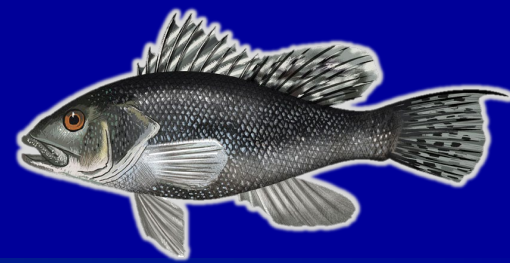


Black Sea Bass 2024 Recreational Measures

Council and Board Meeting
December 13, 2023



Meeting Objectives

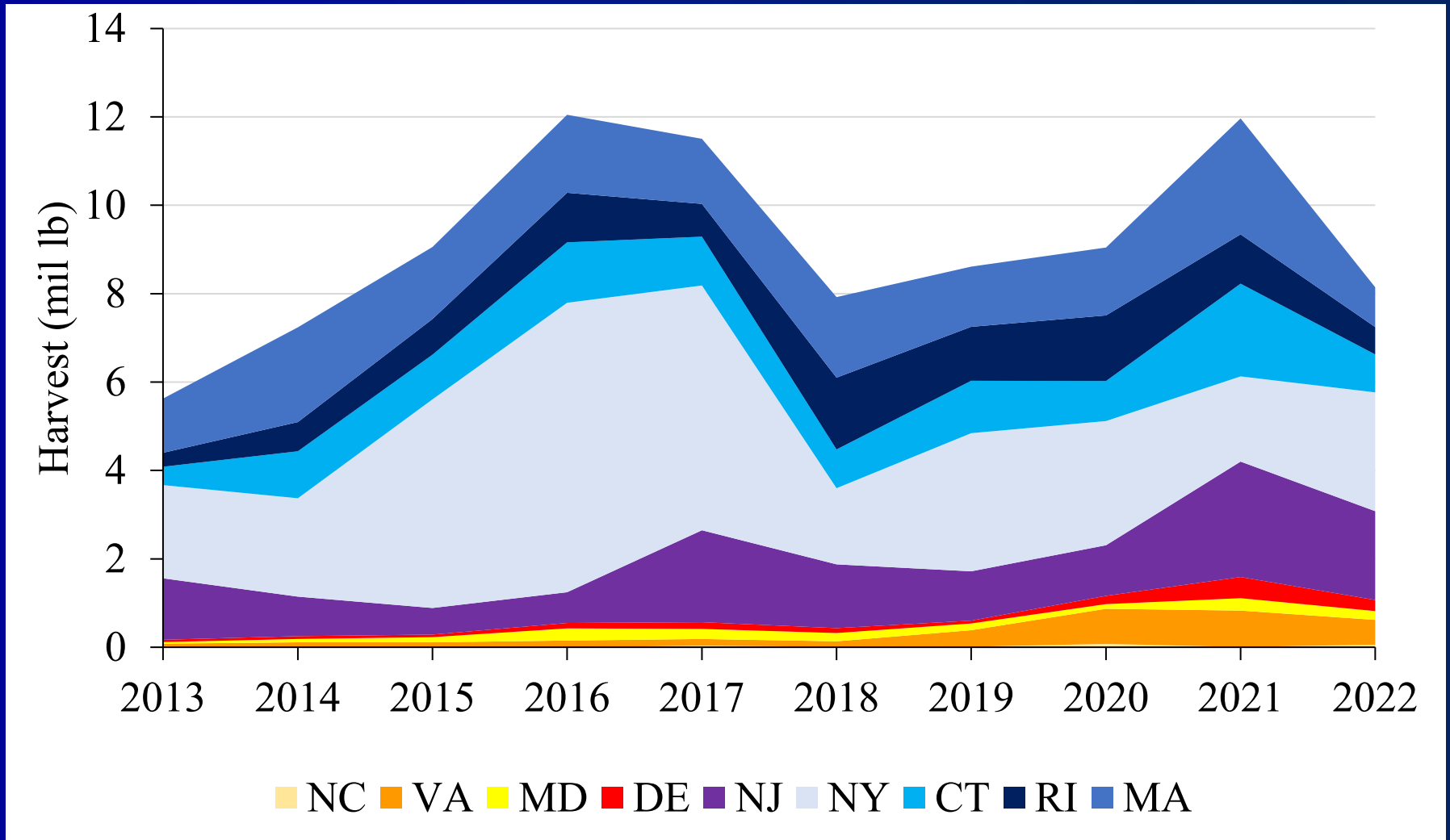


- Review:
 - Recent fishery performance.
 - Monitoring Committee recommendations for 2024 recreational measures.
 - AP input.
- Recommend conservation equivalency or coastwide management and associated measures for 2024.
- Board only: Consider approval of VA proposal for Feb 2024 recreational fishery.

Recreational Measures Process

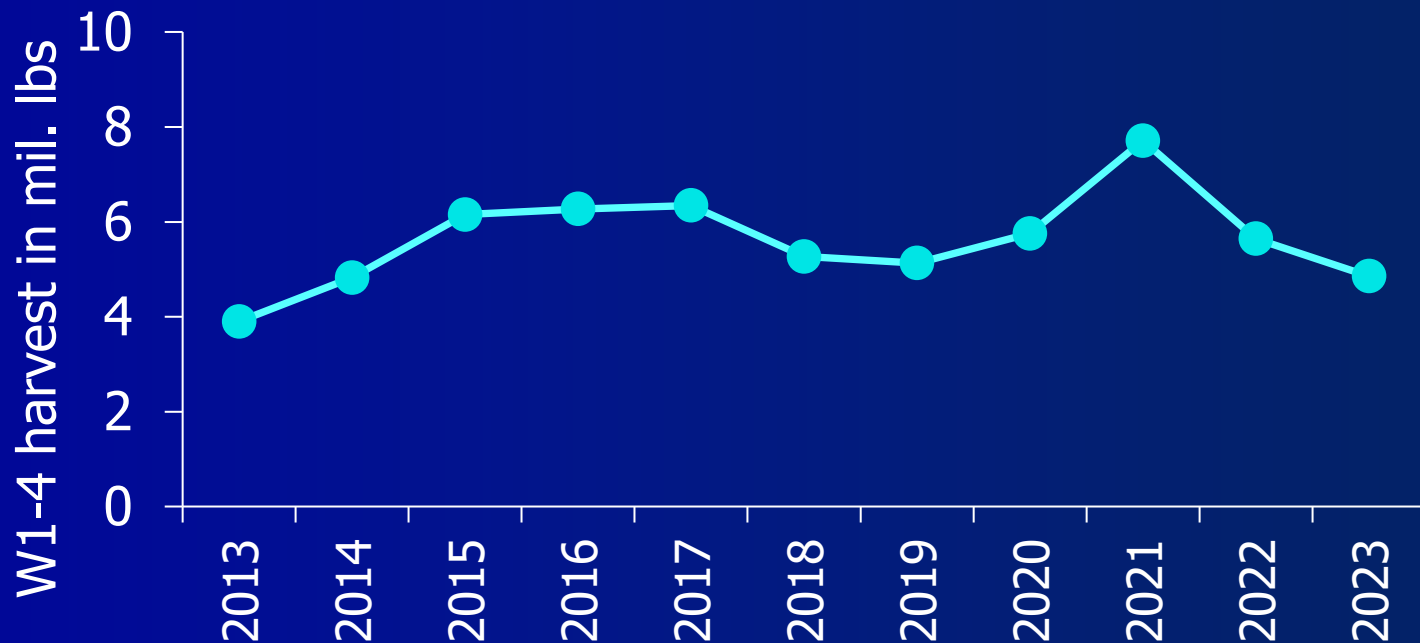
- Today - Council and Board should adopt:
 - Overall percent change in harvest needed for 2024 and
 - Approach to Federal waters measures in 2024
 - Waive federal waters measures in favor of state measures or
 - Coastwide measures
- Early 2024 - State waters measures determined through ASMFC process

Rec. Harvest by State, 2013-2022



Preliminary 2023 Wave 1-4

- 4.86 mil lb
- Lowest wave 1-4 estimate since 2014
- 15% below 2013-2022 average wave 1-4
- Over past 10 years, waves 1-4 accounted for 52-69% (avg 63%) of annual harvest



2023 State Measures

State	Min. Size	Bag Limit	Open Season
ME	13"	10 fish	May 19-Sept 21; Oct 18-Dec 31
NH	16.5"	4 fish	Jan 1 - Dec 31
MA	16.5"	4 fish	May 20 - Sept 7
RI private & shore	16.5"	2 fish	May 22-August 26
		3 fish	August 27-December 31
RI for-hire	16"	2 fish	June 18-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
CT private & shore	16"	5 fish	May 19-June 23, July 8-December 1
CT authorized party/charter monitoring program vessels		5 fish	May 19-August 31
		7 fish	September 1-December 31
NY	16.5"	3 fish	June 23-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
NJ	12.5"	10 fish	May 17-June 19
		1 fish	July 1-August 31
		10 fish	October 1 - October 31
		15 fish	November 1-December 31
DE, MD, NC (north of Hatteras)	13"	15 fish	May 15-September 30, October 10-December 31
VA	13"	15 fish	February 1-28, May 15-July 6, August 9-December 31

<i>Column 1</i> 2024 RHL vs expected harvest under 2023 measures	<i>Column 2</i> Biomass compared to target level (SSB/SSB_{MSY})	<i>Column 3</i> Change in Harvest
RHL greater than upper bound of expected harvest CI (RHL underage expected)	Very high greater than 150% of target	Liberalization % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, not to exceed 40%
	High at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	Liberalization % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, not to exceed 20%
	Low below target stock size	Liberalization: 10%
RHL within expected harvest CI (harvest expected to be close to RHL)	Very high greater than 150% of target	Liberalization: 10%
	High at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	No liberalization or reduction: 0%
	Low below target stock size	Reduction: 10%
RHL less than lower bound of expected harvest CI (RHL overage expected)	Very high greater than 150% of target	Reduction: 10%
	High at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	Reduction % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, not to exceed 20%
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Recreation Demand Model Results

8.40 mil lb	Median projected 2024 harvest under 2023 measures
7.72 – 9.08 mil lb	80% CI around 2024 harvest estimate
6.27 mil lb	2024 RHL

Harvest estimate CI is entirely above the 2024 RHL.

Biomass Category

- 2021 mgmt. track assessment remains the most recent for black sea bass.
- 2019 biomass estimated at 210% of target level.
- “Very high” category under Percent Change Approach.



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Accountability Measures

Year	Rec Harvest	Rec Dead Discards	Total Dead Rec Catch	Rec ACL	% Over/ Under ACL
2020	9.05	3.46	12.50	8.09	55%
2021	11.97	4.20	16.16	7.93	104%
2022	8.34	3.59	11.92	8.76	36%
Avg	9.78	3.75	13.53	8.26	64%

If biomass is above the target: Adjustments to measures will be made, taking into account the performance of the measures and conditions that precipitated the overage.

Accountability Measures

- GARFO letter to Council:
 - No additional action required in 2024 to address the recent overages.
 - Reductions implemented for 2023.
 - Improvements made to the Recreation Demand Model which will be used for setting management measures for 2024.

Stock Assessment Timing

- Percent Change Approach intended to set measures for 2 years at a time, “in sync with the setting of catch and landings limits in response to updated stock assessment information.”
- 2023 an interim assessment year. Measures set just for 2023 with goal of setting 2024-2025 based on 2023 mgmt. track.
- 2023 management track delayed to 2024.
- 2024 RHL differs from 2023 by 5% due only to 3 new years of catch data.
- FW 17/Addenda XXXIV did not contemplate a situation where the RHL would change without updated stock assessment information.

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MC Discussion



- If 2023 and 2024 RHLs had been available for setting identical 2023-2024 measures at the same time, this would have resulted in the same 10% reduction as was implemented for 2023.
 - Would not have required 10% reduction in 2023 and another 10% reduction in 2024.
 - The same measures implemented for 2023 would also have applied to 2024.

MC Discussion



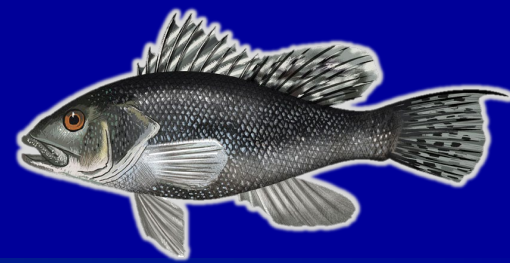
- No status quo option for stocks in the very high biomass category under the Percent Change Approach.
- Not possible to predict how 2024 approach will impact changes needed in 2025.
 - Changes to assessment model.
 - Recreation Demand Model will be updated next year.
- If status quo not used in 2024, likely outcome would be changes each year from 2022 through at least 2025.
 - Annual changes do not align with the goals of the Percent Change Approach.
 - Frequent changes can lead to frustration and non-compliance among anglers.

MC Recommendation



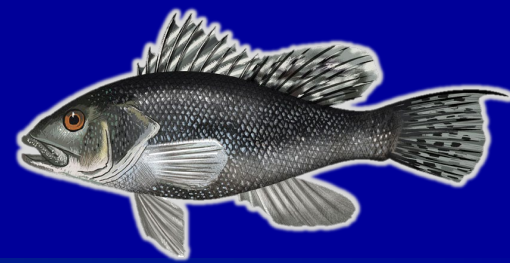
- **MC recommended status quo measures in 2024**
 - Treat 2024 as the 2nd year in a two-year cycle with 2023.
 - Aligns with intent of Percent Change Approach to provide stability in measures and update measures in sync with timing of updated stock assessment info.
- 2025 measures will be set based on updated info, including updated stock assessment.
- Recommended continued use of conservation equivalency to waive federal waters measures.
 - Under status quo approach, no changes to non-preferred coastwide or precautionary default measures.

Conservation Equivalency



- Non-preferred coastwide measures
 - Implemented in federal regulations, but waived in favor of state regulations
 - For 2023: 15-inches, 5 fish, May 15 - Oct 8
- Precautionary default
 - “Deterrent” measures
 - For 2023: 16-inch TL, 2 fish, June 1 – Aug 31

AP Meeting Summary



- Frustration that cannot be liberalized given high biomass.
- Overages are driven by biomass.
- Cuts in summer flounder would be more palatable if scup and black sea bass could be liberalized.
- 2023 harvest may be lower than anticipated due to restrictions implemented during peak season.
- MC justification for status quo should be used to justify a liberalization.
- Higher minimum size limits have disproportionate impacts on male black sea bass.
- Measures should be liberalized to reduce discards (e.g., 16.5" min size in NY).

Additional Email Comments

- Concern about high discards of undersized black sea bass from party/charter boats at depths >100 feet.
- NY Long Island Sound region should have distinct regulations from rest of NY, aligned with CT regs.
- Min. size should be reduced to reduce discards.

Virginia 2024 BSB February Fishery



- Virginia proposes the option to consider either a status quo recreational black sea bass fishery for Feb 1-29, 2024 or no February recreational fishery in 2024
- If the decision is for a status quo approach, then Virginia will:
 - Use 2023 measures or more restrictive: 13” minimum size limit and no more than a 15 fish bag limit
 - Use same process for monitoring landings as in previous years, with mandatory reporting of landings and biological data collection
 - Make adjustments through the recreational specs process to account for the additional landings in February
- Overall, MC, TC, and AP had no concerns with the continuation of this fishery

Virginia 2024 BSB February Fishery



State	Options	Black Sea Bass Measures			
		Mode	Minimum Size Limit	Bag Limit	Dates of Open Season
DE-NC	Option 1	All	13"	15	5/15 - 7/15, 7/27 - 12/31
	Option 2	All	13"	15	5/15 - 9/30, 10/10 - 12/31

- Example season with adjustment from 2023
February fishery: 5/15-7/6 and 8/9-12/31

Questions/Discussion

■ Decision points:

- Percent change in harvest required under Percent Change Approach.
 - Conservation equivalency (with non-preferred coastwide and precautionary default measures) or coastwide measures in 2024.
- MC recommendation: status quo measures in 2024.
- Board only discussion: VA proposal for 2024 Feb. fishery.



Backup Slides

2022 State Measures



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		10 fish	October 7-October 26
		15 fish	November 1-December 31
DE – NC (north of Hatteras)	13"	15 fish	May 15-December 11

Year	Version of MRIP data	Rec. harvest	RHL	RHL over/under	Rec. dead disc	Rec. dead catch	ACL	ACL over/under
2014	Old MRIP (pre-revision)	3.67	2.26	+62%	0.84	4.51	2.90	+56%
2015		3.79	2.33	+63%	0.82	4.61	2.90	+59%
2016		5.19	2.82	+84%	1.21	6.40	3.52	+82%
2017		4.16	4.29	-3%	1.27	5.43	5.38	+1%
2018		3.82	3.66	+4%	1.10	4.92	4.59	+7%
2019		3.46	3.66	-5%	0.50	3.96	4.59	-14%
2020	New MRIP (post-revision)	9.05	5.81	+56%	3.46	12.51	8.09	+55%
2021		11.97	6.34	+89%	4.20	16.17	7.93	+104%
2022		8.34	6.74	+24%	3.59	11.93	8.76	+36%
2023		4.86*	6.57	--	--	--	9.16	--
2024		--	6.27	--	--	--	9.16	--

*Preliminary wave 1-4

2023 Research Track Results for Peer Review - *Not To Be Used In Management*

