

Tab B, No. 9

# Greater Amberjack Recreational State/Regional Management



January 2026 Gulf Council

Tab B No 9

Sarah Gardiner

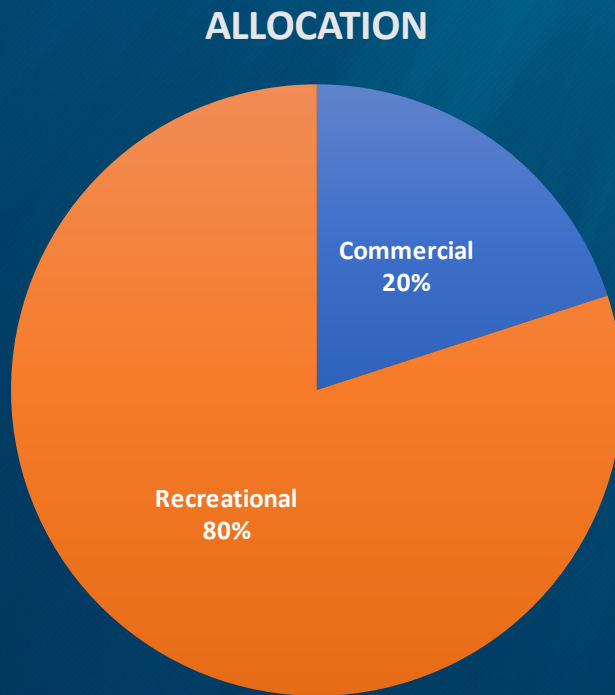
# Purpose of this Presentation



- Greater Amberjack High level History of Management Summary
- Present current Timeline for GAJ count review, Assessment and Catch Advice timing
- Present State/Regional Management Decision Figure



# Current Management Measures



## Season:

*Recreational: September 1- October 31*

**Size limit: 34 in FL**

## Bag limit:

*Recreational: 1*

**2025-2026 ACL/ACT : 404,000/335,320 lbs**

## Allocation:

**AM 54 revised allocation 73:27 to 80:20**

*Changes in recreational data collection system*

# Background



## Ongoing challenges:

- Greater amberjack is overfished
  - Overfished determination >25 years despite attempts to end overfishing
  - Require Assessment to determine rebuilt status
- Short seasons due to low ACLs, difficulty constraining landings, triggering punitive AMs
- Ongoing interest in exploring alternative management approaches that may improve outcomes

## State or Regional Management could offer:

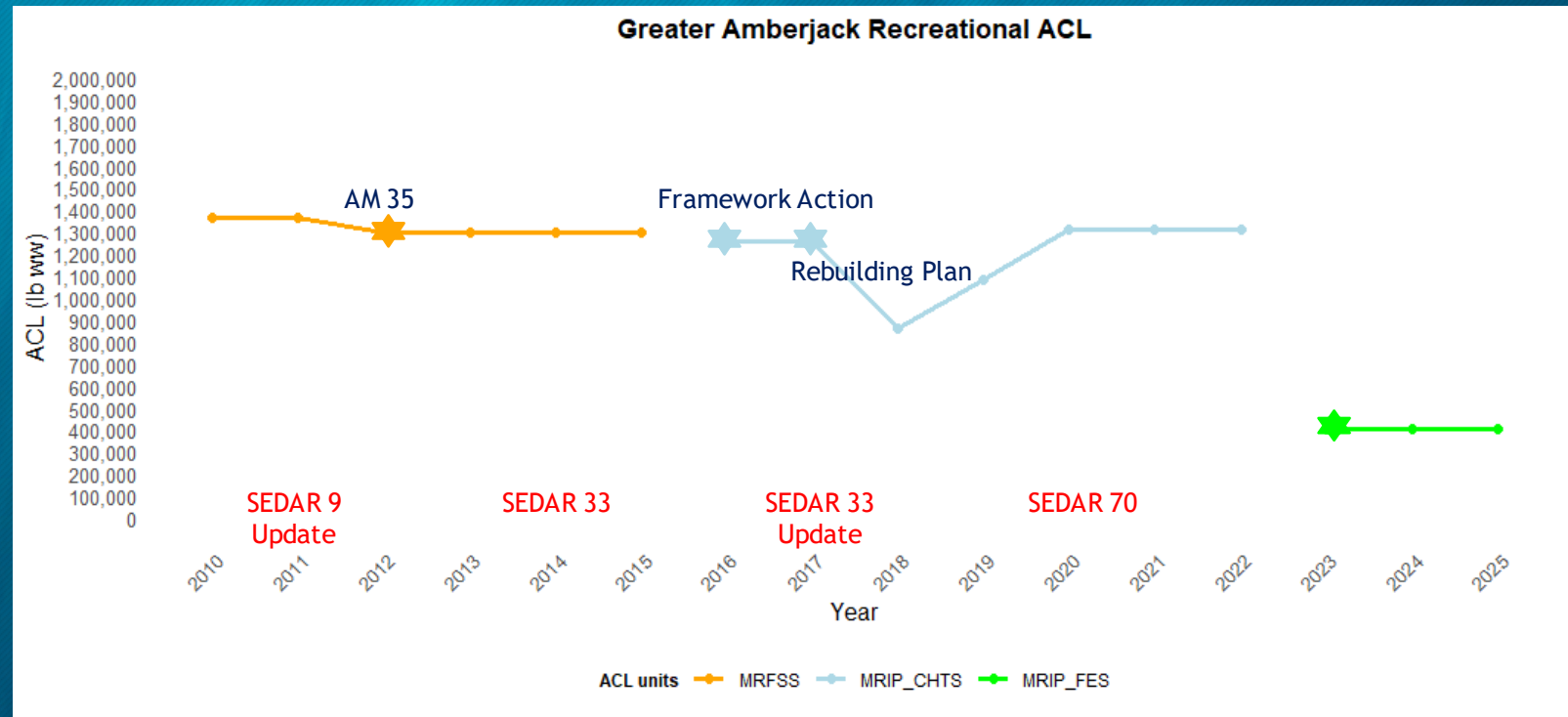
- More flexibility in setting seasons and regulations
- Greater ability to tailor management to specific regions

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2025-12/Q3-2025-overfishing-and-overfished-stocks-map.pdf>

# Points to consider

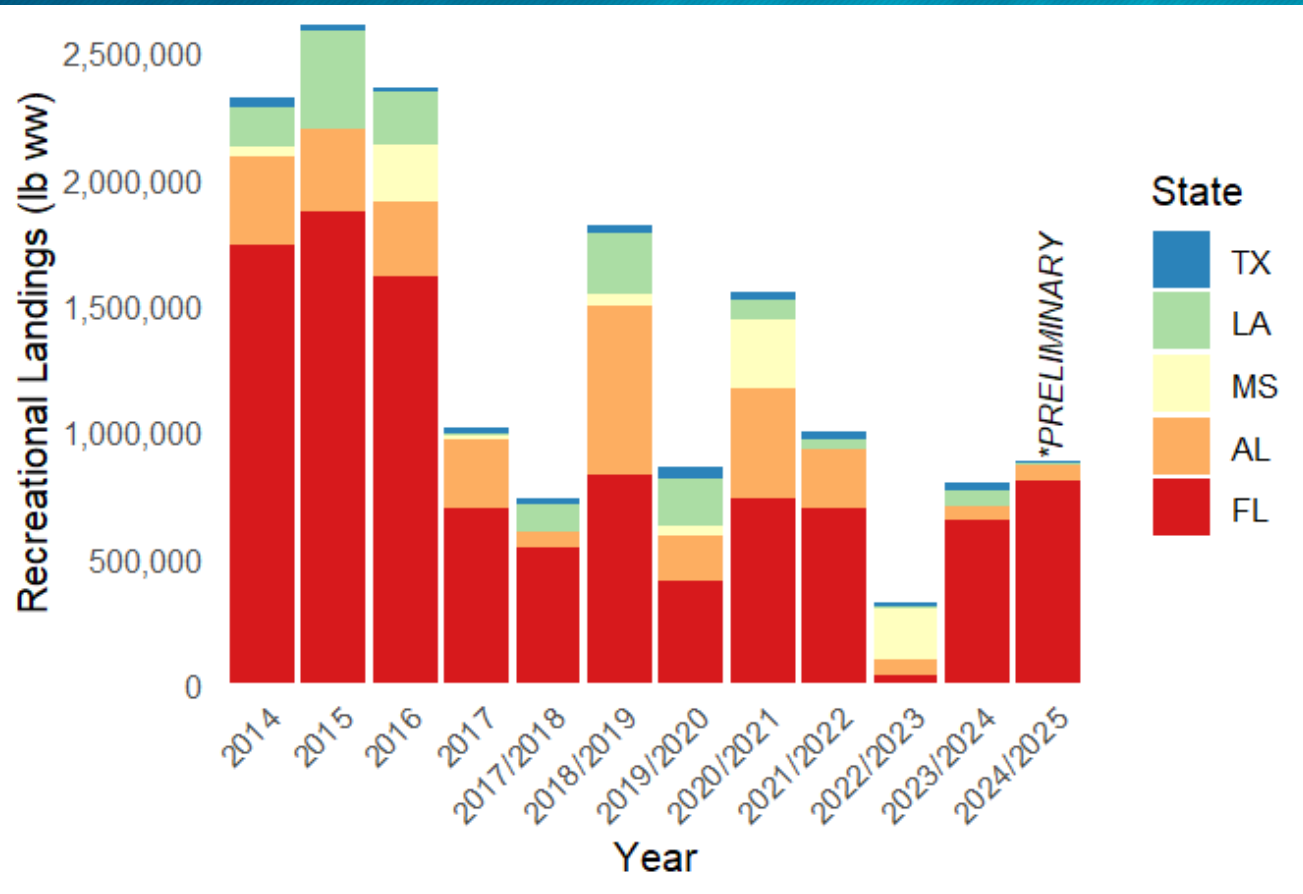


- Historically low ACL compared to the timeseries
- Management “Levers” adjusted continuously over time with little to no apparent change in the stock
- Season structure affects landings: need a monthly chart by state
- Amberjack Count Pending
- SEDAR Recreational Landing Calibrations
  - SEDAR 70 used MRIP-FES
    - FL, AL, MS data calibrated to MRIP FES
    - TX, LA using state- data units
  - Future Assessment calibrations will be discussed during Data Workshop
    - Consider the transition for MS and AL to Creel



# Recreational Landings update

(FES ACL Monitoring)  
SEFSC AUG 2025



Year	For-Hire (lb ww)	Private (lb ww)
2014	455,400 (20%)	1,873,568 (80%)
2015	984,534 (38%)	1,634,307 (62%)
2016	672,862 (29%)	1,686,461 (71%)
2017	141,166 (14%)	870,321 (86%)
2017/2018	349,060 (47%)	387,113 (53%)
2018/2019	355,064 (20%)	1,459,544 (80%)
2019/2020	408,758 (48%)	447,772 (52%)
2020/2021	477,125 (31%)	1,073,218 (69%)
2021/2022	219,646 (22%)	777,491 (78%)
2022/2023	80,245 (25%)	243,158 (75%)
2023/2024	332,314 (42%)	462,167 (58%)
2024/2025*	194,905 (22%)*	687,545 (78%)*

\* PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE

For-Hire: Charter and Headboat, Private: Private Boat and Shore 6

LA/MS Pooled headboat landings were removed from the graph, due to low magnitude and confidentiality concerns.

# Greater Amberjack Count



- Administered through MS-AL Sea Grant
- More refined abundance estimate of GAJ in the Gulf and SA regions
  - Similar to the Great Red Snapper Count
- Review of Results March 2026 by CIE and Gulf and South Atlantic SSC members
  - **Gulf Council Office**

# Amberjack Work Plan



Feb 2026 SSC  
GAJ Interim  
Assessment

March 2026  
GAJ Count  
Review

May 2026 SSC  
Review GAJ  
Count

May 2026  
Reef Fish AP  
GAJ count

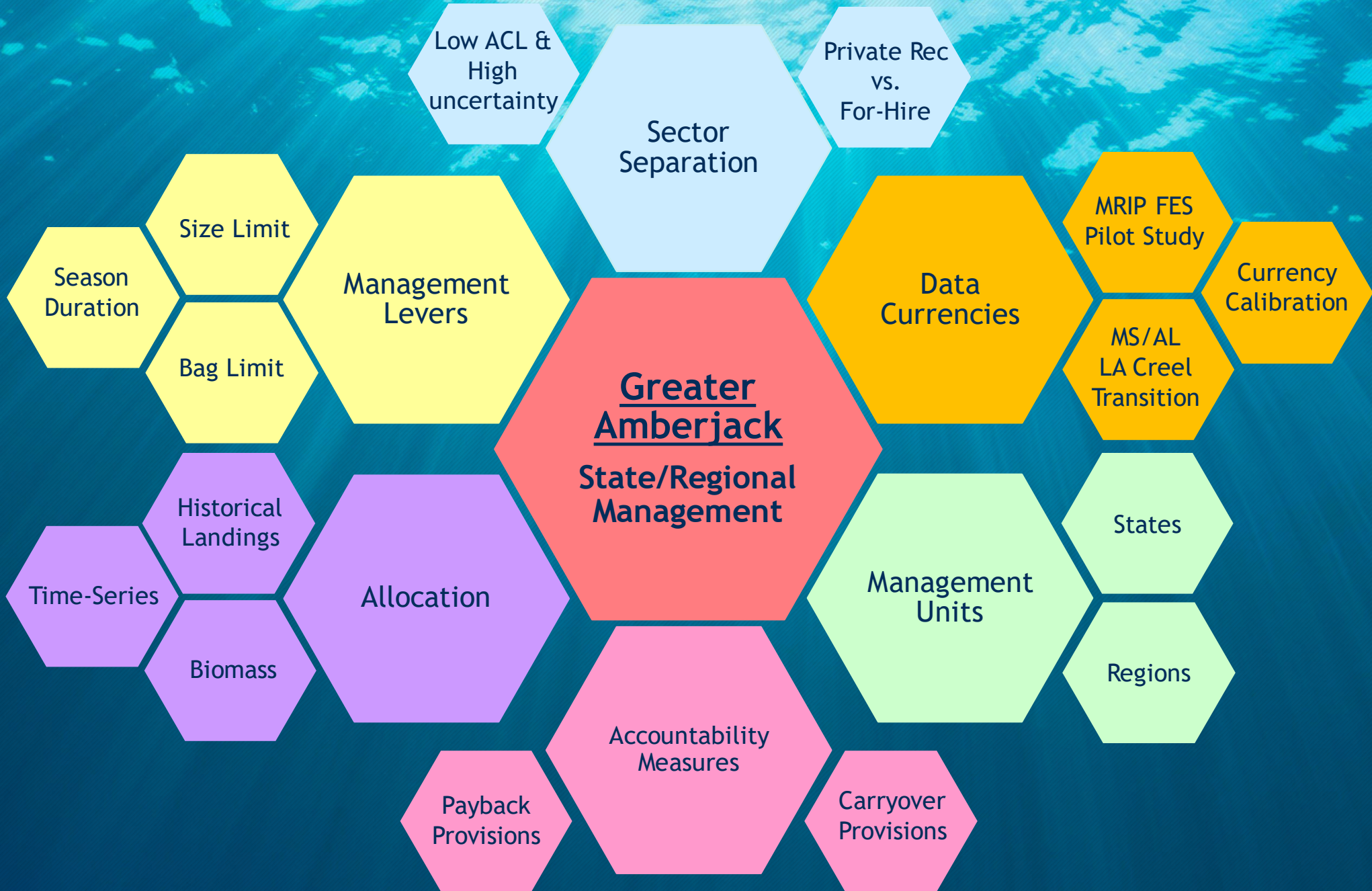
2026/2027  
SEFSC for  
Assessment

Catch Advice

Management  
Advice



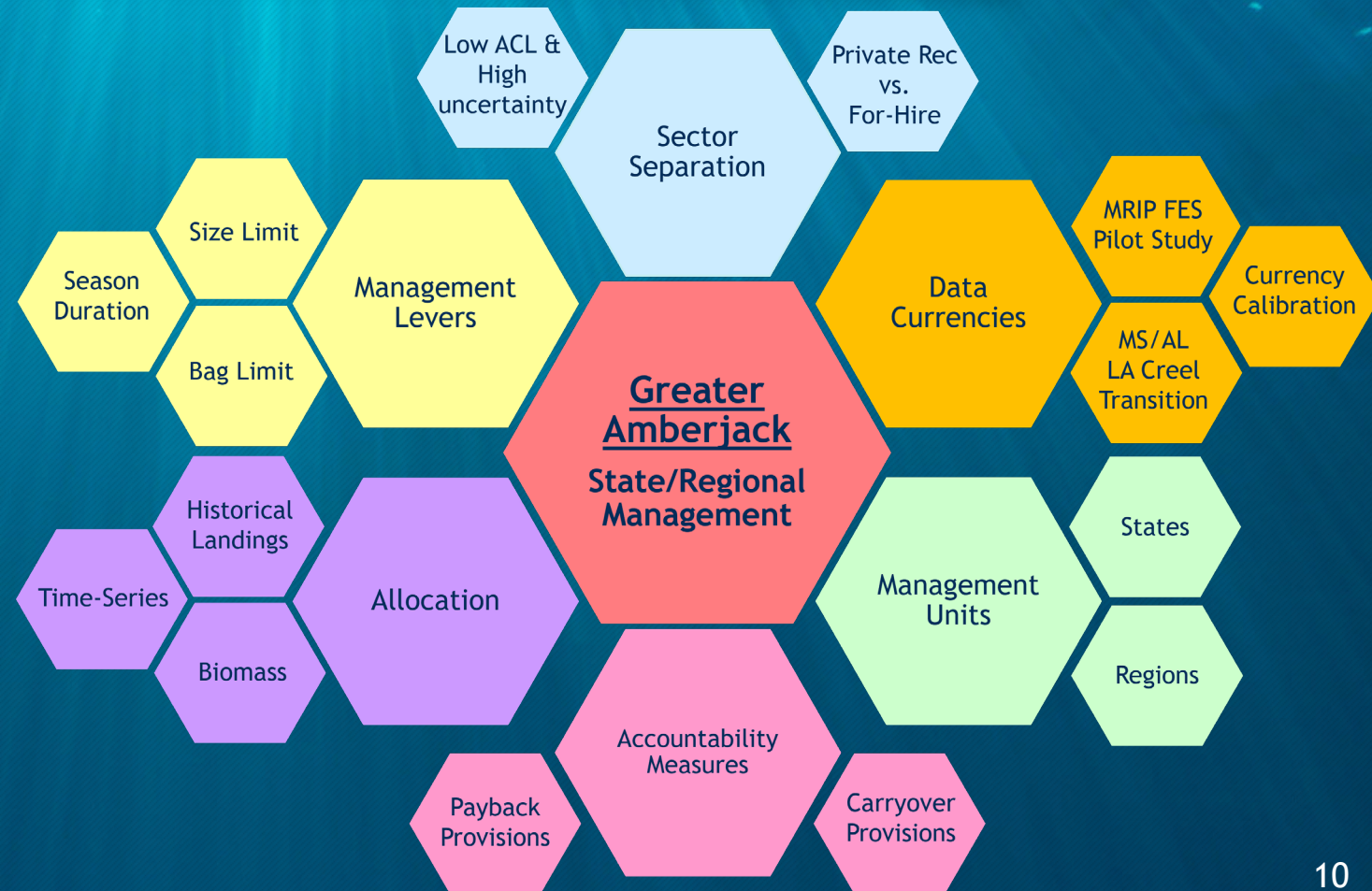
Changing Management  
advice without updated  
Catch advice would be  
challenging



# Next Steps



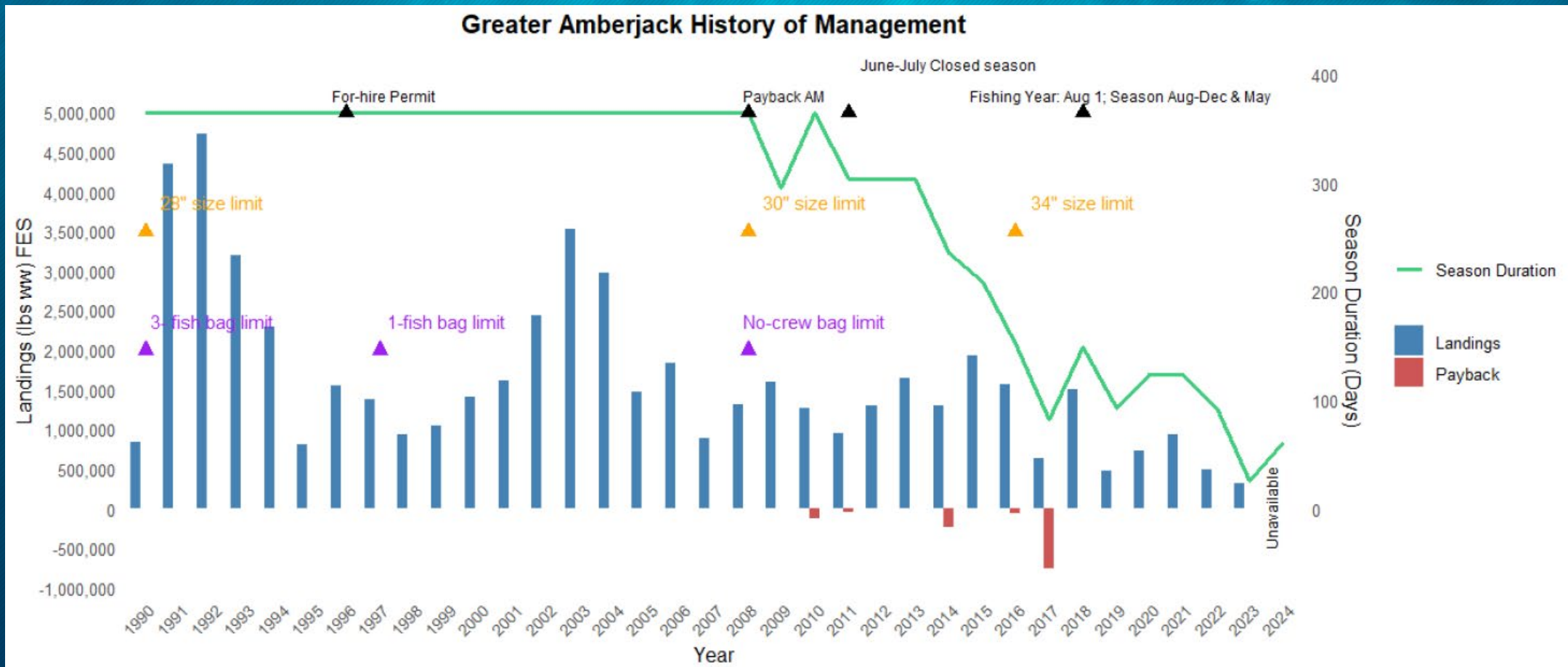
- Recommended to wait for updated catch advice for large-scale management shift
- In the interim, The Council could select items that could be analyzed and start the discussion
  - E.g. Management Units



# Questions



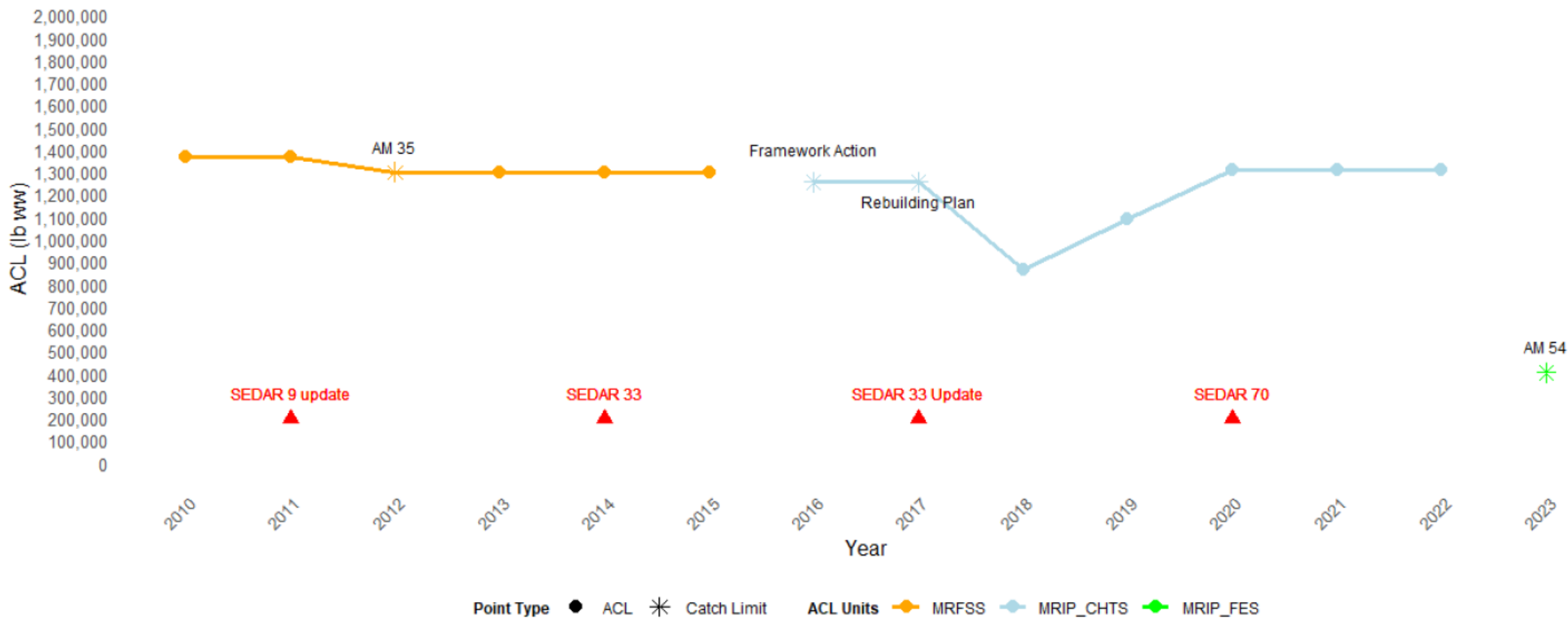
# Supplemental- GAJ History of Management



# Supplemental- Recreational ACL changes to GAJ



Greater Amberjack Recreational ACL



# Supplemental- Red Snapper as a guide



## Why State Management Was Implemented for Red Snapper

- Private angling seasons became progressively short despite a rebuilding stock.
- 1980s-1990s: 180+ days → 2007: 40 days → 2016: 9 days → 2017: Projected 3 days, extended to 39 days by the Secretary of Commerce.
- In 2018, a state management pilot program via Exempted Fishing Permit allowed Gulf states to set their own private angling seasons.
- Amendment 50A (2019) formalized state management, apportioning each state an individual ACL and provided flexibility regarding seasons and other regulations.

# Supplemental- Red Snapper State Management



State responsibilities that were delegated:

- Manage their annual allocation of the private angling ACL
- Set minimum size limits within a range, bag limits, and seasonal closures
- Monitor individual private angling ACLs through state-run data collection programs

Accountability Measures:

- In season: Close the season when harvest projected to reach the state specific ACL
- Post season: when harvest > ACT, reduce ACL and ACT by the amount of previous overage (payback). Paybacks are component specific and state specific.

Federal Oversight: Required to meet Magnuson-Stevens Act

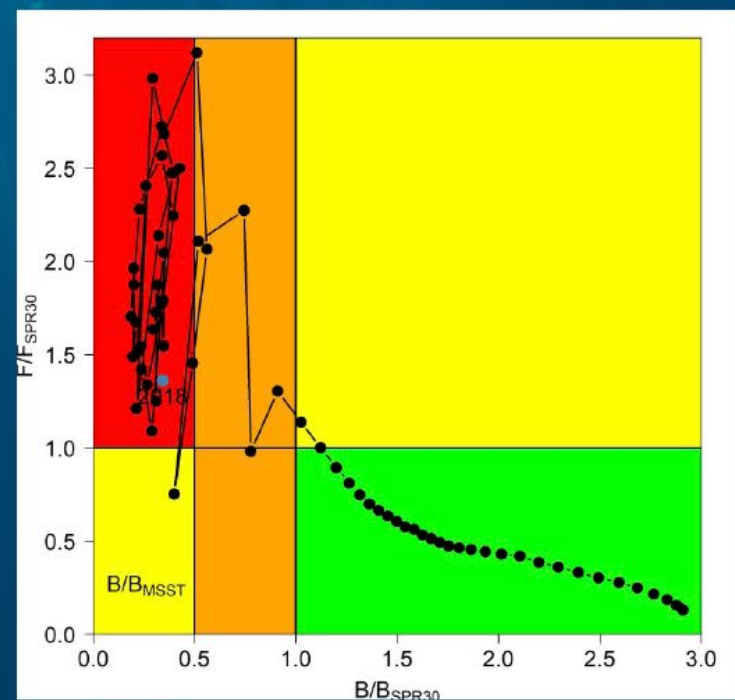
- A private angling ACT remains if a state's delegation ends.
- In the red snapper program, the Council elected to maintain the federal for-hire component under federal management

# Supplemental



## Greater Amberjack

SEDAR	Terminal Year	SPR%	Overfished	Overfishing
<u>SEDAR 9</u>	2004	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 9 Update</u>	2008	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 33</u>	2012	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 33 Update</u>	2015	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 70</u>	2018	30%	Yes	Yes



SEDAR 70, 2020