



Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan

Amendment 1

Department of Environmental Quality
Marine Fisheries

NC Marine Fisheries Commission
Lucas Pensinger and Jason Rock | May 25, 2023



Management Background



Management Background

Fishery Management Plan

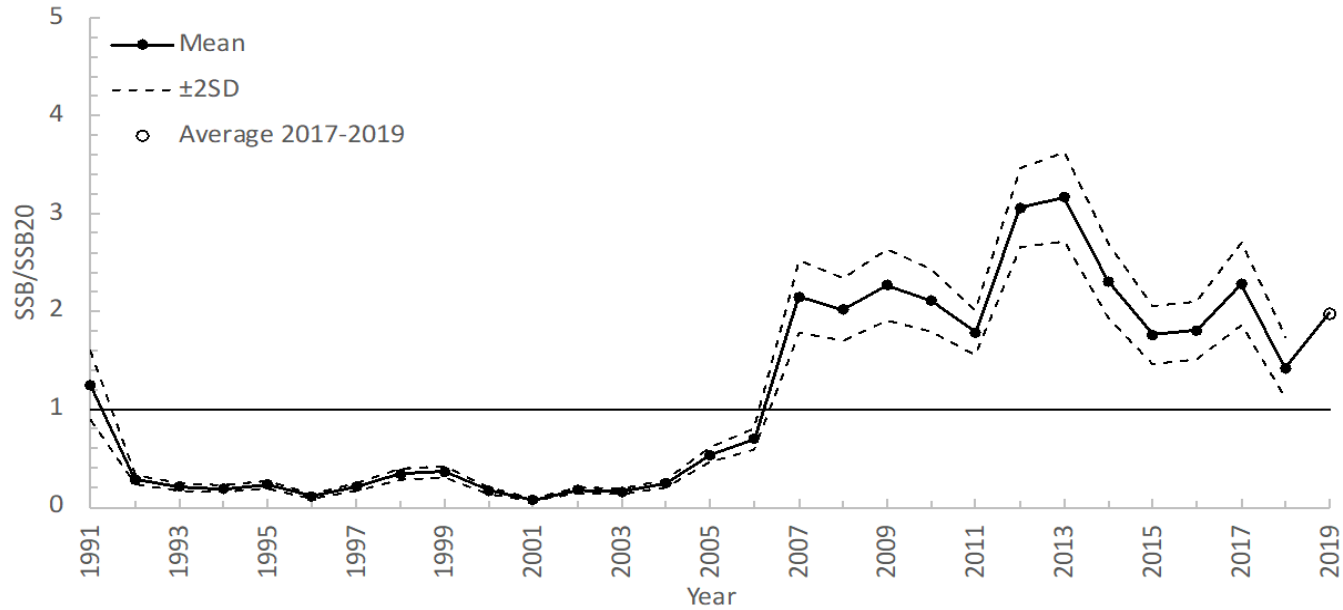
- Adopted February 2012
- 14” minimum size
- 4 fish recreational bag limit
- 75 fish commercial trip limit
- No commercial harvest/sale from joint waters on weekends
- Cold stun protocol

Supplement A

- Adopted March 2014
- Prevented more restrictive management



Stock Assessment (2022)



- Not Overfished

- Spawning stock biomass is high



- Overfishing is occurring

- Removing too many fish

Scoping



Scoping

PURPOSE

- **NOTIFY** public review of FMP underway
- **INFORM** public of stock status
- **OBTAIN INPUT** on management strategies and other insight on stock
- **RECRUIT** potential advisors to serve on FMP AC



Scoping – Sustainable Harvest

- No quota
- Seasonal closures
- Bag limit reduction
- Trip limit reduction
- Increase minimum size



Scoping – Recreational Management

- Spotted Seatrout Specific
 - Gamefish
 - No harvest with RCGL
 - Boat limits
 - Eliminate captain/crew limit
 - Reduce effort
 - Limited entry
 - Closed areas or regional management
 - Outreach/Education
 - Adaptive management
- General
 - Gear requirements
 - Reduce tournament impact
 - App reporting



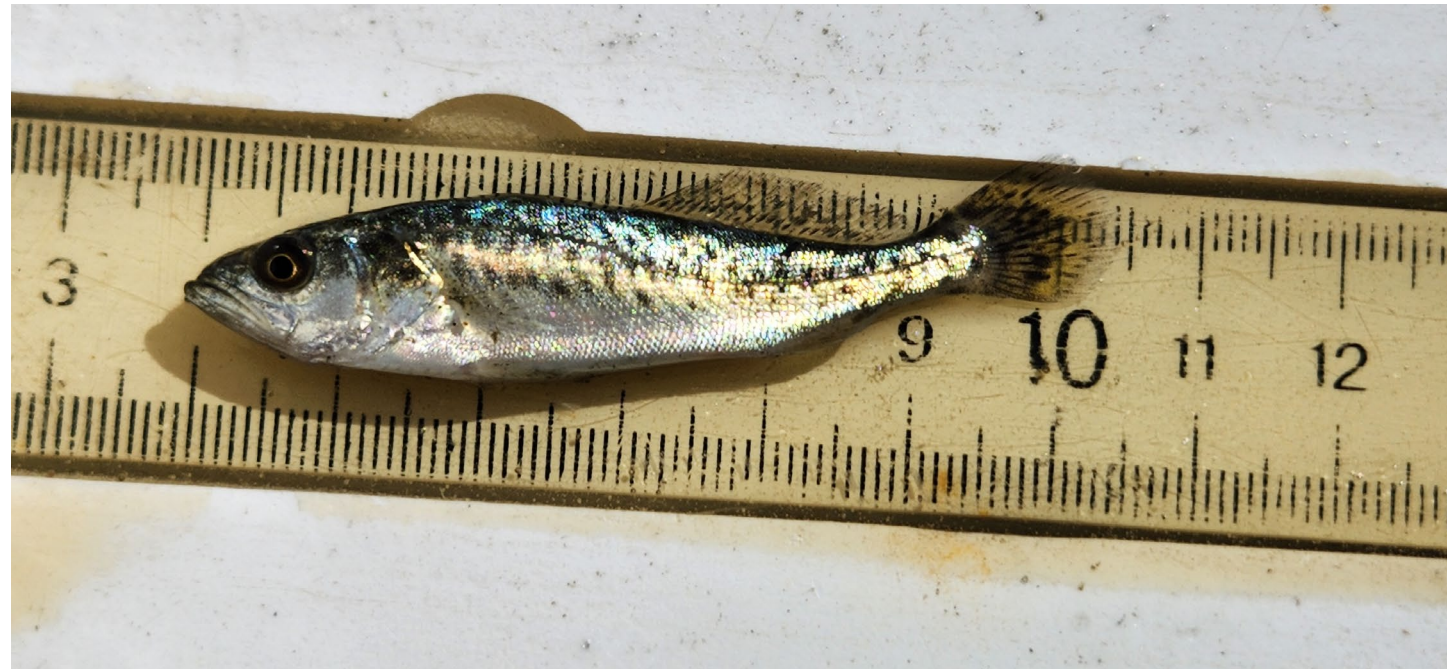
Scoping – Commercial Management

- Spotted Seatrout Specific
 - Hook and line fishery
 - Closed areas or regional management
 - Limited entry
 - Adaptive management
- General
 - Reduce gill net effort
 - Reduce all commercial effort
 - Mandatory reporting of unsold catch
 - License or gear buyouts
 - Area limits
 - Increase gill net mesh size
 - Require attendance



Scoping – Protect Spawning Stock Biomass

- Slot limit
- Bag limit
- Trip limit
- Increase minimum size
- Cold stun closure



Scoping – February Commissioner Considerations

- Manage through quota
- “Hooks out of the water”
- Set allocation of fishery



Scoping – General Ideas

- Increase enforcement efforts
- Ecosystem/multi-species management
- Stock spotted seatrout
- Other states



Questions?



Action Items and Input



Action Items and Input

Action Items

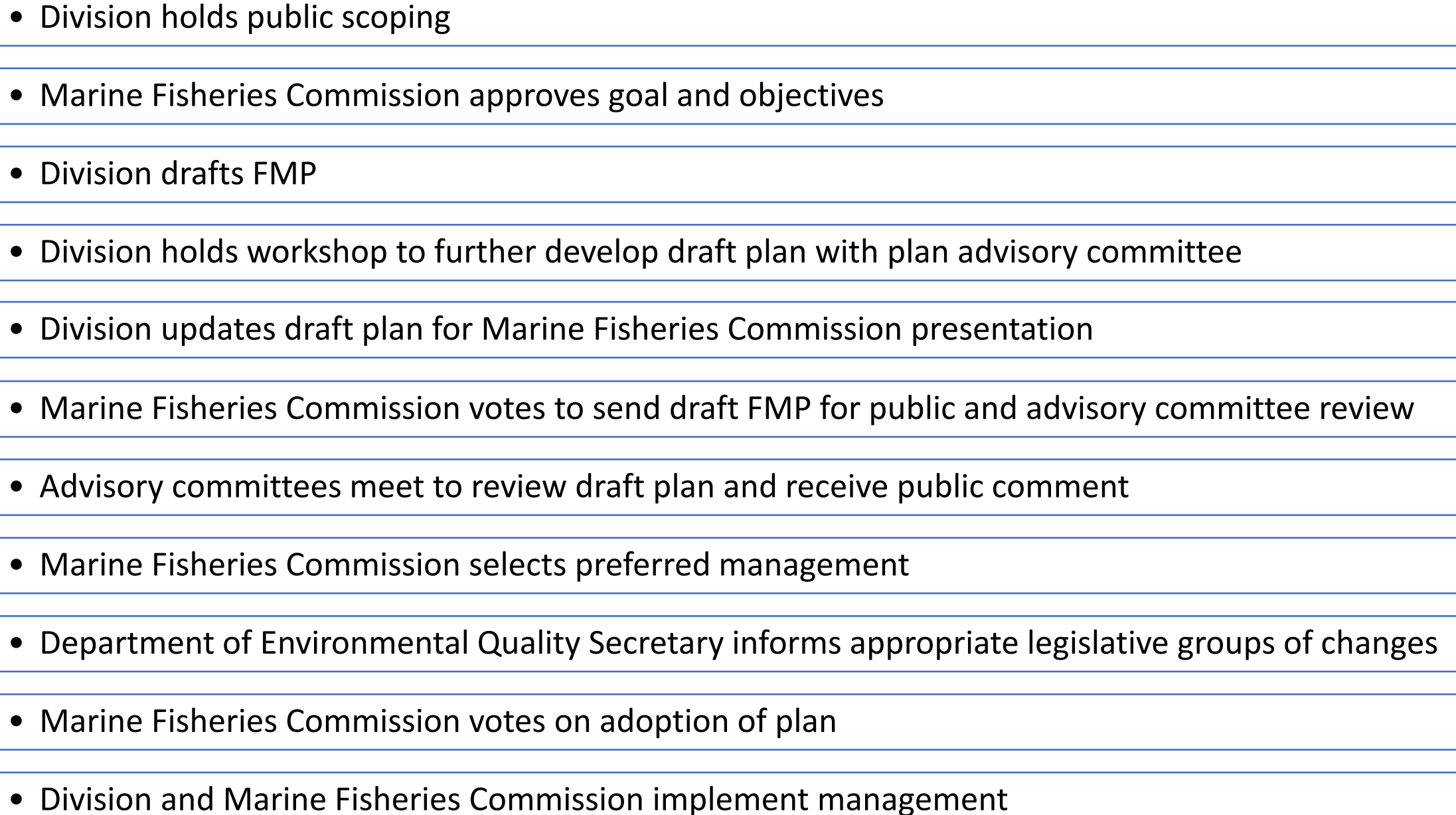
- Vote on approval of Amendment 1 Goal and Objectives

Input

- Provide input on potential management strategies for Amendment 1



FMP Timeline

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- Division holds public scoping
 - Marine Fisheries Commission approves goal and objectives
 - Division drafts FMP
 - Division holds workshop to further develop draft plan with plan advisory committee
 - Division updates draft plan for Marine Fisheries Commission presentation
 - Marine Fisheries Commission votes to send draft FMP for public and advisory committee review
 - Advisory committees meet to review draft plan and receive public comment
 - Marine Fisheries Commission selects preferred management
 - Department of Environmental Quality Secretary informs appropriate legislative groups of changes
 - Marine Fisheries Commission votes on adoption of plan
 - Division and Marine Fisheries Commission implement management

Next Steps



MFC Input on Potential Management Strategies

Sustainable Harvest

Example options: seasons, a quota, and changes to bag limit, trip limit, or size limit.

Recreational Management

Example options: gamefish status, limiting RCGL use, ending captain/crew limits, regional management, and limited entry.

Commercial Management

Example Options: hook and line fishery, regional management, and limited entry.

Spawning Stock Protection

Example options: slot limit, size limit, bag limit, and additional cold stun management.

Action Item: Vote on Amendment 1 Goal and Objectives

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this plan is to manage the Spotted Seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) fishery to maintain a self-sustaining population that provides sustainable harvest based on science-based decision-making processes. The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal.

- Implement management within North Carolina that ends overfishing and maintains the Spotted Seatrout spawning stock abundance and recruitment potential.
- Promote restoration, enhancement, and protection of critical habitat and environmental quality in a manner consistent with the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan, to maintain or increase growth, survival, and reproduction of the Spotted Seatrout stock.
- Monitor and manage the fishery in a manner that utilizes biological, socioeconomic, fishery, habitat, and environmental data.
- Promote outreach and interjurisdictional cooperation regarding the status and management of the Spotted Seatrout stock in North Carolina and Virginia waters, including practices that minimize bycatch and discard mortality.

Questions?

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