

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Monkfish Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Monkfish Committee met on March 31 in Mansfield, MA, to review the Plan Development Team (PDT) recommendations on reference points and specifications, as well as other matters pertaining to Amendment 5. The PDT presented its Initial Report to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on March 17th.
- B. Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP: The Council has initiated work on 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 total allowable catch levels (TTACs). NMFS published the Notice of Intent and request for scoping comments on February 20th, and the comment period ended on March 31st. 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. The Council has also directed the Monkfish Committee to develop alternatives for sector management programs and Individually Transferrable Quotas (ITQs) for the monkfish fishery, but that work on those alternatives should not commence until work the primary components of the amendment is complete. The target date for approval of final measures for Amendment 5 is June, 2010 so the amendment can be implemented at the start of the 2011 fishing year. The Committee Chairman will provide the Council with an update on Amendment 5 at this meeting. The SSC will report on its review of the Initial PDT Report also at this meeting under the SSC agenda item.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. None

III. INFORMATION

1. Initial Report of the PDT to the SSC on Amendment 5 to the Monkfish FMP
2. Scoping hearing summaries and written scoping comments
3. Summary of the March 31st Committee meeting (to be distributed at this meeting)