



# Summer Flounder MSE Stakeholder Scoping

## *Summary of Stakeholder Feedback and Regional Evaluation*

---

*MSE Regional Workshops*

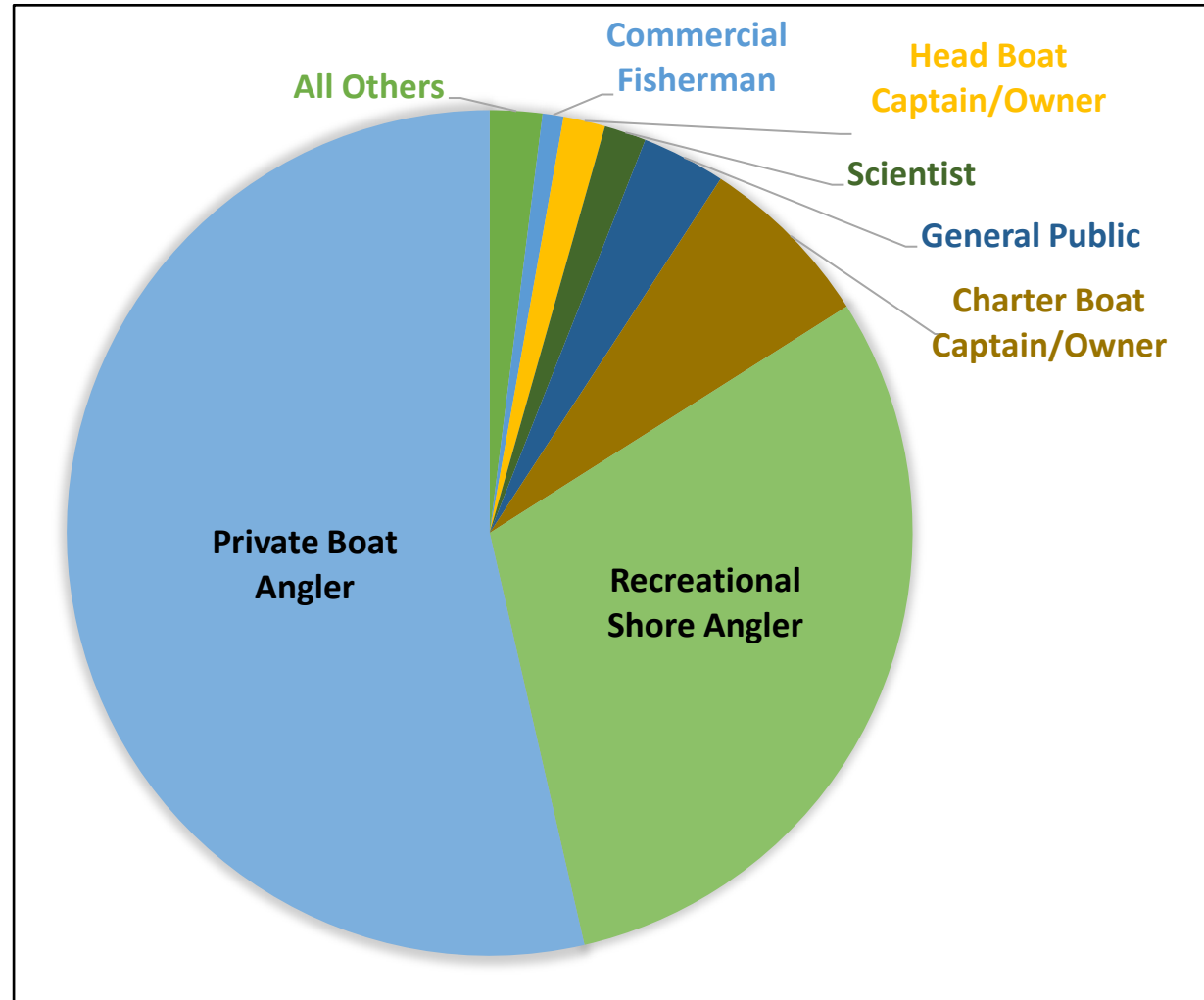
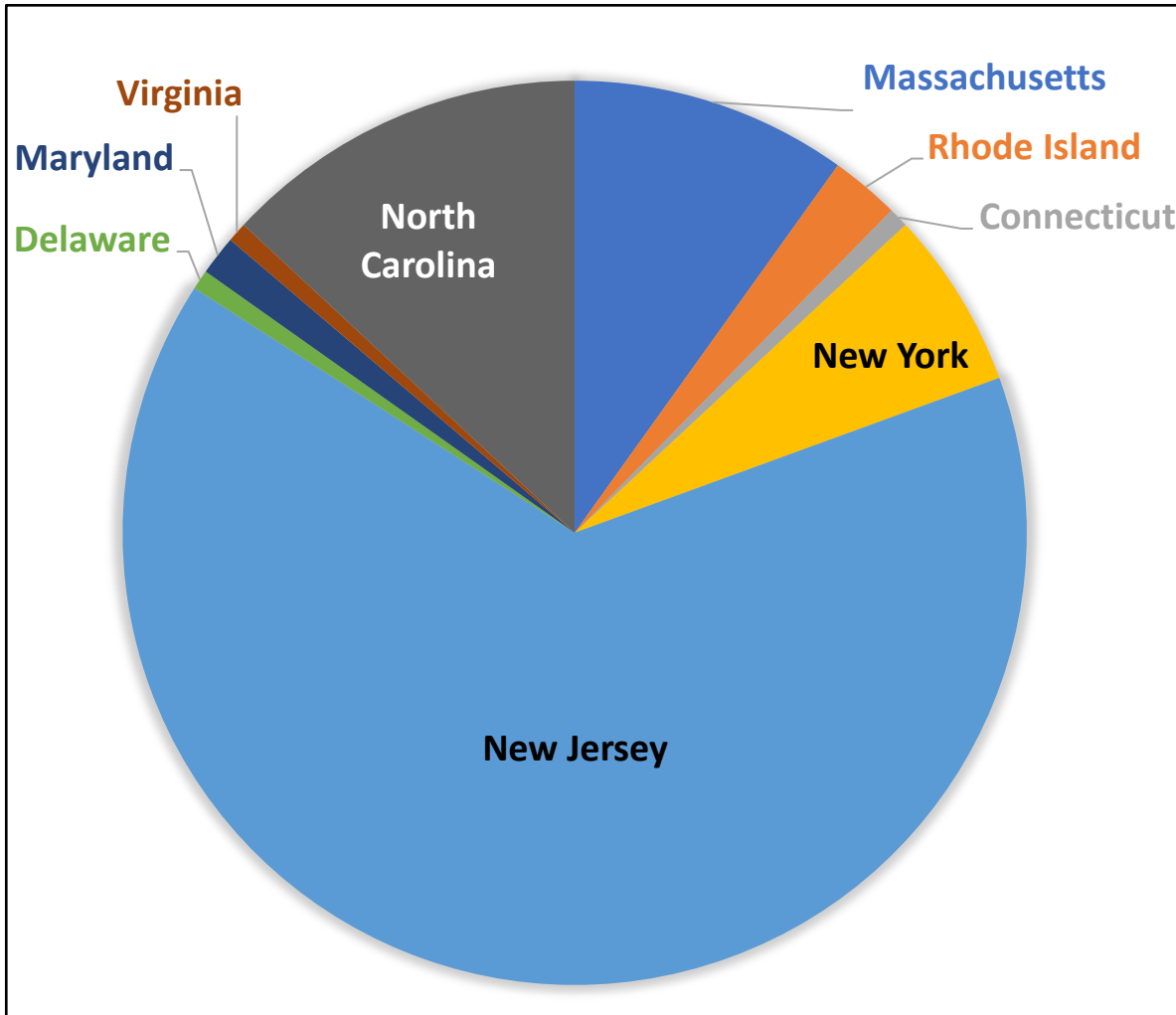
*March 29 – April 5, 2021*



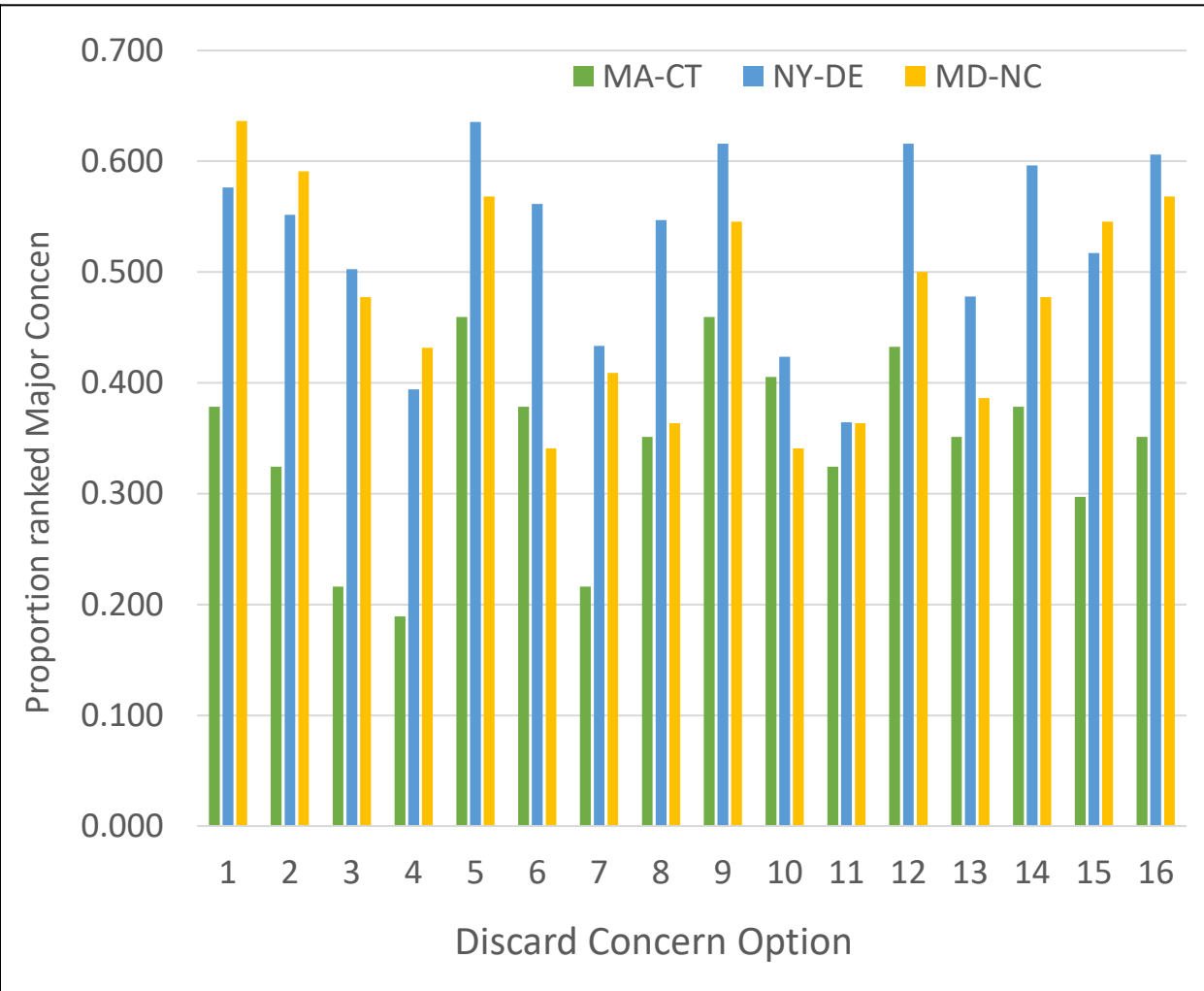
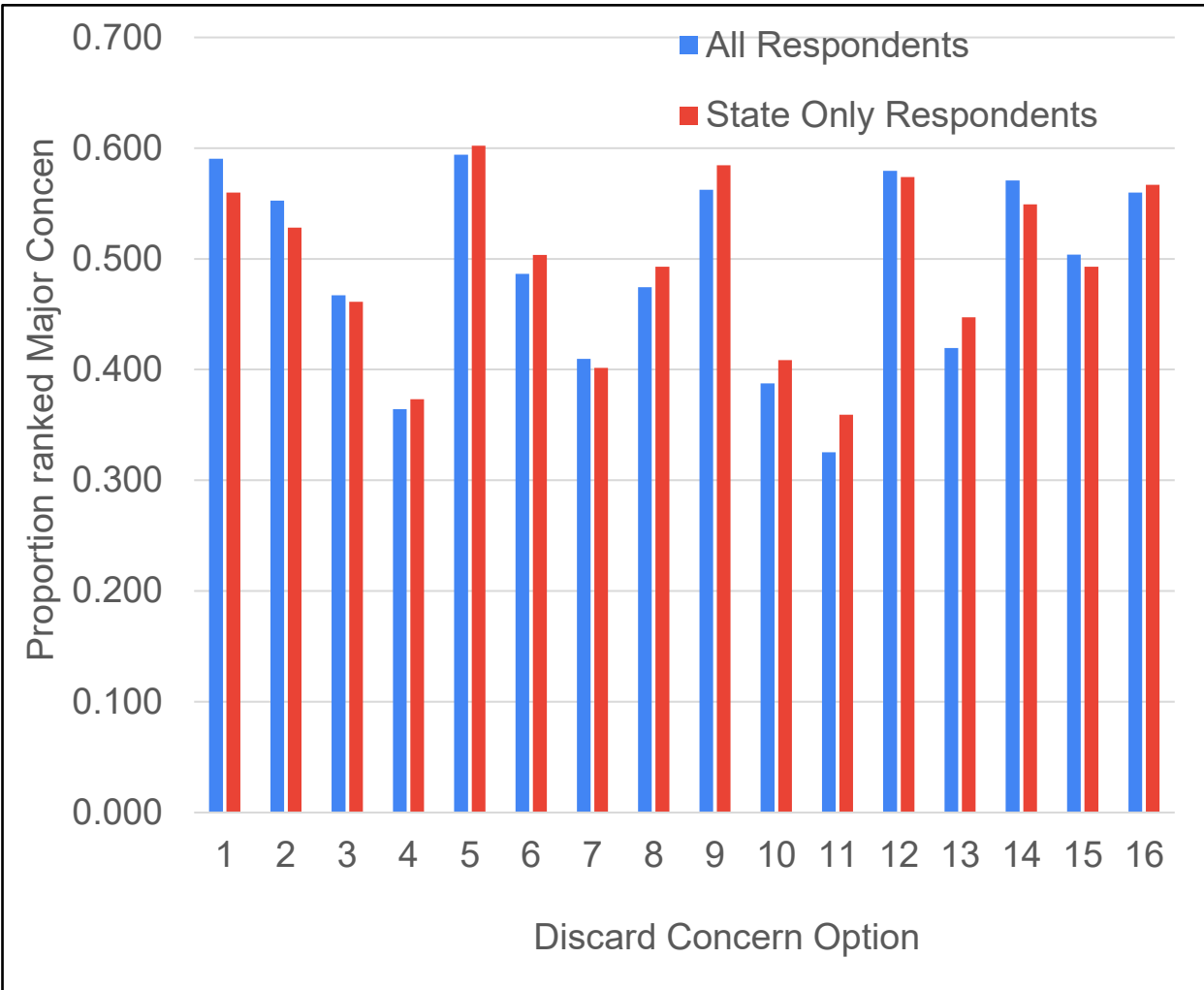
# Overview of Stakeholder Scoping

- Online stakeholder feedback form available from January 11 – 25, 2021
- Combination of mandatory, close-ended and optional, open-ended questions
- Similar to topics discussed tonight – concerns, objectives, strategies, data, unknowns
- Solicitation for core stakeholder group – collected additional demographic info
- 818 individual responses – at least one from each state from MA-NC
  - 285 responses with additional demographic info – used for regional analysis discussed here
- Information collected to help focus regional workshops and be evaluated as part of MSE project

# Regional Stakeholder Demographics



# Discard Concerns



# Discard Concerns – Top 5 Priorities

Rank	All Respondents	MA-CT	NY-DE	MD-NC
1	High discard rates and mortality of females	High discard rates and mortality of females	High discard rates and mortality of females	Ability to retain fish
2	Ability to retain fish	Lack of robust and trusted data	Lack of robust and trusted data	Angler satisfaction
3	Lack of fairness/inequitable access among states	Lack of fairness/inequitable access among states	Lack of fairness/inequitable access among states	High discard rates and mortality of females
4	Future management implications to address discards	Proper handling techniques	Management response to stakeholder input	Management response to stakeholder input
5	Lack of robust and trusted data	Three tied for 5th	Future management implications to address discards	Two tied for 5th

# Management Objectives – Top 5 Priorities

Rank	All Respondents	MA-CT	NY-DE	MD-NC
1	Maximize chances a trip produces a legal sized fish	Minimize risk of overfishing and stock becoming overfished	Maximize chances a trip produces a legal sized fish	Improve quality of recreational fishing experience
2	Improve quality of recreational fishing experience	Minimize the mortality of released summer flounder	Minimize the mortality of released summer flounder	Minimize negative biological impacts to the summer flounder stock
3	Minimize the mortality of released summer flounder	Minimize negative biological impacts to the summer flounder stock	Minimize the differences in regulations between neighboring states	Maximize recreational fishing participation in all sectors
4	Minimize the differences in regulations between neighboring states	Maximize chances a trip produces a legal sized fish	Improve quality of recreational fishing experience	Minimize risk of overfishing and stock becoming overfished
5	Minimize risk of overfishing and stock becoming overfished	Improve quality of recreational fishing experience	Reduce the harvest of female summer flounder	Minimize the mortality of released summer flounder

# Management Strategies – Top 5 Priorities

Rank	All Respondents	MA-CT	NY-DE	MD-NC
1	Best practice recommendations to minimize recreational discard mortality	Best practice recommendations to minimize recreational discard mortality	Implement lower size limits	Expand the recreational season
2	Establish slot size limits	Create an outreach program to improve angler education on proper discarding techniques	Establish slot size limits	Establish slot size limits
3	Expand the recreational season	Research to validate or update the current 10% recreational discard mortality rate	Research to validate or update the current 10% recreational discard mortality rate	Research to validate or update the current 10% recreational discard mortality rate
4	Research to validate or update the current 10% recreational discard mortality rate	Expand use of electronic reporting and volunteer angler surveys to report discards	Best practice recommendations to minimize recreational discard mortality	Best practice recommendations to minimize recreational discard mortality
5	Implement lower size limits	Adjust regulations dynamically through time based on the status of the fishery	Expand the recreational season	Two tied for 5th

# Open-Ended Response – Use in MSE

- Discard Concerns – Broad Categories
  - Commercial Fishery
  - Enforcement and Education
  - Regulations
  - Gear and Tackle
  - Management
  - Science and Data
- Discard Concerns – Ex. Common Themes by Category
  - Smaller commercial size limit
  - Proper handling techniques
  - Implement slot limits
  - Use of circle hooks
  - More responsive management
  - Estimated discard mortality rate



# Open-Ended Response – Use in MSE

Common general themes	Possible to model (Y/N/M/Proxy)	Within scope of MSE (Y/N/M/Proxy)
Ban use/get rid of commercial gill nets, bottom trawls, small mesh	Y	N
Angler education programs: proper handling, safe release, proper release of gut hooked fish, guidelines to maximize fish survival	Proxy	Proxy
Increase opportunities to keep a fish; angler satisfaction	Y	Y
Loss of summer flounder habitat; impacts of beach replenishment projects	M	M/N
Lower the size limit (e.g., 14", 15", 16", or 17"); allowance for one large (e.g., >22") fish	Y	Y