

Management of the Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Fishery

Marine Fisheries Commission
Business Meeting
May 12, 2011



Presentation Overview

- Statement of the issue
- Review of the fishery
- Review of past management efforts
- Potential management options
- DMF staff recommendation



Statement of the Issue



- Trawl discard incidents occurred in January and February 2011
- MFC requested issue paper on use of hook-and-line as commercial gear



Review of the Fishery

Managed through
Atlantic States Marine
Fisheries Commission
(ASMFC) FMP and
N.C. Interjurisdictional
(IJ) FMP



Review of the Fishery

- ASMFC measures effective since 2003:
 - N.C. commercial quota of 480,480 pounds
 - 28-inch minimum size limit (coastwide)
 - Two-fish recreational bag limit (coastwide)
- Fishing year: December 1 – November 30
- Generally, each gear opened separately by proclamation
 - beach seines (December)
 - gill nets (January)
 - trawls (February)



Review of the Fishery

- Only fishery for which commercial use of hook-and-line specifically prohibited (1985)
- 15A NCAC 03M .0201(b):

“Hook-and-line fishing equipment is not commercial fishing equipment in the striped bass fishery. It is unlawful to sell or purchase striped bass taken by hook-and-line. Striped bass taken legally with hook-and-line may be possessed and transported.”



Review of Management



Review of Management

- Early 1990s:
 - Equal allocation of quota among three gear types (beach seine, gill net, trawl)
 - Trip limits for each gear type based on pounds
 - 30-minute tow times for trawls
- 1995/1996: trip limits in numbers of fish
- Capacity for derby-style fishery



Review of Management

- 2005: MFC requested staff develop proposal for limited entry
- G.S. 143B-289.52(d1):

“The Commission may regulate participation in a fishery that is subject to a federal fishery management plan if that plan imposes a quota on the State for the harvest or landing of fish in the fishery.”



Review of Management

- Legislative authority given to MFC to establish gear-specific permits for ocean striped bass fishery
- MFC does not have authority to allocate quota to individual fishermen



Review of Management

G.S. 113-169.1(b):

“The Commission may adopt rules to establish gear specific permits to take striped bass from the Atlantic Ocean and to limit the number and type of these permits that may be issued to a person. The Commission may establish a fee for each permit established pursuant to this subsection in an amount that compensates the Division for the administrative costs associated with the permit but that does not exceed ten dollars per permit.”



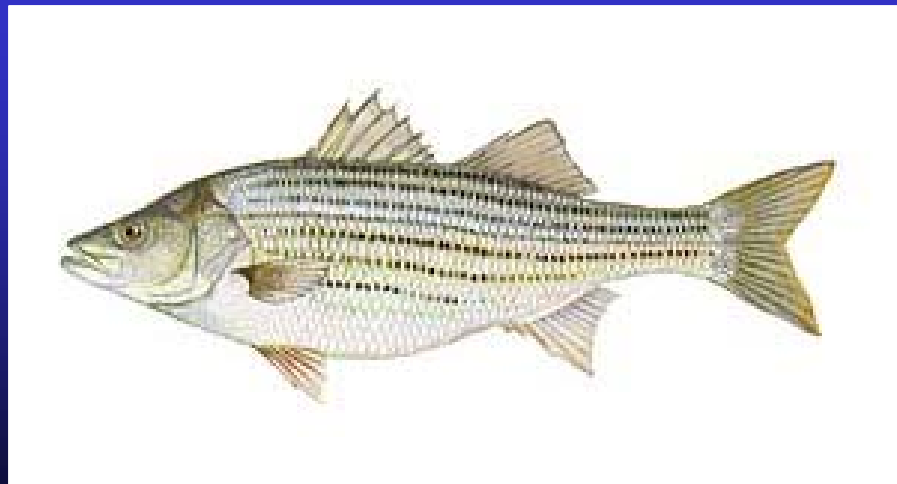
Review of Management

- Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit:
 - Established in rule 2007, suspended until 2009/2010 season
 - One permit per SCFL-holder
 - Participants must declare gear type for 3 years
 - Participants must purchase permit (\$10) by November 1 each year
 - Intent to allocate quota proportionally among gear types



Review of Management

- Permit has not worked as intended
 - Majority of permit holders do not participate
 - 2009/2010: 127 participants, 771 permit holders
 - 2010/2011: 207 participants, 844 permit holders



Review of Management

- MFC policy goal: reduce bycatch to absolute minimum (1991)
- Incidental catch (non-target) and discarded catch (economic/regulatory)
- Catch fewer, reduce mortality, use more species
- Gear restrictions, area and season closures



Potential Management Options

- Status quo
- Hook-and-line:
 - Add to current permit
 - Add and eliminate current permit
 - Add as only gear w/specific license
 - Add as only gear but phase in over three years
 - Replace trawls w/hook-and-line in current system
 - Add as gear, reduce trawl allocation to bycatch only & distribute remaining quota over three gears



Potential Management Options

- Trawl-specific with no hook-and-line
 - Reduce allocation to bycatch limit only & distribute remaining quota over two gears
 - Create individual transferable quota (ITQ) for trawls
- Permit-specific with no hook-and-line
 - Eliminate permit
 - Eliminate permit, create new license w/fee
 - Use limited entry in conjunction w/allowable gears



Goals of Management

- Reduce:
 - waste
 - conflict
- Increase
 - flexibility
 - equity
 - opportunity



Example Management Option

- Season/gear/trip limits:
 - Open Dec 1 each year
 - Gill net: 20 fish/person/day
 - Beach seine: 50 fish/person/day
 - Hook-and-line: 10 fish/vessel/day, Monday-Friday
 - Trawl: 5 fish/vessel/day bycatch until Feb 15
 - Close gill nets Feb 15 due to federal regulation
 - Open trawls Feb 15: weekdays only; 30-minute tow time; 2,000-pound trip limit (adjustable); close when total quota reached



Example Management Option

- Quota Allocation:
 - Do not allocate to individual gear sectors
- Permitting:
 - Develop new Ocean Striped Bass Permit
 - Applicants declare *intended* gear, but not locked in
 - Eliminate Nov 1 application date
- Transfers:
 - Allowed anytime from any gear
 - Trawls must communicate intent to transfer to Marine Patrol before entering inshore waters
- No sale from charter trips



Hook-and-Line Considerations

- Use of bandit gear, electric reels, multiple hooks per line, natural vs. artificial bait, circle vs. barbless hooks
- Commercially licensed for-hire vessels: double-counting of trips, per person vs. per vessel bag limits
- Potential influx of participants



Recommendation

- Thorough public review through Finfish and Regional Advisory Committees
 - Concurrent hook-and-line paper presented to Estuarine Striped Bass ACs (March 2011)
 - Rule change to 15A NCAC 03M .0201 will impact both inshore and ocean fisheries
- After public review, pursue necessary rule changes in conjunction with Estuarine Striped Bass FMP (May 2012)



Questions?



- Catherine Blum
- Michelle Duval
- Charlton Godwin
- John Hadley
- Don Hesselman
- Harold Knudsen
- Amanda Little
- Kathy Rawls
- David Taylor
- Katy West

