

Liaison Report from the January 26 thru January 28, 2020 NEFMC Meeting – Webinar

Groundfish:

During my December liaison report I reported out that the Council Approved Most of Framework 61.

At the January NEFMC meeting the council moved forward with an action to include a universal sector exemption for Acadian Redfish.

The Universal Exemptions include the following:

- Continue to allow use of a 5.5-inch codend (it was 6.5-inch)
- Increase the harvest of redfish while reducing bycatch of other groundfish stocks
- Restore flexibility lost with the 2020 contraction of the Redfish Exemption Area
- Remove areas from the exemption that provide little opportunity to effectively target redfish or areas that have little ability to achieve exemption performance thresholds.
- Voted to include a review of the exemption the next time the Redfish stock is assessed.

After taking up the Redfish Exemption, the Council voted to submit groundfish Framework 61 to GARFO including the Universal Sector Exemption for Redfish.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Votes-to-Submit-Groundfish-Framework-61-with-Universal-Sector-Exemption-for-Redfish.pdf>

Sea Scallops:

Council took final action and voted to send to NMFS for review and implementation Scallop Framework 33 for Fishing Year 2021 and set 2022 Default measures. These measures include:

- 4, 18,000 pound access area trips, 1 MAAA, 1.5 NLS-S and 1.5 CAII plus extension.
- CAII has a new seasonal closure from August 15 through November 30 (use to be through November 15) to reduce flatfish impacts
- The Council also voted to approve 24 Days at Sea

Additional information regarding Part Time Vessels and LAGC access area trips can be found in the link below.

Default measures for 2022 include:

1, 18,000 pound access area trip in the MAAA and 18 Das at Sea

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Signs-off-on-Scallop-Framework-33.pdf>

Small-Mesh Multispecies (Whiting):

The Council moved forward with 2021-2023 catch specifications and voted to submit the final document to NOAA fisheries for approval. These specifications include alternatives to:

- Reduced the Southern red hake ABC by 25% to increase stock rebuilding
- Set a 90% trigger TAL for northern red hake
- Increase whiting possession limit to 15,000 lbs. for trawls with less than 3-inch mesh

There was no press release (yet?) regarding Small-Mesh Multispecies but the decision document can be found here: https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/5_Decision-Documents-for-2021-2023-Specifications.pdf

Habitat:

Council moved to send a comment letter to BOEM regarding the DEIS for the South Fork Wind Farm

Other Business:

The Council made a motion that states:

The Herring Committee recommends the Council support efforts NMFS is currently doing related to exploring the potential use of closing the herring fishery when it is approaching a sub-ACL by VMS notification rather than a notice in the Federal Register