



# Atlantic Chub Mackerel 2024 Specifications Review



Council Meeting

June 7, 2023

# Objective

- Review
  - Management history
  - Recent fishery performance
  - AP Fishery Performance Report
  - SSC recommendations
  - MC recommendations
- Consider if changes are needed to the previously adopted 2024 specs
  - Staff, AP, SSC, MC all recommend no changes



Robert Leaf

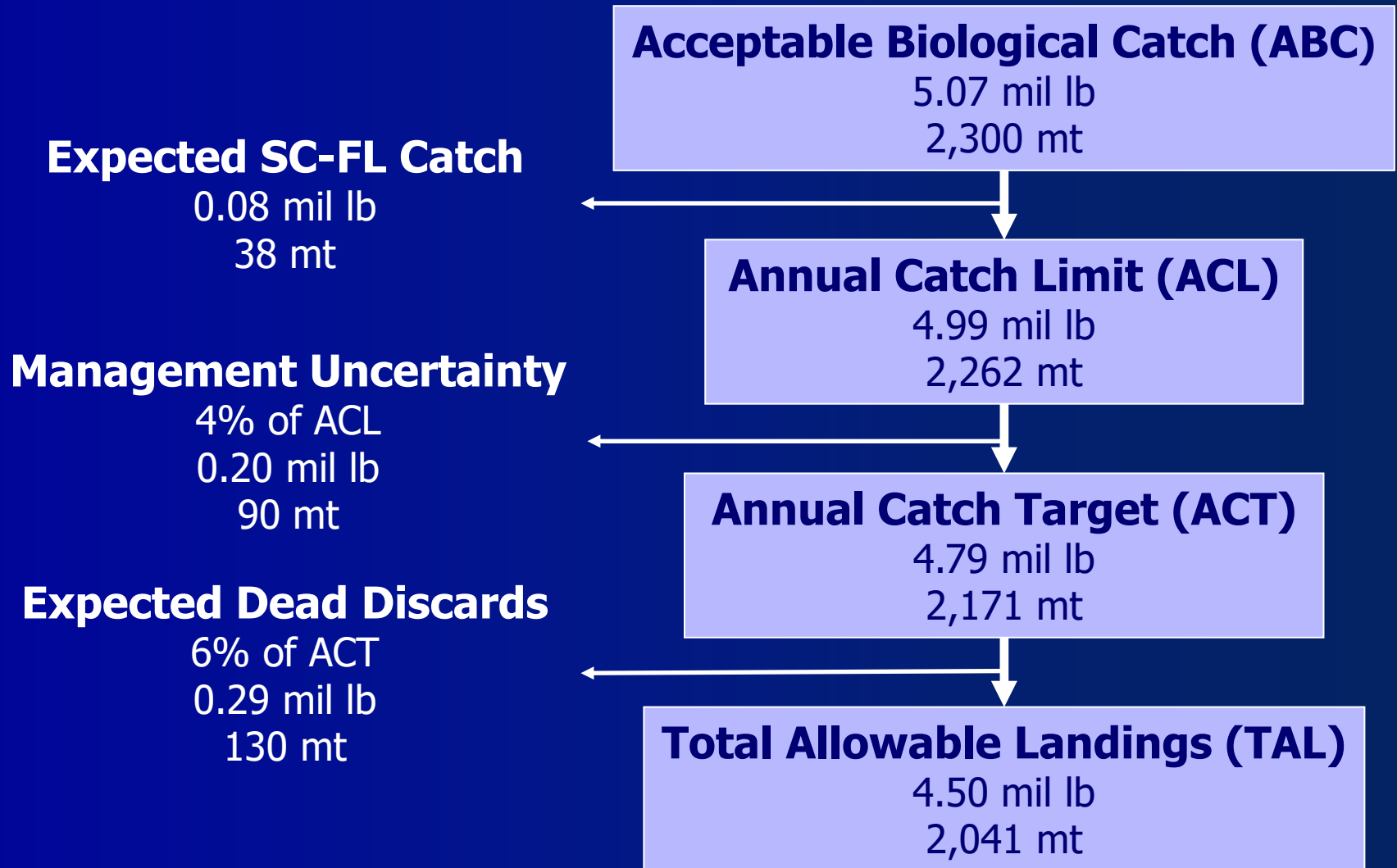
# Management

- First measures implemented through Forage Amendment (effective Sept 2017).
- Amendment 21 to MSB FMP (effective Sept 2020).
  - ABC, ACL, ACT, TAL.
  - Vessel (commercial and party/charter), and dealer permit and reporting requirements.
  - Commercial possession limits.
    - 40,000 lb after 90% of TAL projected to be landed.
    - 10,000 lb after 100% of TAL projected to be landed.
  - No recreational possession limit.
  - No commercial or recreational fish size, gear, or season restrictions.

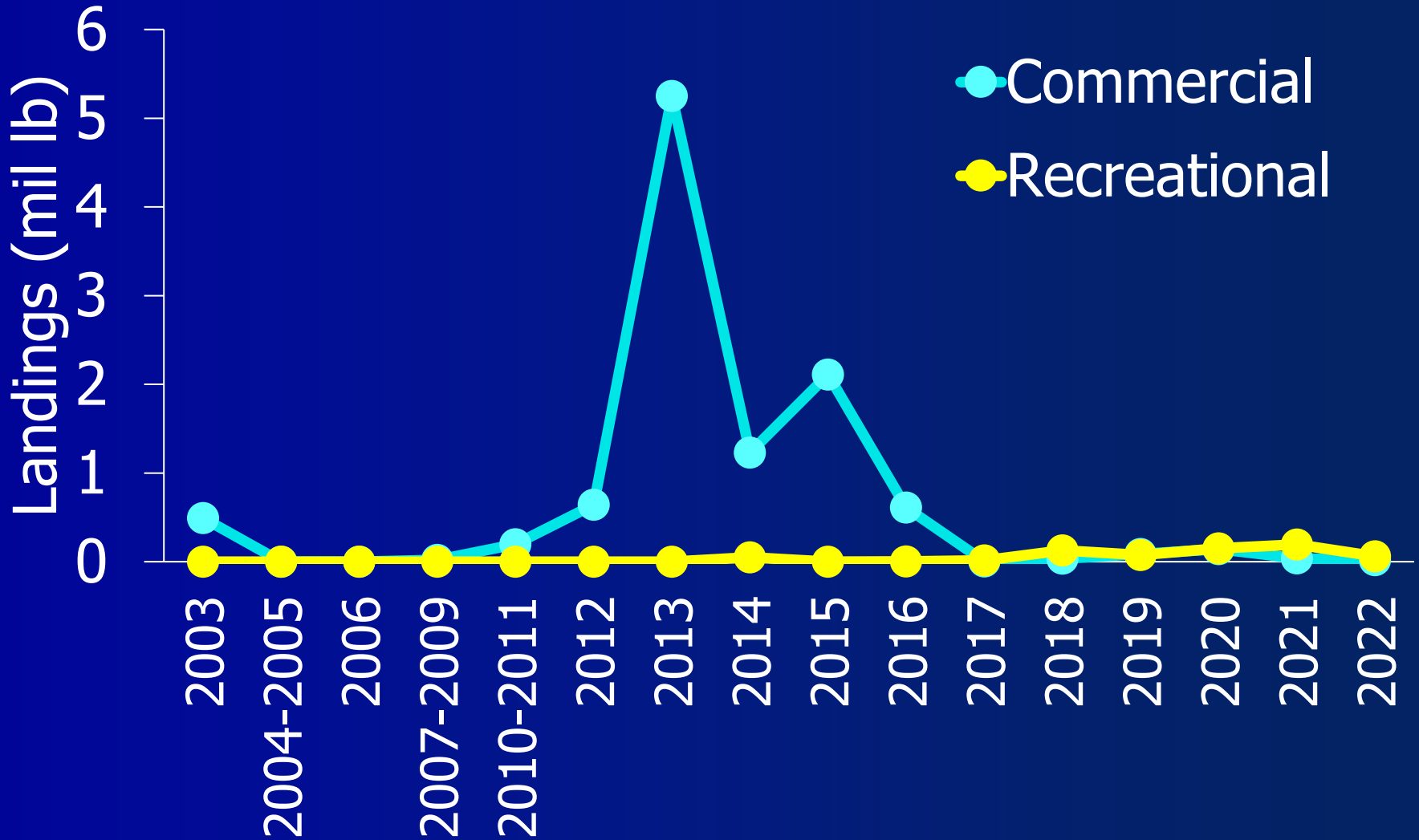
# 2020-2025 ABC = 2,300 MT = 5.07 mil lb

- ABC based on SSC expert judgement.
  - Insufficient info to assess status and trends in NW Atlantic.
  - OFL cannot be specified.
  - ABC based loosely on historic high for landings, assumptions about discards.
  - Prevents fishery from reaching historic high, but allows higher landings than all other years.
  - Unlikely to result in overfishing given general productivity of this species worldwide combined with low fishery capacity in this region.
- ME-FL catch applies to ABC.
- Reviewed in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023. No changes recommended.

# 2020-2025 Specifications



# Com. & Rec. Landings



# Commercial Fishery

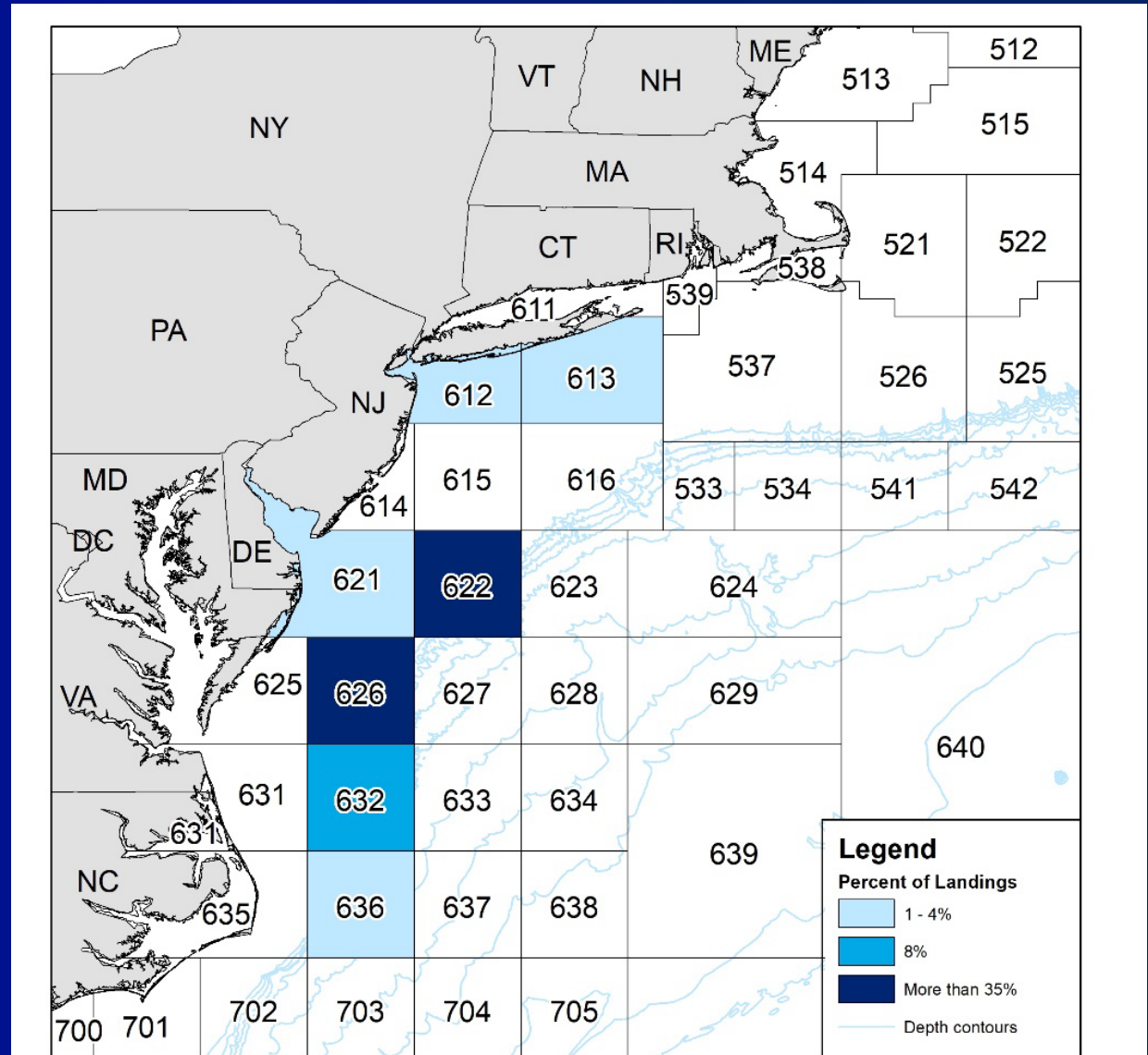
- Overlap with *Illex* squid fishery
  - Vessels, time of year, area
  - “Bailout” species/alternative fishery
- 95% of com. landings over past 20 years from fewer than 5 vessels, fewer than 3 dealers
- 90% landings from bottom trawl, 9% from midwater trawls (fed VTRs)
- 92% landings from June-October
- \$0.51/lb on avg, 2003-2022 (adjusted to 2022 \$)



# Commercial Landings

Federal VTRs  
2003-2022.

Only showing  
areas with 1%  
or more of  
total.



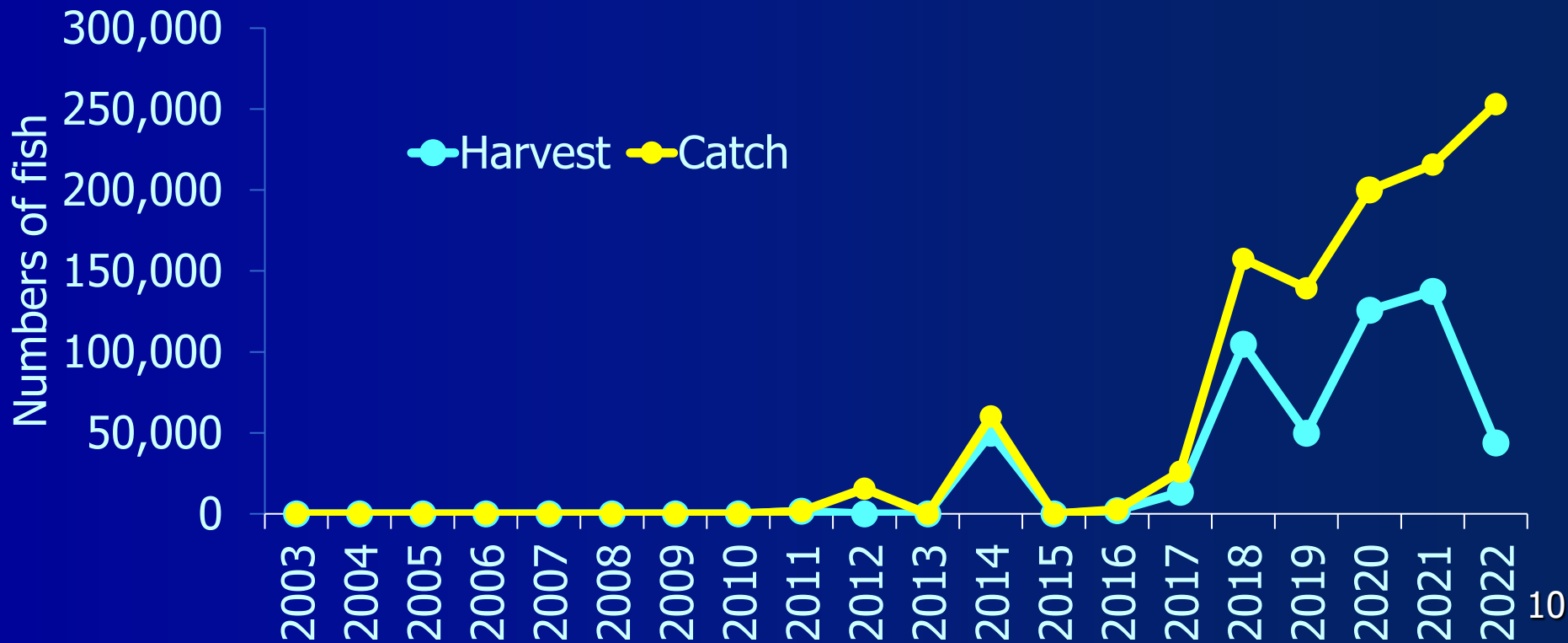


# Bycatch

- Rough analysis by Council staff for Amend. 21 EA.
- Focus on trips landing at least 40,000 lb of chub mackerel.
- 8 observed trips on 4 vessels, 1999-2018.
- Other species most commonly caught on those trips: *Illex*, longfin, butterfish, and round herring.
  - All other species accounted for less than 0.5% of total observed catch.

# Recreational Fishery

- On avg. 2018-2022:
  - 52% harvest from state waters, 48% federal
  - Most harvest in NY (41%), RI (28%), NJ (21%)
  - 56% private/rental, 39% party/charter, 5% shore



# AP Fishery Performance Report

- No changes needed to any 2024 specifications.
- Low commercial landings because vessels have been focusing on other species, mostly *Illex*, but also loligo.
  - Even less likely to catch chub when targeting loligo compared to *Illex*.
- No changes to research priorities.
- Potential of ongoing EFH Amendment to provide more info.

# *SSC*

## *Chub Mackerel ABC for 2024*

- Little data, negligible catches, no model, no assessment.
- Recreational catch increases may be due to improved identification by samplers.
- Concerns about speculation on permits by bait dealers. Many buy, few report.
- Differing spatial patterns between commercial and recreational fisheries
- In view of the low commercial catches, scanty discard information, low and likely imprecise recreational catches, and absence of any reliable indicators of relative abundance, **the SSC recommended continuation of the current ABC of 2,300 mt in 2024.**

# Monitoring Committee

- Agreed over email that no changes are needed to previously approved 2024 specifications.
  - No new information to suggest changes are needed.
  - Staff, AP, SSC all recommended no changes.

# Questions/ Discussion

- Are revisions needed to the previously recommended 2024 specifications?
  - Staff, AP, SSC, MC recommend no changes.



# 2020-2025 Research Priorities

## ■ Short-term/smaller-scale

- Develop expanded discard estimates for the region and better quantify South Atlantic catch.
- Collect length, age, growth, maturity information from fishery independent and dependent data sources throughout U.S. Atlantic waters.
- Evaluate catch per unit effort including the influence of environmental and socioeconomic factors.
- Investigate existing egg and larval surveys throughout the U.S. Atlantic coast to better understand chub mackerel recruitment dynamics.

# 2020-2025 Research Priorities

## ■ Long-term/larger-scale

- Investigate stock mixing throughout Atlantic waters, as applicable.
- Investigate habitat use at different life stages.