
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

PRESS RELEASE



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Council Adopts 2011 Quota Specifications

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and five of its Committees met in New York City from June 8 through June 10, 2010. The Council adopted its recommendations regarding 2011 fishery management measures for the surfclam, ocean quahog, Atlantic mackerel, *Loligo* and *Illex* squid, and butterfly fisheries.

For surfclams and ocean quahogs for the 2011-2013 fishing years, the Council voted to recommend the same regulations that apply for 2010, i.e., an annual quota of 3.400 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 also recommended that the minimum size requirement of 4.75" for surfclams be suspended. In addition, when the Council reassess quotas for 2012 and 2013 it will consider the impacts of any reopening on Georges Bank.

For the 2011 fishing year, the Council adopted the following specifications for Atlantic mackerel: allowable biological catch (ABC) = 80,000 metric tons (mt) an ABC of 47,395 mt; initial optimum yield (IOY) and domestic annual harvest (DAH) = 46,779 mt; domestic annual processing (DAP) = 31,779 mt; joint venture processing (JVP) 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 projected to be landed, the directed fishery for mackerel will close. If closure occurs prior to June 1, a 20,000 pound trip limit will go into effect. If closure occurs on or after June 1, a 50,000 pound trip limit will go into effect. The Council also recommended that up to 3% of the IOY and DAH for Atlantic mackerel may be set aside for scientific research in 2011. In addition to setting the specifications, the Council voted to write a letter requesting National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) pursue a Transboundary Resource Sharing Agreement with Canada for the Atlantic mackerel resource.

For *Loligo* squid, the Council adopted the following specifications for 2011: maximum optimum yield (Max OY) of 32,000 mt, ABC of 24,000 mt, and IOY, DAH, and DAP of 20,000 mt. The Council recommended the following quotas by trimester: Trimester I (January through April): 43% of the annual quota (8,600 mt); Trimester II (May through August): 17% of the annual quota (3,400 mt); and, Trimester III (September through December): 40% of the annual quota (8,000 mt). For Trimesters 1 and 2, the directed fishery will be closed when 90% of each Trimester's allocation is taken. Vessels will then be restricted to a 2,500 pound trip limit following a Trimester closure. 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 (19,000 mt), a 2,500 pound trip limit will be implemented for the rest of the fishing year. Up to 330 mt of the DAH or DAP for *Loligo* may be set aside for scientific research in 2011. The butterfly cap may close the *Loligo* fishery as described in Amendment 10. In 2011, minimum codend mesh requirements will be 2 and 1/8" in Trimesters 1 and 3, and 1 and 7/8" in Trimester 2. The Council also reminds interested parties that the Trimester 3, 2 and 1/8" requirement begins September 13 this year. Strengtheners can be used subject to a minimum 5" mesh opening. Up to 3% of butterfly DAH may be set aside for either butterfly or *Loligo* research set-aside (RSA) awards.

For *Illex* squid, the Council adopted the following quota specifications for 2011: ABC would be set at 24,000 mt, IOY, DAH, and DAP = 23,328 mt. The directed fishery for *Illex* will remain open until 95% of DAH is projected to be taken, 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 DAH or DAP for *Illex* may be set aside for scientific research for 2011.

For the 2011 butterfly specifications the Council adopted the following: 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 2011 at 5,000 pounds for moratorium butterfly permits, and maintain the threshold level for triggering required use of a 3" minimum mesh size at 1,000 pounds. The Council also voted to maintain the threshold level for directed butterfly 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 took action for further development of Amendment 11's alternatives regarding mackerel limited access. The Council approved submitting an updated Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to NMFS for review and NMFS will publish a notice for a new written comment period for the modified alternatives, which generally simplify the existing alternatives while accommodating historical participants.

The Council reviewed public hearing and written comments, and chose additional options for the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) / Accountability Measures (AM) Omnibus Amendment. The Council also discussed the tilefish trip analysis and addressed the potential SMB recreational allocation action and what these implications would be for the ACL/AM Amendment. The Council will review the ACL/AM Amendment and vote for Secretarial Submission at its August meeting in Philadelphia.

A summary of the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee's (TRAC) mackerel assessment was presented to the Council and it indicated there was considerable uncertainty in the assessment results. Consequently, the TRAC agreed that characterization of the mackerel stock status relative to estimated reference points would not be an appropriate basis for management advice at this time. Given reduced productivity and lack of older fish, the TRAC recommended that annual catches not exceed the average total landings (80,000 mt) over the last three years (2006-08) until new information suggests a different amount is more appropriate.

The Research Set-Aside Committee discussed the draft mission statement and ways to improve program coordination with other regional cooperative research efforts. The goal of the RSA Program is to fund scientific research that provides information to improve the conservation and management of fishery resources under the purview of the Council.

Stan Gorski and Karen Green of the NMFS Habitat Conservation Division provided an Energy Issue Update presentation to the Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee. The update highlighted Mid-Atlantic projects that included wind power, liquefied natural gas, nuclear generating facilities, coal fired power plants, pipelines, electric cables, and non-traditional hydroelectric.

The Executive Committee met to: discuss outcomes from the May meetings of the Northeast Regional Coordinating Committee (NRCC) and the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC); discuss initiation of the "Visioning" project from the Catch Share Workshop; and, discuss the status of the proposed surfclam excessive share analysis. The Council voted to initiate a technical review of the issue of excessive shares in the surfclam fishery. The Council also requested staff to move forward with development of an annual Advisory Panel fishery performance report to be incorporated in the specifications setting process.

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 2010 award through August 31, 2010. The Council will evaluate nominations during its October 2010 Council meeting and present the award at its December 2010 or February 2011 meeting. To receive a copy of the nomination form, visit the Council's website at: www.mafmc.org.

The Council bid farewell to Council member Larry Simns from Maryland. Larry served as a Council member from 2001 to 2010. He served on most of the Council's committees during his tenure. Most recently he served on the following committees: Demersal; Joint Monkfish; Surfclam, Ocean Quahog, and Tilefish; ACL/AM; Law Enforcement; and, NMFS Highly Migratory Species. Other Committees he served on during his tenure were the Executive, Bycatch/Limited Access, Ecosystems, and Protected Resources.

The Council also bid farewell to Council Executive Director, Dan Furlong, who will be retiring on July 15, 2010. He has served as the third Executive Director of the Council for over eleven years. During his time as Executive Director, he was involved in overseeing the approval of 34 FMPs and/or Frameworks to FMPs. Dan also served on the NRCC and CCC Committees and the Delaware Sea Grant Advisory Council.



Departing Council member Larry Simns of Maryland (pictured left with Chairman Rick Robins) and departing Executive Director, Dan Furlong (pictured right with Chairman Rick Robins) received thanks and appreciation from their colleagues at a recognition dinner in their honor during the June Council meeting in New York.

