



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 10, 2005

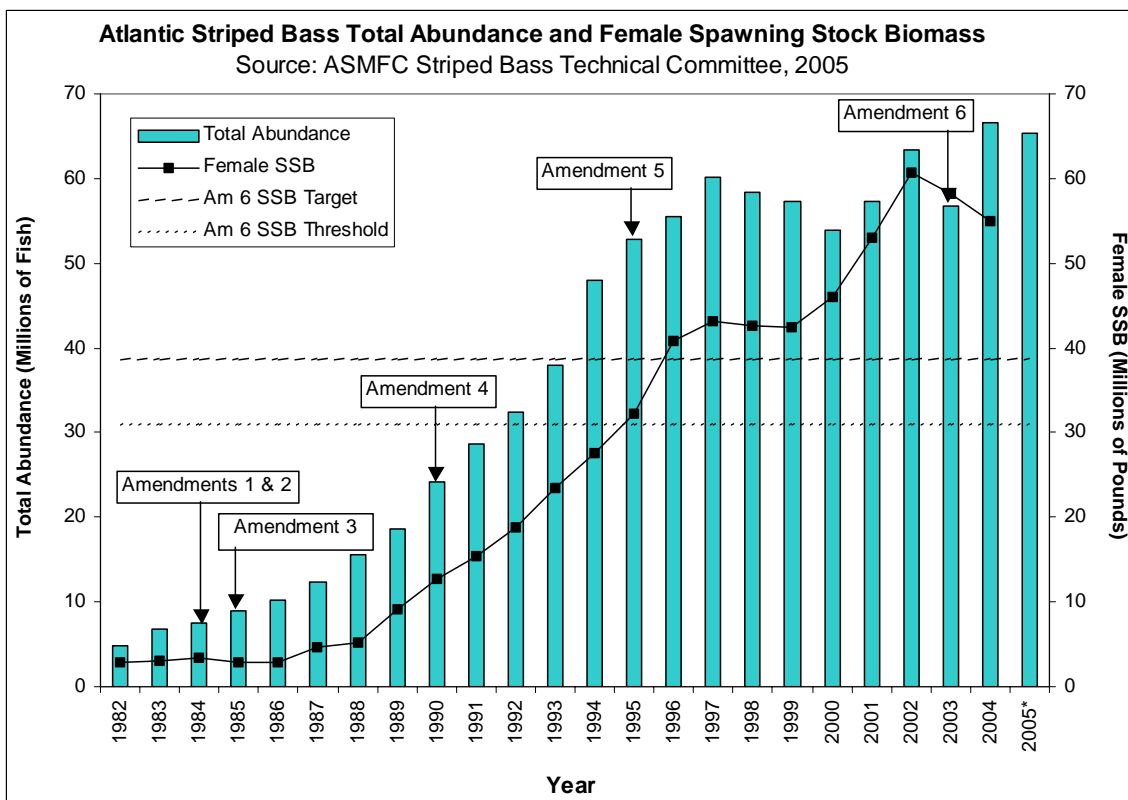
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(Revises October 31 Release by correcting the abundance estimate to 65.3 million fish versus millions of pounds and updating the graph to reflect total abundance of fish versus total biomass)

### Striped Bass Stock Assessment Indicates Healthy Stock

*Total Abundance, Female Spawning Stock Biomass and Recruitment Remain High*

Scientific advice presented to the Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board indicates that striped bass management under Amendment 6 to the Interstate Plan continues to be a success. The virtual population analysis (VPA) estimates that the resource remains at a high level of abundance at 65.3 million fish, 10 percent higher than the average stock size for the previous five years. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) is estimated at 55 million pounds and is well above the SSB target and threshold levels of 38.6 and 30.9 million pounds, respectively. Recruitment of young fish (age 1) at 12.7 million is close to the average recruitment observed since the stock was first declared recovered in 1995. Complementary tagging studies estimate that striped bass abundance may actually be higher than the VPA estimates.



The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, with 2004 fishing mortality below the Amendment 6 threshold of 0.41. Total catch has risen to 5.2 million fish, a 33 percent increase since implementation of Amendment 6 in 2003. Recreational harvest and discards accounted for 72.5 percent of the total mortality, with the majority of fish harvested by anglers in Virginia, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland and North Carolina. Commercial catch has risen slightly to 1.42 million fish, with Maryland commercial fisheries accounting for half of the harvest.

Based on the advice of the Technical Committee, the Board maintained the states' management programs at status quo. The Technical Committee will continue to monitor the status of the stock and refine stock assessment methodology as necessary. The next peer reviewed stock assessment is scheduled for 2007.

Copies of the stock assessment will be available on the Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News) by mid-November. For more information, please contact Lydia Munger, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <[lmunger@asmfc.org](mailto:lmunger@asmfc.org)>.

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