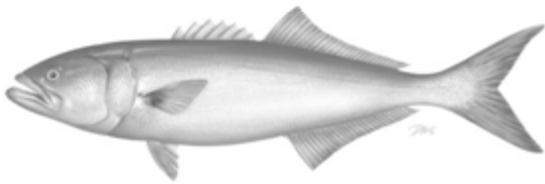


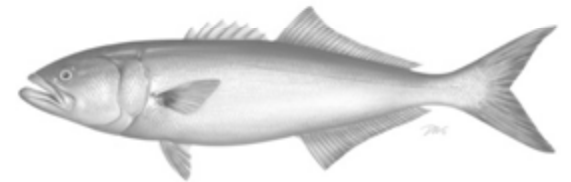


*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful
restoration well in progress by 2015*

Draft Addendum I



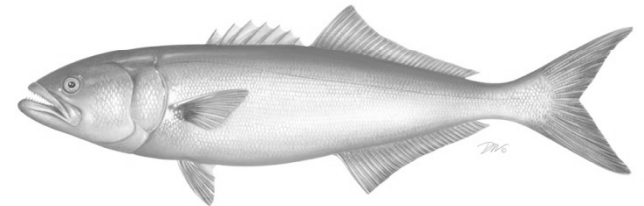
**Arlington, VA
February 8, 2012**





Background

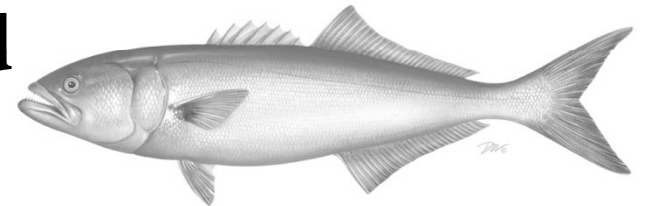
- **SARC approved an age-structured assessment program (ASAP) in 2005**
- **Stock was declared rebuilt in 2009**
- **However, the peer review stated results should be used with caution because of assessment uncertainties**





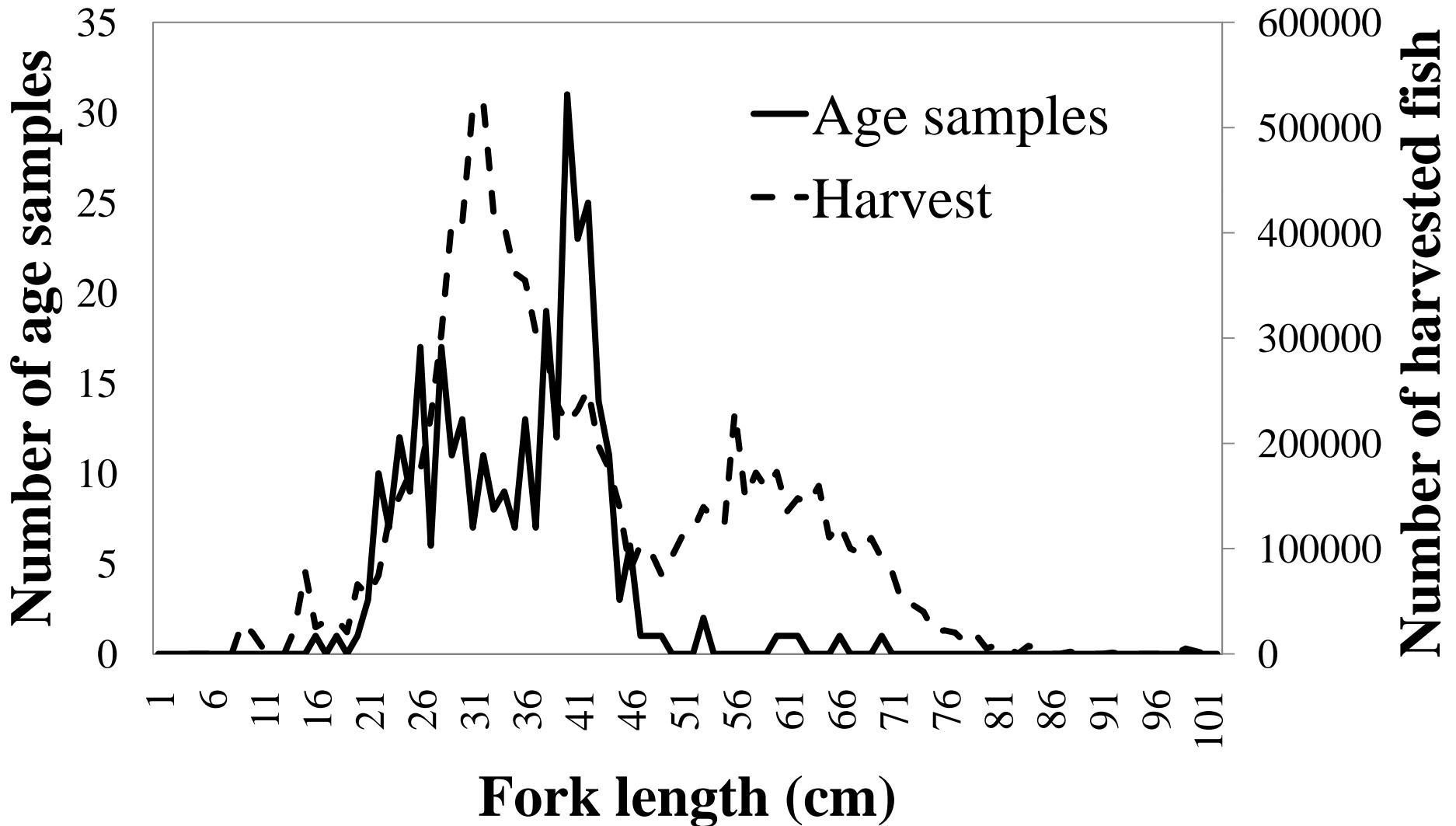
Statement of the Problem

- **Ageing difficulty**
 - Scales for early part of time series (1982-1997)
 - Otoliths for later part (1998-2004)
 - Discrepancies between the two structures.
- **Pooled age samples across years because of gaps in age-length keys**
- **Samples geographically limited**





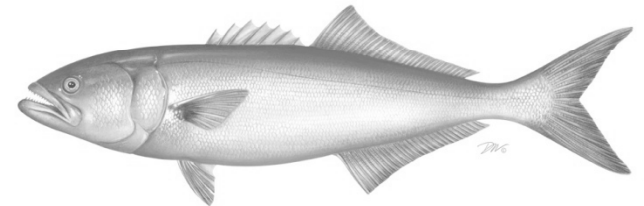
Statement of the Problem





Sampling Protocols

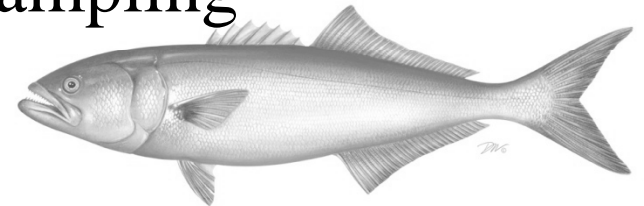
- **2011 ASMFC's Action Plan**
 - **Tasked to collect otoliths to improve age data for stock assessments**
- **Bluefish ageing workshop conducted in May 2011**





Bluefish Ageing Workshop

- Established a protocol to age bluefish using otoliths
- MA, NJ, NC, FL, NEAMAP & SEAMAP have ageing capabilities.
- Recommended a coast wide sampling program
 - Determine the optimum sample size for a coastwide age-length key
 - Test the feasibility of state level sampling





Sampling Protocol Options

- Option 1. Status quo. Sampling not part of state compliance
- Option 2. Sampling is part of state compliance
 - States that account for 5% of coastwide bluefish landings
 - MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, NC and VA 1998-2008
 - Required to collect 100 bluefish ages
 - 50 from January-June and 50 from July-December
 - Cover the full range of bluefish sizes
 - States may help each other with ageing
 - TC will review sampling design after first year
 - Implementation in 2012 fishing season



Public Comment Summary

- Received no public comments.

