



Black Sea Bass



SSC Meeting
July 24, 2023

Overview

- Stock status
- Recent fishery performance
- Advisory Panel Fishery Performance Report
- 2023 data update
- Staff recommendation for 2024 ABC
 - Set 2024 ABC equal to 2023 ABC

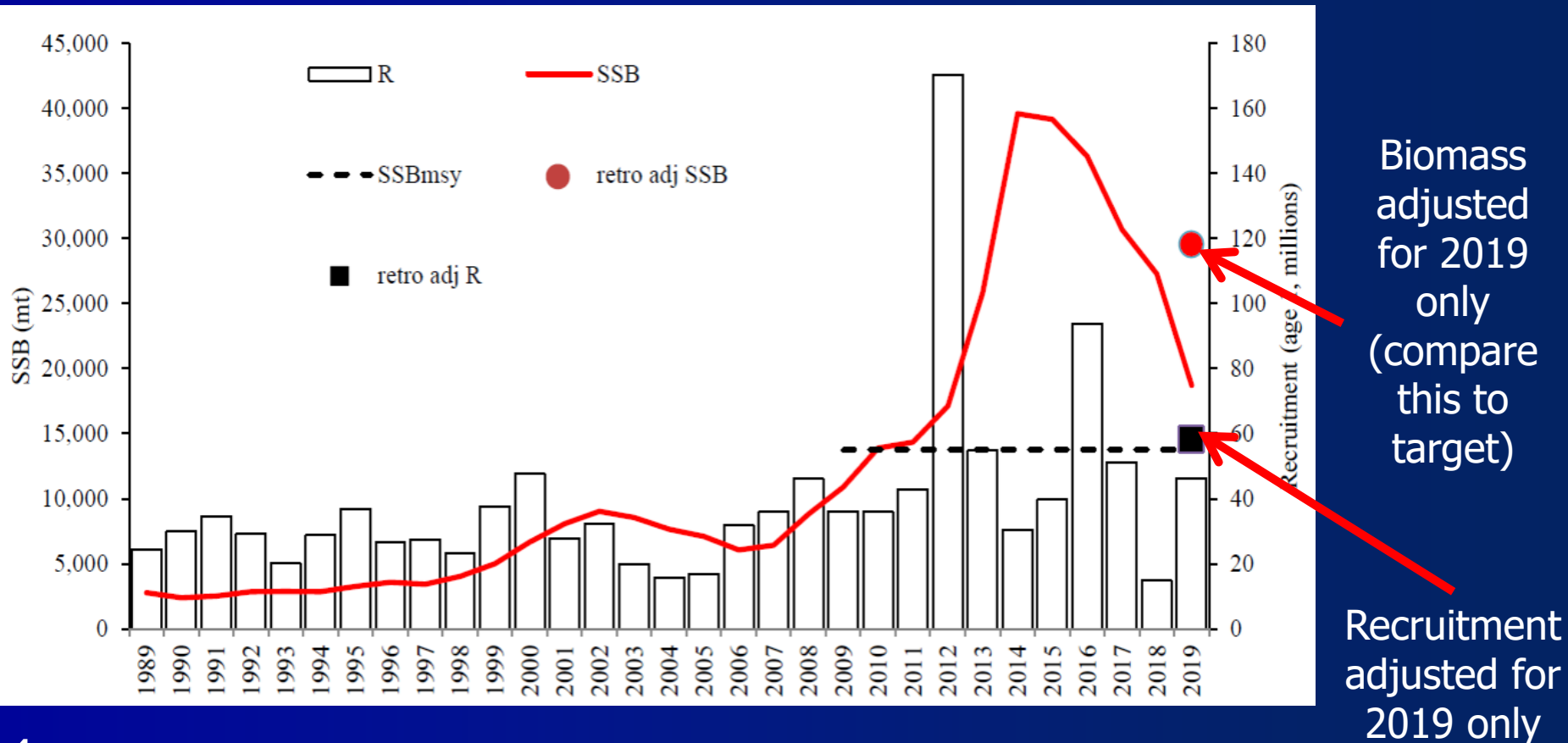
Stock Status

- 2021 management track assessment
 - Data through 2019
- Research track assessment currently in development
 - October 2023 peer review
- Stock status will be updated through a subsequent management track assessment in June 2024

Stock Status

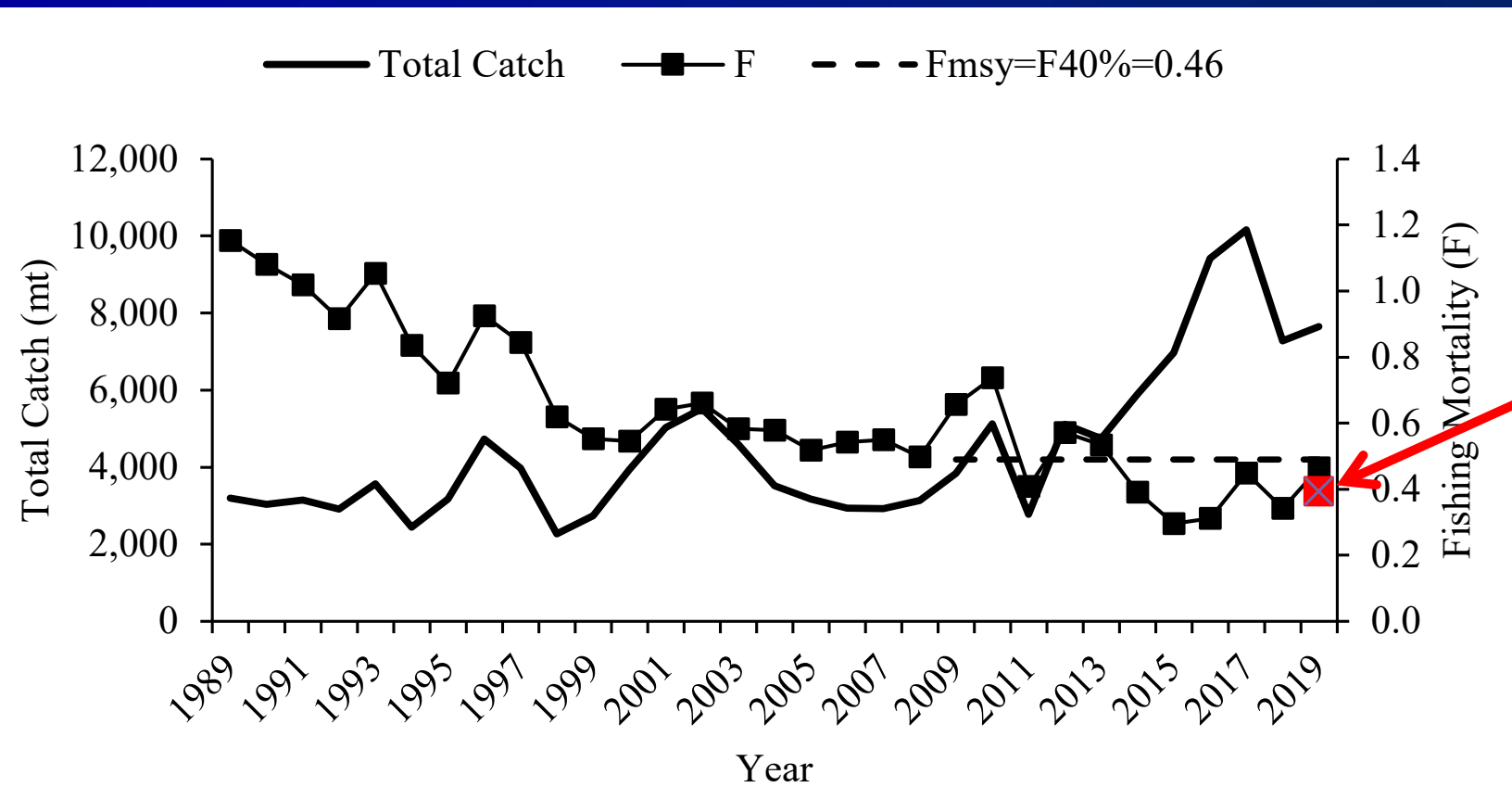
Not overfished.

Biomass about double the target level as of 2019.



Stock Status

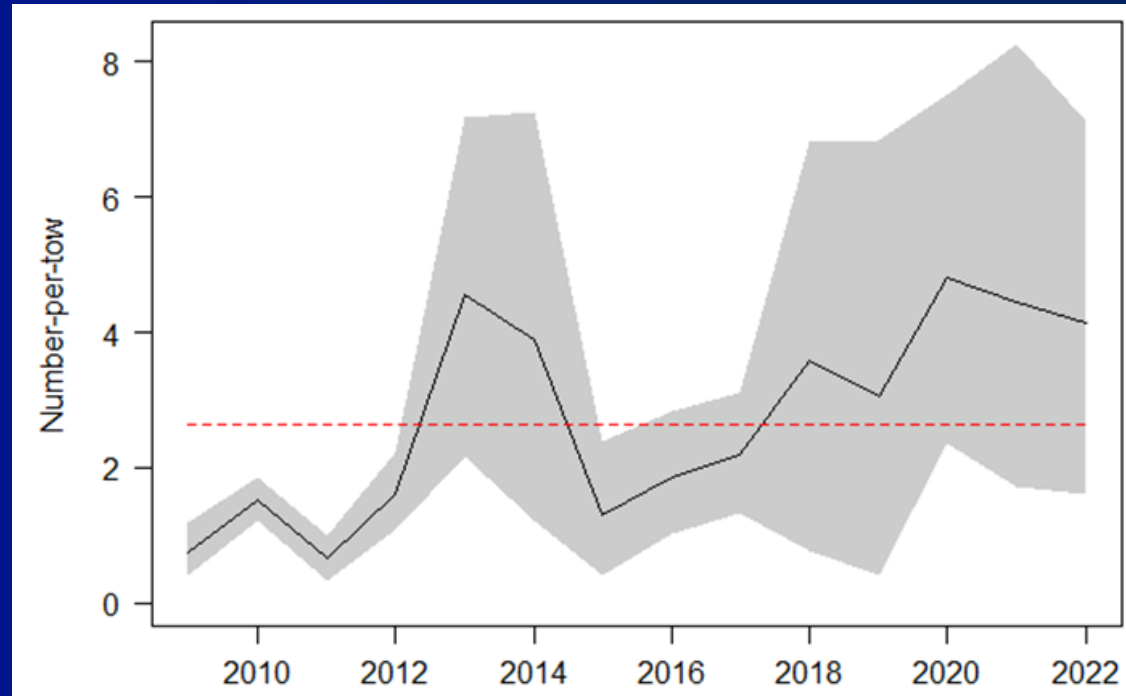
Overfishing not occurring as of 2019.



Fishing mortality adjusted for 2019 only (compare this to threshold)

Data Update

- Relative abundance from NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey has generally increased since 2015.
- Above avg. 2011, 2015, 2016, and 2019 cohorts apparent in aggregate index and/or age composition data.

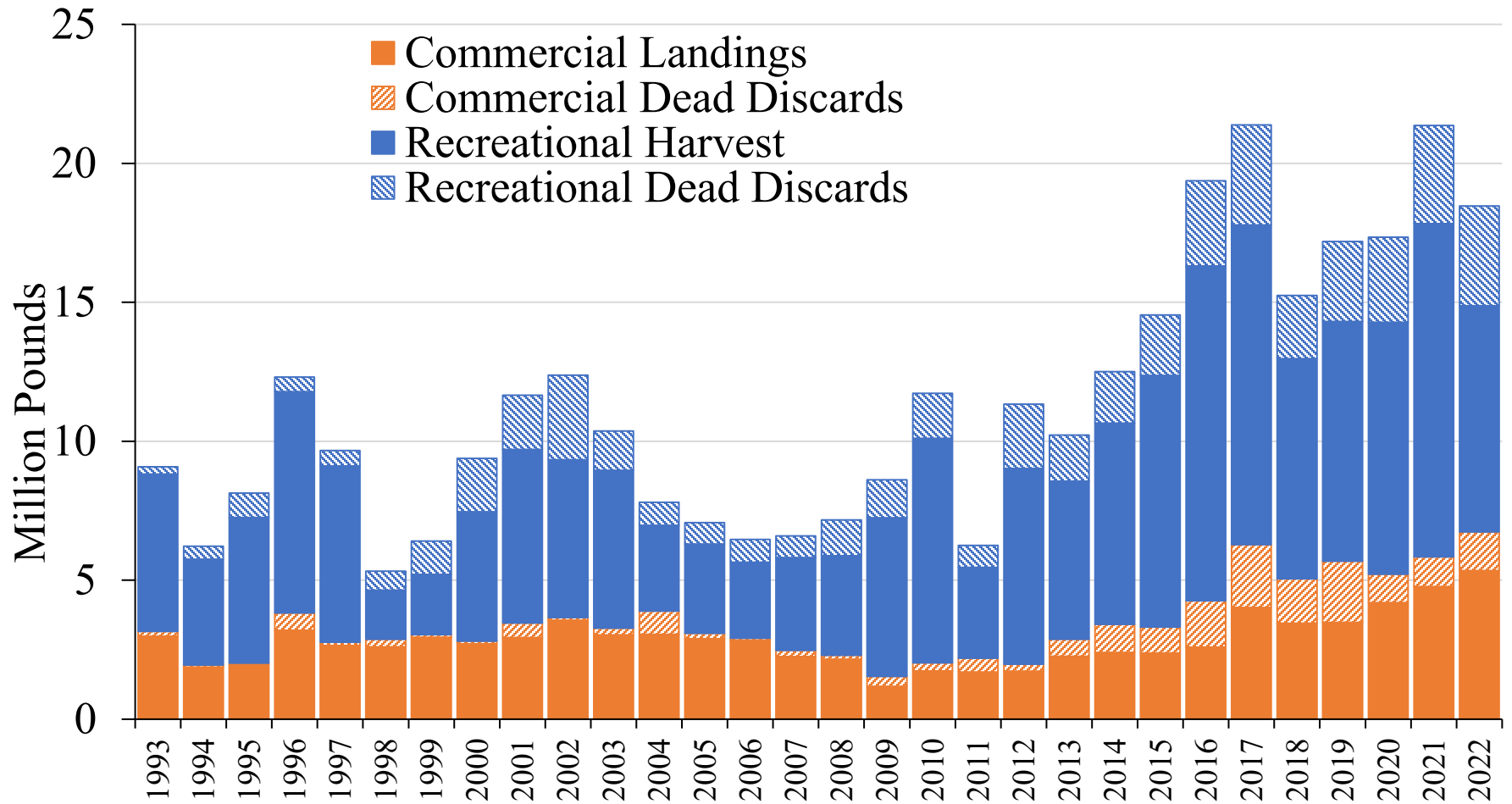


Stratified mean number-per-tow \pm 90% CI from spring bottom trawl survey, 2009-2022 (Bigelow years). The red dotted line represents the median.

OFLs and ABCs

Year	Total dead catch	OFL	OFL over/under	ABC	ABC over/under
2010	2.03	NA	NA	4.50	-55%
2011	2.10	NA	NA	4.50	-51%
2012	5.96	NA	NA	4.50	+32%
2013	5.99	NA	NA	5.50	+9%
2014	7.92	NA	NA	5.50	+44%
2015	7.92	NA	NA	5.50	+44%
2016	10.66	NA	NA	6.67	+60%
2017	11.70	12.05	-3%	10.47	+12%
2018	9.97	10.29	-3%	8.94	+12%
2019	9.64	10.29	-6%	8.94	+8%
2020	17.33	19.39	-11%	15.07	+15%
2021	21.35	17.68	+21%	17.45	+22%
2022	18.46	19.56	-6%	18.86	-2%
2023	--	17.01	--	16.66	--

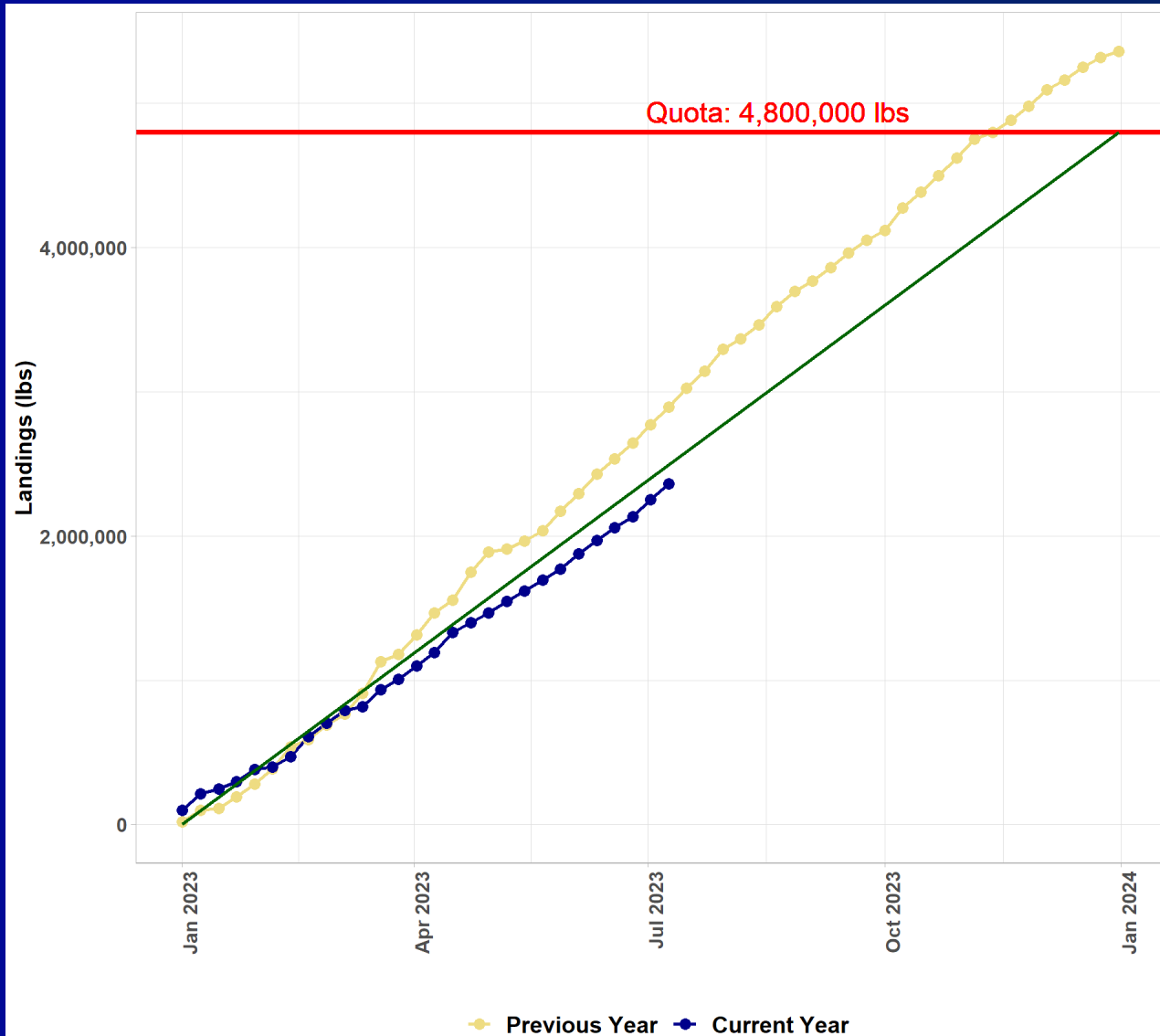
Total Catch



Commercial Fishery

Year	Com. land.	Com. quota	Quota over/under	Com. dead disc.	Projected com. dead discards	Disc. over/under	Com. dead catch	Com. ACL	ACL over/under
2014	2.40	2.17	+11%	1.01	0.36	+181%	3.41	2.60	+31%
2015	2.38	2.21	+8%	0.93	0.39	+138%	3.31	2.60	+27%
2016	2.59	2.71	-4%	1.67	0.44	+280%	4.26	3.15	+35%
2017	4.01	4.12	-3%	2.26	0.97	+133%	6.27	5.09	+23%
2018	3.46	3.52	-2%	1.59	0.83	+92%	5.05	4.35	+16%
2019	3.48	3.52	-1%	2.20	0.83	+165%	5.68	4.35	+31%
2020	4.20	5.58	-25%	1.03	1.40	-27%	5.22	6.98	-25%
2021	4.77	6.09	-22%	1.08	3.43	-69%	5.84	9.52	-39%
2022	5.35	6.47	-17%	1.39	3.63	-62%	6.74	10.10	-33%
2023	--	4.80	--	--	2.70	--	--	7.50	--

2023 Commercial Landings



Recreational Fishery

Year	Data	Rec. harvest	RHL	RHL over/under	Rec. dead disc.	Projected rec. dead discards	Rec. disc. over/under	Rec. dead catch	ACL	ACL over/under
2014	Old MRIP	3.67	2.26	+62%	0.84	0.50	+68%	4.51	2.90	+56%
2015		3.79	2.33	+63%	0.82	0.57	+44%	4.61	2.90	+59%
2016		5.19	2.82	+84%	1.21	0.57	+112%	6.40	3.52	+82%
2017		4.16	4.29	-3%	1.27	0.57	+123%	5.43	5.38	+1%
2018		3.82	3.66	+4%	1.10	0.70	+57%	4.92	4.59	+7%
2019		3.46	3.66	-5%	0.5	1.09	-54%	3.96	4.59	-14%
2020	New MRIP	9.05	5.81	+56%	3.06	0.93	+229%	12.11	8.09	+50%
2021		11.97	6.34	+89%	3.54	0.93	+280%	15.51	7.93	+96%
2022		8.14	6.74	+21%	3.59	2.02	+78%	11.73	8.76	+34%
2023		--	6.57	--	--	2.59	--	--	9.16	--

AP Fishery Performance Report

Recreational Fishery Issues

- Uniform % reductions in harvest across all states are especially hard on states with the most restrictive measures to start with.
- Multiple for-hire advisors support the use of different for-hire vs. private recreational measures.
- Rec. fishery is continually penalized despite robustness of the stock.
- Rec. restrictions hurt the economy as support businesses also suffer.

AP Fishery Performance Report

Recreational Fishery Issues, continued

- One advisor recommended “managing for abundance” – liberalize with caution, the stock assessment isn’t perfect.
- Another advisor disagreed – should take advantage of high biomass when it is available. Black sea bass are retained for food. Assessment doesn’t have a stock/recruitment relationship – extra caution may not result in increased biomass.

AP Fishery Performance Report

Recreational Fishery Issues, continued

- Lower minimum size limits help reduce discards, improve the fishing experience.
- One advisor noted that availability drives catch and expressed concern about comments that measures should be liberalized because biomass is high.
- One advisor recommended private recreational catch reporting through a cell phone app, use of a total cumulative length limit, a prohibition on discards, and larger hook sizes.

AP Fishery Performance Report

Commercial Fishery Issues

- Two recreational advisors supported reducing trawl bycatch (e.g., separate quotas for trawl vs. pot/trap).

AP Fishery Performance Report

General Comments on AP Participation

- Why is AP participation so low?
 - 12/24 MAFMC AP members and 3/31 ASMFC AP members on June 2023 webinar.
- Frustration that new data available after the AP meeting can negate AP input.
- Consider different/additional ways of collecting AP input
 - e.g., online survey before AP meetings, encourage greater discussion among AP members via email and phone in between meetings.
- Hold occasional in person meetings, just not in summer.
- Hold webinar meetings in the evenings.

Additional AP comments

- Frustration with restrictive regs is leading to non-compliance – people just want to take home a fish.
- Regulations should be more consistent across states.
- Discards may not be accurately reported. Fishermen are concerned that discards will be used against them.
- Disappointment that research track delayed.
- Low commercial BSB prices last year.

Staff Recommendation for 2024 ABC

- Set equal to 2023 ABC (7,557 MT / 16.66 mil lb).
- No new stock assessment info.
- Can set 2025 ABC based on an improved stock assessment.
- Very healthy stock status – low risk.

Previous SSC Recommendation

- Projections provided with 2021 mgmt. track.
- 100% OFL CV.
- Projections assumed a 2021 ABC overage due to rec. harvest.
 - Total assumed 2021 catch = 20.17 mil lb. Current estimate for 2021 catch = 21.35 mil lb.
- Could only recommend varying 2022-2023 ABCs to keep p^* below 0.5 in all years.
- Reviewed in 2022, no changes.

Year	OFL		ABC		ABC F	ABC p^*	SSB		SSB/ SSB _{MSY}
	MT	Mil. lb	MT	Mil. lb			MT	Mil. lb	
2022	8,735	19.56	8,555	18.86	0.41	0.49	22,637	49.91	1.57
2023	7,716	17.01	7,557	16.66	0.41	0.49	19,538	43.07	1.35

Questions/Discussion

