Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

SSC Meeting

July 22, 2020
Today

- Highlights from surfclam fish info doc
- Update on fishery performance report (both SCOQ)
- Staff recommendations for surfclam
- Highlights from ocean quahog fish info doc
- Staff recommendations for ocean quahog
Dan covered biological/stock status

2019: 43 vessels (up 4 from 2018)

7 processors SCOQ in 5 states

Decrease in overall ex-vessel value

- $28 million in 2019 (down $2 mil from 2018)
- $14.37/bu in 2019 (up from 2018, $14.18/bu)
Surfclam Landings (thru July 15)

Surfclam Landings Report

Quota: 3,400,000 bushels

![Graph showing Surfclam Landings Report with Quota: 3,400,000 bushels. The graph compares landings for the current year and previous year with a linear trend line for each.](image-url)
Fisheries Performance Report

- Advisors met July 8, 2020
- Asked series of trigger questions
- AP identified 3 Critical Issues
- Also note, advisors would like status quo quotas (quota stability = fishery/market stability)
A. COVID-19:
- Sales to restaurants/retail low
- Processors continuing to operate
- Causing inventories to rise – causing storage costs/expenses to increase
- If this continues, will result in lower landings
- Reopening of retail may provide some relief
- Expect these effects to be ongoing, longer lasting

Source: CDC/Alissa Eckert, MSMI, Dan Higgins, MAMS
B. Research:

- Important Council support research that might increase harvest opportunities in the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England area)

C. Offshore Development:

- Wind energy development has become a critical issue for our industry (see expanded discussion in document)
Surfclam 2019-2020

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 150%
- Based on report from joint SSC/Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Working Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>OFL (mt)</th>
<th>ABC (mt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>74,281</td>
<td>56,419</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>74,110</td>
<td>56,289</td>
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</table>
Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- Specifications be set for 6-years (2021-2026)
- If applied same previous SSC methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>OFL (mt)</th>
<th>ABC (mt)</th>
<th>SSB/SSB_{Threshold} (ratio)^a</th>
<th>P (overfishing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>51,361</td>
<td>46,919</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>48,202</td>
<td>43,460</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<td>2023</td>
<td>45,959</td>
<td>41,166</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>44,629</td>
<td>39,888</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>44,048</td>
<td>39,282</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>43,886</td>
<td>39,223</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.46</td>
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^a The target biomass ratio = 2. See section on BRPs above.
Assessment results suggest current catch levels reasonable

ABC=ACL

ACT = 26,218 mt + 12% incidental = 29,363 mt

Since 2010 fishery has landed about 70% of quota, 100% not taken since 2003
Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- NMFS Regional Administrator may suspend minimum size if “30 percent of the surfclam are smaller than 4.75 inches (12.065 cm)”

- Coastwide, 22% of landed surfclam undersized (DMV = 32.5%, NJ = 11%, and GBK = 18.2%)

- Staff recommend suspension of minimum shell-length for 2021; however, should encourage fishing industry to work to avoid landing large numbers of small clams
Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- NMFS Regional Administrator close areas to surfclam/quahog fishing if:
  - 60% or more smaller than 4.5 inches;
  - Not more than 15% larger than 5.5 inches

- NEFSC survey data/Maps provided: does capture small clams, but doesn’t sample them well

- Staff recommend the Council continue to monitor spatial differences/changes in the fishery
Dan covered biological/stock status

2019: 15 non-ME vessels, 6 ME

7 processors SCOQ in 5 states

Decrease in overall ex-vessel value
- $19 million in 2019 (down $5 million from 2018)
- Non-Maine: $7.86/bu in 2019; up from 2018, $7.53/bu)
- Maine: $38.24/bu in 2019
Quahog Landings – Non-Maine (thru July 15)

Ocean Quahog Landings Report

Quota: 5,333,000 bushels

Graph showing ocean quahog landings from January 2020 to January 2021, with data for the current year and previous year.
Quahog Landings – Maine (thru July 15)

Maine Quahog Landings Report

Quota: 100,000 bushels

Graph showing landings over time with a red line indicating the quota of 100,000 bushels.
Quahog 2019-2020

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Atypical life history in risk policy

<table>
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<th>ABC (mt)</th>
<th>SSB/SSB Threshold (ratio)</th>
<th>P (overfishing)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>61,600</td>
<td>44,695</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>63,600</td>
<td>46,146</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>63,100</td>
<td>45,783</td>
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Quahog Staff Recommendations

- Specifications be set for 6-years (2021-2026)
- If applied same previous SSC methods; w/o atypical and using revised risk policy:

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>SSB/SSB Threshold (ratio)</th>
<th>P (overfishing)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>44,960</td>
<td>44,031</td>
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<td>2025</td>
<td>44,948</td>
<td>44,020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>44,875</td>
<td>43,948</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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The target biomass ratio = 1.25. See section on BRPs above.
Quahog Staff Recommendations

- Assessment results suggest current catch levels reasonable
- ABC=ACL as prescribed in FMP
- ACT = 25,924 mt (includes 5% incidental mortality)
- Comm quota: All 24,689 mt; Non-Maine = 24,190 mt; Maine = 499 mt; Same quotas since 2005