

Monkfish Advisory Panel Meeting

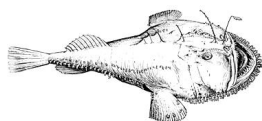
**May 4, 2022
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Webinar**



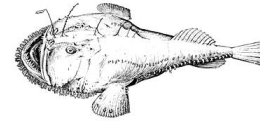
Webinar (recommended): <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/699786796399777547>

Telephone: (415) 655-0060 , access code: 135-291-829

Technical Support: helpdesk@nefmc.org or (978) 465-0492 x111



Introductions



Monkfish Advisory Panel	
Greg DiDomenico, NJ (Chair)	William McCann, MA
James Dopkin, NJ	Randall Hayes Morgan, MD
Timothy Froelich, NY	Nicholas Muto, MA
Eric Hansen, MA	John Our, MA
Michael Karch, NJ	Ted Platz, RI
Gregory Mataronas, RI	Christopher Rainone, NJ
Monkfish Committee	
Elizabeth “Libby” Etrie, Chair	
Council Staff	
Jenny Couture	Rachel Feeney, PDT Chair

Agenda

- 9:00 AM** **Introductions, approve agenda, and review timeline**
- 9:15** **Monkfish Fishery Performance Report**
Discuss the state of the fishery and give input for developing the report
- 10:45** **Framework Adjustment 13**
2023-2025 Specifications: Receive update; recommend a range of alternatives for setting Day-at-Sea allocations and possession limits
Management Measures: Recommend a range of alternatives for potentially requiring a 12-inch minimum mesh size for monkfish gillnets and use of the Vessel Monitoring System across the federal fishery, and for reducing discards in Southern Fishery Management Area
- 12:15 PM** **2022-2026 Council Research Priorities and Data Needs**
Recommend updates to the 2021-2025 list related to monkfish
- 12:45** **Other Business**
Recommend research priorities for the 2023/2024 Monkfish Research Set-Aside program
- 1:00** **Adjourn**

Any revisions?



Monkfish timeline - 2022

		Framework 13	Performance Report	Assessment	2022-2026 Council Research Priorities	2023 Management Priorities	MEETINGS
2022	Feb	PDT planning	PDT planning		PDT drafting updates		2/28 PDT
	March	Cte begins work on framework, develops alternatives	Cte identifies purpose, reviews outline and questions for AP		Cte drafts updates		3/24 Cte
	April	PDT develops alternatives, discard methods, tasking	PDT develops report	NEFSC preparing in spring for AOP, PDT support			4/4 PDT
		MAFMC short update	MAFMC short update				4/5-7 MAFMC
		NEFMC receives update, initiates action	NEFMC receives plan				4/12-14 NEFMC
	May	AP input on alternatives	AP input/response to questions		AP input, Cte review via email		5/4 AP
		PDT work cont.	PDT draft full report				5/12 PDT
				AOP sets scope			5/24 NEFSC
		Cte develops alternatives	Cte receives draft report	Cte receives update			5/26 Cte
	June				SSC reviews updates		6/7 SSC
		MAFMC receives update	MAFMC receives update	MAFMC updated			6/7-9 MAFMC
		PDT work cont.					mid June PDT
		NEFMC receives update	NEFMC receives update	NEFMC receives update	NEFMC approves		6/28-30 NEFMC
	July	PDT work on discard methods, impacts analysis	PDT refines report	NEFSC does assessment over summer, PDT support		PDT input	early July PDT
		Potential: SSC reviews discard methods?	Potential: SSC review? Then PDT finalizes				Mid-late July SSC?
	August	MAFMC receives update	MAFMC updated	MAFMC updated			Aug 8-11 MAFMC
		AP input on alternatives	AP receives final report			AP input	late Aug AP
	Sept	Cte develops alternatives	Cte receive final report			Cte drafts	early Sept Cte
				Assessment peer review			9/19-23 NEFSC
		PDT develops ABC and flowchart, impacts analysis		PDT receives update			late Sept PDT
		NEFMC receives update	NEFMC receives final report	NEFMC receives update		NEFMC sets draft	9/27-29 NEFMC
	Oct	MAFMC receives update	MAFMC receives final report	MAFMC receives update			10/4-6 MAFMC
		SSC recommends OFL and ABC	SSC receives final report				10/10-14 SSC
	Nov	PDT impacts analysis				PDT input	early Nov PDT
		AP recommends preferred alts					
		Cte recommends preferred alts				Cte input	late Nov Cte
	Dec	NEFMC final action				NEFMC finalizes	12/6-8 NEFMC
		MAFMC final action					12/12-15 MAFMC

Monkfish timeline – near term

Month	Day	Meetings and Milestones
May	4	AP mtg: input for performance report, Framework 13, research priorities
	12	PDT mtg: develop performance report, FW 13 data support
	19	PDT finalize documents for Committee meeting
	24	Assessment AOP meeting
	26	Cte mtg: receive draft performance report, Framework 13 alternatives, finish research priorities
June	7-9	MAFMC meeting: receive update memo
	17	PDT finalize documents for Council meeting
	28-30	NEFMC meeting: receive update Committee report



9:15 a.m.

Monkfish Fishery Performance Report

Purpose

Review fishery data, address the questions for the AP

Relevant documents

2 – draft report

Technical Support: helpdesk@nefmc.org or (978) 465-0492 x111

Purpose/scope of report

2022 Council work priority:

“AP and PDT develop a fishery performance report to help the Council/Committee better understand present conditions of the fishery”

Outline (after MAFMC approach)

- Basic Biology
- Status of the Stocks
- Management System
- Fishery Performance
 - Permits, effort, catch, revenue, communities, states, Research-Set-Aside program
- Monkfish Advisory Panel Information

Timeline for Completion

- May: AP input, PDT draft full report, Cte review
- Summer: PDT update data (adding FY 2021), SSC review
- August-September: Final AP input, Cte and Council receive final report



AP questions

1. What factors have influenced recent fishing activity and how (e.g., domestic and foreign markets, costs, environment, fish distribution, regulations)?
2. How might these factors change in FY 2022? How do you expect the fishery to adjust?
3. How has the global pandemic changed the fishery? Do you see the fishery returning to a pre-pandemic state or is there a new normal emerging?
4. Considering the fishery data, are there specific regional or port differences in fishery performance that are important?



AP questions

5. Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved and how would the improvements affect the fishery?
6. Have any recent regulatory changes affected the fishery and how (e.g., implemented in 2020, vessels using the Interactive Voice Response system now must submit a trip declaration within an hour of leaving port, like vessels using the Vessel Monitoring System)?
7. What would you recommend as research priorities?
8. What is hindering the use of RSA DAS to raise funds for monkfish research? How might the Monkfish RSA program improve?
9. What else is important for the Council to know (e.g., impacts of right whale regulations, offshore wind development)?



10:45 a.m.

Framework Adjustment 13

Purpose

Review progress and recommend a range of alternatives for this action.

Relevant documents

3 – Discussion Document

6a – Cte mtg summary

6b – PDT mtg summary

Scope of action & today's charge

April 2022 Council motion to initiate action:

That the Council initiate Framework Adjustment 13 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan.

This action will include developing specifications for 2023-2025 and consider:

- Revising Days-at-Sea allocations and possession limits, including the incidental limit,
- Management measures to reduce southern area discards,
- Requiring 12" mesh for monkfish gillnets, and
- Requiring use of the Vessel Monitoring System across the monkfish fishery.

AP to focus today on if and what alternatives for these topics should be considered.



Brief update on assessment (Sect 3.1)

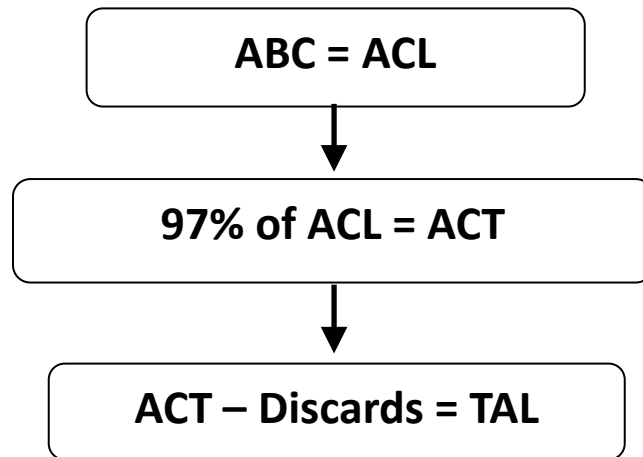
Assessment Years	2007, 2010, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An age and growth assessment model used (“SCALE”). • Monkfish was deemed rebuilt in 2007 (both stocks). • Not overfished, and overfishing was not occurring. • OFLs was lowered in 2013, unchanged since.
	2016, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble with monkfish age validation precluded use of more traditional models. • Used “Plan B” approach, biomass determined only with NEFSC trawl survey index. • Strong 2015 recruitment event noted; biomass increased in 2016-2018 but declined in 2019.
	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management track assessment; Assessment Oversight Panel to set scope May 24. • Peer review in September. • Likely survey index-based, using “Plan B” still; catch data updated through 2021. • For updating discards, 100% discard mortality has been assumed; recent research shows scallop dredge mortality may be lower. AOP to determine if revisiting discard estimation methods is in scope.

Council has recommended that the NEFSC consider recent discard mortality research in assessment.



Brief update on specifications

Setting Acceptable Biological Catch and Flow Chart



ABC setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Plan B” assessment = use a multiplier (change in survey index over the most recent three years) applied to last three years of <u>catch</u>. Hasn’t been used.• FY 2017-19 ABC = no action since FY 2011. SCALE model had failed in 2016 assessment; cautious to change ABC.• FY 2020-22 ABC = multiplier applied to the FY 2017-19 <u>ABC</u>, not catch.
Discard deduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current = latest 3-year (calendar year) mean discard/catch ratio applied to ACT.



Brief update on specifications (Sect 4.1.3)

Revisiting discard deduction

- For FY 2020-22, deduction increased in the north (14 to 18%) and south (25 to 51%), due to 2015-year class discards in FY2017-19, mostly in dredge gear.
- In 2020-2021, Council contracted Fishery Applications Consulting Team, LLC (Dr. O'Keefe) to analyze discard deduction performance and alternate methods (e.g., 2 to 12-year times series, highest recent discard value, using recruitment data to predict discards)
- For FW13, PDT has been tasked to examine alternate methods for setting the deduction. Looking at:
 - Current approach (latest 3 years mean discard/catch)
 - Latest 10 year mean and median discard/catch (may balance stability with recent trends)
 - Latest 10 year mean and median of discards (discards are largely not in directed fishery)
- Committee has indicated the deduction should provide as much stability to the directed fishery as possible (minimizing change between specification cycles). Recruitment data will not be used this cycle.
- PDT to prepare memo for SSC review over summer, potentially in October depending on data delays and time needed for analysis.

Questions?



Effort Controls (Sect 4.2)

- Possession limits and Days-at-Sea are used to help landings remain within TALs.
- Landings relative to TAL have been higher in the north (80-107%) vs. south (39-53%) in FY 2015-2020.

March 24, 2022, Committee tasking for PDT:
“...analyze a few adjustments in these effort controls to see if there may be better ways to optimize landings.”

Current “No Action” effort controls (unchanged for ~5 years):

Days-at-Sea allocation = 45.2 Monkfish DAS/vessel/FY, 37 of which can be used in the SFMA.

Possession Limits (whole weight lb):

Permit	NFMA	SFMA
A (only monk DAS)	3,638	2,037
B (only monk DAS)	1,746	1,673
C (monk w/ or w/o mults or sc DAS)	3,638 (unlimited if mults A DAS)	2,037
D (monk w/ or w/o mults or sc DAS)	1,746 (unlimited if mults A DAS)	1,673
F (seasonal offshore SFMA)	n/a	4,656
H (SFMA only)	n/a	1,673



DAS Usage

Table 3. Monkfish DAS usage, combined management areas, FY 2019 – FY 2021.

Permit Category	All Vessels			# of Active Vessels
	Total # of Permits	DAS Allocated	DAS Used	
FY 2019				
A	21	909	385	11
B	39	1,689	750	25
C	273	11,821	583	24
D	238	10,305	850	42
FY 2020				
A	15	650	193	9
B	37	1,602	444	23
C	268	11,604	334	17
D	229	9,916	490	32
FY 2021				
A	18	779	130	5
B	37	1,602	280	14
C	255	11,042	177	11
D	223	9,656	397	24

Take-home Points

- ~10-11,000 DAS allocated for Permits C, D
- A lot of latent effort in fishery
 - # DAS used < # DAS allocated
 - # of active vessels (use I+ MNK DAS) < permits issued
- % of vessels that used I+ MNK DAS
 - FY21: 4-38% of vessels
 - FY20: 6-62% of vessels
 - FY19: 9-64% of vessels

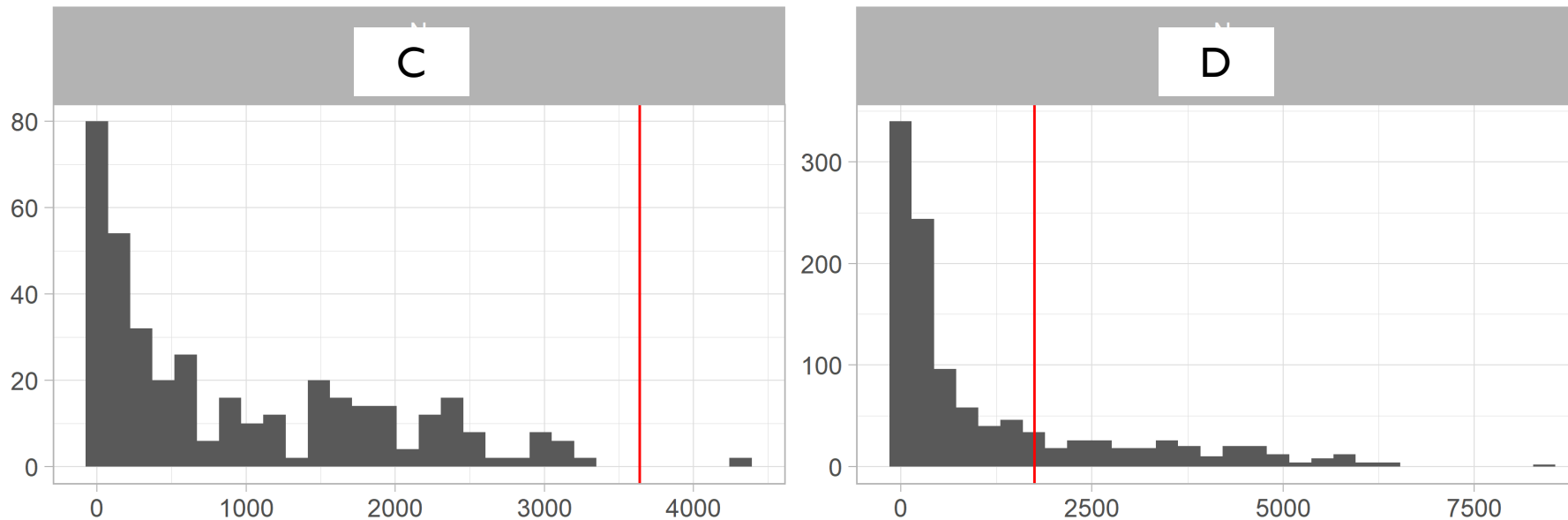
PDT work in-progress

- Parse data by N and S
- Number of vessels using < and ≥ 75%



Landings frequency – northern area

Northern area: Histogram of monkfish landings for permits C and D in FY18
(trip weight by number of trips)



- Red line = trip possession limit (whole weight); Permits C, D = larger vessels
- Only included 'MNK'
- DAS overage provision accounted for

Main take-aways:

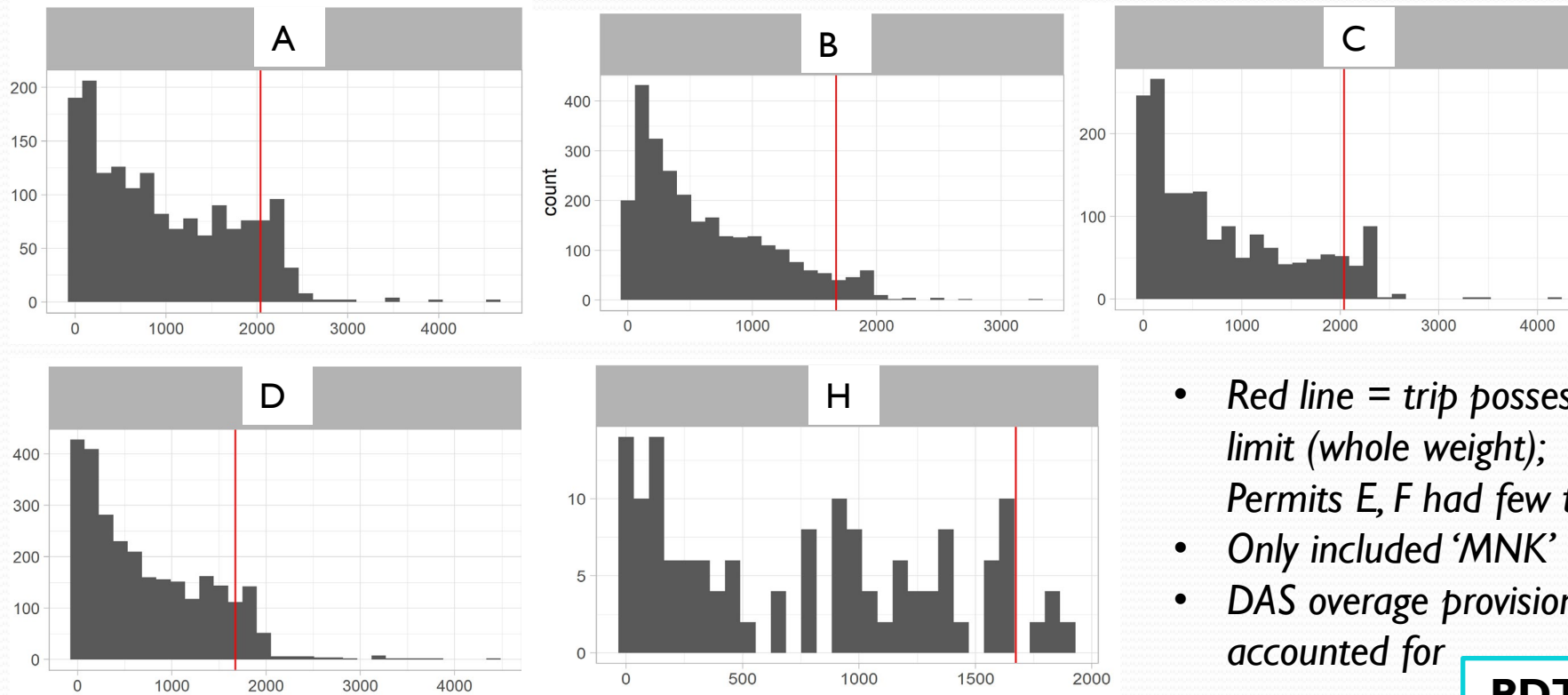
- Many trips land minimal monkfish – low value relative to scallops or groundfish?
- Trip limits not constraining landings esp. for Permit C (has double the trip limit compared to Permit D)
- Some trips > possession limit (unlimited if using a Mnk and Groundfish DAS)

PDT work in-progress

- Remove RSA trips

Landings frequency – southern area

Southern area: Histogram of monkfish landings for permits A, B, C, D, H in FY18
(trip weight by number of trips)



- Red line = trip possession limit (whole weight); Permits E, F had few trips
- Only included 'MNK'
- DAS overage provision accounted for

Main take-aways:

- Many trips land minimal monkfish – likely low value relative to scallops or other groundfish?
- Trip limits could be constraining landings for Permits A, D, H (?) – several trips landing close to, at, or > trip limit
- Unclear why landings > trip limits (misreporting whole vs tail weight? data errors?).

PDT work in-progress

- Remove RSA trips

Incidental possession limits

- To land incidental amounts of monkfish, vessels:
 - must have a Category E open-access federal monkfish permit and
 - not fish on a monkfish-only DAS.
- Incidental monkfish can be caught while on a Northeast Multispecies DAS, on a Scallop DAS or in the Sea Scallop Access Area Program, not under a DAS Program, and not under a DAS program that also hold permits in other fisheries/special cases.
- Incidental possession limits vary by these trip types, gear, and area (see Table 6).

PDT work in-progress

Evaluating whether the incidental landings are being constrained by the current possession limits.

Today's Discussion

Discussion questions:

- *Should alternatives for the DAS allocation for limited access permits be developed? If so, which? Note: only a small subset of vessels has used most of its DAS allocation recently.*
- *Should alternatives for the possession limits should be developed? If so, which?*
 - *Note: only a small subset of vessels has landed monkfish close to the possession limits recently.*
 - *There are several different incidental limits depending on if the vessel is fishing in the north or south, the monkfish permit category, the gear type, and if and what sort of DAS is used on the trip. Should adjustments to any of these incidental limits be considered? If so, which?*



Management Measures (Sect. 4.3)

Potentially requiring 12-inch gillnet mesh

- Current: If on a monk-only DAS, may use 10" diamond mesh in certain areas, minimizing groundfish catch.
- 95% of monk gillnet trips in southern area in FY 2018 used 12" mesh.
- A few recent Monkfish RSA projects evaluated gillnet mesh, could be informative.

March 24, 2022, Committee discussion:

- Is this proposed regulation necessary?
- Would like Advisory Panel input; willing to consider further.

Discussion questions:

- *Should an alternative to increase from the current 10" gillnet mesh requirement in exemption areas to 12" be developed? If so, should the mesh size increase:*
 - *Apply to all vessels with a federal monkfish permit or a subset (e.g., vessels fishing on a monkfish-only DAS)?*
 - *Apply in all exemption areas or certain ones?*



Management Measures (Sect. 4.3)

Potentially requiring Vessel Monitoring System for entire federal fishery

- Only monkfish permit to require VMS is Cat. F (offshore, seasonal permit).
- Limited access Cat. A & B permits don't have other permits that require VMS. Vessels must fish in just north or south and declare trip with call-in (phone app) system.
- Open-access permits (Cat. E) don't need VMS (likely wouldn't apply).
- More positional and vessel activity data, but at a cost to (small) vessels.
- ASMFC is recommending an electronic vessel tracking device for the Federal lobster and Jonah crab fishery, may be a lower cost than VMS.

March 24, 2022, Committee discussion:

- Is this proposed regulations necessary?
- Would like Advisory Panel input; willing to consider further.
- Noted the vessel tracking device may be a solution.

Discussion questions:

- *What alternatives for requiring VMS across more of the federal monkfish fishery should be considered? Note: The PDT recommends not applying this to open access vessels.*
- *Rather than VMS, should an alternate electronic vessel tracking device be considered, like the device the ASMFC is recommending for the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries?*



Management Measures

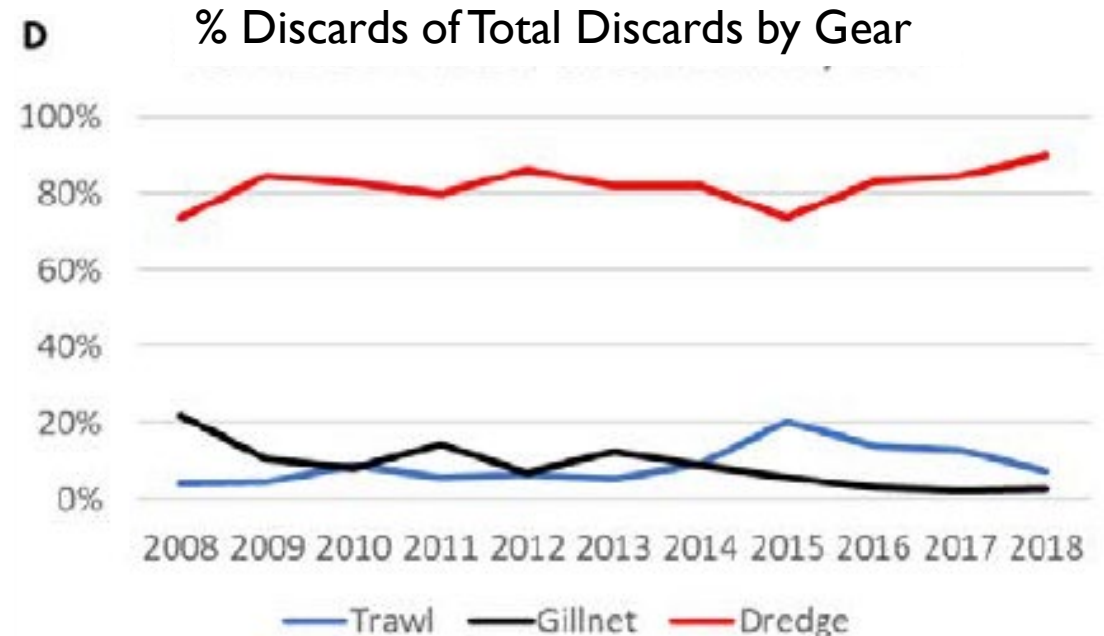
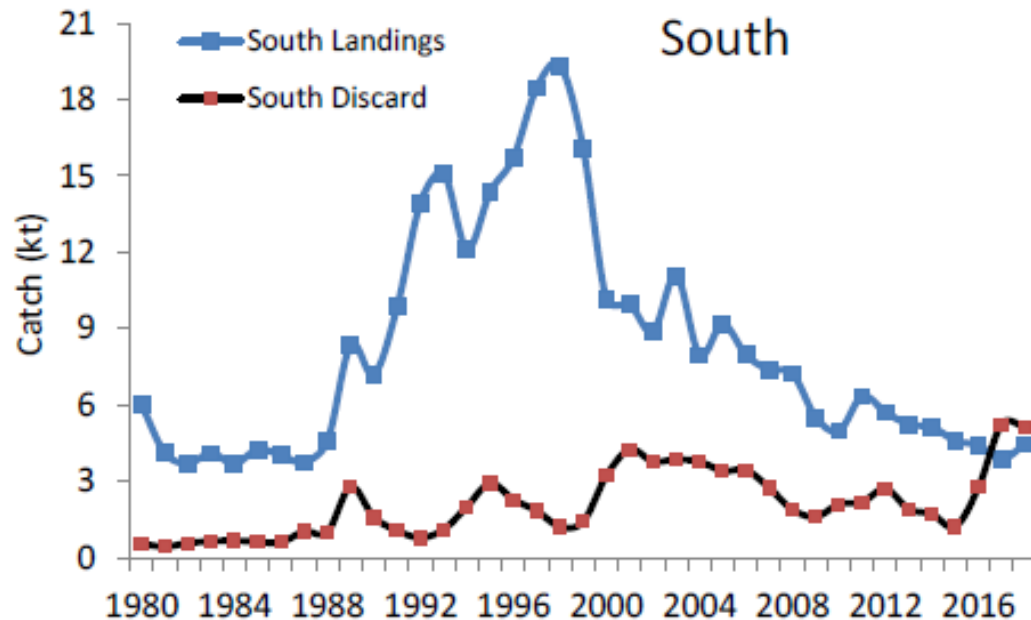
Reducing southern area discards

Magnitude of discarding in Southern mgmt. area:

- Increased from ~25% to ~51% of the ABC from 2016 to 2019 operational assessments
- Discards recently increased likely due to large 2015-year class, esp. from dredge
- Dredge discards significantly higher than trawl, gillnet gear

Reasons for discarding:

- Market demand, low monkfish prices esp. in dredge; large year-class; more effort searching for higher quality scallops; other reasons?



Management Measures

Reducing southern area discards

March 24, 2022, Committee discussion:

Developed guidance on the goals of measures to reduce southern discards:

- “Reduce unnecessary waste and mortality of monkfish.”
- “Turn discards into landings where possible for economic reasons, including for fisheries that do not target monkfish.”

Ideas for alternatives were floated; no tasking yet on alternatives.

- The FY 2022 scallop access areas appear to still overlap with the Southern Fishery Management Area, thus, it is not clear if or how southern monkfish discards will be reduced or changed (though scallop landings are decreasing).
- Table 10 reasons for discarding:
 - Scallop dredge: mostly “no market”
 - Gillnet: mostly “poor quality”
 - Bottom trawl: mostly “no market” or “retention prohibited”
- Discussion document lists some potential approaches:
 - Adjust how DAS are charged, allow DAS leasing, gear modifications, increase trip limits

PDT work in-progress

Collaboration with Scallop PDT on identifying discards in the scallop fishery and how to best represent the data.



Management Measures

Reducing southern area discards

Discussion questions:

- *What alternatives for reducing southern area discards should be considered? Note:*
 - *It may be more appropriate to consider some ideas through a future joint action with other FMPs.*
 - *The NEFMC has recommended to the NEFSC that recent discard mortality research be considered when updating discard data in the 2022 monkfish assessment. The assumed discard mortality rate is 100% across all gear types, but Weissman et al. (2021) suggest that discard mortality in dredge gear may be lower.*



12:15 p.m.

2022-2026 Council Research Priorities and Data Needs

Purpose

Review PDT input and develop
recommendations for updates

Relevant documents

4 – PDT memo

Technical Support: helpdesk@nefmc.org or (978) 465-0492 x111

Research priority setting directive

MSFCMA 109-497

Each Council shall...

“Section 302 (h) Each Council shall develop, in conjunction with the scientific and statistical committee, multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fishery interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes that shall –

- A. establish priorities for 5-year periods;
- B. be updated as necessary; and
- C. be submitted to the Secretary and the regional science centers of the National Marine Fisheries Service for their consideration in developing research priorities and budgets for the region of the Council.”



Update approval process (annual)

Steps

- Updates proposed by PDTs. [Feb 28, see PDT memo]
- Advisory Panels may recommend updates. [May 24]
- Committees review PDT [March 24] and AP input. [May 26]
- Staff compile proposed updates across all Committees for SSC review. [early June]
- Proposed updates and SSC input presented to Council for approval. [June 28-30]
- Approved updates submitted to NOAA Fisheries (NEFSC and GARFO).

What needs Council approval?

- Adding or deleting a priority or other major change.

What does not need Council approval?

- Clarifications to existing priorities.
- Adding in Council-approved Research Set-Aside priorities.



Reading the spreadsheet

- Tracking proposed revisions
 - **Red = proposed deletion**
 - **Green = proposed addition**
 - **Blue = comment or rationale for change**
- The “Notes” (column J) include:
 - Starting in 2019, the year the priority was added.
 - Notes on if and how the priority is being addressed.
 - Links/references to supporting research (see also “References” tab).
- The “References” tab includes full citations included in the Notes.



PDT recommendations on the monkfish priorities

Doc 4

- No changes/updates
 - #64 (gear research to lower bycatch and improve discard survival)
- Revise/clarify/add notes
 - #3 (trawl survey efficiency estimation for monkfish was done in 2019 assessment)
 - #14 (clarify: life history would help an age-based assessment, though otoliths and spines not helpful)
 - #15 (change rating from strategic to urgent: wind farm development more near-term)
 - #30 (add monkfish as an example: assessment methods need improving)
 - #47 (clarify: discard mortality rates by gear type would improve estimating discards and ABC setting)
 - #94 (work underway: trophic interaction of monkfish with prey)
- Merge
 - #46 with 14 (both regard monkfish age validation)

Discussion question:

- *Does the AP agree with the PDT and/or have any revisions to this list to recommend?*



12:45 p.m.
Other Business

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Monkfish Research-Set-Aside Priorities

- NMFS usually solicits proposals for the Monkfish RSA every 2 years. Program.
- The last proposal solicitation was in 2019 for the 2020-2021 program.
- No proposal solicitation in 2021 due to concerns that existing projects were having difficulty with raising the needed revenue through fishing on RSA Days-At-Sea. Instead, the 2020-21 projects were issued an extension.
- If a Monkfish RSA Request for Proposals is issued for 2023-2024, research priorities should be identified by the Council.

Discussion question:

- *What research priorities does the AP recommend for the next RSA proposal solicitation?*

