

VMRC FISHERIES NEWS

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION PLANS & STATISTICS 1-800-937-9237

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 1 WINTER 2002

ATTENTION COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN!!! NEW MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

On November 27, 2001, the Commission adopted amendments to Regulation **4VAC 20-610-10 et seq.**, "**Pertaining to Commercial Fishing and Mandatory Harvest Reporting**". The purpose of the amended regulation is to capture harvest data elements that are important to the fishery management process and to conform Virginia's data collection program to the model developed by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). ACCSP is a state and federal coastal marine fisheries data collection and data management program. Its purpose is to coordinate and standardize the collection, processing, and storage of all marine statistics resulting in a coast wide program that is timely, credible, ensures compatibility, and eliminates duplicative reporting. The effective date of this regulation is January 2, 2002.

4VAC 20-610-60. MANDATORY HARVEST REPORTING

(Important changes are underlined)

- C. All registered commercial fishermen and ALL holders of a Seafood Landing License shall accurately and legibly complete a daily form describing that day's harvest from Virginia tidal and federal waters. The forms used to record daily harvest shall be those provided by the Commission or another approved by the Commission. Registered commercial fishermen may use more than one form when selling to more than one buyer.
- E. The monthly catch report and daily catch records shall include the name and signature of the registered commercial fisherman and his license registration number, buyer or private sale information, date of harvest, city or county of landing, water body fished, gear type and amount used, number of hours gear fished, number of hours watermen fished, number of crew on board including captain, species harvested, market category, and live weight or processed weight of species harvested, and vessel identification (Coast Guard documentation number, VA license number or Hull/VIN number). Any information on the price paid for the catch may be voluntarily provided.
- F. Registered commercial fishermen **NOT FISHING** during a month shall so notify the Commission no later than the 5th of the following month by postage paid postal card provided by the Commission or by calling the Commission's toll free telephone line (1-800-937-9247).
- K. The reporting of the harvest of federally permitted species from beyond Virginia's tidal waters that are sold to a federally permitted dealer shall be exempt from the procedures described in this section. (See list of species on page 4)



This newsletter provides only a summary of management measures adopted by the Commission and has no legal force or effect. Please refer to the regulation cited for legal documentation. To obtain a complete copy of the regulations call 757-247-2248 or access the VMRC homepage: (<http://www.mrc.state.va.us>)

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FISHERY REGULATION CHANGES

SAV SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION CONSERVATION AREAS



On October 23, 2001, the Commission adopted the following amendments to Regulation 4VAC 20-70-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Harvesting of Clams". The purpose of these amendments was to establish boundaries of SAV conservation areas. The effective date of this regulation, as amended, is December 1, 2001.

4VAC 20-70-120. Conventional Dredge.

- E. It shall be unlawful for any person to use or have overboard any dredge within the following defined areas: All public waters of Chincoteague Bay and Assateague Bay and Channel lying east of a line that begins at the Virginia/Maryland state line marker "D" at latitude 38E 01' 10.00" N and longitude 75E 19' 50.90" W, thence southerly to the boundary marker located at latitude 38E 00' 19.00" N and longitude 75E 20' 09.90" W, thence southwesterly to the next boundary marker located at latitude 37E 59' 52.76" N and longitude 75E 20' 42.52" W, thence southwesterly to the next boundary marker located at latitude 37E 59' 35.13" N and longitude 75E 21' 40.28" W, thence southwesterly to channel marker R "14", thence southerly to the next boundary marker located at corner 627 of the Public Clamming Ground, thence southeasterly to channel marker R "10", thence southeasterly to channel marker G "9", thence southerly to channel marker R "8", thence southerly to channel marker R "6", thence southerly to channel marker R "4", thence southerly to channel marker G "1", thence due east to the shoreline to a point located at latitude 37E 56' 19.95", and longitude 75E 22' 17.44". All public waters lying west of a line that begins at Cockle Point at latitude 37E 59' 09.54" N and longitude 75E 24' 25.82" W, thence northeasterly to the next boundary marker located at latitude 37E 59' 34.09" N and longitude 75E 24' 03.27" W, thence northeasterly to the next boundary marker located at latitude 38E 00' 02.69" N and longitude 75E 23' 36.38" W, thence northeasterly to channel marker FIG "3".
- F. All leased ground within the defined boundaries of subsection E of section 4VAC 20-70-120 and meeting the provisions of subsection D of section 4VAC 20-70-120 shall be

RECREATIONAL EEL POT LICENSE

On August 28, 2001, the Commission adopted the following amendments to Regulation 4VAC 20-670-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Recreational Gear Licenses". The effective date of this regulation as amended, is September 15, 2001.

4VAC 20-670-20. Recreational Gear License.

- C. No person shall be issued more than one recreational gill net license, more than one recreational crab pot license, more than one crab trap license, no more than one recreational eel pot license.
- D. It shall be unlawful for any person to use more than five crab pots or more than two eel pots when licensed for recreational purposes under this chapter.

COBIA POSSESSION LIMITS



On October 23, 2001, the Commission adopted the following amendment to Regulation 4VAC 20-510-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia". The purpose for the amended regulation is to improve the spawning potential of cobia in Virginia waters and further discourage the illegal sale of recreationally harvested cobia. The effective date of this regulation, as amended, is January 1, 2002.

4VAC 20-510-20. Possession Limits.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing commercially or recreationally to possess more than two amberjack or more than one cobia at any time. Any amberjack or cobia caught after the possession limit has been reached shall be returned to the water immediately. When fishing from any boat or vessel where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board legally eligible to fish multiplied by one. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit.

SPADEFISH POSSESSION LIMITS



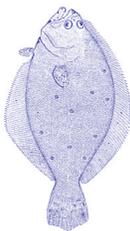
On October 23, 2001, the Commission adopted the following amendments to Regulation 4VAC 20-970-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Spadefish". The purpose for the amended regulation is to extend the recreational season and to reduce overall catch ensuring survival of more spawning fish. The effective date of this regulation as amended, is January 1, 2002.

Regulation 4VAC 20-970-10 et Seq. Spadefish Possession Limit.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing with recreational hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, hand line, spear, gig or other recreational gear to possess more than four spadefish. Any spadefish taken after the possession limit of four fish has been reached shall be returned to the water immediately.
- B. When fishing from a boat or vessel where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board legally eligible to fish multiplied by four. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit.
- C. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing with any licensed commercial gear to possess more than four spadefish. Any spadefish taken by any licensed commercial fisherman after the possession limit of four spadefish has been reached shall be returned to the water immediately.

REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED.....

SUMMER FLOUNDER RECREATIONAL LIMITS



On February 26, 2002, the Commission adopted the following amendment to Regulation 4VAC 20-620-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Summer Flounder". The effective date of this regulation is March 1, 2002.

4 VAC 20-620-50 . Minimum size limit

- B. The minimum possession size limit of Summer Flounder harvested from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by recreational fishing gear, including but not limited to hook and line, rod and reel, spear and gig, shall be 17 1/2 inches, total length. The minimum possession size limit of Summer Flounder harvested from the coastal area by recreational fishing gear, including but not limited to hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear, and gig, shall be 15 1/2 inches, total length.

COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS

On January 26, 2002, the Commission adopted the following amendments to Regulation 4VAC 20-620-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Summer Flounder". The effective date of this regulation is January 1, 2002.

4VAC 20-620-40. Commercial Vessel Possession Limitations.

- A. From the first Monday in January through the first Sunday in February, it shall be unlawful for any person harvesting Summer Flounder outside of Virginia's waters to possess aboard any vessel in Virginia any amount of Summer Flounder in excess of 10% by weight of all other landed species on board the vessel.
- B. From the first Monday in February through March 31 of each year, it shall be unlawful for any person harvesting Summer Flounder outside of Virginia waters to do any of the following:
1. Possess aboard any vessel in Virginia waters an amount of Summer Flounder in excess of 7,500 pounds.
 2. Land Summer Flounder in Virginia, for commercial purposes, more than twice within each consecutive 10-day period, with the first 10-day period beginning on the first Monday in February.
 3. Land in Virginia more than a total of 7,500 pounds of summer Flounder during each consecutive 10-day period, with the first 10-day period beginning on the first Monday in February.

BLACK SEA BASS



On January 26, 2002 the Commission adopted the following amendment to Regulation 4VAC 20-950-10 et. seq., "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass." The effective date of this regulation is January 31, 2002.

4 VAC 20-950-45. Possession Limits and Harvest Quotas.

- A. During the period January 1 through March 31 of each year, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess aboard any vessel or to land in Virginia more than 7,000 pounds of black sea bass.

On February 26, 2002, the Commission adopted the following amendments to regulation 4VAC 20-950-10 et Seq., "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass". The effective date of this regulation is March 1, 2002.

4 VAC 20-950-30. Minimum size limit.

- A. The minimum size for black sea bass harvested by commercial fishing gear shall be 11 inches, total length.
- B. The minimum size of black sea bass harvested by recreational gear, including but not limited to hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear and gig, shall be 11 1/2 inches, total length.

4 VAC 20-950-40. Gear Restrictions.

- A. With an escape vent of 2 3/8 inches diameter circular dimension, two inches square dimension, or 1 3/8 inches by 5 3/4 inches rectangular dimension.

2002 BLUE CRAB SEASON



On February 26, 2002, the Commission adopted the following amendments to regulation 4 VAC 20-270-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Crabbing". The goal is to reduce crab harvests by 10% in the 2002 season. The effective date of this regulation is April 1, 2002.

4VAC 20-270-30. Daily Time Limits.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person, who is licensed to catch and sell crabs taken by crab pot or peeler pot, to take and harvest crabs from any crab pot or peeler pot except during the lawful daily time periods described in this subsection. The lawful daily time periods for the commercial harvesting of crabs by crab pot or peeler pot shall be from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. during the months of April, September, October, and November and from 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. during the months of May, June, July, and August. Crab pots or peeler pots already on board a boat at the end of the lawful daily time period may be set during the period starting immediately following the lawful daily time period and ending one hour after the lawful daily time period.
- B. It shall be unlawful to take or harvest crabs by crab dredge between sunset and sunrise.

4VAC 20-270-55. Minimum Size Limit.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch, harvest, possess, sell or offer for sale, or to destroy in any manner peeler crabs that measure less than 3 inches across the shell from tip to tip of the longest spikes.
1. It shall not be unlawful for any person to possess 10 or less peeler crabs, per United States standard bushel, that have been taken, caught, or harvested and that measure less than 3 inches across the shell from tip to tip of the longest spikes.
 2. It shall not be unlawful to sell or to offer for sale, those peeler crabs less than 3 inches across the shell from tip to tip of the longest spikes, as authorized in subdivision A.1. Of this section.
- B. It shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch, harvest, possess, sell or offer for sale, or to destroy in any manner, any soft crab which measures less than 3 1/2 inches across the shell from tip to tip of the longest spikes.

REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED.....

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT AREAS

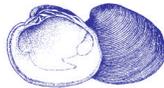
On February 26, 2002, the Commission approved amendments to Regulation 4VAC 20-560-10 et Seq., "Pertaining to Shellfish Management Areas". The effective date of this regulation as amended, is March 1, 2002.

4VAC 20-560-20. Shellfish Management Areas.

J. The York Spit Reef Broodstock Management Area shall consist of the area contained within the defined Latitudes and Longitudes: Northwest corner 37 14.75 N - 076 14.20W, Northeast corner 37 14.75N - 076 13.30W, Southwest corner 37 14.05N - 076 14.20W, Southeast corner 37 14.05N - 076 13.30 W.

4VAC 20-560-50. Time of Day and Harvest Restrictions.

D. It shall be unlawful for any person to harvest any shellfish from the James River, Back River Reef, Middle Ground Light, York Spit Reef, or York River Broodstock Management Area at any time.



YORK SPIT REEF BROODSTOCK MANAGEMENT AREA PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

On February 26, 2002, the Commission approved the 2002 York Spit Reef Broodstock Management Area Procurement Procedures. The Marine Resources Commission will acquire the services of three patent tong clambers to harvest hard clams from the Hampton Roads Shellfish Relay Area and plant them at the York Spit Reef Broodstock Management Area under VMRC supervision.

The program dates are March 11 through April 12, or until the appropriated \$15,000 is spent, whichever comes first. Each clammer will be compensated at the rate of \$15.00 per one hundred clams and will be required to transport and replant all clams, the same day of harvest, in the designated broodstock area, under VMRC supervision.

AMERICAN SHAD RESTORATION PROGRAM



On February 26, 2002, the Commission approved the procurement procedures for obtaining services of up to nine watermen and one alternate that meet the criteria, to participate in the American Shad Restoration Program.

The permitted participants will be responsible for capturing spawning American Shad from the Pamunkey River under the direction of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and shall be paid at the rate of \$200.00 per fishing day, with a fishing day generally occurring between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 12:00 midnight. The harvested shad will be strictly used for hatchery purposes. The Project Dates are March 11 through May 15.

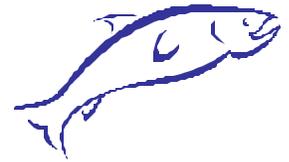
MANDATORY REPORTING EXEMPTIONS

Regulation 4VAC 20-610-60. Mandatory Harvest Reporting, Section K:

The reporting of the harvest of federally permitted species from beyond Virginia's tidal waters that are sold to a federally permitted dealer shall be exempt from the procedures described in this section.

FEDERALLY PERMITTED SPECIES

- Summer Flounder
- Scup
- Black Sea Bass
- Atlantic Sea Scallop
- Monkfish
- Squid
- Atlantic Mackerel
- Butterfish
- Spiny Dogfish
- Atlantic Bluefish



FEDERALLY PERMITTED SEAFOOD DEALERS FOR 2001

CHINCOTEAGUE

- Russell Fish Co
- DL Edgerton Fish Co
- R Stubbs Seafood Co
- Chincoteague Fisheries

CHERITON

- Bernie's Conchs
- Tammy's Trucking LTD

HAMPTON

- L.D. Amory & Co. Inc
- Wanchese Fish Co.
- Hampton Roads Seafood LTD
- S & S Marine Supply Inc.
- Delores of Wanchese

HAYES

- International Seafood Dist.

KELLER

- Lilliston Seafood

MAPPSVILLE

- Eastern Shore Seafood Prod
- Ess Pride L L C

NASSAWADOX

- Sand Dollar Seafood

NEWPORT NEWS

- Demaria Seafood
- Ian Nigel
- Old Point packing Inc
- Peabody Corp
- B & C Seafood Inc

NORFOLK

- JH Miles & Company Inc
- George's Seafood Inc.

PARKSLEY

- Seaside Enterprises

POQUOSON

- Harry Doernte

SEAFORD

- Seaford Scallop Co Inc.
- Wells Ice & Cold Storage Inc.
- VJ O'Neal & Company Inc.

VIRGINIA BEACH

- PYA/Monarch Inc.
- Atlantic Shores Seafood Inc.

WACHAPREAGUE

- R & S Seafood

COMMISSION APPROVES FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

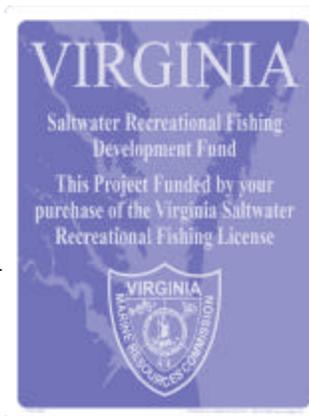
On September 25, 2001, the Commission approved the recommendations of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board (RFAB) to fund the following projects through the Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund, a fund maintained through the sale of saltwater recreational fishing licenses:

1. The Artificial Reef program will receive \$15,000 to cover the remainder of the negotiated 2001 contract for deployment of concrete pipe at 6 reef locations.
2. Funds allocated to the Artificial Reef program will be used for charter services to cover fuel costs.
3. Funding will be used to design and create a sign to be used to advertise the projects funded by the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund.

On November 27, 2001, the Commission approved the recommendations made by the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board (RFAB), with the exception of Project E. The Commission approved this project in lieu of the recommendation made by the RFAB to deny funding for the project. The Commission noted that there were no negative peer reviews or public comment for Project E. The Commission also noted that this was a two-year project and that the \$81,000 allocated previously for year 1 would be wasted if year 2 of the project was not funded. In addition, one Commission member noted that funds were available for this project. For these reasons project E. will receive funding as requested.

The Following projects will receive funding as requested.

- A. The Viking Hook-up (After school fishing program). Huntington Middle School -- Wendy Harvey. \$1,138.86 (Program wishes to retain the unused \$1,104.13 from last years program to be put towards this project).
- B. Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program (Year 8). VIMS and VSWFT -- Jon Lucy and Claude Bain. \$57,408.00
- C. Hampton Roads Kids Fishing Day 2002. CCA of Virginia/Tidewater Chapter -- Bill Dieffenbach. \$6000.00
- D. 2002 Children's Fishing Clinic. Denbigh Rotary Club/Coastal Conservation Association Rob Cowling. \$6000.00
- E. Pinpointing the Sea Grass Habitat that Optimizes Survival for Spotted Seatrout in Virginia (Year 2). C.M. Jones and J. van Montfrans -- ODU. \$81,136.00
- F. Sunshine Children's Fishing Program. Portsmouth Anglers Club. Denise Harrell and Denny Dobbins. \$4300.00
- G. 2002 Deployment Funding for Chesapeake Bay Artificial Reef Sites. VMRC -- Mike Meier. \$200,000.00.
- H. Virginia Saltwater Fishing License Fund Website. VMRC -- Cory Routh. \$6200.00
- I. Saxis Fishing Pier Youth Fishing Tournament. Eastern Shore Anglers Club. John Conquest. \$600.00
- J. Morley's Wharf Youth Fishing Tournament. Eastern Shore Anglers Club. John Conquest. \$600.00
- K. Covert and Undercover Funds for the Virginia Marine Patrol's Special Investigative Unit (SIU). Virginia Marine Patrol -- Special Agent John E. Croft. \$22,000.00



REPORTING HORSESHOE CRABS



The horseshoe crab regulation (4VAC 20-900-35. Monitoring Requirements, section A) requires horseshoe crabs to be reported in NUMBERS (not bushels) . The horseshoe crab harvest quota is tracked by the number of horseshoe crabs caught. The conversion process from bushels to numbers may lead to some inaccuracies, therefore, it would be to your benefit to report in numbers. You must also classify the horseshoe crabs harvested as male (HORM) or female (HORF) on your reports as well.

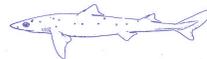
ATTENTION STRIPED BASS PERMITTEES

If you have purchased or intend to purchase a commercial Hook and Line License (for striped bass only), please contact Ellen Cosby (757) 247-2245. This year we have a special decal for your license plate!



COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSURES

1. **SPINY DOGFISH**- Closed November 26, 2001 through April 30, 2002. (Opens May 1, 2002)

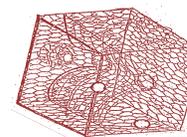


REMINDER! NUMBERS ARE NOW REQUIRED ON ALL POTS!!

ALL commercial pot numbers must consist of the last four digits of the commercial registration number, preceded with a C, P, F or W. You are allowed to paint over the old number.

Examples:

- Crab Pot - **C-1234**
- Peeler Pot - **P-1234**
- Fish/eel Pot - **F-1234**
- Channeled Whelk- **W-1234**



HARVEST REPORTING GUIDELINES

INFORMATION REQUIRED ON ALL HARVEST REPORTS:

- NAME AND COMMERCIAL NUMBER (INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF HELPERS AND THEIR COMMERCIAL NUMBERS)
- INCLUDE THE VESSEL NAME (IF APPLICABLE) NOT THE VESSEL MAKE OR MODEL
- ALWAYS INCLUDE THE VESSEL NUMBER (ASSIGNED TO VESSEL WHEN REGISTERED)
- CITY/COUNTY WHERE HARVEST WAS LANDED (WHERE HARVEST IS OFFLOADED FROM THE BOAT)
- INDICATE BUYER (OR HOME USE)
- MONTH/DAY/YEAR FISHED
- WATER ABBREVIATION
- UNIT OF MEASURE (BU, LBS, NU ... ETC) FOR HARVEST AMOUNT
- HOURS GEAR WORKED AND MAN HOURS WORKED
- GEAR TYPE AND GEAR AMOUNT (PLEASE DO NOT COMBINE MULTIPLE GEAR TYPE ON SAME RECORD)
- **IF PRCD** =PROCESSED WEIGHT. IF THE WEIGHT GIVEN IS FOR PROCESSED WEIGHT, PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX ON THE FORM
- **SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS**: PLEASE USE APPROPRIATE ABBREVIATION FOR SPECIES AS GIVEN ON THE FOLDERS OF THE REPORTS. **EXAMPLE:** IF YOU WRITE "SHAD" ON THE REPORT, STAFF WON'T KNOW IF IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE GIZZARD, AMERICAN, OR HICKORY. OR IF YOU WRITE MACKEREL ON YOUR REPORT, STAFF WON'T KNOW WHETHER IT SHOULD BE SPANISH, KING, OR BOSTON. PLEASE BE SPECIFIC!
- ONLY REPORT PEELER CRABS HARVESTED, NOT THE AMOUNT OF SOFT CRABS SHED (THAT WOULD BE DOUBLE REPORTING)

CALCULATING HOURS WORKED VS. HOURS GEAR FISHED

- **HOURS WORKED** = [TRIP TIME] THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES TO LEAVE THE DOCK, WORK THE GEAR AND RETURN TO THE DOCK
EXAMPLE: If it takes 2 hours to ride in the boat from the dock to the fishing site, 4 hours to pull the harvest from the gear, and another 2 hours to return to the dock, than the total HOURS WORKED= 8 hours.
- **HOURS GEAR FISHED**=AMOUNT OF HOURS GEAR SPENT IN THE WATER BEFORE PULLING THE HARVEST.
EXAMPLE: If nets or pots are set on Monday and harvested on Tuesday (gear left in the water for 1 day) than HOURS GEAR FISHED = 24 hours. If the harvest is not pulled until Wednesday (gear left in the water for 2 days) then HOURS GEAR FISHED = 48



Atlantic Coastal
Cooperative Statistics Program

THE ACCSP LAUNCHES ITS ONLINE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM!!

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a state and federal partnership for Atlantic coastal fisheries data collection and data management, announced the launch of its online data management system on Feb. 19, 2002, bringing data used by resource managers to the public.

“To our knowledge, this is the first instance of a cooperative state and federal partnership that has produced a database used by resource managers that is also available to the public online,” said David Cupka, Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council, “We expect this system to be a tremendous asset to the fishing industry, anglers’ groups, the environmental community and academia.”

This free resource is accessible through the Program’s website at www.accsp.org. Users who request an account will have their username and password emailed to them within two business days. Downloadable reference materials are available on the site, and during business hours, the ACCSP data management staff will be available to users via the Program’s toll-free technical support line.

The 23 partners of the ACCSP use standardized data elements for inshore and offshore catch and effort data. Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Maryland electronically feed commercial data directly to the database. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) feeds its own offshore data to the ACCSP database, along with the inshore data of South Carolina and all Atlantic states from Virginia north. The ACCSP gets recreational catch and effort data from NOAA Fisheries’ Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS).

About the ACCSP

The ACCSP’s partners are the 15 Atlantic states’ natural resource management agencies, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Together these resource managers have developed a plan to cooperatively collect, manage and disseminate fishery statistical data for the Atlantic coast, and to support the development and operation of a national program.

Contacts:	Abbey Compton, Outreach Coordinator abbey.compton@accsp.org 202.289.6400	Mike Cahall, Information Systems Program Manager mike.cahall@accsp.org 202.289.6400
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Council and Commission Schedule Public Hearings for Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan

Hearings to be held in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) will hold seven public hearings to allow for input on the public hearing draft of Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 13 was prepared by the Council and the Commission and is intended to manage the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fishery. This amendment would: 1) revise the quarterly commercial quota system for black sea bass implemented in Amendment 9; 2) address the problem related to permit requirements for fishermen who have both a Northeast Black Sea Bass Permit and a Southeast Snapper/Grouper Permit and fish for black sea bass north and south of Cape Hatteras, NC; 3) address the problems related to the wet storage of black sea bass pots/traps; 4) establish de minimus specifications for black sea bass under the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter; 5) implement tag requirements for black sea bass pots/traps; 6) limit the number of black sea bass pots/traps fished by fishermen; and 7) assess the impacts of fishing activities on EFH and implement management alternatives to prevent, mitigate or minimize adverse effects from fishing on summer flounder, scup and black sea bass EFH so as to bring the FMP into compliance with Section 303(a)(7) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The Council has prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assess the potential effects of the proposed actions on the human environment. This new EIS, which is part of this document, would replace the information presented in Amendments 2, 8, and 9 for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, respectively.

The Council is seeking public comments on the proposed actions and alternatives included in the public hearing draft of Amendment 13. The public is encouraged to attend any of the following hearings and provide comments there, and/or submit written comments to the Council no later than April 15, 2002.

The public hearings are scheduled as follows:

March 18, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Grand Hotel
1045 Beach Ave.
Cape May, NJ (609-884-5611)

March 19, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Comfort Inn
1940 Post Road
Warwick, RI (877-805-8997)

March 18, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Best Western (Canal Club)
100 Trowbridge Road
Bourne, MA (800-675-0008)

March 20, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Quality Inn Lake Wright
6280 Northhampton Blvd.
Norfolk, VA (757-461-6251)

March 19, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Ocean Pines Library
11107 Cathell Road
Ocean Pines, MD (410-208-4014)

March 21, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Roanoke Island Festival Park 1 Festival Park
Manteo, NC (252-475-1500)

March 19, 2002, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
Sheraton 110 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy
Smithtown, NY (631-231-1100)

Submit written comments on the amendment to: Mr. Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Room 2115, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904. A summary of the public hearing document will be sent to you next week. For more information regarding Amendment 13 contact the Council office at 302-674-2331.

ATTENTION OCEAN GILLNETTERS!

This is to inform you of new restrictions on the use of large-mesh gillnets with a mesh size larger than 8 inch (20.3 cm) stretched mesh, in Federal waters (3-200 nautical miles) off of North Carolina and Virginia, starting on Friday, March 15. The purpose of this action is to reduce the impact of the monkfish and other large-mesh gillnet fisheries on endangered and threatened species of sea turtles in areas where sea turtles are known to concentrate.

Under these new restrictions, gillnets with larger than 8 inch stretched mesh are not allowed in Federal waters (3-200 nautical miles):

- north of 33° 51.0' N (North Carolina/South Carolina border at the coast) and south of 35° 46.0' N (Oregon Inlet) at all times;
- north of 35° 46.0' N (Oregon Inlet) and south of 36° 22.5' N Currituck Beach Light, NC) from March 16 through January 14;
- north of 36° 22.5' N (Currituck Beach Light, NC) and south of 37° 34.6' N (Wachapreague Inlet, VA) from April 1 through January 14; and,
- north of 37° 34.6' N (Wachapreague Inlet, VA) and south of 37° 56.0' N (Chincoteague, VA) from April 16 through January 14 (map on reverse).

Waters north of 37° 56.0' N (Chincoteague, VA) are not affected by these new restrictions.

These new restrictions have been published in an Interim Final Rule under the authority of the Endangered Species Act. NMFS is seeking comments on this interim final rule. Comments on this interim final rule are requested and must be postmarked or transmitted by facsimile by 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on June 13, 2002. Comments transmitted via e-mail or the Internet will not be accepted. Written comments on the interim final rule should be sent to the Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Comments may also be sent via fax to 301-713-0376, Attn: Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources.

If you have any questions on this letter, please contact the Northeast Region Division of Protected Resources at 978-281-9328 or the Southeast Region Division of Protected Resources at 727-570-5312.



VMRC CALENDAR

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
VMRC- 4/23/02 9:30 AM	VMRC-5/28/02 9:30 AM	VMRC-6/18/02 9:30 AM

The meeting dates and times are tentative and subject to change. Please call to verify the date and time of the meeting you would like to attend.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings on the adoption of the following proposed amendments will be held at 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, March 26, 2002, at the Marine Resources Commission in Newport News. Any interested persons may offer testimony.

BLACK SEABASS:

Proposed 2002 Fishing Season Possession Limits

Quarter	2002 Initial Possession Limit	Trigger	Adjusted Possession Limit
II	1,500 lbs or 6,000/week	60%	150 lbs/day 1,000 lbs/week
III	500 lbs or 3,000/week	60%	100 lbs/day 700 lbs/week
IV	750 lbs or 4,000/week	60%	100 lbs/day 700 lbs/week

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE. 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

PUBLIC HEARINGS CONTINUED....

BLUE CRABS:

Proposed blue crab conservation measures for 2002.

- Enlarge the current bay-wide sanctuary from the current 35-foot depth contour to the 30-foot depth contour within the mainstem of the Chesapeake Bay and to establish additional sanctuary immediately seaward of the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. The Sanctuary is closed to commercial and recreational crabbing from June 1 through September 15 to protect female crabs during their migration to their spawning grounds.
- Prohibit the taking, harvesting, possessing aboard any vessel, and the landing of sponge crabs by any person during the third week of July.

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT AREAS:

The Commission has adopted the following amendments on an emergency basis and now proposes to make them a permanent part of the regulation:

- A. The York Spit Reef Broodstock Management Area shall be defined as the area contained within the defined Latitudes and Longitudes: Northwest corner 37 14.75 N-076 14.20W, Northeast corner 37 14.75N-076 13.30W, Southwest corner 37 14.05N-076 14.20W, Southeast corner 37 14.05N-076 13.30W.

STRIPED BASS ITQ PROGRAM

On October 23, 2001, the Commission appointed a task force comprised of commercial watermen and two members of the Commission to review the current, extensive harvest of striped bass in the ocean and make recommendations for the 2002 striped bass fishery. A public hearing was held January 22, 2002. The Commission will reach a final decision on May 28, 2002 .