



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Permit Holders 2018 Quota Specifications and Surfclam Minimum Size Suspension

Fishing year 2018 (January 1–December 31, 2018) quotas are 3.4 million bushels for Atlantic surfclams, 5.3 million bushels for ocean quahogs, and 100,000 Maine bushels for Maine ocean quahogs. These quotas are unchanged from fishing year 2017. We anticipate these quotas will be in place for 2019 and 2020. We will notify you of the final quotas for 2019 and 2020 prior to the start of those fishing years. Also, the minimum size limit for surfclams is being suspended for the 2018 fishing year.

We remind surfclam and ocean quahog fishermen that for their safety, it is important to stay informed of how to identify and react to discarded military munitions encountered while fishing. Please visit <http://www.denix.osd.mil/uxo> for more information, or contact us at the number below for a pamphlet of information on military munitions.

<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	
Didn't the fishing year begin on January 1?	Yes, the fishing year did begin January 1, 2018. The Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan contains a quota 'roll over' provision. The 2017 quotas were carried forward into 2018 so the fishery could begin on time. As outlined above, the 2017 quotas are the same as what are now being announced for the 2018 fishing year. The minimum size was suspended in both 2017 and now moving forward in 2018.
Why does it seem like the surfclam minimum size limit is suspended every year?	We have the authority to suspend the minimum size limit when our data show that most surfclams are larger than the minimum size of 4.75 inches. This is often the case, and we want to eliminate the burden of having a minimum size limit in place if it is not necessary, as allowed by the regulations.
How will I know what the quota is for future years and whether the surfclam size limit has been suspended again?	These decisions are made in the fall each year, before the start of a new fishing year. We will continue to let you know through letters such as this. In addition, you can visit our website or call the number below.

Please visit www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/clam/ for more information on this fishery. If you have any questions, please contact Sustainable Fisheries at 978-281-9315.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.