

Blueline Tilefish



Scientific and Statistical Committee
May 10, 2023

Outline and Objectives



- Specification process
- Stock status
- Review of recent fishery performance
- Update on survey work planned for 2023
- Advisory Panel Fishery Performance Report
- Review 2024 Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)
 - Staff Recommendation

Meeting objective

- Recommend ABC for 2024

Overview



2022-2024 Specification	Recreational	Commercial
ABC	100,520 lbs.	
ACLs	73,380 lbs.	27,140 lbs.
ACTs	73,380 lbs.	27,140 lbs.
TALs	71,912 lbs.	26,869 lbs.

■ Commercial

- Season: year-round or until 100% of the TAL is caught
- Trip limit: 500 lbs. gutted weight → 300 lbs. once 70% of the TAL has been landed

■ Recreational

- Season: May 1 – Oct. 31
- Trip limit: 3/5/7 (Private/Uninspected for-hire/Inspected for-hire)

Stock Status



- SEDAR 50 (2017)
- Split the stock into North and South of Cape Hatteras
 - South of Cape Hatteras: Not overfished, overfishing not occurring
 - North of Cape Hatteras: Unknown
 - Data Limited Toolkit used to estimate ABCs
- No data update available
 - However, data that would have been provided is reported in the Fishery Information Document

Upcoming Stock Assessment

YEAR	SA Team			
	1	2	3	4
2020	Scamp RT	Snowy Grouper U	Gag Grouper OA	Tilefish OA
2021		Red Snapper OA		
2022	Scamp OA		Black Sea Bass OA	Spanish Mackerel OA
2023	Gray Triggerfish RT	Vermillion OA		Red Grouper OA
2024		White Grunt RT		Blueline Tilefish OA
2025				Snowy Grouper/ Tilefish
2026				

- Will be conducted through the SEDAR process – SAFMC/SEFSC
- Tentative operational assessment (2024)
 - Available to management in 2025

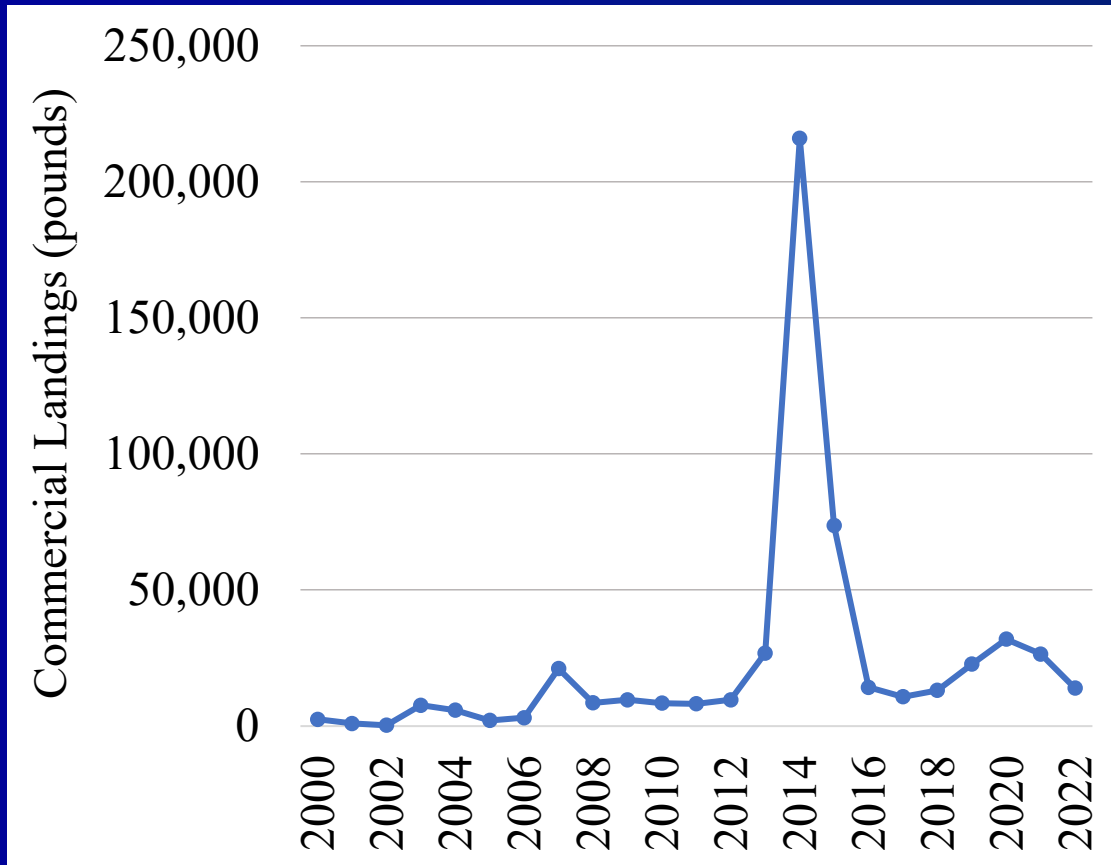


Specification Process



- 2017 assessment made no ABC recommendations for region north of Cape Hatteras
 - MAFMC/SAFMC/NEFSC/SEFSC subcommittee developed ABCs
 - Mid-Atlantic developed ABC has remained status quo since
- SSC: Today
 - Review Fishery Information and Performance Report
 - Review and recommend ABC for 2024 fishing year
- MC: Recommend management measures (May 24)
- Council: Review SSC and MC recommendations and approve specifications (June 6-8)

Commercial Fishery Performance

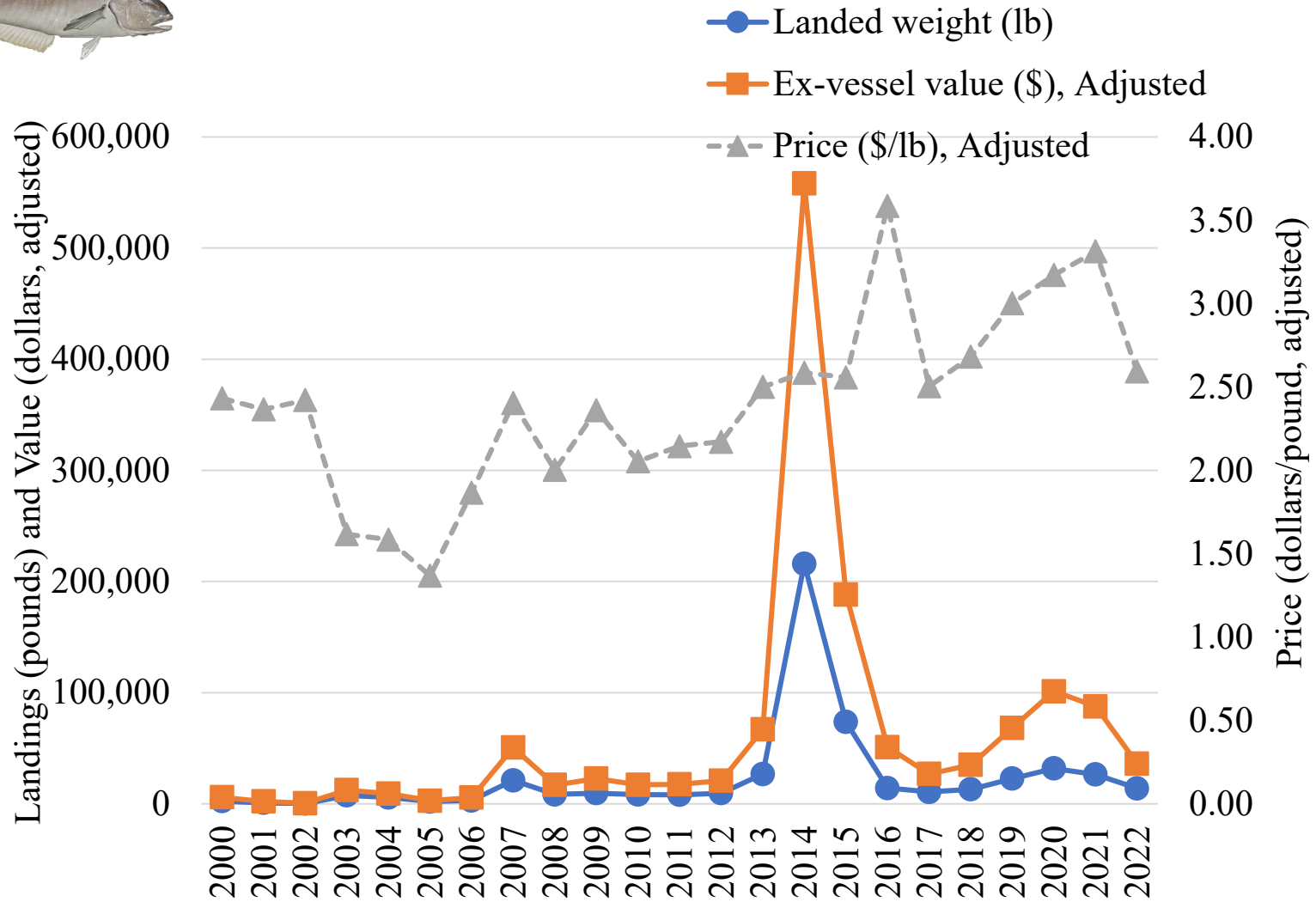


Year	Landings (lbs.)
2013	26,781
2014	215,928
2015	73,644
2016	14,235
2017	10,734
2018	13,068
2019	22,759
2020	31,918
2021	26,446
2022	13,943

State	2022 (lbs.)
RI	3,905
CT	C
NY	2,117
NJ	5,623
MD	1,304
VA	915
Total	13,943

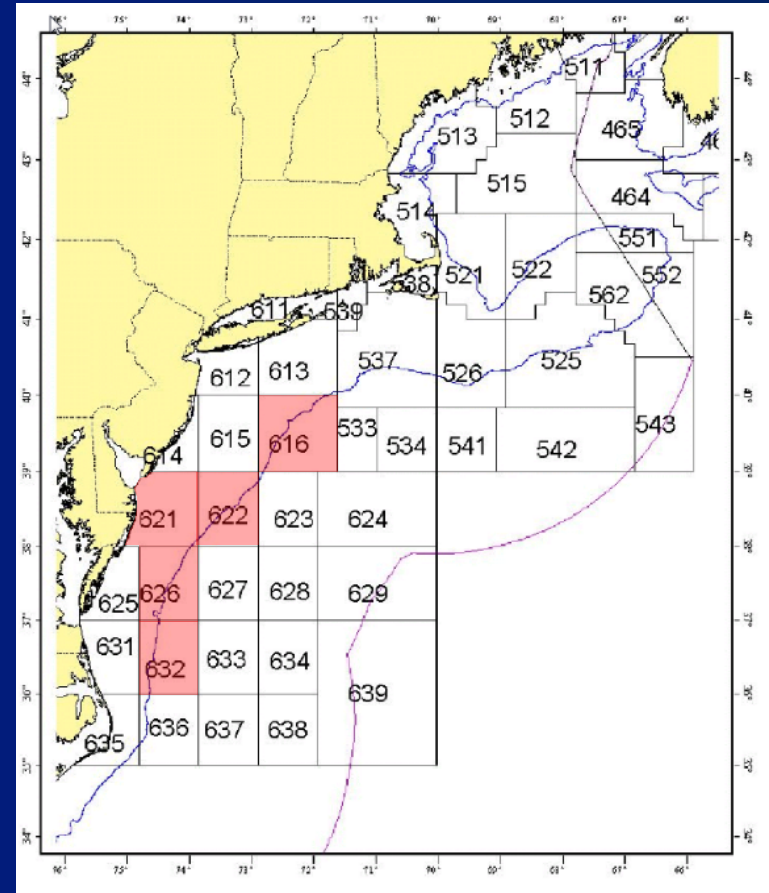


Commercial Fishery Performance

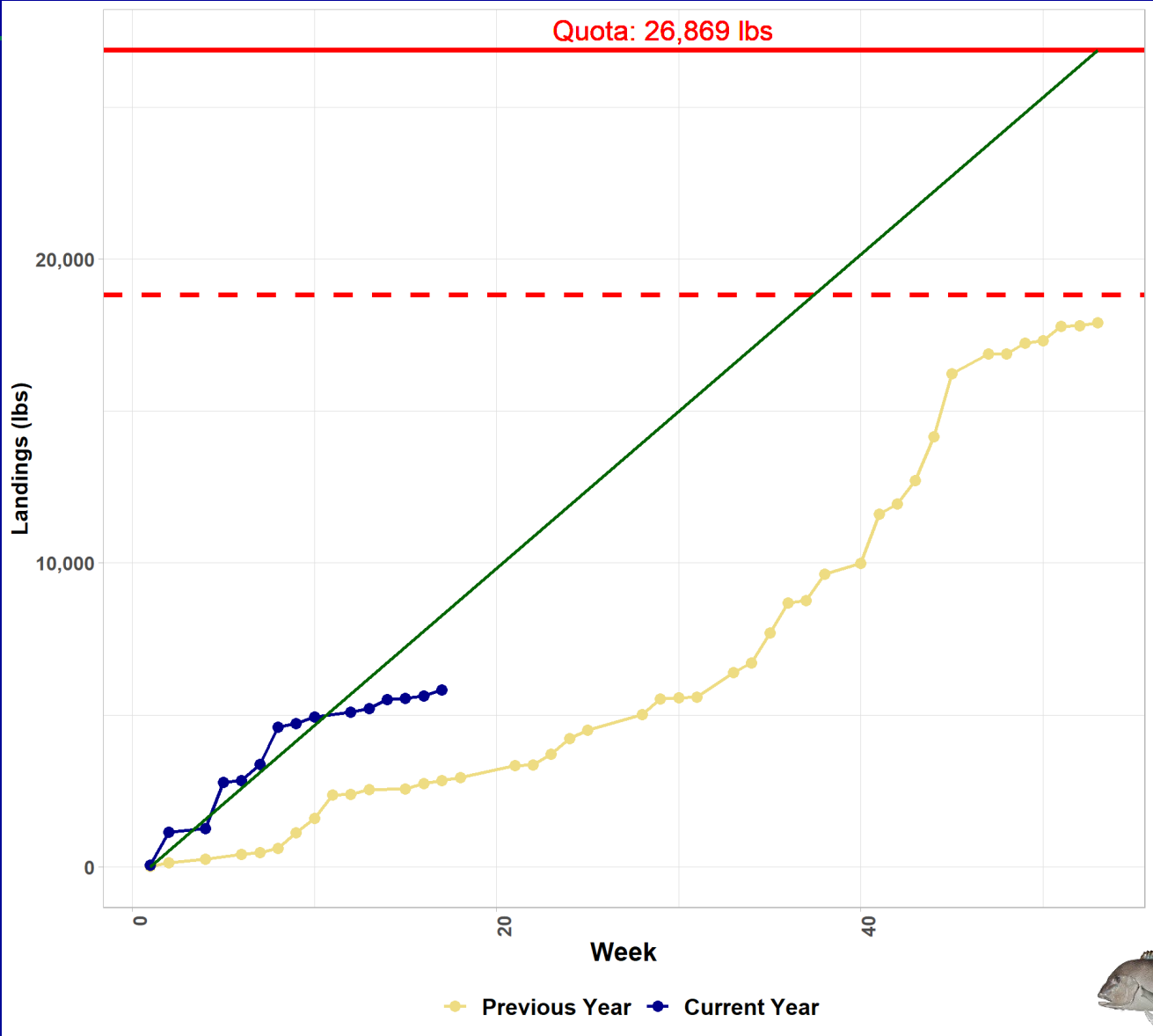


Commercial Fishery Performance

Gear	2022	
	Landings (pounds)	Proportion of total landings
Trawl	7,650	55%
Longline	5,246	37%
Handline	901	6%
Other/ Unknown	226	2%
Total	14,023	100%



Commercial Fishery Performance



Private Recreational Permitting/Reporting



- Requirement implemented in August 2020
- 2020:
 - Permits: 340
 - Reported trips: 8 (84 fish)
- 2021:
 - Permits: 814
 - Reported trips: 34 (319 fish)
- 2022:
 - Permits: 790
 - Reported trips: 33 (396 fish)

More details about permitting and reporting requirements:

<https://www.mafmc.org/rec-tilefish-evtr>

Recreational Fishery – MRIP



Year	Landings (#of fish)	PSE (Landings)	Discards (#of fish)	PSE (Discards)	Mode
2018	6	94.5	5	100	Party
2018	2,083	112.85	310	75.3	Charter
2018	2,989	107.8	0	-	Private/Rental
2019	0	0	7	22.5	Party
2019	2,272	88.6	21	107.8	Charter
2019	4,839	85.9	0	-	Private/Rental
2020*	41	94.8	47	66.8	Party
2020*	1,061	119.4	10	123.9	Charter
2020*	481	104.1	0	-	Private/Rental
2021	5,773	78.1	2,887	38.1	Charter
2021	4,4200	87.65	4,595	91	Private/Rental
2022	0	0	7	16.8	Party
2022	25,382	57.45	83	107	Charter
2022	65,714	74.55	19,871	85.4	Private/Rental

* 2020 MRIP estimates were likely impacted by limited sampling efforts due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Recreational Fishery – Party/Charter VTRs

Year	Number of Trips	Landings (Num. of Fish)	Reported Discards (Num. of Fish)	Estimated Discards ^a (Num. of Fish)
2016	158	15,493	246	310
2017	129	10,164	115	203
2018	221	12,432	99	249
2019	167	10,711	176	214
2020	149	9,670	174	193
2021	222	13,610	69	272
2022	236	13,183	63	264

^a For-hire discards are calculated as 2% of total landings.



Delphi Approach

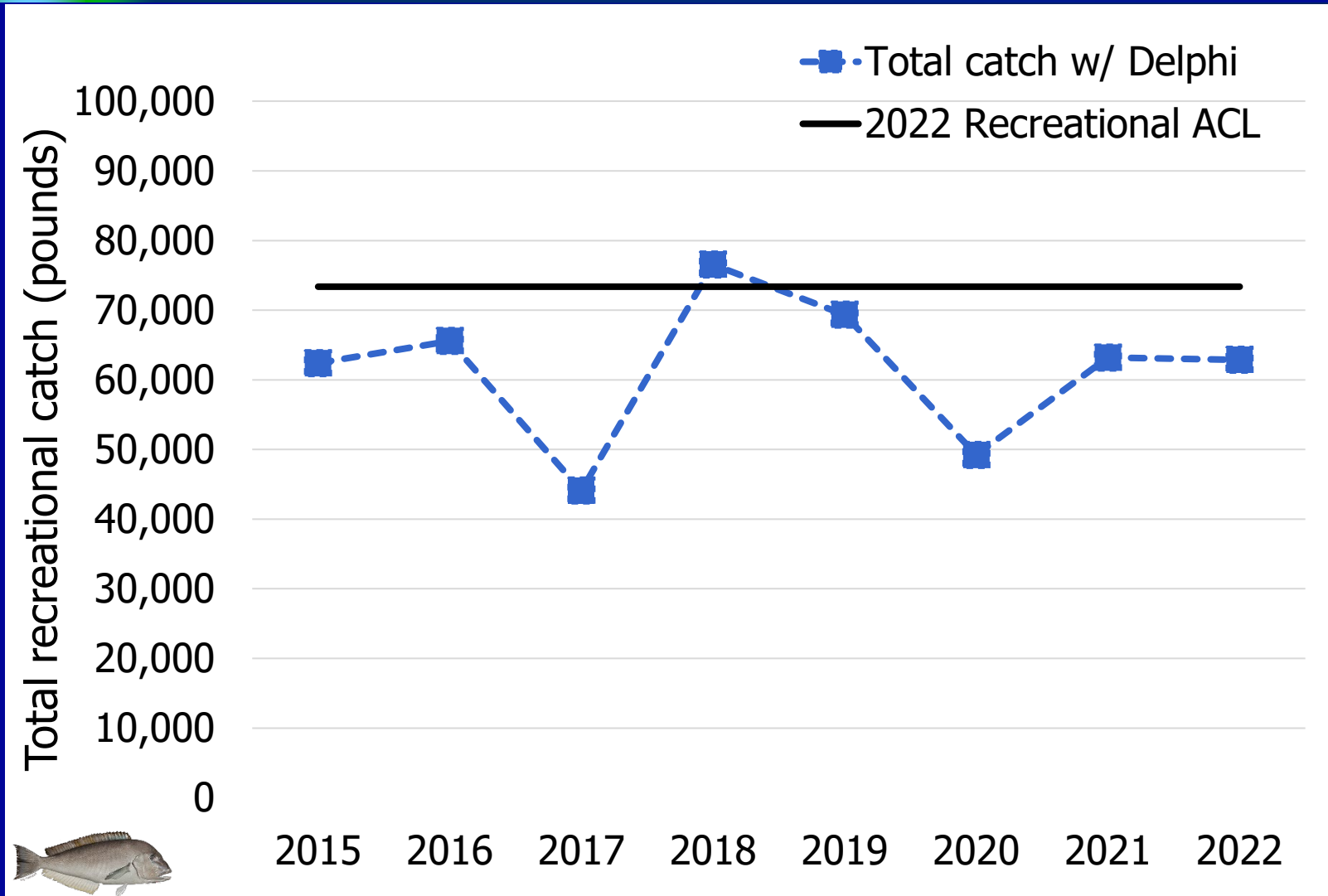
- Initially developed and used in 2016
- Was peer reviewed and accepted as best available science through SEDAR 50
- Applies 105.16% to Charter VTR data to estimate private recreational landings/catch
- Recommended approach by MC since 2016
- Past MC feedback:
 - Interim fix to not having robust private rec. estimates
 - Should be considered for use until more data is available or an improved method is developed

Recreational Fishery Performance

Year	Party (Number of fish)	Charter (Number of fish)	Private Rental (MRIP 2015-2019 and 2021-2022, VTR 2020-2022; Number of fish)	Private Rental (Delphi; Number of fish)	Total catch- Party/charter VTRs and Delphi estimates (Number of fish)
2016	13,746	2,057	116,833	2,163	17,966
2017	8,735	1,632	12,122	1,716	12,083
2018	4,796	7,885	2,989	8,291	20,972
2019	3,247	7,679	4,839	8,075	19,000
2020	6,045	3,625	MRIP = 481* Private VTR = 86	3,812	13,482
2021	10,112	3,510	MRIP = 48,795 Private VTR = 333	3,691	17,313
2022	9,337	3,846	MRIP = 85,585 Private VTR = 404	4,044	17,227



Recreational Fishery Performance



Survey Updates



- South Atlantic Deepwater Longline (SADL) survey
 - Cooperative survey that targets several deepwater snapper/grouper species, including tilefish, in waters from the NC/VA border – FL Keys
 - Survey objective: generate indices of abundance and collect biological information to support stock assessments
 - 2023 SADL survey will be expanded north to about Wilmington Canyon
 - Support collection of information on blueline tilefish throughout range as well as monitor potential distribution shifts of other deepwater species

AP Fishery Performance Report

Blueline Tilefish – Factors Influencing Catch

- Low quotas and trip limits constrain effort/landings for both commercial and recreational sectors
- Low trip limits discourages directed fishing effort
 - Most trips catching bluelines are:
 - Trips targeting other species and incidentally catching bluelines
 - Trip targeting multiple species, including bluelines



AP Fishery Performance Report

Blueline Tilefish – Market/Economic



- Price of blueline tilefish is good enough to drive commercial effort as seen by 2013-2015 landings
 - However, since management was established, blueline activity is represented by “fill-in” trips or incidental catch
- One AP member expressed market/economics cannot be considered a condition driving the fishery due to the constraining quota/trip limits
- Industry participants may put together trips targeting bluelines, golden, other species but that activity is also hindered by other regulations
- Directed blueline trips not financially feasible due to trip costs (fuel, etc.) and current economic reality does not help

AP Fishery Performance Report



Blueline Tilefish – Recreational Fishery Issues

- General concern with MRIP estimates and suggestion to use with caution or not at all
 - One AP member fishes for both blueline and golden tilefish in areas where they co-occur and expressed that in these areas they do not commonly interact with other anglers
- Another AP member expressed concern with Large Pelagic Survey estimates given feedback above
 - Expressed similar caution about using the information
- One member commented recreational effort may also be limited by cost of trips (fuel, bait, etc.)



AP Fishery Performance Report

Blueline Tilefish – Recreational Fishery Issues Continued

- One AP member expressed the 3 fish private recreational possession limit discourages private recreational effort
 - Only fishes where they can target both blueline and goldens
 - Concerned the 3 fish limit contributes to regulatory discards
 - If anglers limit out while still targeting other deepwater species, they are forced to either continue fishing and discard additional bluelines caught or quit fishing
 - Has tried descending devices but unsure if effective for bluelines
- Two AP members supported modifying the rec. season to better match the black sea bass season in most states
 - Commonly target both on same trip
 - Aligning the season will reduce black sea bass discards and help control temporal effort on both fisheries

AP Fishery Performance Report



Blueline Tilefish – Recreational Fishery Issues Continued

- One AP member noted using eFin Logbook to report trips
 - Suggested adding a question on what other species anglers are catching when recreationally targeting tilefish
- AP member supported staff efforts to link to or reference tilefish permitting and reporting requirements on HMS permit renewal website
 - Believes every HMS angler is a potential tilefish angler
- AP members encouraged staff to continue to work on efforts to improve overall awareness of and compliance with private rec. permitting and reporting requirements

AP Fishery Performance Report

Blueline Tilefish – Research Priorities

- One AP member expressed support for the expansion of the SADL survey and looks forward to seeing the outcome of this work



Potential Research Priorities

- Comprehensive 5-year Research Plan (2020-2024)
 - Improve the biological length samples of commercial and recreational landings to better characterize the size distribution of removals
 - *Research the reliability of aging methods. Collect additional age information from the commercial and recreational sectors*
 - *Incorporate mandatory logbook reporting for all recreational anglers and collect fishery-dependent information*





Potential Research Priorities

- Comprehensive 5-year Research Plan (2020-2024)
 - Investigate new stock assessment approaches
 - Conduct habitat studies of deep-water sites in the mid-Atlantic (Norfolk Canyon, Baltimore Canyon, and Hudson Canyon)
- Other
 - Collect representative discard and kept length frequency data in the for-hire fishery
 - Improve mean weight estimates in the recreational fishery
 - Collect catch per unit effort data to help track the stock



Previous SSC Recommendation

- SSC recommended an ABC of 100,520 pounds (45.6 mt) for 2022-2024

Staff recommend no change to the previously recommended 2024 ABC

Questions?



Image: David Hoke

Back-up slides

Commercial Trips and Bycatch

Pound Range	Trips (N)
400+	4
300 - 399	6
200 - 299	12
100 - 199	19
1 - 99	174
Total	231

Species	Trips (N)	Pounds
Scup	4	27,900
Golden tilefish	20	25,285
Summer flounder	3	4,685
Black sea bass	2	768
Bluefish	1	644
Monkfish	1	149
Loligo squid	2	130
Dory John	1	27

Recreational – MRIP

Year	State	MRIP Catch (Number of fish)	Mode
2021	NJ	15,083	Private/Rental
	MD	14,799	Private/Rental
	MD	375	Charter
	VA	18,912	Private/Rental
	VA	8,284	Charter
2022	MD	55,585	Private/Rental
	MD	20,398	Charter
	VA	30,000	Private/Rental
	VA	5,068	Charter
	VA	7	Party

Recreational Fishery Performance

