

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Monkfish Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Monkfish Advisory Panel and Oversight Committee met on March 24 and 25, respectively, to review public comment on Amendment 5 and finalize recommendations to the Councils for final action.
- B. Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP: The Council initiated Amendment 5, primarily to consider alternatives for Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) pursuant to the 2007 re-authorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and to adopt multi-year specifications of target catch levels (TTACs) and associated days-at-sea (DAS) and trip limits. The current TTACs were adopted in Framework 4 for fishing years 2007 – 2009, although a provision exists for the TTACs to continue in effect until replaced through regulatory action. Amendment 5 would implement new specifications for 2011-2013, or beyond. In addition, the Council is considering in Amendment 5 modifications to administrative and other components of the current management program, specifically: an automatic adjustment to DAS accounting for trip limit overages; permit Category C and D multispecies DAS usage requirements; research set-aside program modifications; mandatory VMS; and to allow the landing of monkfish heads.

The Council held six public hearings on Amendment 5 between February 8 and March 9. The Advisory Panel and Oversight Committee reviewed the comments and have made recommendations to the Councils for consideration at their April meetings (MAFMC met April 13-15). The Council is scheduled to take final action at this meeting and approve the final document for submission at its meeting in June, 2010, so the amendment can be implemented at the start of the 2011 fishing year.

- C. NMFS Regulatory Amendment: On October 26, 2009, NMFS published a proposed rule to solicit public comment on a regulatory amendment to allow unused research set-aside DAS to be carried over to the following fishing year. A final rule was published on March 15, 2010. This was a provision under consideration in Amendment 5 but is now scheduled for implementation as of April 14, 2010, and is, therefore, no longer necessary in Amendment 5.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. **Final action on Amendment 5** – Consider public comment, recommendations of the Monkfish Oversight Committee and Advisory Panel, as well as actions of the Mid-Atlantic Council (April 2010) and adopt final measures for submission to NMFS.

III. INFORMATION

1. Amendment 5 Decision Document/Consolidated Comments
2. March 24 Advisory Panel and March 25 Oversight Committee meeting summaries
3. Public hearing summaries and written comments