

**New England Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday - Thursday, April 18-20, 2017**  
**Hilton Mystic, 20 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, CT 06355**  
**tel: (860) 572-0731 | [Hilton Mystic](#)**

Sending comments? Written comments must be received at the NEFMC office no later than 5 p.m., Wednesday, April 12, 2017 to be considered at this meeting. Please address them to Council Chairman Dr. John Quinn or Executive Director Tom Nies at: NEFMC, 50 Water St., Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Email submissions should be sent to [comments@nefmc.org](mailto:comments@nefmc.org).

**Tuesday, April 18, 2017**

**9:00 a.m. Introductions and Announcements** (Chairman Dr. John Quinn)

**9:05 Reports on Recent Activities**

Council Chairman, 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

**10:30 Scallop Committee Report** (Mary Beth Tooley)

Receive committee update, including progress on 2017 work priorities; potentially initiate a framework adjustment to address Northern Gulf of Maine Management Area issues

**12:00 p.m. Lunch Break**

**1:15 Skate Committee Report** (Dr. Matt McKenzie)

Receive summary of scoping comments for Amendment 5 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan; review and consider revising existing control dates for the skate wing and bait fisheries

**2:15 Habitat Committee Report** (Dr. John Quinn)

Review results of coral workshops; identify preferred alternatives for Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment public hearings; receive progress report on Clam Dredge Exemption Area Framework

**Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

**8:30 a.m. Ecosystem Status Report** (Sean Lucey, Northeast Fisheries Science Center)

Update on the status of the Northeast Continental Shelf ecosystem

**9:30 Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Report** (John Pappalardo)

Committee update on developing a worked example of harvest control rules for ecosystem management

**10:00 Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM)** (Dr. Jon Hare, Northeast Fisheries Science Center)

Receive NEFSC presentation on SBRM performance and steps for improvement

**11:15 Discard Methodology Review** (Dr. Michael Lanning, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office)

Receive presentation on peer review of in-season discard estimation methods

**12:00 p.m. 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 Lunch Break**

**1:30 Whiting Committee Report** (Mark Gibson)

Review and approve range of limited access, permitting, and possession limit alternatives for Amendment 22 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

- 3:30        Research Steering Committee Report** (Mark Alexander)  
Receive committee report on review of collaborative research projects funded by the Council
- 3:45        Council Research Priorities** (Staff)  
Approve 2017-2022 research priorities
- 4:15        Cooperative Research Program Review** (Northeast Fisheries Science Center)

**Thursday, April 20, 2017**

- 8:30 a.m.    Council Programmatic Review** (Executive Director Tom Nies)  
Receive steering committee report and approve plan for programmatic review
- 9:30        Atlantic Herring Committee Report** (Peter Kendall)  
Review Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) peer review results; potentially approve range of alternatives for Amendment 8, including acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule options and measures to address localized depletion and user conflicts; review and approve Council comments on Addendum I to Amendment 3 of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Herring Interstate Fishery Management Plan; receive update on NMFS evaluation of incorporating portside data into herring catch cap quota monitoring
- 12:30 p.m.   Lunch Break**
- 1:30        Atlantic Herring Committee Report Continued**
- 2:00        Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Omnibus Amendment** (Carrie Nordeen, GARFO)  
Final action to submit preferred alternatives, including possible clarifications and/or changes to the preferred alternatives for the Atlantic Herring Industry Funding Monitoring Program
- 4:00        Other business**

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

*This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Council member financial disclosure forms are available for examination at the meeting.*

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](http://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.**



# *South Atlantic Fishery Management Council*

## *Press Release*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 10, 2017

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### **Federal Fishery Managers Continue to Explore Options for Red Snapper** *Recreational data concerns acknowledged; Request for pilot catch share program withdrawn*

Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council addressed a number of issues affecting offshore fisheries during their meeting this week in Jekyll Island, Georgia including the continued closure of the red snapper fishery in federal waters off the South Atlantic coast and the prohibition of recreational harvest of Atlantic cobia in federal waters from Georgia to New York. Red snapper were initially closed to harvest in the South Atlantic in 2010 in order to rebuild the stock and end overfishing. Limited harvest was allowed in 2012, 2013 and 2014 through weekend openings. Recreational fishing for Atlantic cobia closed early in 2016 after it was estimated that anglers had exceeded the total annual catch limit for the year. NOAA Fisheries announced on January 24, 2017 that the Atlantic cobia recreational fishery would be closed for the remainder of the year in federal waters after exceeding the annual catch limit in 2016 and in anticipation of harvest being allowed by some states that will likely result in the catch limit being exceeded again in 2017.

The Council, whose members include representatives from state marine resources agencies, federal agencies, and recreational, charter and commercial fishermen, discussed options to reduce discards, improve the survival rate of fish that are released, and perhaps allow limited harvest of red snapper in the future as the stock continues to rebuild. The latest stock assessment update for red snapper was completed in 2016 using data collected through 2014. The Council recently received notification from NOAA Fisheries, the agency responsible for collecting fisheries data, that due to several factors, including uncertainty in the stock assessment and in estimates of fishing mortality, along with anticipated changes to the current methods used for recreational data collection, that an Acceptable Biological Catch for red snapper cannot be determined at this time. Without this number, the Council is unable to set other parameters for red snapper, including Annual Catch Limits. During its meeting the Council requested a joint meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committees from both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, along with scientists from NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Marine Recreational Information Program to address the issue as it applies to red snapper and other species.

"We have to come to some resolution of what kind of management approach may be acceptable as we work towards getting an ABC for red snapper," said Council Chair Dr. Michelle Duval. "We should stay focused on the goal of Amendment 43 to reduce discards and turn discards into landings. The unfortunate reality is that we simply aren't going to have numbers for the next few months." The Council is developing Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 with management options to reduce discards, improve discard mortality, and improve recreational data collection. Public scoping meetings were held in January and February of this year to get input from the public on how best to reduce discards/discard mortality and improve private recreational data. The Council removed an action that considered large area closures and agreed to continue to develop best fishing practices management measures during its June 2017 meeting.

Development of additional management measures continues as part of the Council's 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint for the snapper grouper fishery. The Council reviewed public comment received as part of the public scoping held earlier this year and discussed options for the recreational fishery including restructuring aggregate bag limits, adjusting the current shallow-water grouper spawning season closure, and reducing the minimum size limit for black sea bass through Visioning Regulatory Amendment 26. Commercial measures are being addressed through Visioning Regulatory Amendment 27 and include options for split seasons, and modifications to trip limits and step-downs.

*(Continued)*

### ***Council Considers Options*** (Continued)

The Council decided to postpone further actions on two amendments to allow for further analyses that may be necessary following changes underway to NOAA Fisheries Marine Recreational Information Program. Management measures addressing allocations of yellowtail snapper through Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 and for dolphin (fish) through Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 will be delayed until the revised recreational catch data are available.

The Council also received an update on management measures affecting Atlantic cobia, including a report from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on its development of a complementary management plan that will allow additional flexibility for cobia management. In September 2016, the Council approved measures through Regulatory Amendment 4 to help reduce harvest of Atlantic cobia in federal waters that include increasing the minimum size limit, reducing the recreational bag limit, and establishing vessel limits. The regulations are currently being reviewed by NOAA Fisheries. The Council's Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel will meet April 19-20, 2017 to continue discussions and provide input.

### **Other Actions**

The Council heard from more than 30 fishermen and other stakeholders during a public comment session held on Wednesday afternoon, with the majority of comments directed toward opposition to a proposed Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) that would have allowed for a voluntary pilot catch share program. The Council may provide recommendations for the permits with the final determination made by NOAA Fisheries. Dr. Roy Crabtree, Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office announced just prior to the public comment session that the EFP for the pilot project had been withdrawn by the applicants. Although many attending the public comment session expressed support for withdrawal of the pilot project, some had driven several hours to provide comment. The Council allowed attendees to voice their concerns and discussed ways to avoid the situation for reviewing EFPs in the future. Over 600 written comments were received online regarding the EFP for the pilot program and various other issues addressed by the Council this week.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for June 12-17, 2017 at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. Final committee reports, public comments, and other materials from this week's meeting are available from the Council's website at <http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/>. Read further details and see images and other related meeting links at the March 2017 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map: <http://arcg.is/2mTfmKD>. The March 2017 Meeting Report is also available at: [http://safmc.net/download/SAFMC\\_Mar2017\\_CouncilMeeting\\_SummaryReport.pdf](http://safmc.net/download/SAFMC_Mar2017_CouncilMeeting_SummaryReport.pdf)