



National Marine Fisheries Service
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov



Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Actions

Prepared for the October 4-6, 2022
Meeting of the
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

September 29, 2022

Table of Contents

NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL ACTIONS.....2
SMALL-MESH MULTISPECIES.....2
GROUND FISH.....2
SCALLOPS2
HERRING2
MONKFISH2
ATLANTIC DEEP-SEA RED CRAB2
SKATE.....2
MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL ACTIONS.....2
SPINY DOGFISH.....2
SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS.....3
SURFLAM AND OCEAN QUAHOG.....3
ATLANTIC BLUEFISH.....3
ATLANTIC MACKEREL, SQUID, AND BUTTERFISH4
TILEFISH4
OTHER ACTIONS.....5
PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT.....5
JONAH CRAB.....5
INDUSTRY FUNDED MONITORING OMNIBUS AMENDMENT5
LOBSTER.....5
HABITAT ACTIONS.....5
PROTECTED RESOURCES ACTIONS.....5
**RESEARCH PERMITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS - APPLICATIONS
UNDER REVIEW.....5**
**RESEARCH PERMITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS – APPLICATION
REVIEW COMPLETED.....6**

New England Council Actions

Small-Mesh Multispecies

None at this time.

Groundfish

2022 Recreational Rule for Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock

On August 2, 2022, NMFS published a proposed rule that would modify recreational measures for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock for the remainder of the 2022 fishing year. Comments on the proposed measures are being accepted through August 17, 2022. Proposed measures include an expanded fall season for GOM cod (September 1 through October 7 for all modes) and a 20-fish limit for GOM haddock. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov.

Scallops

None at this time.

Herring

None at this time.

Monkfish

None at this time.

Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab

None at this time.

Skate

None at this time.

Mid-Atlantic Council Actions

Spiny Dogfish

None at this time.

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

Amendment 22

On August 11, 2022, NMFS published a proposed rule to implement Amendment 22 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP. This action would revised the commercial and recreational sector allocations for each stock based on revised Marine Recreational Information Program data. The comment period for this rule closed on September 12, 2022, and we are preparing a final rule. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov.

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

Surfclam/Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment (Amendment 20)

On August 10, 2022, NMFS published a Notice of Availability (87 FR 48617) to solicit public comment on the Secretary's formal decision whether to approve the amendment with a comment period open until October 11, 2022. On August 24, 2022, we published a Proposed Rule (87 FR 51955) seeking comment on potential implementing regulations with a comment period open until September 23, 2022. Amendment 20 proposes to implement limits on the amount of quota share or annual cage tags that participants in the individual transferable quota (ITQ) fishery could hold. The Amendment also adjusts the maximum duration of multiyear specifications to match the stock assessment schedule and updates the FMP goals and objectives. We will consider any comments submitted through Regulations.gov under either document for both the approval of the amendment and the suitability of the proposed regulations. There is no need to submit the same comments twice. For additional information, contact Doug Potts at (978) 281-9341 or Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov.

Atlantic Bluefish

None at this time.

Quota Transfers

Summer Flounder

On August 16, 2022, NMFS published a notice (87 FR 50273) of a summer flounder quota transfer from the State of North Carolina to the Commonwealth of Virginia. North Carolina transferred 7,775 lb of summer flounder commercial quota to Virginia through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to repay landings made by out-of-state permitted vessels under a safe harbor agreement. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

Bluefish

On August 9, 2022, NMFS published a notice (87 FR 48449) of a bluefish quota transfer from the

State of Maryland to the State of Rhode Island. Maryland transferred 30,000 lb of bluefish commercial quota to Rhode Island through mutual agreements of the states. This transfer was requested to ensure that Rhode Island would not exceed its 2022 state quota. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish

Amendment 22

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council adopted Amendment 22 to the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP for Secretarial review at its July 2020 meeting. The notice of availability for the amendment was published on June 7, 2022, and public comment closed on August 8, 2022 (87 FR 34629). We did not publish a proposed rule for this action and issued a decision of disapproval on September 6, 2022. This disapproval applies to the proposed revision of the number and type of *Illex* squid permits to reduce the negative effects from a perceived race to fish in recent years. The action has been returned to the Council for reconsideration, and the Council may take further action to remedy the inconsistencies found in the original amendment. Separate from the *Illex* squid permit alternatives, this action included a recommendation from the Council to revise the FMP goals and objectives, which we intend to approve through a published notice. For additional information please contact Carly Bari at (978) 281-9150 or Carly.Bari@noaa.gov.

Tilefish

2022-2024 Blueline Tilefish Specifications

On August 8, 2022, NMFS published a proposed rule for 2022-2024 blueline tilefish specifications (87 FR 47181). The proposed specifications are status quo from 2021. The fishery is currently operating under a rollover provision. The comment period was open through August 15, 2022. A final rule is under development. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225 or email at Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov.

Framework 7 to the Tilefish FMP

On September 14, 2022, NMFS published a proposed rule for Framework 7 to the Tilefish FMP (87 FR 56393). This rule includes 2022-2024 specifications for the golden tilefish fishery. This action would also modify the annual specifications process, so that specifications could be set for the maximum number of years needed to be consistent with the Northeast Region Coordinating Council-approved stock assessment schedule. Additionally, this action would change the start of the golden tilefish fishing year from November 1 to January 1. The comment period is open through September 29, 2022. For additional information, please contact Laura Hansen at (978) 281-9225 or email at Laura.Hansen@noaa.gov.

Other Actions

Paperwork Reduction Act

NMFS must submit collection of information requirements to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval. NMFS will soon publish a 60-day notice for the extension of Paperwork Reduction Act requirements associated with the Atlantic herring fishery, specifically Amendment 5 and the New England Industry-Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment. Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 60 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either "Atlantic Herring Amendment 5 Data Collection" or the OMB Control Number 0648-0674. For additional information, please contact Carrie Nordeen at (978) 281-9272 or email at Carrie.Nordeen@noaa.gov.

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

On August 22, 2022, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science requested a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) to collect pre-construction data, with a focus on black sea bass, in an area off the coast of Virginia leased for wind development. Sampling would take place approximately every 14 days, with 6 trips from mid-October 2022, to early January 2023, and 20 trips from late March to early December 2023. The project team would place a randomized mix

of eight total ventless and vented pots on six trawls without vertical lines. They would retrieve the trawls via grappling and explore a transition to the use of acoustic on-demand systems. GPS-marked gear locations would be shared via a webpage. Two Star-Oddi sensors would collect temperature data, and GoPro cameras would be used to determine the impact of the soak durations on the catch. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

Research Permits and Acknowledgments – Application Review Completed

On August 22, 2022, NMFS issued an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center to continue trials of on-demand fishing gear in the American lobster and Jonah crab fishery. The goal of this study is to support the development of strategies to reduce entanglement risk to protected species through trials of on-demand gear in a variety of oceanographic conditions and trials of gear marking systems' ability to consistently locate gear and to alert other fishermen to its presence. The EFP authorizes 27 vessels to participate in the trial, with the opportunity to expand the permit to include up to 100 vessels, between August 22, 2022, and August 21, 2023. Participating vessels may replace up to 10 of their existing trawls with modified, on-demand trawls. This project will include the opportunity for up to 30 of the participating vessels at a time to trial gear (up to 300 trawls total) without static vertical lines in Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) Restricted Areas. This project will also allow up to 25 vessels to retrieve buoyless gear via grappling (up to 250 trawls total) to enable the Center to collect data on the viability of grappling at a commercial scale. Other than gear markings, all trawls will be consistent with the regulations of the management area where the vessel is fishing and will include no more than 50 traps per trawl. The project includes additional measures to minimize the risk of impacts to protected species and to reduce the risk of gear conflicts. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

On August 30, 2022, NMFS issued an LOA to Virginia Tech acknowledging blueline tilefish surveys in the Hudson Canyon region. The goal of this project is to collect early growth and maturity status data on deepwater blueline tilefish. The project team will use rod and reel to collect up to 20 small (up to 400 millimeter total length) and 2 larger (greater than 400 millimeter total length) blueline tilefish per trip, with a goal to collect a total of 288 blueline tilefish. The investigators will take approximately 3 trips per month between September and November 2022, and March and August 2023 (24 total). In addition to blueline tilefish, the project team plans to retain any small golden tilefish caught dead. Samples will be transferred for analysis at Virginia Tech and the Beaufort, NC NOAA lab. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

On September 13, 2022, NMFS issued an LOA to Rutgers University acknowledging its efforts to conduct a structured habitat survey as part of the Ocean Wind Offshore Wind Farm – Fisheries Monitoring Plan. The goal is to investigate the relative abundance and demographics of structure-associated fish species in the Ocean Wind 1 lease area, a nearby control site, and nearby locations prior to, during and after wind turbine construction. The acknowledged study period runs from

Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Regulatory Actions

September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023 (pre-construction). Investigators will conduct 6 single-day surveys in the winter, spring, summer, and fall (24 total), sampling 3 stations per day (18 stations per season). At each station, 6 Chevron fish traps will soak for 1.5 hours, and 4-5 anglers will fish with rod and reel for up to 1 hour. Investigators will deploy one benthic and one pelagic, baited underwater camera for one hour per trip at each station. They will tag a subset of catch with conventional t-bar anchor tags or acoustic transmitters. For additional information please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov.

On September 21, 2022, NMFS issued a Scientific Research Permit (SRP) to the Northeast Fishery Science Center (NEFSC) in support of a tagging study of pollock in the Gulf of Maine. The SRP authorizes NEFSC to tag pollock harvested using hook and line gear in the Gulf of Maine during September and October of 2022. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov.

On September 27, 2022, NMFS issued an LOA to the University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science & Technology in support of a multi-year trawl survey near the Mayflower Wind Farm. The trawl survey will operate for 16 days each season, conducting up to 60 twenty-minute tows per season. On board, all fish will be sorted by species and sampled. For additional information, please contact Samantha Tolken at (978) 675-2176 or email at Samantha.Tolken@noaa.gov.