

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Monkfish Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Monkfish Oversight Committee met on June 1 in Portsmouth, NH primarily to consider the Plan Development Team's (PDT) "Two-Area Monkfish Management White Paper" and make recommendations to the Councils on Amendment 6, see item D below.
- B. Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP: Amendment 5 proposes Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs), multi-year specifications of Annual Catch Targets (ACTS) and associated days-at-sea (DAS) and trip limits, as well as several administrative provisions. The Council approved Amendment 5 for submission to NMFS at the June meeting, and staff submitted the final document for formal review on Sept. 20. The proposed rule was published on March 3 (*76 Federal Register* 11737) and the comment period ended on April 4. The final rule was published on May 25 (*76 Federal Register* 30265).
- C. Framework Adjustment 7: In September, based on the results of the stock assessment this past summer, and the subsequent recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Council initiated Framework 7 to revise the 2011-2013 Annual Catch Target (ACT) and associated specification of DAS and trip limits for the Northern Management Area (NMA) originally proposed in Amendment 5. The SSC recommended Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) values that are lower than those considered in Amendment 5, and, for the NMA, also lower than the ACT, requiring a reconsideration of the ACT and management measures. The assessment review committee and the SSC also recommend a revision to the biomass reference points in the FMP so they are consistent with managing for maximum sustainable yield (MSY). These changes will not affect the stock status. The Councils approved the final measures at their January (New England) and February (Mid-Atlantic) meetings. The staff submitted a final document on May 3, and has been working with NMFS to finalize the document for formal review.
- D. Amendment 6 (Catch Shares): In Amendment 6, the Councils are considering adopting catch shares management for the monkfish fishery. A Notice of Intent initiating the scoping process for Amendment 6 was published Nov. 20, 2010 (*75 Federal Register* 74005), and the staffs of both New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils held ten scoping hearings from North Carolina to Maine. The Advisory Panel and Oversight Committee reviewed scoping comments and recommended that the Councils explore separating monkfish management regimes in the northern and southern areas. The Committee tasked the PDT staff to prepare a white paper discussing all aspects of separate management programs, or separate fishery management plans for the two areas. Upon review and discussion at the June 1 meeting, the Committee is recommending that the Councils manage the monkfish fishery under a single FMP. Also, at the June meeting, the Committee tasked the AP and PDT to further specify and define the list of problems and issues with the current system developed at the March AP and Committee meetings for the purpose of drafting a set of recommended goals and objectives for Amendment 6 (see June 1 Committee meeting summary).

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. The Council will consider a recommendation on behalf of the Committee to continue to manage monkfish under a single FMP.

III. INFORMATION

1. Summary of the June 1 Monkfish Oversight Committee Meeting (*to be distributed*).
2. PDT report, "Two-Area Monkfish Management White Paper"
3. Powerpoint presentation "Two-Area Monkfish Management"
4. Amendment 5 final rule