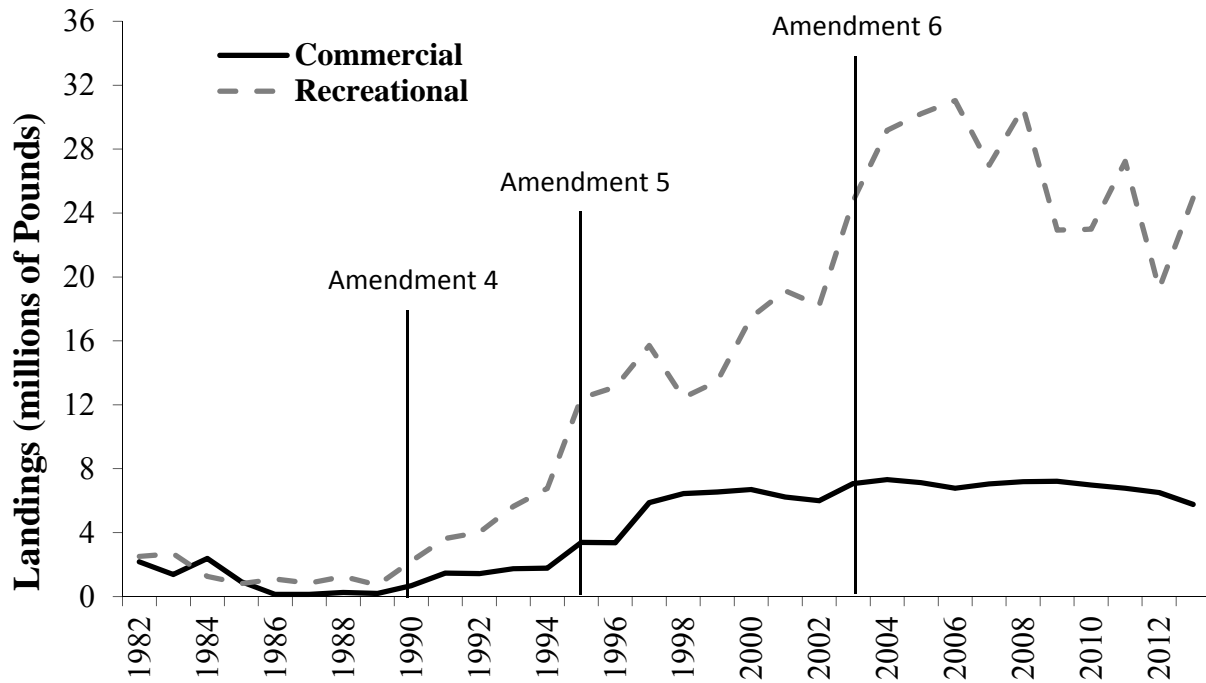


Figure 1. Annual migratory striped bass landings (in pounds) from coastal and Chesapeake Bay fisheries, 1982 – 2013.

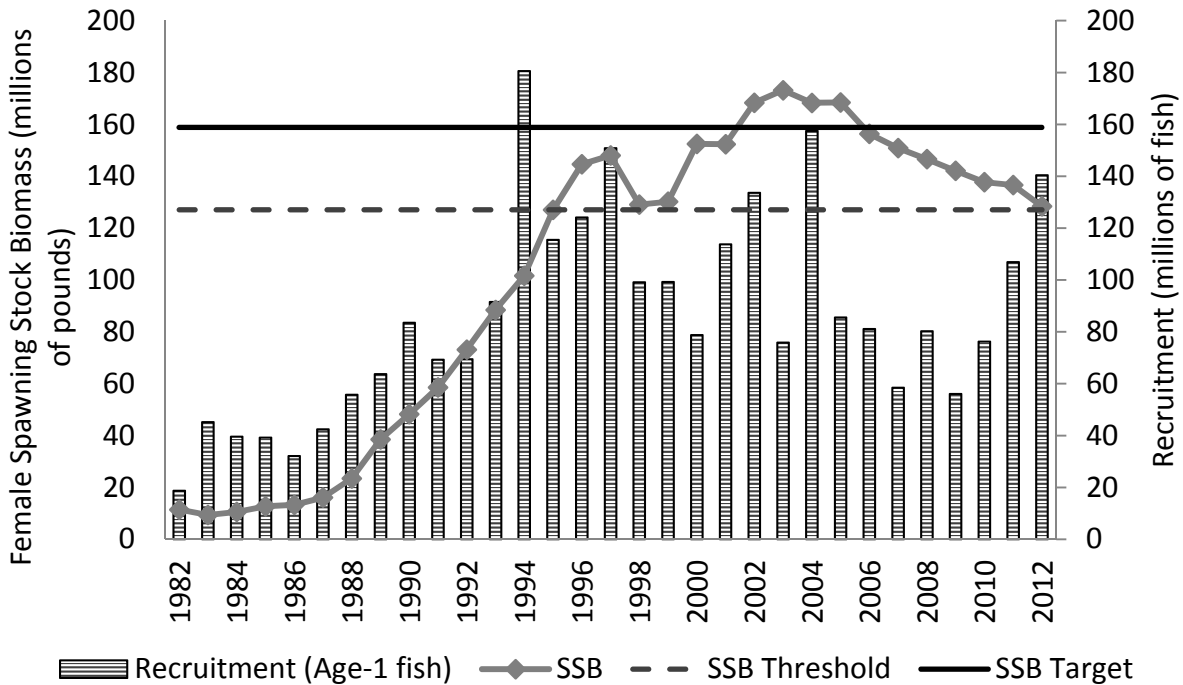
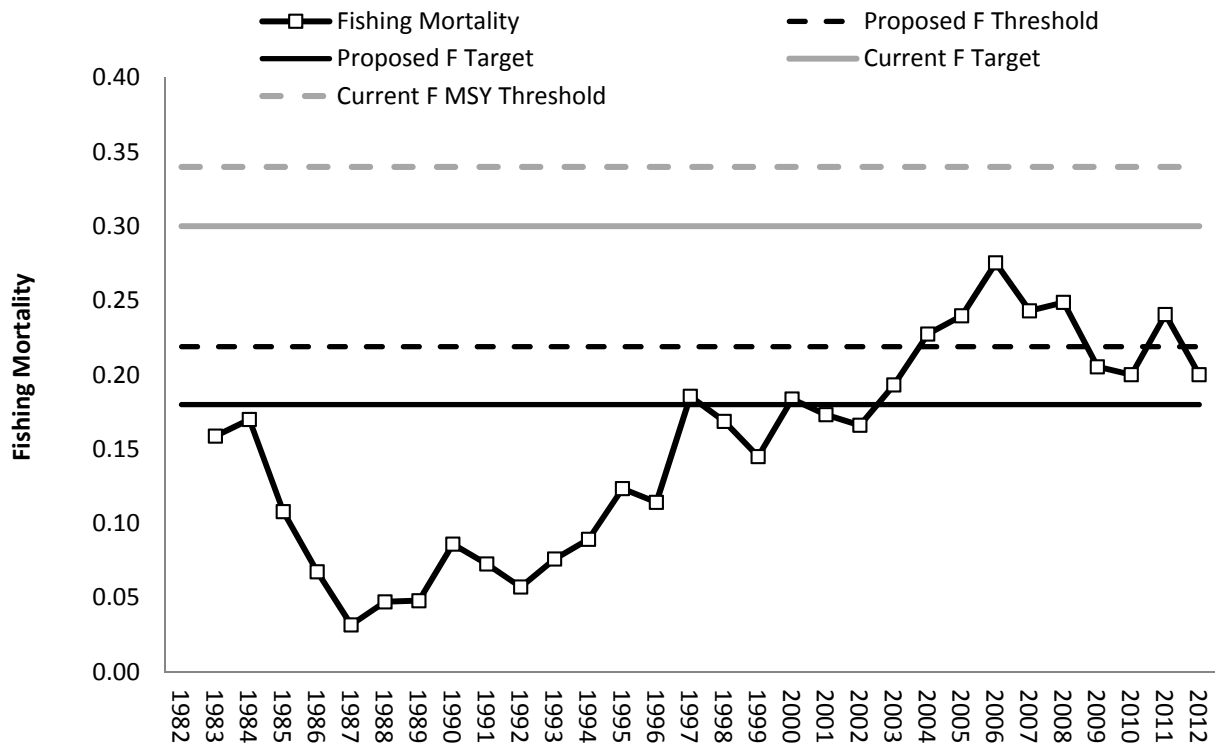


Figure 2. Atlantic striped bass female spawning stock biomass and recruitment (age-1) from 1982 to 2012.



\* The F estimate for 1982 was considered unrealistic and unreasonable high, and is not shown on this graph.

Figure 3. Atlantic striped bass fishing mortality rates relative to the proposed F threshold and F target and old F MSY threshold and old F MSY target from 1982 to 2012.



**Appendix 1**

## Summary of Atlantic Striped Bass Commercial Regulations in 2013

<b>STATE</b>	<b>SIZE LIMITS</b>	<b>SEASONAL QUOTA</b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>
ME	Commercial fishing prohibited		
NH	Commercial fishing prohibited		
MA	34" min.	1,159,750 lb. (minus any overage from previous year) Hook & line only	7.12 until quota reached; 5 fish/day on Sun; 30 fish/day Tues-Thurs
RI	Floating fish trap: 26" min.  General category (mostly rod & reel): 34" min.	Total: 239,963 lb. (minus any overage from previous year) Split 39:61 between trap and general category. Gill netting prohibited.	Trap: 1.1 until quota reached; if 80% quota harvested before 8.26, a 500 lb/trap/day limit is imposed; from 8.27–12.31, 10,000 lb. quota set-aside available. General Category: 6.1-8.31 or 75% quota; 9.13-12.31 or 100% quota; 5 fish/day Sun-Thu.
CT	Commercial fishing prohibited		
NY	24–36" Ocean only (Hudson River closed to commercial harvest)	828,293 lb. (minus any overage from previous year). Pound nets, gill nets (6-8" stretched mesh), hook & line.	7.1 – 12.15 Gill nets <6 or >8", 7 fish/trip; trawls 21 fish/trip. Gill nets prohibited in Great South, South Oyster, and Hempstead Bays.
NJ	Commercial fishing prohibited		
PA	Commercial fishing prohibited		
DE	28" minimum except 20" spring gillnet in DE Bay/River & Nanticoke River (5.5" max mesh & 0.28mm max twine)	193,447 lb. (minus any overage from previous year)	Gillnet: 2.15-5.31 (3.1-31 for Nanticoke) & 11.15-12.31; drift nets only 2.15-28 & 5.1-31; no fixed nets in DE River Hook and Line: 4.1–12.31 Except 4.1-5.31 closed spawning areas
MD	Bay and Rivers: 18–36"  Ocean: 24"	Bay and River: 1,963,873 lbs (part of Baywide quota) Gear specific quotas and landing limits  Ocean: 126,396 lb. (minus any overage from previous year)	Bay Pound Net: 6.1-11.30, Mon-Sat Bay Haul Seine: 6.7-11.30, Mon-Fri Bay Hook & Line: 6.7-11.30, Mon-Thu Bay Drift Gill Net: 1.1-2.28, 12.1-12.31, Mon-Fri Ocean Drift Gill Net & Trawl: 1.1-4.30, 11.1-12.31, Mon-Fri

(Continued – Summary of commercial regulations in 2013)

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	SEASONAL QUOTA	OPEN SEASON
PRFC	18” min all year 36” max 2.15–3.25	635,623 lbs (part of Baywide quota)	Hook & line: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.31 Pound Net & Other: 2.15-3.25, 6.1-12.15 Gill Net: 1.1-3.25, and 11.11-12.31
DC	Commercial fishing prohibited		
VA	Bay and Rivers: 18” min, 28” max & complimentary gill net mesh size limit 3.26–6.15 Ocean: 28” minimum	Bay and Rivers: 1,430,361 lbs in 2012 (part of Baywide quota)  Ocean: 184,853 lb. (minus any overage from previous year)	Bay and Rivers: 2.1-12.31  Ocean: 2.1-12.31
NC	Albemarle Sound: 18”  Ocean: 28”	Albemarle Sound: 275,000 lb Ocean: 480,480 lb. (minus any overage from previous year) split 160,160 lbs each to beach seine, gill net & trawl	Albemarle Sound: 1.1-4.30, 10.1-12.31; daily trip limit ranging from 5 to 15 fish; striped bass cannot exceed 50% by weight of total finfish harvest; season and daily trip limits set by proclamation. Ocean: gear requirements; open days and trip limits for beach seine, gill net, and trawl set via proclamation

## Summary of Atlantic Striped Bass Recreational Regulations in 2013

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	BAG LIMIT	OTHER	OPEN SEASON
ME	20 – 26” OR $\geq 40$ ”	1 fish	Hook & line only	All year, except spawning areas are closed 12.1 – 4.30 and catch and release only 5.1 – 6.30
NH	1 fish 28–40” & 1 fish >28”	2 fish	No netting; no gaffing; must be landed with head and tail intact; no culling	All year
MA	28” min	2 fish	Hook & line only	All year
RI	28” min	2 fish		All year
CT	28” min, except Connecticut River Bonus Program: 22-28”	2 fish, except CR Bonus: 1 fish	CR Bonus Quota: 4,025 fish	All year, except CR Bonus 5.4-6.30 (limited to I-95 bridge to MA border)
NY	Ocean Private: 1 fish 28-40” & 1 fish > 40” Ocean Charter: 28” min Hudson River: 18” min DE River: 28” min	Ocean: 2 fish Hudson R.: 1 fish DE River: 2 fish	Angling or spearing only	Ocean: 4.15 – 12.15 Hudson River: 3.16 – 11.30 Delaware River: All year
NJ	28” min	2 fish, plus 1 additional through Bonus Program	Bonus program quota: 321,750 lb. No netting. Non-offset circle hooks required 4.1-5.31 in DE River if using natural bait.	All year except 1.1-2.28 in intra-coastal waters plus 4.1-5.31 in lower DE River
PA	Non-tidal DE River: 28” min; Delaware Estuary: 28” min. except 20-26” from 4.1-5.31	2 fish		Year round
DE	28” min. except 20-26” from 7.1-8.31 in Del. River, Bay & tributaries	2 fish	Hook & line, spear (for divers) only. Circle hooks required in spawning season.	All year except 4.1-5.31 in spawning grounds (catch & release allowed)

(Continued – Summary of recreational regulations in 2013)

STATE	SIZE LIMITS	BAG LIMIT	OTHER	OPEN SEASON
MD	Susquehanna Flats (SF): 18-26"  Chesapeake Bay Trophy: 28" min Chesapeake Bay Regular: 18" min with 1 fish > 28" Ocean: 28" min	SF: 1 fish  Chesapeake Bay Trophy: 1 fish Chesapeake Bay Regular: 2 fish  Ocean: 2 fish	SF: non-off set circle hook if baited hooks & gap>0.5"  Chesapeake Bay Quota: 2,657,102 lbs (part of Baywide quota; includes Susquehanna Flats harvest, excludes trophy harvest)	SF: 3.1-5.31; catch & release only 3.1-5.3  Chesapeake Bay Trophy: 4.18-5.15 (most tribs closed) Chesapeake Bay Regular: 5.16-12.15 (most tribs closed until 6.1)  Ocean: All year
PRFC	Trophy: 28" Regular: 18" min with 1 fish > 28"	Trophy: 1 fish Regular: 2 fish	Quota: 520,055 lbs. (part of Baywide quota; excludes trophy harvest)	Trophy: 4.20 -5.15 Regular: 5.16-12.31
DC	18" min with 1 fish > 28"	2 fish	Hook & line only	5.16-12.31
VA	Bay/Coastal Trophy: 32" min (28" Potomac tribs) CB Spring: 18-28"; 1 fish >32" CB Fall: 18-28"; 1 fish >34" Potomac Tribs: 18-28"; 1 fish >28" Ocean: 28"	Bay/Coastal Trophy: 1 fish  CB Spring: 2 fish  CB Fall: 2 fish Potomac Tribs: 2 fish Ocean: 2 fish	Hook & line, rod & reel, hand line only  Chesapeake Bay Quota: 1,430,361lbs in 2012 (part of Baywide quota; excludes trophy harvest)	Bay Trophy: 5.1-6.15 (open 4.18 Potomac tribs) Coastal Trophy: 5.1-5.15 CB Spring: 5.16-6.15 (no fish >32" in spawning areas) CB Fall: 10.4-12.31 Potomac Tribs: 5.16-12.31 Ocean: 1.1-3.31, 5.16-12.31
NC	Roanoke River: 2 fish 18- 22" OR 1 fish 18-22" and 1 fish >27" Albemarle Sound: 18" min.  Ocean: 28" min	Roanoke River: 2 fish Albemarle Sound: 3 fish Ocean: 2 fish	Roanoke River quota: 137,500 lb.  Albemarle Sound quota: 137,500 lb.	Roanoke River: 3.1 – 4.30 (single barbless hook required 3.1-6.30 from Roanoke Rapids dam downstream to US 258 bridge) Albemarle Sound: Spring 1.1 – 4.30; Fall 10.1-12.31 Ocean: All year



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## **MEMORANDUM**

May 6, 2014

**To: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**  
**From: Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee**  
**RE: Reference Points for the Chesapeake Bay (Appendix 2)**

The Striped Bass Management Board tasked the Technical Committee (TC) with developing reference points for the Chesapeake Bay stock. The TC evaluated five different scenarios of reference points. However, after detailed discussions, the TC concluded:

1. The TC cannot develop Chesapeake Bay stock specific reference point that explicitly accounts for migratory movements at this time.
2. The TC considered a set of reference points based on SSB/R conservation equivalency, but this methodology does not adequately take into account coastal harvest or the skewed sex-ratio of the Chesapeake Bay harvest. In addition, there is no way to measure the current  $F$  of the Chesapeake Bay fishery that is consistent with the assumptions of this type of model.
3. The TC considered a set of reference points based on SCA coastwide model. We discussed that if those were adopted, they would be very conservative because they ignore the fact that resident striped bass population in Chesapeake Bay is dominated by male fish.
4. The TC considered a method of adjustment to the SCA based reference points but the TC was uncomfortable in accepting the proposed scale of adjustment without more detailed analysis.
5. The TC agreed that stock-specific reference points are the ultimate goal for management of this species, and work on developing a sex-specific model that incorporates stock structure should be continued.
6. In the meantime the TC recommends that the new coastwide reference points should be used for the Chesapeake Bay.
7. The new coastwide reference points already include the effects of the CB fleet's unique selectivity pattern on the coastwide SSB, and represent the best available scientific advice to manage total fishing mortality on the coastwide striped bass population at this time.

The coastwide target total  $F$  is designed to maintain the spawning stock biomass at its target level over the long term. The effects of the Bay's harvest of smaller fish on the total coastwide stock are already incorporated into the coastwide population reference points due to different selectivity patterns for the Bay and Coastal fleets. As a result, the reference points approved for management use in the 2013 benchmark stock assessment represent the best available scientific advice at this time to manage fishing mortality on the entire striped bass population.

Biologically, the coastal migratory population of striped bass is comprised primarily of three stocks: the Chesapeake Bay stock, the Delaware River stock, and the Hudson River stock. Based on tagging data the Albemarle-Roanoke stock contributes insignificantly to the coastal migratory stock, and thus harvest and indices of abundance from the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke River Management Areas are not included in the coastal assessment. Sexually mature adults from the coastal migratory population return to their natal rivers to spawn on an annual basis. Currently, we lack critical data on the sex- and age-specific rates of migration between the natal Bay and rivers and the coastal population. Thus, the stock assessment model treats the coastal population as a single stock. As a result, the TC cannot develop meaningful reference points specifically for the Chesapeake Bay stock at this time.

As an alternative, the TC worked to develop F reference points that would assess the impact of the Chesapeake Bay fleet on the total coastwide stock, since that can be measured through the SCA model using F estimates for the Chesapeake Bay fleet. Such estimates were developed, but it was noted that they would be very conservative due to the dominance of smaller males in the Chesapeake Bay resident population. It is recognized that the Chesapeake Bay fleet harvests primarily small males, but that is not explicitly modeled in the current SCA because it is not a sex-specific model. Therefore, given limited amount of time and constraints in the available data, the TC could not come to a consensus on whether or how to calculate a Chesapeake Bay fleet reference point at this time.

In the meantime, the effects of Chesapeake Bay's different selectivity pattern (i.e., harvest on smaller fish) are incorporated into the target and threshold total F values developed for the entire coastwide population of striped bass. By maintaining total F at the target level, the impact of the Chesapeake Bay fleet on the total coastwide population should remain sustainable.



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

July 30, 2014

**To: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**  
**From: Michael Waine, Striped Bass Plan Development Team Chair**  
**RE: Recommendations on Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment**

At its May 2014 meeting, the Board established a subcommittee of Board members to help guide the continued development of Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment by working with the Plan Development Team and Technical Committee. The Board Subcommittee was composed of the following members, Doug Grout (NH; Chair), Rick Bellavance (RI), Adam Nowalsky (NJ), John Clark (DE), Tom O'Connell (MD), Rob O'Reilly (VA), and Kelly Denit (NMFS). The Board Subcommittee met via conference calls between May and August and have formulated the following recommendations to the full Board for their consideration while considering Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment.

### Board Subcommittee Recommendations

- Removal of Option B14 because this quota option does not result in equal relative reductions by state.
- Removal of Option B15 because this quota option does not achieve a reduction from 2013 quota or harvest.
- Removal of Option C9 because this quota option does not result in equal relative reductions by state.
- Removal of Option C10 because this quota option does not achieve a reduction from 2013 quota or harvest.
- Removal of Option D6 because this quota option does not result in equal relative reductions by state.

These recommendations are also highlighted in the text of the Draft Addendum IV document.



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

July 28, 2014

**To: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board**  
**From: Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel**  
**RE: Comments on Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment**

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on July 28, 2014 via conference call. The main agenda item discussed was to review the context of Draft Addendum IV for public comment and provide feedback to the Board regarding the range of options that are being considered. Below is a summary of their conference call.

### *Attendees*

Arnold Leo (NY) commercial  
Kelly Place (VA) commercial  
John McMurray (NY) charter boat  
Chuck Casella (MA) charter boat  
Ed O'Brien (MD) charter boat  
Louis Bassano (NJ) recreational  
John Pedrick (PA) recreational  
Ed Cook (RI) recreational  
Peter Whelan (NH) recreational

David Sikorski (MD) recreational  
Bill Hall (VA) recreational  
Charlton Godwin (TC Chair)

### *Public*

Louis MacKeil (MA)

### *Staff*

Mike Waine, FMP Coordinator

### **Comments on Document Background**

-Several members shared various perspectives about the performance of the fishery in recent years. There were varying opinions depending on the geographical region represented by AP members. Overall, most individuals felt the description of the fishery was appropriate for the document.

-An AP member suggested including information on what the reference points were back when the coastwide stock was rebuilt. Estimates of F during the rebuilt timeframe are displayed in Figure 2 in the addendum.

-Some AP members were concerned about the shift in the management approach for the Chesapeake Bay and were confused about why the Bay will not be managing with stock specific reference points.

-An AP member suggested that a 50% probability of achieving F seems low and a larger range of options that achieve a higher probability of reducing F to the target should be considered for the public document.



## **Comments on Management Options**

-Some AP members suggested exploring both recreational and commercial options that exceed the necessary percent reduction for a given timeframe, while other members thought less conservative options should be considered as well.

-Some AP members suggested yearly review for the three year timeframe that spreads out the harvest reduction through time. As data become available the management program should be adjusted to ensure the timeframe is being met.

-Some AP members commented about the lack of equivalency between the recreational and commercial options for the coastal fishery. For example, options B14, C9 and D6 significantly reduce commercial quotas for some states by more than 50%. Generally states should not be punished for managing within their quotas. There was also a discussion about the fact that if the fishery remains similar to previous years, taking the reduction from Amendment 6 quotas will actually reduce the fishery.

-One AP member suggested including an option that achieves optimum sustainable yield in three years, noting the benefits of the industry that come from restoring larger table fare and trophy fish.