



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: May 31, 2023
TO: Skate Advisory Panel and Committee
FROM: Scott Olszewski, Skate Committee Chair
SUBJECT: Charge for meetings on June 12 and 14, 2023

The purpose of this memo is to help prepare the Skate Advisory Panel (AP) for its meeting on Monday, June 12 at 1:00 PM and the Committee for its meeting Wednesday, June 14 at 9:00 AM. Both meetings will be held via webinar only. Please join the webinar ten minutes prior to test audio and help the meeting start on time.

PURPOSE. The purpose of both meetings is to continue work on the following 2023 skate priorities. We will: 1) review progress and give final input on a white paper regarding thorny skate, and 2) continue developing the Council action that will contain the 2024-2025 skate fishery specifications. At the beginning of each meeting, staff will summarize the outcomes of the May 22 Assessment Oversight Panel meeting in which the 2023 skate management track assessment was discussed.

MEETING MATERIALS. To make the most of our meeting time, please familiarize yourself with the documents beforehand and come ready to make any recommendations. As documents become available, they will be posted on the Council webpages for each meeting:

Advisory Panel: <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/jun-12-2023-skate-advisory-panel-webinar>

Committee: <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/jun-14-2023-skate-committee>

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 in 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. Links to register for the webinars are posted on the above webpages.

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.

Thorny Skate White Paper

RECENT ACTIVITY. Since the Skate AP and Committee meetings in March, the Plan Development Team (PDT) has continued to revise the white paper (Document #2) and incorporate the input received from the AP and Committee (e.g., potential impacts of future wind energy development in the Gulf of Maine). Data on thorny skate catch has been added and the discussion of potential measures has been further developed.

ON JUNE 12/14. Staff will provide an update on the development of this white paper. The AP can make any final recommendations to the Committee on this document and give input on next steps. The Committee will give final directions to the PDT on revising the white paper and develop recommendations to the Council on next steps. Note: additional work on thorny skate issues in 2023, apart from the stock assessment and development of specifications, would require a change to 2023 Council work priorities.

FUTURE STEPS. The PDT will finalize this white paper on or before June 16, the deadline for submitting documents for the June 27-29 Council meeting.

2024-2025 Skate Specifications

RECENT ACTIVITY. Since the Skate AP and Committee meetings in March, the PDT has updated the discussion document (Document #3), focusing on the Committee tasking of adding data and analyses that would support decisions about whether to consider revising possession limits.

ON JUNE 12/14. Staff will provide an update on this work. The AP and Committee can make recommendations on whether possession limit alternatives should be included in this action.

Discussion questions/starters include:

- Should the possession limits in place for FY 2022-2023 be maintained in FY 2023-2024 or should adjustments be considered? How so?
 - The possession limits for wing and/or bait?
 - The wing possession limit for B-DAS (220 lb) and non-DAS (500 lb) trips?
- Should alternatives be considered that would change:
 - The partial possession limit for barndoor skate in the wing fishery?
 - The possession prohibition for smooth skate?
- The Council would need to initiate a framework adjustment action to consider the species-specific possession limits.

FUTURE STEPS. Recommendations will be considered by the Council at its June meeting. The PDT will meet on July 10 to review Committee tasking and continue developing this action.