



## 2023 Spring Meeting - Act Now!

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Emilie Franke  
FMP Coordinator  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
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Ms. Franke & the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board,

I am writing you today on behalf of thousands of our concerned members. The technical committee meeting on March 30, 2023 brought to light some very alarming data. With a significant rise in harvest during 2022, estimated to be more than double that of the previous year, the probability of rebuilding by 2029 has decreased by 83-86%. We are now looking at a 14.6% probability of rebuilding, even less if Addendum 1 (commercial quota transfers) is approved.

We have reached a defining moment in the recovery of the striped bass stock. The board can choose to either act now or delay action and derail the rebuilding timeline. Choosing the latter would clearly violate the requirements within Amendment 7. The board needs to stick to the 10-year rebuilding schedule with a minimum 50% chance of success.

Four straight years of poor recruitment in the Chesapeake combined with a massive increase in harvest has left us in a horrible position. We are removing more fish from the population than are entering it, many of whom are larger spawning fish, it is simply not sustainable. We suggested a harvest moratorium and seasonal closures during the public comment period leading up to Amendment 7. Neither was put in place and here we are again, trying to correct a management plan which to this point has failed.

**Stripers Forever and our members ask that the board act swiftly in removing Addendum 1 from consideration on May 2nd. Instead, initiate an Addendum which would greatly reduce harvest and make certain that the stock successfully rebuilds by 2029.**

Task the technical committee with developing options to adjust the current management plan. And hopefully, when the time comes, we urge the board to consider seasonal closures (specifically in and around spawning areas) as well as a coastwide commercial and recreational harvest moratorium. There is no time to waste, even the slightest delay will have a grave effect on rebuilding the stock.

Sincerely,



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