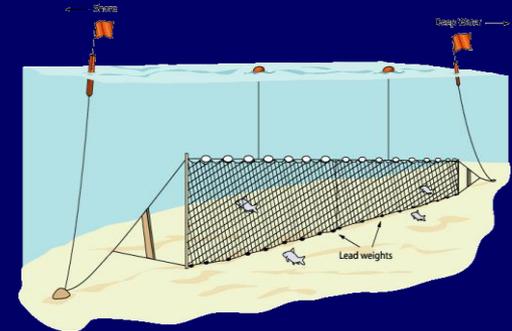


RI Department of Environmental Management

Marine Fisheries

PRE-HEARING WORKSHOP

March 14, 2016



Public Hearing Items

1. Proposed amendments to **RIMFR Part XVI - Menhaden** regarding:
 - a. General editing for improved clarity and readability
 - b. Commercial Menhaden
 - c. Recreational Menhaden

2. Proposed amendments to **RIMFR Part 5 - Lobsters, Crabs, and Other Crustaceans** regarding:
 - a. Management of the Horseshoe crab fishery
 - b. Management of the Cancer Crab fishery

3. Proposed amendments regarding **commercial gillnet regulations**

4. Proposed **ADOPTION** of **RIMFR Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions** (in conjunction with proposed repeal of *Part X - Equipment Restrictions, Part XI – Commercial Fisheries, Part XIII – Gill Net Regulations, and Part XIV – Fish Traps*).

5. Proposed **REPEAL** of **RIMFR Part X - Equipment Restrictions, RIMFR Part XI – Commercial Fisheries, RIMFR Part XIII – Gill Net Regulations, and RIMFR Part XIV – Fish Traps** (in conjunction with proposed adoption of *Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions*).



Commercial Menhaden

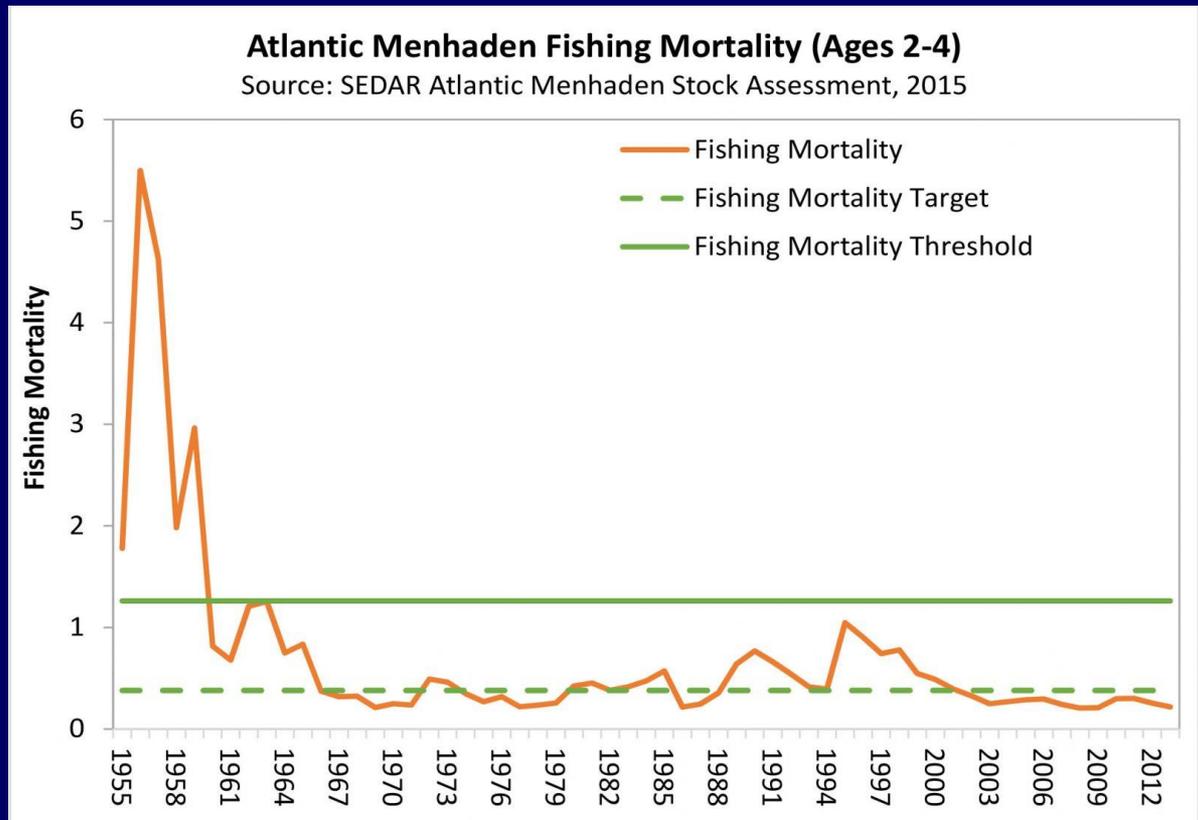
- Summary of Stock Status
- ASMFC Management of Menhaden
- 2015 Rhode Island Commercial Fishery Performance
- Recommendations for the 2016 Menhaden Fishery



Menhaden Stock Status

- Benchmark in 2015: ASMFC/SEDAR
- The population is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring relative to the new maximum spawning potential (MSP) reference points (ASMFC, 2015).

- Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.22 in 2013, a level below the fishing mortality threshold ($F_{15\%MSP}=1.26$) and the fishing mortality target ($F_{30\%MSP}=0.38$).

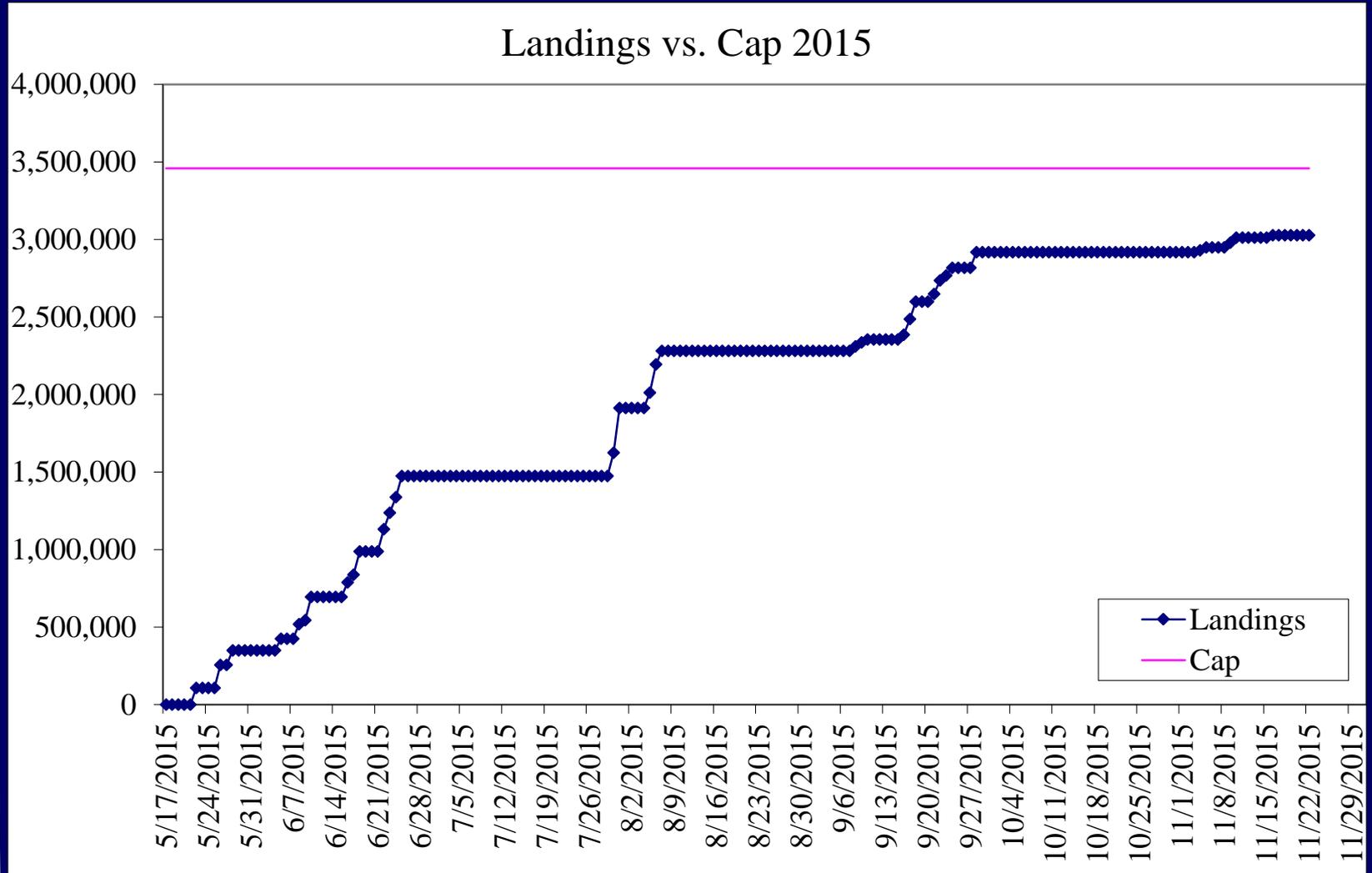


ASMFC Management of Menhaden

- Amendment 2 approved in 2012 established:
 - Total allowable catch (TAC).
 - State-by-state quota allocations.
 - Episodic event set aside quota (1% of TAC).
- Management board approved a 10% TAC increase for 2015 and 2016 in response to benchmark assessment findings.
- Board committed to moving forward with development of an amendment to:
 - Establish ecological based reference points.
 - Consider changes to the current state-by-state quotas.
- ASMFC is funding a socioeconomic analysis of the Atlantic menhaden commercial bait and reduction fishery.



2015 RI Landings*

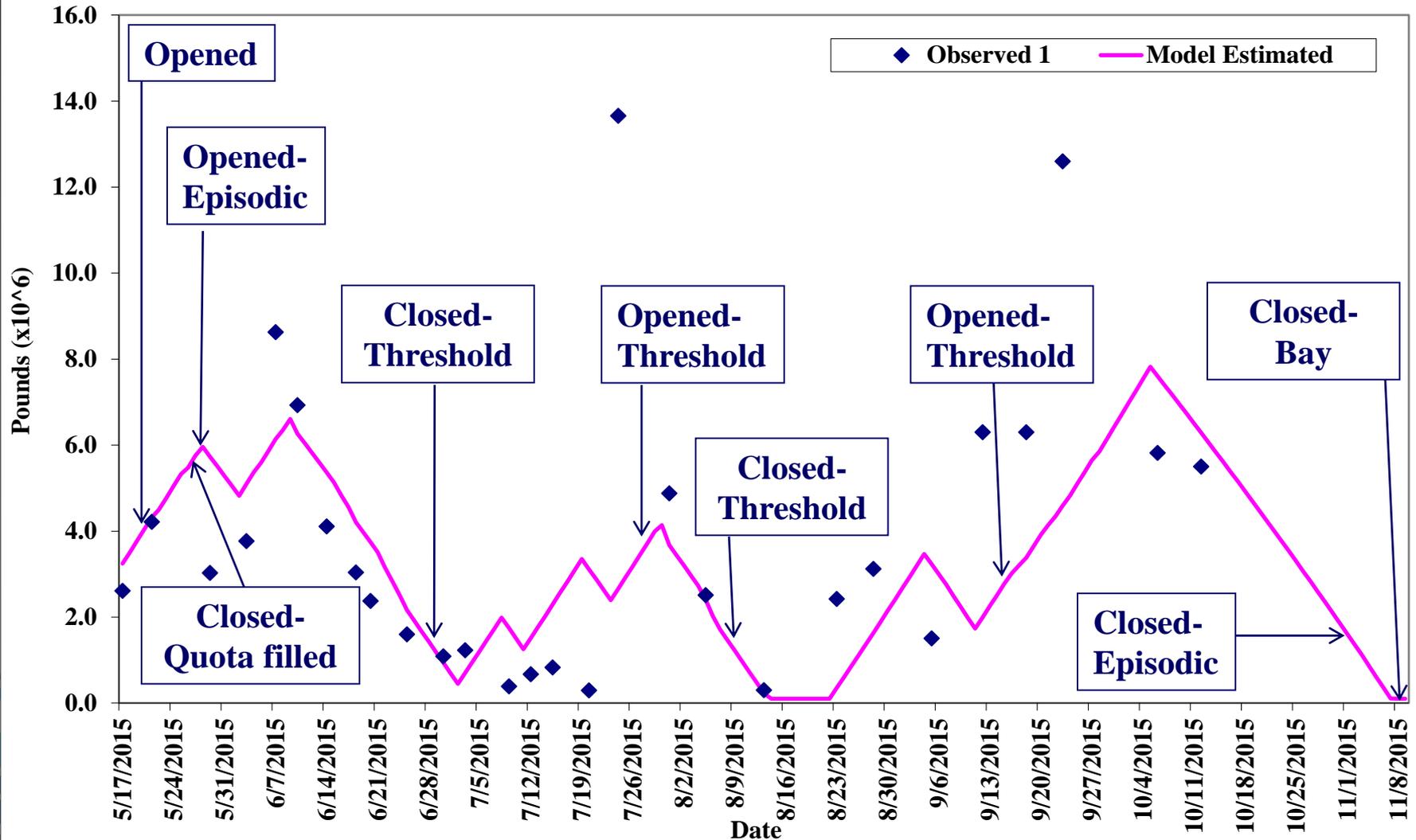


* Note: Actual landing amounts transformed to protect confidentiality



2015 RI Spotter Pilot Observations

Observed and Model Estimated Spotter Index of Menhaden in Narragansett Bay in 2015



Commercial Menhaden

Landings by sector

Quota	Total Landings	Quota Remaining	Bycatch Landed (< 6,000 lbs)	Episodic Event Landings
73,457	107,142	-33,685	69,947	1,883,292



Commercial Menhaden

- Proposed Management Options: The Division has not proposed any management changes to commercial Menhaden for 2016.

Industry Proposal:

<u>Trigger</u>	<u>Pounds</u>
Biomass “Floor”	2,000,000 <u>1,500,000</u>
Biomass “Ceiling”	1,500,000 <u>1,000,000</u>



Recreational Menhaden

- Changes proposed due to lack of clarity of regulation
- 200 fish/vsl/day possession limit originates from closed area allowance.

Proposed Management Option:

<u>Min. size</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Possession Limit</u>
<u>No min. size</u>	<u>Open year round</u>	<u>200 fish</u>



Hearing Item 1a: General editing of Menhaden regs for improved clarity

- Editing throughout regulation for improved clarity.
- No regulatory changes.
- Refer to companion document for changes.



Horseshoe Crabs

- Proposal is intended to promote equity among participants by providing for a longer bait harvest season and to allow for timely harvest reporting.
- Possession limit proposal originates from RI average daily landings for last 3 years.
- Current proposal only to establish a commercial possession limit for the bait fishery.

Option 1:

- Status Quo – No daily commercial possession limit.

Option 2:

- Establish a commercial possession limit.

Proposed language: **Bait fishery possession limit: 60 Horseshoe Crabs per person per day when open to permitted harvesters. The possession limits apply during commercial harvesting operations.**



Cancer Crabs

- Proposal originates from the need to maintain compliance with ASMFC Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Jonah Crab.
- RI proposal includes both Jonah Crab and Atlantic Rock Crab due to similarities and overlap that exist between the two fisheries.
- Therefore this proposal establishes regulations for the management of Cancer Crabs (Jonah Crab and Atlantic Rock Crab).



Cancer Crabs

- Specifics of proposal include:
 - Lobster Trap Allocation (LTA) qualifier: Jonah Crab and Atlantic Rock Crab can only be harvested from pots with a valid lobster trap tag.
 - Establish minimum size:
 - 4.75” carapace width for Jonah Crab.
 - No minimum size proposed for Atlantic Rock Crab.
 - Season: No closed season.



Cancer Crabs

- Specifics cont'd:
 - Establishment of a Control dates: June 2, 2015 for Jonah Crab; June 1, 2016 for Atlantic Rock Crab
 - Possession Limit:
 - LTA holders: No possession limit
 - Non-LTA holders: 1,000 crabs/vsl/day
 - Gillnets and Otter Trawls: 200 Jonah crabs/day or 500/trip (5 days or longer)
 - Rec. poss. limit: 50 whole Jonah crabs per person per day (no license req'd.)
 - Harvest Restrictions:
 - No harvest at night
 - Harvest/possession of egg-bearing females prohibited
 - Only whole Cancer crab may be retained and sold



Hearing Item 3 – Gillnet regulations

- DFW proposal originates from the need to address long-standing issue of lack of net limits in RI waters.
- Due to impending actions for Atlantic Sturgeon, Skate harvest reductions, reduced Bluefish quota, and marine mammal interactions, the state wants to act prospectively.
- Proposal to complement NOAA Fisheries regulations for protected species in order to provides for education and compliance.



Gillnet regulations

- Net Limits and Tagging of Nets:

- Net Length Limit: Gill nets cannot exceed 3,000 linear feet.
- Tags Required: All nets set, hauled and maintained in state waters must have a tag attached every 300 linear feet.
- Tag Limit: License holders issued 80 tags plus additional 10 for routine loss.
- Application period: 11/1 – 2/29 for the following fishing year. Tags valid in two year blocks, first period from 1/1/17 – 12/31/19.
- Control Date: A control date of June 1, 2016, is established for the gillnet fishery in Rhode Island.

- Owner Operator Rule:

- Operator of gillnet vessel must be the registered or documented owner of the vessel.
- One set off tags issued to each license holder/vessel.



Gillnet regulations

- Tending of Nets:

- Small Mesh (<10"): Hauled once per day. (Status quo).
- Large Mesh (>=10"): Hauled at least once every 7 days.

- Setting of Nets:

- Pattern: Set in a straight line (from one end buoy to the other).
- Setting Prohibited: Prohibited in March annually.
- Weak Links: Weak links have a breaking strength of no greater than 1,100 pounds. All buoys and weights must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link. Weak links on the float line must be compliant with the ALWTRP.
- Anchors: All gillnets which do not return to port each day must be anchored with an anchor with a holding power of at least a 22 pound Danforth style anchor at each end. Must be burying anchor, no dead weights.



Gillnet regulations

- Marking of nets:

- Color Coding: Buoy lines must be marked with 3 individual green colored marks measuring 12 inches: one at the top, one at the midway point, and one at the bottom of each buoy line.
- Pingers Required: All gill nets must have pingers properly attached between 12/1 – 2/29, and between 4/1 – 5/31 annually.
- Pinger Attachment: Must be attached at the end of each string of each gillnet and at the bridle of every net within a string of nets.
- Pinger Maintenance: Pingers shall be maintained in an activated state at all times.
- Pinger Specifications: Pingers must broadcast a 10 kHz (± 2 kHz) sound at 132 dB (± 4 dB) re 1 micropascal at 1 m, lasting 300 milliseconds (± 15 milliseconds), and repeating every 4 seconds (± 0.2 seconds).



End of Slides!

