



National Marine Fisheries Service  
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
[www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov)



# Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Actions

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Prepared for the October 5-8, 2020  
Meeting of the  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

October 2, 2020

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## **New England Council Actions**

### **Small-Mesh Multispecies**

None at this time.

### **Groundfish**

#### **Fishing Year 2020 Recreational Management Measures**

On August 14, 2020, NMFS published an interim final rule in the *Federal Register* (85 FR 49602) that set fishing year 2020 recreational management measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock. The action was necessary to respond to updated catch and other information, and the measures are intended to ensure the recreational fishery achieves but does not exceed, fishing year 2020 catch limits. This action implemented the recreational management measures recommended by the New England Fishery Management Council at its June meeting. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).

### **Scallops**

None at this time.

### **Herring**

None at this time.

### **Monkfish**

On September 17, 2020, NMFS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* (85 FR 57986) implementing Framework Adjustment 12 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. This rule sets 2020 specifications for the northern and southern management areas, projects specifications for fishing years 2021 and 2022, and makes minor corrections/clarifications to the regulations. The final rule becomes effective on October 19, 2020. For additional information, please contact Allison Murphy at (978) 281-9122 or email at [Allison.Murphy@noaa.gov](mailto:Allison.Murphy@noaa.gov).

### **Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab**

None at this time.

### **Skate**

None at this time.

## **Spiny Dogfish**

None at this time.

## **Mid-Atlantic Council Actions**

### **Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass**

#### **Notice of Availability for Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan**

On July 29, 2020, NMFS published a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* (85 FR 45571) for Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (the Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment). Amendment 21 proposes revisions to the summer flounder commercial state quota allocation percentages and the fishery management plan goals and objectives. The comment period for the notice of availability closed September 28, 2020. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978)281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

#### **Proposed Rule for Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan**

On August 12, 2020, NMFS published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (85 FR 48660) for Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP. Amendment 21 proposes revisions to the summer flounder commercial state quota allocation percentages and the fishery management plan goals and objectives. The comment period on the proposed rule closed **September 11, 2020**. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978)281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

### **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog**

None at this time.

## **Atlantic Bluefish**

None at this time.

## **Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish**

### **Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP (Chub Amendment)**

NMFS published a final rule on August 4, 2020 (85 FR 47103) implementing measures approved under Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP on May 4, 2020. This action integrates Atlantic chub mackerel into the FMP and implements long-term measures to replace temporary measures implemented under Amendment 18 in 2017. Specifically, it identifies goals and objectives for managing Atlantic chub mackerel; specifies status determination criteria; designates essential fish habitat; establishes a specifications process; sets annual catch limits for 2020-2022; and implements accountability measures, possession limits, permitting and reporting requirements, and other administrative measures for Atlantic chub mackerel caught from Maine through North Carolina. These measures were effective on September 3, 2020. For additional information, please contact Douglas Christel at (978) 281-9141, or [Douglas.Christel@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Christel@noaa.gov).

### **2020 Illex Squid Specifications Adjustment**

NMFS published a temporary final rule on August 4, 2020 (85 FR 47102) to increase the 2020 Illex squid specifications from an acceptable biological catch limit of 26,000 mt to 30,000 mt. This rule was effective upon publication. For additional information, please contact Aly Pitts at (978) 281-9352 or by email at [alyson.pitts@noaa.gov](mailto:alyson.pitts@noaa.gov).

## **Tilefish**

### **Private Recreational Tilefish Permitting and Reporting**

On July 16, 2020, NMFS published a final rule to implement permitting and reporting requirements for private recreational tilefish vessels (85 FR 43149). Any vessel that intends to fish for golden and/or blueline tilefish north of the Virginia/North Carolina line must obtain a Federal private recreational tilefish vessel permit before taking a trip through Fish Online. Private recreational tilefish vessels are also required to submit electronic vessel trip reports for any trip targeting tilefish through a NMFS-approved electronic reporting system. Trip reports must be submitted within 24-hour of returning to port. The rule became effective August 17, 2020. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225, or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

## **Other Actions**

### **Paperwork Reduction Act**

None at this time.

## **Jonah Crab**

None at this time.

## **Industry Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment**

None at this time.

## **Lobster**

None at this time.

## **Habitat Actions**

### **Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment**

On August 26, 2019, NMFS published a Notice of Availability for the Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment (84 FR 44596) to solicit public on the approval of the Amendment. On November 20, 2019, NMFS approved this action. The Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment will implement measures that reduce impacts of fishing gear on deep-sea corals in the Gulf of Maine and on the outer continental shelf. In doing so, this action will prohibit the use of mobile bottom-tending gear in two areas in the Gulf of Maine (Mount Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge), and it will prohibit the use of all bottom-tending gear (with an exception for red crab pots) along the outer continental shelf in waters no shallower than 600 meters. On January 3, 2020, NMFS published a proposed rule for the Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment (85 FR 285) to solicit further public comment. The public comment period closed on February 18, 2020. NMFS is developing a final rule that will implement this action. For additional information, please contact Travis Ford at (978) 281-9233 or email at [Travis.Ford@noaa.gov](mailto:Travis.Ford@noaa.gov).

## **Protected Resources Actions**

None at this time.

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Applications Under Review**

On June 2, 2020, and August 6, 2020, NMFS received two EFP applications from the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation. Both applications are requests for EFPs to conduct a ventless trap survey and a gillnet survey in the South Fork wind farm lease area. The ventless trap survey will focus on monitoring of scup, black sea bass, and tautog. Survey trips will take place seasonally once per month from April through October through the project period. This will result in three continuous survey periods, August 2020 through October 2020, April 2021 through October 2021, and April 2022 through July 2022. Each survey will consist of two one

day trips. The gillnet survey will focus on monitoring of monkfish and winter skate. Survey trips will take place seasonally four times per month from April through June and again from October through December for each project year resulting in four sampling periods. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225, or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

On March 4, 2020, NMFS received an application from the Northeast Sector Service Network for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) in support of an ongoing project to develop a maximized retention electronic monitoring (MREM) program to meet monitoring requirements for the Northeast multispecies fishery. This EFP would allow one MREM participant to conduct exploratory fishing for haddock and pollock while using a 5.1-inch square mesh codend without gear modifiers in the Redfish Exemption Area. The vessel would use electronic monitoring on 100 percent of sector trips and the video footage would be used to confirm that the vessel complied with retention requirements. Catch would be assessed via a dockside monitoring program. For additional information, please contact Mark Grant at (978) 281-9145 or email at [mark.grant@noaa.gov](mailto:mark.grant@noaa.gov).

On June 2, 2020, NMFS received an application for an EFP from the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation to conduct a beam trawl survey in and around the South Fork Wind Farm work area. The purpose of this study is to collect oceanographic data and pre-construction data on the abundance, size structure, and distribution of marine organisms in and around the work area. The EFP would authorize 8 vessels to conduct up to 24 1-day sampling trips from September 2020 through July 2022 (1 trip per month). Nine tows would be completed during each sampling trip: Three tows in a sampling area inside the South Fork Wind Farm work area, and six tows in reference areas adjacent to the work area. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 618-8923 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Application Review Completed**

On June 24, 2020, NMFS issued a Scientific Research Letter of Acknowledgment (LOA) to the Maine Department of Marine Resources to support tagging research of Atlantic halibut in the Gulf of Maine. Up to 60 halibut would be captured, tagged, and released using bottom longline in the Gulf of Maine during the summer of 2020. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On July 31, 2020, NMFS issued a Scientific Research Permit (SRP) to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in support of the fall Gulf of Maine bottom longline survey and supporting catchability research. Research would be conducted using bottom longline in the Gulf of Maine between August and November of 2020. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On July 31, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in support of an ongoing project to develop a maximized retention electronic monitoring program to meet

monitoring requirements for the Northeast multispecies fishery. Under the EFP, participating vessels are required to retain all catch of allocated groundfish. Vessels are required to use electronic monitoring on 100 percent of sector trips and the video footage would be used to confirm that vessels complied with retention requirements. Catch for each trip is assessed shoreside via a dockside monitoring program. The EFP also exempts participating vessels from the following regulations: portions of Northeast multispecies closed areas; minimum fish sizes, minimum mesh sizes, and sector third-party monitoring requirements. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978) 281-9255 or email at [claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov](mailto:claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov).

On July 31, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the University of Connecticut to conduct a lobster growth study. Participating vessels will collect up to 18 undersized and 20 egg-bearing female lobsters. Exemptions allow the possession of undersize, v-notched, and egg-bearing lobsters and the sale of the lobsters retained for sampling to a research organization that does not hold a Federal dealer permit. The lobsters will be transported to the research to conduct tests on the impact of endocrine disrupting chemicals on lobster growth. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225, or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

On June 5, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the Coonamessett Farm Foundation in support of a research project testing alternative gillnet configurations in the Georges Bank haddock fishery. The EFP allows two participating vessels to test the selectivity of gillnets with 6.0-inch mesh on Georges Bank and in southern New England. Coonamessett Farm technicians would be on board for all trips. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On June 24, 2020, NMFS issued a Scientific Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) to the Maine Department of Marine Resources to support ongoing tagging studies of Atlantic halibut in the Gulf of Maine. Up to 60 halibut would be captured and tagged by two vessels using bottom longline in the Gulf of Maine. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On July 6, 2020, NMFS issued an LOA to the Maine Department of Marine Resources in support of the 2020 Maine-New Hampshire inshore trawl survey. Two survey cruises will be conducted using a modified shrimp trawl net: One survey cruise will be conducted during fall 2020, and a second survey cruise will be conducted during spring 2021. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 618-8923 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

On July 31, 2020, NMFS issued a Scientific Research Permit (SRP) to the Northeast Fishery Science Center to support their annual fall Gulf of Maine bottom longline survey and additional longline catchability research. Research would be conducted using bottom longline in the Gulf of Maine during the summer and fall of 2020. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On September 3, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the Cape Cod Commercial Fisherman's Alliance in support of an exploratory fishing project to facilitate catch of haddock in the Southern New England Regulated Mesh Area without increasing discards of sublegal flounder species. From September 4, 2020 through June 31, 2021, two trawl vessels participating in the Alliance's Audit



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Model Electronic Monitoring EFP may use 6-inch diamond mesh codends in the Southern New England Regulated Mesh Area. This is the second year of this project, for which an EFP was issued last year on December 19, 2019. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).

On September 9, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries for their annual ventless lobster trap survey. The purpose of this survey is to provide fishery-independent data on lobster growth and abundance within Massachusetts state waters of statistical areas 514 and 538. The EFP will authorize the six participating vessels to deploy three standard and three ventless traps per six-pot trawl. Four vessels in statistical area 514 will each have 12 research trawls, one vessel in statistical area 538 will have 11, and the other will have 13 research trawls. Stations will be sampled twice per month from June through October, 2020. Sampling trips will occur after a soak time of 3-5 days and at least one MA DMF scientist will be on board for the sampling trips. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225 or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

On September 21, 2020, NMFS issued an EFP to the Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) for their 2019 Monkfish Research Set Aside Days at Sea (DAS) award. The EFP exempts the participating vessels from the landing limits for the monkfish northern and southern Fishery Management Areas. CFF was awarded 161 DAS, or 655,914 lb allocation of whole monkfish. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225 or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).