



BEYOND 2025: REVISING THE
CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT
JULY 2025

Leila Duman
Bays Restoration Officer
Maryland Department of
Natural Resources

Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

What is the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement?

- The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is a Voluntary agreement between the six watershed states, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government.
- Contains 10 goals and 31 outcomes to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay.



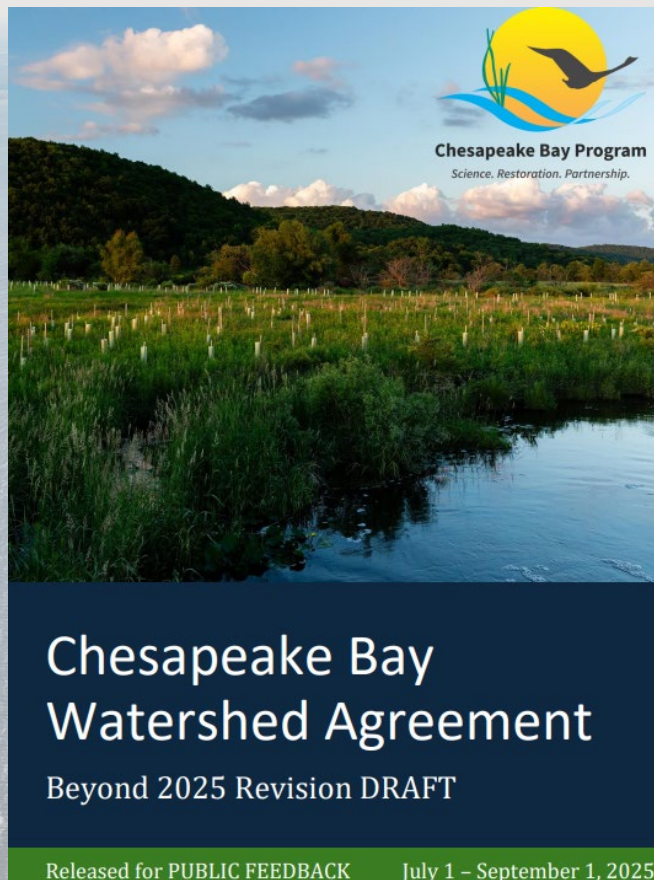
What is “Beyond 2025” and why is the year 2025 so important?



When the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* was signed in 2014, many of the 31 outcomes, or measurable restoration targets, listed 2025 as the intended date in which to meet these objectives.



Beyond 2025 refers to the effort being undertaken by the Chesapeake Bay Program to determine the next steps in restoring and conserving the Chesapeake Bay post-2025.



Revised Vision

“The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable and resilient Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved and healthy working lands, a vibrant cultural heritage and a wide range of engaged individuals whose communities enjoy access to the waters and natural landscapes of the region.”

Feedback can be emailed to comments@chesapeakebay.net

Healthy Landscapes Goal

Conserve, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic and cultural value to maintain water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.

Clean Water Goal

Reduce pollutants entering the Bay and its rivers to achieve the water quality necessary to support our aquatic wildlife and protect human health.

Thriving Habitat & Wildlife Goal

Protect, restore and sustain fisheries and wildlife, as well as the network of land and water habitats they depend on, to promote a balanced and resilient ecosystem and support local economies and recreational opportunities.

Engaged Communities Goal

Engage and grow a community of local stewards and leaders through education, recreation and professional opportunities.

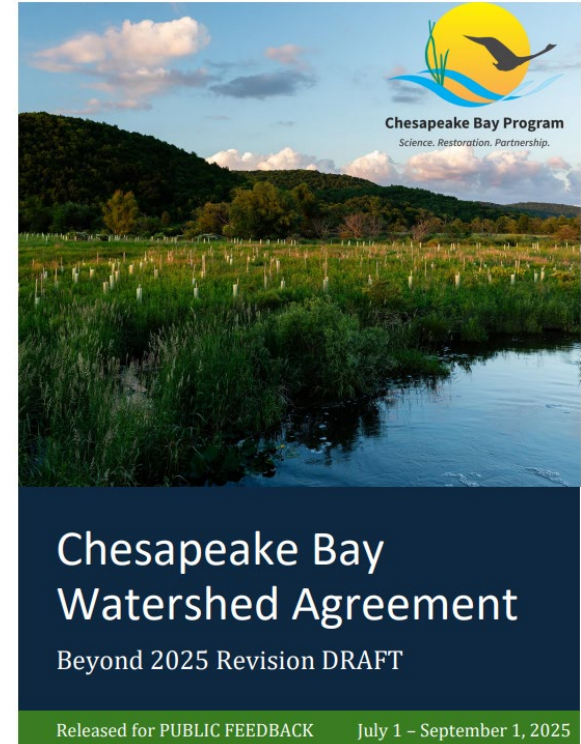
We Want All the Feedback!



- Public feedback period opened on Tuesday, July 1 and runs for 60 days until Monday, September 1.
- Everything you need to know can be found at <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/planning-for-2025-and-beyond>
- Feedback can be emailed to comments@chesapeakebay.net

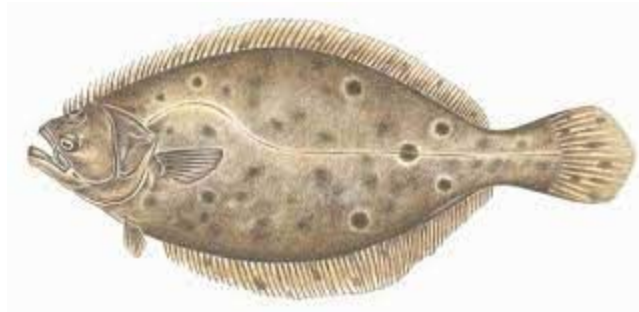


- Chesapeake Bay Program staff is available to talk with any of your members or groups about Beyond 2025.



Interjurisdictional Management

Updates and Announcements



Presented By:
Michael Luisi / Lynn Fegley / Carrie Kennedy

July 15, 2025

ASMFC Spring Meeting

August 5-7, 2025

Westin Crystal City

Arlington, VA



Species Focus / Potential Board Action

- *Striped Bass, American Eel & Red Drum*

Websites and Contact Information



www.asmfc.org



www.mafmc.org

Lynn Fegley

Director
Fishing and Boating Services
lynn.fegley@maryland.gov
(410) 260-8285 (O)
(443) 223-9279 (M)



Michael Luisi

Associate Director
Tidal & Coastal Mngt. and Science
Fishing and Boating Services
Michael.Luisi@maryland.gov
(410) 260-8341 (O)
(443) 758-6547 (M)



Carrie Kennedy

Division Director
Monitoring and Assessment
Fishing and Boating Services
Carrie.Kennedy@maryland.gov
(410) 260-8295 (O)
(410) 279-7234 (M)



American Eel

Tuesday, August 5th 2:15-3:15



Important Items for Attention

- Update on USFWS CITES Proposal to List American Eel under Appendix II

Red Drum/Sciaenids

Tuesday, August 5th 3:30 - 5:30 pm



Important Items for Discussion

- Consider Red Drum Draft Addendum II for Public Comment
 - Reductions needed in the southern region - North Carolina to Florida
 - Will consider options for reductions in the Mid-Atlantic region
 - Preference for MD/PRFC/VA to have the same regulations
- Review 2025 Traffic Light Analyses for Spot and Atlantic Croaker

Striped Bass

Wednesday, August 6th 1:15 - 5:30pm



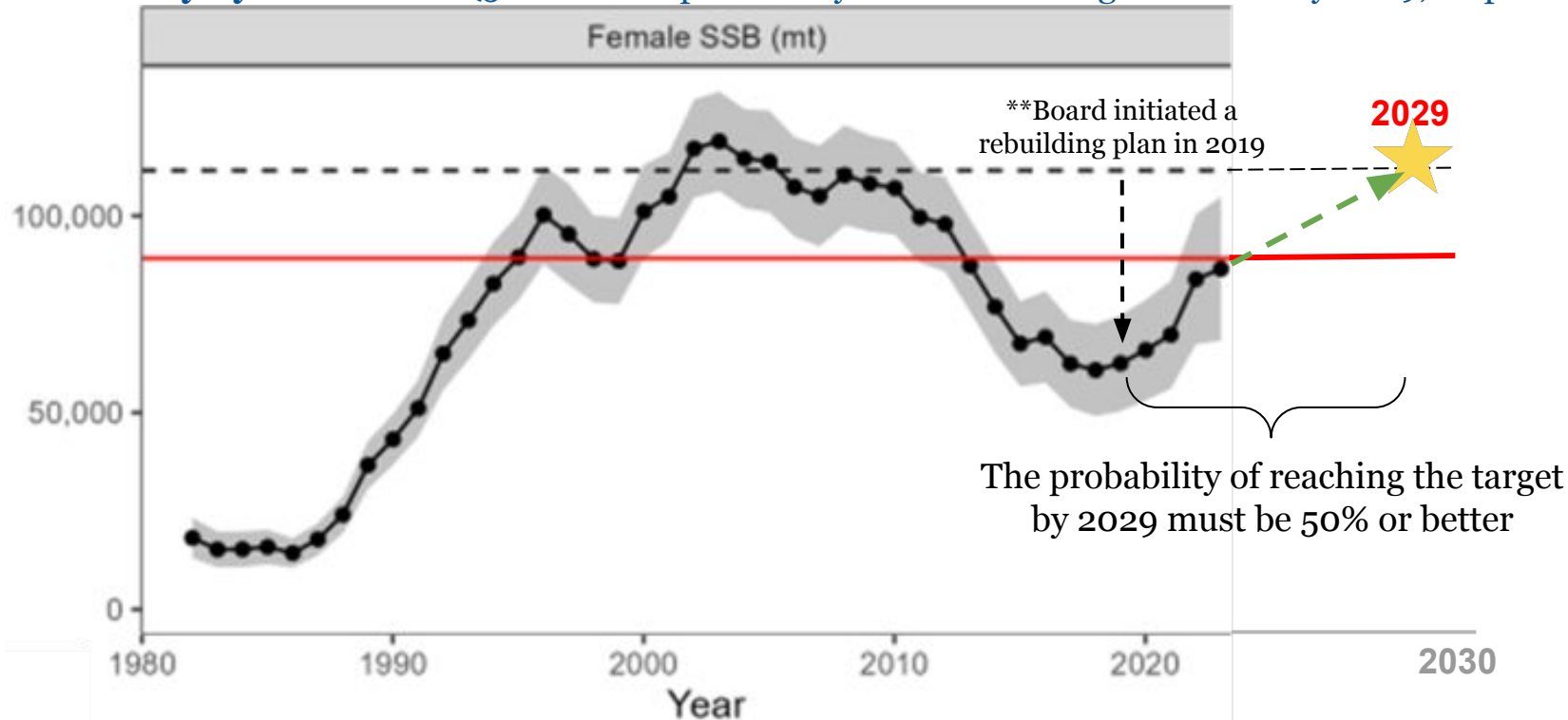
Important Items for Discussion

- Consider Draft Addendum III for Public Comment (2026 Measures)
- What is in Addendum III
 - *Potential 2026 Reductions to meet Rebuilding Timeline of 2029*
 - *SB Tagging Compliance - Focus on tagging at point of harvest/landing*
 - Recreational Baseline Adjustment (Board Comments and Data Update)
 - Standardizing length measurements

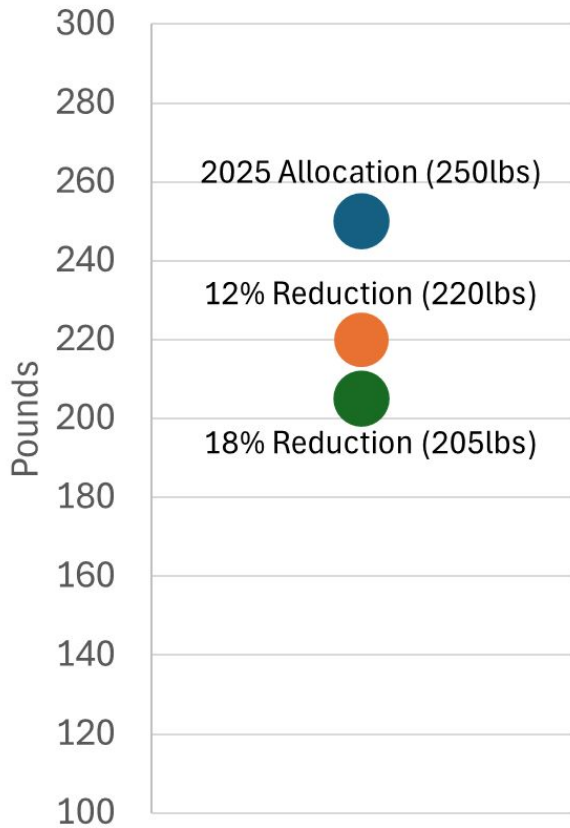
Potential Reductions in 2026

Atlantic striped bass was declared overfished in 2019 and is subject to a rebuilding plan that **requires the stock to be rebuilt to its spawning stock biomass target by 2029.**

- To stay on track with the rebuilding plan **states will need to reduce overall removals in the fishery by 12% to 18%** (50% to 60% probability to reach the target biomass by 2029, respectively)



What does this mean for your CB 2026 Quota?



Joint ASMFC/MAFMC April Meeting

August 11-14, 2025

Annapolis, MD



MID-ATLANTIC | FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

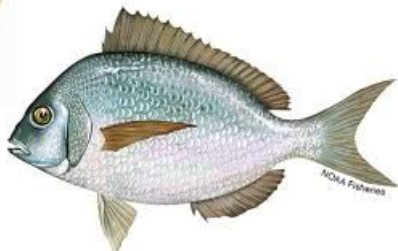
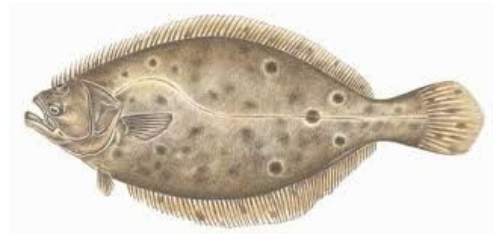
2026 Specifications - 4 Rec/Comm Species

August 12 - 13, 2025



Important Items for Discussion

- The ASMFC Board and Council will determine 2026 annual specifications for Black Sea Bass, Summer Flounder, Scup and Bluefish
- This will set commercial quotas and recreational catch targets for the next couple years



Striped Bass Industry Workgroup

Meeting: May 2025

Striped Bass Industry Workgroup

Meeting: May 2025

Elections to occur in 2026.

Prior to the start of the 2026 harvest season, will be utilizing the wait list to allow purchase of undeclared, 0% share permits.

Two regulatory scoping items:

1. Increasing allocation caps
2. Increased flexibility with transferring permits / share / allocation.

Request to TFAC – Discuss if a no commercial or recreational fishing / clamming / oystering buffer is required around pound nets.

Striped Bass Industry Workgroup

Meeting: May 2025

Two passed motions:

1. The commercial striped bass allocation can not be used in the striped bass charter fishery.
2. The Striped Bass Industry Workgroup opposes the portion of the baseline season adjustment proposal (April 1 to May 15) at ASMFC to protect the future spawning stock.

Maryland's Baseline Adjustment Proposal



Presented to:
The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

May 6, 2025

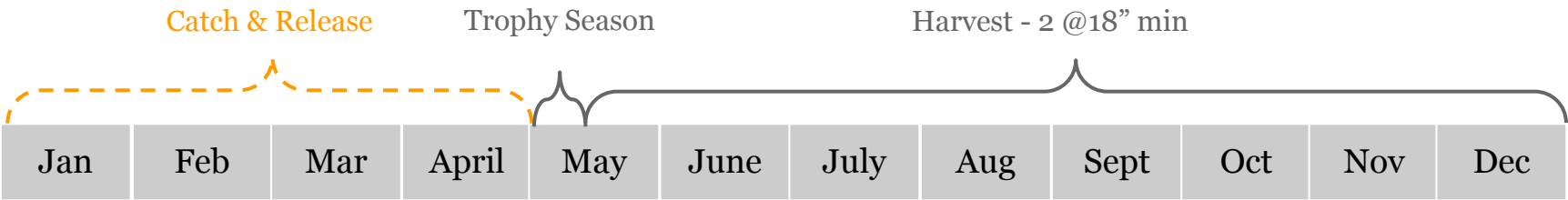
Background

- Since 2015, Maryland DNR has **modified recreational measures/regulations 7 times**
- Changes included:
 - Size Limits (min/max)
 - Bag limits (2 fish to 1 fish)
 - Seasonal modifications (Trophy Season Closure)
 - Gear requirements (Circle Hooks)
 - Targeting restrictions (No Targeting Closures)
- Previous changes resulted from Board actions (Addenda and Emergency) as well as Conservation Equivalency Proposals when the CE was allowed prior to Amendment 7.
- Currently, any additional changes (Addendum III...IV...etc) to the recreational measures will require Maryland to 'tack on' more restrictions to a fishing year in the Chesapeake Bay that is already too complicated.
- Stakeholders expressed concerned that, without the ability to adapt and reset our baseline, any new management actions could regulate their fishery away.
- MDNR is also interested in taking a step back and re-focusing on **efforts to re-align more closely with VA/PRFC and protect the resident stock during the summer months** when they are most vulnerable to release mortality
- A trade-off between summer no targeting closures and spring access through catch and release was explored

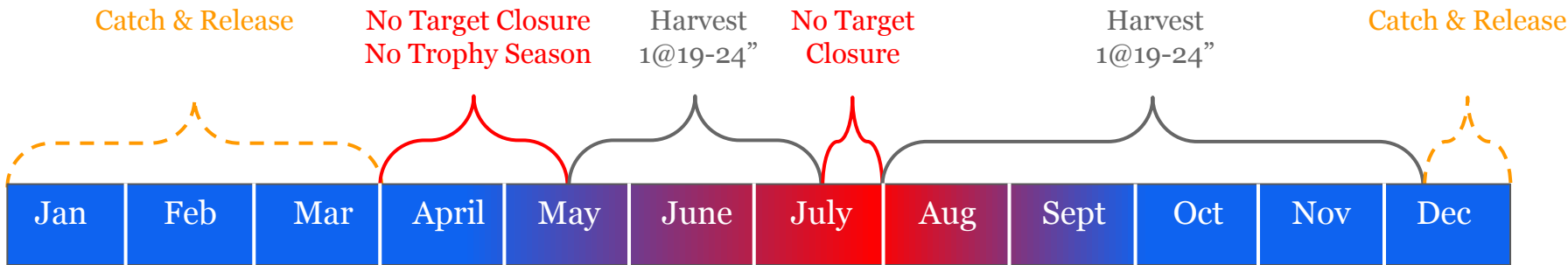


Current Season Comparison (Complexity)

General Maryland Measures 10+ Years Ago (Pre-Addendum IV to Amendment 6)

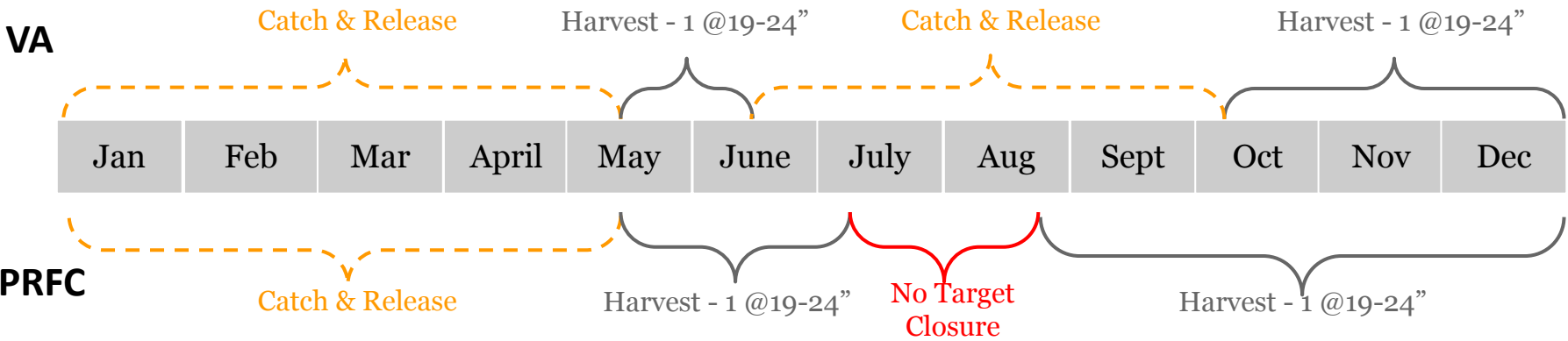


Current 2025 Recreational Chesapeake Bay Measures

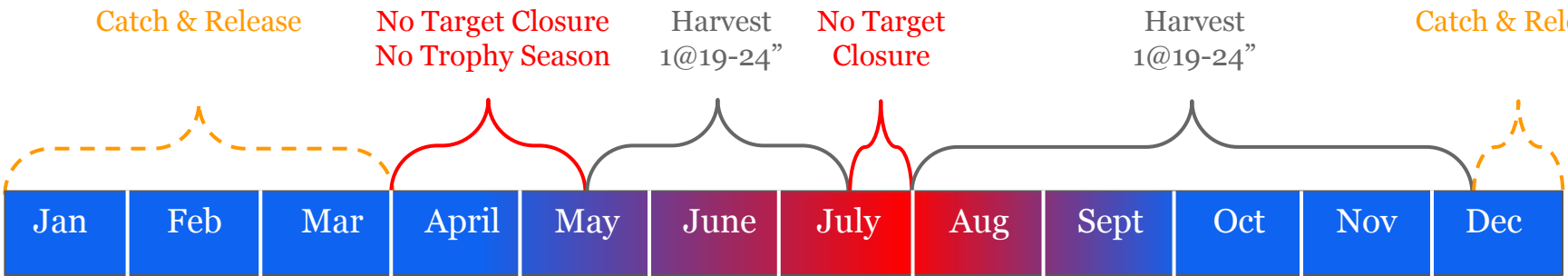


Current Season Comparison (Bay Jurisdictions)

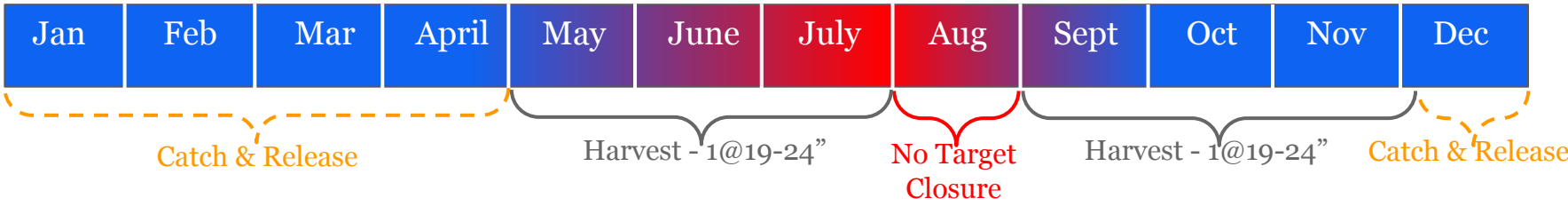
Current 2025 Virginia and PRFC Recreational Measures



Current 2025 MD Recreational Chesapeake Bay Measures



Proposed Baseline Adjustment

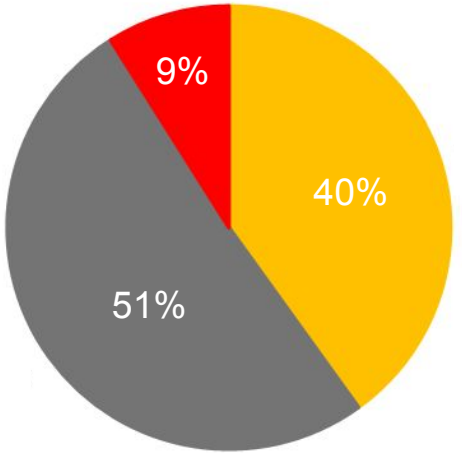


Option 3: Aug Closure / + Access

- Jan 1 - April 30 (Catch and Release)
- May 1 - July 31 (Harvest - 1 @ 19-24)
- Aug 1 - Aug 31 (No Target Closure)
- Sept 1 - *Dec 5 (Harvest - 1 @ 19-24)
- Dec 7 - Dec 31 (Catch and Release)

Total Removals Compared to 2024

- More Conservative than 2024
- Net Mortality = **619 fish saved**



✓ Selected as the preferred option

Maryland's Baseline Adjustment Proposal

ASMFC Spring 2025 Meeting



In Summary



- This proposal is an effort to **refocus our conservation effort** on the protection of the resident population in the Chesapeake Bay and **realign with our neighboring jurisdictions**.
- Effort in Wave 4 (July - August) is redistributed to the spring of the year to allow for a catch and release fishery in April and an earlier start date for the summer/fall fishery.
- The mortality savings alone from closing the entire month of August is a **'win for the fish'**
- This is our opportunity to address the needs of the stock (low abundance of residents) while at the same time, **allowing access** through catch and release when conditions in the Bay are much more conducive to fishing activity (low release mortality).
- Our proposal is 'mortality' positive...**meaning that it is more conservative than the status quo**
- Opinions are split on this issue in Maryland, however, we would like to have the opportunity to **solicit public feedback on the topic**.
- We realize the challenges that this presents to states, since this is currently just a Maryland issue.
- The Board has taken significant action to address the rebuilding of the Striped Bass population throughout the range of the stock.
- **This proposal is just one more action that will get us closer to that goal**



TOPIC - Razor Clam Harvest from Restricted Areas

- Desired Outcome - Discussion and Commission Recommendations
 - Request to modify regulations to allow the harvest of Razor Clams for bait from MDE restricted and conditional areas.
 - Status of regs for razor clam harvest
 - Issues with razor clam harvest from closed areas



Current Razor Clam Regulations

08.02.02.03H – prohibits the commercial harvest of razors for human consumption

08.02.02.06 – allows commercial harvest of razors from restricted/conditional areas

08.02.02.03H - bait only for commercial harvest

Prohibits commercial harvesters from selling razor clams in the food market.

Created so that commercial razor harvesters do not need to comply with NSSP requirements.

Individuals can harvest razor clams recreationally for human consumption (from approved areas)

We know razor clams are coming ashore from two sources:
commercial harvesters for bait
recreational harvesters for food, or maybe bait

Adding a third source -commercially harvested bait clams from restricted areas - would add serious challenges to ensuring no contaminated clams reach the food market.

Due to significant human health risk with clams in restricted/conditional areas, the Department deems it necessary to ensure that any razor clams commercially harvested from restricted/conditional areas be distinguishable from those harvested in open areas and that this harvest be carefully controlled and monitored.



08.02.02.06 – allows commercial harvest of razors from restricted/conditional areas

Razor clams harvested from restricted or conditional areas
may not be sold for human consumption
must be dyed with blue dye

Harvesters Must:

- possess a permit (only 30 allowed per area)
- report according to DNR requirements

DNR Must:

- create and distribute permit applications
- review applications and issue permits
- create public notice to open specific areas
- devise way to track and monitor harvest

DNR NRP: supervision of harvest



“Blue Dye” Program Chesapeake Beach, 2020:

35 Watermen applied – permits given to first 30 applicants

Prior to harvest, watermen needed to contact NRP

Following harvest watermen required to call NRP to report bushels harvested

NRP on site to monitor activities and ensure clams were dyed.

Results:

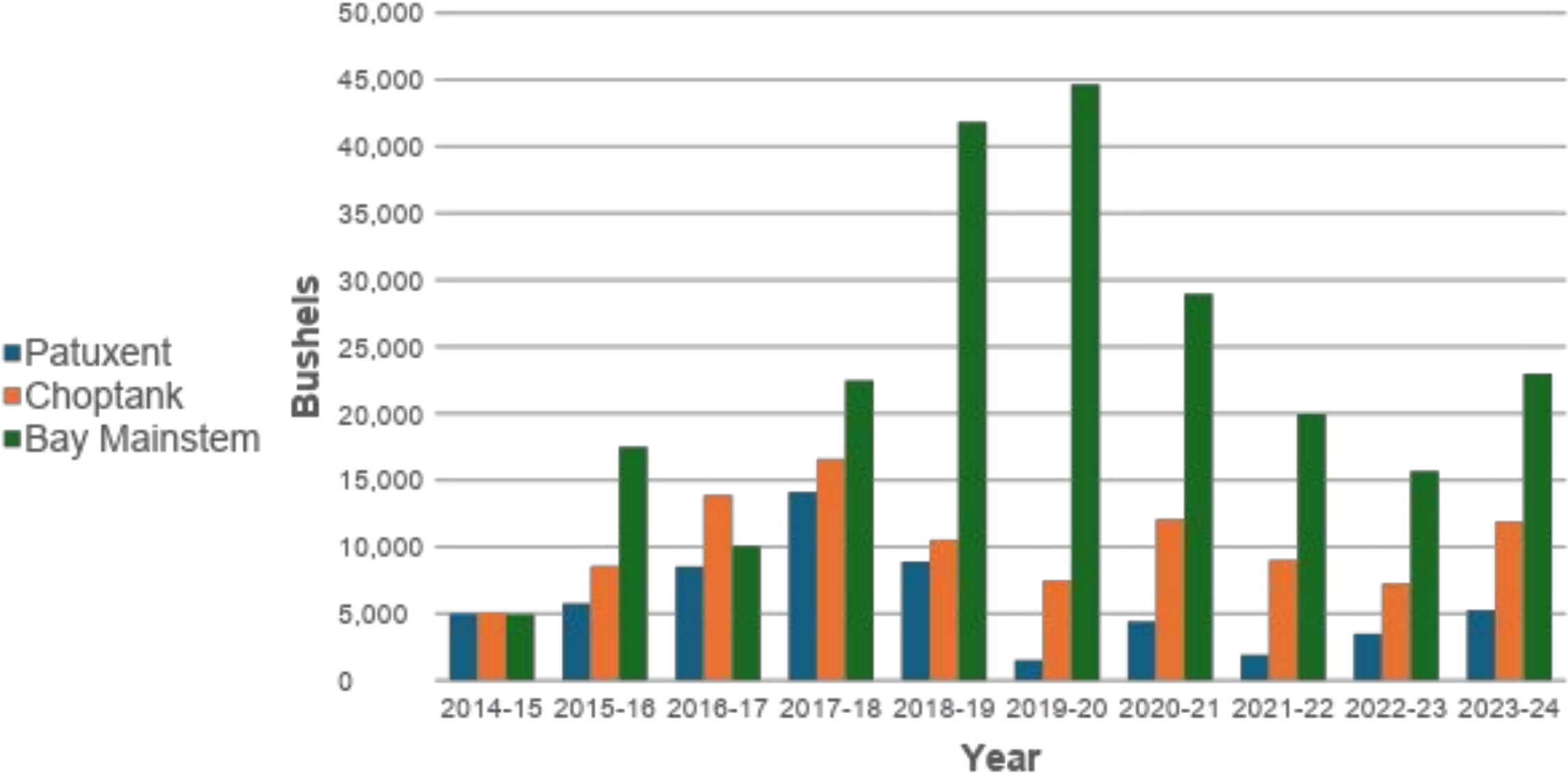
Fewer people than expected participated.

22 the first dayand 0 by day 5.

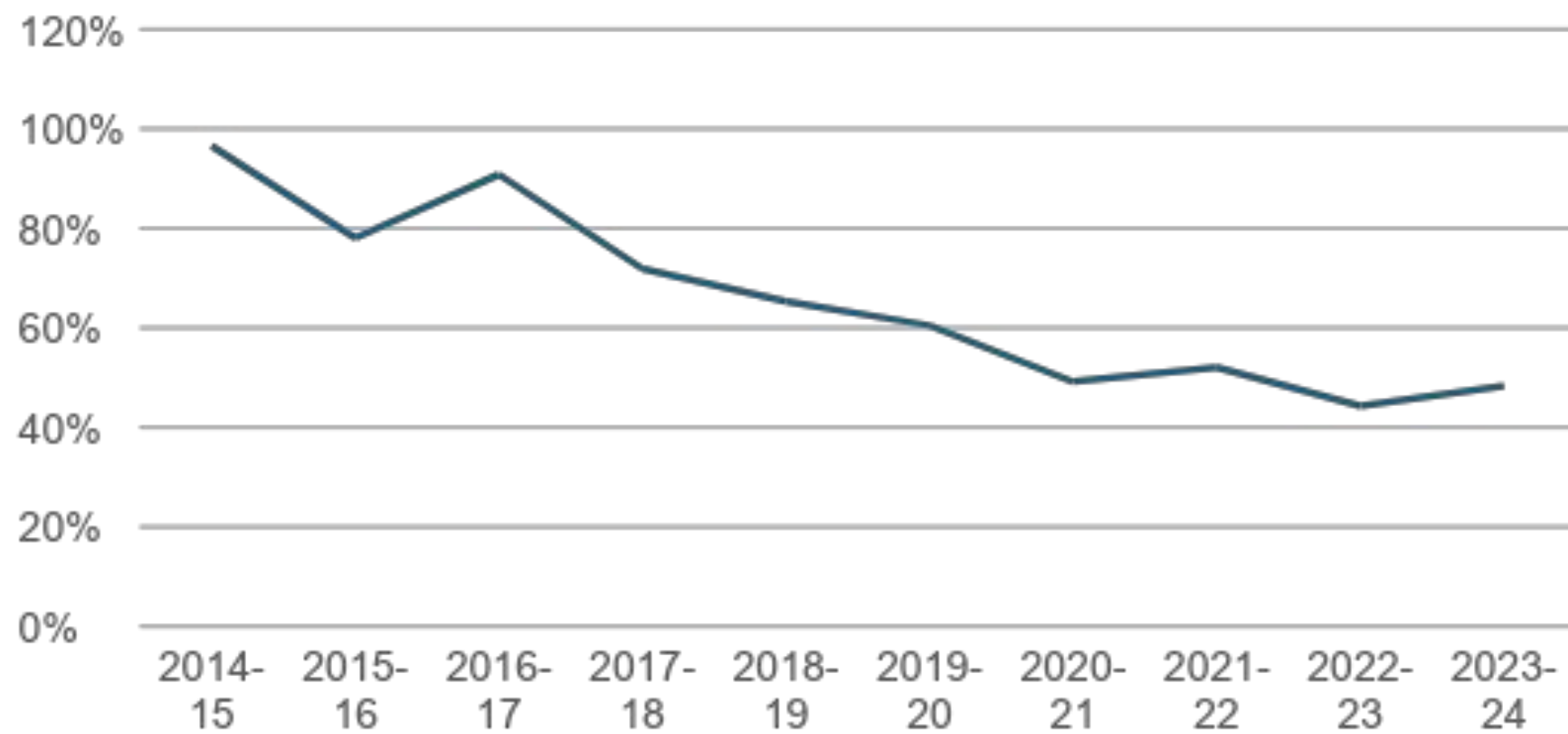
494 bushels harvested

Low compliance with times and check-ins

Razor Clam Harvest over Last 10 Years by Key Area



Reporting Rate for Clams over Time





Summing UP:

- Recreational harvest is occurring for consumption
- Risks to human health are high if clams from restricted/conditional areas reach food market or just someone's table
- There is a pathway to harvest "polluted" clams (blue dye program) provided FABS has adequate human resources
- Razor clam harvest remains robust in key harvest areas
- Reporting compliance has plummeted in recent years



Commission Discussion and Recommendations

