

2015 Striped Bass Management Measures Under Consideration

January 27, 2015

Sport Fisheries Advisory

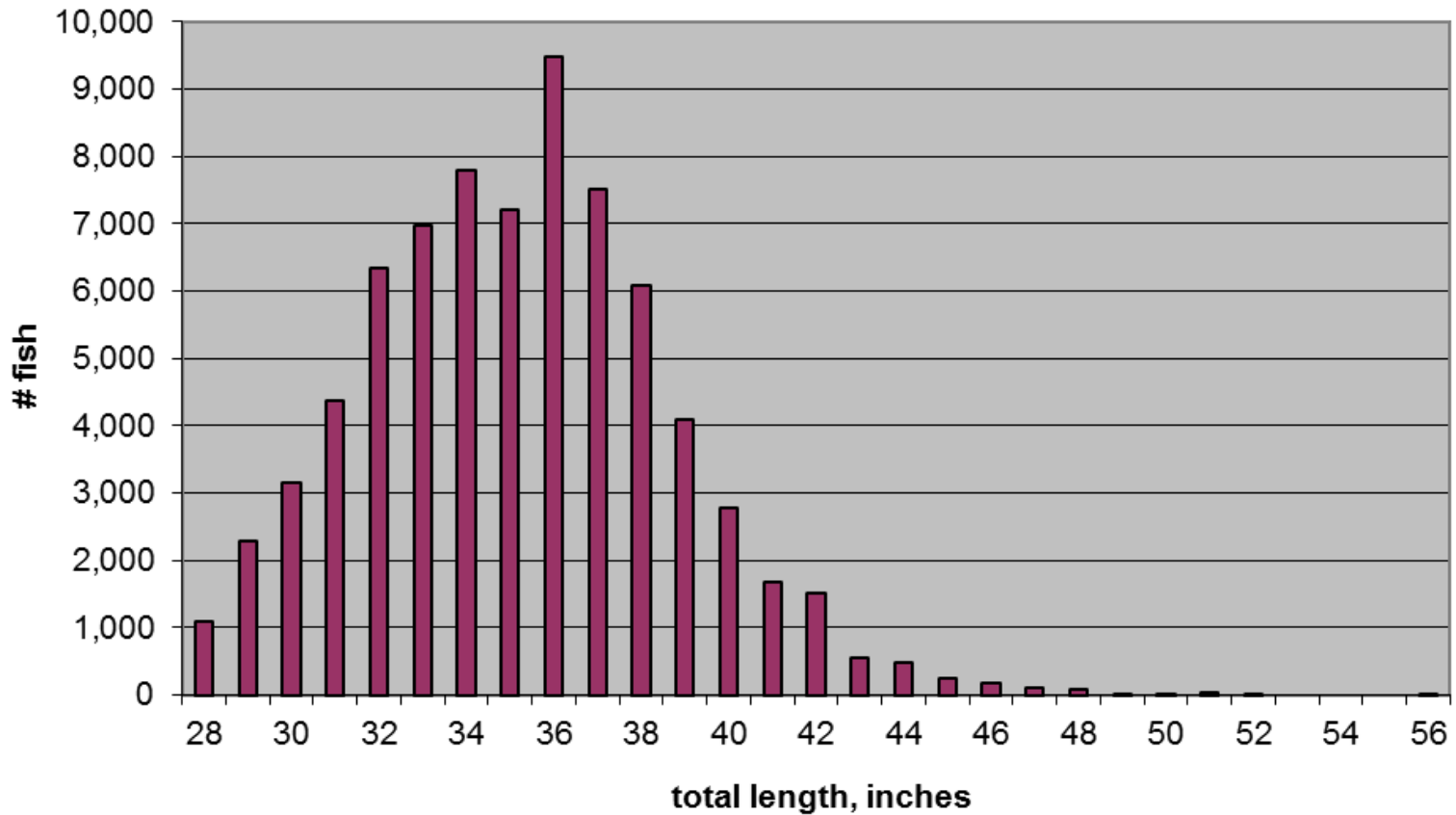
Commission Meeting

Atlantic and Coastal Bays

- Season: Same, January 1 to December 31
- Minimum Size: Same, 28"
- Creel Limit: Reduced from 2 to 1 fish / person
- Approved by ASMFC Technical Committee

Spring Trophy Fishery

2011-2013 trophy season striped bass size distribution



Spring Trophy Fishery (STF)

Option STF1 – APPROVED BY ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Sector	Season	Creel Limit	Size Limit
Private angler and charter boat	Same, 3 rd Saturday in April to May 15	Same, 1 fish / person	Increased from a minimum of 28" to 36"

- Pros:
 - Maintains traditional trophy fishery. Minimum 36" in size limit when trophy fishery first opened.
 - Consistent with VA and PRFC spring trophy rules.
- Cons:
 - Focuses harvest on female spawning stock. Need to keep perspective that this fishery is a small fraction of the coastal migrant harvest.
 - Concern that there will be increased difficulty to catch a legal fish, especially during the first two weeks in May.

Spring Trophy Fishery (STF)

Option STF2 - APPROVED BY ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

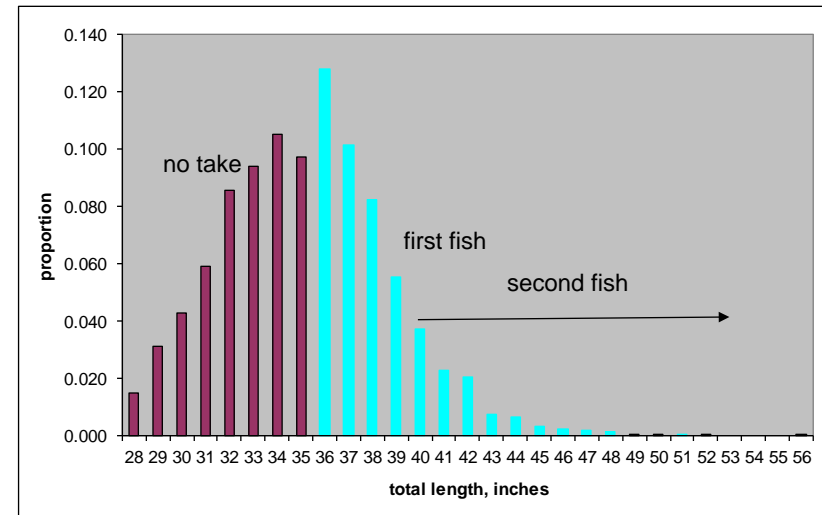
- Same as Option STF1 with one exception.
 - **Charter boats are allowed to have one angler aboard their boat to possess a fish between 28 and 36". This is not an additional fish but in lieu of a fish 36+".**
 - Request came from a member of the MD Charter Boat Industry Association who can explain the rationale behind this request.
- Pros:
 - Maintains traditional trophy fishery. Minimum 36" in size limit when trophy fishery first opened.
 - Allows charter boats an opportunity to allow passengers to bring home a fish when not able to catch a fish >36".
- Cons:
 - Focuses harvest on female spawning stock. Need to keep perspective that this fishery is a small fraction of the coastal migrant harvest.
 - Concern that there will be increased difficulty to catch a legal fish by anglers, especially during the first two weeks in May.
 - Inconsistent with VA and PRFC, and between private and charter.

Spring Trophy Fishery (STF)

Option STF3 – REQUIRES ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REVIEW

Sector	Season	Creel Limit	Size Limit
Private angler and charter boat	Same, 3 rd Saturday in April to May 15	Increase from 1 to 2 fish / person	1 fish 36-40" 1 fish >40"

- MD Charter Boat Industry Association requested examination of a 2 fish option to help address marketing disadvantages with options being considered in other coastal states (see handout in folder).
 - Pros:
 - Maintains opportunity to catch a trophy fish.
 - Mitigates 2 fish marketing disadvantages with other coastal states.
 - Cons:
 - Focuses harvest on female spawning stock. Need to keep perspective that this fishery is a small fraction of the coastal migrant harvest.
 - Inconsistent with VA and PRFC. However, they may consider this approach.

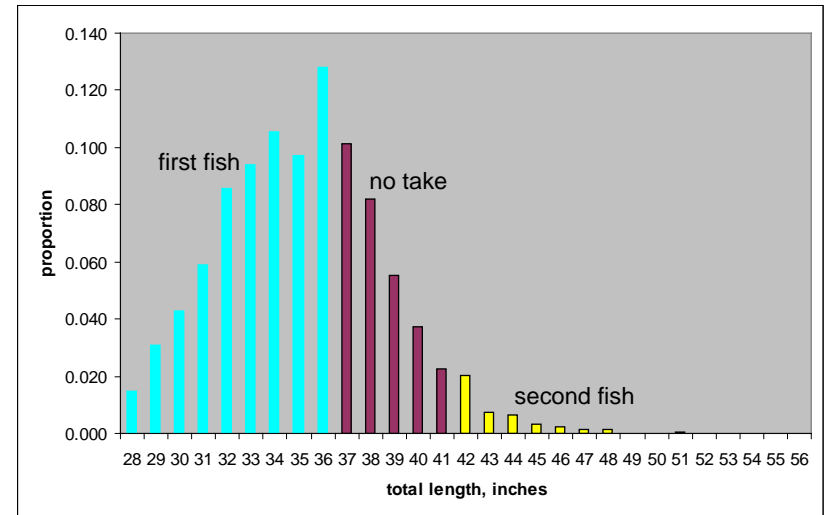


Spring Trophy Fishery (STF)

Option STF4 – REQUIRES ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REVIEW

Sector	Season	Creel Limit	Size Limit
Private angler and charter boat	Same, 3 rd Saturday in April to May 15	Increase from 1 to 2 fish / person	1 fish 28-36" 1 fish >42"

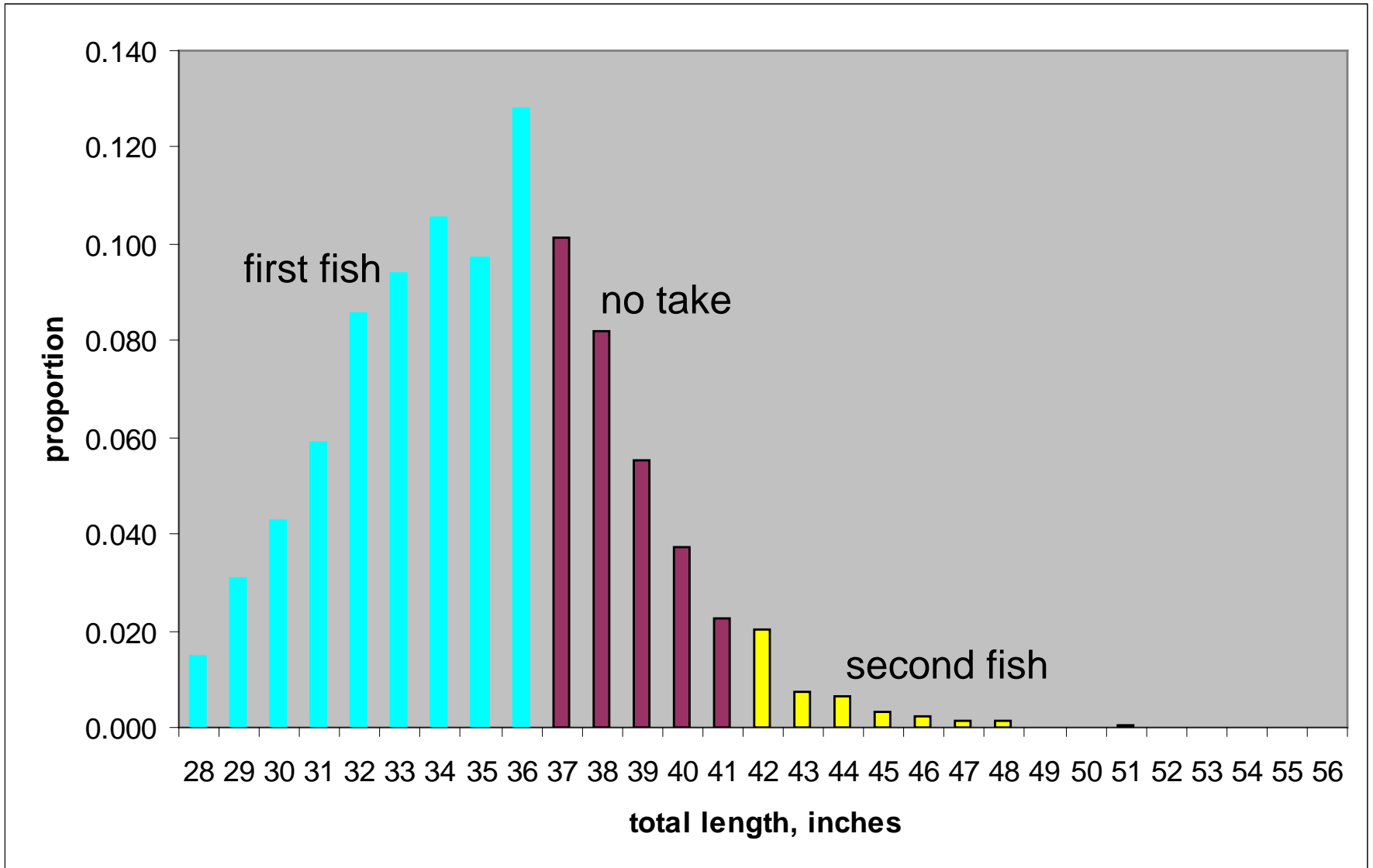
- Solomons Charter Boat Association submitted this option via letter (1/26/15) to SFAC (see letter in folder). Vice- Chairman Dave Sikorski requested it be reviewed.
 - Pros:
 - Maintains opportunity to keep a trophy fish.
 - Mitigates 2 fish and size marketing disadvantages with other coastal states.
 - Adds further protection to female spawning stock, especially largest.
 - Cons:
 - Opportunity to catch a trophy fish (>42") will be uncommon.
 - Some anglers will have to throw back a fish of a lifetime (36-42").
 - Potential impact to tournaments.



Spring Tournaments:

- 2014: 5 tournament winners ranged from 43.25 to 50"
- 2013: 7 tournament winners ranged from 41 to 50"

First fish 28-36", second fish 42" or larger



Summer / Fall (SFF)

Option SFF1 – APPROVED BY ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Sector	Season	Creel Limit	Size Limit
Private angler and charter boat	Same, May 16 to Dec 15	Same, 2 fish / person	Increased from a minimum of 18" to 20"

- Pros:
 - Maintains season and creel which have been a priority expressed by anglers.
 - Allows lowest minimum size while still achieving required 20.5% reduction.
- Cons:
 - Will experience high discards of undersized fish, especially in 2015.

Option SFF2 – APPROVED BY ASMFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

- Same as Option SFF1 with the exception of the season.
 - Season closure of December 15 extended to December 20.