



Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Marine Fisheries

May 2022 MFC Business Meeting | Anne L. Markwith and Michael S. Loeffler | May 26, 2022



Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3

Next Steps

• Division holds public scoping period

• Marine Fisheries Commission approve goal and objectives of FMP

• Division draft FMP

• Division hold workshops to further develop draft FMP with plan advisory committee

• Division updates draft FMP

• Marine Fisheries Commission reviews draft FMP and votes to send for public and advisory committee review

• Public and advisory committee review period

• Marine Fisheries Commission selects preferred management options

• DEQ Secretary reports FMP progress to legislative bodies for review

• **Marine Fisheries Commission votes to adopt the FMP**

• **Division and Marine Fisheries Commission implement management strategies**

You are here

Marine Fisheries Commission Preferred Management Strategy

1. Set annual harvest quotas for the commercial fisheries
 - Two Gear categories: Mobile Gears and Pound Nets
 - Divide Mobile Gears into 2 areas
 - Divide Pound Nets into 3 areas
 - Maintain 72% reduction and current allocation for Pound Net fishery
 - Trip limits for gigs and pound nets only after closure threshold is met
2. Set annual harvest quotas for the recreational fisheries
 - Implement single hook-and-line and gig season to constrain to quota
 - Reduce bag limit to 1-fish/per person/per day
 - Do not allow harvest of southern flounder with RCGL



Marine Fisheries Commission Preferred Management Strategy

3. Allow a one-fish ocellated bag limit in an early season from March 1 – April 15
4. Do not establish inlet corridors for southern flounder during spawning migrations
5. Implement adaptive management strategy for the southern flounder fishery
6. Do not to implement a slot limit at this time
7. Continue to allow anchored large-mesh gill nets to harvest southern flounder during the commercial season



Marine Fisheries Commission Preferred Management Strategy

8. A resolution that the NCMFC recognizes that there may need to be consideration of a moratorium if there are continued excesses in the allowable catch of flounder in both sectors
9. A motion that “based on recognition of a series of coincident concerns specific to the initial steps in rebuilding the southern flounder fishery [they delayed] the transition to a 50/50 commercial/recreational parity allocation by 2 years (time for at least 1 cycle of larval to female maturity) allocations: 2023: 70/30; 2024: 70/30; 2025: 60/40; 2026: 50/50”



Marine Fisheries Commission Preferred Management Strategy

- Minimum distance requirements between commercial gears
- Commercial gear requirements
- Commercial gear removal outside of season
- Commercial possession requirements outside of season
- Recreational requirements



Draft Amendment 3 Action Item

Vote on final adoption of Amendment 3



Questions?

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Sustainable Harvest

Southern Flounder Quota Options

Management Option	Management Sub-option	Management Measure	Gear	# Management Areas	Description	Location/Allocation (Pounds)			Quota
1	1.1A	Commercial Quota	Mobile Gears	2	Division at the ITP B-D Boundary Line	Northern: 123,879	Southern: 62,309		186,188
1	1.1B	Commercial Quota	Mobile Gears	1	Statewide	Statewide: 186,188			186,188
1	1.1C	Commercial Quota	Mobile Gears	3	Same areas as Amendment 2	Northern: 47,082	Central: 65,355	Southern: 73,751	186,188
1	1.2A	Commercial Quota	Pound Nets	3	Same areas as Amendment 2	Northern: 39,700	Central: 121,756	Southern: 25,002	186,458
1	1.2B	Commercial Quota	Pound Nets	1	Statewide	Statewide: 186,458			186,458
1	1.2C	Commercial Quota	Pound Nets	2	Division at approximately Pea Island	Northern: 39,700	Southern: 146,758		186,458

Sustainable Harvest

Southern Flounder Quota Options

Management Option	Management Sub-option	Management Measure	Gear	# Management Areas	Description	Location/Allocation (Pounds)	Quota
2	2.1	Commercial Sub-Allocation	All commercial gears	N/A	2017 Landings		372,646
2	2.2	Commercial Sub-Allocation	All commercial gears	N/A	Maintain current pound net allocation		372,646
2	2.3	Commercial Sub-Allocation	All commercial gears except gill nets	N/A	Allocate gill net harvest to mobile and pound net gears equally		372,646
3		Recreational Quota (through season)	Hook-and-line, gigs	1	Statewide	Hook-and-Line: 142,206 Gig: 17,500	159,706

Sustainable Harvest Trip Limit Options

Management Option	Management sub-option	Management Measure	Description
4	4A	Commercial Fishery Trip Limits	Implement trip limits for pound nets and gigs only to maximize potential opportunities for reopening a fishery to harvest remaining allocation
4	4B	Commercial Fishery Trip Limits	Implement trip limits for all gears
4	4C	Commercial Fishery Trip Limits	Status quo, do not implement trip limits



Sustainable Harvest

Recreational Bag Limit Options

Management Option	Management sub-option	Management Measure	Description
5	5A	Recreational Fishery Bag Limits	Reduce recreational bag limit of flounder to one fish per person per day
5	5B	Recreational Fishery Bag Limits	Reduce recreational bag limit of flounder to no more than three fish per person per day
5	5C	Recreational Fishery Bag Limits	Reduce recreational bag limit of flounder to no more than two fish per person per day
5	5D	Recreational Fishery Bag Limits	Status quo, keep the recreational bag limit of flounder at no more than four fish per person per day



Sustainable Harvest RCGL Options

Management Option	Management sub-option	Management Measure	Description
6	6A	Recreational Commercial Gear	Allow the RCGL to be used to harvest flounder only during a period of time when the commercial and recreational fisheries are both open
6	6B	Recreational Commercial Gear	Prohibit the use of RCGL to harvest southern flounder



Increased Recreational Access Options

Management Option	Management Strategy	Description
Option 1	Increased Recreational Access	Status quo, do not allow species specific management to increase access to the recreational fishery
Option 2	Increased Recreational Access	One-fish ocellated bag limit from March 1 through April 15 in ocean waters only and one-fish bag limit consisting of any species of flounder during the southern flounder season

Inlet Corridors Options

Management Option	Management Strategy	Description
Option 1	Inlet Corridors	Status quo, do not establish inlet corridors for southern flounder during spawning migrations
Option 2A	Inlet Corridors	Implement inlet corridors affecting all gears in the selected areas
Option 2B	Inlet Corridors	Implement inlet corridors affecting only specific gears in the selected areas

Adaptive Management Options

Management Option	Management Strategy	Description
Option 1	Adaptive Management	Adopt the adaptive management framework based on the peer-reviewed and approved stock assessment
Option 2	Adaptive Management	Do not adopt the adaptive management framework



Slot Limits Options

Management Option	Management sub-option	Management Measure	Description
1		Slot Limit	Status quo, do not implement a slot limit
2	2A	Slot Limit	Implement a 15–16 inch slot limit
2	2B	Slot Limit	Implement a 15–17 inch slot limit
2	2C	Slot Limit	Implement a 15–18 inch slot limit
2	2D	Slot Limit	Implement a 15–19 inch slot limit



Phasing Out Large-Mesh Gill Nets Options

Management Option	Management Measure	Description
1	Phasing Out Large-Mesh Gill Nets	Phase out anchored large-mesh gill nets from the southern flounder fishery at the end of the current ITP
2	Phasing Out Large-Mesh Gill Nets	Status quo, continue to allow anchored large-mesh gill nets to harvest southern flounder in the North Carolina southern flounder fishery



Sustainable Harvest Recreational Bag Limits

Season	Landings (lb)			
	4-Fish Bag Limit	3- Fish Bag Limit	2- Fish Bag Limit	1- Fish Bag Limit
No closure	451,126	428,594	400,502	332,075
Apr 16–Jun 30	109,157	107,657	105,569	100,911
May 1–Jun 30	102,622	102,622	99,249	94,985
Jun 1–Jul 15	110,702	109,102	106,836	102,184
Aug 1–Sep 30	179,895	175,782	171,480	161,015
Aug 16–Sep 30	127,706	125,359	123,267	118,071
July 16–Sep. 30	222,360	216,583	210,150	194,024
June 16–Sep. 15	272,287	263,508	252,502	226,790



Sustainable Harvest

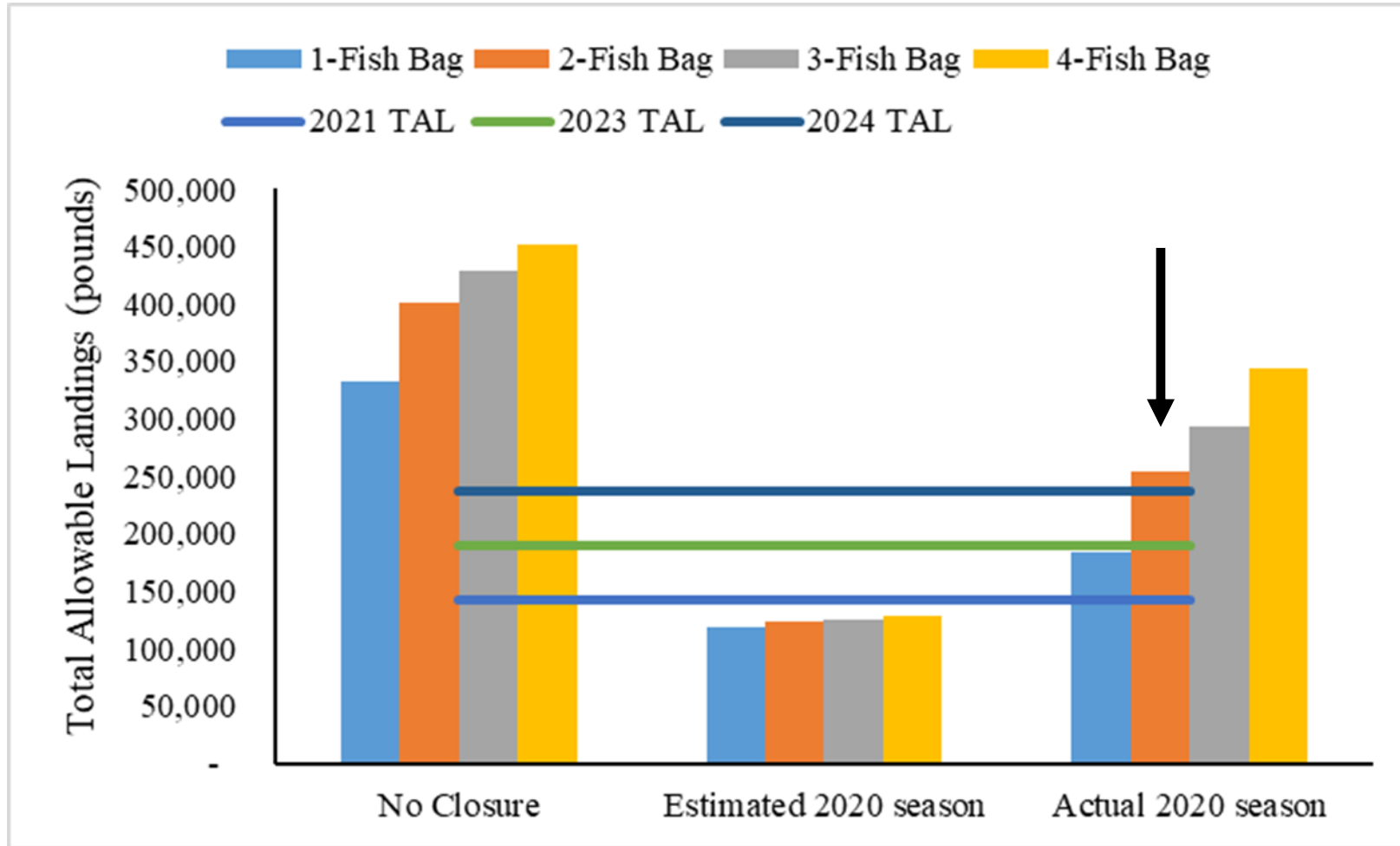
Recreational Bag Limits: Why Reduce Recreational Bag Limit?

Percent Contribution of Bag Limit to Total Harvest

Season	4-Fish Bag Limit	3-Fish Bag Limit	2-Fish Bag Limit	1-Fish Bag Limit
No Season	5%	6%	15%	74%
Aug 1 - Sept 30	2%	2%	6%	90%
Aug 16 - Sept 30	2%	2%	4%	93%
Jun 1 - Jun 30	1%	1%	2%	95%
Apr 1 - June 30	1%	2%	4%	92%
Apr 1 - Sep 30	4%	6%	13%	77%
Mar 1 - Apr 15	0%	0%	0%	100%
Sep 1 – Sep 30	1%	1%	2%	96%
Apr 16 - Jun 30	1%	2%	4%	92%
May 1 - Jun 30	1%	2%	4%	93%
May 16 - Jun 30	1%	2%	3%	94%

Sustainable Harvest

Recreational Bag Limits: Why Reduce Recreational Bag Limit?



Increased Recreational Access

Ocean Only				Ocean and Estuarine				
Ocellated Flounder Season	Bag Limit Ocellated Flounder Season	Estimated Ocellated Flounder Landings	Southern Flounder Landings Early Season	Southern Flounder Season	Bag Limit Southern Flounder Season	Southern Flounder Landings Late Season	Total Southern Flounder Landing	Total Allowable Southern Flounder Landings
None	0	0	0	Aug 16 – Sep 30	1	118,128	118,128	142,206
Mar 1– Apr 15	1	1,025	1,267	Aug 16 – Sep 30	1	118,128	119,395	142,206
Apr 1– June 30	1	23,116	50,159	Aug 16 – Sep 30	1	118,128	168,287	142,206
Apr 1– Sep 30	1	56,009	143,330	Aug 16 – Sep 30	1	74,860	218,190	142,206



Inlet Corridors

Harvest in Inlet Corridors

- New River Estuary Telemetry Study
 - Resident behavior over a long period
 - Rapid movement with onset of spawning migration

50% of migrants left in 5 days
75% of migrants left in 10 days

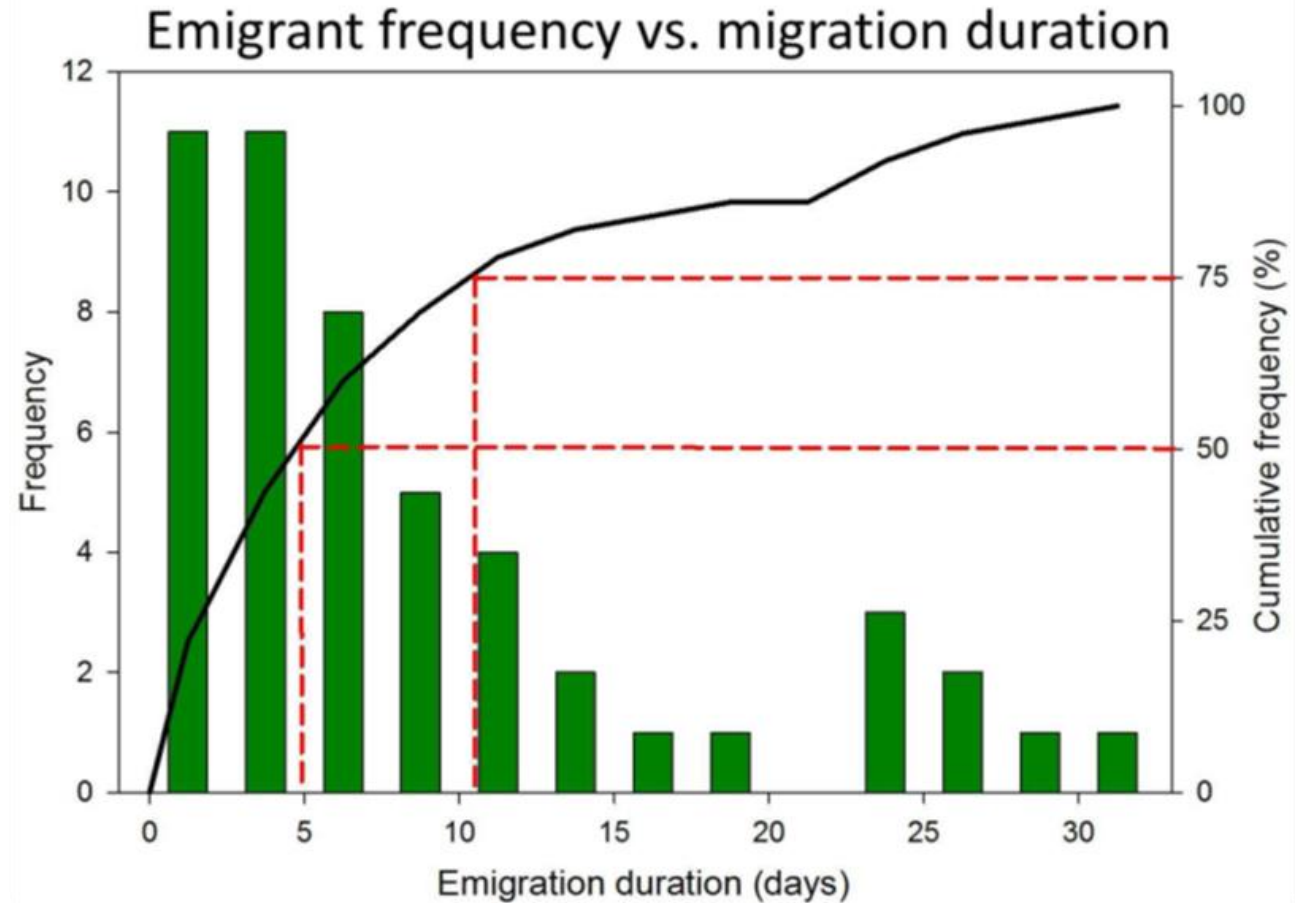
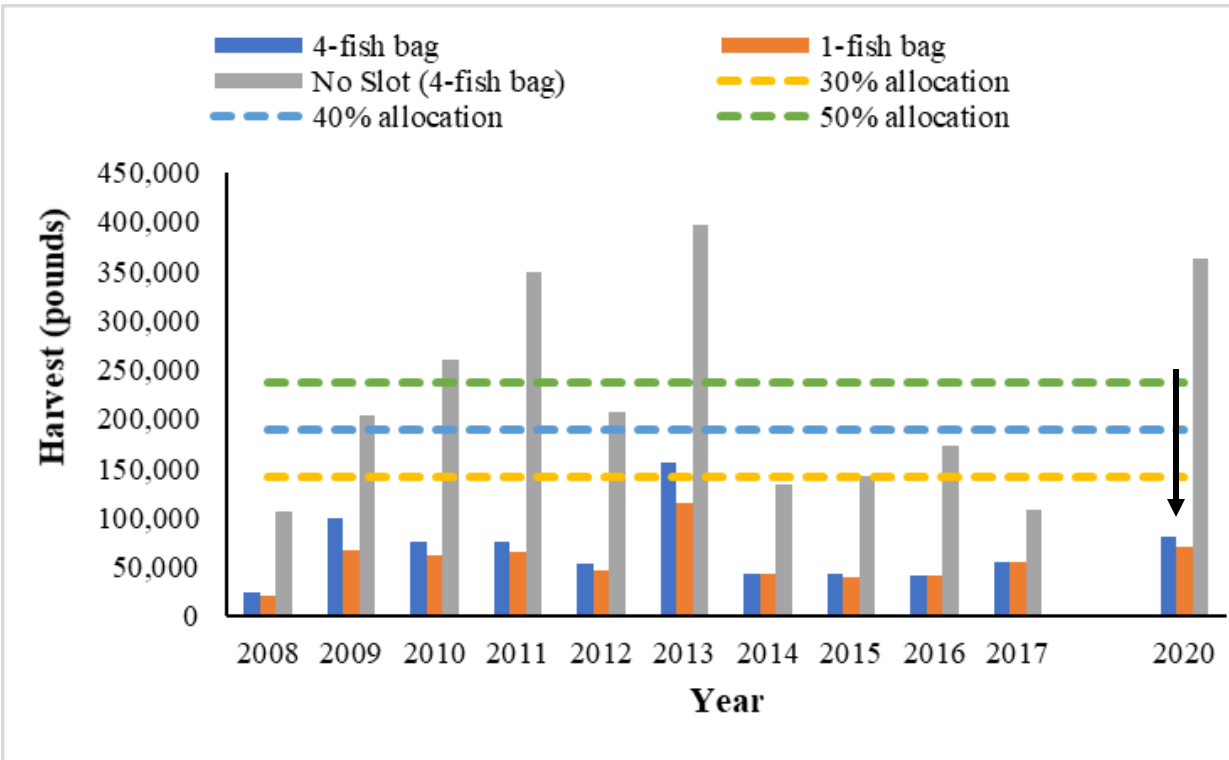


Figure from Scharf et al. 2015

Slot Limits

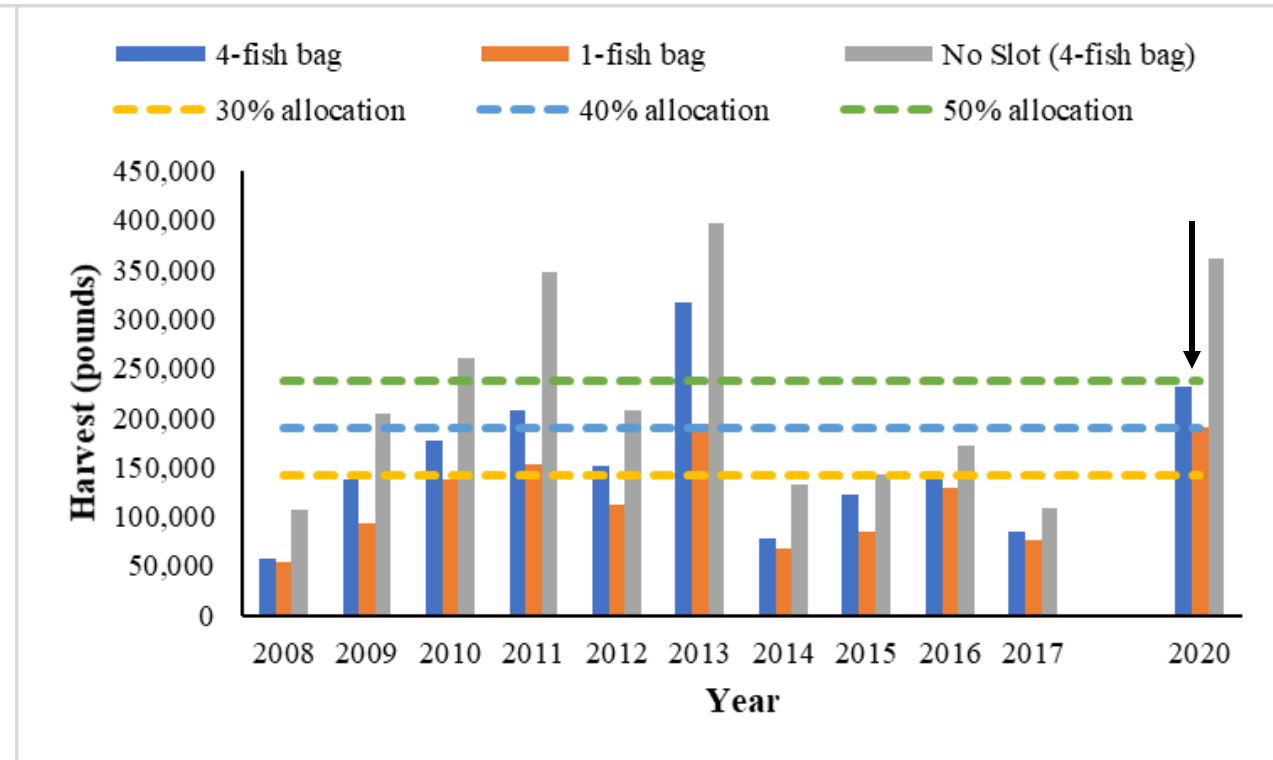
Recreational Hook-and-Line Data (August. 16 to Sept. 30)

15- to 16-inch (1-inch) slot



- Less likely to exceed TAL
- Potentially greatest increase in discards

15- to 19-inch (4-inch) slot



- More likely to exceed TAL
- Bag limit becomes more important