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## COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

June 11-14, 2012

New York City, NY

### ATLANTIC MACKEREL, SQUID, AND BUTTERFISH SPECIFICATIONS

**ATLANTIC MACKEREL:** Based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee's reaffirmation of an 80,000 metric ton (mt) acceptable biological catch (ABC) for mackerel, the Council adopted status-quo specifications for 2013-2015, subject to annual review. This results in a U.S. Annual Catch Limit (ACL) of 43,781 mt after a potential Canadian catch is subtracted. After accounting for discards and management uncertainties, the Council recommended a commercial domestic annual harvest (DAH) of 33,821 mt and a recreational annual catch target (ACT) of 2,443 mt. Any catches over the 43,781 mt ACL in 2013 will be deducted from 2014.

**ILLEX SQUID:** Last year the Council adopted three year specifications for Illex squid for the 2012-2014 fishing years. Based on the SSC's reaffirmation of the 2012 ABC, the Council reaffirmed the status quo quota of 22,915 mt for 2013.

**LONGFIN SQUID:** Longfin squid are also in the second year of a three year specification period. The SSC reaffirmed the 2012 ABC, and the Council reaffirmed a status quo quota for 2013 of 22,445 mt. The Council also recommended several regulatory changes to improve efficiency:

- The Council recommended reducing the pre-trip notification time to 48 hours in response to reports that the requirement for 72 hour notice is burdensome for some fishermen. NMFS confirmed that the observer program can handle this adjustment.
- The Council recommended that several trimester closure buffers be lowered during the last two weeks of Trimesters I and II in order to avoid unnecessary end-of-trimester closures.
- To ensure that some butterflyfish cap quota remains for Trimester III in 2013, a Trimester II closure was recommended if 75% of the annual butterflyfish cap is reached. Trimester II butterflyfish cap usage will be examined in greater detail and considered again in an FMP framework action.

**BUTTERFISH:** Based on advice from the Council's SSC, the Council recommended a butterflyfish ABC of 8,400 mt of butterflyfish for 2013. Given the 132% from the 2012 ABC of 3,622 mt, the Council recommended that a limited directed fishery be re-established in 2013. At least 1,028 mt would be initially available for a directed fishery with no trip limits. If the fishery does not close early in the year then additional directed-fishery quota would be released incrementally, up to a maximum of 2,005 mt if the fishery does not close before November 1. The rest of the ABC would be reserved for

### SPECIES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED

- Atlantic Mackerel, Longfin and Illex Squid, Butterfish
- Monkfish
- Surfclams & Ocean Quahogs
- Highly Migratory Species
- Research Set-Aside (RSA)
- Bureau of Energy Management
- Visioning & Strategic Planning

### MATERIALS ON THE WEB

Meeting materials related to the topics summarized in this report are available on the Council's website at [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org). Audio files of the full meeting discussions will be posted at <http://mafmc.org/actions/audio/audio.htm>

### QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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smaller scale catches and potential discards. Several trip limits related to smaller scale catches are also proposed to be increased. Details of the proposed system will be posted to [http://mafmc.org/fmp/msb\\_files/msbSpecs2012.htm](http://mafmc.org/fmp/msb_files/msbSpecs2012.htm) in the coming weeks.

#### AMENDMENT 14

The Council discussed options for addressing catch and bycatch of river herrings (blueback and alewife) and shads (American and hickory) in the Atlantic mackerel and squid fisheries via Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Three possible components of Amendment 14 were discussed: (1) catch monitoring requirements to improve accuracy of river herring and shad (RH/S) catch estimates; (2) measures to reduce RH/S bycatch and/or catch; and (3) addition of RH/S as “stock(s) in the fishery.”

**CATCH MONITORING:** Given the limited data available about RH/S catch in the mackerel or squid fisheries, the Council voted to recommend more rigorous requirements for catch monitoring. The Council also recommended that NMFS increase vessel and dealer reporting requirements and increase observer coverage to 100% on mid-water trawlers in the Atlantic mackerel fishery. The Council also recommended that efforts be made to improve observer data collection and discourage slippage (discarding of the net’s contents before an observer can sample them). The Council discussed concerns about the capacity for NMFS to fund about 100% coverage, and they recommended that fishery participants be required to pay a portion of observer costs—up to \$325 per day for participants in the mackerel fishery.

**REDUCE RH/S BYCATCH AND/OR CATCH:** The Council voted to implement a catch-cap for river herring and shad in the mackerel fishery beginning in 2014.

**STOCK(S) IN THE FISHERY:** The Council discussed the feasibility of adding river herrings and/or shads as directly managed fisheries in Amendment 14 and determined that a follow-up Amendment (15) would allow for a more complete consideration of the issue. The Council will consider potential Amendment 15 provisions for Annual Catch Limits, Essential Fish Habitat, and joint management arrangements with partners such as the New England Fishery Management Council and/or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

## MONKFISH

#### AMENDMENT 6

Council staff provided a briefing on a proposal from the New England Council’s Monkfish Committee to remove Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) from Amendment 6 to the Monkfish FMP. The Council recommended that the New England Fishery Management Council not remove ITQs from Amendment 6 and that additional dialogue between the monkfish committee and monkfish AP be pursued before any changes are made.

## SURFCLAM AND OCEAN QUAHOG

#### 2013 SPECIFICATIONS

The Council voted to maintain the 2012 quota of 3.4 million bushels for the surfclam fishery, 5.333 million bushels for the ocean quahog fishery, and 100,000 Maine bushels for the Maine ocean quahog fishery in 2013. The Council also recommended that the minimum size limit for surfclams be suspended.

## COMMITTEES AND OTHER BUSINESS

#### RESEARCH SET-ASIDE

The RSA committee met to discuss several issues related to scientific quality, administration, and enforcement of the RSA program. The committee considered options for increasing the input of the SSC in the RSA project selection, implementation, and review. The recommendations will be presented to the full Council in August for review and approval.

## **BUREAU OF ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

The Council received two presentations on seismic testing impacts associated with BOEM's Atlantic Geological and Geophysical Programmatic EIS. The Council discussed the serious potential threats that this testing pose to marine mammals and species and moved to submit written comments opposing the BOEM seismic testing on the US east coast.

## **HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES**

Tom Warren gave a presentation on the potential Atlantic bluefin tuna management measures being considered in the scoping process for Amendment 7 to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species FMP. The Council decided that the Highly Migratory Species Committee will develop a set of comments in response to the scoping document.

## **VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Council staff provided a presentation on the themes and outcomes of the stakeholder input report developed during the first phase of the Visioning and Strategic Planning Project. The Council briefly discussed the next phase of the strategic planning process. Additional strategic planning materials will be available on the Council website in the coming weeks: <http://www.mafmc.org/vision>

## **NMFS NORTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA COLLECTION**

The socio-economics branch of NMFS' Northeast Fisheries Science Center was scheduled to provide a briefing on upcoming data collection efforts designed to provide information about the impacts of regulations on fishermen. There are three major components of this research: 1) Socio-economic mail surveys of vessel owners, 2) Socio-economic dockside surveys of crew, and 3) Mail surveys of vessel costs from vessel owners. Due to scheduling issues, the briefing had to be abbreviated. A full audio/visual presentation about these data collection efforts may be accessed here: <http://mafmc.org/NEFSC-SocioEconDataCollection.htm>

## **OTHER**

In addition to the Committee meetings and regular Council business, the Council received an update from Greg Capobianco from the New York Department of State on offshore planning progress in New York State.

Dr. Jon Hare of the New England Fisheries Science Center gave a presentation on the effects of climate on fisheries resources in the Mid-Atlantic region. Dr. Hare described potential shifts in distribution and abundance of fish populations based on projected climate changes. He also gave an overview of current research efforts to predict potential fishery responses to changing climates.

**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:  
AUGUST 14-16, 2012  
PHILADELPHIA, PA**