



New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 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 October 26, 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 1:45 p.m. Please register for the webinar if you have not already done so:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5109344090904881936>.

Purpose

The objectives for this meeting are to: (1) review and approve, with any modifications necessary, updates to the Council's Wind Energy Policy; (2) receive updates on regional offshore wind issues, a potential habitat management action for the northern edge of Georges Bank, and regional aquaculture issues; and (4) discuss habitat-related work priorities for 2022. 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.

Revisions to the Wind Energy Policy

The PDT worked over the summer to revise the Council's Wind Energy Policy and has provided a revised draft (Document 5a) and a memorandum (Document 5b) explaining the changes. The current policy and the related Submarine Cable Policy are linked off [this page](#). Please review the revised policy carefully and come prepared to recommended specific edits. The intent is to forward the revised policy (with any necessary edits) to the Council for their approval in December.

Offshore Wind updates

Diverse engagement related to offshore wind science and development is ongoing. Staff will provide a short summary of recent work. 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. A multi-year work priority we began work on this year is to determine whether to move forward with a habitat management action for this region. The Habitat PDT continues to develop informational materials related to this issue in the form of a white paper. Staff will provide a short update on recent PDT discussions (Documents 3a, 3b, and 4a).

Aquaculture updates

GARFO staff will provide updates on regional aquaculture issues, including the Blue Water Fisheries project off New Hampshire (Document 4b).

Habitat work priorities for 2022

Potential work priorities for next year are summarized in document 4a. Most items are similar to or continuations of this year's priorities. Two potential Council actions were added to the list during the Council meeting last month. One is to develop an action to consider authorizing salmon aquaculture in the EEZ, and another would consider a new Habitat Area of Particular Concern designation for complex habitat in Southern New England. We will discuss these priorities and recommend whether the Council should adopt some or all of them in December.

Meeting Materials

The documents listed below will be posted to <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/oct-26-2021-habitat-joint-advisory-panel-and-committee>. 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 – May 10, 2021 ([link](#))
3. Habitat PDT meeting summaries
 - a. June 15, 2021
 - b. September 20, 2021

Note that the PDT is meeting on October 25; staff will not have a written summary available but can briefly review the PDT's discussion during the Northern Edge agenda item.
4. Presentations
 - a. Staff presentation, NEFMC
 - b. Aquaculture update, GARFO
 - c. Stellwagen DHRA update, SBNMS
5. Wind Energy Policy
 - a. Revised policy document
 - b. Memo from Habitat PDT outlining recommended changes
6. Correspondence