



## ***Illex* Fishery Information Document**

**April 2019**

This Fishery Information Document provides a brief overview of the biology, stock condition, management system, and fishery performance for *Illex* squid with an emphasis on 2018. Data sources for Fishery Information Documents are generally from unpublished National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) survey, dealer, vessel trip report (VTR), permit, and Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) databases and should be considered preliminary. For more resources, including previous Fishery Information Documents, please visit <http://www.mafmc.org/msb>.

### **Key Facts**

- 2018 was a productive year for *Illex*, with the quota being harvested even faster than in 2017. 2017 and 2018 represent a rare sequence of two consecutive very strong *Illex* years.
- Substantial variability is to be expected with a squid species.

### **Basic Biology**

*Illex* squid is a semi-pelagic/semi-demersal schooling cephalopod species distributed between Newfoundland and the Florida Straits, and lives less than one year. *Illex* is a semelparous, terminal spawner whereby spawning and death occur within several days of mating. The northern stock component, located north of the USA-Canada border in NAFO Subareas 3 and 4 (Figure 1), is assessed annually and is managed by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), though landings have been low in recent years. The southern stock component is located in NAFO Subareas 5 and 6 between the Gulf of Maine and Cape Hatteras, NC and is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (the Council or MAFMC). Additional life history information is detailed in the EFH document for the species, located at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/habitat/efh/>.

### **Status of the Stock**

The status of *Illex* is unknown with respect to being overfished or not, and unknown with respect to experiencing overfishing or not. Recent results from the NEFSC Trawl surveys are highly variable and without trend, and are graphed in the “NEFSC Biological Update” that is created as part of the SSC ABC-setting process. These are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meeting-documents/> (see May 2018 Meeting Materials).

## Management System and Fishery Performance

### *Management*

The Council established management of *Illex* in 1978 and the management unit includes all federal East Coast waters.

Access is limited with moratorium permits. Trip limits are triggered when the quota is approached. Incidental permits are limited to 10,000 pounds per trip. Additional summary regulatory information is available at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/msb/index.html#e1111022>.

The current quota is 22,915 MT. A proposed rule is expected soon that would increase the 2019 quota to 24,825 MT (based on a recommendation from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee).

Recreational catch of *Illex* is believed to be negligible. There are no recreational regulations except for party/charter vessel permits and reporting.

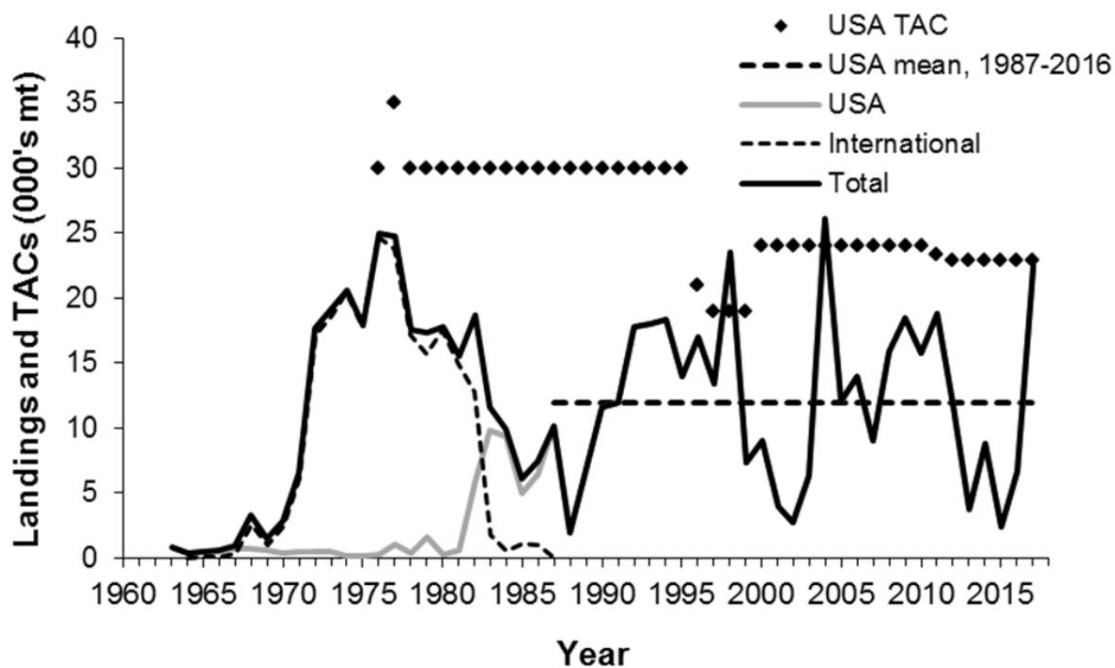
### *Commercial Fishery*

Figure 1 describes *Illex* catch 1963-2017 and highlights the early foreign fishery landings before foreign fishing was phased out. Figures 2-4 describe domestic landings, revenues, and prices since 1982. Figure 5 illustrates preliminary 2017 (yellow-orange) and 2018 (blue) landings through the year.

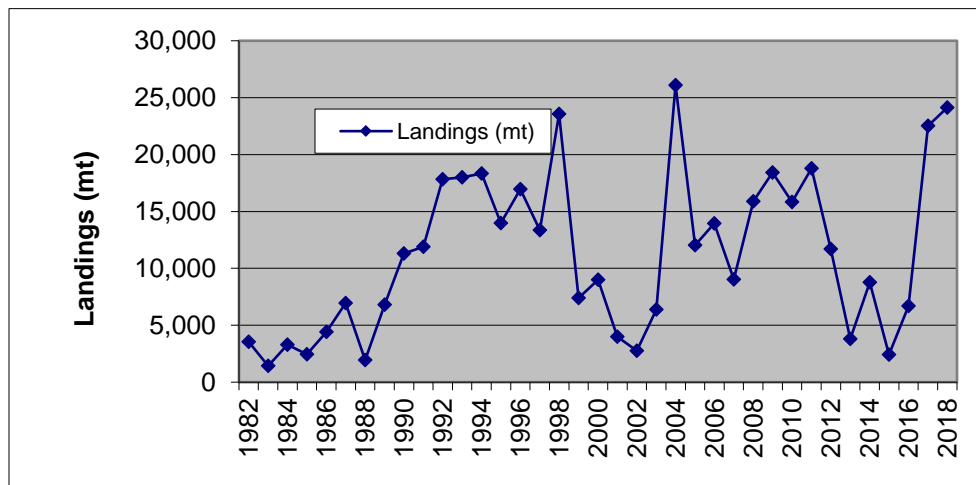
Table 1 describes 2018 *Illex* landings by state, and Table 2 describes 2018 *Illex* landings by gear type.

Figures 6 describes the location of recent *Illex* landings 2013-2016. Table 3 provides preliminary information on *Illex* landings by statistical area for 2018.

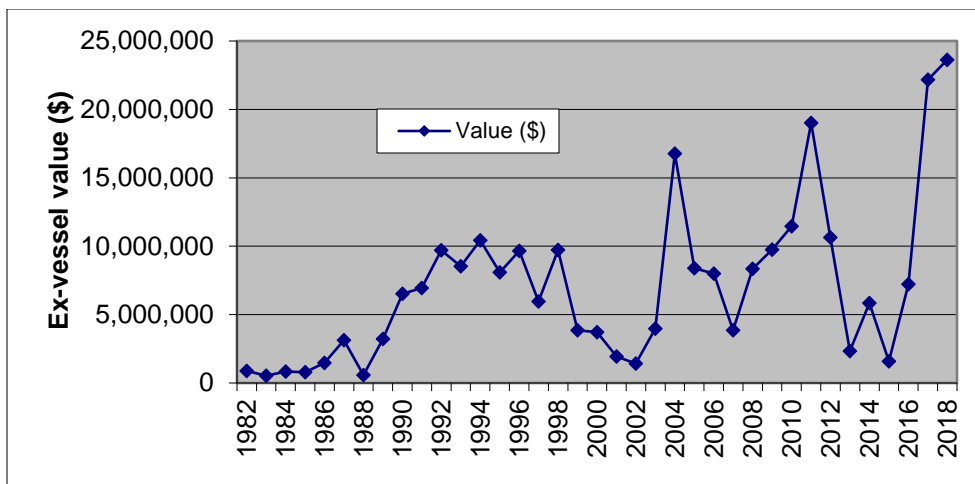
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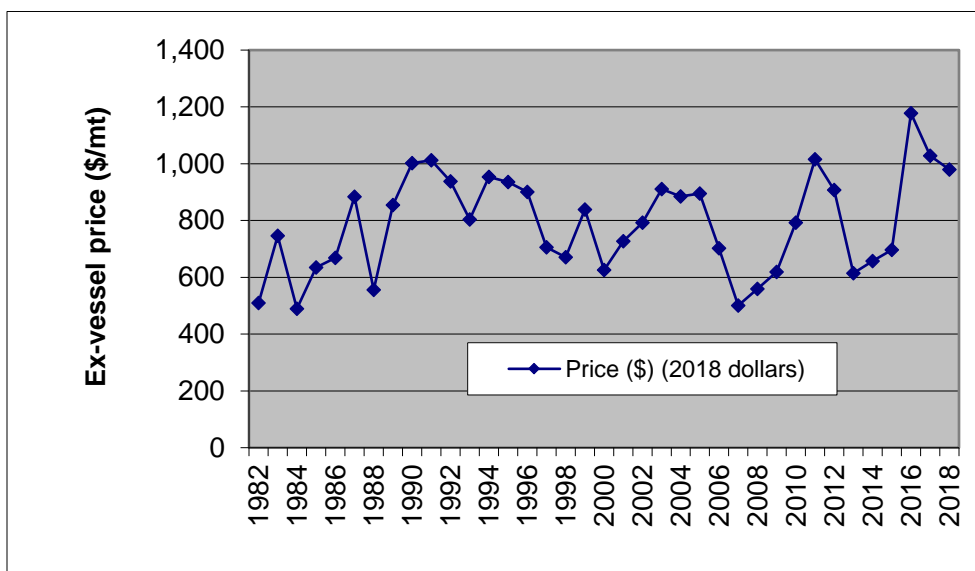
**Figure 1.** Total annual *Illex* landings (mt) by the U.S. and other countries for 1963-2017. Source: NEFSC *Illex* Data update, available at <http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings/2018/may-8-9>.



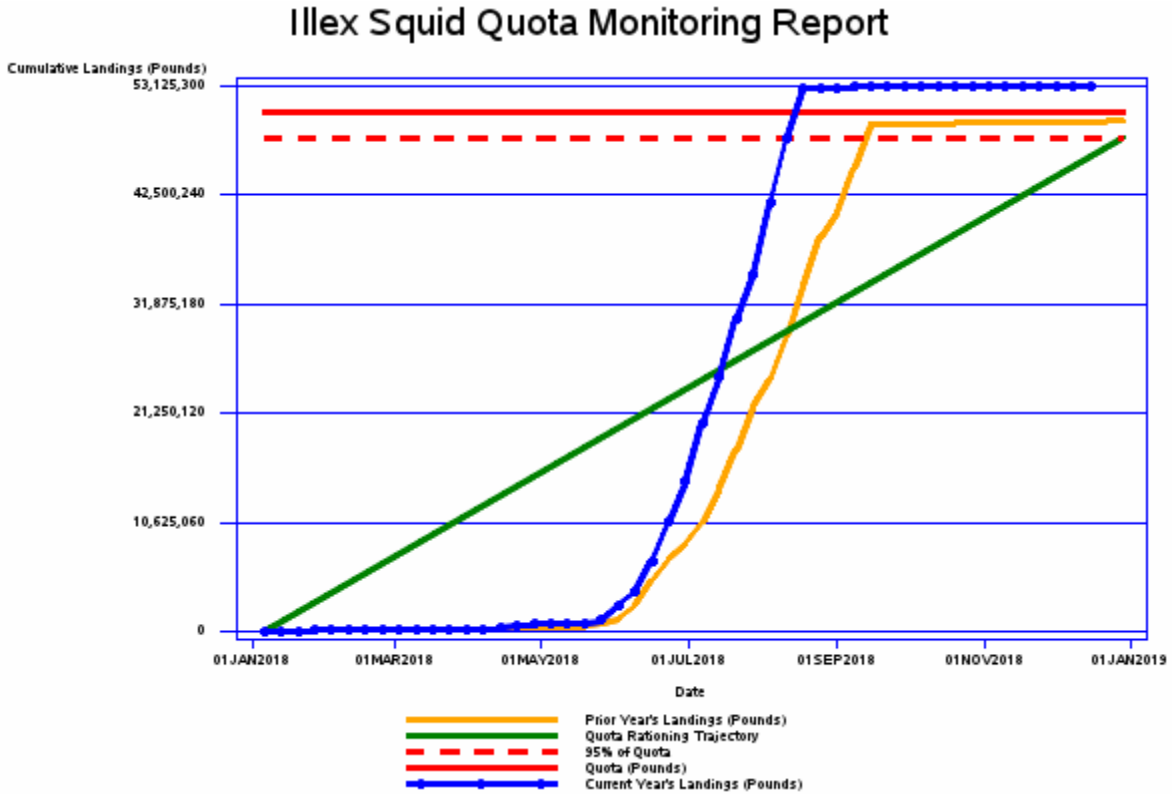
**Figure 2.** US *Illex* landings 1982-2018. Source: NMFS unpublished dealer data.



**Figure 3.** US *Illlex* landings nominal ex-vessel revenues 1982-2018. Source: NMFS unpublished dealer data.



**Figure 4.** US *Illlex* landings ex-vessel prices 1982-2018 (adjusted to 2018 “real” dollars using the producer price index (PPI), Federal Reserve data). Source: NMFS unpublished dealer data.



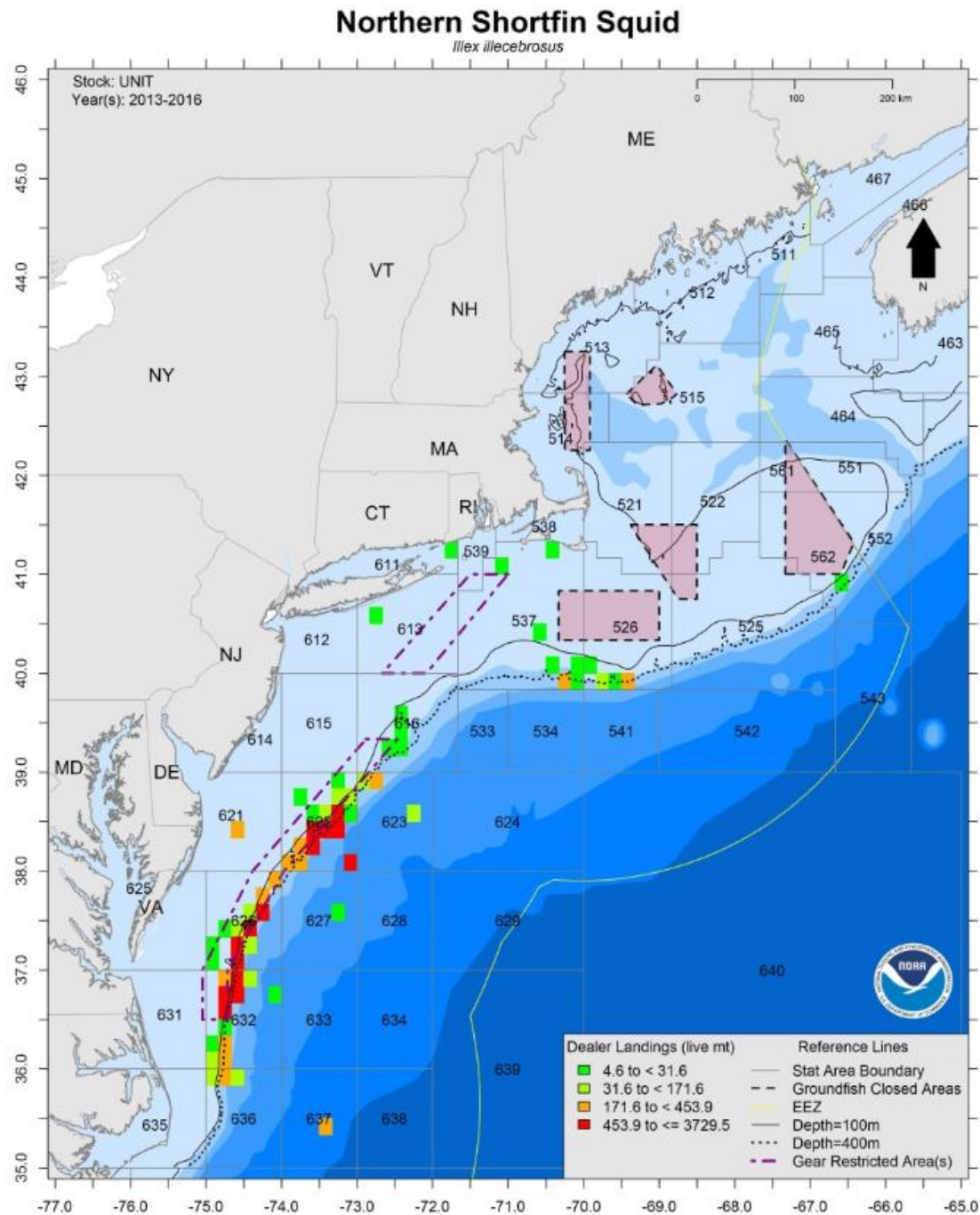
**Figure 5.** US Preliminary *Illex* landings; 2018 in blue, 2017 in yellow-orange. Source: <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/atlanticIllex.html>.

**Table 1.** Commercial *Illex* landings (live weight) by state in 2018. Source: NMFS unpublished dealer data.

State	Metric_Tons	Percent
NJ	12,359	51%
RI	9,429	39%
MA	1,497	6%
Other	833	3%

**Table 2.** Commercial *Illex* landings (live weight) by gear in 2018. Source: NMFS unpublished dealer data.

GEAR	Metric Tons 2018	Percent
TRAWL,OTTER,BOTTOM,FISH	21,893	91%
Other/unknown	2,224	9%



**Figure 6.** Distribution of landings (mt) for bottom trawl trips with *Illex* landings greater than 4.5 mt (10,000 lbs), by ten-minute square, during 2013-2016.

**Table 3.** Commercial *Illex* landings by statistical area in 2018. Source: NMFS unpublished VTR data.

Stat Area	Metric Tons 2018	Percent
622	13,138	56%
526	3,674	16%
626	2,658	11%
616	2,113	9%
537	1,044	4%
Other	911	4%

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