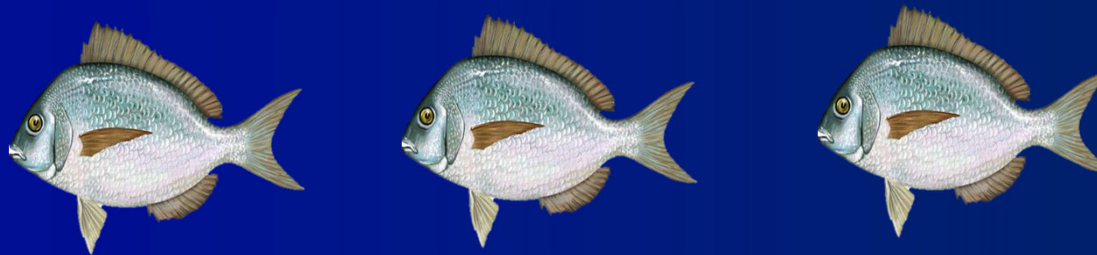




# Scup 2024-2025 Recreational Measures



Council and Board  
December 12, 2023

# Objectives

- Review recent recreational fishery performance
- Review Monitoring Committee recommendations
- Review Advisory Panel input
- Identify percent change needed under the Percent Change Approach
- Adopt federal waters measures
  - If desired, preliminarily discuss/provide guidance to the Technical Committee on development of state measures proposals



# 2023 Federal Recreational Measures



Possession  
limit

- 40 scup

Updated  
in 2023

Size limit

- 10 inches total length

Season

- May 1-December 31

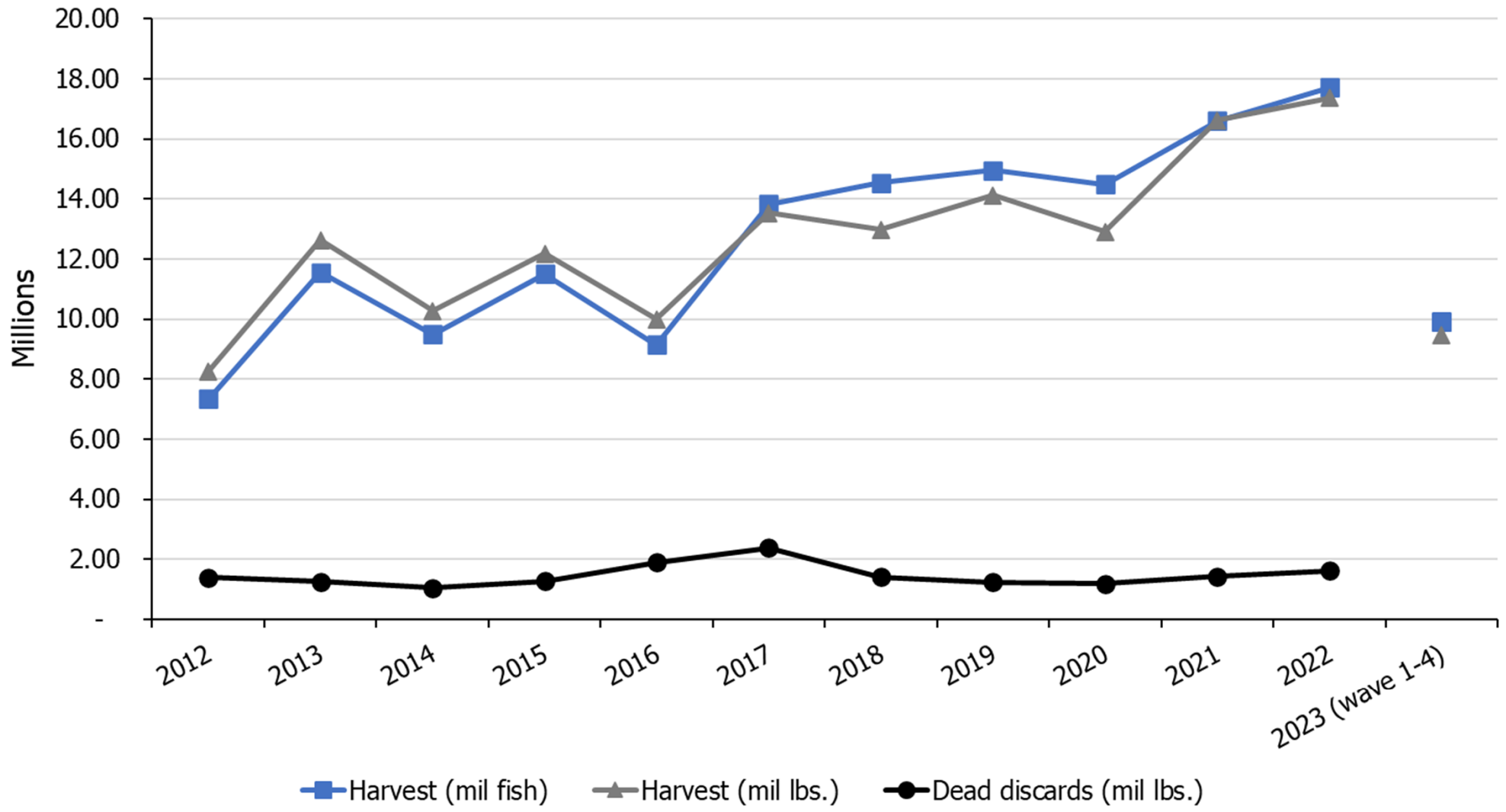
Updated  
in 2023

# 2023 State Recreational Measures

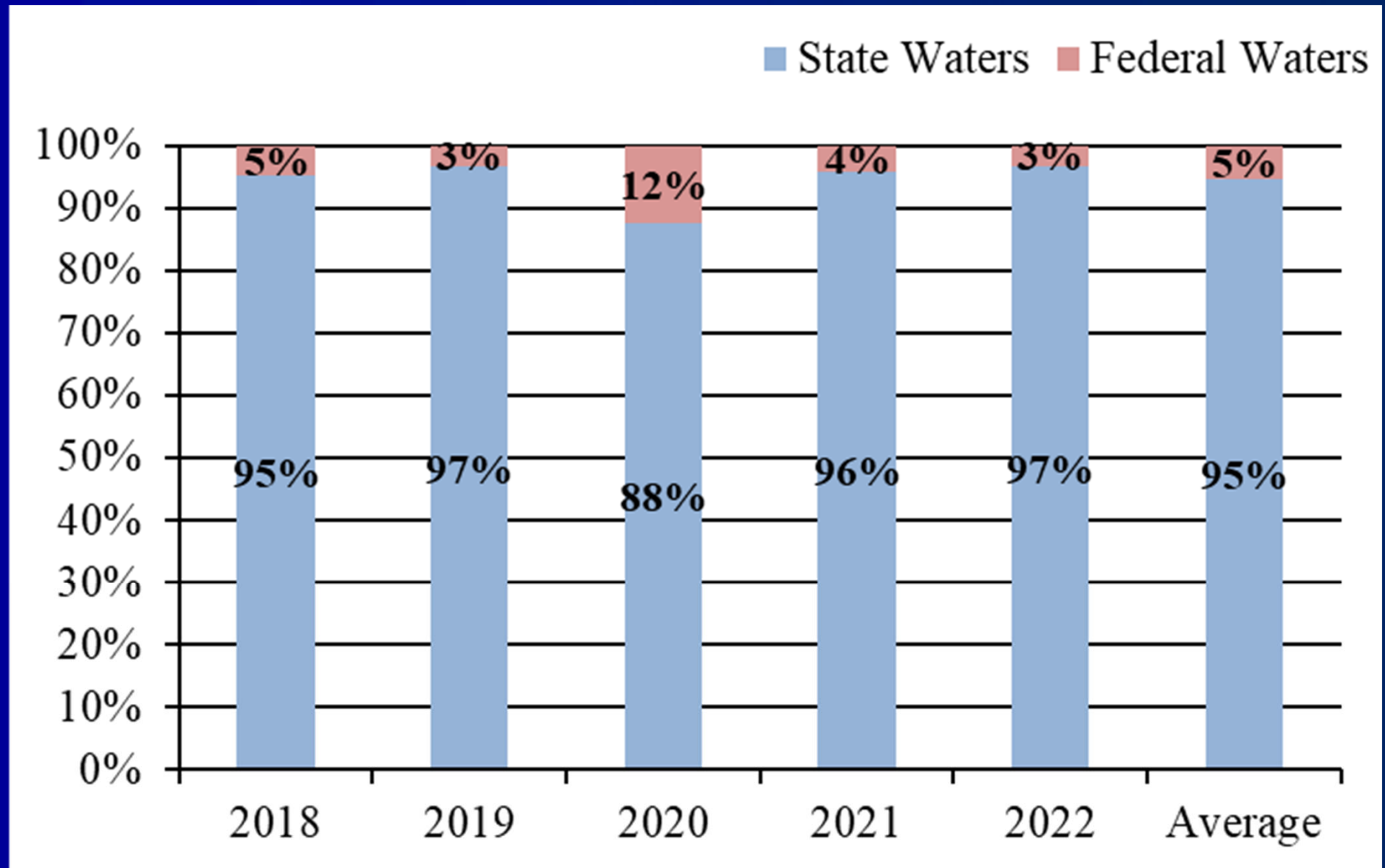
State	Minimum Size (inches)	Possession Limit	Open Season
MA (private vessel)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Dec 31
MA (shore)	9.5		
MA (party/charter)	10.5	40 fish	May 1 – June 30
		30 fish	July 1 – Dec 31
RI (private vessel)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Dec 31
RI (shore)	9.5		
RI (party/charter)	10.5"	30 fish	May 1 – Aug 31; Nov 1 – Dec 31
		40 fish	Sept 1 – Oct 31
CT (private vessel)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Dec 31
CT (shore)	9.5		
CT (Auth For-Hire Mon. Program Vessels)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Aug 31; Nov 1 – Dec 31
		40 fish	Sept 1 – Oct 31
NY (private vessel)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Dec 31
NY (shore)	9.5		
NY (party/charter)	10.5	30 fish	May 1 – Aug 31; Nov 1 – Dec 31
		40 fish	Sept 1 – Oct 31
NJ	10	30 fish	Aug 1 – Dec 31
DE	9	40 fish	Jan 1 – Dec 31
MD			
VA		30 fish	
NC, North of Cape Hatteras		40 fish	

# Recreational Landing Trends

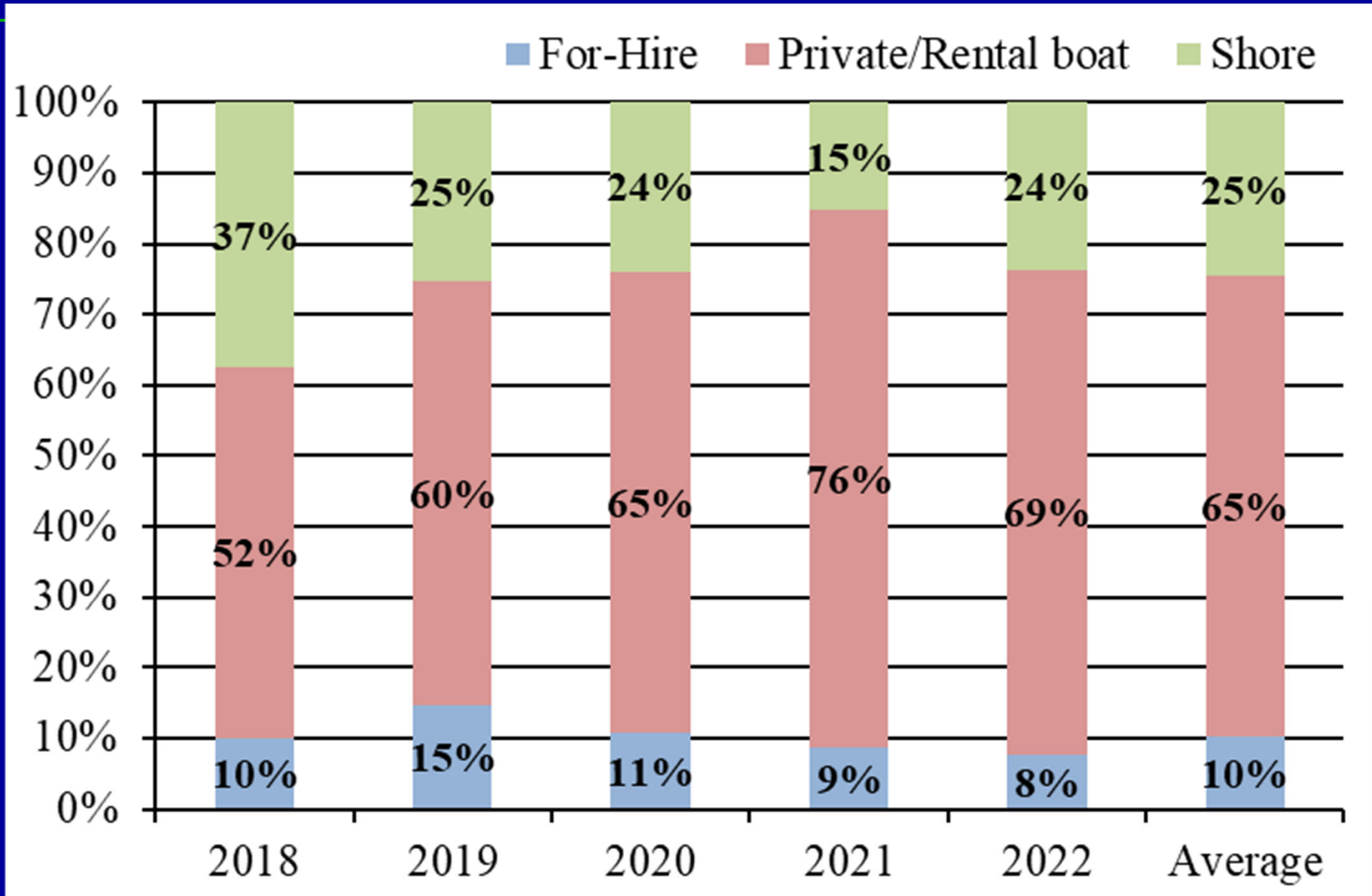
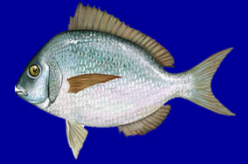
*With 2023 Waves 1-4*



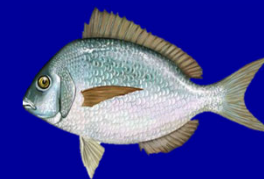
# Harvest in Federal and State Waters



# Harvest By Mode




# Harvest By State



State	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (w1-4)
ME	0	0	0	0	0	0
NH	0	0	0	0	0	0
MA	3,021,958	1,924,202	1,174,793	3,763,514	2,098,575	776,243
RI	2,030,259	2,856,459	1,330,397	2,467,932	2,898,790	1,582,362
CT	2,574,308	2,242,549	2,951,959	2,856,535	1,822,874	1,697,575
NY	4,906,041	6,970,873	6,253,478	7,177,770	10,249,645	5,330,495
NJ	443,700	118,830	1,200,943	194,092	284,678	68,995
DE	362	0	316	1,179	1,757	0
MD	369	444	578	331	2,211	0
VA	0	229	0	157,454	0	0
NC	420	2,637	1,346	2,831	2,848	2,978
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,977,417</b>	<b>14,116,223</b>	<b>12,913,810</b>	<b>16,621,638</b>	<b>17,361,378</b>	<b>9,458,648</b>



<i>Column 1</i> <b>Ave. 2024-2025 RHL vs expected harvest under 2023 measures</b>	<i>Column 2</i> <b>Biomass compared to target level (SSB/SSB<sub>MSY</sub>)</b>	<i>Column 3</i> <b>Change in Harvest</b> 
<b>RHL greater than upper bound of expected harvest CI</b> (RHL underage expected)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 40%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 20%</b>
	<b>Low</b> below target stock size	<b>Liberalization: 10%</b>
<b>RHL within expected harvest CI</b> (harvest expected to be close to RHL)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization: 10%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>No liberalization or reduction: 0%</b>
	<b>Low</b> below target stock size	<b>Reduction: 10%</b>
<b>RHL less than lower bound of expected harvest CI</b> (RHL overage expected)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Reduction: 10%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>Reduction</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 20%</b>
	<b>Low</b> below target stock size	<b>Reduction</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 40%</b>

# Percent Change in Harvest Needed for 2024-2025



- **Percent Change Approach Step 1:** Compare 2024-2025 average RHL to 80% confidence interval around expected 2024-2025 harvest under current (2023) measures

	Median (mil lbs.)	80% CI	2024-2025 Ave. RHL
RDM	15.29	16.29 – 14.07	12.51

**Average RHL is less than the lower bound of the CI**

*Column 1*  
**Ave. 2024-2025 RHL vs expected harvest under 2023 measures**

**RHL greater than upper bound of expected harvest CI**  
 (RHL underage expected)

**RHL within expected harvest CI**  
 (harvest expected to be close to RHL)

**RHL less than lower bound of expected harvest CI**  
 (RHL overage expected)

# Percent Change Approach Step 2 &3



<i>Column 1</i> <b>Ave. 2024-2025 RHL vs expected harvest under 2023 measures</b>	<i>Column 2</i> <b>Biomass compared to target level (SSB/SSB<sub>MSY</sub>)</b>	<i>Column 3</i> <b>Change in Harvest</b>
<b>RHL greater than upper bound of expected harvest CI</b> (RHL underage expected)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 40%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 20%</b>
	<b>Low</b> below target stock size	<b>Liberalization: 10%</b>
<b>RHL within expected harvest CI</b> (harvest expected to be close to RHL)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Liberalization: 10%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>No liberalization or reduction: 0%</b>
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<b>RHL less than lower bound of expected harvest CI</b> (RHL overage expected)	<b>Very high</b> greater than 150% of target	<b>Reduction: 10%</b>
	<b>High</b> at least target, but no higher than 150% of target	<b>Reduction</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 20%</b>
	<b>Low</b> below target stock size	<b>Reduction</b> % = difference between harvest estimate and 2023 RHL, <b>not to exceed 40%</b>

# Rec. Accountability Measures



Year	Rec. Harvest (mil lbs.)	Rec. Dead Discards (mil lbs.)	Total Dead Rec. Catch (mil lbs.)	Rec. ACL (mil lbs.)	% Over/Under ACL
2020	12.91	1.15	14.06	7.87	+79%
2021	16.62	1.36	17.98	7.66	+135%
2022	17.36	1.63	18.99	7.06	+169%
<b>Average</b>	<b>15.63</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>17.05</b>	<b>7.53</b>	<b>+126%</b>

*2020 recreational estimates were developed using imputation methods*

## Accountability Measure Triggered

**3. If biomass is above the target:** Adjustments to measures will be made, taking into account the performance of the measures and conditions that precipitated the overage

- GARFO letter indicated no additional action is required in 2024 to address recent overages, given 2023 10% reduction adopted and improvements made to RDM

# Resulting 2024-2025 Harvest Target



- Federal and state measures should collectively achieve the **10% reduction** required by Percent Change Approach
  - RDM median estimate of 15.29 million pounds results in a harvest target of **13.76 million pounds**



# 2024 Fed. Waters Recreational Season



- Joint Dec. 2022 meeting, the Council/Board agreed to:
  - Reduce possession limit to 40 fish; maintain 10-in. min. size
  - **Shorten the federal waters season to May 1 – Dec. 31**
- Throughout 2023, the May 1 – Dec. 31 season (i.e., Jan. 1 – April 31 closure) has come up at several Board and Council meetings
  - Concern about season disproportionately impacting some states, specifically southern states like NJ expressed importance of wave 1 and 2 to the for-hire industry
  - Northern states expressed need for season given those states took the bulk of the required 2023 reduction and desire for consistency between state/federal regs
  - Some concern with accuracy of wave 1 & 2 MRIP data

# 2024 Fed. Waters Recreational Season Continued



- When this topic came up at the joint August 2023 meeting
  - GARFO indicated that if the forthcoming rec. management measures setting process indicates the May 1 – Dec. 31 federal season is no longer needed; NOAA could publish a rule by the end of 2023 to modify the federal season for 2024

# VTR Analysis to Estimate Jan. – April Recreational Harvest



Month	Total number of trips	Avg. number anglers per trip	Avg. # fish harvested per angler	Ave. annual harvested fish reported on VTRs (# fish)	Ave. annual for-hire harvest (lbs.) <sup>a</sup>	Estimated annual for-hire and private harvest in all waters (lbs.) <sup>b</sup>
Jan	24	27	10	269	253	1,407
Feb	14	35	16	558	525	2,915
March	15	28	4	110	103	575
April	16	26	11	298	280	1,555
<b>Jan – April</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>1,161</b>	<b>6,452</b>

<sup>a</sup> Represent total harvested fish as reported on VTRs multiplied by the average MRIP-estimated weight of landed fish for all modes in 2018-2022 (i.e., 0.94 pounds).

<sup>b</sup> Values were calculated based on an assumption that total harvest was 18% for-hire, 82% private based on average wave 6 (November-December) MRIP data for 2018-2022.



# MC Feedback/Recommendation



- MC met Nov. 13-14 and again on Dec. 7
- Supported the use of the RDM for estimating scup 2024-2025 harvest under 2023 measures and use of an 80% CI
  - Results in a required 10% reduction in harvest
- Supported the VTR analysis
  - Did not think it was necessary to attempt to further breakdown total estimated rec. harvest to federal waters only harvest
  - 6,452 lbs. is a small proportion of annual harvest (0.04%)
  - Wave 1&2 participants primarily operate in federal waters
  - Wave 6 data could be a better approximation of the split compared to annual data; however, due to lack of readily accessible MRIP wave data MC was unable to investigate utility

# MC Feedback/Recommendation continued



- Expressed frustration with the inaccessibility of MRIP data
  - Prime example of the need to have access to wave data at least to technical staff
  - Lack of information hinders responsive and informed decisions
- Board member questioned implications on black sea bass discards if the federal waters scup closure was removed
  - Similar comment made by an MC member in November
  - Challenging to assess what fishery MRIP discard data is coming from
  - Could investigate VTR black sea bass discard data
- Recommend maintaining fed. waters measures, except for the Jan – April federal waters closure, and adjustments to state waters made through the Commission process to achieve the full 10% reduction

# Advisor Feedback



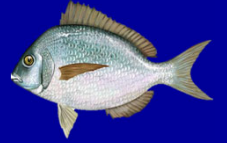
- Multiple advisors expressed frustration with the required 10% reduction in harvest
  - Instead think measures should be liberalized given scup biomass
  - One advisor noted the significant regulatory changes made in NJ and the significant decrease in effort and catch as a result. Advisor noted that any further reductions could put for-hire boats out of business
- Multiple advisors advocated for rec sector separation
  - Argued that unlike private rec. for-hire catch is accounted for given VTR requirements and they should not face reductions
  - However, two advisors voice opposition to rec. separation. One of the advisors cautioned unintended consequence as a result of separation and questioned the accuracy of VTR reported discards
  - Two advisors noted captains are aware of the need for accurate data and felt VTRs represent just that

# Advisor Feedback continued



- Multiple advisors supportive of removing Jan. – April Fed. Waters closure
  - Especially supportive of removal of season for for-hire boats
- Some agreed the VTR analysis was appropriate given wave 1&2 MRIP data limitations
  - Accurately represents the limited amount of harvest that occurs during those months
- One advisor noted federal VTR data does not capture harvest from state-only permitted vessels operating solely in state waters
- One advisor recommended adding 2023 VTR data to the analysis
- Another advisor questions the 0.94 average weight multiplier used to convert number of fish to pounds

# Advisor Feedback continued



- One advisor expressed frustration over the lack of accountability in the recreational fishery
  - Argued that until private recreational catch is fully accounted for, management cuts will continue to unfairly impact commercial and for-hire fisherman
  - Expressed that recreational data deficiencies are the root of the problem
  - Without accurate recreational data we do not have a clear understanding of actual number of fish removed from the ocean

# Summary



- Percent Change Approach with use of Recreation Demand Model and 80% CI results in:
  - 10% reduction relative to expected 2024 harvest
  - Harvest target would equal 13.76 million pounds
- MC recommendation
  - Maintain federal waters measures, with the exemption of the current federal waters Jan – April closure, and adjustments to state waters made through to Commission process to achieve full 10% reduction
- Technical Committee will develop regional/state proposals in early 2024
- Measures to be held constant over 2024-2025



# Questions/Discussion



Photo curtesy: M. Eversmier