

# Liaison Report from the June 28<sup>th</sup> thru the 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 NEFMC Meeting in Portland, ME – Hybrid

## **Monkfish Committee Report:**

- Framework 13:

That the Council remove consideration of Vessel Monitoring System from the list of measures in Framework 13.

- Monkfish Research Set Aside priorities for 2023-2024 (not listed in priority order)
  1. Research on monkfish life history focusing on: (a) age and growth, (b) longevity, (c) reproduction and (d) natural mortality;
  2. Trawl and gillnet gear studies focusing on (a) bycatch reduction, including reducing interactions, and injury/mortality associated with these interactions, with sea turtles, Atlantic sturgeon, right and humpback whales, and other protected species and (b) size and/or species selectivity;
  3. Research on the pingers used for monkfish gillnet gear to reduce porpoise interactions, so that interaction with seals is also reduced (acoustic frequency and the number of pingers necessary per gillnet string); and
  4. Research to improve the monkfish market (e.g., increasing domestic demand, making new markets).

## **Groundfish Committee Report:**

- Framework Adjustment 65 / Specifications and Management Measures:
  1. That the Council write a letter to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council informing them of our intention to consider a Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder sub-ACL for the small mesh fisheries and inquire if they would like to consult on establishing the AM for those small mesh fisheries under their purview.
  2. That the Council include Georges Bank cod as a stock to pursue “additional measures to promote rebuilding” in Framework Adjustment 65, including mechanisms that could be adopted to minimize the impact to the commercial fishery if the recreational fishery exceeds its catch target
  3. That the Council consider the following analyses in the Amendment 23 review metrics:

- a. Comparison of target coverage rates vs. realized coverage rates, including comparison between vessels using EM monitoring tools and human at-sea monitors
- b. The number of trips where waivers for monitoring requirements are issued and the reason for the waiver
- c. Evidence of bias in catch reporting between monitored and un-monitored trips, including:
  1. Trip duration
  2. Species composition and size composition of landed groundfish
  3. Species composition and weight of discarded groundfish
  4. Ratio of landed to discarded fish by species

d. Overall industry and agency costs for meeting monitoring requirements, including a cost comparison between EM-monitored trips and human at-sea monitored trips e.

e. Efficacy of the Dockside Monitoring Program required in the Maximized Retention EM program, including purpose of the program (size composition and weights of sub-legal fish, validating dealer weights, hold inspection) cost of the program and the use of information collected

Additional information including other Groundfish Motions can be found here: <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Final-Motions-June-2022.pdf>

### **Habitat Committee Report:**

1. The Council agreed by consensus that staff compose a comment letter to BOEM in response to the request for comments on the Draft Fisheries Mitigation Guidance and have the Executive Committee review before sending by the August 22 deadline.

2. That the Council send BOEM a letter urging a completed Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA, supported by an inclusive collaborative planning effort (like the Maine roadmap), for the entire Gulf of Maine Planning Area prior to the identification of any Wind Energy Areas (and subsequent leasing) to better understand the ecological risks and cumulative impacts of offshore wind development on important resources including: fishing communities and their cultural heritage (e.g., fishing businesses with portfolios located entirely within the Gulf of Maine); NEFMC managed stocks (and impact of altered federal surveys); deep sea corals and other sensitive and vulnerable habitat; as well as ESA-listed species and their designated critical habitat (e.g., North Atlantic right whale, Atlantic salmon, Atlantic sturgeon, leatherback sea turtles).

- Southern New England Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) Framework

This Motion was postponed from April Council meeting

That the Council selects as a preferred alternative an area overlapping offshore wind lease sites in Southern New England buffered by approximately 10 km on all sides as a Habitat Area of Particular Concern, due to the potential adverse impacts associated with offshore wind-energy

development on sensitive hard-bottom habitats and cod spawning activity, as provided in 50 CFR 600.815(a)(8)(i), (ii), and (iii). The designation would apply to locations within the mapped area where there is evidence of cod spawning activity, as defined in Alternative 3 and/or complex benthic habitat, as defined in Alternatives 4, in the draft framework document

**Scallop Committee Report:**

2023/2024 Scallop RSA Research Priorities:

**# HIGH PRIORITY (1)**

1 Scallop Resource Surveys

**# MEDIUM PRIORITY (2-7)**

2 Scallop Biology

3 Sea Turtle Research

4 Enhancement

5 Habitat Characterization

6 High Density Areas

7 Wind

**# GENERAL RESEARCH (8-9)**

8 Bycatch: Small scallops & non-target species

9 Gear: Commercial dredge research

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

The Council will be holding six EBFM public information workshops later this fall using presentations and outreach materials already developed by the Council.

**Herring and Industry Funded Monitoring (IFM):**

Council Received Updates on the 2023-2025 Specs; they discussed the Status of Framework 7, and received an update regarding Industry-Funded Monitoring

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Updates-2023-2025-Atlantic-Herring-Specs-Discusses-Status-of-Framework-7-Industry-Funded-Monitoring.pdf>