

# Atlantic Striped Bass: ASMFC Potential 2025 Management Measures

December 10, 2024



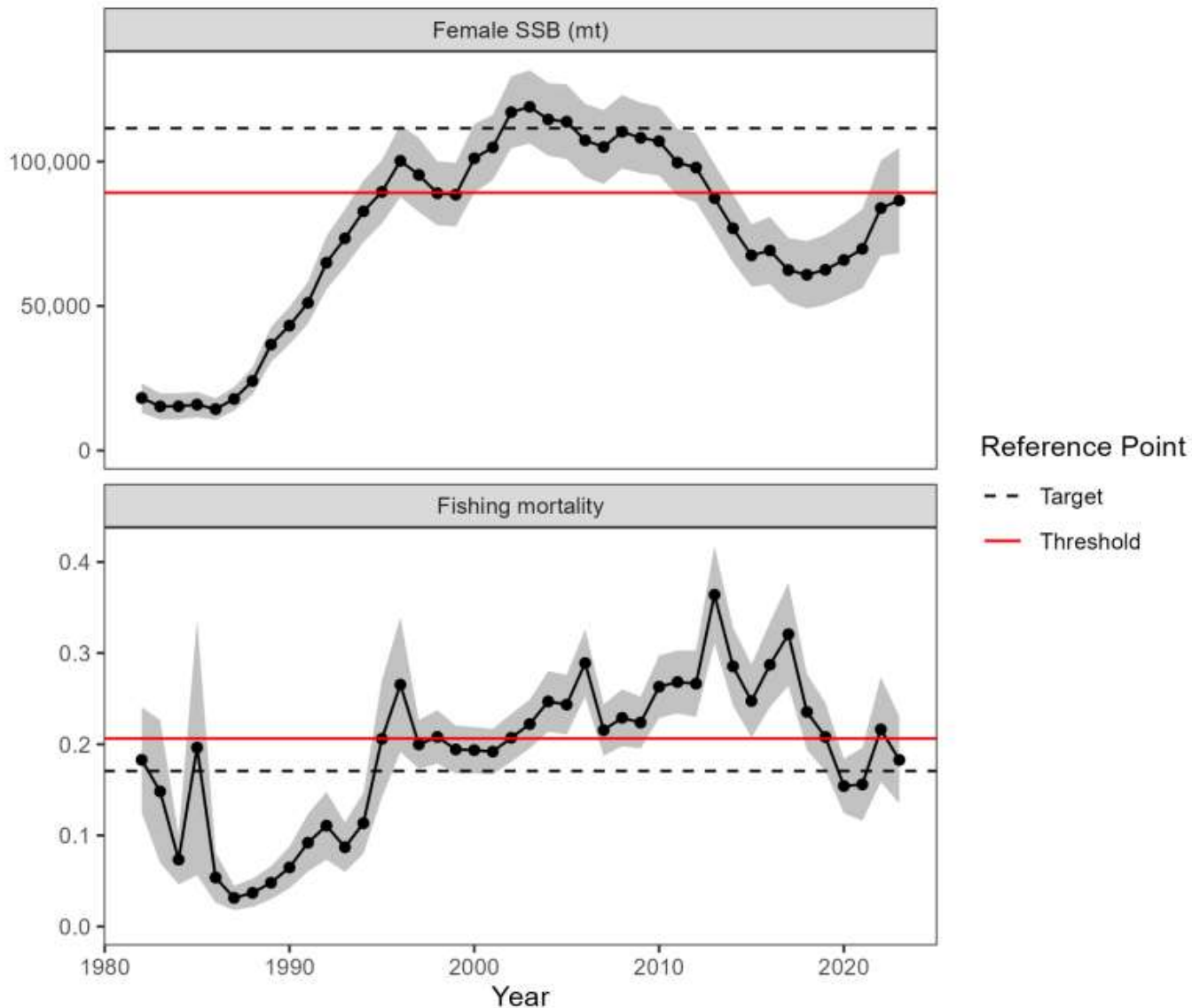
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# Outline

- ▶ Stock Assessment
- ▶ Projections and Reductions
- ▶ Potential Management Options
- ▶ What we are looking for from you

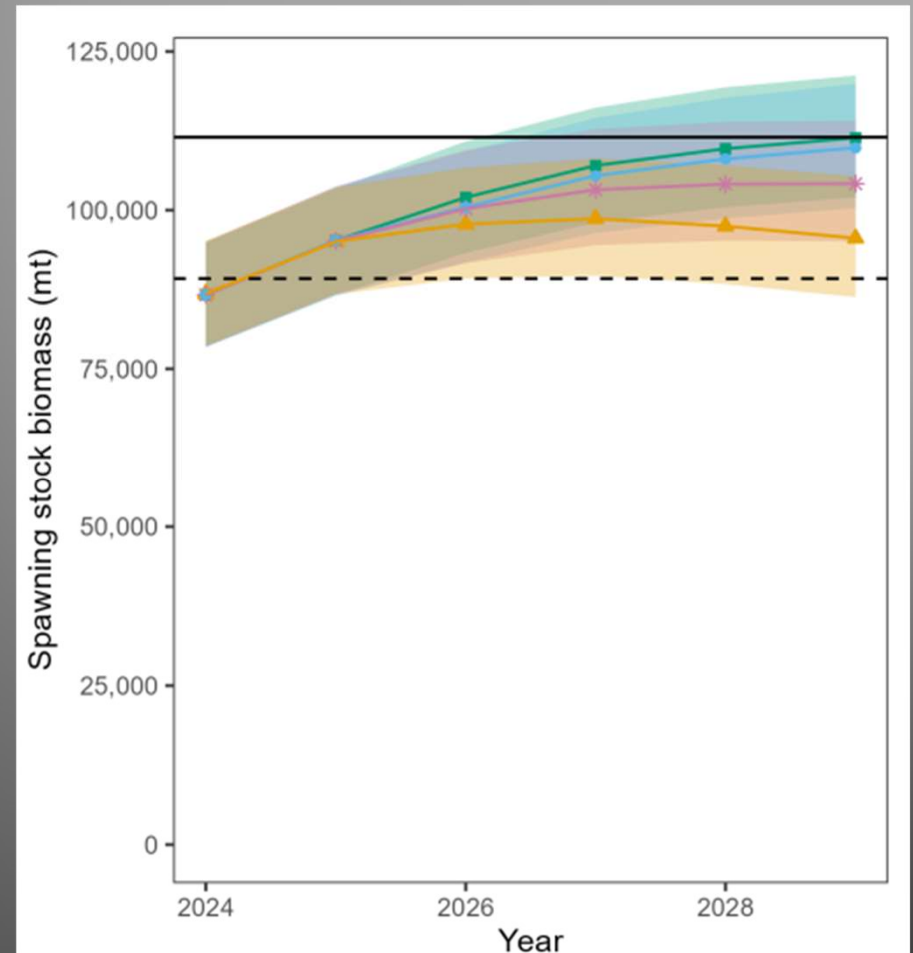


# 2024 Stock Assessment



# 2024 Projections

- ▶ Fishing mortality increase in 2025
- ▶ Probability of rebuilding by 2029 less than 50%
- ▶ Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board can change management measures through board action



# ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- ▶ December 16 – consider changes to 2025 management measures
  - Response to 2024 stock assessment results
  - Need to increase the probability of rebuilding by the 2029 deadline
- ▶ Tasked the Technical Committee with updating projections and developing 2025 management options



# Technical Committee Report: Projections and Reductions

# Projections and Reductions

- ▶ Scenario of interest indicates low removals in 2024, followed by an increase in fishing mortality ( $F$ ) in 2025, and then a decrease/stabilize  $F$  from 2026–2029
- ▶ Three considerations
  - What data are used to estimate 2024 removals?
  - How high will  $F$  increase in 2025?
  - How long will  $F$  decrease in 2026–2029?



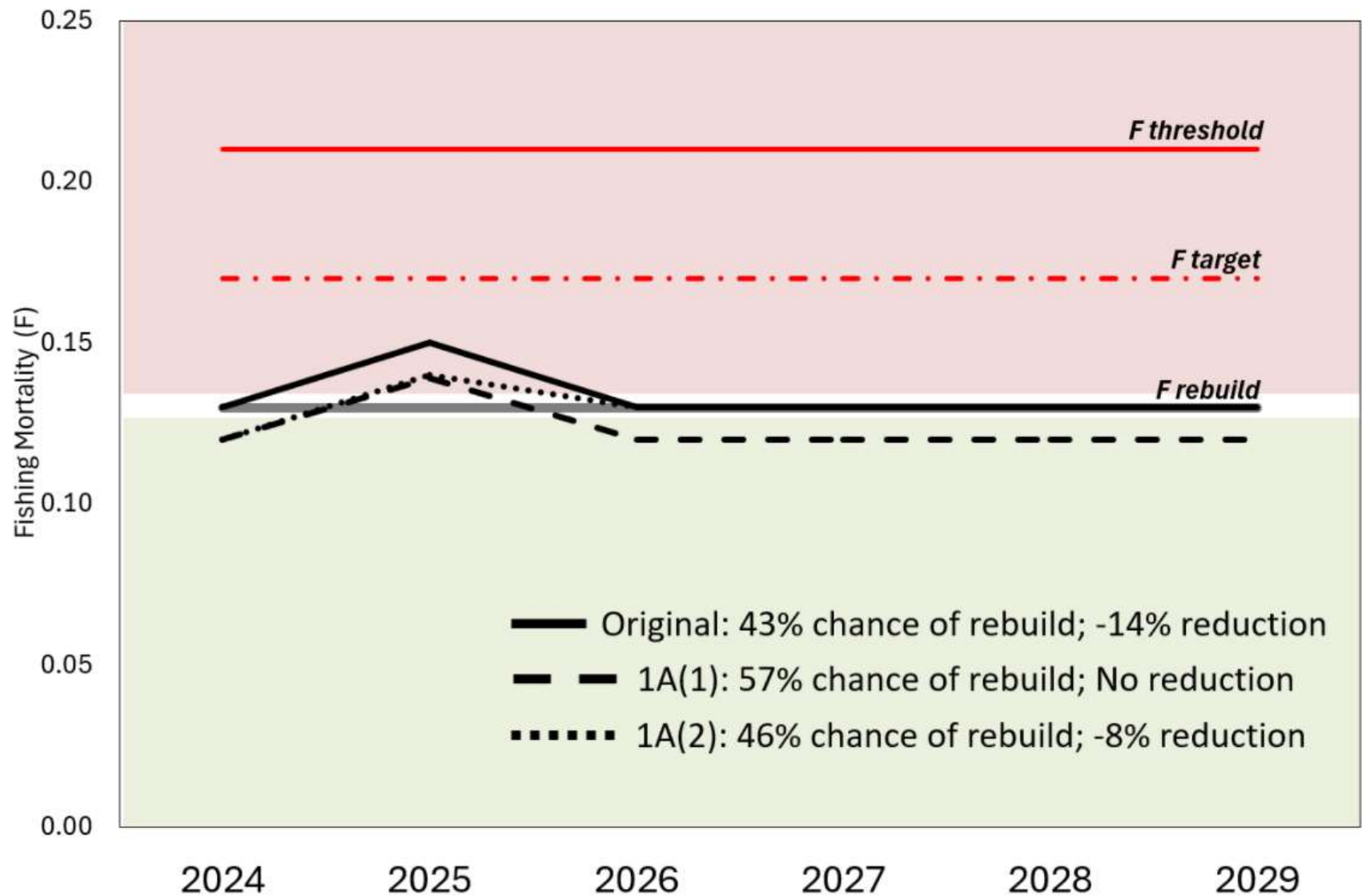
# Projections and Reductions

- ▶ TC Task 1A: Update projection with additional data to determine 2025 reduction to achieve a 50% probability of rebuilding stock by 2029
  - Estimate 2024 removals with Addendum II measures
    - Assessment report data Wave 2–3 (Mar–June):  
2024 removals = 3.89 million fish;  $F_{2024}=0.13$
    - Added Wave 4 data (July–Aug):  
2024 removals = 3.67 million fish;  $F_{2024}=0.12$

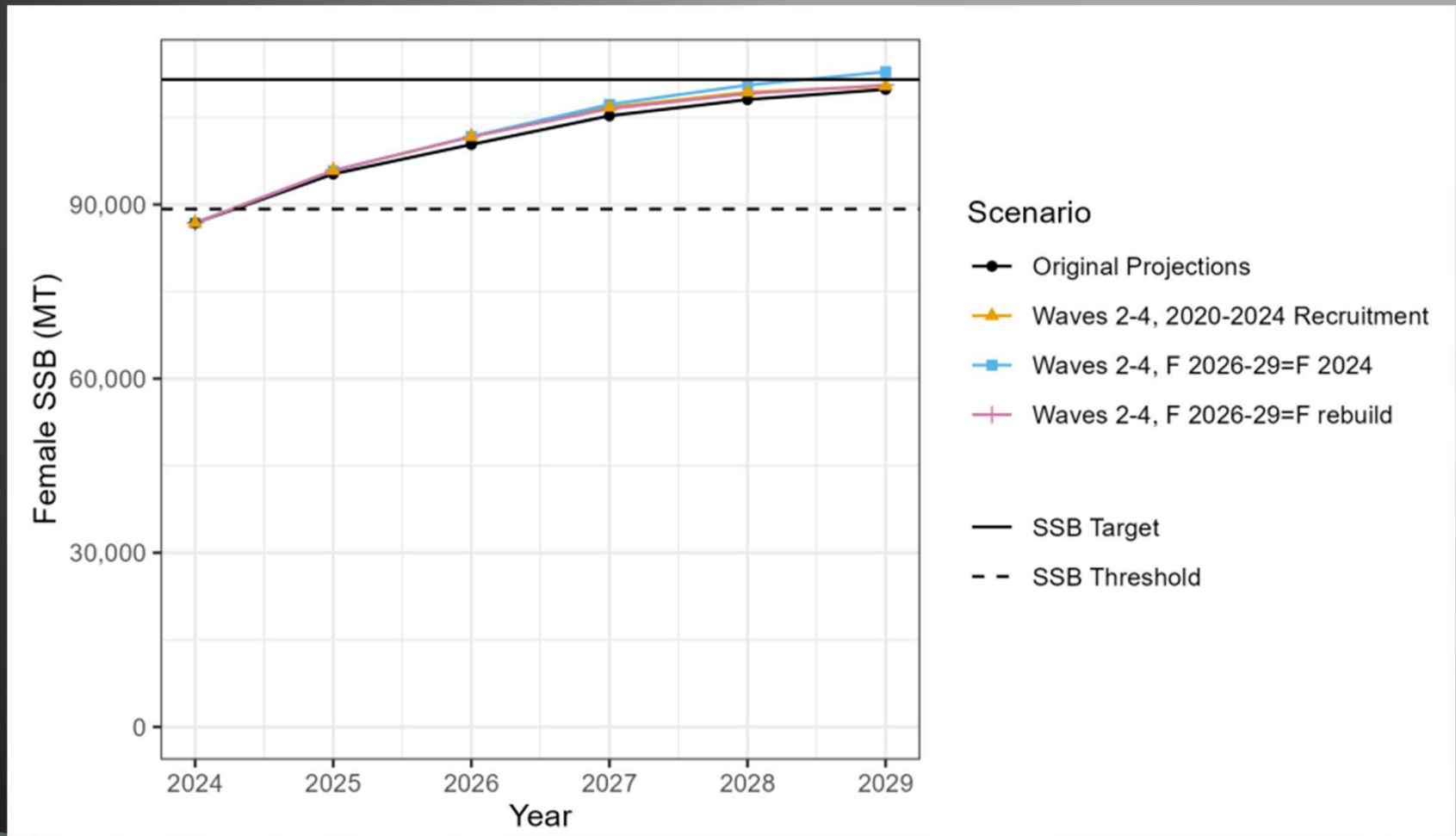
# *F* Assumptions

- ▶ 2018 year-class entering ocean slot limit
- ▶ 2025 assume *F* increases by 17%
  - Based on 2021–2023 increase when the 2015 year-class moved into the slot
  - Could change rebuilding trajectory unless *F* in 2026–2029 is low enough to offset
- ▶ 2026–2029 assume *F* decreases as 2018 year-class grows out of the slot
  - No strong year classes behind it
  - How low will *F* decrease? Enough to offset 2025?

# F Scenarios



# Projection Update



# 2025 Reduction

- ▶ Probability of rebuilding by 2029 ranges from 57% to 43% across scenarios
  - 0% to 14% reduction range
- ▶ Board should consider risk tolerance
- ▶ The level of risk the board is willing to accept is a management decision
  - Risk in respect to stock status, economic loss, modeling uncertainty due to annual management changes



# Notes on Reductions

- ▶ TC notes all 3 scenarios represent possible futures for the stock
- ▶ Small management changes (e.g., reductions less than 10%) are difficult to measure due to MRIP estimates uncertainty
- ▶ Reduction less than 10% would not be statistically distinguishable from status quo



# Uncertainty

- ▶ Angler behavior
- ▶ Fish availability
- ▶ Magnitude of 2025 increase and 2026–2029 decrease highly uncertain
- ▶ Projections assume constant  $F$  from 2026–2029
- ▶ Uncertainty around how well the 2024 selectivity curve represents actual selectivity



# Technical Committee Report: Potential Management Options

# Potential Management Options

How to split the reduction between sectors?

	Even Reductions		No Commercial Reduction		Reductions Based on Sector Contribution to Total Removals	
Total Reduction	Comm.	Rec.	Comm.	Rec.	Comm.	Rec.
-14%	-14%	-14%	0%	-16%	-1.5%	-16%
-8%	-8%	-8%	0%	-9%	-1%	-9%

# Board Tasks for Recreational Management

- ▶ Board tasked the TC:
  - Developing size limit options
  - Develop seasonal closure options



# Recreational Size Limits

- ▶ harvest of larger fish vs. maintaining the current slot limit
- ▶ If current 28–31” slot, the remaining larger 2015 year-class will be protected but the incoming 2018 year-class will be subject to harvest
- ▶ If shifted to larger fish, incoming 2018 year-class would be protected but the larger 2015 year-class would then be subject to harvest



# Potential Management Options

Ocean	
Size Limit	Estimated Reduction Relative to Current 28-31" Slot
28-30" slot limit	-5%
32-35" slot limit	-2%
33-36" slot limit	-4%
35" minimum size	0%
38" minimum size	-5%
40" minimum size	-6%

# Recreational Season Closures

- ▶ Seasonal closure options (# days closed) would be in addition to existing closures
- ▶ No-Harvest Closure: harvest prohibited but catch-and-release fishing allowed
- ▶ No-Targeting Closure: all fishing for striped bass is prohibited (no catch-and-release and no harvest)
  - Trips only targeting striped bass only won't occur
  - All trips will still occur



# Recreational Season Closure

## ▶ Ocean

- All States
- ME–MA and RI–NC
- ME–NH and MA–NJ and DE–NC

## ▶ Chesapeake Bay

- Maryland and Virginia during same Wave
- Maryland and Virginia during different Waves
- PRFC and DC can choose to match either Maryland or Virginia timing



# Ocean Closure Examples for 14%


Ocean seasonal closures to achieve 14% recreational reduction (corresponding to equal commercial reduction)			
Region/Wave	# days for 14% reduction with NO-TARGETING closure assuming Striped Bass-Only Trips Eliminated	# days for 14% reduction with NO-TARGETING closure assuming All Striped Bass Trips Occur with New Target	# days for 14% reduction with NO-HARVEST closure
All Ocean States Wave 6	29 days	36 days	Cannot achieve 14% reduction closing entire wave to harvest
ME-MA Wave 3; RI-NC Wave 6	25 days	34 days	55 days
ME-MA Wave 4; RI-NC Wave 6	23 days	31 days	47 days
ME-MA Wave 5; RI-NC Wave 6	25 days	32 days	54 days

# Ocean Closure Examples for 14%

Ocean seasonal closures to achieve 14% recreational reduction (corresponding to equal commercial reduction)			
Region/Wave	# days for 14% reduction with NO-TARGETING closure assuming Striped Bass-Only Trips Eliminated	# days for 14% reduction with NO-TARGETING closure assuming All Striped Bass Trips Occur with New Target	# days for 14% reduction with NO-HARVEST closure
ME-NH Wave 3; MA-NJ Wave 6; DE-NC Wave 6*	28 days	36 days	61 days
ME-NH Wave 4; MA-NJ Wave 6; DE-NC Wave 6*	27 days	34 days	59 days
ME-NH Wave 5; MA-NJ Wave 6; DE-NC Wave 6*	27 days	35 days	60 days

What are we looking for from you?

# Board Considerations on December 16

- ▶ What would you recommend to the ME Commissioners?
    - Should the Board act to effect 2025 measures?
    - Should the Board initiate an Addendum?
      - Would not impact 2025 but provides opportunity for more analyses.
    - Should the Board not act?
      - Next assessment currently scheduled for 2027.
  - ▶ How should the Board balance the approaching 2029 deadline to rebuild, the uncertainties in future F rates, and the management options in the TC memo?
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# Board Considerations on December 16

- ▶ If the Board should act:
  - What management tools should the Board use?
  - If the Board pursues seasonal closures:
    - Harvest vs no-targeting?
    - Preferred waves?
  - How should the reduction be split between the recreational and commercial sectors?

