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Dr. Christopher Moore
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
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Dear Sir,

I am writing to point out what appears to be a major problem with MRIP over-estimates of recreational fishing catch, both from shore and from private vessels, and its effect on fisheries policy. I was taught in my basic statistics classes that a result that seems impossible likely is, at least until verified by reexamination and direct observation. I was also taught that statistical models are, until verified by comparison with actual outcomes, hypothesis. MRIP estimates of recreational catch seem to be vastly overstated and no commercial fisherman or party boat or for-hire skipper I've spoken with in the past year believes them. Because recreational effort and catch are unverified, MRIP appears to be at best a hypothesis and should not be used to make fisheries policy.

If recreational catch estimates are as fanciful as I believe them to be, their use in setting quotas would seem to result in an equally fanciful over-estimate of the biomass. Since the recreational catch estimate is given as a justification for increasing the commercial quotas, the result could be large, perhaps unsustainable, overfishing. I would urge at the very least that the MRIP estimate of recreational fishing catch be verified, preferably by direct observation; even something as simple as a cellphone survey of recreational landings would provide useful data.

Sincerely,

Raphael Warshaw