

Monkfish Advisory Panel

Meeting Summary

January 9, 2013

Present: Mr. Dempsey, Committee Chair, Mr. Haring NEFMC staff, Mr. Armstrong, MAFMC staff, Mr. Christel, NERO, Ms. Raymond (AP Chair), Mr. Walker (AP Vice-Chair), Mr. Hickman, Mr. Platz, Ms. Jordan, Mr. Froelich, Mr. Margeson, Mr. McCann, Mr. Rainone, Mr. Julliard, and approximately 10 interested parties.

The Monkfish Advisory Panel (MAP) reviewed the draft alternatives in sections 1.0 through 3.5 in the Amendment 6 document. The Committee Chair requested that the MAP comment on the pros and cons of the draft alternatives, as well as provide recommendations on potential improvements/additions to the draft alternatives.

The AP did not formally endorse any alternative as preferred and looks forward to continuing to work with the Committee and Councils to develop these options prior to final action. In the days following the meeting, one member of the AP strenuously objected to the MAP comments summarized under sections 1.5.2.2 and 1.5.3.2.

1.0 Modifications to current DAS/Trip Limit system

1.1 Requirement for vessels with groundfish permits to also use a groundfish DAS when on a monkfish DAS

The MAP endorsed for continued development this alternative as well as the maximum flexibility proposed in the sub-options, i.e., if adopted, this opportunity should be available to all vessels in both management areas.

1.1.4 Increase monkfish-only DAS based on higher groundfish common pool DAS counting

1.1.5 Allow monkfish-only DAS (in excess of groundfish DAS allocations) to be used at any time

The MAP endorsed both 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 for continued development, noting the positive effect of reducing discards (primarily of groundfish species) but also request the PDT to analyze the potential for increase in effort on monkfish beyond what is currently projected by the DAS and trip limit allocation to monkfish vessels fishing in the groundfish common pool.

1.2 Modify DAS/trip limit allocation for Category F (offshore) vessels

The MAP supports increased flexibility for the Category F permit, but does not have the expertise to

provide specific recommendations

1.3 Modify the method for allocating DAS to active vessels to address latent effort

While concerns about cutting out fishermen who qualified for an initial limited access permit, latent effort has been repeatedly flagged by the MAP as a concern, and the MAP supports section 1.3 for continued development with the following modifications: on the sub-options of this alternative:

1.3.2.1.1 Calculation of minimum DAS threshold:

Used 1, 10, or 20 DAS in any one year 2000 to the control date

Used 25% or 50% of allocated DAS in any one year 2000-control date

1.3.2.1.2 Qualification period for DAS use

ADD: Option D: Used the minimum in any one year during the fishing years 2000-2008

The MAP rationale for recommending a qualifying period of 2000-2008 takes into consideration the different monkfish DAS requirements in the NFMA (beginning in 2007) as well as the late addition of category H permits to the limited access qualification program.

1.3.2.2.1 Minimum landings threshold

The MAP recommends minimum landings of 10k, 20k or 30k whole weight while on monkfish DAS in any one year regardless of permit type (excluding Cat E) and requests the PDT to provide data showing landings distribution per year to maybe better define the threshold.

The MAP recommends addition of a new alternative for continued development:

1.3.3 Qualification for allocating DAS to active vessels would combine minimum DAS usage with minimum landings threshold.

1.4.3 Eliminate Category H

The MAP endorses for continued development the proposed sub options 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 and recommends a new sub option:

1.4.4 Move the Category H fishing area restriction to the southern boundary of the NFMA (essentially limiting Category H permit fishing to the entire SFMA).

The MAP further recommends action in the pending 2014 framework action to address this issue.

1.5 Modifications to Monkfish Possession Limits

1.5.1.2 Eliminate the Trip Limit on a Groundfish DAS

The MAP endorses for continued development elimination of the monkfish trip limit in the NFMA for monkfish limited access vessels fishing in groundfish sectors, and further recommends that this alternative be added to the framework action pending for implementation in 2014.

1.5.2.2 Increase incidental limit for sector vessels not on a groundfish DAS

The MAP notes that the suggested increase to 300 lb/day tail weight is very similar to the current possession limit for directed monkfish vessels, and therefore recommends that this alternative, if adopted, apply only to vessels with limited access monkfish permits. Members expressed concerns about increased effort on monkfish at 300 lbs. incidental limit.

1.5.3.2 Increase incidental limit for fixed gear vessels on a groundfish DAS in the SFMA

The MAP endorses for continued development this sub option both as a way to turn discards into landings, and to restore parity with respect to possession limits between the trawl and fixed gear fleets.

1.6 Southern Management Area at-sea Monkfish DAS declaration

The MAP endorses for continued development option described in 1.6.2.

The MAP recommends development of an additional alternative that would apply to both management areas:

1.6.3 Allow vessels to pro-rate their monkfish DAS usage with monkfish landings.

For example, a category C permit holder (currently allowed 1250 lbs. tail weight/DAS) makes a five day fishing trip and catches a total of 2500 lbs. tail weight. The vessel operator declares monkfish DAS and is charged two monkfish DAS, instead of 5, which is the current practice.

1.7 Monkfish DAS Leasing

The MAP engaged in a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of a DAS leasing program, and noted that the design elements of a monkfish DAS leasing program are greatly complicated by the numerous permit categories and the varying possession limits associated with different permit categories.

The AP Chair and the Committee Chair consulted with NERO regarding the feasibility of preparing a presentation on the groundfish DAS leasing program to illustrate the lessons learned in the development and evolution of that program. NERO staff agreed to make such a presentation available by the February 7 Committee meeting.

The MAP noted that prior to implementation of a monkfish DAS leasing program, the Councils would first need to modify the method for allocating DAS to active vessels to address latent effort.

Therefore the MAP recommends that the qualification factors used to identify active vessels in section

1.3 would define those vessels eligible to participate in a monkfish DAS leasing program.

The MAP is interested in the development of a monkfish DAS leasing program to improve efficiency, but also wants to ensure that leasing program would not increase effort to the point where the ABCs are exceeded, and accountability measures would be implemented.

The MAP recommends that the Committee give consideration to DAS leasing proposals (attached) submitted by MAP members Mr. Froelich and Mr. Platz.

Members discussed using the same options discussed in Section 1.3 to define the “active DAS” available for leasing? There was some discussion of the idea that if a vessel engages in leasing out DAS, it cannot fish the balance of its DAS allocation.

Also, if the DAS allocation is done based on active DAS, and some LA vessels do not receive an allocation a leasing program would provide them with a means to re-enter the fishery without expanding the total number of DAS in use.

The MAP notes that the Committee has previously considered and rejected a DAS transfer proposal, but the MAP would like such an alternative to be developed, in the event that DAS leasing is not approved.

2.0 Research Set-Aside Program (RSA)

The Map endorses for continued development option 2.2 RSA Quota without commenting on a preference for either sub option A or B.

Mr. Platz provided a written recommendation for modifications to the RSA program, and based on feedback by the MAP, agreed to make modifications and re-submit at the next meeting of the MAP>

Carry-over DAS

The MAP recommends the addition of an alternative to both Amendment 6 and the framework pending for 2014 that would modify, during the specifications process, the DAS carryover (currently at 4 DAS), to be between 4 and 10 days

From Tim Froehlich (1.9.13)

Things to consider in preparation of Amend 6

1. No change in minimum mesh size requirements in SFMA.
2. Only one area can be fished on any directed monkfish trip. Declare into SFMA or NFMA before leaving the dock and operate under that areas regulations. This will enhance monitoring of the resource, leaving no question of where the fish were caught. This will also simplify things for Coast Guard/Law Enforcement. Currently there is a "loop hole" allowing vessels to fish both areas on the same trip. This needs to be addressed.
3. Allow for regulation flexibility in the NFMA for those vessels in sectors.
4. Establish a DAS leasing program for the SFMA with a qualifying period using a Tiered method in order to identify industry members and their level of past participation:

Tier 1 =those vessels who used 90- 100% of their DAS allocation from 2007- 2012. Tier 2 = those vessels who used 75 - 89% of their OAS allocation from 2007 - 2012. Tier 3 =those vessels who used 50- 74% of their DAS allocation from 2007-2012.

If less than 50% of DAS were used from 2007- 2012, those permits can not be leased. The goal of this alternative is to insure that latent permits will not be leased for the sake of creating more effort. Allowing latent permits to lease to active fisherman will only cause a reduction in DAS/trip limit in future years. The owners of those latent permits can still use their permits, they just can't lease them.

A vessel leasing from Tier 1, 2 or 3 will have access to the high end qualifying percentage number. Example: Vessel A leased a Tier 1 permit. He would gain 100% of that years DAS/trip limit allocation. Vessel B leased a Tier 2 permit. He would gain 89% of that years DAS/trip limit allocation. Vessel C leased a Tier 3 permit. He would gain 74% of that years DAS/trip limit allocation.

From Ted Platz (in development of Amendment 5)

Monkfish permit stacking:

All limited access monkfish permits shall be stackable. A and C permits may be put together as may B and D permits. The resulting stacked permit shall receive a 50% increase in DAS and a 50 % increase in landing limits as an adjustment for the 2 stacked permits. All groundfish allocation and DAS will accrue to the stacked permit, as will all fishing history. All redundant permits shall be retired. Permits may be stacked without regard to length, horsepower or tonnage considerations, and the larger levels of each shall apply to the new stacked permit.

Ex.

B/D permits with a 525 lb. tail weight limit would be able to land 1,528 lbs and 1819 lbs for a single and a double respectively. As a stacked permit the single and double limits would be 2,292 lbs. and 4,584 lbs. A/C permits with a 525 lb. tail weight limit would be able to land 1,819 lbs and 3,638 lbs. for a single and double respectively. As a stacked permit the single and double limits would be 2,729 and 5,458 respectively. Under a 30 DAS scenario, two separate permits would have 30 DAS each. The stacked permit with the above landing limits would have 45 DAS.

This management measure reduces DAS time by 25% while simultaneously allowing fishers to increase their daily profitability.

Monkfish DAS leasing:

All limited access monkfish permits shall be permitted to lease out their allocated number of leaseable DAS based on DAS use during the qualifying period of 1999 – 2008, the rebuilding years for this fishery. Leaseable DAS will be equal to the average number of monkfish DAS fished annually by a permit during the qualifying period. The formula for determining leaseable monkfish DAS will be the total number of monkfish DAS used during the qualifying period divided by the number of years in the qualifying period. Each permit will have a leaseable monkfish DAS number attached to it. A boat may fish its monkfish DAS or lease its leaseable monkfish DAS, but may not do a combination of both.

This measure will allow vessel owners with multiple boats to consolidate their operations in a manner consistent with their previous exploitation levels. This will also allow an improvement in efficiency and profitability for the monkfish fleet while limiting the amount of effort that is likely to be transferred into this fishery through a less restricted monkfish DAS leasing program. At the same time, those wishing to enter this fishery retain the full right to fish all of their allocated monkfish DAS.