Project-specific management of Atlantic scup trawl fishery, Rhode Island, FAO 21

The project-specific management conditions have been worked out from suggestions of the online expert survey, January 2025.

1. Expert meeting

__1.1__ Besides the general regulations for sustainable fishery listed in Part B, project-specific management conditions are imposed on each fishery project. Taken together with the regulations under B. 2.-4., these special conditions constitute a catalogue of measures to be adopted in the management plan and quality assurance system of the project. The conditions are the result of an expert survey of each fishery project to be performed. Naturland decides whether to accept the list of experts proposed either by the fishery project or a third party and can, where justified, reject the list or ask for changes to be made. The experts on the list should cover the following fields:
• scientific institutions which deal with the respective type of fishery (primarily for current in-formation on the status of the stock and on the aquatic ecosystem)
• fishing authorities (legal requirements, national and international development aims)
• NGOs (social and ecological aspects)
• organisations from the fishing and/or processing industries (technical, social and economic aspects).
__1.2__ To ensure that the regulations compiled in the project-specific management conditions are kept up to date, each expert survey is performed every four years at the minimum. In principle, the fishery project bears responsibility for the expert survey being performed according to schedule. This also holds true for the case that the project has to supply the experts with pertinent data for them to be able to assess the situation of a fishery. The project-specific management conditions for each individual fishery project must be approved by Naturland.

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include the project specific management conditions:

1.2. The next expert survey should take place in 2029 the latest.

The following topics will be discussed:

- Observation of bycatch of juvenile scup
- Mesh size adaption

2. Ecology

2.1 The project performs its fishing activities in such a way that integrity of the ecosystem is maintained long-term, concerning both the stocks of the economically relevant species as well as the other components of the ecosystem.

2.2 Subject of the evaluation is the geographical catchment area of the respective fishery project or the project's share in the total exploitation of a certain species.

2.3 In the case of species which only occur temporarily in the catchment area of the project, or which do not spend their whole life cycle there, an evaluation is made of whether the management form of the project were compatible with maintaining the total stock volume if this management form were adopted by all the enterprises involved in fishing this species in this way (exemplary character).

2.4 Naturland reserves the right not to perform certification or to suspend the procedure if management of the fishery is not guided by the concept of the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), i. e. the fishing mortality rate must be below Fmsy (F<Fmsy) and the biomass of the spawning stock (SSB) must be greater than or equal to MSY Btrigger (SSB ≥ MSY Btrigger). Should no reference values be available for certain species, then as an alternative certification may be performed on the basis of the life span and manner of reproduction.

2.5 If no exclusively used geographic area can be attributed to the project (e.g. in deep-sea fishery), the evaluation is made based not only on the fishing practices of the project but also on the total situation of the stocks in question.

2.6 Practices which are generally deemed as detrimental or critical from an ecological point of view are prohibited. These include the following regulations in addition to the project-specific management conditions defined:
• catching marine mammals and ocean turtles
• catching sharks for their fins ("finning")
• the use of poisons and explosives in fishing
• damage to coral reefs (including cold-water corals)
• beam trawl fishing as well as demersal trawling on highly structured sea beds
• demersal trawling without suitable escape hatches to keep bycatches to a minimum.
2.7 The project-specific management conditions govern the following in particular:
• minimum size and maximum quantities
• equipment and techniques employed
• close seasons and sanctuaries
• avoidance or minimization of bycatches
• other measures which help to protect the aquatic ecosystem and/or individual species (e.g. protection of breeding colonies)
• protocols for monitoring of relevant pollutants, determination of specific alert/reporting values and threshold values.

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Par

The following topics include project specific management conditions:

2.4. Northeast Fisheries Science Center of NOAA do the regular stock assessment and after the stock assessments conducted by the Science Center go to the Science and Statistical Committees of the MidAtlantic Fishery Management Council to use in setting catch advice for the Council. According to the latest report, the Atlantic scup stock is not overfished and not subject to overfishing. The link to the latest Scup Fishery Information Document by Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council can be found here:
Status of Stocks Reports | NOAA Fisheries

https://www.mafmc.org/s/2024_Scup_info_doc_FINAL-mkn6.pdf

https://apps-st.fisheries.noaa.gov/sis/docServlet?fileAction=download&fileId=8979

The spawning biomass (SBB) for scup in the designed catching areas is at or above the biomass that would produce maximum sustainable yield (SSBMSY).

2.7.1 The restrictions on the Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) are defined by Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council, on advice from its Scientific and Statistical Committee based on science from NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

The Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Atlantic scup in FAO 21 is defined in total at 26.85 mlb in 2025. The commercial quota for Atlantic scup in FAO 21 is defined at 19.54 million lb in 2025.

2.7.2 In case the stock of sea bass or summer flounder in FAO 21 is overfished or subject to overfishing the part of these species shall not exceed 5 % in the total annual catch.

https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/summer-flounder

Black Sea Bass | NOAA Fisheries

2.7.3 The fishery is carried out exclusively with otter trawls.

2.7.4 The minimum mesh size used by the trawl fishery is 5 inches. The mesh shape is diamond.

2.7.5 The fishermen avoid the marine protected areas and respect the spatiotemporal closures.

2.7.6 Fishermen avoid sensitive areas that overlap with deep-sea coral regions.

Deep Sea Corals Amendment (Amendment 16 to the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP) — Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 - Library - NEFMC

Fishermen respect areas within the U.S. EEZ where fishing is prohibited.

https://www.fisherycouncils.org/area-based-management.

Fishing is prohibited in the Northeast Canyons Marine National Monument

Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument | NOAA Fisheries.

Fishery is prohibited in Scup Gear Restricted Areas and Tilefish Gear Restricted Areas.

Tilefish: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries

Gulf of Maine-Georges Bank Regulated Mesh Areas | NOAA Fisheries

The fishery must register in Marine Mammal Authorization Program.

Marine Mammal Authorization Program

2.7.7 Each landing of the fish is controlled and documented by the fishing authorities.

All federally permitted scup vessels are required to submit electronic Vessel Trip Reports (VTR) to the federal government.

For state only vessels, as well as dealers, state reporting is also required for vessels with a scup permit to Rhode Island department of Environmental Management (RIDMF).

2.7.8 Bycatch of endangered species and marine mammals (IUCN Red list/ETP – endangered, threatened, protected) is very uncommon. ETP species caught shall be documented and released alive and carefully.

2.7.9 Scientists and observers have permission to accompany the fishing vessels for research purposes.

2.7.10 Scup vessels are also required to take on board NOAA Fisheries Observers, which personnel collect biological data and conduct regulatory compliance also.

2.7.11 Loss of gears rarely occurs in this fishery. Vessels shall be equipped with GPS, electronic plotters, and net sensors that allow to know the seafloor type and slope. Therefore, a lost gear can be located and shall be retrieved. Loss of gear must be documented and recovered. If not, a detailed explanation must be provided.

2.7.12 All vessels shall be equipped with the information of marine litter for United States Coast Guard inspection. Fishermen shall adhere to a waste management plan that emphasizes waste prevention and includes the collection of ocean litter during fishing trips.

2.7.13 The vessel size and the horsepower are limited by NOAA Fisheries through the vessel's permit. The maximum vessel size is 151 feet in length and the maximum horsepower is 2000.

2.7.14 The fuel used is Diesel.

2.7.15 Protocol for the monitoring of relevant environmental pollutants in the final product are shown in table I

Table I Analytical protocol

Parameter	Interval	Alarm value	Limit value	Limit of detection
Example	*annually*	*xx mg/kg*	*xx mg/kg*	*xx mg/kg*
Heavy metals:				
Cadmium (Cd)	annually	0,025 mg/kg	0,05 mg/kg	0,005 mg/kg
Lead (Pb)	annually	0,15 mg/kg	0,3 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Mercury (Hg)	annually	0,25 mg/kg	0,5 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Dioxins:				
Sum of dioxins (WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ)	annually	1,75 pg/g	3,5 pg/g	0,5 pg/g
Sum of dioxins & dioxin like PCBS (WHO PCDD/F-PCB/TEQ)	annually	3,25 pg/g	6,5 pg/g	0,5 pg/g
Sum of PCB28, PCB52, PCB101, PCB138, PCB 153 and PCB 180	annually	37,25 ng/g	75 ng/g	-
Microbiology:				
Total bacterial count	annually	$5x10^6$ CFU/g	10×10^6 CFU/g	$< 10^2$ CFU/g
Listeria monocytogenes	annually	-	detected in 25 g	-
Salmonella	annually	-	detected in 25 g	-
Other:				
Radiation	annually	50 Bq/kg	100 Bq/kg	3 Bq/kg
Histamine	annually	100 mg/kg	200 mg/kg	5 mg/kg
TBT	annually	0,01 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Please add any further testing parameters below, such as regionally				

3. Social and economic sustainability of the fishery

3.1 *Naturland's standards governing social responsibility apply (ref. A.III. of these standards).*
3.2 *In addition, allowances have to be made for the situation of many fishermen in the developing countries. Fishery projects (resp. the processors or exporters of the fishery produce) bears responsibility not only for the fishermen to meet with fair working conditions (ref. A. III), but also for adequate living conditions out of working hours. Depending on socio-economic circum-stances, those responsible must introduce the requisite measures in a suitable manner. These include especially:*

- *adequate board and lodging*
- *access to banking and insurance services*
- *health care*
- *schooling for the children*
- *transport possibilities*

This is especially applicable if the fishermen and -women are not capable of fulfilling these basic needs from the sale of their products. This is the case, for example, when there is a glut or where seasonal yields fluctuate dramatically, and in cases of over-dependence on fishing as the sole source of income.
3.3 *The project-specific management conditions govern, in particular:*

- *special social aspects, particularly in relation to the situation in developing countries*
- *measures designed to avoid conflicts with other users of the resources*

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include project specific management conditions:

3.3.1 All fishermen are either self-employed or employed by seafreeze and receive a defined share of the catch. All workers employed by seafreeze receive at least the national minimum wage.

3.3.2 The fishermen follow a code of conduct and are regularly instructed in safety issues.

3.3.3 Seafreeze donates yearly squid to the Calamari Festival held by the Narragansett Chamber of Commerce that draws thousands of people each year. Seafreeze also invests in the local fishing community by supporting full time staff to work on regulatory and fishery science issues that beneficially impact all local commercial vessels.
Seafreeze has measures in place to avoid conflicts with other users of the resources.

4. Legal framework and management

__4.1__ Fishing is performed in compliance with national and international law. The fishery project has to be able to produce the corresponding documents and proof in full and freshly updated.
__4.2__ The fishery project (or the processor or exporter of the fishing produce) is responsible for its staff and workers being familiar with the contents of these standards. Appropriate training sessions and material have to be provided to guarantee that the catalogue of measures is complied with.
Part B.; Regulations for sustainable capture fishery
Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery 05/2017 page 15 of 15

__4.3__ The management of the fishery project must be able to prove that the requirements laid down in the standards and the project-specific management conditions are implemented systematically, effectively and promptly at every level. This proof includes:
• consistent records and analysis of the catch data
• feedback between the current catch data and the fishing practice in place
• knowledge of current national and international regulations and fulfilment of the duties arising therefrom
• establishment of mechanisms guaranteeing regular communication between the project and the fishermen with regard to social matters
• existence of and compliance with a development plan (e.g. for deficient issues)

__4.4__ The project-specific management conditions govern in particular:
• obligatory documentation requirements and internal control system.

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include project specific management conditions:

4.1 A central fishing vessel registry is maintained; only registered vessels that have been granted a fishing license may engage in commercial fishing.

4.2.1 Staff and workers are familiar with the Naturland standards. Training and material supporting the catalogue of measures have been provided.

4.3 Before embarking on a fishing trip, the vessel´s operators must ensure that the vessel has quota registered which suffices for the expected catch.

4.4.1 The fish can be traced back to the vessel by time and catch area.

4.4.2 Each landing is controlled and weighed in the harbor. Recording of vessel catch quotas and catches are done by the Fisheries Authority.

Appendix:

2025 Catch Limits	**Scup**	**Black Sea Bass**	**Summer Flounder**	**Bluefish**
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	41.31	16.66	19.32	21.83
Commercial ACL = Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	26.85	7.50	10.62	3.06
Commercial Quota	19.54	6.00	8.79	3.03
Recreational ACL = ACT	14.46	9.16	8.69	18.78
Recreational Harvest Limit	12.31	6.27	6.35	15.70

NOAA Fisheries Announces Final 2025 Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Fisheries

2025 Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Fisheries | NOAA Fisheries

Table 3: Short term projections of total fishery catch (OFL) and Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) for Scup based on a harvest scenario of fishing at F_{MSY} *proxy* between 2024 and 2025. Catch in 2023 was assumed to be 13,458 (mt).

Year	Catch (mt)	SSB (mt)	F_{Full}
2023	13,458	209,407 (155,000 - 286,000)	0.115

Year	Catch (mt)	SSB (mt)	F_{Full}
2024	20,295	185,475 (138,000 - 252,000)	0.190
2025	18,363	162,716 (121,000 - 221,000)	0.190

2023 Suck Management Track Assessment Report

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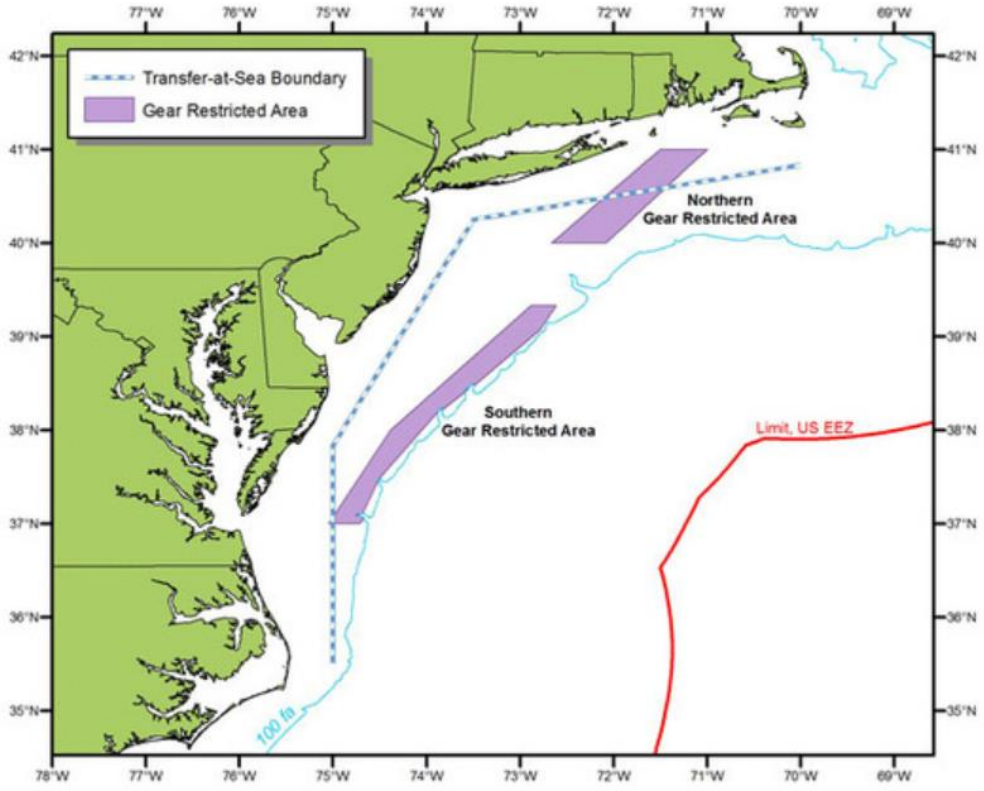
2faa900d931JmltdHM9MTczOTE0NTYwMA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=4&fclid=1f1eb01c-d4c2-6be5-151e-a590d5106a8b&psq=scup+management+track+assessment&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9hc21mYy5vcmcvdXBsb2Fkcy9maWxlLzY1YzM4Y2NiU2N1cF9NYW5hZ21lbnRfVHJhY2tfQXNzZXNzbWVudF8yMDIzLnBkZg&ntb=1



Scup: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries