



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901  
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org  
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | P. Weston Townsend, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

#5

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 23, 2020  
**To:** Council  
**From:** Jason Didden, staff  
**Subject:** Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee (SDMC) Summary and 2021-2022 Specifications Recommendations<sup>1</sup>

The SDMC met on September 14, 2020. SDMC members present included Jason Didden, Chris Kellogg, Conor McManus, Cynthia Ferrio, Nichola Meserve, Angel Willey, Kathy Sosebee, David Behringer, and Scott MacDonald (ex officio). Other participants included Kirby Rootes-Murdy, June Lewis, Jim Fletcher, Allison Ferreira, Janice Plante, David Stormer, Sonny Gwin, Greg DiDomenico, Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, and John Whiteside.

Given the Scientific and Statistical Committee's Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendation, the SDMC recommends using the new ABC to formulate 2021/2022 fishing year quotas using updated information where applicable (see Table 1 below). This would increase the commercial quota by 27% from 2020 to 2021 (under the originally adopted 2021 specifications, the quota would have increased 18% from 2020).

Related to its task to recommend measures necessary to avoid exceeding the Annual Catch Limit, the SDMC concluded that changes to the current 6,000 pound trip limit do not appear necessary. The SDMC noted that as long as the states are adhering to their quotas based on the overall ABC/ACL, different trip limits should not affect stock size. Major changes, such as removing the federal trip limit or removing the complete closure once 100% of the quota is caught, are more appropriate for frameworks or amendments where more analysis and public comment can be evaluated. If there were no federal trip limits then vessels would be governed by state limits when in state waters. The interplay of trip limits and prices may make it difficult to predict fishery responses to modified trip limits. J. Didden noted that due to workload constraints (no spiny dogfish action was planned for 2020), MAFMC staff would likely not be able to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) needed to consider substantial trip limit changes. An abbreviated NEPA document can be used however to change just the specifications/quota. NMFS staff noted that potentially New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) staff could develop such

---

<sup>1</sup> Other related materials included in the briefing book: SSC Report (see Committee Reports Tab); Staff ABC Memo; AP Fishery Performance Report; and Fishery Information Document.

an EA if the NEFMC deemed trip limits to be a high priority. The Councils could consider trip limit changes via a separate future action if desired/prioritized.

Follow-up by NMFS-GARFO staff indicated that it might be possible from a NEPA perspective to consider a trip-limit change up to 7,000-8,000 pounds via the abbreviated document **if** the case could be made that there have been no significant changes in the fishery/environment, and that the previous analyses addressed the likely impacts. However, given the previous document examining trip limits (the 2016-2018 Specifications EA) only included data through 2014 and acknowledged the uncertainty about price effects from additional trip limit changes, Council staff recommends that further trip limit changes be considered via a separate action that could more fully use recent data to consider socio-economic impacts. A separate action would also facilitate public awareness and participation – given the fishery is in the middle of multi-year specifications, fishery participants may not be expecting consideration of trip limit changes. Staff also notes that some advisors supported reconsidering trip limits and some advisors opposed any changes at this time.

Table 1. Spiny Dogfish Specifications

Specifications	Basis for Original 2019-2021 Specifications	2019 (pounds)	2019 (mt)	2020 (pounds)	2020 (mt)	2021 Original (pounds)	2021 Original (mt)	2021 Revised/ 2022 (pounds)	2021 Revised/ 2022 (mt)	Basis for Revised 2021 (and 2022) Specifications
OFL (from SSC)	Projected Catch at Fmsy	47,507,413	21,549	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
ABC (from SSC)	Council Risk Policy	28,470,497	12,914	31,142,499	14,126	35,368,761	16,043	<b>38,576,487</b>	<b>17,498</b>	SSC, Revised Council Risk Policy
Canadian Landings	= 2017 estimate	108,027	49	108,027	49	108,027	49	<b>99,208</b>	<b>45</b>	= 2018 estimate
Domestic ABC	= ABC – Canadian Landings	28,362,470	12,865	31,034,473	14,077	35,260,734	15,994	<b>38,477,279</b>	<b>17,453</b>	= ABC – Canadian Landings
ACL	= Domestic ABC	28,362,470	12,865	31,034,473	14,077	35,260,734	15,994	<b>38,477,279</b>	<b>17,453</b>	= Domestic ABC
Mgmt Uncert Buffer	Ave pct overage since 2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	Ave pct overage since 2011
ACT	= ACL - mgmt uncert buffer	28,362,470	12,865	31,034,473	14,077	35,260,734	15,994	<b>38,477,279</b>	<b>17,453</b>	= ACL - mgmt uncert buffer
U.S. Discards	= 3 year average 2015-16-17	7,661,064	3,475	7,661,064	3,475	7,661,064	3,475	<b>8,800,854</b>	<b>3,992</b>	= 3 year average 2016-17-18
TAL	ACT – Discards	20,701,406	9,390	23,373,409	10,602	27,599,671	12,519	<b>29,676,425</b>	<b>13,461</b>	ACT – Discards
U.S. Rec Landings	= 2017 estimate	178,574	81	178,574	81	178,574	81	<b>116,845</b>	<b>53</b>	= 2019 estimate
Comm Quota	TAL – Rec Landings	20,522,832	9,309	23,194,835	10,521	27,421,096	12,438	<b>29,559,580</b>	<b>13,408</b>	TAL – Rec Landings

The 2021/2022 Specifications recommended by the SDMC

