

Summer Flounder 2021 Recreational Measures

Council and Board
December 15, 2020



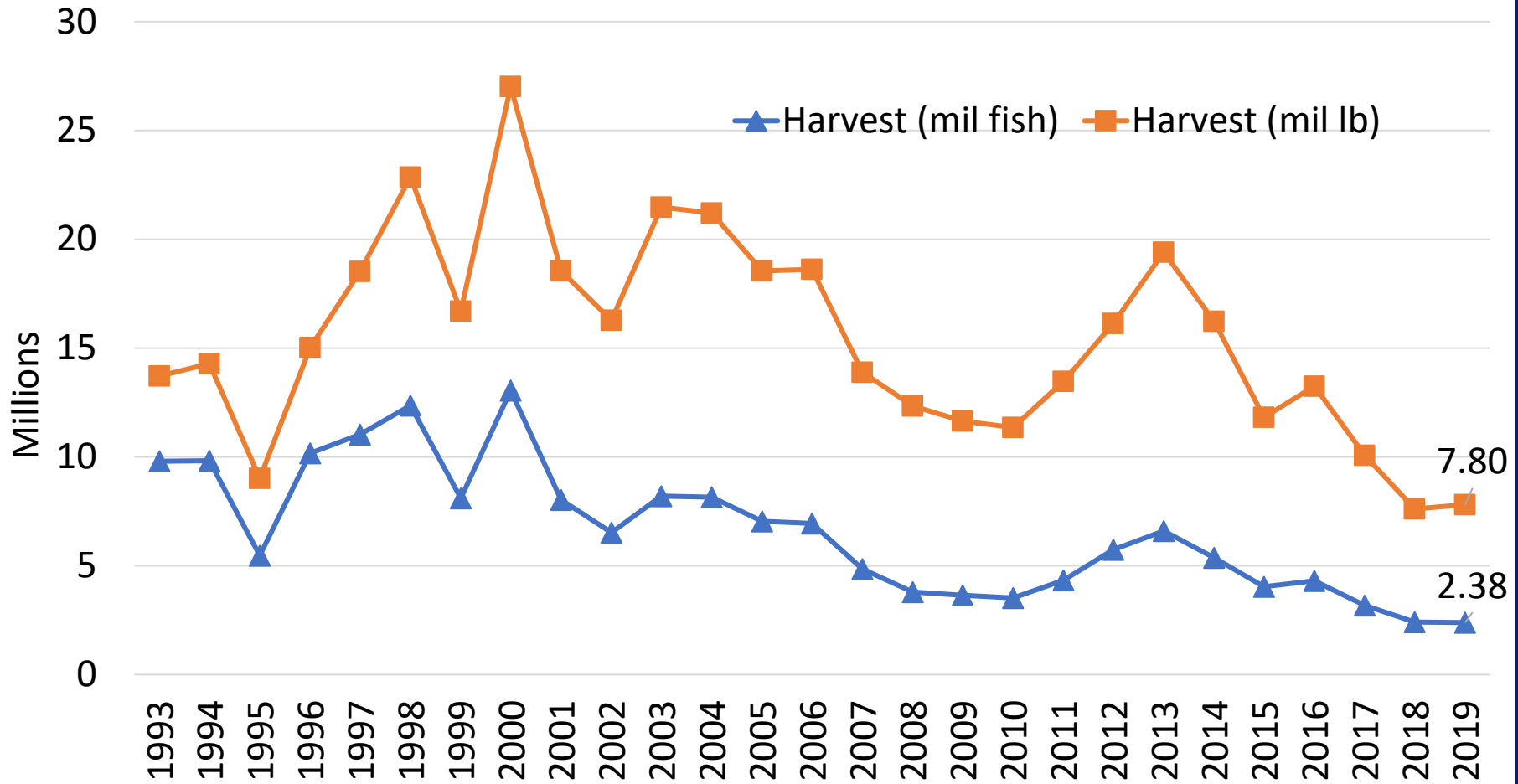
Objectives

- Review recent recreational fishery data, performance, AP recommendations, and Monitoring Committee recommendations for 2021 rec. measures
- Recommend use of coastwide measures or conservation equivalency and associated measures to achieve 2021 RHL (8.32 mil lb)

2021 Harvest Limit

- August 2020: Council and Board revised previously implemented 2021 RHL to 8.32 mil lb to reflect new Council risk policy
 - Increase of 8% from 2019-2020 RHL of 7.69 mil lb

Summer flounder rec. harvest 1993-2019



Rec. Harvest Limit Performance

Recreational performance through 2018 can only be evaluated using PRIOR MRIP estimates; 2019 can be evaluated using new MRIP

Year	Rec. Harvest – OLD MRIP (mil lb)	RHL (mil lb)	Rec. % Over/ Under	Rec. Harvest – NEW MRIP (mil lb)	PSE (ME- VA) - NEW MRIP (mil lb)
2015	4.72	7.38	-36%	11.83	7.8
2016	6.18	5.42	+14%	13.24	10.8
2017	3.19	3.77	-15%	10.06	13.4
2018	3.35	4.42	-24%	7.60	8.5
2019	-	7.69	+1%	7.80	9.6
2020	-	7.69	-	-	-
2021 (proposed)	-	8.32	-	-	-

Recreational Catch Limit Performance: Accountability Measures Not Triggered for 2021

Recreational accountability measures (AMs) reviewed based on 3-year moving average of dead recreational catch vs. recreational catch limits

	Rec. Harvest	Rec. Dead Discards	Total Rec. Catch	Rec. ACL	Over/Under
2017 (old MRIP)	3.19	0.94	4.13	4.72	-13%
2018 (old MRIP)	3.35	0.97	4.32	5.53	-22%
2019 (new MRIP)	7.80	3.04	10.84	11.51	-6%

2020 Recreational Measures

- Regional Conservation Equivalency
 - State measures control harvest; federal measures waived
- Non-preferred coastwide measures
 - Implemented in federal regulations, but waived
 - 19-inches, 4 fish, May 15-Sept. 15
- Precautionary default
 - “Deterrent” measures
 - 20-inch TL, 2 fish, July 1-August 31

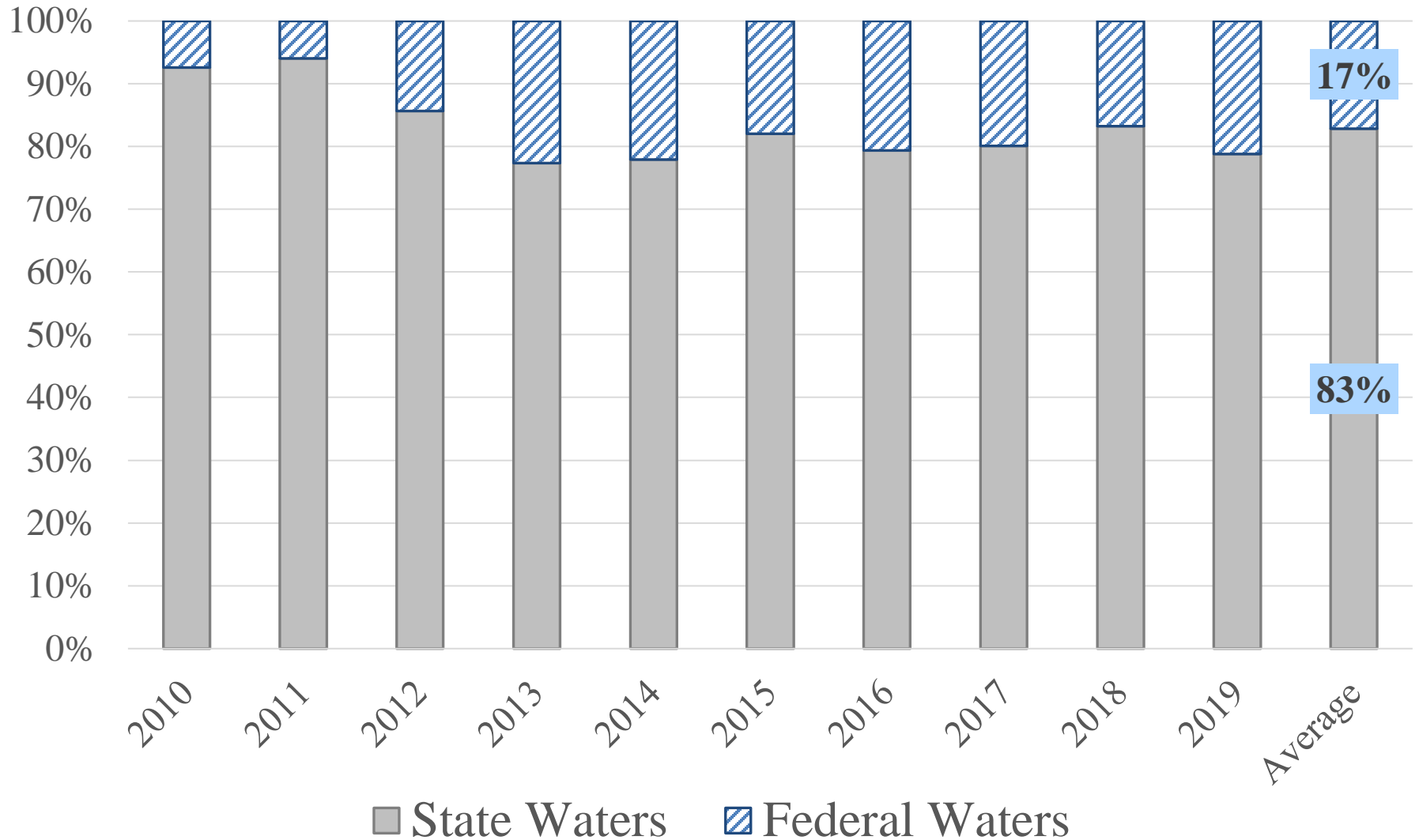
2020 State Measures

	Min. Size (in)	Possession Limit	Season
MA	17	5	May 23-October 9
RI	19	6	May 3-December 31
RI SHORE	19	4 ^a	
	17	2 ^a	
CT	19	4	May 4- September 30
CT SHORE SITES	17		
NY	19		
NJ	18	3	May 22- September 19
NJ SHORE SITE	16	2	
NJ DE BAY	17	3	
DE, MD, PRFC, VA	16.5	4	January 1- December 31
NC	15	4	August 16-September 30 ^b

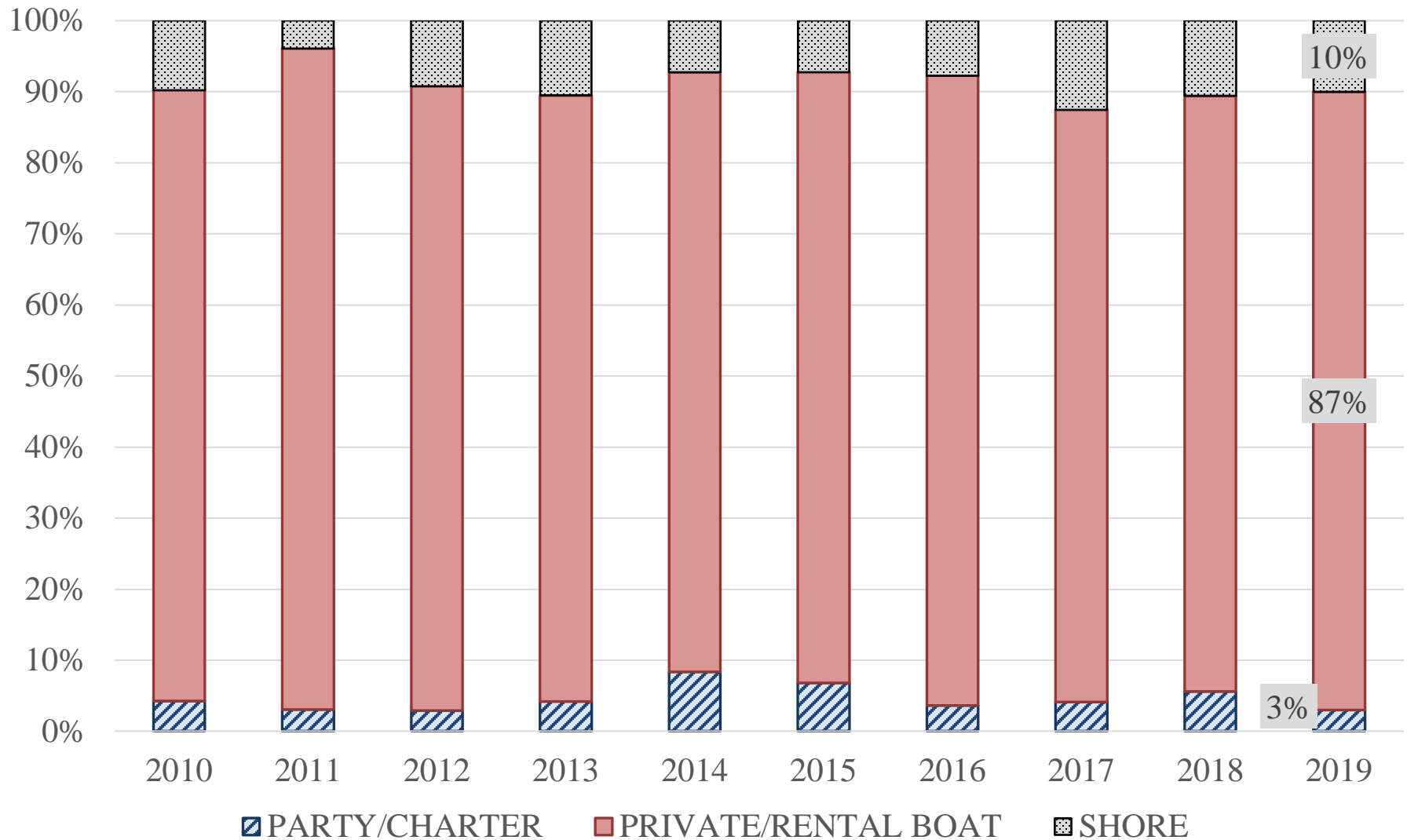
^a Combined limit of 6 fish, no more than 2 at 17 inches

^b Adjusted for 2020 due to measures to end overfishing on southern flounder

State vs. Federal Waters Harvest (# fish)



Harvest (#) by mode



Staff Recommendation

- Status quo regional conservation equivalency for 2021 with status quo measures
- No information to inform 2020 performance; 2019 performance just over RHL
- Not overfished, overfishing not occurring
- Status quo measures also:
 - Promote stability in measures
 - Consistent with recent MC and Council/Board recommendations to consider PSEs and avoid smaller adjustments
 - Promotes compliance and understanding of relationship between measures and harvest

Staff Recommendation

- No changes to non-preferred coastwide or precautionary default
 - Non-preferred coastwide measures
 - Implemented in federal regulations, but waived
 - 19-inches, 4 fish, May 15-Sept. 15
 - Precautionary default
 - “Deterrent” measures
 - 20-inch TL, 2 fish, July 1-August 31

Advisory Panel Comments

- 6 voiced support for *status quo*
 - Stability in measures, concern with changing based on limited data
 - Harvest expected to be down this year especially in for hire sector
- 1 concerned with whether conservation equivalency is feasible/best available science with no 2020 state data to support it

Advisory Panel Comments

- 1 concerned with off-season rec. discards and how they are accounted for
- 1 noted that commercial and rec discards in general are a huge problem that the Council/Board should better address

Advisory Panel Comments

- 1 spoke in support of mandatory private angler electronic reporting and supported evaluating total length limit with mandatory retention
 - Also requested SSC evaluation of estuary release of larvae of fluke, scup, BSB
- 1 hopeful that reduced effort earlier in 2020 during spawning season would lead to improved recruitment this year
- Proportions of harvest by mode seem way off

Monitoring Committee Recs.

- Agreed with staff recommendation for status quo measures in 2021 and no changes to non-preferred coastwide or precautionary default
- Any adjustments would be highly uncertain given lack of 2020 data
- 2019 performance does not indicate cause for concern with current measures

Monitoring Committee Recs.

- Recommends against state level adjustments for 2021 under CE
- Exception: supports allowing for minor changes in open seasons that would not increase harvest
 - e.g., NJ's adjustment last year shifting season by 2 days on either end to allow holiday opening

Recommendation Summary

- Regional conservation equivalency with status quo state measures
 - Except allowing for proposals for minor season adjustments that do not increase harvest
- Non-preferred coastwide measures: 19 inches, 4 fish, May 15-Sept. 15
- Status quo precautionary default: 20 inches, 2 fish, July 1-August 31