

**Commercial Fishing License Restructuring  
Implementation**

**Finfish Fishery Sector**

**DRAFT #2**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During the 2002 legislative session the General Assembly adopted the Commercial Fisheries Management Act, implementing a new commercial fishing license system and ending the moratorium on the issuance of new commercial fishing licenses that has been in place since 1995. One purpose of the act is to enable new entrants into commercial fisheries; however, provisions providing the authority to limit access were included. Fisheries identified for consideration of limited access are those “for which there is adequate or greater than adequate harvesting capacity currently in the fishery” and those that are managed under a state quota system. In accordance with Section 20-2.1-9(5) of the Fisheries Management Act, this management plan has been developed to identify fisheries that the Department of Environmental Management proposes to limit entry at current levels of effort and fisheries for which new licenses may be issued.

Regulations implementing the commercial licensing system proposed by the Department of Environmental Management identify two endorsement categories for finfish, restricted and non-restricted. The Department proposes limiting access to species listed in the restricted category to the current number of participants. In 2001, there were a total of 1,771 multipurpose or finfish license holders, eligible to fish for finfish in RI state waters. The Department proposes issuing new licenses to harvest species in the non-restricted category, which contains all other species not included in the restricted category.

This management plan will be updated on an annual basis and the list of restricted and non-restricted species will be revised depending upon stock status, quotas, current performance of the fishery, etc. Based on this information the Department will propose for public hearing a new management plan each year.

## **RESTRICTED FINFISH**

Summarized below are the stock status reports, management programs, and performance reports of species relegated to the restricted finfish category. All of these species are currently managed through a state quota system or will be in the near future (black sea bass). The Department’s interest in limiting participation in these fisheries does not stem from concern with stock dynamics since a quota limits total landings within the State. The main concern is with allowing too many people access to the resource, which would impact current license holders through shorter seasons, lower possession limits, and ultimately fewer pounds of fish. The primary goal for quota-managed fisheries has been to keep seasons open as long as possible. At times this results in low possession limits that are not economically viable for the whole industry.

Projections of season length for various increases in effort, in the form of new participants, are also provided. These projections are based on the reported landings and possession limits from 2001, unless otherwise noted. A proportional relationship is assumed between landings and effort, i.e. a 10% increase in effort would lead to a 10% increase in landings given a constant biomass. This linear relationship is a simplistic assumption but does provide some insight as to the potential impact from increased effort. Based on this information, recommendations have been developed regarding management of these fisheries under the new licensing system adopted by the General Assembly.

Several questions are addressed regarding expansion of effort in these fisheries. First, have management goals been satisfied with the current conditions? As previously addressed, the goal of long seasons. Ideally, fisheries would remain open throughout the season with possession limits that are profitable for the industry and diminish regulatory discards. With current levels of effort there is a minimum quota amount needed to attain these goals, which raises a second question. Have any of the quotas in recent years been adequate to meet these goals and what will future quotas most likely be? And lastly, what would be the impact of increased effort?

## SCUP

**Stock Status** - Scup was recently assessed and reviewed at the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop. The Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) concluded the scup stock is not overfished in a biomass sense and that fishing mortality rate with respect to overfishing cannot currently be evaluated (NEFSC, 2002). The 2001 estimate of spawning stock biomass (SSB) (2000-2002 average = 3.20 SSB kg/tow), based upon the 3-year moving average of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) spring survey exceeds the established biomass index threshold (2.77 kg/tow) (Figure 1). The change in stock status results from the extremely high survey index in the spring NEFSC 2002 survey. Though the relative exploitation rates have declined in recent years, the absolute value of F cannot be determined. Survey data indicate strong recruitment and rebuilding of age structure. This is consistent with recent Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife (RIDFW) trawl survey data.

The SARC management advice was to continue management efforts to further reduce fishing mortality rates and minimize fishery discards to rebuild the stock. Managers need to further constrain recreational catches as this sector continues to overshoot its target allocations. The stock can likely sustain modest increase in catches, however the SARC urged caution due to the high uncertainty in stock status determination.

**Management Program-** Scup are managed within state waters by the Department of Environmental Management with advice from the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) and RIDFW. Regional management of the scup resource is the shared responsibility of the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council (ASMFC). The Scup Fishery Management Plan (FMP) sets annual quota specifications into three sub-periods. During the two winter sub-periods, the quota is available coast wide and is restricted through the implementation of trip limits. A state-by-state quota system is in place for the summer sub-period (May – October), whereby quotas are distributed to the states based upon their percentage share of commercial landings for the period May through October 1983-1992. RI further divides the state quota into a general category allocation (40%) and a fish trap allocation (60%).

**Fishery Performance and Projections-** Management of the state scup quota to keep the fishery open throughout the summer period has proven to be difficult due to the number of licensees who have open access to the fishery. Despite receiving the highest coastwide allocation (56%) and implementing low trip limits, closures of the fishery, and overages are frequent (Table 1a-c). Increased catch rates are due to the growing scup population and increased availability. Under current levels of effort the summer fishery is frequently closed even with low trip limits. In 2001, the fishery was open 61 out of 184 days. With

the exception of a 1,000-pound possession limit from May 1 to May 14 a 100-pound possession limit was in place when the fishery was open. Effort increases as small as 10% would leave the fishery closed for an estimated 70% of the summer period (Table 2). Replacing the 1,000-pound possession limit with a lower limit would lengthen the season, however, a lower possession limit would be financially burdensome for the trawling industry and would increase regulatory discards. The high possession limit allows trawlers to target scup using large mesh. Otherwise small mesh is used to harvest other species such as squid and butterfish to supplement their income.

Table 2. Total days open during Summer Sub-Period in 2001 and estimated number of days open for various increases in effort

Sub-Periods	2001	10% inc	15% inc	20% inc	30% inc	40% inc
May 1 – June 30	25	19	18	17	15	14
Jul 1 – Sep15	24	21	20	20	18	17
Sep 16 – Oct 31	12	11	11	10	10	9
# Days open	61	51	49	47	43	40

Based on 2001 catch rates and possession limits, the quota necessary to keep the fishery open throughout the summer period is estimated to be just over 1 million pounds for the general category. This represents a 47% increase over the 2002 quota. In August of 2002, ASMFC and MAMFC recommended a 53% increase over the 2002 quota. This increase would provide a commercial quota for the general category of approximately 1 million pounds, which should allow the fishery to remain open throughout the year based on the possession limits and catch rates in 2001 and under current levels of effort. Increased effort would lead to a resumption of premature closures.

## SUMMER FLOUNDER

**Stock Status** - According to the 2002 SARC, summer flounder is overfished and overfishing is occurring relative to the current biological reference points. The fishing mortality (F) has declined from 1.32 in 1994 to 0.27 in 2001, which is marginally above the current overfishing definition reference point of 0.26. The SARC report indicates that the 2001 estimate of F may understate the actual fishing mortality as retrospective analysis show that the current assessment method tends to underestimate recent fishing mortality rates (e.g. by about 1/3 over the last three years).

Total stock biomass has increased substantially since 1989, and in 2001 was estimated to be 42,900MT, 19% below the current biomass threshold of 53,200 MT (Figure 2). Projections indicate that if the TAL in 2002 is not exceeded, total stock biomass will exceed the biomass threshold. At this level, the stock will no longer be overfished. Managers need to further constrain recreational catches as this sector continues to overshoot its target allocations.

**Management Program:** Summer Flounder are managed within state waters by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) with advice from the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council and RIDFW. Regional management of the summer flounder resource is the shared responsibility of MAFMC and ASMFC. Existing DEM regulations provide a framework to manage the annual summer flounder quota allocated to RI through possession limits and seasons. The total commercial quota is allocated into four sub-periods based on the proportion of catches during the years 1980 through 1989.

In RI, management of the fishery for summer flounder has been difficult and the subject of frequent allocation disputes. The winter commercial fishery is prosecuted offshore, by larger trawl vessels. During the summer, smaller trawl vessels, floating traps, gillnet and rod and reel fishermen direct their efforts on this species inshore, along with a substantial recreational fishery. Frequent possession limit reductions and closures are enacted by the RIDFW during each sub-period to keep RI landings within the quota allocated by MAFMC and ASMFC (Table 1a-c).

DEM implemented a Summer Flounder Exemption Program (SFEP) in 1995 to limit the number of vessels that could participate in the directed fishery, based upon their historical participation. At that time, a 200-pound limit was established for anyone who did not qualify for a SFEP. Due to the increase in stock biomass in the near shore waters and the number of license holders eligible to direct on the summer flounder fishery, the spring & summer sub-periods have been quickly exhausted, even with low trip limits of 100 pounds.

**Fishery Performance and Projections:** Under current levels of effort, the summer flounder fishery has been frequently closed. The season most affected has been the summer because of the small allocation available. The proportion of summer flounder taken by different gear types during the summer months has changed over the past few years. The percentage harvested by otter trawl has declined each year during the period 1996 to 2000 while the proportion taken by all other gear types has increased with the greatest increase occurring for the Rod & Reel sector (Figure 3). The increase in stock abundance over the same time period as evidenced by the RIDFW trawl surveys may explain this shift as fish have become more available to inshore fisherman. As a result, the performance of the fishery has also changed over the years. Low possession limits and long closures are characteristic of the current fishery during the summer. In 2001, the fishery was only open 55 out of the 92 days available for the June through August sub-period (Table 3). In 2002, new sub-periods were created and the May through July sub-period was open 53 out of the total 92 days available.

Modest effort increases would lead to fewer days open (Table 3). A 10% increase would have decreased the number of open days by an estimated 33 days. The first two sub-periods would experience the greatest impact. The June through August period would have been closed 50% to 63% of the time with a 10% and 40% increase in effort, respectively. The last two sub-periods would be least affected. The September through October sub-period would stay open throughout the period under all effort increases.

Table 3. Total days open in 2001 and estimated number of days open for various increases in effort

Sub-Periods	2001	10% inc	15% inc	20% inc	30% inc	40% inc
Jan – May	151	130	127	124	119	112
June – Aug	55	46	43	41	37	34
Sep – Oct	61	61	61	61	61	61
Nov - Dec	45	42	41	40	39	37
# Days open	312	279	272	266	256	244

Theoretically, the current quotas are sufficient to keep the fishery open throughout the year with very low possession limits; however, this would not be economically feasible for the trawling industry and would increase regulatory discards. Large mesh is used to target scup and summer flounder if the possession limits are high enough to be profitable otherwise small mesh is used to target other species while keeping scup and fluke limits as bycatch. Possession limits during summer months has been a contentious issue

between the trawler and rod & reel sectors. The high possession limits necessary for trawlers to cover expenses lead to early closures while low possession limits and a long season are desired by the rod & reel sector. A compromise between the two sectors would be a sizable limit for several weeks in May (i.e. 300 pounds) and then a 100-pound possession limit for the remainder of the period, however, recent quotas have not been substantial enough to achieve these limits.

Based on average landings and possession limits in 2001 the quota would need to be approximately 200,000 pounds greater than received. However, this estimation is based on the possession limits that were in effect, which were very low throughout much of the year. For comparison, the quota allocated for 2002 was about 500,000 pounds greater than the 2001 quota. The fishery remained open throughout the first sub-period with fairly high limits, however, the second sub-period (May – July) closed after 53 days with a 100-pound possession limit. A much higher quota would be needed to achieve the possession limits that would satisfy all industry sectors. An estimated 3 million pounds would be needed to keep the fishery open all year with the possession limits indicated below.

Jan 1 – Feb 9:	700 pounds
Feb 10 – Apr 30:	1,500 pounds
May 1 – May 31:	300 pounds
Jun 1 – Jul 31:	100 pounds
Aug 1 – Aug 31:	100 pounds
Sep1 – Oct 31:	300 pounds
Nov 1 – Dec 31:	500 pounds

This estimate is based on landings reported in 2002 for the January - April and June periods. Landings were estimated for the remaining months based on landings data reported in 1998 – 2000.

While the biomass of summer flounder has been increasing over recent years, ASMFC and MAFMC recommended this August to reduce the 2003 summer flounder quota by about 4% because biomass is still below the threshold and estimates of fishing mortality and recruitment for recent years in the assessment were biased. Increased effort at this time would lead to lower possession limits and longer closed periods.

## TAUTOG

**Stock Status:** The ASMFC technical committee completed the most recent assessment of tautog in 2001. Results indicate that coastwide fishing mortality rates have declined since 1993, however, since the 2000 rate ( $F_{2000} = 0.41$ ) exceeds the target ( $F_{TARGET\ 2000} = 0.24$ ) the stock is considered overfished. Abundance indices through 2000 show a slight increase in biomass and recruitment for recent years (Figure 4). The current index of stock size is slightly above the time series average, while the spawning stock biomass is below the time series average, indicating that a considerable proportion of the recent growth in the stock is from fish younger than spawning age (Figure 4). The recent increase in fishing mortality rates appear to be due to an increase in recreational landings, which comprise approximately 90% of total landings over the past six years. Commercial landings have not risen appreciably since plan implementation. Indices of abundance based on the RIDFW trawl survey indicate a recent increase in abundance locally; however, the 2001 estimate is below the time series average. Abundance indices for young-of-the-year tautog also point to an increase in abundance over the past several years, consistent with the results of the coastwide assessment.

**Management Program:** Tautog are managed within state waters by the DEM with advice from the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council and RIDFW. Regional management of the tautog resource is conducted by ASMFC through Addendum III to the Tautog FMP, which was recently adopted in February of 2002. The FMP in part requires a reduction in fishing mortality (F) because the most recent estimates of F exceed the target of 0.24. States are required to implement regulations that meet the required reductions by April 1, 2003. The final phase of the plan will require further reductions in fishing mortality to achieve a target of F = 0.15. Consequently, the state quota is not likely to increase over the next few years. The commercial fishery in Rhode Island is managed through a combination of seasons, quotas, and possession limits. Although it is not required, Rhode Island established a commercial quota, which in part achieves the fishing mortality targets required by the FMP. The quota is divided equally into three seasons with a daily possession limit of 20 fish.

For the year 2000, the commercial quota was double the amount available in 1999, increasing the number of open days by 128. In 2001, the quota remained the same as 2000 but the fishery was open a fewer number of days. For two sub-periods, the allocations were harvested prior to the end of the sub-period, resulting in early closures. During the first sub-period, the fishery was open 33 of the 47 days and landings exceeded the allocation by 13,000 pounds. Had the fishery closed when the quota was reached the fishery would have been open for 27 days. The excessive overage was due to unusually high landings in one of the reporting weeks. This overage was deducted from the quota allocated to the first sub-period in 2002, leaving a small amount available. Catch rates in 2002 were also very high with 14,689 pounds landed in a single week.

Further increases in effort would lead to earlier closures and greater difficulties in monitoring landings (Table 4). A 10% increase in effort would reduce the number of open days by a week while a 40% increase would shorten the season by four weeks. Recent stock surveys show that local populations are increasing in biomass. Landing rates are expected to increase as the stock grows and fish become more readily available. A combination of static commercial quotas, growing population biomass, and effort increases would lead to a drastic reduction in season length for a fishery that currently is unable to remain open throughout the season.

Table 4. Total days open in 2001 and estimated number of days open for various increases in effort

<b>Sub-Periods</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>10% inc</b>	<b>15% inc</b>	<b>20% inc</b>	<b>30% inc</b>	<b>40% inc</b>
Apr 14-May 31 *	33	32	31	30	29	28
Aug 1 – Sep 15	46	44	42	40	37	34
Oct 15 – Dec 31	32	28	26	25	23	22
# Days open	111	104	99	95	89	84

\* Estimated days open based on data including the 13,000 pound overage

Based on average landings within sub-periods, the quota necessary to keep the fishery open throughout the first two periods and the last period until mid December is 101, 521 pounds. This would be a 100% increase over current quota levels. While local stocks are increasing the region wide assessment indicates that fishing mortality has increased lately and future management actions will aim to reduce F. Expansion of the commercial quota is unlikely in the next few years.

## STRIPED BASS

**Stock Status:** According to the stock assessment for 2001 overall abundance of the stock is very high and the fishing mortality remains below the target fishing mortality ( $F_{2001} = 0.31$ ). Abundance increased steadily between 1982 and 1997 but has remained stable since (Figure 5). The population abundance as of January 1, 2001 was estimated to be 45.6 million fish. Model results indicate fishing mortality increased steadily until 1999 but decreased slightly in 2000. Indices of abundance calculated from the RIDFW trawl survey are quite variable for the time series; however, a trend of increasing abundance is evident.

**Management Program:** Striped bass are managed by ASMFC through Addendum V to Amendment 5 to the interstate FMP, which requires minimum sizes for the commercial and recreational fisheries, possession limits for the recreational fishery, and state quotas for the commercial fishery. Based on the 1999 assessment, it was determined that the 1998 F estimate on fully recruited fish exceeded the target and equaled the overfishing definition. The management program for 2000 was aimed at reducing F, resulting in a smaller commercial quota than 1999. Based on the 2000 assessment the Management Board determined that no additional reductions in F were necessary. Amendment 6 is currently in draft form and might be adopted later this year. This amendment provides a number of options for several issues that the Management Board will adopt. Issues include overfishing definitions, stock rebuilding targets, minimum size regimes, and distribution of allocations among user groups. The options that are selected will determine future commercial quotas for Rhode Island. Because of the variety of options available the 2003 quota amount relative to 2002 is uncertain. However, with the latest assessments showing a leveling of the stock biomass substantial increases in the commercial quota are unlikely in the near future.

Regulations for the commercial striped bass fishery in Rhode Island include minimum sizes, possession limits, gear restrictions, seasons and quotas. The commercial quota is divided between two sectors, floating traps (37%) and a general category (63%). The quota for the general category, primarily rod & reel, and the floating trap fishery were made available in 2001 and 2002 during two seasons.

**Fishery Performance and Projections:** There were fewer open days for the general category in 2001 compared with 2000 and 1999, however, early closures occurred within all three years (Table 1a-c). In 2001, the fishery was open for 42 days compared to 1999 when the fishery was open 64 days. The shorter season in 2001 is most likely due to a higher possession limit.

Estimates of open days under different levels of effort for the striped bass fishery are based on 2002 data, since the quota has already been harvested. The fishery was open for 28 days. The plan was to leave 10% of the quota for October 1, however the entire quota was harvested during the first season. The number of open days has decreased each year since 1999. An increase in effort would shorten the season further while the consensus among industry representatives is to have a longer season.

Table 5. Total days open in 2002 and estimated number of days open for various increases in effort

	2002	10% inc	15% inc	20% inc	30% inc	40% inc
# Days open	28	26	25	24	23	22

In past years the catch rates are higher in June compared to September and October. Landings data for 2000 and 2001 indicate that catch rates in June are higher than in September and October. Assuming that the catch rates in September, and October are half that of June the quota needed to keep the fishery open during those three months is about 288,000 pounds. Commercial quotas of this magnitude are unlikely in the next few years because the most recent stock assessments indicate that the population of striped bass has not increased in biomass since 1997 and the recreational catch has increased dramatically over recent years.

## **BLACK SEA BASS**

**Stock Status:** According to the last stock assessment completed in 1998 the black sea bass stock is over-exploited and at a low biomass level. Estimated rates of fishing mortality during the period 1984-1997 were above  $F_{max}$  ( $F=0.32$ ), with a mean value of  $F=0.68$  over the period. Spawning stock biomass was relatively stable during the period 1984-1995, with an increase in 1996. Recruitment in 1997 was well below the 1972-1996 average and the age structure of the stock is highly truncated. Recent surveys, however, indicate an increasing trend in biomass.

The biomass threshold is based on the NEFSC spring survey. The threshold is defined as the maximum value of a three-year moving average of the spring survey catch-per-tow (1977-1979 average of 0.9 kg/tow). The 2001 biomass index was 0.594 (three year average for 2000-2002) or about 2/3 of the threshold. The series indicates a general increase in the exploitable biomass since 1993 (Figure 6). The preliminary index for 2002 of 0.626 is the highest value in the time series (1968-2002). Survey indicates that strong recruitment has recently occurred in 1999 and 2000, with the 2000 value being the highest in the time series. Preliminary results indicate a strong year class produced in 2002. Other indicators of stock status such as recreational landings signify increased biomass over recent years. Relative exploitation levels indicate a significant reduction in mortality from 1998 to 2001 relative to 1996 and 1997 levels. Based on the relative index, exploitation rates were lower in 2001 than 1998.

**Management Program:** The black sea bass stock is managed jointly by ASMFC and MAFMC. Coastwide quotas allocated into quarterly periods have been implemented each year since 1996 to achieve target exploitation rates. Possession limits are in place throughout the year to control harvest rates and are the same for all fishermen along the eastern coast. Amendment 13, approved by ASMFC and MAFMC, establishes a state quota system. If adopted by the Secretary of Commerce before the end of November of 2002, the state quota system will become effective for 2003 otherwise it will take effect for 2004. Rhode Island's share of the commercial quota is 11%.

**Fishery Performance and Projections:** 11% of the quota approved for 2003 (2.94 million pounds) is 323,400 pounds. Landings in Rhode Island did not reach that amount in 1999 or 2000, however, 2001 landings and projected landings for 2002 are greater than the 11% share (Table 1a-c). Over the period 1999 – 2001 the number of closed days has increased each year and consequently possession limits have decreased to extend season length. High landings were achieved in 2001 despite being closed for 164 days, indicating an increase in the availability of black sea bass. Under the current harvest rates, it is expected that the 11% allocation will be fully harvested. Any expansion of

effort at this time would hinder the Department from meeting its objective of keeping the fishery open throughout the year under reasonable possession limits.

### **NON-RESTRICTED FINFISH**

The species relegated to the non-restricted categories include all species of finfish with the exception of those listed in the restricted category. All species for which the state is allocated a quota are listed as restricted with the exception of bluefish since the quota allocated to the state has been more than the industry is able to harvest since it was implemented. Stock status and management are summarized for bluefish. The top ten commercially landed species in terms of pounds for the year 2000 contained in the non-restricted category are: herring, squid, skate, whiting, monkfish, mackerel, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, red hake, and butterfish.

### **BLUEFISH**

**Stock Status:** The Atlantic Coast bluefish stock was last assessed this year, 2002. Fishing mortality (F) in 2001 was estimated to be  $F = 0.25$ . Accepting  $F_{msy} = 0.40$ , estimated in the 1997 assessment and adopted by Amendment 1, as an overfishing definition, the bluefish stock was not overfished in 2000 and 2001. However, biomass remains below levels needed to deliver MSY. Stock abundance declined between the late 1970s and the mid 1990's and has increased since (Figure 7).

**Management Program:** Bluefish are managed cooperatively by ASMFC and MAFMC through Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan. The Bluefish Monitoring Committee meets annually to review the most recent data and to make recommendations regarding the commercial quota, the recreational harvest limit, and other management measures. Commercial quotas have been implemented since 1994 and have never been fully harvested. Coastwide quotas have ranged between 9.583 and 11.38 million pounds with a quota of 10.5 million pounds approved for 2002. Projection results from the latest assessment indicate that the bluefish stock will increase in biomass over the next couple of years. The Bluefish Monitoring Committee recommended a commercial quota of 10.5 million pounds for 2003, the same as 2002. Rhode Island share of this quota, 6.8%, equals 714,851 million pounds. There are no possession limits, size limits, or closed seasons for the commercial fishery. Half of the commercial quota is allocated to the period January through June and half to July through December.

**Fishery Performance and Projections:** Since 1994 when states were first allocated a commercial quota for bluefish, Rhode Island has not fully harvested its allocation and the fishery has never been closed while the quota system has been in place. In 2001, 30% of the quota was not harvested.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regulation 1: All Rhode Island residents who possess a valid multi-purpose license as of December 31, 2002 shall be eligible to obtain a new Multi-purpose License for 2003 and fish for restricted and non-restricted finfish at Full Harvest and Gear Levels, provided that all applicable application requirements are met.

Regulation 2: All Rhode Island residents who possess a valid commercial finfish license as of December 31, 2002 shall be eligible to obtain a new Principal Effort License for 2003 and fish for restricted and non-restricted finfish, per endorsement(s), at Full Harvest and Gear Levels, provided that all applicable application requirements are met.

Regulation 3: All non-residents who possess a valid Rhode Island finfish license as of December 31, 2002 shall be eligible to obtain a new Principal Effort License for 2003 and fish for restricted and non-restricted finfish, per endorsement(s), at Full Harvest and Gear Levels, provided that all applicable application requirements are met, including those relating to interstate reciprocity.

Regulation 4: The restricted finfish endorsement category shall include the following five species: scup, summer flounder, tautog, striped bass, and black sea bass.

Regulation 5: The non-restricted finfish endorsement category shall include all species of finfish available for commercial harvest except the five species included in the restricted endorsement category.

Regulation 6: The Full Harvest and Gear Levels shall be the same harvest and gear restrictions in effect for finfish species as of January 1, 2003, subject to modification, by rule, during the 2003 license year in accordance with the state's existing quota management program.

Regulation 7: The existing summer flounder exemption program shall remain in effect and be applicable to all holders of Principal Effort and Multi-Purpose Licenses.

Regulation 8: No new Multi-Purpose Licenses, or Principal Effort Licenses with restricted finfish endorsements, shall be available for 2003, except pursuant to sections 6.7-6 and 6.7-7 of the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Management of Marine Fisheries*.

Regulation 9: New Commercial Fishing Licenses with non-restricted finfish endorsements shall be available for 2003.

Regulation 10: Any Rhode Island resident shall be eligible to obtain a Commercial Fishing License with a non-restricted finfish endorsement and fish for non-restricted finfish at Basic Harvest and Gear Levels, provided that all applicable application requirements are met.

Regulation 11: Any non-resident shall be eligible to obtain a Non-Resident Commercial Fishing License with a non-restricted finfish endorsement and fish for non-restricted finfish at Basic Harvest and Gear Levels, provided that all applicable application requirements are met, including those relating to interstate reciprocity.

Regulation 12: The Basic Harvest and Gear Levels shall be the same harvest and gear restrictions in effect for finfish species as of January 1, 2003, subject to modification, by rule, during the 2003 season in accordance with the state's existing fisheries management program.

*Future management considerations:* This management plan will be further developed throughout 2003 with input from industry, RIMFC, and the University of Rhode Island as data is obtained under the new licensing system. An important issue for future consideration is the impact of the restricted and non-restricted endorsements on regulatory discards. New licenses issued to harvest non-restricted species may lead to an increase in discards of restricted species. A multi-species quota has been suggested as an alternative strategy to the species by species approach currently employed by the Department, which may be effective in minimizing discards. The Department recommends further research of the multi-species quota.

## **Current Regulations Pertaining to Effort Limitations**

7.7 Fluke (Summer Flounder) -- No person commercially licensed under RIGL 20-2-27 or RIMFC Part II shall possess or harvest any fluke which is less than fourteen (14) inches total length. A total annual statewide quota for fluke will be established. It shall be the most recent allocation established for the State by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce and published in the Federal Register. The quota may be harvested by licensed gear fishermen in accordance with the provisions of Title 20 of the General Laws and in accordance with all rules and regulations promulgated by the R.I. Marine Fisheries Council. In order to provide for the orderly harvest of the quota the R.I. Marine Fisheries Council has established the following sub-period allocations:

### 7.7.1 Summer flounder Sub-periods

7.7.1-1 Winter Sub-Period: January 1 - April 30 annually.

Target allocation - 54% of the annual quota established in Section 7.7. The possession limit per vessel will be 700 pounds per calendar day.

The DFW will increase the possession limit during the sub-period based on the current catch rate and advice from fishing industry representatives and the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council.

7.7.1-2 Summer I Sub-Period: May 1 - July 31 annually.

Target allocation - 12% of the annual quota established in Section 7.7. The possession limit per vessel will be 100 pounds per calendar day.

7.7.1-3 Summer II Sub-Period: August 1 - October 31 annually.

Target allocation - 23% of the annual quota established in section 7.7. The possession limit per vessel will be 150 pounds per calendar day.

7.7.1-4 Fall Sub-Period: November 1 - December 31 annually.

Target allocation - 11% of the annual quota established in Section 7.7. The possession limit per vessel will be 450 pounds per calendar day.

Any unused portion of the quota from a 'sub-period' will be equally distributed to the allocations of the remaining sub-periods. The over-harvest of a sub-period allocation will be deducted from the allocations of the remaining sub-periods. Annually, the target allocations specified in sections 7.7.1-1 through 7.7.1-4 shall be adjusted by the DFW to charge over-harvest of a sub-period allocation during a given year to the same sub-period of the next following year.

### 7.7.2 Summer flounder Trip Limits (possession limit)

7.7.2-1 Repealed 5/11/01

7.7.2-2 The possession limit may vary from the amount specified in sections 7.7.1-1 through 7.7.1-4. Fish and Wildlife, after discussions with fishing industry representatives, will determine, based upon the period of time remaining in the quota period and the current catch rate, whether the quota will be reached prior to the end of the sub-period. Having determined the catch rate and time remaining in the sub-period, Fish and Wildlife will decide whether the possession limit should be decreased or increased. Fish and Wildlife will file a notice with the

Secretary of State's Office if the rate is changed, and publish a news release announcing the change in a newspaper of daily circulation throughout the State.  
[Effective 12:01 AM, April 28, 2002, the possession limit for the commercial summer flounder fishery will be 100 lbs. per vessel, per calendar day.]

7.7.3 Summer flounder Mesh Regulations – Otter trawlers that land or possess 100 pounds (45.4 kg) or more of summer flounder from May 1 through October 31; or 200 pounds (90.8 kg) or more of summer flounder per trip from November 1 through April 30, must fish with nets or combinations of nets that have a minimum mesh size of 5.5 inch (14.0 cm) diamond, or 6 inch (15.2 cm) square mesh applied throughout the body, extension(s) and codend portion of the net

7.7.6 Moratorium on the Landing of Summer Flounder -- No person shall possess, land, sell, or offer for sale in excess of two hundred (200) pounds of summer flounder *Paralichthys dentatus*, in any calendar day, in the State of Rhode Island or the jurisdictional waters of the state without a summer flounder exemption certificate issued by Fish and Wildlife and a valid Rhode Island commercial fishing license. Application for a summer flounder exemption permit must be received by Fish and Wildlife prior to January 1, 1997.

7.7.7 Exemption Certificates -- Fish and Wildlife will issue an exemption certificate for a vessel if the owner of the vessel or his/her representative applies to Fish and Wildlife prior to January 1, 1997, for the issuance of such a certificate and demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Director that:

7.7.7-1 the operator of the vessel possesses a valid Rhode Island commercial fishing license to land summer flounder up to the amount permitted by the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council regulations; and

7.7.7-2 the subject vessel meets any of the following criteria:

a. the vessel was operated by a person who possessed a valid Rhode Island commercial fishing license and landed and sold in excess of one pound of summer flounder to a Rhode Island licensed dealer during the period from January 1, 1987, through December 31, 1992; or

b. the vessel fished exclusively in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and landed and sold in excess of one pound of summer flounder to a licensed Rhode Island licensed dealer sometime during the period January 1, 1987, through December 31, 1992. The Department may require additional supporting documents including but not limited to the ship's logs, ice and fuel slips; or

c. the vessel replaces a vessel which was operated by a person who possessed a valid Rhode Island commercial fishing license, and the vessel being replaced landed and sold in excess of one pound of summer flounder to a Rhode Island licensed dealer during the period from January 1, 1987, through December 31, 1992, and if the vessel being replaced was lost by sinking or was otherwise destroyed, the replaced vessel is required to have been owned by the applicant at the time of the loss; or

d. the vessel replaces a vessel which fished exclusively in the EEZ and landed and sold in excess of one pound of summer flounder to a Rhode Island licensed dealer, during the period January 1, 1987, through December 31, 1992, and if the vessel being replaced was lost by sinking or was otherwise destroyed, the replaced vessel is required to have been owned by the applicant at the time of the loss.

e. If the vessel is replacing a vessel that was lost by sinking or was otherwise destroyed, documentation must be presented from a licensed insurance company, U.S. Coast Guard report, or some other valid evidence of ownership to the satisfaction of the Director.

7.7.8 Application for Certificate of Exemption -- A vessel is eligible to receive a Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate if it meets the following conditions. The applicant applying for an exemption certificate shall:

7.7.8-1 provide Fish and Wildlife with a copy of the operator's valid current Rhode Island commercial fishing license or non-resident landing license, and Federal Fluke Permit if the summer flounder is to be taken in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and

7.7.8-2 submit a completed notarized application for said certificate; and

7.7.8-3 submit proof that the vessel meets the requirements set out in 7.7.7 and

7.7.8-4 provide a completed notarized waiver authorizing the Department to access records verifying that this vessel and operator meet the criteria set forth in 7.7.7; and

7.7.8-5 provide Fish and wildlife with a copy of the vessel's U.S. Coast Guard documentation papers or state issued boat registration certificate proving ownership of the vessel. If replacing a vessel, proof of ownership for both boats is required, and

7.7.8-6 provide to the satisfaction of the Division of Fish and Wildlife proof that the applicant vessel is replacing a vessel which has been removed from the Summer Flounder Exemption Program (as described in 7.7.6)

(a) A vessel may be sold with all permits and history (state and federal) transferred together or without the vessel history and permits. A vessel owner may sever the permits and history in entirety from the vessel for the purposes of replacing the vessel. The vessel owner must supply credible written evidence verifying that the transferee/seller is retaining the vessel's fishing and permit history for purposes of replacing the vessel. If a vessel owner elects to sever permits and history from a vessel, the permits and history may be transferred only to another vessel owned by said vessel owner.

(b) Vessel permits, Certificates of Exemption, and fishing history cannot be split.

(c) Vessel permits or Certificates of Exemption may not be combined to create larger replacement vessels.

(d) The replacement vessel may not exceed a 10% increase in length overall (LOA), a 10% increase in gross registered tonnage (GRT) or net tonnage, or a 20% increase in horsepower of the vessel being replaced.

(e) Only one vessel upgrade based upon the original issuance of certificate is allowed for the Certificate of Exemption or permit.

7.7.9 Submission of Application -- Application for an exemption certificate shall be mailed or submitted prior to January 1, 1997 to the office of Fish and Wildlife at: Oliver Stedman Government Center, 4808 Tower Hill Rd., Wakefield, RI 02879, Attention: Fluke Exemption.

7.9 Tautog (Blackfish) -- No person shall take, possess, sell, possess for sale, or offer for sale any tautog measuring less than sixteen (16) inches total length whether caught within the jurisdiction of this State or otherwise.

7.9.2 Commercial --The total allowable harvest of tautog will be established annually, and will be that amount allocated to the State of Rhode Island by the Regional Fishery Management Council and/or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The quota may be harvested only by permitted gear types and licensed fishermen in accordance with all rules and regulations promulgated by the RIMFC and the RIGL Title 20. In order to provide for the orderly harvest of the quota the RIMFC has established the following three sub-period allocations:

April 15 - May 31	1/3 annual allocated quota
August 1 - Sept 15	1/3 annual allocated quota
October 15 - end of quota or 12/31	1/3 annual allocated quota

Within each period the allocation may be harvested until it is exhausted. Any unused quota not harvested during a sub-period will be carried forward into the next period and any over-harvest will be deducted from that period allocated in the next calendar year. No licensed commercial fisherman may possess more than twenty (20) tautog in any calendar day. The aggregate number of tautog on

any vessel, regardless of how many licensed fishermen are onboard, may not exceed the twenty (20) fish limit per day. During a closure of the R.I. tautog fishery a federally permitted vessel fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), may traverse Rhode Island waters for the purpose of landing tautog in another state, provided their nets are stowed in accordance with Section 10.10 of these regulations.

7.10.1 Bluefish - Commercial Quota -- A total allowable harvest of bluefish will be established annually, and shall be that amount allocated to the State of Rhode Island by the Regional Fishery Management Councils and/or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The quota may be harvested only by permitted gear types and licensed fishermen in accordance with all rules and regulations promulgated by the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council. To provide for the orderly harvest of the quota, the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council has established the following sub-period allocations.

7.10.2 Bluefish Commercial Quota - Sub-Periods

7.10.2-1 Spring sub-period - January 1 through June 30 annually. Quota - 50% of the annual allocation.

7.10.2-2 Summer-Fall Sub Period - July 1 through December 31 annually. Quota - 50% of the annual allocation.

When 50% of any seasonal sub-period quota is reached, Fish and Wildlife will determine if a possession limit of between 200 - 10,000 pounds should be established depending upon the time remaining in the quota period and the current catch rate. Fish and Wildlife will file a notice with the Secretary of State's office if a possession limit is established, and will publish a news release announcing the change. The possession limit may be modified by Fish and Wildlife providing such notification is made.

7.11 Scup Regulations - Minimum Size - 9" total length (TL) -- It is unlawful for any person commercially licensed under RIGL 20-2-27 or RIMFC Part II, to land or possess any scup, or parts thereof, that do not meet this size limit. [see Part 10.12 for gear roller regs] (RIMFC REGULATION) [Penalty - Part 3.3 (RIGL 20-3-3) (RIGL 20-6-29)]

7.11.1 - Scup - Commercial Quota -- A total allowable harvest of scup will be established annually, and shall be that amount allocated to the State of Rhode Island by the Regional Fishery Management Councils and/or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The quota may be harvested only by permitted gear types and licensed fishermen in accordance with all rules and regulations promulgated by the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council. To provide for the orderly harvest of the quota, the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council has established the following sub-period allocations.

7.11.2 Scup Commercial Quota - Sub-Periods

7.11.2-1 Winter Period I (January-April) – possession and landing limit is 10,000 pounds decreasing to 1,000 pounds once 75% of the period quota is landed.

Winter Period II (November-December) -- possession and landing limit is 2,000 pounds, decreasing to 500 pounds once 70% of the period quota is landed.

7.11.2-2 Summer-Fall Period (May - October) A state quota for scup will be established annually for the Summer-Fall period and shall be the most recent amount allocated to the State of Rhode Island by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce and published in the Federal Register. The total quota for will be divided as follows:

FLOATING TRAPS licensed by the state of Rhode Island – Sixty percent (60%) of the Summer-Fall period quota will be allocated to the floating trap harvesting sector. With the

exception of 50,000 pounds, which will be set aside until September 1, the quota allocated to the floating trap sector will be available during the following sub-periods:

**MAY 1 – MAY 31:** Ninety percent (90%) of the floating trap quota, not including the 50,000 pounds set aside, will be available from May 1 through May 31. The possession limit will be 25,000 pounds per fish trap licensee\* per calendar day. Once 60 percent of the sub-period allocation is projected to be harvested, the possession limit will be 10,000 pounds per fish trap licensee per calendar day.

**JUNE 1 – AUGUST 31:** Ten percent (10%) of the floating trap quota, not including the 50,000 pounds set aside, will be available from June 1 through August 31. The possession limit will be 1,000 pounds per fish trap licensee per calendar day.

\* “Fish trap licensee” – for purposes of this section, fish trap licensee shall refer to a resident person or resident corporation currently issued a license pursuant to RI General Laws §20-5-2. The maximum possession limit per fish trap licensee shall be the amount set forth above regardless of the number of authorized trap locations, the number of vessels or the number of licensed fishermen who may be working for or may enter into contract with the fish trap licensee. While engaged in the operation of a fish trap, any licensed fisherman that may be working for or may enter into contract with the fish trap licensee waives any individual right to possess scup pursuant to a possession limit set out in RIMF Regulations Part 7.11.2-2.

Dealers are required to report scup landings daily to the DFW. Annually on September 1, the unharvested portion of the floating trap fishery quota will be allocated to gear types other than floating traps, except for 50,000 pounds, which will remain available to the floating trap fishery at a possession limit of 1,000 pounds per calendar day.

Annually on October 15, the unharvested portion of the 50,000 pound remainder will be allocated to gear types other than floating traps at the current established trip limit. Once their entire allocation has been harvested, the floating trap fishery for scup will close for the season.

**GEAR TYPES OTHER THAN FLOATING FISH TRAPS –** Forty percent (40%) of the Summer-Fall period quota will be allocated to all gear types except floating fish traps. The quota allocated to the other gear type sector will be available during the following sub-periods.

**MAY - JUNE:** One-third (1/3) of the other gear type quota will be available from May 1 through June 30. The possession limit per vessel on May 1 will be 1,000 pounds per calendar day. The possession limit will be reduced at the discretion of the Division. The fishery will close once the entire period allocation is projected to be harvested.

**JULY - SEPT. 15:** One-third (1/3) of the other gear type quota will be available from July 1 through September 15. The possession limit per vessel will be 100 pounds per calendar day until the end of the sub-period or until the entire sub-period allocation is projected to be harvested, at which time the fishery will close.

**SEPT. 16 – OCTOBER 31:** One-third (1/3) of the other gear type quota will be available from September 16 through October 31. The possession limit per vessel will be 100 pounds per calendar day until the end of the sub-period or until the entire sub-period allocation is projected to be harvested, at which time the fishery will close. Annually, on October 15, or thereafter, the Division may increase the possession limit if they project the entire quota will not be harvested by the end of the sub-period.

Any unused portion of a sub-period allocation will be divided between the two remaining period(s). The DFW will have the discretion of adjusting trip limits upwards or downwards as necessary.

7.11.2-3 Possession Limit Adjustments -- Except for scup harvested from floating fish traps licensed by the State of Rhode Island, the possession limit may vary from 0 - 10,000 pounds. Fish and Wildlife, after discussions with fishing industry representatives, will determine, based upon the period of time remaining in the quota period and the current catch rate, whether the quota will be reached prior to the end of the sub-period. Having determined the catch rate and

time remaining in the sub-period, Fish and Wildlife will decide whether the possession limit should be decreased or increased. Fish and Wildlife will file a notice with the Secretary of State's Office if the rate is changed and publish a news release announcing the change. The rate may be modified by Fish and Wildlife upon providing such notification with the possession limit altered between a range of 0 - 10,000 pounds in possession.

12.1 Size/Possession Limits/Season -- Except as provided in Parts 12.3 and 12.5, no person shall possess in Rhode Island any striped bass which measures less than twenty-eight inches (28") in total length, whether caught within the jurisdiction of this State, or otherwise. Except as provided in Parts 12.3 and 12.5 no person shall possess, per calendar day, more than two (2) striped bass, whether caught within the jurisdiction of Rhode Island or otherwise. There is no closed season for striped bass. Compliance with the possession limit aboard vessels will be determined by dividing the number of fish onboard a vessel by the number of recreational fishermen onboard said vessel. (RIMFC REGULATION) [Penalty Part 12.2; (RIGL 20-4-11)]

12.3 Striped Bass Size/Possession Limits in the Commercial Striped Bass Fisheries -- Except as provided in Part 12.5, any person meeting the requirements of RIGL §§ 20-2-26, or 20-2-27, or 20-2-28.1, shall be allowed to take or possess, whether caught within the jurisdiction of this state or otherwise, striped bass which measure thirty four (34) inches or greater in total length. Except as provided for in Part 12.5 or 12.6, no person shall in any manner take and/or possess in Rhode Island more than the allowable limit established by the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council. When Fish and Wildlife has determined that the annual quota established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has been filled, the commercial sale of striped bass will terminate and the season will be closed. A notice terminating the fishery will be provided to the local press, and a notice of the closure will be submitted to the Secretary of State to be effective upon filing. [Effective 12:01 AM on June 29, 2002, the commercial striped bass fishery will be closed.]

The following seasons and possession limits are established for commercial striped bass fishermen:

January 1 – May 31	The commercial fishery will be CLOSED from January 1 through May 31, annually.
June 1 – September 30	Ninety percent (90%) of the commercial quota will be available from June 1 – September 30. The possession limit will be four (4) fish per license holder per calendar day. The fishery will close one ninety percent (90%) of the commercial quota is projected to be harvested if prior to September 30.
October 1 – December 31	Ten percent (10%) of the commercial quota will be available from October 1 through December 31. The possession limit will be three (3) fish per license holder per calendar day. The fishery will close when the entire commercial quota is projected to be harvested.

In addition, if Fish and Wildlife determines that the quota will be exceeded or will not be met before the end of the fall season, Fish and Wildlife may adjust that catch rate accordingly on or after September 15, annually. If on October 15, 10,000 pounds or more of any gear-specific allocation remains, that poundage will be committed to a general category available to the entire commercial fishery. (RIMFC REGULATIONS) [Penalty - Part 3.3; (RIGL 20-3-3)]

12.6 Gill Net Prohibition for Striped Bass -- No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gill netting, or while hauling a gill net (RIMFC REGS) [Penalty - Part 3.3; (RIGL 20-3-3)]

12.7 Striped Bass 50-yard Closure Zone for Gill Nets -- It shall be illegal to set, haul, or maintain a gill net within 50 yards of the Rhode Island coastline (mean high tide line) in the following areas and during the following seasons:

12.7.1 Areas From Monahan's Dock breakwater (State Pier #5) to the southernmost tip of Matunuck Pt. (Carpenter's Bar); in Narragansett Bay, Mt. Hope Bay, and Sakonnet River (as described in Part 13.4-1), and from the southern tip of Sachuest Point to the juncture of Second Beach and Sachuest Point, and from the southwest corner on Price's Neck to Castle Hill Light House.

12.7.2 Season Closure All gill netting is prohibited within 50 yards of the Rhode Island coastline (mean high water line) during the period October 15 - December 31 annually. (RIMFC REGULATION) [Penalty - Part 3.3; (RIGL 20-3-3)]

### **Suggested Regulatory Changes**

- Change statutory language to reflect new licensing bill
- Specify species eligible for basic license harvest
- Specify basic harvest license season
- Harvest limits and season for principal effort and multipurpose license holders would be those currently in place
- Specify eligibility requirements for license upgrade
  - Commercial license holder must demonstrate a minimum of during previous two years

Table 1a. Possession Limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2001

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2001	1-Jan	1,000	10,000	0	0	9,000
	30-Jan		1,000			
	7-Feb	500				4,500
	7-Mar		closed			closed
	15-Mar	750				
	1-Apr					1,500
	15-Apr			20 fish		
	1-May		1,000			
	10-May	100				
	14-May					150
	15-May		100			
	17-May	50				
	18-May			closed		
	26-May			closed		
	1-Jun	100			4 fish	
	11-Jun	50				
	14-Jun					closed
	25-Jun				closed	
	1-Jul		100			1,000
	12-Jul					150
	24-Jul					closed
	25-Jul	closed	closed			
	1-Aug			20 fish	3 fish	
	5-Aug				closed	
	1-Sep	100				
	15-Sep				4 fish	
	16-Sep		100	closed*		
	27-Sep				closed	
	28-Sep		closed			
	1-Oct					300
	13-Oct				4 fish	
	15-Oct				closed	
	15-Oct			20 fish		
1-Nov	350	2,000				
10-Nov					closed	
16-Nov			closed			
23-Nov		closed				
29-Nov	1,000					
15-Dec	closed					
<b>Days in Season</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Total Days Open</b>		<b>310</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Total Days Closed</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>*Indicates scheduled closure</b>						
<b>Commercial Seasons</b>						
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30 <sup>F</sup>	Apr 15 - May 31	Jun 1 - Jun 30	Jan 1-Mar 31 <sup>F</sup>	
	Jun 1-Aug 1	May 1 - Jun 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15	Oct 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Sep 1-Oct 1	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31 <sup>F</sup>	
		Nov 1 - Dec 31 <sup>F</sup>				
<sup>F</sup> Federal coastwide quota						
<b>Quotas</b>						
State	<b>1,743,117</b>	<b>377,818</b>	<b>51,348</b>	<b>107,730</b>	-----	
Federal	-----	<b>2,384,090</b>	-----	-----	<b>2,735,412</b>	

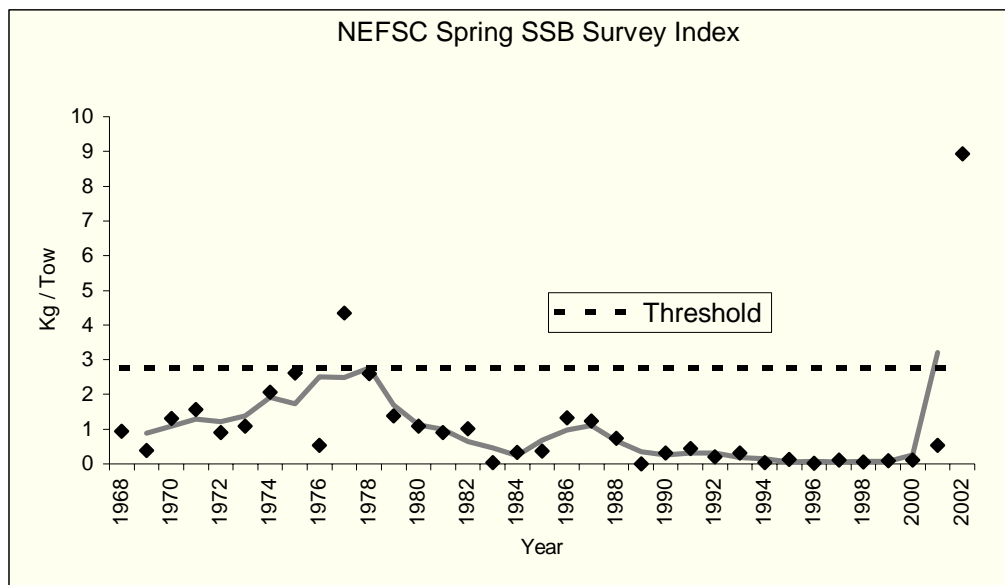
Table 1b. Possession limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2000

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2000	1-Jan	1,000	10,000			9,000
	8-Feb		1,000			
	17-Feb		closed			
	1-Apr	500				3,000
	1-May	300	1,000	20 fish		
	16-May	100	100			
	17-May		closed			
	18-May	closed				
	1-Jun	100		closed*	3 fish	
	23-Jun	50				
	1-Jul	closed	100		closed*	3,000
	1-Aug			20 fish		
	9-Aug		closed			closed
	16-Aug		100			
	28-Aug		300			
	1-Sep	300				3 fish
	10-Sep		100			
	16-Sep				closed*	
	17-Sep	50				
	24-Sep	closed				
	1-Oct		closed			2,000
	8-Oct	50				
	15-Oct	closed			20 fish	
	23-Oct	50				
	26-Oct					1,000
	1-Nov	300	500			
	3-Nov		closed			closed
	7-Nov					closed
	18-Nov	600				
	22-Nov					3 fish
27-Nov					closed	
10-Dec	200					
<b>Days in Season</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Total Days Open</b>		<b>268</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Total Days Closed</b>		<b>97</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>108</b>
* Indicates scheduled closure						
<b>Commercial Seasons</b>						
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30	May 1 - May 31	June 1 - June 30	Jan 1-Mar 31 <sup>F</sup>	
	June 1-Aug 1	May 1 - June 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15	Sep 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Sep 1-Oct 1	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31 <sup>F</sup>	
		Nov 1 - Dec 31				
<sup>F</sup> Federal coastwide quota						
<b>Quotas</b>						
State	<b>1,742,581</b>	<b>377,818</b>	<b>51,348</b>	<b>81,390</b>	-----	
Federal	-----	<b>1,213,516</b>	-----	-----	<b>2,578,949</b>	

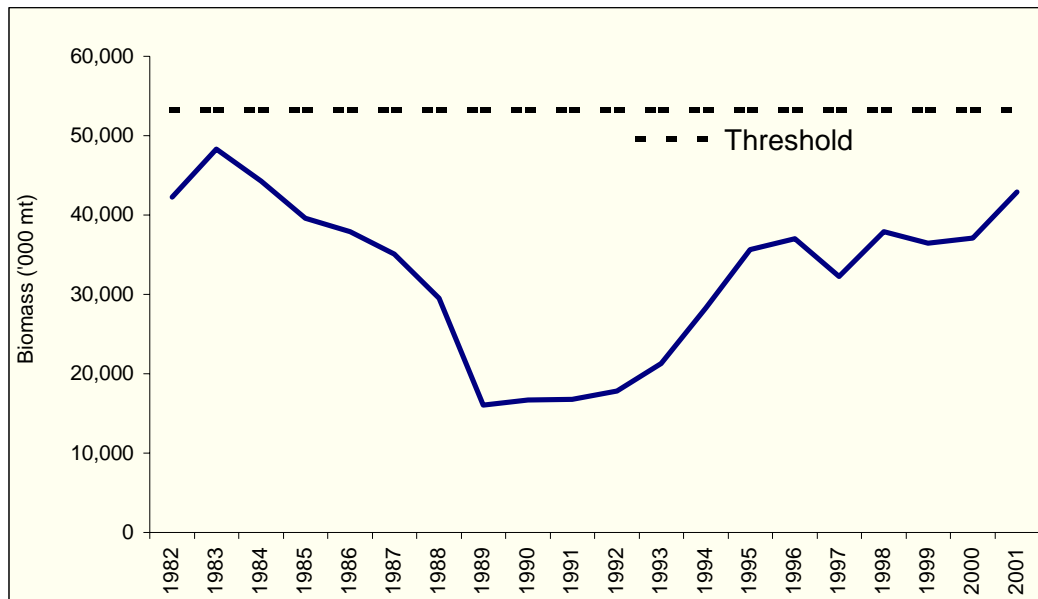
Table 1c. Possession limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 1999

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
1999	1-Jan	1,000	20,000			11,000
	26-Mar	400				
	1-Apr					7,000
	1-May		2,500			
	15-May			20fish		
	13-May	300				
	26-May	closed				
	1-Jun	100			2fish	
	11-Jun			closed		
	1-Jul				closed*	3,000
	16-Jul	50				
	5-Aug	closed				
	1-Sep	300			2fish	
	10-Sep		closed			
	16-Sep	100				
	30-Sep	closed				
	1-Oct					4,000
	5-Oct				closed	
	1-Nov	300	8,000			
	4-Dec		closed			
11-Dec	400					
20-Dec					closed	
29-Dec	1,000					
<b>Days in Season</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Total Days Open</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>Total Days Closed</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>12</b>
* Indicates scheduled closure						
<b>Commercial Seasons</b>						
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30	May 15-Dec31	June 1 - June 30	Jan 1-Mar 31 <sup>F</sup>	
	June 1-Aug 1	May 1-Oct 31		Sep 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Sep 1-Oct 1	Nov 1 - Dec 31			Jul 1-Sep 30 <sup>F</sup>	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31				Oct 1-Dec 31 <sup>F</sup>	
<sup>F</sup> Federal coastwide quota						
<b>Quotas</b>						
State	<b>1,742,581</b>	<b>239,128</b>	<b>25,582</b>	<b>95,138</b>	-----	
Federal	-----	<b>1,547,007</b>	-----	-----	<b>3,025,001</b>	

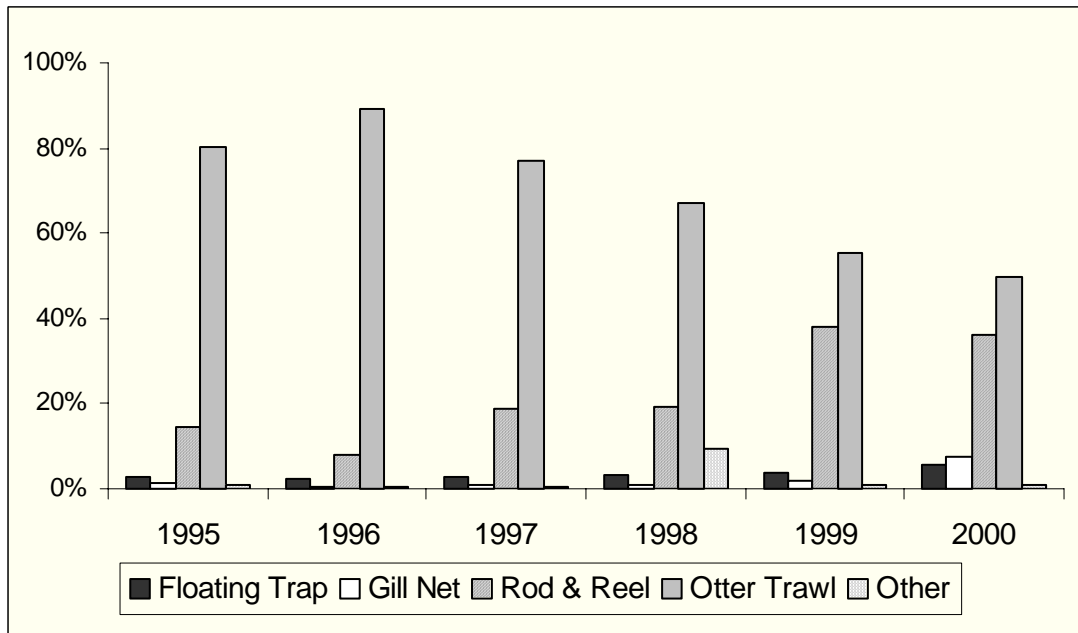
**Figure 1. NEFSC spring SSB survey index for scup**



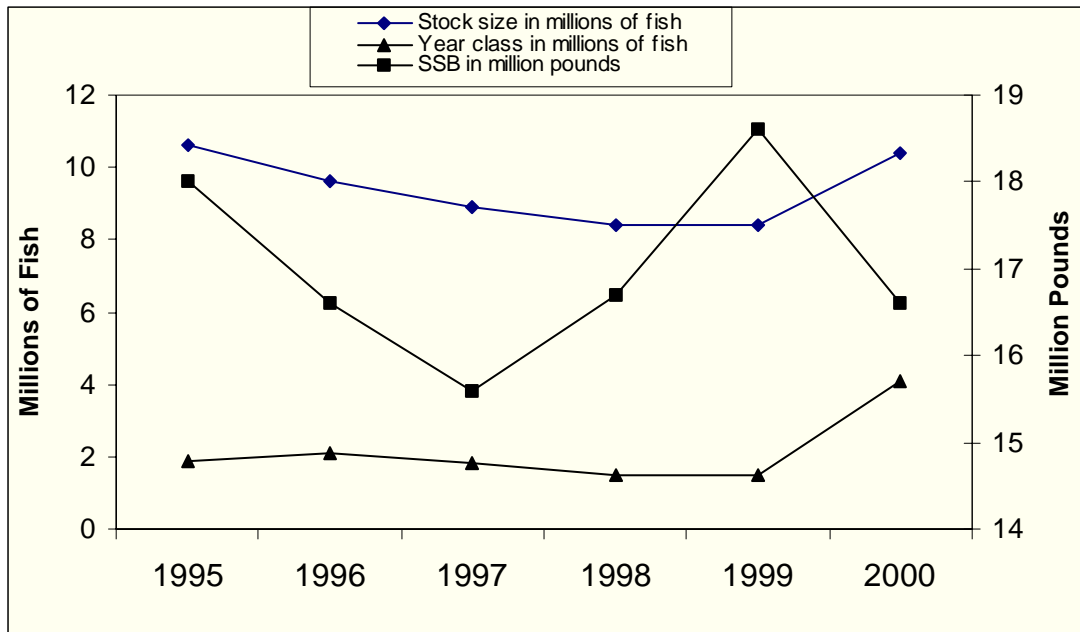
**Figure 2. Total stock biomass ('000mt) for summer flounder**



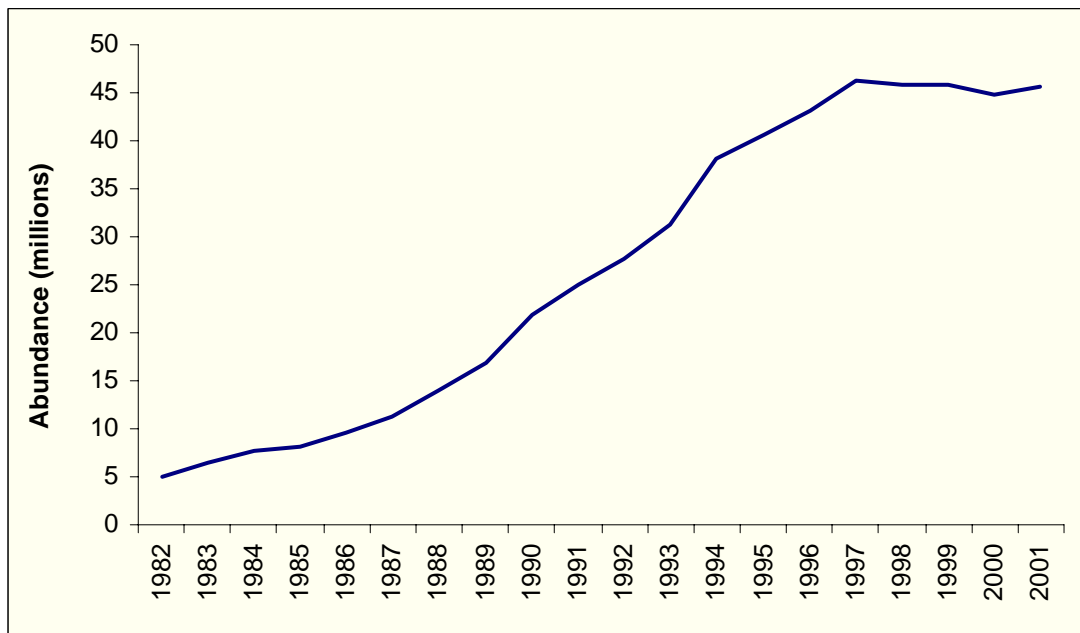
**Figure 3. Percentage of summer flounder landed commercially in Rhode Island by gear type**



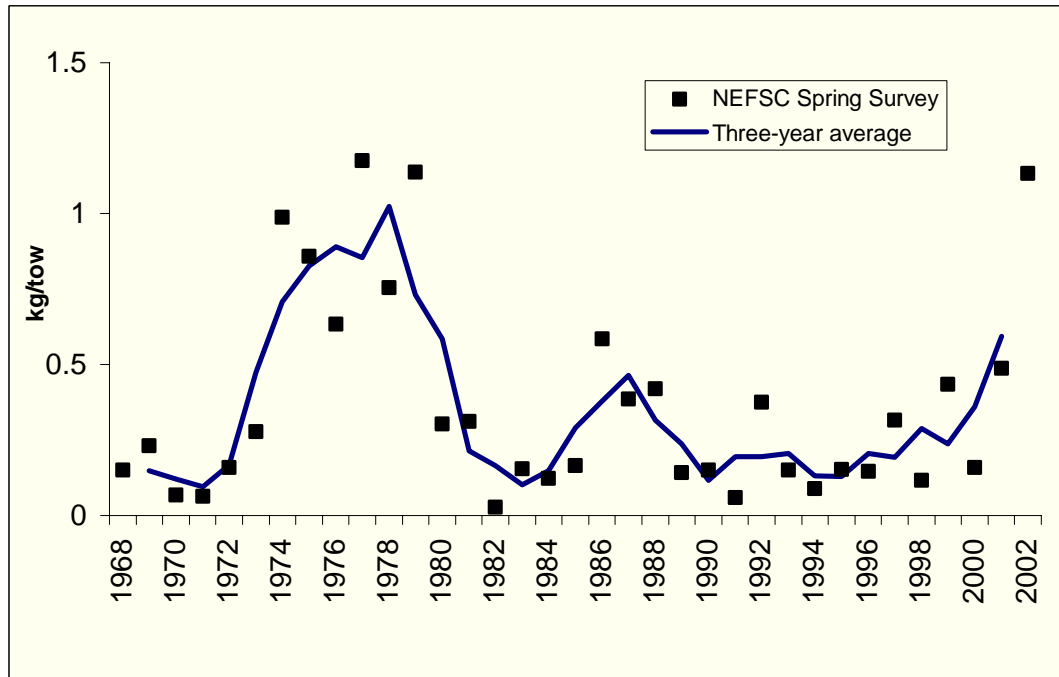
**Figure 4. Year class strength, SSB, and stock size for tautog on Atlantic Coast**



**Figure 5. Striped bass population abundance (age 1 and older)**



**Figure 6. NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey index (mean weight per tow) of black sea bass from offshore strata, Cape Cod to Cape Hatteras**



**Figure 7. Average biomass of bluefish relative to Bmsy**

