

Liaison Report from the December 7th thru December 9th, 2021 NEFMC Meeting – Webinar

Reports on Recent Activities

Received Guidance on Financial Disclosures and Voting Recusals

Habitat:

- 1) Received updates on recent Habitat related work
- 2) Revised its Wind Energy Policy taking into account comments from the MAFMC EOP (Ecosystems and Ocean Planning) Committee and AP.

The policy's list of principles and best management practices includes 25 points categorized under the following six headings:

- Best management practices and stakeholder engagement
- Project siting and environmental review
- Construction and operations
- Navigation and safety
- Research and Monitoring
- Compensation and Mitigation

The Council was also briefed on BOEM's request for information *“to obtain input from the public, especially the fishing community, on avoiding, minimizing and, if needed, compensating for impacts from offshore wind energy projects to commercial and recreational fisheries.”*

The Council also received a briefing from BOEM that covered numerous items, including updates on the New York Bight lease sale, Central Atlantic Planning Area development, the Gulf of Maine research lease application, and the anticipated schedule of environmental impact statements for 2022

Additional information can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Approves-Revised-Wind-Energy-Policy-Receives-BOEM-Updates.pdf>

Spiny Dogfish:

The Council made a motion to approve an increase of the Federal spiny dogfish trip limit from 6,000 to 7,500 pounds.

Groundfish:

Council selected preferred measures under FW 63 and 2022 Catch Limits for Georges Bank Cod. The FW contains revised fishery specifications for Groundfish catch on several stocks, including:

- Gulf of Maine cod for fishing years 2022 through 2024
- Georges Bank cod for fishing year 2022, marking a sharp reduction from previous catch limits

- Georges Bank yellowtail flounder for fishing years 2022 and 2023
- White hake for fishing year 2022, consistent with the new rebuilding plan for this stock

In addition, the framework includes 2022 TACs for three resources on Georges Bank that the U.S. shares with Canada encompassing:

- Eastern Georges Bank cod
- Eastern Georges Bank haddock
- Georges Bank yellowtail flounder

Additional information and information about what's going on with Georges Bank Cod can be found here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/NEFMC-Picks-Groundfish-Framework-63-Measures-Specs-Include-2022-Catch-Limits-for-Georges-Bank-Cod.pdf>

Scallops:

Under FW 34, the council took the following actions:

- 1) Updated the Overfishing Limit and Acceptable Biological Catch
- 2) Clarified the Northern Gulf of Maine Management and set TAL
- 3) Set the Fishery Specifications which are:
 - 24 DAS
 - 3 Access Area Trips at the following levels:
 - A) Two trips to Closed Area II at 15,000 pounds each for a total of 30,000 pounds
 - B) One trip to Nantucket Lightship South with a 15,000 pound possession limit
 - C) One 15,000 pound default access area trip to CAII for FY 2023.

The Council also identified that the Hudson Canyon and Elephant Trunk areas would be reverted to open bottom and identified new closures of the New York Bight and Nantucket Lightship West. The Council also decided Closed Area I would remain a rotational area designated for LAGC Access Area trips and RSA compensation fishing only.

The Council Updated the LAGC IFQ Access Area Trip Allocations, and decided to Distribute Closed Area II Access Area Allocation to CAI Only, as preferred. The total access area trip allocations for the LAGC IFQ for FY 2022 would be:

- 357 in Nantucket Lightship South
- 714 in Closed Area I

2022 Council Priorities

The Council also finalized their 2022 Priorities for all fishery management plans and other Council responsibilities.

And this concludes my Liaison Report.