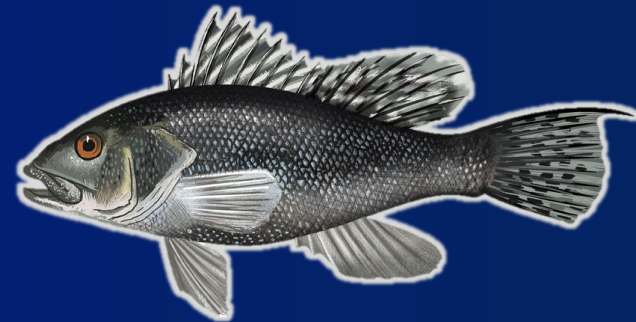


# Black Sea Bass 2022 Recreational Measures

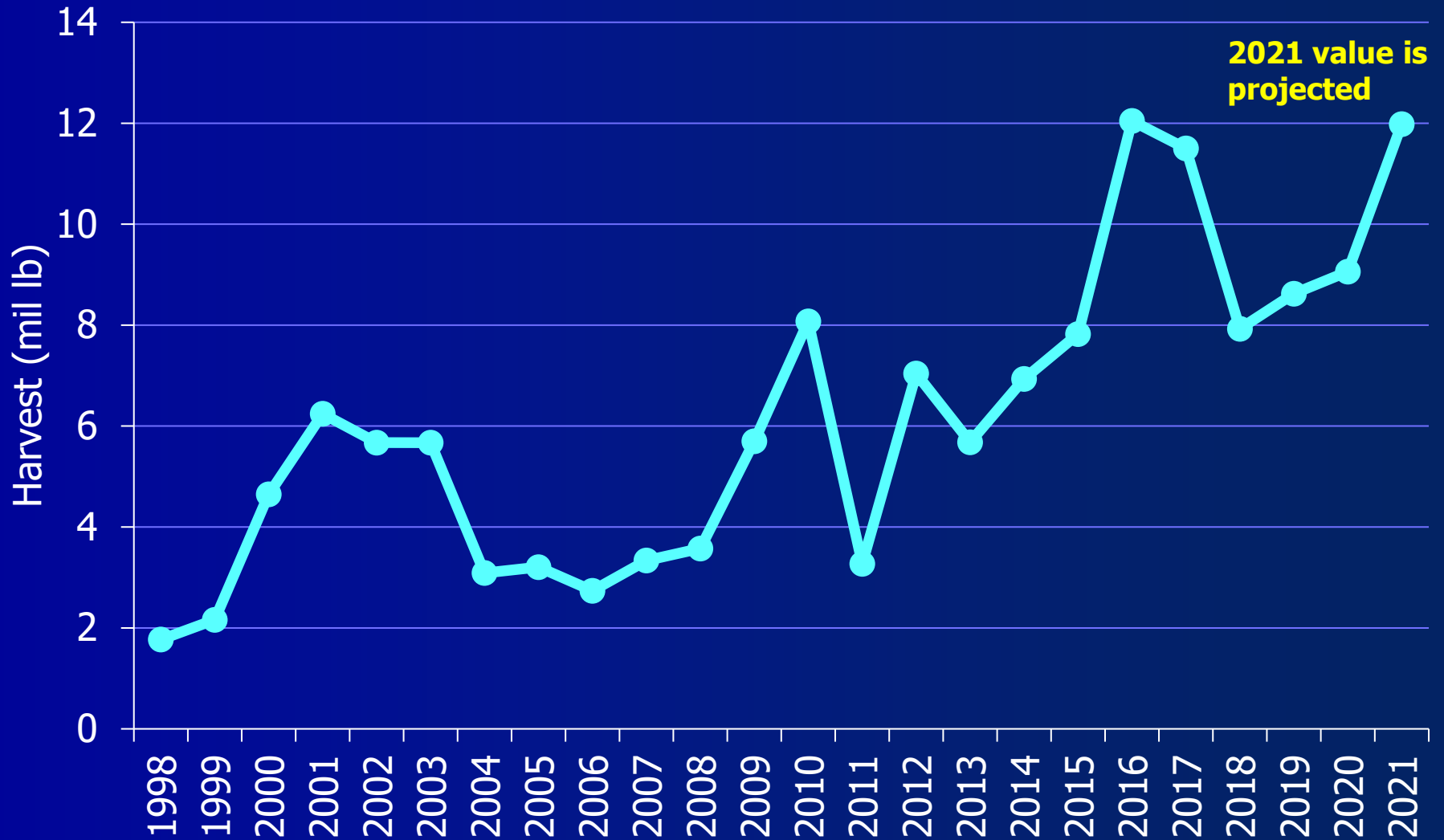
Council/Board Meeting  
December 14, 2021



# 2022 RHL

- **6.74 million pounds**
  - 6% increase from 2021.
  - Based on results of 2021 management track assessment.
  - Highest RHL ever implemented for BSB.

# Harvest 1998-2021



# RHL Performance

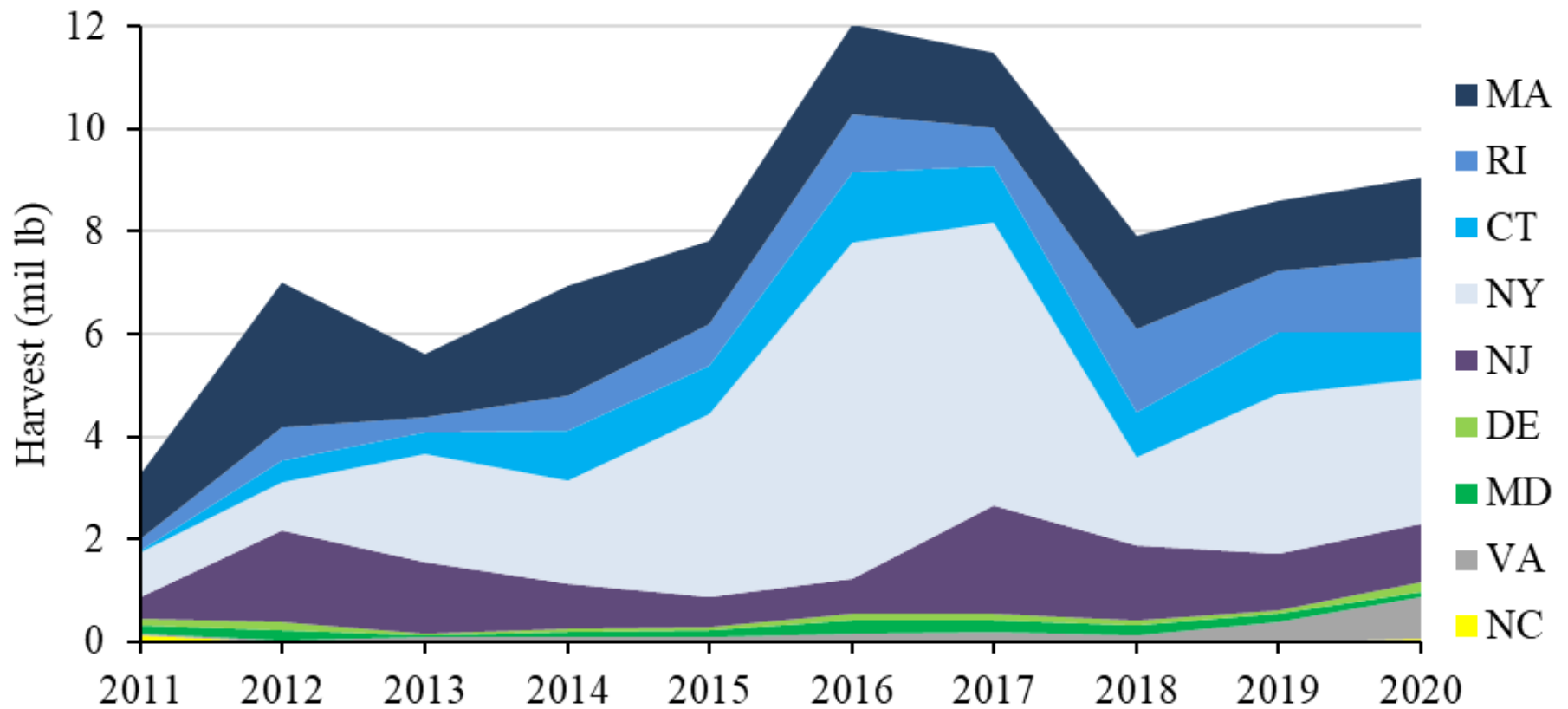
RHLs based on constant catch or data limited approach

RHLs based on peer reviewed and accepted stock assessment

RHLs account for "new" MRIP data

Year	RHL	Harvest <b>old</b> MRIP	Harvest <b>new</b> MRIP	% over/ under RHL
2010	1.83	3.19	8.07	<b>+74%</b> Old MRIP
2011	1.84	1.17	3.27	<b>-36%</b> Old MRIP
2012	1.32	3.18	7.04	<b>+141%</b> Old MRIP
2013	2.26	2.46	5.68	<b>+9%</b> Old MRIP
2014	2.26	3.67	6.93	<b>+62%</b> Old MRIP
2015	2.33	3.79	7.82	<b>+63%</b> Old MRIP
2016	2.82	5.19	12.05	<b>+84%</b> Old MRIP
2017	4.29	4.16	11.50	<b>-3%</b> Old MRIP
2018	3.66	3.82	7.93	<b>+4%</b> Old MRIP
2019	3.66	3.46	8.62	<b>-5%</b> Old MRIP
2020	5.81	-	9.06	<b>+56%</b> New MRIP
2021	6.34	-	11.98 projected	<b>+89%</b> New MRIP
2022	6.74	-	-	-
2023	5.95	-	-	-

# Harvest by State



# **2018-2021 Federal Measures**

---

- **12.5-inch TL minimum size**
- **15 fish possession limit**
- **Feb 1 – 28, May 15 - December 31**

State	Size	Bag	Season
Maine	13"	10	May 19 - Sept 21; Oct 18 - Dec 31
New Hampshire	13"	10	Jan 1 - Dec 31
Massachusetts	15"	5	2018: May 19 - Sept 12
			2019 & 2020: May 18 - Sept 8
			2021: May 18 - Sept 8
Rhode Island	15"	3	Jun 24 - Aug 31
		7	Sept 1 - Dec 31
Connecticut private & shore	15"	5	May 19 - Dec 31
CT party/charter monitoring program	15"	5	May 19 - Aug 31
		7	Sept 1- Dec 31
New York	15"	3	Jun 23 - Aug 31
		7	Sept 1- Dec 31
New Jersey	12.5"	10	May 15 - Jun 22
		2	Jul 1- Aug 31
		10	Oct 8 - Oct 31
	13"	15	Nov 1 - Dec 31
Delaware	12.5"	15	May 15 - Dec 31
Maryland	12.5"	15	May 15 - Dec 31
Virginia	12.5"	15	2018: Feb 1 - 28; May 15 - Dec 31
			2019: Feb 1-28; May 15-31; June 22-Dec 31
			2020: Feb 1 - 29; May 29 - Dec 31
			2021: Feb 1-28; May 15-May 31; Jun 16-Dec 31
North Carolina, North of Cape Hatteras (35° 15'N)	12.5	15	2018: Feb 1 - 28; May 15 - Dec 31
			2019: Feb 1 - 28; May 17 - Dec 31
			2020: Feb 1 - 29; May 17 - Nov 30
			2021: May 15 - Dec 31

# Optional Feb Opening

- States must opt-in. Must modify measures later in the year so participation does not increase likelihood of exceeding RHL.
- Allowed since 2018.
- Only NC and VA have participated.
- No changes recommended to this program for 2022.
- States will consider their participation in early 2022.



# Expected 2022 Harvest

- MC recommendation: 2018-2021 avg harvest = 9.40 mil lb
  - Measures unchanged across 2018-2021.
  - 2021 based on coastwide projection using 2018-2020 proportions by wave.
  - Would need to be reduced by 28% to prevent RHL overage.

# Accountability Measures

- Compare 3 yr avg rec. ACL to 3 yr avg dead catch.
- 2020 dead discards in weight not currently available.
- 4% overage based on 2018-2020 average without 2020 discards. Overage will be greater with discards.
- Biomass is above  $B_{MSY}$ . "Adjustments to the recreational management measures, taking into account the performance of the measures and conditions that precipitated the overage, **will be made** in the following fishing year, or as soon as possible thereafter, once catch data are available, as a single-year adjustment."

Year	ACL	Harvest	Dead disc	Dead catch	% Over (+) or Under (-) ACL
<b>2017</b> old MRIP	5.38	4.16	1.27	5.43	+1%
<b>2018</b> old MRIP	4.59	3.82	1.10	4.92	+7%
<b>2019</b> old MRIP	4.59	3.46	0.50	3.96	-14%
<b>2020</b> new MRIP	8.09	9.05	Unavailable	Unavailable	+12%*
<b>2018-2020 avg</b>	<b>5.75</b>	<b>5.44</b>	*	<b>5.98*</b>	<b>+4%*</b>

**\*Does not include 2020 discards. This amount will be greater once 2020 discards are included.**

# 2020 & 2021 Status Quo Approach

- MRIP data changes: harvest greater than previously thought.
- Ongoing Com/Rec Allocation Amendment, Rec. Reform Initiative actions.
- SSB more than double the target.
- Would have needed reduction on the order of 20% to prevent RHL overage.
- A management challenge more so than a conservation need.
- Recommended status quo measures for 2020 and 2021 despite expected overages.
- Strongly emphasized as a temporary approach.

# 2022 Measures

- Council staff memo: if harvest constrained by 28% to prevent 2022 RHL overage, consider:
  - Reducing minimum size.
  - Reducing open seasons.
  - Bag limit change not recommended.
    - Big reductions needed to see an impact.
    - Potential for disproportionate impacts to for-hire sector.
- MC did not agree with this recommendation.

# MC Recommendation

- No strong conservation need for notable rec. restrictions.
- MC recommended **status quo** measures in all states and federal waters in 2022.
- If status quo not possible due to the AM, then MC recommends either:
  - **Half inch minimum size increase** in all states and federal waters (expected 13% reduction in numbers of fish), or
  - States (ideally as regions) propose different changes to meet a **14% reduction in each state** (half of 28%).
- Ongoing actions (Harvest Control Rule FW/Addendum and Com/Rec Allocation Amendment) may impact the 2023 fishery, but have unknown outcomes.

# Federal Conservation Equivalency

- Option to waive federal waters measures in favor of state measures where anglers land their catch.
  - Non-preferred coastwide measures
    - Bag/size/season that would constrain harvest to RHL if implemented in all state and federal waters.
  - Precautionary default measures
    - Bag/size/season used as a deterrent to encourage states to develop measures which can be approved through ASMFC process.
- Allowed for BSB since 2020, but has not been used.
- Not recommended by MC for BSB for 2022.
- However, after MC meeting, GARFO indicated this process must be followed for 2022.

# Non-Preferred Coastwide and Precautionary Default Measures

## Caveats!

- Developed by staff. Not reviewed by MC or AP.
- Analysis required major assumptions and approximations as rec. BSB fishery has not been managed with uniform coastwide measures since 2010 and there are notable differences in current measures across states.

Scenario	Non-Preferred Coastwide Measures	Precautionary Default Measures
<b>14% coastwide reduction in harvest</b>	14" minimum size 5 fish bag limit May 15 - October 31 open season	16" minimum size 3 fish bag limit June 24 - December 31 open season
<b>28% coastwide reduction in harvest to prevent RHL overage</b>	14" minimum size 5 fish bag limit May 15 - September 21 open season	

# AP Comments

- AM calculations use old MRIP data in some years, new data in other years.
- MRIP data concerns.
  - Generally poor quality data, especially from private anglers.
  - Support for private angler reporting.
  - 2020 uncertainty due to imputation.
  - Mgmt uses data at too fine of a scale.



# AP Comments

- Com fishery concerns that rec. ACL overages appear permissible, may be rewarded with reallocation.
- Allocations not based on best available science because use old MRIP data; driving these challenges with rec. measures.
- Concern that MC recommendations did not follow best available science, relied too much on ongoing allocation amendment.
- Some support for status quo rec measures in 2022.
- Some support for liberalization or increase in overall catch limits.
- No conservation concerns.

# Additional AP Comments Via Email or Phone

- Consider total length limit with no discards.
- Consider hook size restrictions.
- Consider a tag system for rec. fishery.
- Pandemic is a special circumstance and should be considered in relation to status quo discussions.
- Concerned about increased rec. effort on BSB (e.g., decline in bluefish).
- Increased rec. min. size will increase discards.
- Concerns about rec. fishery having negative impacts on commercial.

# Public Comments via Email

- Several comments related to allocation amendment, but also directly addressing a 2022 BSB rec. measures issue:
  - “oppos[e] use of accountability measures for recreational fisheries until quota has been reassigned as it already was two years ago for commercial fishers.”

# Decision Points

- 2022 recreational management measures.
- Coastwide measures or conservation equivalency.
  - Non-preferred coastwide measures.
    - 14% reduction: 14", 5 fish, May 15 - Oct 31
    - 28% reduction: 14", 5 fish, May 15 – Sept 21
  - Precautionary default measures.
    - 16", 3 fish, June 24 – Dec 31
  - Guidance on degree of change in measures allowed by states/regions for 2022.
    - MC recommendation: 1" minimum size increase in each state or 14% reduction in each state
    - To prevent RHL overage: 28% reduction

# Backup slides

---

# Harvest Control Rule FW/Addendum

- **Policy Board/Council review and approve final range of options and draft addendum for public comment (Feb 2022)**
- Public hearings (March - April 2022)
- Continued development of models to inform measure setting (winter - spring 2022)
- Completion of NEFSC socioeconomic survey (spring 2022)
- FMAT/PDT and APs meet to consider recommendations for final action (May 2022)
- **Policy Board/Council take final action on FW/addendum (June 2022)**
- Development of NEPA document for framework and federal rulemaking (June 2022 – late 2022)
- NEFSC socioeconomic survey data used to update models used to inform measure setting (summer/fall 2022)
- **MC and AP meetings to provide input on 2023 measures (fall 2022)**
- **Board, Council set 2023 recreational management measures based on HCR option selected (Dec 2022)**