



2017 Planned Council Meeting Topics

October 10-12, 2017 – Hyatt Long Island East End, Riverhead, NY

- Swearing-in of new and reappointed Council members
- Election of Officers
- Spiny dogfish 2018 specifications – *Review*
- Golden Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota program review – *Review*
- Bluefish Amendment – *Initiate*
- EAFM risk assessment – *Finalize and adopt EAFM Based Risk Assessment* ~~Approve possible items for inclusion in 2018 Implementation Plan~~
- Development of 2019-2023 strategic plan – *Initiate*
- Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP Goals and Objectives – *Review*
- Risk policy framework – *Framework meeting 2*
- Summer flounder, scup and black sea bass commercial accountability measures framework – *Framework meeting 1*
- 2019-2023 Strategic Plan – *Discuss next steps*
- 2018 Recreational Black Sea Bass Wave 1 Fishery – *Consider a potential February 2018 opening*

December 11-14, 2017 – Westin Annapolis, Annapolis, MD

- 2018 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass – *Adopt*
- 2018 Implementation Plan – *Review and approve*
- Risk policy framework – *Framework meeting 2 (Final Action)*
- Chub Mackerel Amendment – *Review scoping comments and recommendations from FMAT, AP, and Committee*
- Summer Flounder Amendment – ~~Update~~ ~~Approve public hearing document for commercial issues and FMP goals and objectives~~
- Martha's Vineyard/Nantucket Squid Buffer Zone framework – *Framework meeting 1*
- ~~Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass commercial accountability measures framework – Framework meeting 2 (final action) (moved to February 2018)~~
- Black sea bass wave 1 LOA framework – *Framework meeting 1*
- Black sea bass amendment – *Discuss next steps*
- Bluefish Amendment – *Initiate*

➤ *Indicates topics that have been added*

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 18, 2017

To: Groundfish PDT (Cc: Groundfish Committee)

From: MAFMC Staff

Subject: Windowpane AM Modifications

MAFMC staff examined 2008-2016 observer data in the ten-minute squares (TMSs) that constitute the windowpane large mesh/non-groundfish accountability measure (AM) areas. Observations were limited to observed hauls with bottom otter trawl gear using mesh 5" or greater. Observations were binned by three seasons (Jan-Apr, May-Aug, Sept-Dec). Three seasons were chosen to achieve some seasonal perspective without overly reducing the number of observations. The ratio of windowpane caught to all species retained was calculated by season for the ten-minute squares that constitute the relevant windowpane AM areas. The results suggest that the western portion of the AM area near Montauk (TMSs 417126, 417136, 407121, and 407131) could likely be dropped for the full year without substantial impact to windowpane given the consistent relatively low encounter rates, and could be considered as AM area modifications in Framework 57 (see Figure 1 below), in addition to options analogous to the flexibility provisions currently in place for groundfish. Encounter rates appeared relatively high throughout the year in the AM near south-western Long Island/Sandy Hook, so the analysis does not support any simple modifications to AMs in that area (see Figure 2 next page).

Figure 1. East of Montauk, Windowpane encounter rates, bottom trawl observer data, 2008-2016

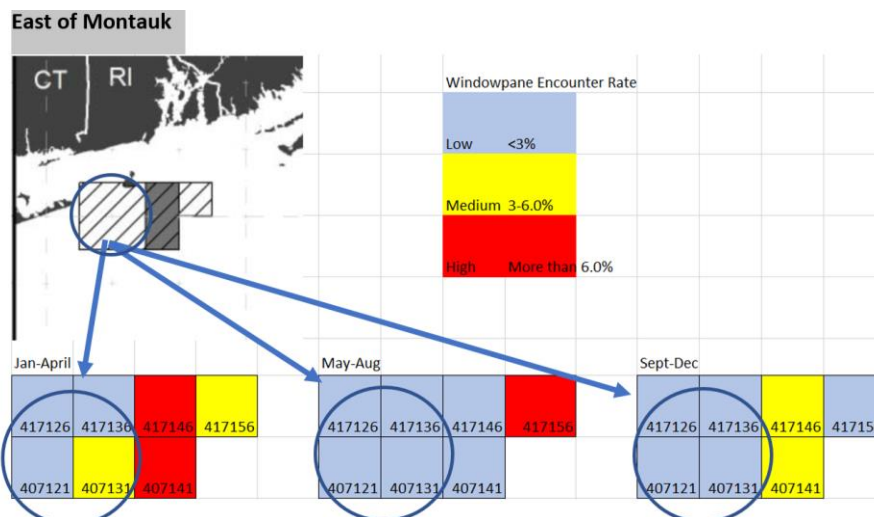
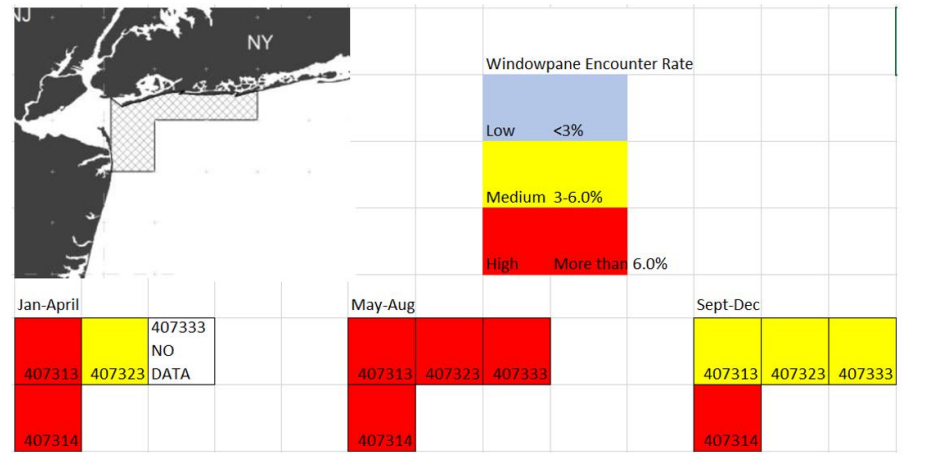


Figure 2. South-western Long Island/Sandy Hook, Windowpane encounter rates, bottom trawl observer data, 2008-2016

Southern Long Island/Sandy Hook





Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

September 22, 2017

Mr. Tom Nies
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Tom:

Please extend our appreciation to the New England Fishery Management Council for their ongoing work to consider modifications to the windowpane large mesh/non-groundfish accountability measures (AMs). Based on previous discussion at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, staff supports inclusion of the measures approved by the committee for consideration in Framework 57, as well as possible future consideration of additional approaches to address windowpane issues. Our staff will be available to perform additional analysis of options that would modify the AM areas east of Montauk.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Chris M. Moore for".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, J. Didden



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Richard B. Robins, Jr., Chairman | Lee G. Anderson, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 22, 2017
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Matthew Seeley, Staff
Subject: Pilot Tilefish Survey Update

In January 2017, the Council funded a fisheries-independent pilot survey out of SUNY Stony Brook for golden and blueline tilefish from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras. The goals and objectives of the survey are as follows:

1. Establish a comprehensive fishery-independent bottom long-line survey for the golden and blueline tilefish along the Atlantic coast
2. Quantify the number of individuals and size-structure of the two species
3. Determine the spatial distribution of both species and identify preferred depth strata across size range
4. Evaluate the role of environmental variables in driving the observed spatial distribution patterns
5. Evaluate proposed sampling intensity and statistical power

The second and final leg of this survey was completed in Mid-August. Data is currently being analyzed and will be presented to the Council at the December Council Meeting in Annapolis, Maryland. Below are preliminary results and a survey update.

Over two cruises, sampling occurred at 192 stations that encompassed tilefish habitat and took into consideration both golden and blueline tilefish depth distributions. Bottom longlines with one-nautical mile mainline were deployed with 150 evenly spaced gangions and soaked for an average of 40 minutes. Three different offset circle hook sizes (8/0, 12/0, 14/0) were distributed by a ratio of 20-60-20. Current meters and hook timers were also deployed.

Resulting catch was recorded from all strata sampled during the survey and included 1,392 individuals spanning 21 species. Of the total catch, 619 individuals were golden tilefish and 75 were blueline tilefish (Table 1). Tilefish ranged in size from 25 to 110 centimeters (9.84 to 43.31 inches) and weighed 0.5 to 22.1 kilograms (1.1 to 48.72 pounds). Biological samples were collected and included otoliths, reproductive tissue, fin clips, stomach contents, and muscle/liver samples. Relative sampling locations are provided in Figure 1.

Table 1. Distribution of catch by latitude-depth strata. Increasing strata indicates location is further south. Numbers 1-4 within each location indicate depth with 4 being the deepest.

Strata	Area (sq km)	Total Catch	Total Blueline	Total Golden	Strata	Area (sq km)	Total Catch	Total Blueline	Total Golden
02--3	3684	143	0	0	06--3	728	23	0	0
03--1	1519	25	0	0	06--4	57	4	0	1
03--2	2321	52	0	29	07--1	315	1	0	0
03--3	3184	271	0	141	07--2	374	9	0	0
03--4	177	14	0	1	07--3	1551	63	22	2
04--1	1592	13	0	0	07--4	98	21	0	5
04--2	2167	52	0	11	08--1	183	26	1	0
04--3	2538	210	1	174	08--2	708	14	11	0
04--4	241	12	0	7	08--3	550	14	0	9
05--1	977	9	0	0	08--4	62	7	0	0
05--2	1236	23	0	0	09--1	191	4	3	0
05--3	2720	311	2	235	09--2	332	51	35	1
05--4	209	9	0	3	09--3	336	2	0	0
06--1	735	1	0	0	09--4	48	3	0	0
06--2	631	8	0	0					

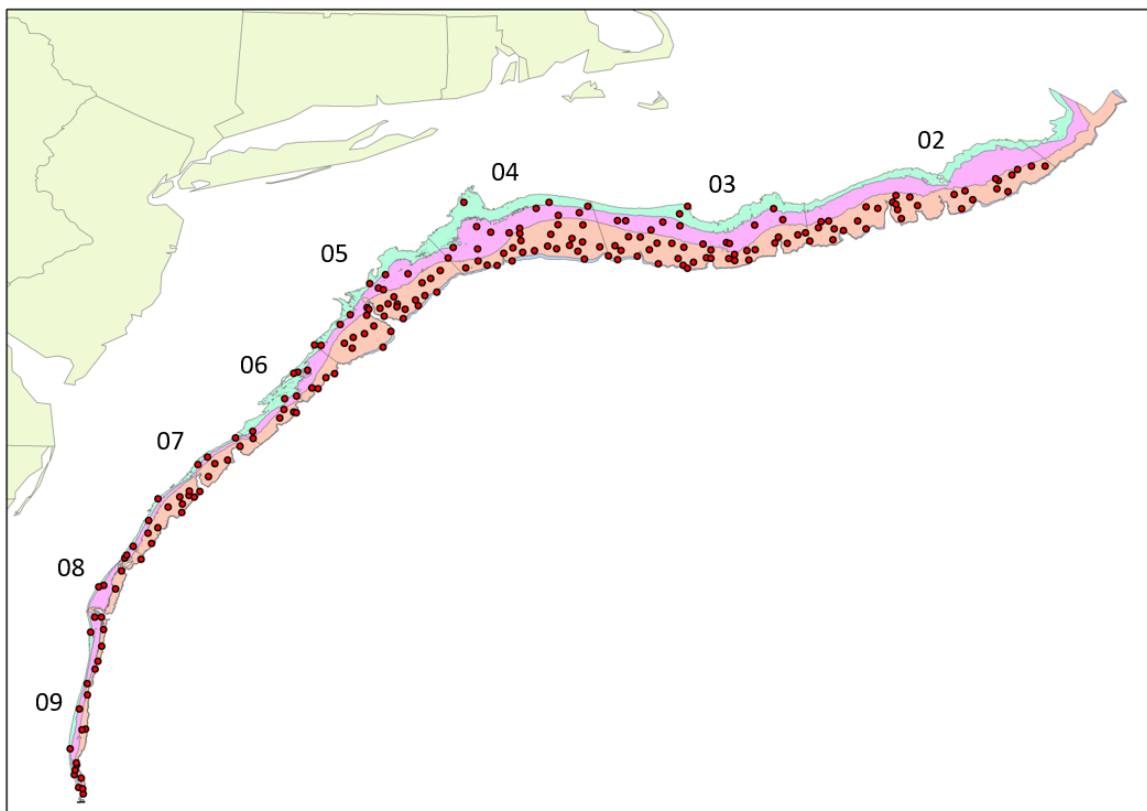


Figure 1. Tilefish strata stations spanning from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras.



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Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 22, 2017
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Matthew Seeley and Brandon Muffley, Staff
Subject: Blueline Tilefish SEDAR 50 Assessment Review

On August 29-31, 2017, Council staff attended the Blueline Tilefish SEDAR 50 Assessment Review Workshop in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. The goals of the meeting were to select the preferred models for the blueline tilefish stocks North and South of Cape Hatteras and to make recommendations on total allowable catch (TAC).

The assessment team divided blueline tilefish into two stocks, North and South of Cape Hatteras. This partition does not align with the Council's management boundary, the North Carolina/Virginia line, which leads to the need for management decisions between the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Councils on how acceptable biological catches (ABC) will be allocated (Figure 1). The data limited North of Hatteras stock was analyzed with the DLM Toolkit and the South of Hatteras stock was analyzed with an age structured model.

For the stock North of Cape Hatteras, the review panel concluded:

- The assessment results should be interpreted qualitatively given the high uncertainty in the results from the DLM analyses.
- The panel agreed with the assessment team that the results North of Hatteras provide evidence that the recent landings may not be sustainable in the long term.
- Given the relative frequency distributions for the TACs provided by the DLM Toolkit that included maximum sustainable yield approximation, the review panel agreed with the assessment team's decision **not to undertake** these analyses.
- Quantitative estimates of status determination criteria for the North of Hatteras stock **were not provided** by the DLM analyses.

With the official approval of Amendment 6 to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan and given the outcome of the SEDAR 50 assessment, the Council will move forward with setting an ABC for north of the Virginia/North Carolina line. We are in contact with the South Atlantic Council to confirm their SSC will be setting congruent ABCs for only the South Atlantic management areas.

Council staff (2-3) and MAFMC SSC members (1-2, in addition to Dr. Boreman) will attend the SAFMC SSC meeting on October 25, 2017 to aid in discussion of blueline tilefish ABCs, particularly as it relates to the management unit north of Cape Hatteras. The MAFMC SSC will then review the assessment results and set specifications for the management unit north of the Virginia/North Carolina line at their March 2018 meeting.

The assessment workshop report is available through the SEDAR 50 webpage (<http://sedarweb.org/sedar-50-atlantic-blue-line-tilefish-assessment-workshop-report>).



Figure 1. Current and proposed Council/Assessment management units.



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October 2, 2017

Mr. Gregg Waugh
Executive Director
SAFMC
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC

Dear Gregg:

Thank you for your invitation to our staff and SSC members to attend the upcoming SAFMC SSC meeting where the specification of ABC for blueline tilefish will be discussed. Council staff (2-3) and MAFMC SSC members (1-2) will attend the meeting.

In early 2018, we plan to request that our SSC provide us with an ABC recommendation for blueline tilefish for the area now under the jurisdiction of the MAFMC (i.e., north of the VA/NC border). As such, the upcoming SSC meeting in Charleston, SC offers an excellent opportunity for dialogue between staff and SSC members from both Councils. This should help ensure that the approach taken next year by the Mid-Atlantic SSC in specification of ABC for the area north of the VA/NC border is compatible with the approach taken by your Council and SSC for specification of ABC for blueline tilefish south of that area.

We look forward to working cooperatively with the South Atlantic Council on the management of this important resource. Please call me or Matt Seeley of my staff if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, T. Baum, M. Seeley



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Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

August 31, 2017

Dr. Jon Hare
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Dear Jon:

In August, the Council discussed concerns related to the Atlantic surfclam stock assessment. As you know, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) was unable to endorse the overfishing limit (OFL) provided by the assessment for 2018-2020 because of a poor understanding of survey catchability. This lack of understanding contributed to the uncertainty in the absolute estimates of spawning stock biomass, recruitment, and fishing mortality provided in the stock assessment.

Because of these concerns, we are providing an early request for information to support the May 2018 review of the 2019 fishing year acceptable biological catch by the SSC. Specifically, we are requesting, "Survey data, including survey indices and swept area estimates of biomass (when available), catch records, and spatial distribution of the fishery," be available as interim metrics.¹ This early data request should provide your staff the additional time needed to ensure this information can be provided to us by May 2018.

In addition, the Council remains concerned about the uncertainty associated with the absolute estimates provided in the stock assessment. As such, we are requesting a description of the short-term and long-term research and analyses that the NEFSC is planning to conduct to improve our understanding of survey catchability and reduce the uncertainty in the absolute estimates.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: J. Coakley, P. deFur, W. Elliott, M. Luisi

¹https://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/5938001659cc686cc1578f97/1496842263226/01_May+2017+SSC+Report.pdf