

Liaison Report from the September 29 thru October 02, 2020 NEFMC Meeting – Webinar

Election of officers:

Chairman = John Quinn

Vice chair = Eric Reid

And they voted in their 3 Executive Committee members

Skates:

The Council's skate committee made a number of motions to refine the problem statement for the skate fishery and voted on a number of goals to add to amendment 5 to the skate fishery.

Additional information can be found here: *Not published yet*

Atlantic Herring Framework 8:

- The Council voted on the 2021-2023 OFL/ABC specifications for Herring.
- Due to the low catch limits available to the U.S. fishery the Council set boarder transfers with Canada at 0/mt
- The Council expressed wide support for the RSA program but due to the low quotas they decided to set the RSA harvest @ 3% for 2021 (to support ongoing projects) and 0% for FY 2022 and 2023
- The Council agreed to allow 5% of unharvested catch from 2019 and/or 2020 from each management area to automatically roll over to fishing years 2021 and/or 2022

Herring Framework 8, measures that effect Mackerel:

- The Council voted to adjust the current 2,000-pound incidental possession limit of herring in the mackerel fishery in Herring Management Areas 2 and 3 as follows:
- When 90% of each area's sub-ACL is reached, the mackerel fishery's incidental catch limit of Atlantic herring would be limited to 40,000 pounds;
- When 98% of each herring management area's sub-ACL is reached, the incidental catch limit of Atlantic herring would be 2,000 pounds; and
- If the total ACL for the herring fishery is reached at 95%, then the incidental "backstop" catch limit for the mackerel fishery would be 2,000 pounds.
- In Area 1B, which currently is subject to a seasonal closure from January through April, the Council voted to eliminate the closure to potentially allow directed mackerel harvests during the early winter months when mackerel typically are present in the area.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Adopts-2021-2023-Herring-Specifications-Adjusts-Herring-Measures-to-Facilitate-Mackerel-Harvest.pdf>

Groundfish Amendment 23:

- After 3 ½ years developing Amendment 23, the Council adopted a target at-sea monitoring coverage rate of 100% for all groundfish sector trips for the first four fishing years following the effective date of Amendment 23.
- The Council recognized that waivers for at-sea monitoring coverage may be granted “in limited circumstances and for good cause only,” such as when at-sea monitors are not available.
- The 100% target coverage rate, which will be reviewed in Year 3 as a Council priority, is subject to available NOAA Fisheries funding.
- The Council set its minimum coverage rate at 40%. In the absence of federal funding sufficient to cover this minimum 40% rate, the groundfish industry will fund the additional coverage needed to achieve the 40% minimum.
- Both the 100% target and the 40% minimum coverage rates can be achieved through a combination of at-sea monitoring and the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP).
- Electronic monitoring may be used to fulfill the Council’s at-sea monitoring target coverage rate, but vessels still will be required to carry human observers when selected for a NEFOP trip. There are 2 different accounting models associated with Electronic Monitoring.
- Audit Model: Cameras run on 100% of the trips to record the catch and discards. Then, a portion of the video footage, as determined by NMFS, is reviewed to verify discard amounts on vessel trip reports.
- Maximized Retention Model: Cameras also run on 100% of the trips. Vessels must retain all allocated groundfish, including sublegal fish. A dockside monitoring component is involved to sample the catch and verify that all allocated, non-prohibited groundfish are landed as viewed by the camera. This EM option has been pilot-tested but not as extensively as the Audit Model, and the Council recognized it may need further refinements.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Adopts-100-Groundfish-At-Sea-Monitoring-Target-Industry-to-be-Reimbursed-if-Funds-Available.pdf>

Sea Scallop Amendment 21

Addresses Northern Gulf of Maine Allocations

- Create a NGOM set-aside with a NGOM set-aside trigger of 800,000 pounds, with pounds over the trigger split 5% for the NGOM set-aside and 95% for the NGOM APL, as preferred.
- Council voted on expanding the Scallop Industry Funded Observer program by use a portion of the NGOM Allocation to off-set monitoring costs.
- They voted to allocate a portion of the NGOM Allocation to increase the overall Scallop RSA and support Scallop RSA compensation fishing, allocate 25,000 pounds of scallops

from NGOM. This would bring the annual RSA pounds available up to 1.275 million pounds.

- Took No Action to address the Cumulative Maximum Dredge Width meaning the default dredge width is 15.5 feet.
- Took action to increase the LAGC IFQ Possession Limit to 800 pounds per trip for only access area trips only.
- Council Increased the Amount of Observer Compensation Available in 12-hour increments for observed LAGC IFQ trips longer than one day, this is capped at 48 hours.
- Voted to allow temporary transfers of quota from LA vessels with IFQ to LAGC IFQ-only with no change to LAGC IFQ quota accumulation caps (5% of APL).
- Council expanded the list of measures that can be addressed through specifications and/or framework adjustments, as preferred.

- In other business, due to a gear conflict in scallop fishery, the Council recommend to NMFS a bulletin be sent to all scallop permit holders (LA and LAGC IFQ) advising of fixed gear in the area of Lobster Area 4 and reminding vessels to avoid fixed gear, and including details about how fixed gear is likely to be set.

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Adopts-Scallop-Amendment-21-with-Measures-for-NGOM-LAGC-IFQ-Fishery.pdf>