



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Striped Bass Technical Committee

*Monday, June 22, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Conference call and Webinar*

Technical Committee Members: Charlton Godwin (Chair), Nicole Lengyel (Vice Chair), Kathy Hattala, Kevin Sullivan, Alexei Sharov, Heather Corbett, Derek Orner, Carol Hoffman, Ed Hale, Gary Nelson, Kurt Gottschall, Mike Kaufman, Luke Lyon, Steve Minkinen, Wilson Laney,

Stock Assessment Subcommittee Members: Mike Celestino, Angela Giuliana, Beth Versak,

Others: Eric Durell, Simon Brown, Ryan (MD), Roger

Staff: Katie Drew, Max Appelman

Summary:

The Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call and webinar to discuss (1) ongoing board tasks, (2) the development of fleet-specific fishing mortality reference points, and (3) to discuss the timeline for the stock assessment update which is scheduled for review by the Board at the annual meeting in November.

First on the agenda for discussion was estimating total reduction with final state options from Addendum IV. Recreational harvest estimates were based on 2013 MRIP data, where 2013 harvest (A+B1) was queried for each fishery (i.e., coastal, seasonal, and trophy fisheries by state) and the percent estimated reduction for each fishery was subtracted resulting in an estimate for 2015 harvest by fishery. Nine percent of coastwide released fish (MRIP B2's) was added to the total harvest for 2013 and 2015 to account for dead discards. The percent difference was calculated between the total 2013 and 2015 harvest (A+B1+9% of B2).

TC members identified that the methods explained above account for dead discards twice since the estimated percent reductions for the new regulations already account for dead discards. The estimated percent reduction for each fishery should be applied to the total removals for that fishery, including dead discards (i.e., A+B1+9% of B2).

For the coastal commercial fishery, if harvest in 2013 was higher than the 2015 quota under Addendum IV, then it was assumed harvest will reach the new quota for that state. If 2013 harvest was below the new quota, then harvest in 2015 was assumed equal to harvest in 2013. The same method was followed for the Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries, except using harvest in 2012, and a 20.5% reduction from that harvest for the 2015 quota as stipulated in Addendum IV. State-specific estimates were totaled and the percent difference was calculated between the respective totals. All figures are calculated in pounds.

Staff will use fish-weight conversions from 2014 Compliance reports (2013 fishing season) to convert pounds of fish to number of fish so that a population-wide harvest estimate can be calculated in number of fish for 2015. **If states have fish-weight conversions different from those provided in the compliance reports then they should send them to Staff. ACTION: Staff will amend the harvest estimate tables with the mentioned recommendations, and circulate to the group for review by the end of the week.**

The TC noted that it should be stressed to the Board that these estimates for 2015 that incorporate Addendum IV regulation assume the same pattern of harvest as 2013 (2012 for the Chesapeake Bay commercial fishery). It is likely that actual harvest in 2015 will not be similar to these estimates due to inevitable difference in population and fishery dynamics between years. However, this estimate reflects the best available data at this time.

Second and third on the agenda relate to non-compliance rates for 2015 and how they could impact the total reduction estimate. Staff presented non-compliance estimates based on MRIP data on the number of trips and number of fish harvested from each trip. Seven percent is the average annual non-compliance rate from 2011-2013 (i.e., 7% of harvest is from non-compliant trips). TC members questioned how to account for misreported and falsely recorded trips, indicating that some records are actually compliant when identified as non-compliant (e.g., coding errors, miscounted anglers, or even recreational trips that should have been recorded as commercial).

TC members concluded that there are many caveats to consider, and ultimately non-compliance is extremely variable year to year. From a statistical standpoint, there is just too much uncertainty to attribute any accuracy to a 2015 non-compliance rate estimate. Effort is really the main driver for what the 2015 reduction in harvest will be, and non-compliance could be anywhere from 0% compliance to 100% compliance, with strong outreach and education. **ACTION: The TC will present a range of non-compliance figures (i.e., 4-15%, based on 2011, 2012 and 2013 MRIP data) at the upcoming August meeting based on the described methods.**

The next agenda item was to discuss the likelihood of achieving F_{target} with final state options. Since a stock assessment update is scheduled for review in November, the **TC unanimously agreed that this task should wait to use the results of the update so that it reflects the current condition of the stock. This will then be available for review by the Board in November, as well as the stock assessment update.**

The TC then discussed development of coastal and discard fleet fishing mortality (F) reference points consistent with the Chesapeake Bay F reference point. Staff presented preliminary potential methods. There were concerns that the methods presented resulted in estimates that were not consistent with the overall coastwide reference points, and it was decided that the methodology should be reviewed in more detail before a final recommendation is made. **ACTION: Staff will develop a document to circulate to the TC by the end of the week which clearly describes the proposed methodology, and all the caveats and assumptions to be considered.**

The last item on the agenda was discussion of the timeline for the 2015 stock assessment. All states have submitted compliance reports and Excel spreadsheets for the 2015 stock status update (except one; expected to submit those reports early this week). Some TC members identified a lag in age-length key (ALK) development compared to reporting, where compliance reports are using borrowed ALKs from previous years since they aren't yet developed for the current year.

ACTION: TC members should go back into past compliance reports and substitute out borrowed ALKs with the correct ones. Additionally, TC members will assemble the weight-at-age information from the 2013 and 2014 compliance reports for the assessment update.

Gary Nelson, runs the stock assessment model for the updates, and expects to have all data formatted and ready for analysis by the end of August. Alexei Sharov, volunteered to run the model separately for QA/QC purposes. The stock assessment update report will be available for Board approval at the annual meeting in November.

ACTION: The TC will reconvene via conference call and webinar shortly after the holiday (July 4th) to (1) review the final harvest reduction estimate, (2) review the final 2015 non-compliance figures, (3) review progress with the stock assessment update for November, and (4) to continue discussion for fleet-specific F reference points.