



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 5-6, 2021  
Meeting of the  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

October 1, 2021

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## **New England Council Actions**

### **Small-Mesh Multispecies**

None at this time.

### **Groundfish**

#### **2021 Recreational Measures for Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock**

On August 18, 2021, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that recreational measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock would remain in place for the remainder of the 2021 fishing year. Measures include an April 1-14 recreational season for cod, as well as a September 15-30 season for private anglers and a September 8-October 7 season for for-hire vessels. During these seasons anglers would be allowed one cod 21 inches or larger. Anglers are allowed to harvest 15 haddock 17 inches or larger from May 1-February 28 and April 1-30. These regulations are consistent with the Council's recommendation for status quo measures for fishing year 2021. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

### **Scallops**

#### **Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan**

On September 9, 2021, NMFS published a notice of availability (86 FR 50320) for Amendment 21 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan. Amendment 21 is intended to promote conservation of the scallop resource in the Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area and to manage total removals from the area by all fishery components. Amendment 21 would also expand flexibility in the limited access general category individual fishing quota fishery to reduce impacts of potential decreases in ex-vessel price and increases in operating costs. The comment period for this action ends on November 8, 2021, and NMFS will publish a proposed rule for this action shortly. For additional information, please contact Travis Ford at (978) 281-9233 or email at [Travis.Ford@noaa.gov](mailto:Travis.Ford@noaa.gov).

### **Herring**

None at this time.

## **Monkfish**

None at this time.

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

None at this time.

## **Skate**

### **Rescission of Control Dates**

On August 31, 2021, NMFS published a notice in the *Federal Register* (86 FR 48608) to rescind the control dates for each sector of the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery, as requested by the New England Fishery Management Council. At its April 2021 meeting, the Council decided to discontinue development of a limited access program in Amendment 5, in favor of other management strategies to address latent effort. In conjunction with that decision, the Council decided that both control dates for the wing and bait skate fisheries are too outdated to be used should a limited access program be reconsidered in the future, and voted to request their rescission at its following meeting in June 2021. Therefore, on behalf of the Council, this notice announces the rescission of the July 30, 2009, and March 31, 2014, control dates, which means that both dates are no longer considered dates for entry into the bait and skate wing fisheries, respectively. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Ferrio at (978) 281-9180 or email at [Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov).

## **Spiny Dogfish**

None at this time.

## **Mid-Atlantic Council Actions**

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

On September 24, 2021, NMFS published a temporary rule (86 FR 53011) to adjust the Winter II period quota for scup. For 2021, the initial Winter II quota is 3,267,825 lb. The best available landings information indicated that 3,415,629 lb remained of the 9,247,904 lb Winter I quota. Consistent with Framework 3, the full amount of unused 2021 Winter I quota was transferred to Winter II, resulting in a revised 2021 Winter II quota of 6,683,454 lb. Because the amount transferred was between 3.0 and 3.5 million lb, the Federal per trip possession limit increased from 12,000 lb to 21,000 lb. The new possession limit will be effective October 1 through December 31, 2021. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225 or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

## Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

None at this time.

## Atlantic Bluefish

### **Notice of Availability for Amendment 7 to Bluefish Fishery Management Plan**

On September 1, 2021, NMFS published a Notification of Availability in the *Federal Register* (86 FR 48968) for Amendment 7 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (the Comprehensive Reallocation and Rebuilding Amendment), as approved by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. This Amendment proposed to revise the goals and objectives of the fishery management plan, reallocate quota between the commercial and recreational fisheries, reallocate commercial quota among the states, implement a rebuilding plan using a constant fishing mortality strategy, revise the sector quota transfer, and revise how management uncertainty is applied during the specifications process. Amendment 7 is intended to use the best information available to update the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan, by responding to changes in stock health and distribution, while recognizing economic need and reliance throughout the management area. The comment period for this notice of availability ends on November 1, 2021, and a final rule is under development. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Ferrio at (978) 281-9180 or email at [Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov).

### **Proposed Rule for Amendment 7 to Bluefish Fishery Management Plan**

On September 13, 2021, NMFS published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (86 FR 50866) for Amendment 7 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (the Comprehensive Reallocation and Rebuilding Amendment), as approved by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. This Amendment proposed to revise the goals and objectives of the fishery management plan, reallocate quota between the commercial and recreational fisheries, reallocate commercial quota among the states, implement a rebuilding plan using a constant fishing mortality strategy, revise the sector quota transfer, and revise how management uncertainty is applied during the specifications process. Amendment 7 is intended to use the best information available to update the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan, by responding to changes in stock health and distribution, while recognizing economic need and reliance throughout the management area. The comment period for this notice of availability ends on October 13, 2021, and the final rule is under development. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Ferrio at (978) 281-9180 or email at [Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov).

### **2022-2023 Specifications**

A proposed rule is under development to implement catch specifications for the 2022 and 2023 bluefish fishery based on the most recent scientific information and the changes made in Amendment 7. The proposed specifications would set bluefish catch limits following recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, the Bluefish Monitoring Committee, and the Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's

Bluefish Board. These proposed catch limits would implement the 7-year rebuilding plan for the stock. The resulting specifications increase the commercial quota by about 28 percent and the recreational harvest limit by approximately 67 percent, and no changes are proposed to any current recreational or commercial management measures. This action cannot publish before Amendment 7 is final, however NMFS is working to publish the rule in time for the January 1, 2022 start of the fishing year. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Ferrio at (978) 281-9180 or email at [Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Ferrio@noaa.gov).

### **Quota Transfers**

On July 13, 2021, NMFS published a notice (86 FR 36671) of a bluefish quota transfer from the Commonwealth of Virginia to the state of New York. Virginia transferred 50,000 lb of bluefish commercial quota to New York through mutual agreement of the states. On September 7, 2021, NMFS published a notice (86 FR 49929) of a bluefish quota transfer from the state of Maine to the state of Rhode Island. Maine transferred 15,000 lb of bluefish commercial quota to Rhode Island. On September 24, 2021, NMFS published a notice (86 FR 53012) of bluefish quota transfers from the Commonwealth of Virginia to the state of New York and the state of New Jersey to the state of North Carolina. Virginia is transferring 20,000 lb to New York, and New Jersey is transferring 40,000 lb to North Carolina through mutual agreement of the states. These transfers were requested to ensure that the receiving states would not exceed their 2021 state quota. For additional information please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225, or email at [Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov).

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

None at this time.

### **Tilefish**

None at this time.

### **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**

None at this time.

## **Protected Resources Actions**

None at this time.

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

None at this time.

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

On August 17, 2021, NMFS issued a LOA to the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) in support of its 2021 Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey. The purpose of this survey is to collaborate with the fishing industry to assess fish stocks in inshore waters off the coast of Maine and New Hampshire. DMR will partner with one commercial fishing vessel to conduct two survey cruises using a modified shrimp net: One in Fall 2021, and one in Spring 2022. For more information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 291-9196 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

On Friday, August 20, 2021, NMFS issued a modified Maximized Retention Electronic Monitoring EFP to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. The modification included a new exemption from the minimum mesh size of the Universal Sector Redfish Exemption program. This exemption allows participating vessels to continue using 4.5 inch mesh codends while fishing in the redfish exemption area. 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 15, 2021, Virginia Tech was issued a LOA to support a study of growth and maturity in blueline tilefish. One vessel will collect approximately 288 blueline tilefish using rod and reel gear over the course of 24 trips in the Hudson Canyon area. Additional research trips will be made off of North Carolina/South Carolina and Florida under authorizations issued by the Southeast Regional Office. For additional information, please contact Douglas Potts at [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

On Thursday, September 16, 2021, NMFS issued an Exempted Educational Activity Authorization (EEAA) to the University of New England (UNE) in support of its Marine & Coastal Field Techniques course. From the date of issuance to November 1, 2021, three vessels owned and operated by UNE may take a total of approximately 6 trips under the EEAA, during which students would fish with typical rod and reel gear for a variety of species, including groundfish, tuna, and sharks. They would additionally deploy a single pot/trap with the intention of collecting live white hake. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).