



# Northeast Region Bulletin

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## **Atlantic Sea Scallop Permit Holders**

### New Biological Opinion for the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan *July 13, 2012*

As required by the Endangered Species Act, NOAA Fisheries has reanalyzed the Atlantic sea scallop fishery's interactions with sea turtles and Atlantic sturgeon. We have determined that the Atlantic sea scallop fishery is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any Atlantic sturgeon distinct population segment or any sea turtle species. Although this announcement does not include any immediate changes to the scallop regulations, we wanted to update you on some future adjustments that may result from this new biological opinion.

#### ***Sea turtles***

The new biological opinion no longer specifies the need for effort controls in the Mid-Atlantic from June through October to reduce sea turtle interactions. The new opinion does call for more emphasis on testing and evaluating the effectiveness of gear modifications, such as the turtle deflector dredge that will be effective May 2013. We will work with the New England Fishery Management Council to adjustment current management measures to be consistent with the new biological opinion, most likely through Framework 24 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan intended for implementation in May 2013.

#### ***Atlantic sturgeon***

The new biological opinion does not call for any additional changes in the scallop fishery regarding Atlantic sturgeon.

To read the complete biological opinion, go to

[http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/section7/NMFS-signedBOs/2012ScallopBiOp071212.pdf](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/section7/NMFS-signedBOs/2012ScallopBiOp071212.pdf)

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