

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The PDT met on April 29 and June 1 to refine alternatives for a Habitat Area of Particular Concern in Southern New England (both meetings) and discuss research priorities (April 29 meeting only). The Advisory Panel met on May 24 to discuss the HAPC framework. The Committee met on June 10 to discuss the HAPC framework and receive other updates.
- B. SNE HAPC Framework: At the April meeting, the Council postponed further discussion of the framework until June. On June 10, the Committee recommended none of the alternatives as presently configured in the framework document and asked the Council to consider whether they wish to continue work on the action.
- C. Offshore Energy Coordination: Staff are tracking various initiatives including Central Atlantic and Gulf of Maine planning for leasing, fisheries mitigation, and individual project timelines. The Central Atlantic call for information and nominations comment period is open through June 28, and the Council will submit comments in collaboration with MAFMC. Comment opportunities are anticipated this summer on the draft fisheries mitigation guidance, the Gulf of Maine request for information, the Revolution Wind DEIS, and the New England Wind DEIS.
- D. Aquaculture: The timing of an action to authorize salmon aquaculture in the EEZ will be aligned with NOAA Fisheries work on the Blue Water Fisheries project; the NOI for the EIS has not been published yet. The Committee recommended continuing to lay the groundwork for an action considering authorization of salmon aquaculture in the EEZ, potentially to be initiated in September.
- E. Northeast Regional Fish Habitat Assessment: The NRHA team continues to finalize products and is developing a communications and rollout plan. NRHA contributors will present to the Council at this meeting. A joint sub-panel of the NEFMC and MAFMC SSCs reviewed the assessment products and their report will be provided.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. Consider final action on HAPC designation(s) in Southern New England (Document 6).
- B. Recommend development of offshore wind-related comment letters as noted above.

III. INFORMATION

- 1. Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment Presentation – Chris Haak, Tori Kentner
- 2. Aquaculture Presentation – Chris Schillaci, GARFO
- 3. Offshore Wind Presentation – BOEM staff
- 4. SNE HAPC Presentation - Michelle Bachman, Council staff
- 5. Meeting summary: Plan Development Team – April 29, 2022
- 6. Meeting summary: Advisory Panel – May 24, 2022
- 7. Meeting summary: Plan Development Team – June 1, 2022
- 8. Meeting summary: Committee – June 10, 2022 (DRAFT)

9. NRHA Summary Report – June 16, 2022 (DRAFT)
10. SSC Sub-Panel Report on NRHA Review – June 17, 2022
11. Southern New England Habitat Area of Particular Concern Framework (DRAFT)
12. Correspondence