

# Black Sea Bass 2024 Recreational Measures

Advisory Panel Meeting  
December 4, 2023



# Meeting Objectives

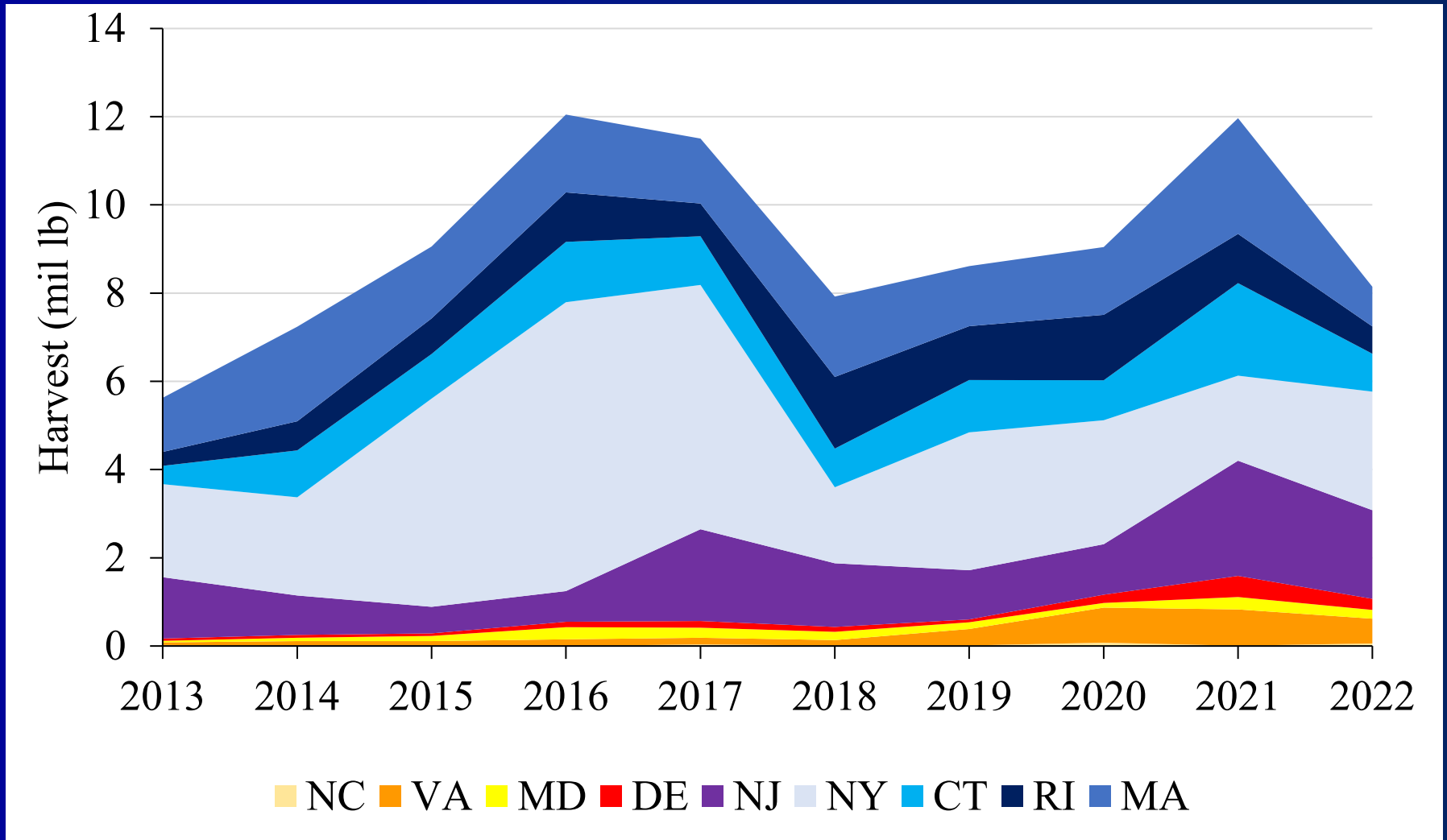


- Review process for setting measures.
- Review recent fishery performance.
- Review Monitoring Committee recommendations for 2024 recreational measures.
- Provide AP input to Council and Board on 2024 recreational measures.

# Recreational Measures Process

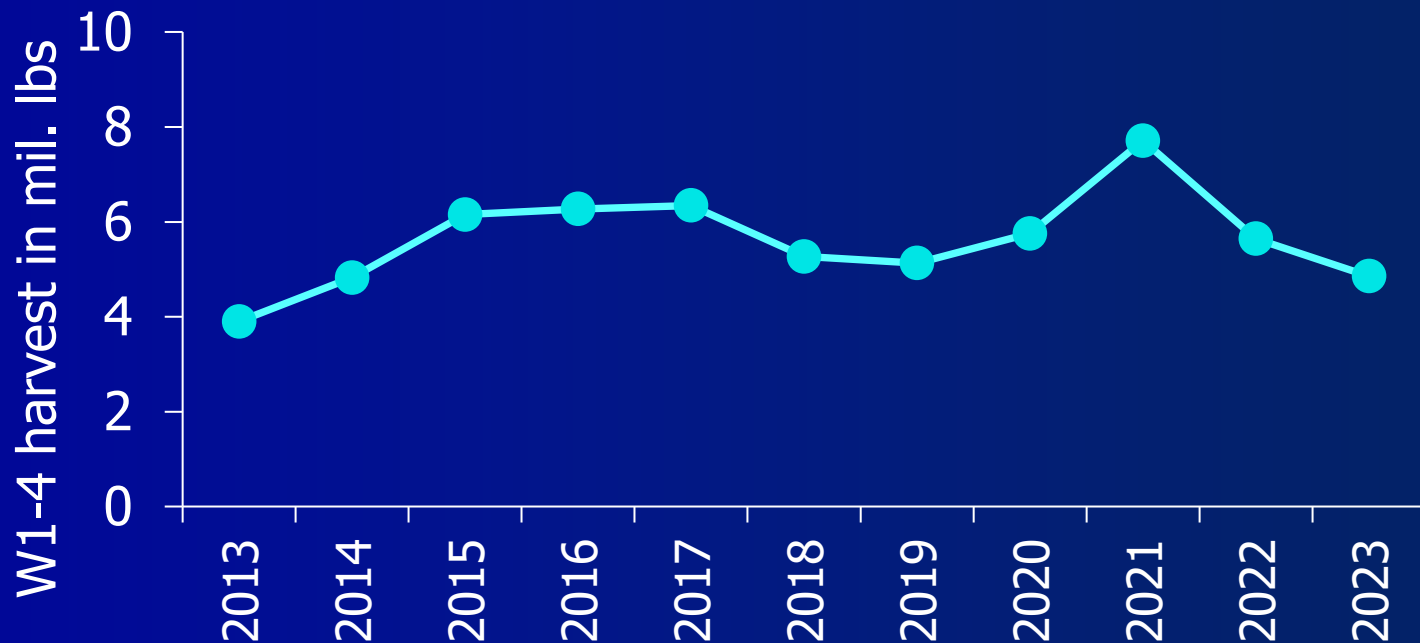
- Dec 2023 - Council and Board will adopt:
  - Overall percent change in harvest needed for 2024 and
  - Approach to Federal waters measures in 2024
    - Waive federal waters measures in favor of state measures or
    - Coastwide measures
- Early 2024 - State waters measures determined through ASMFC process

# Rec. Harvest by State, 2013-2022



# Preliminary 2023 Wave 1-4

- 4.86 mil lb
- Lowest wave 1-4 estimate since 2014
- 15% below 2013-2022 average wave 1-4
- Over past 10 years, waves 1-4 accounted for 52-69% (avg 63%) of annual harvest



# 2023 State Measures

State	Min. Size	Bag Limit	Open Season
<b>ME</b>	13"	10 fish	May 19-Sept 21; Oct 18-Dec 31
<b>NH</b>	16.5"	4 fish	Jan 1 - Dec 31
<b>MA</b>	16.5"	4 fish	May 20 - Sept 7
<b>RI</b> private & shore	16.5"	2 fish	May 22-August 26
		3 fish	August 27-December 31
<b>RI</b> for-hire	16"	2 fish	June 18-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
<b>CT</b> private & shore	16"	5 fish	May 19-June 23, July 8-December 1
<b>CT</b> authorized party/charter monitoring program vessels		5 fish	May 19-August 31
		7 fish	September 1-December 31
<b>NY</b>	16.5"	3 fish	June 23-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
<b>NJ</b>	12.5"	10 fish	May 17-June 19
		1 fish	July 1-August 31
		10 fish	October 1 - October 31
		15 fish	November 1-December 31
<b>DE, MD, NC</b> (north of Hatteras)	13"	15 fish	May 15-September 30, October 10-December 31
<b>VA</b>	13"	15 fish	February 1-28, May 15-July 6, August 9-December 31

<i>Column 1</i> <b>2024 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>
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# Recreation Demand Model Results

8.40 mil lb	Median projected 2024 harvest under 2023 measures
7.72 – 9.08 mil lb	80% CI around 2024 harvest estimate
6.27 mil lb	2024 RHL

Harvest estimate CI is entirely above the 2024 RHL.



# Biomass Category

- 2021 mgmt. track assessment remains the most recent for black sea bass.
- 2019 biomass estimated at 210% of target level.
- “Very high” category under Percent Change Approach.

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# Accountability Measures

Year	Rec Harvest	Rec Dead Discards	Total Dead Rec Catch	Rec ACL	% Over/ Under ACL
2020	9.05	3.46	12.50	8.09	55%
2021	11.97	4.20	16.16	7.93	104%
2022	8.34	3.59	11.92	8.76	36%
Avg	<b>9.78</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>13.53</b>	<b>8.26</b>	<b>64%</b>

**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.

# Accountability Measures

- GARFO letter to Council:
  - No additional action required in 2024 to address the recent overages.
  - Reductions implemented for 2023.
  - Improvements made to the Recreation Demand Model which will be used for setting management measures for 2024.

# Stock Assessment Timing

- Percent Change Approach intended to set measures for 2 years at a time, “in sync with the setting of catch and landings limits in response to updated stock assessment information.”
- 2023 an interim assessment year. Measures set just for 2023 with goal of setting 2024-2025 based on 2023 mgmt. track.
- 2023 management track delayed to 2024.
- 2024 RHL differs from 2023 by 5% due only to 3 new years of catch data.
- FW 17/Addenda XXXIV did not contemplate a situation where the RHL would change without updated stock assessment information.

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# MC Discussion

- If 2023 and 2024 RHLs had been available for setting identical 2023-2024 measures at the same time, this would have resulted in the same 10% reduction as was implemented for 2023.
  - Would not have required 10% reduction in 2023 and another 10% reduction in 2024.
  - The same measures implemented for 2023 would also have applied to 2024.

# MC Discussion

- No status quo option for stocks in the very high biomass category under the Percent Change Approach.
- Not possible to predict how 2024 approach will impact changes needed in 2025.
  - Changes to assessment model.
  - Recreation Demand Model will be updated next year.
- If status quo not used in 2024, likely outcome would be changes each year from 2022 through at least 2025.
  - Annual changes do not align with the goals of the Percent Change Approach.
  - Frequent changes can lead to frustration and non-compliance among anglers.



# MC Recommendation

- **MC recommended status quo measures in 2024**
  - Treat 2024 as the 2nd year in a two-year cycle with 2023.
  - Aligns with intent of Percent Change Approach to provide stability in measures and update measures in sync with timing of updated stock assessment info.
- 2025 measures will be set based on updated info, including updated stock assessment.
- Recommended continued use of conservation equivalency to waive federal waters measures.
  - Under status quo approach, no changes to non-preferred coastwide or precautionary default measures.

# Virginia February Fishery

- Virginia has a special February recreational opening for black sea bass.
- Requires a special permit and reporting for every trip.
- Season adjusted later in the year as needed to account for February harvest.
- Status quo approach will likely include Virginia's February fishery, with the same permitting and reporting requirements.
- Monitoring Committee is supportive of this approach.

# Questions/Discussion

- MC recommendation: status quo measures in 2024