



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | P. Weston Townsend, Vice Chairman

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

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 22, 2021
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Brandon Muffley and Julia Beaty, staff
Subject: Update on the Thread Herring exempted fishing permit

In June 2021, the Council discussed an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application submitted to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) for an experimental purse seine fishery in federal waters for Atlantic thread herring. Thread herring are an ecosystem component species under the Council's Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment and are subject to a 1,700 pound possession limit. The application requested the ability to catch up to 3,000 MT (6.6 million pounds) of thread herring in 2022 and would require an exemption to the Unmanaged Forage possession limit.

The Council requested the SSC review the application and provide input on scientific and biological considerations of the application and proposed data collection program. Given the role of thread herring as forage in the ecosystem and application to the Unmanaged Forage Amendment, the Council also requested the Ecosystem and Ocean Planning (EOP) Committee meet to review the feedback from the SSC and provide any additional recommendations regarding the application.

The SSC discussed the thread herring EFP application at their September 7–8, 2021 meeting and their comments and recommendations are provided in the September SSC meeting report behind the Committee Reports tab. The EOP Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, October 4th to discuss the EFP application (meeting information can be found at: <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2021/ecosystem-and-ocean-planning-committee-meeting>). A draft report or verbal summary of the Committee meeting will be provided to the Council at the October meeting.

The applicant may decide to revise and resubmit their EFP application to GARFO after considering the advice of the SSC and EOP Committee. Once GARFO publishes a Federal Register Notice with an associated public comment period, the Council may decide to submit a comment letter based on the SSC and EOP Committee recommendations. Staff will continue to keep the Council informed about the application and future Federal Register publication.