

Science and Statistical Committee, Bluefish Monitoring Committee Recommendations for 2010

The Council's Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) convened on July 16, 2009 at the Hilton Philadelphia Airport Hotel. The following consists of the SSC's draft consensus advice to the Council regarding bluefish management measures for 2010.

By consensus, the SSC recommended to the Council that it adopt a TAC (ABC) associated with $F=0.15$ for 2010 (i.e., associated TAC=34.376 million pounds and TAL=29.264 million lbs).

The SSC noted that this advice is based on consideration of the scientific uncertainty associated with the stock assessment of this species. The Committee also noted that no management uncertainty is included in this advice.

Sources of scientific uncertainty:

- age composition data are sparse for some portions of the catch-at-age matrix; the lack of medium size and age fish in the catch persists and the cause of this observation is unknown
- fishery independent trawl and seine surveys do not sample this pelagic species effectively, so survey indices do not track stock abundance
- the recreational component of the fishery represents the majority of the catch and recreational catch estimates at the state level are highly uncertain

The Council's Bluefish Monitoring Committee (MC) convened July 17, 2009 at the Hilton Philadelphia Airport Hotel. The following consists of that committee's consensus advice to the Council regarding bluefish management measures for 2010.

The MC recommended setting management measures in a manner that would achieve F target = 0.15 for 2010. This corresponds to: 1) 34.376 m lbs TAC and 2) 29.264 m lbs TAL based on a reduction of the TAC by 5.112 m lbs (estimated discards for 2010).

The MC observed that the 2009 recreational fishery data are preliminary at this time and are, therefore, unsuitable for use in projecting 2010 recreational harvest. The MC recommended that expected recreational landings in 2010 be assumed to be consistent with recreational landings from 2008 (18.900 m lb) which are slightly above the average recreational landings for the past five years (18.115 m lb). Under this scenario, a transfer of 3.714 m lbs from the recreational fishery to the commercial fishery would be possible and would provide for a commercial quota equivalent to the greatest level of commercial landings observed in the past ten years (8.688 m lb; 2001). Additionally, the resulting recreational harvest limit (20.575 m lb) would provide a 1.675 m lb cushion should recreational landings exceed expected levels. The allocation of the bluefish TAL among the recreational and commercial sectors (Table 1) and among the Atlantic states (Table 2) is summarized below.

Table 1. Monitoring Committee recommendations for bluefish TAC/TAL, commercial/recreational allocations in 2010.

Allocation of TAL at F target = 0.15:

	lbs
TAC	34,376,328
Discards	5,112,514
TAL	29,263,814
17% comm	4,974,848
83% rec	24,288,966
"proj" rec landings	18,900,193
rec transfer	3,713,539
adj comm quota	8,688,387
adj rec harvest limit	20,575,427

Table 2. Initial Allocation of 2010 Commercial Quota among Atlantic States (lbs).

State	Pct of Total ¹	Initial State Allocation	2008 Landings ²	Initial Difference
ME	0.6685%	58,082	824	57,258
NH	0.4145%	36,013	8,153	27,860
MA	6.7167%	583,573	509,586	73,987
RI	6.8081%	591,514	414,881	176,633
CT	1.2663%	110,021	37,497	72,524
NY	10.3851%	902,298	1,262,096	(359,798)
NJ	14.8162%	1,287,289	1,023,684	263,605
DE	1.8782%	163,185	21,718	141,467
MD	3.0018%	260,808	80,369	180,439
VA	11.8795%	1,032,137	530,908	501,229
NC	32.0608%	2,785,566	1,929,097	856,469
SC	0.0352%	3,058	367	2,691
GA	0.0095%	825	40	785
FL	10.0597%	874,026	148,428	725,598
Total		8,688,387	5,967,648	

¹ As established in Amendment 1.

² From 2008 Dealer reports (ME – VA) and SEFSC Gen Canv. Data (NC – FL)