

RI Marine Fisheries Council
 Scup/Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel
 Meeting Minutes
 February 19, 2014, 7:00 PM
 URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute

W. Macintosh, Chairman	C. Donilon
F. Blount*	J. Barker
P. Heaney	D. Monti
R. Tellier	E. Cook
S. Medeiros	
R. Ballou, RIDEM	J. McNamee, DFW staff

(*primary advisory panel member; ^ alternate member)

W. Macintosh began the meeting. He stated that J. McNamee of the RI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW or Division) had a presentation which covered the first several agenda topics and was broken in to a scup section followed by a black sea bass section. He stated that after each section of the presentation the panel would discuss any proposals they may have for recreational management for scup or black sea bass in 2014. He noted that there was not a quorum present therefore they would not vote on any proposals that came forward, but the discussion and comments the panel would generate were still useful.

J. McNamee began the DFW presentation with a discussion about stock status for scup. The stock was rebuilt and overfishing was not occurring. He then went over the fishery performance in RI in 2013. The fishery went well in 2013. Given the high coastwide quota and harvest targets for scup in 2013, and the fact that the preliminary indications were that the recreational fishery would have an underage, managers from the northern region (scup is managed through a regional approach for the recreational fishery rather than state by state) decided to remain at status quo for 2013. J. McNamee concluded by stating that the DFW was recommending status quo.

W. Mackintosh asked the group if they had any questions or if the group wanted to make any additional proposals. **S. Medeiros stated that RISAA approved of the special area provisions (designated sites that allowed for a smaller minimum size of scup), and wanted to see them expanded in 2014. He suggested some additional sites that could be added including Fort Adams, the West Wall at the Harbor of Refuge, Ft Wetherill, and another upper Bay site.** He felt that the DFW could do a better job of promoting the program, many people did not even know about it. **The group discussed this and the consensus was to keep the sites limited to areas with no boat ramps, but in general the group supported the expansion of this program.**

J. McNamee then went through a discussion about the black sea bass fishery. The stock was rebuilt and overfishing was not occurring according to the only peer reviewed stock assessment available, but J. McNamee then went on to describe the situation that occurred with the benchmark assessment, the result of which was the assessment was rejected. He noted that he was optimistic that a new assessment would be initiated soon. He then went over the fishery performance in RI in 2013. The fishery went over the harvest target in 2013, and this was a year where RI was operating under Addendum XXII, which implemented a regional management

plan. The fishery exceeded the target by roughly 3.2%, and therefore this was the potential reduction that would be needed. J. McNamee stated that there was currently an ASMFC Addendum out for public comment and this Addendum was seeking to set up either a state by state or regional option for black sea bass management in 2014, similar to what was in place for 2013. J. McNamee concluded by stating that the DFW would approve any option that remained within the reduction strategy as developed by ASMFC, but depended on the approach taken by the management board, i.e. regional or state by state. He concluded by asking for the advisory panel advice on how best to take reductions in this fishery.

W. Mackintosh went to the group for discussion. **In general, the panel preferred a later start date as opposed to ending the season early or decreasing the bag limit. The group went so far as to say they were opposed to the early closure, because this was a very valuable time of the year for charter boats fishing for black sea bass.**

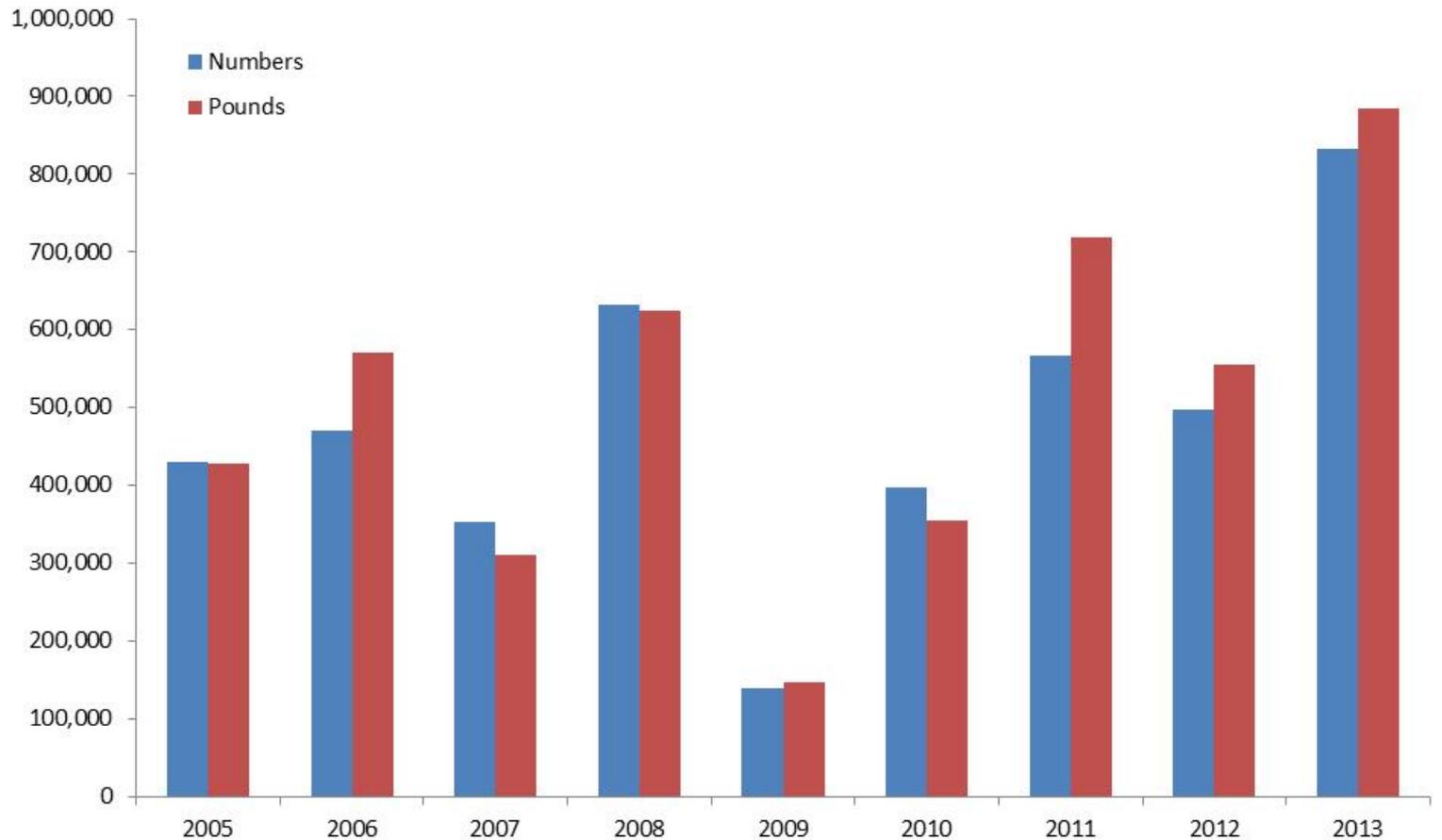
W. Mackintosh adjourned the meeting.

Summary of the Rhode Island Recreational Scup and Black Sea Bass Fisheries



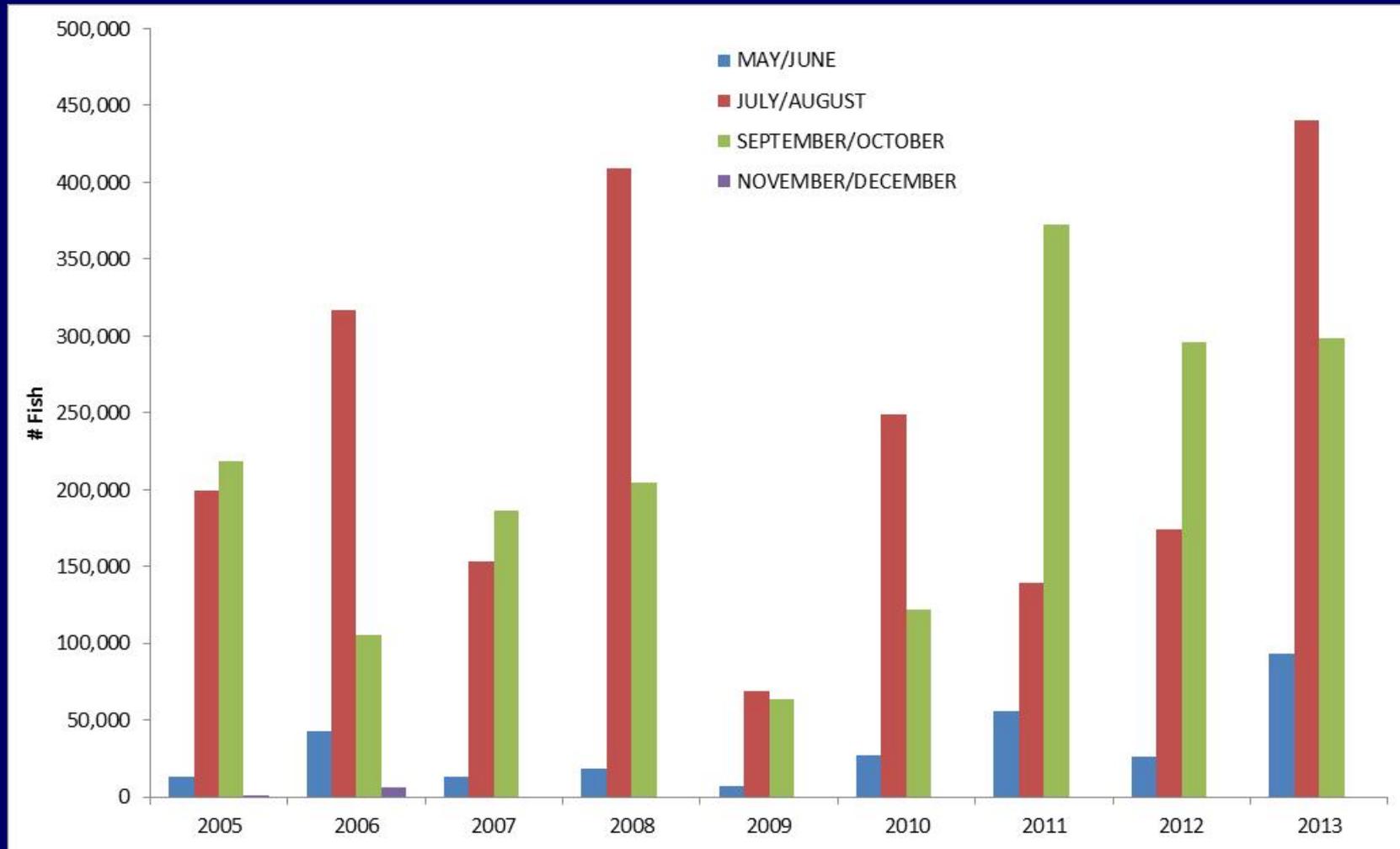
Recreational Harvest - Scup

***Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves**



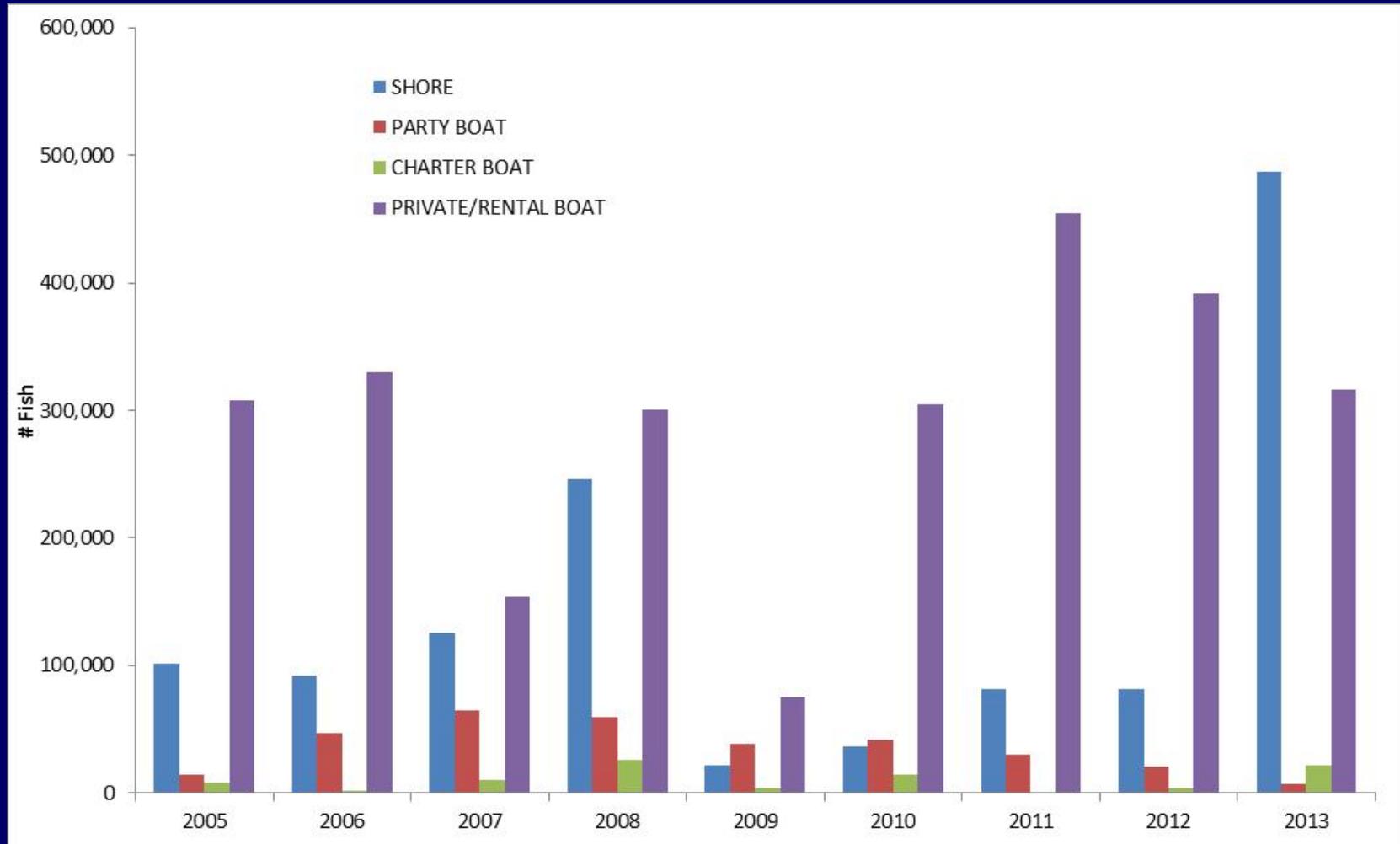
Recreational Harvest By Wave - Scup

***Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves**



Recreational Harvest By Mode - Scup

*Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves



Rhode Island Recreational Fishery Performance - Scup

- ◆ Landings and targets are analyzed on a regional basis in the scup fishery. Our region is MA – NY
- ◆ The landings target for 2013 for this region was 6,781,019 fish
- ◆ Preliminary landings in 2013 for the region are 4,809,691 fish
- ◆ This is approximately a 29% underage



Stock Status - Scup

- ◆ There was no update done in 2013 for scup
- ◆ The fishing mortality rate estimated for 2011 is 0.034, which is below the fishing mortality threshold reference point $F_{40\%}$ (0.177).
- ◆ Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be 190,424 mt in 2011, which is above the biomass target of 92,044 mt ($SSB_{40\%}$).
- ◆ The stock is considered rebuilt and the stock is not considered overfished and is not currently experiencing overfishing.
- ◆ Quotas and harvest targets were set through 2015:
 - ◆ 2014 = 7.03 mlbs coastwide
 - ◆ 2015 = 6.6 mlbs coastwide



2013 Rhode Island Scup Recreational Measures

- ◆ **Party/Charter:**
 - ◆ **Minimum size = 10"**
 - ◆ **Season: May 1 – August 31 at 30 fish**
 - ◆ **Season: September 1 – October 31 at 45 fish**
 - ◆ **Season: November 1 – December 31 at 30 fish**

- ◆ **General category**
 - ◆ **Minimum size = 10"**
 - ◆ **Possession Limit of 30 fish**
 - ◆ **Open Season: May 1 – December 31**

- ◆ **Special Area Provisions (India Pt, Conimicut Pt, Stonebridge)**
 - ◆ **Minimum size = 9"**
 - ◆ **Possession Limit of 30 fish**
 - ◆ **Open Season: May 1 – December 31**



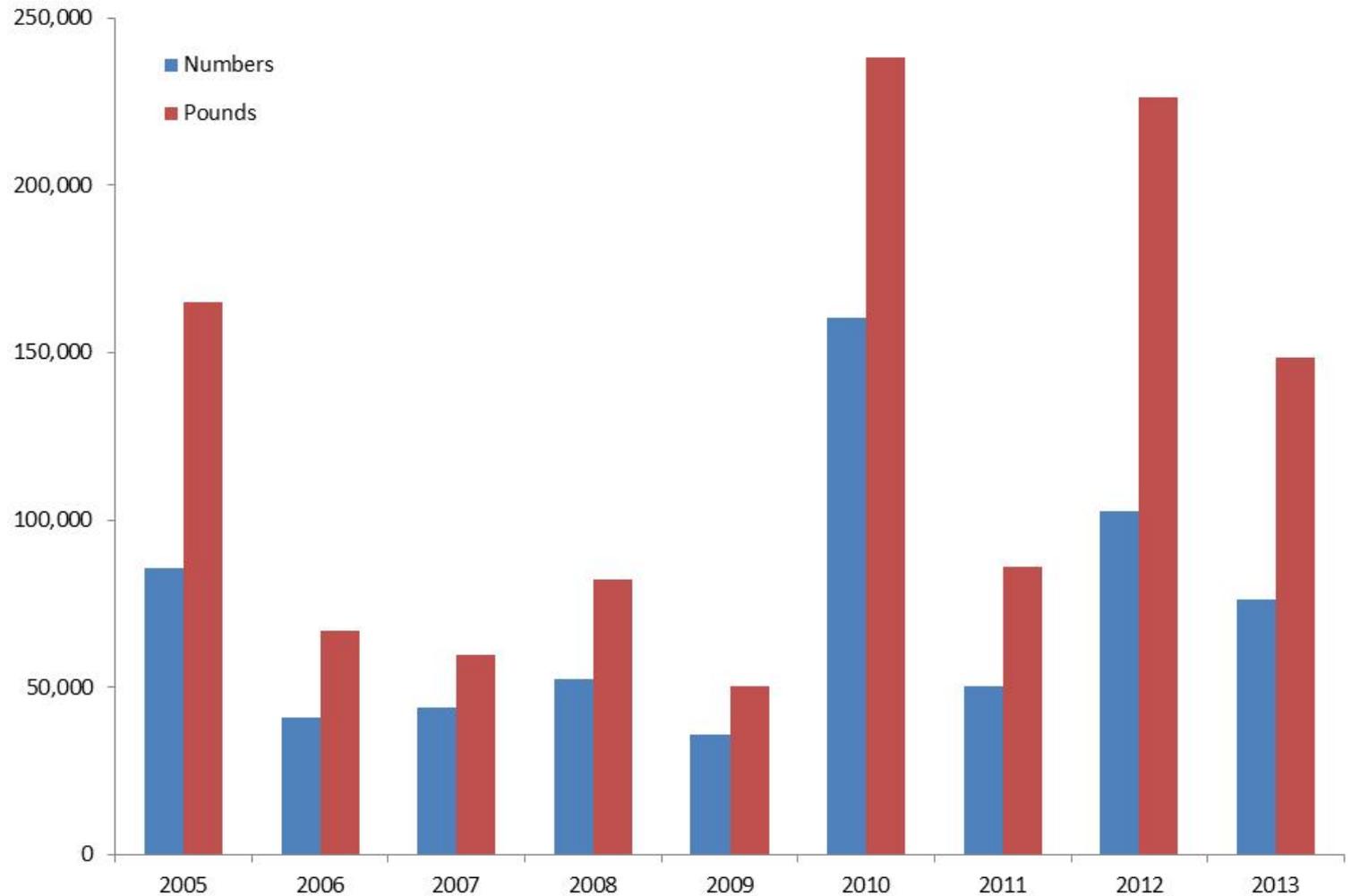
Division of Fish and Wildlife Proposed Changes

The RI Division of Fish and Wildlife will recommend an option derived collaboratively with the Northern Region partners of status quo for 2014



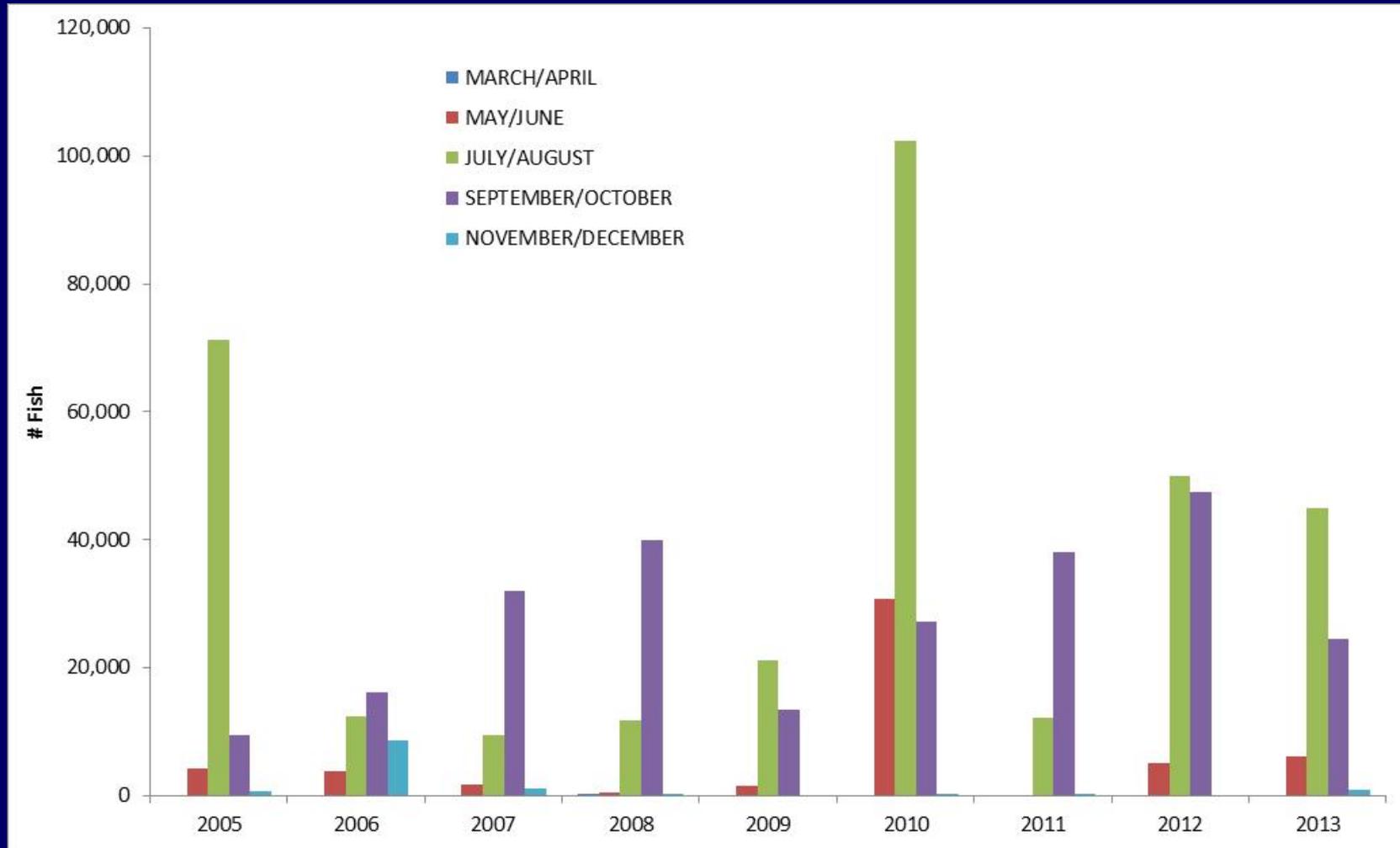
Recreational Harvest - Black Sea Bass

*Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves



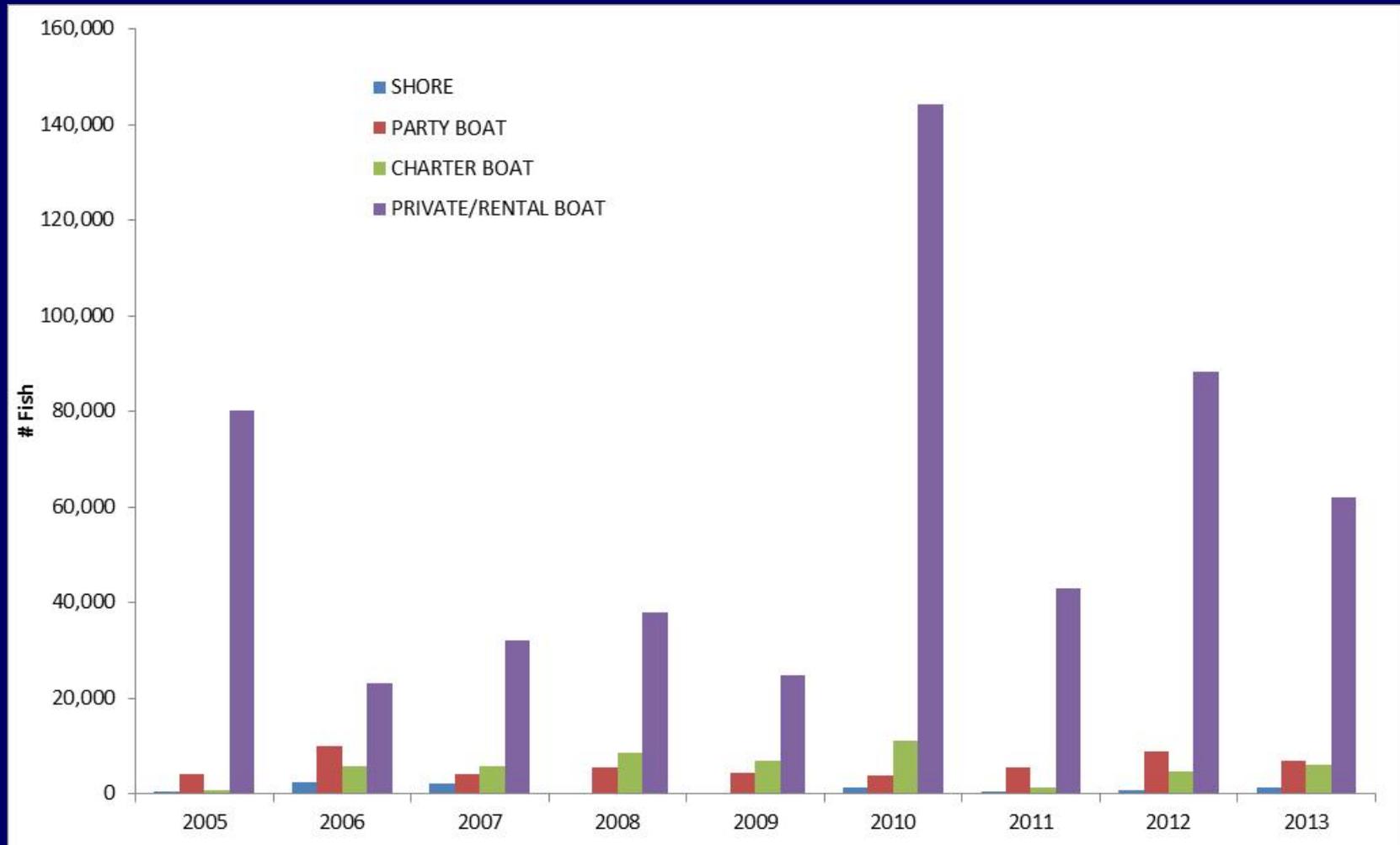
Recreational Harvest By Wave – Black Sea Bass

*Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves



Recreational Harvest By Mode – Black Sea Bass

*Note: 2013 data preliminary, contains all waves



Rhode Island Recreational Fishery Performance – Black Sea Bass

- ◆ Landings and targets were analyzed on a coastwide basis in the recreational Black Sea Bass fishery until 2011
- ◆ The landings had been at or under harvest targets since 2002 until 2009, where the harvest target was exceeded by 104%
- ◆ Addendum XXI set forth state-by-state measures allowing the southern states to remain at status quo regulations and allowing northern states to tailor their reductions in a way that best suited each individual state
- ◆ Similar Addenda have been in place since 2011 and will be in 2014 as well
- ◆ RI will need to meet a 3.2% reduction in 2014



Stock Status – Black Sea Bass

- ◆ **The current spawning stock size is at or above the biomass goal based on both assessment models.**
- ◆ **Because of the rejection of the benchmark assessment, and the fact that the peer review panel did not have time to review the updated SCALE model, the stock assessment defaults back to the original SCALE configuration.**
- ◆ **Black sea bass was going to have an operational assessment performed on it in 2013, but at the meeting it was deemed unnecessary given the likelihood that SSC would not accept results**
- ◆ **Slated for a benchmark in 2014, but this will not occur unless new modeling approach is brought forward**



2013 Rhode Island Black Sea Bass Recreational Measures

- ◆ **All Modes:**
 - ◆ **Minimum size = 13"**
 - ◆ **Season:**
 - ◆ **June 15 – August 31 at 3 fish**
 - ◆ **September 1 – December 31 at 7 fish**



Division of Fish and Wildlife Proposed Changes

The RI Division of Fish and Wildlife will recommend any option establishing restrictions that will meet approval by ASMFC

The Division would like some feed back on where these restrictions should be taken (season, bag limits) though would like to go on record to state that increasing the minimum size should be avoided

Potential options:

1. Start fishery June 22
2. Drop fall bag to 5 fish
3. End fishery October 28th

