

# VMRC FISHERIES NEWS

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION PLANS & STATISTICS 1-800-937-9237

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1 SPRING 2001

## 5% Targeted Harvest Reductions Proposed for Virginia Blue Crab Fisheries in 2001



The Bi-State Blue-Crab Advisory Committee and Chesapeake Bay Commission have recommended a 15% harvest reduction by 2003. Virginia, Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission plan to achieve at least part of that 15% reduction in 2001.

As directed by the Commission following the January 2001 Virginia Resources Commission meeting, the Crab Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) along with Staff, composed a 5% harvest reduction plan for 2001. During the meeting, Staff presented a number of management alternatives (crab pot and crab dredge bushel limits, season closures for the crab pot fishery, time of day restrictions and cull ring requirements), and the associated percentage harvest reductions.

After much deliberation, the CMAC and Staff made the following recommendations:

- **A Time-of-Day Limit**— An 8-hour work day for the crab pot and peeler pot fisheries, with a start-up time no earlier than one hour before sunrise.
- **Winter Crab Dredge Fishery**— Reduce the current 20 barrel (60 bushel limit) to 17 barrels (51 bushels).
- **Recreational Fishery**— Harvest limits for licensed crabbers (up to 5 pots; one crab trap; 300 ft trot line) would be lowered from the current no limit status to a limit of one bushel of hard crabs and two dozen peeler crabs, in any one day, for personal use.

On March 20, 2001, the Commission voted to delay any regulatory decision until April. The other Bay jurisdictions will have enacted their own conservation measures by then, which will make it easier for us to make the most appropriate regulatory decisions for our area. The Commission will hold a work session to further discuss reduction-in-harvest measures. The work session will be held April 10, 2001 at 10 A.M. at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Route 1208, Gloucester Point, Virginia, in the Director's Conference Room. **NO PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED**, however, the public may attend the work session.

### POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION BLUE CRAB MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

(For current Potomac River fishery regulations, please call 1-800-266-3904 or (804)224-7148)

The Potomac River Fisheries Commission adopted the following emergency crab harvest regulations:

1. The crab pot season is shortened by 1 month (the season will be April 1-October 31, 2001), with a 5-day grace period at the end of the season for pulling pots (no bait may be on board during the grace period and no pots can be set or relocated).
2. Peeler pot season shortened: May 20 through October 31, 2001, with same 5-day grace period and caveats.
3. Shortened pot limits for the 300-, 400- and 500-pot categories by 10% (harvest reduction credit applies to both peeler and hard crab potting, as the same license applies to both fisheries)
4. For unlicensed recreational crabbers: reduced harvest limits to 4 dozen hard crabs and 2 dozen peelers per day, with a maximum of 1 bushel of hard crabs and 3 dozen peelers per boat.
5. For licensed recreational crabbers: limited individuals to 1 bushel of hard crabs and 2 dozen peelers, with a maximum boat limit of 2 bushels of hard crabs and 4 dozen peelers.

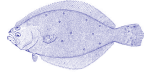
*This newsletter provides only a summary of management measures adopted by the commission and has no legal force or effect. Please refer to the regulation cited for legal documentation. To obtain a complete copy of the regulations call 757-247-2248 or access the VMRC homepage: (<http://www.state.va.us/mrc/homepage>)*

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# RECREATIONAL FISHERY REGULATION CHANGES

## SUMMER FLOUNDER



On February 27, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4 VAC 20-620-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Summer Flounder"**. The purposes of the amendments are to restrict recreational flounder fishing such that the coastwide quota for summer flounder is not exceeded and to comply with the interstate fishery management plan for flounder. The effective date of the amended regulation is March 1, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-620-50. Minimum Size Limits.

B. The minimum size of Summer Flounder harvested by recreational fishing gear, including but not limited to hook and line, rod and reel, spear and gig, shall be 15-1/2 inches, total length.

### 4VAC 20-620-60. Possession Limit.

A. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing with recreational hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear, gig or other recreational gear to possess more than 8 Summer Flounder. When fishing is from a boat or vessel where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board legally eligible to fish multiplied by 8. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit. Any Summer Flounder taken after the possession limit has been reached shall be returned to the water immediately.

### 4VAC 20-620-70. Recreational Fishing Season.

- A. The recreational fishing season shall be closed from January 1 through March 28, and From July 24 through August 1, except as described in subsection B of this section.
- B. The recreational fishing season for the Potomac River tributaries shall be closed from January 1 through June 5

## STRIPED BASS



On January 23, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-252-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Taking of Striped Bass"**. The purposes of the amendments are to comply with an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries (ASMFC) mandate. The effective date of this amended regulation is January 26, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-252-70. Potomac River Tributaries Spring Trophy-Size Striped Bass Recreational Fishery.

C. The minimum size limit for this fishery shall correspond to the minimum size limit as established by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission for the Mainstem Potomac River Spring Trophy-Size Fishery.

### 4VAC 20-252-100. Potomac River Tributaries Fall Striped Bass Recreational Fishery.

D. The maximum size limit for this fishery shall correspond to the maximum size limit as established by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission for the mainstem Potomac River Fall Striped Bass Recreational Fishery; however, the maximum size limit

## SCUP



On February 27, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-910-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Scup (Porgy)"**. The purpose of the amendment is to restrict recreational scup fishing such that the coastwide quota is not exceeded and to comply with the interstate fishery management plan for scup. The effective date of the amended regulation is March 1, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-910-30. Minimum Size Limits.

B. The minimum size of scup harvested by recreational fishing gear, including but not limited to hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear, and gig, shall be 8 inches, total length.

## NEW CRAB POT NUMBERS

Recreational crab pot numbers must consist of the last four digits of the social security number or drivers license number, preceded with "R".



Example: R-2222

## BLACK SEABASS



On March 20, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-950-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass"**. The purposes of the amendments are to restrict recreational black sea bass fishing such that the coastwide quota for black sea bass is not exceeded and to comply with the interstate fishery management plan for black sea bass. The effective date of the amended regulation is March 1, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-950-30. Minimum Size Limit.

B. The minimum size of black sea bass harvested by recreational gear, including but not limited to hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear and gig, shall be 11 inches, total length.

### 4VAC 20-950-45. Possession Limits and Harvest Quotas.

- G. It shall be unlawful for any person to possess or to land any black sea bass for recreational purposes, from March 1 through March 31 and from July 15 through August 14 of each year.
- H. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing with hook-and-line, rod-and-reel, spear, gig or other recreational gear to possess more than 25 black sea bass. When fishing is from a boat or vessel where the entire catch is held in a common hold or container, the possession limit shall be for the boat or vessel and shall be equal to the number of persons on board legally eligible to fish multiplied by 25. The captain or operator of the boat or vessel shall be responsible for any boat or vessel possession limit. Any black sea bass taken after the possession limit has been reached shall be returned to the water immediately.

# COMMERCIAL FISHERY REGULATION CHANGES

## NEW POT NUMBERS Effective January 1, 2001

Pot numbers are now required for **all** Crab Pot, Peeler Pot, Fish/Eel Pot and Channeled Whelk buoys, as described below. All commercial pot numbers must consist of the last four digits of the commercial registration number, preceded with a C, P, F or W. You are allowed to paint over the old number.

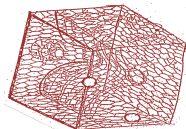
Examples:

Crab Pot - C-1234

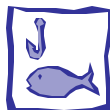
Peeler Pot - P-1234

Fish/Eel Pot - F-1234

Channeled Whelk - W-1234



## COMMERCIAL HOOK-AND-LINE FISHING



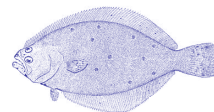
On February 27, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-995-10 et seq.**, "**Pertaining to Commercial Hook-and-Line-Fishing**". The purpose for the amendment is to apply the same restrictions required of current licensees to those persons applying for a license through the random drawing.

### **4VAC 20-995-20. Entry Limitation; Catch Restrictions; Transfers.**

- A. The Sale of Commercial hook-and-line licenses shall be limited to registered commercial fishermen meeting either of the following two requirements, except as provided by 4VAC 20-995-20 B:
1. The fisherman shall have held a 1996 commercial hook-and-line-license or a 1997 commercial hook-and-line license which was purchased prior to August 26, 1997, provided the fisherman has reported sales of at least 1000 pounds of seafood during the course of the previous two years as documented by the Commission's mandatory harvest reporting program.
  2. The fisherman shall hold a valid and current striped bass permit issued by the Marine Resources Commission.
- B. The fisherman otherwise qualified under subdivision 4VAC 20-995-20 A 1 shall have been granted an exemption from the requirement to report sales of at least 1000 pounds of seafood during the course of the previous two years as documented by the Commission's mandatory harvest reporting system.
1. Exemptions shall solely be based on documented medical hardships or active military leave which prevented the fisherman from fully satisfying the requirements described in subdivision 4VAC 20-995-20 A. 1.

2. Exemptions may only be granted by the Commissioner or his designee.
- C. The maximum number of general hook-and-line licenses is established as 200 and includes those fishermen who either satisfy the provisions of subdivision A. 1 of this section or are registered commercial fishermen who have reported sales of at least 1000 pounds of seafood during the previous two years, as documented by the Commission's mandatory harvest reporting program, chosen by random drawing, to be held annually, should the number of licensees at the start of any year be less than 200.
- D. Persons who are eligible to purchase a commercial hook-and-line license by meeting the provisions of subdivision A2 of this section may take only striped bass by commercial hook and line.
- E. Any person licensed for commercial hook and line under the provisions of subdivision A1 of this section may transfer such license to any registered commercial fisherman, provided that the transferee shall have documented, through the Commission's mandatory harvest reporting program, the sale of at least 1000 pounds of seafood during the course of the previous two years. Transfer of licenses between family members shall be exempt from this requirement. All transfers shall be documented on the form provided by the Marine Resources Commission and approved by the Marine Resources Commissioner. Upon approval, the person entering the commercial hook-and-line fishery shall purchase a commercial hook-and-line license in his own name. No commercial hook-and-line license shall be transferred more than once per calendar year.

## SUMMER FLOUNDER



On February 27, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4 VAC 20-620-10 et seq.**, "**Pertaining to Summer Flounder**". The purpose for the amendment is to provide a portion of Virginia's commercial summer flounder quota to Virginia fishermen in the Potomac River.

### **4VAC 20-620-30. Commercial Harvest Quota.**

- B. The commercial harvest of Summer Flounder from Virginia tidal waters for each calendar year shall be limited to 300,000 pounds. Out of this amount, 142,114 pounds shall be set aside for a Chesapeake Bay-wide harvest quota.

# COMMERCIAL REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED...

## HORSESHOE CRAB ENDORSEMENT LICENSE

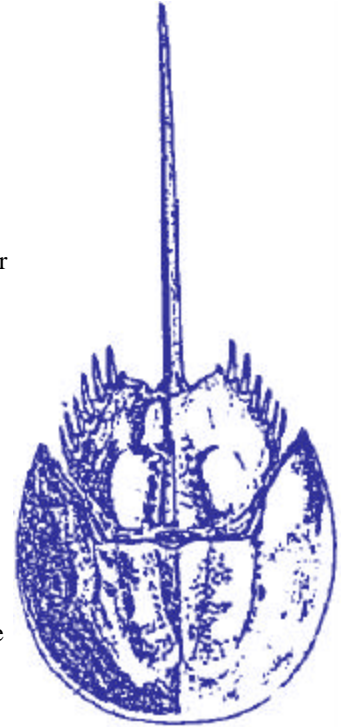
On December 19, 2000, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-900-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Horseshoe Crab"**. The purpose for the amendments is to monitor the horseshoe crab quota in a more accurate and timely manner. The effective date for the amended regulation is January 1, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-900-25. Commercial Fisheries Management Measures.

- E. During each calendar year fifteen percent of Virginia's horseshoe crab quota shall be reserved for by-catch. This portion of the annual quota shall be allocated to those individuals who do not qualify for a Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License, as established in subsection C of 4VAC 20-900-30. **It shall be unlawful for any person who does not hold a valid Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License to possess aboard any vessel or to land any number of horseshoe crabs in excess of 100.**

### 4VAC20-900-30. License Requirements and Exemption

- C. It shall be unlawful for any boat or vessel to land horseshoe crabs in Virginia, for commercial purposes, without first obtaining a Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License, as described in this section. The Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License shall be required of each boat or vessel used to land horseshoe crabs for commercial purposes. Possession of any quantity of horseshoe crabs which exceeds the limit described in subsection B of this section shall be presumed for commercial purposes. Possession of any quantity of horseshoe crabs which exceeds the limit described in subsection B of this section shall be presumed for commercial purposes. There shall be no fee for the license.
- D. To be eligible for a Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License the boat or vessel shall have landed and sold at least 500 horseshoe crabs in Virginia in at least one year during the period 1998-2000.
1. The owner shall complete an application for each boat or vessel by providing to the Marine Resources Commission a notarized and signed statement of applicant's name, address, telephone number, boat or vessel name and its registration or documentation number.
  2. The owner shall complete a notarized authorization to allow the Marine Resources Commission to obtain copies of landings data from the National Marine Fisheries Service.



### 4VAC 20-900-35. Monitoring Requirements.

- B. It shall be unlawful for a Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License holder to fail to contact the Marine Resources Operations Station, prior to the vessel issued a Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License offloading horseshoe crabs. The horseshoe Crab Endorsement License holder shall provide the Commission the name of the vessel and its captain and the anticipated or approximate offloading time and site. Following offloading, the Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License holder shall contact the VMRC Interactive-Voice-Response (IVR) System within 24 hours of landing and provide their Horseshoe Crab Endorsement License.

## HORSESHOE CRAB HARVEST QUOTA REVISED

On November 15, 2000 the Commission amended **Regulation 4VAC 20-900-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Horseshoe Crab"**, which revised a commercial harvest quota previously enacted as an emergency regulation on October 20, 2000. The effective date of the adopted regulation is November 17, 2000.

### 4 VAC 20-900-25. Commercial Fisheries Management Measures .

- C. The commercial landings quota of horseshoe crab, for each calendar year, shall be 152,495 horseshoe crabs. Additional quantities of horseshoe crab may be transferred to Virginia by other jurisdictions, in accordance with the provisions of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan, provided that the combined total of the landings quota and transfers from other jurisdictions shall not exceed 355,000 horseshoe crabs.

*This newsletter provides only a summary of management measures adopted by the Commission and has no legal force or effect. Please refer to the regulation cited for legal documentation.*

# COMMERCIAL REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED...

## BOUNDARY OF CLOSED AREA FOR FISH POTS MODIFIED

On February 27, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-270-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Crabbing"** which would move the closed area boundary downstream. The purpose of the amendment is to reduce the impact of the closed area on fish pot fishermen in the Chickahominy River and adjacent areas of the James River.

### 4VAC20-270-40. Season Limits

B. It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly place, set, or fish or leave any fish pot in any tidal waters during the March 27 through March 31 period, except as provided in subdivisions 1 and 2 of this subsection.

1. It shall be lawful for any person to place, set, or fish any fish pot in those waters located upriver of the following boundary lines:

A. In the James River the boundary shall be a line connecting Hog Point and the downstream point at the mouth of College Creek.

B. In the York River the boundary lines shall be the Route 33 bridges at West Point.

C. In the Rappahannock River the boundary line shall be the Route 360 Bridge at Tappahannock.

2. This subsection shall not apply to lawful eel pots as described in 4VAC 20-500-50

## STRIPED BASS

### Commercial Seasons, Areas, and Size Limits



On January 23, 2001, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC 20-252-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Taking of Striped Bass"**. The purposes of the amendments are to comply with an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries (ASMFC) mandate, specified by addendum V to Amendment 5 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic striped Bass, that requires states to choose between preferred management measures for implementation for the 2001-2002 period and establish uniformity in recreational management measures between the Potomac Fisheries Commission and Virginia. The effective date of this revised regulation is January 26, 2001.

### 4VAC 20-252-140. Commercial Seasons, Areas, and Size Limits

1. In the Chesapeake Bay its tributaries and the Potomac River tributaries, the open commercial season shall be from February 1 through December 23, inclusive. The minimum size limit shall be 18 inches total length during the periods of February 1 through December 31. The Maximum size limit shall be 28 inches from March 26 through June 15.

2. In the coastal area, the open commercial season shall be February 1 through December 31, inclusive, and the minimum size limit shall be 28 inches total length.

## SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT AREAS



On November 15, 2000, the Commission amended Regulation **4VAC-20-560-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Shellfish Management Areas"**. The purposes of these amendments are to more equitably disperse effort throughout the existing Shellfish Management Areas and to increase economic return during the winter months. The effective date of the amended regulation is December 1, 2000.

### 4VAC 20-560-40. Patent Tong Season

A. The lawful season for the harvest of clams by patent tong from the York river, Shellfish Management Area shall be August 15 through November 30.

B. The lawful season for the harvest of clams by patent tong from the Poquoson River Shellfish Management Area shall be March 15 through May 1.

C. The lawful season for the harvest of clams by patent tong from the Back River Shellfish Management Area shall be January 1 through March 31.

D. It shall be unlawful for any person to harvest clams by patent tong from either the York River, Poquoson River, and Back River Shellfish management Area except as provided in subsections A, B, and C of this section.

### 4VAC 20-560-50. Time of Day and Harvest Restrictions.

E. It shall be unlawful for any person to harvest clams by patent tong from the Newport News Shellfish Management Area before sunrise or after 2:00 P.M.

## HARD CLAM RELAY SEASON



On March 20, 2001, the Commission voted in agreement with the Clam Management Advisory Committee and Staff's recommendation to NOT open the Hampton Flats hard Clam Harvest Area for Clam relay on April 2, 2001, but will instead, extend the end of the relay season, from August 16, 2001 through September 28, 2001. The effective date of this amended regulation is August 16, 2001. Please refer to **Regulation 4VAC 20-561-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Hampton Flats Hard Clam Harvest Area"**.

### Regulation 4VAC 20-561-30. Harvest Season.

A. The open harvest season for the Hampton Flats Hard Clam Harvest Area, as specified by §28.2-816 of the Code of Virginia, shall be extended from Thursday, August 16, 2001 through Friday, September 28, 2001. Harvest of hard clams in the Hampton Flats Hard Clam Harvest Area shall be managed by the authority promulgated in §28.2-816 of the Code of Virginia.

B. It shall be unlawful to harvest hard clams from the Hampton Flats Hard Clam Harvest Area, except as

## COMMERCIAL REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED...

### IMPORTATION OF UNDERSIZED CHANNELED WHELK

On March 20, 2001, the Commission voted to adopt Staff's recommendation to amend **Regulation 4VAC 20-890-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Channeled Whelk"**. The purpose of the amendment is to minimize regulatory burdens which inhibit normal business operations. The following amendments will be effective March 20, 2001.

#### 4VAC 20-890-30. Minimum Size Limits.

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than 10 channeled whelk, per bushel or bag, which measure less than 5 1/2 inches in length or can be passed through a culling ring of 2 3/4 inches in diameter, except as described in subsection D of this section.
- D. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the possession of sub-legal size channeled whelk imported from other states or jurisdictions, provided the following conditions are met:



1. Such imports shall have been landed in another state or jurisdiction and shall not have been imported into Virginia by waterborne transport.
2. Such imported channeled whelk are accompanied by a bill of sale which shall include the name of the seller, address and phone number of the seller, the license number of the seller if such license is required in the jurisdiction of harvest, the date of sale and the quantity of channeled whelk purchased under the bill of sale.

### STRANDED SEA TURTLE REDUCTIONS



On March 20, 2001, the Commission voted to adopt Staff's recommendation to amend **Regulation 4VAC-751-1- et seq., "Pertaining to the Setting and Mesh Size of Gill Nets."**

The purpose of these amendments is to reduce the strandings and mortalities of endangered and threatened sea turtles. The amended regulation will be effective April 1, 2001.

#### 4VAC 20-751-20. Gill Net Mesh Sizes, Restricted Areas, and Season.

- B. During the period May 1 through June 30, it shall be unlawful for any person to have aboard any vessel or to place, set, or fish more than 8400 feet of gill net.
- C. During the period May 1 through June 30, it shall be unlawful for any person to have aboard any vessel or to place, set, or fish any gill net in the Chesapeake Bay or in Virginia's portion of the Territorial Sea, that is made, set

or fished in a tied-down manner, by connecting the net's head rope and foot rope with lines, which cause the net to form a pocket of webbing.

- D. During the period June 1 through June 30, it shall be unlawful for any person to have aboard any vessel or to place, set, or fish any gill net with a stretched mesh greater than six inches in the Virginia portion of the Territorial Sea, south of a line connecting Smith Island Light and the Three-Mile Limit Line.

### ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES (SUMMER FLOUNDER & BLACK SEABASS MEASURES)

**Summer flounder:** ASMFC had decreased the total allowable landing (TAL) limit for summer flounder from 20.5 million pounds to 17.9 million pounds. The states must now revise their commercial and recreational fishing measures for 2001. The states and federal government will be working closely with recreational and commercial fishing constituencies and environmental groups to devise a plan for long-term management of summer flounder. The plan will be reviewed by the Summer Flounder Technical Committee and approved by the end of April.

**Black Sea Bass:** The ASMFC has approved emergency action for this year's second, third and fourth quarter black sea bass fishery, establishing a new trigger limit of 40% for the last three quarters of the fishery. The states will have the choice to either implement a 150-pound daily possession limit or to develop a management program that allows a possession limit of up to 1,000 pounds. *Copies of these actions may be obtained online at: [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org).*

### MANDATORY HARVEST REPORTING



The Mandatory Harvest Report Forms will have a new look in 2001! The size of the form will be 8 1/2X11 instead of 8 1/2X14. There will also be changes in the way the form must be filled out, so please pay close attention to the sample form that will be given.

When filling out your harvest reports please use the following guidelines:

- Reports are due by the 5th of each month.
- Use black or blue ink when filling out reports.
- Include unit of measure for your harvest amount.
- Be sure to send the "VMRC copy" of the report.
- Make sure your hours are calculated correctly.
- Print name and commercial number on top of forms.
- Use abbreviation for species, water bodies and gear types provided on the inside of the folder.
- When reporting crabs you are to report peeler crabs harvested, NOT the amount of soft crabs shed.
- Be sure to include other watermen's commercial card numbers if they are working with you.

# POACHING, A THREAT TO THE WATERMAN'S HERITAGE

## ATTENTION WORKING WATERMEN!

The illegal take and trade in seafood continues, despite the efforts of law enforcement officials—special enforcement programs, poaching hotlines, appeals for information and standing rewards. Examples of illegal activities that impact your occupation and the sustainable seafood harvest are:

- Untagged/undersize rockfish
- Sale of protected, Short-nosed sturgeon
- Take and sale of undersize hard crabs
- Take and sale of dark sponge crabs
- Sales by un-licensed watermen and seafood dealers

As a working waterman you understand the cost to you—lowered market value, reduced catch, unfair competition and increased regulations. Poaching undermines fisheries management and threatens the waterman's heritage. In terms of damage to the resource, the cost is incalculable.

Recently, state and federal officers have joined forces to stem the tide of commercial poaching in Virginia. The Virginia Marine Fisheries Task Force is a three-prong campaign utilizing special agents from the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Law Enforcement Division of the Marine Resources Commission (Virginia Marine Patrol). Together, the Task Force is working to bring commercial poaching to a halt by concentrating on businesses and individuals that knowingly and willfully violate the law.

Prosecutions have resulted in stiff fines and in some cases imprisonment for habitual violators. We know that effective apprehension and sentencing serves as a deterrent to future violations and increases overall compliance. Cooperative enforcement is an essential resource management tool that also helps level the field among competitors and provide relief to honest watermen who work hard for every dollar.

Poaching is a crime that affects everyone. There are watermen out there who could identify the people who violate the laws, but they hesitate to get involved. They hope someone else will do it. Only there is no one else.

As the spring fishing season starts, I ask you to consider this message. I call upon all public-spirited watermen to join forces with us to help shape the future. With your support, I'm confident that we can make a difference.

Please feel free to phone any of the agencies involved with the Task Force; all calls and information will be kept in the strictest confidence: Virginia Marine Resources Commission- (757) 247-2278 or (757) 594-8800  
National Marine Fisheries Service- (757) 595-2692

Colonel Steven G. Bowman  
Chief, Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Law Enforcement Division

## COAST GUARD ISSUES VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF ZEBRA MUSSELS AND OTHER AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

(The guidelines can be accessed online at: <http://152.119.239.10/docimages/p56/119638.pdf>)

In addition to these generic guidelines, States and provinces may include specific laws and guidelines for their areas.

- Always inspect equipment (in the broadest sense, e.g., boats, planes, trailers, decoy anchors, SCUBA gear, and lures) for visible plants and animals before transporting.
- Always remove visible plants and animals from equipment (expel plants, animals, and water from internal parts).
- Always drain water from equipment before transporting.
- Always clean equipment that has been in infested waters before placing it in other waters.
- Always report questionable species to your resource agency for identification. Information is available from many sources about identification of ANS: however, specimens are needed to confirm sightings. Many jurisdictions have different rules regarding possession and transport. Always ask your local natural resources management agency for instructions.
- Avoid transporting plants, animals, mud, or water to or from lakes, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters.
- Avoid releasing animals or plants (e.g., aquarium species, bait, or water garden plants) into the wild unless you release them into the same waterbody or location where the species came from.

## VMRC CALENDAR

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<b>VMRC</b> — April 24, 2001 9:30 A.M. Commission Main Office	<b>VMRC</b> —May 22, 2001, 9:30 A.M. Commission Main Office	<b>VMRC</b> - June 26, 2001, 9:30 A.M. Commission Main Office
<b>FMAC</b> -April 30, 2001 7 P.M.		

The meeting dates and times are tentative and subject to change. Please call to verify the date and time of the meet-

- VMRC**— Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Meetings set on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 9:30 A.M. (fisheries items are generally considered after 12 noon). Held at the Commission's main office in Newport News.  
**NOTE: Please call the Agency to confirm the date and time on scheduled meetings.**
- FMAC**— Finfish Management Advisory Committee. Meetings generally the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 P.M. Held at the Commission's main office in Newport News.
- ASMFC**—Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Call (202) 452-9110 to find out the meeting location.
- LRC**— Living Resources Committee. Meetings held at the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office, Annapolis, MD.
- MFAMC** -Mid- Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Call (302) 674-2331 to find out the meeting location.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
 MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION  
 2600 WASHINGTON AVE. 3RD FLOOR  
 NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607



## PUBLIC HEARINGS



The following public hearings will be held at 12 noon on Tuesday, April 24, 2001 at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Ave, Newport News, Virginia.

- Commercial Harvest and Landing Quota For Scup**

The Atlantic States marine Fisheries commission's plan is based on a state-by-state quota system. Each state's share is a percentage of their commercial landings for the reference period of May through October, 1983-1992. All states included in the Fishery management Plan for Scup will be required to implement the provisions of this emergency action by May 1, 2001. A public hearing will determine Virginia's summer period quota for the scup commercial fishery.

- Annual Bluefish Quota for Virginia**

In order to comply with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council/Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Bluefish Fishery Management Plan the Commission would need to amend Regulation 4VAC 20-450-10 et seq., "Pertaining To The Taking Of Bluefish" in Subsection A of 4VAC- 20-450-30 and adopt a commercial bluefish landings quota of 1,138,412 pounds. A public hearing will determine Virginia's annual bluefish quota.

### **IMPORTANT REMINDER!**

### **CRAB DREDGE PERMIT ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for your 01/02 crab dredge permit all harvest reports must be turned in by April 5, 2001.