



Longfin Squid Fishery Performance Report April 2024

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Mackerel-Squid-Butterfish (MSB) Advisory Panel (AP) met via webinar to review the MSB Fishery Information Documents and develop Fishery Performance Reports. Separate reports were created for each species/fishery. The primary purpose of the report is to contextualize catch histories for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) by providing information about fishing effort, market trends, environmental changes, and other factors. AP member comments are not consensus or majority statements – the summary below may represent the perspective of one or multiple AP members. Some staff follow-up information has been added and noted where applicable.

Advisory Panel members present: Jeff Kaelin, Dan Farnham, Jr, Emerson Hasbrouck, Greg DiDomenico, Katie Almeida, and Meghan Lapp.

Others present: Jason Didden, Julia Beaty, Tom Miller, Conor Davis, Gavin Fay, Maria Fenton, Rich Malinowski, Will Poston, and Alan Bianchi.

Trigger questions posed to the AP to generate discussion:

1. What factors have influenced recent catch (markets, environment, regulations, etc.)?
2. Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved?
3. What would you recommend as research priorities?
4. What else is important for the Council to know?

Market/Economic Conditions

Longfin prices are down. The trend started with Covid – fishing has been great but the market hasn't normalized after surpluses started from Covid. Some boats are targeting other species as a result (e.g. shrimp out of Montauk for small boats or scup/summer flounder/butterfish for larger boats in winter. Some smaller boats were less active in early summer 2023 (due to low prices) versus the early summer of 2022.

The Town Dock implemented trip limits to slow landings across the dock. First 40k pounds then 30k pounds per trip.

There are two markets – fresh and frozen. It's expensive to hold frozen product and expensive to ship, affecting price that processors can offer to vessels. Diesel prices were very high in 2022, affecting costs for both vessels and processors. Diesel prices have decreased somewhat but are still elevated (staff added EIA diesel chart on next page).



Environmental Conditions

Nothing remarkable was reported, but discussion noted that the “Squid Squad” is investigating connections between squids and environmental conditions (the initial focus was just *Illex*). The Squid Squad meets regularly and integrates industry observations and environmental analyses from participating scientists at NMFS’ Northeast Fisheries Science Center. See related materials at <https://www.mafmc.org/briefing/february-2023> for additional information on the Squid Squad and related research.

Management Issues

Area/gear limitations negatively affect fishing/landings. Scup, Tilefish, and Fixed/Mobile Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs) have made longfin squid fishing more difficult. Large mesh requirements on George’s Bank also restrict targeting of longfin squid in areas where fishermen have been seeing signs of longfin squid in recent years. The [Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine Monument](#) may negatively impact access to areas where longfin squid could have been caught. The Monument also acts as a fence because you’d have to spend the time and fuel to get to the other (eastern) side.

Windfarm development continues to be a major concern for the longfin squid fishery given expanding potential overlap between wind farm areas and squid fishery areas. Concerns involve both fleet displacement and effects on squid mortality/behavior from installation and/or operation of turbines/facilities.

Other Issues

Especially until we have completed the ongoing research track assessment, it's unnecessary to investigate every potential criticism of longfin squid management (including the potential for managing based on sub-annual cohorts).

The longfin measures should remain status-quo (all AP'ers on call concurred).

Both squids were re-certified by MSE, reflecting on the sustainable management of longfin/*Illex* including scientific advances.

Research Priorities

Staff will be following up with the AP via email regarding research priorities.

SSC should be aware of the variety of squid research projects that are active in addition to standard research track assessment, e.g.:

- Wilberg et al UMD-CES/CBL Squid Modeling
- Longfin Industry Summit (April 2024)
- Cooperative biological data collection (SQUIBS)
- Longfin aging (contract using subset of SQUIBS work)
- Squid Squad

Additional Public Input

No additional input was provided.