



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

December 27, 2002

Dear Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has issued final specifications for the 2003 fishing year for surfclams, ocean quahogs and Maine mahogany quahogs. NOAA Fisheries has approved a 4-percent increase for the surfclam fishery from the 2002 quota level and is maintaining the quota at status quo levels for the 2003 ocean quahog and Maine mahogany quahog fisheries. In addition, NOAA Fisheries has extended the suspension of the minimum size limit for surfclams in the 2003 fishing year. The following table summarizes the 2003 fishing year quotas:

FISHERY	2003 QUOTA (bushels)
Surfclam ¹	3,250,000
Ocean Quahog ¹	4,500,000
Maine Mahogany Quahog ²	100,000

¹1 bushel = 1.88 cubic feet

²1 bushel = 1.2448 cubic feet

These final specifications are effective January 1, 2003. You are encouraged to obtain further information or a copy of the final specifications by calling (978) 281-9141. 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.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/nero.html.

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

