



Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ)

Species Separation Requirements
Amendment



October 4, 2022



Today

- Review history of the draft amendment, its contents, and potential next steps
- Consider approving the Draft Amendment for public hearings/comment



Purpose and Need for Action

- Purpose is to modify the species separation requirements in SCOQ fisheries
- Regulations will be modified to allow for mixed catches onboard vessels that presently are declared/targeting either surfclam or ocean quahog

Purpose and Need for Action

- Action is needed because of:
 - Increased frequency of mixed catches in these fisheries (distribution shifts)
 - To improve data collection and monitoring of SCOQ catches
 - To be consistent with the ITQ system which requires cage tags and allocation for each species to be landed

History of Action

Date	Action/Meeting
November 17, 2020	FMAT initially met to discuss development of white paper
October 13, 2021	SCOQ Advisory Panel (AP) Meeting
October 15, 2021	SCOQ Committee Meeting
November 16, 2021	FMAT Meeting
December 6, 2021	Joint SCOQ Committee/AP Meeting
December 15, 2021	Council initiated Amendment
April 26, 2022	FMAT met to kick off Amendment work

Council Motion (Dec. 2021)

- Move to initiate an Amendment that considers **short-term** solutions to species separation including white paper option 3
- Also request that the staff/NEFSC explore the feasibility of **longer-term solutions** for monitoring (such as electronic monitoring testing on the clam survey)

Timeline Going Forward

Date	Action/Meeting
October 4, 2022	Council approves draft for public hearings?
November 23, 2022	Comment Period Closes; 3 public hearings completed
Early December 2022	SCOQ Committee Meeting; develops recommendations to Council
December 2022	Council selects preferred and submits to NMFS?
Early 2023	Staff finalizes document; formal submission to NMFS

The Draft Amendment

- Environmental Assessment under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- 4 alternatives within the amendment - the no action, plus 3 action alternatives
- Drawn from the 9 options initially considered in the white paper

**SPECIES SEPARATION REQUIREMENTS
AMENDMENT
AMENDMENT XX TO THE ATLANTIC SURFCLAM
AND OCEAN QUAHOG
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

(Includes Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review, and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis)

September 2022

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
in cooperation with
the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Draft adopted by MAFMC: MM-DD-YYYY
Final adopted by MAFMC: MM-DD-YYYY
Draft submitted to NOAA: MM-DD-YYYY
Final approved by NOAA: MM-DD-YYYY

<u>Council Address</u>	<u>NMFS Address</u>
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council 800 North State Street, Suite 201 Dover, DE 19901	Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office 55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930



Alternative 1 (No Action/Status Quo)

- No changes made to current regulations for SCOQ
- Impacts not expected on SCOQ and Non-Target Species, Physical Habitat, and Protected Resources
- Expect continued minor (-) impacts to habitat as fisheries are prosecuted
- Not taking action has potential to result in human communities impacts that range from slight neg- at present, to neg- in long-term

Alternative 2 (Allow Combined Trip Declaration and Require Onboard Sorting)

- New “combined” trip category allows for SCOQ to be landed on the same trip
- Onboard sorting will be required on all trips
- Impacts similar to alt. 1, except for human communities
- Slight neg- to slight pos+ impacts
 - because operating costs may increase for some trips and vessel/processor groups (sl-)
 - allows for mixed catches, and address issue in short-term (sl+)

Alternative 3 (Combined Trip, Cage Mix, Manual Port Monitoring Program)

- New “combined” trip category
- Allowing mixing of SC and OQ within cages with a new sampling program
- Impacts similar to alt. 1, except for human communities
- Neg- to slight pos+ impacts
 - costs associated with developing new sampling program applied to industry as a whole (-)
 - allows for mixed catches, improves catch data, but long-term solution (sl+)

Alternative 4 (Combined Trip, Cage Mix, Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program)

- New “combined” trip category
- Allowing mixing of SC and OQ within cages with a new EM program
- Impacts similar to alt. 1, except for human communities
- Slight neg- to slight pos+ impacts
 - costs associated with deploying EM technology to the industry (sl-)
 - allows for mixed catches, improves catch data, but long-term solution (sl+)

For the Council

- Questions?
- Approve the draft amendment for public hearings?

