

OCEAN QUAHOGS ARCTICA ISLANDICA



MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (MAFMC) - ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) PROFILE

1. Management Unit

The management unit is all ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*) in the Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

2. Stock Status

The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring based on the most recent stock assessment (2020). For current stock status: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/status-stocks-reports>

3. Current Text Designations

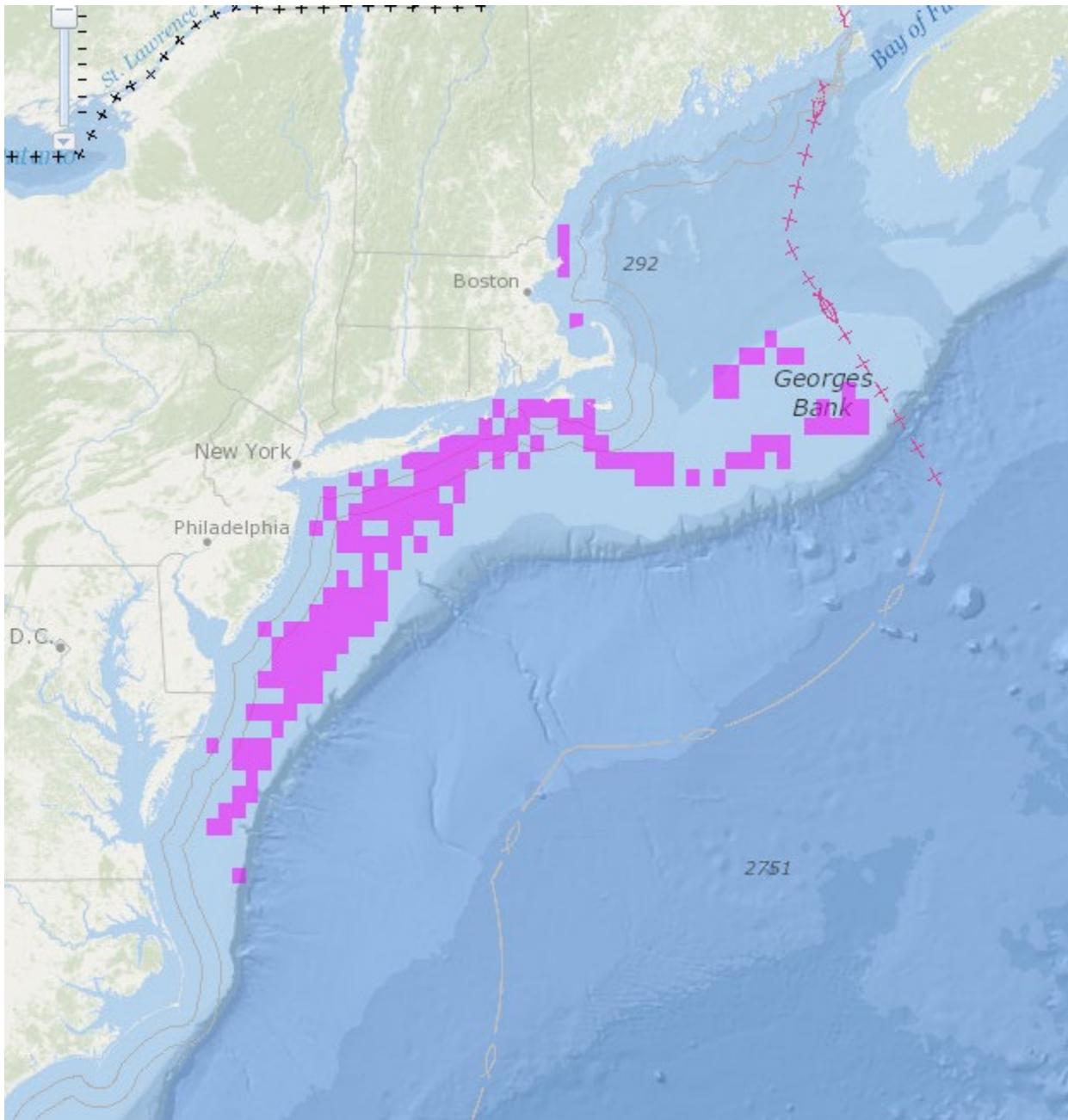
Source: MAFMC. 1998. Amendment 12 to the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan. Dover, DE. Available at: www.mafmc.org

Juveniles and Adults: Throughout the substrate, to a depth of three feet below the water/sediment interface, within federal waters from the eastern edge of Georges Bank and the Gulf of Maine throughout the Atlantic EEZ, in areas that encompass the top 90% of all the ranked ten-minute squares for the area where ocean quahogs were caught in the NEFSC [Northeast Fisheries Science Center] surfclam and ocean quahog dredge surveys. Distribution in the western Atlantic ranges in depths from 30 feet to about 800 feet. Ocean quahogs are rarely found where bottom water temperatures exceed 60°F, and occur progressively further offshore between Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras.

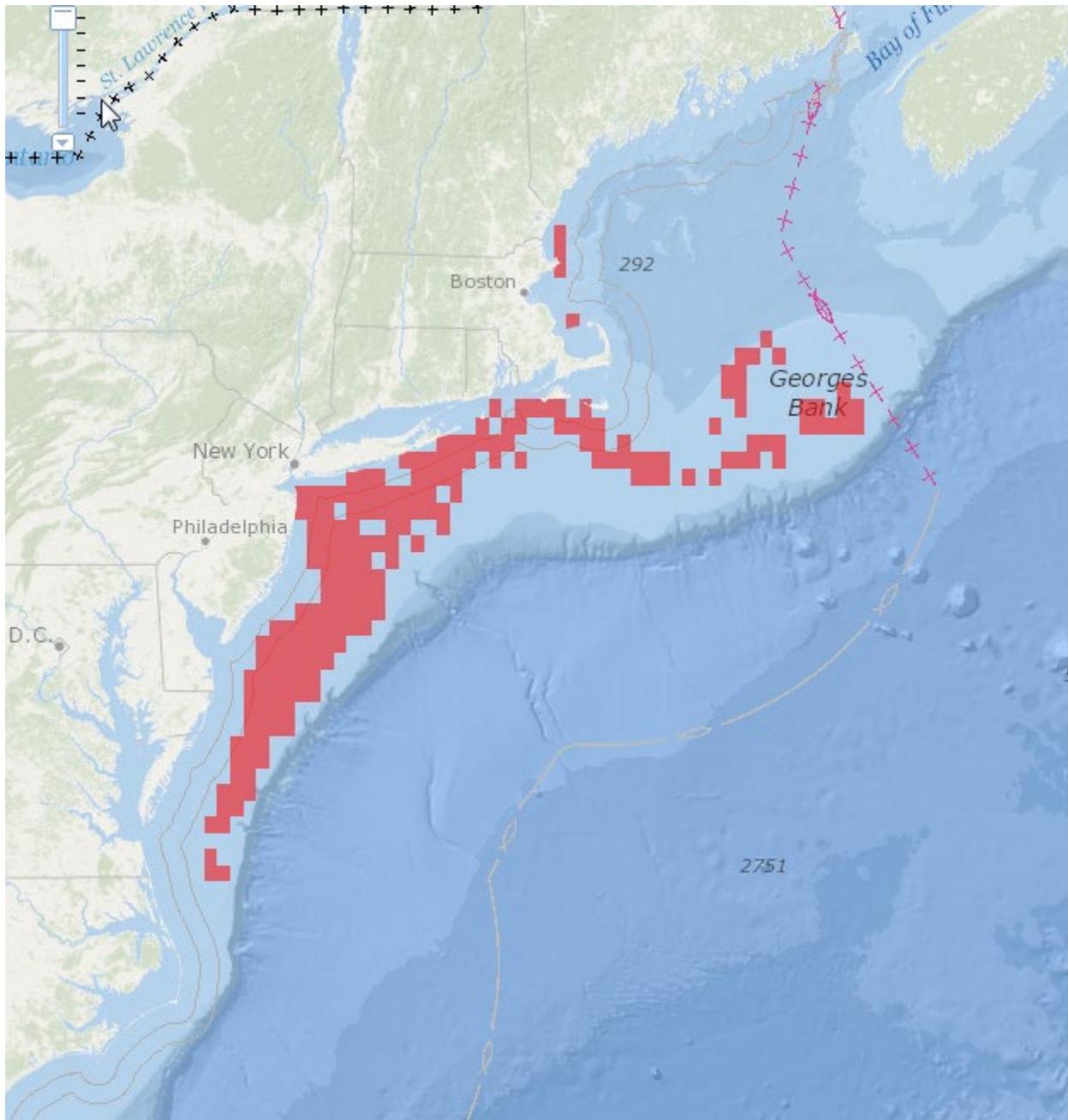
4. Current Map Designations

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Juvenile: Areas which encompass the top 90% of the areas where juvenile ocean quahogs were caught in the NEFSC clam dredge survey between 1965-1997.



Adults: Areas which encompass the top 90% of the areas where adult ocean quahogs were caught in the NEFSC clam dredge survey between 1965-1997.



5. Designation and Mapping Methods

The Council has generally identified EFH using level 1 and/or level 2 data (see EFH regulations; section 7). The designations were comprised of a detailed text description and a series of maps by ten-minute square areas (TMSQ). The Mid-Atlantic EFH Technical Team, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) scientists, and other experts developed alternatives for the Council to consider. Four alternatives were proposed and, for mapping purposes, the Council selected the alternative that used a distributional percentage (50%, 75%, 90%, or 100% of observations) of the catches by area based on which level of information was available and stock status. EFH maps were developed for each life stage and displayed the distribution and abundance data by TMSQ.

Amendment 12 to the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP (1999) identified ocean quahog EFH by life stage. Descriptions and maps were based on information from the NEFSC clam dredge survey and EFH source documents (technical memos) developed by NEFSC staff. The Council used 90% of the TMSQ where ocean quahog were collected in order to be more inclusive and risk averse.

6. EFH Source Documents

Information on ocean quahog habitat requirements can be found in:

Cargnelli LM, Griesbach SJ, Packer DB, Weissberger E. 1999. Essential Fish Habitat Source Document: Ocean Quahog, *Arctica islandica*, Life History and Habitat Characteristics. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NE-148. Available at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/habitat/efh/>.

7. Other Information

EFH Legal Authorities

EFH from Magnuson Stevens Act:

<http://www.fisheriesforum.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=014976d6-5bc1-f0c4-be6b-ade7c99fc932&forceDialog=0>

EFH Contents of Fishery Management Plans under CFR §600.815:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title50-vol12/pdf/CFR-2013-title50-vol12-sec600-815.pdf>

Federal agency consultation with the Secretary under CFR §600.920:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title50-vol12/pdf/CFR-2014-title50-vol12-sec600-920.pdf>

NMFS 2006 EFH Guidance:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/03/201/03-201-15.pdf>

Management and Stock Assessments

MAFMC: <http://www.mafmc.org>

ASMFC: <http://www.asmfc.org>

NEFSC Stock Assessments: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/>