



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2014

To: Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

From: Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel

RE: Potential Fishing Effort Changes from a Catch and Release Fishery in the EEZ

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on April 14, 2014 via conference call. The main agenda item discussed was to consider how the striped bass fishery would change if catch and release fishing were allowed in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ; 3-200m miles). Below is a summary of their conference call.

Attendees

Riley Williams (NC) commercial

Arnold Leo (NY) commercial

Kelly Place (VA) commercial

John McMurray (NY) charter boat

Chuck Casella (MA) charter boat

Ed O'Brien (MD) charter boat

Louis Bassano (NJ) recreational

Bob Fjelstad (VA) recreational

John Pedrick (PA) recreational

Ed Cook (RI) recreational

Joe Fletcher (DC) recreational

Charlton Godwin (TC Chair)

Public

Louis MacKeil (MA)

Staff

Mike Waine, FMP Coordinator

Mark Robson, LEC Coordinator

The AP unanimously agreed that they are not in favor of considering an opening of the EEZ to catch and release fishing for striped bass. They made this recommendation because of their concern about the continued decline in striped bass spawning stock biomass, and opening the EEZ to catch and release fishing at this time could add an additional source of fishing mortality on the stock. The AP echoed the law enforcement concerns that opening the EEZ to catch and release fishing would invite unlawful harvest of the species in the EEZ. Additionally, the AP noted that a catch and release fishery in the EEZ would end up targeting large striped bass that aggregate in deeper water off the Chesapeake Bay in the winter time. It is believed that the methods of capture, tackle used, location of the fishery, and level of fishing effort could result in a higher release mortality rate in the EEZ. As a result, the AP concluded that a catch and release fishery in the EEZ would increase fishing effort and result in more dead discarded striped bass.