



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Date Issued: 7/20/2015

Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Information Collection Program Requirements

Effective Date: January 1, 2016

We are implementing regulations for an information collection program for the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) fisheries. There is nothing you need to do immediately, but be aware of the following changes:

- ITQ permits now expire at the end of the year and you will need to renew your permit annually. We will send you annual reminders/renewal package paperwork;
- You will now be required to complete a new ITQ ownership form that must be submitted along with the annual ITQ permit renewal form in order to receive your permit and annual allocation of cage tags; and
- The ITQ transfer form has been modified to collect more detailed information on transfers.

We will be sending out these new and updated forms in early fall of 2015. You will need to complete the new forms to receive your 2016 ITQ permit. The forms will also be available on our forms and application webpage at: www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/forms.html.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the additional information going to be used for?	The additional information collected is intended to be used by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to inform its efforts to develop an excessive shares cap.
What is an excessive share cap?	An excessive share cap is a limit on how much allocation a single individual or entity can hold.
Does this action set excessive share caps?	No. This action only collects additional information.
What happens to my current ITQ permit?	Nothing. Your current 2015 ITQ permit will remain valid through the end of the year.
What happens when my ITQ permit expires?	Your ITQ permit and tags will expire on the last day of the fishing year (December 31). You will have to renew your permit to receive 2016 cage tags or to transfer cage tags.
What happens if I forget to renew my ITQ permit?	You have until the end of the year after the permit expires to renew your permit. For example, when your permit expires on December 31, 2015, you would have until December 31, 2016, to renew and receive your 2016 ITQ permit. If you do not renew before the end of the year for which you need the permit, you will lose your ITQ permit including any associated quota share. This is referred to as “renew-or-lose,” and has been in place for all limited access vessel permits and

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	tilefish IFQ permits for many years. For this first year, we have included an additional renewal grace period so there is even more time to renew your 2016 ITQ permit and ensure that no one inadvertently loses their ITQ permit.
Do I need to complete these new forms now to make sure my permit is renewed?	Not yet. The permit renewal forms will be available and sent out in early fall.
If I do not renew my permit will I be notified prior to losing it?	Yes. Our Permits Office would send you reminders that the deadline to renew your permit is approaching. Please make sure your contact information on file with us is up to date to ensure we can contact you.
What if I hold both surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ allocations?	You will need to complete separate renewal and ownership forms for each ITQ allocation (C or Q number) you hold in order to receive the associated ITQ permits.
Who do I speak with if I have questions?	For questions about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITQ permits and forms, contact our Permits Office at 978-282-8483. • This rule, contact our Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315.