
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

PRESS RELEASE



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Amendment 1 to Spiny Dogfish Plan Initiated Amendment 11 to Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Plan Delayed

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and six of its Committees met in Duck, North Carolina from April 14 until April 16, 2009. The Council took action to move forward with a scoping document for Amendment 1 to the joint Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) based on recommendations from the Joint Dogfish Committee.

The scoping issues to be considered in the development of Amendment 1 to the Spiny Dogfish FMP included the following: Add a research set-aside provision to include no limit or only up to 3%; include commercial quota allocation alternatives; allow for specifying quota and/or trip limits by sex; include the smooth dogfish fishery in the FMP; require a limited access permit for possession of dogfish in federal waters; and, include a program for a recreational fishery for spiny dogfish. The Council also agreed to write to the Secretary of Commerce requesting that he grant the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils joint management authority for smooth dogfish.

A scoping session for the Omnibus Annual Catch Limits (ACL) / Accountability Measures (AM) Amendment was held on Tuesday evening. This session was conducted to solicit public comments on the actions the Council could consider in addressing the new requirements for ACLs and AMs, based on the National Standard 1 guidance which published on January 16, 2009 (effective on February 17, 2009). The Council is considering a wide range of possible management options to address these requirements. These options could include, but are not limited to, the development of control rules to specify acceptable biological catch (ABC) and ACLs, as well as AMs. The Council is considering amending the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP, Bluefish FMP, Dogfish FMP, Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP, Tilefish FMP, and Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP through this Omnibus Amendment. This Amendment will affect all Council managed species except *Loligo* and *Illex* squid as these species are exempt from the National Standard 1 requirements. The morning following the scoping session, the ACL / AM Committee met to consider the development of a risk policy to be applied by the Council in the development of control rules used to establish ABC and ACLs.

The Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee met to review management alternatives to be considered and analyzed for Amendment 11 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP. Amendment 11 considers: 1) Establishing limited access to cap capacity in the mackerel fishery; 2) Updating Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) identifications and designations; 3) Evaluating gear impacts on *Loligo* egg EFH; 4) Establishing a recreational mackerel quota; and, 5) Avoiding at-sea processing problems. Several changes / additions were made including finalizing a range of EFH alternatives, a range of caps on at-sea processing, and mackerel limited access vessel baseline provisions. The Council

voted to delay forwarding Amendment 11 to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) until June to allow for additional development of Amendment 11's Environmental Impact Statement.

The Council addressed and discussed the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and initiation of a scoping document for Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP. Amendment 5 would bring the Monkfish FMP into compliance with National Standard 1 guidance for including ACLs and AMs, would adopt multi-year catch targets, and could establish a system for ITQ or sector management.

Gordon Colvin of the NMFS' Office of Science and Technology provided an update on NMFS' Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Mr. Colvin explained that the purpose of MRIP is to develop reliable information that can be used by managers, anglers, and other stakeholders to ensure that fish stocks and the ecosystems are managed sustainably and fairly. Details on implementation may be found at "countmyfish.noaa.gov."

The Council also received an update from Rick DeVictor, an Environmental Impact Scientist of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), on Amendments 17 and 18 to the SAFMC's Snapper Grouper FMP. The Council voted to request that the SAFMC include an alternative in proposed Amendment 18 for a northern snapper grouper management unit for deep water species to be managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council in consultation with the SAFMC.

Dr. Jason Link of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) gave a report to the Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee regarding NEFSC prey-predator relationship studies. The Committee also began to discuss the status of the proposed LNG facilities in the Mid-Atlantic Council's jurisdiction off New Jersey and New York. There is significant activity regarding these three proposed facilities but as there are no specific comment periods "open", the Committee decided it would explore associated environmental issues in-depth at the June Council meeting.

The Bycatch/Limited Access Committee received a presentation from Wes Erickson, a British Columbian fisherman and restaurateur, regarding British Columbia's groundfish fishery management practices and bycatch reduction efforts through initiation and adoption of limited access privilege programs (LAPPs). This presentation was a personal perspective, and highlighted the positive outcome LAPPs provided him.

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