



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: 5/22/2018
To: Memo for file
From: Jason Didden
Subject: 5/16/18 FMAT Meeting Summary (DRAFT)

FMAT Participants: J. Didden, D. Richardson, S. Gurtman, K. Curti, B. Galuardi, D. Palmer, T. Murphy, and D. Christel.

Other and/or Public: A. Pitts, M. Lapp, C. Berardi, J. Kaelin, M. Pratt, G. DiDomenico

J. Didden (Council staff) summarized the Council’s rebuilding approach, timeline, and alternatives. Findings, recommendations, and/or tasks of/for the FMAT included:

-The rebuilding goal (Bmsy proxy as approved in recent assessment) and general rebuilding approaches (P*/3-year, 5-year, and 7-year) appear reasonable from a technical and NEPA perspective. As previously noted in various forums, the terminal year recruitment estimates are critical and uncertain. An adaptive approach will likely be appropriate.

-The observation by the SSC that some rebuilding ABCs are higher/riskier than the ABCs that would result from applying the Council’s standard risk policy to a fully rebuilt stock warrants consideration. The standard risk policy ABC for a 100% rebuilt mackerel stock assuming a 100% C.V. and typical life history is 33,474 metric tons (MT), or 81% of the Maximum Sustainable Yield for a rebuilt stock (MSY=41,334 MT). Accordingly, the FMAT recommends that no ABCs for 2019-2021 be initially set higher than 33,474 MT.

This would modify the ABCs recommended by the SSC from...

	SSC ABCs		
	P* (100%/typ), 3yr	5-year	7-year
2019	19,025	29,184	30,868
2020	26,183	32,480	34,016
2021	33,001	35,195	36,551

To...(see next page, 2021 of 5-year option and 2020/2021 of 7-year option)

	FMAT ABCs		
	<u>P* (100%/typ), 3yr</u>	<u>5-year</u>	<u>7-year</u>
2019	19,025	29,184	30,868
2020	26,183	32,480	33,474
2021	33,001	33,474	33,474

-K. Curti (NEFSC) calculated the long-term spawning stock size that results from application of the P* approach assuming a 100% C.V. and typical life history. Under all rebuilding approaches, if the standard P* approach recommended by the SSC (i.e. 100% C.V. and typical life history) is used once the stock is rebuilt, due to the Council’s risk policy and resulting lower-than-MSY-catches (19% lower than MSY), the mackerel assessment and associated projections indicate the mackerel spawning stock should increase to approximately 150% of the target/rebuilt spawning biomass. In other words, the equilibrium stock size at an ongoing catch of 33,474 MT is about 1.5 times the target biomass (lower catch than MSY results in biomass higher than Bmsy).

-The approaches described in the last Council meeting document for handling Canadian catch and recreational catch appear reasonable, but will have to be tracked over time. Neither appear directly controllable and could lead to ACL overages at some point. Note: 2018 and subsequent MRIP estimates will have to be back-converted into old units for ACL monitoring until an assessment update occurs.

-The approaches for in-season control of commercial landings appear reasonable but will be experimental to a degree – landings are hard to predict, especially if mackerel abundance increases or market conditions change. Again, an adaptive approach may be necessary.

-Council staff will work with GARFO staff to investigate if it could be practicable to give GARFO some additional discretion to decide whether the proposed quota triggers need to be exercised in any given year. For example, a directed fishery closure at 80% of the quota in late December may not be necessary. NMFS would prefer as much direction as possible in terms of exercising any such discretion, with clear specification of objectives. **(TASK (Didden/Christel): Create viable discretionary closure option.)**

-There was discussion begun by a public question about whether this action could address targeting of mackerel by incidental permits. While modifications to trip limits are and can be considered, changing the basic current nature of permit categories and/or their access beyond what has already been described seems beyond the scope of this framework, especially given the required timeline of final action by August 2018 if early 2019 is an implementation goal. A separate future action could consider a variety of permit-related access changes if desired.

-The general approach of considering staying at the current river herring/shad (RH/S) cap and also considering scaling up based on the quota (in a similar fashion as the cap was scaled down) appears generally reasonable, but the FMAT would like to review a detailed history of how the RH/S cap has been set over its years of operation before making any recommendations. **(TASK (Didden): Develop cap history timeline.)**

-The FMAT will meet again on June 25, 2018 at 9am.