

## NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### Monkfish Committee

#### I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Monkfish Advisory Panel met on March 9 and the Oversight Committee met on March 29. The primary purpose of these meetings was to review public scoping comments on Amendment 6 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. The groups also discussed an issue raised by some industry members regarding the use of exempted fishery permits (trip limit exemptions) in the monkfish cooperative research program. These matters are discussed 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. A final rule is pending and the target effectiveness date is the start of the 2011 fishing year on May 1.
- 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 draft final document on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 reviewed scoping comments and made several recommendations to the Committee (see AP report), including that the Councils explore separating monkfish management regimes in the northern and southern areas. The Oversight Committee also reviewed the scoping comments (see meeting summary) and has tasked the staff to prepare a white paper discussing all aspects of separate management programs, or separate fishery management plans for the two areas.

## **II. COUNCIL ACTION**

### **A. None**

## **III. INFORMATION**

1. Summary of the March 29<sup>th</sup> Monkfish Oversight Committee Meeting
2. Summary of the March 9<sup>th</sup> Monkfish Advisory Panel Meeting
3. Scoping comments on Amendment 6 received after March 7<sup>th</sup> and AP chair's response to Southern Management Area Advisors' comment letter. (all previous comments have been distributed by CD, available at this meeting and from the Council office)
4. Amendment 6 scoping hearing summaries
5. Amendment 5 final rule, *pending publication* will be distributed at the meeting.