Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

SSC Meeting

May 11, 2022
Today’s Review (2023 Measures)

- Surfclam fishery info doc (fishery data update)
- Fishery performance report (both SCOQ)
- Staff recommendations for surfclam
- Repeat for ocean quahog...
- Received Level 3 SC and Level 1 OQ Management Track Assessments 2 years ago
Surfclam Biomass
Surfclam Fishing Mortality
Surfclam Info Doc

- 2021: 41 vessels (2 less than 2020)
- 8 processors/dealers SCOQ in 5 states
- Increase in overall ex-vessel value
  - $24 million in 2021
  - Up $1 million from 2020
Surfclam Landings (thru April 20)

Quota: 3,400,000 bushels
Fisheries Performance Report

- Covers both SCOQ
- Advisors met April 19, 2022
- Asked series of trigger questions
- AP identified several “Critical Issues”
- Also note, advisors would like status quo quotas (quota stability = fishery/market stability)
Fisheries Performance Report

- Regulations for shellfish safety have been updated by FDA.
- NOAA Fisheries has not addressed these changes on Georges Bank - preventing access to fishing areas unnecessarily.
- NOAA Fisheries/GARFO has not yet acted to modify these unnecessary shellfish safety area closures in a timely manner.
- AP requests Council send a letter to NOAA Fisheries and the appropriate public heath safety groups (in NOAA and FDA).
A. COVID-19:

- Sales to restaurants (foodservice) was low for 2020 and in 2021.

- Clam industry has seen a ramp up in food service demand, so COVID not a huge issue for 2022 in this sector.

- Demand is high but limitations in terms of the amount of product available (i.e., able to sell more than can be produced).

- Industry anticipates that as if inventories grow, they would be able to sell the addition product.
B. Research:

- Important Council support research in Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England area)

- Lack of access in this area is challenge for industry and has negatively impacted catch rates.

- Advisors would like to see Councils work on issue.

- Industry members are frustrated with their lack of ability to work through Exempted Fishing Permit program.
B. Research:

- Time components of the GSCHMA access areas (seasonal restrictions for cod) should be revisited.

- AP recognizes that Councils have taken initial steps, but industry does not feel it is being addressed.

- AP requests the MAFMC make this issue a priority under their responsibilities to SCOQ Fishery Management Plan.

- AP also recommends the MAFMC follow up with NEFMC to conduct a cross Council workshop on the issue.
Other Important Issues:

- The SCOQ AP would like to request that surfclam and ocean quahog AP members have two seats on Fishery Management Act Teams (FMATs) for issues related to these fisheries.
SSC Recommendation 2021-2026

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Based on report for Level 3 Management Track Assessment
- 2021 $p^* = 0.47$
Atlantic Surfclam Flowchart

- Overfishing Limit (OFL)
- Scientific Uncertainty

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) = Annual Catch Limit (ACL) = Total Allowable Catch (TAC)

Management Uncertainty

Annual Catch Target (ACT)
## Surfclam SSC/Council Recommendations

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<th>Year</th>
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Surfclam Staff Recommendations

- No changes to measures for 2023
  - Council will need motion to recommend RA suspend minimum size (required annually)

Really need a new staff holiday picture! Jan retired, Matt w/ WPFMC, Tori and Hannah (not pictured) are new MAFMC staffers.
Quahog Fishing Mortality

![Graph showing exploitation rate over years with a threshold line.](image-url)
2021: 16 non-ME vessels, 3 ME

8 processors/dealers of SCOQ in 5 states

Increase in overall ex-vessel value
  – $18 million in 2021
  – Up $2 million from 2020
Quahog Landings – Non-Maine (thru April 20)

Quota: 5,333,000 bushels

- Current Year
- Previous Year
Quahog Landings – Maine (thru April 13)
SSC Recommendation 2021-2026

- SSC-modified OFL probability distribution
- Coefficient of variation (OFL CV) of 100%
- Based on report for Level 1 Management Track Assessment
- 2021 \( p^* = 0.49 \)
Ocean Quahog Flowchart

- Overfishing Limit (OFL)
- Scientific Uncertainty
  - Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)
  - Annual Catch Limit (ACL)
    - Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
    - Management Uncertainty
      - Annual Catch Target (ACT) Non-Maine Fishery
      - Annual Catch Target (ACT) Maine Fishery
## Quahog SSC/Council Recommendations

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* For combined Maine and non-Maine quahog fishery.
Quahog Staff Recommendations

- No changes to measures for 2023