

Skate Plan Development Team Meeting

**August 18, 2020
1:00 – 3:00 PM
Webinar**



Webinar access (recommended): <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/300419589>

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Introductions

Skate Plan Development Team	
Dr. Trish Clay, NEFSC/SSB	Ashleigh McCord, GARFO/NEPA
Jenny Couture, NEFMC	Danielle Palmer, GARFO/PRD
Dr. Tobey Curtis, GARFO/HMS	Eric Schneider, RI DEM/DMF
Dr. Rachel Feeney (PDT Chair), NEFMC	Dr. Katherine Sosebee, NEFSC/Pop. Dy.
Cynthia Ferrio, GARFO/SFD	John Sullivan, GARFO/APSD
Lou Goodreau, NEFMC	Samantha Werner, NEFSC/SSB

Reminders:

- Please mute yourself to avoid interference with the meeting.
- Only have ONE audio connection to the webinar to avoid echoes.
- This is a working meeting of the PDT. Public comment will not be accepted.

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Agenda

- 1:00 pm** **Introductions/approval of agenda/timeline check-in**
- 1:05** **Finalize 2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)**
- Fishery landings and discards – progress on tables
 - Other sections, develop guidance on the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives, tasking
- 1:50** **Amendment 5**
- Recap August Cte meeting, develop input for Sept mtg, tasking
- 2:20** **Council priorities regarding skates**
- Finalize recommendations for addressing E.O. 13921 and for 2021 management priorities
- 2:45** **Other business**
- Clarify how to use aggregate data
- 3:00** **Adjourn**

Any revisions?



Skate timeline: near-term



Month	Day	Meetings and Milestones
Aug.	18	PDT mtg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Monitoring Report – finalize draft • Priorities – finalize recommendations • Amendment 5 - discuss any tasking from Aug 6
Sept.	2	PDT finishes docs for Skate AP & Committee
	10	Skate AP mtg (morning), Committee mtg (afternoon) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Monitoring Report, A5, priorities
	17	PDT finishes docs for Council mtg
	29-30	Council mtg
Oct	1	

1:05 p.m.

Annual Monitoring Report

- Fishery landings and discards. Resolve the purpose of this section and key questions.
- Other sections (survey indices and stock status, changes to other FMPs, research).
- Develop guidance on the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives.
- Tasking on any outstanding PDT work.

Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Charge:

Per skate regulations, the PDT meets at least annually to review the status of the species in the skate complex. At a minimum, this review includes:

- Annual updates to survey indices, fishery landings and discards;
- Re-evaluation of stock status based on the updated survey indices and the FMP's overfishing definitions;
- Determination of whether any of the accountability measures (AMs) specified under §648.323 were triggered (i.e., if a wing or bait TAL was exceeded by >5% or the ACL was exceeded); and
- Changes to other FMPs (e.g., Northeast Multispecies, Monkfish, Atlantic Scallops) that may impact skate stocks, and describe the anticipated impacts of those changes on the skate fishery.

Based on this review, the Skate PDT provides guidance to the Skate Committee and the Council on the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives.



2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Fishery landings & discards

PDT discussed these goals for improvement. Need to confirm.

- Table logistics
 - Have the rows of a table add to the total (show all catch components).
 - Have the data in tables comparable (consistent units, make the landings in each be equivalent).
 - If these are not possible, then have clear explanations of why.
- Communicate how GARFO calculates Total Catch relative to the ACL and landings relative to the TALs, which catch components are included and excluded.

**Improvements attempted , but numbers still do not add up. See memo to PDT.
Need help!**

First, should we take a step back?

- What is the purpose of this section? What should be included? How can we efficiently get there?

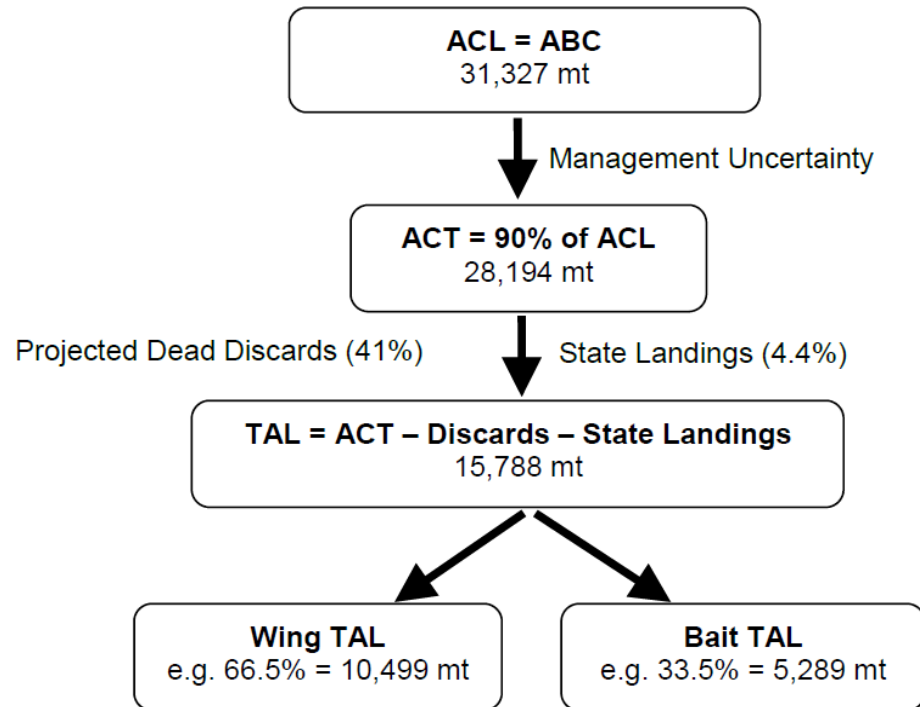


2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Fishery landings, discards, accountability measures

Key questions:

- Why is GARFO ACL accounting table different than how fishery is specified? Which should be used in AMR?
- The TAL monitoring and ACL accounting tables use different definitions of federal landings, correct? TAL monitoring excludes landings with no skate endorsement on the day of landing, thus is an underestimate. ACL accounting includes all landings by vessels that had a skate endorsement any time during the fishing year.
- What is “state landings”? Not defined in regs. Landings with no federal fishing permit sold to federal dealer (what the March PDT memo said)? Landings with a federal fishing permit but no federal skate endorsement? Both (what APSD recently instructed)?
- “Recreational catch” is in the GARFO table. Where is recreational catch accounted for in specifications? Does this include just private angler? Is party-charter within the TALs?
- “Research landings” are within bait and wing landings within the disposition table. Where is this in the GARFO accounting table and specifications?



2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Fishery landings, discards, accountability measures

PDT Discussion:

- What is the purpose of this section?
- What should be included?
- How can we get efficiently there?



2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Other Sections (survey indices and stock status, changes to other FMPs, Research)

See draft Annual Monitoring Report

PDT Discussion:

- Survey indices and stock status
- Changes to other FMPs
- Research



2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Provide guidance on the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives.

Preliminary PDT Discussion Recap:

- Council should revisit FMP objectives. For example:
 - Objective 2 - This should be updated or made less specific. Thorny skate is the only skate species that is currently overfished. Barndoor was declared rebuilt in 2016. Winter skate is the most caught species in the wing fishery, but it is a stable stock.
 - Objective 5 - The latest version of research needs should be referred to, i.e. the annual update. The scoping document was created in 2001. Research needs are not consistently in SAFE reports.
 - Objective 7 - There are no measures that address this objective. Would the Council like to develop some? Clearnose and rosette skates make up a small percentage of overall skate catch.
- Thorny skate has not made progress towards rebuilding. Is it time for more specific measures?



Skate FMP Goals and Objectives

Goal: Consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and other applicable laws, to develop a Fishery Management Plan to research and manage the Northeast Skate Complex at long-term sustainable levels.

Objective 1: Collect information critical for substantially improving knowledge of skate fisheries by species and for monitoring: (a) the status of skate fisheries, resources, and related markets and (b) the effectiveness of skate management approaches.

Objective 2: Implement measures to: protect the two **currently overfished** species of skates (**barndoor** and thorny) and increase their biomass to target levels, **reduce fishing mortality on winter skate**, and prevent overfishing of the other species in the Northeast skate complex – this may be accomplished through management measures in other FMPs (groundfish, monkfish, scallops), skate-specific management measures, or a combination of both as necessary.

Objective 3: Develop a skate permit system, coordinate data collection with appropriate state agencies for vessels fishing for skates or catching skates as bycatch only in state waters, and work with the fishing industry to establish a catch reporting system consistent with industry capabilities, including the use of study fleets.

Objective 4: Minimize the bycatch and discard mortality rates for skates caught in both directed and non-directed fisheries through the promotion and encouragement of experimentation, conservation engineering, and gear development.

Objective 5: Promote and encourage research for critical biological, ecological, and fishery information based on the research needs identified in the **Skate SAFE Report and scoping document**, including the development and dissemination of a skate species identification guide.

Objective 6: Minimize, to the extent possible, the impacts of skate management approaches on fisheries for other species on which New England and Mid-Atlantic fishermen depend (for example, groundfish, monkfish, scallops, and fluke), recognizing the interconnected nature of skate and other fisheries in the Northeast Region.

Objective 7: To the extent possible, **manage clearnose and rosette skates separately** from the other five species in the skate complex, recognizing that these two species are distributed primarily in the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions.



2020 Skate Annual Monitoring Report (for FY 2019)

Provide guidance on the need to adjust measures in the Skate FMP to better achieve the FMP's objectives.

PDT Discussion:

- Need for clearer skate monitoring and catch accounting. Is this a regulatory fix or a matter of improved communication?
- Other?



1:50 p.m. Amendment 5

- Recap outcomes of the August 6 Skate Committee meeting
- Develop any input for the September 10 Skate Committee meeting
- Tasking on any outstanding PDT work

Amendment 5

August 6 Committee meeting recap

Problem Statements (emphases added)

1. There are two modes of the skate fishery, directed and non-directed fisheries. The incidental limit has been triggered two times in the last ten years, and when it gets triggered, there are negative impacts on the directed skate fishery and on the other fisheries that incidentally harvest skate. There is a need to improve the reliability and accountability of catch reporting in the skate fishery (and other fisheries that catch skate) to ensure there is precise and accurate representation of catch (landings and discards). Accurate catch data are necessary to ensure that catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing and to determine when catch limits are exceeded. **(6/0/0/0)**
2. Current and potential access to the skate resource make it difficult to achieve long term sustainable management in the skate fishery. It is more difficult to prevent overfishing and predict outcomes of management when participants in a fishery cannot be defined. **(5/2/0/0)**



Amendment 5

August 6 Committee meeting recap

Goals (7/0/0/0)

1. Avoid tripping the skate incidental possession limit.
2. Improve skate data, leading to improved assessments (e.g., no longer be considered data-poor) and more precise and accurate understanding of the landings and discards in different segments of the fishery.
3. Minimize bycatch and discards.
4. Better characterize the directed and non-directed fisheries.
5. Better understand the true potential for vessels to enter the fishery.
6. Minimize the impact on any other fisheries that have interactions with skates.
7. Preserve, to the extent possible, ongoing participation the fishery consistent with how past utilization has occurred.



Amendment 5

August 6 Committee meeting recap

Types of measures to achieve goals (postponed to September 10)

1. An intermediate trigger to slow the fishery (before the 85%/90% trigger).
2. Limited access, with and without tiers for different qualification criteria for permit categories.
3. Creating different TALs for the fishery segments (e.g., directed monkfish TAL with a LOA).
4. Monitoring requirements beyond NEFOP/SBRM requirements.
5. Restrict switching between state and federal fishing.
6. Gear restrictions that could reduce bycatch (e.g., number of nets, hauling gear after each trip).

After further input from the Committee and the September Council meeting, the Committee would like a PDT analysis on the potential for vessels to enter the fishery.



Amendment 5

Develop any PDT input, tasking

PDT Discussion:

- Do the Committee's motions adequately address PDT concerns with earlier language?
 - A goal(s) should be developed
 - Adding a conservation focus would help comply with all National Standards.
 - Need to clarify terms (e.g., latent effort, new entrant, non-target species)
- Other comments/input?
- Discussion Document
 - Now includes brief summary of the PDT analysis of potential landings from March memo.
 - Other additions?



2:20 p.m. Skate Priorities

- Finalize recommendations for addressing E.O. 13921 and for 2021 management priorities

Council priorities regarding skate

E.O. 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth (5/7/20)

- Purpose
 - “to strengthen the American economy; improve the competitiveness of American industry; ensure food security; provide environmentally safe and sustainable seafood; support American workers; ensure coordinated, predictable, and transparent Federal actions; and remove unnecessary regulatory burdens”
- Request of the Council
 - **By November 2, 2020**, “...submit a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries, including a proposal for initiating each recommended action within 1 year of the date of this order.”
 - Can include changes to regulations, orders, guidance documents, or other similar agency actions
 - Must accomplish “within existing appropriations.” No new resources for the Councils or NMFS.
 - Must comply with applicable law (MSA, ESA, MMPA, etc.).
 - “Initiate” actions by May 2021 (not implement)
- Distinct from the 2017 order to identify regulations that are unnecessary, outdated, or ineffective.
- Logistics/next steps
 - Committees/APs identify ideas
 - Consider as part of priorities process; will require expediting process to meet deadline.



Council priorities regarding skate

- Task: Develop priorities for:
 - 2021 Council management priorities
 - E.O. 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth (to strengthen the American economy; improve the competitiveness of American industry; ensure food security; provide environmentally safe and sustainable seafood; support American workers; ensure coordinated, predictable, and transparent Federal actions; and remove unnecessary regulatory burdens)
- Timeframe: Priorities development on the fast track
 - September 10 is the Committee's only chance to develop and prioritize recommendations (normally two bites at the apple).
 - Council to finalize in late October (normally in December).



Council priorities regarding skate

Preliminary PDT Discussion:

- Required
 - 2022-2023 specifications
 - Annual Monitoring Report
 - Management track assessment (not a Council action, but will use PDT resources)
- Discretionary
 - Amendment 5 (likely continued)
 - Removing the need to do the annual monitoring report (would take an amendment).
 - Revisit FMP goals and objectives (some outdated by the time FMP was implemented)
- Considerations
 - The thorny skate rebuilding deadline is 8 years away. GARFO hasn't notified the Council in recent history on lack of rebuilding. May be coming soon (after assessment update?). PDT has been flagging concerns for several years. SSC has also flagged it (requested additional information).
 - The assessment will likely be elevated to a Level 2, so done later in the year than in the past.



Council priorities regarding skate

PDT Discussion:

- Continued need for annual monitoring report?
 - Is it appropriate for the PDT to:
 - Revisit and potentially change stock status determinations outside the assessment process?
 - Be the body that:
 - Alerts the Council on the need to use AMs? Wouldn't this communication come from GARFO and prior to the AMR being developed?
 - Provides updates on landings and discards?
 - In a year when specifications are developed, is it necessary to also create an AMR? Regs are unclear.
- Other ideas?



2:45 p.m.

Other Business

- Clarify how to use aggregate data (e.g., a record that includes data from multiple trips)
- Other business

Other Business

PDT Discussion:

