



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

Greater Atlantic  
Regional  
Fisheries Office

# Monkfish Fishery Status Update

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August 25, 2014

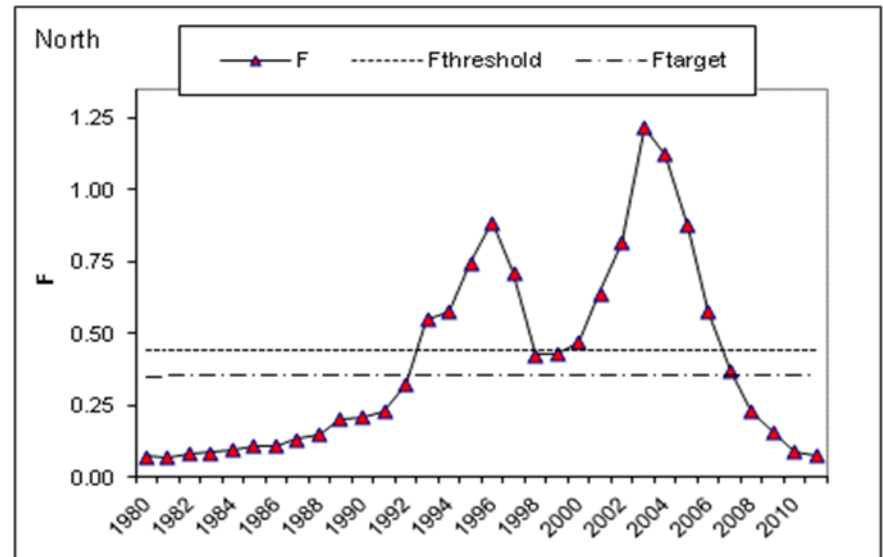
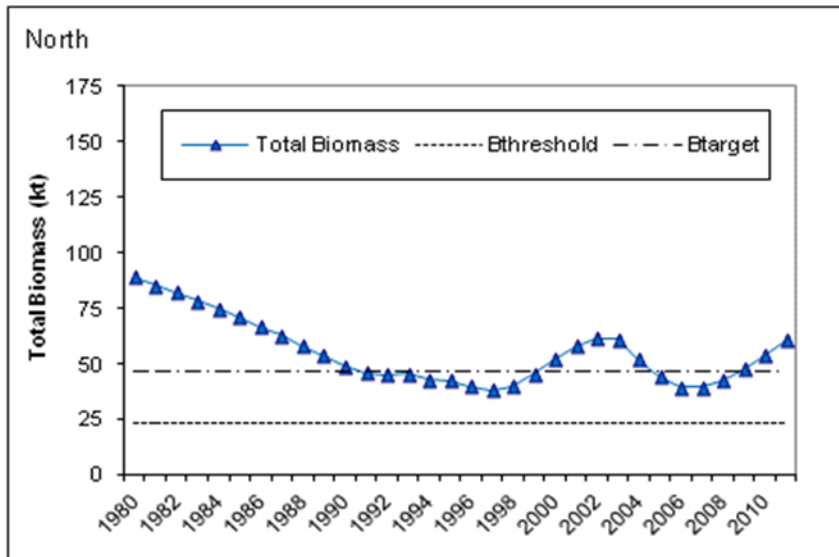


Source: [www.animaladay.blogspot.com](http://www.animaladay.blogspot.com)

# 2013 Assessment Update

## Northern Stock:

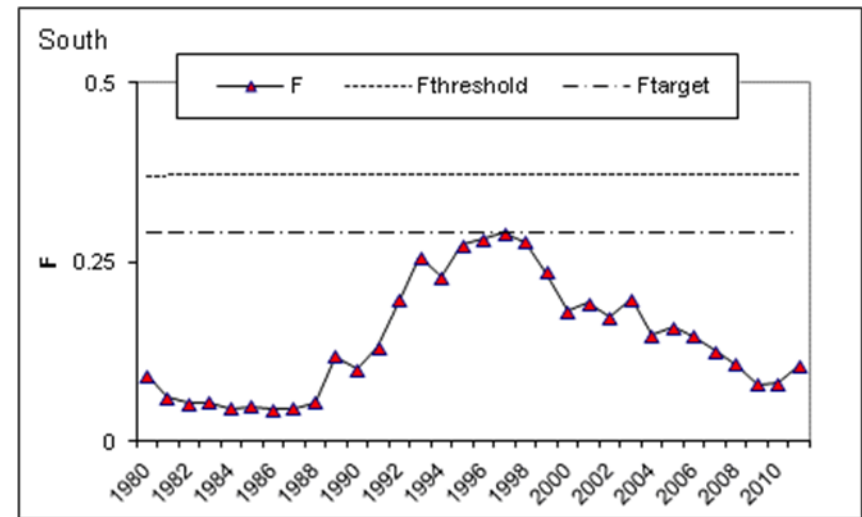
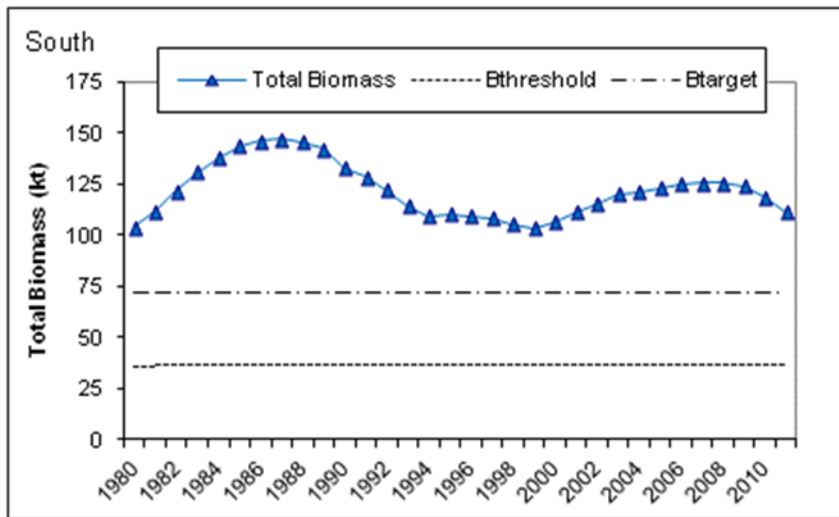
- Not overfished or subject to overfishing
- Positive biomass trend and very low  $F$
- Retrospective pattern improving, but still very large
- Still lots of uncertainty in assessment



# 2013 Assessment Update

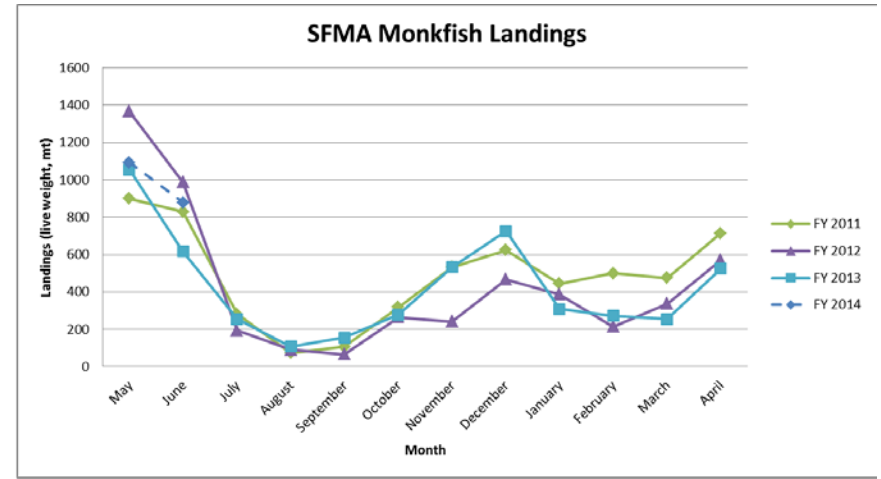
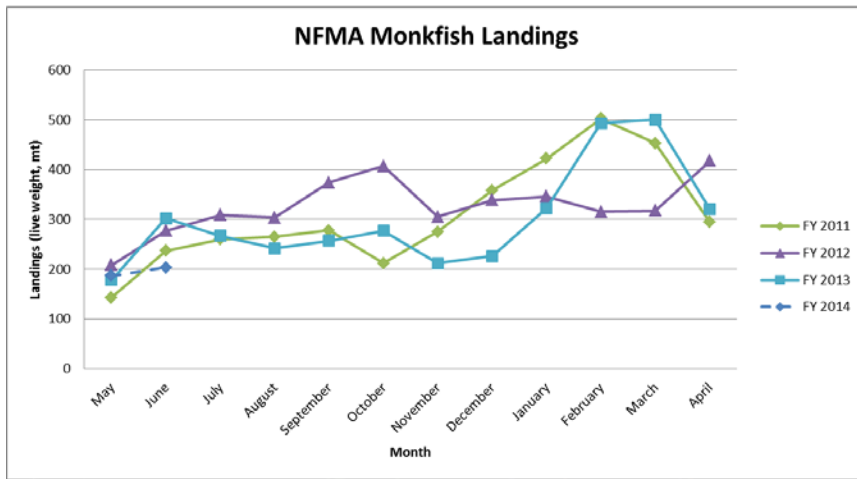
## Southern Stock:

- Not overfished or subject to overfishing
- Slight biomass decline and increase in F recently
- Retrospective pattern less severe than in North
- Still lots of uncertainty in assessment



# 2013 Emergency Action

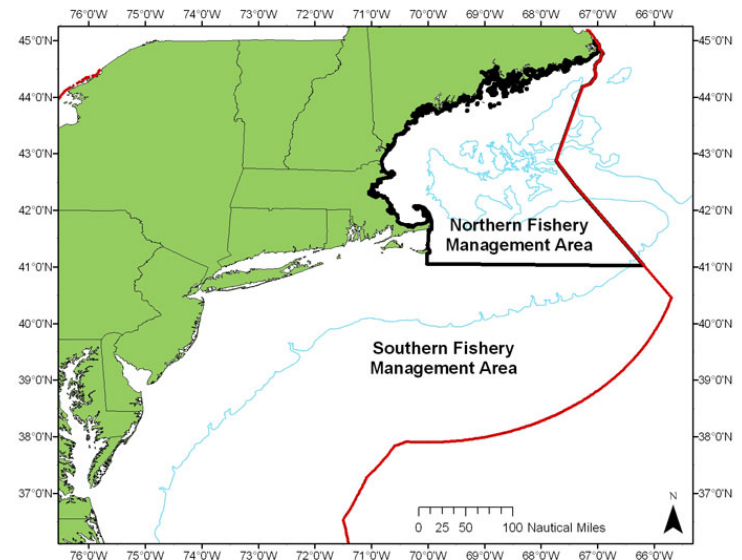
- Unlimited monkfish possession for Cat. C & D vessels fishing on a monk or groundfish DAS in the Northern Area
- **Landings followed recent trends:**
  - No increase in Northern Area landings
  - No apparent shift in effort to or from the Southern Area



# Framework 8

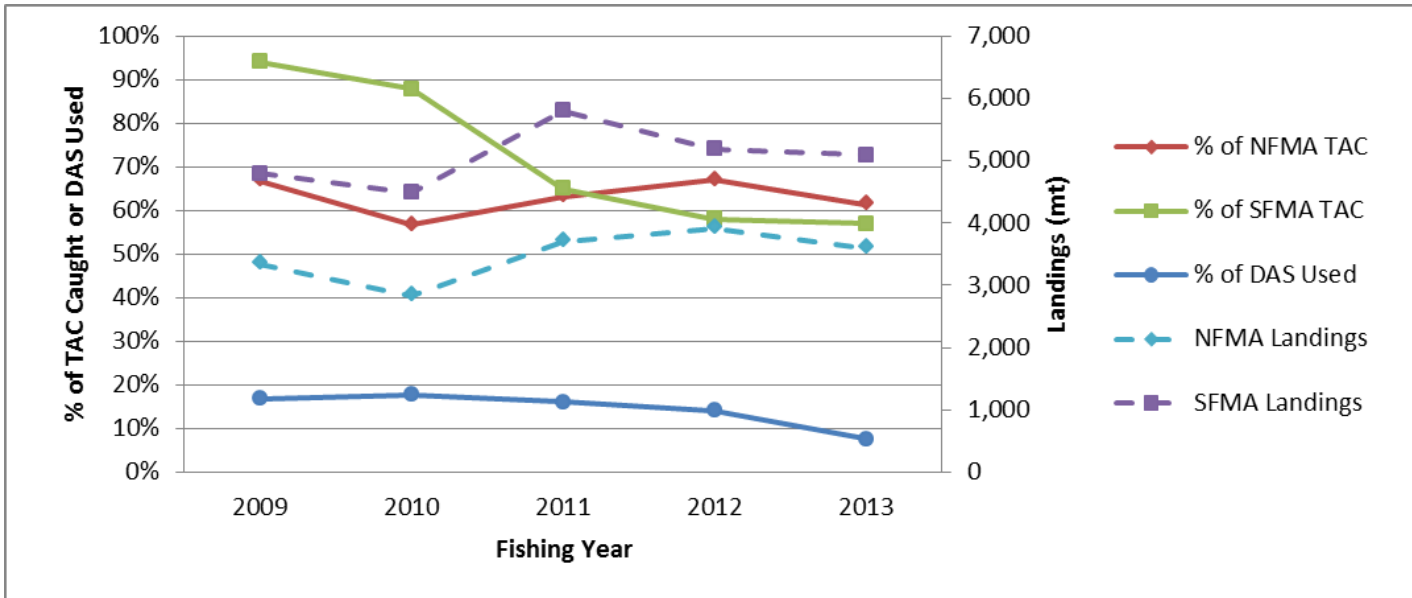
Effective July 18, 2014

1. Increased monkfish DAS allocations (46 DAS)
2. Increased Southern Area monkfish DAS limit (32 DAS)
3. Increased landing limits:
  - *Incidental* Northern Area limits (600 or 500 lb/groundfish DAS)
  - *Directed* Southern Area limits (610 or 500 lb/monk DAS)
4. Monk-only DAS can be used anytime
5. Cat. H vessels can now fish throughout the Southern Area



# How Are We Doing?

- We're still not fully harvesting our TACs
- NFMA and SFMA landings are relatively steady
- Very few allocated DAS are being used each year



# Whatever Happened to Sturgeon?

## December 2013 Biological Opinion:

- Continuation of monkfish fishery will not jeopardize the continued existence of Atlantic sturgeon and other species
- No further action is necessary to reduce sturgeon takes in the monkfish fishery



# Where Do We Go from Here?

## 1. Continue Developing A6

- Create monkfish ITQ program
- Integrate monkfish into groundfish sectors
- Allow monkfish DAS leasing
- Refine DAS allocations and landing limits
- Revise Monkfish/Groundfish FMP links
- Change RSA approach/measures

## 2. Revise other measures in FMP

- DAS allocations and limits
- North/South area restrictions
- Eliminate latent effort



Source: [www.illustrationsource.com](http://www.illustrationsource.com)



# Amendment 6

## **Sub-goal 1: Maximize yield**

Objective 1: Reduce the ratio of discards to pounds landed

Objective 2: Provide incentives to reduce discards of undersized monkfish

Objective 3: Ensure the full utilization of the ACT.

## **Sub-goal 2: Maximize efficiency in the fishery**

Objective 4: Allow vessels to more efficiently fish for monkfish

Objective 5: Allow vessels to better utilize monkfish incidental bycatch

## **Sub-goal 3: Simplify regulations**

Objective 6: Better integration of monkfish measures with other FMPs

Objective 7: Address existing geographic constraints on permit categories.

## **Sub-goal 4: Minimize disruption to current fleet distribution and composition**

Objective 8: Establish accumulation limits if catch shares are implemented

## **Sub-goal 5: Maintain the monkfish bycatch allowances in other fisheries**

Objective 9: Quantify and allocate monkfish bycatch to other fisheries.

## **Sub-goal 6: Minimize the impacts on protected species**

Objective 10: Reduce Atlantic sturgeon mortality (if necessary)

# Amendment 6

- **Broad scope, with many different measures/approaches**
  - Consider narrowing scope or focus
  - Some measures can be implemented via framework
- **ITQ and sector policy questions need to be addressed:**
  1. Does the allocation apply to both areas, or just the NMFA?
  2. How are initial allocations calculated?
    - a) What years are used?
    - b) What type of landings (directed, incidental, or both) are included?
  3. Who can participate (limited access permits, or all permits)?
  4. Should there be different rules for different activities (initial allocation, share ownership, landing)?

# Amendment 6

## New or substantial measures may require EIS

- Requires public hearings and draft/final EIS review
- ~1 year to implement following Council approval

## ITQ would require referendum

- Adds ~1 year to implementation timing
- Other decisions need to be made:
  - Who participates (owners, captains, crew)?
  - How are votes counted/weighted?



Source: [www.olamadsen.com](http://www.olamadsen.com)

# Amendment 6

## Control Date: May 9, 2012

- References who was participating in the fishery at the time
- Can be used to:
  1. Qualify permits for future fishing privileges
  2. Limit ownership of excessive shares in fishery
  3. Determine who can participate in ITQ referendum
- Intended to discourage speculative activity
- Councils are NOT bound by this date

# Other Measures

1. Eliminate latent effort in the fishery
2. Restrict vessels to 1 area per trip or fishing year
3. Reduce SFMA gillnet minimum mesh size
4. Reconsider SFMA incidental limit for trawl vessels
5. Evaluate RSA program and measures
6. Integrate skates into the FMP
7. Revise DAS and landing limits
8. Anything else you want to change



Source: [www.meritcd.com](http://www.meritcd.com)

# What's Down the Road?

## Benchmark Assessment (fall 2016)

- Should include additional age, growth, and genetic data
- Could possibly resolve the single stock debate

## 2017 – 2019 Specifications

- Should be implemented May 2017
- Existing specs would continue if specifications are delayed
- May require DAS and landing limit adjustments



# What Do We Do Now?

1. Decide what's most needed for the fishery
2. Identify/refine goals for the next monkfish action
3. List and prioritize measures for further development
4. Determine when measures can/should be implemented
5. Present suggestions to Councils for prioritization and approval for further development



Source: [www.sellingwithsean.com](http://www.sellingwithsean.com)



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Thank you!

Questions?

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