



# Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

SSC Meeting

July 22, 2020



# Today

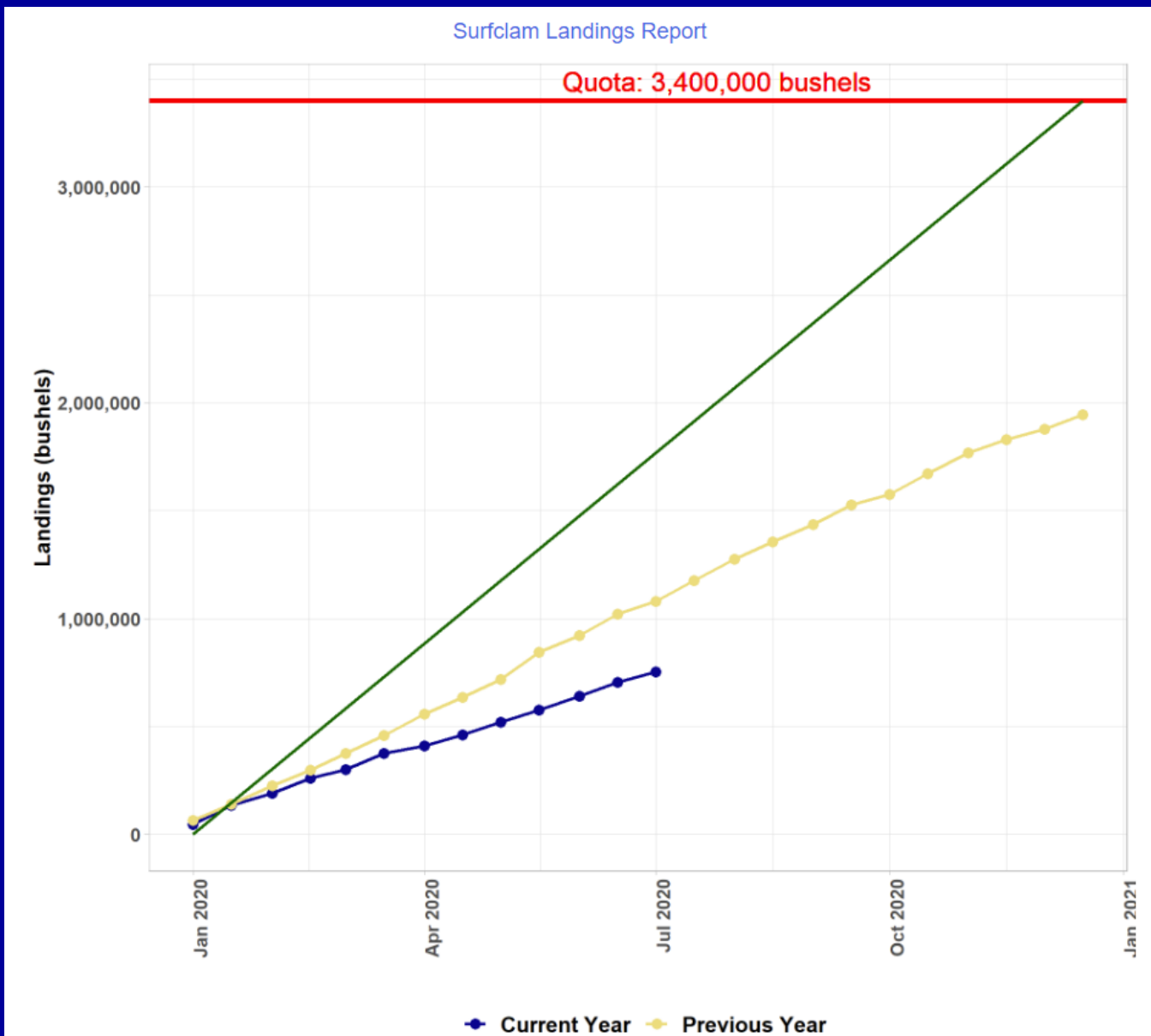
- Highlights from surfclam fish info doc
- Update on fishery performance report (both SCOQ)
- Staff recommendations for surfclam
- Highlights from ocean quahog fish info doc
- Staff recommendations for ocean quahog



# Surfclam Info Doc

- Dan covered biological/stock status
- 2019: 43 vessels (up 4 from 2018)
- 7 processors SCOQ in 5 states
- Decrease in overall ex-vessel value
  - \$28 million in 2019 (down \$2 mil from 2018)
  - \$14.37/bu in 2019 (up from 2018, \$14.18/bu)

# Surfclam Landings (thru July 15)



# Fisheries Performance Report

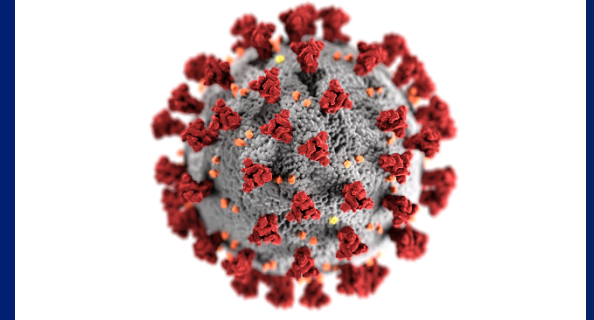
- Advisors met July 8, 2020
- Asked series of trigger questions
- AP identified 3 Critical Issues
- Also note, advisors would like status quo quotas (quota stability = fishery/market stability)



# Fisheries Performance Report

## ■ A. COVID-19:

- Sales to restaurants/retail low
- Processors continuing to operate
- Causing inventories to rise – causing storage costs/expenses to increase
- If this continues, will result in lower landings
- Reopening of retail may provide some relief
- Expect these effects to be ongoing, longer lasting



Source: CDC/Alissa Eckert, MSMI, Dan Higgins, MAMS

# Fisheries Performance Report

## ■ B. Research:

- Important Council support research that might increase harvest opportunities in the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England area)

## ■ C. Offshore Development:

- Wind energy development has become a critical issue for our industry (see expanded discussion in document)

# Surfclam 2019-2020

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 150%
- Based on report from joint SSC/Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Working Group

<b>Year</b>	<b>OFL (mt)</b>	<b>ABC (mt)</b>
<b>2019</b>	74,281	56,419
<b>2020</b>	74,110	56,289



# Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- Specifications be set for 6-years (2021-2026)
- If applied same previous SSC methods:

Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)	SSB/ <del>SSB</del> Threshold (ratio) <sup>a</sup>	P (overfishing)
2021	51,361	46,919	2.21	0.47
2022	48,202	43,460	2.15	0.46
2023	45,959	41,166	2.12	0.46
2024	44,629	39,888	2.11	0.46
2025	44,048	39,282	2.10	0.46
2026	43,886	39,223	2.11	0.46

<sup>a</sup> The target biomass ratio = 2. See section on BRPs above.

# Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- Assessment results suggest current catch levels reasonable
- $ABC=ACL$
- $ACT = 26,218 \text{ mt} + 12\% \text{ incidental} = 29,363 \text{ mt}$
- Since 2010 fishery has landed about 70% of quota, 100% not taken since 2003

# Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- NMFS Regional Administrator may suspend minimum size if “30 percent of the surfclam are smaller than 4.75 inches (12.065 cm)”
- Coastwide, 22% of landed surfclam undersized (DMV = 32.5%, NJ = 11%, and GBK = 18.2%)
- Staff recommend suspension of minimum shell-length for 2021; however, should encourage fishing industry to work to avoid landing large numbers of small clams

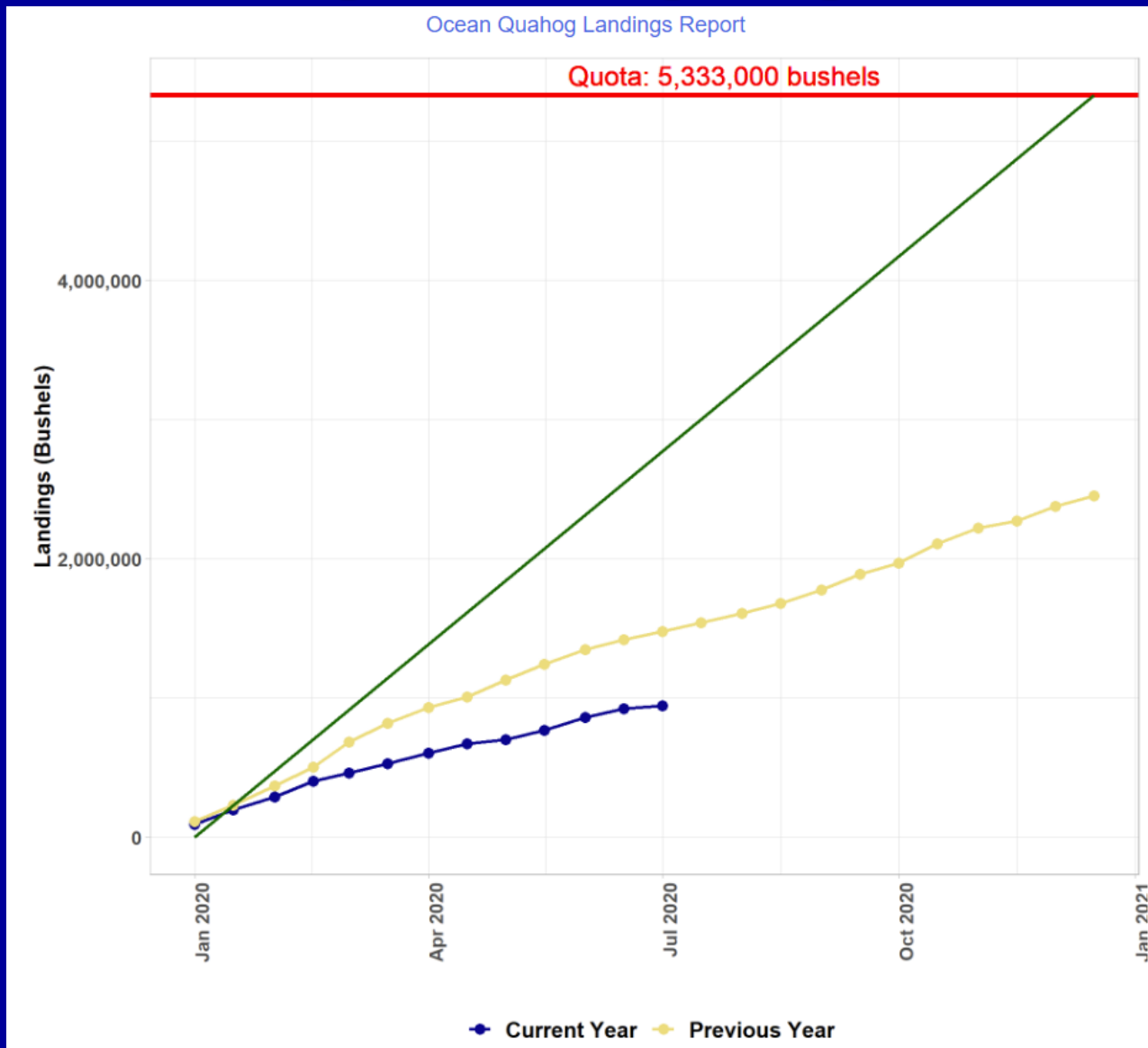
# Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- NMFS Regional Administrator close areas to surfclam/quahog fishing if:
  - 60% or more smaller than 4.5 inches;  
Not more than 15% larger than 5.5 inches
- NEFSC survey data/Maps provided: does capture small clams, but doesn't sample them well
- Staff recommend the Council continue to monitor spatial differences/changes in the fishery

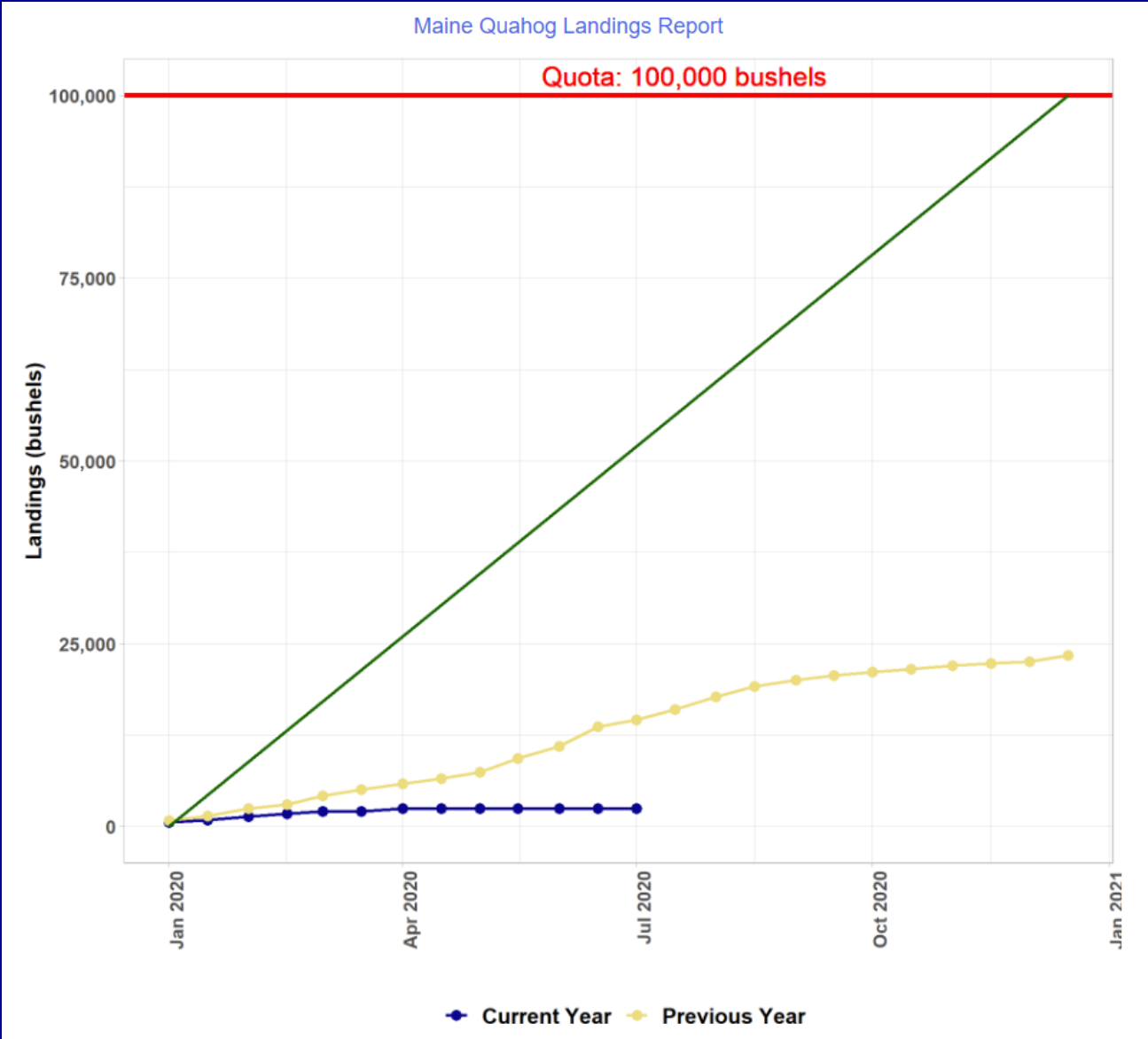
# Quahog Info Doc

- Dan covered biological/stock status
- 2019: 15 non-ME vessels, 6 ME
- 7 processors SCOQ in 5 states
- Decrease in overall ex-vessel value
  - \$19 million in 2019 (down \$5 million from 2018)
  - Non-Maine: \$7.86/bu in 2019; up from 2018, \$7.53/bu)
  - Maine: \$38.24/bu in 2019

# Quahog Landings – Non-Maine (thru July 15)



# Quahog Landings – Maine (thru July 15)



# Quahog 2019-2020

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Atypical life history in risk policy

Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)	SSB/SSB <del>Threshold</del> (ratio)	P (overfishing)
2018	61,600	44,695	2.0	0.35
2019	63,600	46,146		
2020	63,100	45,783		



# Quahog Staff Recommendations

- Specifications be set for 6-years (2021-2026)
- If applied same previous SSC methods; w/o atypical and using revised risk policy:

Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)	SSB/SSB <del>Threshold</del> (ratio) <sup>a</sup>	P (overfishing)
2021	44,960	44,031	2.18	0.49
2022	45,001	44,072	2.18	
2023	45,012	44,082	2.17	
2024	44,994	44,065	2.16	
2025	44,948	44,020	2.15	
2026	44,875	43,948	2.14	

<sup>a</sup> The target biomass ratio = 1.25. See section on BRPs above.

# Quahog Staff Recommendations

- Assessment results suggest current catch levels reasonable
- ABC=ACL as prescribed in FMP
- ACT = 25,924 mt (includes 5% incidental mortality)
- Comm quota: All 24,689 mt; Non-Maine = 24,190 mt; Maine = 499 mt; Same quotas since 2005