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New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 3, 2021
TO: Habitat Committee and Habitat Advisory Panel
FROM: Eric Reid, Habitat Committee Chairman

SUBJECT: Charge to Committee and Advisory Panel for May 10, 2021 meeting

On May 10, 2021 there will be a joint Habitat Committee and Habitat Advisory Panel meeting. We will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and expect the meeting to end around noon. Please register for the webinar if you have not already done so: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2841811361646228237>.

Purpose

The objectives for this meeting are to: (1) discuss offshore wind issues related to science and monitoring, the Council’s renewable energy policy, and open comment opportunities; (2) receive a brief update on a potential habitat management action for the northern edge of Georges Bank; (3) receive a brief update on regional aquaculture issues; (4) receive other relevant updates on habitat-related matters, including a review of other work expected to occur in 2021. If you have any other business items, please let me know and provide any related materials to Ms. Bachman for distribution.

Note about joint format

Committee members may make motions/suggest consensus statements on behalf of the Committee, and Advisory Panel members may do so on behalf of the Advisory Panel. The same motions or consensus statements may be adopted by both groups if desired. Any voting on motions during web-based meetings will occur via roll call. The Committee or Advisory Panel may adopt consensus statements by acclamation, without the need for a roll call vote; this is preferable as a time-saving measure where appropriate.

Offshore Wind Update and Discussion

Diverse engagement related to offshore wind science and development is ongoing. Representatives from Offshore Wind Developers with leases off Rhode Island and Massachusetts will provide updates on their science and monitoring activities (Document 4). Staff will provide some thoughts on ways we might update our renewable energy policy and discuss next steps for completing this work (Document 5). The current policy is linked off [this page](#). Finally, the group will have an opportunity to weigh in on draft comments to BOEM regarding the Revolution Wind Project (Document 6). Questions, feedback, and short updates from members are welcomed.

Northern Edge Habitat Management Action

The Council considered a variety of habitat and groundfish management approaches for the Northern Edge of Georges Bank during development of Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2. In October 2020, the Council approved a 2021 work priority to determine whether to move forward with a habitat management action for this region. As noted during our last meeting, the Habitat PDT is developing informational materials related to this issue in the form of a white paper. Staff will provide a short update on recent PDT discussions (Document 5). For more information see documents 3a and 3b.

Aquaculture

In April, the Council endorsed the concept of engaging early and often in regional aquaculture development issues. Following the meeting, an aquaculture coordination plan (Document 6) was posted to the habitat policies page. The plan is informal and can be updated as needed. Staff will provide updates on aquaculture issues as needed (Document 5).

Habitat-related Council research priorities

Each spring the SSC and then the Council discuss the Council's list of research priorities and recommend revisions as needed. The PDT discussed these priorities on May 3 (summary of discussion in Document 3b; recommended edits in Document 8). This agenda item is an opportunity for the Committee and Advisors to provide feedback on habitat related items, including suggested additions, edits, or removals.

Other updates and plans for 2021 work

Staff will provide updates on other initiatives, including the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment and relevant ocean planning issues (Document 5). We will also discuss the status of 2021 work priorities.

Meeting Materials

The documents listed below will be posted to <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/may-10-2021-habitat-joint-committee-and-advisory-panel-webinar>. If you have any questions about the materials, please contact Ms. Bachman (mbachman@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 x120).

1. Tasking memo from Committee Chairman Eric Reid (*this document*)
2. Habitat Committee/Advisory Panel meeting summary – March 9, 2021 (link)
3. Habitat PDT meeting summaries
 - a. April 5, 2021
 - b. May 3, 2021 (DRAFT)
4. Fishery Liaison updates
5. Staff presentation
6. Draft comment letter on NOI for Revolution Wind
7. April 2021 NEFMC Aquaculture Coordination Plan
8. Habitat-related Council research priorities
9. Correspondence