



## New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116

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

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 12, 2023  
**TO:** Monkfish Advisory Panel and Committee  
**FROM:** Elizabeth “Libby” Etrie, Monkfish Committee Chair  
**SUBJECT:** Charge for joint meeting on January 23, 2023

The purpose of this memo is to help prepare the Monkfish Advisory Panel (AP) and Committee for our joint meeting on **Monday, January 23 at 9:00 AM via webinar**. Please join the webinar ten minutes prior to test audio and help the meeting start on time.

**PURPOSE.** The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) recommend final preferred alternatives for Framework Adjustment 13 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) which include Fishing Year 2023-2025 specifications and other management measures; and 2) review Monkfish Research-Set-Aside research priorities set by the NEFMC in June 2022 and recommend any revisions.

**MEETING MATERIALS.** To make the most of our meeting time, please read and familiarize yourself with the documents beforehand and come ready to make recommendations. As documents become available, they will be posted on the Council webpage for the meeting:<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/jan-23-2023-monkfish-joint-committee-and-advisory-panel-webinar>

**WEBINAR REGISTRATION.** To be able to view the webinar, listen and talk during it, you must: 1) register for the webinar in advance, and 2) join the webinar on the day of the meeting (you can then select phone or computer for your audio connection). If you just call using the phone number provided on the meeting notice, you will be in listen-only mode and will not be able to speak during the meeting. The webinar registration link is posted on the meeting webpage.

**QUESTIONS/TECHNICAL SUPPORT.** If you have any questions about the meeting documents, agenda, or how to participate, please contact Rachel Feeney (rfeeney@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 x110). A [Public Participation Guide](#) is available with tips on joining Council webinars. Staff would be happy to set up a practice webinar for you ahead of the meeting if that would be helpful. For technical support during the meeting, please email [helpdesk@nefmc.org](mailto:helpdesk@nefmc.org).

### NEFMC Advisory Panel policies

This being the first meeting of the 2023-2025 Monkfish Advisory Panel, staff will briefly present the Council’s policies relating to its advisory panels. This will include an overview of the harassment policy which the Council is expected to formally adopt at its January 2023 meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents from all prior monkfish Committee, Advisory Panel, and Plan Development Team meetings are posted on the monkfish page of the Council’s website: <https://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/monkfish>.

### Framework Adjustment 13

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** There were many meetings last fall! As a reminder, and particularly for new AP members: as noted before and during the August 30 meetings of the AP and Committee, monkfish trawl survey indices that form the basis of catch advice have declined for both northern and southern monkfish management areas. The peer review of the 2022 monkfish management track assessment occurred the week of September 19, 2022. The Plan Development Team (PDT) met on September 27 to receive the assessment results and preliminary results of the peer review, prepare potential overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and discard deduction approaches for consideration by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and develop effort control alternatives and analyses per tasking of the Committee. Staff updated the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils at their late September and early October meetings. The PDT then met on October 18 to finish work ahead of the October 26 SSC meeting, at which the SSC made recommendations for the OFLs, ABCs, and discard deduction. The PDT met on November 2 to finalize the range of alternatives and work on impact analyses and the AP and Committee met on November 28 and 29 to make final recommendations on this action.

In December, neither Council took final action as originally scheduled. The NEFMC decided to remand the ABCs back to the SSC and ask the SSC to consider another approach to setting the ABCs. The MAFMC supported this decision. The Councils did choose a final preferred alternative for Action 3 (gillnet mesh measures) and the FW13 document has been updated to reflect that.

In early January, the PDT developed ABCs based on this request of the Councils and revised the effort control alternatives in Action 2 per Council tasking (Documents 2a, 2B, 2C). The SSC met on January 20 to consider this request. The PDT also updated the range of alternatives and impacts analysis (Document 2a).

**ON JANUARY 23.** Staff will provide an update on the development of this action, focusing on updates since the December meetings of the Councils. After discussion, the AP and Committee can make recommendations on the final preferred alternatives for this action.

**FUTURE STEPS.** The NEFMC is scheduled to take final action on [January 25, 2023](#) and the MAFMC on [February 7-9, 2023](#).

### 2023-2024 Monkfish Research-Set-Aside Program Research Priorities

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** In June 2022, the NEFMC approved priorities for the 2023-2024 Monkfish Research-Set-Aside (RSA) program with input provided by the Monkfish PDT, AP, and Committee. However, at the same meeting, NOAA Fisheries shared concerns about administering this RSA program for 2023-2024 and indicated that there would likely not be a Request for Proposals. In November 2022, there had been some discussion at the AP and Committee meetings about potential future priorities. In December 2022, GARFO staff indicated to NEFMC staff that there has been interest relayed by scientists and fishermen in participating in Monkfish RSA research next year. GARFO will likely proceed with an RFP but is allowing time for both Councils to review and provide any revisions to the priorities that the NEFMC approved in June 2022. On January 9, the PDT reviewed and commented on the priorities (Document 3).

**ON JANUARY 23.** The AP and Committee can make final recommendations on what the Council should work on in 2023 regarding monkfish, including any ranking of priorities.

**FUTURE STEPS.** The NEFMC and MAFMC are scheduled to make updates to and approve the research priorities at their upcoming meetings. NOAA Fisheries is then expected to proceed with issuing a Request for Proposals.

## Other Business

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** In addition to finishing Framework Adjustment 13, the NEFMC approved in December these two work priorities for monkfish in 2023.

- *Develop measures to reduce gillnet interactions with protected species (sturgeon, large whales), responding to the Sturgeon Action Plan. (Document 5a)*
- *Review recommendations from the RSA program review and develop measures to improve the Monkfish RSA program's effectiveness. Revisit use of RSA DAS and ability to flip to a directed RSA DAS while at sea. Form a work group of fishermen, NOAA and Council staff, Monkfish Committee members, etc. to discuss the Monkfish RSA program and identify potential improvements. (Document 5b)*

**ON JANUARY 23.** We will have a brief, preliminary discussion about these two priorities, receiving any updates on if and how the protected species priority may be accomplished in collaboration with other Committees or jointly with the MAFMC. Regarding the RSA priority, we should prepare for a future meeting that identifies the scope and objectives of a work group to develop recommendations.