



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org

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

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

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 27, 2023
To: Council
From: Chris Moore, Executive Director
Subject: Executive Director's Report

The following materials are enclosed for review during the Executive Director's Report at the February 2023 Council Meeting:

1. 2023 Planned Council Meeting Topics
2. 2023 Council Meeting Schedule
3. 2023 Implementation Plan – Proposed Actions and Deliverables
4. MAFMC Letter to ONMS: Hudson Canyon Section 304(a)(5) Consultation
5. GARFO Letter to MAFMC: MSB Amendment 23 Approval
6. NEFMC Letter to MAFMC: Spiny Dogfish Specifications
7. NEFMC Letter to NRCC Partners: White Hake Assessment
8. NEFMC Press Release: Council Executive Director Tom Nies Announces Retirement
9. Reminder: Preventing Harassment and Discrimination Training
10. Staff Memo: Offshore Wind Updates
11. Staff Memo: SSC Membership Reappointments

2023 Planned Council Meeting Topics

Updated: 1/19/23

February 7-9, 2023 Council Meeting – Washington, DC

- Monkfish Framework 13: final action on 2023-2025 specifications and other measures
- Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program: review priorities
- *Illex* Permit Action Follow-Up: review NMFS response and consider initiating action
- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Species Separation Requirements Amendment: review FMAT action plan and additional Advisory Panel recommendations
- Executive Committee (Closed): review Ricks E Savage award nominees
- Squid Squad Update
- Lessons Learned – Piloting an Automatic Jigging Machine in Southern New England Squid Fisheries
- Highly Migratory Species: update on recent and ongoing management initiatives
- Bluefish and Spiny Dogfish Research Track Assessments: presentation
- Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team: update
- Financial Disclosure and Recusals: review NOAA requirements
- SCEMFIS Survey of Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Species Composition: presentation
- NEFSC Cost Survey for Commercial Fishing Businesses: presentation
- Marine Resource Education Program: overview of program goals and accomplishments
- Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel: overview and update
- SSC membership: review and approve

April 4-6, 2023 Council Meeting – Durham, NC

- 2023 *Illex* Specifications: review
- 2024-2025 *Illex* Specifications: approve
- Habitat Activities (including aquaculture): update
- Offshore Wind: update
- East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning: update
- 2023 Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystem Report: review
- Short-Term Forecasts of Species Distributions Project: review results and discuss next steps
- NTAP Restrictor Rope Research: review results
- Ocean City Video Project: review results

June 6-8, 2023 Council Meeting – Virginia Beach, VA

- 2024 Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Specifications: review
- 2024 Blueline Tilefish Specifications: review
- 2024 Golden Tilefish Specifications: review
- Monkfish and Dogfish Joint Framework to Reduce the Bycatch of Atlantic Sturgeon: review and approve range of alternatives
- Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment: review draft EFH designation alternatives
- 2024 Atlantic Chub Mackerel Specifications: review
- 2024 Butterfish Specifications: review
- EAFM Risk Assessment Review: update
- Unmanaged Commercial Landings Report: review

August 8-10, 2023 Council Meeting – Annapolis, MD

- 2024-2025 Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Specifications: approve (joint with ASMFC SFSBSB Board)
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial Measures: review (joint with ASMFC SFSBSB Board)
- Scup Commercial Discards and Gear Restricted Areas (GRA): review analysis and discuss next steps
- Recreational Harvest Control Rule 2.0 Action (to be implemented after sunset of percent change approach): discuss next steps (joint with ASMFC Policy Board)
- 2024-2025 Bluefish Specifications and Recreational Management Measures: approve (joint with ASMFC Bluefish Board)
- 2024-2025 Atlantic Mackerel Specifications: approve
- 2024-2025 Atlantic Mackerel River Herring and Shad Cap: approve
- Research Set-Aside Program Redevelopment: update

October 3-5, 2023 Council Meeting – New York City, NY

- 2024-2026 Spiny Dogfish Specifications: approve
- SCOQ Species Separation Requirements Amendment: review and approve any additional alternatives
- 2024-2026 Longfin Squid Specifications: approve
- Executive Committee: review progress on 2023 Implementation Plan and discuss draft 2024 deliverables
- Council Process for Reviewing EFP Applications: approve
- Private Recreational Tilefish Permitting and Reporting: review performance
- EAFM Risk Assessment Review: approve
- Biennial Review of 2020-2024 Research Priorities Document: review and approve
- Habitat Activities (including aquaculture): update
- Offshore Wind: update

December 11-14, 2023 Council Meeting – Philadelphia, PA

- 2024-2025 Recreational Management Measures for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass: approve (joint with ASMFC SFSBSB Board)
- Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Commercial Minimum Mesh Size Regulations and Exemptions: review and discuss next steps (joint with ASMFC SFSBSB Board)
- Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Sector Separation and Recreational Catch Accounting Amendment: review and approve draft scoping document (joint with ASMFC Policy Board)
- Recreational Harvest Control Rule 2.0 Action (to be implemented after sunset of percent change approach): review and discuss next steps (joint with ASMFC Policy Board)
- Monkfish and Dogfish Joint Framework to Reduce the Bycatch of Atlantic Sturgeon: final action
- 2024 Implementation Plan: approve
- Golden Tilefish IFQ Program Review: review final report

2023 Council Meeting Topics At-a-Glance

	February	April	June	August	October	December
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish and River Herring and Shad (RH/S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illex</i> Permit Action Follow-Up • Squid Squad Update • Lessons Learned: Automatic Jigging Machine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 <i>Illex</i> Specifications Review • 2024-2025 <i>Illex</i> Specs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 Chub Mackerel Specs Review • 2024 Butterfish Specs Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2025 Atlantic Mackerel Specs • 2024-2025 RH/S Cap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2026 Longfin Squid Specs 	
Recreational Reform				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rec Harvest Control Rule 2.0 Action: Discuss 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rec Sector Separation and Catch Accounting Amd: Approve Scoping Doc • Rec Harvest Control Rule 2.0 Action: Discuss
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass (SF/S/BSB)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2025 SF/S/BSB Specs and Commercial Measures • Scup GRA Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2025 SF/S/BSB Rec Mgmt Measures • SF/S/BSB Commercial Min Mesh Size Review
Bluefish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Track Assessment Presentation 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2025 Bluefish Specs and Rec Measures 		
Golden and Blueline Tilefish			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 Blueline Tilefish Specs Review • 2024 Golden Tilefish Specs Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Tilefish Permitting/ Reporting Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Tilefish IFQ Program: Review Final Report
Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SC/OQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC/OQ Species Separation Amd: Review Action Plan • SC/OQ SCEMFIS Survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 SC/OQ Specs Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC/OQ Species Separation Amd: Review/Approve Additional Alternatives 	
Spiny Dogfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Track Assessment Presentation 		<i>See protected resources</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2026 Dogfish Specs 	
Monkfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FW 13: Final Action • RSA Priorities 		<i>See protected resources</i>			
Science Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEFSC Cost Survey Presentation • SSC Membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-Term Forecasts of Species Distributions • NTAP Restrictor Rope Research • Ocean City Video Project 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSA Redevelopment Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020-2024 Research Priorities Document Review 	

	February	April	June	August	October	December
EAFM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 State of the Ecosystem Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAFM Risk Assessment Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAFM Risk Assessment Review: Approve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Process for Reviewing EFP Applications: Approve
Habitat/ Wind/ Aquaculture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat Update • Wind Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omnibus EFH Amendment: Review Draft Alternatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat Update • Wind Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Protected Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALWTRP Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogfish/ Monkfish FW to Reduce Sturgeon Bycatch: Review Alternatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogfish/ Monkfish FW to Reduce Sturgeon Bycatch: Review Alternatives: Final Action
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMS Update • Recusal/ Disclosure Presentation • MREP Update • NTAP Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario Planning Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmanaged Commercial Landings Report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Draft 2024 Deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 Implementation Plan: Approve

Acronyms/Abbreviations

ALWTRP	Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan	NEFSC	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Amd	Amendment	NTAP	Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management	Rec	Recreational
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	RH/S	River Herring and Shad
FMP	Fishery Management Plan	RSA	Research Set-Aside
GRA	Gear Restricted Area	SC/OQ	Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog
HMS	Highly Migratory Species	SF/S/BSB	Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass
Mgmt	Management	Specs	Specifications
MREP	Marine Resource Education Program	SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee
MSB	Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish		



2023 Council Meeting Schedule

(As of September 20, 2022)

February 7 – 9, 2023	Hotel Washington 515 15 th Street NW Washington, DC 20004
April 4 – 6, 2023	Hyatt Place Durham Southpoint 7840 NC-751 Hwy Durham, NC 27713
June 6 – 8, 2023	Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront 3001 Atlantic Avenue Virginia Beach, VA 23451
August 8 – 11, 2023	Westin Annapolis 100 Westgate Circle Annapolis, MD 21401
October 3 – 5, 2023	Yotel NYC 570 Tenth Avenue New York, NY 10036
December 11 – 14, 2023	The Notary Hotel 21 North Juniper Street Philadelphia, PA 19107

2023 PROPOSED ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES

This section provides an overview of the activities, amendments, frameworks, specifications, and other projects the Council expects to initiate, continue, or complete during the year. These activities are organized by Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and topic area. See the Appendix for additional details about the proposed deliverables.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, BLACK SEA BASS

1. Develop 2024-2025 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
2. Develop 2024-2025 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
3. Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas
4. Review and potentially revise commercial minimum mesh size regulations and exemptions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
5. Initiate development of action to replace Recreational Harvest Control Rule after sunset period, including enhanced use of the Recreational Demand Model and/or Recreational Fleet Dynamics Model
6. Continue development of amendment to consider recreational sector separation and recreational catch accounting for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish
7. Facilitate development of summer flounder, scup, black sea bass advisory panel fishery performance reports
8. Support black sea bass research track assessment
9. Support 2023 management track assessments for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass

BLUEFISH

10. Develop 2024-2025 specifications for bluefish
11. Develop 2024-2025 recreational management measures for bluefish
12. Facilitate development of bluefish advisory panel fishery performance report
13. Support 2023 bluefish management track assessment

Note: Deliverables 5, 6, and 7 in the previous section will also address bluefish recreational management issues

GOLDEN AND BLUELINE TILEFISH

14. Review 2024 specifications for golden tilefish
 15. Review 2024 specifications for blueline tilefish
 16. Complete and review Golden Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota Program Review
 17. Facilitate development of advisory panel fishery performance reports
 18. Review performance of private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting
 19. Work with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to support the upcoming 2024 blueline tilefish operational assessment
 20. Coordinate the 2023 golden tilefish survey pending approval of funding/logistics
 21. Support 2024 golden tilefish research track assessment
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MACKEREL, SQUID, BUTTERFISH

22. Develop 2024-2025 Atlantic mackerel specifications
23. Develop 2024-2026 longfin squid specifications
24. Review 2023 specifications for *Illlex*
25. Develop 2024-2025 specifications for *Illlex*
26. Review 2024 specifications for butterfish
27. Review 2024 specifications for chub mackerel
28. Facilitate development of mackerel, squid, butterfish advisory panel fishery performance reports
29. Support 2023 management track assessments for Atlantic mackerel and longfin squid

RIVER HERRING AND SHAD

30. Develop 2024-2025 river herring and shad cap (paired with Atlantic mackerel specifications), including consideration of the river herring assessment

SPINY DOGFISH

31. Develop 2024-2026 specifications and/or a rebuilding plan (possibly including trip limit changes), as appropriate given outcome of research and management track assessments
32. Facilitate development of spiny dogfish advisory panel fishery performance report
33. Support 2023 spiny dogfish management track assessment

ATLANTIC SURFLAM AND OCEAN QUAHOG

34. Review 2024 specifications for surfclam and ocean quahog
35. Facilitate development of surfclam and ocean quahog advisory panel fishery performance reports
36. Oversee SCOQ Electronic Monitoring Project
37. Develop alternatives for the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Species Separation Requirements Amendment

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

38. Conduct biennial review of the 2020-2024 research priorities document
39. Approve Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) membership
40. Review outcomes and recommendations from the SSC Ecosystem Work Group
41. Review past action and consider possible redevelopment of a revised Research Set-Aside program
42. Review results and determine potential application of the research project on short-term forecasts of species distributions
43. Support the 2023 Applying State Space Models Research Track Assessment
44. Coordinate and facilitate the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel

ECOSYSTEM AND OCEAN PLANNING/HABITAT

45. Continue development of Essential Fish Habitat Amendment
 46. Maintain and integrate Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment products
 47. Oversee National Fishing Effects Database Project
 48. Maintain joint MAFMC and New England Fishery Management Council offshore wind web page
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49. Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development
 50. Complete comprehensive review and update to Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management risk assessment
 51. Complete East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative and identify priorities for resulting action
 52. Continue to track thread herring Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application and develop comments, if needed
 53. Develop a policy and/or process for reviewing EFP applications for new or expanding fisheries as it relates to the unmanaged forage amendment

GENERAL

54. Review commercial landings of unmanaged species
55. Participate on Council Coordination Committee Working Groups and Subcommittees (Habitat, Area-Based Management, Legislative, ESA/MSA Coordination, Equity and Environmental Justice)
56. Respond to requests for information associated with Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification or audits for MSC-certified fisheries (Atlantic surfclam, ocean quahog, Illex squid, longfin squid, spiny dogfish, scup)
57. Track relevant legislation and provide comments as requested
58. Continue to participate on marine mammal take reduction teams and protected resources working groups, and initiate necessary actions in response to protected resource issues
59. Initiate action in response to the action plan developed by the Atlantic Sturgeon Bycatch Working Group to reduce sturgeon bycatch in gillnet fisheries

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

60. Continue to inform and engage stakeholders using a variety of communication tools and channels, including the Council website, email updates, press releases, YouTube, webinars, face-to-face meetings, and a variety of printed and digital communication materials
61. Conduct outreach to increase stakeholder awareness and understanding of Council actions under development
62. Further develop and refine the Council's website content and structure to increase usefulness and functionality
63. Develop fact sheets and outreach materials as needed
64. Continue additional outreach to improve awareness of, and compliance with, private recreational tilefish reporting requirements

STAFF WRAP-UP ON COMPLETED ACTIONS

The following actions have been, or are expected to be, approved by the Council by the end of 2022 but will require staff work in 2023 to finalize for submission to NMFS:

65. Finalize and submit any outstanding specifications packages for 2023

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

To be considered for addition to the 2023 implementation plan if time and resources allow:

66. Develop framework to allow quota transfer between commercial and recreational sectors for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
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67. Initiate amendment to address disapproved portions of *Illex* Permit Amendment
 68. Initiate action to implement "did not fish" reports for commercial, for-hire, and private tilefish permit holders
 69. Initiate action to implement a possession limit for frigate and bullet mackerel in the Mid-Atlantic
 70. Explore the use of unused ACL carryover for the Council's fisheries
 71. Develop an action to authorize an experimental Atlantic surfclam fishery in the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (HMA)
 72. Develop spatial management options for Atlantic surfclam open water aquaculture in the New York Bight and central Atlantic.
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Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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

January 24, 2023

Matt Brookhart, Regional Director
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway, SSMC4
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Brookhart:

Thank you for consulting with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) on the proposed designation of the Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary under National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) section 304(a)(5). This letter provides our determination on whether we deem it necessary to prepare draft regulations for fishing within the Exclusive Economic Zone to implement the proposed sanctuary designation.

The Council is one of eight regional councils authorized under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and tasked with conservation and management of our nation's Federal fisheries. The Council has management jurisdiction over 14 marine fisheries in Federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region, plus more than 50 ecosystem component species managed across all fishery management plans. The Council develops fishery management plans to achieve its vision of "Healthy marine ecosystems and thriving, sustainable fisheries and fishing communities that provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation."

The Council considered section 304(a)(5) during its December 2022 Council Meeting and determined that fishing regulations beyond those already in place in Federal waters are not necessary to implement the proposed Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary.

As noted in our recent scoping comments,¹ the Hudson Canyon area includes very important commercial and recreational fishing grounds. The Council has an excellent record of managing its fisheries within and beyond Hudson Canyon. Members of the Council and its staff are experts in natural resource management and conservation in the highly dynamic, ocean ecosystem, and are thus best equipped to develop fishery management measures. In fact, many of the stated objectives of the proposed sanctuary are already in line with the Council's fishery management goals, including conservation of marine wildlife and habitats, sustainable economic uses of the Hudson Canyon, increased education and awareness of ocean environments, and promoting research and monitoring.

The MSA itself provides a strong framework for fisheries management that is applied through a science-based, transparent, and participatory process. The Council works hard to balance the MSA's 10 National Standards while adhering to the National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, and other applicable laws.

¹ The Council's August 2022 scoping comments can be found at: <https://www.mafmc.org/s/MAFMC-Hudson-Canyon-Scoping-2022-08-08.pdf>.

As required under the MSA, the Council sets science-based catch limits for all Council-managed species to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks.² The Council also utilizes a variety of other management tools to ensure sustainability of managed fisheries and protect parts of the ocean from the impacts of fishing activities. These include bycatch caps or quotas, fish size restrictions, trip limits, gear restrictions, and area closures. Recognizing the important role that forage species play in the marine ecosystem, the Council has designated more than 50 species as “ecosystem component species” and established a combined 1,700 pound incidental possession limit for those species. The Council also applies an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management³ and continues to adapt its fishery management plans to incorporate these foundational principles.

The Council has already taken significant steps to safeguard the unique biological and physical resources of the Hudson Canyon. In 2015, the Council approved the designation of the Frank R. Lautenberg Deep Sea Coral Protection Area, a roughly 100,000 km² area in the Mid-Atlantic region to protect deep sea corals from the impacts of fishing gear.⁴ Within this area, which includes Hudson Canyon, all bottom tending commercial fishing gear is prohibited, with limited exceptions. Boundaries for the deep sea coral protected area were developed through a transparent and collaborative process involving fishing industry representatives, environmental groups, fishery managers, and scientists, and were approved nearly unanimously by the Council.

The Council’s fishery management plans create system wide conservation benefits that apply throughout the Hudson Canyon and beyond and balance the economic use of fisheries resources with the needs of a healthy ecosystem. On this basis, we conclude no additional fishing measures are needed to implement the proposed sanctuary.

We appreciate the opportunity to consult with Office of National Marine Sanctuaries on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

cc: J. Coakley, K. Dancy, M. Duval, L. Hogan, M. Luisi, W. Townsend

² See <http://www.mafmc.org/s/MAFMC-ABC-Control-Rule-White-Paper.pdf>, as well as species Fishery Management Plans for more information.

³ <https://www.mafmc.org/eafm>.

⁴ See <https://www.mafmc.org/actions/msb-am16> for additional information.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

January 24, 2023

Michael Luisi, Chairman
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mike:

On behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, I have approved Amendment 23 to the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (RIN 0648-BL75), including all the management measures recommended by the Council in this amendment. As you know, Amendment 23 revises the Atlantic mackerel rebuilding plan and establishes new 2023 Atlantic mackerel specifications, which include:

- An acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 8,094 mt;
- ABC deductions for expected Canadian catch (2,197 mt), recreational catch (2,143 mt), and estimated commercial discards (115 mt);
- A resulting commercial quota of 3,639 mt;
- A 20-fish per person recreational possession limit (including private anglers and for-hire crew);
- A status quo river herring and shad catch cap of 129 mt; and
- A modified commercial fishery closure approach.

We expect to publish a final rule implementing the measures in Amendment 23 imminently.

We appreciate the efforts of the Council and staff to develop this amendment and ongoing efforts to improve the management of the mackerel, squid, and butterfish fisheries. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Pentony".

Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

Cc: Dr. Christopher M. Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council





New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

January 19, 2023

Dr. Christopher Moore
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201,
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Chris:

At its Dec 5-8, 2022 meeting, the New England Fishery Management Council passed following motion for the 2023 Spiny Dogfish Specifications by consensus with one abstention.

That the management uncertainty buffer be set to 0% and with the other specification used by the Monitoring Committee to result in a 12-million-pound commercial quota.

Please contact me if you have any questions about our Council's recommendation.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director



New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

January 13, 2023

Mr. Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Mr. Robert Beal
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dr. Jonathan Hare
Science and Research Director
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Dr. Christopher Moore
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Suite 201, 800 N. State Street
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mike, Jon, Bob and Chris:

The Council requests that a management track assessment for white hake be conducted in the fall of 2023. We believe a Level III assessment is warranted, but recognize the ultimate decision will be made by the Assessment Oversight Panel.

At its December 2022 meeting, the Council passed the following motion:

That the Council supports a modification in the stock assessment schedule to accommodate a white hake management track update in 2023. The white hake update should follow a Level 3 Enhanced Review to accommodate the recommendations under the 2022 Management Track Peer Review Panel Report and the Scientific and Statistical Committee report dated November 23, 2022.

White Hake was assessed in the fall of 2022. While the assessment concluded the stock was not subject to overfishing and was not overfished, the Peer Review Panel and subsequent Scientific and Statistical Committee reports for white hake indicate a number of important uncertainties in the stock assessment. In particular the SSC wrote of white hake¹:

The SSC noted several uncertainties including poor characterization of catch and numbers-at-age, low sampling levels, missing 2020 surveys, and a major retrospective pattern. The retrospective error was reduced in the 2022 Management Track assessment compared to the previous 2019 assessment, partially due to the addition of the shrimp survey index.

¹ SSC Report available at: <https://www.nefmc.org/library/nov-9-2022-ssc-report-re-groundfish>

The SSC noted that the SSB_{MSY} reference point is based on a cumulative distribution function (CDF) of recruitment estimates from 1963-2019, whereas the projections are based on a CDF of recruitment estimates from 1995-2019. The SSC highlighted that the use of different recruitment time stanzas may not be appropriate for the stock and leads to uncertainty about the outcomes of catch advice.

The SSC highlighted the high utilization rate of white hake and the potential for the stock to become a choke species for the groundfish fishery. The SSC commented that the mixed signals for white hake presented challenges to set catch advice within the constraints of the current ABC control rule. The SSC recommended exploration of internal consistency between biological reference points and projections and consideration of change point analysis or recruit-per-spawner analysis to inform recruitment time stanzas. The SSC recommended exploration of the conflicting trends in biomass and recruitment and potential sources of uncertainty. The SSC reiterated recommendations from the 2022 Management Track Peer Review Panel to explore splitting the survey time series between the Albatross and Bigelow and continue explorations of the utility of the Bottom Longline Survey. The SSC commented that the importance of this stock and the uncertainty in the assessment may warrant an earlier than scheduled assessment update.

Furthermore, representatives from the commercial fishery indicate encountering a consistent level of availability and abundance of white hake while targeting other stocks. The catch of white hake is critical to the catch of other target stocks (e.g., pollock, redfish, monkfish).

Thank you for considering the Council's request. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2023

PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

Council Executive Director Tom Nies Announces Retirement

The New England Fishery Management Council opened its January 24-26, 2023 meeting in Portsmouth, NH with the news that Executive Director Thomas A. Nies, a 25-year veteran of the Council staff, will be retiring this summer. The Council will immediately initiate a nationwide search for his replacement.

Tom joined the Council staff in 1997. He first worked on the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan and then spent 13 years as the Council's lead analyst for groundfish. In that role, he led the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT), as he did the Herring PDT beforehand. Tom also helped develop a standardized bycatch reporting methodology for Northeast fisheries. He became Executive Director in 2013.

Council Chair Eric Reid said, "The New England Fishery Management Council has had the rare privilege to have Tom at the helm of what can be, at times, a rather unwieldy ship. On every voyage, Tom's tremendous work ethic and institutional knowledge have been unsurpassed assets not only to the Council members and staff but also to our stakeholders and the public."



"I'm fully committed to the Council process. I've thoroughly enjoyed my job." – Executive Director Tom Nies.

As Executive Director, Tom's many responsibilities have included participating in: (1) the Council Coordination Committee ([CCC](#)), which includes leadership from all eight of the nation's regional fishery management councils; and (2) the Northeast Region Coordinating Council ([NRCC](#)), which, among other tasks, determines the region's stock assessment schedule.

Chair Reid said, "Tom has earned the respect of all of us in New England and nationwide from Gloucester to Guam. He is a true professional, and we'll always be grateful for his strong leadership."

Prior to joining the Council, Tom completed a 21-year career with the U.S. Coast Guard. He logged over 10 years of at-sea duty and served as the Commanding Officer of the Boston, MA-based USCG Cutter Spencer. His land-based assignments included a stint at the fisheries law enforcement branch at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He later served as the Admiral's representative for the First Coast Guard District Law Enforcement Division at New England Council meetings, which was his introduction to the Council.

The Council will issue a vacancy announcement to solicit a new Executive Director. Tom will overlap with his successor to ensure a smooth transition. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Spedden, Shelley

From: Moore, Christopher
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 1:32 PM
To: COUNCIL - Voting; CouncilNonVoting; Staff-MAF
Subject: FW: Preventing Harassment and Discrimination training launch for Regional Fishery Management Councils -- training due February 28, 2023

Everyone – see Morgan’s email below. We will discuss the training and policies at our next Council meeting. Thanks! C

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 N. State St, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901

302-526-5255
mafmc.org

From: Morgan Corey - NOAA Federal <morgan.corey@noaa.gov>
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 11:54 AM
To:
Subject: Preventing Harassment and Discrimination training launch for Regional Fishery Management Councils -- training due February 28, 2023

Good morning,
The Council Coordination Committee recently finalized model policies on Addressing Allegations of Harassment in the Regional Fishery Management Council context. In conjunction with these new policies, NOAA Fisheries has secured Preventing Harassment and Discrimination training from a company called EVERFI FOUNDRY. You will all be assigned this training, which will launch this week (no later than Friday). We wanted to provide a few details here so you can easily access the training.

The email invite will come from an external sender and could be sent to spam. To find the email, search for: <automated-message@everfi-foundry.net>. We recommend adding this email to your trusted contacts list. Once you locate the training invite email, you may login to the system using your email. The system will first ask you to reset your password. You will use the same login info to return to and complete the course on your own time.

The deadline for completing the course is **February 28, 2023**. You will receive reminders prompting you to complete the course on time and NMFS will check in on the status of trainings completed to follow up with any overdue assignments.

Thank you for your commitment to making the Council environment an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, and safety, free from harassment.

--

Morgan Corey (she/her/hers)
Fishery Management Specialist, Office of Sustainable Fisheries
NOAA Fisheries | U.S. Department of Commerce
Office: (301) 427-8535



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: January 27, 2023
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Julia Beaty, staff
Subject: Updates on Offshore Wind Energy Development

This memo summarizes select recent updates in offshore wind energy development. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- **Submitted comment letters:** Since the December 2022 Council meeting, the Council submitted the following comment letters:
 - [MAFMC and NEFMC Letter to BOEM: Central Atlantic Draft Wind Energy Areas](#) (12/16/22)
 - [MAFMC and NEFMC Letter to BOEM: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Empire Wind Project off New York](#) (1/17/23)
- **Comment letters in progress:** Council staff are working with New England Council staff to develop comment letters for the following open comment periods:
 - MAFMC and NEFMC Letter to BOEM: [Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (in progress, comments due 2/14/2023)
 - MAFMC and NEFMC Letter to BOEM: [Sunrise Wind](#) (in progress, comments due 2/14/2023)
 - MAFMC and NEFMC Letter to BOEM: [New England Wind](#) (in progress, comments due 2/21/2023)
- **Updates to offshore wind energy regulations:** BOEM announced a proposed rule to update the regulations for renewable energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf. The proposed rule has not yet published in the Federal Register, but a preliminary version can be found [here](#). A comment period will be open for 60 days after the proposed rule publishes. The rule proposes to eliminate requirements for deployment of meteorological buoys, increase survey flexibility, improve project design and installation verification, establish a renewable energy leasing schedule, reform the auction regulations, tailor financial assurance requirements and instruments, clarify safety management system regulations, and other revisions.
- **Regional fund administrator for compensatory mitigation:** During the December 2022 Council meeting, the Council received an update on an initiative led by nine states

to establish a regional fund administrator for fisheries compensatory mitigation. A request for information (RFI) was released in December. The comment period associated with this RFI has been extended to February 7, 2023. More information is available [here](#).

- **Offshore wind and whales:** NOAA Fisheries released an [FAQ page](#) on offshore wind energy development and whales. Agency representatives also did a press call on January 18, 2023, which can be [listened to here](#).
- **Research funding:** The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is seeking proposals for independent research regarding fisheries and offshore wind. The deadline for proposal submission is March 13, 2023 by 3:00 pm. More information, including details on the specific topic areas, is available [here](#).
- **Ongoing construction:** Construction is underway for the South Fork and Vineyard Wind 1 projects. The most recent information on construction activities for South Fork can be found [here](#) and for Vineyard Wind 1 can be found [here](#).
- **Stay informed:**
 - To stay up to date on individual wind projects, including development of fishery communications plans, details on offshore survey operations, and other updates, see the project-specific links available at <https://www.mafmc.org/offshore-wind-notice>.
 - The Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal maintains a list of current and recent government agency actions and public comment opportunities relevant for the Mid-Atlantic Region. This list can be viewed [here](#).



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

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

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 5, 2023
To: Council
From: Brandon Muffley, Council Staff
Subject: SSC Membership Re-appointments

On Thursday, February 9, 2023, as part of the Executive Director's report, the Council will review and consider the re-appointment of existing SSC members. Council SOPPs specify that SSC members shall serve three-year terms and are subject to re-appointment at the discretion of the Council. There are 4 members (out of 20) whose three-year term expires in March 2023 and, therefore, are up for re-appointment. All 4 members (listed below) have expressed interest in remaining on the SSC for another three-year term.

As part of the review, Council members can find more information about each SSC member (e.g., education, background, areas of expertise) by reviewing the membership directory – found here [SSC Membership Directory and Bios](#). Also included is a table showing SSC member attendance for all SSC meetings from 2020 – 2022.

Existing SSC members up for re-appointment include:

Dr. Geret DePiper

Dr. Gavin Fay

Dr. Jorge Holzer

Dr. Alexei Sharov

SSC Participation of current members eligible for re-appointment



Name	Start of 3- year term	Total number of Meetings attended											% of Meetings attended		
		March 2020 (hybrid)	May 2020 (webinar)	July 2020 (webinar)	Sept 2020 (webinar)	March 2021 (webinar)	May 2021 (webinar)	July 2021 (webinar)	Sept 2021 (webinar)	March 2022 (webinar)	May 2022 (webinar)	July 2022 (hybrid)		Sept 2022 (hybrid)	
Geret DePiper	Mar-20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	0.92
Gavin Fay	Mar-20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	0.92
Jorge Holzer	Mar-20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12	1.00
Alexei Sharov	Mar-20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	11	0.92