



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 29, 2020
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Jessica Coakley and José Montañez, Staff
Subject: Changes to 2020 Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ) Specifications Setting Process

As a result of the revised Northeast Regional Coordinating Council (NRCC) approved stock assessment process, the timing of specifications setting in 2020 will be different than years past.

The Council will be receiving management track assessments in 2020 for both surfclam and ocean quahog to set specifications for upcoming fishing years (2021-2026).

An Assessment Oversight Panel (AOP) will meet on February 25, 2020 to review and approve the SCOQ management track assessment plans and determine what level of assessment review (Level 1, 2, or 3) will be needed. Dr. Dan Hennen, lead assessment scientist, has suggested that a greater level of review may be required for at least one of the species.

As a result, the schedule for 2020 would be as follows:

- June 22, 2020 (week of) - SCOQ management track assessment peer reviews at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC).
- June/July - SCOQ Advisory Panel will meet to develop fishery performance reports (FPRs).
- July 22-23, 2020 - Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will receive the reviewed SCOQ assessments, FPRs, and staff recommendations, and develop Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations.
- August 10-13, 2020 - Council meeting in Philadelphia, PA, during which specifications for these fisheries will be recommended.
- Staff will complete the specification package for submission to the Regional Administrator so that rulemaking can be completed in late 2020.