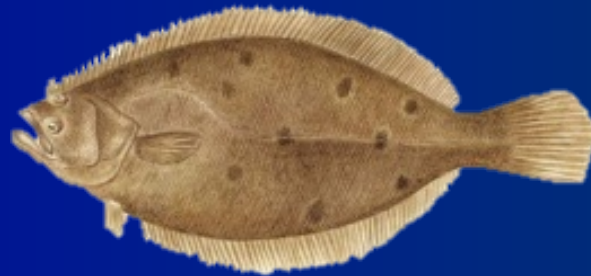




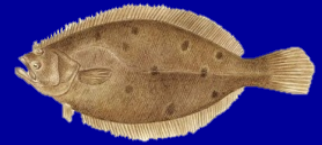
# Summer Flounder 2021 ABC Review



SSC

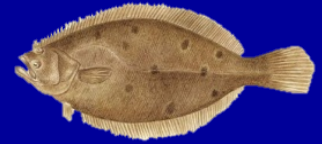
*July 23, 2020*

# Overview



- Summer flounder 2019-2021 catch limits adopted in early 2019 based on 2018 benchmark assessment (SAW/SARC 66)
- **TORs:**
  1. Specify a revised 2021 ABC based on the Council's revised risk policy. If revising the 2021 ABC with the new risk policy is inappropriate, specify an alternative ABC for 2021 (e.g., previous recommendation) and provide any supporting information used to make this determination.
  2. Provide any relevant data and/or assessment considerations for the 2021 management track assessment.

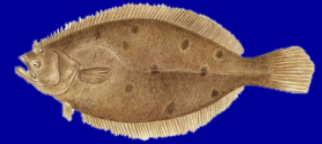
# 2019-2021 Specifications



- Constant catch and landings limits set each year 2019-2021

|                   | OFL                       | ABC                               | ABC F | P*    |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 2019<br>(revised) | 13,609 mt<br>(30.00 m lb) | <b>11,354 mt<br/>(25.03 m lb)</b> | 0.364 | 0.372 |
| 2020              | 14,034 mt<br>(30.94 m lb) |                                   | 0.351 | 0.351 |
| 2021              | 14,367 mt<br>(31.67 m lb) |                                   | 0.342 | 0.336 |

# Stock Status: 2018 Assessment



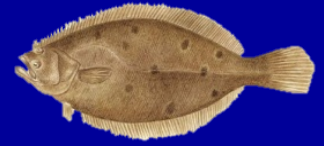
## SSB

- Not overfished in 2017
- 2017 SSB = 44,552 mt
- 78% of  $SSB_{35\%} = SSB_{MSY} = 57,159$  mt

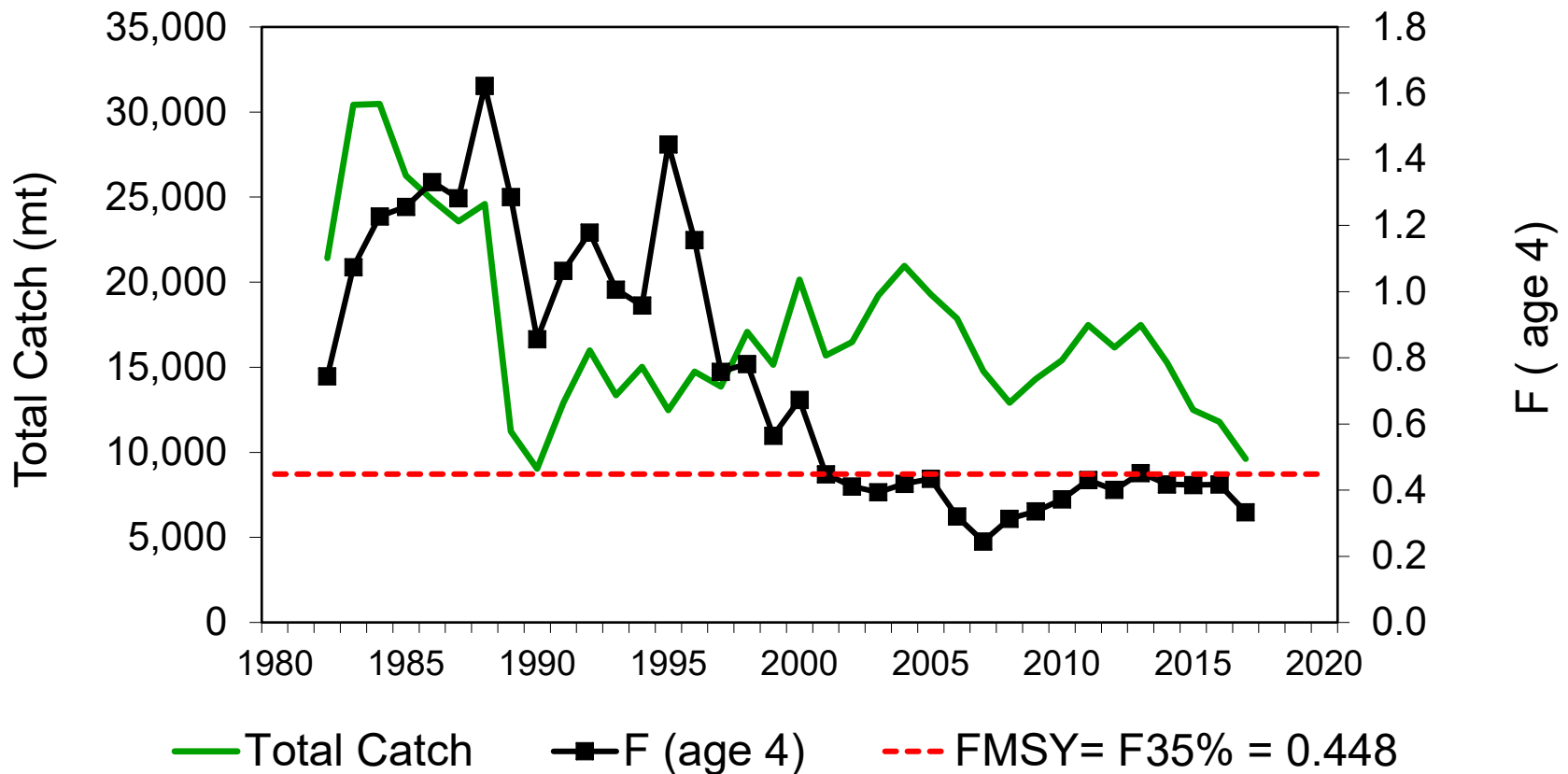
## F

- Overfishing not occurring in 2017
- 2017  $F = 0.334$
- 25% below  $F_{35\%} = F_{MSY}$  proxy = 0.448

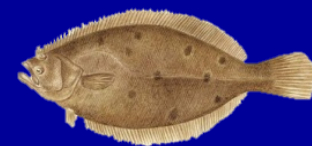
# Fishing Mortality



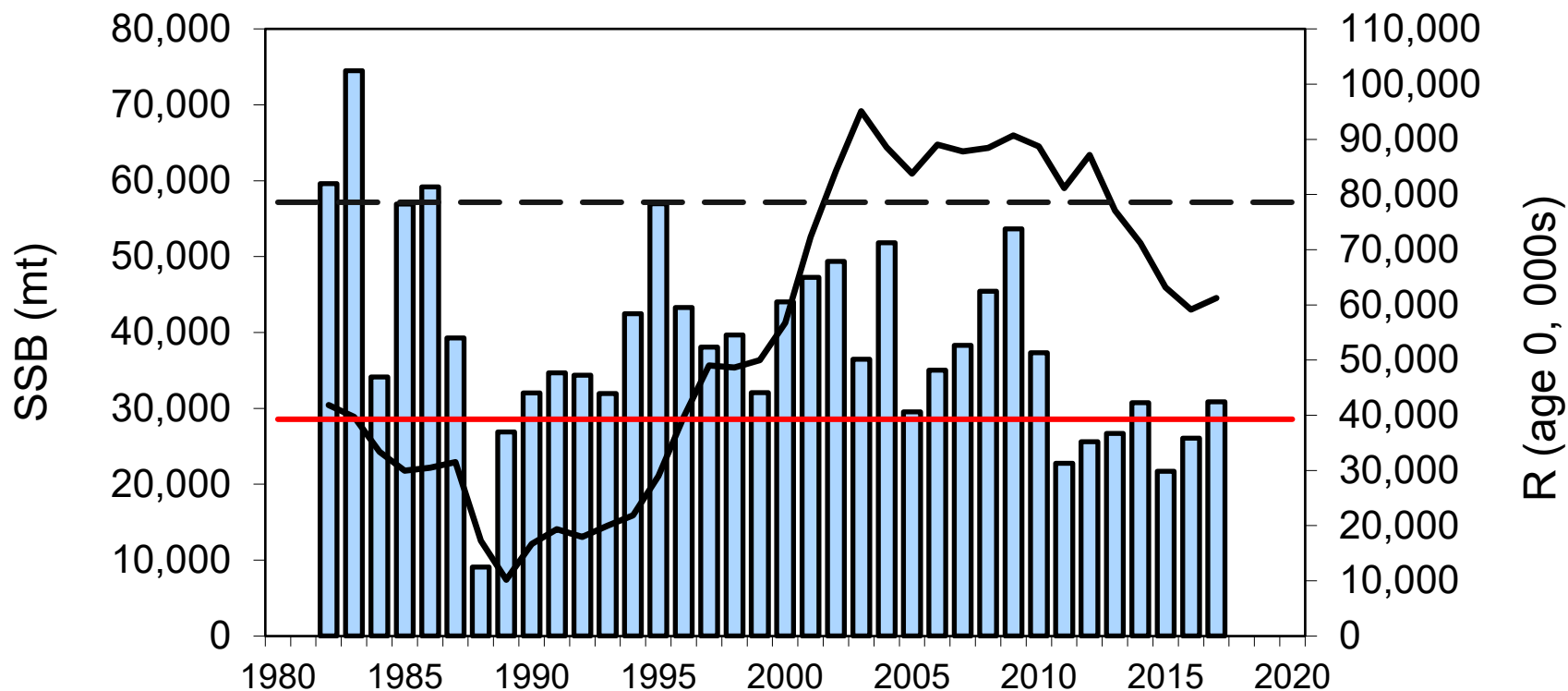
## Total Catch and Fishing Mortality (F)



# SSB and Recruitment



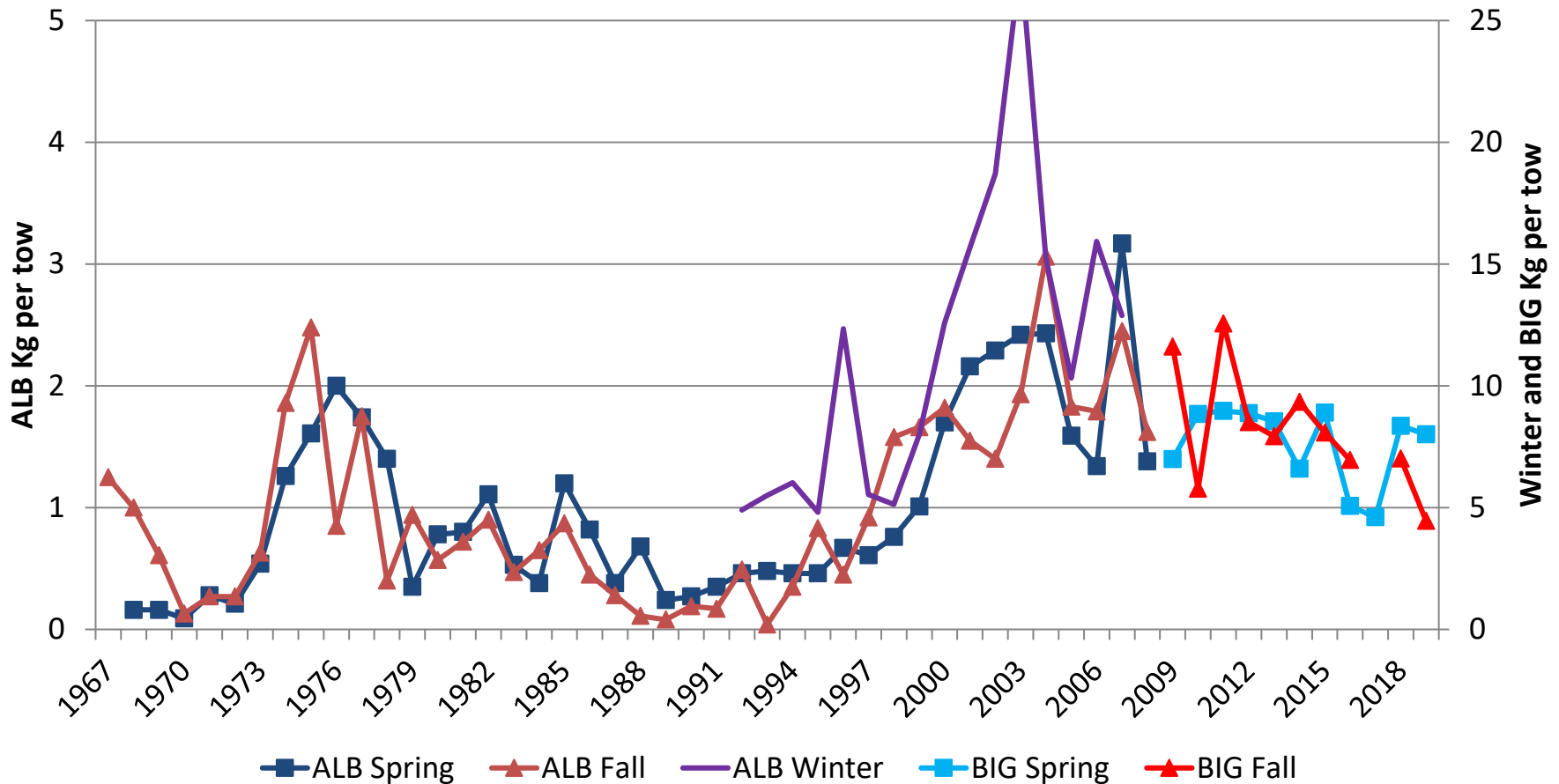
## Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) and Recruitment (R)



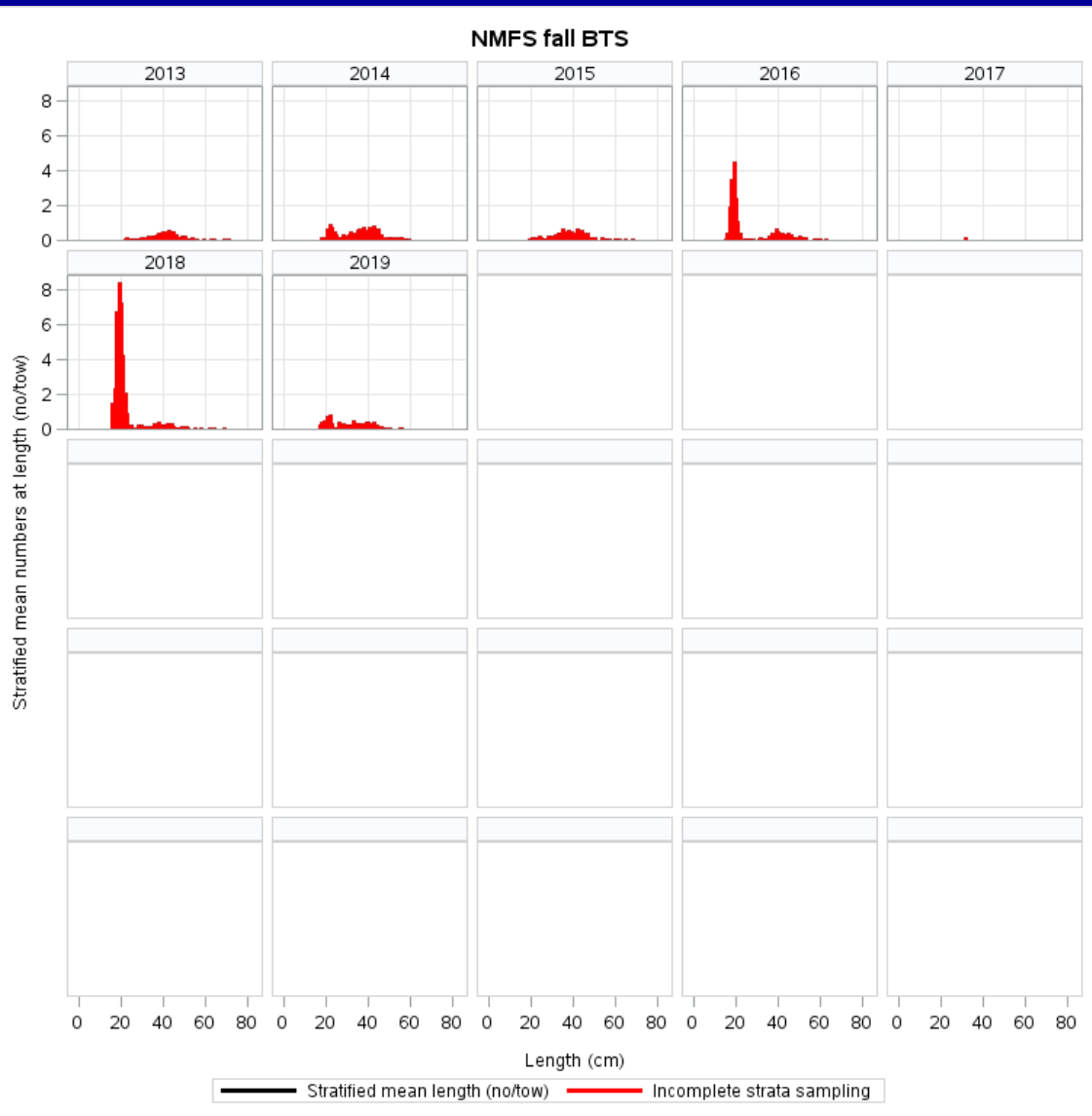
■ R — SSB — ·SSBMSY = SSB35% = 57,159 mt — 1/2 SSBMSY = 1/2 SSB35% = 28,580 mt

# 2020 Data Update

## NEFSC Summer Flounder Biomass Indices

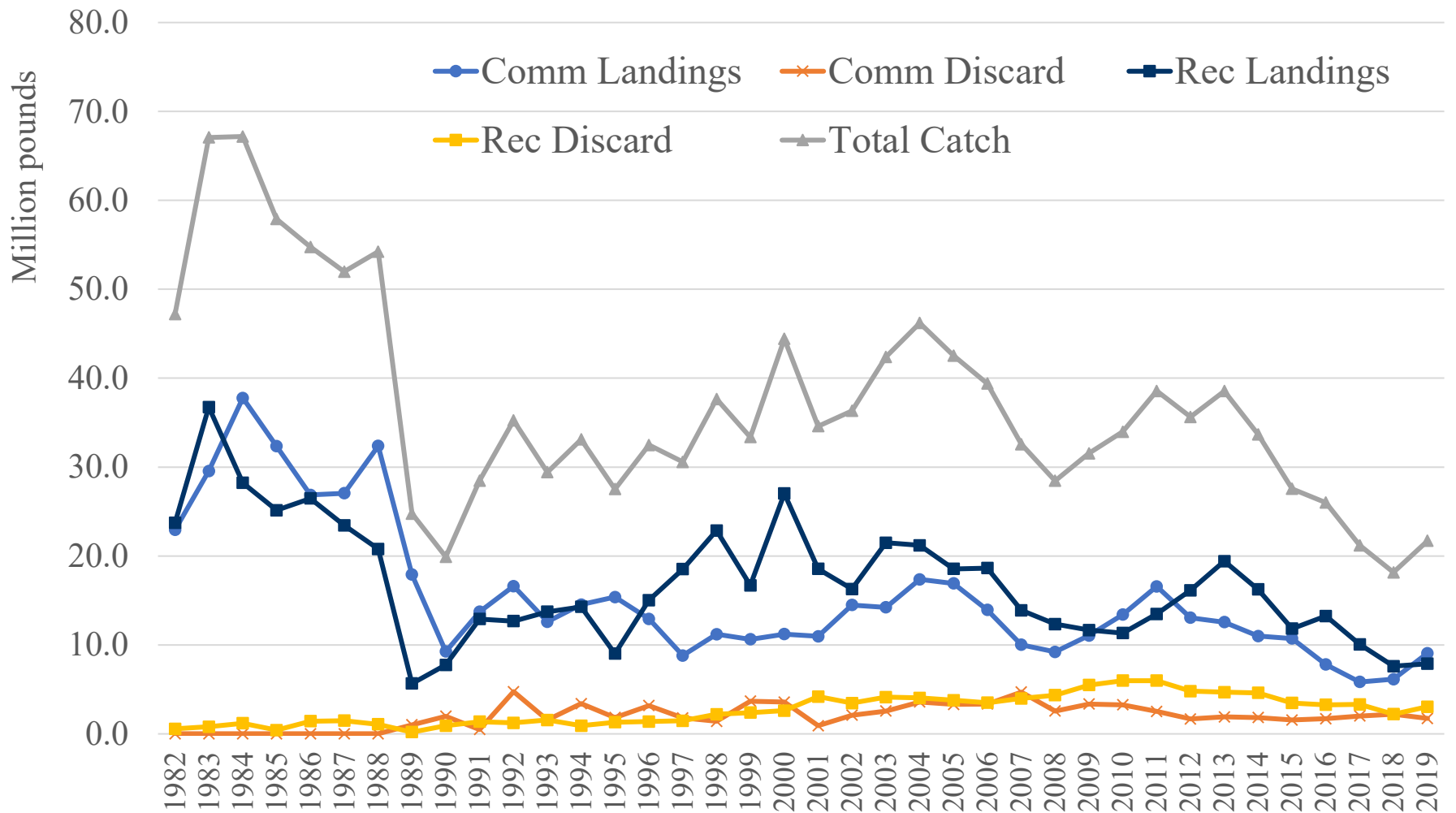
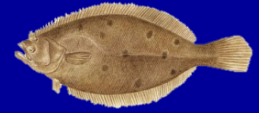


# 2020 Data Update





# Fishery Catch



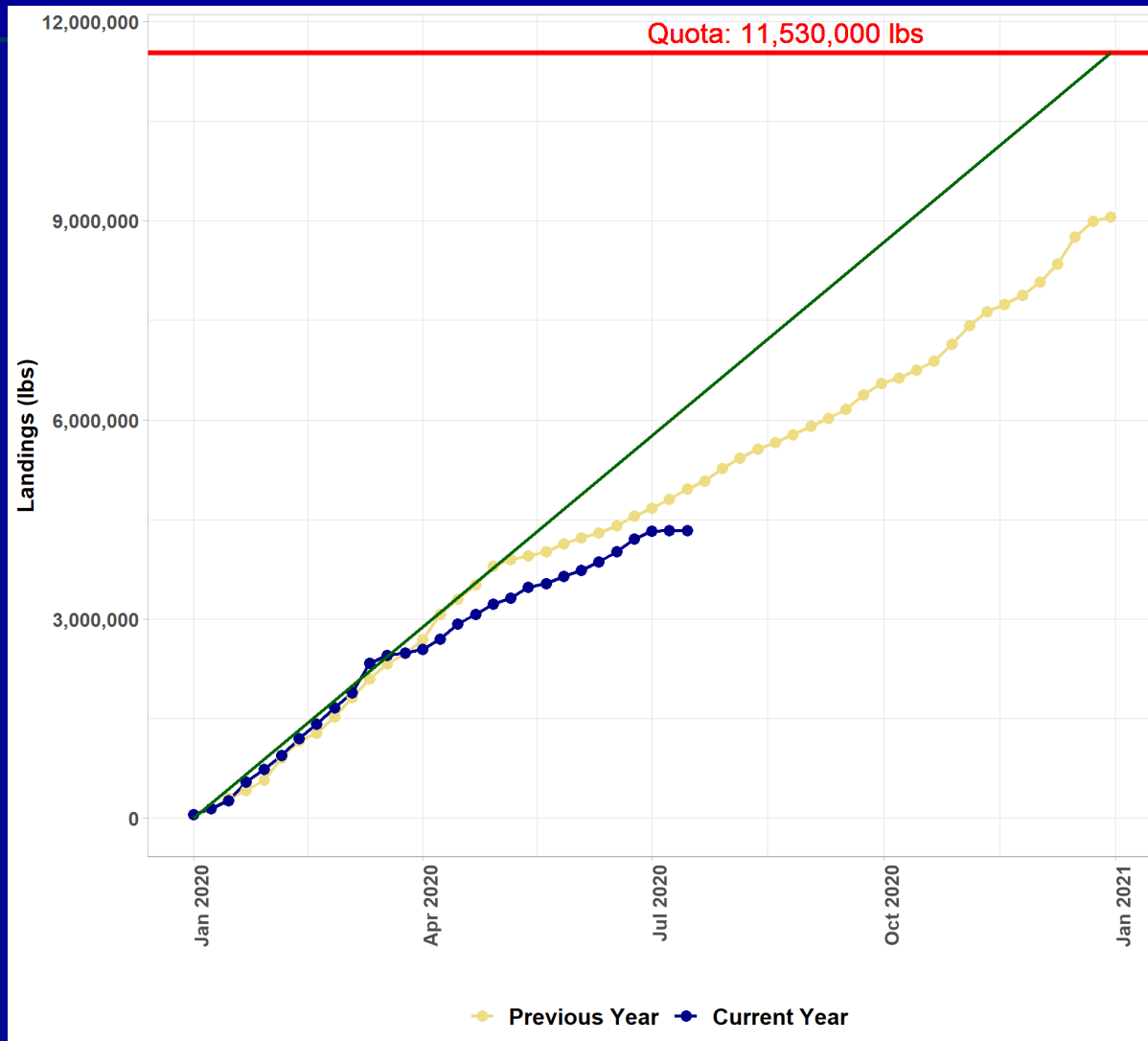
# Fishery Performance



| Year             | Comm. Landings (mil lb) | Comm. Quota (mil lb) | Comm. % Over/Under | Rec. Harvest – OLD MRIP (mil lb) | RHL (mil lb) | Rec. % Over/Under* | Rec. Harvest – NEW MRIP (mil lb) |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>2015</b>      | 10.68                   | 11.07                | -4%                | 4.72                             | 7.38         | -36%               | 11.83                            |
| <b>2016</b>      | 7.81                    | 8.12                 | -4%                | 6.18                             | 5.42         | <b>+14%</b>        | 13.24                            |
| <b>2017</b>      | 5.83                    | 5.66                 | <b>+3%</b>         | 3.19                             | 3.77         | -15%               | 10.06                            |
| <b>2018</b>      | 6.14                    | 6.44                 | -5%                | 3.35                             | 4.42         | -24%               | 7.60                             |
| <b>2019</b>      | 9.06                    | 10.98                | -17%               | --                               | 7.69         | 1%                 | 7.80                             |
| <b>5-yr Avg.</b> |                         |                      | <b>-1%</b>         |                                  |              | <b>-12%</b>        |                                  |

\*2015-2018 evaluated using old MRIP data; 2019 with revised MRIP data

# 2020 Commercial Landings



Commercial landings through July 15, 2020

# AP Fishery Performance Report

## *General Management Issues (All 3 Species)*

- Covid-19 impacts
  - For-hire industry attempting to recover from lost opportunities from earlier in season
  - Bait & tackle industries under pressure to make up for lost business before fall
  - For-hire industry tackle shortages
  - Commercial markets & ex-vessel prices down due to restaurant closures

# AP Fishery Performance Report

## *General Management Issues (All 3 Species)*

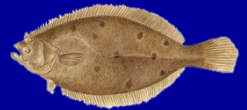
- Additional restrictions on menhaden have increased prey for sharks; increased shark populations possibly impacting abundance and distribution of rec target species
- Concerns with the accuracy of MRIP data
- One questioned methods MRIP uses to scale up effort estimates
- One requested adoption of mandatory private angler electronic recreational reporting

# AP Fishery Performance Report

## *Email Comments (All 3 Species)*

- Discard ban/total retention should be implemented; commercial fisheries should be managed based on dollar value per year based on vessel length
- Explore ocean ranching & stock enhancement
- Recreational fisheries should be managed in numbers of fish instead of pounds to increase fish kept and angler satisfaction
  - Evaluate ways to increase angler satisfaction under existing conservation constraints

# AP Fishery Performance Report



## *Market and Economic Issues*

- Summer flounder ex-vessel price is down due to covid and restaurant closures
  - One report of ~\$1/lb in NY compared to \$3-4 coastwide avg. in recent years
  - Has not been worth it for many vessels to go fishing
  - NY more beholden to fresh fish market than other states
- Email comment: prices stable, markets available

# AP Fishery Performance Report

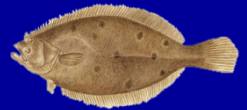


## *Market and Economic Issues*

- One advisor: Medium size summer flounder set market price
  - Imports tend to fit size consumers want and current size limits disadvantage fluke markets
  - Supported lowering minimum size below 14"



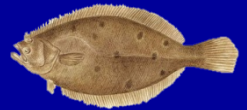
# AP Fishery Performance Report



## *Environmental and General Fishing Trends*

- Mixed reports from Long Island
  - Commercial fishermen on north side of Long Island seeing few fish; catch per day is down
  - One member of public disagreed, for-hire season has been good in Long Island Sound (but poor for southern shore and west end)
- Fishing in Rhode Island is slow, poor catch rates
- Eastern shore of VA rec. fishing had slow start due to weather and covid, but effort and catch high in recent weeks

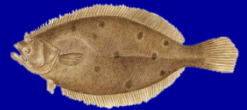
# AP Fishery Performance Report



## *Environmental and General Fishing Trends*

- Email comment: Regional depletions of fluke seen in New Jersey and elsewhere (due to concentrated fishing effort?); disparate access to fishery
  - Need better knowledge of migration patterns
  - Rec fishing in NJ good this spring, believe due to covid-related reduced commercial harvest
- Email comment: 2019 recreational fishing in MA was even worse than 2018; few legal size fish inside of 23+ miles

# AP Fishery Performance Report

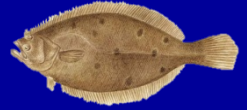


## *Management Issues*

- Questioned MRIP data on landings by recreational mode
  - One said shore mode estimate is too low; two others said they believe it's too high
- One request for consideration of a recreational total length limit for summer flounder with mandatory retention
- Email comment: comm. quota increase will decrease discards

# Prior SSC Recommendations

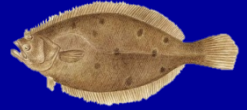
## February 2019



- SSC used projections based on recent 7-yr below avg. recruitment (rather than full 36-yr series)
  - Noted near-term conditions more likely to reflect recent recruitment patterns
- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Lognormal distribution of OFL with  $CV = 60\%$ ; avg. Proj.  $B/B_{msy} \sim 89\%$

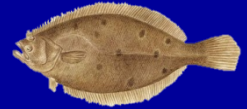
# Prior SSC Recommendations

## February 2019



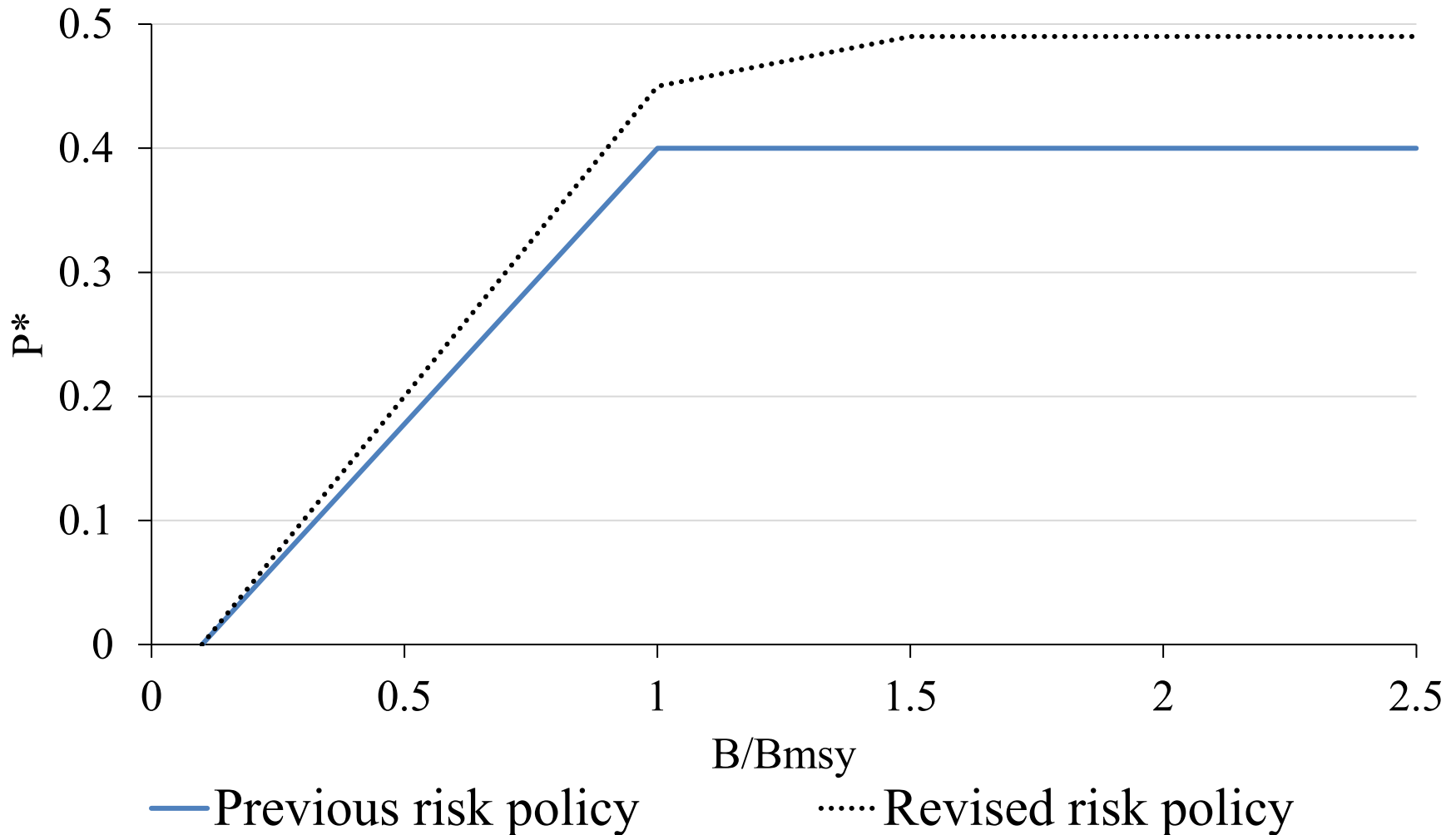
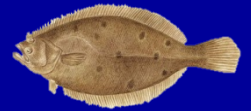
- At Council request, SSC recommended two sets of ABCs for 2019-2021 (varying and averaged)
  - Council and Board adopted averaged approach: Constant 2019-2021 ABC of 11,354 mt or 25.03 mil lb

# Council Risk Policy Revisions



- Dec. 2019: Council adopted revisions to risk policy through omnibus framework action
- Approved a hybrid of two alternatives in document; allows for increased risk of overfishing for most biomass levels
- Not yet implemented, but Council intent was to apply to 2021 specifications

# Council Risk Policy Revisions



# Staff ABC Recommendation



- Recommend revising previously adopted 2021 ABC based on revisions to Council risk policy
- Use same OFL, continue 60% CV, proj. 2021  $B/B_{msy} = 0.88$

|            | 2021: Current                             | 2021: Staff Rec                           |
|------------|---|---|
| <b>OFL</b> | 31.67 mil lb<br>(14,367 mt)               | 31.67 mil lb<br>(14,367 mt)               |
| <b>ABC</b> | <b>25.03 mil lb</b><br><b>(11,354 mt)</b> | <b>27.11 mil lb</b><br><b>(12,297 mt)</b> |
| <b>P*</b>  | 0.34                                      | 0.39                                      |