

Black Sea Bass



SSC

July 23, 2014

Current multi-year specifications

- 2014-2015 specifications in place for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
- Review implemented 2015 specifications
 - Recommend changes if necessary





Stock Status

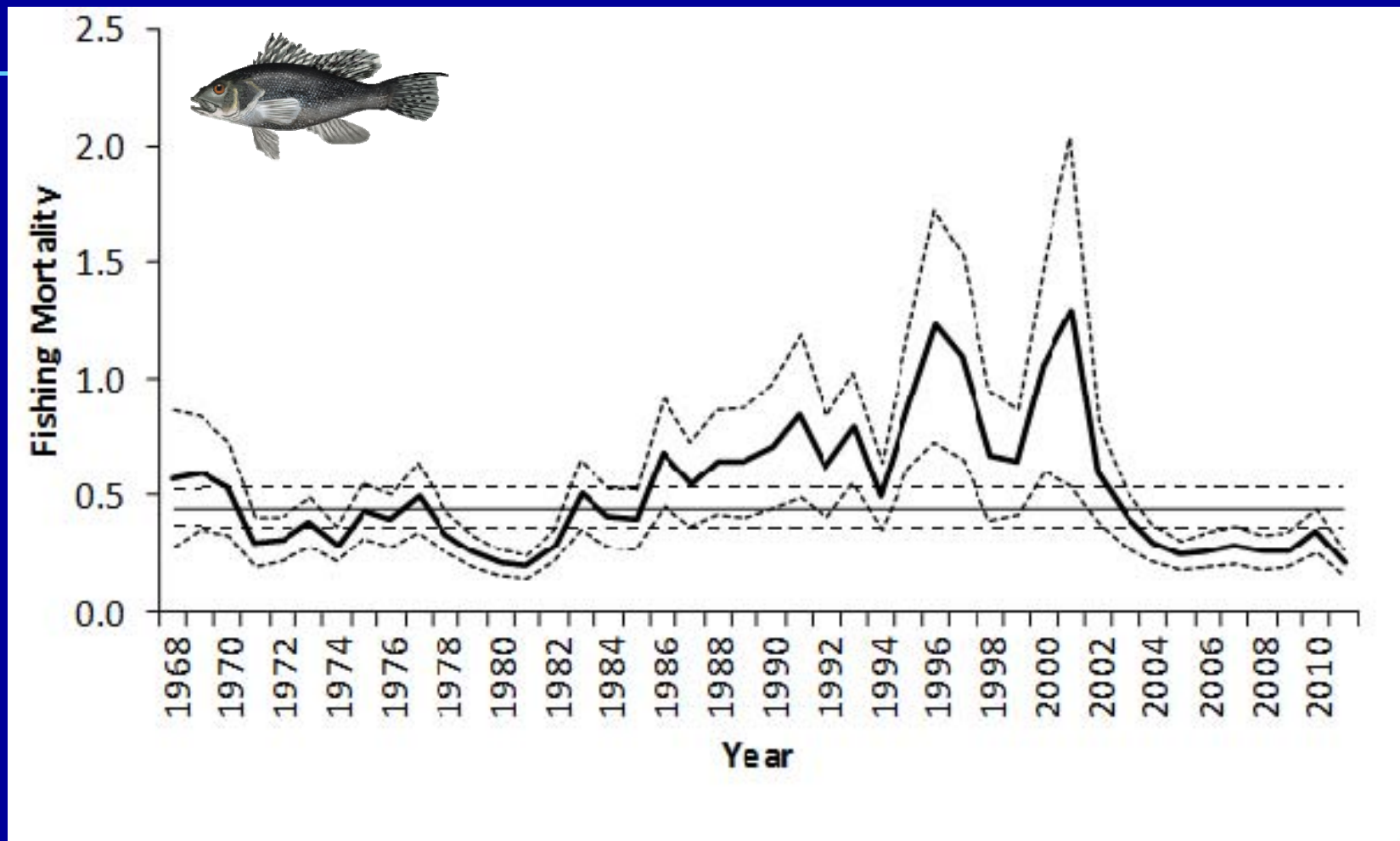
- Data Poor Stock Working Group and Peer Review Panel (2009)
 - Statistical catch at length (SCALE) model
- July 2012 update
 - 2011 Estimates of F and SSB, updated projections, updated biological reference points
- Not overfished and overfishing not occurring in 2011



Biological Reference Points

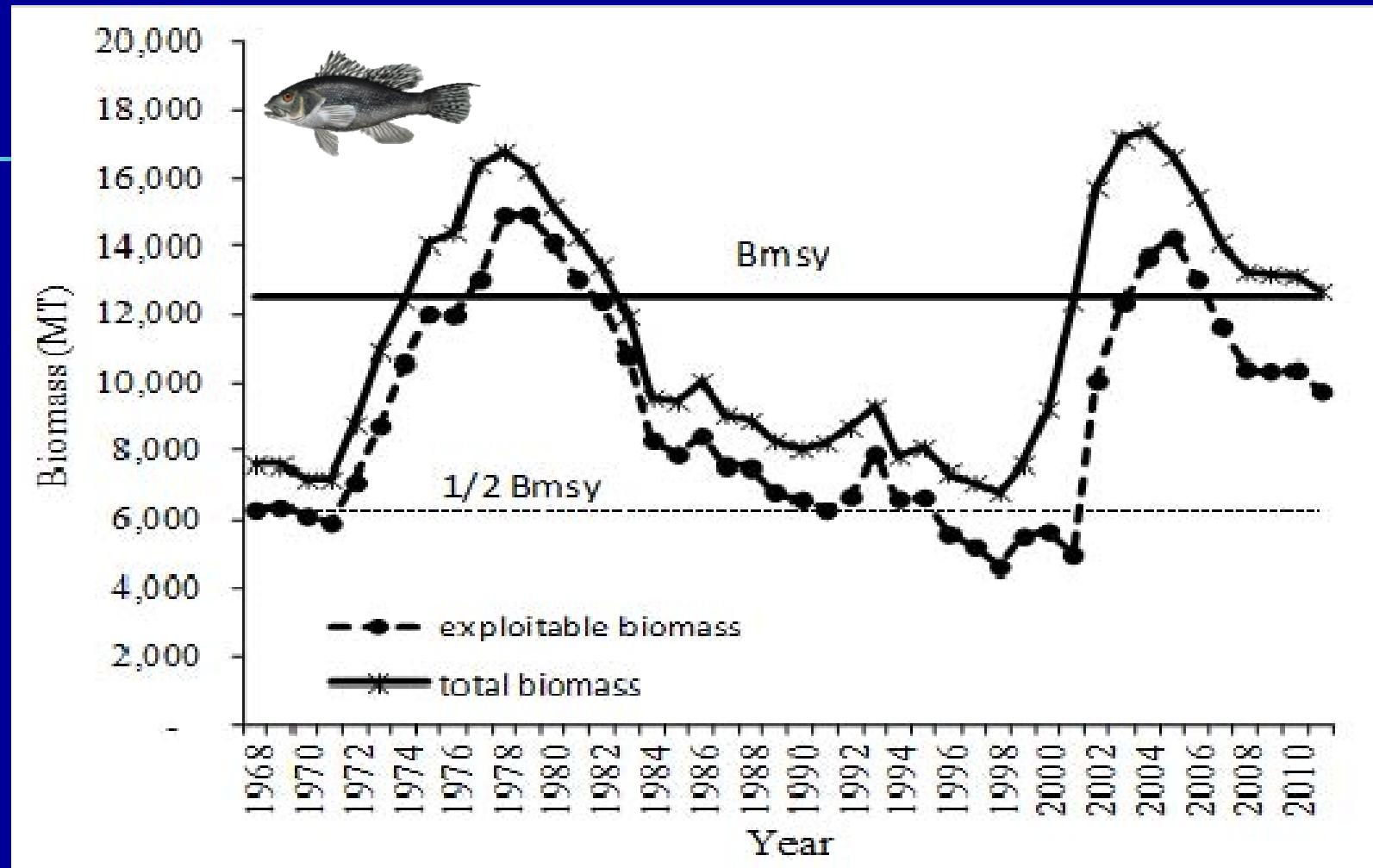
- $F_{40\%} = F_{\text{MSYproxy}} = 0.44$
- $\text{SSB}_{\text{MSYproxy}} = 24.0 \text{ million lbs (10,880 mt)}$
- $\text{MSST} = \frac{1}{2} \text{SSB}_{\text{MSYproxy}} = 12.0 \text{ mil lbs (5,440 mt)}$

Fishing Mortality



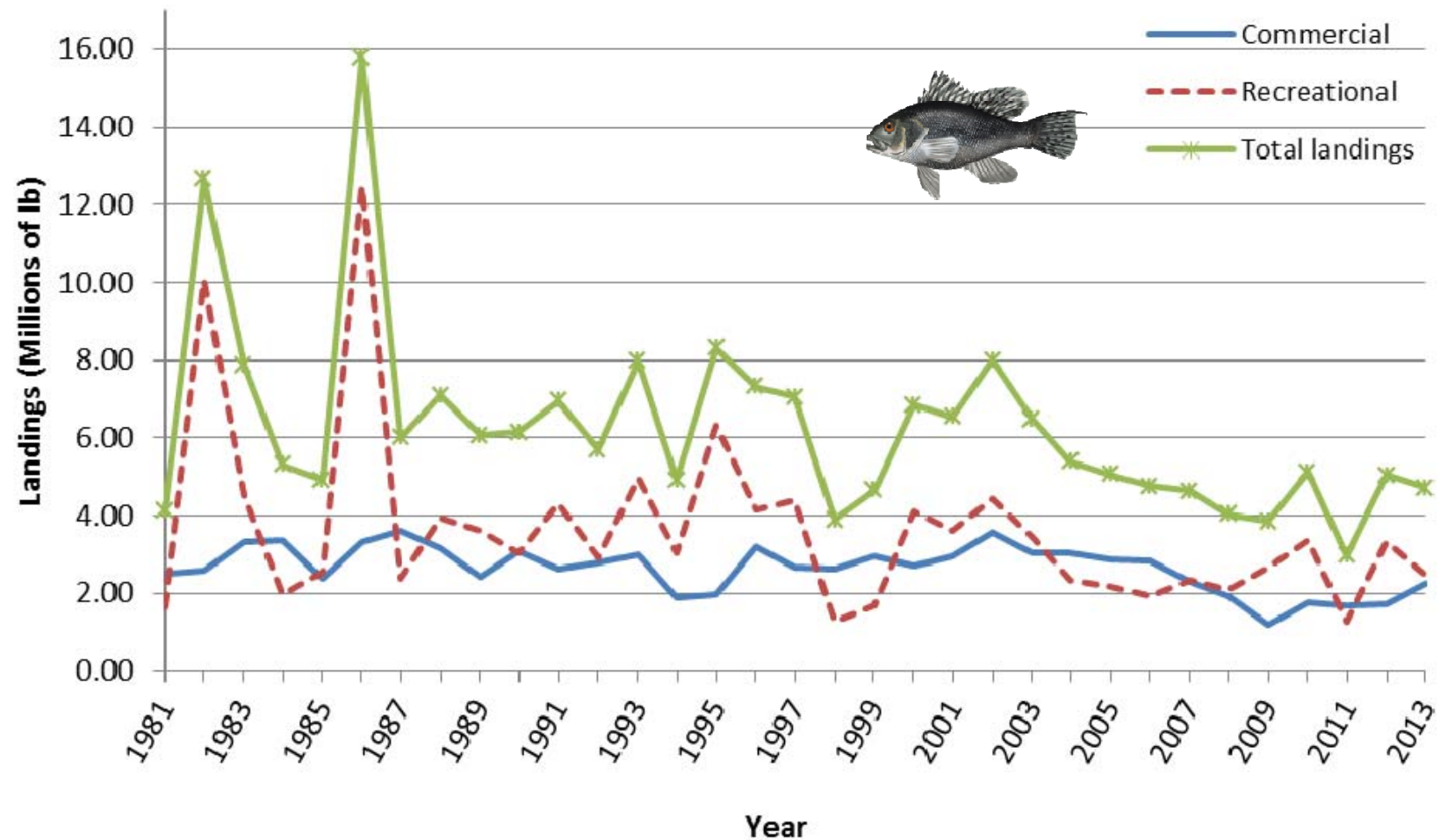
2011 $F = 0.21$; below $F_{MSY} = F_{40\%} = 0.44$

Biomass



2011 SSB = 24.57 mil lb (11,145 mt); 102% of $SSB_{MSY} = 24$ mil lb

Landings



2013 Fishery Performance

- Commercial landings
 - 2.26 million lb; ~4% over commercial quota
- Recreational landings
 - 2.32 million; ~3% over rec. harvest limit



Regulatory Review

- Level 4 assessment designation
- SSC did not endorse OFL in assessment
- July 2012: ABC recommendations based on constant catch approach (4.5 mil lb)
- January 2013: SSC revisited previous recommendation



Regulatory Review

- January 2013 SSC meeting: No information to support change from constant catch approach or level 4 designation
- Re-evaluation of constant catch level used since 2010 (4.50 mil lb)
- Reviewed avg. catch during rebuilding (2000-2009)
- Recommended constant catch level of 5.50 mil lb (2,494 mt) for 2013-2014



Regulatory Review

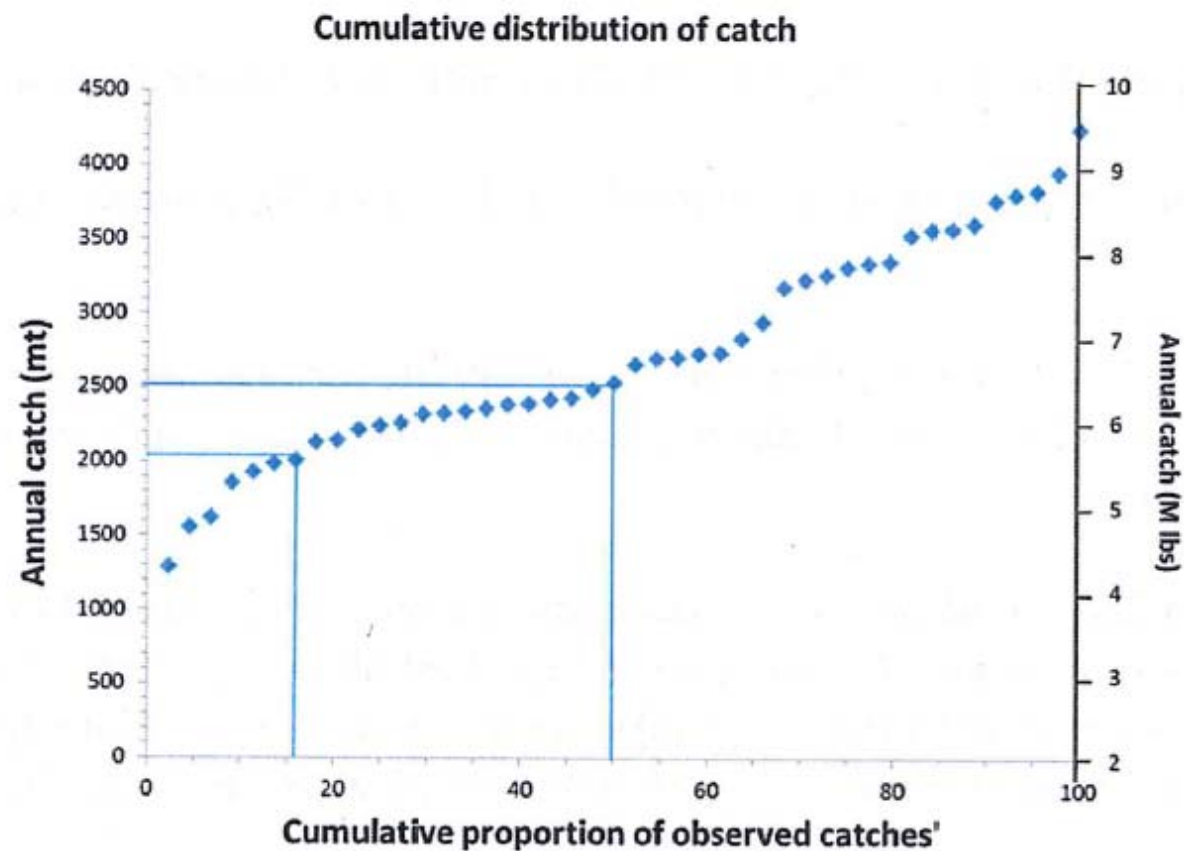


Figure 3. The distribution of observed black sea bass catches (1968 - 2011)

Regulatory Review

- September 2013: SSC reviewed 2014 ABC recommendation
- No compelling evidence to warrant change
- Extended same ABC recommendation into 2015 fishing year



Fishery Performance Report

- Sea bass preying heavily on other species, particularly juvenile lobster
- High biomass of fish in northern waters, nearly "invasive" in some areas
 - Biomass should be regulated to control impacts on other species



Fishery Performance Report

- "Critical management situation"
 - Quota is punitive and based on bad information
- Lack of confidence in MRIP estimates
 - Sense that recent effort reductions not captured by outdated effort surveys



Fishery Performance Report

- Frustrated with high regulatory discards
- Information about proper release techniques should be disseminated to a greater degree
- Barotrauma reduction efforts should eventually be reflected in discard mortality estimates if possible



Fishery Performance Report

- Research plan comments:
 - Explore feasibility of slot limit in recreational fishery
 - Quantify shifts in distribution/abundance related to climate change
 - Effects of chemicals to increase growth rate/sex change; enhancement potential



Staff Recommendation: No Change to Implemented Specifications

	2014	2015
ABC	5.50 mil lb (2,494 mt)	5.50 mil lb (2,494 mt)
Commercial ACL	2.60 mil lb (1,180 mt)	2.60 mil lb (1,180 mt)
Recreational ACL	2.90 mil lb (1,314 mt)	2.90 mil lb (1,314 mt)