

Judge allows scallopers to dredge

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In a victory for fishermen, a federal judge in Washington has ruled that scallopers may continue to tow their dredges in a mid-Atlantic fishery where the New Bedford fleet lands approximately 80 percent of its catch.

In July, the environmental group Oceana asked U.S. District Court Judge Ellen Huvelle

to temporarily close the fishery until the National Marine Fisheries Service acted to protect endangered sea turtles that migrate through the area during the spring and fall. Loggerhead, leatherback, Kemp's ridley and green sea turtles have been

caught and killed by heavy scallop dredges in the mid-Atlantic.

Oceana called for the fisheries service to re-evaluate how the scallop fishing industry affects sea turtles. The group also filed a federal lawsuit against the service in May.