



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

An Overview

By

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Presentation Overview



- **Commission Overview**
- **ASMFC Programs**
- **Species Highlights**
 - **Atlantic Menhaden**
 - **Atlantic Striped Bass**
 - **Bluefish**
 - **Atlantic Croaker & Spot**
 - **Summer Flounder/
Scup/Black Sea Bass**



ASMFC Overview



- **Formed in 1942 – Interstate Compact**
- **15 Atlantic coast states, ME – FL**
- **0 – 3 miles from shore**
- **Deliberative forum for states**
- **Cooperative management of transboundary resources**
- **Standards est. by Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Management Act**



Atlantic Coastal Act (1993)

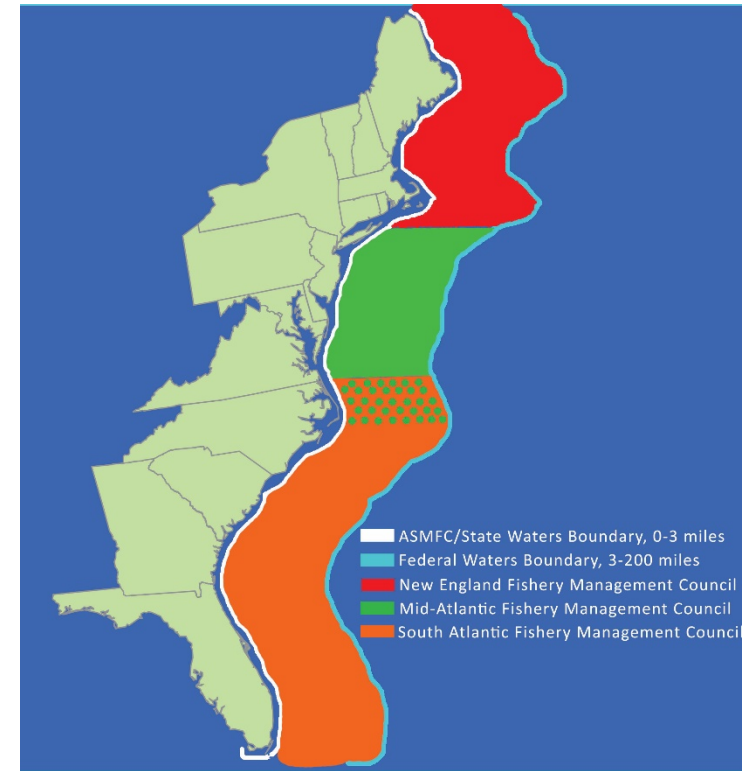


- **Standards for fisheries management**
- **States implement regulations**
- **State compliance tied to conservation standards – Secretarial pre-emption**
- **Work cooperatively with federal partners on shared resources**
- **Authorizes funding to support**
 - **ASMFC & state management**
 - **Federal partners**

Fisheries Management

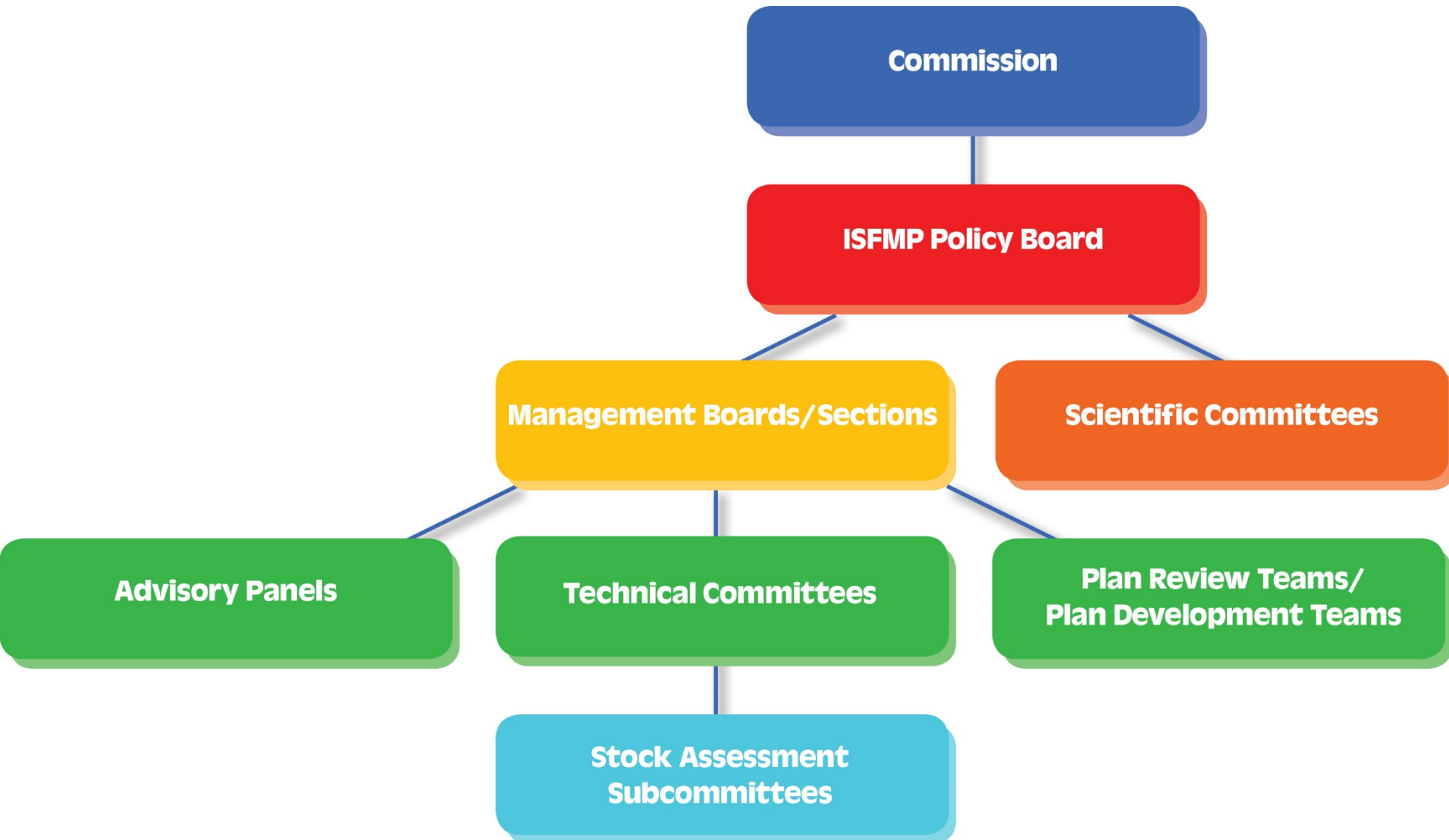


- **27 species/species groups**
- **Some managed solely by Commission**
 - American eel, striped bass, Atlantic menhaden, spot
- **Others managed jointly/cooperatively with Regional Councils and NOAA Fisheries**
 - Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, Atlantic herring



A grid of 20 illustrations of various marine organisms, arranged in four columns and five rows. The organisms include: Column 1: A striped bass, a blue fish, a spotted fish, a catfish, a striped bass, a salmon, and an eel. Column 2: A crayfish, a blue fish, a striped bass, a striped bass, a flatfish, a striped bass, and a shark. Column 3: A striped bass, a crayfish, a crab, a blue fish, a striped bass, a striped bass, and a striped bass. Column 4: A blue fish, a flatfish, a striped bass, a horseshoe crab, a striped bass, a striped bass, and a striped bass.

ISFMP Structure



ASMFC

One State – One Vote Principle



Bill Anderson
MD DNR



Del. Dana Stein
Legislative Appt.



Russell Dize
Governor Appt.



Other Votes

- **NMFS**
- **USFWS**
- **Potomac River Fisheries Commission**
- **District of Columbia**
- **Regional Management Councils**

FMP Development



Problem identified

Stock Status



Scientific Review

Technical Committee



Proposed Action

Potential Management Measures



Public & Advisory Panel Input

Public Comment Process



Commission Decides

Final Management Measures



States Act

Regulations Implemented and Enforced

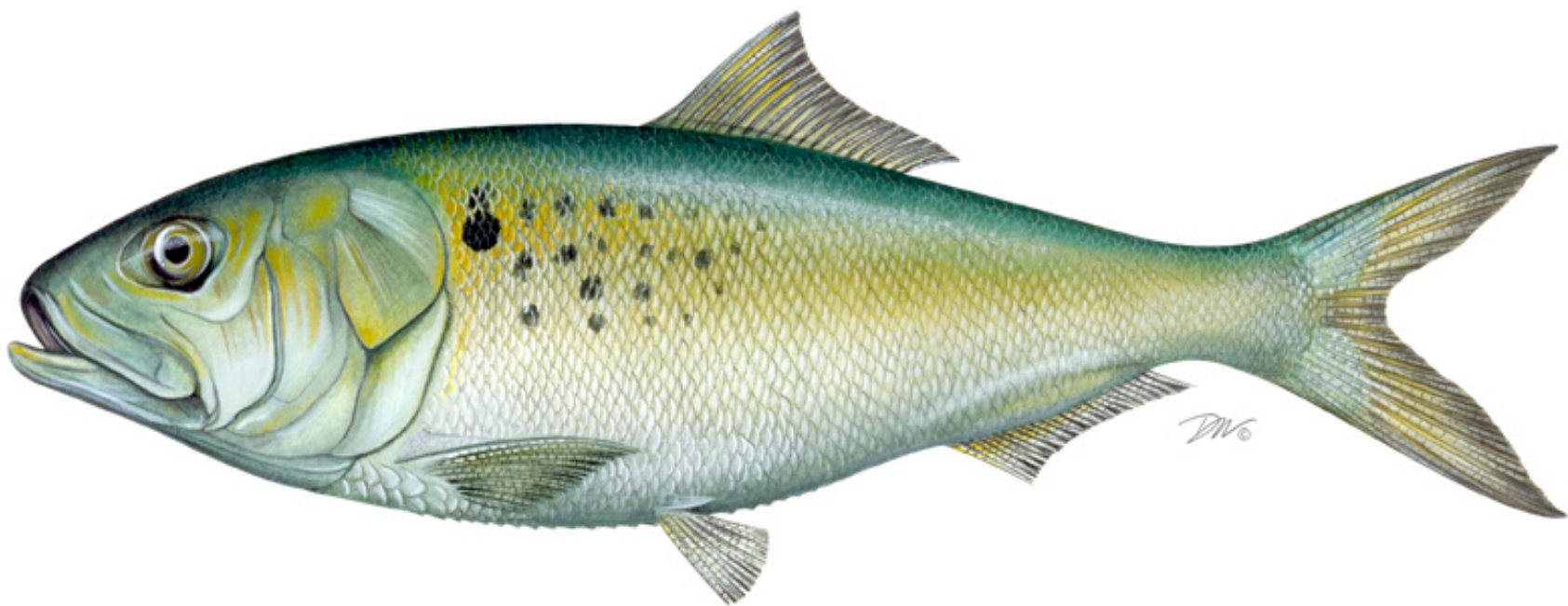
FMP/Amendment: 12 – 18 months

Addendum: 3 – 6 months

Species Highlights

- **Atlantic Menhaden**
- **Atlantic Striped Bass**
- **Bluefish**
- **Atlantic Croaker/Spot**
- **Summer Flounder/
Black Sea Bass/Scup**





Atlantic Menhaden



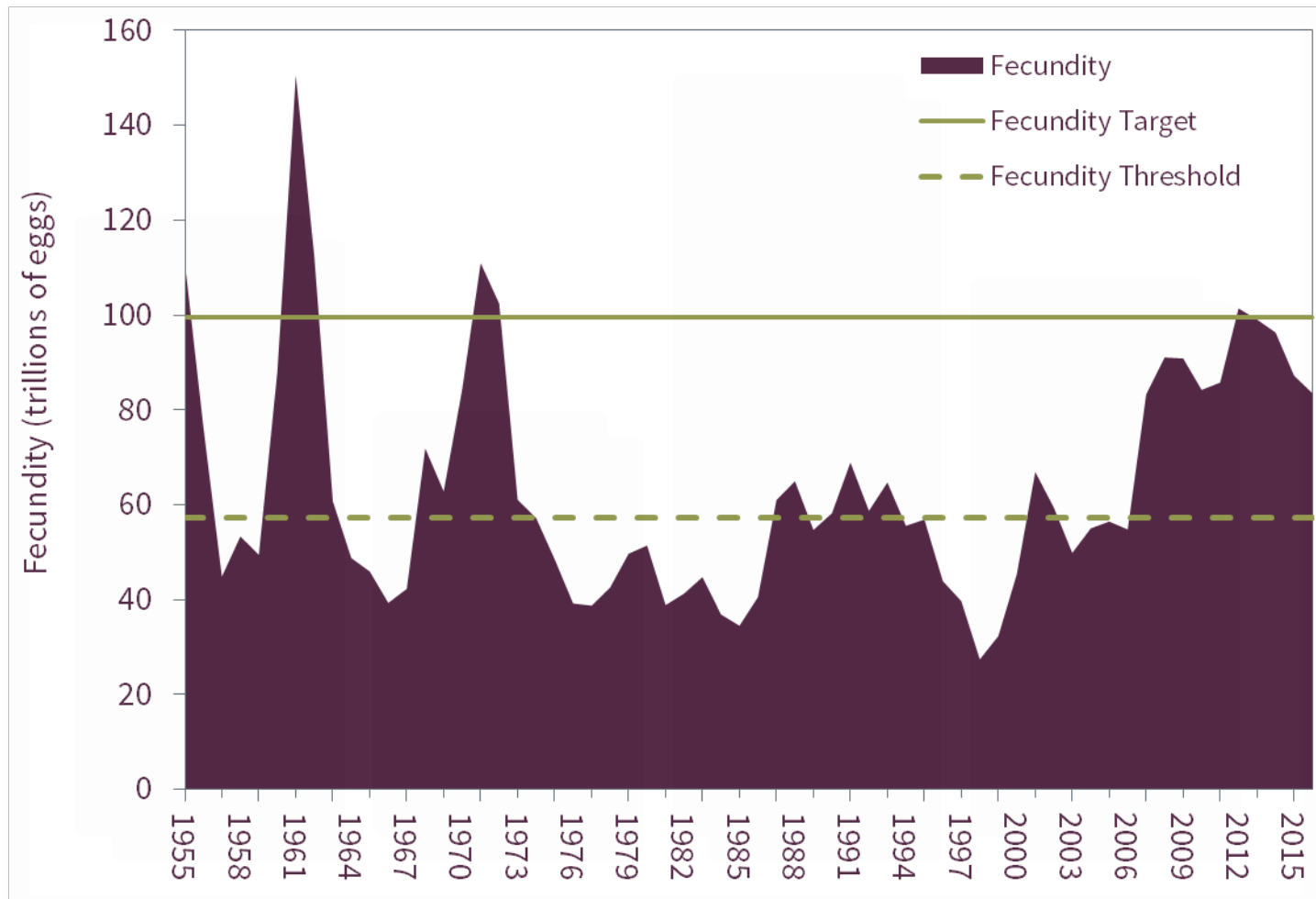
- **Not overfished/overfishing not occurring**
- **Population Fecundity**
 - **Measure of reproductive capacity**
 - **Well above the threshold (57,295 billion eggs) and at or near the target (99,467 billion eggs) in recent years**
 - **2016 fecundity = 83,486 billion eggs**
- **Fishing mortality below target and threshold**

Atlantic Menhaden



Atlantic Menhaden Fecundity

Source: Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, 2017

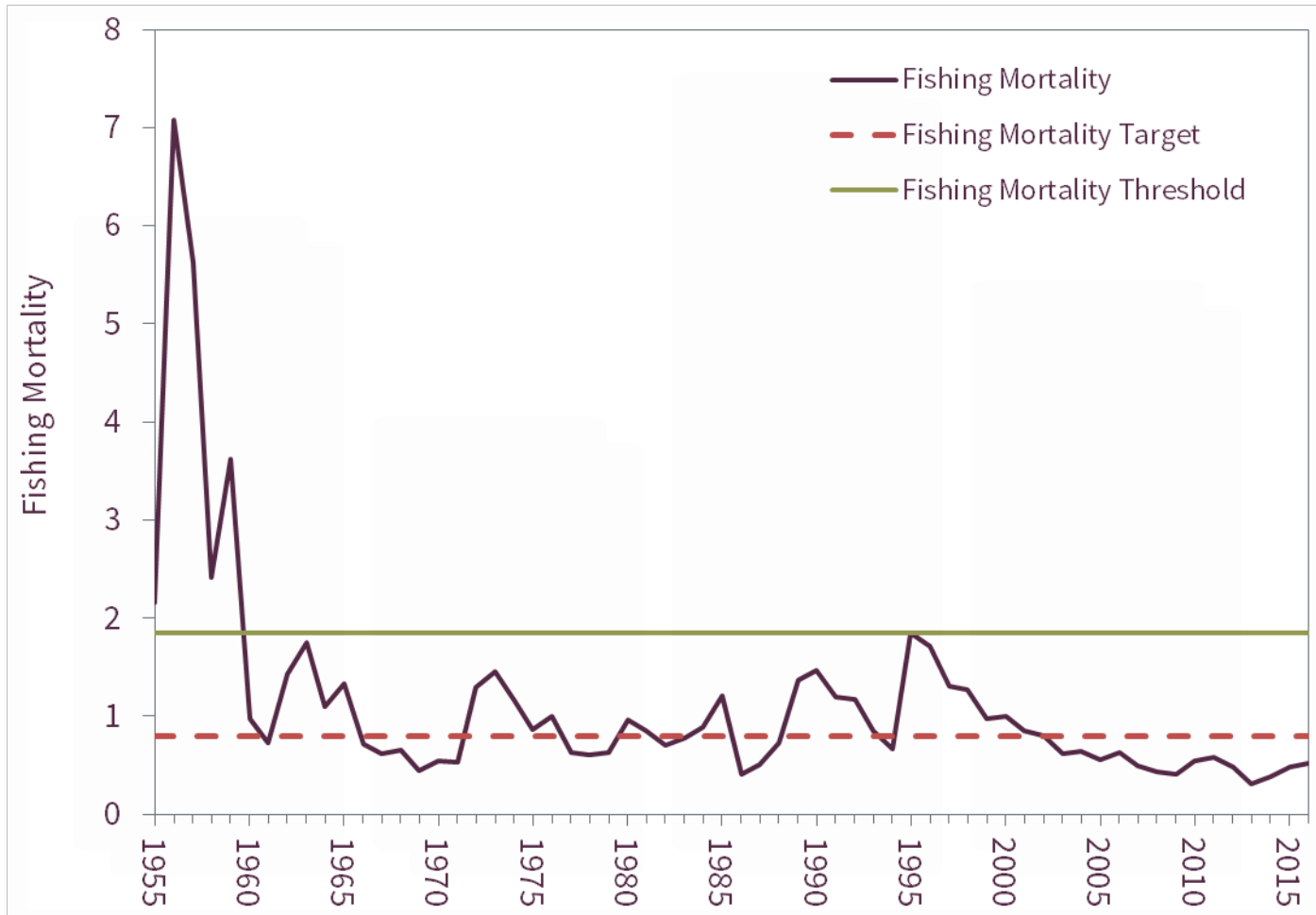


Atlantic Menhaden



Atlantic Menhaden Fishing Mortality (Ages 2-4)

Source: Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, 2017



Amendment 3



- **Maintains single-species BRPs until adoption of menhaden-specific ERPs in 2020**
- **2020 quota maintained at 216,000 mt**
 - **MD Commercial Quota = 8,968,821 pounds**
- **Caps Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery at 51,000 mt**
- **Also includes state allocation, quota transfers, incidental catch, episodic events set aside program**

Chesapeake Bay Cap



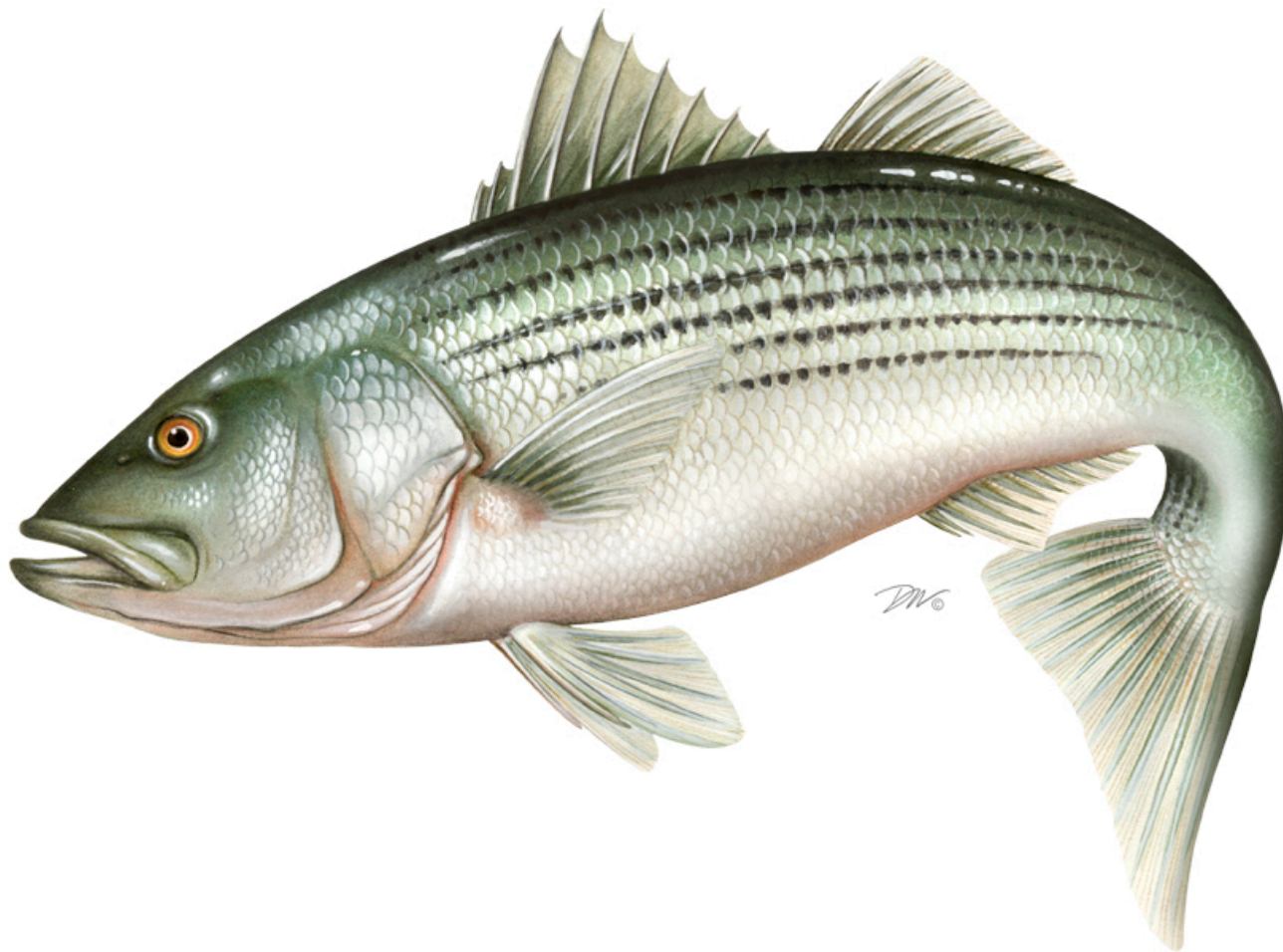
- **Purpose: Maintain Bay marine environment to assure availability of the ecosystem's resources over the long-term**
- **Nov. 15 – ASMFC notified Sec. of Commerce that VA is out of compliance with Bay cap**
- **Dec. 19 – Sec. of Commerce declares fishery moratorium, effective June 17**
- **VA General Assembly considering 10 proposed bills**

Atlantic Menhaden



Pending Assessments

- **2 Benchmark Stock Assessments**
 - **Traditional Single Species**
 - **Ecological Reference Point (ERP)**
- **Outcomes to Guide Future Management**
- **Board Consideration in February 2020**



Atlantic Striped Bass

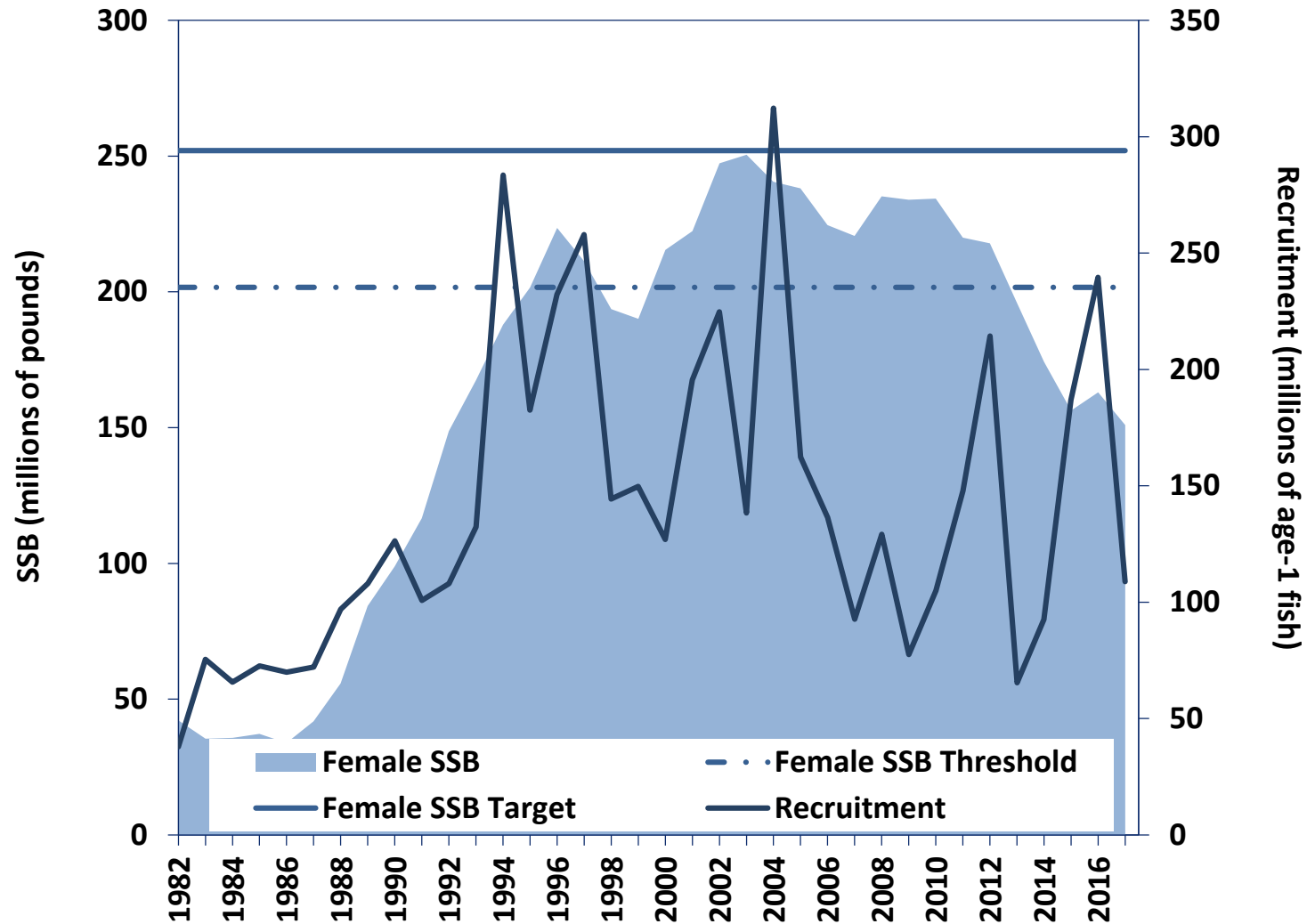


- **Overfished and overfishing is occurring**
- **Female spawning stock biomass = 151 million lbs., below 202 million lb. threshold**
- **Recruitment: periods of highs and lows**
 - **High in 2012, 2015, 2016**
 - **Low in 2013, 2014, 2017**
 - **2017 recruitment = 108.8 fish, below time series average of 140.9 fish**

Atlantic Striped Bass



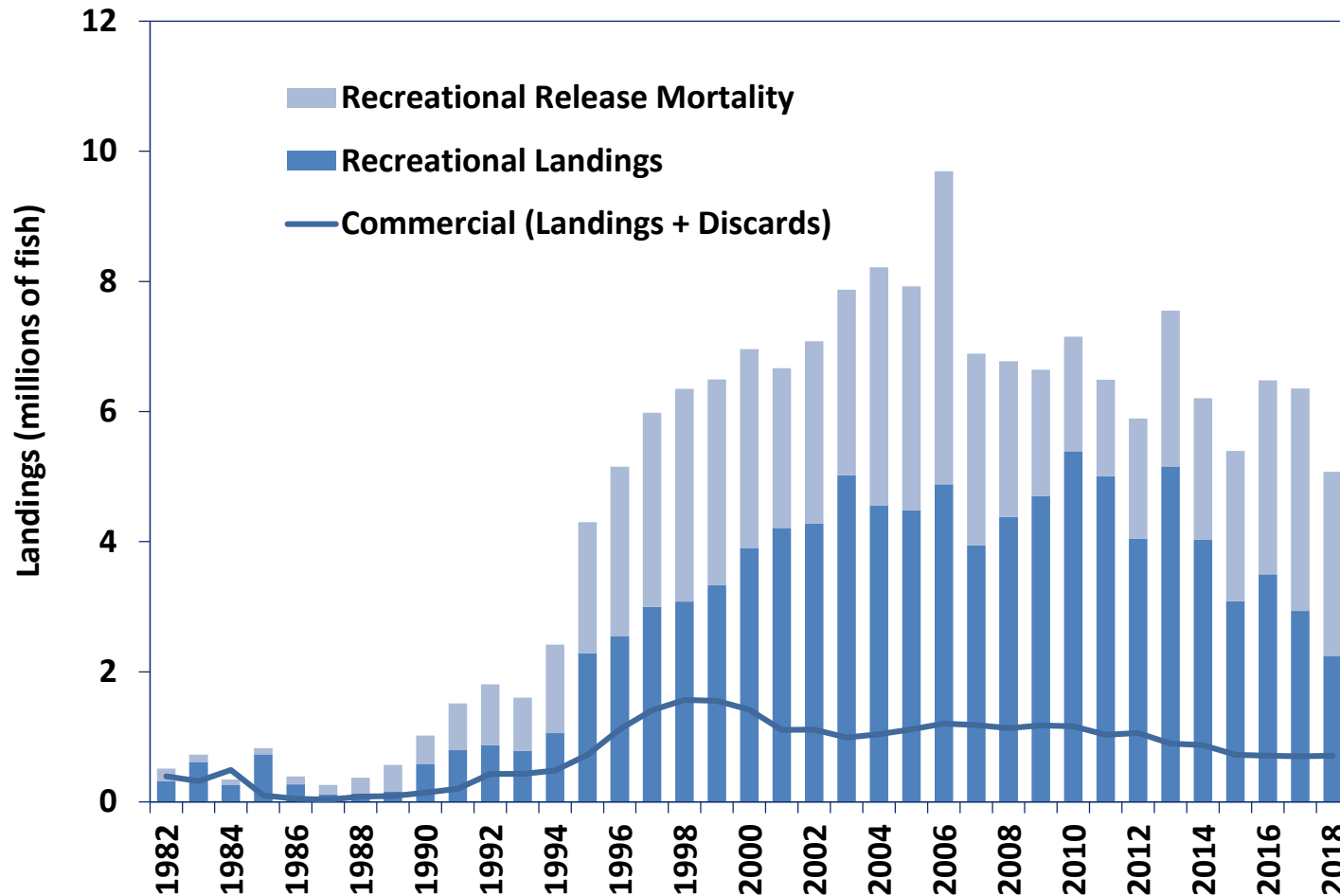
Female Spawning Stock Biomass and Recruitment



Atlantic Striped Bass



Commercial Landings and Discards & Recreational Landings and Release Mortality

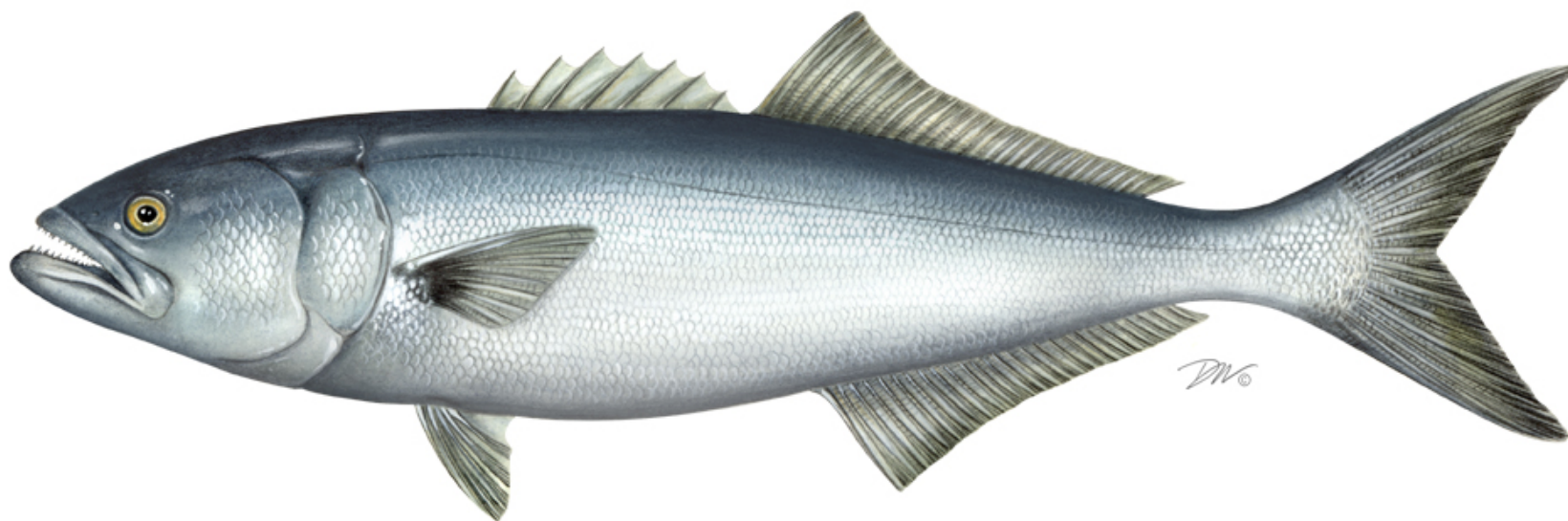


*Recreational release mortality assumes that 9% of fish released alive die.

Atlantic Striped Bass



- **Managed under Addendum VI (2019)**
- **Reduce removals (harvest + discards) by 18% coastwide, to be applied equally between sectors**
 - **States may apply for CE, as long as it achieves 18% reduction in removals**
 - **MD proposes an 1.8% reduction in commercial quota, and a 20.6 % reduction in recreational removals**
 - **Proposed commercial quotas**
 - **Ocean = 89,094 lbs**
 - **Chesapeake Bay = 1,445,394 lbs**



Bluefish

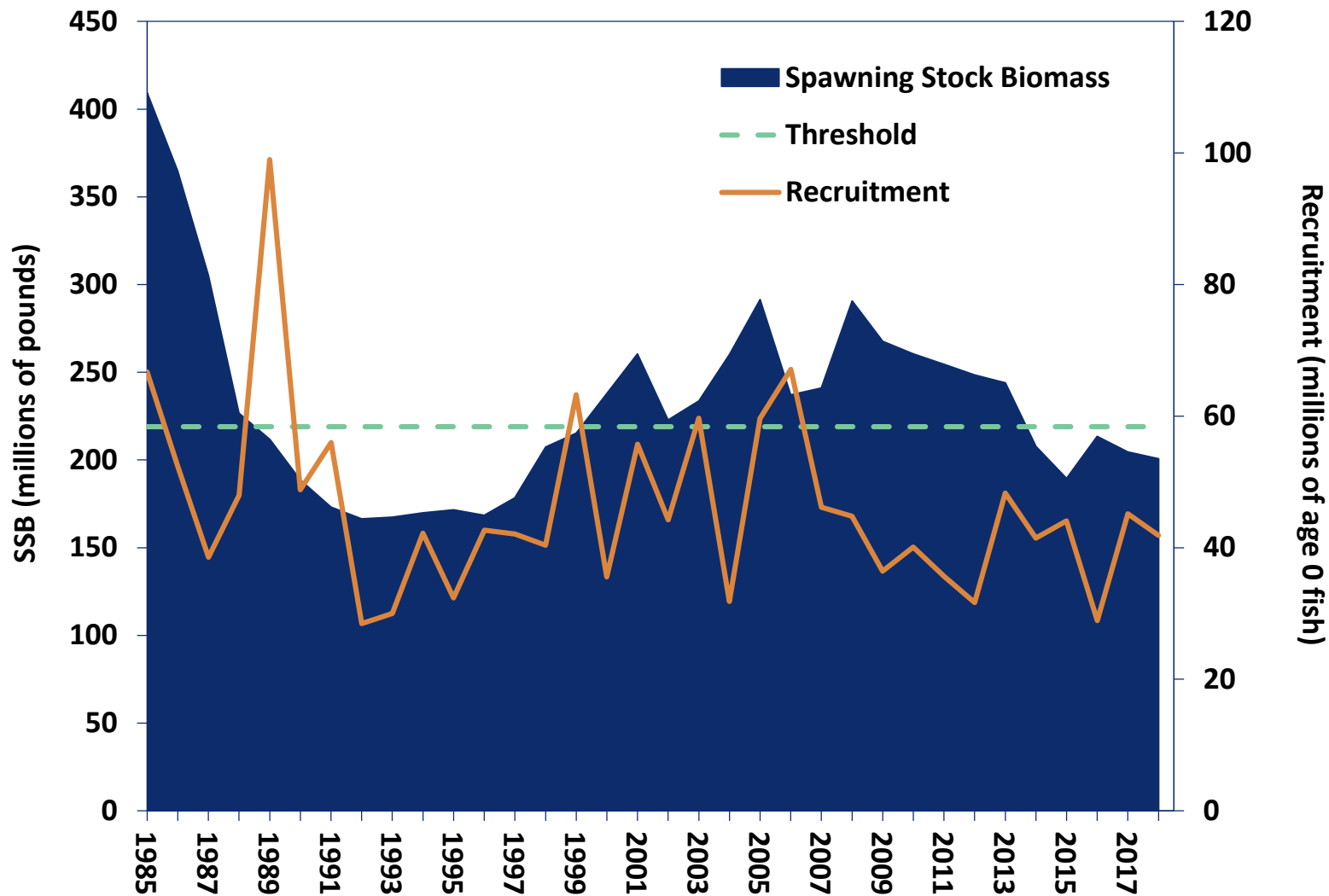


- **Overfished/not experiencing overfishing**
- **SSB = 201 million lbs., below 219 million lb. threshold**
- **ASMFC/MAFMC reduced 2020 commercial quota and recreational RHL to halt further stock declines**
 - **Commercial reduced to 2.77 million pounds**
 - **MD commercial quota = 83,054 pounds**
 - **Recreational bag limit cut from 15 or 10 fish to 5 fish limit for for-hire and 3 fish limit for private angler**

Bluefish



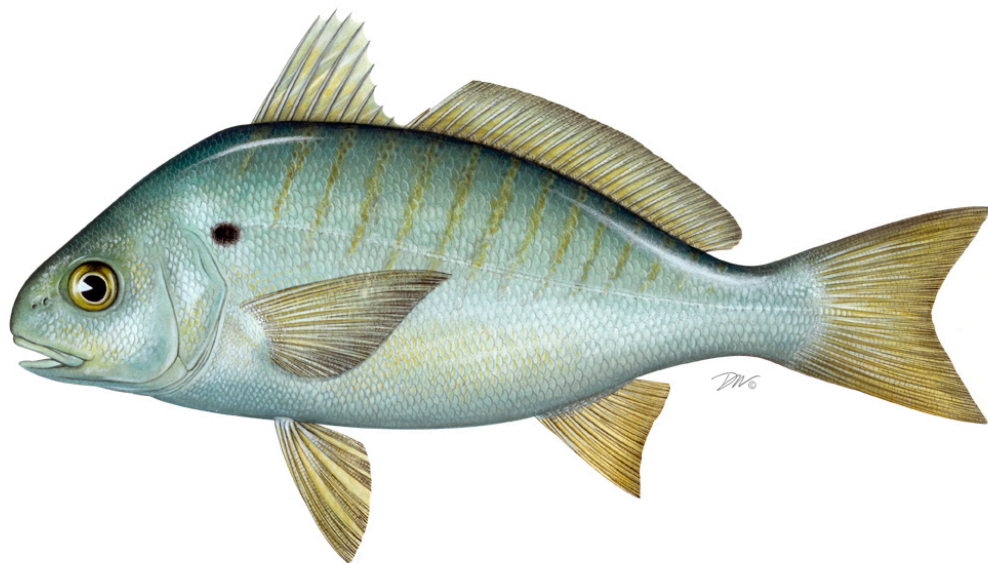
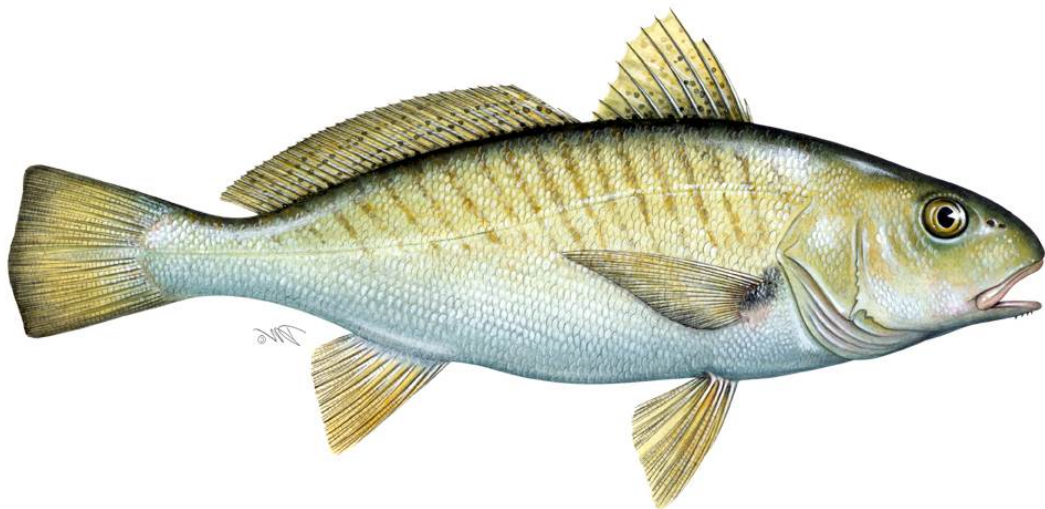
Spawning Stock Biomass and Recruitment



Bluefish



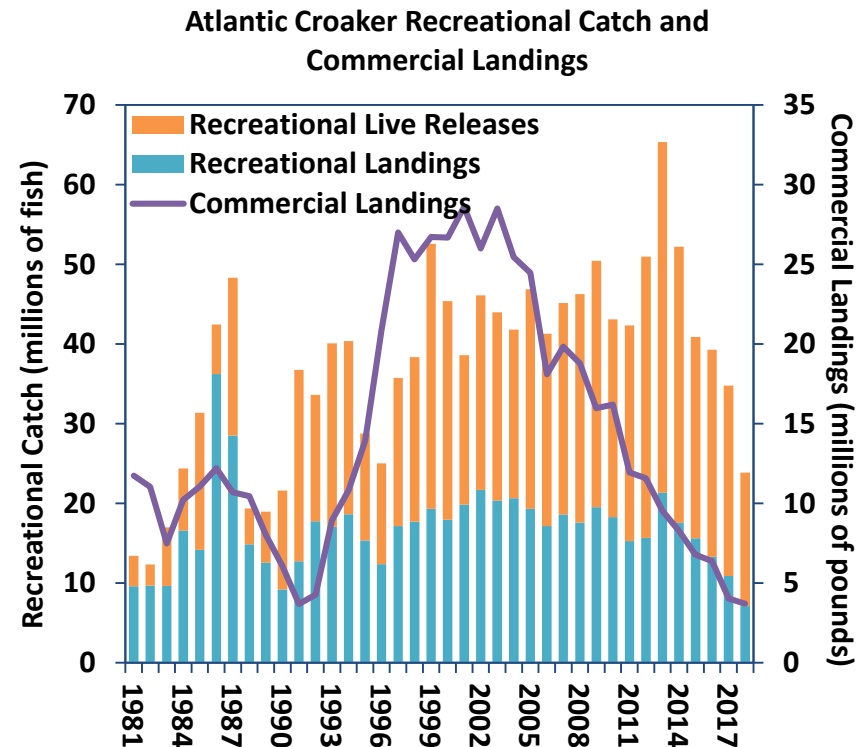
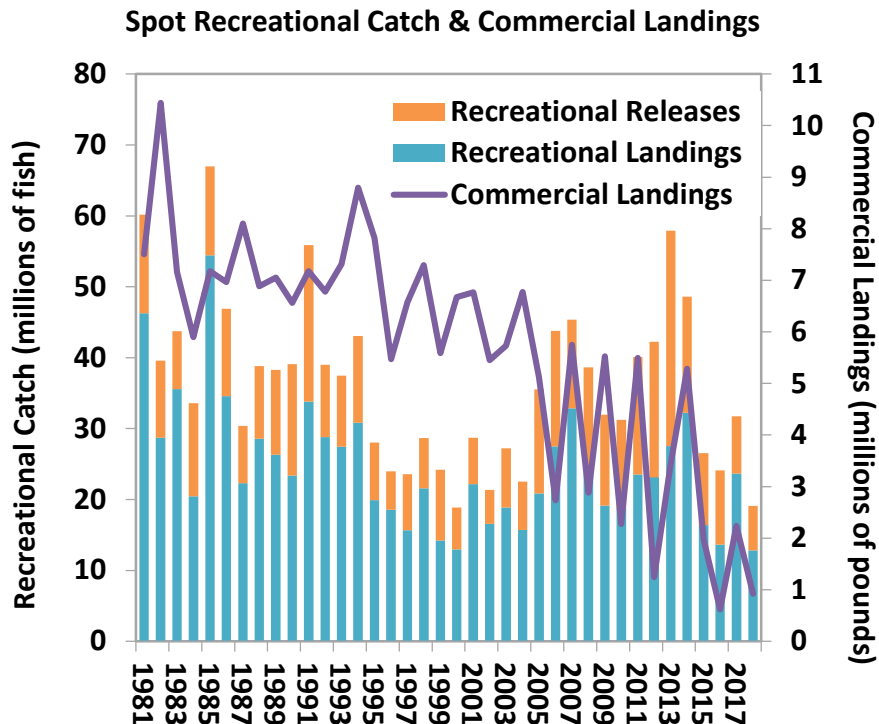
- **Managed under Amendment 1 (1998)**
- **Allocated 83% to recreational fishery/17% to commercial fishery**
- **New amendment underway to address:**
 - **Goals and objectives**
 - **Allocations between sectors and among the states**
 - **Quota transfer process**
 - **Rebuilding plan**
- **Currently in scoping phase; draft amendment to be developed in 2020**



Atlantic Croaker & Spot



- **Stock Status: Unknown for both species**
- **Significant declines in harvest and reports of poor fishing not reflected by current TLA abundance indices**



Atlantic Croaker & Spot



- **Traffic Light Approach (TLA) used to monitor fishery and resource trends and initiate management as needed**
- **TLA assigns color (red, yellow, green) to indicate changes in *harvest* and *abundance***
- **If too much red (low harvest or abundance) for too long, management action is required**

Atlantic Croaker & Spot

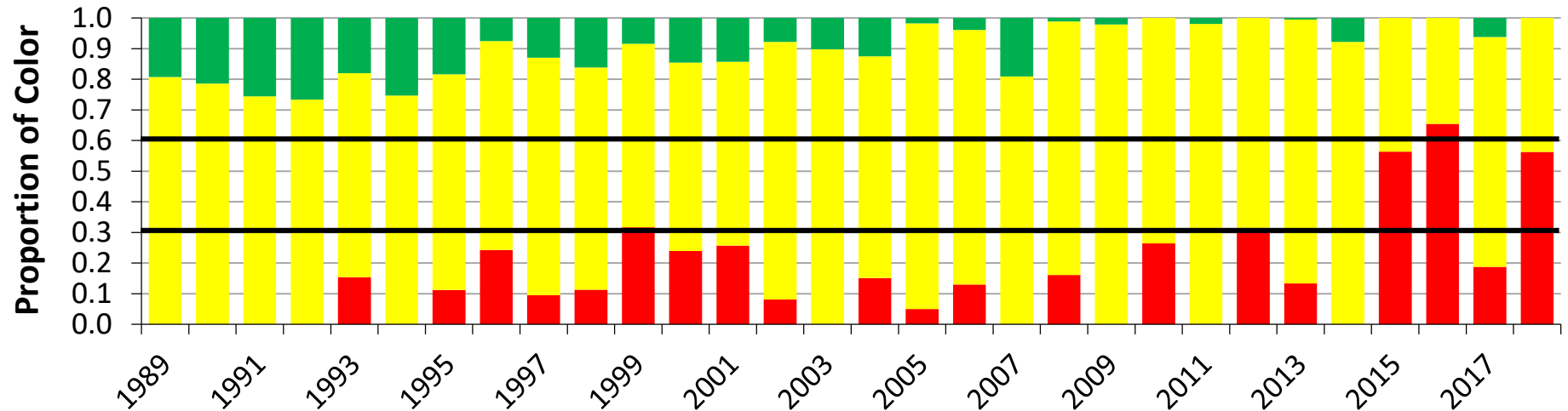


- **Technical review of TLA recommended several updates/potential management responses**
 - Add additional fishery-independent surveys
 - Look at trends by region (Mid-Atl. & South Atlantic)
 - Change reference period to more current years
 - Explore measures to reduce harvest when action is triggered based on high levels of red in most recent years for both harvest and abundance characteristics

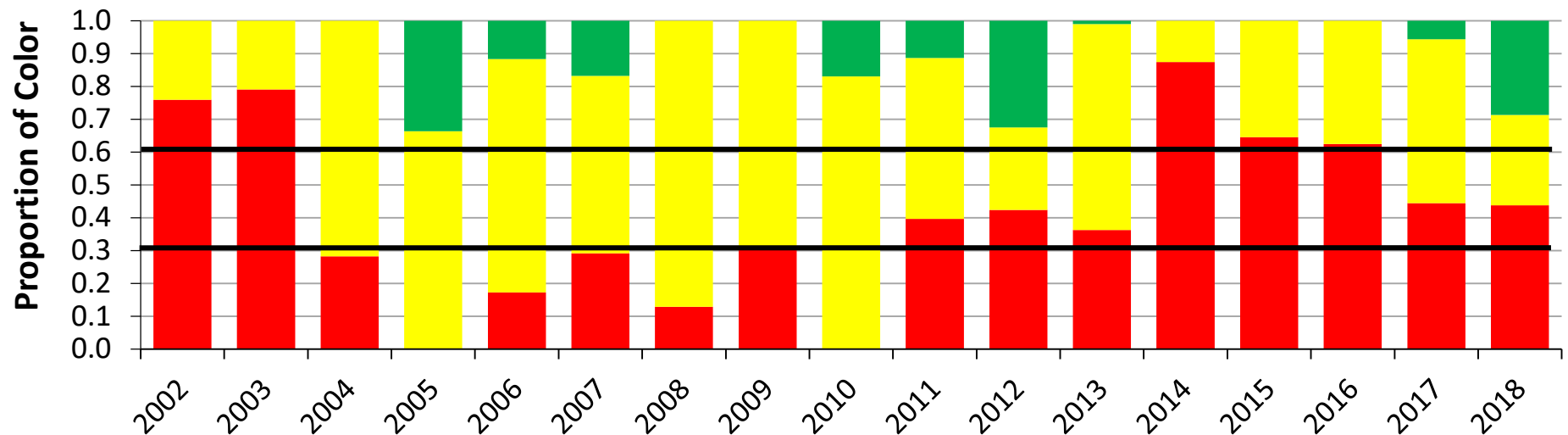
Proposed TLA (Mid-Atl.)



Composite Harvest Characteristic



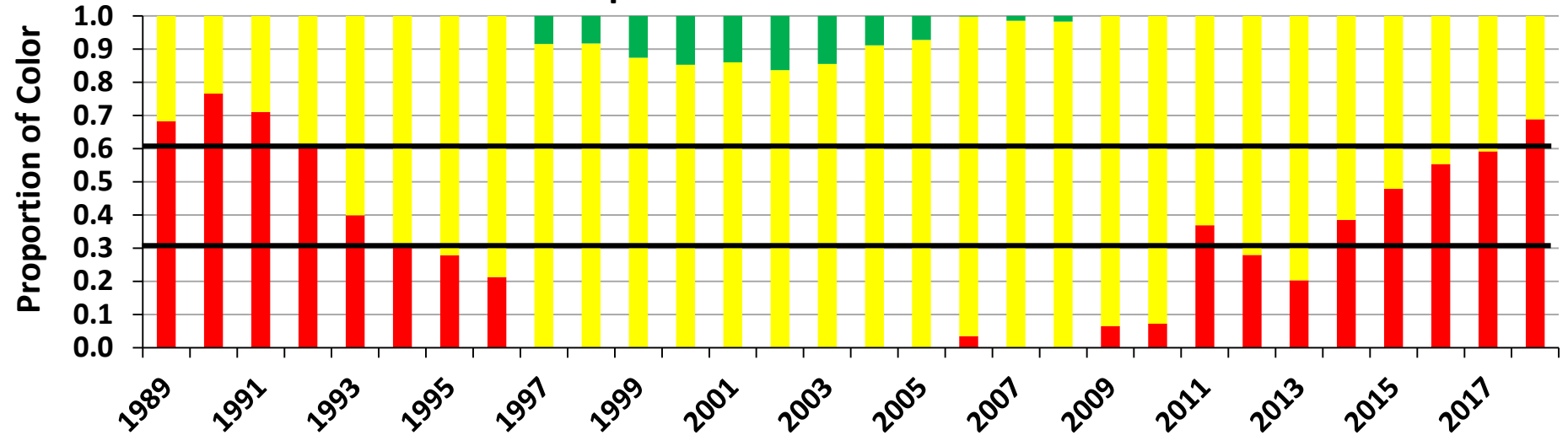
Composite Abundance Characteristic



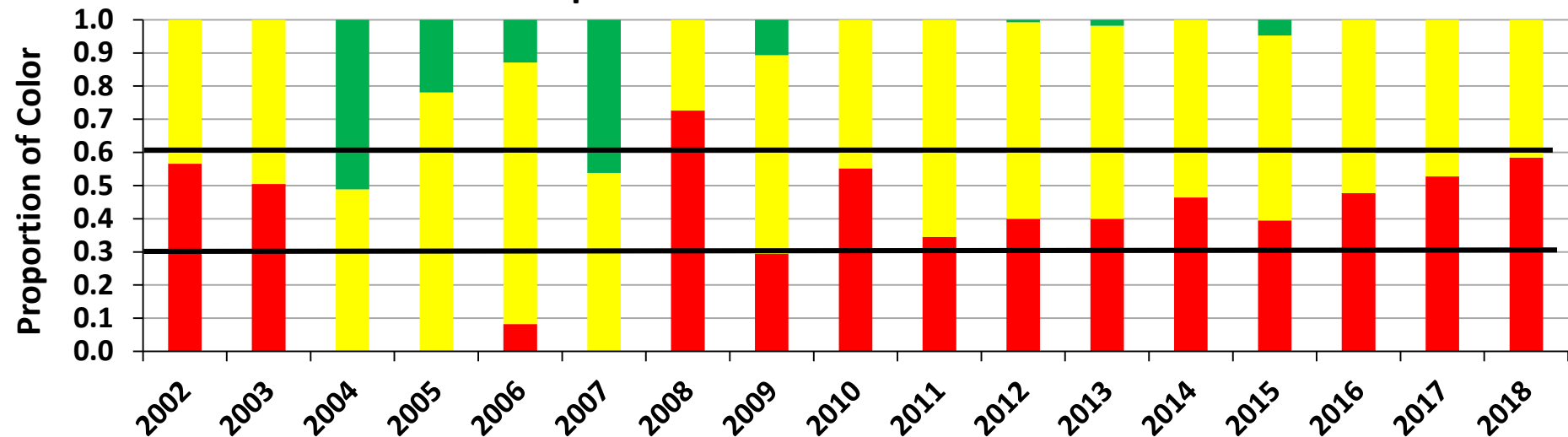
Proposed TLA (Mid-Atl.)



Composite Harvest Characteristic



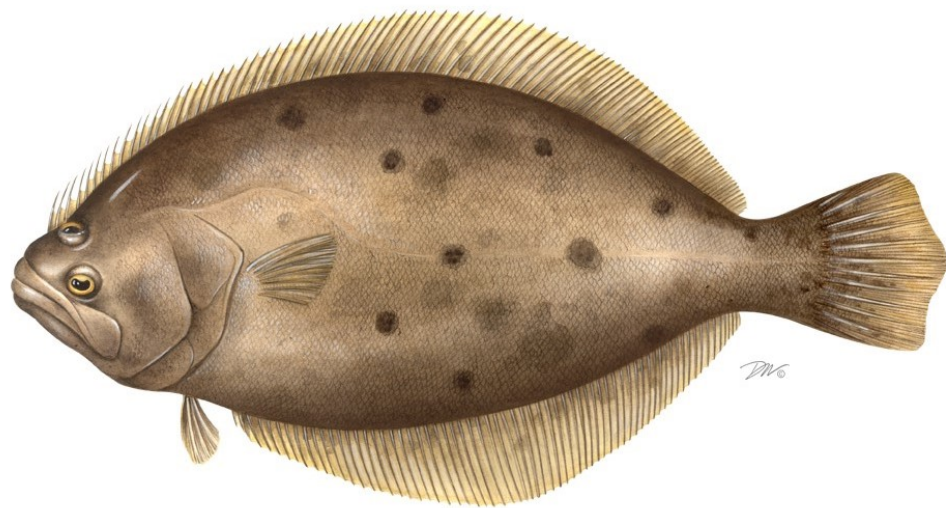
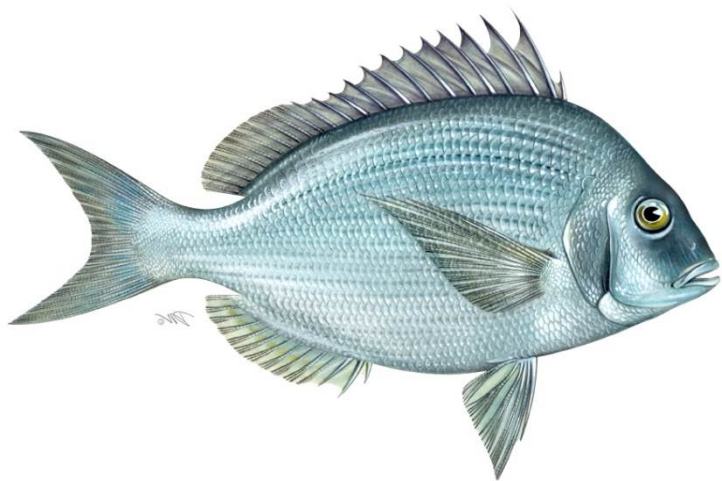
Composite Abundance Characteristic



Atlantic Croaker & Spot



- **Current TLA provides *NO* information on how much harvest reduction is needed**
- **Board initiated addenda to**
 - **Revise TLAs to improve ability to monitor changes in harvest and abundance**
 - **Link concerning trends to required management action**
- **Public input/hearings held throughout December/early January**
- **Board to consider final action in February**



Upcoming Management Action

- **ASMFC & MAFMFC initiated 2 new plan amendments**
- **1 amendment to address changes to rec./comm. allocations for all three species**
 - **Changes to base years and species distribution and availability**
 - **Currently in public scoping phase**
- **1 amendment focused on state-by-state commercial allocations for black sea bass**

For More Information



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releases and newsletter

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