Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

Catch Share Program Review: June Council Meeting

June 4, 2019
Background

- April 9, 2019 presentation of SCOQ ITQ Program Review Report (NEI, Inc.)
- Opened 30 day comment period
- Staff compiled the public comment
- Oversight Team had call May 13 to discuss issues identified and potential actions
Today

- Summary of comments received on review report
- Present issues and potential actions
- Council formally submit review package to NMFS
- Review is complete!
Written Comments Submitted

List of Written Comments Submitted:

1. Roman Dudus
2. Anonymous
3. Anonymous
5. Tom Hoff
6. Daniel LaVecchia, LaMonica Fine Foods
7. Tom Alspach, Sea Watch International, LTD
8. Thomas Dameron, Surfside Foods, LLC
Overall Themes

- While ITQ improved safety at sea, casualties were still occurring after program implementation.

- Some commenters questioned the analysis conducted and conclusions of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
Overall Themes

- Quota is set higher than landings (demand)
- This gives processors all the control in the industry
- If the quota was set closer to what industry needs, all shareholders would have opportunity to participate in fishery
Overall Themes

- Outcomes of ITQ program are aligned with the initial program Goals and Objectives (G&Os)
- Surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ system functions better than any other fishery
- The existing G&Os should not be modified
Overall Themes

- Herfindahl-Hirschman Indexes discussed in document should be removed because of the assumptions used.
Overall Themes

- There is no market power in these fisheries
- National Standard 4 is being met
- There is no reason for the Excessive Shares Amendment to be implemented
Overall Themes

- The ITQ system does not prevent new entrants from entering fishery if they raise necessary capital to do so.

- There is no evidence of market manipulation and the report should have stated this.
Oversight Team

- Met May 13 to consider findings of report and public comment

- Identified issues and potential actions

- Council can take up any or all

- Staff recommend they be tasked to follow-up on best ways to address prior to 2020 implementation plan discussion (October)
1. Imbalance between Quotas and Harvest

- Consider mechanisms in excess shares amend. or other means to align quota and market demand so all allocation holders can utilize their quota.
2. Decline in Independent Operators

- Could examine ways to promote the participation of independent harvesters in this fishery
3. Barriers to New Entry

- Consider what specific impediments are to entry into these fisheries.

- Consider how changes to ITQ program or other programs could improve opportunity and assist new entrants into the harvesting sector and/or processing sector.
4. Improved Data Collection and/or Research

- Data collection needs identified in the report
- Decline in voluntary participation in NMFS surveys
- Consider improving the collection of social and economic information for our region (including voluntary versus mandatory collection protocols)
5. Discards

- Catches including both surfclams and ocean quahogs have become more common, as surfclams have shifted towards deeper water.

- This increasing range overlap may change discard patterns in the future.

- Evaluate the possibility of using electronic monitoring to assess discards (commingling) in these fisheries.
6. Goals and Objectives of Fishery Management Plan

- Oversight Team notes that review highlights the opportunity for Council to revisit and possibly “refresh” FMP goals and objectives.
- Some public comments suggested G&Os should not be changed; other noted the work “sustainability” should appear in G&Os.
- Council is considering this in Excessive Shares Amendment.