



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | P. Weston Townsend, Vice Chairman

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 27, 2023
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Jessica Coakley, Staff
Subject: 2024 Specifications Review for Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

As part of the 2021-2026 multi-year specification process for Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Council will review the most recent information available to determine whether modification of the 2024 specifications is warranted. The NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center provided an update of the commercial fishery data for surfclam and ocean quahog to support this review.

Based on a review of the information provided, staff recommends no change to the 2024 fishing year specifications. To maintain status quo measures for 2024, the Council would need a motion recommending the surfclam minimum size be suspended by the Regional Administrator (i.e., an annual requirement in the regulations).

Last year, the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office reviewed the landings information and biological sampling data for surfclams and determined the proportion of surfclams in the fishery smaller than 4.75 inches did not exceed the 30 percent trigger for the minimum size requirement. An estimated 27.6 percent of the coast wide surfclam landings to date in 2022 (August 2021 through July 2022) were undersized. The lower and upper 95 percent confidence bounds for this estimate were 25.4 percent and 29.8 percent.

If the Council requests the minimum size be suspended in 2024, the Regional Office will analyze the data from August 2022 to July 2023.

In 2024, the Council will again review available information and may consider modifications to the 2025 specifications, if warranted.