

# Liaison Report from the December 01 thru December 03, 2020 NEFMC Meeting – Webinar

## **Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM):**

Due to the continued low scoring on the annual priorities list it was decided to have an extended conversation at this meeting to discuss, where have we been, where are we going and what do we want to do, with the question of, are we going to proceed with EBFM? The Regional Administrator and NEFSC co-authored a letter to the NEFMC and outlined 3 possible paths forward as:

1. Pause the current EBFM approach.
2. Continue the current EBFM approach
3. Implement an incremental EBFM approach.

The Council chose to continue the current EBFM approach but due to the highly technical aspect of the scope of work voted to hold workshops for the public only when we are allowed to meet in person again.

## **Atlantic Herring:**

Council received a preview of what's to come while working on the Herring FMP priorities.

1. Framework 7 – protect spawning on Georges Bank
2. The need to develop a rebuilding plan
3. Review and potentially adjust herring accountability measures (AMs)
4. Coordinate with ASMFC and MAFMC (no specific action)

This was an update only and no action was taken at this meeting. The Herring committee is still uncertain how the above items will be bundled.

## **Habitat:**

Council received general updates on offshore wind and other topics, plus, they:

1. Adopted their aquaculture policy and submarine cable policy as revised on November 17, 2020.
2. The Council was asked to send a letter to Manna Fish Farms, Inc. conveying fisheries-related considerations related to the siting of their pre-application phase project southeast of Shinnecock Inlet, NY.
3. Council respond to NOAA Fisheries' request for information on Aquaculture Opportunity Areas, focusing on questions 9 and 10 on page 67521 of the Federal Register notice.

## **Atlantic Sea Scallops:**

1. Council Received an Overview of the 2020 Surveys, Along With Biomass Estimates and Initial Outlook for 2021

2. The results indicate that roughly two-thirds of the harvestable biomass – also known as exploitable biomass – is located in scallop rotational areas, and roughly one-third is available on open bottom.
3. Important to note, due to Covid, this year's surveys were conducted entirely through the industry-funded Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Receives-Overview-of-2020-Scallop-Surveys-Biomass-Estimates-and-Initial-2021-Outlook.pdf>

### **Whiting Committee Report:**

The council voted to take action on 2 items for Whiting, they are:

1. Consider southern whiting possession limit changes in the specifications package based on mesh size.
2. And include as a measure changing the northern red hake TAL trigger from 37.9% to 90%.

Additional information not published yet.

### **Groundfish:**

Council Approved Most of Framework 61 which does the following:

1. Sets fishing year 2021-2023 specifications for groundfish stocks
2. Updated status determination criteria for Georges Bank winter flounder and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder
3. Voted on a revised rebuilding strategy for white hake
4. Set total allowable catches (TACs) for three fish species, GB yellowtail flounder, Eastern GB haddock, and Eastern GB cod

And

5. At the January NEFMC meeting, the Council will vote on a universal sector exemption for redfish

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Approves-Most-of-Groundfish-Framework-61-Final-Vote-on-Redfish-Universal-Sector-Exemption-Slated-for-January.pdf>

### **Spiny Dogfish:**

Under the Dogfish Committee report the Council took 1 action as follows:

1. To adopt the following for the 2021 and 2022 fishing years' spiny dogfish specifications from Table 1 in the MAFMC Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee summary memo. I couldn't cut and paste the table but the pounds reflected in the table are 29,559,580 pounds and 13,400 metric tonnes.

**Skates:**

The council sent out Amendment 5 for 2 extra scoping meetings, they are seeking additional input on more options to manage the Skate wing and Bait fisheries that may go beyond or possibly not involve a limited access fishery.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Seeks-Input-on-More-Options-for-Skate-Wing-and-Bait-Fisheries-in-Amendment-5.pdf>