

---

# Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

# PRESS RELEASE

---



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 16, 2009

PRESS CONTACT: Kathy Collins  
(302) 674-2331 x14

## Catch Shares Catching On Status Quo - Status Quo Amendment 11 Moving Forward

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and six of its Committees met in New York City, NY from June 8 until June 11, 2009. The Council adopted its recommendations regarding 2010 fishery management measures for Atlantic mackerel, *Loligo* and *Illex* squids, butterfish, surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. The Council supported maintaining the 2009 quota levels for all six species reviewed by the Council at this meeting.

Dr. James Balsiger, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, provided the Council an update on the agency's recent announcement to establish a NOAA Catch Share Task Force to address the following five priorities for purposes of facilitating the adoption of catch shares as a management strategy: ensure that catch shares are fully considered when addressing fishery management plan amendments; ensure that Councils have technical and administrative support to adopt catch share systems if the fishing public desires them; ensure that catch share systems yield the best possible environmental and economic outcome in terms of impacts on the ecosystem, catch limits, bycatch, and essential fish habitat; consider organizational changes necessary to facilitate enhanced communications; and, advise the NOAA Administrator regarding allocation of resources to the Councils in support of this initiative and establish specific milestones to evaluate the success of this initiative. The Council was pleased to host Dr. Balsiger and assured him that it would work with him and his staff to support NOAA's task force on catch shares.

For the 2010 fishing year, the Council adopted the following specifications for Atlantic mackerel: allowable biological catch (ABC) = 156,000 metric tons (mt); initial optimum yield (IOY) and domestic annual harvest (DAH) = 115,000 mt; domestic annual processing (DAP) = 100,000 mt; joint venture processing (JVP) = 0 mt; and, total allowable level of foreign fishing (TALFF) = 0 mt. The DAH specification includes 15,000 mt for the recreational mackerel fishery. When 90% of the OY is landed, or projected to be landed, the directed fishery for mackerel will close. If 90% of OY is reached prior to June 1, a 20,000 pound trip limit would go into effect for the balance of the fishing year. If 90% of OY is reached on or after June 1, a 50,000 pound trip limit would go into effect for the balance of the fishing year. OY may be increased during the year through an in-season adjustment, but not to exceed ABC (156,000 mt). The Council also recommended that up to 3% of the IOY and DAH for mackerel may be set aside for scientific research in 2010.

For *Loligo* squid, the Council adopted the following specifications for 2010: maximum optimum yield (Max OY) of 32,000 mt and ABC, IOY, DAH, and DAP of 19,000 mt. The Council recommended the following quotas by trimester: Trimester I (January through April): 43% of the annual quota (8,170 mt); Trimester II (May through August): 17% of the annual quota (3,230 mt); and, Trimester III (September through December): 40% of the annual quota (7,600 mt). For Trimesters 1 and 2, the directed fishery will be closed when 90% of each Trimester's allocation is taken. Vessels will be restricted to a 2,500 pound trip limit following a closure for the remainder of the period. Vessels possessing *Loligo* incidental catch permits may land up to 2,500 pounds per trip at all times. When 95% of the total annual quota is harvested (18,050 mt), a 2,500 pound trip limit will be implemented for the rest of the fishing year. Vessels which possess *Loligo* incidental catch permits may land up to 2,500 pounds per trip at all times. Also, if Trimester 1 underages are 25% or greater, then half of Trimester 1 underages would be transferred to Trimester 2 and half would be transferred to Trimester 3. Overages in Trimester 1 would continue to be deducted from Trimester 3. Underages or overages in Trimester 2 would be applied to Trimester 3. The Council recommended increasing the codend cover requirement to 5 inches or greater inside stretch measurement. The Council also recommended that up to 3% of the ABC, IOY, DAH and DAP for *Loligo* be set aside for scientific research in 2010.

For *Illex* squid, the Council adopted the following quota specifications for 2010: Max OY, ABC, IOY, DAH, and DAP would all be set at 24,000 mt. The directed fishery for *Illex* will remain open until 95% of ABC is taken, or is projected to be taken (22,800 mt), at which time a 10,000 pound trip limit would be implemented for the remainder of the fishing year. Vessels which possess *Illex* incidental catch permits may land up to 10,000 pounds per trip at all times. The Council also recommended that up to 3% of the ABC, IOY, DAH and DAP for *Illex* be set aside for scientific research for 2010.

For the 2010 butterfish specifications the Council adopted the following: Max OY would be set at 12,175 mt, ABC would be set at 1,500 mt and IOY, DAH, and DAP would all be set at 500 mt. The Council agreed to maintain the trip limit for 2010 at 5,000 pounds for moratorium butterfish permits, and maintain the threshold level for triggering the required use of a minimum mesh size (i.e., 3 inches) at 1,000 pounds. The Council also voted to maintain the threshold level for directed butterfish fishery closure at 80% of DAH. If 80% of DAH is reached prior to October 1, a 250 pound daily trip limit would be imposed. If 80% of DAH is reached on or after October 1, a 600 pound daily trip limit would be imposed. Incidental catch permits have a 600 pound trip limit that will be reduced to 250 pounds if the directed fishery closes before October 1. The Council also recommended that up to 3% of the ABC, IOY, DAH and DAP for butterfish be set aside for scientific research in 2010.

The Council voted to maintain the 2009 regulations for surfclams and ocean quahogs for the 2010 fishing year. The regulations provide for a quota of 3.4 million bushels for the surfclam fishery, 5.333 million bushels for the ocean quahog fishery, and 100,000 bushels for the Maine ocean quahog fishery. It was also recommended by the Council that the minimum size requirement for surfclams be suspended.

The Council also took action to submit the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and public hearing document for Amendment 11 to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish (SMB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The SMB FMP was delayed from the April meeting to allow for further development of Amendment 11's DEIS. The Council also requested the Department of Commerce increase observer coverage to monitor river herring bycatch in small mesh fisheries.

The Council agreed to accept the Monkfish Oversight Committee's recommendations to develop measures for the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and initiate a public hearing document for Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP. Amendment 5 would bring the Monkfish FMP into compliance with National Standard 1 guidance for including annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs), would adopt multi-year catch targets, and could establish a system for ITQ or sector management.

The Council received four presentations during its meeting. The first presentation was by Pat Scida of NMFS regarding NMFS' Sea Turtle Strategy and Potential Impacts on Mid-Atlantic Fisheries. The second presentation was by Chad Demarest of the New England Council regarding its Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Omnibus Amendment and Potential Impacts on Mid-Atlantic Fisheries. There was also a presentation by Dr. John Manderson of Rutgers University regarding "Developing Ecological Indicators for Spatial Fisheries Management". Dr. Holly Bamford of NMFS also gave a presentation regarding its Marine Debris Program.

The Research Set-Aside Committee met with NMFS' Cooperative Research Staff and received a presentation on NMFS' draft Cooperative Research Strategic Plan. The Committee also discussed ways to improve program coordination with other cooperative research efforts.

Dr. Ned Cyr of the NMFS presented a report to the Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee regarding NMFS' Report to Congress (State of Science to Support an Ecosystem Approach to Regional Fishery Management). The Committee received an update of the proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities in the Mid-Atlantic Council's jurisdiction off New Jersey and New York and explored associated environmental issues. The Committee also received an update of the NMFS' Northeast Regional Office's Habitat Conservation Division's role and responsibilities regarding non-fishery uses of the ocean.

The meeting also served as a forum for the following committees to conduct business during this Council meeting: Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Committee; Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Committee; Annual Catch Limits (ACL) / Accountability Measures (AM) Committee; and, Executive Committee.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is seeking nominations for its annual Fishery Achievement Award. This award recognizes individuals, entities, and fishermen in the Mid-Atlantic region who exhibit professionalism, diligence, and effort to protect the living marine resources through partnership, public education, and enforcement actions. Anyone can submit a nomination and any person or organization can be nominated. The Council will accept nominations for the 2009 award through August 31, 2009. The Council will evaluate nominations during its October 2009 Council meeting and present the award at its December 2009 or February 2010 meeting. To receive a copy of the nomination form, visit the Council's website at: [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org). Printed copies of the nomination forms are available by contacting Jan Bryan at 302-674-2331, Extension 18.

###