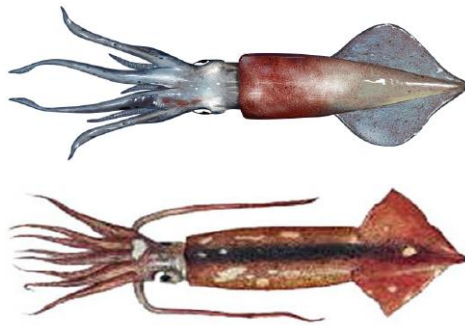




# Squid Capacity Amendment *Scoping Guide*

<http://www.mafmc.org/actions/squid-capacity-amendment>

March-April-May 2015



## WHAT IS SCOPING?

**Scoping** is the process of identifying issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issue at hand. It provides the first and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or to raise issues and concerns as development of an amendment begins.

This is the public's opportunity to inform the Council about changes observed in the squid fisheries, actions that the public believes should or should not be taken in terms of management and regulation, or any other concerns the public has about the squid fisheries.

Your comments early in the amendment development process will help us identify management issues and develop effective alternatives that address issues of public concern in a thorough and appropriate manner.

No management measures have yet been analyzed for their effectiveness or impacts. Please comment on which kinds of management measures may or may not be useful or practical, and explain your rationale. Please also comment on any other issues you believe should be addressed in the amendment. The list of relevant issues may be expanded as suggestions are offered during the scoping process.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is seeking public input for the development of a “Squid Capacity Amendment” to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish (MSB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This amendment will review the performance of the longfin squid and *Illex* squid fisheries and consider options for controlling or limiting capacity of the fleets.

This action was identified as a priority in the Council’s 2015 Implementation Plan (<http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan/>), and the Council is now seeking public input to inform development of an amendment. The Council would like your comments on the range of issues and information that should be considered, including comments related to capacity of the squid fleets as well as any other issues that might be of concern to you regarding management of the MSB fisheries.

### **WHY IS THIS ACTION BEING PROPOSED?**

The Council is proposing to develop this amendment because there is considerable latent capacity in both the longfin squid and *Illex* squid fisheries. In most years, the majority of landings are harvested by a small portion of vessels with limited access permits. The Council is concerned that activation of the existing latent capacity could cause problems such as shortened seasons and increased incidental catch of non-target species. Although participation has not increased in recent years, the possibility of effort transfer from other fisheries exists. This could negatively impact current participants if quotas are caught more quickly, causing closed seasons. In addition, if excess effort causes a “race to fish,” there could be an increase in non-target species interactions that could lead to other restrictions for the squid fisheries.

### CURRENT AMENDMENT OBJECTIVES

- Review the performance of the squid fisheries.
- Consider measures to control/reduce capacity in the squid fisheries.

### **WHAT APPROACHES MAY BE CONSIDERED?**

The amendment is likely to consider a variety of approaches for reducing capacity in the squid fisheries. These could include, *but would not be limited to*:

- Requalification of permits
- Tiered limited access system
- Limited access privilege program (LAPP - more commonly referred to as an “individual fishing quota” or “catch share system”).

The Council has recently updated the control dates for both squid fisheries – May 16, 2013 for longfin squid and August 2, 2013 for *Illex* squid. The Council may (or may not) use the current or previous control dates as reference points as it considers whether, and/or how, to further limit the number of

participants in the squid fisheries. Additional details on the control dates are available at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/squid-capacity-amendment>.

A draft Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement will be developed for public comment and used by the Council to evaluate any proposed measures. The Council will consider the biological and socio-economic impacts of any management measure before making a final decision.

### **STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

The Council would like your input on the range of issues and information that should be considered during development of this amendment, including the specific issues identified in this document, as well as any other issues that might be of concern to you regarding the squid fisheries. Please also comment on the level of environmental assessment/impact analysis you believe would be appropriate (an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement - <http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/nepa/eis.htm>). If there are any particular kinds of analyses you believe would be important to help evaluate measures to control/reduce capacity in the squid fisheries, please also comment on those.

### **LEARN MORE**

Find additional information and background documents about the amendment at: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/squid-capacity-amendment>.

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## GET INVOLVED

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### **ATTEND A SCOPING HEARING**

Public scoping hearings will be held on the following dates:

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Monday <b>April 6, 2015, 4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Superior Trawl</b> 55 State Street, Narragansett, RI 02882. Telephone: (401) 782-1171.
Tuesday <b>April 7, 2015, 5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Montauk Library</b> 871 Montauk Highway, Montauk, NY 11954. Telephone: (631) 668-3377.
Wednesday <b>April 8, 2015, 5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Fairfield Inn</b> 185 MacArthur Dr, New Bedford, MA 02740. Telephone: (774) 634-2000.
Monday <b>April 13, 2015, 6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Congress Hall Hotel</b> 251 Beach Ave, Cape May, NJ 08204. Telephone: (888) 944-1816.
Wednesday <b>April 15, 2015, 5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Ocean Place Resort</b> 1 Ocean Blvd Long Branch, NJ, 07740. Telephone: 732-571-4000.
Tuesday <b>April 21, 2015, 6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Webinar</b> This meeting will be conducted via webinar accessible via the internet from the Council's website, <a href="http://www.mafmc.org">www.mafmc.org</a> . The Virginia Marine Resources Commission will also provide in-person access to the webinar at its office at: 2600 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor, Newport News, VA 23607; (757) 247-2200. Members of the public may also attend in-person at the Council office address (see below) for this webinar meeting, if they contact the Council by April 19, 2015. Please contact Jason Didden by April 19, 2015 at <a href="mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org">jdidden@mafmc.org</a> or (302) 526-5254 if you would like to confirm that your computer is set up to access the webinar.

### **SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS:**

In addition to providing comments at any of the scoping hearings, you may submit written comments. Written comments are due by May 11, 2015, 11:59 p.m., EST and may be sent by any of the following methods:

1. **ONLINE** at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/squid-capacity-amendment>
2. **EMAIL** to [jdidden@mafmc.org](mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org)
3. **MAIL** to Chris Moore, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
4. **FAX** to 302.674.5399

*Please include "Squid Amendment Scoping Comments" in the subject line if using email or fax or on the outside of the envelope if submitting written comments.*

All comments, regardless of submission method, will be compiled into a single document for review and consideration by the Council.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

After the initial phase of information gathering and public comment, if the Council decides to proceed with the Amendment the Council will evaluate potential management alternatives for inclusion in the amendment.

The Council will then develop a draft amendment, incorporating the identified management alternatives, for public review. The Council will also prepare draft environmental analyses as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and subject those analyses to review and comment by the public as appropriate.

Finally, the Council will choose preferred management measures for submission with the appropriate environmental analyses to the Secretary of Commerce for publishing of a proposed and then final rule, both of which have additional comment periods. While there are many opportunities for public comment in the process, this scoping comment opportunity is particularly important for assisting the Council in establishing the overall focus and direction of the Amendment.

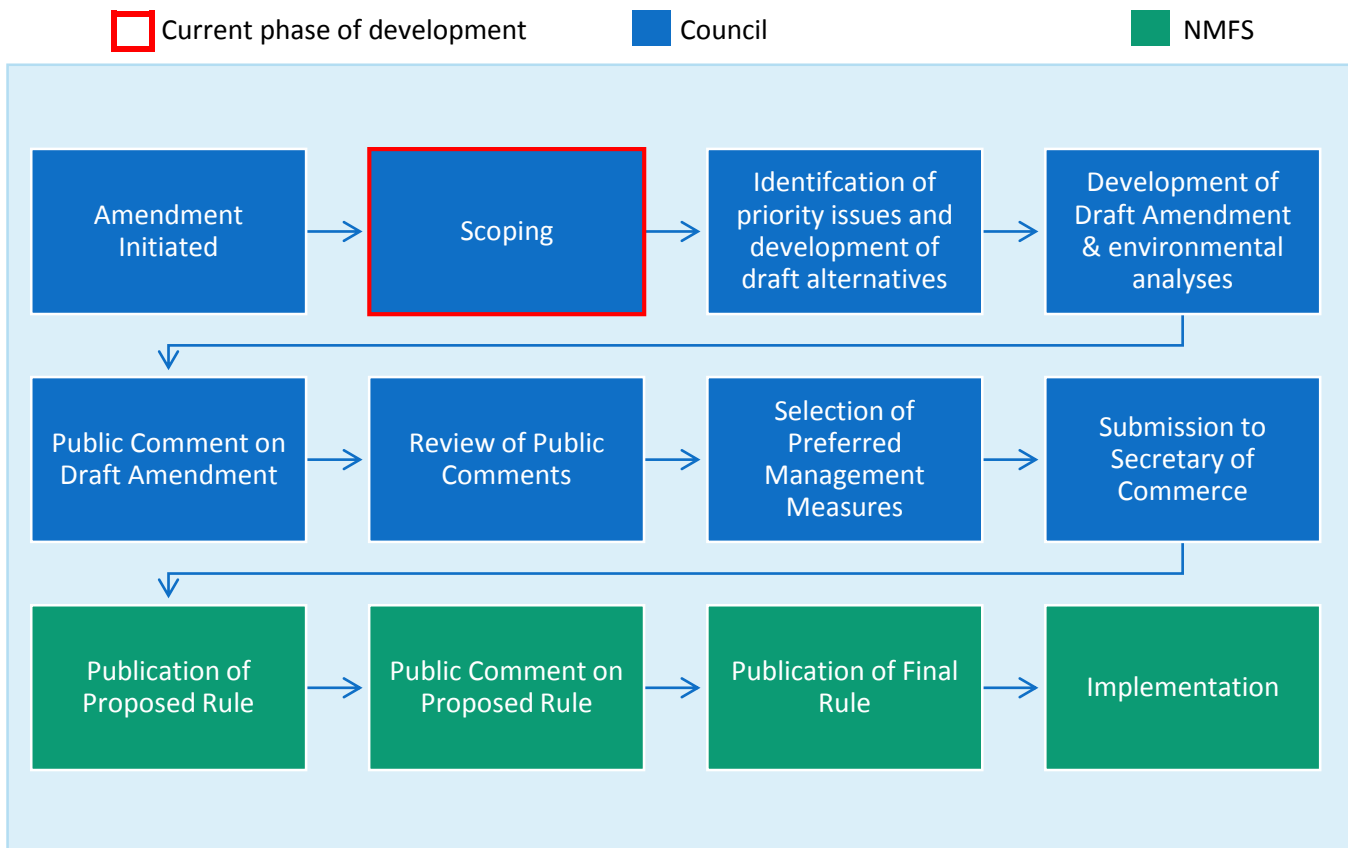


Figure 1. Amendment Development Process

## FISHERY BACKGROUND

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To assist the public in developing comments, background information on the longfin squid and *Illex* squid fisheries is provided below. This scoping document is focused on recent fishery performance and participation. Additional information can be found in the annual specifications environmental assessment (EA), available at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/squid-capacity-amendment>.

### LONGFIN SQUID

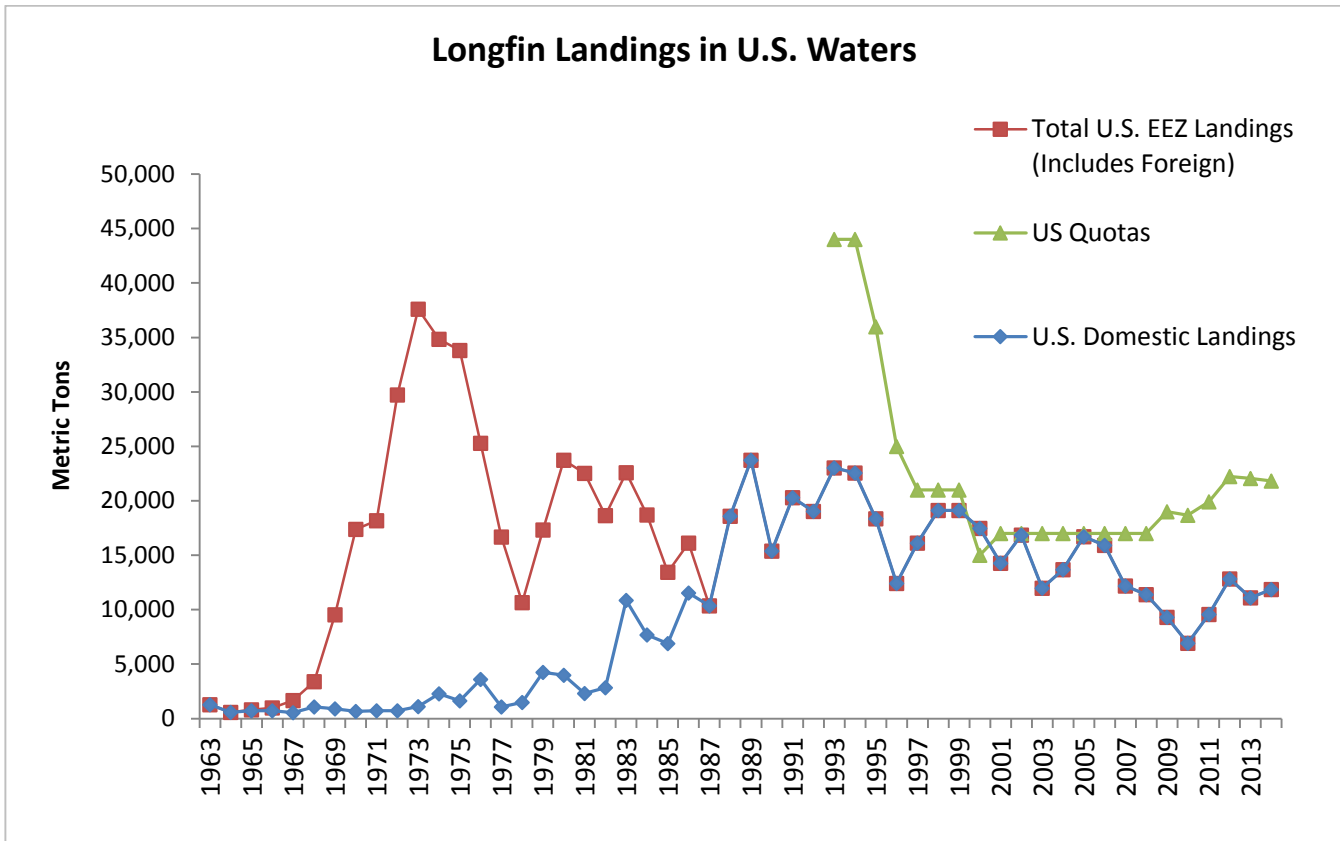
Longfin squid is a semi-pelagic/semi-demersal schooling species primarily distributed between Georges Bank and Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Additional life history information is detailed in the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) document for the species, located at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/habitat/efh/>.



Based on a new biomass reference point from a 2010 SAW-SARC assessment, the longfin squid stock was not overfished in 2009. The overfishing status was not determined because no overfishing threshold was recommended (though the assessment did describe the stock as “lightly exploited”). The assessment documents are available at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/reports.html>. Recent results from the NEFSC Trawl surveys are highly variable, and are graphed in the “NEFSC Biological Update” (linked below) that is created as part of the SSC ABC-setting process. These are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings/2014/may-7-8-2014>.

Longfin squid are in multi-year specifications and the quota is likely to remain stable from 2014-2017 unless unexpected new information suggests a different quota is more appropriate. The current (2015) annual quota for longfin squid is 22,445 metric tons (mt). As has been done in all fishing years since 2007, the longfin DAH is allocated into trimesters, according to percentages specified in the FMP, as follows: Trimester 1: 43%, Trimester 2: 17%, Trimester 3: 40%. If there are substantial underages from Trimester 1, they roll into Trimesters 2 and 3 evenly but Trimester 2 can only go up to 25.5% at most. Annual landings have been substantially below quotas since 2007 (Figure 2). Over the years, catch has occurred variably among the trimesters and there have been trimester closures (Table 1). Ex-vessel revenues since 1982 are provided in Figure 3.

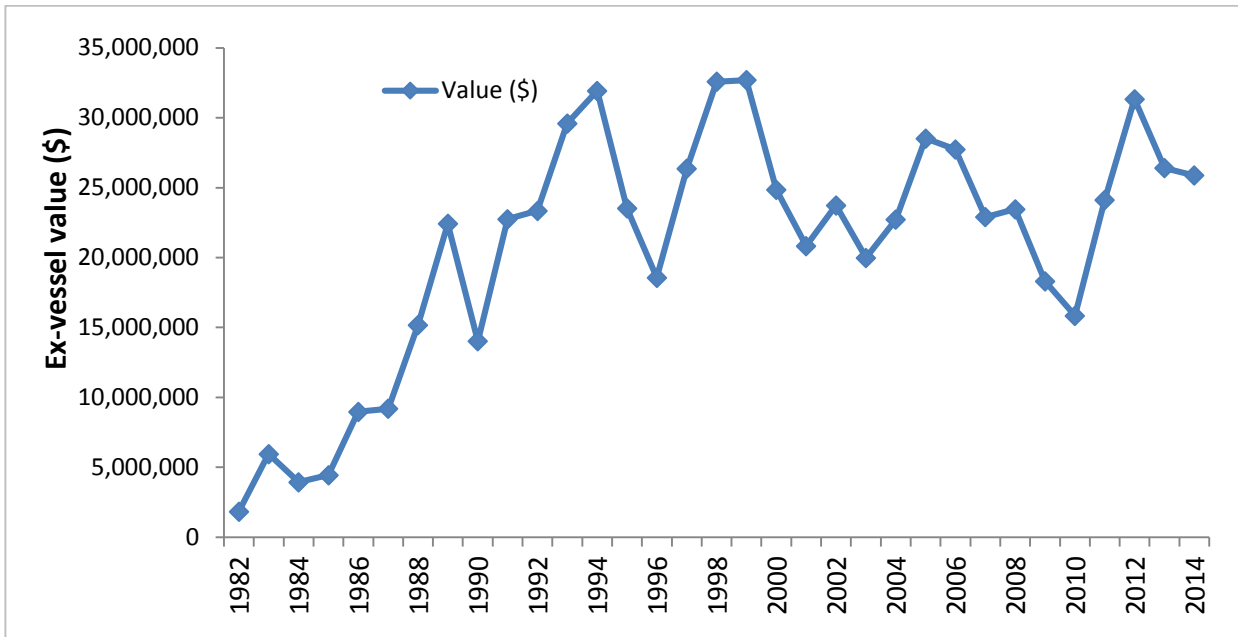
In 2014 there were approximately 337 active longfin squid limited access permits. Another 64 were not active but had their history documented under CPH or “Confirmation of Permit History.” In any given year, a relatively small portion of these vessels account for most longfin squid landings. Most of the vessels in Table 2 are limited access vessels but some are incidentally-permitted vessels. Table 3 describes the numbers of vessels in CPH and the principal port state for the limited access vessels that were not among those vessels accounting for 95% of longfin squid catch by federally-permitted vessels in 2014. Again, the recent specifications document (see above link at beginning of this “Fishery Background” section) has more information on recent activity by state/port/gear/etc.



Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data  
**Figure 2. Longfin Squid Landings 1963-2014**

**Table 1. Seasonal Longfin Squid Closures**

Year	Closures
2000	March 25-Apr 30; Jul 1-Aug 31; Sep 7-Dec 31;
2001	May 29-Jun 30;
2002	May 28-Jun30; Aug 16-Sep 30; Nov 2 -Dec 11; Dec 24-Dec31;
2003	Mar 25-Mar 31;
2004	Mar 5- Mar 31;
2005	Feb 20-Mar 31; April 25-Jun 30; Dec 18-Dec 31;
2006	Feb 13-Mar 31; April 21-April 26; May 23-June 30; Sept 2-Sept 30;
2007	April 13-April 30;
2008	July 17 - Aug 31.
2009	Aug 6 - Aug 31.
2010	
2011	Aug 23-Aug 31
2012	April 17-April 30 (butterfish cap); July 10 - Aug 31
2013	
2014	Aug 11-Aug 31



Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data

**Figure 3. Longfin Squid Nominal Ex-Vessel Revenues 1982-2014.**

**Table 2. Activity by federal vessels in longfin squid fishery.**

Year	Percent of Catch Harvested by Federally-Permitted Vessels	Number of vessels that harvested approx. 75% of federal landings	Number of vessels that accounted for about the next 20%	Number of vessels that accounted for about 95% of federal landings (sum of previous 2 columns)
1997	96%	84	88	172
1998	98%	75	92	167
1999	97%	72	103	175
2000	97%	87	99	186
2001	97%	64	88	152
2002	100%	70	69	139
2003	100%	52	59	111
2004	97%	54	57	111
2005	96%	46	45	91
2006	97%	60	59	119
2007	95%	42	63	105
2008	99%	49	63	112
2009	98%	49	61	110
2010	96%	49	58	107
2011	100%	49	54	103
2012	99%	59	60	119
2013	99%	44	42	86
2014	98%	50	59	109

Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data



**Table 3. Limited access longfin squid permits with principal port in state but not among vessels accounting for 95% of federal catch in 2014.**

State	Number of Vessels
MA	76
NJ	71
VA	21
NY	20
NC	15
ME	14
RI	12
CT	3
MD	3
NH	3
Other/Permit Not active but categorized as CPH	66

Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data

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## ILLEX SQUID

*Illex* squid is a semi-pelagic/semi-demersal schooling species distributed between Newfoundland and the Florida Straits. Additional life history information is detailed in the EFH document for the species, located at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/habitat/efh/>.

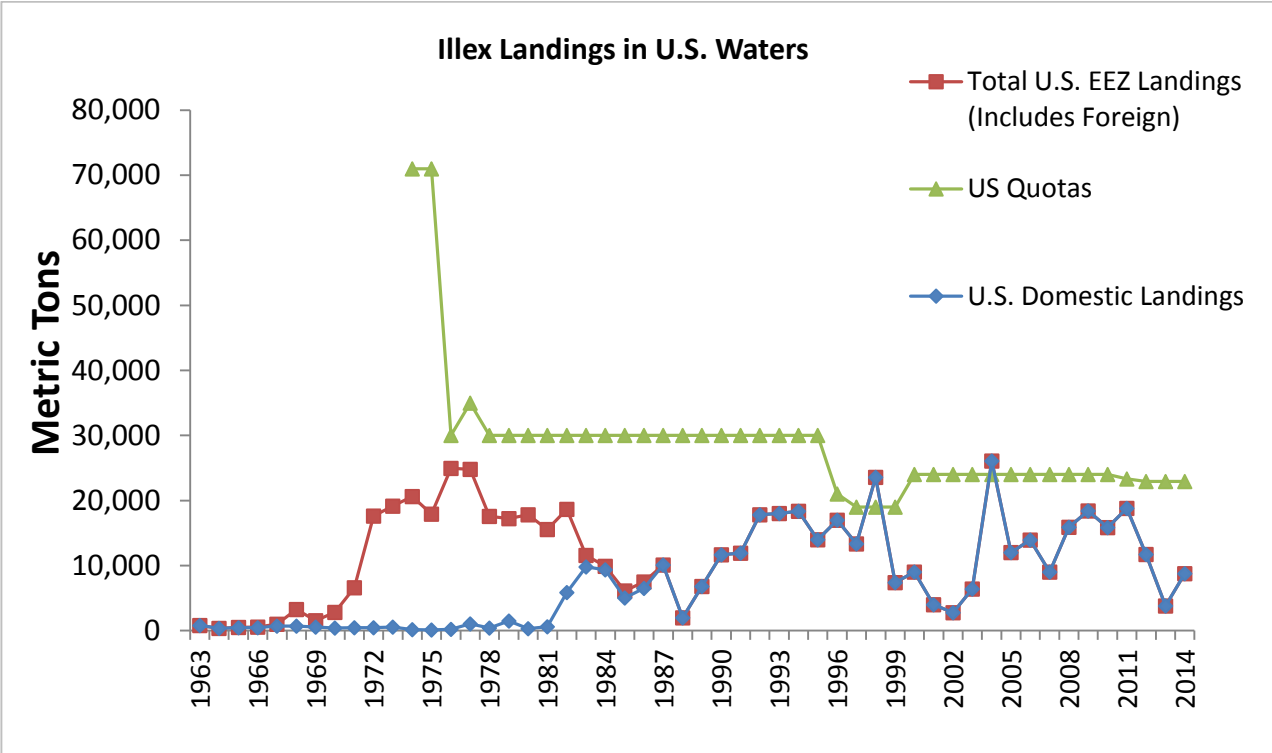


The status of *Illex* is unknown with respect to whether it is overfished and whether it is experiencing overfishing or not. Recent results from the NEFSC Trawl surveys are highly variable, and are graphed in the “NEFSC Biological Update” that is created as part of the SSC ABC-setting process. These are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings/2014/may-7-8-2014>.

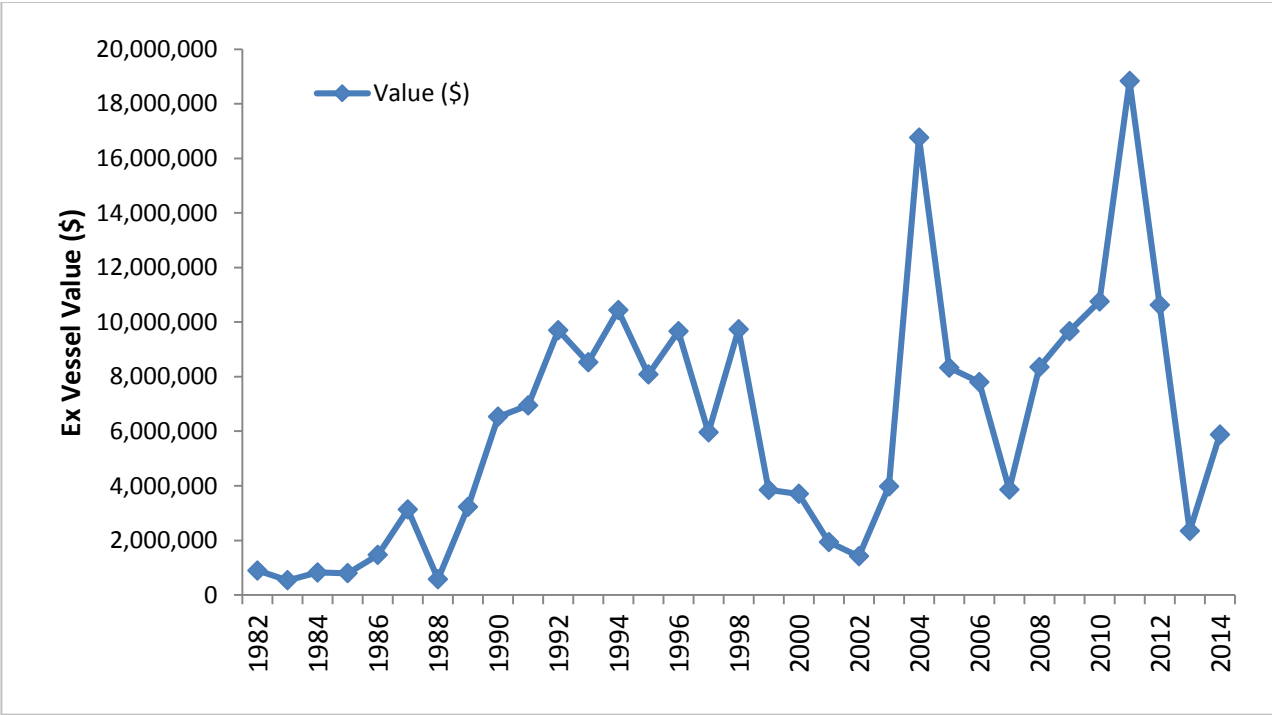
*Illex* squid are in multi-year specifications, and the quota is likely to remain stable from 2014-2017 unless unexpected new information suggests a different quota is more appropriate. The current (2015) annual quota for *Illex* squid is 22,915 metric tons (mt). There is no seasonal allocation, but the fishery generally occurs June through early October, which is when *Illex* are available to the fishery. Annual landings have been variable over the course of the fishery (Figure 4). Ex-vessel revenues since 1982 are provided in Figure 5.

There were approximately 76 active *Illex* squid limited access permits in 2014 with another 5 not active but having their history documented under CPH or “Confirmation of Permit History.” In any given year, a very small portion of these vessels account for most *Illex* squid landings. Most of the vessels in Table 4 are limited access vessels but some may be incidentally-permitted vessels earlier in the time series. Table 5 describes the numbers of vessels in CPH and the principal port state for the limited access vessels that were not among those vessels accounting for 95% of *Illex* squid catch by federally-permitted vessels in 2014. Again, the recent specifications document (see above link at beginning of this “Fishery Background” section) has more information on recent activity by state/port/gear/etc.

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Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data  
**Figure 4. Illex Squid Landings 1963-2014.**



Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data  
**Figure 5. Illex Squid Nominal Ex-Vessel Revenues 1982-2014.**

**Table 4. Activity by federal vessels in *Illex* squid fishery.**

Year	Percent of Catch Harvested by Federally-Permitted Vessels	Number of vessels that harvested approx. 75% of federal landings	Number of vessels that accounted for about the next 20%	Number of vessels that accounted for about 95% of federal landings
1997	100%	7	9	16
1998	100%	13	11	24
1999	100%	5	8	13
2000	100%	5	6	11
2001	100%	CI		7
2002	100%	CI		5
2003	100%	3	6	9
2004	100%	11	11	22
2005	100%	8	10	18
2006	100%	4	7	11
2007	100%	5	3	8
2008	100%	5	6	11
2009	100%	5	4	9
2010	100%	6	7	13
2011	100%	7	9	16
2012	100%	4	4	8
2013	100%	4	5	9
2014	100%	CI		6

CI = Confidential Information

Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data

**Table 5. Limited access *Illex* permits with principal port in state but not among vessels accounting for 95% of federal catch in 2014.**

State	Number of Vessels
NJ	24
MA	15
RI	8
NC	7
VA	7
CT	3
NY	3
Other/Permit not active but categorized as CPH	8

Source: Unpublished NMFS Dealer/Permit Data