



# Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

Species Separation Requirements  
Amendment



*February 2023 Council Meeting*



# Today

- Quick recap of where we are with this action
- Overview of Jan. 26 Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) & SCOQ Advisory Panel (AP) Meeting
  - FMAT Action Plan for 2023
  - Some ideas for solutions from AP/Fishing Industry



# Purpose of Action

- Purpose is to modify the species separation requirements in SCOQ fisheries
- Regulations would be modified to allow for mixed catches
- Issue was raised to the Councils attention by the fishing industry

# December 2022 Motion

Move to delay final action on the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Species Separation Requirements Amendment and remand the amendment to the Committee and FMAT to continue to develop alternatives for a possible 2023 Council meeting. This action should be considered for inclusion on the 2023 Council Implementation Plan.

# January 26 FMAT/AP Meeting

- AP provided input on the FMAT's draft action plan
- FMAT gathered input from AP on additional types of solutions that could be considered for amendment



# FMAT Action Plan

Date	Action/Meeting
January 26, 2023	FMAT meets with AP
February 8, 2023	Update to Council
April 12, 2023	FMAT meeting to discuss possible solutions with additional experts
April 2023	Discuss FMAT meeting outputs during AP Fishery Performance Report meeting
May – September 2023	FMAT develops possible alternatives; any additional FMAT, AP, or Committee meetings scheduled as needed
September 2023	Committee meets to develop recommendations on additional alternatives for inclusion in EA

# FMAT Action Plan

Date	Action/Meeting
October 2023	Council approves any additional alternatives
October 2023 – January 2024	FMAT completes drafting public hearing document (may include an additional AP and Committee meeting to review document)
February 2024	Council approves public hearing draft
April/May 2024	Public hearings and comment period; Committee meeting to review public comment provided and develop recommendations to the Council
June 2024	Council Final Action

# Advisory Panel/Industry Solutions

- Possession of mixed catches should be allowed
- Final accounting and sorting should occur at processing facility
- Quota accounting should use bushels instead of cages as the unit of measure for landings
- Should be able to recoup number of bushels landed non-target species in cage (i.e., credit to a tag for future use)



# On Vessel Sorting Ideas

- Need to change accounting away from 1 tag = 32-bushel cage
- Move towards bushel-based accounting
- Crews discard as much as possible at sea (but not mandatory)
- Single species declaration needs to change; presence of both must be allowed

# On Vessel Sorting Ideas

- Clams separated at sea could be tagged with species specific tag
- Idea of a mixed species tag
- Could provide a hail weight if vessel cannot fully separate at sea – like other fisheries
- At sea can provide some separation, and plant provides further separation

# At Dealer/Processor Ideas

- Allowance for transport and possession of both species separately or mixed in cages at plant
- Plant records will be for both enforcement and data reporting
- Species must be separated at plant, where separation can be most practically accommodated

# At Dealer/Processor Ideas

- Some advisors not supportive of a common protocol for counting – given different processor needs. Felt reporting by common unit (bushel/volume) is sufficient
- Ability to take estimated non-target in cages that were not used to be credited back in bushels to allocation holder
- Ability to transfer non-target to other processors

# Other things discussed

- Idea of testing counting/separation process in one plant (pilot) before implementing; FMAT noted EFP options
- Asked about who would potentially initiate an MSE?
- Noted that this new process of accounting would reduce uncertainty in catch estimates
- Some industry felt the proposed solution is simple to implement and requires few regulatory changes

# Other things discussed

- Some FMAT members asked about ability to track areas fished
- Tracking sorted catch (back to tags) or if more than one vessels catch is in processors cooler at same time
- FMAT also noted this may not be as simple as noted; may require changes to systems
- More details in the comments provided...

Questions?

