



Angler's Guide: Draft Addendum II to Amendment 7 for Atlantic Striped Bass

What is Addendum II, and why was it developed?

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Draft Addendum II was developed in response to the 2022 striped bass stock assessment update, which showed that fishing mortality was higher than acceptable levels to rebuild the striped bass population to target levels by 2029. The Draft Addendum includes options that aim to achieve at least a 14.5% reduction in striped bass removed from the population by all fishing activities in 2024, as compared to 2022. The Draft Addendum includes options to reduce fishing mortality in both the Ocean and Chesapeake Bay components of the striped bass fishery.

[Click here to view the full Draft Addendum II](#)

How can I find out more and provide comments?

ASMFC staff and leaders from each member state will be hosting in-person, virtual, or hybrid meetings to provide an overview of the Draft Addendum, answer questions, and receive input from attendees. The public may also provide comments in writing or via email through December 22, 2023.

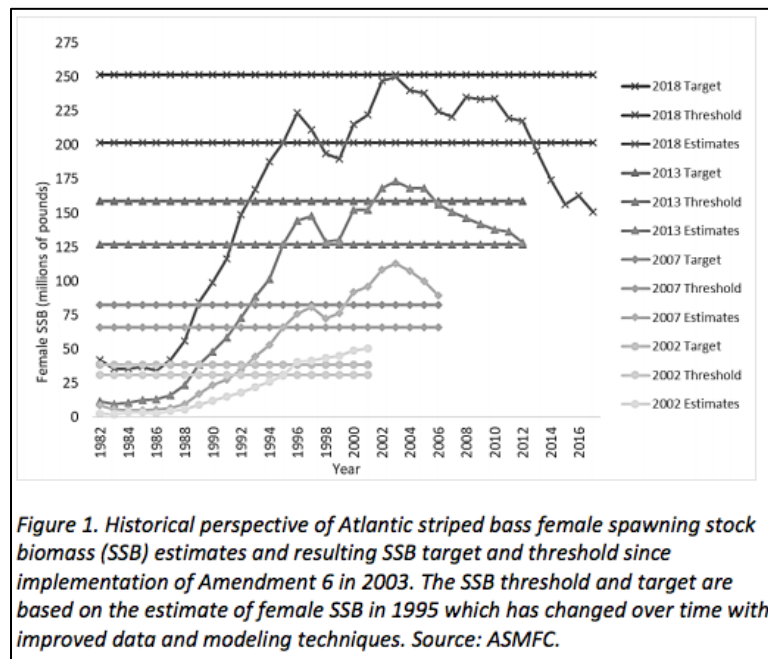
[Click here for public comment information & meeting dates](#)

Quick Take: TRCP's Preferred Options

- **Recreational Ocean:** Option B – 28-31" slot for all modes (14.1% reduction in total removals)
- **Recreational Chesapeake Bay:** Option B1 – 19-23" slot (22.4% reduction) or B2 – 19-24" slot (15.9% reduction)
- **Commercial Fishery:** Option B – 14.5% reduction
- **Stock Assessment Response:** Option B – Board Action
- **Implementation Dates:** ASAP

What happened in striped bass management to lead us to this point?

The 2018 benchmark stock assessment concluded that the striped bass population was “overfished and experiencing overfishing.” As Figure 1 below shows, each new assessment can give managers a new view on the size of the overall stock and how the estimated population relates to reference points that are used to determine the status of the stock.

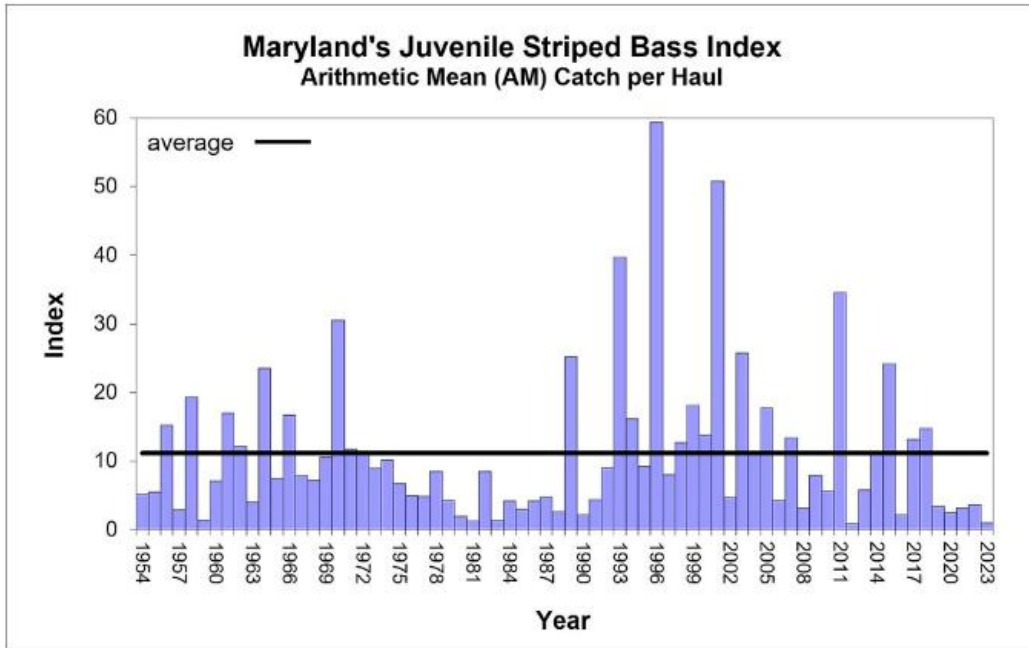


In 2019, the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board developed Addendum VI to Amendment 6 of the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan, to attempt to reduce fishing mortality and subsequent removals by 18%, as compared to 2017 removals, in all components of the fishery.

Unfortunately, managers in the Chesapeake Bay chose at that time to only reduce commercial quotas by 1.8% in Maryland and the Potomac, and by 7.7% in Virginia waters. This was done through conservation equivalency, a tool that is no longer allowed for striped bass management, at least until the stock is no longer overfished. This action was a *de facto* reallocation from the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery to the commercial fishery, with the Maryland for-hire industry patrons also retaining a higher limit than the general public. This meant that the balance of removals in the Chesapeake Bay changed, leaving professional fishermen on the sidelines of conservation from 2020 to 2023 in Maryland.

Recent recruitment failure

In October 2023, Maryland and Virginia announced the results of their annual recruitment surveys, reporting continued juvenile recruitment failure in the coast’s most important spawning and rearing areas. What this means is that enough younger striped bass are failing to achieve maturity.



Which options are being considered for ocean-based recreational fisheries?

Section 3.1.1 of the Addendum includes 4 options for the ocean that will achieve various levels of reduction in removals. Only Options B & D provide the same regulations for all participants in recreational fisheries, with Option B also continuing to protect 2015 year classes.

TRCP Preferred Option: Option B

| Ocean Recreational Options | Overall Reduction | Harvest Change | Rec. Release Mortality Change |
|---|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Option A. 1 fish at 28" to < 35" with 2017 season dates (all modes) or approved CEs. | | | |
| Option B. 1 fish at 28" – 31" with 2022 seasons (all modes). | -14.1% | -49.9% | +2.0% |
| Option C. Private vessel/shore: 1 fish at 28" – 31" with 2022 seasons. For-hire: 1 fish at 28" – 33" with 2022 seasons. | -14.0% | -49.5% | +2.0% |
| Option D. 1 fish at 30" – 33" with 2022 seasons (all modes). | -12.8% | -45.4% | +1.8% |
| Option E. Private vessel/shore: 1 fish at 30" – 33" with 2022 seasons. For-hire: 1 fish at 28" – 33" with 2022 seasons. | -12.8% | -45.0% | +1.8% |

Which options are being considered for Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries?

Section 3.1.2 of the Addendum includes options for Maryland, Virginia, Potomac River, and D.C. waters, and are reflected in the table below. Option A reflects status quo fishery regulations, which currently differ in each jurisdiction under approved conservation equivalency (CE) plans. Options B1-4 include options that will require consistent bag and size limits across all Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions, and seasons consistent with the 2022 season. Each option is expected to achieve a different overall reduction in total removals listed in the table below. **Options B1 & B2 are the only options estimated to achieve more than the goal of reducing fishery removals by 14.5% or more**, and apply reductions across all components of recreational fishery. Options C1-2 include different bag limits for the public and for-hire patrons, with only option C1 achieving more than the 14.5% reduction.

TRCP Preferred Option: B1 or B2

| Chesapeake Bay Recreational Options | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Min. Size | Max. Size | Bag Limit | Season | Overall Reduction | Harvest Change | Rec. Release Mortality (RRM) Change |
| Option A | 1 fish at 18" minimum size with 2017 seasons, or approved CEs. | | | | | | |
| <i>Chesapeake Bay Options with Consistent Minimum Size, Maximum Size, and Bag Limit</i> | | | | | | | |
| | Min. Size | Max. Size | Bag Limit | Season | Overall Reduction | Harvest Change | RRM Change |
| Option B1 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 23" | 1 fish (all modes) | same as 2022* | -22.4% | -38.4% | +6.7% |
| Option B2 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 24" | 1 fish (all modes) | same as 2022* | -15.9% | -27.5% | +4.8% |
| Option B3 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 25" | 1 fish (all modes) | same as 2022* | -12.1% | -21.1% | +3.7% |
| Option B4 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 26" | 1 fish (all modes) | same as 2022* | -10.3% | -18.1% | +3.2% |
| <i>Chesapeake Bay Options with Consistent Minimum Size, Maximum Size, and Mode-Specific Bag Limits (P/S=private vessel/shore anglers and FH= for-hire)</i> | | | | | | | |
| | Min. Size | Max. Size | Bag Limit | Season | Overall Reduction | Harvest Change | RRM Change |
| Option C1 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 23" | 1 fish P/S 2 fish FH | same as 2022* | -17.9% | -31.4% | +4.9% |
| Option C2 | 19" (all jurisdictions) | 24" | 1 fish P/S 2 fish FH | same as 2022* | -11.0% | -19.3% | +3.0% |

Why are managers considering different rules for different recreational fishery sectors?

Often called a mode split or sector-separation, a request for these options was made by participants in the for-hire realm of recreational fisheries and was supported by some managers in various states. The request for these options is often due to a concern that other regulations being considered would have an impact on certain businesses that are part of the recreational fishing industry. Unfortunately, these

types of splits mean that some portions of recreational fisheries receive a pass on important conservation measures, and others do not, inequitably impacting the recreational fishing economy.

Section 3.1.2 of the Addendum includes options which provide different bag limits for different participants in the Chesapeake Bay, assigning some a 2 fish limit and others a 1 fish limit per day (Options C1 & C2).

Section 3.1.1 includes options with a different size limit for the 1 fish bag in places on the coast (Options C & E).

TRCP Stance: Sector separation or mode-splitting is a mistake and should not be allowed.

Will commercial fishing be included in any reductions?

Possibly. **Section 3.2.1** details the commercial fishery options. The Board is considering reducing the quota by between 0% and 14.5%. Option A achieves 0% change, or status quo, and Option B includes a range from 0-14.5% reductions. Unfortunately, a reduction in a state's commercial quota may not reduce the actual number of fish landed next year by the desired percentage, because quotas vary from actual harvest numbers.

For example, the Chesapeake Bay commercial fisheries, which account for approximately 80% of all coastwide commercial striped bass catch, when considering the number of fish caught, landed approximately 15% less than their quotas allowed in 2022. This indicates that a reduction in quota in 2024 will not guarantee increased fish survival.

All Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions have Individual Transferable Quotas, aka ITQs, meaning that some commercial fishermen can and will catch their full quotas, lease other quotas from others, or choose to not catch their quotas. All of these possible outcomes are difficult to forecast in 2024. The table below includes Options A & B shaded in grey for each jurisdiction or region, with a hypothetical outcome in white, if landings were reduced by 14.5% from 2022 landings.

Preferred Option: Option B (No option to reduce landings is being considered coastwide through this action, so some states may not reduce commercial catch in 2024 as compared to 2022)

(See table on next page)

| Commercial Quota Reduction Options | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | Option A. Status Quo (Amendment 7 quotas and size limits; approved CE's may continue) | | Option B. Up to a 14.5% Reduction from the 2022 Quotas with the 2022 Size Limits | | 2022 Commercial Harvest for Reference | Hypothetical 14.5% Reduction in Landings from 2022 Levels if Quotas are Reduced** |
| | Amendment 7 Quota | CE-Adjusted Quota* | Maximum Quota (-0% from 2022) | Minimum Quota (-14.5% from 2022) | | |
| ME | 154 | N/A | 154 | 131 | 0 | 0 |
| NH | 3,537 | N/A | 3,537 | 3,024 | 0 | 0 |
| MA | 713,247 | 735,240 | 735,240 | 628,630 | 770,101 | 628,630 |
| RI | 148,889 | N/A | 148,889 | 127,300 | 162,434 | 127,300 |
| CT | 14,607 | N/A | 14,607 | 12,488 | 0 | 0 |
| NY | 652,552 | 640,718 | 640,718 | 547,813 | 623,304 | 532,924 |
| NJ ⁺ | 197,877 | 215,912 | 215,912 | 184,604 | rec bonus program: 36,807 | rec bonus program: 31,470 |
| DE | 118,970 | 142,474 | 142,474 | 121,815 | 139,221 | 119,034 |
| MD | 74,396 | 89,094 | 89,094 | 76,175 | 88,069 | 75,299 |
| VA | 113,685 | 125,034 | 125,034 | 106,904 | 121,723 | 104,073 |
| NC | 295,495 | N/A | 295,495 | 252,648 | 0 | 0 |
| MD Ches Bay | 2,588,603 | 3,001,648 | 3,001,648 | 2,566,409 | 2,386,559 | 2,040,508 |
| PRFC | | | | | | |
| VA Ches Bay | | | | | | |

What will happen in 2024 and beyond?

In late 2024, the results from the coastwide stock assessment update will be completed and provided to the Board. This update will include data from 2023 and will help managers understand the growing impacts of recruitment failure in the Chesapeake, and of ongoing fishing on the overall population, through 2023. After this assessment update, the Board will be looking to a benchmark stock assessment coming in late 2026-2027.

Section 3.3 of the Draft Addendum includes two options for a response to this assessment. Option A requires an addendum process, which includes the preparation of a draft management document similar to Draft Addendum II, and subsequent public comment periods before coastwide management changes are implemented. Depending on the timeline for this action, it may delay full implementation of on-water measures for 6-12+ months, relying on states to be proactive in the interim and reduce known removals as required. This is not a common practice in recent history. Option B allows the Board to quickly respond through a simple motion and could yield measures that have unknown consequences. Option B does not allow for direct public comment on any changes considered for the 2025 fishery, which could impact some portions of recreational fisheries and commercial fishing differently, depending on the specific action.

TRCP Preferred Option: Option B

When will new regulations be implemented?

Section 4.0 lists three separate deadlines for states to be compliance with various steps in the process; the actual dates for these deadlines will be selected by the Board to ensure all states have newly mandated regulations in place in the 2024 fishing year.

TRCP Stance: Reductions in fishery removals should be implemented as quickly as possible in 2024, for all who participate in striped bass fishing, to ensure the best conservation outcomes.
