



## Agenda

### Part 1: Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey Results – M. Luisi

- Presentation of WDS results

### Part 2: Maryland Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee – D. Blazer

- MD Management Alternatives / Virginia & PRFC Possible actions
- Long Term / Regulatory & Legislative Ideas

### Part 3: ASMFC / MAFMC Updates – M. Luisi

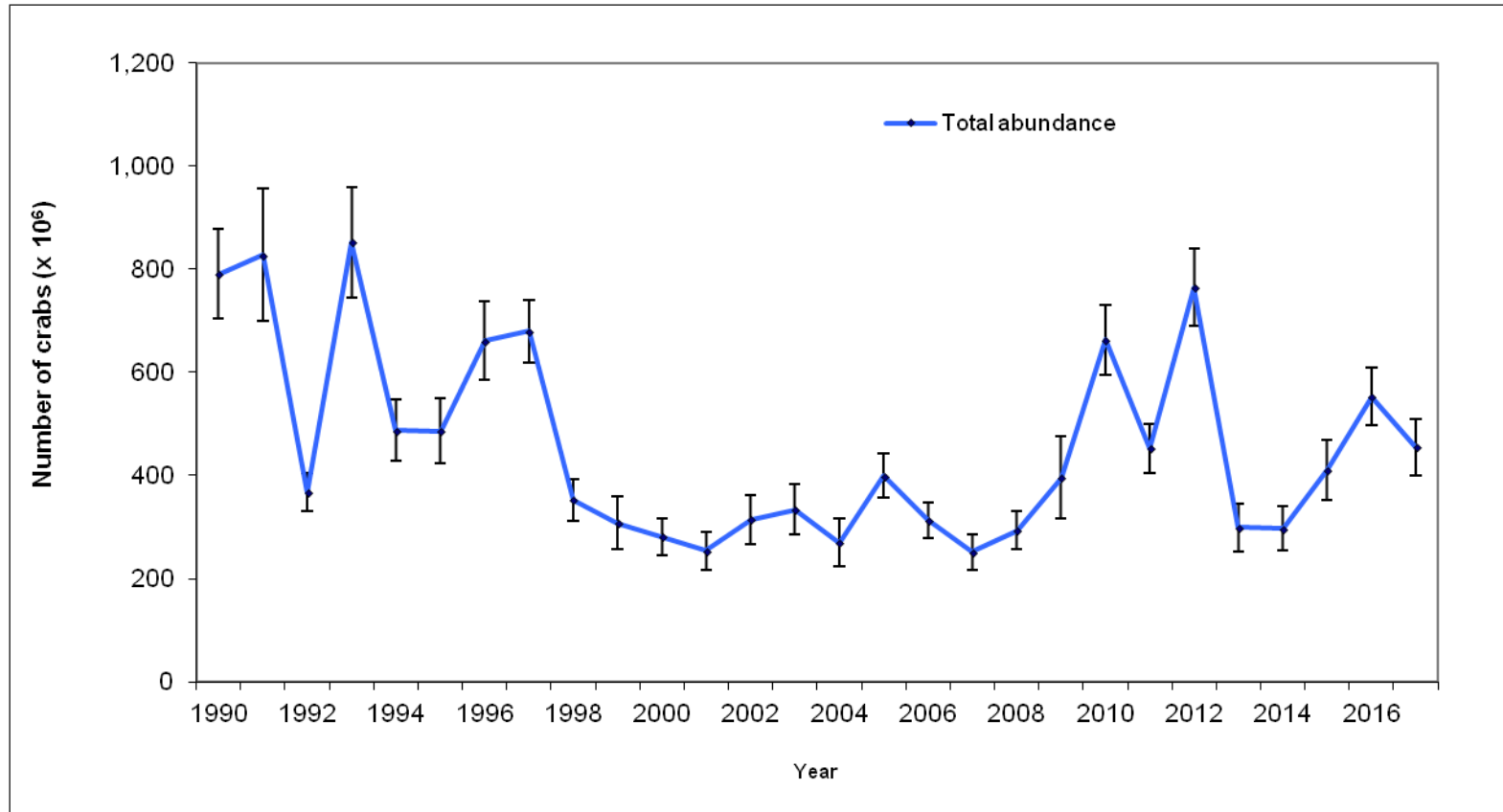
- Summer Flounder
- Black Sea Bass
- Cobia
- Tautog
- Spot / Croaker Assessment
- Striped Bass Addendum





## Part 1: Total Abundance – 455 M (-18% from 553 M)

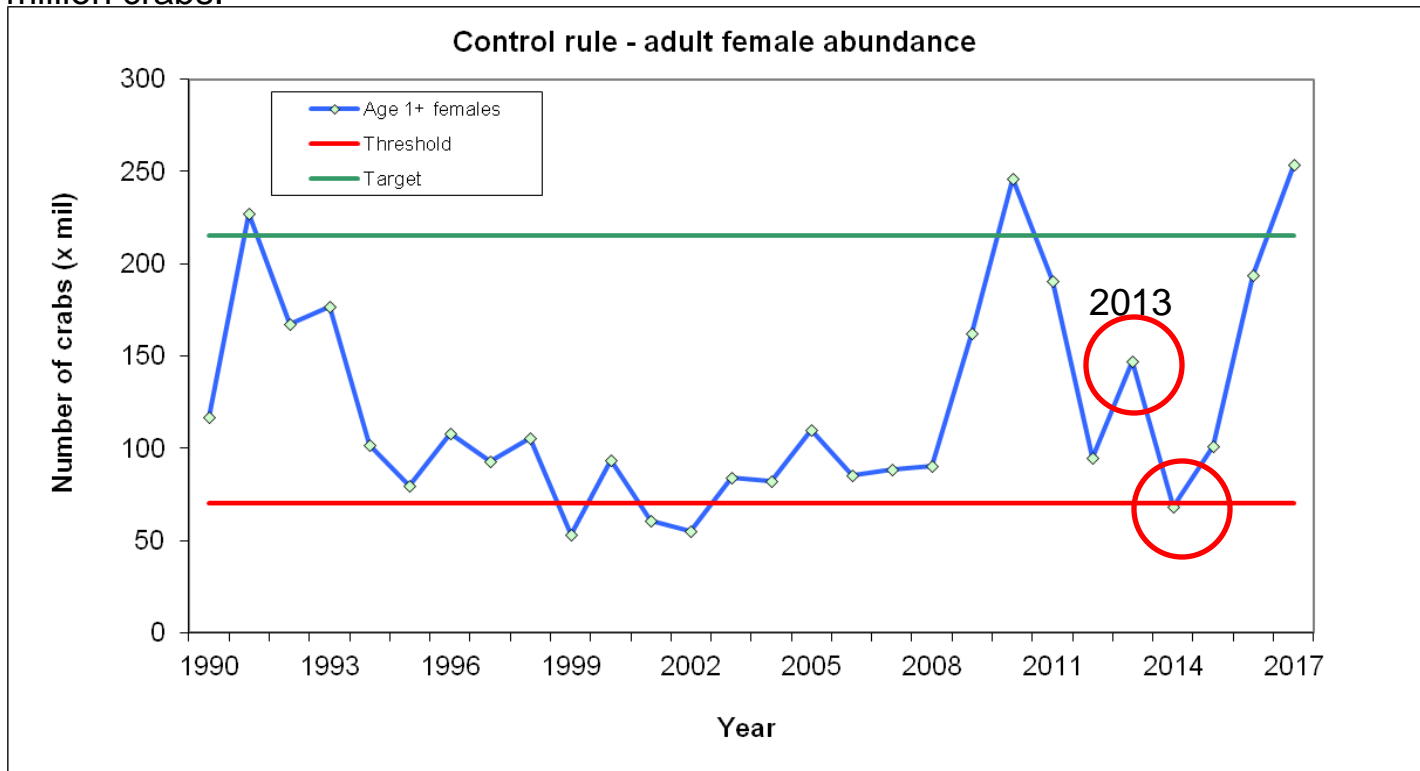
Figure 1. Winter dredge survey estimate of **total blue crab abundance (males and females)** 1990-2017. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Abundance in 2017 is estimated to be 455 million crabs.





## Age 1+ Females – 254 M (+31% from 194 M)

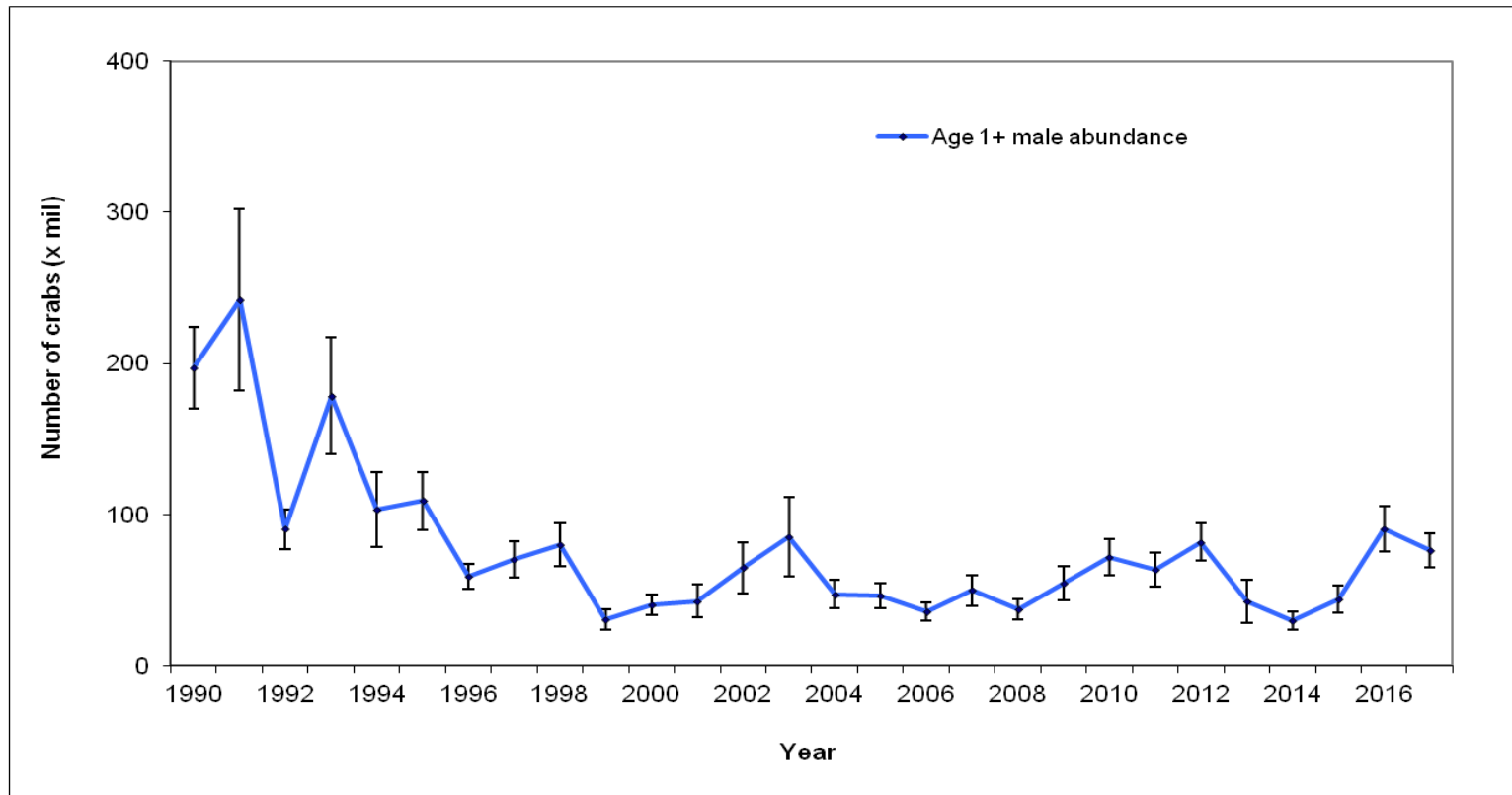
Figure 3. Winter dredge survey estimate of **abundance of age 1+ female blue crabs ( $\geq 60$  mm carapace width)** 1990-2017 with female-specific reference points. These are female crabs considered the 'exploitable stock' that will spawn within the coming year. The minimum safe threshold is set at 70 million and the target is 215 million age 1+ female crabs. Age 1+ female abundance in 2017 is estimated to be 253 million crabs.





## Age 1 + Males – 76 M (-16% from 91 M)

Figure 4. Winter dredge survey estimate of **abundance of age1+ male blue crabs ( $\geq 60$  mm carapace width)** 1990-2017. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Abundance of age 1+ male crabs in 2017 is estimated to be 76 million crabs.





## Juvenile Abundance – 125 M (-54% from 271 M)

Figure 2. Winter dredge survey estimate of **abundance of juvenile blue crabs (age 0)**, 1990-2017. These are male and female crabs measuring less than 60mm across the carapace. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Juvenile abundance in 2017 is estimated to be 125 million crabs.

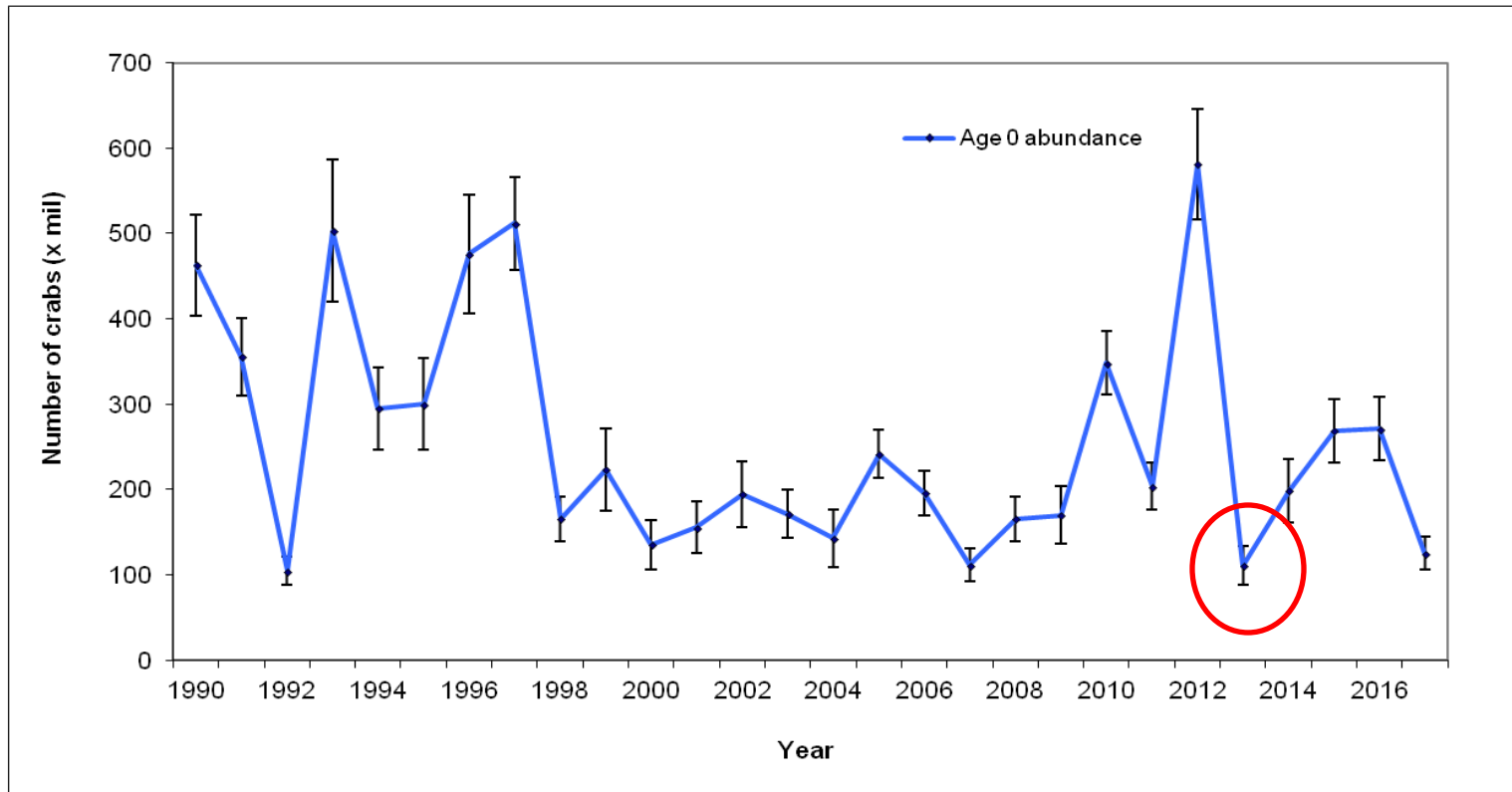




Figure 9. The percentage of **all female** blue crabs removed from the population each year by fishing relative to the female-specific target (25.5%) and threshold (34%) exploitation rates, 1990 through 2015. Exploitation rate for 2016 was approximately 15%.

Exploitation rate (% removed) is the number of female crabs harvested within a year divided by the female population (age 0 and age 1+) estimated at the beginning of the year.

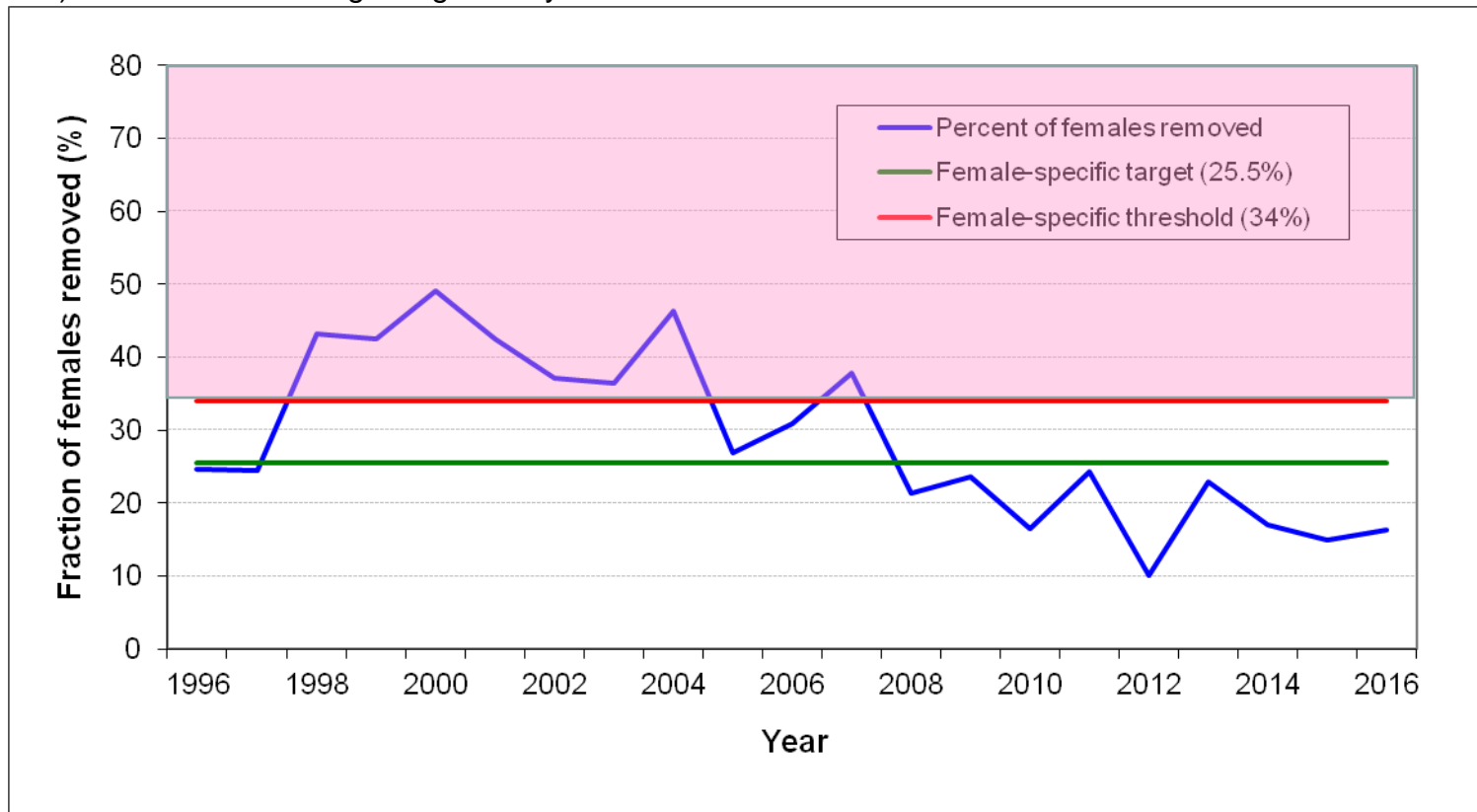




Figure 10. The percentage of all male blue crabs removed from the population each year by fishing, 1990 – 2015, relative to the conservation trigger of 33%.  
Exploitation rate for 2015 was approximately 22%.

Exploitation rate (% removed) is the number of male crabs harvested within a year divided by the male population (age 0 and age 1+) estimated at the beginning of the year.

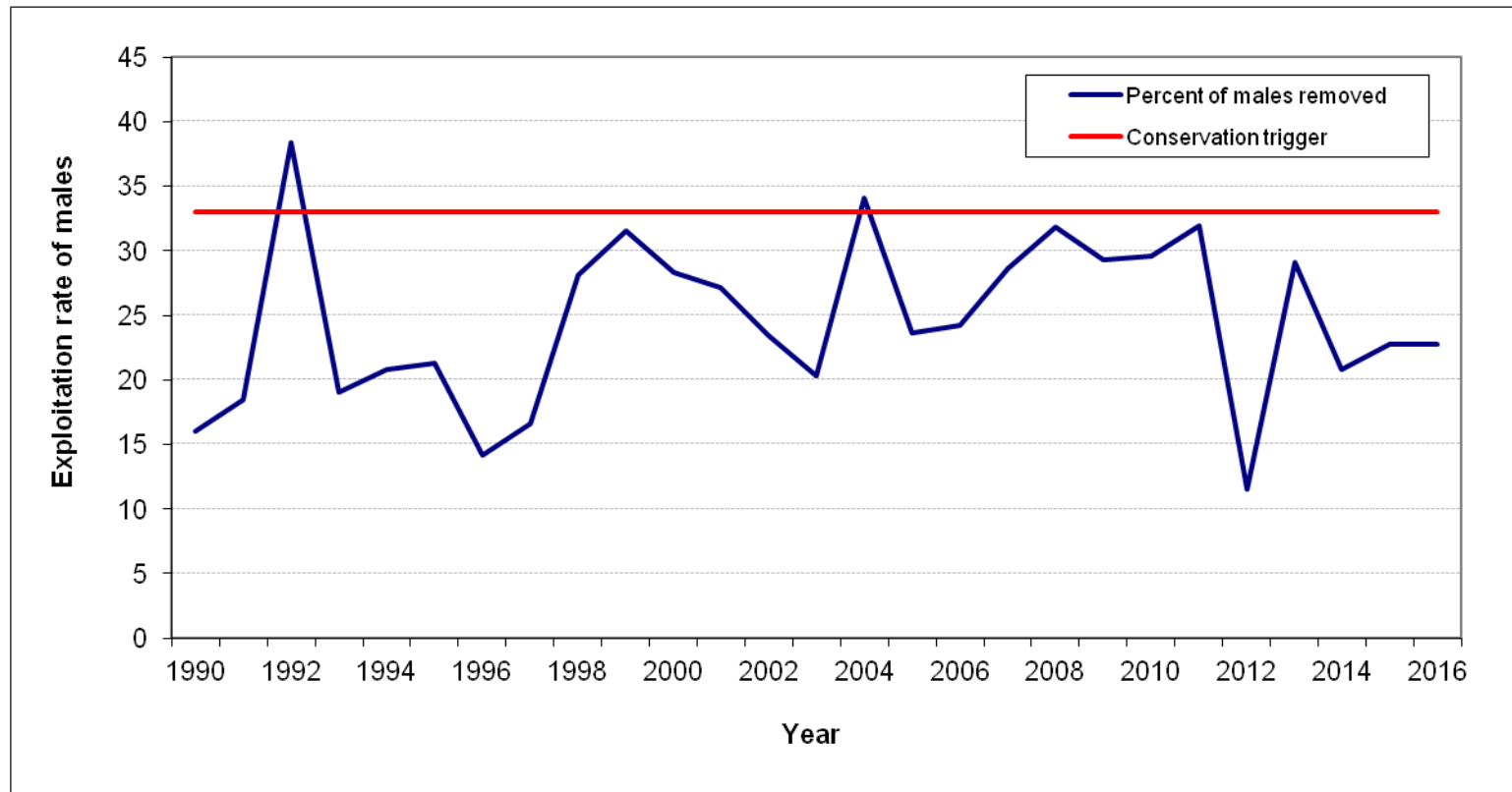
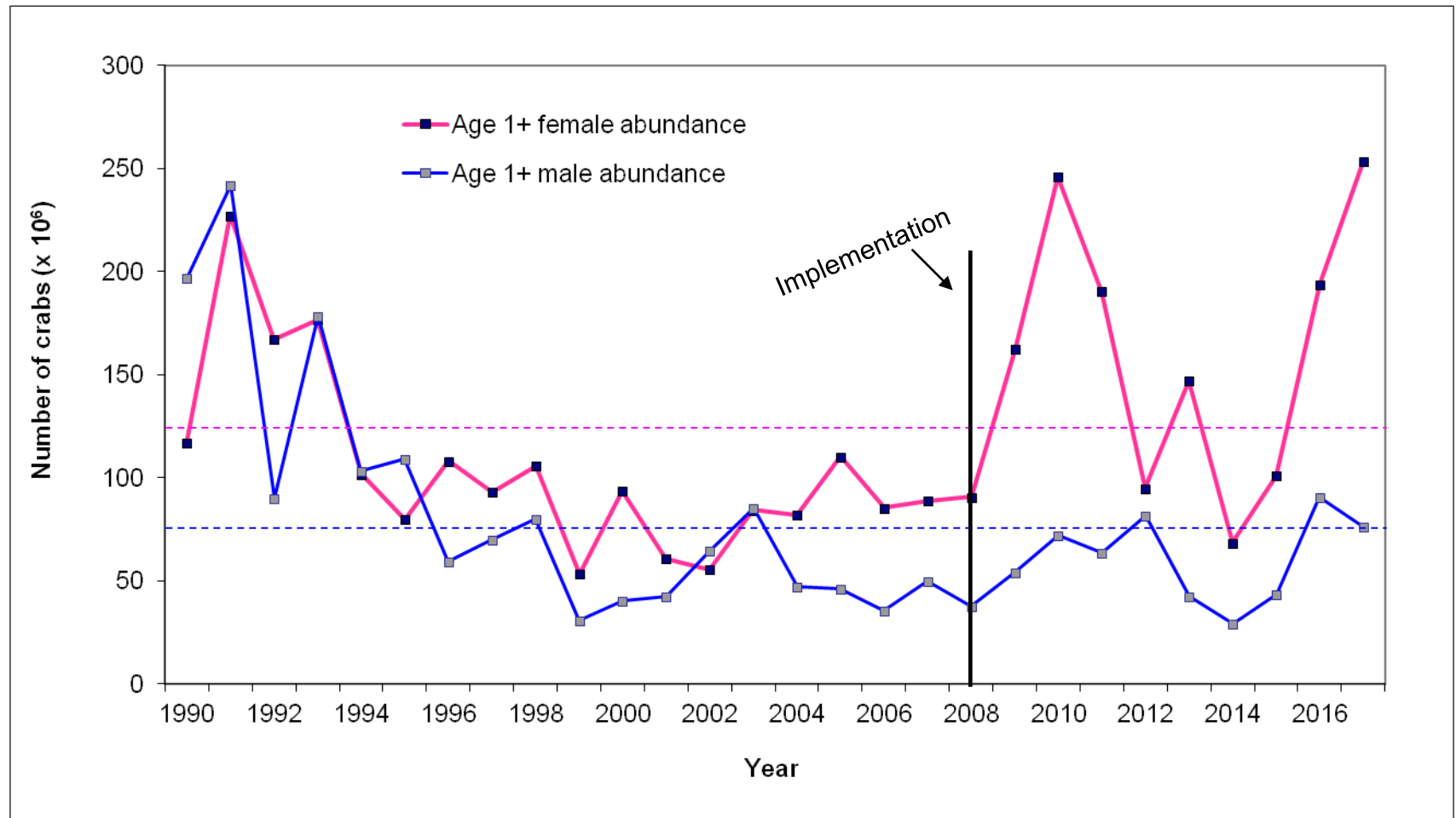




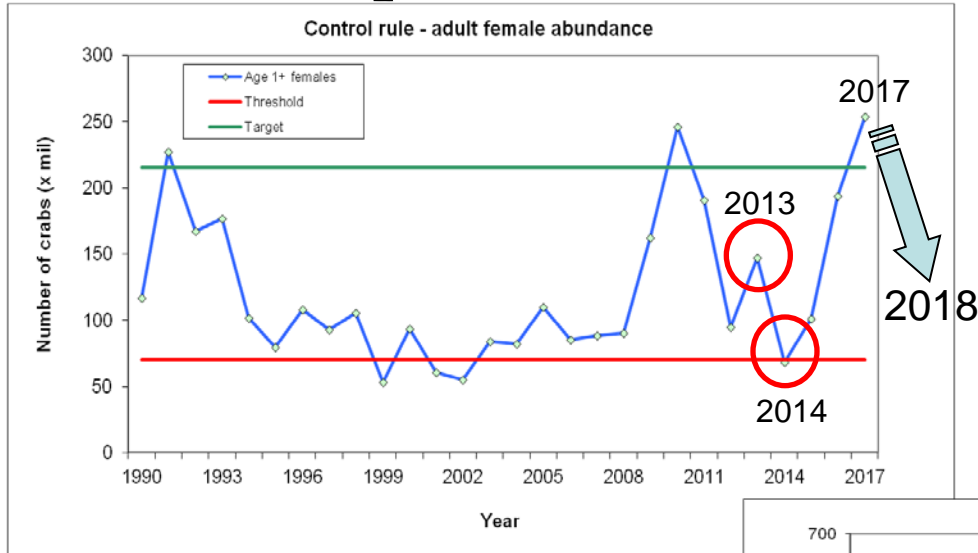
Figure 5. Winter dredge survey estimate of **abundance of age1+ male and female blue crabs ( $\geq 60$  mm carapace width)** with average abundance.



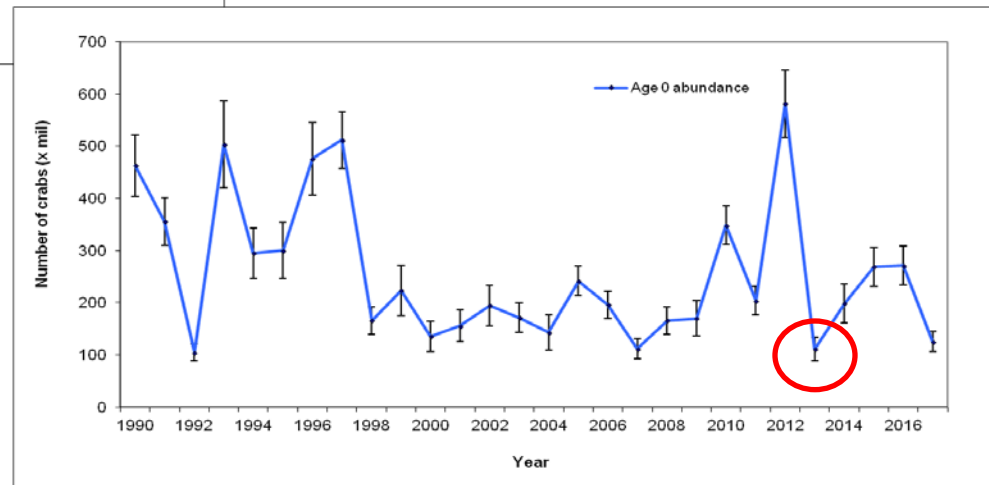




## Expectations – Mature Female Crabs



With Juvenile abundance as low as it is, there is an expectation that the Age 1+ female estimate next year will drop...as it did from 2013 to 2014. Our harvest controls this year (female bushel limits) were developed to minimize/control this drop in Age 1+ females next year





## Part 2: MD Management Alternatives & Virginia-PRFC Mngt. Actions





# Long Term Regulatory / Legislative Proposals

## *(SB 59 /HB 1314) – Holiday Crab Harvest Times*



- General Assembly passed House Bill 1314 and Senate Bill 59 - bills go into effect July 1, 2017
- Department can adopt regulations to permit commercial harvesters to take crabs using legal gears one hour earlier than current rules permit during Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Labor Day holidays and the day before the holidays.
- The Department cannot submit the required regulations to enact this legislation until that date.
- Earliest effective date if submitted by emergency after July 1 effective date of the bill, would be mid-July.



## Long Term Regulatory / Legislative Proposals

### *Crew Requirements for CB6 and CB9 Authorizations*

- The crew requirements were created in 1994 as part of the limited entry legislation (SB 494).
- The legislation was originally drafted to restrict commercial crabbers to 300 crab pots per licensee, unless accompanied by crew members authorized under the person's TFL. The licensee could set and fish 300 additional crab pots for each additional crew member authorized on the licensee's license, but not more than an additional 600 pots (900 pots/boat max).
- The CB6 and the CB9 were the "one crew" and "two crew" options. The bill was amended to add qualifications to get a CB6/CB9 (you must have been licensed to catch crabs for commercial purposes on 4/1/1994) and to make clear that those CB6 and CB9 authorizations were to run with the license, including any transfer, but if the license were to be revoked or relinquished to the Department, the Department was to award the unused crew authorization to another licensee based on regs we wrote to determine that process.
- DNR didn't write those regs, instead just issuing them to folks on the wait list. The total number of CB6/CB9's issued by the Department was to not exceed the number granted by August 31, 1994, so there was one license renewal period to determine how many CB6/CB9 authorizations were to exist forever.
- A statutory change would need to be made to alter this requirement



## Long Term Regulatory / Legislative Proposals

### *Workday Hours Flexibility*



- Statutes still limit flexibility (number of hours and set and catch time) for trotlines outside of the new holidays law that will go into effect in July
- Regulations could be altered to a certain degree (staying within the confines mentioned above)
- Note that regulations wouldn't be able to be in effect for this season because the holidays law needs to be put in regulation and DNR cannot alter the law till the permanent regulation change is in effect in October (even if an emergency is effective earlier)



## Long Term Regulatory / Legislative Proposals

### *Sponge Crab Importation Flexibility*



- 2002 – importation allowed year round
- 2003 – current regulations which allow importation between April 25 through July 5
- Could change regulation to allow public notice for altering these dates

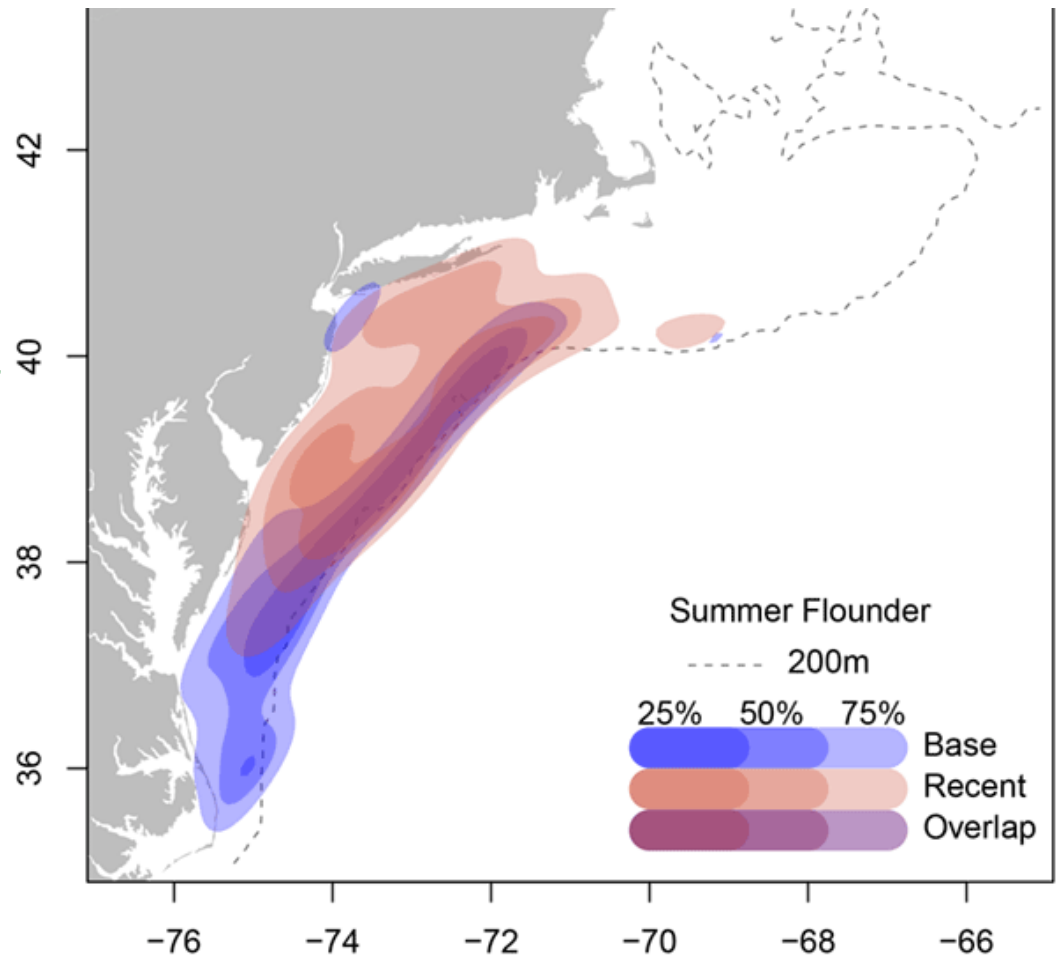




## Part 3: ASMFC & MAFMC Updates



June 6-8, 2017  
Norfolk, Virginia



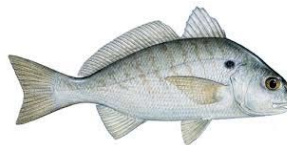


## ASMFC & MAFMC Updates



### May 8 – 10, 2017 in Alexandria Virginia

- *Summer Flounder: (NJ non-compliance finding)*
- *BSB: Status Quo Federal Waters for 2017*
- *Cobia: Possibility that ASMFC will take over Mngt.*
- *Tautog: Regional Management for 2018 / Hearings*
- *Spot / Croaker: Assessments were NOT accepted*







## ASMFC & MAFMC Updates

### Striped Bass Addendum V – 10% Increase in Harvest

- *October 2015: Board approval to conduct a stock assessment UPDATE*
- *October 2016: SA Update presented to Board – Support for additional TC work*
- *February 2017: Initiated Addendum V (10% increase in harvest)*
  - *This was based on where  $F$  was in 2015 compared to the target*
  - *PDT developed the addendum – MD was involved on this team*
  - *2016 harvest data – coast wide – didn't help our case*
- *May 2017: Board to review and approve addendum V for public comment*
  - *Motion to approve failed (5 – 10)*





## ~Looking Ahead~

### *Various paths we can take...Changes to Regulations/Quotas*

#### A New ASMFC Addendum

- Could lead to relief from Ad IV reductions
- Timeline would likely be August or October 2017

~Late 2017~ or ~2018~

#### Conservation Equivalency

- Write a CE proposal for the Spring ASMFC meeting
- Must still achieve a 20.5% reduction (Ad IV)
- Trade offs

August 2017 or 2018

#### New Benchmark Assessment (2018)

- Sex Ratio
- New BRPs

2019/2020



# QUESTIONS ?