



## New England Fishery Management Council

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Daniel Salerno, *Acting Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 8, 2025  
**TO:** Skate and Monkfish Advisory Panels and Committees  
**FROM:** Matt Gates, Monkfish Committee Chair; Scott Olszewski, Skate Committee Chair  
**SUBJECT:** **Charge for joint meetings on September 16 and September 17, 2025**

The purpose of this memo is to help prepare the Monkfish and Skate Advisory Panels (AP) and Committees for their joint meetings on September 16 and 17, respectively.

The AP meeting will be held via webinar, and the Committee meeting will be held at the Hampton Inn, 20 Hotel Drive, South Kingstown, Rhode Island, but a webinar option will be available for those unable to travel to the meeting. **In-person Committee attendance is strongly encouraged; please let staff know ahead of time if you must join remotely.** If you are joining via webinar, please join the webinar ten minutes prior to test audio and to help the meetings start on time. The Joint AP meeting will be held on September 16 from 10:30 am – 4:30 pm, and the Joint Committee meeting will be held on September 17 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

**PURPOSE.** The purpose of both meetings is to: 1) discuss specifications actions for both monkfish and skates based on outcomes of the 2025 monkfish and skate data updates and recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee; 2) review joint Plan Development Team tasking on monkfish and skate fishery effort and overlaps; 3) recommend final preferred alternatives to the Councils on Monkfish Framework 17 (specifications for FY 2026-2030) and Skate Specifications (FY 2026-2030); 4) receive a presentation on the Alternative Gear-Marking Framework (Joint AP meeting only); 5) discuss 2026 Council priorities; and 6) other business, as necessary.

**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:

AP: <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/sep-16-2025-joint-skate-and-monkfish-advisory-panels-webinar>

Committee: <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/sep-17-2025-joint-skate-and-monkfish-committee-webinar>

**WEBINAR REGISTRATION.** For those joining remotely, 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). Links to register for the webinars are posted on the above webpages. Please check that your Zoom account is updated to help ensure the software will work properly.

**QUESTIONS/TECHNICAL SUPPORT.** If you have any questions about the meeting documents, agenda, or how to participate, please contact Rachel Feeney ([rfeeney@nefmc.org](mailto:rfeeney@nefmc.org); 978-465-0492 x110) or Jennifer Couture ([jcouture@nefmc.org](mailto:jcouture@nefmc.org); 978-465-0492 x111). Staff would be happy to set up a practice webinar for you ahead of the meeting if that would be helpful.

## 2025 Monkfish and Skate Specifications Actions

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** In March 2025, the Joint APs and Joint Committees reviewed the scope of 2025 specifications actions for the monkfish and skate fisheries and the process for setting specifications. The planned Monkfish and Skate Management Track Assessments were cancelled later in the spring and data updates have been provided for both fisheries in lieu of the assessments. Final action for both fishery specifications have been moved up from December to September. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met on August 19<sup>th</sup> to receive the NEFSC data updates for monkfish and skates and provide recommendations on Acceptable Biological Catches and overfishing limits for both monkfish and skates.

**ON SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> & 17<sup>TH</sup>.** Staff will present the NEFSC data updates for monkfish and skates (Documents 2), provide the SSC's recommendations on overfishing limits and acceptable biological catches (Documents 3b and 4a), and provide an overview of the associated specifications (Documents 3c and 4b). Staff will also review the Joint Monkfish and Skate Plan Development Team tasking on monkfish and skate fishery effort and overlaps (Documents 5a and 5b). The APs and Committees will make recommendations on final preferred alternatives to the Councils on Monkfish Framework 17 and Skate Specifications.

**FUTURE STEPS.** Final action is anticipated for monkfish and skates during the September NEFMC meeting and the October Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) meeting (for monkfish, which is a jointly managed plan).

## Alternative Gear-Marking Framework

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), the MAFMC, and the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) are developing an action which would consider allowing alternative surface marking provisions for fixed gear fisheries in the Greater Atlantic Region. If approved, this action would allow for the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line. During the June NEFMC meeting, the NEFMC was interested in having Advisory Panels receive an overview of this action and provide feedback. During the July 23<sup>rd</sup> On-Demand Working Group [meeting](#), the group specifically recommended the Monkfish and Skate APs receive a presentation during their next meeting.

**ON SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>.** GARFO staff will provide an overview of this action (Documents 6a and 6b) and seek feedback.

**FUTURE STEPS.** Final action for this action is expected during the September NEFMC meeting and the October MAFMC meeting.

## 2026 Council Priorities

**RECENT ACTIVITY.** The NEFMC solicited recommendations from members of all its Advisory Panels on how it could meet [Executive Order \(EO\) 14276](#), *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*, with a comment deadline of August 15. These ideas, along with PDT ideas, were aggregated and provided to the Council's Executive Committee for deliberation during their September 4<sup>th</sup> [meeting](#). Separately, progress reports were provided on a subset of the Inflation Reduction Act projects during the Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee's [meeting](#) on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**ON SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> & 17<sup>TH</sup>.** Staff will present a brief overview of ongoing and expected work in 2026. The APs and Committees can discuss 2026 Council priorities.

**FUTURE STEPS.** Final action on actions to meet EO 14276 will be made by the NEFMC in September and on other priorities in December 2025.