



*A report published by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council - October 2011*

**The Council Report summarizes major issues voted on or discussed at each regularly scheduled MAFMC meeting. The Council met most recently on October 11-13 in Galloway, NJ.**

**At its October meeting, the Council addressed issues related to Atlantic mackerel, squids, butterfish, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, spiny dogfish, and research set-aside (RSA).**

### **Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish**

#### **Amendment 14**

The Council voted to move forward with public comment and hearings on a range of alternatives and the Amendment's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Hearings would likely be in December 2011 or early 2012. Amendment 14 deals with incidental catch and general management of river herrings (blueback herring and alewife) and shads (American shad and hickory shad). The Amendment focuses on three potential management problems: 1) there is high uncertainty about the incidental catch of river herrings and shads in ocean fisheries; 2) the incidental catch in ocean fisheries may be negatively impacting river herring and shad populations; and, 3) the overall existing federal/state/regional management framework may be insufficient to adequately conserve river herring and shad stocks.

### **Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass**

#### **Amendment 17**

The Council reviewed draft alternatives to include in Amendment 17 and voted to move forward with continued development of the Amendment. Amendment 17 will address spatial/regional management for the recreational black sea bass (BSB) fishery. Alternatives proposed for BSB would require changes to both the Commission's and the Council's FMPs; therefore, the Council will discuss these alternatives at their December meeting with the Commissions Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board. The Board can then consider development of a complementary document to enable a regional or state-based approach to recreational management.

### **Spiny Dogfish**

#### **2012 Management Measures**

The Council voted to recommend that the commercial quota for spiny dogfish be 35.694 million pounds in 2012. The Council recommended the quota following an update on the current status of the spiny dogfish stock and a review of the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC's) recommendations. The Council also voted to recommend a 2012 daily commercial trip limit of 4,000 pounds. Both of these actions represent increases over the existing quota (20 million pounds) and trip limit (3,000 pounds).

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils jointly manage spiny dogfish. In order for these recommendations to go into effect in federal waters, similar measures will have to be adopted by the New England Council at its November 2011 meeting. The National Marine Fisheries Service will then have to approve both Councils' recommendations. Management measures for state water fisheries will be determined by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission at its November 2011 meeting.

These increases follow a ten year rebuilding effort during which the directed fishery for spiny dogfish was effectively eliminated through a combination of very low quotas and trip limits. Declaration of the rebuilt status of the spiny dogfish stock came from the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2010.

### **Committees and Other Business**

#### **Research Set-Aside**

The Council discussed the Committee's recommended changes to administrative and scientific issues regarding changes to improve the RSA program. The staff and RSA Committee will continue to work on these issues to improve the program.

#### **Other**

In addition to the Committee meetings and regular Council business, the Council received a presentation from Paul Rago of the NMFS NEFSC regarding the report of the 3-Year Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM). The Council also received a presentation from Pete Cooper and Steve Durkee of NMFS regarding Amendment 5 to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) FMP. Amendment 5 would allow for management measures that may be necessary to end overfishing and rebuild stocks for scalloped hammerhead, dusky, sandbar, and blacknose sharks.

#### **Swearing in of Reappointed Member**

The Council swore in reappointed member John McMurray of Long Beach, NY who will be serving a second term on the Council.

#### **Materials on the Web**

Meeting materials related to the above issues and any presentations that accompanied the briefings provided to the Council at its October meeting are located on the Council's website at

[http://www.mafmc.org/meeting\\_materials/briefing\\_books.htm](http://www.mafmc.org/meeting_materials/briefing_books.htm).

Audio files of the full meeting discussions will be posted at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/audio/audio.htm>.

**Next Council Meeting - December 13-15, 2011  
Williamsburg, VA**