2018 Planned Council Meeting Topics

as of 9/20/2018

October 1-4, 2018 – Cape May, NJ

- 2019-2021 Spiny Dogfish Specifications – *Develop and approve*
- 2019 Specifications for Squids and Butterfish – *Review and approve any modifications*
- Chub Mackerel Amendment – *Approve public hearing document*
- Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment update – *Decide whether to proceed*
- ~~Revised MSB goals and objectives – *Adopt*~~
- Risk Policy Framework – *Update on summer flounder economic MSE analysis*
- EAFM Risk Assessment – *Next steps and determine high risk priorities*
- ~~Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment – *Approve public hearing document*~~ (moved to December)
- 2020-2024 Strategic Plan – *Discuss timeline and approach*
- 2019 Implementation Plan – *Discuss draft priorities*
- *Illex* and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment – *Review and approve scoping document*
- GARFO/NEFSC Fishery Dependent Data Initiative Project (FDDI) – *Receive update*
- HMS Permits and Law Enforcement Issues - *Discuss*

December 11-13, 2018 – Annapolis, MD

- ~~Bluefish Allocation Amendment – *Approve range of alternatives for public hearings*~~
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass 2019 Recreational Management Measures - *Adopt*
- Summer Flounder Amendment: Commercial Issues/Goals and Objectives – *Final action*
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Framework on Conservation Equivalency, Block Island Sound Transit, and Slot Limits – *Framework meeting 2 (final action)*
- Summer Flounder F-Based Recreational MSE – *Review preliminary results*
- Black Sea Bass Amendment – *Review initiation and identify issues for consideration*
- ~~Chub Mackerel Amendment – *Final action*~~ *(moved to February 2019)*
- 2019 Implementation Plan – *Approve*
- Risk Policy Framework – *Final results of summer flounder economic MSE and determine next steps*
- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment – *Approve public hearing document*

Status of Council Actions Under Development

AS OF 9/20/2018

FMP	Action	Description	Status	Staff Lead
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment	The Council and ASMFC are developing this joint amendment to consider revisions to the FMP goals and objectives for summer flounder and commercial management measures and strategies, including federal commercial moratorium permit requalification, commercial allocation, and landings flexibility FMP framework provisions. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/summer-flounder-amendment	Public hearings held in September 2018; written comments accepted through October 12, 2018. Final action is expected at the December 2018 Council meeting.	Dancy
	Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Framework on Conservation Equivalency, Block Island Sound Transit, and Slot Limits	The Council and the ASMFC are developing a joint framework action and addendum to consider adding the following management options to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan: (1) Conservation equivalency for the recreational black sea bass fishery, (2) Conservation equivalency rollover for summer flounder and black sea bass, (3) Transit provisions for Block Island Sound for all three species, and (4) Slot limits for recreational fisheries for all three species. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-recreational-management-fw	Final action is scheduled for December 2018.	Beaty
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish	Chub Mackerel Amendment	This amendment considers adding Atlantic chub mackerel to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP. The amendment will consider potential catch limits, accountability measures, and other conservation and management measures required for stocks to be considered "in the fishery." http://www.mafmc.org/actions/chub-mackerel-amendment	The Council will review a public hearing document in October. Public hearings may take place in late 2018 or early 2019. Final action may take place in February 2019.	Beaty
	Illex Amendment	To ensure optimal management and fishery operation, the Council is considering modifications to the Illex permitting system as well as revisions to the goals and objectives for the MSB FMP.	The Council will review a draft scoping document at the October 2018 meeting.	Didden

FMP	Action	Description	Status	Staff Lead
Bluefish	Bluefish Allocation Amendment	This amendment considers potential revisions to the allocation of Atlantic bluefish between the commercial and recreational fisheries and the commercial allocations to the states. As part of this amendment the Council and ASMFC will also review the goals and objectives of the bluefish FMP and the quota transfer processes. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment	Staff is continuing to develop alternatives for this amendment but will not finalize the public hearing document or hold public hearings until after the results of the bluefish operational assessment are available in the spring of 2019.	Seeley
Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs	Excessive Shares Amendment	This amendment considers options to ensure that no individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) privileges. In addition, the goals and objectives for the SCOQ FMP will be reviewed and potentially revised. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/scoq-excessive-shares-amendment	Staff is continuing to refine the range of alternatives and develop a public hearing document.	Montañez
Omnibus	Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment	This amendment considers measures that would allow the Council to implement industry-funded monitoring coverage in some FMPs above levels required by the Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology in order to assess the amount and type of catch, monitor annual catch limits, and/or provide other information for management. The Amendment also considers specific coverage levels for the Atlantic mackerel fishery. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/omnibus-observer-funding	Action was postponed until completion of NMFS' electronic monitoring pilot project being conducted by NMFS. The Council expects to receive an update and discuss next steps in October 2018.	GARFO/ Didden
	Risk Policy Framework	The purpose of this framework action is to provide for a review of the ABC control rule framework and Council Risk Policy established in 2010 and to recommend any changes.	Development of the MSE model for summer flounder is continuing with a focus on further incorporation of social and economic factors. The Council will review initial MSE results later in 2018.	Muffley
	Omnibus Amendment for Data Modernization	This amendment will address the regulatory changes needed to fully implement the Agency's Fishery-Dependent Data Initiative.	The Council will receive an update at the October 2018 meeting.	GARFO/ NEFSC

Timeline and Status of Recent MAFMC Actions and Amendments/Frameworks Under Review

As of 9/20/2018

The table below summarizes the status of actions after they have been approved by the Council. For information about the status of Council actions under development, please see the document titled "Status of Council Actions Under Development."

Status	Amendment/Framework	Action Number	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	NOA Published	Proposed Rule Published	Approval/ Disapproval Letter	Final Rule Published	Regs Effective
Complete	Tilefish Framework 2	Tilefish FW 2	4/13/16				10/23/17		3/13/18	4/12/18
Complete	Blueline Tilefish Amendment	Tilefish AM 6	4/13/16			6/14/17	6/28/17	9/13/17	11/15/17	12/15/17
Complete	Omnibus Unmanaged Forage Amendment	SFSBSB AM 20; MSB AM 18; SCOQ AM 19; Bluefish AM 6; Tilefish AM 5; Dogfish AM 5	8/8/16	11/23/16	3/20/17	3/28/17	4/24/17	6/19/17	8/25/17	9/27/17
Complete	Omnibus eVTR Framework	MSB FW 10; Bluefish FW 2; SFSBSB FW 10; Tilefish FW 3	8/10/16		11/17/16		5/24/17		9/11/17	3/12/18
Complete	Omnibus ABC Framework	MSB FW 11; Bluefish FW 3; SFSBSB FW 11; SCOQ FW 2; Tilefish FW 4; Dogfish FW 3	6/12/14		7/31/15		7/19/17		4/11/18	5/11/18
Complete	Commercial Scup Quota Period Framework	SFSBSB FW 12	5/10/17	11/16/17	2/15/18	N/A	2/26/18		4/19/18	5/21/18
Complete	New Jersey Special Management Zones	N/A	12/12/16				2/13/18		7/9/18	8/8/18
Open	Squid Amendment	MSB AM 20	6/7/17	12/12/17	7/20/18	7/27/18	8/31/18			
Open	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Commercial Accountability Measure Framework	SFSBSB FW13	2/14/18	6/12/18	7/20/18	N/A	8/9/18			
Open	Atlantic Mackerel Closure Provisions Framework	TBD	6/5/2018	8/17/2018						
Open	Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Framework	TBD	8/13/2018							

Timeline and Status of Current and Upcoming Specifications for MAFMC Fisheries

As of 8/2/2018

Current Specifications	Year(s)	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Final Rule	Regs Effective	Notes
Atlantic Mackerel	2016-2018	6/9/15		8/24/15	1/22/16	4/26/16	5/26/16	
Bluefish	2016-2018	8/11/15			3/31/16	8/4/16	8/1/16	
Spiny Dogfish	2016-2018	12/7/15	3/11/16	5/20/16	6/22/16	8/15/16	8/15/16	
Summer Flounder	2017-2018	8/9/16	10/11/16	11/17/16	11/15/16	12/22/16	1/1/17	
Black Sea Bass	2017-2018	2/15/17	3/15/17	5/1/17	4/14/17	5/25/17	5/25/17	
Golden Tilefish	2018-2020	4/11/17	6/5/17	8/16/17	9/7/17	11/7/17	11/2/17	
Blueline Tilefish (see note)	2018	4/12/17			6/28/17	11/15/17	12/15/17	2018 specifications set via final rule implementing Amendment 6 to the Tilefish FMP
Surfclam and Ocean Quahog	2018-2020	6/6/17			12/8/17	2/6/18	3/8/18	
Squid and Butterfish	2018-2020	6/7/17		8/24/17	12/13/17	3/1/18	4/2/18	
Scup	2018-2019	8/8/17	10/2/17	12/1/17	11/7/17	12/22/17	12/22/17	2019 specs reviewed in August 2018. No changes recommended.
Blueline Tilefish	2019-2021	4/11/18	8/17/18					
Summer flounder (recreational measures)	2018	12/12/17	3/5/18	4/10/18	4/11/18	5/31/18	5/31/18	
Black sea bass (recreational measures)	2018	2/14/18	3/5/18	4/10/18	4/11/18	5/31/18	5/31/18	
Bluefish	2019	8/15/18						
Summer Flounder	2019	8/15/18						
Black Sea Bass	2019	8/14/18						

Upcoming Specifications	Year(s)	Council Meeting (*subject to change)
Spiny Dogfish	2019-2021	October 2018
Squid and Butterfish	*2019 Review*	October 2018

MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

September 14, 2018

Mr. Guy` DuBeck
NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division
1315 East-West Highway
NMFS/SF1
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Guy`:

At the August 2018 Council Meeting, Highly Migratory Species (HMS) staff presented Draft Amendment 11 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP). In response, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's HMS Committee (Committee) would like to offer the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Alternative Set C

The Committee *does not support* Alternative C1 and instead recommends Alternative C3 to implement mandatory reporting of all recreationally landed and discarded shortfin mako sharks. Considering shortfin mako sharks are overfished and experiencing overfishing, it is imperative to collect data from commercial *and* recreational fishermen on landings and discards. The no action (preferred) alternative would not require reporting of shortfin mako sharks outside of the potential interception by the Large Pelagic Survey or Marine Recreational Information Program.

Alternative Set D

The Committee supports the preferred alternative to establish a foundation for developing an international rebuilding plan for shortfin mako sharks. However, we would like to see the HMS division take a more aggressive approach to rebuilding by encouraging other member nations to adopt the international management recommendations put forth by ICCAT.

Please accept this letter as a formal comment from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's HMS Committee on Draft Amendment 11 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP.

Please call me or Matt Seeley of my staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, D. Hemilright, D. Stutt, M. Seeley

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel Meeting - Fall 2018

Sheraton Silver Spring Hotel
8777 Georgia Avenue
September 5-6, 2018

Wednesday, September 05, 2018

Time	Discussion Item	Presenter
8:30 – 8:45 am	Welcome/Introductions	Bennett Brooks, Facilitator
8:45 – 9:30 am	Overview of Recent Activities/Rulemaking • Regulatory Actions, Landings, & Tournament Updates • International Updates • Reporting, Permitting, & Other Issues • Other Business for Meeting Agenda	HMS Division Staff
9:30 – 10:00	Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) Road Map Draft Implementation Plan for HMS • Presentations, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	
10:00 – 10:15 am	Break	
10:15 – 11:00 am	Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Management: Review of 2018 Year to Date • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Pelagic Longline Bluefin Tuna Area-Based and Weak Hook Management Updates • Presentations, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:30 – 2:15 pm	NOAA Fisheries Leadership Remarks	Samuel Rauch – NOAA Fisheries Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs
2:15 – 3:45 pm	Amendment 7 Three-Year Review and Amendment 13 – Bluefin Tuna Management • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
3:45 – 4:00 pm	Break	

4:00 – 4:30 pm	United States / Bahamas Boundary Negotiations Update • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	David Hogan U.S. Department of State
4:30 – 5:15 pm	HMS Charter-Headboat Electronic Logbook Reporting • Presentations, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
5:15 – 6:00 pm	Amendment 12 - Implementing Recent NMFS National Policy Directives • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
6:00 – 6:15 pm	Public Comment	
6:15 pm	Adjourn	
6:30 pm	No-Host Social at Sheraton Lobby Lounge	

Thursday, September 06, 2018

Time	Discussion Item	Presenter
8:30 – 8:45 am	Reconvene	Bennett Brooks, Facilitator
8:45 –9:15 am	NMFS Bottom Longline Shark Survey History and Results • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	Lisa Natanson – NOAA Fisheries Northeast Science Center
9:15 – 9:45 am	Trends in Indices of Abundance used in Dusky and Sandbar Shark Stock Assessments • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	Enric Cortes – NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center
9:45 –10:00 am	Break	
10:00 – 11:00 am	Amendment 11 – Shortfin Mako Sharks • Presentations, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey Transition Plan Update • Presentations, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	John Foster and Dave Van Voorhees – NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Lunch	
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Amendment 14 – Domestic Shark Quota Management • Presentation, Questions & Answers • HMS Advisory Panel Discussion	HMS Division Staff
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Public Comment	

2:45 – 3:00 pm	Meeting Wrap Up & HMS Division Priorities Presentation • Presentation, Questions & Answers	HMS Division Staff
3:00 pm	Adjourn	

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 18, 2018

To: Chris Moore

From: Jason Didden

Subject: MRIP ground-truthing exercises

During several recent presentations on the higher effort estimates generated with the new mail-based Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES), people have asked whether anyone had "ground-truthed" the new numbers. Without a full census to compare to the survey, it's not really possible to totally ground-truth the absolute value of the new higher effort estimates, but staff investigated this issue via a couple of "thought experiments" considering population and some other surveys to see if the new effort estimates seemed "plausible." The analysis below is by no means conclusive, but may be useful for adding context to the new MRIP estimates and/or sparking further evaluation of this issue.

The new MRIP FES estimates that in the Mid-Atlantic (VA-NY), for all modes (boat, shore, etc.) and for all areas (brackish tidal waters, bays, inshore ocean, and offshore), there were 46 million angler/person trips in 2017 (36.4 million inland, 7.8 million ocean within 3 miles, and 1.8 million ocean beyond 3 miles).[1] The Census estimates that in 2017 the VA-NY (including PA) population was 57.1 million[2].

If you think about how many trips an individual fisherman might take in a year, then you can evaluate what percent of the population must be fishing to result in the effort estimates generated by MRIP, and consider if that percent is reasonable. Or vice-versa. There are also non-Mid-Atlantic state people fishing, but that's likely a small proportion of effort.

The next questions then become "How often does the average person go fishing?" or "What percent of the population fishes?" One can calculate that from MRIP data but then the analysis becomes circular, so staff briefly searched for other independent sources of this information and two were found. The industry trade groups The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation and

[1] https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/access-data/run-a-data-query/queries/index

[2] https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/PEP/2017/PEPANNRES/0100000US%7C0100000US.04000%7C0200000US1%7C0200000US2%7C0200000US3%7C0200000US4

The Outdoor Foundation published a report *2015 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING*[3]. They estimated that in 2014, four percent of all Americans ages 6+ fished in saltwater (11.8 million participants), and the average number of annual outings per saltwater fishing participant in 2014 was 16 (most fish fewer times but some fish a lot). The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's *2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, And Wildlife-Associated Recreation*[4] found that 8.3 million saltwater anglers age 16+ fished 9 days on average and averaged 7 trips, for a participation rate of about 3%.

One might expect the Mid-Atlantic states' population to fish in saltwater a bit more than the average American overall given the relative proximity of the coast. If 5% of the Mid-Atlantic states' population goes saltwater fishing, that's about 2.86 million anglers. Given the MRIP effort estimate of 46 million trips, the implied average trips per angler is about 16 trips per year. This rate is the same as the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation and The Outdoor Foundation Report trip rate and higher than the U.S. F&W Service's trip rate.

While there are a variety of issues that limit the applicability of such comparisons, they seem to suggest that the MRIP effort estimates at least seem plausible given the population in the Mid-Atlantic. While 46 million angler/person trips seems like a lot, in the context of the Mid-Atlantic states' population of 57.1 million people, the number of trips seems possible given some of the other surveys that have been done on saltwater fishing participation.

Another way of thinking about this question is in terms of the number of people fishing per day needed to get to 46 million angler trips (again brackish and saltwater). There are approximately 104 weekend days and 261 weekdays in a year. If 2/3 of the days are fishable, then there are 69 fishable weekend days and 174 fishable weekdays. For the sake of simplicity, above-zero fishing effort during days assumed non-fishable is ignored.

If fishing intensity is 2.5 times higher on a weekend day than a weekday (which aligns with MRIP access point data and a few bait and tackle shops staff called), you can calculate the needed number of people fishing per day under these assumptions. To get to 46 million salt/brackish water angler trips, on average 133,000 people must go fishing on a fishable weekday and 332,500 people must go fishing on a fishable weekend day ([174*133,000] + [69*332,500] = 46 million). Or relating these numbers to the overall regional population of 57.1 million, on a typical fishable weekday, 1 out of 430 people go saltwater/brackish fishing and on a typical fishable weekend day 1 out of 172 people go saltwater/brackish fishing.

Modifying various considerations such as the proportion of fishable days, including Pennsylvania's population, including very young individuals, and ignoring people who take two trips in one day will change the results of this exercise, but overall it seems possible that you could have around 1 out of 430 people fishing on fishable weekdays and 1 out of 172 people fishing on fishable weekend days in the Mid-Atlantic population as defined.

[3] https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2015-Special-Report-on-Fishing_FV.pdf

[4] https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/fhwar/publications/2016/fhw16-nat.pdf

NTAP Update, September 19, 2018

From: Wendy Gabriel - NOAA Federal <wendy.gabriel@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 20, 2018 2:48 PM
To: Batsavage, Chris; Parkins, Christopher; Lackner, Hank; Andrew Lipsky - NOAA Affiliate; Chris Legault; Roebuck, Christopher; Goethel, Dave; Dave Packer; David Richardson - NOAA Federal; Mirarchi, Frank; Gartland, James; Ruhle, James; Eutsler, Jeffrey; Hoey, John; John Manderson - NOAA Federal; Hare, Jon; Knight, Jonathan; Seeley, Matthew; Luisi, Michael; Michael Simpkins; Pol, Michael; Rago, Paul; Politis, Philip; He, Pingguo; Ruhle, Robert; Alexander, Terry; Stockwell, Terry; Miller, Timothy
Subject: NTAP update, 19 September 2018

1. Industry-based gear performance experiment

We have awarded a contract to get field data on the effects of wingspread on catch rates to Chris Roebuck's F/V Karen Elizabeth. Now that we know that we have a vessel with capacity for twin trawling, we will work with the NTAP Working Group to design the experiment.

2. Autumn Bottom Trawl Survey progress

The Bigelow left the dock on schedule to start the first leg and is ending the first leg on schedule as well. The first leg was extremely productive, even with a major storm. All strata south and west of Hudson Canyon have been completed. We hope this productivity can continue through the remaining legs, which would afford us some flexibility at the end of the survey for some experimental work.

3. Gear performance experiments, Bigelow

At the start of the fall bottom trawl survey, we undertook some initial testing of Thyboron Type IV 66" (NEAMAP) doors in shallow water on a few Bigelow days. Terry Alexander was aboard to provide advice.

We expect to have some some Thyboron 21 "flipper" as well as Bison doors available for testing should we have days available at the end of the fall survey. Terry Alexander is coordinating with ESB to make Bison doors available on loan. We hope he can get out for this second component if days become available; and if others are interested in participating, let us know.

At the moment we have more doors to test than days potentially available at the end of the fall survey. However, we need to develop a priority list for any other candidate doors NTAP and the Working Group feels would be viable. This work will continue as part of the spring survey and as some additional dedicated days in the summer.

4. Flume tank experiments

As soon as we understand that Memorial University has addressed their camera issues, we will finalize a venue or access for webinar viewing and circulate a poll for potential dates.

5. Potential effects of gear performance on stock assessment results

We developed working papers for TRAC and summer flounder assessments evaluating effects of gear performance (efficiency, wingspread) on indices used in stock assessments.

6. Evaluation of catchability and integration into assessments

We developed a draft working paper that comprehensively evaluated industry-based studies of Bigelow trawl efficiency, for consideration in the summer flounder assessment. Chris Roebuck, NTAP member, is a co-author on that working paper.

7. Scheduling an NTAP Working Group meeting/webinar

We would like to schedule a date for an NTAP Working Group to: 1.) Design the twin trawl experiment above evaluating effects of wingspread on catch rates, including target species, areas, timing, and logistics. 2.) Identify additional candidate doors for evaluation. 3.) Identify flume tank experiment options.

We discussed a webinar approach at our last WG meeting. This seemed to work well in a previous experimental design effort. Andy Lipsky has polled some of you for availabililtyit turns out that scheduling will still be difficult, between the NEAMP (over 8 November) and NEFSC trawl surveys (over 13 November) and people's fishing plans. For Working Group members, please weigh in on a Doodle poll by 26 September. https://doodle.com/poll/5qz367p2yyc3p69k

As always, any questions or ideas, give me a call.
Thanks,
Wendy

--

Wendy L. Gabriel, Ph. D.
Chief, Population and Ecosystems Monitoring and Analysis Division
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA National Marine Fisheries
Woods Hole Lab
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

(508)-495-2213

Request for Proposals
For a Study to Document the Distribution of Surfclams in the US Northwest Atlantic

Proposal Submission Deadline: October 31, 2018
Term of Project: 2 years

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to document the distributions of *Spisula solidissima similis* and *Spisula solidissima solidissima* in the nearshore waters of the US Northwest Atlantic. This study should involve an examination of the extent of genetic and reproductive isolation among areas sampled for these species.

Background

The surfclam taxon *Spisula solidissima similis*, also known as the "southern" surfclam, has a reported distribution that includes shallow nearshore marine habitats south of Cape Hatteras as well as in the Gulf of Mexico. *Spisula solidissima solidissima*, the commerically harvested Atlantic surfclam, is larger with a longer life span and is found in cooler waters north of Cape Hatteras both nearshore and offshore.

S. s. similis was recently shown to be reproductively isolated and genetically distinct from *S. s. solidissima* at the level of species (Hare et al., 2005, 2010). While morphological differences were observed, these differences were not sufficient to distinguish these two species in the field (Hare et al., 2010). A commercially harvested population of *S. s. similis* has been documented North of Cape Hatteras in the Long Island Sound (Hare et al., 2010), and this southern species has also been documented in Massachusetts state waters (Shields, 12 March 2018). Recent analysis on size, growth, and longevity of surfclams by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) has suggested that there are portions of the inshore federal survey strata that have surfclams that are fast growing, with shorter longevity and smaller maximum sizes than other parts of the survey (NEFSC 2017). It is possible that warmer waters and changing conditions are altering the distribution of these species.

Currently, the federal fishery management plan treats all Atlantic surfclams as a single management unit and does not distinguish between *S. s. solidissima* and *S. s. similis*. There are potential implications to the stock assessment if multiple species that are genetically or reproductively distinct are assessed as part of a single stock. Multiple species that have different maximum sizes, longevity, and growth may affect how assessment results are interpreted and biological reference points are developed. In addition, there are management implications because the commercial fishery targets larger clams, in part through size restrictive gear. Although managers annually suspend the minimum size limit, if a substantial portion of the stock does not approach the maximum size of *S. s. solidissima,* recommended gear specifications may need to be revisited. *S. s. solidissima* has not been a strong candidate stock for rotational management because of its relatively slow growth. *S. s. similis* may be better suited to rotational management, which presents interesting spatial management options that will depend on the distribution of each species.

This study should improve the information available to the stock assessment and allow fisheries managers to make better informed decisions on surfclam management in the Northeast.

Scope of Work
The contractor will document the distributions of *S. s. similis* and *S. s. solidissima* in the nearshore waters of the US Northwest Atlantic. The contractor will also examine the extent of genetic and reproductive isolation among areas sampled for these species.

The contractor will be responsible for the genetic testing of samples, analysis of this information, a discussion of the implications of findings, and presentation of final results to the Council.

The contractor will not be directly responsible for sample collection. Samples will be obtained from inshore regions of the federal surfclam survey (Map 1) and state surveys (< 3 miles). Tentative commitments have already been obtained from several state agencies (i.e., NJ Department of Environmental Protection, NY Department of Environmental Conservation, and MA Division of Marine Fisheries) and federal agencies (i.e., NEFSC) to provide georeferenced samples from their fishery independent surveys.

However, the contractor will be required to specify the exact number of samples needed to address the scope of work, as well methods for sample collection (e.g. size of surfclam needed, processing of tissue, etc.), to allow these agencies to provide samples. The contractor will coordinate with the NEFSC (Dr. Daniel Hennen), and points of contact in the state agencies to obtain the georeferenced samples. The proposal should also include the cost for materials to process, handle, and ship the samples from the agencies to the contractor.

Contractor Qualifications
Applicants should have demonstrated experience with current techniques for genetic testing on marine shellfish, including mitochondrial and DNA sequencing.

How to Apply
Applicants should submit a proposal to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, by email (cmoore@mafmc.org) by 11:59 pm on October 31, 2018. Proposals should not exceed 20 pages total (excluding curriculum vitae) and should include the following elements:

- *Executive Summary*: A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as brief summary of the applicant's qualifications.
- *Proposed Scope of Work*: A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work described above. This should include a summary of potential analysis approaches, a project schedule, a brief summary of how the project will be managed, and a list of all personnel who may work on the project.
- *Qualifications of Applicant*: A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. Curriculum vitae should be included for all individuals who will work on the project.
- *Proposed Budget:* A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g. hourly rates, fixed fees).
- *References:* Names, full addresses, and phone numbers for three clients for whom the applicant has provided similar services to those requested.

Timeline
September 10, 2018: Issuance of Request for Proposals
October 31, 2018: Deadline for proposal submission
January 7, 2019: Contractor notification
January 31, 2019: Contracts finalized
March 1, 2019: Project begins
March 1, 2020: Submission of final report

Proposal Evaluation Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated based on methodology, prior experience, references, qualifications, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

Requests for Further Information
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901
tel: 302-526-5255
email: cmoore@mafmc.org

Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by applicants.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending civil/criminal legal actions.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify this request for proposals in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.

References

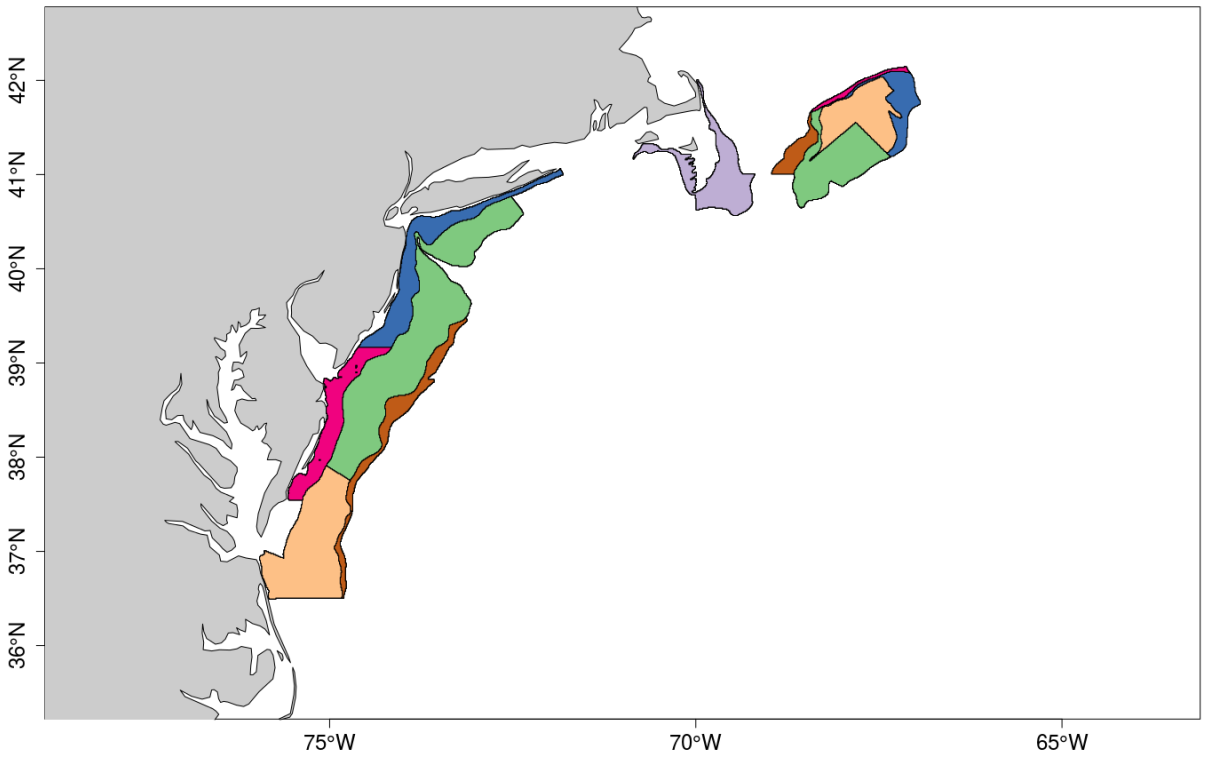
Hare, M. and J. R. Weinberg. 2005. Phylogeography of surfclams, *Spisula solidissima*, in the western north Atlantic based on mitochondrial and nuclear sequences. Marine Biology 146: 707-716.

Hare, M., J. R. Weinberg, O. Peterfalvy, M. Davidson. 2010. The “southern” surfclam (*Spisula solidisssima similis*) found north of its typical range: a commercially harvested population in Long Island Sound New York. J. Shellf. Res. 29(4):799-807.

Northeast Fisheries Science Center. 2017. 61st Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (61st SAW) Assessment Report. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 17-05; 466 p. (doi:10.7289/V5/RD-NEFSC-17-05) Available from: National Marine Fisheries Service, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026, online at http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications.

Shields, Tom. Memo to David Pierce. MA Marine Fisheries Preliminary Southern Surf Clam Investigations, Boston, MA. 12 March 2018.

Map 1: Current Northeast Fisheries Science Center surfclam survey sampling strata.



White Paper on the Development of a Continuous Tilefish Survey

September 2018

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Introduction and Management Context

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC or Council) manages two species of tilefish, golden (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) and blueline tilefish (*Caulolatilus microps*). Golden tilefish are found in the southern New England/Mid-Atlantic area and generally occur at depths of 75 to 400 meters (Nelson and Carpenter 1968). Blueline tilefish inhabit the Northeast U.S. shelf ecosystem, which includes the area from the Gulf of Maine south to Cape Hatteras. They occupy this habitat at a depth range of 46 to 256 meters (Sedberry et al. 2006). Blueline tilefish also occur farther south and are managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) from the VA/NC line to the Florida Keys.

The Council has managed golden tilefish since 2001 and recently initiated management of blueline tilefish in waters north of the VA/NC line (2015). Blueline tilefish are a data poor stock in the Mid-Atlantic, as they have not been previously managed and interests in the fishery only recently spiked. Initiation of blueline tilefish management was driven by increased landings (around 10x) of unmanaged blueline tilefish in 2014. Landings in 2015 were projected to surpass those in 2014, but an emergency rule was initiated in June 2015 limiting commercial catch to 300 pounds and recreational harvest to 7 fish per angler. An extension of the emergency rule limited catch in the Mid-Atlantic allowing management to issue more appropriate measures based on catch histories, life history parameters, and the most updated stock assessment. In December 2017, a final rule was published for Amendment 6 to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which added blueline tilefish as a fully managed species to the Tilefish FMP.

The Council is now working to develop indices of abundance for both golden and blueline tilefish ranging from Cape Hatteras to the northernmost extent of their range. This white paper describes the current stock status of golden and blueline tilefish and proposes a range of options for the development of a continuous tilefish survey in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Purpose/Need

Tilefish favor offshore habitat where the benthos are irregularly composed of sand, mud, clay, and shell hash where they can burrow into the sediment (Sedberry et al. 2016). Current fishery independent surveys conducted in or into the Mid-Atlantic region (e.g. Bigelow NEFSC Trawl, NEAMAP, ChesMMAP and various state-run trawl surveys) often target shallow coastal regions or are not designed to target deep water burrowing species like tilefish. This habitat preference makes tilefish a more difficult species to sample through the current fishery independent trawl surveys. According to dealer reported data, tilefish are most often caught using bottom longline gear, and thus, an associated survey should follow that same approach.

The most relatable surveys currently conducted are the MARMAP/SEAMAP conducted through South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. These surveys are only performed in the South Atlantic, but survey methods could be applied to tilefish (specifically blueline tilefish) in the Mid-Atlantic.

In the Mid-Atlantic, the golden tilefish stock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring as of the 2017 assessment update. There are no fishery independent surveys available for this stock, so commercial catch per unit effort is relied upon for indications of population abundance changes. Blueline tilefish stock status is currently listed as unknown from the 2017 benchmark stock assessment. To better understand tilefish life histories, assist in identifying updated biological reference points, and implement future management measures, the Council is proposing to:

1. Develop long-term surveys for golden and/or blueline tilefish;
2. Develop indices of abundance for golden and/or blueline tilefish;
3. Determine the spatial distribution of golden and/or blueline tilefish in the Mid-Atlantic.

Current Tilefish Stock Status and Research

Data Update and Benchmark Assessment

In 2018, the Council received a golden tilefish data update that included data through 2017 and indicated the stock is currently not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. The update identified that recent landings declined from a high of 2.03 million pounds in 2010 to a low of 1.09 million pounds in 2016. This decline appeared to be a result of a combination of lower catch rates and some inactive vessels. However, 2017 landings increased to 1.53 million pounds most likely due to increased catch per unit effort on the strong year class. In 2017, the model update concluded that this year class was about 50% selected and is predicted to be 100% selected in 2018.

The status of the Blueline Tilefish stock along the Atlantic Coast was assessed in 2017 as part of the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process (SEDAR 50). Blueline tilefish were assessed as two separate stocks, north and south of Cape Hatteras. Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations and stock statuses were identified for the region south of Cape Hatteras (not overfished, overfishing not occurring), but data limitations restricted an ABC recommendation and identification of stock status (unknown) for the region north of Cape Hatteras, which encompasses the Mid-Atlantic management areas. To assist in developing an ABC recommendation for the stock north of Cape Hatteras, the Mid- and South Atlantic Councils/SSCs, as well as staff from the Northeast and Southeast Fisheries Science Centers developed a joint subcommittee to rerun the Data Limited Toolkit (DLMTool), which simulates stock responses to different harvest strategies. The results were partitioned at the Council boundaries using coastwide catch data from a pilot tilefish survey funded by the MAFMC out of SUNY Stony Brook. The joint review committee report was presented to the Council at the June 2018 Council Meeting[1].

Pilot Tilefish Survey

In January 2017, the Council funded a fisheries-independent pilot survey conducted by SUNY Stony Brook for golden and blueline tilefish from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras. The goals and objectives of the survey were to:

1. Establish a comprehensive fishery-independent bottom long-line survey for golden and blueline tilefish along the Atlantic coast;
2. Quantify the number of individuals and size-structure of the two species;
3. Determine the spatial distribution of both species and identify preferred depth strata across size range;
4. Evaluate the role of environmental variables driving the observed spatial distribution patterns; and
5. Evaluate proposed sampling intensity and statistical power.

Over two cruises, sampling occurred at 192 stations that encompassed tilefish habitat and took into consideration both golden and blueline tilefish depth distributions (Figure 1). Bottom longlines with one-nautical mile mainline were deployed with 150 evenly spaced gangions and soaked for an average of 40 minutes. Three different offset circle hook sizes (8/0, 12/0, 14/0) were distributed by a ratio of 20-60-20. Current meters and hook timers were also deployed. Resulting catch was recorded from all strata sampled during the survey and included 1,392 individuals spanning 21 species. Of the total catch, 619 individuals

[1] Report of the Pilot Tilefish Survey Review can be found on page 11 of the Executive Director's Report from the June 2018 MAFMC Meeting, found at http://www.mafmc.org/s/Tab15_Executive-Director-Report.pdf.

were golden tilefish and 75 were blueline tilefish[2]. Ultimately, this survey was designed to sample tilefish (both golden and blueline tilefish) from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras. Due to slightly different habitat preferences specific to the two species and potential sampling bias to the north (as far as blueline tilefish habitat preference is considered), this study more effectively sampled golden tilefish.

Recommendations Developed from the Outcome of the Pilot Tilefish Survey

A Pilot Tilefish Survey Review Committee (Committee) was established to peer review the findings of the survey and provide recommendations regarding future tilefish research and survey implementation. The Committee concluded that the survey provided insight into development of future long-term tilefish surveys. The survey design was robust and benefited from the collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. The implementation protocols appeared to be feasible, and the interpretation of the data was appropriate and valid given the effective post hoc analyses, which contained good recognition of the limitations. However, given the low catches, particularly for blueline tilefish, the survey design may need to be re-evaluated (potentially by increasing the number of stations) to reduce uncertainty.

The Committee concluded that if the survey continued as designed and conducted in the pilot, an index of relative abundance could likely be developed for golden tilefish. Due to the low encounter rates for blueline tilefish, aspects of the survey design would need to be modified (depth strata, samples per strata, hook size, bait size, etc.). Furthermore, the Committee stated it is premature to make these conclusions given the magnitude of interannual variability for blueline tilefish abundance and distribution is unknown. As a result, the Committee proposed that the survey may be more effective if the target species (and associated habitat/location) alternated each year or over a few years. Variations of this recommendation are explored further under the "Options" section of this white paper.

For blueline tilefish, the Committee also proposed that modifications can be made to the pilot study to make it directly compatible to current surveys such as the MARMAP/SEAMAP-South Atlantic Long Bottom Longline Survey[3]. The compatibility would only apply to blueline tilefish due to the one-unit stock's extensive range. Variables that would need to be modified are the strata and depth sampled, number of hooks, hook size (one versus 3), bait (whole squid vs 1"x1"), and sampling season.

Future Survey Recommendations

The Committee developed a number of recommendations for consideration in the development of a future tilefish survey based on the outcomes of the pilot:

Gear

- Use only one hook size (small or medium) in the future. Small hooks had overall higher catch rates and an increase in the proportion of undersized fish.
- Include hook timers in a future survey but they are likely to be only necessary in one specific year.
- Bait size should be relative to hook size instead of standardizing bait size across all hook sizes.
- Consider use of Smith (2016) methodology for hook saturation bias.

[2] The pilot survey final report and other materials presented to the MAFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee at the March 2017 meeting can be found at http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings/2018/march-13-14.

[3] Carmichael et al. (2016) report detailing optimal approached for surveying deep-water species complex of the Southeastern U.S. Atlantic Coast and Smart et al. (2015) detailing sampling gears and standard protocols used by the Southeast Reef Fish Survey and its partners.

Sampling

- According to blueline tilefish data collected from the MARMAP/SEAMAP-South Atlantic Long Bottom Longline survey south of Cape Hatteras, blueline tilefish bottom substrate and depth preference may differ from golden tilefish. In the pilot, the shallowest sampled strata were 75 meters, so the survey may have missed blueline tilefish in shallow waters (~<50 meters).
- Expand temporal sampling coverage to account for tilefish abundance and potential shifts in habitat preference. However, timing in mid-summer for the pilot survey might have helped to lower spiny dogfish bycatch.
- Consider a multi-year option with increased sampling intensity (i.e. conduct an intensive study once every three years); or one targeted tilefish species per year with a specific design and the other tilefish species in the next year with a specific design.
- Record information on leading hook with bait or not; and if a baited hook came back empty (no catch and no bait).
    - Frequency of zero catch (any species) does not cause concerns about gear saturation unless the zero catches are the result of baitless hooks. In the pilot, the overall catch rate was only 5% catch rate (30,000 hooks with 1,300 fish caught) and about 2.5% for tilefish. However, if the hooks are baitless upon haulback then other species or invertebrates may be stripping the bait, thereby reducing potential catches of the target tilefish species.
- Identify a consistent soak time and standardize it with the South Atlantic surveys.
- Look at species composition and bycatch species relative to soak time.

Future Survey Development: Options to Consider

Although blueline tilefish are a newly managed species in the Mid-Atlantic (since 2015) they have been prosecuted by industry, like golden tilefish, for decades. As noted by the Committee, to assist in developing effective surveys in the future, it is vital to involve industry in survey development and potentially survey implementation. Depending on resources and identified best practices for associated gear and sampling methods, one or multiple options listed below may be selected (Table 1). For blueline tilefish, each option should consider adopting methods conducted by MARMAP/SEAMAP (Southeast Reef Fish Survey) to allow for survey expansion through the Mid-Atlantic.

Option 1

Conduct a biennial golden tilefish survey from near Veatch Canyon to Cape Hatteras. This survey can closely follow the guidelines and methods performed through the pilot tilefish survey as described above and in the final report.

Option 2

Conduct a bi- or triennial blueline tilefish survey from Hudson Canyon (which presents the northernmost abundance of blueline tilefish based on the pilot survey) to Cape Hatteras increasing localized sampling intensity (noted as an outcome of the pilot), as this may be more important than timing and range.

Option 3

Conduct a dual species survey for golden and blueline tilefish in core fishery areas. Under this option, survey design will need to target different habitat ranges since golden and blueline tilefish are often found at different depths.

Option 4

Develop a long bottom longline survey in conjunction with the SEFSC and SAFMC to sample blueline tilefish along the Atlantic coast from Veatch Canyon to the Florida Keys. This survey will offer more collaborative partners and potential sources of funding while sampling species managed by both the MAFMC and SAFMC. It is also a proactive approach to monitor species that have potential to shift habitat northward into Mid-Atlantic waters.

Potential Funding Sources

The MAFMC provided internal funding ($224,350) for the pilot tilefish survey conducted through SUNY Stony Brook. Now, the Council is looking to identify other entities or sources to fund the proposed continuous tilefish surveys. Potential funding sources are as follows:

1. NOAA Fisheries - Northeast and Southeast Fisheries Science Center and GARFO.

2. Industry - Funding provided through a landing fee on a per pound basis of landed golden tilefish which can be recovered at the dealer level (e.g. Based on 2017 landings, ex-vessel value, and the adjusted price per pound, if commercial golden tilefish permit holders provided ~ $0.16/pound, the recovered cost would sum to ~ $225,203 in one year. Average ex-vessel revenue for the last five years was approximately $5,000,000.) (Figures 2 and 3).

3. A combination of NMFS and industry - Funding provided through a cost recovery on pounds of landed fish and a match program through the NOAA Fisheries.

4. A cooperative survey with industry where revenue generated are used to offset the survey costs.

5. A targeted Research Set-Aside program (initiated when specifications are reviewed or set).

References

Carmichael, J, M Duval, M Reichert, N Bacheler and T Kellison. 2015. Workshop to determine optimal approaches for surveying the deep-water species complex off the southeastern U.S. Atlantic coast. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC- 685. 24 p. doi:10.7289/V5GB222C

Frisk, M. G., J. A. Olin, R. M. Cerrato, P. Nitschke, and L. Nolan. 2018. Final Report to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council: Fisheries-independent pilot survey for Golden (*Lopholatilus chamaelonticeps*) & Blueline (*Caulolatilus microps*) Tilefish throughout the range from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras. Available: http://www.mafmc.org/tilefish/. (February 2018).

Nelson, W.R. and J.S. Carpenter. 1968. Bottom longline explorations in the Gulf of Mexico. Com. Fish. Rev. 30:57-62.

SEDAR. 2017. SEDAR 50 – Atlantic Blueline Tilefish Assessment Report. SEDAR, North Charleston SC. 542 pp. available online at: http://sedarweb.org/sedar-50.

Sedberry, G.R. and Pashuk, O. and Wyanski, D.M. and Stephen, J.A. and Weinbach, P. (2006) *Spawning locations for Atlantic reef fishes off the southeastern U.S.* In: Proceedings of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, 57, pp. 463-514.

Smart, T. I., M. J. Reichert, J. C. Ballenger, W. J. Bubley, and D. Wyanski. 2015. Overview of sampling gears and standard protocols used by the Southeast Reef Fish Survey and its partners. Charleston, SC.

Smith, S. J. 2016. Review of the Atlantic Halibut longline survey index of exploitable biomass. Can. Tech. Rep. Aquat. Sci. 3180: v + 56 p

Tilefish Survey Review Committee 2018. Report of the Tilefish Survey Review. MAFMC. Link p. 11.

Table 1. Details of potential future surveys identified for golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and golden and blueline tilefish together.

	Sampling Frequency	**Survey Range**	**Sampling Intensity**	**Cost**
Golden Tilefish *(Option 1)*	Every other year to capture year classes moving through the fishery	Potentially Veatch Canyon to Cape Hatteras	Similar to the pilot study	Potentially less than the pilot study
Blueline Tilefish *(Option 2)*	Every 2 (or even 3) years due to their patchiness and effort being focused on sampling intensity	Potentially Hudson Canyon to Cape Hatteras (the range does not need to be as large as golden tilefish)	Increase sampling intensity (more tows) compared to the pilot study to cover patchiness within the stock	Potentially slightly more than the pilot study due to increased sampling intensity (but the survey range will be decreased)
Golden and Blueline Tilefish *(Option 3)*	Every other year to capture year classes moving through the fishery (for golden tilefish, but will apply to both species)	Respective golden and blueline tilefish core areas based on the pilot study and dealer reported landings	Golden tilefish sampling intensity can be the same as the pilot study. Blueline tilefish sampling intensity should be increased compared to the pilot study to cover patchiness within the stock.	More expensive than the pilot study (even without surveying Georges Bank) due to the increased sampling intensity. Also, not all labor in the pilot study was compensated.
Blueline Tilefish and/or Golden *(Option 4)*	Every other year to capture year classes moving through the fishery (for golden tilefish, but will apply to both species)	Potentially Veatch or Hudson Canyon to the Florida Keys	Blueline tilefish sampling intensity should be increased compared to the pilot study to cover patchiness within the stock and expand through locations recommended by MARMAP/SEAMAP. Golden tilefish sampling intensity can be the same as the pilot study.	More expensive than the pilot study (even without surveying Georges Bank) due to the increased sampling intensity. Also, not all labor in the pilot study was compensated. Collaboration with the SEFSC, SAFMC, SCDNR may help to offset costs.

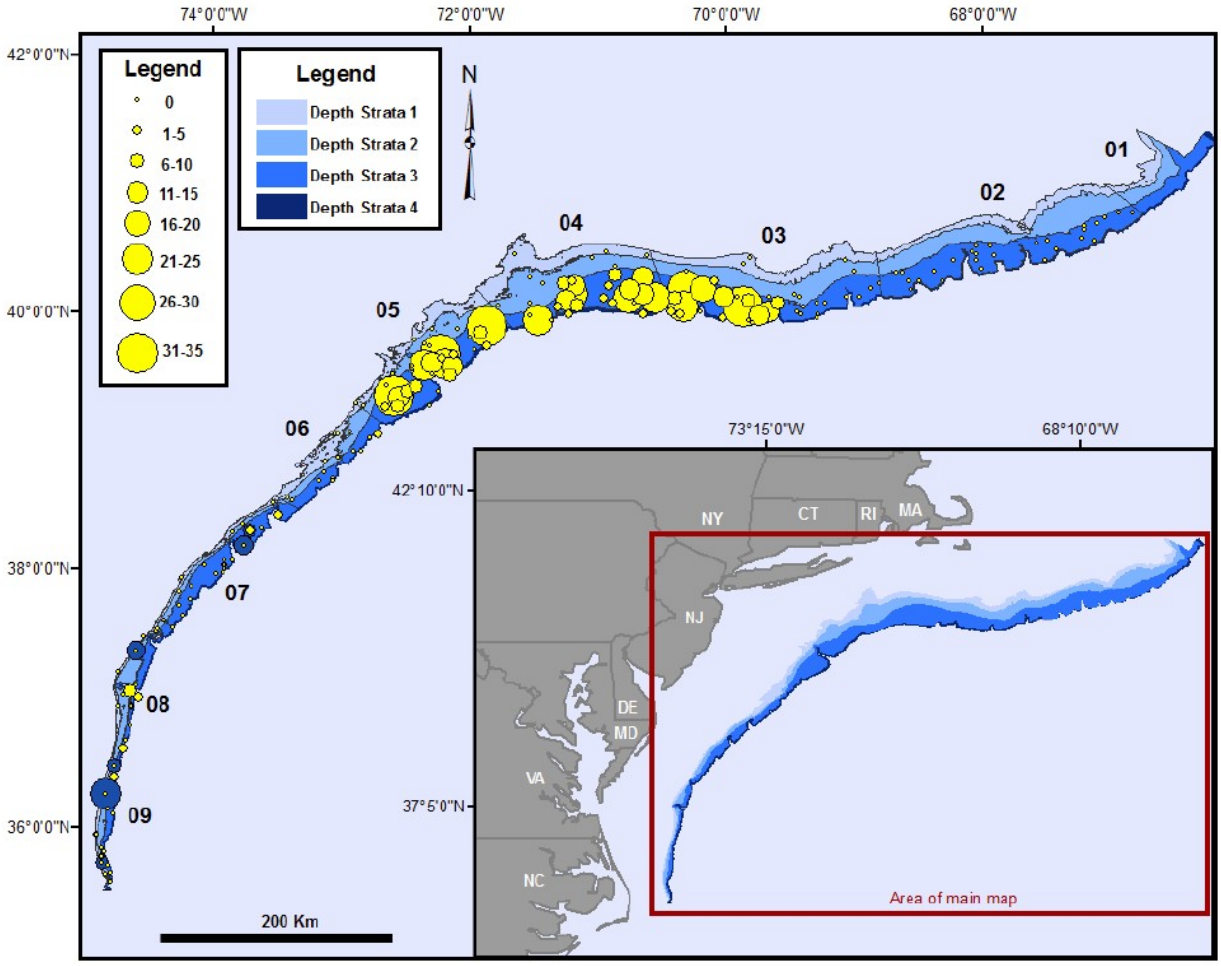


Figure 1. Station locations and distribution of golden (yellow) and blueline (blue) tilefish caught (number of individuals) during the pilot tilefish survey through SUNY Stony Brook.

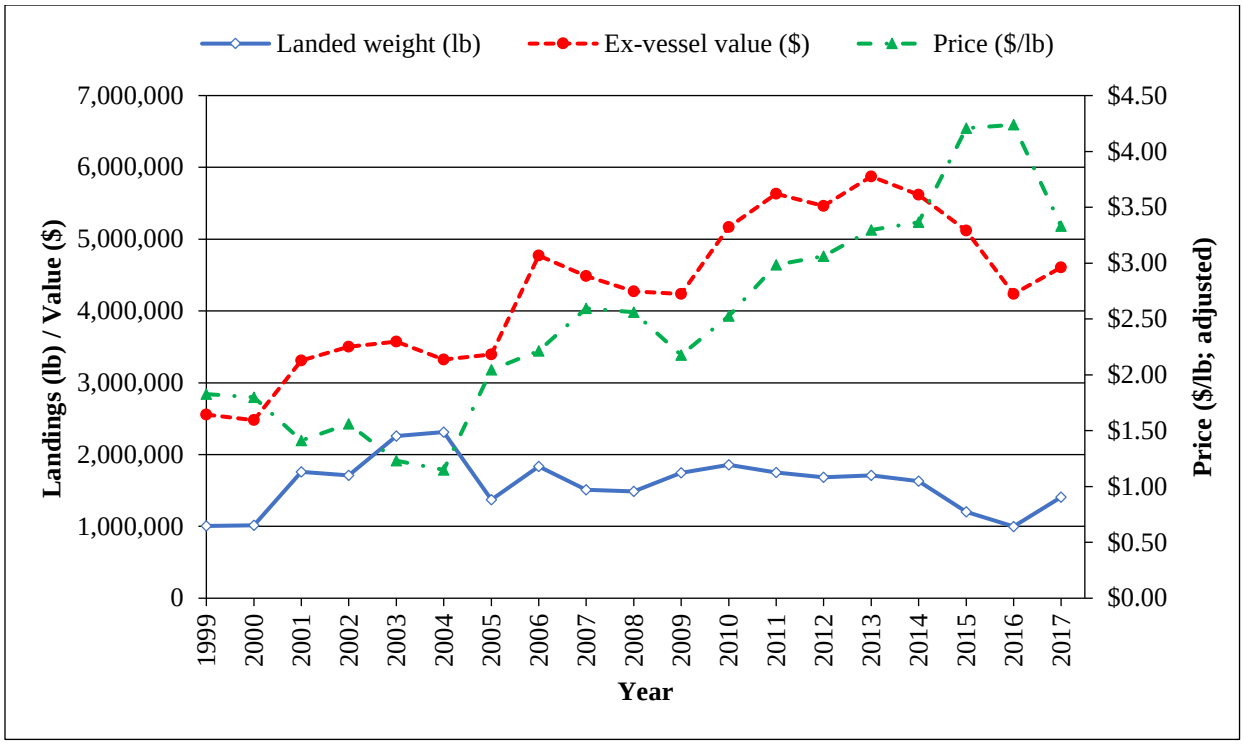


Figure 2. Landings (landed weight), ex-vessel value, and price for golden tilefish, Maine through Virginia combined, 1999-2017. Note: Price data have been adjusted by the GDP deflator indexed for 2016.

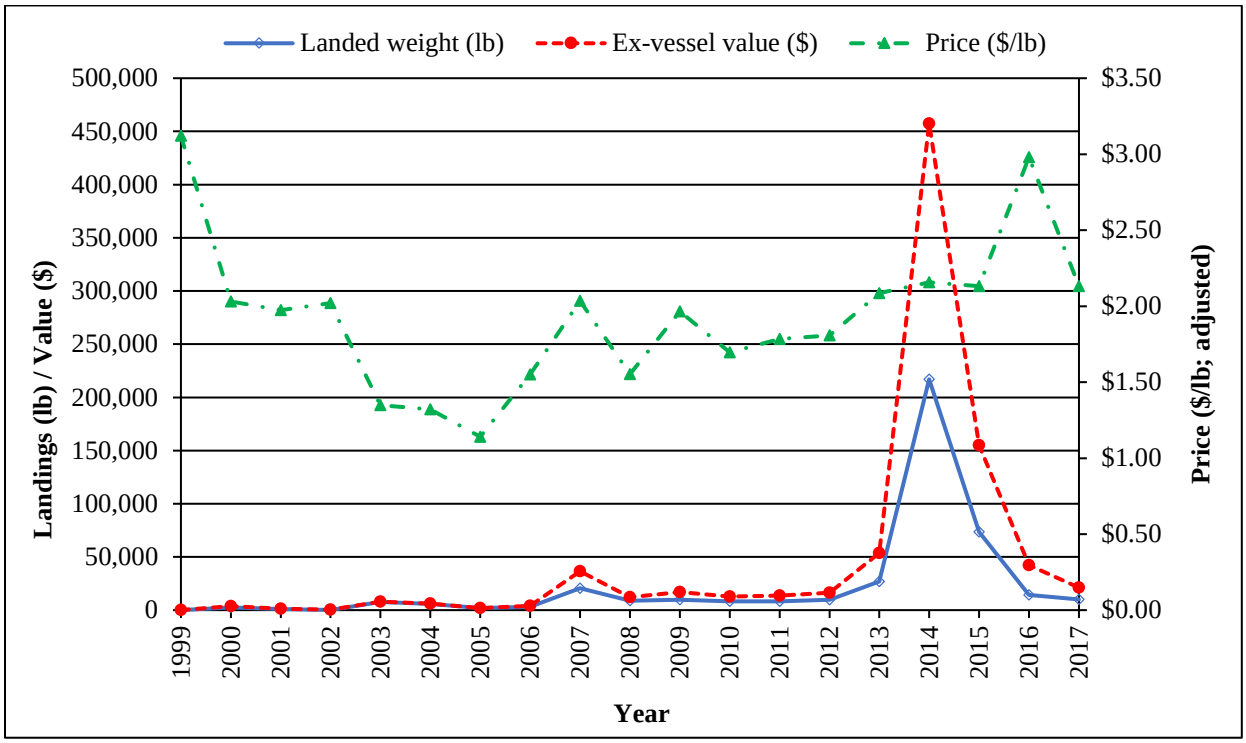


Figure 3. Landings (landed weight), ex-vessel value, and price for blueline tilefish, Maine through Virginia combined, 1999-2017. Note: Price data have been adjusted by the GDP deflator indexed for 2016.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 21, 2018

To: Council

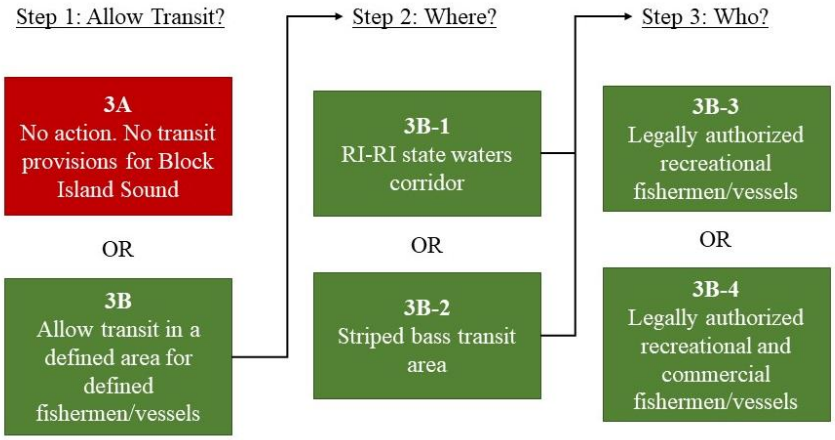
From: Julia Beaty

Subject: Revisions to alternatives for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass framework on conservation equivalency, Block Island Sound transit, and slot limits

In August 2018, the Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved a range of alternatives for a framework action and addendum on conservation equivalency, Block Island Sound transit, and slot limits. Based on subsequent discussions among Board members and Council, Commission, and GARFO staff, revisions to the previously-approved alternatives for Block Island Sound transit are recommended. The Board approved these revisions over email. The Council will consider approving the revisions during their October 2018 meeting.

The revised alternatives are included below for Council consideration. They are summarized in the flowchart below and described in more detail on the following pages. No changes are recommended to the other alternatives, which are not included here, but can be found in the briefing materials for the August 2018 joint Council and Board meeting (available at: http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/august-2018).

The Council and Board plan to take final action on this framework/addendum during their joint meeting in December 2018.



Alternative 3A: No action (no transit provisions)

Under alternative 3A, no change would be made to current regulations, which require the following:

1. *Non-federally permitted recreational fishermen (i.e., private anglers)* in possession of summer flounder, scup, or black sea bass legally harvested from state waters, may enter/transit/fish in federal waters, provided they remain in compliance with all federal regulations governing the recreational harvest of those species while in federal waters. Upon re-entering state waters (to continue fishing, and/or land), all such fishermen are subject to all applicable regulations of that state. If federal regulations for any of the three species are more restrictive than state-waters regulations, private anglers must abide by them while in federal waters. If federal waters are closed, they may not enter/transit/fish in federal waters. If other federal measures (e.g., minimum size, possession limit) are more restrictive, possession of any of the three species must be compliant with those federal measures in federal waters.
2. *Non-federally permitted for-hire and commercial vessels* (i.e., state-permitted vessels without a federal party/charter permit or a federal commercial moratorium permit) in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters, may not enter/transit/fish in federal waters.
3. *Dual (state and federal) permitted for-hire and commercial vessels* in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters may enter/transit/fish in federal waters, provided they remain in compliance with all federal regulations while in federal waters. Upon re-entering state waters (to continue fishing and/or land), all such fishermen remain subject to the most restrictive regulations, either federal or state. If federal regulations are more restrictive, dual permitted for-hire and commercial vessels must abide by them wherever they fish. If federal waters are closed, they may not enter/transit/fish in federal or state waters. If other federal measures (e.g., minimum size, possession limit, gear) are more restrictive, possession of any of the three species must be compliant with those federal measures in both state and federal waters.

Alternative 3B: Block Island Sound transit provisions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass

This alternative would establish a transit area (as defined under sub-alternative 3B-1 or 3B-2) through which non-federally permitted vessels (recreational or recreational and commercial, as defined under sub-alternative 3B-3 or 3B-4), in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters could transit between the Rhode Island state waters surrounding Block Island and the coastal state waters of Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, or Massachusetts. Transit through the defined area would be allowed provided:

1. Fishermen and harvest are compliant with all applicable state regulations.
2. Gear is stowed in accordance with federal rules.
3. No fishing takes place from the vessel while in federal waters.
4. The vessel is in continuous transit.

Transit through the defined area would be allowed for non-federally permitted recreational fishermen (i.e., all private anglers) in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters when federal regulations governing the recreational harvest of those species are more restrictive. (Private anglers would still be allowed to transit all federal waters when abiding by any more restrictive federal regulations or when federal regulations are less restrictive than state regulations.)

Transit through the defined area would be allowed for non-federally permitted for-hire and commercial vessels in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters at all times. (Non-federally permitted for-hire and commercial vessels would still be prohibited from possessing any of the three species in all other federal waters.)

There would be no change to current federal regulations requiring all federally permitted vessels and dual (state and federal) permit holders to abide by the measures of the state(s) in which they harvest and land their catch, or the federal waters measures, whichever are more restrictive.

If alternative 3B is selected, only one sub-alternative for transit area should be chosen (i.e., either sub-alternative 3B-1 or sub-alternative 3B-2 below).

Sub-alternative 3B-1: Block Island Sound transit provisions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass apply in a defined north-south transit corridor from Rhode Island state waters around Block Island Sound to Rhode Island state coastal waters

The transit area would be the transit corridor shown in Figure 1 and bound by the following coordinates:

- NW (41º18′50″N, -71º32′56″W)
- NE (41º18′20″N, -71º31′27″W)
- SE (41º17′01″N, -71º32′25″W)
- SW (41º17′19″N, -71º33′19″W)

This sub-alternative defines only the transit area. Transit provisions could apply to recreational vessels only, or both recreational and commercial vessels, depending on the sub-alternatives selected below.

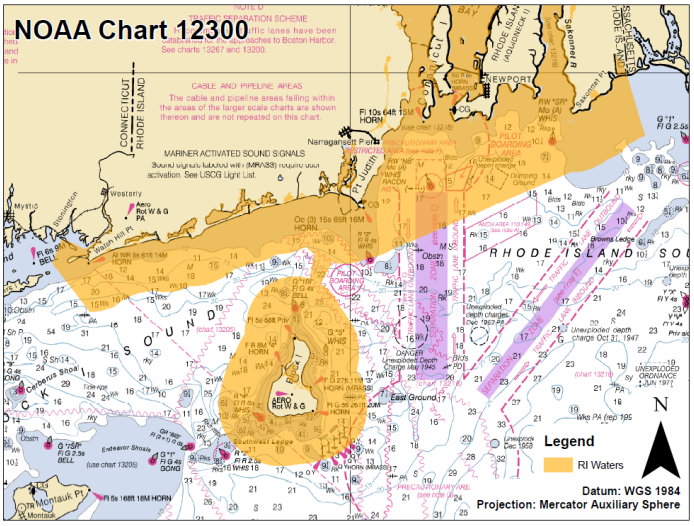


Figure 1: Block Island Sound transit area under sub-alternative 3B-1 (orange corridor north of Block Island).

Sub-alternative 3B-2: Block Island Sound transit provisions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass apply in the existing Block Island transit zone for striped bass

The transit area would be identical to the area of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around Block Island where transit is allowed for striped bass. This area, as shown in Figure 2, is defined as follows: "The EEZ within Block Island Sound, north of a line connecting Montauk Light, Montauk Point, NY, and Block Island Southeast Light, Block Island, RI; and west of a line connecting Point Judith Light, Point Judith, RI, and Block Island Southeast Light, Block Island, RI" (50 CFR 697.7 (b).

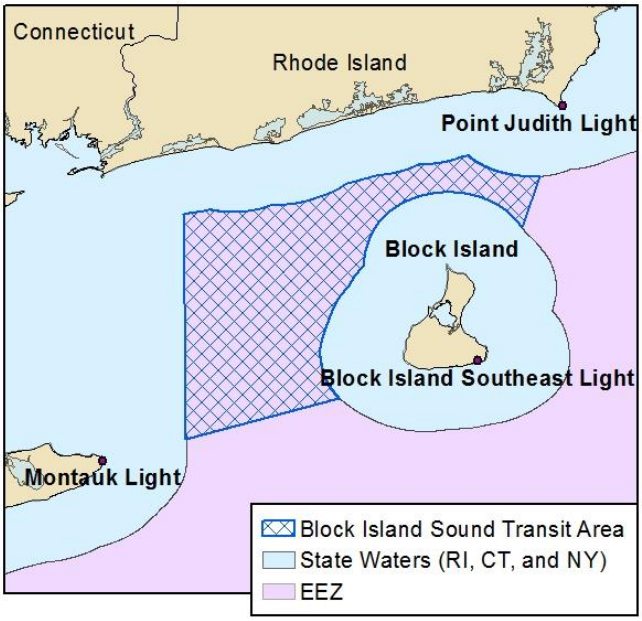


Figure 2: Block Island Transit Zone for Striped Bass (blue hatched area).

This sub-alternative defines only the transit area. The transit provisions could apply to recreational vessels only, or both the recreational and commercial vessels, depending on the sub-alternative selected below.

If alternative 3B is selected, only one sub-alternative for fisheries subject to transit provisions should be chosen (i.e., either sub-alternative 3B-3 or sub-alternative 3B-4 below).

Sub-alternative 3B-3: Recreational fishery

All non-federally permitted recreational fishermen (i.e., private anglers), and all non-federally permitted (i.e., state licensed or permitted) for-hire party/charter vessels, in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters could transit through the defined area between the Rhode Island state waters surrounding Block Island and the coastal state waters of Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, or Massachusetts.

These transit provisions would apply to private anglers only when federal regulations governing the recreational harvest of those species are more restrictive. These transit provisions would apply to all non-federally permitted (i.e., state licensed or permitted) for-hire party/charter vessels at all times.

These transit provisions would not apply to dual (state and federal) permitted for-hire vessels (i.e., those with federal charter/party permits), as all dual permit holders are always required to abide by the measures of the state(s) in which they harvest and land their catch, or the federal waters measures, whichever are more restrictive.

Sub-alternative 3B-4: Recreational and commercial fishery

This alternative would allow all non-federally permitted recreational fishermen (i.e., private anglers), all non-federally permitted (i.e., state licensed or permitted) party/charter vessels, and all non-federally permitted commercial vessels, in possession of any of the three species legally harvested from state waters to transit through the defined area between the Rhode Island state waters surrounding Block Island and the coastal state waters of Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, or Massachusetts.

These transit provisions would apply to private anglers only when federal regulations governing the recreational harvest of those species are more restrictive. These transit provisions would apply to all non-federally permitted (i.e., state licensed or permitted) for-hire party/charter and commercial vessels at all times.

These transit provisions would not apply to dual (state and federal) permitted for-hire and commercial vessels (i.e., those with federal charter/party permits and/or federal commercial moratorium permits), as all dual permit holders are always required to abide by the measures of the state(s) in which they harvest and land their catch, or the federal waters measures, whichever are more restrictive.