

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Hotel Viking, Newport, RI
November 15-17, 2016

DRAFT MONKFISH MOTIONS

1. Mr. Balzano moved on behalf of the committee:
to select Option 3 (Section 4.1.1.3) Reduce the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in the northern fishery management area (ACL=7,592; ACT=7,364 mt; TAL=6,338 mt) and Option 4 (Section 4.1.1.4) Reduce the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in the Southern Fishery Management Area (ACL=12,316 mt; ACT=11,947; TAL=9,011) as preferred alternatives.

The motion *carried* unanimously on a show of hands (17/0/0).

2. Mr. Balzano moved on behalf of the committee:
to select Option 4 (Section 4.2.2.4) Increase the DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA as the preferred alternative.

The motion *carried* on a show of hands (16/1/0).

3. Mr. Balzano moved on behalf of the committee:
to select Option 3 (Section 4.2.1.3) that would increase the incidental trip limits on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA to 900 and 750 lb. tail weight per DAS for Category C and D permits, respectively, as the preferred alternative.

The motion *carried* unanimously on a show of hands (17/0/0).

4. Mr. Balzano moved on behalf of the committee:
to move Option 2 (Section 4.2.1.2) Increase the DAS allocation in the Northern Fishery Management Area to considered but rejected.

The motion *carried* unanimously on a show of hands (17/0/0).

5. Mr. Balzano moved on behalf of the committee:
to move Options 2 and 3 (Section 4.2.2.2) Increase the DAS allocation in the SFMA and Increase the trip limits in the SFMA to considered but rejected.

The motion *carried* unanimously on a show of hands (17/0/0).

6. Mr. Balzano moved and Mr. Alexander seconded:
to submit Monkfish Framework 10 to GARFO pending approval by the MAFMC.
The motion *carried* unanimously on a show of hands (17/0/0).

DECISION DOCUMENT

for

Framework Adjustment 10

to the

Monkfish

Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

**MAFMC Meeting
December 13, 2016**

The following decision tables in this document appear in the same order as the sections in the Draft Framework 10 document; page numbers are provided for reference.

**Section 4.1.1 – Revised Annual Catch Limits
(p. 24)**

NEFMC Motion:

- To select Option 3 (Section 4.1.1.3) Reduce the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in the northern fishery management area (ACL=7,592; ACT=7,364 mt; TAL=6,338 mt) and Option 4 (Section 4.1.1.4) Reduce the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in the Southern Fishery Management Area (ACL=12,316 mt; ACT=11,947; TAL=9,011) as preferred alternatives. **CARRIED** 17/0/0.

| Alternatives/Options Under Consideration | Description |
|--|--|
| Option 1 | No Action |
| Option 2 | Updated Discard Rate for Northern and Southern Fishery Management Areas |
| Option 3 | Reduce the Management Uncertainty Buffer to 3% in the NFMA |
| Option 4 | Reduce the Management Uncertainty Buffer to 3% in the SFMA |
| Decisions/Questions to Consider | |
| • | |
| Monkfish Committee Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To select Option 3 (Section 1.1.1.3) Revised annual catch limit for the NFMA as the preferred alternative To select Option 4 (Section 1.1.1.4) Revised annual catch limit for the SFMA as the preferred alternative The Committee was in favor of updating the discard rate and reducing the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in both areas, which Options 3 and 4 achieve. | |
| Monkfish AP Comments/Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quorum was not met at the October 12, 2016 AP meeting, however, the AP members present supported reducing the management uncertainty buffers to 3% in both areas. | |
| Other Important Considerations/DEA References | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biological impacts: p. 103 Habitat impacts: p. 115 Protected resources impacts: p. 118 Economic impacts: p. 124 Social impacts: p. to be completed | |

Section 4.2.1 – Modify the DAS allocation and/or trip limits in the NFMA
(p. 28)

NEFMC Motion:

- To select Option 3 (Section 4.2.1.3) that would increase the incidental trip limits on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA to 900 and 750 lb. tail weight per DAS for Category C and D permits, respectively, as the preferred alternative. **CARRIED 17/0/0.**
- To move Option 2 (Section 4.2.1.2) Increase the DAS allocation in the Northern Fishery Management Area to considered but rejected. **CARRIED 17/0/0.**

| Alternatives/Options Under Consideration | Description |
|--|--|
| Option 1 | No Action |
| Option 2 | Increase the DAS allocation in the Northern Fishery Management Area |
| Option 3 | Increase the trip limits in the NFMA |
| Decisions/Questions to Consider | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the incidental limits on a NE multispecies DAS could remove the need to use a monkfish DAS in the NFMA, depending on the level of increase. Is that the intent of the Committee? | |
| Monkfish Committee Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee didn't make any recommendations on changes to DAS allocations in the NFMA. | |
| Monkfish AP Comments/Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AP did not discuss modifications to the incidental limits when on a NE multispecies DAS or increasing DAS in the NFMA. | |
| Other Important Considerations/DEA References | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological impacts: p. 110 • Habitat impacts: p. 116 • Protected resources impacts: p. 121 • Economic impacts: p. 132 • Social impacts: p. to be completed | |

**Section 4.2.2 – Modify the DAS allocation and/or trip limits in the SFMA
(p. 30)**

NEFMC Motion:

- To select Option 4 (Section 4.2.2.4) Increase the DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA as the preferred alternative. **CARRIED** 16/1/0.
- To move Options 2 and 3 (Section 4.2.2.2) Increase the DAS allocation in the SFMA and Increase the trip limits in the SFMA to considered but rejected. **CARRIED** 17/0/0.

| Alternatives/Options Under Consideration | Description |
|---|--|
| Option 1 | No Action |
| Option 2 | Increase the DAS allocation in the SFMA |
| Option 3 | Increase the trip limits in the SFMA |
| Option 4 | Increase the DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA |
| Decisions/Questions to Consider | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PDT is recommending moving Options 2 and 3 to considered but rejected, if the Committee intends to increase both the DAS and trip limits in the SFMA. | |
| Monkfish Committee Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Option 4 as the preferred alternative and supported the PDT recommendation to move Options 2 and 3 to considered but rejected. | |
| Monkfish AP Comments/Recommendations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorum was not met at the October 12, 2016 AP meeting, however, the AP members present supported a 15% in both DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA. | |
| Other Important Considerations/DEA References | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological impacts: p. 113 • Habitat impacts: p. 116 • Protected resources impacts: p. 121 • Economic impacts: 134 • Social impacts: p. to be completed | |



New England Fishery Management Council

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DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Monkfish Committee

Hotel Viking, Newport, RI
November 14, 2016

The Committee met on November 14, 2016 in Newport, RI to: discuss the alternatives under consideration in Framework 10.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Mr. Vince Balzano (Chair), Ms. Laurie Nolan (Vice Chair), Mr. Mark Alexander, Mr. Terry Alexander, Ms. Libby Etrie, Mr. Mark Gibson, Mr. Steven Heins, Dr. Cate O’Keefe, Mr. John Pappalardo, Mr. Mike Ruccio, Mr. Wes Townsend; Dr. Fiona Hogan (NEFMC staff); Dr. Willie Whitmore (GARFO); and Mr. John Almeida (NOAA General Counsel). In addition, approximately 10 members of the public attended.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The Committee recommended a 15% increase in both DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA as the preferred alternative.
- The Committee recommended an increase in incidental trip limits when on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA of 900 and 750 lb tail weight/DAS for C and D permits, respectively, as the preferred alternative.

PRESENTATION: DAS AND TRIP LIMIT ANALYSIS

Dr. Hermsen updated the DAS allocation and trip limit analysis based on the Committee’s request to increase the incidental landing limits when on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA at their October 18th, 2016 meeting (Hermsen, 2016). The analysis was also updated to project potential landings under a 15% increase in both DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA. A total of nine runs were conducted for the NFMA; seven were conducted in the SFMA (Table 7, Hermsen, 2016). Increasing the incidental limits on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA would effectively shift effort from a monkfish DAS to a NE multispecies DAS. In other words it would relabel directed effort to incidental effort. It would also reduce the need to use a monkfish DAS in the NFMA as the majority of trips caught less than the proposed incidental limits. The additional runs that increased the incidental limits in the NFMA when on a NE multispecies DAS did not solve for a revised level of directed monkfish DAS allocation because the “directed” effort remaining was so low it could take a large number of DAS to project that the TAL would be achieved. For the SFMA, the maximum potential landings were projected to be 12,345,092 lb. This represented a 30% increase over observed landings in FY2015.

DISCUSSION ON THE PRESENTATION

A Committee member questioned why vessels in the NFMA were not using their monkfish DAS and instead were mainly landing lower, incidental amounts of monkfish. GARFO staff explained that the fishery in the NFMA has always been incidental. For the first several years of the fishery, there weren't any monkfish DAS limits in the NFMA – DAS only had to be declared in the SFMA. Because of its incidental nature, there has always been fewer monkfish DAS used in the NFMA compared to the SFMA. Recent estimates of DAS usage were approximately 3% in the NFMA. A Committee member characterized monkfish fishing in the NFMA as a mixed trip where they're landing both monkfish and groundfish but not directing effort on monkfish.

Current regulations, allow a monkfish DAS to be declared after leaving the dock in the NFMA, provided the monkfish option is selected before the trip starts. A Committee member questioned why the onus was on the captain to do this at sea instead of being able to declare it after landing. GARFO staff considered the current regulations to provide enough flexibility for fishermen since they can declare a monkfish DAS at any time prior to landing, if they need to. Another Committee member remembered when the monkfish option was originally developed and at the time was considered the best solution to increase flexibility. GARFO staff also pointed out that only a small number of vessels in the NFMA were restricted by existing DAS allocations. A number of DAS go unused in the NFMA every year but no shift of effort from the NFMA to the SFMA had been detected in the data to date. According to the FY 2015 TAL report (<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/monkfish.html>), 38% of overall landings in the NFMA were landed using otter trawl; 38% of overall landings in the SFMA were landed using gillnet gear.

A Committee member thought it would be helpful to identify the different characteristics of the fishing fleets in the two management areas. The southern fishery targets monkfish and primarily uses gillnet gear. The northern fishery primarily consists of trawlers looking to put a trip on board and use monkfish as a component of a trip. It was thought financially unviable for such vessels to move south to complete a trip.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PRESENTATION

- Bill McCann – A lot of the northern vessels don't have allocation of southern groundfish stocks. Sector rules, if they don't have allocation for those stocks they can't catch them. As far as the fear factor goes they could give you 100 DAS in the NFMA but you can still only use whatever is allowed down south. They could give them the max but it doesn't matter because you can only use 32 in the SFMA.
- Jeff Kaelin, Lund's Fisheries – We don't really direct on monkfish but land it on scallop boats and buy a lot of monkfish from gillnetters in Barnegat. The Committee has had this discussion for a long time. I wonder how many of those DAS are being used in the south. You have 40,000 DAS and only a small percentage is being used. There are latent DAS and I recognize there would be the right to go between areas but we could find out how much demand there is to do that and get rid of 20,000 DAS. If we change the calculations we can get rid of that fear factor. I think people would say there's not 20,000 DAS that could be burned in the south. We could use A6 to rationalize the fishery. I do appreciate you considering a 3% uncertainty buffer. That's a positive thing.

A Committee member was concerned that monkfish would be caught when vessels move south to fish for squid. Another Committee member has fished in the south for squid but not for monkfish. The Committee member remained concerned that loopholes would be found.

AGENDA ITEM #1: FRAMEWORK 10

Council Staff outlined the alternatives under consideration for Framework 10. These included specifications for FYs 2017 - 2019. At their October 18th, 2016 meeting, the Committee selected Options 3 (ACL=7,592; ACT=7,364 mt; TAL=6,338 mt) and 4 (ACL=12,316 mt; ACT=11,947; TAL=9,011) as preferred alternatives for specifications. The AP members in attendance of their October 12, 2016 meeting were in favor of a 6% management uncertainty buffer in both management areas because of concerns surrounding the NEFSC trawl survey and assessment. Other alternatives were for increases in DAS allocation and/or trip limits for both management areas. The AP members in attendance of their October 12, 2016 meeting recommended a 15% increase in DAS allocations and trip limits in the SFMA; no recommendation was made for the NFMA.

The Committee decided to begin with the SMFA alternatives.

1. MOTION: Ms. Nolan/Mr. Pappalardo

To recommend Option 4 (Section 4.2.2 Increase the DAS allocation and trip limits in the SFMA) as preferred alternative.

MOTION #1 CARRIED/10-0-0.

Next the Committee discussed alternatives for the NFMA, beginning with the DAS allocation in the NFMA. A Committee member suggested increasing the DAS allocation in the NFMA area to 87 DAS. The Committee member didn't want to miss out on any opportunities. GARFO staff explained that the model was not able to provide an analytical solution to increase DAS in the NFMA if the incidental trip limits were increased. The relationship between DAS allocation and landings in the SFMA is very straightforward but is less so in the NFMA. Instead, increasing the incidental landing limits would reduce the need to declare a monkfish DAS in the NFMA. The 87 DAS estimate came from a run where the incidental landings limits were not increased and therefore there was still measureable directed effort for the model.

2. MOTION: Mr. T. Alexander/Ms. Etrie

To recommend Option 3 (Section 4.2.1.3 Increase the incidental trip limits on a NE multispecies DAS in the NFMA) to 900 and 750 lb tail weight per DAS for Category C and D permits, respectively, as the preferred alternative.

Rationale: Increasing the incidental limits on a NE multispecies DAS would allow vessels to fish and not use a MF DAS. This addresses the needs of GF vessels that view monkfish as a component of their trip.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PRESENTATION

- Bill McCann – We were discussing increasing the monkfish DAS. I think you would be better increasing the limit on the monkfish DAS, which would entice people to use their monkfish DAS and not save them. Right now we're at no limit on a monkfish DAS but that will change.

MOTION #2 CARRIED/10-0-0.

The Committee discussed what might be an appropriate option for monkfish DAS allocations in the NFMA. GARFO staff noted that by raising the incidental limit in the NMFA essentially moves them to groundfish trips. This would also reduce the need for a monkfish DAS that are currently not restraining so it becomes a policy decision for the Committee. A Committee member reminded the Committee of concern raised at the last Committee meeting about the risk of reducing the management uncertainty buffer to 3% in the NFMA. Maintaining status quo DAS in the NFMA might help mitigate that risk especially when the existing allocation was not restricting. Another Committee member suggested the allocation could even be lowered to 37 DAS to match the southern allocation.

Staff clarified that FW10 alternatives would not adjust the unlimited trip limit when fishing on a NE multispecies and monkfish DAS in the NFMA. A Committee member noted that none of the alternatives in the NFMA were expected to increase landings in the NFMA, unless there was a behavioral shift that was inconsistent with recent patterns. A Committee member thought that the alternatives would increase flexibility but not landings in the NFMA and was uncomfortable with an increase in DAS as high as 87 DAS. However, since some vessels were being restricted by the current allocation, the Committee member was interested in discussing a lower increase in NFMA DAS. GARFO staff noted that monkfish permits are not associated with a management area and accordingly all permit holders are allocated the same amount of DAS but only a set number was allowed to be used in the SFMA. Since the Committee did not want to increase DAS in the NFMA after their discussion, the alternative in the document could be moved to considered but rejected.

3. MOTION: Ms. Etrie /Mr. T. Alexander

To move Option 2 (Section 4.2.1.2 Increase the DAS allocation in the Northern Fishery Management Area) to considered but rejected (Etrie/M. Alexander)

MOTION #3 CARRIED/10-0-0.

Staff noted that since the Committee had selected Option 4 for the SFMA alternatives, it would aid in preparing the document to move Options 2 and 3 to considered but rejected.

4. MOTION: Mr. M. Alexander/Mr. Gibson

To move Options 2 and 3 (Section 4.2.2 to increase the DAS allocation in the SFMA and Increase the trip limits in the SFMA) to considered but rejected

MOTION #4 CARRIED/10-0-0.

AGENDA ITEM #2: OTHER BUSINESS

An issue of concern for a Committee member was the current regulations that prohibit trip category vessels from leaving their gillnet gear in the water when they go in. The day boat category can leave their gear out but are restricted to 50 nets. Vessels opt into the trip boat category, which has unlimited nets. The nets being left out would be 12" and not the 6.5" net. The sector exemption from this regulation was recently rejected and GARFO thought Council action would be needed to amend it. The regulation is under the NE multispecies FMP, which would require a joint action if the Monkfish Committee addressed the issue. A Committee member suggested that it be included in NE Multispecies FW56 since it was a groundfish regulation and to include it in monkfish FW10 would delay final action.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE PRESENTATION

- Bill McCann – The reason is because of the 120 day blocks so that was the difference between day and trip. Day boats had to take the 120 day blocks.

Consensus statement: To encourage the Groundfish Committee to modify the regulations that requires trip gillnet vessels to bring their gear in at the end of their trip specifically considering modifications that would allow 10” or greater gillnet gear to be left between trips to facilitate more efficient monkfish trips.

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