



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: May 1, 2019
To: Council
From: Jason Didden, Staff
Subject: April 24, 2019 FMAT Meeting Summary

The Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) for the *Illex* Permits and Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Goals and Objectives Amendment met for the first time on April 24, 2019. Members of the FMAT present included Jason Didden (Council staff), Doug Christel (NMFS-GARFO-Sustainable Fisheries), Marianne Ferguson (NMFS-GARFO-NEPA), Ben Galuardi (NMFS-GARFO-Statistics), Don Frei (NMFS-GARFO-Enforcement), and Lisa Hendrickson (NMFS – Science Center). Aly Pitts (NMFS-GARFO-Sustainable Fisheries) also attended.

The purpose of the meeting was to review scoping comments and develop related recommendations for the Council, which will review the scoping comments at the June Council Meeting. The focus was on potential scope of action issues and general range of alternatives issues. (ACTION) Jason Didden will circulate a revised Action Plan to the FMAT for review.

FMAT input on Scoping Comments

Many comments were particular to issues already in the scope of possible alternatives described in the scoping guide (e.g. permit requalification, tiers, freezer trawler versus refrigerated seawater (RSW) needs, individual transferable quotas (ITQs), FMP goals, etc.), and were not the focus of the FMAT meeting. The FMAT recommends that the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish (MSB) Advisory Panel and MSB Committee be used to develop particular alternatives once the Council affirms the scope of the action. Possible additions mentioned during scoping are discussed below, along with several general recommendations.

1. Require a 48-hour buffer between *Illex* trips. This idea was proposed to slow down the fishery. The FMAT recognized the concept is relevant to the purpose of the action, to address *Illex* participation and quota utilization, and it could be further evaluated as a possible alternative. However, it seems difficult to administer and enforce, and would likely require additional reporting by vessels. Such a measure could also complicate CPUE calculations, and may have high costs if *Illex* availability changes quickly. Restricting fishing departure times may also have safety-at-sea issues that would have to be explored.

2. Allow US vessels to use Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) quota. This idea was discussed in 2018 as a possible way to increase the *Illex* quota. The FMAT recognized the

concept is relevant to the purpose of the action, to address *Illex* participation and quota utilization, and it could be further evaluated as a possible alternative. However the inter-relationships of the US and NAFO assessments and quotas are complicated, and (ACTION) Lisa Hendrickson will produce a summary to facilitate further evaluation of this concept.

3. Require Daily *Illex* VMS Reporting. The Council could add this to the list of issues addressed in this action, but it does not appear directly related to a current purpose of the action (*Illex* participation/permits and revision of FMP Goals and Objectives).

4. Clarify squid ABC Control Rules. The Council could add this to the list of issues addressed in this action, but it does not appear directly related to a current purpose of the action. While the Council's 2011 ACL/AM Omnibus Amendment did not include the squids, the Council still relies on the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for catch advice based on best available scientific information to avoid overfishing. Neither squid currently has assessments that lend themselves to F-based reference points, but the plan specifies that if there is a new accepted assessment, new reference points will be automatically incorporated.

5. Related to the different *Illex* vessel processing types (freezer-trawler, RSW, and/or fresh/ice), the FMAT recommends that annual permit applications/renewals include the intended processing type (for potential CPUE calculations). (ACTION) GARFO staff will confirm this is feasible.

6. Initial requalification considerations. Use of the current 2013 control date is reasonable as a potential alternative, but the previous 2003 control date is not reasonable. There should be some alternatives that include landings through 2018 to appropriately consider recent participation. Data since 1997 is the best quality due to mandatory reporting requirements since 1997. Considering trip based, annual ("best year"), or cumulative landings criteria all seem feasible.

7. Allowing rollover of longfin squid quota between years. The Council could add this to the list of issues addressed in this action, but it does not appear directly related to a current purpose of the action. Such rollovers may not be feasible due to legal requirements to avoid overfishing, and would substantially add to the complexity of the action due to the complexity of longfin squid's lifecycle.

8. Adding hold capacity requirement alternatives as a component of capacity control. This seems like a reasonable alternative to add to the scope of alternatives and is directly related to the purpose of the action.

9. Several other scoping ideas could be pursued but also do not appear directly related to a current purpose of the action, including: squid breeding/stocking and water quality/egg survivability issues. Virginia's comments reflect the standard way NMFS will coordinate with the States (there appears to have been confusion about where we were in the amendment development timeline).

10. There were a variety of perspectives on how to revise the goals and objectives of the FMP. The FMAT will look for guidance from the Council on how to proceed given the goals and objectives reflect the policy preferences of the Council.

11. In follow-up FMAT email discussions, it was noted that the benefits related to extending the *Illex* season from a simple permit requalification or even tiering may be short lived. The remaining vessels can increase their effort or fishing power leading to a race to fish. With a quota based management system, the most direct way to end the race to fish is through an individual transferable quota (ITQ). An alternative would be to implement effort control options, such as days at sea limits, trip limits, or closed areas to meet the TAC or extend the season, if the Council is interested in such approaches.