



Spiny Dogfish Committee Meeting Summary

October 1, 2021

Webinar

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Spiny Dogfish Committee met on October 1, 2021 at 10am. The purpose was to review 2022 fishing year specifications and make any appropriate recommendations.

Spiny Dogfish Committee Attendees: Sonny Gwin (Committee chair), Rick Bellavance (Committee vice-chair), Chris Batsavage, Dan Farnham, Daniel Salerno, Skip Feller, Nichola Meserve, Maureen Davidson, Jay Hermsen, and Dewey Hemilright.

Other Attendees: Jason Didden, Cynthia Ferrio, Toni Kerns, Joe Cimino, Meredith Whitten, Willow Patten, John Whiteside, Greg DiDomenico, James Fletcher, and Alan Bianchi.

After reviewing recent fishery performance, the Committee did not recommend any changes to the quotas part of specifications (no action needed). The Committee voted to recommend an increase for the federal trip limit to 7,500 pounds (a similar scale of increase as previously done via specifications). The Committee also recommended that the Council later consider additional changes via a framework action, pending the results of the research track assessment:

I move that the Committee recommend to the Councils that they adopt a trip limit increase to 7,500 pounds via the most expedient process possible (Likely via specifications with an expedited NEPA document if possible). Hemilright/Bellavance 9/0/1

I move that the Committee recommend to the Councils that they prioritize a framework to consider additional trip limit changes, with work beginning after the completion of the research track assessment. Farnham/Hemilright 9/0/1

Discussion centered on the effects of an increased trip limit, with public comment indicating that effort would not be expected to increase compared to recent years as current effort is less than recent years. The goal of a trip limit increase is to return to recent effort/landings to preserve markets. Staff noted many trips have landed at or near the trip limit in recent years, so increasing the trip limit would be expected to increase landings to some degree. Staff will provide additional preliminary trip-level analysis at the meeting if possible.

Various process considerations were discussed, and given the contraindications regarding criteria for emergency action, a moderate trip limit change made via the specifications process would likely be most expedient. The target date for a change would be the start of the next fishing year, i.e. May 1, 2022. An advantage of using a framework process is that additional public comment can be solicited, but a framework takes longer and requires both Councils to approve any measures (as opposed to specifications, where NMFS has flexibility to resolve any differences).