



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

December 19, 2003

Dear Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has issued final specifications for the 2004 fishing year for surfclams, ocean quahogs and Maine mahogany quahogs. NOAA Fisheries has approved a 4.6-percent increase for the surfclam fishery and an 11.1-percent increase for the ocean quahog fishery from the 2003 quota levels, and is maintaining the 2003 status quo level for the 2004 Maine mahogany quahog fishery. In addition, NOAA Fisheries has extended the suspension of the minimum size limit for surfclams in the 2004 fishing year. The following table summarizes the 2004 fishing year quotas:

| FISHERY | 2004 QUOTA (bushels) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Surfclam ¹ | 3,400,000 |
| Ocean Quahog ¹ | 5,000,000 |
| Maine Mahogany Quahog ² | 100,000 |

¹1 bushel = 1.88 cubic feet

²1 bushel = 1.2445 cubic feet

These final specifications are effective January 1, 2004. You are encouraged to obtain further information or a copy of the final specifications by calling (978) 281-9218. This letter does not contain all the regulatory provisions that pertain to these species, and consequently, has no legal force or effect. A copy of the final specifications can also be obtained through the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office's Web Site: www.nero.noaa.gov.

This small entity compliance guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
 Regional Administrator

