



North Atlantic Sea Scallop Update

NEW SEASON PREDICTIONS



Captain Jack

As of Feb 28th, the 2016-2017 open allotment for boats has come to a close. Our friend Captain Jack has valuable information to share regarding the upcoming 2017-2018 season, which begins March 1st.

FISHING INFORMATION...

- Starting March 1st, boats can start open area fishing under 2017 regulations, even though they are not signed into law (permissions are due to the “default clause”). This effort allows the boats to get started while the fisheries prepare for the new season.
- The boats are allowed to fish 30.41 open area days for 2017.
- There will also be 4 closed area trips of 18,000 lbs:
 - Trip 1: In the Mid-Atlantic area that is currently open.
 - Trip 2: In a small part of the Mid-Atlantic area that has been closed for 3 years to allow small scallops to grow.
 - Trip 3: In the Nantucket Lightship closed area.
 - Trip 4: In Closed Area #2 – an area 180 miles east of Cape Cod.
- Access to these areas will start when the government has issued Amendment 28, expected by April 1st.

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60-70% of the 2017 open area fishing effort will occur in the Mid-Atlantic area from Long Island to VA. The Georgia's Bank area will account for only 30%.



SIZING

43 to 46 millions lbs will be landed during the 2017 fishing year. Of this total:

- U/10s, U/12s should = 10%
- 10/20s should = 40%
- 20/30s should = 30%
- 30/40s should = 20%

2017 is what we call a "rebuilding year" – Many of the larger scallops have been caught over the past 3 years, and it takes time for the smaller sizes to grow into large scallops.

PRICING

U/10s and U/12s will be priced very high, as only a small part of the total harvest will yield this size.

10/20s will remain high, due to the lack of the two larger sizes.

20/30s will dominate lbs landed. They will be towards the high count of the size range (25-29 count).

30/40s will be a factor this year.

OUTLOOK

This year, the closed area lbs landed will equal or surpass the open area catch – a unique occurrence that hasn't been seen in years.

The increase in closed area lbs, coupled with the cut back in open area days from 34.5 to 30.4, is meant to take some pressure of the 20/30 and 30/40 population dominating the open areas.