

New England Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday – Thursday, April 13-15, 2021
[By Webinar](#)

Sending comments? Written comments must be received at the NEFMC office no later than 8:00 a.m., Thursday, April 8, 2021 to be considered at this meeting. Please address comments 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.

IMPORTANT: Due to ongoing federal and state travel restrictions and public safety guidelines related to [COVID-19](#), this meeting will be conducted by webinar. Please continue to monitor the Council's [April 2021 meeting webpage](#).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: The Council's "Guidelines for Providing Public Comments" can be found [here](#). Anyone interested in speaking during the open period for public comment on April 15, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. should email Janice Plante at jplante@nefmc.org to get on the list.

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

12:00 p.m. 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, U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA Enforcement, and SAFMC Dolphin/Wahoo

1:30 Climate Science at Northeast Fisheries Science Center (Dr. Vince Saba, NEFSC)

Report on Northeast Fisheries Science Center efforts to address climate change impacts on fisheries

2:15 Break

2:30 Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative (Council Staff)

Report on the NRCC's scenario planning initiative to address climate change impacts and implications

3:00 NOAA Listening Session on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (Dr. Paul Doremus, NOAA Fisheries)

NOAA listening session on Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, focusing on Section 216(c), making fisheries and protected resources more resilient to climate change; Council recommendations and comments

4:15 Congressional Update (David Whaley)

Update on congressional activities; Council discussion

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

9:00 a.m. Atlantic Herring Committee Report (Rick Bellavance)

Progress report and discussion of next steps on actions to: (1) develop a rebuilding plan to address the overfished status of the Atlantic herring resource; (2) potentially adjust herring accountability measures; and (3) consider spawning closures on Georges Bank under Framework Adjustment 7

11:00 Skate Committee Report: (Dr. Matt McKenzie)

Northeast Skate Complex Amendment 5: review scoping comments and identify next steps; receive update on other 2021 skate priorities

12:30 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30 Habitat Committee Report (Eric Reid)

Habitat Management Areas (HMAs): progress report on assessing revisions to the HMA on the Northern Edge of Georges Bank; Aquaculture: discuss and receive feedback on a strategy for ongoing Council engagement and coordination with NOAA Fisheries; Offshore Energy: update on offshore wind developments in the Greater Atlantic Region

- 3:00 Atlantic Sea Scallop Biological Opinion** (Jen Anderson, GARFO)
Progress report on 2021 Atlantic Sea Scallop Biological Opinion to address turtle interactions in the fishery
- 3:15 Scallop Report** (Vincent Balzano)
Scallop Survey Working Group (SSWG): update on SSWG formation and recent activities, as well as other 2021 scallop priorities
- 4:15 Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP)** (Terry Alexander)
Report on March 19, 2021 meeting of the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel; Council discussion

Thursday, April 15, 2021

- 9:00 a.m. State of the Ecosystem 2021** (Dr. Sean Lucey, NEFSC)
Presentation on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's State of the Ecosystem 2021 report
- 10:00 Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)** (SSC Chair Dr. Jason McNamee)
Receive SSC's recommendations on the State of the Ecosystem 2021 report; Council discussion
- 10:30 Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) MSE Steering Committee** (Dr. Matt McKenzie)
EBFM Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Steering Committee update on EBFM public information workshop planning
- 11:00 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)
- 11:15 Groundfish Report** (Terry Alexander)
Recreational Party/Charter Limited Entry: Council decision on next steps in response to feedback on the recreational groundfish party/charter fishery limited entry strawman
- 12:15 p.m. Other Business**

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

This meeting is being held entirely by webinar. Council member financial disclosure forms are available for examination on the Council website.

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, 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

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 5, 2021

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Council Chooses Preferred Management Measures for Dolphin and Wahoo Fisheries

Proposed measures would reduce recreational vessel limits for Dolphin and bag limits for Wahoo

During its meeting this week, members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council chose preferred management alternatives affecting Dolphin and Wahoo harvested in federal waters along the entire Atlantic coast. The proposed measures, as outlined in Amendment 10 to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan, would reduce the current recreational vessel limit for Dolphin from 60 fish to 48 fish per vessel while maintaining the 10 fish per person/day bag limit and reduce the daily bag limit for Wahoo from 2 fish to 1 fish per person/day. Reductions in harvest are intended to help prevent seasonal closures that could be imposed should catch levels be exceeded.

Regional differences in the Dolphin and Wahoo fisheries became the focus of discussion as members of the Council reviewed concerns expressed during public hearings held in late January. Fishermen in South Florida and the Keys, including charter captains, have expressed concerns about catching fewer Dolphin and encountering smaller fish over the past few years and have requested the Council take action to reduce harvest. Further north, charter captains and other fishermen have raised objections to the proposed reductions, noting the importance of maintaining higher vessel limits for trips that require much farther runs offshore.

“We’ve heard from constituents and advisory panel members and believe their observations. Looking at the various management scenarios for both Dolphin and Wahoo, the Council compromised to reduce catches while addressing concerns of fishermen dependent on these valuable recreational fisheries,” explained Council Chair Mel Bell. “There are many variables affecting these migratory fisheries, including international harvest, environmental conditions, and other factors. We don’t have a clear sense of what the problem is and we’re being more preventative than curative at this point,” said Bell.

Amendment 10 also includes updates to annual catch limits, modifications to sector allocations, and changes to accountability measures designed to ensure the catch levels are not exceeded for both Dolphin and Wahoo. Proposed management measures would also allow properly permitted commercial fishing vessels with trap, pot or buoy gear onboard to retain up to 500 pounds (gutted weight) of Dolphin and remove the Operator Card requirement for for-hire and commercial fishermen in the Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo fishery. After considering recommendations from its advisory panels and public comment, the Council removed an action that would have allowed filleting Dolphin at sea on for-hire vessels in federal waters north of the NC/VA border. The Council is scheduled to approve Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 for review by the Secretary of Commerce during its June meeting.

(Continued)

Other Business:

Red Snapper

NOAA Fisheries provided an update on the recreational Red Snapper Season for 2021. Due to delays from COVID-19, some landings data from 2020 are not yet available. Those data are expected in May 2021. NOAA Fisheries intends to announce the 2021 season as soon as data are available and evaluated. If a season is allowed, the recreational season for Red Snapper begins on the second Friday in July. The number of fishing days is determined by NOAA Fisheries based on catch estimates from the previous season. The recreational season was open for four days in 2020 and five days in 2019.

A new stock assessment for Red Snapper will be reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) during its meeting in late April. The Council will receive an overview of the assessment and the SSC's recommendations during its June meeting. The Council discussed management options for considering the stock assessment results in setting the 2021 catch levels and requested that staff determine if an abbreviated framework can be used to adjust catch levels and if so, prepare such an amendment for Council review at their June 2021 meeting. The Council will also move forward with a plan amendment to modify annual catch limits, allocations, and other management measures necessary as a result of the stock assessment.

King Mackerel, Red Porgy, Snowy Grouper and Rock Shrimp Fishery Access Area

The Council continued work on management measures addressing Atlantic migratory group King Mackerel to address the recent stock assessment update that found the stock is not overfished or undergoing overfishing. The measures, originally included in Framework Amendment 10 and now Amendment 34 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan, would modify annual catch limits and sector allocations, increase the recreational bag limit and possession limits off the coast of Florida, reduce the minimum size limits for both commercial and recreational sectors, and allow retention of "cut off" King and Spanish Mackerel by recreational fishermen as is allowed for the commercial sector. Public hearings on the amendment will be scheduled following the Council's June meeting.

Proposed management measures for Red Porgy to end overfishing and rebuild the stock continued to be reviewed in Amendment 50 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, with public hearings scheduled this summer. The Council reviewed recent stock assessment results for Snowy Grouper and recommendations from its SSC and will begin developing an amendment to address management measures. The Council also approved Coral Amendment 10 for public hearings to be held prior to the Council's June meeting. The amendment addresses a Shrimp Fishery Access Area for rock shrimp along the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Coral Habitat Area of Particular Concern off the east coast of Florida.

Additional information about this week's meeting, including a meeting [Story Map](#), committee reports, and briefing book materials is available from the Council's website at: <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/>. The next meeting of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is currently scheduled for June 14-18, 2021 in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.