

and collection of these carcasses, for each species that may result from capture activities. In addition, live animals may be harassed during vessel and aerial surveys for species counts and observation.

Dated: March 26, 2018.

Julia Harrison,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG062

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Advisory Panel will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, April 13, 2018, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via internet Webinar. Detailed connection details are available at <http://www.mafmc.org>. To join the Webinar, follow this link and enter the online meeting room: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/scoq2018ap/>
Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher M. Moore Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N. State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 526-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting is to develop a fishery performance report by the Council's Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Advisory Panel. The intent of this report is to facilitate structured input from the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Advisory Panel members to the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee. Advisors will also receive an update on the clam dredge access framework under development by the New England Fishery Management Council.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to M. Jan Saunders at the Mid-Atlantic Council Office (302) 526-5251 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 26, 2018.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG018

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries; Scoping Process

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Supplemental notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council has been preparing an amendment to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, known as the "Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment," to modify aspects of the fishery management plan related to summer flounder commercial and recreational management. To avoid delaying the amendment while waiting for updated recreational information, the Council is now splitting several issues within this original action, including fishery management plan goals and objectives, commercial allocation, commercial moratorium permits, and commercial framework provisions into a separate action that will continue to be developed as an EIS. The Council is taking comments on this modified action, which is now being referred to as the "Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment." Following completion of this "Commercial Issues" amendment, the Council may then develop at least one future action relating to recreational fishery issues and commercial/recreational allocation to incorporate updated recreational fishery data when it becomes available later this year. The purpose of this notification is to alert

and seek comment from the public about the Council's consideration of splitting this amendment, by delaying some issues to be pursued via later actions.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before April 30, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Email:** nmfs.flukeamendment@noaa.gov; Include "Summer Flounder Amendment Scoping Comments" in the subject line;
- **Mail:** Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N. State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901.
- **Fax:** (302) 674-5399.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 16, 2014, an NOI was published in the **Federal Register** (79 FR 55432) announcing the Council's intent to prepare an EIS for a broad management action addressing several categories of summer flounder issues in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Council initiated this Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to review all aspects of the FMP related to summer flounder. The amendment was intended to consider updating the goals and objectives of the FMP as related to summer flounder, revising the allocation between the commercial and recreational sector, and modifying many management strategies and requirements for both commercial and recreational fisheries for summer flounder. Since publication of the original NOI, the Council has delayed development of recreational fishery issues and recreational/commercial allocation and narrowed the remaining range of issues to a more focused list of priority topics.

The primary driver of this proposed split is the ongoing revisions to recreational data by the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), which are expected to substantially change the current understanding of recreational catch and landings. Due to these changes, the Council and Commission chose to delay development of any issues that would rely heavily on recreational data, including quota allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors, as well as recreational management measures and strategies. If this action