

AMENDMENT #7 TO THE  
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE  
ATLANTIC SURF CLAM AND OCEAN QUAHOG FISHERIES

October 1986

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

in cooperation with the

National Marine Fisheries Service

and the

New England Fishery Management Council

Draft adopted by MAFMC: 7 January 1987

Final adopted by MAFMC: 1 April 1987

Final adopted by NOAA: 24 July 1987

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## II. SUMMARY

This Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fisheries (FMP), prepared by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), is intended to: (1) change the quarterly quota allocation for the Georges Bank Area from 10%-40%-40%-10% to 25% for each quarter; (2) remove for all Areas the 5,000 bushel threshold for transfer of unharvested quota from one quarter to the next; (3) add the provision that any unharvested quota be distributed proportionally among the remaining quarters in the year rather than being added totally to the next quarter for the Nantucket Shoals and Georges Bank Areas; (4) remove the 10% limit on carry over of unharvested quota from one year to the next, but provide that any such carry over be distributed proportionally to each quarter for the Nantucket Shoals and Georges Bank Areas; (5) provides for annual renewal of vessel permits; and (6) makes changes to the regulations to enhance enforcement and prosecution. The management unit is all surf clams (*Spisula solidissima*) and all ocean quahogs (*Arctica islandica*) in the Atlantic fishery conservation zone (FCZ). The objectives of the FMP are:

1. Rebuild the surf clam populations to allow eventual harvest approaching the 50 million pound level, which is the estimate of maximum sustainable yield over the range of the resource, based on the average yearly catch from 1960 to 1976.
2. Minimize economic dislocation to the extent possible consistent with objective 1 and encourage efficiency in the fishery.
3. Prevent the harvest of ocean quahogs from exceeding maximum sustainable yield and direct the fishery toward achieving Optimum Yield.
4. Provide the greatest degrees of freedom and flexibility to all harvesters of these resources consistent with the attainment of the other objectives of this Plan.
5. Optimize yield per recruit.
6. Increase understanding of the conditions of the stocks and fishery.

The FMP contains three management areas for surf clams: the Mid-Atlantic Area (south of the line that begins at 41°18'16.249" north latitude and 71°54'28.477" west longitude and proceeds S 37°22'32.75" E to the point of intersection with the outward boundary of the FCZ), the Nantucket Shoals Area (north of the line that begins at 41°18'16.249" north latitude and 71°54'28.477" west longitude and proceeds S 37°22'32.75" E to the point of intersection with the outward boundary of the FCZ and west of 69° longitude), and the Georges Bank Area (north of the line that begins at 41°18'16.249" north latitude and 71°54'28.477" west longitude and proceeds S 37°22'32.75" E to the point of intersection with the outward boundary of the FCZ and east of 69° longitude).

The Amendment would change the relevant paragraphs of section XIII.B.2.a. as follows (deleted material overstruck, bolded material added):

In the Georges Bank Area the annual quota is divided into ~~quarterly quotas, the quarters and share being: 1 January - 31 March, 10%, 1 April - 30 June, 40%, 1 July - 30 September, 40%, and 1 October - 31 December, 10%~~ **equal quarterly quotas, the quarters being: 1 January - 31 March, 1 April - 30 June, 1 July - 30 September, and 1 October - 31 December.** If the first day of a calendar quarter does not fall on Sunday, then the fishing quarter will begin on the first Sunday of the new calendar quarter.

In the Mid-Atlantic Area, if the actual catch of surf clams in any one quarter falls ~~more than 5,000 bu~~ short of the specified quarterly quota, the Regional Director shall add the amount of the shortfall to the next succeeding quarterly quota. If the actual catch of surf clams in any quarter exceeds the specified quarterly quota, the Regional Director shall subtract the amount of the excess from the next succeeding quarterly quota. The Regional Director shall publish a notice in the *Federal Register* whenever the quarterly quota for surf clams is adjusted. It is understood that this process would also operate between years, that is, between the last quarter of one year and the first quarter of the next year.