



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 August 8-11, 2023  
Meeting of the  
Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council

August 4, 2023

## **New England Council Actions**

### **Small-Mesh Multispecies**

None at this time.

### **Groundfish**

#### **Inseason Action: Gulf of Maine Cod Trimester TAC Area Closure for the Common Pool Fishery**

On August 1, 2023 NMFS published a temporary rule in the *Federal Register* (88 FR 50065) that closed the Gulf of Maine Cod Trimester Total Allowable Catch Area to Northeast multispecies common pool vessels fishing with trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear, through August 31, 2023. The closure is required because the common pool fishery is projected to have caught over 90 percent of its Trimester 1 quota for Gulf of Maine cod. This closure is intended to prevent an overage of the common pool quota for this stock. 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**

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 23 Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocations

On August 2, 2023, NMFS notified the Council of our decision on Amendment 23. We have disapproved the adjustment to the process for setting the state allocations and the addition of the state allocations and payback provisions to the Council's FMP. We have approved the changes to the Federal commercial in-season closure regulations for black sea bass. Our disapproval of the addition of the state allocations and associated provisions to the Federal FMP does not impact the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan. We intend to publish the final rule prior to the start of the black sea bass fishing year on January 1, 2024. The final rule will include responses to all of the comments received and additional rationale for our partial approval of this amendment. For additional information, please contact Mark Grant at (978) 282-9145 or [Mark.Grant@noaa.gov](mailto:Mark.Grant@noaa.gov).

### Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

None at this time.

### Atlantic Bluefish

None at this time.

### Quota Transfers

On June 20, 2023, and July 11, 2023, NMFS published notice (88 FR 39793; 88 FR 44063) of summer flounder quota transfers from the State of Maryland to the State of New Jersey and the State of North Carolina to the State of Rhode Island in the *Federal Register*. Maryland transferred 4,598 lb of summer flounder commercial quota to New Jersey, and North Carolina transferred 25,273 lb of summer flounder commercial quota to Rhode Island, through mutual agreement of the states. These transfers were requested to repay landings made by out-of-state permitted vessels under safe harbor agreements. For additional information, please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov).

### Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish

#### Final 2023-2025 Specifications for Atlantic Chub Mackerel, Longfin Squid, *Illex* Squid, and Butterfish

On July 27, 2023, NMFS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* (88 FR 48389) implementing 2023-2025 specifications for chub mackerel, longfin squid, *Illex* squid, and butterfish, effective upon publication. This action maintains the 2022 chub mackerel and longfin squid specifications for 2023. This action also maintains the 2022 *Illex* squid acceptable biological catch (ABC) for 2023, but slightly increases the domestic annual harvest based on a new discard rate. This action also implements 2023 and projected 2024 butterfish specifications, and maintains the existing butterfish mortality cap in the longfin squid fishery for 2023. For additional information, please contact Shannah Jaburek at (978) 281-282-8456 or email at [Shannah.Jaburek@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannah.Jaburek@noaa.gov).

### **2023 Longfin Squid Trimester II Closure**

On July 28, 2023, a temporary rule was filed in the *Federal Register* (88 FR 50808) implementing a closure of the directed longfin squid fishery for the remainder of Trimester II, effective August 2, 2023. While this closure is in effect, vessels may not fish for, possess, or land more than 250 lb of longfin squid per trip, or land longfin squid more than once per calendar day. The mackerel, squid, and butterfish regulations require NMFS to implement this closure when the Regional Administrator projects that 90 percent of the Trimester II longfin squid quota will be caught. There is an exception for vessels issued a Tier 1 or Tier 2 longfin squid moratorium permit that take declared *Illex* squid trips in the *Illex* Squid Exemption Area. This temporary rule expires on August 31, 2023. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

### **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**

On July 13, 2023, UMass Dartmouth's School for Marine Science and Technology submitted an application for a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) to assess impacts of offshore wind development on fish and invertebrate abundance and demographics through data collection before, during, and after wind construction in the Revolution Wind and Sunrise Wind development areas. For additional information, please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov)

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

On July 14, 2023, NMFS issued an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation to conduct ventless trap surveys to provide distribution, abundance, and biological data on juvenile lobsters and Jonah crabs from times and areas with low coverage from traditional surveys. Research trips will take place from July 2023 to June 2024. For additional information, please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov).

On July 14, 2023, NMFS issued an EFP to Blue Planet Strategies to test sub-surface gear marking, on-demand gear, and smart-buoy technologies in fixed gear fisheries. Research trips will take place from July 2023 to June 2024. For additional information, please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov).

On July 24, 2023, NMFS issued an EFP to the Maine Department of Marine Resources to evaluate the impacts of novel fishing technologies, including low-cost retrieval systems and acoustic sub-sea location systems, on commercial fixed-gear fishing operations and entanglement risks to protected species. Research trips will take place from July 2023 to September 2024. For additional information, please contact Laura Deighan at (978) 281-9184 or [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov).

On June 20, 2023, NMFS issued an LOA to Stony Brook University in support of an ongoing project monitoring the offshore waters of the New York Bight. Under this LOA, one Stony Brook University research vessel will complete three research cruises during July - October,

2023. During each cruise, midwater trawl gear will be used to collect biological samples. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

On June 28, 2023, NMFS issued an LOA to the University of New Hampshire in support of a study on Atlantic cod. Under this LOA, two vessels will conduct approximately 30 research trips during June - October, 2023, using rod and reel gear. A subset of the cod caught will receive acoustic tags before being returned to the water. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

On July 12, 2023, NMFS issued an Exempted Educational Activity Authorization (EEAA) to the University of New Hampshire in support of undergraduate coursework to be conducted at the Shoals Marine Laboratory. Under this EEAA, three Cornell University research vessels would conduct educational fishing activities in order for students to collect biological specimens and other data. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or email at [Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov](mailto:Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov).

On July 13, 2023, NMFS issued Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) to the Cornell Cooperative Extension - Suffolk County and to the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance in support of the 2023-2024 Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The EFPs exempt vessels from the monkfish DAS landing limit restrictions while fishing on RSA DAS. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).