



Stripers Forever 2012 Annual Fishing Survey Results

The results of the Stripers Forever 2012 Annual Fishing Survey are attached above. In 2012 we received 812 responses to our annual survey. 647, or 80% of the respondents, have fished for stripers for more than 10 years, and many of these people fished through both the last striped bass collapse and the recovery of the late 1980s and 1990s. This is a very experienced sample of the angling population. This year's survey has again produced a good representative sampling of sentiments from fishers all along the striper's migratory range, and responses increased slightly in every region except the NY/NJ that was hard hit by Sandy right in the middle of what should have been their best fishing. The summary is that by all counts the fishery is continuing to decline. People report catching fewer fish, and this agrees with the official NOAA data. After a few recent years of perception that the average size fish was getting larger sentiments shifted the other way. That is undoubtedly because the only really good year class in the fishery, the 2003 year class, has now gotten older, and scarcer, and less likely to be caught by the average recreational fisherman.

We had survey results from 75 guides too, though this was down from 87 last year. Without a doubt the decline in striper fishing is hurting this valuable industry as well as the related fishing tourism and tackle businesses.

We will send this information to the press and to fishery policy makers everywhere. We hope that you will use this information personally to help us advocate for the goal of coast-wide striped bass game fish. Please share the results with your local fishing club, home town newspaper, and elected officials that you may know.

The complete Excel spreadsheet of *Survey Totals* is also attached to this web page. You will find both the questions and the responses listed. The second tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet shows comments that were received; as usual there were some very good ones, and they have not been edited. Another document entitled *Key Comparisons* is also attached. Key Comparisons graphs out the answers to some particularly important questions. The questions that we use have been the same for the ten years we have been doing the survey. Older surveys are not currently available on the website as we in the process of building a new website and the old data has been transferred. If you want to see any of the old survey results, though, just e-mail us by e-mailing to stripers@whatif.net.

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Question # and answer ME NH MA RI CT NY NJ PA DE MD VA NC SC totals % response

Personal use angler's section

State of the Fishery 2011

1. What state	71	13	222	83	42	77	163	18	36	38	23	18	8	812	100%
2. I fish from a boat what percentage of the time.															
<25%	22	6	73	30	14	33	72	13	18	0	4	3	3	291	36%
25 - 49	8	0	24	4	4	3	14	0	4	1	3	2	1	68	8%
50-74	2	0	22	10	2	8	10	0	1	7	1	2	0	65	8%
>75%	39	7	102	38	22	33	66	5	12	30	15	11	4	384	48%
3. I have fished regularly for stripers for this many years.															
<5 years	4	1	17	10	3	4	10	1	4	0	1	1	1	57	7%
5-9 years	4	4	32	9	10	11	14	0	2	5	6	4	1	102	13%
>10	62	8	173	64	29	59	138	17	30	33	15	13	6	647	80%
4. In my opinion striper fishing in the past five years has changed as follows:															
much worse	45	7	49	19	10	24	24	3	10	14	6	4	2	217	27%
worse	16	4	112	41	23	43	70	7	13	17	15	10	3	374	47%
same	8	2	40	12	4	6	37	4	5	5	0	0	2	125	16%
improved somewhat	2	0	16	5	4	4	20	3	4	1	2	3	1	65	8%
improved greatly	0	0	3	5		0	8	1	3	1	0		0	21	3%
5. The average size of the stripers that I catch now has changed as follows:															
much smaller	7	0	32	12	7	15	23	4	8	12	7	3	0	130	16%
somewhat smaller	24	4	79	26	14	27	62	4	12	17	6	8	3	286	36%
no change	10	5	48	21	6	9	39	6	7	6	7	5	3	172	21%
somewhat larger	23	4	45	17	13	24	37	4	7	3	2	2	1	182	23%
much larger	4	0	17	3	1	2	1	0	1	0	1		1	31	4%
6. The number of stripers I catch per hour of fishing time on the water is:															
many fewer	42	6	61	25	11	27	43	5	14	15	11	6	2	268	34%
fewer	22	7	103	43	24	40	69	7	12	16	8	6	3	360	44%
about the same	4	0	36	7	5	6	36	5	6	6	4	4	3	122	15%
more	1	0	18	5	1	2	13	1	3	1	0	2	0	47	6%
many more	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		0	6	1%
7. Because of the changes in the striped bass fishery my inclination to take a professionally guided striped bass trip has changed as follows:															
less likely	47	8	116	43	21	48	73	11	15	19	8	8	3	420	53%
about the same	13	4	87	34	20	25	77	7	18	17	12	7	2	323	41%
more likely	8	1	14	4	0	3	9	0	2	2	3	3	3	52	6%
<i>Bag and size limit</i>															
9. Forgetting for a moment current striped bass regulations, and starting with a clean sheet, I think that recreational anglers should be able to keep at least one school striper (possibly different from state to state, but probably between 18 and 28 inches in length) per day for personal consumption.															
yes	52	6	123	46	20	36	125	12	25	34	19	13	5	516	65%
no	17	7	95	32	22	38	37	6	10	4	2	4	3	277	35%

10. If you answered yes to #8, should this smaller fish be allowed instead of, or in addition to, a bass of some larger size?															
instead of	50	5	98	38	17	32	85	7	17	25	9	11	5	399	76%
in addition to	3	2	29	9	3	3	43	5	10	9	10	2	0	128	24%
11. If you answered no to #8 what should the minimum size be?															
28	15	1	52	22	15	18	43	7	7	5	4	2	2	193	56%
32	2	1	27	11	5	6	13	3	5	3	0	0	1	77	22%
36	3	3	19	4	2	17	4	1	1	0	1	1		56	16%
40	3	2	6	2	2	0	5	0		0	0	1		21	6%
12. Do you think we should have a slot limit for recreationally caught stripers?															
yes	61	7	146	48	27	41	122	13	27	23	16	15	5	551	71%
no	5	6	67	29	14	31	37	5	8	13	4	2	2	223	29%
13. Slot preference															
20-26	42	1	44	14	6	8	23	2	9	9	5	7	4	174	31%
22-28	10	4	47	19	12	13	69	7	12	5	6	3	2	209	38%
24-30	10	1	56	16	9	21	32	4	6	8	6	5		174	31%
13. When commercial fishing is ended, what percentage of the current commercial quota should be saved from harvest as a conservation buffer? The rest would be used to liberalize the recreational harvest. 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%															
25%	10	5	26	17	5	10	25	1	8	4	5	3	1	120	16%
50	10	1	59	21	14	16	49	4	7	11	6	7	2	207	27%
75	16	3	33	17	6	15	29	4	11	11	3	3	2	153	20%
100%	32	3	87	22	16	30	57	8	8	9	7	2	3	284	37%
15. Would you favor legislation that creates a striped bass stamp costing between \$10.00 and \$25.00 per year with the funds earmarked to buyout the current commercial fishery?															
yes	65	9	163	56	32	66	114	12	26	32	17	13	7	612	78%
no	4	3	52	24	10	7	48	6	9	6	4	4	1	178	22%
16. If you answered yes to #15, should this stamp program end after a fixed number of years, or should the fee continue to fund enforcement and striped bass enhancement programs?															
end	14	1	58	15	14	13	40	2	5	8	3	4	1	178	29%
continue	47	8	107	42	18	53	83	11	21	24	14	9	6	443	71%
17. Should Stripers Forever advocate that circle hooks be required, where practical, when bait fishing for striped bass?															
yes	56	9	171	55	34	64	124	14	24	29	14	11	8	613	78%
no	11	3	41	22	8	10	39	4	10	8	7	6	0	169	22%
18. My personal comments on striped bass management that you have not covered are? See comment tab below.															
Guides Section															
19. How has your guiding business for striped bass changed because of the fishery in the last five years?															
worsened considerably	4		12	4	3	6	6	0	1	0	1	1		38	50%
worsened a little	1		6	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	13	17%
not changed	1		4	1	1	2	3	2	0	2	0	0		16	21%
improved somewhat			2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1		5	7%
improved a great deal			0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		3	5%
20. How important is keeping a striped bass to your clients?															
not very important			11	1	1	6	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	26	33%
somewhat important	5		5	0	0	4	4	0	0	1	0	1		20	26%

very important	1		9	4	3	0	8	0	0	2	3	1		31	41%
21. How important to your clients is catching a lot of stripers per trip?															
not very important	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0%
somewhat important	4		10	2	3	3	9	2	1	0	3	1	1	39	52%
very important	2		14	3	1	7	3	0	1	3	0	2		36	48%
22. How important is catching a really large striper to your clients?															
not very important	0		3	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	1	1		11	14%
somewhat important	6		14	1	2	6	6	2	1	0	2	1	1	42	55%
very important	0		8	4	1	2	4	0	0	3	0	1		23	31%
23. Which is more important to my clients, catching big fish or catching a lot of fish?															
big fish	1		5	3	0	1	4	1	1	1	0	0		17	23%
many fish	5		18	2	4	9	8	1	1	2	3	3	1	57	77%
24. I am more likely than I was 5 years ago to make new investments in equipment for my striped bass guiding business?															
yes	0		1	1	0	2	4	2	1	2	1	2		16	22%
no	6		22	4	4	8	8	0	1	1	2	1	1	58	78%

25. My comments as to how the management of striped bass is affecting my guiding business:

See Comments Tab below

There should be NO striped bass being kept at all!!!! The fish is in serious danger!

Recreational striper fishing is not the problem as far as conservation is concerned. I have seen first hand what those net boats have done to the bunker population. something needs to be done about that.

1 fish slot limit is the way to go we cant keep killing the cows. would love to see commercils liscences bought out with tag money, perhaps using a portion for future studies

make it a game fish

Ban netting in the Chesapeake Bay for Striped Bass.

Maine's slot limit targets small bass with bait resulting in a lot of dead, discarded fish resulting from rough handling. I am appalled at the Mass. commercial fishery.

Research needs to track the impact of stripers on Atlantic salmon- they now travel all the way to Newfoundland.

Checking of size limits, by the states, saw to many undersized fish taken.

The commercial fishery here on the cape is out of control. The regulations are not followed. Most commercial guys are rcmguys fishing for gas money. You guys should push for an either / or system in the short term... Either a rec license or a comm. license until we can ban comm.

Catch and Release for 5 years!

a slot limit should be limited for a certain amount per season NOT per day, and should be reported, as done with a deer in CT.

I would prefer a slot limit of one 16-20" striper per day. No other striper of any size be allowed.

A two fish limit NO tag of any kind And once you have caught your limit you fishing day is done . Too many short stripers floating after being gut hooked Just to catch a bigger fish. Sport fisherman are greedy. Do away with the Commercial allocation as an excuse to catch ONE more fish . Having a commercial allocation in a State with no Commercial fishing is Stupid. I would bet if monitored 90% of all 3rd fish caught are not recorded. That was proven back when we had TROPHY Tags and f/g said report your trophy tags because if you do not we will lose the commercial quota that we provided so yopu can catch a third fish . It turned out that everybody turned there trophy tag in even if they DID NOT catch a Fish so as to preserve the Commercial quota. Do away w/commercial quota TWO fish limit and Stop all Fishing for stipers Dec 31st like before. Allow the Stripers to Regroup .You kill the young and there is no way to sustain the population of STRIPERS . With Menhaden on the Decline Stop the catching of Menhaden During the same period. Take take take leaves nothing to sustain its Balance

It has to be done simultaneously with the management of forage fish such as menhaden and herring.

much like the gun control lobby whom many people suspect have an underlying purpose to eliminate all guns, Stripers forever needs to be more vocal and clear that they are not trying to eliminate the harvest of all striped bas, just comercial fishing

Make it a game fish

Circle hooks are a very excellent idea and work well, however I feel people thoroughly enjoy "setting the hook".

caught many nice fish, released several. Smaller school size not abundant this year.

I think the population is on the decline, not seeing that many schoolies. We need uniform management along the east coast.

In addition to harvest reduction, SE should advocate with a louder voice the protection, enhancement and conservation of striped bass spawning grounds and work with other partners in conservation on saving and improving the striped bass. Harvest reduction is not the only thing that the stripers need. With habitat improvement the fish will have better recruitment and with water quality improvement there will be healthier fish. The nature of stripers being river estuary spawners require that we have healthier and cleaner rivers forming fertile ecosystems that provide abundant food & cover.

I didn't answer the slot question because in my opinion it isn't a simple as a stated slot without addressing year class structures and annual adjustments to the slot.

Limit charters to one fish. Poachers and commercial can not be controlled, but charters can somewhat be controlled

Conserve Bunker forage, especially in Virginia.

Use stamp money for more law enforcement and checks on overages by party boats and other recreational charters that may be taking too many fish.

We must release the large breeder female fish!

Touchy subject especially when state to state commercial enforcement varies immensely. Menhaden population regulation must go hand in hand with everything else.

stop recreational and commercial killing of bass NOW

I believe we need to do away with the spring "trophy season" in MD, C&R only during spawn. impose a slot limit of 24-32" and limit 1 fish per day. Ban all net fishing for stripers in the bay. H&L only for Comms

Stripers eat a lot of fish, we need to protect their forage especially if we reduce the commercial harvest.

Please continue your efforts in behalf of Menhaden. Overfishing of this feedstock is hurting the younger classes in particular, in my opinion. Also, please consider some publicity about cow-killing fishermen who catch and keep large breeders. It's a waste and big stripers taste like crap anyway.

Charter boat catch should be included in commercial catch. Could a measure and tag system with a cash incentive help change the decision for a charter boat to "keep" (read, sell) the catch?

control the food they eat

From what I've seen this past year fishing Narragansett bay And around Block Island , I'm for an all out moratorium . No commercial or recreational fishing allowed. And until something is done with the over fishing of manhaden all this conservation of stripped bass is useless!

Great work - keep it up Do most of my saltwater fisjng in FLA, fishing in CT is poor

Striper regs. (harvest & size) need to be more consistant for the entire east coast (all states)

NJ season is not over. Why the rush to survey us?

National and state funded regulation often go to fund other things and not what they are meant for. Conn. licenses go into general fund, not into fishing.

The survey is flawed. I favor making striped bass a gamefish with no commercial or recreational take and there is no option for that. Also, I would never take a charter, especially a party boat charter for striped bass as all they do is kill fish.

Keep up the good work guys!

Stop the recreational, party boat and commercial killing.

Limiting take of all the forage species that bass depend on

All it takes is common sense. Don't keep everything you catch all the time. Keeping a fish here and there for dinner is fine. Fishing for stripers commercially doesn't make much sense to me but as long as it's closely regulated I guess it should be ok.

No cow harvests

End commercial fishing and make them a protected game fish
Catch and Release is the only way to go. If a harvest is permitted, anglers should be required to purchase a tag for each fish taken and the number of tags limited to less than five per angler per season.

Encourage tagging. Perhaps start a contest rewarding those getting tag returns,
Make it a game fish, no harvest allowed. Bass are toxic for human consumption.
In NJ an additional fish is allowed to be possessed with purchase of a "bonus tag". This practise should be discontinued

I believe striped bass fishing must be strictly on a catch-and-release basis. I see no reason to harvest striper knowing the current status of that fishery.

Lowering the keeper size would enhance stripper fishing for all.

NO harvest till stocks are much larger and self sustaining!!!

There is a need for much more enforcement across the stripe bass fishery

I only agree to the Stamp fee if very strong measures are put in place to ensure proper use of the funds generated.

Stop commercial harvest of striped bass and save the pogeys (menhaden)!

With the YOY index so low this year, conservation measures needed to be addressed ASAP

less commercial catch

THE BAIT FISH SHOULD BE LOOKED INTO AS TO RESTRICTING THE COMMERCIAL CATCHES . THE FISH WE ARE CATCHING IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS HAVE HEADS OF A 25 LBS FISH AND THE BODY OF A TEN POUND FISH. BETTER CONTROL IS GREATLY NEEDED. THANK NICK D.

better enforcement of current regs is needed

I believe one 28" fish per day for consumption, however, any fish caught over 36" in length should be released.

We need to protect the breeders and also the forage fish that sustain Striped Bass at all ages.

I strongly believe that striped bass should be a gamefish and not commercially taken. I don't feel that any striped bass over 30" should be kept for personal or commercial consumption. I would gladly buy a stamp. I agree that it would assist in funding striped bass programs. However, I don't like the idea of it being mandated by legislation.

once again if the larger fish are breeders why not make the smaller fish keepable and release the larger ones

Stop all live lining for striped bass!!! This year in NJ you could not net/catch herring and the jetty live liners were OUT OF BUSINESS!!! However, the charter boats still live line bunker (pogies), porgies, eels, spot, snapper blues, white perch etc. to catch (mostly gut hooking) striped bass.

Limit daily harvest to one fish per angler daily...none for the captain, mate, etc.. The charter fleets are killing huge cows every Spring in NJ/NY live lining bunker and every day they are killing as many as twenty(20) 20-50+ pound breeding bass for six anglers with 2 per mate, captain and "bonus tag" fish.

Our striped bass (rock) fishery has fallen off badly in eastern, NC. over just the last 2 years. After decades of feast and famine striper populations it's time we learn from the past and put a short term moratorium on all "keeper" striper fishing to, no.1, stabilize and analyze the population and, then, make good long term management decisions. I am 70 yrs. old so this won't affect me in the long run, but if done right with a catch and release, circle hook only fishery over 5 or so years, younger generations can enjoy the striper fishing I have experienced in the past. Finally, put a moratorium on all commercial fishing and sales (with tough penalties) for a long enough period to rebuild the striper populations! Then, institute a management plan for both inshore and offshore fishing (commercial and recreational) that will guarantee this great game fish will be here for future generations. I firmly believe this can be accomplished if the commercial and recreational fishermen will work together for the future benefit of their children and our state's fisheries future. I love to catch them, but haven't kept one in the past 20 years. If you can afford to fish, you can afford to eat beef or pork or other meats until we can recover this fishery! Jim Wellborn Emerald Isle, N.C. P.S. I have no children, so my comments are not self-serving, but for the consideration of those of you who enjoy fishing for this great species and hope your children (commercial and recreational) can have the same experience!

In addition to gamefish status I would like to see the recreational limit go back to one fish.

mass commercial fishery is a joke. Locals cry about making a living bass fishing it's just a paid hobby much more jobs created catering to travelling fisherman. Locally need to address predation by seals. few people come to surfcast in sept and oct anymore even in a boat some of my most productive spots are dead when seals are around

More angler reps on fish control boards.

Creel size has decreased, some management is needed. No one likes enforced management but I feel it is necessary for the future of recreational fishing for striped bass.

Ending commercial striper fishing and giving the quota to recreational fishing would defeat the purpose. I see so many rec fishermen ignoring the current regulations. We need more marshalls with enforcement power. Two a-day means two a-day, not two in the morning, two at night, etc. And if you aren't fishing, you can't count that persons quota towards your own. Save the big breeding size fish. It is our only hope. Keep a small one (less than 30") - one a day. Do we really need more than that?

do what ever is necessary to save this fishery for future generations. my grandson is 2 months old

Enforce the current rules especially on the beaches in Minmouth County, NJ

We need more enforcement of undersized catches and possession numbers. Asians seem to have no regard for possession laws.

Is it possible to have commercial fishermen pay an upcharge to catch striped bass?

0 fish this last year!!!!

There were noticeably fewer stripers the last 2 years.

We need to continue to monitor and act upon issues that impact the spawning grounds - primary example - the surface runoff that impacts the Chesapeake Bay and Hudson River

Let the breeders grow to breed

Shore fishing in Maine has been extremely different. I caught a fraction of stripers this year than last, however every striper I caught was greater than 30". I even caught my first 40" this year. But, I caught a total of 10 stripers. That's it. I'm not sure what to make out of that. Far fewer stripers, much larger. The mackerel catch was below average. That scares me beyond words. 5 years ago I could load a 5 gallon bucket of Mack's in an hour. This year I caught 2. Gallons period. Very concerned.

Look to limit the charter?party boats 2fish limit. They are out there everyday killing way too many bass.

Stronger emphasis should be made for circle hooks. In addition, we could make a slot limit with one fish per angler above that per year to allow for another world record.

Have a maximum size limit imposed to save the broad stock.

Advocate catch & release, like all warm salt-water fishing and all fly fishing (fresh & salt)

Regulations on party boats are critical but nonexistent

all license fees towards SB management and habitat. minimum size should be at 80% of spawning age/maturity, and take into consideration charter industry catches (in example CC bay in MA - all stripers are 28" or more. so your proposal of a smaller size limit will ruin CC bay charter fishery for SB !)

circle mandatory for all bait fishing

Forget the commercial evils for a bit and focus on the day boats that take out 8-12 people some times twice a day and allow them to kill two breeder size fish each after speaking to my asmf rep he let me know that all those dead fish are just rec caught fish and we all know that there is no way of knowing what the rec angler takes a year forget about these captain who lack morals as long as they get there 60\$ each out of these guys there happy sickening

Single barb-less hooks on flies and lures. Keep pushing for game fish only status in MA.

Keep up the good work.

single fish limit, no bonus tags, no multiple fish limit.

make it a game fish with catch and release all the time!!!!!! NO KEEPING ANY FISH!!!!!! ALSO PROTECT FOREAGE FISH LIKE MENHADEN AND ALL OTHER FOREAGE FISH THAT SUBSTAINS ALL PREDATORY FISH!!!!!!

there should be no Commercial fishing for stripers and no size limit either because all stripers should be catch and release gamefish!!!!!!

Not sure a slot is good for the fishery or not. Need more info.

end commercial fishing/reduce take/manage for largest sustainable biomass/make it gamefish only/manage prey/food species more credibly

Commercial fishers from one state should not be allowed go take fish from another state . We must restore menhaden. Bass need food. Please help us fight for limits on Omega Protien

new york dec & fishery regulators dont give a monkeys butt biscuit to the concerns of the fisherys period , they suck , the attitude of the fisherman for the most part suck as well , poaching and keeping undersize as well as breeder stock gos un checked ,a insane open seson length insane , let them spawn and keep the big fish in the water your doing the best that any body has done so far ,, thank you and keep the fight

Ban netting of Striped Bass in Maryland

THERE SHOULD BE A LIMIT ON COMMERCIAL MOSS BUNKER CATCH/MENHADEN

Not only should the commercial impact be eliminated or greatly reduced, the bonus tag for recreational fishing should be abolished and the daily limit should be 1 bass

There aren't ANY stripers now where I fish!!! I have given up, and will sell my boat if it continues in its current state.

I think the limit should be reduced to 1 fish at 28".

I think we should go to a catch and release fishery until the population of fish stabilizes, and all states have made Striped bass a gamefish, not eligible for commercial harvest or sale. Then we should do the same for Bunker.

There should be the elimination of the commercial fishing for bunkers both inshore and offshore. I believe that many striped base are being killed by the seine netters.

Things will never change the government is so corrupt. Politicians have to many special interest, and don't care about anything but their wallet.

SHould be mostly catch and release until stocks rebound more

We need Game Fish Status for striped bass before it is too late.

LAst two seasons worst yet

Need to save our breeding stock. both recs and comms kill too many big fish

keep the good work up

end pound net fishing now. Use recreational fishing funds to buy out net license

I did not answer the frequency of striper fishing questions because I have not fished regularly for stripers since 2009, when we moved from Portsmouth NH to Wilmington, NC., where there is scant striper fishing. Prior to moving, I fished 50-50 shore and boat in and around Maine, Mass. and N.H., several times a week. In the five years prior to the move, I saw the size/quality of the fish go down, catching many more schoolies than keepers. In the past five years of occasional summer fishing off Bailey Island, Maine, I have seen a precipitous drop-off. It is alarming to see huge schools of mackerel untouched by bass up there. This year was the first in five in which I caught a striper, 29", on fly (off Whaleback Island in Harpswell Sound in Maine). In fact, I saw a half dozen or more fish caught on live mackerel w/ circle hook and released) in the same general area. Prior to that, there were no stripers seen, including by a fishing guide in the area.

I don't believe that circle hooks decrease mortality

definition of "circle" hooks is problematic as there are no industry standards re. labeling or design parameters. This was the winning argument in MA last year.

reduce the size of legal fish to 18" and ban keeping fish above , say, 32".

I'm not an expert on this, but my personal opinion is that the stock is crashing. We can't keep killing all of these big fish and hav a sustainable fishery. Maryland Sport Fishing Association keeps running these tournaments that promote killing big fish and they pay big money to people to do it. The whole mentality has to change. Most of the commercial guys have no ethics and would kill the very last fish until they were completely gone.

We should also ban the taking of large female spawning stripers over 42 inches (or 30 pounds) whichever is esier to manage - WAY too many 40-50pound females have been killed in last 4 years

The most important issue to me currently in striped bass fishing is that it is illegal to fish recreationally beyond three miles. Coincidentally, since nobody is allowed to be out there, not even recreational anglers, it is a very attractive spot for commercial poaching. Stripers Forever should immediately try to legalize recreational fishing beyond three miles, with perhaps a one or two fish per boat (not person) limit. Mandatory use of circle or single hooks to ensure the live release of as many stripers as possible while fishing beyond three miles would be an excellent measure. it is all about enforcement. there are too many yahoos out there that dont know the rules, or simply throw back fish that have no chance of surviving

strictly catch and release during spawning seasons

Forage management, especially menhaden, should be an explicit part of striped bass management and of fisheries management in general better policing and harsher penelties for offenders

I believe it is time to close he fishery entirely to commercial fishing, give stripers gamefish status and at temporarily close the recreational fishery to allow maximum recovery. When that recovery is deemed sufficient, NOT by commercial interests, then a sportfishing ethic and rules can be reestablished. And I believe charter fishing should be more restricted in its catch quota then. I also believe that fishermen should have to buy tags for large fish and be resticted to few fish over 40" per season by tag. Also there should be a maximum number of under 40" but over 28' any angler can keep per season. Not sure about daily limits under 28." Tags have worked for salmon in places and could work for bass, while helping to fund conservation.

Commercial hook and line fishery in states like Massachusetts is crazy--why would we encourage harvest of huge numbers of breeding-size fish??

Reduce the number of large breeders being killed!

THIS year was a very different year with water temps warming quicker than normal and staying warm. Mid-summer bite with water temps in mid 70's was good for 10 days and then slow bite into Fall. Sandy resulted in sucking out the inshore waters of the normal Fall striper bite with water temps dropping 15 degrees in 2 days following SANDY. Unless a slot is introduced limiting the number of large bass being taken we are doomed again with loss of striper population. 1 bass 22-28 and one bass over 36" would be perfect for managing the stock.

Make Striped A Game Fish Coast Wide

Keep up the good work. More discussion about environmental issues, menhaden population, etc. commercial fishing is only one issue but it feels like the most important the way the survey is framed.

5 fish per trip was my average

I really prefer that all striper fishing becomes totally catch and release with no commercial or recreational harvest!

Save the bunker save the bass

It's getting really bad out there....

Give me "power and authority" and I can end the problem in 5 minutes!

only keep 1 fish per person 28 inch

Make it a game fish!

I caught 11 bass this season. The first was 28". That same day I caught 3 more that ranged between 12 and 16". The remaining 7 fish were all in the range 14-16". I did not catch a striper after June 30th despite continuing to fish several times each week.

why allow one per day? I only need to eat 4 per year

Universal limit of ONE fish per day 22" to 28" All other fish weighed, photographed and released

The problem isn't solely that of the commercial fisherman the recreational angler kills as many fish if not more than the commercial guys the end message should be just decrease fish mortality between by catch and gut hooked released fish there is no way to tell the exact pressure on these fish just long and short don't kill striped bass

Keep up the great work SF

I would prefer a 100% catch and release fishery in North Carolina !!!

A slot of 24 to 34, 1 fish per boat per day over 40"

More attention needs to be focused on ecosystem based management. Managing a single species with the expectation for the whole system to be healthy is ignorant. Managers should focus on critical habitat, as well as the health of forage fish stocks as a priority. Also, we need more enforcement of regulations. Slot limit is the only way to go to avoid permanent genetic changes that will influence the size of our stripers (i.e. taking big fish will select for small fish reproducing generations of small fish).

Delaware's Striped Bass fishery is deplorable. Not only do the commercial boats kill EVERY fish caught, the locals have NO regard for conservation as well.

Focus should be on reducing # of stripers being taken by the recreational and commercial sectors.

We should encourage circle hooks-especially on TV shows. They have a big influence. We should also push much harder to save menhaden and end that commercial (non-bait) fishery. That will have many reaching good downstream effects, saving many species that depend on them.

More enforcement and on the water oversight needs to be increased as too many people take advantage of keeping too many and undersized fish.

I see and hear of it too much!!!

We do not seem to see managers make the hard decisions that would benefit the striper, i.e. circle hooks and slot limits.

Better enforcement of current regulations

Mark as a recreational fish only

Protect bait fish as well.

I could not answer several of the questions based on my experience. I have not caught a legal sized striper in about 6 years.

Limit one fish kept.

As far as surf casting goes, I have seen a decline in larger fish.

Chesapeake Bay habitat quality is the most critical problem.

Seals are a major problem when surf casting in Truro. Something needs to be done. They take fish off your line!

Large breeders in Chesapeake Bay in the spring should not be killed or fished for at all, for that matter. I think the umbrella rig haul there is disgusting.

yes, I did not answer a few of the questions because I didn't understand them or I thought that they were poorly worded or who get misleading info

Moratorium, no possession.

We should manage the fish and not the fisheries.

Lots of small stripers caught this year compared to the previous three years - please take measures to protect them!!!!

Re question 4, on slot limit, I mean that anglers should be allowed to keep a fish between 22 and 28 inches, but anything bigger or smaller must be released.

I believe that higher than normal water temps. (up to 80 in surf most of summer) helped to kill the fishing this past year.

caught and released a good number of 36" - 46" fish this year but not many school sized to 28" fish which worries me for the future sustainability of striped bass

A slot limit encourages the killing of many more fish in total than would occur with a minimum size limit.

Get ride of the commercial fisherman!

the commercial industry lost all credibility as a result of their illegal harvests two years ago

This year saw many more smaller stripers than in previous years. This is a positive.

Stop commercial fishing for menhaden (except for bait shops) in ALL Atlantic states!

All recreational striper fishing should be catch and release.

Hurricane Sandy helped many Striped bass survive the Fall migration, there should be only 1 fish per day to be killed

I would support a slot range of 36 to 40 inches.

Get the state politics out of the regs. Govt. reps are too influenced by commercial fisherman to prevent conservation of stocks.

The ASMFC is a bad joke.

More enforcement of laws. Too many short fish are being taken.

Menhaden

Fewer smaller bass around. Need studies on red spots seen on bass last couple years-it is not all mycobacterium. Cause vs effect of declining bass numbers?

We must stop killing the breeders!

The success of slot limits in other fisheries should be guide for future management. Killing the big cow stripers is destructive to the fishery. Stop the insanity.

Bag limits on meat angler/charters they are keeping too many big fish day in and day out and of course the commercial sector.

I always thought a slot limit would be good, but I had a really good season and now feel we should increase the legal fish size and remove the commercial consumption.

It sucks

Fish harvested should not be mature spawners.

limit each person to one large fish. Catch and release until stocks are rebuilt so everyone can catch one..

We need to tighten restrictions on commercial fishing and enforce existing regulations. There is far too little actual enforcement out on the water, and poachers can do what they want with impunity. Also, party and charter boats routinely violate regulations with no sanctions.

Stop the gillnetting (or dramatically reduce the quota) in Maryland

It has been mismanaged on the basis of bad data and when the data pointed to a downturn, the AMSFC did nothing. the commercial influence there is too strong.

must stop the commercial fishery, including bunkers

I know several people who fish for stripers commercially. There is nothing to "buy out" since they have no equipment (boat, tackle, etc) that is exclusively dedicated to fishing for stripers. Terminate commercial licenses and police poachers. Policing efforts are supposed to be paid for out of saltwater recreational license fees, so no need for a striped bass stamp.

Use only 1 treble hook on plugs. Remove the other hook/hooks because they always damage the fish.

They should ban Striper fishing or eliminate harvesting striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay area during breeding season. The same way the Gulf of Mexico is off limits to Bluefin Tuna fishing

buy out the commercial fisherman

I think we need even stronger financial/economic data to counter the advocates of commercial striper fishing. Also, we need to lend a strong voice to the effort to curb menhaden over-harvesting. Thanks for this survey again.

Your questions are somewhat poorly worded. You leave no opportunity - especially Q 1/2 - go from 18" to 28" w/nothing in between? Q 4/5 don't specify what time of the year - mortality is clearly different in warmer temps. Q 6 is way too ambiguous - when, where, etc.. Q 7/8 is also ambiguous especially w/o any consistent enforcement mechanism or knowing consistently where the money is going - I could spend the \$25 on bait and get better return. Circle hooks are always a good avocation for live lining - go for that!!

In my area, Manasquan River and Upper Barnegat Bay, a lack of bait is of prime concern. No bait, no fish!

Some of your questions are best answered by striped bass biologists, not fishermen.

Do something SOON!!!!!!!

Seeing what the slot limits have done for the RedFish, (which has made a remarkable comeback) I believe it will also benefit the Striped Bass. I truly believe the "Cows" should always be released for the future of the Bass

We had so little sightings of pogies. Until we see more bait I do not think we will see more stripers or bluefish.

Up here in Maine, the striper fishery has dropped by 80% in last 5 years for me. We tend to get the so-called leftovers from down south of us and water temp and baitfish dictate how the fishing is going to be. I am now debating fishing the areas of Montauk and the Mass area from now on when the fishing is hot. I used to catch 500-700 stripers a year, this year, 83 and it was work. Thanks again and willing to answer any questions and listen to ideas.....

outlaw j hooks circle hooks only

there is no striped bass management !

Treble hooks should also be banned

Sandy made no access to NJ beaches at the beginning of Striper migration and it is still in effect. There will be practically NO Striper fishing in NJ this fall.

Eliminate all commercial fishing for at least 10 years

End commercial bass fishing NOW

Commercial menhaden catch limits should be reduced.

I believe the population has declined to a point that re-institution of a moratorium should be considered (on the Chesapeake Bay, at least) until the numbers have reached healthy, sustainable levels.

Just end commercial fishing for stripers, period.

Once again, I caught no fish this summer so I left one answer blank. It gets discouraging throwing a fly for a few hours and not getting a strike.

I fished about 70 times this season and caught 11 fish. One was 28" and rest were 12-14". This is the first time in the past 3-4 years that I have seen small fish. All fish were caught by the end of June - skunked the remainder of the season.

Obviously, more preservation of the menhaden and herring fisheries is needed. The commercial boys are cleaning these forage fish out.

The 2010 season was the best I have seen in years - big schools of fish and lots of big, healthy fish. I caught a 28 lber on a sand eel fly in about 2 feet of water - a personal best for shallow water. Last year, there were fewer fish overall and fewer big fish, but it was still a good season. This year, there were much fewer fish overall, almost no big fish and 75% of the fish I caught had the macobacteriosis lesions and I didn't keep one fish. Very disturbing trend, especially when combined with the other pressures being put on the striper population - overfishing, commercial harvesting of forage fish, poaching, etc.

Where are the schoolies gone? Have seen very few schoolies over the past 5 years

We need to address the long-term management of menhaden, as well as other forage foods, in the total management of striper resources.

Make Striped Bass a protected game fish.

Enforcement is non-existent in my area so bag limits are rarely followed

Most of the striped bass I fish for are in the Cape Fear River, NC. Down here, habitat loss is really hurting these fish and there is currently a moratorium in the river. It would be nice to see more funds going into the health of these wintering grounds so the fish can get back on their feet.

Have sportsmen participate in more selection of regulations.

have no idea how to answer #6 above. For me, striper fishing has deteriorated over the past 5 years. Have done somewhat better on the Vineyard the last year but I think that is related to increased knowledge of where to go. I also fish in Maine near the Kennebec and striper fishing there has declined markedly the last few years according to everyone I talked to.

I fished significantly off Monomoy point off Chatham this year and the fishing both in numbers and size were outstanding. On different trips for tuna we stopped for an hour and a half twice to fish for stripers and between the two days and the approx. 3 hours we fished with 5 guys we caught a total of over 100 "keeper bass". By the way we released every one of them but 2. The fishing was excellent this year! That was on the open water. Inside Bass River where my summer home is I fished the estuary and river significantly this year. The numbers of fish inside were less than years past and smaller. They also did not seem to stay around this year inside for a long period of time. We caught mostly schoolie bass between 13/14" to 19/24" were the most common size. Tight Lines! Look forward to next year. I've been fishing the cape for 40 years! Make rec Strippier fisherman like me pay more money so we can do more conservation. Gone are the days of FREE fishing.

I attended the hearing in the State House in MA last year. Unfortunately, there are many, many more commercial voices than recreational voices. Question 5 I have no answer for that question

I prefer a slot limit so that the bigger breeding bass are returned to the water, and because it allows an angler to keep a wounded (gut hooked) fish to be harvested rather than returned to the water to die. I would end the stamp system after it is completed because I don't believe the funds would be correctly allocated.

Obviously I don't trust state/federal government with funds that would be collected in question 7/8 as current enforcement is horrible i.e. gill nets in Maryland so there must be some oversight of how this money is used.

Why not circle hooks for flies as well?

Should be made a game fish, free from commercial take!!

end commercial fishing

I am for reduction of the harvest by all of us, but the real gap is in enforcement. Too many folks just flaunting the regulations. I am catch and release, but I am also not against the taking of a reasonable size fish. As for those who say it is for the table and a necessity, I see very few folks who are hungry fishing for this species. Those who take too many are usually funneling their catch to the restaurant trade.

Focus more attention on Rhode Island !!!

Stop commercial fishing!!!!!!!!!!!!

More schoolies around this year than in the last four or five. Spring/early summer run was very poor while fall run was better than previous years. Total catch was up almost 90% from previous year due primarily to the abundance of school size fish 25" and under, but still down 40% from 2010 and 60% from 2009.

It seems like we were catching a lot more & larger fish in the past. And a hell of a lot less bait fish (herring). Maybe that's the problem not enough bait fish - or commercial fishing ??

keep pressure on to get bunker back - there is very limited bait from years past and we see a direct correlation with the fish. No need to keep breeding fish. Take a picture and release. Slot size for all states for three to four years would help restore the stocks.

promote catch-and-release; stripers are too valuable to kill.

Should have a narrow slot limit in the 20" range, 1 per person per day (these size fish are better eating and healthier too, low mercury, PCB, etc), and a trophy category for true trophies, at least 45" or more, with a tag system similar to deer and a limit of 1 or 2 per person per year. Stripers are the only good inshore fishery left along much of the east coast that we haven't destroyed yet. When was the last time we had good fishing close to shore for large cod, pollock, halibut, etc? We need to protect the one good fishery we have left that is accessible to average anglers of average financial means.

Don't allow charter captains to live bait with treble hooks !

Stripers Forever should educate, not "advocate that circle hooks be required". Over time more and more fisherman are voluntarily changing to circle hook use because they work and allow a clean release if desired.

#8 - there will always need to be funds available for conservation and education question #6...0%

stop killing so many bass. Doesn't matter the size kill fewer fish.

Make stripers a game fish and stop commercials altogether fishing for them.

Slot with one "trophy stamp" per year/per angler for larger bass, say over 45".

I found this questionnaire very slanted towards the objectives of SF. If you want to capture real data that can truly be taken seriously to further your cause I would advise you to seek more objective input. You miss a lot of potential data. For example I found there to be an abundant number of smaller fish around this summer. A plethora of bait with heavy blitz-like activity through June and July. I had seen a decrease in the number of smaller fish years past so I was pleased to see a healthy number of healthy young fish. I also found in general a good number of fish but they seemed concentrated in groups so without a boat my success was dramatically less. There was for about the 3rd or 4th year in a row a huge abundance of bait, mainly herring I believe. To me I saw signs that give me much hope in the health of the striper populations, but from your questions you would not be able to get any of that kind of info.

There should be a moratorium put on keeping large striped bass. No need to kill a fish over 40"

I caught no fish for the 6th year running. I don't hire guides. Tom (Ackerman) and I went small mouth fishing. He sold his boat. Frans gave up on stripers this year and fishes small mouth and blues

Maryland fisheries management is more corrupt than anyone could ever imagine. This is a good place to start your efforts.

I would be good with #7 if I thought it could be successfully implemented.

One fish per day limit!

I fish in multiple states for stripers. Pennsylvania (Del River), Maine, New Jersey, and New York State. The fishing in all areas has declined noticeably in the number of fish. In New Jersey, the fish are considerably larger, but there are less of them. In Maine, the fishing has declined alarmingly over the last few years. I just started fishing in New York State, so cannot comment on that yet.

Something has to be done about bycatch. Too many times I have seen hundreds of dead bass in the NY Bight. I think commercial fisherman are killing the fisheries

Start a 40" Club with recognition certificates/ badges or stickers provided to those anglers and the boat captain that release these breeders.- that are poor table fare. Once again I will raise the funds for this effort.

ALSO PROTECT THE FORAGE FROM COMMERCIAL OVERFISHING

Thank you for your hard work.