



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

December 22, 2000

Dear Permit Holder:

This letter is to notify you of important changes to the regulations governing Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs) that were developed to reduce scup bycatch in Mid-Atlantic small-mesh fisheries, and to notify you of two technical changes to the landing limits in the Atlantic mackerel, squid and butterfish fisheries.

The following changes become effective on December 23, 2000:

- 1) The GRAs that were established in the Mid-Atlantic Bight are modified in size and location (see attachment);
- 2) The small-mesh Atlantic mackerel fishery is exempt from the GRA requirements in all of the GRAs; and
- 3) The small-mesh *Loligo* squid fishery is exempt from the GRA requirements through December 31, 2000.

The coordinates and time periods of the new GRAs are provided below. A map depicting these GRAs is also attached.

Northern Gear Restricted Area I (November 1 to December 31)

<u>Point</u>	<u>N. lat.</u>	<u>W. long.</u>
NGA 1	41E 00"	71E 00"
NGA 2	41E 00"	71E 30"
NGA 3	40E 00"	72E 40"
NGA 4	40E 00"	72E 05"
NGA 5	41E 00"	71E 00"

Northern Gear Restricted Area II (December 1 to January 31)

<u>Point</u>	<u>N. lat.</u>	<u>W. long.</u>
NGA 6	40E 00"	71E 40"
NGA 7	40E 00"	72E 10"
NGA 8	39E 00"	73E 09"
NGA 9	39E 00"	72E 50"
NGA 10	40E 00"	71E 40"

Southern Gear Restricted Area (January 1 to April 30)

<u>Point</u>	<u>N. lat.</u>	<u>W. long.</u>
SGA 1	39E 00"	72E 50"
SGA 2	39E 11"	72E 58"
SGA 3	38E 00"	74E 05"
SGA 4	38E 00"	73E 57"
SGA 5	39E 00"	72E 50"



The following technical modifications to the landing limits in the squid, mackerel and butterfish fisheries will become effective on January 27, 2001:

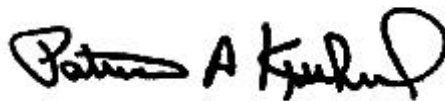
1) When the directed fisheries for Atlantic mackerel, *Loligo* squid, *Illex* squid, and butterfish are closed, vessels with appropriate fishing permits will be allowed to land the incidental allowance only one time per calendar day. For example, federally permitted vessels may land only one incidental catch allowance of *Loligo* squid (2,500 lb) per calendar day after the directed fishery has been closed.

2) The incidental allowance in the squid, mackerel and butterfish fisheries are now defined as possession limits. Therefore, it is unlawful for any person to take, retain, possess, or land more than the allowed possession limits established for these fisheries.

Finally, effective January 27, 2001, the procedure for establishing exemptions to the GRAs will be modified. The new procedure now requires the Mid-Atlantic Council to make exemption recommendations to the Northeast Regional Administrator using the framework adjustment process established in the Fishery Management Plan for the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fisheries. This will allow for greater public participation in the decision process and will require adequate supporting rationale for any exemption request.

For further information please call 978-281-9278.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. Kurkul". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Patricia A. Kurkul,
Regional Administrator

Attachment

Area 1 from Nov 1-Dec 31, Area 2
from Dec 1-Jan 31, and Area 3 from Jan 1-April 30

Mid-Atlantic Scup Gear Restricted Areas

