



NOAA FISHERIES Sustainable Fisheries



Catch Shares Program Status

As of December 31, 2017, there are 16 catch share programs in operation. In addition:

- One new catch share program is being developed and three fisheries were or are considering a catch share program.

Further details about the status of each program are provided beginning on page 2.

National Catch Share Program 2016-2017 Update

Policy Implementation

Since the NOAA Catch Share Policy was released in 2010, NOAA Fisheries has been working on a variety of catch share-related activities. For example, NOAA Fisheries recently released guidance on what should be included when catch share programs are reviewed.

Current Catch Share Programs (Year Implemented)

1. Mid-Atlantic Surfclam & Ocean Quahog IFQ (1990)
2. South Atlantic Wreckfish ITQ (1992)
3. Western Alaska Community Development Quota (1992)
4. Pacific Halibut & Sablefish IFQ (1995)
5. Bering Sea AFA Pollock Cooperatives (1998)
6. Pacific Sablefish Permit Stacking Program (2001)
7. Bering Sea King and Tanner Crab (2005)
8. Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper IFQ (2007)
9. Bering Sea Groundfish (non-Pollock) Cooperatives (2008)
10. Mid-Atlantic Golden Tilefish IFQ (2009)
11. Gulf of Mexico Grouper & Tilefish IFQ (2010)
12. Atlantic Sea Scallop General Category IFQ (2010)
13. Northeast Multispecies Sector Program (2010)
14. Pacific Coast Groundfish Trawl Rationalization (2011)
15. Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program (2011)
16. Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (2015)

Catch Share Programs Implemented or Significantly Modified Since Last Report

None.

Catch Share Programs Being Developed

North Pacific Charter Halibut Recreational Quota Entity Program: At the December 2016 meeting, the North Pacific Council took final action on a package that would allow the formation of a non-profit charter halibut recreational quota entity (RQE) to purchase and hold commercial halibut quota share (QS) to augment the charter catch limits in International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Regulatory Area 2C and Area 3A. IFQ from the RQE's QS holdings would augment the pounds allocated to the sector through the Catch Sharing Plan (CSP). The charter catch limit plus any pounds of individual fishing quota (IFQ) holdings would be the new basis on which halibut charter annual management measures are established (e.g., size limits, annual limits, day of the week closure, etc.). In this way, RQE QS holdings would allow an opportunity for the charter halibut sector to reduce the restrictiveness of annual management measures for all charter anglers in Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. We expect this new program would be considered a component of the existing halibut and sablefish IFQ program, and the RQE would be required to pay cost recovery on quota included in the program when quota is used to augment charter catch limits.

The Council's preferred alternative includes a series of transfer restrictions, such as an annual transfer restriction of 1 and 1.2% of the commercial QS in Area 2C and 3A, respectively, and a combined cumulative limit for both guided angler fish (GAF) usage and the RQE holdings of no more than 10 and 12% of the commercial QS in Area 2C and 3A, respectively. In addition, the annual management measures for charter halibut anglers could only be relaxed up to the limits in place for unguided anglers (i.e., two fish of any size per day). If the RQE holds more QS than necessary to match unguided limits, the Council's preferred alternative outlines how the excess would be distributed back to commercial participants. The proposed rule published October 3, 2017 (82 FR 46016). We anticipate implementation of the final rule in May 2018.

Catch Shares Being Considered

North Pacific Gulf of Alaska Trawl: The North Pacific Council considered a potential catch share program for central and western Gulf of Alaska trawl groundfish fisheries. The program was intended to improve incentives for bycatch reduction and management in trawl fisheries, increase utilization of groundfish species in the Gulf of Alaska, provide additional flexibility to participants, and increase economic efficiency in the fishery. Beginning in 2012, the Council developed and considered three alternatives to implement the program, in all of which harvesting cooperatives would receive an annual allocation of groundfish and/or bycatch species. One of the alternatives considered would allocate only bycatch species. At the December 2016 meeting, the Council considered public testimony and reviewed a summary of the public comment scoping process that was conducted over the summer, a preliminary draft Social Impact Assessment, and a preliminary draft Regulatory Impact Review, before voting to postpone further action on this issue indefinitely. The Council indicated its intent to consider other management options that could address Gulf of Alaska trawl vessel operators' and processors' concerns about their ability to minimize bycatch while executing the fishery in a viable manner.

Gulf of Mexico Charter and Headboat Component of the Reef Fish Fishery: Amendments 41 and 42 consider allocation-based management as one possible option for managing federally permitted charter and headboats, respectively. At the October 2016 Council meeting, the Council reviewed drafts of both Amendments, and decided to convene the Ad-Hoc Red Snapper Charter For-Hire and Ad-Hoc Reef Fish Headboat Advisory Panels to discuss next steps in the Amendments. The joint Charter and Headboat Advisory Panels met in January 2017 to discuss what species should be included in the programs and if they should be combined into one program. The Reef Fish Committee reviewed drafts of the amendments in October of 2017, but has not taken final action. The Council must select preferred alternatives before NOAA Fisheries can request the required referendum.

New England Monkfish: The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) began development of Amendment 6 to the Monkfish FMP in 2010. The NEFMC directed the Monkfish Committee to develop alternatives to address identified objectives, recognizing the differences between the northern and southern

monkfish fisheries. The range of alternatives included modifications to the current management system, a days-at-sea leasing option, sector management and individual transferrable quotas (ITQ). The amendment was placed on hold in 2015, but in November 2016, the NEFMC sent a letter to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council expressing interest in reconsidering a catch share program for this fishery. At the June 2017 meeting, the Monkfish Advisory Panel and Monkfish Committee both recommended to suspend further development of Amendment 6. The NEFMC agreed and decided to no longer pursue catch share management for this fishery given the lack of public support and no immediate problems that need to be solved with catch share management.

Gulf of Mexico For-Hire Component of the Reef Fish Fishery: In October and November 2015, the Gulf Council held scoping workshops for Reef Fish Amendments 41 and 42, investigating management options for Federally permitted charter and headboat vessels, respectively. Potential management measures being considered include traditional management approaches (size limits, bag limits, seasons, etc.) and allocation approaches (allocations to fishing cooperatives or regional fishing organizations, individual fishing quotas (IFQs), permit fishing quotas, and fish tags).

New England Monkfish: The New England Council began development of Amendment 6 to the monkfish FMP in 2010. The Council identified a set of objectives to be achieved through implementation of Amendment 6 and directed the Monkfish Committee to develop alternatives to address these objectives, recognizing the differences between the northern and southern monkfish fisheries. The Committee and Advisory Panel began developing a range of alternatives for public hearings, including modifications to the current management system, a days-at-sea leasing option, sector management, and individual transferrable quotas (ITQs). The New England Council has chosen to focus its resources on other priorities, and further development of this amendment has been placed on hold. Creation of a catch share program in this fishery would likely require a referendum under the Magnuson-Stevens Act provisions for such programs in New England.

Other Catch Shares Activities

Highly Migratory Species Management Division continues to implement the Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) Program in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery.

- **Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) Program.** On January 1, 2016, trip-level accountability became effective, and vessels are required to possess a minimum amount of Individual Bluefin Quota in order to fish. The NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office developed an online system for tracking IBQ and continues to add new features to the system. Electronic Monitoring Systems (video cameras, and associated equipment) were installed on 112 pelagic longline vessels. In December 2016 (81 FR 95903), a final rule published that provides NOAA Fisheries the ability to distribute quota in-season either to all qualified IBQ share recipients or only to permitted Atlantic Tunas Longline vessels with recent fishing activity, whether or not they are associated with IBQ shares.
- **Accountability for Bluefin Tuna Catch.** On January 27, 2018, in order to provide additional flexibility, NOAA Fisheries will implement quarterly accountability instead of trip-level accountability (Final Rule published December 28, 2017; 82 FR 61489). Thus, vessels will be allowed to fish with a low IBQ balance or with quota debt during a calendar quarter, provided they hold the minimum amount necessary prior to the first trip of each quarter. Vessels will still be required to report bluefin tuna catch at the end of each trip (and account for it with IBQ), but this regulatory change will provide the flexibility to fish even if the vessel has less than the minimum amount of IBQ or quota debt, until the first fishing trip in each calendar quarter. The change will provide flexibility for two important operational business decisions made by vessel owners: decisions regarding quota balance and any level of quota debt to maintain (subject to full accounting quarterly), and decisions regarding the timing and price at which they lease additional quota.
- **IBQ 3-Year Review.** NOAA Fisheries is in the process of preparing the formal review of the IBQ catch share program, and anticipates a draft document completed by the fall of 2018, and a final document by spring 2019.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council:

- **Amendment 28 Litigation.** Amendment 28 to the reef fish fishery management plan shifted 2.5 percent of the red snapper quota allocation from the commercial sector to the recreational sector (81 FR 25576; April 28, 2016). On March 3, 2017, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia vacated the amendment and required NOAA Fisheries to reinstate the sector allocations and resulting annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and quotas that were in effect prior to Amendment 28. The updated final rule published on June 7, 2017 (82 FR 26376).
- **Amendment 36 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP.** This amendment will address potential modifications to the red snapper and grouper-tilefish IFQ programs based on the red snapper 5-year review completed in April 2013, and the nearly finalized grouper-tilefish review expected to be completed this year. The Council split the Amendment into 36A and B, with 36A containing modifications to revoke shares from non-activated IFQ accounts, withhold IFQ allocations before a quota reduction, and require advance notice of landing for all reef fish vessels to improve enforcement in the IFQ fisheries. Amendment 36A was approved by the Council and is under review by the Secretary of Commerce. The proposed rule is expected to publish in March 2018. For Amendment 36B, the Council is considering actions related to program participation, quota redistribution, and allocation caps and is still in early development stages.
- **Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Program Review.** The Gulf Council and NOAA Fisheries continue to work on the first 5-year review of the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program. The review is expected to be completed in 2018.

Pacific Fishery Management Council:

The Pacific Council continues development and analysis of trailing amendments associated with the Pacific Groundfish Trawl Rationalization program. A continually updated list of completed and ongoing trailing actions is available on the Council website.

- **Cost Recovery Litigation.** At its September 2011 meeting, the Council adopted a cost recovery program structure for the Pacific Trawl Rationalization program. The cost recovery program became effective on January 10, 2014, with NOAA Fisheries scheduled to receive its first cost recovery fees in February 2014. On January 9, 2014, a lawsuit was filed by a member of the Catcher/Processor sector that claims they are not a Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPP) and thus not required to pay cost recovery fees, as well as claiming that NOAA Fisheries made other errors in implementing the rule. The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington found in favor of NOAA, and plaintiffs filed an appeal before the Ninth Circuit. On August 10, 2016, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that the agency had the authority to require Glacier to pay a cost recovery fee, but that the agency's calculation of the amount of the 2014 cost recovery fee was inconsistent with its own regulations. NOAA Fisheries elected to apply a revised methodology for all sectors for all years, resulting in a reduction in each sector's recoverable costs.
- **Pacific Choice Litigation.** In 2010, the Council recommended, and NOAA Fisheries adopted, an aggregate non-whiting accumulation limit of 2.7%. On November 4, 2015, NOAA Fisheries issued regulations that provided minor procedural modifications explaining how NOAA Fisheries would divest quota should any quota holder be above the accumulation limit after the November 30, 2015 divestiture deadline. On December 4, 2015, both regulations were challenged by a processor who had held shares in excess of the 2.7% accumulation limit. NOAA Fisheries filed a motion to dismiss the complaint based on statute of limitations and lack of standing to bring suit, which was denied by the district court. We expect a decision on this case in 2018.
- **Widow Rockfish Reallocation and Divestiture.** Under Amendment 20, overfished species were allocated in a manner intended to meet the bycatch needs for those receiving quota for target species. It included a provision that when an overfished species attains rebuilt status, quota shares for the species would be actively considered for reallocation. Widow rockfish was declared rebuilt for the 2013-2014 biennial specifications cycle, and the Pacific Council approved a reallocation of widow rockfish quota share at its April 2015 meeting. The proposed rule published on June 29, 2016 (81 FR 42295), and the final rule published on November 24, 2017 (82 FR 55775), and was effective December 26, 2017. March 19, 2018, is the appeal deadline to contest the Initial Administrative Determination of reallocation Quota Share (QS) amounts. If no appeals are filed, final reallocation of widow rockfish QS and the ability to begin trading widow rockfish QS could begin as early as March 2018.

- **Trawl Catch Share Program Five Year Review.** At its November 2017 meeting, the Pacific Council adopted the final review of the Amendment 20 trawl catch share program and a review of Amendment 21 inter-sector allocations. The Pacific Council is currently considering follow-up items based on the results of the review.
- **Allow Fixed Gear and Trawl Joint Registration.** At its April 2012 meeting, the Pacific Council recommended allowing a fixed gear permit and a trawl permit to be registered to the same vessel at the same time. The proposed rule was published in June 2016, and the final rule published November 23, 2016 (81 FR 84419), for implementation in 2017.
- **At-Sea Processing of Fixed Gear Sablefish.** When it took action on fixed gear and trawl permit stacking, the Pacific Council recommended that the opportunity to stack these permits be specified in regulations such that the limited entry fixed gear exception for freezing sablefish would not allow the freezing of sablefish caught under the trawl rationalization program. The final rule published November 23, 2016 (81 FR 84419), and it was effective January 1, 2017.
- **Whiting and Midwater Trawl Cleanup Rule.** This rule updated regulations for Pacific whiting IFQ trips. It allowed vessels to retain prohibited and protected species until landing on “maximized retention” trips and provided disposition procedures for these species consistent with the groundfish and salmon FMPs and the 2012 biological opinions. It also required that Pacific Whiting IFQ landings be 50% or more Pacific whiting by weight. The final rule was published on December 14, 2015 (80 FR 77267), with an effective date of January 13, 2016.
- **Electronic Monitoring (EM) for the Trawl Rationalization program.** At its September 2014 meeting, the Pacific Council recommended regulatory action to allow the use of EM on all vessels participating in the trawl catch share program. Exempted fishing permits (EFP) for EM in 2015 and 2016 informed the finalization of the EM policy in regulation. At its November 2015 meeting, the Council took final action that would provide whiting vessels the option to use EM in place of observers to meet the 100 percent coverage required by the catch share program. At its April 2016 meeting, the Pacific Council approved EM regulations for vessels targeting whiting and using fixed gear in the trawl catch share fishery. At the November 2017 meeting, the Pacific Council took final action for the final two components of the groundfish fishery: Bottom trawl and midwater pelagic rockfish trips. Implementation of the final EM regulations for whiting and fixed gear is expected in summer, 2018. The Council took final action on EM regulations for bottom trawl and midwater trawl in November 2017. NMFS is currently evaluating the Council’s recommendations.
- **Area Modifications.** The Pacific Council is considering modifications to the rockfish conservation areas concurrently with the essential fish habitat (EFH) amendment process. The Pacific Council selected a range of alternatives at its September 2015 meeting, and narrowed the range of alternatives at its April 2016 meeting. Council final action has been postponed until April 2018, to allow continued development of the impacts analysis.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council:

- **Cost Recovery.** NOAA Fisheries published a final rule on January 5, 2016 (81 FR 150), to implement cost recovery regulations for the Amendment 80, AFA/ Aleutian Islands Pollock, and Community Development Quota groundfish and halibut programs. The first cost recovery fees were due in December 2016. On May 23, 2016, NOAA Fisheries also implemented regulations (81 FR 23645; April 22, 2016) that will improve security and reduce administrative costs for processing cost recovery payments for the Halibut and Sablefish IFQ and the Crab Rationalization Programs.
- **Halibut Sablefish IFQ.** NOAA Fisheries published a final rule July 28, 2014 (79 FR 43679), that restricted the use of hired masters in this fishery with the goal of promoting the transition to an owner-operated fishery. The rule was challenged on August 27, 2014 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. On October 20, 2015, the court ruled in favor of NOAA on all counts. Plaintiffs filed a motion for reconsideration. On November 16, 2016, the Court upheld the provisions of the final rule but remanded it to NOAA Fisheries for further consideration of the MSA National Standards. In 2018, NOAA Fisheries will

complete an analysis of the final rule to determine whether it is consistent with the 10 National Standards. NOAA Fisheries will request public comment prior to making a final determination.

- **UCIDA Lawsuit.** In 2013, a commercial fishing industry group sued over a 2011 North Pacific Council decision to remove several Alaska salmon fisheries from the federal FMP. In September 2016, the court sided with the commercial fishermen. The court noted that authorizing the state to manage the fisheries is allowed, but when a fishery requires conservation and management, it should be included in an FMP and the FMP can delegate management to the state consistent with federal requirements in the MSA. Federal and state managers are working with stakeholders through the North Pacific Council process to create appropriate federal management for these salmon species. We anticipate this process will continue through 2018 and result in North Pacific Council recommendations for two FMP amendments.
- **Halibut Retention in Sablefish Pots.** In April 2015, the Council took final action to authorize the use of longline pot gear in Gulf of Alaska (GOA) sablefish IFQ fisheries. The Council recommended that NOAA Fisheries require full retention of all legal-sized halibut caught incidentally in the pot gear. The IPHC approved this recommendation at its annual meeting in January 2016, and NOAA Fisheries published a final rule December 28, 2016 (81 FR 95435), for implementation effective January 27, 2017. The North Pacific Council is currently considering a similar action to authorize halibut retention in pot gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) sablefish IFQ fisheries.
- **Processing Caps in Tanner Crab Fisheries.** On January 26, 2016 (81 FR 4206), NOAA Fisheries published an emergency rule to modify regulations governing individual processing quota use caps. The rule temporarily relieved a restriction that was preventing the full harvest of tanner crabs. NOAA Fisheries published a final rule December 20, 2016 (81 FR 92697), for Amendment 27 that permanently exempted the tanner crab fisheries from the processing quota use caps.
- **Halibut Decksorting Exempted Fishing Permit.** In 2016 and 2017, NOAA Fisheries issued EFPs to permit deck sorting of halibut prohibited species catch on non-pelagic trawl catcher/processor vessels fishing for flatfish in the BSAI. In 2018, the EFP will be expanded to apply to vessels fishing for flatfish in the BSAI and GOA. The data collected so far show the practice of deck sorting halibut can lower the total halibut mortality estimate for the vessel. NOAA Fisheries is currently developing an analysis for a regulatory amendment to implement monitoring and enforcement provisions to allow halibut deck sorting on non-pollock trawl catcher/processors. NOAA Fisheries expects implementation in 2020.
- **Halibut leasing options for Community Development Quota (CDQ) Vessels.** In June 2015, the Council initiated an examination of options for halibut IFQ holders in the Bering Sea to lease quota to CDQ groups. This action would exempt permit holders from owner-on-board requirements in years of low halibut catch limits. The North Pacific Council took final action in June 2017. The proposed rule should publish in early 2018, and we anticipate implementation of the final rule in July 2018.
- **Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization Program Review.** The 10-year program review of the BSAI Crab Rationalization program was completed in February 2017. Results provided a basic illustration of the dynamics within the fisheries and a broad evaluation of the program to evaluate whether the program objectives are being realized. The review also summarizes key changes in the fisheries, and discusses challenges for the management of the program.
- **Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishing Quota Program Review.** The 20-year program review of the Halibut and Sablefish IFQ program was completed in December 2016. In January 2017, the IFQ Committee evaluated issues related to the IFQ program (consolidation of small holding of quota share units, medical transfers, surviving heir provisions, use of hired masters, and participation by residents of rural communities) and provided recommendations to the North Pacific Council on potential future revisions to the program. In October 2017, the committee discussed migration of quota share among Alaska and non-Alaska communities, the impacts of quota share loss on rural communities, opportunities for new entrants, the use of hired masters, and provisions that allow quota holders to combine small holdings to increase efficiency.

- American Fisheries Act Program Review. The review of the AFA program was completed February 2017. The North Pacific Council tasked staff to write a discussion paper for a management action that would remove sideboards and prohibit directed fishing for species whose current sideboard limits are insufficient to support a directed fishery. The North Pacific Council will review an analysis and should take final action to recommend removal of the sideboards in February 2018.

New England Fishery Management Council:

- Transition to Industry-Funded Monitoring for Northeast Multispecies Sectors. In December 2015, David Goethel and XIII Northeast Fishery Sector, Inc. filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire challenging the requirement to carry and pay for at-sea monitors. NOAA Fisheries prevailed in the lawsuit on the grounds that the Plaintiffs brought their suit after the statute of limitations had run, and the decision was upheld on appeal by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.
- Groundfish Framework 55 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Framework 55 primarily set groundfish specifications for the 2016-2018 fishing years and adjusted the groundfish sector at-sea monitoring (ASM) program. The final rule was effective on May 1, 2016 (81 FR 26412).
- Groundfish Framework 56 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Framework 56 incorporated stock status changes for witch flounder, set specifications for several groundfish stocks, and temporarily changed the accountability measures implementation policy for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder and northern windowpane flounder for catches occurring in fishing years 2017 and 2018. The final rule was effective on August 1, 2017 (82 FR 35661).
- Groundfish Electronic Monitoring (EM). The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) and Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) have been collaborating for several years with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, The Nature Conservancy, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, and several groundfish sectors, to fully implement an EM program in the groundfish fishery. In the 2016 fishing year, 14 primarily inshore vessels across five different fishing sectors used EM in lieu of human at-sea monitors. In 2017, GARFO and NEFSC added a second EM project, for which vessels keep cameras on 100 percent of the time. GARFO and NEFSC are collaborating with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute to add a third EM project in 2018. These efforts will inform development of Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP.
- Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. The primary goal of Amendment 23 is to improve the reliability and accountability of the groundfish monitoring program. NEFMC completed scoping of Amendment 23 in March of 2017 and voted on the range of alternatives in June 2017, including: EM; dockside monitoring, adjustments to the current method for determining coverage levels and streamlining the sector reporting process. Implementation of this amendment is planned for 2019.
- Amendment 19 to the Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan. This action is intended to better align the annual fishery specification-setting with the beginning of the scallop fishing year by implementing a separate specification process and shifting the start of the fishing year to April 1. The final rule published November 3, 2016 (81 FR 76516).
- Sea Scallop Framework 27. Framework 27 (Final rule published May 4, 2016; 81 FR 26727) set specifications for the scallop fishery for fishing year 2016; created a new rotational closed area to protect small scallops; opened the northern portion of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area to the Limited Access General Category fleet; transferred 19% of the Limited Access General Category access area trips from the Mid-Atlantic Access Area to the northern portion of the Nantucket Lightship Access Area; and implemented an accountability measure to the fishing year 2016 Northern Gulf of Maine catch limit as a result of a fishing year 2015 catch overage.
- Sea Scallop Framework 28. Framework 28 sets specifications for fishing year 2017; limits research set-aside compensation fishing to certain areas; restricts the possession of shell stock inshore of the days-at-sea demarcation line to 50 US bushels; and adopts 2018 default specifications equivalent to 75% of the 2017 open area days-at-sea allocations. The final rule was effective on March 23, 2017 (82 FR 15155).

- **Sea Scallop Framework 29.** Framework 29 includes specifications for the 2018 scallop fishing year, which begins April 1, as well as default specifications for 2019. It also includes actions related to Closed Area I carryover pounds, the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area, and flatfish accountability measures, among others. Several of the actions in Framework 29 are intertwined with the implementation of the New England Council's Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2, which was partially approved on January 3, 2018. The final rule for the amendment is anticipated in spring 2018 and will open EFH and groundfish closed areas in Closed Area I and Nantucket Lightship Closed Areas that have been off limits to scallop fishing for many years. Implementation of Framework 29 NGOM measures are expected by April 1, 2018, with the rest of Framework 29 measures to follow sometime after.

Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council:

- **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Cost Recovery Amendment.** The final rule for Amendment 17 published June 15, 2016 (81 FR 38969), which established cost recovery provisions for this fishery among other changes to the management program. The 2017 fishing year was the first under the new cost recovery system.
- **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment.** The Mid Atlantic Council is developing an amendment to reconsider excessive share caps for the fishery. This amendment is also reconsidering the goals and objectives of the FMP. Final Council action expected in 2019, with implementation in 2020.
- **Golden Tilefish Framework 2.** The final rule for Framework Adjustment 2 to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan should publish early in 2018 (the proposed rule published October 2017: 82 FR 48967). The framework will allow for discards to be deducted from the specific component of the commercial sector generating them; eliminate a redundant call-in reporting requirement in the golden tilefish fishery; prohibit vessels from fishing more than one golden tilefish IFQ allocation at a time; require golden tilefish to be landed with the head attached; restrict the golden tilefish recreational fishery to rod and reel only, with a five-hook limit per rod; and require that incidental permit holders do not possess golden tilefish at the time of landings in excess of 50% of the total of all combined species landed.
- **Tilefish IFQ Program Review.** In December 2017, the Mid-Atlantic Council and NOAA Fisheries finalized the first 5-year review of the Tilefish IFQ Program, which was created in 2010. The program has 12 quota share-holders with minimal transfer of quota between participants. The review suggests consideration of a few minor changes including changing who is billed cost recovery from the owner to the person who lands the quota. Other suggested changes include starting the fishing year in January rather than November and considering allowing carryover between years.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council:

- **Wreckfish ITQ Program Review.** In 2017, the Council initiated a review of the wreckfish ITQ program which began in 1992, and was last reviewed in 2009. The review is expected to be completed in late 2018 or early 2019.

