

PROFILE: SUMMER FLOUNDER (from page 28)

Two major commercial trawl fisheries exist — a winter offshore and a summer inshore. Summer flounder are also commercially harvested by pound nets and gillnets in estuarine waters. Throughout the 1980s, commercial landings ranged from 21 to 38 million pounds. By 1990, landings reached a low of 9 million pounds and have since fluctuated between 9 and 17 million pounds. In 1993, the coastwide quota was implemented for the first time, setting a commercial landings limit of 12.4 million pounds. Since then, commercial landings, which are limited by the quota, have ranged from approximately 10 to 18 million pounds. Over the past five years, commercial landings have been on the decline, in part due to annual quota limits, dropping from approximately 11 million pounds in 2015 to 6 million pounds in 2018.

Summer flounder are also highly prized in the recreational fishery. Anglers catch summer flounder from the shore, piers, and boats with hook and line. Estimates of recreational effort and catch, generated by MRIP, were improved through a 2015 transition from a phone-based survey to a mail-based survey to estimate fishing effort. Old catch estimates prior to 2015 were subsequently calibrated to new estimates from the improved mail-based survey.

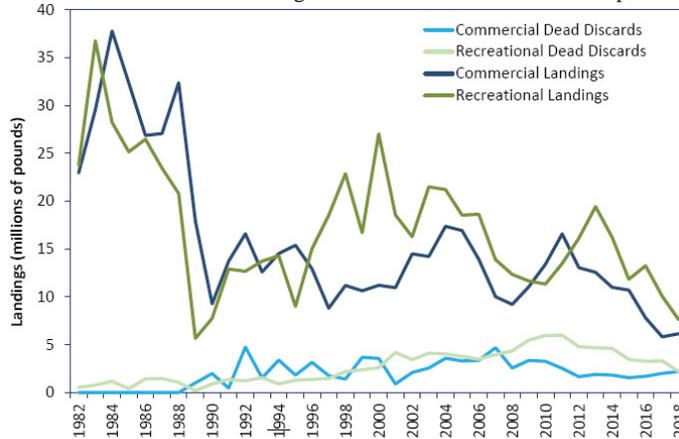
As a result of the survey improvements, new recreational landings estimates increased, on average, about 1.5 times in

the early 1980s and about 3 times in the most recent 5 years. These new MRIP estimates result in a larger stock abundance than previously estimated using old MRIP estimates.

From 1981 through 2004, recreational landings varied widely from a high of 37 million pounds in 1981 to a low of 6 million pounds in 1989. Starting in 1993, harvest limits were implemented for the recreational fishery. Beginning in the mid-2000s, recreational harvest began to decline, in part due to decreases in the coastwide recreational harvest limit (RHL). In 2018, recreational anglers harvested 7.6 million pounds of summer flounder.

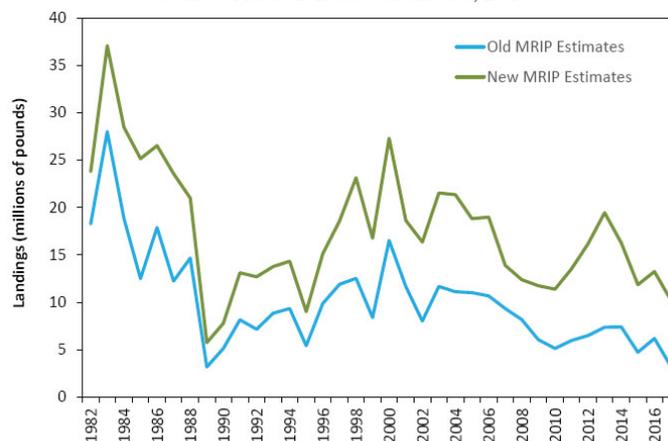
Summer Flounder Commercial and Recreational Landings and Discards

Source: 66th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshp, 2018



Comparison of Old & New MRIP Estimates of Summer Flounder Recreational Landings

Source: ACCSP Data Warehouse, 2019



Stock Status

The 2018 stock assessment indicates summer flounder is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Female spawning stock biomass (SSB) is estimated at 98 million pounds, below the SSB target of 126 million pounds, but above the SSB threshold of 63 million pounds. While total fishing mortality is

estimated at 0.334, below the fishing mortality threshold of 0.448, mortality from all sources is greater than current levels of recruitment.

(to page 35)

Now Available In Rhode Island!

HIGH HOOK

OREGON

Wines

Love life. Go fishing. Care for the planet. Drink wine

Distributed by M.S. Walker

BUSINESS MEMBER

SPRING KICKOFF WIN THE BOAT!

THE Fisherman

Get It ALL For Just **.59¢ Per Week**

COBIA

Win* a Cobia in our Dreamboat Fishing Challenge

Weekly Home Delivery

Premium Online Access theFisherman.com

*See official Dreamboat rules at theFisherman.com