



# *Temporary Management Measures to End Overfishing of the North Carolina Striped Mullet Stock*

*DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY*

Marine Fisheries

N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission | Daniel Zapf, Jeffrey Dobbs, Willow Patten | Feb. 22-24, 2023



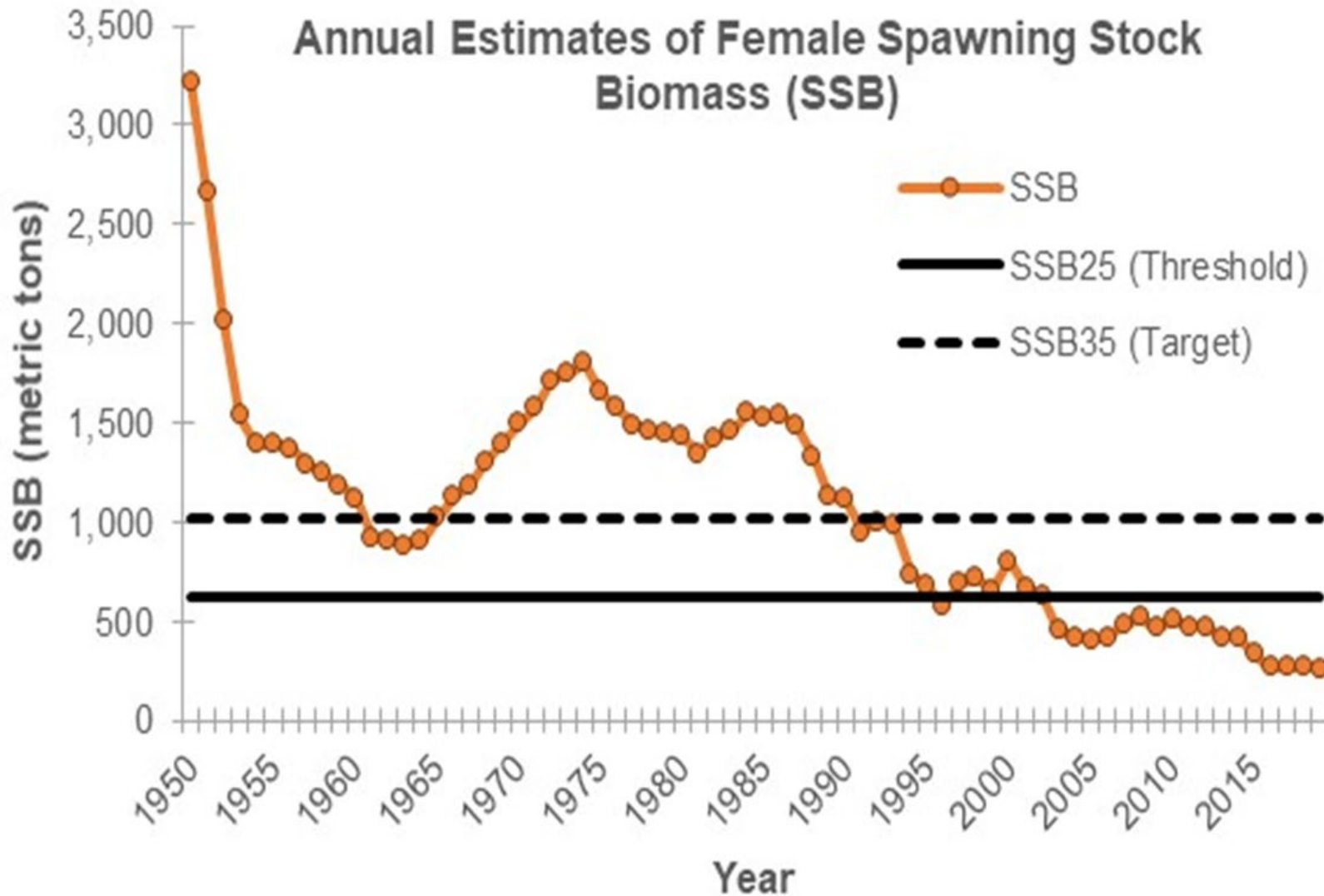
# Outline

- Stock assessment results
- Need for temporary management measures
- Supplement A timeline
- Public comment
- DMF recommendation and MFC preferred option





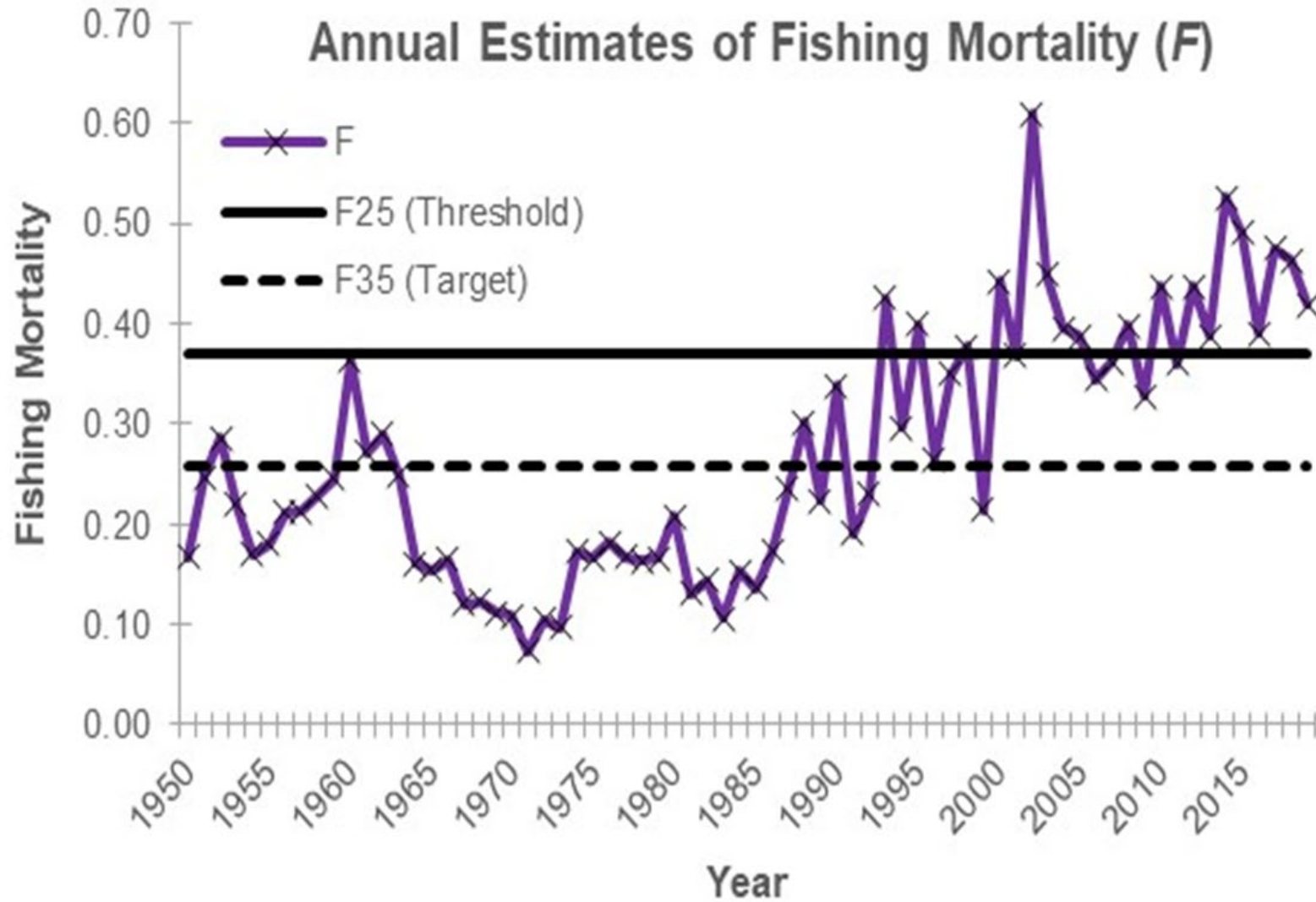
# 2022 Stock Assessment – Spawning Stock Biomass



- The North Carolina Striped Mullet stock is **overfished**
- The 2019 spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 263 mt, less than the 619 mt threshold



# 2022 Stock Assessment – Fishing Mortality



- **Overfishing** is occurring in the striped mullet fisheries
- The 2019 fishing mortality (F) was estimated at 0.42, greater than the threshold of 0.37



# Supplement

- General Statute 113-182.1 provides a mechanism for the Commission to supplement FMP management when the DEQ Secretary determines it is in the interest of the long-term viability of the fishery
- Temporary management measures to END overfishing immediately
  - 9.3% reduction in total removals needed to reduce F to the threshold
  - 33% reduction in total removals needed to reduce F to the target
- NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0502 provides the Director proclamation authority to implement restrictions in the taking of mullet



## *Supplement A Timeline*

- **May 2022** - MFC reviewed the 2022 Striped Mullet Stock Assessment
- **August 2022** – DMF Director asks approval from MFC to request supplement
- **Sep. 2022** – DEQ Secretary authorized development of temporary management measures
- **Nov. 2022** – Division presented draft Supplement A and recommendations
  - MFC selected Option 2 a season closure from Nov. 7 – Dec. 31 to achieve a 22.1% harvest reduction
- **Dec. 19, 2022 – Jan. 19, 2023** - Division received public comment on proposed temporary management measures
- **Feb. 2023** – Division presents summary of public comment to MFC
  - MFC votes on adoption of Supplement A



# *Public Comment Summary*

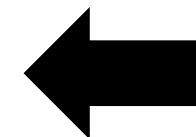
- Public comment period from Dec. 19, 2022 – Jan. 19, 2023
- Received 65 comments
- Very few comments indicated outright support for Supplement A
- Most comments were in opposition to Supplement A
  - Cited skepticism of stock assessment, economic impact, and the desire to exclude recreational harvest from closure
- Additional comments included
  - Support for gill net closures in Neuse and Pamlico rivers/complete removal of gill nets
  - Continuing to allow harvest with cast nets during the closure
  - Alternate season closure



## *DMF Recommendation and MFC Preferred Option*

- To achieve this reduction, **the DMF recommends Option 1 or Option 2**
- **MFC selected Option 2** as preferred management option

<b>Option</b>	<b>Season Closure</b>	<b>Estimated Commercial Harvest Reduction (%)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>October 29 – December 31</b>	33.7
<b>2</b>	<b>November 7 – December 31</b>	22.1



**MFC Preferred Option**



## *MFC Actions*

Vote on adoption of Supplement A to Amendment 1



## *Division Next Steps*

- If Supplement A is adopted, closure will be implemented via proclamation authority of the DMF Director
- DMF will continue development of Amendment 2 to the Striped Mullet FMP
- Amendment 2 tentatively scheduled for adoption in 2024



# *Questions?*

## Striped Mullet Leads Contact Information

Jeffrey Dobbs

[Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Dobbs@ncdenr.gov)

252-808-8193

Daniel Zapf

[Daniel.Zapf@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Daniel.Zapf@ncdenr.gov)

252-948-3874

Willow Patten

[Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov)

252-948-3884