

# Atlantic Chub Mackerel 2023-2025 Specifications



Council Meeting

June 8, 2022

# Meeting Objective

- Review:
  - Recent fishery information.
  - 2020-2022 specifications.
  - SSC, AP, and MC recommendations.
- Recommend 2023-2025 specifications.
  - Status quo recommended by SSC, AP, and MC.

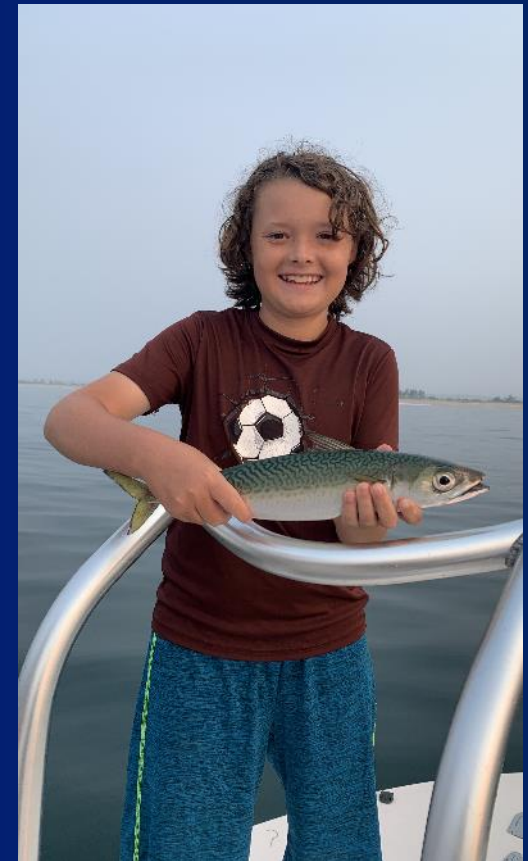
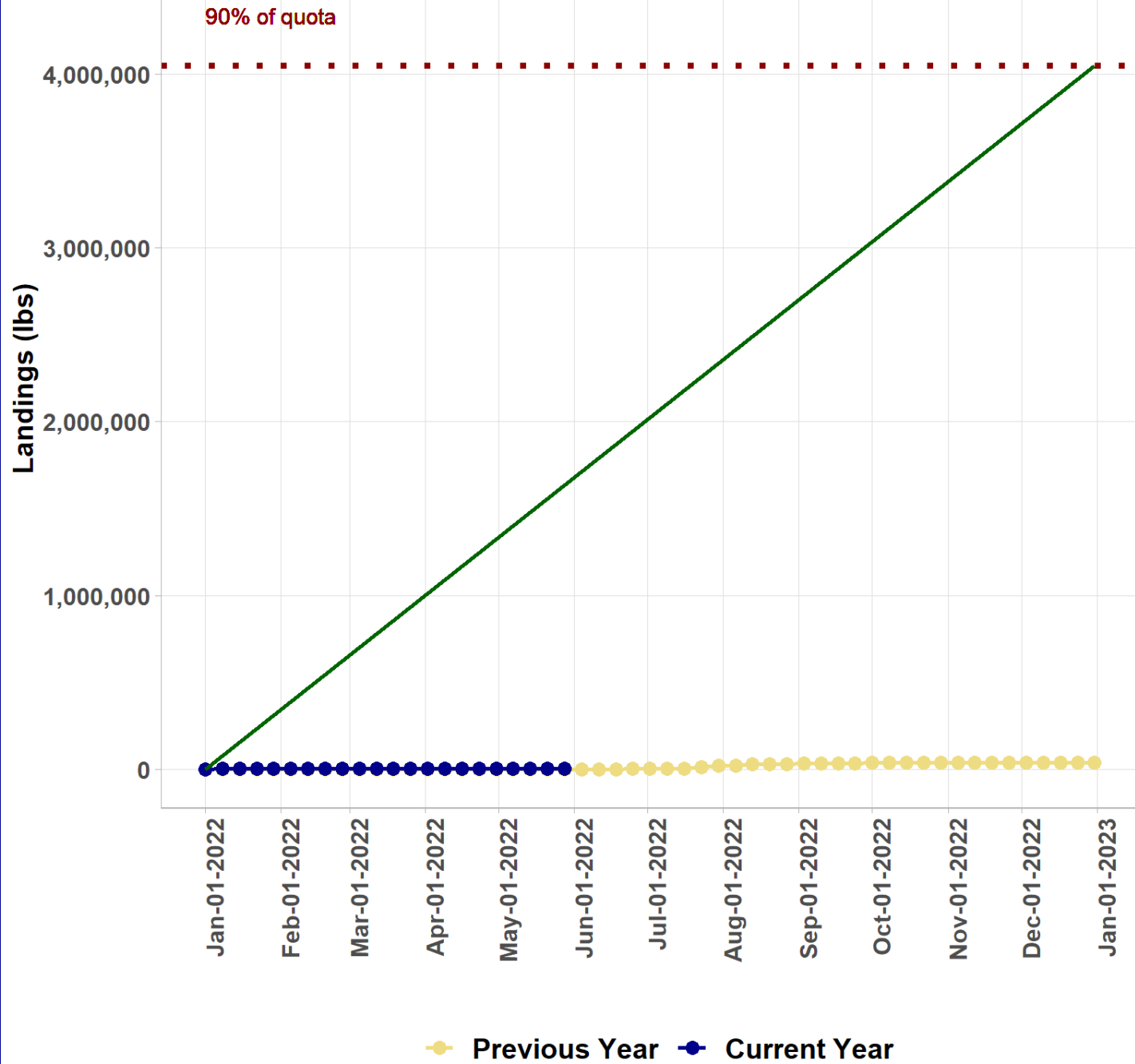


Photo credit: Jason Didden

# Com. & Rec. Landings



Quota: 4,499,486 lbs



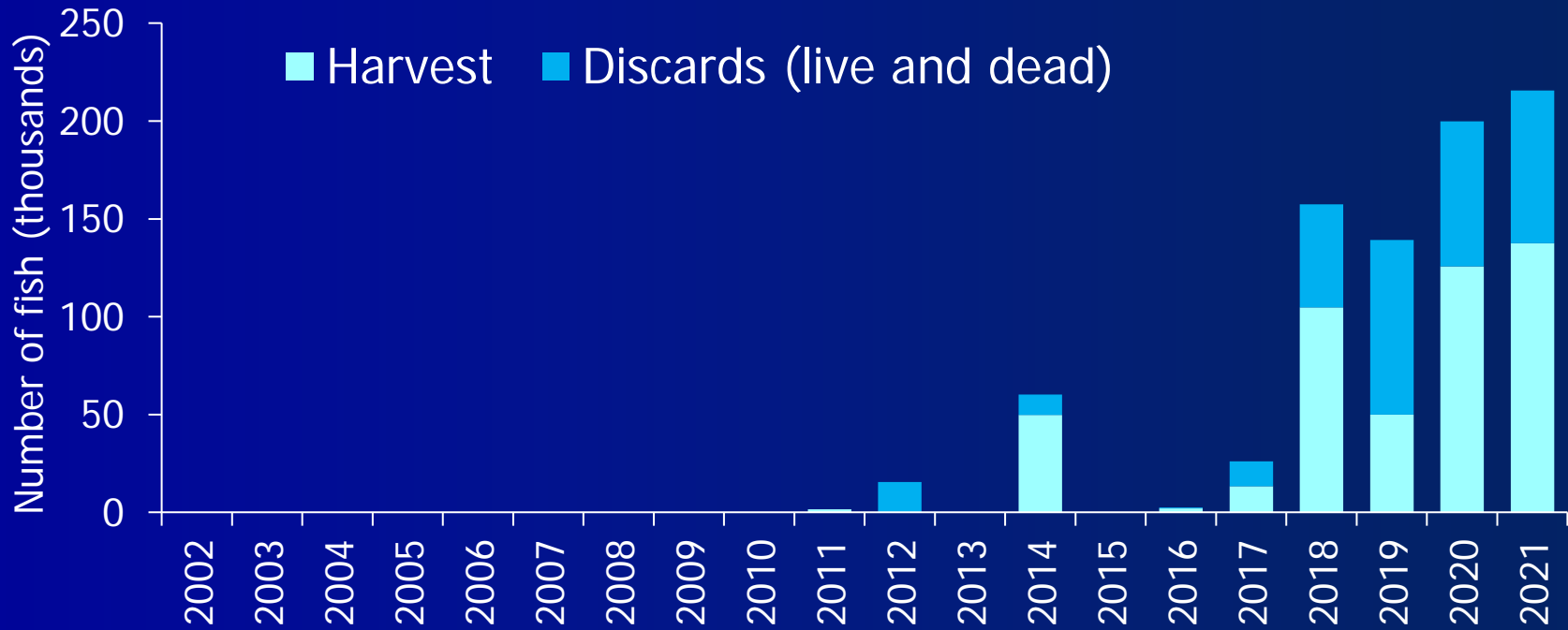
# Commercial Fishery

- Overlap with *Illex* squid fishery
  - Vessels, time of year, area
  - “Bailout” species/alternative fishery
- 95% of com. landings over past 20 years from fewer than 5 vessels, fewer than 3 dealers
- 91% landings from bottom trawl, 9% from midwater trawls (fed VTRs)
- 97% landings from June-October
- \$0.53/lb on avg, 2002-2021 (adjusted to 2021 \$)



# Recreational Fishery

- On avg. 2017-2021:
  - 56% harvest from state waters, 44% federal.
  - Most harvest in NY (42%), RI (28%), NJ (18%), CT (8%).
  - 57% private/rental, 38% party/charter, 5% shore.
  - Most harvest July-Aug (57%), Sept-Oct (40%).



## *Chub Mackerel ABCs for 2023-2025*

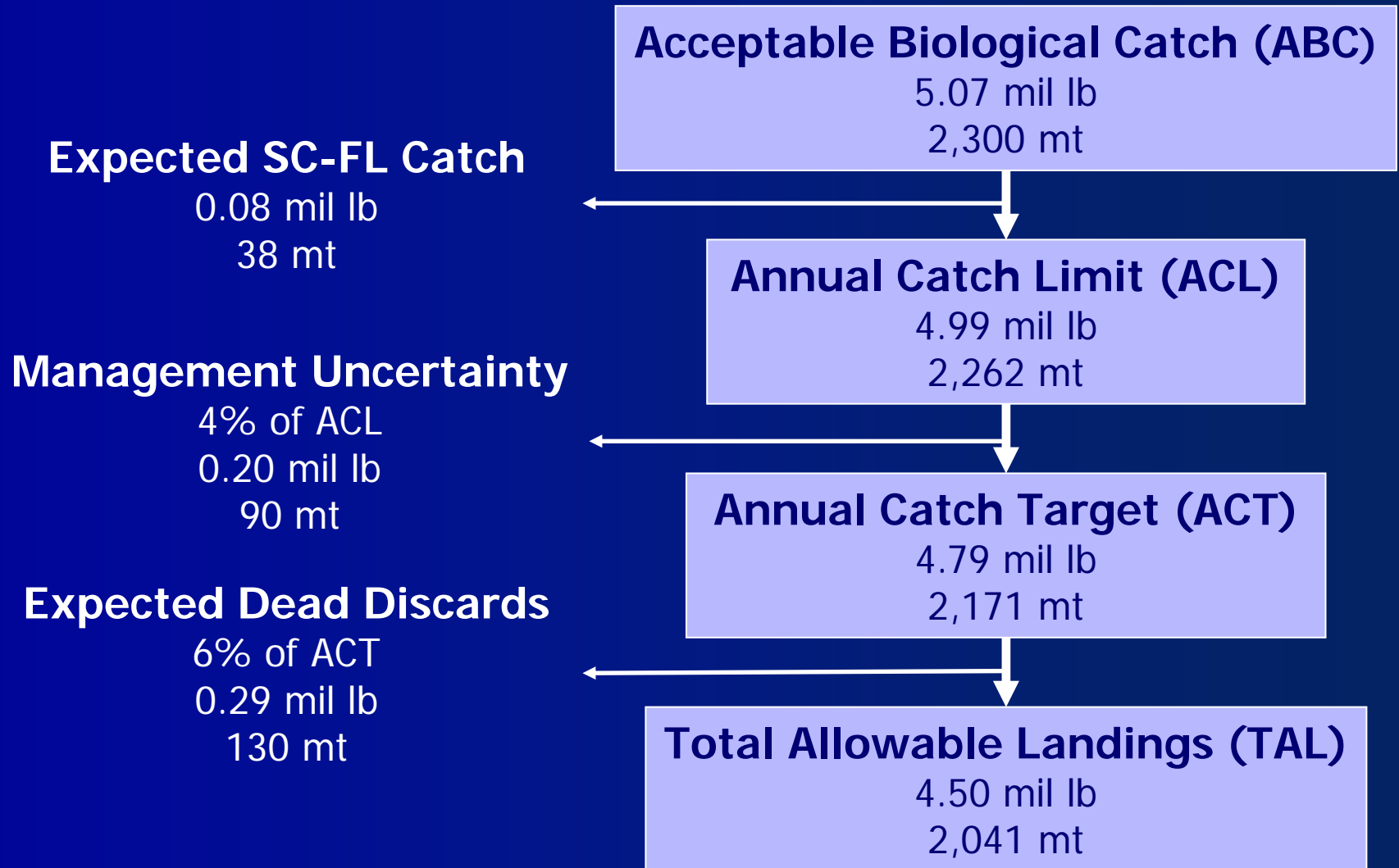
- No new information to inform specifications that are based on recent catches and expert judgement.
- Prospects for conventional stock assessment approaches are limited for the foreseeable future.
- Given general productivity of this widely distributed species and fisheries on similar species worldwide, current catches in Mid-Atlantic are unlikely to cause overfishing.
- **The SSC recommends continuation of the existing quota ABC = 2,300 mt for the period 2023-2025.**
- SSC believes recommendations are based on information that meets applicable National Standards for best scientific information available.

# *Chub Mackerel: Sources of Uncertainty and Research Recommendations*

- Sources of Uncertainty
  - Range expansion?
  - Range: Gulf of Mexico to Mid-Atlantic but limited stock structure info
  - No fishery-independent measures of abundance
  - Limited fishery-dependent data. Commercial fishing is often opportunistic (alternative species for *Ill*ex vessels)
  - Low observer coverage in potential fisheries
  - Diet study of potential predators revealed low incidence rates
  - High uncertainty in recreational catch
- Research Recommendations
  - Expand commercial fishery sampling
  - Comprehensive evaluation of spatial and temporal patterns for all data sources
  - Many others...
  - Collections should begin now to lay basis for future Research Track Assessment



# 2020-2022 Specifications



# ACL

- $ACL = ABC - \text{expected SC-FL catch}$ .
- Expected SC-FL catch = 38 mt / 84,500 lb.
- Intended as a conservative estimate.
- Represents ~2% of ABC.
- Highest com + rec landings, 1998-2017, increased by about 10% to account for discards, which are uncertain.
- Recent data suggest SC-FL catch has remained well below this amount.
  - No MRIP catch SC- FL east coast, 2018-2021.
  - Commercial data confidential, but landings less than 250 lb total, 2018-2021 combined.
- **MC recommends no change.**

# ACT

- $ACT = ACL - \text{mgmt. uncertainty buffer.}$
- Council previously recommended 4% reduction in ACL.
- **MC recommends no change.**

# TAL

- TAL = ACT – expected discards.
- No expanded discard estimates.
- Council previously recommended 6% reduction in ACT.
- Based on overall % discards shown in 2003-2017 observer data. Driven by years with higher catch.
- More recent years shown higher discard %, but lower overall catch.
- As ABC is loosely based on the year with highest catch, **MC recommends no changes.**

- Additional MC input:

- Observer data preferable to VTR for these calculations.
- Would be beneficial to have expanded SBRM discard estimates.

| Years                | Observer Discard % |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2006-2020 (15 years) | 7% (337 trips)     |
| 2011-2020 (10 years) | 6% (301 trips)     |
| 2016-2020 (5 years)  | 43% (193 trips)    |
| 2013-2015 (top 3)    | 4% (95 trips)      |
| 2013 (historic high) | 3% (27 trips)      |

# Possession Limits

- Commercial possession limits.
  - 40,000 lb after 90% of TAL projected to be landed.
  - 10,000 lb after 100% of TAL projected to be landed.
- No recreational possession limit.
- 40,000 lb intended to discourage targeting while minimizing dead discards.
- 2002-2021 (typo in staff memo, not 2020-2021): 90% of commercial trips landed less than 10,000 lb.
- **MC recommends no change.**

# AP Fishery Performance Report

- Commercial fleet has not targeted chub mackerel in recent years. Focusing on Illex.
- Increasing recreational catch likely due to increased availability with warming waters.



Lund's Fisheries

# AP Fishery Performance Report

- No changes recommended to any mgmt. measures for 2023.
- No data to suggest changes are needed. Hopefully can have more data for next cycle of setting ABCs.
- Emerging fishery.
  - Mgmt is overly precautionary.
  - Should prioritize and support development of sustainable emerging fisheries.
  - Need to adapt to a changing environment.
- Recommend research on range of the species, especially regarding climate change.

# Thread Herring



- AP member associated with a processor/dealer that has encouraged vessels to target chub mackerel in the past said the company is now more interested in exploring potential for a thread herring fishery.
- Company submitted an EFP, but revisions were requested.
- MC member: would be first case of considering expanded fishery for a Forage Amendment EC species; therefore, thorough consideration needed regarding most appropriate process.



# Discussion

- Recommend 2023-2025 specifications.
- SSC, AP, MC recommend no changes from 2020-2022.

