

# Liaison Report from the June 22 thru June 24, 2021 NEFMC Meeting – Webinar

## **September NEFMC meeting:**

The Council agreed by consensus to have a hybrid meeting for the September Council meeting with members attending in-person as preferable.

## **Habitat:**

The Council agreed by consensus:

That staff develop comments on behalf of the Council, jointly with the MAFMC where appropriate, on the following issues: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' permit application for the Blue Water Fisheries aquaculture project, BOEM's proposed sale notice for NY Bight leasing, BOEM's notice of intent for the Empire Wind project, and the U.S. Coast Guard's draft Approaches to Chesapeake Bay Port Access Route Study.

## **Scallops:**

The Council adopted 2022-23 research priorities to help develop the next round of projects to be funded through Scallop RSA. One thing to note, the Scallop fishery received an updated Turtle Biological Opinion and elevated its priorities to address concerns found under the Reasonable and Prudent Measures (RPM's) within the new Bio-op.

The Council initiated FW 34. This framework will include:

- 1) 2022 fishing specifications and default measures for the 2023 FY
- 2) Potential modifications to the LAGC IFQ access area trip limit counting system
- 3) Measures from Amendment 21 that are approved by NMFS.

And lastly, a petition was received requesting that NMFS take secretarial action to implement a scallop leasing program. The Council deliberated and concluded that the petition does not have merit and that the Council is the appropriate body to lead changes to the scallop FMP.

Additional information regarding scallops can be found here:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Approves-2022-2023-Scallop-RSA-Priorities-Initiates-Framework-34-Responds-to-Letter-on-Leasing-Petition.pdf>

## **Groundfish:**

### Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Workshops:

For several years the Council has supported work to better define the biological stock structure of Atlantic cod, which currently is managed as two stocks. A working group reviewed all available information concluded that cod as a species more appropriately consists of five stocks (see map in the link below). The Council and the NEFMC, with contracted support from the University of New Hampshire and New Hampshire Sea Grant, decided to host two sets of public workshops to gain additional perspectives on science and management issues associated with a potential change in stock status. 3 Workshops were held in June and 5 management workshops were going to be held sometime over the course of the summer.

Council initiated FW 63 which will do the following:

- 1) Sets the 2022 TAC's for the U.S./Canada management units for Eastern GB cod and Eastern GB haddock, as well as 2022-2023 specifications for GB yellowtail flounder
- 2) Set 2022-2024 specs for GB cod and Gulf of Maine cod and possibly adjust 2022 specifications for GB and Gulf of Maine haddock
- 3) Adjust 2022 specifications for white hake based on the Council's rebuilding plan
- 4) Adopts additional measures to promote stock rebuilding
- 5) Development of alternatives to the current system for setting groundfish default specifications.

The Council will also review the current ABC Control Rule or Harvest Control Rule to investigate alternatives that may perform better under a range of current groundfish conditions and stock assessment issues.

Additional information and the Cod Map can be found here:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Receives-Cod-Stock-Structure-and-Groundfish-ABC-Control-Rule-Updates-Initiates-Framework-63.pdf>

## **The Council Received Updates on Offshore Wind, Atlantic Herring, EBFM, and Approved their 2021-2025 Research Priorities**

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Receives-Updates-on-Offshore-Wind-Atlantic-Herring-EBFM-Approves-2021-2025-Research-Priorities.pdf>

## **Saying farewell:**

The Council also said farewell to 4 long time Council Members: Chairman, Dr. John Quinn from Mass, Terry Alexander from Maine, Vincent Balzano from Maine and Dr. Matt McKenzie from Conn. All four have served three consecutive three-year terms on the Council and were ineligible for reappointment

And this concludes my Liaison Report.