

Skate Plan Development Team Meeting

November 4, 2020
1:00 – 4:00 PM
Webinar



Webinar access (recommended): <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/968903189>

Listen-only call in: (872) 240-3412 access code: 968-903-189

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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**
- 1:05** **Recap outcomes of September Council meeting and discuss 2021 Council priorities for skate management**
- 1:15** **Amendment 5**
- Timeline, action plan, supplemental scoping, developing background information, tasking
- 2:45** **2022-2023 specifications**
- Action plan, timeline, thorny skate rebuilding, clarifications and updates for specifications, tasking
- 3:45** **Other business**
- Plan next meeting, other?
- 4:00** **Adjourn**

Any revisions?



1:05 p.m.
September Council meeting
outcomes,
2021 skate priorities

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September & October Council Meetings

- **Annual Monitoring Report**
 - Received report with a few questions. Some concerns on the 2021 assessment (thorny skate, timing relative to specifications).
 - Discussion of the utility/future need. Staff: should clarify in priorities if the Council wants an AMR separate from the specifications document.
- **Amendment 5**
 - Accepted all Committee motions for a problem statement, goals and types of measures to consider for Amendment 5, with a few minor adjustments.
 - With that, scope of Amendment 5 expanding. Need to be a supplemental scoping period to solicit public comment. Will bring a scoping document to the December Council meeting for approval.
- **Initial Priorities Put on the List**
 - 2022-2023 specifications
 - Annual Monitoring Report
 - Amendment 5



- **Final 2021 Priorities**
 - 2022-2023 specifications
 - Amendment 5



PDT Discussion:



1:15 p.m. Amendment 5

- Timeline, action plan, supplemental scoping, developing background information, tasking

Skate timeline: near-term



Month	Day	Meetings and Milestones
Nov.	4	PDT mtg: background work, planning
	6	Cte sending any comments on scoping doc
	20	Documents finished for Council mtg
Dec.	3	Council mtg: approve scoping document
Jan-Feb	30 days	Scoping opens, two or three hearings
Feb-Mar	tbd	AP and Cte mtgs: review scoping outcomes, develop alternatives or tasking
Apr	13-15	Council mtg: A5 scoping outcomes & update

A5 timeline, action plan

Review A5 Action Plan (version 4 draft)

PDT Discussion:

- Review/update
 - A5 timeline
 - Responsibilities of PDT members and others
 - PDT resources and work schedule
- PDT task – check-in with supervisors on the action plan, let Rachel know of any concerns



A5 problem statement

Two Committee motions carried as-is

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.

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.



A5 goals

One Committee motion carried with revision

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.



A5 types of measures to consider

One Committee motion carried as-is (motion to amend failed)

1. An intermediate trigger to slow the wing and/or bait fishery.
2. Limited access for the wing and/or bait fishery, with or without tiers for different qualification criteria for permit categories.
3. Creating different TALs for the wing fishery segments (e.g., directed and non-directed TALs).
4. Monitoring requirements for the wing and/or bait fishery beyond NEFOP/SBRM requirements.
5. Restrict switching between state and federal fishing for the wing and/or bait fishery.
6. Gear modifications that could reduce bycatch for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., 12" mesh gillnet size).
7. Make the Federal skate permit a year-round permit for the wing and/or bait fishery.
8. Additional reporting requirements for the wing and/or bait fishery (e.g., VMS declarations, daily catch reports).



A5 supplemental scoping

PDT Discussion:

- Action to continue under 1978 NEPA guidelines
- Scoping document edits?
- Potential problem statement clarification: replace “two times” with “ a “few times”
- RA’s concerns
- Other
- PDT task – further comments on scoping document to Rachel by November 9



A5 background information

PDT Discussion (docs due early Feb?):

- Discussion Document
 - Recent additions
 - More NMFS Social Indicators for skate communities (Sect 5.6.4.1.1, p. 56-58)
 - Preliminary section on EO 12898 on environmental justice (Sect 5.6.4.1.2, p. 58)
 - Affected Environment – work needed
 - Sect. 5.3 - Non-target Species (bycatch)
 - Our sidebars in May-June remain unresolved on whether this section needs revision.
 - Section typically describes the bycatch of species other than X in the X fishery. Just the two sentences highlighted touch on that. Section currently focuses on skates as a bycatch of other fisheries. OK?
 - PDT task – Jenny to coordinate sub-group (Cynthia, Ashleigh, ?) to resolve by 5/20.
 - Sects 5.4 & 5.5 – Protected Species and Physical/EFH
 - PDT task – Jenny to coordinate updates by summer 2020 (Danielle, Michelle).
 - Sect 5.6 – Human Communities
 - PDT task – a few small edits & additions. Will reach out individually.
 - Other?



A5 background information

PDT Discussion (docs due early Feb?):

- PDT draft memo - A5 background on types of measures (other than limited access)
 - Intermediate possession limits
 - Identifying “directed” and “non-directed” fishery segments
 - Monitoring requirements
 - State and federal fishing
 - Year-round permit
 - Gear modifications
 - Reporting requirements



2:45 p.m. 2022-2023 specifications

- Action plan, timeline, thorny skate rebuilding, clarifications and updates for specifications, tasking

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Specifications action plan

Action plan (draft in spring 2021)

- Likely scope:
 - Setting ACL specifications (e.g., TALs) for FY 2022-23
 - Setting wing and bait possession limits
 - Other?
- Type of NEPA analysis expected:
 - EA (is a SIR possible)?
- PDT member support/roles
 - Any expected changes?



Specifications timeline – draft for discussion

PDT discussion

- Timing relative to assessment



Thorny skate rebuilding

Nov 4 FR notice

- 2020 stock status update indicates stock is still overfished.
- “NMFS has notified the NEFMC of the requirement to rebuild these stocks.”
- Does this refer to the original overfished notice (March 2020)? Is the Council still expecting the “lack of rebuilding” letter after the September 2021 assessment?

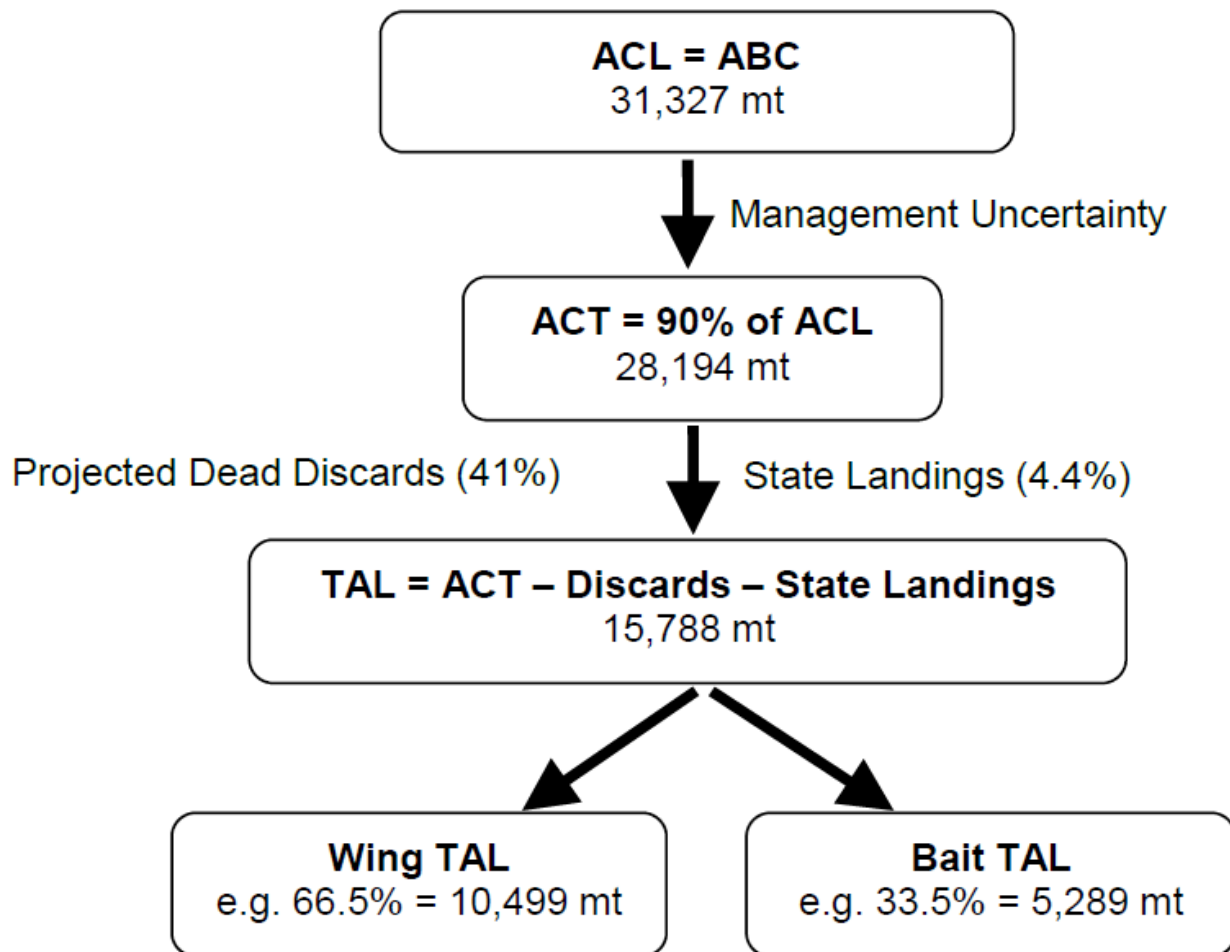
Rebuilding Program/Progress

- “If the 3-year average of the appropriate survey mean weight per tow declines below the average for the previous 3 years, then the Council shall take management action to ensure that stock rebuilding will achieve target levels.”
- What does “previous” mean, moving average (2016-2018 vs 2017-2019; used in status update) or subsequent (2014-2016 vs 2017-2019)?
- Thorny has fallen below the previous moving average before (e.g., 2019 AMR was -0.6%).
- Only 4.3% of BMSY target; rebuilding deadline is 2028.

Next Steps?



Specifications Flow Chart



The “buffer”

- Clarify that it includes management AND scientific uncertainty?
- Should certain uncertainties be more explicitly included? Which?

“%” for dead discards and state

- It’s not the % of the TAL for that year but the % of the landings for the 3 years included in the calculation that was dead discards and state. This is confusing.
- The flow chart shouldn't have the % included. maybe just the actual values.

Other

- Clarify why OFL is not set for this FMP
- Clarify why skates are managed as a complex
- Other?



3:45 p.m.
Other Business

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Other Business

PDT Discussion:



PDT Discussion:

