



October 2018 Council Meeting Summary

October 1-4, 2018

Cape May, New Jersey

The following summary highlights actions taken and issues considered at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's October 2018 meeting in Cape May, NJ. Presentations, briefing materials, and webinar recordings are available on the Council website at www.mafmc.org/briefing/october-2018.

Spiny Dogfish Specifications

The Council adopted the following specifications for the spiny dogfish fishery in 2019, 2020, and 2021:

	2019	2020	2021
	<i>Million pounds</i>		
Acceptable Biological Catch	28.5	31.1	35.4
Commercial Quota	20.5	23.2	27.4

These specifications are consistent with the advice from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Because the spiny dogfish fishery is managed jointly, the New England Fishery Management Council must also make recommendations for spiny dogfish specifications at its upcoming meeting in December. If approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the new measures will go into effect around May 1, 2019.

The Council also considered a proposal to remove the federal trip limit for spiny dogfish. The Council agreed to include this in the list of "Possible Additions" in the 2019 Implementation Plan. However, no changes to the federal trip limit were recommended as part of 2019-2021 specifications.

Squids and Butterfish Specifications

The Council reviewed squid and butterfish specifications for 2019-2020 (previously established as part of [multi-year specifications](#)). For longfin squid and butterfish, the Council did not recommend any changes. For *Illex* squid, the Council voted to increase the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) to 26,000 metric tons (mt) for 2019 and 2020 after reviewing recommendations from its SSC. This is an increase of approximately 8% above the ABC originally approved by the Council. If approved by the NMFS, this revised ABC will result in a domestic annual harvest (DAH) of 24,824.8 mt after accounting for discards.

Illex Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment

The Council reviewed and approved a scoping document for the *Illex* Permit and Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB) Goals and Objectives Amendment. This amendment will consider modifications to the *Illex* permitting system to ensure optimal management and fishery operation, as well as revisions to the goals and objectives for the MSB Fishery Management Plan. A final scoping document and additional details about scoping hearings will be posted on the Council's website as they become available.

Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment

NMFS provided the Council with the results of an electronic monitoring project and potential options for next steps related to industry funded monitoring (IFM). The Council had originally considered IFM due to observer coverage concerns in the mackerel fishery, but most mackerel catches will be subject to additional monitoring through a recent New-England Council IFM action for the Atlantic herring fishery. The Council thus decided to

monitor observer coverage of the mackerel fishery and may re-initiate an action to consider additional IFM observer coverage in the mackerel fishery at a later date.

Chub Mackerel

The Council reviewed a draft public hearing document for the Chub Mackerel Amendment, as well as advisory panel, staff, and FMAT recommendations for the document. The Council approved the public hearing document with a few revisions, most notably the removal of all alternatives related to framework actions. Removal of this section of alternatives means that no chub mackerel management measures could be implemented or modified through framework adjustments. Public hearings for this action will take place over the next few months. The public hearing schedule will be posted to the Council's website once it is available. The Council also discussed the SSC's ABC recommendation for chub mackerel and will adopt an ABC when they take final action on the amendment.

Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Risk Assessment

The Council reviewed recommendations from the Ecosystem and Ocean Planning (EOP) Committee regarding the next steps to incorporate ecosystem considerations in the Council's management and science programs as established in the Council's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) guidance document. In 2017, the Council completed the first step in this process and conducted a risk assessment to help identify and prioritize ecosystem interactions and risks. This risk assessment is intended to help the Council decide where to focus limited resources to address priority ecosystem considerations. The next steps will be to (1) define specific management questions to address the highest priority ecosystem factors and (2) build conceptual models to help ensure that key relationships throughout the system are accounted for. The Council supported the EOP Committee's recommendation to begin piloting the development of a summer flounder conceptual model that will consider key risk factors affecting summer flounder and its fisheries. This process will take place over the course of the next year and will involve several Council committees, advisory panels, scientists, and stakeholders. The Council also agreed to annually update the EAFM risk assessment document to include new information and data, new or improved analyses, and new or modified risk elements. Lastly, the Council reviewed comments submitted by the EOP Committee to NOAA Fisheries regarding the draft Northeast Regional Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) Implementation Plan.

Risk Policy Framework Update

Council staff and Dr. Doug Lipton (NOAA Fisheries) provided an update on current analyses and initiatives related to the Council's review of its risk policy and ABC control rules. In 2017, the Council initiated an Omnibus Risk Policy Framework to review and potentially revise the Council's risk policy and ABC control rule. In December 2017, the Council postponed further action on the framework until after the completion of additional analyses on the social and economic impacts of the different risk policy and control rule alternatives. Dr Lipton provided an overview of his current risk policy management strategy evaluation (MSE) research that will incorporate social and economic factors in the summer flounder fishery. The final results of Dr. Lipton's social and economic MSE will be presented to the Council in December 2018. In addition, as part of this review, an update was provided on the development of a decision document for the Council's SSC to use when defining the appropriate level of uncertainty to be applied to the Overfishing Limit (OFL). It is anticipated that the SSC will finalize the discussion document in early 2019 and present its recommendations to the Council in the spring of 2019.

Fisheries Dependent Data Initiative

Barry Clifford (NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Office) provided an annual update on the Fisheries Dependent Data Initiative (FDDI). The FDDI is intended to modernize fishery dependent data collection programs that will result in: (1) The development of a modernized data system capable of supporting current and future data collection needs; (2) automated integration of multiple fisheries dependent data sets that will result in a single comprehensive fisheries dependent data set; and (3) consolidation of industry reporting requirements

that will minimize the number of systems needed to fulfil reporting requirements while also eliminating redundancy wherever possible. Mr. Clifford provided an overview of work completed to date as well as future project plans, as well as information about changes to reporting requirements that are necessary to achieve the intended objectives.

David Gouveia (NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Office) gave a presentation regarding the possible expansion of the electronic vessel trip reporting (eVTR) requirements to all MAFMC-managed commercial fisheries. All commercial and for-hire vessels possessing GARFO issued permits are currently required to submit vessel trip reports (VTRs), with the exception of those vessels possessing lobster-only permits. Since March 2018, all vessels that hold Federal party or charter permits for species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council have been required to submit these VTRs electronically for all trips carrying passengers for hire. The Council has expressed interest in expanding this requirement to commercial fisheries. The presentation included an overview of options for expanding mandatory eVTR use in commercial fisheries managed by the Council as well as some of the potential challenges and limitations.

South East Regional Office (SERO) Party/Charter Reporting Requirement

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) has approved a For-Hire Reporting Amendment which will require vessels with a Southeast federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Atlantic dolphin and wahoo, or South Atlantic snapper-grouper species to report using electronic reporting (beginning in early 2019). Karla Gore (NMFS Southeast Regional Office) gave a presentation on the status of this action and how it could affect Mid-Atlantic for-hire fishermen. The current Mid-Atlantic eVTR applications should be able to be used to meet this new requirement without duplicate reporting, but there will be additional economic questions added to address the new Southeast permit requirements. eVTR applications will have to be configured based on your permit status. Additional information is available in the SAFMC's October 2018 meeting materials <http://safmc.net/satl-federal-for-hire-electronic-reporting-outreach/>.

HMS Permits and Law Enforcement Issues

Greg DiDomenico (Garden State Seafood Association) gave a presentation about law enforcement issues related to the harvest and sale of highly migratory species (HMS) by for-hire vessels. The Council has scheduled a workshop to further explore these issues and identify potential solutions. Additional information about this workshop is available at <http://www.mafmc.org/workshop/law-enforcement-for-hire-workshop>.

2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Dr. Michelle Duval presented a proposed approach and timeline for the development of the Council's next strategic plan. Members of the public will have opportunities to provide input for the next strategic plan through a survey available in late 2019. Updates on this process will be posted at www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan.

Next Council Meeting

Monday, December 10, 2018 – Thursday, December 13, 2018

[Westin Annapolis](#)

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