

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR WEAKFISH
(Cynoscion regalis)

2015 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

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I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) adopted its first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Weakfish in 1985. Amendment 1 to the FMP (1992) unsuccessfully aimed to improve the status of Weakfish. Amendment 2 (1995) resulted in some improvement to the stock, but several signs indicated that further improvement was necessary. Thus, Amendment 3 (1996) was implemented to increase the sustainability of the fishery. Addendum I to Amendment 3 was approved in 2000 in order to extend the management program until the next amendment was implemented.

Amendment 4, approved in 2002, strives to establish two goals. One is the utilization of interstate management so that Atlantic coastal weakfish recover to healthy levels that will maintain commercial and recreational harvest consistent with a self-sustaining spawning stock. The second goal is to provide for restoration and maintenance of essential habitat (ASMFC 2002). The management objectives are to:

- 1) Establish and maintain an overfishing definition which includes target and threshold fishing mortality rates and a threshold spawning stock biomass in order to prevent overfishing and to maintain a sustainable weakfish population;
- 2) Restore the weakfish age and size structure to that necessary for the restoration of the fishery;
- 3) Return weakfish to their previous geographic range;
- 4) Achieve compatible and equitable management measures among jurisdictions throughout the fishery management unit, including states' waters and the federal EEZ;
- 5) Promote cooperative interstate research, monitoring, and law enforcement necessary to support management of weakfish;
- 6) Promote identification and conservation of habitat essential for the long term stability in the weakfish population; and
- 7) Establish standards and procedures for both the implementation of Amendment 4 and for determination of states' compliance with provisions of the management plan.

Amendment 4 established target and threshold fishing mortality rates and a threshold spawning stock biomass level to determine overfishing and overfished stock status. The amendment requires states to implement recreational and commercial management measures to achieve annual fishing mortality targets. Some management measures are specified (e.g., minimum size limit, minimum mesh size, bycatch limit), while the Amendment provides the states flexibility in implementing other regulations (e.g., trip limits, area or season closures). States may request implementation of alternative management plans with conservationally-equivalent measures. States deemed to have insignificant landings were exempt from the recreational and commercial requirements, with the exception of the bycatch reduction device requirements.

The Commission adopted Addendum I to Amendment 4 (2005) to replace the biological sampling program in Section 3.0 of Amendment 4. In response to a significant decline in stock abundance and increasing total mortality since 1999, the Commission approved Addendum II to Amendment 4 (2007) to reduce the recreational creel limit and commercial bycatch limit, and

set landings levels that when met will trigger a re-evaluation of management measures. Addendum III to Amendment 4 (2007) altered the bycatch reduction device certification requirements in Section 4.2.8 of Amendment 4 for consistency with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Shrimp FMP. The Commission approved Addendum IV to Amendment 4 in 2009 to respond to the results of the 2009 benchmark stock assessment (additional information is provided in Section VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues).

Weakfish are managed under this plan as a single stock throughout their coastal range. All Atlantic coast states from Massachusetts through Florida and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission have a declared interest in weakfish, as do FWS and NMFS; Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia do not. See Table 1 for a summary of state-by-state regulations in 2015.

II. Status of the Stock

According to the last stock assessment, completed in 2016, the weakfish stock is depleted and overfishing is not occurring (ASMFC 2016). While overfishing has not occurred in recent years, harvest was reduced by an estimated 60% in Addendum IV to reduce additional mortality from fishing and poise the stock for a quicker recovery should natural mortality decline.

Between 1986 and 1993, spawning stock biomass (SSB) declined drastically from 48.5 million pounds (the time series maximum) to 16.0 million pounds (Figure 1). Overfishing was the main cause of this decline, with fishing mortality (F) accounting for about 90% of total mortality (fishing plus natural mortality) during the period (Figure 1). With the implementation of management measures in the early to mid-1990s, F declined to 0.60 in 1996 and biomass responded favorably by increasing to a peak of 38.1 million pounds in 1997 (Figure 1). Despite low and declining harvests since the early 2000s, SSB continued to decline, reaching a time-series low of 4.2 million pounds in 2009. However, the contribution of fishing mortality to total mortality was substantially reduced during this period; from 2001-2010, 60-75% of total mortality is attributed to fishing mortality. After the 2009 stock assessment (48th SAW), harvest quotas were reduced, further reducing the contribution of fishing mortality to less than 25% of total mortality from 2011-2014. SSB increased slightly at the end of the assessment time series, but further monitoring is necessary to determine whether this increase is sustainable. Conversely, natural mortality has risen substantially since the mid-1990s (Figure 1). Annual natural mortality estimates did not exceed 0.17 from 1982-1997 but had an average of 0.93 from 2007-2014. Factors such as predation, competition, and changes in the environment are believed to be having a stronger influence on recent weakfish stock dynamics than fishing mortality.

III. Status of the Fishery

At 268,196 pounds in 2015, the total coastwide landings of weakfish have declined in every year since 2012 (539,560 lbs). Total landings are below the most recent ten-year (2006-2015) average of 755,848 pounds. The commercial fishery (144,250 lbs) accounted for 54% of the total 2015 landings, and the recreational fishery (123,946 lbs) for 46% (Table 2).

Commercial Fishery

Commercial data are cooperatively collected and compiled by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and state fishery agencies from state mandated trip-tickets, landing weigh-out reports from seafood dealers, federal logbooks, shipboard and portside interviews, and biological sampling of catches. Landings from the NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division are used within this report unless a state reports alternative values in its compliance report to the Commission, in which case those values are used preferentially (see notes for Table 3).

Between 1982 and 2015, coastwide commercial weakfish landings have ranged from the high of 21.1 million pounds in 1986 to the low of 132,906 pounds in 2011 (Table 3). Since 1988, the overall trend is declining except between 1990-1998 when landings hovered between 6.1 and 9.1 million pounds (Figure 2). Landings in 2015 were the second-lowest on record at 144,250 pounds.

North Carolina (56%) and New York (17%) landed the largest shares of the 2015 coastwide commercial weakfish landings. Except New Jersey, all states' commercial landings in 2015 were below those reported in 2014 (Table 3).

The dominant commercial gears were gill nets (about 55% of commercial landings). There has been a shift in the dominant source of landings from trawls in the 1950s-1980s to gill nets in the 1990s-present. The majority of commercial landings tend to occur in the fall and winter months, presumably as the fish congregate to migrate to over-wintering grounds in the South Atlantic (Hogarth et al. 1995).

Recreational Fishery

Recreational catch statistics are collected by the NMFS. Effort data are collected through telephone interviews. Catch expansions are based on angler interviews and biological sampling conducted by trained interviewers stationed at fishing access sites. All recreational data in this report are from the NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division queried from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP; 2017), except as noted in Section VI of this report for Florida's estimates.

Since 1982, coastwide recreational landings have ranged from the high of 11.4 million pounds in 1983 to the low of 27,081 pounds in 2011 (Table 4). Landings averaged 7.8 million pounds from 1982-1988, before falling to between one and four million pounds from 1990-2002. In 2003, recreational landings dropped below one million pounds (Figure 2). Landings have averaged 122 thousand pounds from 2010-2014, and are estimated at 123,946 pounds (108,162 fish) in 2015 (Tables 4 and 5). The number of fish released alive by anglers remained above 1 million fish from 1992 to 2008, peaked at over 5 million in 1996, and decreased to 351,993 fish in 2013 (Table 6, Figure 3). In 2015, 1.1 million fish were released. In 2010, all states implemented a one fish bag limit, which impacted landings and discards from that point on.

New Jersey anglers consistently harvested the most weakfish by pounds along the coast until 2009. In the 1980s and 1990s, anglers in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia often took the next

largest shares of the recreational total amount. In the 2000s, New Jersey anglers led in the harvest, whereas anglers in Virginia and North Carolina tended to take the second and third largest amounts (Tables 4 and 5). However, from 2009-2011, North Carolina anglers landed the largest share while South Carolina and Virginia had the next largest shares of the recreational harvest. Between 2012 and 2013, New Jersey again recreationally harvested the most weakfish, in pounds; however, in 2014 and 2015 North Carolina was the largest recreational harvester. North Carolina harvested 50,967 pounds (41.1% of recreational harvest) of weakfish in 2015.

The size of fish sampled to provide the MRIP weight estimates has historically varied in a latitudinal fashion, with larger fish caught in the north and smaller fish caught in the south. The mean weight per fish sampled throughout the recreational time series (1982-2015) is less than 1.5 pounds for all states from Florida through Maryland and over 1.9 pounds for all states north of Maryland. In 2015, the mean weights for fish caught in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (1.39, 1.28, 1.49 lbs, respectively) were greater than each state's time series mean (0.95, 0.95, and 1.21 lbs, respectively), and the mean weights for fish caught in Maryland and New Jersey (0.55 and 0.73 lbs, respectively) were less than each state's time series mean (1.43 and 1.93 lbs, respectively).

The recreational fishery catches weakfish using live or cut bait, jigging, trolling, and chumming. The majority of recreationally harvested weakfish are caught in state waters (98% in 2015 by pounds). In 2015, nearly all recreationally harvested fish were caught on private or rental boats (74%) or from shore (15%).

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

The 2016 assessment was completed by the ASMFC Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) (ASMFC 2016) and peer reviewed by the ASMFC Weakfish Stock Assessment Review Panel (ASMFC 2016). The assessment includes fishery data and survey indices through 2014.

As a result of this assessment, the Weakfish TC recommends new Z and SSB reference points along with a two-stage control rule for evaluating weakfish stock status and management response.

Under conditions of time-varying natural mortality, there is no long-term stable equilibrium population size, so an SSB target is not informative for management. The Weakfish TC recommends an SSB threshold of $SSB_{30\%} = 6,880$ MT that is equivalent to 30% of the projected SSB under average natural mortality and no fishing. When SSB is below that threshold, the stock is considered depleted.

SSB in 2014 was 2,548 MT, below the SSB threshold, indicating the stock is depleted (Table 9.2.1, Figure 9.2.1). SSB has been below the threshold for the last 13 years.

The TC recommends the use of total mortality benchmarks to prevent an increase in fishing pressure when F is low but M is high. When Z is below the Z target, F reference points can be used to assess overfishing status.

Z in 2014 was 1.11, above the Z target, but below the Z threshold, indicating total mortality is still high but within acceptable limits (Table 9.2.1, Figure 9.2.2). Z was above the threshold from 2002-2013.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Fishery-Independent Data

Young-of-year indices of relative abundance are provided by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida provide age- 0+ or 1+ indices of relative abundance. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center Groundfish Trawl Survey also produces an age-structured index for the Mid-Atlantic coast, while the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) survey produces another index for the South Atlantic Coast. The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) began spring and fall surveys between Martha's Vineyard and Cape Hatteras in the fall of 2007, and provided an Age 1+ index which is included in the 2016 assessment. Stomach content analysis was also done to assess food habit changes and investigate the possible decrease in preferred food availability as a driver of natural mortality, however results were inconclusive. The Chesapeake Bay Multispecies Monitoring and Assessment Program (ChesMMAP), which began in 2002, collects data on relative abundance, length, weight, age, sex, and trophic interactions in the Bay. See Table 7 for the indices provided in the 2016 compliance reports.

Fishery-Dependent Data

The coastal states and the NMFS collect data on commercial and recreational landings. Addendum I to Amendment 4 requires the collection of otoliths and lengths to characterize the catch; the number of samples required is based on the magnitude of each state's fisheries. Each spring, the states are required to submit biological sampling plans, and each fall, through the compliance reports, the states are required to provide the actual sampling levels completed. See Section VII for more information.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues

Fishery Management Plan

Addendum IV to Amendment 4 was approved in November 2009, and was implemented in May 2010. In response to the 2009 stock assessment results, the addendum implements more appropriate biological reference points in response to recent stock dynamics and reduces harvest while attempting to minimize unnecessary bycatch waste. Addendum IV requires all states in the management unit (including those that are *de minimis*) to implement a recreational creel limit no greater than 1 fish, commercial trip and bycatch limits no greater than 100 pounds, and a finfish trawl fishery allowance for up to 100 undersized fish. The addendum adopted percentage based biological reference points with an overfished/depleted threshold of 20% SSB and a target of 30% SSB. Results of the 2016 assessment support continued use of these reference points. The biological sampling requirements under

Addendum I are unchanged, and all regulations previously enacted to protect weakfish and reduce bycatch are to remain effective.

No additional amendments or addenda are under development.

Florida Management Area and Landings Data

In November 2009, the Management Board approved a proposal from Florida to reduce the state's weakfish management area to a small area in northeast Florida where pure weakfish are known to occur based on genetics data. The revision is intended to address the misidentification of weakfish, sand seatrout, silver seatrout, and their hybrids, and the consequential law enforcement issue. Inside the newly established weakfish management area (St. Mary's River only), any fish that resembles weakfish will be considered weakfish for enforcement purposes, both for commercial and recreational limits. Outside the weakfish management area, all fish that resemble weakfish will be considered sand seatrout.

As a result of the approved proposal, the commercial and recreational landings data provided in Florida's 2016 compliance report represent the best estimate of pure weakfish landings in the state. Commercial landings data from Florida's trip ticket program and recreational landings from the NMFS's Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey include only weakfish landed in Nassau and Duval counties, as revised on the basis of the genome proportions within the *Cynoscion*-complex found in the counties (48% weakfish in Nassau County and 17% in Duval County). The landings, tables, and figures in this report use the landings as reported by Florida.

De Minimis Status

Amendment 4 permits states to request *de minimis* status if, for the last two years, their combined average commercial and recreational landings (by weight) constitute less than 1% of the coastwide commercial and recreational landings for the same two year period. The *de minimis* threshold for the 2015 fishing year, calculated with 2014 and 2015 harvest data, is 2,714 pounds.

Four states requested *de minimis* status in their 2016 compliance reports: Florida, Georgia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. All of these states qualify for *de minimis* status (Florida 0.40%, Georgia 0.75%, Connecticut 0.93%, and Massachusetts 0.26%).

Addendum II Management Triggers

In 2010, the recreational and commercial management measures in Addendum IV replaced those in Addendum II. However, the Plan Review Team will continue to include an evaluation of the two management triggers as they provide perspective on the magnitude of fishery landings (but hitting a trigger will not require Board reconsideration of the management measures).

Addendum II established two management triggers that would require the Board to consider modifying management measures if reached. First, commercial management measures are to be re-evaluated if coastwide commercial landings exceed 80% of the mean commercial landings from 2000-2004, or 2.99 million pounds. Second, commercial and recreational management

measures are to be re-evaluated if any single state's landings exceed its five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

The 2015 coastwide commercial landings are 144,250 pounds, thus the first trigger has not been exceeded. The second trigger was met in South Carolina because their total estimated landings in 2015 (40,830 lbs) were 356% greater than their average total landings from 2010-2014 (8,958 lbs), however, this increase is due to extremely low landings in previous years and is not cause for concern (Table 8). Furthermore, these landings were documented in the last two waves of 2015, immediately after a 1,000-year flood event in early October. Estimates of catches during this period were likely anomalous as the effects of the storm were felt for weeks after the event as rivers continued to crest and estuaries were inundated with stormwater.

VII. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements for 2015

Mandatory compliance elements for 2015 were provided by Amendment 4 and its four addenda.

Regulatory Requirements

The management program includes regulatory requirements for non *de minimis* states as follows:

- Recreational management measures including minimum size limits and a maximum creel limit of one fish (see Addenda II and IV to Amendment 4)
- Commercial management measures including minimum size limits, minimum mesh size limits, landings limits, trip limits, bycatch limits, closed seasons and areas, and bycatch reduction device requirements (see Section 4.2 of Amendment 4, and Addendum IV)

The PRT finds all states to have implemented the plan's compliance requirements.

See Table 1 for a summary of state commercial and recreational regulations in 2015.

Monitoring Requirements

Addendum I implemented monitoring requirements for non *de minimis* states as follows:

- Maintenance of at least the 2005 level of recreational sampling of individual lengths through the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey;
- Collection of six individual fish lengths for each metric ton of weakfish landed commercially;
- Collection of three individual fish ages for each metric ton of total weakfish landed, with a maximum of 1000 ages annually per state [Samples may come from commercial and/or recreational fishery as long as they come from the same general area (inshore versus offshore) that those fisheries are prosecuted in.].

Table 9 provides the otolith and length collection requirements for 2015. These are based on the best available 2014 landings data provided to the Commission by the NMFS and the states. Table 9 also provides the number of otoliths and lengths collected by the states in 2015. All states except Delaware and South Carolina met the biological sampling requirements in 2015, as reported in state compliance reports. However, if fishery independent collections by

Delaware's Trawl Survey Program and SEAMAP attributed to the coasts of Delaware and South Carolina, respectively, are included in calculating the number of samples collected, both of these states' biological sampling requirements are fulfilled.

VIII. Recommendations of the Plan Review Team

Management Recommendations

- That the Board consider the *de minimis* requests from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, and Florida.
- That the Board consider for management the use of biological reference points from the 2016 stock assessment.
- That the Board consider updating management triggers established in Addendum II to Amendment 4.
- That the Board clarify the use of fishery-independent samples in fulfilling biological sampling requirements as set forth in Addendum I to Amendment 4.

Research Recommendations

Fishery-Dependent Priorities

High

- Increase observer coverage to identify the magnitude of discards for all commercial gear types from both directed and non-directed fisheries.¹

Moderate

- Continue studies on temperature, size, and depth specific recreational hook and release mortality rates, particularly catches from warm, deep waters. Investigate methods to increase survival of released fish.
- Continue studies on mesh size selectivity, particularly trawl fisheries.²
- Improve methods to estimate commercial bycatch. Refine estimates of discard mortality based on factors such as distance from shore and other geographical differences for all sizes including below minimum size.

Low

- Determine the onshore versus offshore components of the weakfish fishery.
- Collect catch and effort data including size and age composition of the catch, determine stock mortality throughout the range, and define gear characteristics. In particular, increase length frequency sampling in fisheries from Maryland and further north.
- Develop latitudinal, seasonal, and gear-specific age-length keys coast wide. Increase sample sizes for gear specific keys.

¹ Some Mid-Atlantic trawl fleet observer coverage has been implemented under ACCSP funding.

² Gillnet selectivity has been investigated by Swihart et al (2000). Some gear selectivity information in Amendment 3 to the ASMFC Weakfish FMP. Information can also be obtained from the North Carolina Pamlico Sound Independent Gill Net Survey.

Modeling / Quantitative Priorities

High

- Evaluate predation of weakfish with a more advanced multispecies model (e.g., the ASMFC MSVPA or Ecopath with Ecosim).
- Develop a bioenergetics model that encompasses a broader range of ages than Hartman and Brandt (1995) and use it to evaluate diet and growth data.
- Analyze the spawner-recruit relationship and examine the effects of the relationship between adult stock size and environmental factors on year class strength.

Life History, Biological, and Habitat Priorities

High

- Develop a coastwide tagging program to identify stocks and determine migration, stock mixing, and characteristics of stocks in over wintering grounds. Determine the relationship between migratory aspects and the observed trend in weight at age.³
- Monitor weakfish diets over a broad regional and spatial scale.
- Continue to investigate the geographical extent of weakfish hybridization.

Moderate

- Identify and delineate weakfish spawning habitat locations and environmental preferences to quantify spawning habitat.
- Compile data on larval and juvenile distribution from existing databases to obtain indications of spawning and nursery habitat location and extent.
- Examine geographical and temporal differences in growth rate (length and weight at age).
- Determine the impact of power plants and other water intakes on larval, post larval, and juvenile weakfish mortality in spawning and nursery areas. Calculate the resulting impact on adult stock size.⁴
- Monitor predation on weakfish from bird, fish, and marine mammal species.

Management, Law Enforcement, and Socioeconomic Priorities

Moderate

- Assemble socioeconomic data as it becomes available from ACCSP.

Low

- Define restrictions necessary for implementation of projects in spawning and over wintering areas and develop policies on limiting development projects seasonally or spatially.

³ A university led weakfish tagging study has been ongoing in North Carolina and Delaware since 2014. The objective of the study is to evaluate movement and stock mixing of weakfish along the U.S. east coast and to estimate seasonal and annual rates of fishing and natural mortality. The study is slated to be completed in late 2017 with results available to the weakfish TC in early 2018.

⁴ Data are available for power plants in the Delaware Bay area and North Carolina. Also see Heimbuch et al. 2007. Assessing coastwide effects of power plant entrainment and impingement on fish populations: Atlantic menhaden example. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. 27: 569-577.

IX. References

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X. Tables

Table 1. Summary of state regulations for weakfish in 2015.

| State | Commercial | Recreational | Implementation Date |
|-------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| MA | 16", open 1/1-12/31, 100 lb possession limit. | 16", 1 fish | June 2010 |
| RI | 16"; open 6/1-6/30 & 8/7-11/8, 100 lb possession limit. Other times of year: 100 pound bycatch limit with at least an equal poundage of other species as weakfish. Trawl codend mesh size ≥ 4.5 " diamond or 4.0" square. | 16", 1 fish | April 28, 2010 |
| CT | 16"; open 1/1-12/31, 100 lb possession limit. | 16", 1 fish | April 25, 2010 |
| NY | 16" (12" dressed & 10" filleted); Hook and line open 4/1-6/24 & 8/28-11/15; 0 lb bycatch limit. All other gears open 4/1-6/24 and 8/28-11/15; 100 lb bycatch limit. | 16" (12" dressed, 10" fillet), 1 fish | By May 1, 2010 |
| NJ | Gill net: 13"; open 1/1-5/20 & 9/3-10/19 & 10/27-12/31, 100 lb possession limit; mesh ≥ 3.25 " stretched except 2.75 - 3.25" allowed within 2nm for permitted fishermen doing monthly reporting. Otter trawl: 13"; open 1/1-7/31 & 10/13-12/31, 100 lb possession limit; mesh ≥ 3.75 " diamond or 3.375 square. Pound net: 13"; open 1/1-6/6 & 7/1-12/31, 100 lb possession limit. 100 lb bycatch limit & 50% rule. Hook & line: 13", 1 fish, open 1/1-12/31. | 13", 1 fish | March 25, 2010 |
| DE | Gill net: 12"; only nets with stretch mesh ≥ 3.125 " allowed in water 4/1-6/30, none permitted weekends and legal holidays 5/10-9/30, 100 lb possession limit. Drift gill net: open 1/1-12/31 except 34 specified days of gear out of water in May and June. Anchor gill net: open 1/1-5/9 and 10/1-12/31, otherwise gear out of water. Hook & line: 13"; 100 lb possession limit 4 days/week during 5/1-10/31, 1 fish creel limit all other times. | 13", 1 fish | April 11, 2010 |
| MD | 12". Ocean all gears: 100 lb bycatch limit & 50% rule. Chesapeake Bay hook & line: open 8/1-9/30, 50 lb possession limit, 0 lb bycatch. Chesapeake Bay all other gears: 50 lb bycatch limit & 50% rule. Gillnet: mesh ≥ 3.0 " stretched. Trawl: mesh ≥ 3.375 " square or 3.75" diamond. | 13", 1 fish | June 28, 2010 |
| PRFC | 12"; open 7/28-12/31, 50 lb possession limit; 50 lb bycatch limit & 50% rule for certified pound nets with approved cull panels, and 0 lb bycatch for all other gears. Pound net: limited entry. | 12", 1 fish | January 1, 2010 |

Table 1 (conyinued). Summary of state regulations for weakfish in 2015.

| | | | |
|----|--|-------------|-----------------|
| VA | Gill net: 12"; open 3/16-5/13 & 10/21-12/30, 100 lb possession limit. Pound net: no minimum size; limited entry; open 4/1-4/30 & 5/23-9/12 unless exempted by license forfeit, 100 lb possession limit. Haul seine: no minimum size; open 4/16-6/10 & 8/21-9/24, 100 lb possession limit. Out of state trawl: 12" except 100 undersized fish allowed; open 4/1-9/25, 100 lb possession limit; codend mesh \geq 3.0". Hook & line: 12"; open 1/1-12/31, 100 lb possession limit. 100 lb bycatch limit (per vessel), 50% rule for all gears during closed seasons. | 12", 1 fish | May 1, 2010 |
| NC | 12", except 10" for long haul seines & pound nets in internal waters 4/1-11/15; open 1/1-12/31, 100 lbs trip limit. Gill net: mesh \geq 2.875" stretch. Gill nets and flynets that do not meet mesh requirements can only take weakfish as bycatch provided the weight of weakfish doesn't exceed 50% of catch up to 100lbs, 100lb limit in shrimp or crab trawl. | 12", 1 fish | August 20, 2010 |
| SC | 12", 1 fish. BRDs in shrimp trawls. | 12", 1 fish | July 1, 2010 |
| GA | 13", 1 fish. BRDs in shrimp trawls. | 13", 1 fish | June 3, 2010 |
| FL | 12", 100 lb possession limit. BRDs in shrimp trawls. | 12", 1 fish | July 27, 2010 |

Table 2. Comparison of commercial and recreational Atlantic coast weakfish landings from 1982 to 2015 (see Tables 3 and 4 for source information and state-specific landings).

| Year | Recreational Landings (lbs) | Commercial Landings (lbs) | Total Landings (lbs) | % Comm |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| 1982 | 8,285,323 | 19,493,321 | 27,778,644 | 70% |
| 1983 | 11,391,635 | 17,485,501 | 28,877,136 | 61% |
| 1984 | 6,655,261 | 19,652,279 | 26,307,540 | 75% |
| 1985 | 5,467,698 | 16,833,896 | 22,301,594 | 75% |
| 1986 | 10,043,641 | 21,097,068 | 31,140,709 | 68% |
| 1987 | 6,705,462 | 16,947,925 | 23,653,387 | 72% |
| 1988 | 6,244,994 | 20,431,283 | 26,676,277 | 77% |
| 1989 | 2,069,062 | 14,018,067 | 16,087,129 | 87% |
| 1990 | 1,293,187 | 9,087,481 | 10,380,668 | 88% |
| 1991 | 2,051,533 | 8,381,774 | 10,433,307 | 80% |
| 1992 | 1,349,200 | 7,332,282 | 8,681,482 | 84% |
| 1993 | 995,410 | 6,689,118 | 7,684,528 | 87% |
| 1994 | 1,650,411 | 6,120,441 | 7,770,852 | 79% |
| 1995 | 1,813,279 | 7,060,567 | 8,873,846 | 80% |
| 1996 | 2,908,627 | 7,216,860 | 10,125,487 | 71% |
| 1997 | 3,628,760 | 7,237,666 | 10,866,426 | 67% |
| 1998 | 4,026,244 | 8,400,173 | 12,426,417 | 68% |
| 1999 | 3,047,216 | 6,863,765 | 9,910,981 | 69% |
| 2000 | 4,046,525 | 5,345,618 | 9,392,143 | 57% |
| 2001 | 2,684,146 | 5,007,329 | 7,691,475 | 65% |
| 2002 | 2,135,034 | 4,770,229 | 6,905,263 | 69% |
| 2003 | 843,357 | 1,983,239 | 2,826,596 | 70% |
| 2004 | 891,399 | 1,540,456 | 2,431,855 | 63% |
| 2005 | 1,490,205 | 1,250,239 | 2,740,444 | 46% |
| 2006 | 848,282 | 1,104,031 | 1,952,313 | 57% |
| 2007 | 562,613 | 897,531 | 1,460,144 | 61% |
| 2008 | 665,943 | 470,630 | 1,136,573 | 41% |
| 2009 | 171,675 | 364,553 | 536,228 | 68% |
| 2010 | 71,991 | 199,780 | 271,771 | 74% |
| 2011 | 27,436 | 133,085 | 160,521 | 83% |
| 2012 | 265,712 | 273,606 | 539,318 | 51% |
| 2013 | 164,240 | 353,665 | 518,386 | 68% |
| 2014 | 78,058 | 196,489 | 274,547 | 72% |
| 2015 | 123,946 | 144,250 | 268,196 | 54% |

Table 3. Commercial landings (pounds) of weakfish by state, 1982-2015 (Source: NMFS, except as noted below). Starred values are confidential.

| Year | FL | GA | SC | NC | VA | PRFC | MD | DE | NJ | NY | CT | RI | MA | Total |
|------|---------|-------|-----|------------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| 1982 | 176,203 | 596 | 443 | 12,052,232 | 1,856,920 | 307,230 | 249,297 | 1,294,500 | 2,073,500 | 1,257,100 | 25,600 | 176,800 | 22,900 | 19,493,321 |
| 1983 | 117,720 | 2,749 | | 10,233,734 | 2,483,777 | 119,394 | 390,227 | 901,800 | 2,172,700 | 850,000 | 42,800 | 163,700 | 6,900 | 17,485,501 |
| 1984 | 923 | 862 | | 12,990,726 | 2,022,123 | 90,166 | 325,279 | 782,400 | 2,751,600 | 484,500 | 31,300 | 167,600 | 4,800 | 19,652,279 |
| 1985 | 7,747 | 82 | | 9,821,188 | 2,014,376 | 72,666 | 316,320 | 990,817 | 3,030,100 | 386,200 | 28,200 | 163,100 | 3,100 | 16,833,896 |
| 1986 | 9,162 | 75 | | 14,309,372 | 1,886,254 | 116,197 | 337,064 | 723,444 | 3,208,600 | 359,900 | 13,700 | 127,600 | 5,700 | 21,097,068 |
| 1987 | 11,719 | 189 | | 11,508,389 | 1,722,441 | 265,942 | 328,510 | 577,735 | 2,094,100 | 329,100 | 29,500 | 78,600 | 1,700 | 16,947,925 |
| 1988 | 13,283 | | | 15,091,878 | 1,383,218 | 96,765 | 832,636 | 530,603 | 2,332,800 | 124,500 | 2,400 | 19,400 | 3,800 | 20,431,283 |
| 1989 | 21,376 | | 113 | 10,115,747 | 1,001,324 | 28,653 | 731,313 | 543,741 | 1,458,500 | 103,500 | 2,300 | 9,600 | 1,900 | 14,018,067 |
| 1990 | 17,433 | 33 | | 5,802,159 | 1,192,321 | 18,510 | 416,130 | 625,006 | 968,318 | 19,924 | 1,281 | 24,646 | 1,720 | 9,087,481 |
| 1991 | 21,344 | | | 5,308,574 | 1,047,106 | 13,798 | 153,632 | 503,289 | 1,174,181 | 111,629 | 21,300 | 25,009 | 1,912 | 8,381,774 |
| 1992 | 24,655 | | | 4,862,551 | 532,482 | 19,961 | 384,999 | 362,042 | 940,695 | 168,087 | 3,500 | 30,277 | 3,033 | 7,332,282 |
| 1993 | 19,580 | | | 4,309,249 | 1,049,946 | 37,828 | 141,926 | 195,216 | 834,446 | 88,379 | 1,477 | 9,991 | 1,080 | 6,689,118 |
| 1994 | 27,835 | | | 3,489,929 | 1,264,263 | 28,958 | 223,288 | 262,263 | 695,280 | 99,470 | 11,000 | 18,155 | | 6,120,441 |
| 1995 | 5,609 | | | 4,113,260 | 1,448,372 | 38,138 | 64,829 | 291,010 | 867,262 | 172,431 | 6,431 | 52,690 | 535 | 7,060,567 |
| 1996 | 387 | | | 3,977,633 | 1,487,069 | 99,493 | 97,068 | 317,317 | 822,041 | 365,307 | 6,937 | 43,522 | 86 | 7,216,860 |
| 1997 | 875 | | | 3,561,060 | 1,521,517 | 35,239 | 144,659 | 558,910 | 1,036,470 | 336,752 | 10,958 | 31,171 | 55 | 7,237,666 |
| 1998 | 952 | | | 3,354,008 | 1,796,487 | 81,744 | 221,048 | 552,947 | 1,804,618 | 496,403 | 14,482 | 77,074 | 410 | 8,400,173 |
| 1999 | 779 | | | 2,617,580 | 1,610,484 | 68,749 | 192,750 | 441,176 | 1,291,319 | 489,935 | 22,172 | 126,271 | 2,550 | 6,863,765 |
| 2000 | 448 | | | 1,869,042 | 1,311,298 | 68,574 | 145,918 | 328,269 | 1,071,428 | 352,832 | 7,920 | 189,362 | 527 | 5,345,618 |
| 2001 | 1,201 | | | 1,960,324 | 1,124,707 | 44,219 | 153,865 | 190,093 | 837,550 | 578,797 | 6,774 | 109,568 | 231 | 5,007,329 |
| 2002 | 394 | | | 1,828,150 | 1,129,158 | 57,818 | 79,734 | 164,064 | 863,088 | 513,977 | 10,223 | 122,781 | 842 | 4,770,229 |
| 2003 | 288 | | | 848,822 | 454,841 | 5,273 | 31,215 | 91,195 | 340,269 | 144,416 | 3,059 | 63,337 | 524 | 1,983,239 |
| 2004 | 192 | | | 685,463 | 325,832 | 1,986 | 50,519 | 48,905 | 197,108 | 178,414 | 6,206 | 38,284 | 68 | 1,532,977 |
| 2005 | 553 | | | 421,779 | 361,874 | 1,004 | 30,983 | 70,788 | 196,710 | 109,861 | 6,118 | 41,587 | | 1,241,257 |
| 2006 | 337 | | | 363,078 | 261,619 | 689 | 32,417 | 34,429 | 206,659 | 152,867 | 7,012 | 45,133 | | 1,104,240 |
| 2007 | 888 | | | 175,579 | 406,392 | 20 | 18,060 | 24,750 | 164,506 | 86,656 | 1,910 | 20,800 | | 899,561 |
| 2008 | 996 | | | 170,469 | 171,153 | 74 | 5,815 | 11,185 | 56,884 | 44,275 | 1,012 | 9,702 | | 471,565 |
| 2009 | 453 | | | 156,145 | 61,089 | 17 | 4,888 | 2,976 | 30,047 | 102,861 | 495 | 6,286 | | 365,257 |
| 2010 | 73 | | | 106,319 | 57,326 | 80 | 2,148 | 2,339 | 12,053 | 13,105 | 899 | 5,380 | 58 | 199,780 |
| 2011 | 608 | * | * | 65,897 | 26,014 | * | 223 | 1,100 | 13,324 | 17,143 | 2,105 | 5,766 | 636 | 132,906 |
| 2012 | 1,999 | * | * | 91,382 | 45,790 | * | 1,356 | 29,367 | 19,291 | 61,206 | 4,723 | 17,908 | 616 | 273,736 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|---|---|---------|--------|----|-------|-------|--------|---------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| 2013 | 1,065 | * | * | 120,198 | 55,524 | * | 3,159 | 9,357 | 14,913 | 108,693 | 5,960 | 31,826 | 3,400 | 354,157 |
| 2014 | 557 | * | * | 105,115 | 23,242 | 10 | 2,127 | 4,310 | * | 32,717 | 3,343 | 15,493 | 918 | 196,489 |
| 2015 | 741 | * | | 80,235 | 17,882 | 3 | 1,318 | 1,477 | 9,655 | 24,424 | 1,719 | 6,323 | 473 | 144,250 |

Notes: FL: state-reported landings 1984-present (NMFS-reported landings limited to Nassau and Duval Counties and adjusted on the basis of the genome proportions of weakfish within the Cynoscion-complex in those counties' waters). NC: state-reported landings 1994-present. VA: NMFS-reported landings minus the PRFC-reported harvest landed in VA 1982-1992; state reported landings 1993-present (exclude Potomac River harvest). PRFC: agency-reported landings 1982-present (fish caught in Potomac River and landed in MD and VA). MD: state-reported landings 1982-present (exclude Potomac River harvest). DE: state-reported landings 1985-present. NJ: state-reported landings 2005-present. CT: state-reported landings 1995-present. RI: SAFIS landings 2005-present.

Table 4. Recreational landings (pounds) of weakfish by state, 1982-2015 (NMFS, except as noted below).

| Year | FL | GA | SC | NC | VA | MD | DE | NJ | NY | CT | RI | MA | Total |
|------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| 1982 | 48,137 | | 14,786 | 276,047 | 2,994,879 | 2,127,679 | 1,330,769 | 613,223 | 725,194 | 0 | 154,609 | | 8,285,323 |
| 1983 | 9,190 | 12,165 | 4,515 | 338,100 | 738,671 | 1,215,376 | 2,205,140 | 6,080,018 | 164,227 | 12,976 | 588,805 | 22,452 | 11,391,635 |
| 1984 | 9,719 | | 5,150 | 189,031 | 850,169 | 254,962 | 1,279,594 | 3,987,542 | 51,464 | 11,358 | | 16,272 | 6,655,261 |
| 1985 | 822 | 3,422 | 105,151 | 184,485 | 508,980 | 898,313 | 1,102,095 | 1,876,608 | 638,913 | 17,269 | 131,884 | | 5,467,942 |
| 1986 | 3,785 | 12,621 | 44,185 | 417,470 | 2,032,394 | 2,406,643 | 1,598,932 | 3,184,095 | 242,217 | 61,281 | 41,142 | | 10,044,765 |
| 1987 | 1,713 | 9,491 | 23,781 | 710,002 | 647,692 | 831,615 | 1,072,198 | 3,353,362 | 51,830 | 4,286 | | | 6,705,970 |
| 1988 | 2,241 | | 1,841 | 359,606 | 1,677,694 | 1,679,702 | 1,664,477 | 833,197 | 26,127 | | | | 6,244,885 |
| 1989 | 4,171 | 8,175 | 5,963 | 139,979 | 424,463 | 344,658 | 521,648 | 575,109 | 46,133 | | | | 2,070,299 |
| 1990 | 2,085 | 961 | 11,186 | 63,420 | 256,690 | 388,662 | 207,131 | 358,456 | 4,317 | | 897 | | 1,293,805 |
| 1991 | 3,536 | 5,597 | 25,210 | 99,824 | 280,075 | 278,176 | 427,778 | 896,801 | 35,931 | 0 | | | 2,052,928 |
| 1992 | 2,738 | 1,014 | 40,459 | 27,363 | 206,710 | 121,403 | 232,204 | 677,811 | 19,824 | 909 | 20,154 | | 1,350,589 |
| 1993 | 6,594 | 12,791 | 6,929 | 78,982 | 89,992 | 173,952 | 291,627 | 312,840 | 18,889 | 6,509 | | | 999,105 |
| 1994 | 7,276 | 783 | 25,163 | 149,159 | 142,265 | 300,831 | 319,491 | 706,207 | 2,579 | | | | 1,653,754 |
| 1995 | 1,697 | 21,283 | 22,875 | 72,412 | 211,494 | 141,511 | 419,527 | 898,565 | 24,467 | | 0 | | 1,813,831 |
| 1996 | 759 | 5,060 | 4,980 | 79,317 | 194,485 | 185,074 | 690,121 | 1,730,057 | 19,081 | | | | 2,908,934 |
| 1997 | 3,866 | 34,356 | 1,728 | 165,032 | 463,652 | 188,339 | 734,800 | 1,817,033 | 220,718 | 1,367 | | | 3,630,891 |
| 1998 | 698 | 690 | 11,288 | 192,210 | 839,245 | 377,820 | 616,422 | 1,910,868 | 63,298 | 9,808 | | 4,087 | 4,026,434 |
| 1999 | 2,245 | 1,614 | 4,383 | 161,291 | 399,588 | 544,474 | 484,157 | 1,374,170 | 63,058 | 6,371 | 5,866 | | 3,047,217 |
| 2000 | 2,943 | 3,503 | 6,312 | 87,926 | 496,205 | 696,662 | 635,339 | 1,916,092 | 164,525 | 35,095 | 1,922 | | 4,046,524 |
| 2001 | 1,322 | 2,983 | | 158,423 | 373,206 | 567,625 | 172,969 | 1,251,151 | 151,584 | 4,883 | 0 | | 2,684,146 |
| 2002 | 1,577 | 683 | 50,141 | 82,747 | 295,397 | 174,064 | 243,156 | 1,213,558 | 58,627 | 11,285 | 3,801 | | 2,135,036 |
| 2003 | 580 | 1,327 | 4,306 | 161,474 | 215,522 | 24,698 | 57,866 | 333,690 | 37,106 | 3,537 | 2,379 | 873 | 843,358 |
| 2004 | 937 | 11,153 | 118,352 | 273,683 | 218,745 | 43,576 | 6,726 | 284,420 | 19,231 | 0 | 0 | | 976,823 |
| 2005 | 1,565 | 7,659 | 94,205 | 157,977 | 28,432 | 8,814 | 39,438 | 1,093,492 | 606 | | 12,340 | | 1,444,528 |
| 2006 | 1,520 | 3,305 | 8,014 | 139,392 | 36,653 | 575 | 19,292 | 789,330 | 13,766 | | 69,501 | | 1,081,348 |
| 2007 | 8,446 | 3,847 | 46,103 | 125,459 | 99,346 | 19,434 | 4,204 | 433,567 | 8,142 | | 0 | | 748,548 |
| 2008 | 1,197 | 5,853 | 21,296 | 139,368 | 29,474 | 2,194 | 4,054 | 365,125 | 114,011 | | | | 682,572 |
| 2009 | 1,952 | 4,797 | 10,375 | 103,230 | 16,658 | 1,506 | 9,868 | 24,069 | 0 | | | | 172,455 |
| 2010 | 455 | 2,829 | 10,379 | 49,903 | 1,579 | 1,810 | 46 | 3,541 | 1,294 | | | | 71,836 |
| 2011 | 530 | 430 | 3,089 | 17,621 | 2,635 | 134 | 21 | 2,449 | 172 | | 0 | 0 | 27,081 |
| 2012 | 668 | 3,625 | 12,244 | 46,081 | 20,952 | 6,192 | 4,442 | 156,495 | 15,125 | | | 0 | 265,824 |
| 2013 | 937 | 952 | 5,572 | 34,731 | 1,781 | 3,518 | 9,659 | 77,848 | 28,051 | | 1,825 | | 164,874 |
| 2014 | 762 | 3,703 | 13,504 | 26,185 | 5,902 | 2,144 | 3,531 | 17,311 | 5,016 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 78,058 |
| 2015 | 102 | 384 | 40,830 | 50,967 | 6,124 | 1,695 | 141 | 21,990 | 1,713 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 123,946 |

Notes: FL: state-reported landings 1983-present (NMFS-reported estimates limited to Nassau and Duval Counties and adjusted on the basis of the genome proportions of weakfish within the Cynoscion-complex found in those counties' waters.

Table 5. Recreational landings (numbers) of weakfish by state, from 1982 to 2015 (NMFS, except as noted below).

| Year | FL | GA | SC | NC | VA | MD | DE | NJ | NY | CT | RI | MA | Total |
|------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|-------|-----------|
| 1982 | | | 17,342 | 200,045 | 715,892 | 440,146 | 213,937 | 104,066 | 88,234 | 11,769 | 18,614 | | 1,810,045 |
| 1983 | 11,012 | 17,209 | 6,807 | 387,871 | 354,846 | 595,286 | 996,589 | 2,857,093 | 36,934 | 6,363 | 74,608 | 2,732 | 5,347,350 |
| 1984 | 18,529 | | 7,836 | 489,468 | 782,848 | 104,057 | 541,392 | 1,026,043 | 20,133 | 1,561 | 0 | 2,237 | 2,994,104 |
| 1985 | 1,364 | 4,811 | 61,788 | 217,671 | 505,223 | 305,799 | 330,854 | 812,839 | 89,538 | 2,874 | 17,092 | | 2,349,853 |
| 1986 | 4,853 | 18,130 | 78,315 | 611,363 | 2,418,046 | 1,947,394 | 732,537 | 2,500,622 | 34,582 | 7,315 | 4,595 | | 8,357,752 |
| 1987 | 2,412 | 10,802 | 18,841 | 624,160 | 1,015,413 | 824,883 | 534,597 | 1,666,619 | 7,447 | 777 | | | 4,705,951 |
| 1988 | 3,586 | 0 | 1,834 | 438,148 | 2,297,053 | 1,163,766 | 771,996 | 642,032 | 13,215 | 0 | | | 5,331,630 |
| 1989 | 5,327 | 8,245 | 6,810 | 190,193 | 357,864 | 226,505 | 215,454 | 303,289 | 6,436 | | | | 1,320,123 |
| 1990 | 2,778 | 2,273 | 8,027 | 91,300 | 286,458 | 370,528 | 144,132 | 216,385 | 3,057 | | 407 | | 1,125,345 |
| 1991 | 5,018 | 4,954 | 19,616 | 140,826 | 351,947 | 221,242 | 314,620 | 545,665 | 28,072 | 18,695 | | | 1,650,655 |
| 1992 | 3,693 | 1,751 | 23,501 | 35,490 | 265,645 | 137,260 | 97,314 | 311,659 | 5,282 | 434 | 9,624 | | 891,653 |
| 1993 | 8,944 | 14,752 | 7,360 | 106,737 | 108,392 | 238,768 | 216,213 | 203,915 | 12,610 | 2,460 | | | 920,151 |
| 1994 | 9,994 | 718 | 46,858 | 177,965 | 169,740 | 332,846 | 258,478 | 591,571 | 1,872 | 0 | | | 1,590,042 |
| 1995 | 2,167 | 22,437 | 29,897 | 62,475 | 226,682 | 88,695 | 375,548 | 671,850 | 22,310 | | 1,568 | | 1,503,629 |
| 1996 | 1,576 | 5,413 | 5,695 | 90,704 | 193,861 | 183,408 | 573,706 | 1,104,251 | 16,320 | | 0 | | 2,174,934 |
| 1997 | 4,295 | 44,202 | 2,039 | 184,954 | 557,809 | 162,900 | 603,618 | 1,028,334 | 112,986 | 517 | 1,415 | | 2,703,069 |
| 1998 | 896 | 718 | 15,838 | 191,181 | 463,525 | 290,051 | 429,678 | 920,558 | 21,392 | 2,183 | 0 | 618 | 2,336,638 |
| 1999 | 2,714 | 1,679 | 3,941 | 127,163 | 229,209 | 340,096 | 211,161 | 583,883 | 18,347 | 1,606 | 2,296 | | 1,522,095 |
| 2000 | 3,276 | 4,181 | 5,585 | 71,247 | 286,752 | 475,348 | 253,073 | 760,279 | 42,406 | 7,342 | 712 | | 1,910,201 |
| 2001 | 1,542 | 3,316 | | 158,605 | 175,872 | 302,719 | 64,086 | 736,069 | 28,126 | 715 | 2,301 | | 1,473,351 |
| 2002 | 1,842 | 852 | 90,245 | 90,170 | 178,110 | 100,467 | 102,405 | 492,876 | 24,962 | 1,796 | 1,420 | | 1,085,145 |
| 2003 | 774 | 1,573 | 4,162 | 153,753 | 86,112 | 41,048 | 13,998 | 151,101 | 9,234 | 443 | 109 | 109 | 462,416 |
| 2004 | 1,114 | 9,815 | 153,589 | 237,395 | 158,111 | 15,832 | 2,524 | 228,536 | 7,596 | 0 | 0 | | 814,512 |
| 2005 | 1,539 | 5,764 | 129,575 | 163,265 | 44,088 | 32,243 | 14,488 | 1,008,393 | 359 | | 1,473 | | 1,401,187 |
| 2006 | 1,578 | 3,501 | 7,123 | 153,696 | 43,081 | 754 | 5,642 | 489,440 | 9,123 | | 5,948 | | 719,886 |
| 2007 | 961 | 4,712 | 71,230 | 114,332 | 87,470 | 6,980 | 3,072 | 229,755 | 7,120 | | 0 | | 525,632 |
| 2008 | 1,470 | 5,909 | 25,794 | 137,564 | 27,939 | 2,000 | 3,607 | 298,076 | 30,543 | | | | 532,902 |
| 2009 | 2,028 | 8,664 | 10,952 | 81,643 | 15,523 | 4,169 | 5,995 | 11,928 | | | | | 140,902 |
| 2010 | 589 | 3,113 | 9,672 | 50,932 | 4,303 | 4,787 | 31 | 2,261 | 3,423 | | 0 | | 79,111 |
| 2011 | 471 | 973 | 4,107 | 13,464 | 4,374 | 237 | 27 | 3,003 | 111 | | | | 26,767 |
| 2012 | 988 | 4,603 | 13,593 | 40,299 | 21,791 | 11,401 | 4,139 | 114,330 | 5,055 | | | 0 | 216,199 |
| 2013 | 2,086 | 1,080 | 13,314 | 142,857 | 2,246 | 1,834 | 5,662 | 30,697 | 7,003 | | 331 | | 207,110 |
| 2014 | 905 | 3,423 | 11,573 | 26,526 | 9,084 | 1,062 | 3,295 | 6,520 | 644 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 63,032 |
| 2015 | 143 | 492 | 29,392 | 39,953 | 4,122 | 3,093 | 74 | 30,273 | 620 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 108,162 |

Notes: FL: state-reported landings 1983-present (NMFS-reported estimates limited to Nassau and Duval Counties and adjusted on the basis of the genome proportions of weakfish within the Cynoscion-complex found in those counties' waters).

Table 6. Recreational releases (numbers) of weakfish by state, from 1982 to 2015 (NMFS, except as noted below).

| Year | FL | GA | SC | NC | VA | MD | DE | NJ | NY | CT | RI | MA | Total |
|------|-------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|-----|-----------|
| 1982 | | | 0 | 44,134 | 126,514 | 2,139 | 16,595 | 1,695 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 191,077 |
| 1983 | 806 | 173 | 0 | 10,560 | 45,565 | 15,642 | 22,221 | 155,116 | 15,870 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 265,953 |
| 1984 | 252 | | 1,561 | 17,381 | 202,791 | 8,934 | 52,879 | 4,464 | 0 | 0 | 5,214 | 0 | 293,476 |
| 1985 | 302 | 152 | 3,279 | 2,138 | 82,071 | 12,114 | 36,924 | 246,284 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 383,264 |
| 1986 | 862 | 0 | 2,873 | 354,095 | 692,462 | 327,841 | 191,590 | 895,044 | 4,556 | 0 | 0 | | 2,469,323 |
| 1987 | 547 | 89 | 0 | 71,659 | 233,441 | 299,172 | 149,810 | 182,019 | 1,266 | 0 | | | 938,003 |
| 1988 | 24 | 4,196 | 0 | 109,489 | 484,782 | 155,255 | 262,696 | 5,144 | 0 | 634 | | | 1,022,220 |
| 1989 | 0 | 0 | 1,019 | 34,074 | 52,191 | 53,148 | 42,640 | 22,841 | 1,980 | | | | 207,893 |
| 1990 | 101 | 0 | 0 | 20,669 | 198,948 | 142,055 | 77,470 | 32,863 | 570 | | 0 | | 472,676 |
| 1991 | 1,556 | 0 | 0 | 11,457 | 361,768 | 40,349 | 90,529 | 238,646 | 33,046 | 2,108 | | | 779,459 |
| 1992 | 2,121 | 362 | 4,598 | 27,052 | 244,817 | 71,040 | 65,133 | 249,846 | 8,362 | 0 | 98 | | 673,429 |
| 1993 | 3,397 | 840 | 267 | 52,468 | 245,211 | 225,510 | 274,968 | 281,450 | 20,995 | 0 | | | 1,105,106 |
| 1994 | 1,863 | 21,588 | 0 | 147,616 | 652,571 | 583,059 | 602,732 | 1,051,931 | 45,537 | 1,013 | | | 3,107,910 |
| 1995 | 2,006 | 572 | 0 | 154,008 | 939,970 | 178,937 | 1,119,535 | 1,613,831 | 81,236 | | 98 | | 4,090,193 |
| 1996 | 1,303 | 307 | 0 | 188,263 | 814,573 | 492,402 | 1,627,260 | 1,859,049 | 84,990 | | 780 | | 5,068,927 |
| 1997 | 6,596 | 0 | 2,938 | 209,122 | 1,404,092 | 323,653 | 941,536 | 975,280 | 90,549 | 1,213 | 163 | | 3,955,142 |
| 1998 | 1,721 | 1,468 | 329 | 131,537 | 1,244,949 | 461,518 | 639,468 | 778,180 | 29,836 | 360 | 1,921 | 0 | 3,291,287 |
| 1999 | 2,818 | 0 | 13,616 | 149,377 | 818,959 | 753,266 | 385,626 | 551,283 | 35,459 | 0 | 8,436 | | 2,718,840 |
| 2000 | 5,551 | 12,895 | 15,869 | 346,212 | 935,594 | 1,209,290 | 523,976 | 1,605,024 | 68,531 | 1,285 | 931 | | 4,725,158 |
| 2001 | 2,541 | 13,537 | | 886,943 | 633,443 | 737,240 | 235,580 | 1,064,609 | 69,123 | 0 | 358 | | 3,643,374 |
| 2002 | 2,113 | 9,540 | 1,019 | 336,709 | 888,337 | 286,182 | 120,671 | 350,810 | 62,803 | 0 | 1,932 | | 2,060,116 |
| 2003 | 2,556 | 21,212 | 1,966 | 153,563 | 504,129 | 180,827 | 45,439 | 631,438 | 7,286 | 1,233 | 0 | 0 | 1,549,649 |
| 2004 | 3,395 | 12,249 | 107,177 | 240,298 | 544,776 | 132,087 | 74,531 | 607,393 | 40,254 | 12,331 | 187 | | 1,774,678 |
| 2005 | 2,007 | 29,623 | 56,663 | 241,674 | 355,792 | 55,270 | 110,000 | 1,279,930 | 193,556 | | 0 | | 2,324,515 |
| 2006 | 5,132 | 6,149 | 21,917 | 295,415 | 556,763 | 57,394 | 1,000,616 | 1,231,102 | 11,732 | | 0 | | 3,186,220 |
| 2007 | 949 | 19,890 | 90,224 | 148,938 | 229,453 | 106,308 | 23,823 | 581,435 | 200,574 | | 1,784 | | 1,403,378 |
| 2008 | 711 | 13,229 | 105,401 | 127,333 | 427,616 | 30,260 | 61,895 | 1,254,625 | 26,851 | | | | 2,047,921 |
| 2009 | 285 | 12,438 | 40,292 | 125,649 | 84,700 | 6,700 | 4,430 | 82,282 | 6,038 | | | | 362,814 |
| 2010 | 38 | 11,483 | 25,559 | 250,369 | 177,395 | 104,421 | 17,740 | 78,053 | 3,107 | | | 931 | 669,096 |
| 2011 | 520 | 14,576 | 5,165 | 109,483 | 288,304 | 18,500 | 6,568 | 99,964 | 55,172 | | | | 598,252 |
| 2012 | 0 | 37,247 | 50,026 | 165,891 | 102,245 | 24,898 | 84,963 | 731,563 | 11,454 | | | 0 | 1,208,287 |
| 2013 | 561 | 8,362 | 7,602 | 109,006 | 81,263 | 10,078 | 24,299 | 90,268 | 5,974 | | 14,520 | 0 | 351,933 |
| 2014 | 614 | 1,772 | 54,432 | 282,663 | 109,115 | 4,819 | 22,730 | 79,756 | 239 | 315 | 0 | 0 | 556,455 |
| 2015 | 0 | 11,193 | 77,330 | 505,906 | 125,238 | 117,606 | 16,109 | 246,280 | 3,893 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,103,555 |

Notes: FL: state-reported landings 1983-present (NMFS-reported estimates limited to Nassau and Duval Counties and adjusted on the basis of the genome proportions of weakfish within the Cynoscion-complex found in those counties' waters).

Table 7. Indices of relative weakfish abundance from 1980 to 2015.

| Yr | MA Tr YOY | RI Tr Coast YOY | CT Tr LIS YOY | CT Tr LIS 1+ | NY Tr Coast YOY | NJ Tr DE Bay YOY | NJ Tr Ocean 1+ | DE Tr DE Bay YOY | DE Tr Inland YOY | DE Tr DE Bay 1+ | MD Tr Ches Bay YOY | MD Tr Coast YOY | VA Tr Ches Bay YOY | NC Tr Pam Snd YOY | NC Gn Pam Snd 1+ | SC Tr Inshore YOY | SC SEAMAP Summer 0+/1+ | SC SEAMAP Fall 0+/1+ | GA Tr Coast 0+ | FL Tr Jax YOY | FL Tr IR & Jax 1+ |
|------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | #/ tow | #/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | AM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | #/ nm | GM#/ tow | GM#/ ha | GM#/ tow | #/ tow | #/ set | #/ tow | #/ tow | #/ tow | #/ obshr | med/ tow | med/ tow |
| 1980 | * | 17.16 | * | * | * | * | * | 4.15 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1981 | * | 36.44 | * | * | * | * | * | 5.98 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1982 | * | 19.55 | * | * | * | * | * | 11.49 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1983 | * | 3.13 | * | * | * | * | * | 4.47 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1984 | * | 5.03 | 1.00 | 0.55 | * | * | * | 6.67 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1985 | * | 19.18 | 6.19 | 0.24 | * | * | * | 9.25 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1986 | * | 2.00 | 13.17 | 0.24 | * | * | * | 12.79 | 1.14 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1987 | * | 1.31 | 0.63 | 0.11 | 1.50 | * | * | 5.82 | 1.26 | * | * | * | * | 12.14 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1988 | * | 10.86 | 2.90 | 0.06 | 0.20 | * | * | 4.73 | 0.81 | * | * | * | 8.13 | 101.50 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1989 | * | 1.17 | 8.69 | 0.02 | 6.90 | * | 2.23 | 11.11 | 2.20 | * | 0.44 | 0.87 | 11.74 | 14.20 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1990 | * | 25.53 | 5.56 | 0.08 | 2.30 | * | 1.01 | 8.73 | 2.95 | * | 0.95 | 1.72 | 4.46 | 50.20 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1991 | * | 25.41 | 11.95 | 0.31 | 56.50 | 2.20 | 1.01 | 20.07 | 5.87 | 31.43 | 0.78 | 1.89 | 3.16 | 36.96 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1992 | * | 14.51 | 3.03 | 0.18 | 23.40 | 1.01 | 1.40 | 14.72 | 2.51 | 23.83 | 3.24 | 1.81 | 6.78 | 42.71 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1993 | * | 7.50 | 4.08 | 0.12 | 4.40 | 1.01 | 0.89 | 14.79 | 0.63 | 80.10 | 1.59 | 0.91 | 5.81 | 8.70 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1994 | * | 15.17 | 11.19 | 0.06 | 70.90 | 1.40 | 5.43 | 11.47 | 1.47 | 206.50 | 2.33 | 1.84 | 2.51 | 68.06 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1995 | * | 0.26 | 5.21 | 0.70 | 4.70 | 0.89 | 6.20 | 13.49 | 4.24 | 150.00 | 5.95 | 4.44 | 5.95 | 38.21 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1996 | * | 124.67 | 15.23 | 0.56 | 220.40 | 5.43 | 3.95 | 12.13 | 1.18 | 233.80 | 6.40 | 3.18 | 7.26 | 72.07 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1997 | * | 88.83 | 12.38 | 0.89 | 82.40 | 6.20 | 3.48 | 15.40 | 2.07 | 110.40 | 4.28 | 3.06 | 6.81 | 32.79 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1998 | * | 13.51 | 5.02 | 0.28 | 4.80 | 3.95 | 0.59 | 11.35 | 1.35 | 102.07 | 5.87 | 2.80 | 7.60 | 70.44 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 1999 | * | 3.68 | 30.93 | 0.39 | 40.50 | 3.48 | 1.05 | 13.51 | 1.99 | 92.56 | 3.26 | 2.76 | 6.78 | 99.90 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 2000 | * | 9.38 | 63.31 | 0.30 | 167.10 | 0.59 | 2.36 | 14.14 | 1.64 | 179.12 | 6.54 | 2.34 | 8.35 | 62.99 | * | * | 20.30 | 5.10 | * | * | * |
| 2001 | * | 19.33 | 40.09 | 0.52 | 113.70 | 15.03 | 0.68 | 7.56 | 1.53 | 80.70 | 8.10 | 2.56 | 5.09 | 30.30 | 1.42 | * | 19.20 | 5.40 | * | 0.79 | 0.23 |
| 2002 | * | 8.40 | 41.35 | 0.16 | 145.20 | 19.70 | 1.59 | 5.96 | 1.31 | 144.98 | 3.92 | 0.61 | 6.93 | 22.00 | 1.40 | * | 16.20 | 2.80 | * | 1.45 | 0.52 |
| 2003 | * | 198.00 | 49.41 | 0.07 | 69.80 | 3.11 | 0.08 | 10.44 | 2.44 | 65.78 | 4.89 | 5.64 | 9.23 | 23.93 | 1.22 | * | 14.20 | 3.90 | 105.44 | 4.35 | 0.34 |
| 2004 | * | 1.88 | 58.98 | 0.21 | 43.90 | 8.48 | 1.79 | 8.39 | 3.32 | 48.88 | 1.62 | 3.39 | 6.66 | 28.75 | 1.32 | * | 3.10 | 3.40 | 94.42 | 4.04 | 0.19 |
| 2005 | * | 128.93 | 25.86 | 0.12 | 226.50 | 20.60 | 0.46 | 16.82 | 3.84 | 29.00 | 3.55 | 4.98 | 5.69 | 28.76 | 1.24 | * | 1.80 | 9.40 | 32.08 | 1.83 | 0.73 |
| 2006 | * | 0.36 | 1.05 | 0.29 | 55.10 | 12.24 | 0.19 | 5.35 | 1.60 | 106.31 | 2.41 | 1.50 | 6.34 | 39.09 | 0.92 | * | 4.10 | 3.10 | 79.96 | 1.78 | 0.44 |
| 2007 | * | 36.10 | 63.93 | 0.06 | 92.12 | 25.53 | 0.83 | 13.70 | 2.98 | 43.16 | 1.60 | 2.32 | 5.35 | 56.80 | 0.43 | * | 11.40 | 18.40 | 159.64 | 1.68 | 0.46 |
| 2008 | * | 0.55 | 9.07 | 0.08 | 51.50 | 7.86 | 0.35 | 6.74 | 1.02 | 45.94 | 0.79 | 0.23 | 5.77 | 50.30 | 0.49 | * | 11.30 | 17.70 | 75.55 | 1.66 | 0.39 |
| 2009 | * | 7.29 | 6.48 | 0.30 | 13.30 | 7.29 | 0.33 | 8.56 | 5.91 | 35.83 | 1.42 | 1.33 | 6.18 | 58.89 | 0.31 | * | 15.30 | 11.90 | 104.76 | 2.12 | 1.17 |
| 2010 | * | 7.95 | - | - | 15.30 | 10.51 | 0.69 | 11.98 | 3.49 | 43.57 | 1.68 | 2.16 | 14.11 | 32.45 | 0.48 | * | 14.80 | 14.60 | 128.48 | 0.74 | 0.70 |

| Yr | MA Tr YOY | RI Tr Coast YOY | CT Tr LIS YOY | CT Tr LIS 1+ | NY Tr Coast YOY | NJ Tr DE Bay YOY | NJ Tr Ocean 1+ | DE Tr DE Bay YOY | DE Tr Inland YOY | DE Tr DE Bay 1+ | MD Tr Ches Bay YOY | MD Tr Coast YOY | VA Tr Ches Bay YOY | NC Tr Pam Snd YOY | NC Gn Pam Snd 1+ | SC Tr Inshore YOY | SC SEAMAP Summer 0+/1+ | SC SEAMAP Fall 0+/1+ | GA Tr Coast 0+ | FL Tr Jax YOY | FL Tr IR & Jax 1+ |
|------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | #/ tow | #/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | AM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | GM#/ tow | #/ nm | GM#/ tow | GM#/ ha | GM#/ tow | #/ tow | #/ set | #/ tow | #/ tow | #/ tow | #/ obshr | med/ tow | med/ tow |
| 2011 | * | 70.63 | 11.64 | 0.68 | 34.50 | 15.80 | 22.32 | 7.89 | 3.30 | 89.22 | 2.04 | 1.90 | 5.23 | 33.69 | 0.36 | * | 74.10 | 13.90 | 104.20 | 0.74 | 0.52 |
| 2012 | * | 122.30 | 21.96 | 0.73 | 9.40 | 1.26 | 0.23 | 7.55 | 3.44 | 106.43 | 0.46 | 0.46 | 3.02 | 40.66 | 0.92 | * | 18.80 | 9.80 | 91.64 | 1.79 | 0.65 |
| 2013 | * | 13.20 | 7.01 | 0.52 | 22.60 | 15.55 | 0.39 | 13.49 | 4.47 | 71.78 | 2.15 | 1.02 | 9.41 | 58.53 | 0.69 | * | 25.50 | 0.20 | 131.52 | 0.69 | 0.12 |
| 2014 | * | 1.27 | 41.53 | 0.08 | 97.70 | 4.87 | 0.98 | 13.67 | 4.71 | 38.01 | 2.95 | 1.28 | 3.77 | 32.83 | 0.50 | * | 12.00 | 7.60 | 64.16 | 0.62 | 0.19 |
| 2015 | 0.21 | 46.47 | 30.91 | 0.46 | 19.90 | 2.27 | 1.44 | 10.22 | 3.88 | 76.46 | 2.23 | 0.88 | 3.77 | 43.30 | | 19.30 | 18.20 | 257.80 | 3.61 | 1.08 | 0.03 |

Table 8. Evaluation of the Coastwide Management Trigger (Section 3.3.1 of Addendum II to Amendment 4): percent change of each state's 2015 total landings to its five-year (2009-2013) mean total landings.

| | FL | GA | SC | NC | VA | PRFC | MD | DE | NJ | NY | CT | RI | MA |
|-----------|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2010-2014 | 1,531 | 2,324 | 8,958 | 132,686 | 48,149 | 51 | 4,562 | 12,834 | 65,176 | 56,504 | 3,406 | 15,640 | 1,126 |
| 2015 | 843 | 384 | 40,830 | 131,202 | 24,006 | 3 | 3,013 | 1,618 | 31,645 | 26,137 | 1,719 | 6,323 | 473 |
| % change | -45% | -83% | 356% | -1% | -50% | -94% | -34% | -87% | -51% | -54% | -50% | -60% | -58% |

Table 9. Biological sampling of weakfish in 2015, Massachusetts-Florida (Sampling requirements are based on Addendum I to Amendment 4 and 2015 landings data and are reported in state compliance reports; values highlighted with red bold font do not meet sampling requirements; bracketed values denote fishery independent samples not included in original state compliance reports).

| | Samples Required | | Samples Completed | | Fisheries Sampled |
|-------------|------------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|---|
| | Otoliths | Lengths | Otoliths | Lengths | |
| MA* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | NA |
| RI | 21 | 42 | 33 | 2,036 | commercial, RIDFW Trawl Survey |
| CT* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | CT DEEP fall trawl survey |
| NY | 51 | 89 | 105 | 105 | commercial (GN, TR, PN, H&L) |
| NJ | 35 | 24 | 86 | 88 | NJ Ocean Trawl Survey/ research surveys |
| DE | 11 | 12 | 0 [476] | 0 [1,788] | [Delaware's Trawl Survey Program] |
| MD | 6 | 6 | 21 | 23 | commercial (PN, GN) |
| PRFC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | NA |
| VA | 40 | 63 | 243 | 2,058 | commercial (GN, PN, HS) |
| NC | 179 | 286 | 326 | 2,371 | commercial (HS, GN, TR, PN, BS), otolith count includes samples from rec also |
| SC | 18 | 0 | 7 [108] | 19 [243] | Recreational, [SEAMAP] |
| GA* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | NA |
| FL* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | NA |

* *de minimis* in 2015; not required to conduct sampling; sample numbers provided to show from what states were exempt
 NA=not applicable, GN=gill net, TR=trawl, PN=pound net, H&L=hook and line, HS=haul seine, BS=beach seine

XI. Figures

Figure 1. Estimated weakfish age 1+ biomass, fishing mortality, and natural mortality from 1982 to 2008 (NMFS 2009a, NMFS 2009b).

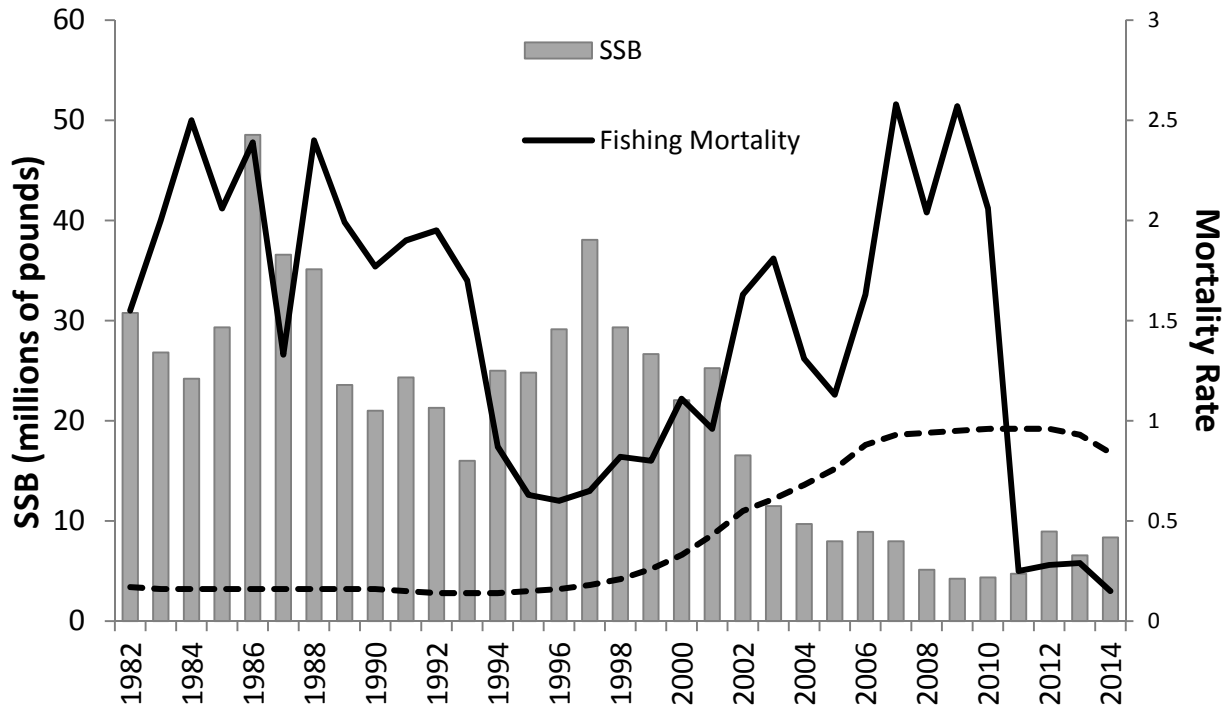


Figure 2. Commercial and recreational weakfish harvest (pounds), from 1982 to 2015 (see Tables 3 and 4 for source information and values).

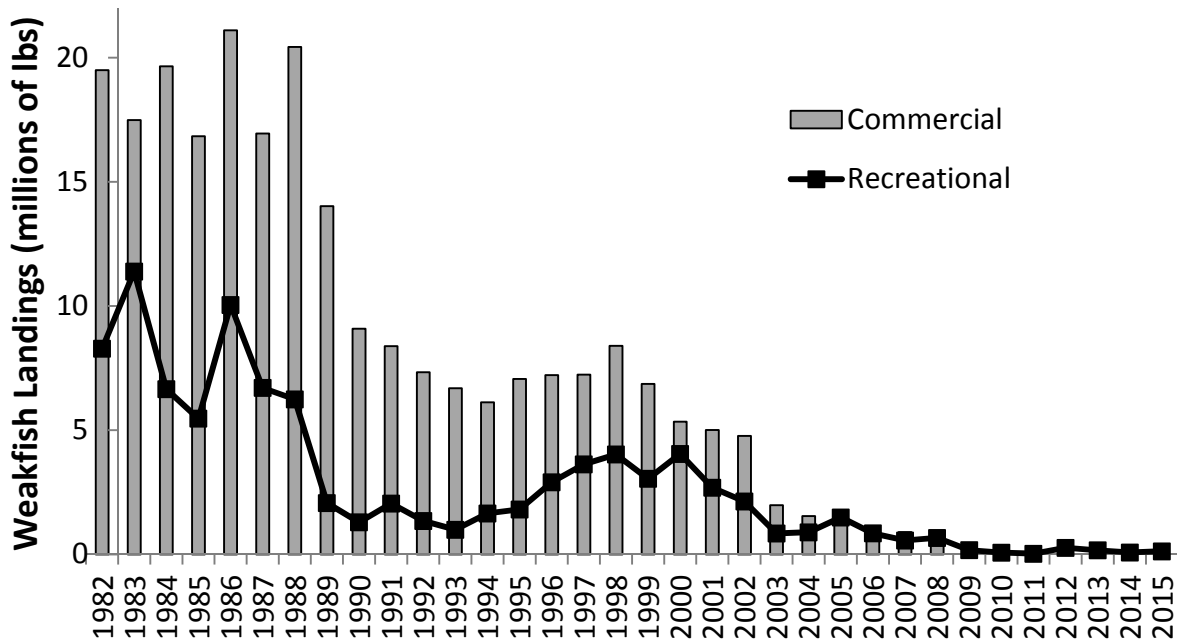


Figure 3. Recreational weakfish harvest and releases (number of fish), from 1983 to 2015 (see Tables 5 and 6 for source information and values).

