

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 635**

[I.D. 061995A]

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings**

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

**ACTION:** Public hearings.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold eight public hearings to allow for input on the proposed Fishery Management Plan for the Scup Fishery (FMP).

**DATES:** Written comments will be accepted until July 24, 1995. The hearings will be held during the month of July. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for time and dates of the hearings.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to David R. Keifer, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Room 2115 Federal Building, 300 South New Street, Dover, DE 19904-6790. The public hearings will be held in Maryland, Virginia, Rhode Island, North Carolina, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and New York. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for the locations of the hearings.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David R. Keifer, (302) 674-2331; fax (302) 674-5399.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Council has adopted the following management measures for this FMP for purposes of public hearings:

**Years 1 and 2**

1. A 9-inch (22.9-cm) total length (TL) minimum fish size in the commercial fishery in Federal and state waters.

2. A 7-inch (17.8-cm) TL minimum fish size in the recreational fishery in Federal waters (the exclusive economic zone) with the states setting the recreational size limit in state waters. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has proposed a 7-inch (17.8-cm) TL size limit in state waters from New Jersey to North Carolina and an 8-inch (20.3-cm) TL size limit in state waters from New York to Maine.

**Years 3 and Subsequent**

Prior to year 3 and annually thereafter, the Council, working through a Monitoring Committee, would evaluate the success of the FMP relative to the overfishing reduction goal and propose adjustments to the management system. Beginning with year 3, additional measures would be implemented by the Director, Northeast Region, NMFS, based on the recommendations of the Council. Additional management measures could be any or all of the following:

**For the Commercial Fishery**

1. A 9-inch (22.9-cm) TL minimum fish size.

2. A 4.5-inch (11.4-cm) minimum mesh size for vessels retaining more than 1,000 lb (0.45 mt) of scup. The minimum mesh size would be established on a framework basis.

3. A coastwide quota with Federal permit holders being prohibited from landing (selling) after the quota has been attained. Quota overruns would be deducted from the quota for the subsequent year. All states would need to prohibit scup sales following Federal sales prohibition.

**For the Recreational Fishery**

1. An 8-inch (20.3-cm) minimum fish size, which may be adjusted annually through framework action.

2. A possession limit, which may be adjusted annually through framework action.

3. An open season in the recreational fishery, which may be adjusted annually through framework action.

4. A coastwide recreational harvest limit. Landings in excess of the limit would be deducted from the harvest limit for the subsequent year.

**For All Years**

1. Operator permits for commercial and party and charter boats.

2. Vessel permits for party and charter boats.

3. Vessel permits for commercial vessels (permits to sell) under a moratorium on entry. Vessels with documented landings of scup for sale between January 26, 1988, and January 26, 1993, qualify for a moratorium permit to land and sell scup under this moratorium program.

4. Dealer permits (permits to purchase).

5. Permitted vessels may only sell to permitted dealers and permitted dealers may only buy from permitted vessels.

6. Party and charter boat, commercial vessel, and dealer reports.

7. The hinges and fasteners of one panel or door in scup pots or traps must be made of one of the following degradable materials:

a. Untreated hemp, jute, or cotton string of 3/16-inch (0.32-cm) diameter or smaller;

b. Magnesium alloy, timed float releases (pop-up devices) or similar magnesium alloy fasteners; or

c. Ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire of 0.062-inch (0.16-cm) diameter or smaller.

8. Scup pots and traps would be required to have a minimum escape vent of 2.75 inches (7.0 cm) in diameter.

9. A maximum size of 18 inches (45.7 cm) in diameter for rollers used in roller rig trawl gear.

All public hearings are scheduled to begin at 7 p.m., except the New York hearings, which are scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. All hearings will be tape recorded and the tapes will be filed as the official transcript of the hearings. The hearings will be held at the following locations:

1. July 10, 1995—Holiday Inn, Route 13, Salisbury, MD.

2. July 17, 1995—Days Inn, 5807 Northampton Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA.

3. July 17, 1995—Newport Harbor and Marina, Newport, RI.

4. July 18, 1995—North Carolina State Aquarium, Airport Road, Manteo, NC.

5. July 18, 1995—Holiday Inn, 290 Highway 37 East, Toms River, NJ.

6. July 18, 1995—Days Inn, 500 Hathaway Road, I-95 and 140, New Bedford, MA.

7. July 19, 1995—Ramada Inn, Exit 72, Long Island Expressway, Riverhead, NY.

8. July 24, 1995—Kingsborough Community College, Manhattan Beach, NY.

These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at 302-674-2331 at least 5 days prior to the hearing dates.

Dated: June 27, 1995.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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