

VMRC FISHERIES NEWS

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION PLANS & STATISTICS 1-800-937-9247

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 1 WINTER 2003

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 home-page: (<http://www.mrc.state.va.us>)



AMERICAN SHAD REDUCTION PLAN



A five year phase-out plan for the American shad coastal fishery established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), has been in place since 2000. The commercial fishery for American Shad in the coastal areas along the east coast will be permanently closed after December 31, 2004. On December 17, 2003, the Commission adopted amendments to the American Shad regulation. The effective date of this regulation as amended, is January 1, 2003.

AREA FISHERY PERMITS AND GEAR RESTRICTIONS

A. It shall be unlawful for any person to possess, harvest, land or sell more than 10 American shad, without first qualifying for and obtaining a Coastal area commercial American shad fishery permit from the Commission. (Permits have already been issued to those who qualify)

F. It shall be unlawful for any person to take, possess or land any American shad from the Coastal area, using any gill net with mesh less than 5 inches or greater than 6 inches, stretched measure.

COMMERCIAL HARVEST QUOTAS

A. The 2003 and 2004 Coastal area commercial American shad fishery quota is 168,039 pounds, each year.

B. In either 2003 or 2004, when it has been announced that the Coastal area commercial American shad fishery quota has been projected as reached and the fishery has been closed, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess aboard any vessel or land in Virginia any American shad.

C. It shall be unlawful for any person to possess aboard any vessel or land in Virginia any American shad harvested from the Coastal area, after December 31, 2004.

MORATORIUM

A. On or after January 1, 1994, it shall be unlawful for any person to catch and retain possession of American Shad from the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries.

B. On and after January 1, 1994, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess any American Shad taken from the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries.

On January 28, 2003, the Commission directed Staff to develop a plan, for submittal to ASMFC. The plan for establishing an American shad by-catch allowance in the Chesapeake system, would allow commercial registered fishermen to retain by-catch of American shad in an amount not to exceed 10%, by weight of the individual's daily harvest within the Chesapeake system. The Commission also decided to endorse the procurement of services from watermen to support the 10th year of American shad restoration (hatchery and stocking of fingerlings) in the James and Pamunkey Rivers.

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STRIPED BASS REGULATION CHANGES



The Finfish Management Advisory Committee has been working on the striped bass coastal quota issue since June 2002. On December 17, 2002, the Commission approved the amendments to the regulation pertaining to the taking of striped bass. The amendments established a 129,397 pound commercial harvest quota strictly for coastal areas, starting in 2003. By January 2003 the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission allowed the Virginia coastal commercial quota to be increased by 55,456 pounds, and the final 2003 quota for this area is 184,853 pounds. The Commission adopted this change to the quota by emergency regulation on January 28, 2003. This 184,853 pound quota is a new and separate quota and not part of the commercial harvest quota of 1,701,748 pounds for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and the Potomac River tributaries of Virginia. On February 25, 2003, the Commission voted to make the emergency striped bass regulation permanent. The effective date of this regulation as amended is February 28, 2003. (The following is only a summary of the amendments, to obtain a complete copy of the regulation call 757-247-2248 or access the VMRC homepage (www.mrc.state.va.us/))

ENTRY LIMITS, PERMITS, AND REPORTS

1. Permits for the Coastal area striped bass commercial fishery shall be limited to any registered commercial fishermen who landed a total of at least 1,000 pounds of striped bass from the Coastal area in one year or more, from 1993 through 1997, and harvested striped bass from the Coastal area in either 2001 or 2002, as documented by the Commission's mandatory reporting database, and chooses to surrender 236 tags of his Chesapeake Bay area striped bass harvest quota. Should the Coastal Area harvest quota, described in 4 VAC 20-150 B, be insufficient to provide permits for all those who qualify according to the requirements in this subdivision, permits shall be granted first on the basis of total number years a fisherman landed striped bass from 1993 through 1997 and secondarily on the total number of pounds landed by a fisherman from 1993-97.

2. If shares of Coastal area quota remain, following the initial permitting process in 2003, as described in subdivision 1 of this subsection, subsequent permits issued for the 2003 Coastal area commercial striped bass fishery shall first be limited, sequentially, to those fishermen who landed the most striped bass, beyond a minimum total landings amount of 1,000 pounds, from the Coastal area during the most number of years, from 1993-97, and landed striped bass from the Coastal area in either 2001 or 2002, as documented by the Commission's mandatory reporting database, and chooses to surrender 236 tags of his Chesapeake Bay area striped bass harvest quota. Secondarily, permits issued for the 2003 Coastal area commercial striped bass fishery shall be limited, sequentially, to those fishermen who landed the most striped bass, beyond a minimum total landings amount of 1,000 pounds, from the Coastal area during the most number of years, from 1993-97, as documented by the Commission's mandatory reporting database, and chooses to surrender 236 tags of his Chesapeake Bay area striped bass harvest quota.

COMMERCIAL HARVEST QUOTA

A. The commercial harvest quota for the Chesapeake Bay area shall be determined annually by the Marine Resources Commission. The total allowable level of all commercial harvest of striped bass from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and the Potomac River tributaries of Virginia, for all open seasons and for all legal gear, shall be 1,701,748 pounds of whole fish. At such time as the total commercial harvest of striped bass from the Chesapeake Bay area is projected to reach 1,701,748 pounds, and announced as such, it shall be unlawful for any person to land or

Chesapeake Bay area.

B. The Commercial harvest quota for the Coastal area of Virginia shall be determined annually by the Marine Resources Commission. The total allowable level of all commercial harvest of striped bass from the Coastal area, for all open seasons and for all legal gear, shall be 184,853 pounds of whole fish. At such time as the total commercial harvest of striped bass from the Coastal area is projected to reach 184,853 pounds, and announced as such, it shall be unlawful for any person to land or possess striped bass caught for commercial purposes from the Coastal area.

INDIVIDUAL TRANSFERRABLE SHARES; TAGGING

A. For each person permitted under the provisions of 4 VAC 20-252-130 to harvest striped bass commercially, tags shall be distributed to permitted fishermen in amounts equal to the share of the Chesapeake Bay area and Coastal area striped bass harvest quota they hold. Tags issued for Chesapeake Bay area harvest quota shall only be used for striped bass harvests in the Chesapeake Bay area, and tags issued for the Coastal area harvest quota shall only be used for striped bass harvests in the Coastal area.

B. No licensed registered commercial fisherman shall hold shares totaling more than two percent of the total annual Chesapeake Bay area commercial striped bass harvest quota of tags or more than 11 percent of the total annual Coastal area commercial striped bass harvest quota of tags.

C. Transfers of Chesapeake Bay area or Coastal area striped bass commercial quota shares from one person to another may be permanent or temporary. Transferred tags from the Chesapeake Bay area striped bass commercial quota shall only be used by the transferee for striped bass harvested from the Chesapeake Bay area, and transferred tags from the Coastal area striped bass commercial quota shall only be used by the transferee for striped bass harvested from the Coastal area. Permanent transfers of commercial quota shares shall grant to the transferee that transferred share of the quota of tags for future years, and the transferor loses that same transferred share of the quota of tags in future years. Temporary transfers of striped bass commercial harvest quota shares shall allow the transferee to harvest that transferred share of the quota of tags during the year in which the transfer is approved. Thereafter, any share of the transferred striped bass commercial quota of

REGULATION CHANGES CONTINUED...

(The following are only summaries of the amended regulations, to obtain a complete copy of the regulation call 757-247-2248 or access the VMRC homepage(www.mrc.state.va.us)

BLACK SEA BASS



On December 17, 2002, the Commission adopted amendments to the regulation pertaining to black sea bass. The effective date of this regulation is January 1, 2003.

DIRECTED FISHERY AND BY-CATCH FISHERY PERMITS

A. It shall be unlawful for any person to participate in the commercial black sea bass fishery, or to possess, harvest, or sell black sea bass, without first qualifying for and obtaining either a directed fishery permit or a by-catch fishery permit from the Commission, as described, respectively, in subsections B and C of this section.

COMMERCIAL HARVEST QUOTAS

A. The 2003 directed commercial fishery black sea bass quota is 619,703 pounds. When it has been announced that the directed fishery quota has been projected as reached and the directed fishery has been closed, it shall be unlawful for any directed commercial black sea bass fishery permittee to possess aboard any vessel or land in Virginia any black sea bass.

B. The 2003 by-catch commercial fishery black sea bass quota is 46,697. When it has been announced that the by-catch fishery quota has been projected as reached and the by-catch fishery has been closed, it shall be unlawful for any by-catch commercial black sea bass fishery permittee to possess aboard any vessel or land in Virginia any black sea bass. In the event the by-catch fishery quota is exceeded, the amount the quota is exceeded, shall be deducted from the following year's by-catch fishing quota.

INDIVIDUAL FISHERY QUOTAS; BY-CATCH LIMIT; AT SEA HARVESTERS

A. Each person possessing a directed fishery permit shall be assigned an individual fishery quota, in pounds, for each calendar year. A person's individual fishery quota shall be equal to that person's percentage of the total landings of black sea bass in Virginia, from July 1, 1997 through December 31, 2001, multiplied by the directed commercial fishery black sea bass quota for the calendar year. Any directed fishery permittee shall be limited to landings in the amount of his individual fishery quota, in pounds, in any calendar year and it shall be unlawful for any permittee to exceed his individual fishery quota. In addition to the penalties prescribed by law, any overages of an individual's fishery quota shall be deducted from that permittee's individual fishery quota for the following year.

C. Each by-catch fishery permittee shall be limited to 100 pounds of black sea bass per vessel per trip. It shall be unlawful for any person permitted for the by-catch fishery to possess aboard a vessel or to land in Virginia more than 100 pounds of

Further amendments, concerning recreational sea bass fishing, were adopted by the Commission on February 25, 2003 and include:

RECREATIONAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT

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 12 inches, total length.

RECREATIONAL FISHING SEASON

Recreational black sea bass fishing season will be closed from September 2-15 and from December 1-31.

RED DRUM COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL POSSESSION LIMITS



On December 17, 2002, the Commission adopted amendments to the regulation pertaining to speckled trout and red drum. The effective date of this regulation as amended is January 1, 2003.

SIZE LIMIT

It shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch or possess any red drum less than 18 inches in length or greater than 26 inches in length.

POSSESSION LIMIT

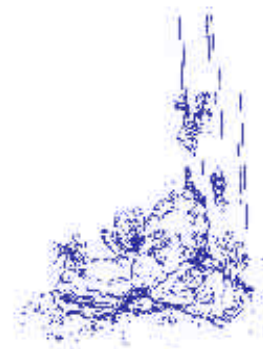
It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than three red drum.

OYSTER HARVESTING

On December 17, 2002, the Commission adopted amendments to the regulation pertaining to restrictions on oyster harvest. The effective date of this regulation, as amended, is December 27, 2002.

GEAR RESTRICTIONS

Harvesting with a standard oyster dredge shall be allowed in that area in the Deep Rock Dredge Area and in the PTSMA in Tangier Sound, from Tangier Light north to the Maryland-Virginia line and in Pocomoke Sound, northeast from a line from Beach Island Light to the house on the Great Fox Island, except for the designated hand tong areas. Only a standard oyster dredge (maximum weight 150 pounds with attachment, maximum width of 50", maximum tooth length 4 inches, minimum teeth spacing 3 inches) may be used.



MANDATORY HARVEST REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REPORTING BLACK SEA BASS



POSSESSION LIMITS AND HARVEST QUOTAS

ALL fishermen must report ALL landings of black sea bass to law enforcement (Operations Division) within 1 hour after landing. The report must include an estimated weight of black sea bass and location where the black sea bass was offloaded/landed. The fishermen must then report the final weight of black sea bass and location where they were offloaded/landed, to the Plans & Statistics (1-800-937-9247) within 24 hours after landing.

REPORTING FOR PURSE SEINE OR BAIT SEINE VESSELS

The owner of any purse seine vessel or bait seine vessel (snapper rig) licensed under provisions of §28.2 - 402 of the Code of Virginia shall submit the Captain's Daily Fishing Reports (CDFRs) to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in accordance with provisions of Amendment I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for Atlantic Menhaden, which was effective July 2001. (The CDFRs are forms provided by the NMFS and must be submitted in a manner consistent with the requirements of the NMFS.)

REPORTING AMERICAN SHAD



A. It shall be unlawful for any person permitted for the Coastal area commercial American shad fishery to fail to contact within one hour of landing, the Marine Resources Commission's Law Enforcement Operations Division to report his name and the name of the vessel, his permit number, the location where catch will be offloaded, and the estimated weight of the landing of American shad.

B. It shall be unlawful for any person permitted for the Coastal area commercial American shad fishery to fail to contact within 24 hours of landing, the Marine Resources Commission's Interactive Voice Recording System to report his name and the name of the vessel, his permit number and the weight of American shad landed.

C. Any buyer of American shad from the Coastal area commercial American shad fishery shall maintain records of all purchases for the current year and prior year, and to make those records available to VMRC upon request.

WHO MUST REPORT?

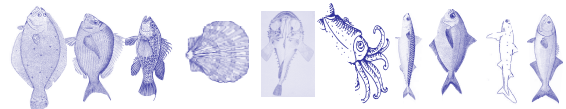
All registered commercial fishermen and all holders of a Seafood Landing License must report their daily harvest from Virginia tidal and federal waters.

MANDATORY REPORTING EXEMPTIONS

The reporting of the harvest of federally permitted species from beyond Virginia's tidal waters that are sold to a federally permitted dealer shall be exempt from the procedures described in this section.

FEDERALLY PERMITTED SPECIES

- Summer Flounder
- Scup
- Black Sea Bass
- Atlantic Sea Scallop
- Monkfish
- Squid
- Atlantic Mackerel
- Butterfish
- Spiny Dogfish
- Atlantic Bluefish



2003 FEDERALLY PERMITTED SEAFOOD DEALERS

CHINCOTEAGUE

- Russell Fish Co
- R Stubbs Seafood Co

CHERITON

- Bernie's Conchs

HAMPTON

- L.D. Amory & Co. Inc
- Wanchese Fish Co.
- Hampton Roads Seafood LTD
- S & S Marine Supply Inc.
- Delores of Wanchese
- Selby Enterprises LLC

MAPPSVILLE

- Eastern Shore Seafood Prod
- Ess Pride L L C

NASSAWADOX

- Sand Dollar Seafood

NEWPORT NEWS

- Demaria Seafood

- Old Point packing Inc
- Peabody Corp
- B & C Seafood Inc

NORFOLK

- JH Miles & Company Inc
- George's Seafood Inc.

- Craig G Neff

PARKSLEY

- Seaside Enterprises

POQUOSON

- Harry Doernte

SEAFORD

- Seaford Scallop Co Inc.
- VJ O'Neal & Company Inc.

VIRGINIA BEACH

- PYA/Monarch Inc.

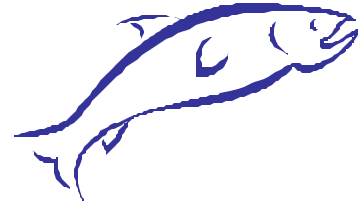
WACHAPREAGUE

- R & S Seafood

HARVEST REPORTING GUIDELINES

INFORMATION REQUIRED ON ALL HARVEST REPORTS

- **NAME AND COMMERCIAL NUMBER** (Including the number of helpers and their commercial numbers)
- **VESSEL NAME** (Not the vessel make or model)
- **VESSEL NUMBER** (Very important to ALWAYS include this)
- **CITY/COUNTY** (Where harvest is offloaded from the boat, NOT truck)
- **BUYER** (If no buyer, then indicate if it is for retail or home use)
- **DATE** (Must include month and day for each trip)
- **WATER BODY** (See report folder for appropriate abbreviations)
- **HARVEST AMOUNT** (Must indicate unit of measure: BU, LBS, NU ... ETC)
- **HOURS GEAR WORKED** (Amount of hours gear spent in the water before pulling the harvest)
- **MAN HOURS WORKED** (The total amount of time it takes to leave the dock, work the gear and return to the dock)
- **GEAR TYPE AND GEAR AMOUNT** (Please do not combine multiple gear type on same trip report)
- **IF PRCD** (Processed weight. If the weight given is for processed weight, please check the appropriate box)
- **SPECIES ABBREVIATIONS:** Please use appropriate abbreviation for species as given on the folders of the reports.
Example: Please don't just write "shad" on the report, indicate whether it is supposed to be gizzard, American, or hickory. If you have a mackerel, please indicate whether it is a Spanish, king, or Boston. Please be specific!
- **PEELER CRABS** (Only report peeler crabs harvested, NOT the amount of crabs shed)



CALCULATING HOURS WORKED VS. HOURS GEAR FISHED

- **HOURS WORKED** = [trip time] the total amount of time it takes to leave the dock, work the gear and return to the dock
EXAMPLE: If it takes 2 hours to ride in the boat from the dock to the fishing site, 4 hours to pull the harvest from the gear, and another 2 hours to return to the dock, then the total HOURS WORKED= 8 hours.
- **HOURS GEAR FISHED**=Amount of hours gear spent in the water before pulling the harvest.
EXAMPLE: If nets or pots are set on Monday and harvested on Tuesday (gear left in the water for 1 day) then HOURS GEAR FISHED = 24 hours. If the harvest is not pulled until Wednesday (gear left in the water for 2 days) then HOURS GEAR FISHED = 48





IMPORTANT REMINDERS!!



- **CRAB DREDGERS**- This crab dredge season runs from December 1, 2002- March 31, 2003. All crab dredge reports are due by April 5, 2003!! You must dredge for crabs at least one day during this season in order to qualify for your permit renewal for next season.
- **CHARTER BOATS**- All charter boats fishing for striped bass are required to obtain a special Striped Bass Permit. All striped bass caught must be reported to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission at the end of the season.
- **RECREATIONAL FISHING WITH COMMERCIAL GEAR**- All licensed recreational fishermen who purchase commercial gear used recreationally are required to report their harvests on special forms provided by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Reports are due by January 5, the following year.
- **COMMERCIAL LICENSE RENEWAL**- Applicants holding a valid Commercial Fisherman Registration License may register during the period December 1 through February 28 of each year.
- **STRIPED BASS TAG TRANSFERS**- Because transferring striped bass tags has become very complex and time consuming, you are now required to call and make an appointment at least one day in advance before coming to the office to transfer striped bass tags. Thank you for your cooperation and patience!



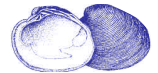
OCEAN GILLNETTERS

In March 2002, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) established new restrictions on the use of large-mesh gillnets with a mesh size larger than 8 inch (20.3 cm) stretched mesh, in Federal waters (3-200 nautical miles) off of North Carolina and Virginia. The purpose of this action is to reduce the impact of the monkfish and other large-mesh gillnet fisheries on endangered and threatened species of sea turtles in areas where sea turtles are known to concentrate. Following review of public comments submitted on the Interim Final Rule, NOAA Fisheries published a Final Rule on December 3, 2002, that establishes the restrictions on an annual basis.

- north of 33° 51.0' N (North Carolina/South Carolina border at the coast) and south of 35° 46.0' N (Oregon Inlet) at all times;
- north of 35° 46.0' N (Oregon Inlet) and south of 36° 22.5' N Currituck Beach Light, NC) from March 16 through January 14;
- north of 36° 22.5' N (Currituck Beach Light, NC) and south of 37° 34.6' N (Wachapreague Inlet, VA) from April 1 through January 14; and,
- north of 37° 34.6' N (Wachapreague Inlet, VA) and south of 37° 56.0' N (Chincoteague, VA) from April 16 through January 14 (map on reverse).

Waters north of 37° 56.0' N (Chincoteague, VA) are not affected by these new restrictions. If you have any questions on this letter, please contact the Northeast Region Division of Protected Resources at 978-281-9328 or the Southeast Region Division of Protected Resources at 727-570-5312.

IMPORTATION OF HARD CLAM SEED



On November 26, 2002, the Commission adopted amendments to the regulation pertaining to the importation of fish, shellfish, or crustacea. The effective date of this regulation, as amended, is November 27, 2002.

1. Any hard clam of the species *Mercenaria mercenaria* from the waters of any coastal area or state within the continental United States and which is absent of any known shellfish pathogen, as specified in subsection B of this section, except that any importation of hatchery produced seed of the genus *Mercenaria* from Pacific coastal states within the continental United States shall be prohibited, and any importation of hatchery produced seed of the genus *Mercenaria* from South Carolina or Florida shall meet all requirements established by 4 VAC 20-754-30 A 1., a through d. Importation requirements established by 4 VAC 20-754-30 A 1., a through d, shall be in addition to those importation requirements established by 4 VAC 20-754-30 B.

a. The South Carolina or Florida hatchery or facility shall certify that only northern broodstock clams of the genus *Mercenaria*, absent of shellfish pathogens, were used to produce hard clam seed that is to be exported to Virginia. The certification shall be accompanied by evidence that the facility took possession of the northern broodstock hard clams within the previous 12 months.

b. The South Carolina or Florida hatchery or facility shall certify that any clam seed scheduled for importation into Virginia was produced from broodstock that satisfies the requirements specified by 4 VAC 20-754-30 A 1. a.

c. The South Carolina or Florida hatchery or facility shall certify that only hard clams of northern broodstock were held in the facility used for spawning purposes throughout the time period, within a calendar year, corresponding to all shipments of hard clam seed to Virginia, and all shipments of clam seed shall be accompanied by a tag indicating the name of the hatchery or facility and the quantity, on a per bag or container basis.

d. Any certification requirements described in 4 VAC 20-754-30 A 1. a. and b. shall accompany the certified statement from an approved shellfish pathologist as to the complete absence of known shellfish pathogens in a random sample of hard clam seed of the genus *Mercenaria* scheduled for importation into Virginia, as described in 4 VAC 20-754-30 B. All certified statements required for importation of hard clam seed of genus *Mercenaria*, as specified by 4 VAC 20-754-30 A 1. a and b and VAC 20-754-30 B shall be provided to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Fisheries Management Division at least 10 days prior to the shipment of any hard clam seed of genus *Mercenaria*.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2003

For More Information Contact

Trina H. Lee (804) 786-4265

Jimeequa H. Williams (804) 225-3881

FLOODING PROMPTS RIVER CLOSURE TO SHELLFISH HARVESTING

(Richmond, Va.)— State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H., today announced the closure of portions of the James and Rappahannock Rivers to shellfish harvesting. In some instances, pollution from storm flooding can produce high levels of fecal coliform and viruses in the rivers. The Virginia Department of Health will collect test samples to determine if any contaminants are present.

The impacted areas for the James River extend from Hog Island in Surry County downstream to the Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel. The Rappahannock River will be closed from the Tappahannock Bridge to approximately 20 miles downstream to Stove Point and Monaskon.

“The closure is a precautionary measure which will prohibit the harvest of shellfish. To protect the public health from possible pathogenic bacteria and viruses present in these floodwaters, the tributaries will remain closed for harvesting until test results indicate it is safe to reopen them,” Dr. Stroube said. “High concentrations of bacterial and viral pollutants can be harmful to humans if ingested, and we aim to prevent this occurrence if at all possible.”

Heavy snows and rains have produced generalized flooding causing extensive runoff which may have allowed these pollutants to be washed into the James and Rappahannock Rivers. Though the exact duration of the closure depends upon the weather and the possibility of future heavy precipitation, it may take from one to three weeks for the rivers to clear up. Virginia Department of Health policy requires two consecutive acceptable samples to reopen an area closed due a single pulse-type pollution occurrence.

The Virginia Department of Health last closed the James and Rappahannock Rivers in 1998 due to heavy rains. Following severe flooding, river closure represents a typical public health approach to the situation.

FEBRUARY 25, 2003 COMMISSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
SUMMER FLOUNDER-RECREATIONAL
Regulation 4VAC 20-620-10 et. Seq., "Pertaining to Summer Flounder".

- 1) 17-1/2 inch statewide minimum size and an eight fish limit.
- 2) 8 fish possession limit.
- 3) Closed Season- January 1 - March 28, 2003.

SCUP-COMMERCIAL
Regulation 4 VAC 20-910-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Scup (Porgy)" During the period January 1 through April 30 of each year, it shall be unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

1. Possess aboard any vessel in Virginia waters more than 15,000 pounds of scup.
2. Land in Virginia, more than a total of 15,000 pounds of scup during each consecutive seven-day period, with the first seven-day period beginning on February 1.

SUMINOE OYSTERS

The Commission has permitted the Virginia Seafood Council to deploy about one million triploid Suminoe Oysters at 10 locations in Virginia waters for aquaculture and subsequent marketing trials, as part of a continued, controlled experiment.

OYSTER REPLENISHMENT

The Commission approved the 2003 Oyster Replenishment Plan and procurement procedures.

WEAKFISH-COMMERCIAL
Regulation 4VAC 20-380-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Grey Trout "

- 1) During any closed season that applies to gill net, haul seine, pound net or trawl, the possession limit for grey trout taken as by-catch in other directed fisheries shall be the lesser of 900 pounds or an amount equal to the number of registered commercial fishermen or seafood landing licensees on board multiplied by 300 pounds. Only one license per person, either the commercial fisherman's registration license or seafood landing license, shall be used to calculate the boat or vessel possession limit. Further, during any closed season described in subsection A, B, C and D of this section, it shall be unlawful for any person to do any of the following:
 - A. Possesses greytrout less than 12 inches in total length.
 - B. Possess aboard any vessel or land any quantity of grey trout which is more than the total weight of species other than grey trout on board the vessel.
 - C. Possess aboard any vessel or land any grey trout taken by commercial hook and line.
- 2) Fishermen are allowed up to 300 undersized weakfish taken in finfish trawl fisheries to be landed. None of the undersized fish can be sold, according to the Interstate management plan for this species.
- 3) The new closed gill net seasons are May 14th through October 20th and December 31st through March 15th.



VMRC CALENDAR

MARCH	APRIL	MAY
VMRC— 3/25/03 9:30AM	VMRC—4/22/03 9:30AM	VMRC— 5/27/02 9:30 AM

The meeting dates and times are tentative and subject to change. Please call to verify the date and time of the meeting you would like to attend.

- 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.
- CMAC**— Clam Management Advisory Committee. Meetings to be announced. Meetings begin at 7 p.m.. Held at Commission Main office.
- MFAMC** -Mid- Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Call (302) 674-2331 to find out the meeting location.
- RFAB**- Recreational Fishery Advisory Board

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN TAKE REDUCTION TEAM (BDTRT) MEETING

The sixth meeting of the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team will be held April 1-3, 2003 in Virginia Beach, VA at the Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel (36th street and Atlantic Ave). The meeting will start at 8:30 AM on Tuesday, April 1, 2003, and it will conclude at 5 PM on Thursday April 3, 2003.

The meeting will cover the proposed rule for the 2003 Marine Mammal Protection Act List of Fisheries published in the January 10th edition of the Federal Register. The rule specifically discusses the Atlantic Mixed Species Trap/Pot, Gulf of Mexico Blue Crab Trap/Pot Fishery, Gulf of Mexico Gillnet, and Mid-Atlantic Coastal Gillnet fisheries. The rule will be open for 30 days of public comment, so comments must be received on or before February 10, 2003. If you have any questions please call 727-570-5312, or FAX 727-570-5517

Please send comments to the following address:
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
PROTECTED RESOURCES DIVISION F/SER3
9721 EXECUTIVE CENTER DRIVE N
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33702



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
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NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED