

New England Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday – Thursday, December 5-7, 2023
Hotel Viking, One Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI 02840
tel: (401) 847-3300 | [Hotel Viking](#)
[Webinar Registration Option](#)

Sending comments? Written comments must be received at the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) office no later than 8:00 a.m., Thursday, November 30, 2023 to be considered at this meeting. Please address comments to Council Chair Eric Reid or Executive Director Cate O’Keefe at: NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Email submissions should be sent to comments@nefmc.org. ** Written comments must address items listed on the agenda for this meeting or issues that will be brought up under the open period for public comment.

IMPORTANT: *The Council will hold its December 2023 meeting at the Hotel Viking in Newport, RI. This will be a hybrid meeting with in-person participation, coupled with a webinar option for individuals who cannot or prefer not to attend in person. Updates will be posted on the [Council’s December 2023 meeting webpage](#).*

PUBLIC COMMENTS: *The Council’s “Guidelines for Providing Public Comments” can be found [here](#). Anyone interested in speaking during the open period for public comment on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 11:45 a.m. should fill out the sign-up sheet on the table at the entrance to the Council meeting room. To speak remotely, email Janice Plante at jplante@nefmc.org to get on the list.*

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

9:30 a.m. Introductions and Announcements (Council Chair Eric Reid)

9:35 Reports on Recent Activities

Council Chair, Council Executive Director, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) Regional Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) General Counsel, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA Enforcement, Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

11:15 Risk Policy Working Group Report (Megan Ware)

Progress report on addressing Terms of Reference 1 and 2 to revise the Council’s Risk Policy; review potential changes to Risk Policy Statement

11:45 Open Period for Public Comment

Opportunity for the public to provide brief comments on issues relevant to Council business but not listed on this agenda (please limit remarks to 3-5 minutes)

12:15 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30 East Coast Climate Coordination (Staff)

Report on first meeting of the East Coast Climate Coordination Group, one of two groups formed as an outcome of the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative

2:30 Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA Executive Director Dr. Reneé Reilly)

Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) report on the alliance’s mission, activities, and steps to support the Council’s offshore wind efforts and streamline communications

3:00 Habitat Committee Report (Council Chair Eric Reid)

Offshore Wind and Other Habitat-Related Work: review Council comments on draft Wind Energy Areas for Gulf of Maine (GOM) and discuss other GOM leasing/planning issues; receive presentation on other offshore wind and habitat-related updates

- 4:15** **NOAA Guidance to Councils on Financial Disclosures and Voting Recusals** (Mitch MacDonald, NOAA GC)
NOAA General Counsel briefing on disclosure of financial interests and voting recusal regulations for regional fishery management council members
- 5:00** **Council Adjourns**
- 6:00** **Council Public Outreach**
Informational exchange to foster open lines of communication among Council members, staff, industry, and meeting attendees; all are welcome; light snacks provided

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

- 9:00 a.m.** **September 2023 Management Track Stock Assessments** (NEFSC)
Presentation on peer-reviewed results of September 2023 Management Track Stock Assessments for Acadian redfish, Atlantic mackerel, northern and southern red hake, the Northeast skate complex, northern windowpane flounder, and spiny dogfish
- 10:15** **Scientific and Statistical Committee** (SSC Chair Dr. Lisa Kerr)
Presentation on Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for Gulf of Maine haddock, Acadian redfish, northern and southern windowpane flounder, white hake, northern and southern red hake, northern silver hake, southern whiting (silver and offshore hake combined), Atlantic sea scallops, and the Northeast skate complex
- 11:45** **Skate Committee Report** (Scott Olszewski)
Framework 12: final action to develop 2024-2025 fishery specifications and measures to expand possession of smooth and barndoor skates
- 12:30 p.m.** **Lunch Break**
- 1:45** **Whiting Committee Report** (Rick Bellavance)
Final action on 2024-2026 specifications for the small-mesh multispecies (whiting) fishery
- 2:30** **Scallop Committee Report** (Melanie Griffin)
Framework 38: final action on 2024 fishery specifications, 2025 default specifications, increased vessel monitoring system (VMS) polling rates near closed area boundaries, and other measures
- 4:30** **Northern Edge** (Council Chair Eric Reid)
Update on action to potentially authorize scallop fishery access to the Habitat Closure Area on the Northern Edge of Georges Bank

Thursday, December 7, 2023

- 9:00 a.m.** **Groundfish Committee Report** (Rick Bellavance)
Framework 66: final action that includes (1) 2024-2025 total allowable catches for U.S./Canada shared resources on Georges Bank, (2) 2024-2025 specifications for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, white hake, and Gulf of Maine haddock, (3) 2024-2026 specifications for Acadian redfish, northern windowpane, and southern windowpane, (4) a revised white hake rebuilding plan, (5) Atlantic halibut issues, (6) extending removal of the sector management uncertainty buffer for white hake and Gulf of Maine haddock until the next specifications cycle, and (7) modification of the scallop fishery accountability measure for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder for fishing years 2024 and 2025; Framework 68: progress report on action to revise groundfish acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rules; Atlantic Cod Management Transition Plan: update and Council discussion
- 12:00 p.m.** **Lunch Break**
- 1:15** **2024 Council Priorities** (Executive Director Cate O'Keefe)
Final action on 2024 Council Priorities for all fishery management plans and other Council responsibilities

4:00 Other Business

Times listed next to the agenda items are estimates and are subject to change.

This meeting is being held in person and by webinar. Council member financial disclosure forms are available for examination on the Council website.

Although other non-emergency issues not contained on this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Documents pertaining to Council actions are available for review prior to a final vote by the Council.

Please check the Council's website, www.nefmc.org, or call (978) 465-0492 for copies.

This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 USC 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.