



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 28, 2023
To: Council
From: José Montañez, Staff
Subject: Golden Tilefish Catch Share Program Review

The following is available for Council consideration on the above subject.

- Northern Economics, Inc. Golden Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota Program Twelve-Year Review, September 2023.

The document can be found online at: <https://www.mafmc.org/tilefish>

Background

The Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) requires the Councils and Secretary of Commerce to include provisions for the regular monitoring and review of the operations of Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs) implemented after January 12, 2007. Amendment 1 to the Golden Tilefish FMP implemented an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program in 2009. Regulations in the golden tilefish IFQ program found at 50 CFR § 648.294(h)(6)(i) indicate that “a formal review of the IFQ program must be conducted by the MAFMC within 5 years of the effective date of the final regulations. Thereafter, it shall be incorporated into every scheduled MAFMC review of the FMP (i.e., future amendments or frameworks), but no less frequently than every 7 years.”

The first golden tilefish IFQ review conducted in 2017¹ was completed by a Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) consisting of individuals from the staff of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO). This first review covered performance of the first six years from fishing year (FY) 2010 to FY2015. The completion of a second golden tilefish IFQ program review was included in the Council’s 2023 implementation plan. To prepare for the 2023 review, a Program Oversight Team was formed and the Council contracted Northern Economic, Inc. (NEI) to conduct the review.

The 2023 review and report, which covers FY2016 to FY2021, was developed by NEI to be consistent with the LAPP review requirements as described in NMFS Procedural Instruction 01-121-01, *Guidance for Conducting Review of Catch Share Programs* (NMFS 2017).

¹ The Golden Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota Program 5-Year Review (September 2017) can be found here: <https://www.mafmc.org/tilefish>

Steps to Complete the Program Review

On December 13, 2023, the Council will receive a presentation from NEI on the “Golden Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota Program Twelve-Year Review.” This presentation will start a 30-day public comment period that will end on January 12, 2024. The Council will set up a web-based form (at www.mafmc.org; under “Lates News”) to receive written comments on the review document, and there will be opportunity for the public to comment verbally at the December 2023 Council Meeting.

Following the closing of the comment period, the Oversight Team will meet on January 23, 2024 to consider the findings of the review report and public comments received, and to develop any specific recommended actions for the Council to consider for the GTF IFQ Program. These recommendations will be provided to the Council at its April 2024 Meeting.

At the April 2024 Meeting, the Council will review the public comment received and recommendations of the Oversight Team. At that time, the Council may choose to submit the review package to NMFS and the Program Review will be complete. The Council may also choose to take up none, some, or all the recommendations that were identified.

Steps After the Program Review is Complete

In order to identify the best ways to address any of the recommendations identified by the Council, staff will work with our partners at GARFO and NEFSC to identify the possible approaches to address them (i.e., FMP action, regulatory action, NMFS action, etc.). The Council will then consider whether and how to fold these recommended actions into the 2025 Implementation Plan.

References

National Marine Fisheries Service. 2017. NOAA Catch Share Policy. Silver Spring, MD. <https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/01-121-01.pdf>