



## ASA Guide to Draft Addendum VI for Striped Bass

### Background

- ASA recognizes that a healthy striped bass population and fishery is critical to the sportfishing industry and is a significant driver of angler engagement and participation along the Atlantic coast.
- While the stock is significantly healthier than it was when the moratorium was enacted in the 1980s, recent declining trends in the population and its fishery continue to be a cause for concern.
- Through the sportfish restoration program, the sportfishing industry and its anglers have cooperatively supported conservation efforts to restore significant fisheries like striped bass.
- This time is no different, and as anglers that love our sport, we understand the responsibility of making tough management decisions to ensure our fisheries continue to thrive.
- Therefore, we support ending overfishing as a critical first step to rebuilding the striped bass population and offer the following management recommendations to ASMFC.

### 3.1 Proposed Management Scenario

**Support scenario 2: equal percent reductions between the recreational and commercial sectors.**

**Rationale is detailed in the bullets below.**

- Conservation efforts should be shared equally between the recreational and commercial sectors because everyone that uses the resource has a shared interest in its future.
- In both management scenarios (i.e., 2 and 3), the reductions for the commercial sector are based on Addendum IV quotas instead of 2017 harvest potentially allowing for an increase in removals if the quotas are fully utilized. This contradicts the intent of the Addendum.
- Scenario 3 would disproportionately penalize states that only have a recreational fishery or convert their commercial quota to a recreational bonus fish program (e.g., ME, NH, CT, NJ, PA, DC).
- 97% of total economic contribution came from the recreational sector in 2016, and that amounted to expenditures totaling \$6.3 billion dollars. Therefore, placing more economic burden on the recreational fishery by taking a smaller reduction on the commercial fishery is not supported.

### Recreational Fishery Management Options

**Ocean Fishery (all jurisdictions)** - the sub options for 2A listed in the table below would specifically apply to the recreational ocean fishery. All these sub options achieve the required reduction, so it's recommended to support a sub option that fits with the type of fishery you prefer.

- For example, sub option 2-A allows harvest of larger fish whereas the other sub options (slot limits) conserve the larger fish and allow harvest on a smaller sized fish. As a reminder, the current ocean recreational fishery is managed under a 28" minimum size and 1 fish bag limit.

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy Fish/Season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
2-A1	1	35" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 (see Appendix 1)	-43%	+3%	-18%
2-A2	1	28"-35" slot		-46%	+3%	-19%
2-A3 <sup>^</sup>	1	30"-38" slot		-44%	+3%	-18%
2-A4 <sup>^</sup>	1	32"-40" slot		-49%	+4%	-21%

<sup>^</sup>Under sub-option 2-A3 and 2-A4, ocean trophy fish fisheries would be capped with a 38" and 40" maximum size limit, respectively.

**Chesapeake Bay Fishery (MD, PRFC, DC and VA)** - The sub options for 2B listed in the table below would specifically apply to the recreational Chesapeake Bay fishery. All these sub options achieve the required reduction, so it's recommended to support a sub option that fits with the type of fishery you prefer. As a reminder, the current bay recreational fishery is managed with a 20" minimum size and a two fish bag limit with only one fish allowed >28". There are also various seasonal trophy fisheries.

Sub-Option	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Season and Trophy Fish/Season	% change from 2017		
				Harvest	Release Mortality	Total Removals
2-B1	1	18" min	Same seasons and trophy season as 2017 (see <i>Appendix 1</i> )	-40%	+4%	-20%
2-B2	2	22" min		-34%	+4%	-18%
2-B3 <sup>^</sup>	2	18"-23" slot	Same seasons as 2017 but <i>without</i> trophy fish season	-36%	+5%	-19%
2-B4 <sup>^</sup>	2	20"-24" slot		-35%	+5%	-19%

<sup>^</sup>Under sub-options 2-B3 and 2-B4, states would be required to submit for conservation equivalency to reinstate a trophy fish season.

### Conservation Equivalency

Conservation equivalency allows states flexibility to develop alternative regulations that address specific state or regional differences while still achieving the reductions.

- ASA recommends ASMFC strive for coastwide consistency in management measures but supports the use of conservation equivalency programs if the proposed alternative measures quantifiably achieve the required reduction, and the Board follows up to hold states accountable for those reductions through the fishery performance review process.

### 3.2 Circle Hook Provision Recommendation

#### **Support option 2: require the use of non-offset circle hooks when fishing with bait.**

- Currently, circle hook requirements for the striped bass fishery vary across the states even though science supports the use of circle hooks reduces discard mortality.
- 90% of recreational catch is released alive so any efforts to reduce discard mortality will help the resource.
- Educational campaigns to teach anglers the various techniques of using circle hooks should be employed by all the states to support effective implementation of this option.