



MID-ATLANTIC

FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Mid-Atlantic Council Votes to Increase *Illex* Squid Quota

Cape May, NJ – Today the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted to increase the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for *Illex* squid by 2,000 metric tons (mt) for 2019 and 2020 after reviewing recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). This is an increase of approximately 8% above the ABC originally approved by the Council.

In 2017, the Council established a 24,000 mt ABC for 2018, 2019, and 2020. However, the rapid pace of landings in 2017 and 2018 suggests that *Illex* squid have been highly available to the U.S. fishery during these years, despite several prior years of low landings. The fishery closed September 15th in 2017 and August 15th in 2018. Given the fishery's recent performance, the Council asked its SSC earlier this year to consider whether changes to the 2019 and 2020 ABC are warranted. The SSC reviewed recent catch and survey information and endorsed a revised ABC of 26,000 mt.

If approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), this revised ABC will result in a domestic annual harvest (DAH) of 24,824.8 mt after accounting for discards. NMFS would then seek to close the fishery at 95% of that quota.

The Council also agreed to develop a working group to investigate new data collection and analysis to support setting *Illex* ABCs in the future.