

EAFM Recreational Summer Founder Discards MSE

Possible management scenarios

March 2022

Below are different management scenarios that will be tested through our MSE simulation model framework. We will evaluate how each scenario performs relative to the different performance metrics we've developed and how well they support achieving our four different management objectives. We will also see how the different scenarios perform under different conditions (e.g., biased MRIP data, changing stock distributions, or different stock productivities). For this project, we are not trying to specify or recommend an exact set of management regulations that would be implemented in 2023. Rather, we want to ensure the scenarios considered generally represent the range and scope the fishery is likely to operate in and are of interest to management and stakeholders. In addition, we need to create scenarios that are different enough from one another, particularly within the different categories, in order to evaluate differences in performance. We will then use the model simulation results and our trade-off analysis to see what scenario(s) and/or categories of scenarios perform best at reducing discards, converting discards into harvest, and achieve our other management goals.

Options with Current Regional Breakdown

1. Status quo – using 2019 regs as baseline
 - a. Most states regs have remained relatively similar, exception is N.C. whose season in 2020 and 2021 were reduced
2. Keep existing regulations (possession and season) for each state, but drop the minimum size by 1 inch (not going lower than 16 inches) within each state

Options with Different Regional Breakdown

3. 3 region option (MA-NY, NJ, DE-NC – same as regions used in black sea bass) – trying to minimize regulatory complexity, increase equity, and allow for some modifications from current regs
 - a. MA-NY: 4 fish @ 18" May 1-Sept 30
 - b. NJ: 3 fish @ 17" May 15-Sept 15
 - c. DE-NC: 4 fish @16" All year

Coastwide Options

4. 1 fish @ 14" and season from May 15-Sept 15
 - a. Lower bounds on possession limit and size limit, align with commercial minimum, increase potential to take home a fish
5. 3 fish @ 17" and season from May 1-Sept 30

- a. Somewhat in the middle of all state regulations now (components in some states more liberal, some more restrictive) and within range of non-preferred coastwide measures
- 6. 2 fish @ 16"-19" (ie., up to 18.99 inches) and 1 @ 19" and greater and season from May 15-Sept 15
 - a. Interest from stakeholders and states, allows for one small fish to help increase opportunities across modes, larger slot size to address some TC comments, allow for any size above 18" but lower possession limit

Slot Limit Option

- 7. 3 fish at 16"-20" with season of May 15-Sept 15
 - a. This could also be considered under the Coastwide options since applied to all states, but kept separate to highlight difference. Interest in slot limits, done in other fisheries. Lower size limit to increase opportunities. Would not include a trophy fish, although interest from stakeholders

Other Considerations (lower priority, if time/feasible)

- 8. Season implications – run status quo option but open season for all states of April 1-Oct 31
 - a. Interest in modifications to the season to allow for greater overlap with other fisheries where fluke may be discarded, increased opportunities/angler satisfaction