

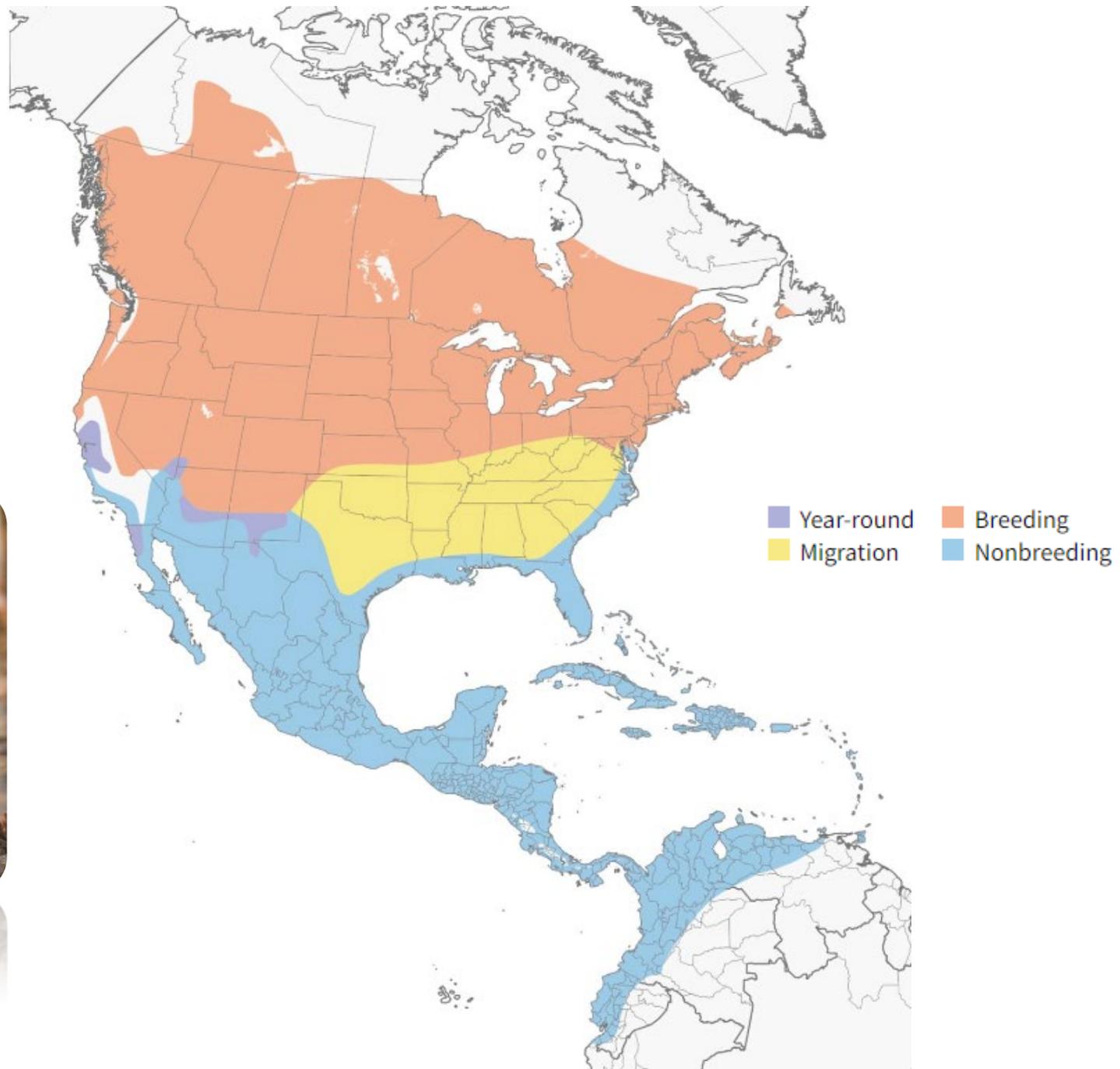
Cumberland County Federation

Proposal:
Reduce sora daily bag
from 25 to 15 birds

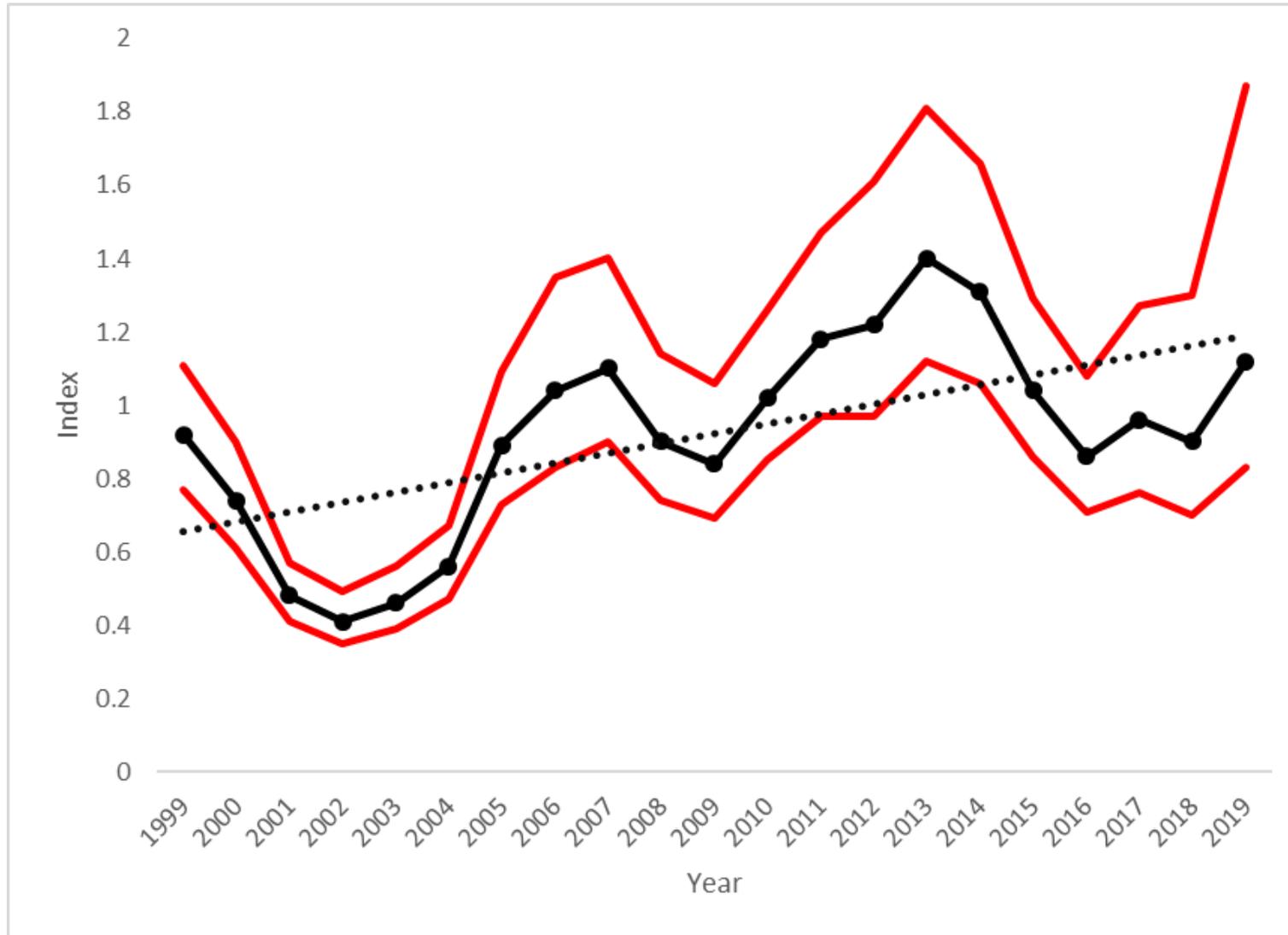
Due to perceived reduction
in rail abundance



Sora



Breeding Bird Survey index for sora, survey-wide



Black line=index; red line=CI; Dotted line=trend.

Harvest

~12% of Atlantic Flyway rail harvest occurs in NJ (1999-2019)

- mean 152 rail hunters annually

- mean 2,515 rails harvested annually

Table 3. Estimated species composition and harvest for rails in New Jersey and the Atlantic Flyway, 2000-2019.

Species	New Jersey		Atlantic Flyway	
	Percent total harvest	Mean annual harvest	Percent total harvest	Mean annual harvest
Sora	69%	1,757	33%	6,829
Virginia rail	1%	27	1%	228
Clapper rail	30%	773	66%	13,773
King rail	0%	-	Trace	11

Table 4. Sora percent of harvest and cumulative total in New Jersey, by *n*th bird in the bag, 2003-2019.

<i>n</i> th bird in bag	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15	20	25
% of harvest	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	6%	5%	4%	4%	3%	1%	1%	trace
Cumulative %	15%	29%	42%	54%	65%	71%	75%	79%	83%	86%	94%	98%	100%

Data source: USFWS Parts Collection Survey

n = 181 bags

Related: 15% of rail hunts result in zero rails harvested

Summary of banding data for rails

Banding data most common means evaluate harvest impact

Data is sparse for rails: secretive, low density, and harvest pressure (and therefore priority) presumed low

Clapper rail: (1950-60s) band recovery rates Atlantic Flyway **0.6 - 2.3%** (Eddleman and Conroy 1994).

Sora and VA rail: (1990s) banded **3,897 sora** & **417 VA rails**. (Haramis and Kearns 2007)

-1 sora (shot Maurice River, NJ)

-1 Virginia rail (found dead, FL)

Clapper rail: Wiest et al. (2013) estimated 252,835 clapper rails ME-VA -- (does not include NC-FL) .
Assuming that all the Atlantic Flyway (ME to FL) clapper rail harvest (13,773) occurred from ME to VA, the harvest would only be 5%

- significant rail harvest occurs south of VA

- estimate is biased high

Compare to harvest rates:

-**Mallard:** 9-15%, -**Black duck:** 5-8%, -**Canada geese:** 5%

Key points

- BBS suggests sora population stable
- Undoubtedly loss of wild rice habitat on Maurice River; sora likely disperse to other habitats
- Hunters rarely achieve full bag, but like the option when conditions are right (large tide following a migration flight)
- If felt bag limit reduction needed for conservation impact, would need to reduce bag more (eg: 5 birds?)
- Motive of guides to have lower bag limits?: more satisfied clients?