

Liaison Report from the September 25th thru 28th, 2023 NEFMC Meeting in Plymouth, MA – Hybrid

Election of Officers:

Both Eric Reid and Rick Bellavance were reappointed by the NEFMC as Chair and Vice Chair. The Council also welcomed their newest member Jackie Odell from Mass.

Additional information can be found here: <https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/NEFMC-Reelects-Eric-Reid-and-Rick-Bellavance-as-Chair-and-Vice-Chair-for-2023-2024-Welcomes-New-Member-Jackie-Odell.pdf>

Scallop Committee Report:

The Council received an overview of scallop survey results, these surveys were conducted by:

- Coonamessett Farm Foundation
- UMass Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST),
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).

These surveys were carried out with industry partners under the Scallop RSA Program.

- Due to mechanical problems, the 2023 federal scallop survey was canceled.
https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/13b_Press-Release-Sea-Scallop-Survey-Canceled-2023--NOAA-Fisheries.pdf

The Council added to their work priorities increasing VMS ping rates in FW 38 to improve enforcement in the fishery.

The Council also moved to adopt Scallop Survey Guiding Principles

Additional information can be found here: <https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/Council-Receives-2023-Scallop-Survey-Overview-Discusses-VMS-Ping-Rates-Northern-Edge-Approves-Survey-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

NEFSC Fishery Independent Surveys

The Council requests that the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) develop a white paper to be submitted to the New England Fishery Management Council by January 12, 2024, outlining an industry-based survey that is complementary to the spring and autumn Bottom Trawl Survey.

Habitat Committee Report:

- Northern Edge

The Council tasked the PDT to analyze 4 areas in the development of access areas for the Northern Edge Framework. The analysis should include estimates of biomass in each of the 4 areas along with estimates of percentage of disturbance from fishing.

The Council also received a progress report on the following:

- The Council's Framework Adjustment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon Fishery Management Plan, known as the salmon aquaculture framework;
- The Council's Southern New England Habitat Area of Particular Concern Framework, which currently is out for public comment through October 26, 2023 as a proposed rule
- The NOAA/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service draft management plan for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, which is out for public comment through October 26, 2023.

Additional information can be found here: <https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/Council-Receives-2023-Scallop-Survey-Overview-Discusses-VMS-Ping-Rates-Northern-Edge-Approves-Survey-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

Herring Committee Report:

Revisit Amendment 8 Inshore Midwater Trawl Closure

The Council voted to change the title for this action from "revisit Amendment 8 Inshore Midwater Trawl Closure" to "an Action to Minimize User Conflicts related to the Atlantic Herring Fishery."

The Council also tasked the Herring Committee and PDT to schedule 5 public scoping meetings to discuss user conflicts. As part of its work the Committee and PDT should review and compile the records of user conflicts and they also tasked the Committee and PDT to develop a scoping document by January 2024.

Additional information can be found here: <https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/NEFMC-to-Develop-Atlantic-Herring-Amendment-10-to-Address-Fishery-Issues-Launches-Planning-Process-for-Scoping-Meetings.pdf>

Transboundary Management Guidance Committee Report:

Council approve the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee's recommendations for United States/Canada total allowable catches (TACs) for 2024 as:

- Eastern Georges Bank cod at a TAC of 520 mt,
- Eastern Georges Bank haddock at a TAC of 10,000 mt, and
- Georges Bank yellowtail flounder at a TAC of 168 mt.

Groundfish Committee Report:

- FW 66 – Specifications and Management Measures

The Council added a Yellow Tail alternative that would change for catch in FY2024 and FY2025 only, the sea scallop accountability measure (AM) implementation policy such that the scallop fishery AM for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder would only be implemented if the scallop fishery exceeds its sub-ACL for the stock and the overall ACL for the stock is also exceeded.

The Council moved to modify/replace the existing groundfish ABC control rules to better address the goals and objectives of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) FMP.

They also moved to develop a tiered groundfish ABC control rule which considers as potential categories, but is not limited to:

- 1) Stock status, including unknown and rebuilt
- 2) Stock assessment model type and sources or level of uncertainty
- 3) Productivity regime.

Joint Monkfish/Dogfish action to reduce Atlantic Sturgeon Bycatch and the Monkfish Committee Report

As discussed yesterday and earlier today.

