



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

2019 Spring Meeting Summary

Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

2019 Spring Meeting
Arlington, VA
April 29 – May 2, 2019

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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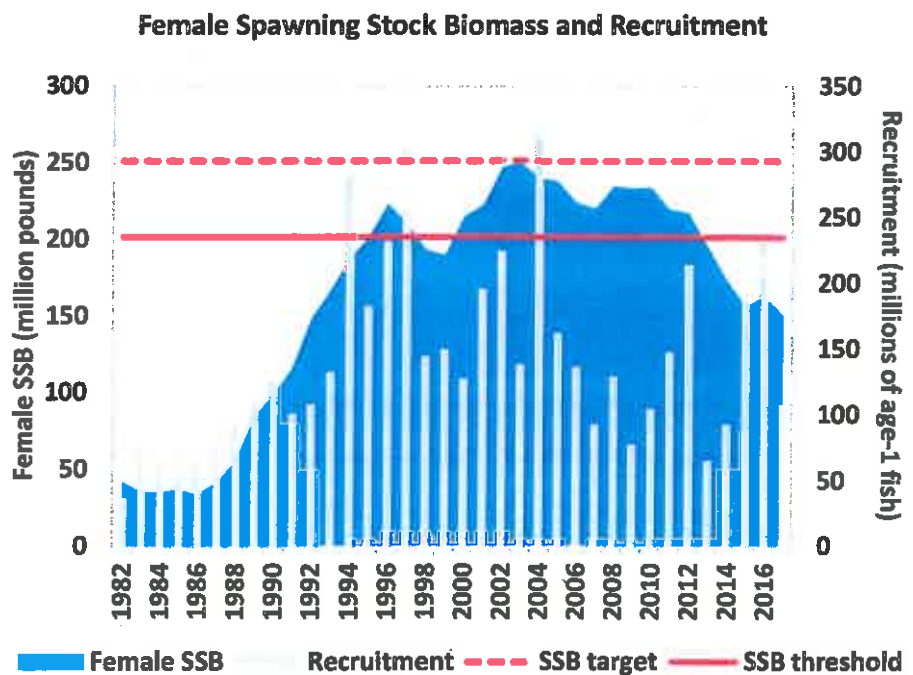
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ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (APRIL 30, 2019)

Press Release

**Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment
Finds Resource Overfished and Overfishing Occurring
*Board Initiates Addendum to Reduce Total Fishing Mortality***

Arlington, VA – The 2018 Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment indicates the resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing relative to the updated reference points defined in the assessment. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 151 million pounds, below the SSB threshold of 202 million pounds. Despite recent declines in SSB, the assessment indicated the stock is still significantly above the SSB levels observed during the moratorium in the mid-1980s. Total fishing mortality (F) was estimated at 0.31, above the F threshold of 0.24. The benchmark assessment and its single-stock statistical catch-at-



age model was endorsed by the Peer Review Panel and accepted by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) for management use.

Based on these findings and the tripping of Amendment 6's reference point management triggers relating to F and SSB thresholds (e.g., F in 2017 is above the threshold level and SSB is below the threshold level), the Board initiated the development of a Draft Addendum to consider measures aimed to reduce F to the target level. The Technical Committee estimates it would require roughly a 17% reduction in total removals (commercial and recreational harvest, including dead releases) to reduce F to the target in 2020 relative to 2017 levels. The Draft Addendum will explore a range of management options, including minimum size and slot size limits for the recreational fishery in the Chesapeake Bay and along the coast, as well as a coastwide circle hook requirement when fishing with bait. The Board also provided guidance on how to apply the necessary reductions to both the commercial and recreational sectors. The Draft Addendum will be presented to the Board for its consideration and approval for public comment in August. If approved, it will be released for public comment, with the Board considering its final approval in October for implementation in 2020. Additionally, the Board postponed a motion to initiate the development of an Amendment until its next meeting in August.

Atlantic striped bass experienced a period of strong recruitment (estimated as number of age-1 fish) from 1994-2004, followed by a period of lower recruitment from 2005-2011 (although not as low as the early 1980s, when the stock was considered collapsed). This period of low recruitment contributed to the decline in SSB in recent years. Recruitment was high in 2012, 2015, and 2016 (corresponding to strong 2011, 2014, and 2015 year classes), but recruitment estimates were below the long-term average in 2013, 2014, and 2017. Recruitment in 2017 was estimated at 108.8 million age-1 fish, below the time series average of 140.9 million fish.

A more detailed description of the stock assessment results is available on the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5cc9ba4eAtlStripedBassStockAssessmentOverview.pdf>. The 2018 Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment, Stock Assessment Summary and Peer Review Report can be obtained via the following links:

Full assessment report - <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1908/crd1908.pdf>

Summary Report - <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1901/crd1901.pdf>

Peer Review Report - <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/saw66/saw-66-summary-report.pdf>

For more information, please contact Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org.

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PR19-14

Motions

Move to accept the 2018 Striped Bass Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report for management use.

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Mr. White. Motion carries by consensus.

Main Motion

Move to initiate an addendum to achieve the fishing mortality target or lower within one year.

Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. McMurray. Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to initiate an addendum to address the overfishing status of striped bass and implement measures to reduce F back to the F target. Task PDT to develop options that would reduce F to the target that would include:

- **Minimum fish size for the coast and a minimum fish size for Chesapeake Bay.**
- **Slot limit that would prohibit harvest of fish over 40 inches.**
- **Mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait coastwide to reduce discard mortality.**
- **A provision that states could use seasonal closures in conservation equivalency proposals.**
- **Apply needed reductions equally to both commercial and recreational sectors.**
- **Apply needed reductions to the recreational sector only.**

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to delete "Apply needed reductions to the recreational sector only" from the substituted motion.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Mr. Shiels. Motion passes (9 in favor, 5 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Motion to Substitute as Amended

Move to substitute to initiate an addendum to address the overfishing status of striped bass and implement measures to reduce F back to the F target. Task PDT to develop options that would reduce F to the target that would include:

- **Minimum fish size for the coast and a minimum fish size for Chesapeake Bay.**
- **Slot limit that would prohibit harvest of fish over 40 inches.**
- **Mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait coastwide to reduce discard mortality.**
- **A provision that states could use seasonal closures in conservation equivalency proposals.**
- **Apply needed reductions equally to both commercial and recreational sectors.**

Motion to Amend

Move to add the following option: Apply needed reductions proportionally based on total removals in 2017 to both commercial and recreational sectors.

Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion passes (13 in favor, 3 opposed).

Motion to Substitute as Amended

Move to substitute to initiate an addendum to address the overfishing status of striped bass and implement measures to reduce F back to the F target. Task PDT to develop options that would reduce F to the target that would include:

- **Minimum fish size for the coast and a minimum fish size for Chesapeake Bay.**
- **Slot limit that would prohibit harvest of fish over 40 inches.**
- **Mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait coastwide to reduce discard mortality.**
- **A provision that states could use seasonal closures in conservation equivalency proposals.**

- **Apply needed reductions equally to both commercial and recreational sectors.**
- **Apply needed reductions proportionally based on total removals in 2017 to both commercial and recreational sectors.**

Motion carries unanimously. Roll Call: In Favor – ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS.

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to initiate an addendum to address the overfishing status of striped bass and implement measures to reduce F back to the F target. Task PDT to develop options that would reduce F to the target that would include:

- **Minimum fish size for the coast and a minimum fish size for Chesapeake Bay.**
- **Slot limit that would prohibit harvest of fish over 40 inches.**
- **Mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait coastwide to reduce discard mortality.**
- **A provision that states could use seasonal closures in conservation equivalency proposals.**
- **Apply needed reductions equally to both commercial and recreational sectors.**
- **Apply needed reductions proportionally based on total removals in 2017 to both commercial and recreational sectors.**

Motion carries without objection.

Main Motion

Move to initiate an Amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan to address the needed consideration for change on the issues of fishery goals and objectives, empirical/biological/spatial reference points, management triggers, rebuilding biomass, and area specific management. Work on this amendment will begin upon the completion of the previously discussed addendum to the management plan.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion postponed until 2019 Summer Meeting.

Motion to Amend

Move to amend to add reallocation of commercial quota between states.

Motion made by Mr. Pugh and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion postponed until 2019 Summer Meeting.

Motion to Postpone

Move to postpone consideration of the initiation of an amendment until the summer 2019 meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Dize. Motion passes 15-1-0abs-0null.

Move to forward the Block Island Transit Zone letter to NOAA Fisheries.

Motion made by Mr. Fote and seconded by Dr. Davis. Motion carries (13 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions).

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (APRIL 30 & MAY 1, 2019)

Meeting Summary

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met to review and discuss a number of issues. The LEC welcomed alternate representatives David Sykes from the USFWS and Don Frei from NOAA OLE.