



# Black Sea Bass 2021 Specifications



Council and Board Meeting  
*August 11, 2020*

# Objectives



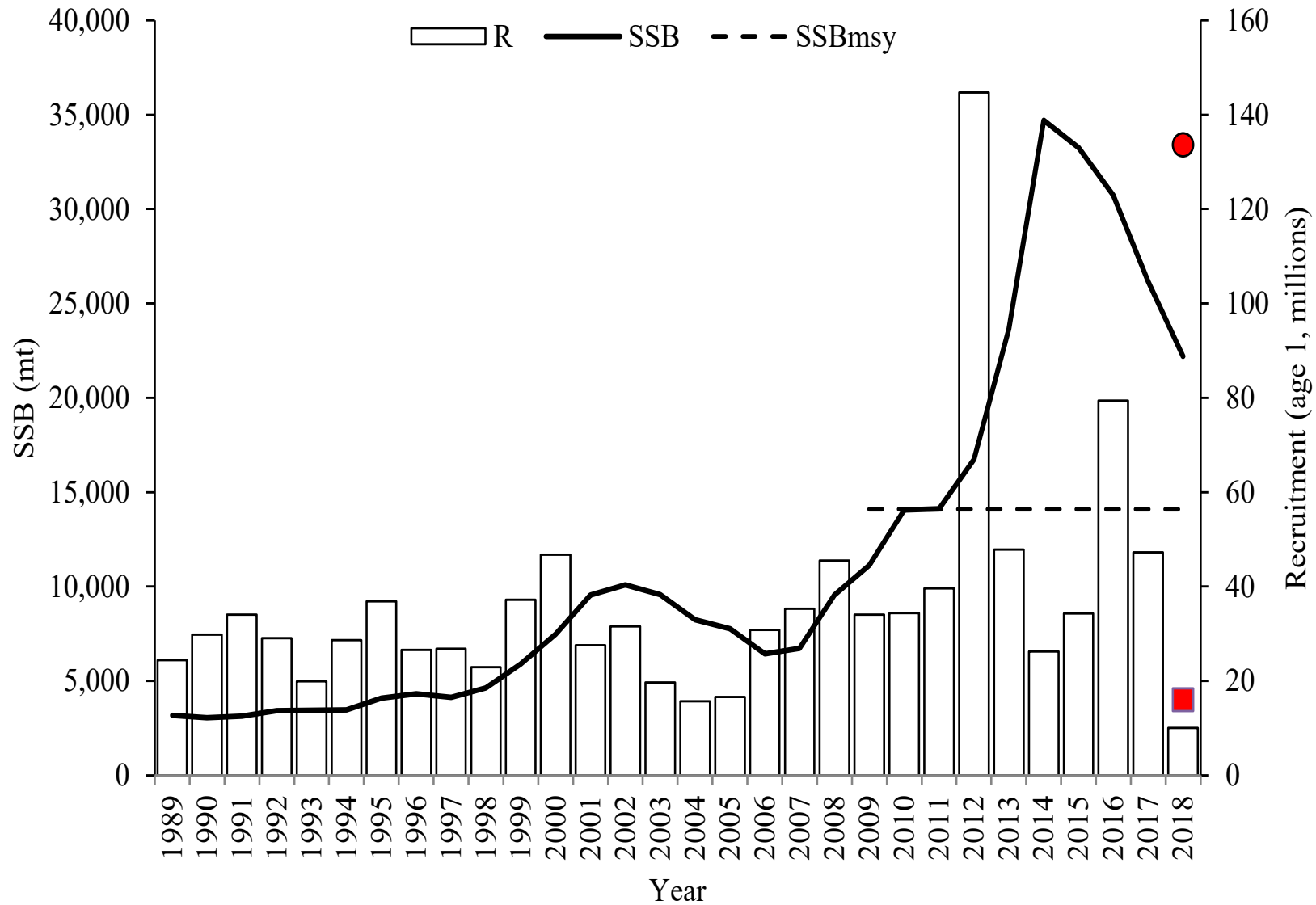
## ■ Review:

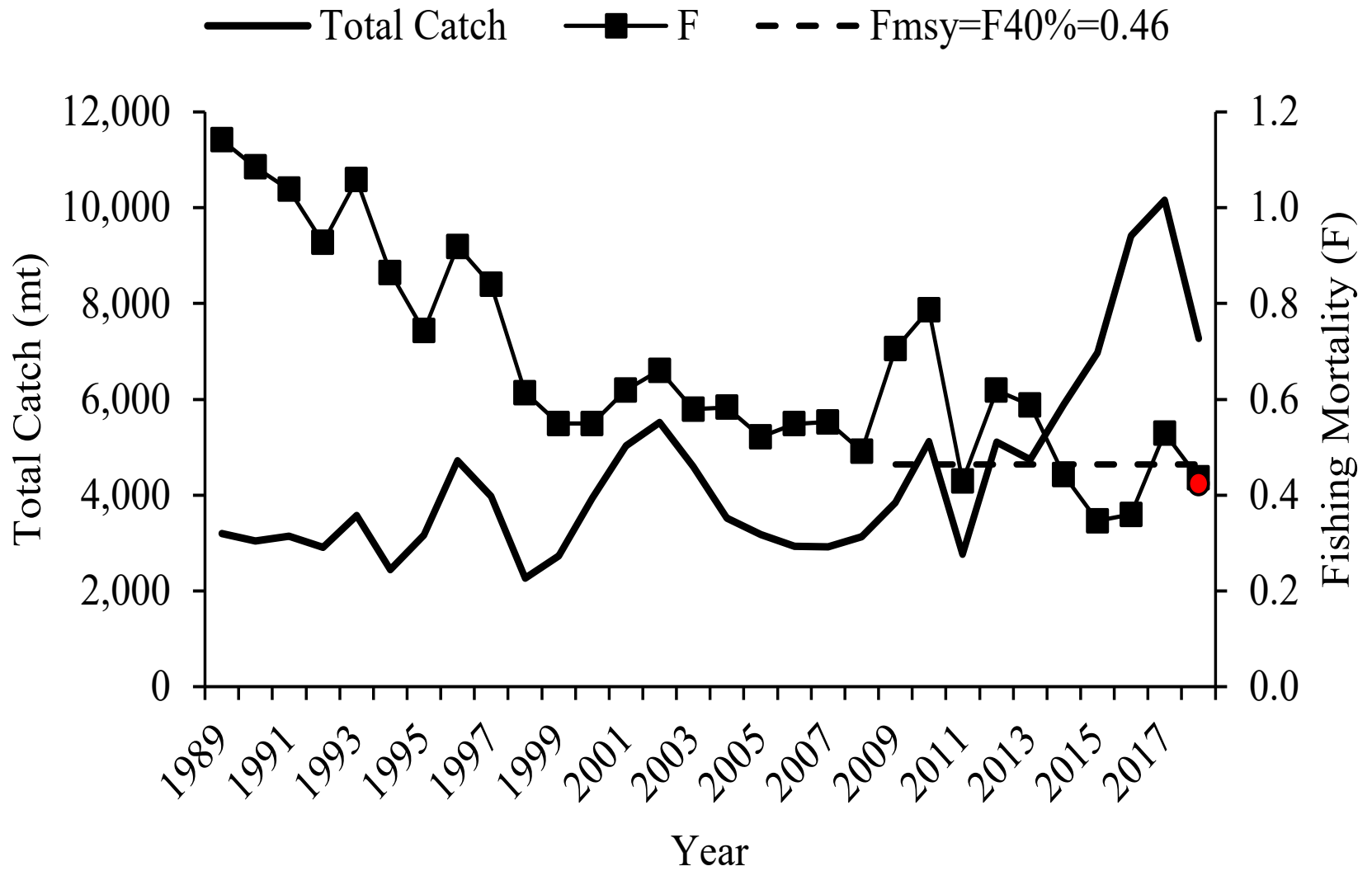
- Previously approved 2021 specifications
- AP input
- SSC, MC, and staff recommendations

## ■ Consider if changes are needed to:

- 2021 catch and landings limits
- Commercial management measures
- February recreational fishery

## ■ **Board only:** consider NC proposal for 2020 rec. measures to account for Feb. BSB harvest

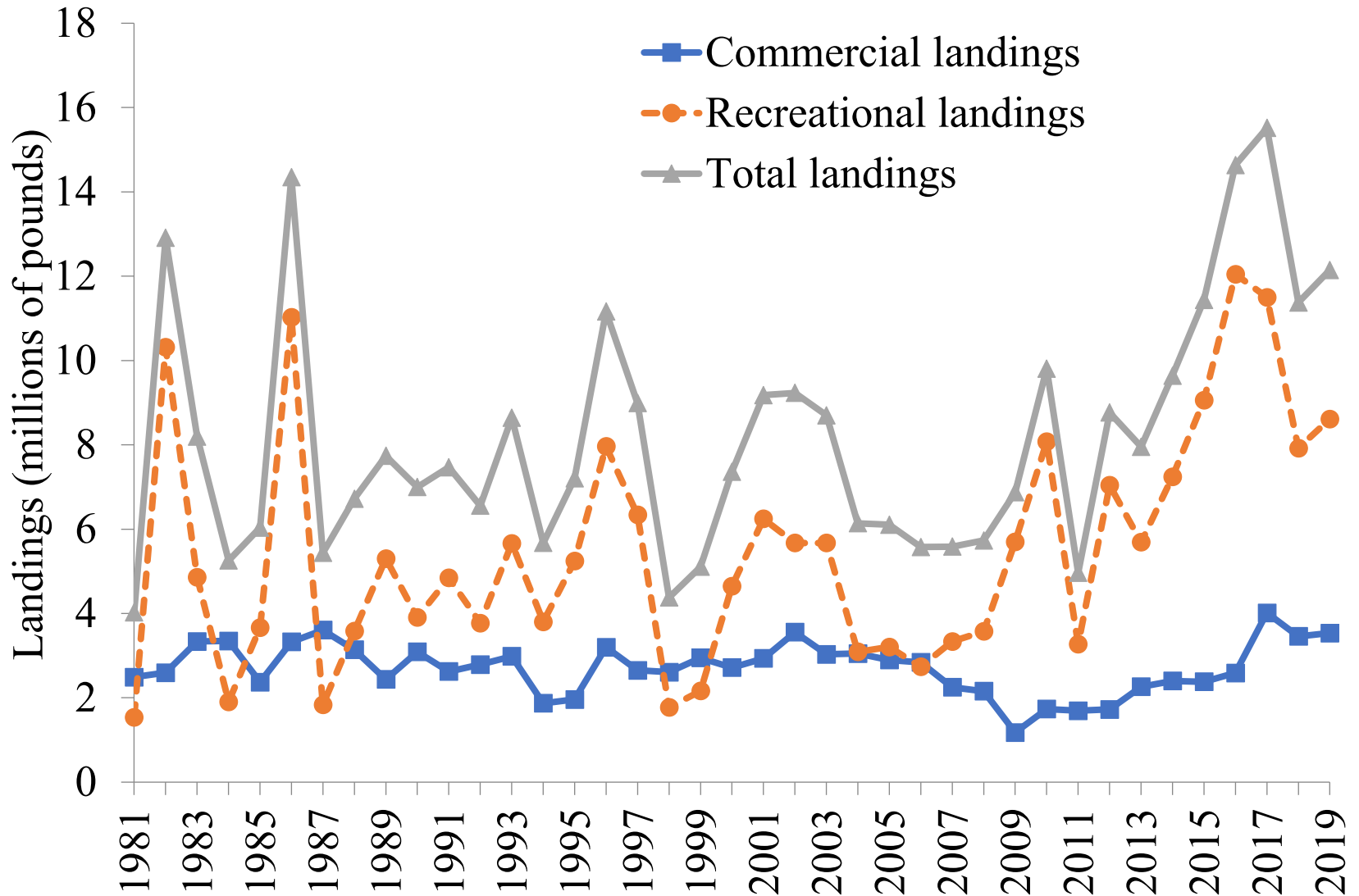




# 2020 data update

- Com. and rec. landings and NEFSC survey info.
- No updated info on discards, state surveys, or NEAMAP.
- No updated estimates of SSB, F, and recruitment.
- No indications of notable changes in biological or fishery trends.

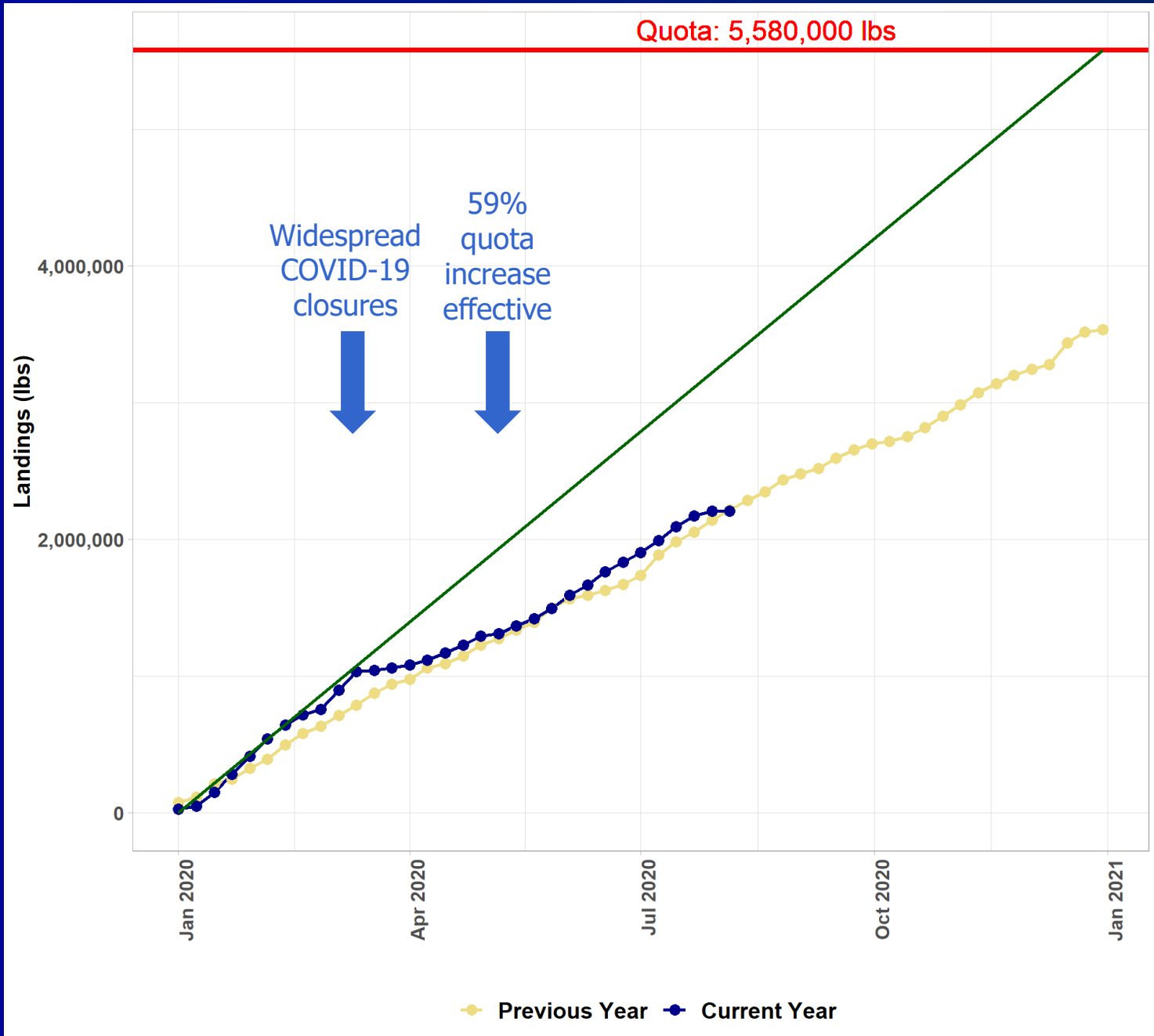
# Fishery Landings



# Commercial Quotas & Landings

<b>Year</b>	<b>Quota (mil lb)</b>	<b>Landings (mil lb)</b>	<b>% of quota landed</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>108%</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>5.58</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

# 2020 Commercial Landings Trajectory – data reported through 8/5/2020





# RHLs & Rec. Harvest (mil lb)

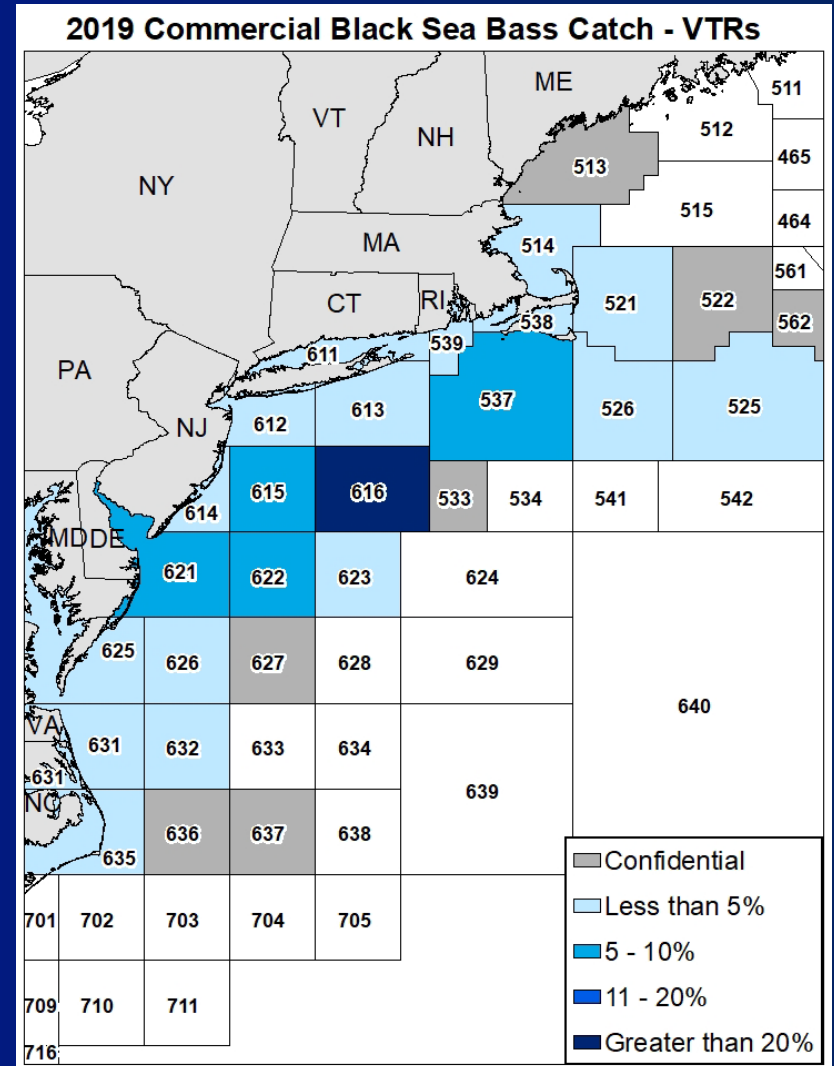
<b>Year</b>	<b>RHL</b>	<b>Harvest (old MRIP)</b>	<b>% of RHL harvested (old MRIP)</b>	<b>Harvest (new MRIP)</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>163%</b>	<b>9.06</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>5.19</b>	<b>184%</b>	<b>12.05</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>11.50</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>7.92</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>8.61</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>5.81</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

# AP Fishery Performance Report

- See summer flounder presentation for comments that apply to all 3 species (COVID impacts, concerns about MRIP accuracy, etc.).
- BSB price decreased from as much as \$4-6/lb to \$1.50/lb, but still higher than other species, so fishermen continued to harvest.
- 2020 a good year so far for com. and rec. fisheries off Virginia.

# AP Fishery Performance Report

- Distribution of com. BSB catch influenced by fishing effort for summer flounder.
- BSB stock has expanded both north and south.
- MRIP estimates showing private harvest > for-hire are unbelievable.



# Black Sea Bass (100% OFL CV)



- **Highlights**

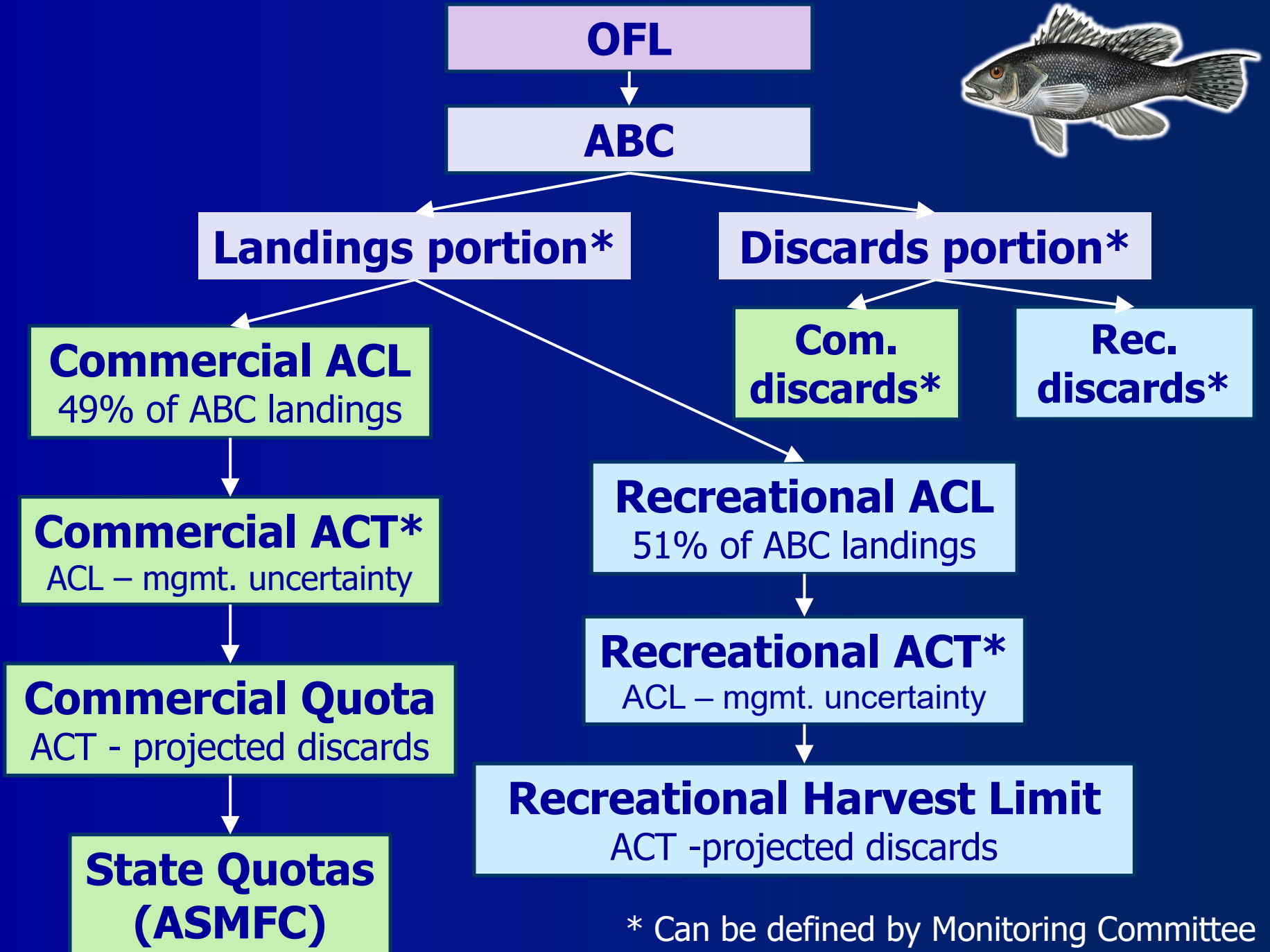
- SSC Recommends ABC= 7,916 mt an increase of 15.8% over previous 2021 ABC
- With Pstar of 0.49 the chances of overfishing occurring will be higher if ABC is exceeded.
- Partial information from 2020 Spring survey suggests slightly higher index

- **Uncertainties**

- 2018 Year class may be above average
- Effects of catches exceeding ABCs in multi-year projections

- **Considerations for 2021 Management Track Assessment**

- Base multi-year projections on realized catch rather than ABCs
- Forecast implications of strong year classes on projected discards
- New information on discard mortality rates may be useful in 2021 assessment

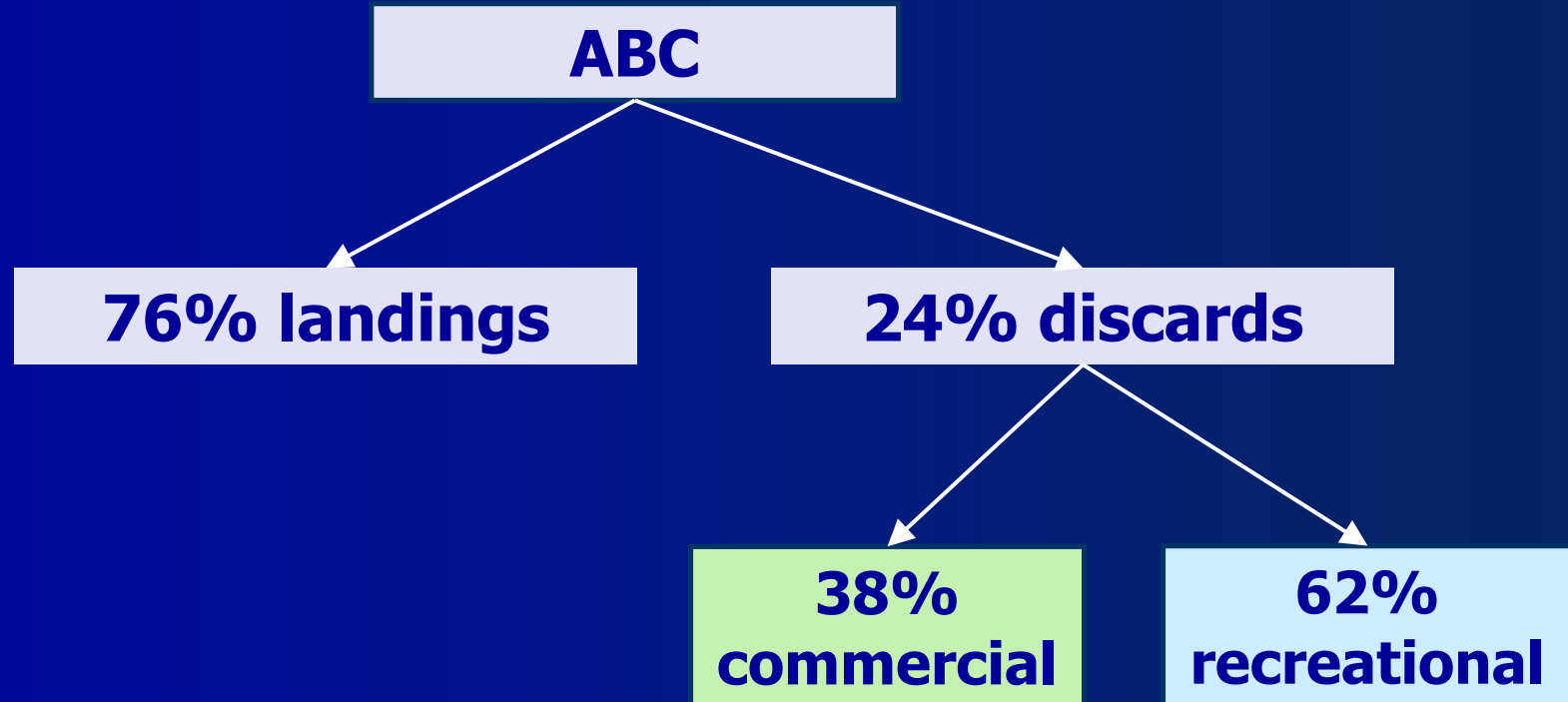


# Discards

- Discards have exceeded projections every year since at least 2015.
- ABC (but not OFL) exceeded every year since at least 2015.
- With revised ABC, buffer between OFL and ABC will shrink from 15% to 1%.
- Discard projections should be reconsidered to help ensure that ABC is not exceeded in 2021.

Discards (mil lb.)	2015	2016	2017	2018
Commercial - projected	0.37	0.44	0.97	0.83
Commercial - actual	0.93	1.67	2.26	1.59
<b>Commercial disc. overage</b>	<b>+155%</b>	<b>+282%</b>	<b>+132%</b>	<b>+92%</b>
Recreational - projected	0.57	0.70	1.09	0.93
Recreational – actual (“old” MRIP units)	0.92	3.45	1.27	1.10
<b>Recreational disc. overage</b>	<b>+61%</b>	<b>+394%</b>	<b>+17%</b>	<b>+18%</b>

# Past Method for Calculating Expected Discards



All based on 2016-2018 proportions, NEFSC data

# MC Recommendation for Discards

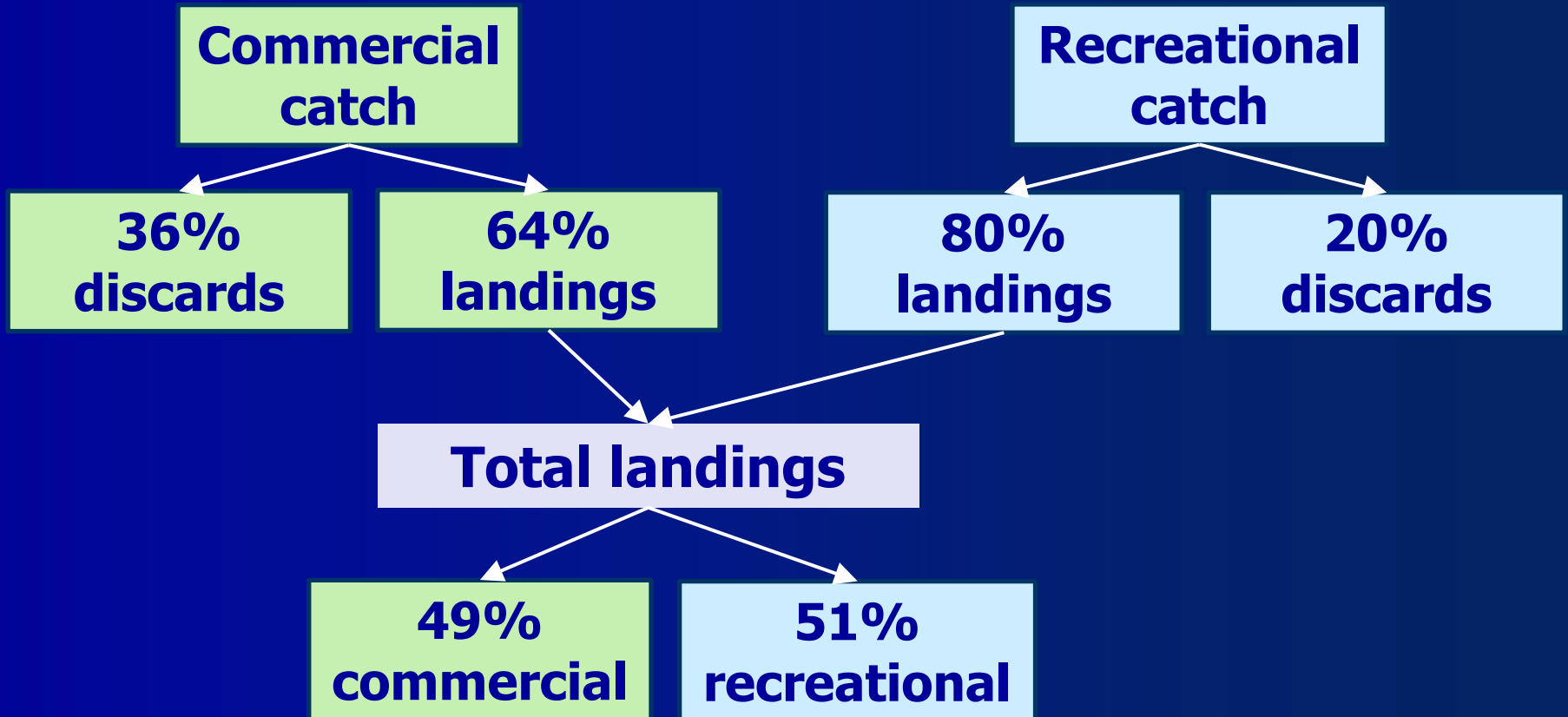


- Based on Sept. 2019 MC recommendation.
- All values based on 2016-2018 proportions, NEFSC data.

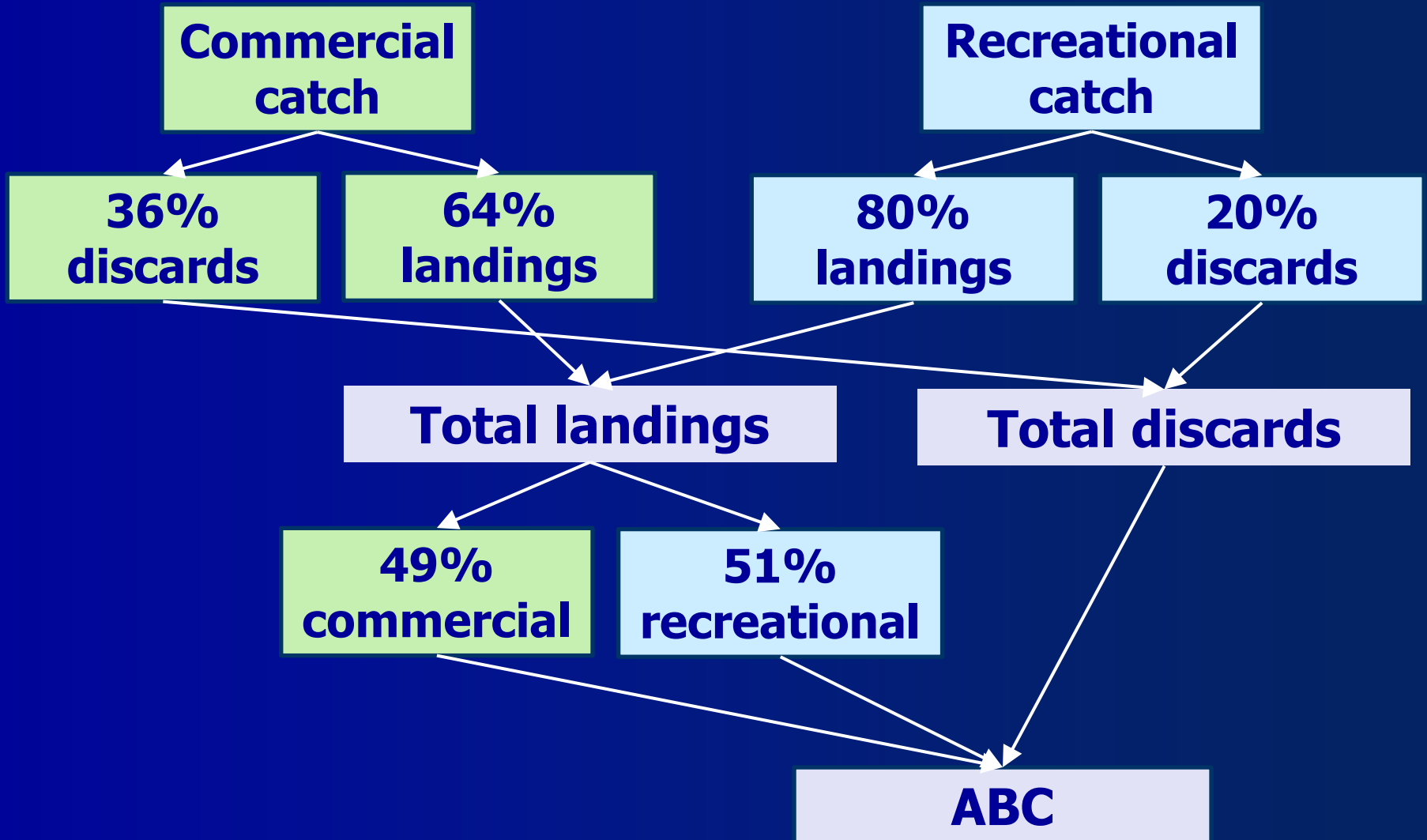
	2016	2017	2018	2016-2018 Avg
Rec disc as % of rec catch	18%	22%	20%	<b>20%</b>
Com disc as % of com catch	40%	36%	32%	<b>36%</b>



# MC Recommendation for Discards



# MC Recommendation for Discards



	Previously approved		MC recommended revision		Revision based only on P* change only	
	mil lb	Basis	mil lb	Basis	mil lb	Basis
<b>OFL</b>	<b>17.68</b>	2019 operational stock assessment projections	<b>17.68</b>	No change	<b>17.68</b>	No change
<b>ABC</b>	<b>15.07</b>	Sept. 2019 SSC recommendation	<b>17.45</b>	July 2020 SSC recommendation	<b>17.45</b>	July 2020 SSC recommendation
<b>Total disc.</b>	<b>3.68</b>	24% of ABC (avg. 2016-2018 disc. as % of catch)	<b>5.01</b>	Sector disc. described below combined with required 49% com./51% rec. landings allocation	<b>4.19</b>	Same basis as previously approved values. Updated based on revised ABC only.
<b>Com. disc.</b>	<b>1.40</b>	38% of total disc. (avg. 2016-2018 % of disc. by sector)	<b>3.43</b>	Assumption that com. disc. would be 36% of com. catch (2016-2018 avg.)	<b>1.59</b>	
<b>Rec. disc.</b>	<b>1.40</b>	62% of total disc. (avg. 2016-2018 % of disc. by sector)	<b>1.58</b>	Assumption that rec. disc. would be 20% of rec. catch (2016-2018 avg.)	<b>2.60</b>	
<b>Com. ACL</b>	<b>6.98</b>	49% of ABC landings portion (per FMP) + com. disc.	<b>9.52</b>	Same	<b>8.09</b>	
<b>Com. ACT</b>	<b>6.98</b>	= ACL (no mgmt. uncertainty deduction)	<b>9.52</b>	Same	<b>8.09</b>	
<b>Com. quota</b>	<b>5.58</b>	Com. ACT minus com. disc.	<b>6.09</b>	Com. ACT minus com. disc.	<b>6.50</b>	
<b>Rec. ACL</b>	<b>8.09</b>	51% of ABC landings portion (per FMP) + rec. disc.	<b>7.93</b>	Same	<b>9.36</b>	
<b>Rec. ACT</b>	<b>8.09</b>	= ACL (no mgmt. uncertainty deduction)	<b>7.93</b>	Same	<b>9.36</b>	
<b>RHL</b>	<b>5.81</b>	Rec. ACT minus rec. disc.	<b>6.34</b>	Same	<b>6.76</b>	

# MC Discussion - Discards

- Staff recommendation better predicts total discards than past method.
  - May over-estimate commercial discards, under-estimate recreational discards.
  - MC did not recommend an alternative to the staff recommendation
- Challenges:
  - Requirement to allocate 49% of allowable landings to commercial fishery, 51% to recreational. Does not match recent landings trends.
  - Applying past proportions to next year's ABC when past proportions are based on catch exceeding ABC.

# Other MC Recommendations

- No mgmt. uncertainty buffer if discards projections revised.
- No changes to commercial federal min. fish size, gear requirements, or possession limits.

# Additional AP Comments

- Commercial discards should decrease in 2020 due to increased quota.
- Recreational discard mortality rate varies throughout the year, but constant rate used in assessment/mgmt.
- Reducing the min. size in the rec. BSB fishery to 14" (currently 15" in MA-NY) would decrease total mortality.

# Additional Public Comment

- Science does not support an additional increase in 2021.
- Stock is increasing, but potential increases in 2021 catch limits are too big.
- Fishermen's input, VTRs, observer data should be used more in science.
- Increased quotas change the dynamics of the fishery (e.g., more trawl landings). Decrease marketability, especially with COVID.
- Do not increase 2021 catch limits until we can better understand COVID impacts on data, better understand impacts of increase on fishery, and meet in person.

# Discussion

- 2021 catch and landings limits
- 2021 commercial mgmt. measures (MC recommends no change)

	Previously approved	MC recommendation	P* change only
<b>ABC</b>	15.07	<b>17.45</b>	<b>17.45</b>
<b>Com. ACL</b>	6.98	<b>9.52</b>	<b>8.09</b>
<b>Com. ACT</b>	6.98	<b>9.52</b>	<b>8.09</b>
<b>Com. quota</b>	5.58	<b>6.09</b>	<b>6.50</b>
<b>Rec. ACL</b>	8.09	<b>7.93</b>	<b>9.36</b>
<b>Rec. ACT</b>	8.09	<b>7.93</b>	<b>9.36</b>
<b>RHL</b>	5.81	<b>6.34</b>	<b>6.76</b>



# Feb. 2021 Rec. Fishery

- Objectives:
  - Review February opening during 2018-2020.
  - Consider if mgmt. changes are needed for February 2021 fishery.



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Followed by Board consideration of NC proposal for 2020 rec. measures to account for Feb. BSB harvest.

# Background

- BSB rec. fishery closed Jan-Feb, 2010-2012 & 2014-2017.
- Council/Board agreed to open fishery in Feb 2018-2020 under specific constraints.
  - States must opt-in.
  - 12.5" min. size, 15 fish bag limit.
  - Account for expected Feb. harvest when developing measures for remainder of year.
  - Expected Feb. harvest pre-defined.

Expected Feb. harvest, 2018-2020		
State	Proportion	Pounds
<b>RI</b>	0.29%	288
<b>CT</b>	0.06%	57
<b>NY</b>	9.41%	9,410
<b>NJ</b>	82.85%	82,850
<b>DE</b>	1.30%	1,297
<b>MD</b>	0.54%	541
<b>VA</b>	5.50%	5,496
<b>NC</b>	0.06%	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100,000</b>

# 2018-2020 participation

- Only VA and NC.
- Season adjustments made as necessary to account for expected and estimated Feb. harvest.
- Total Feb. harvest in 2018 & 2019 accounted for 0.09% and 0.12% of coastwide annual harvest.
- Process:
  - Submit initial proposal for TC review, Board approval.
  - If additional modifications needed based on actual Feb. harvest, submit an additional proposal for TC review, Board approval.

# Virginia

- Participating fishermen required to:
  - Obtain a permit from VMRC
  - Complete a logbook for each trip
  - Call the VMRC before or immediately after the start of each trip
- MRIP or law enforcement requested call on way back to port for some trips, but not required.
- VMRC collected biological samples.
- Feb. 2018-2020 harvest greater than expected.
- Closed additional days in wave 3 to account for estimated harvest.

# North Carolina

- MRIP sampling.
- MRIP samplers requested to collect info on length, weight, discards, catch and harvest per angler, and fishing locations.
- NCDMF staff collected biological samples from for-hire boats.
- No estimated wave 1 harvest, 2018 & 2019 (0 intercepts).
- Outlier estimate of 50,692 lb in 2020 (2 intercepts).

# MC Recommendation

- Previous analysis updated only to account for revised MRIP
- Revised total of 483,993 lb (previously 100,000)
  - For-hire harvest estimated based on VTRs in Feb 2013
  - Assumption that for-hire harvest will account for 10% of total, private for 90% based on MRIP data from waves 3 & 6, 2010-2019. (Previously 50%/50%)
- Divided among states based on VTRs, wave 1, 1996-2009 & 2013 (negligible changes)

State	Proportion	Pounds
RI	0.24%	1,146
CT	0.03%	158
NY	8.65%	41,871
NJ	83.87%	405,913
DE	1.33%	6,418
MD	0.46%	2,227
VA	5.14%	24,891*
NC	0.28%	1,369
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>483,993</b>

\*Or alternative value based on 2018-2020 monitoring.

# Monitoring Committee Recommendation

- Revise based only on new MRIP data.
- States that participated in the recent opening can define expected Feb. harvest based on their monitoring results.
- Participating states should not use MRIP to monitor harvest or adjust measures later in year.
- Strongly support VA monitoring system (logbooks, call in, special permit).
- Pros and cons to current system (states opt in and adjust individually) vs. allowing coastwide opening with expected harvest deducted from RHL.

# AP Comments – Feb Fishery

- Calculations of expected Feb. harvest by state are flawed and based on bad data.
- 500,000 lb harvested if all states participate – too high.
- Inaccurate assumption that 10% of potential harvest from for-hire, 90% from private. Most private vessels not operating during Feb.
- Calculations rely heavily on 2013 – stock was different then.
- Support for VA monitoring program.
- Feb. catch should be reported electronically.
- Support for current system of states opting in, adjusting measures individually, rather than a coastwide system.
- Feb. 2021 harvest will be impacted by social distancing.
- 1 advisor questioned entire program – bad calculations, low participation, costly monitoring programs.



# Discussion

- Changes to Feb. rec. fishery for 2021
  - MC recommendation: revise only values for initial expected February harvest by state

State	Proportion	Pounds
RI	0.24%	1,146
CT	0.03%	158
NY	8.65%	41,871
NJ	83.87%	405,913
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NC	0.28%	1,369
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>483,993</b>

\*Or alternative value based on 2018-2020 monitoring.

# North Carolina Proposal

## ■ Background

- Board approved NC proposal to account for expected February harvest in January 2020
  - Closed May 15-16, 2020
- NC expected harvest was 62 lbs based on 2013 wave 1 VTR data

Private anglers - North Carolina February 2018-2020					
Year	MRIP intercepts	Estimated total harvest (# fish)	Estimated total harvest (lb.)	Estimated total discards (#s fish)	Estimated total catch (#s fish)
2018	0	0	0	0	0
2019	0	0	0	0	0
2020	2	28,091	50,692	18,936	47,027

# February 2020 NC Harvest Data

- February 2020 harvest estimate
  - MRIP February NC NOH harvest: 50,692 lbs
    - 2 intercepts (8 anglers, 67 total black sea bass)
    - GARFO: No VTR data for NC for-hire 2018-2020
- Biological Sampling

**For-hire - North Carolina February 2018-2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>MRIP intercepts</b>	<b>Federal VTRs submitted</b>	<b>Trips sampled by NCDMF</b>	<b>Sampled fish</b>	<b>Estimated weight of sampled fish</b>
<b>2018</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2019</b>	0	0	1	24	55
<b>2020</b>	0	0	1	31	71

# North Carolina Proposal

- NC notes concerns with harvest estimate
  - Estimate higher than any NC annual estimate since 2011
  - Only 2 MRIP intercepts
  - Only 9 fishable days according to weather data
  - One intercept reported as a private boat fishing in state waters
    - Mode and area fished substantially influence harvest estimate with only two intercepts

# North Carolina Proposal

- NC proposes two options to account for Feb. 2020 black sea bass harvest:
  1. Close December 1-31, 2020 (31 additional closed days)
  2. Close November 16-December 31, 2020 (46 additional closed days)
- Effort-based approach, not pound-for-pound
  - Compared wave 6 effort to wave 1
- TC agrees that 2020 estimate is likely an outlier

# TC Recommendations

- TC supports NC proposal
- Both options provide reasonable alternatives to account for February 2020 harvest
- Agree that 2020 estimate is an outlier
- Concerns with relying on fine-scale MRIP estimates
- TC recommends requiring tailored estimation methodology for February fishery
  - mandatory logbook reporting, call-in program
- Concern about industry reaction to restrictions based on MRIP estimate

# Board Action

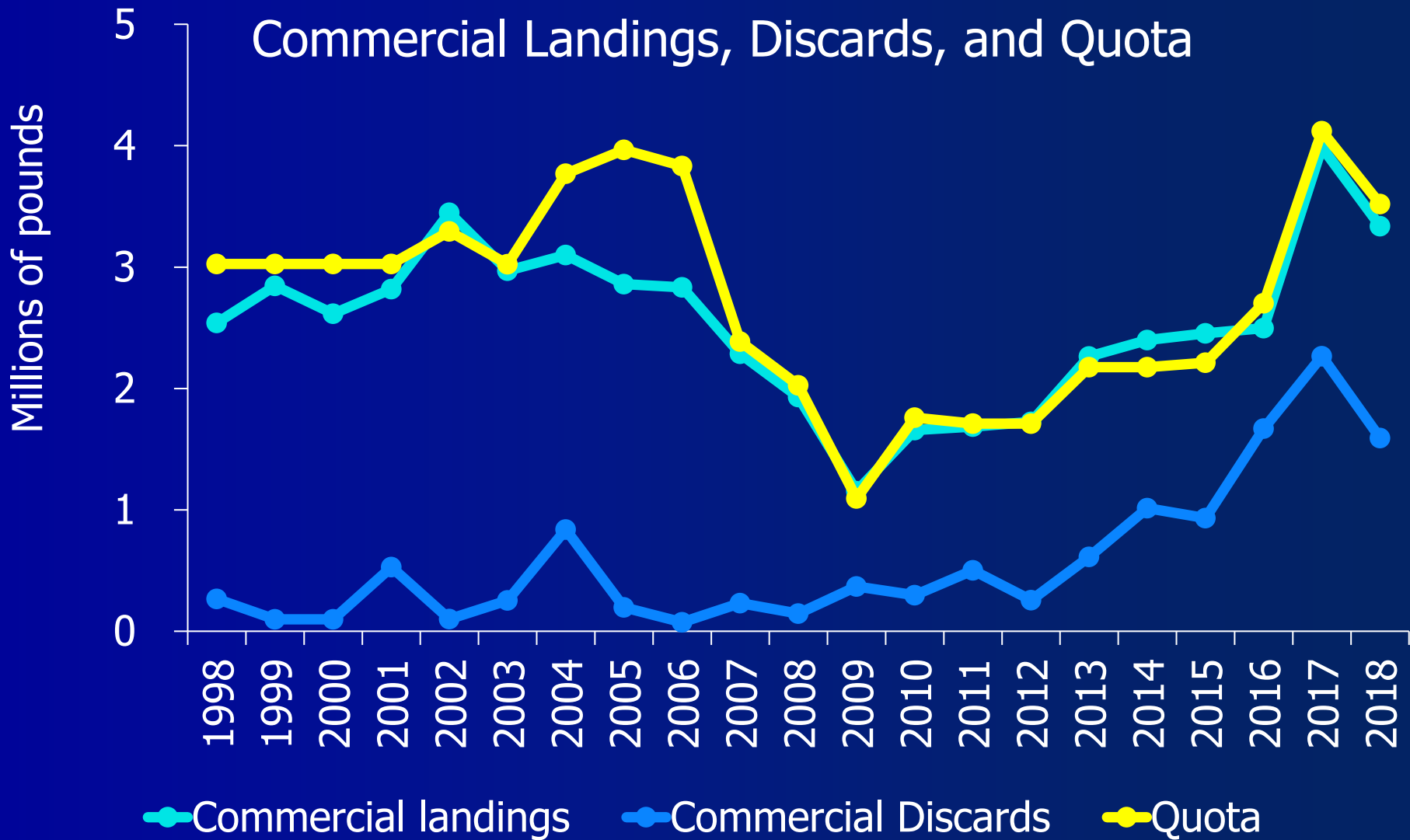
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- Consider approval of North Carolina proposal to account for black sea bass harvest in the NC February 2020 recreational fishery.

# Backup Slides



# Commercial Landings, Discards, and Quota



	2016	2017	2018	2016-2018 Avg
Rec disc as % of rec catch	18%	22%	20%	<b>20%</b>
Com disc as % of com catch	40%	36%	32%	<b>36%</b>

# Expected Feb. harvest by state

## Previous analysis updated with new data

- 2013 Federal VTR data for expected for-hire harvest.
- Assumed 10% for-hire, 90% private based on waves 2 and 6, 2010-2019.

Month	# vessels submitted federal VTRs	Avg. trips per vessel	Avg. # anglers per trip	Avg. # fish harvested per angler	Total harvested fish reported on VTRs	Total for-hire harvest (lb)	Estimated total for-hire and private harvest (lb)
Jan	35	5.00	24.73	8.76	44,651	83,497	834,974
<b>Feb</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>28.94</b>	<b>11.46</b>	<b>25,882</b>	<b>48,399</b>	<b>483,993</b>
Jan & Feb	39	6.28	25.93	9.53	70,533	131,897	1,318,967

# For-hire/private ratio

- Varied by state.
- ~10%, 90% based on waves 2&6 and all waves.

Table: Percentage of black sea bass catch in numbers of fish by mode and state during waves 2 (March-April) and 6 (November-December), 2010-2019.

State	Party/charter	Private/rental/shore
ME	-	-
NH	-	-
MA	0%	100%
RI	3%	97%
CT	0%	100%
NY	2%	98%
NJ	51%	49%
DE	4%	96%
MD	38%	62%
VA	4%	96%
NC	13%	87%
<b>ME-NC</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>90%</b>

# Fishing Effort in Feb

Number of for-hire fishing trips, February, 2010-2019, which harvested any species according to federal VTR data.

Year	Number of for-hire trips in February				
	ME - CT	NY	NJ	DE - NC	Total (ME-NC)
2010	24	90	32	18	164
2011	47	121	40	16	224
2012	43	99	127	45	314
2013	23	57	66	20	166
2014	20	30	31	17	98
2015	3	C	19	C	27
2016	5	20	29	15	69
2017	C	29	36	C	90
2018	C	C	14	10	37
2019	C	25	26	22	75