

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat Committee

I. STATUS

The Plan Development Team met on January 9 (draft summary, document 2a). The Committee and Advisory Panel will meet jointly on January 22 (draft summary, document 2b).

- A. Offshore Energy Coordination: Staff, PDT, Committee, and AP engagement in these issues is ongoing. The first meeting of the Gulf of Maine Regional Task Force occurred in December. BOEM and NEFMC staff will brief the Council on recent activities (documents 1a and 1b).
- B. Council policy statements on non-fishing activities that may affect EFH: Staff and a working group of Committee, AP, and PDT members continue to compile background information on aquaculture, floating wind, and submarine cables and the effects of those activities on habitat, and have plans for completing background documents on these topics during the first half of 2020 (documents 1b).
- C. Northeast Regional Fish Habitat Assessment: The work teams are completing the data inventory, reviewing and summarizing information about species habitat use, and continuing to scope potential modeling approaches and ways to report out the results. A steering committee update occurred in mid-January. For more information see here: <http://www.mafmc.org/nrha>.
- D. Fishing Effects Model: Model datasets will be posted to the Northeast Ocean Data Portal sometime in February or early March.
- E. Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment: The proposed rule was published on January 2 and comments are being accepted through February 18. NMFS has already approved the amendment.
- F. Clam dredge Framework: A final rule is expected soon.
- G. Research planning for the Great South Channel HMA: Coonamessett Farm Foundation's Exempted Fishing Permit request is provided as document 3a. A Federal Register notice seeking comments on this request should be published prior to the Council meeting (document 3b). Draft comments will be developed following the January 22 Habitat Committee meeting (document 3c).

II. COUNCIL ACTION

Provide feedback to the Committee on offshore wind coordination and habitat policy development. Review and approve a comment letter responding to the CFF EFP FR notice.

III. INFORMATION

- 1. Presentations (forthcoming)
 - a. BOEM report (Brian Hooker)
 - b. Habitat Committee report (Michelle Bachman)
- 2. Meeting summaries
 - a. Draft summary of Habitat Plan Development Team meeting, January 9, 2020

- b. Draft summary of Habitat Committee/Advisory Panel meeting, January 22, 2020 (forthcoming)
- 3. Information on CFF EFP
 - a. Project proposal
 - b. Federal Register notice (forthcoming)
 - c. Draft comment letter (forthcoming)
- 4. Correspondence