



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Initiates Development of Draft Addendum V to Liberalize Management Measures

The Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum V to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to consider liberalizing coastwide commercial and recreational regulations. The Board’s action responds to concerns raised by Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions regarding continued economic hardship endured by its stakeholders since the implementation of Addendum IV and information from the 2016 assessment update indicating fishing mortality is below the target.

Addendum IV, implemented for the 2015 fishing season, required coastwide harvest reductions to reduce fishing mortality (F) to a level at or below the target. Specifically, coastal fisheries implemented measures to reduce harvest by 25% compared to 2013 levels, and Chesapeake Bay fisheries implemented measures to reduce harvest by 20.5% compared to 2012 levels. Additionally, an objective of Addendum IV is to protect the 2011 year class.

According to the results of the 2016 stock assessment update, the Atlantic striped bass stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Furthermore, Addendum IV successfully reduced fishing mortality to a level below the target (F in 2015 is estimated at 0.16), and length-frequency data from the catch in 2015 indicates a strong presence of the 2011 year class which is anticipated to join the coastal spawning population this year.

A draft of the addendum will be presented for Board review in May. For more information, please contact Max Appelmann, FMP Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org.

Black Sea Bass Area Monitoring and Assessment Program

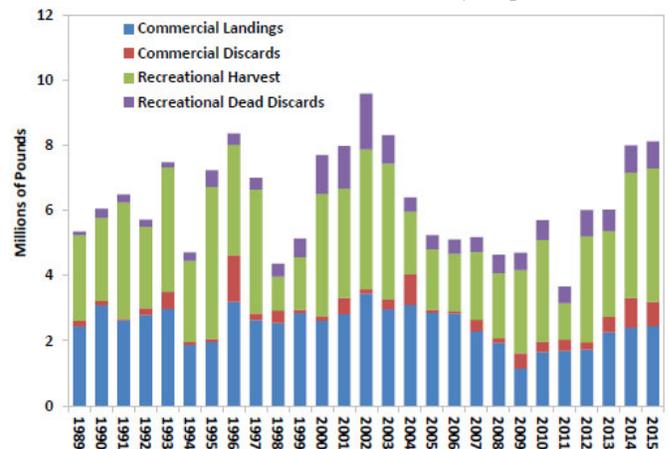
Surveys and state surveys from MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD and VA.

With improved recruitment and declining fishing mortality rates since 2007, Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) has steadily increased. SSB in 2015 was estimated at 48.9 million pounds, 2.3 times the SSB target of 21.3 million pounds, and fishing mortality (F) was estimated at 0.27, well below the F target of 0.36. To account for the fact that black sea bass are a protogynous hermaphrodite, which change sex from female to male, the assessment defined SSB as the total of male and female mature

biomass which accounts for changes in sex ratio. Recruitment at age 1 averaged 24.3 million fish from 1989 to 2015, with peaks in 2000 (1999 cohort) at 37.3 million and at 68.9 million in 2012 (2011 cohort). The large 2011 cohort, which is currently moving through the fishery, was dominant in the northern area and less so in the south. Since 2012, recruitment has been average with a 2014 cohort estimated at 24.9 million fish. The distribution of black sea bass continues to expand northward into the Gulf of Maine.

Black Sea Bass Fishery Removals

Source: 62nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop for Black Sea Bass Assessment Summary Report for 2016



Commercial landings averaged 2.9 million pounds from the late 1980s through the 1990s. Since implementation of quotas in 1998, commercial landings have ranged between 2.9 and 3.5 million pounds until 2007. Commercial landings declined to 1.2 million pounds in 2009, then increased to 2.3 million pounds in 2013 and have since remained above 2.5 million pounds.

Commercial fishery discards represent a relatively small fraction of the total fishery removals from the stock. Commercial discards were generally less than 0.4 million pounds per year, but increased to 0.9 and 0.7 million pounds in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

The recreational fishery harvests a significant proportion of the total catch. Recreational landings averaged 3.7 million pounds annually until 1997.

Recreational harvest limits were implemented in 1998 and landings have since ranged between 1.1 and 4.4 million pounds. Recreational landings in 2015 were 4.1 million pounds.

Recreational discard losses, assuming 15% hook and release mortality, are similar, generally less than 0.4 million pounds per year. Estimated mortality from recreational discards was 0.8 million pounds in 2015.

For more information about summer flounder, scup, or black sea bass please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.