

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Monkfish Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Advisory Panel (AP) met on July 19 in Danvers, MA primarily to provide additional input to the Monkfish Oversight Committee on the list of issues and problems in the fishery that could be addressed by Amendment 6. The Committee met on August 31 in Portsmouth, NH to review the AP report and information from the Plan Development Team's (PDT) and to develop a recommendation to the Council on goals and objectives for Amendment 6. The Committee also reviewed applications and made recommendations to fill open seats on the AP.
- B. 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 Councils approved the final measures at their January (New England) and February (Mid-Atlantic) meetings, and the staff submitted a final document on May 3. NMFS published a proposed rule on August 5, (*76 Federal Register* 47533) and the comment period ended on September 6.
- C. 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 have been working to define the list of issues and problems in the fishery. At the August 31 meeting, the Committee agreed that Amendment 6 goals and objectives be based on the monkfish list of issues as they relate to the northern and southern management areas, and to task the PDT with summarizing information from the work that has been done to date to characterize the significance and importance of each of the monkfish issues on the list for the northern and southern management areas. The Committee also proposed requesting that NMFS provide permit holders with their individual contribution factor based on three historical qualification periods (see "Council Action" below).
- D. Technical Correction in Amendment 5: NMFS implemented a technical amendment in Amendment 5 to correct the tail-to-whole fish conversion ratio used to calculate whole (headed and gutted) fish trip limit equivalence. The previous ratio that had been applied is that used to convert tails to live weight. Since the trip limit is expressed as a tail weight, converted to whole weight for vessels landing whole (H&G) fish, the change in the conversion factor resulted in a 14% reduction in the trip limit for those vessels. The Committee is asking the Council to send a letter to NMFS to ask whether the impact of monkfish tail weight conversion issue can be mitigated through a technical amendment.
- E. Mid-Atlantic Council Request: The Council has received a letter requesting two additional seats on the Monkfish Committee for MAFMC appointments. The MAFMC currently has three seats (including vice chair) and the NEFMC has nine seats.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. **Motion on behalf of the Committee:** Request the Council send a letter to NMFS asking whether the impact of monkfish tail weight conversion calculation issue can be mitigated through a technical amendment.

- B. **Motion on behalf of the Committee:** Request the Council send a letter to NMFS requesting that they calculate individual contribution factor (PSC, ITQ or other) based on landings history for three time periods for each area: initial permit qualification period, 2000-2010 and 2005-2010, to be sent to permit holders, and to identify the proportion of the landings by management area (NMA/SMA) used in the calculations for each vessel, and that the agency also provide a summary report to the Council.

III. INFORMATION

- 1. Summary of the August 31 Monkfish Oversight Committee Meeting
- 2. AP Report on the July 19th meeting
- 3. Correspondence from MAFMC Chairman August 31, Committee membership request.
- 4. Plan Development Team reports on latent effort and permit category H issues
- 5. Staff Powerpoint presentation on Amendment 6 issues