

Joint Monkfish-Skate Advisory Panel and Committee Meeting

March 19, 2026
Webinar



New England
Fishery Management Council

Introductions



Monkfish (M) and Skate (S) Advisory Panels	
Jeff Kneebone, MA (S Chair)	Patrick Duckworth, RI (M, S)
Gregory Mataronas, RI (M Chair, S)	Andrea Incollingo, RI (S)
Bonnie Brady NY (M)	Daniel Nordstrom, RI (S)
Aubrey Church, MA (M Vice-Chair, S)	Chris Rainone, NJ (M)
Argentina Conceicao, MA (S)	Robert Roberge, ME (M)
Sean Connors, MA (M, S)	Liam Sullivan, NH (M, S)
Josiah Dodge, MA (M, S)	John Whiteside, MA (S)
James Dopkin, NJ (M, S)	

Council Staff
Emily Bodell, Skate PDT
Jenny Couture, Monkfish PDT
Rachel Feeney, Skate PDT



Monkfish (M) and Skate (S) Committees	
Matt Gates, CT DEP (M Chair, S)	John Pappalardo (M, S)
Scott Olszewski, RI DEM (M, S Chair)	Ted Platz (M, S Vice-Chair)
Terry Alexander, ME (M, S)	Paul Risi, MAFMC (M)
Pete Christopher, GARFO (M)	Robert Ruhle, MAFMC (M Vice-Chair)
Joe Grist, MAFMC (S)	Kelly Whitmore, MADMF (M, S)
Eric Hansen (M, S)	Jake Wiscott, MAFMC (M)
Dr. Jay Hermsen, GARFO (S)	Lisa Wooleyhan, MAFMC (M)
Laurie Nolan, MAFMC (M)	

Reminders:

- Please mute yourself to avoid interference with the meeting.
- Only have ONE audio connection to the webinar to avoid echoes.

Agenda



- 9:00** **Introductions, approve agenda**
- 9:05** **NEFMC Advisory Panel policies**
- 9:20** **2026 timeline and other updates**
- Review of 2026 Council priorities and timeline
 - General discussion on how both fisheries are performing in recent fishing years (concerns, feedback, etc.) and outlook for Fishing Year 2026
-
- 9:45** **Summary of feedback on 2025 coordinated monkfish and skate efforts**
- Review summary report
 - Provide any additional feedback, comments
- 10:50** **Break**
- 11:00** **Draft scoping document for a potential Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program**
- Review draft scoping document
 - Develop rationale for scoping for an IFQ program to include in scoping document
 - Provide any additional feedback, comments
- 12:45** **Other business**
- 1:00** **Adjourn**

Any revisions?

NEFMC Advisory Panel Policies

2026 timeline and other updates



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2026 Monkfish & Skate Work



Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun		July - Sept	Oct - Dec
IFQ Scoping	Draft IFQ scoping document	Councils: approve scoping doc	Conduct Scoping	Councils: Discuss scoping and guide next steps	TBD
Monkfish CPUE Review	SSC subpanel review				
IRA: Joint Governance of Monkfish and Skate	Evaluate 2025 coordinated approach; Staff Governance Workshop			Evaluate opportunities and tradeoffs of combining the Monkfish and Skate FMPs; Regional Governance Workshop	

Additional: Coordinate with EO14276 Monkfish Management Measures and 2027 Council priorities

Updated January 20, 2026, NEFMC Staff

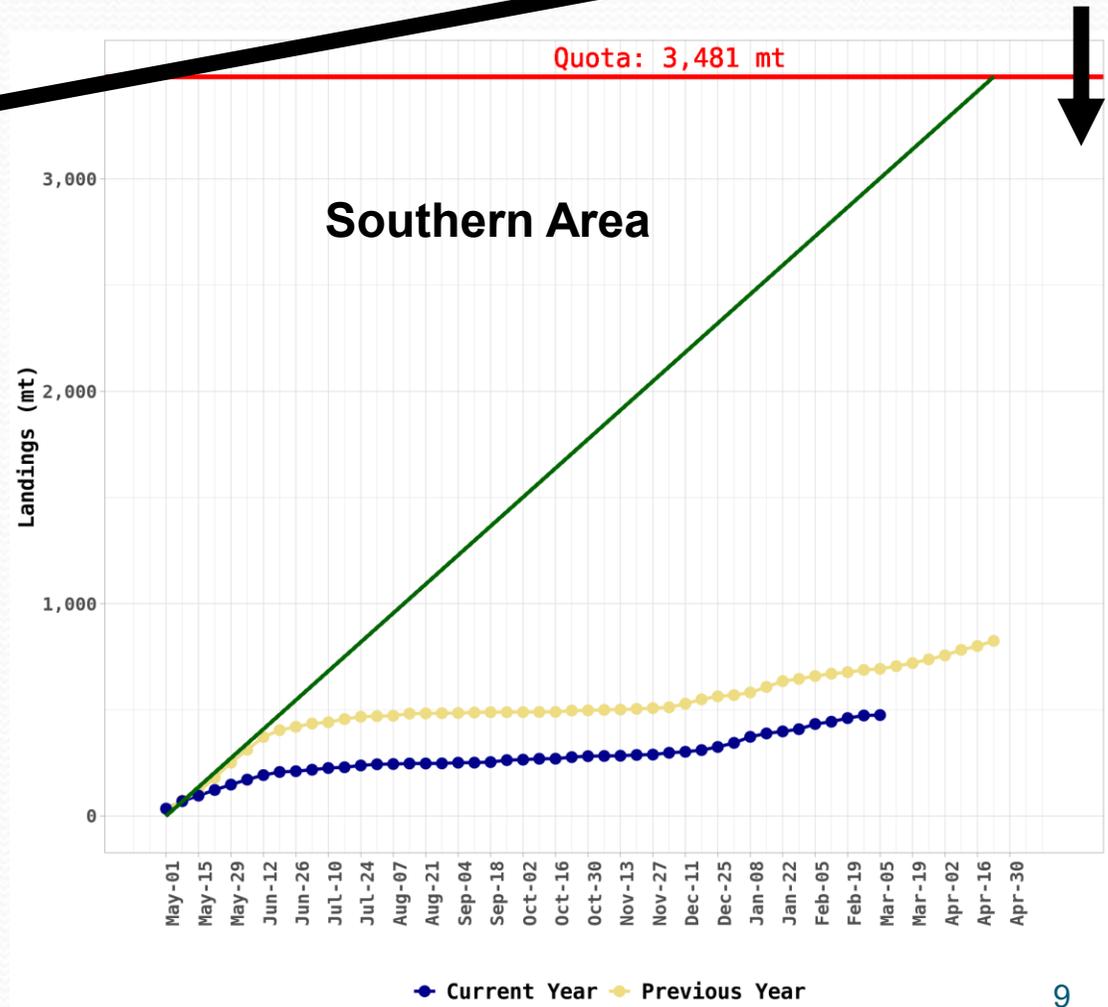
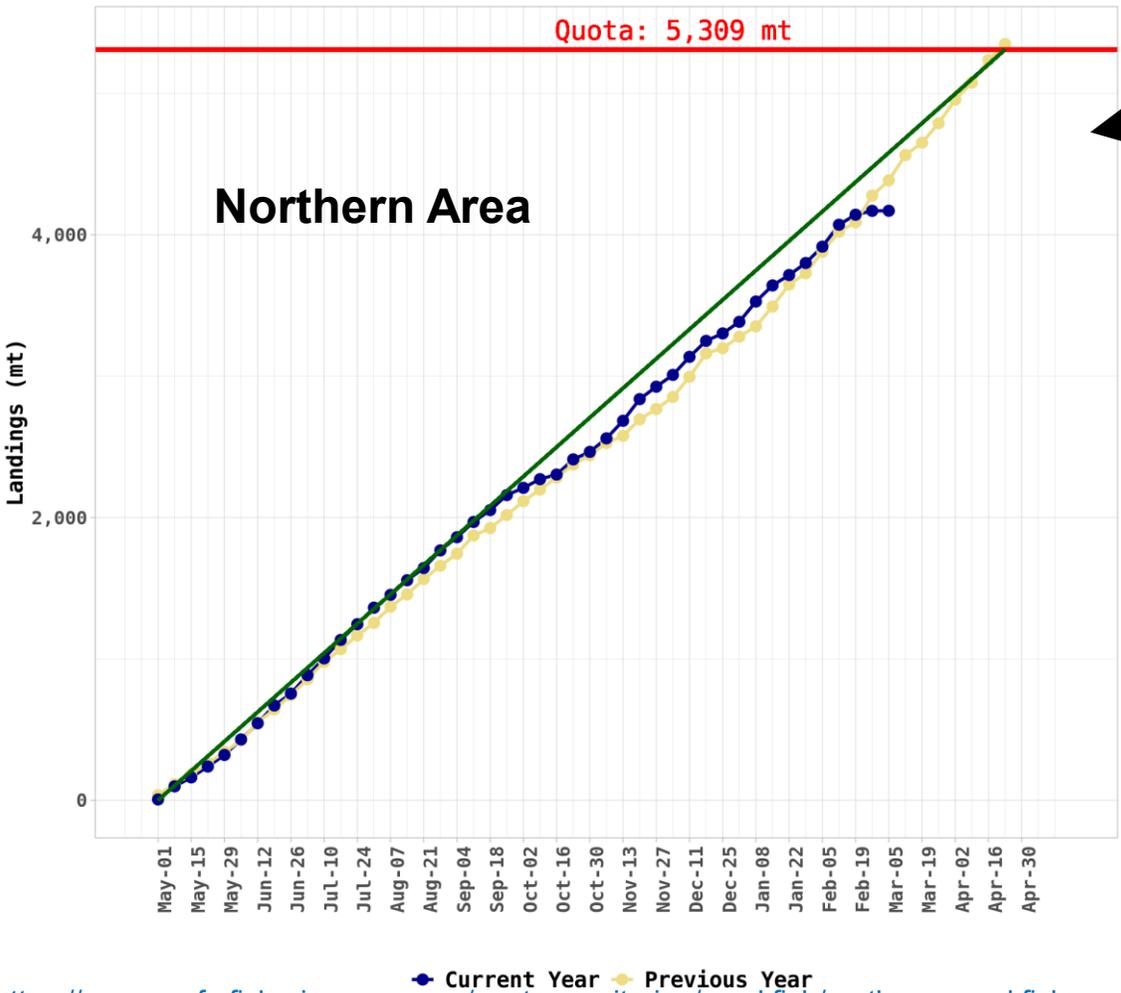
Upcoming Meetings



- **April Council meetings:**
 - Purpose: receive 2025 summary report; review/approve IFQ scoping document
 - MAFMC April 8 (NYC)
 - NEFMC April 14 (Portland, ME)
- **IFQ Scoping meetings (4:00 - 6:30pm):**
 - Mon, April 27: Portland, ME
 - Wed, April 29: New Bedford, MA
 - Thurs, April 30: Riverhead, NY
 - Tues, May 5: Manahawkin, NJ
 - Mon, May 11: Webinar only
- **Joint PDT, AP/Committee meetings (early to mid June)**
 - Purpose: Present scoping summary, recommend next steps
- **NEFMC meeting (June 23-25), MAFMC meeting (August 10-13)**
 - Purpose: Present scoping summary, recommend next steps

Monkfish FY 2025 Landings

Landings as of March 11, 2026 (whole lb)	North	South
Cumulative landings (lb)	9.19 M	1.05 M
Total Allowable Landings (lb)	11.7 M	7.67 M
Percent of quota (%)	78.5%	13.7%



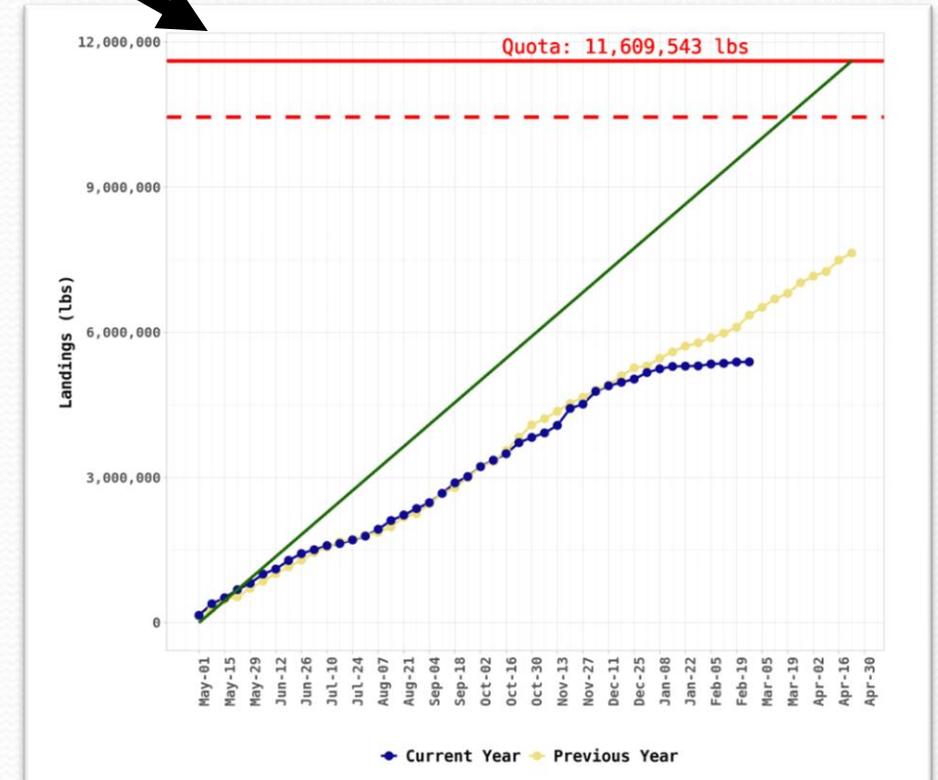
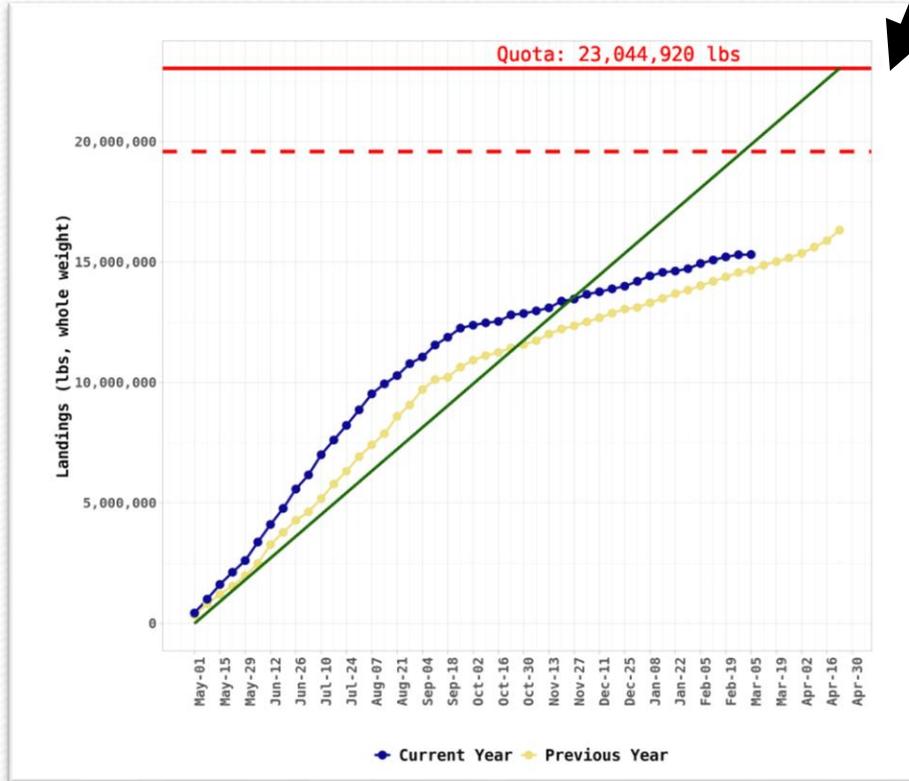
Skate FY 2025 Landings



Landings as of March 11, 2026 (whole lb)	Wing	Bait
Cumulative landings (lb)	15.2M	5.4M
Total Allowable Landings (lb)	23.0M	11.6M
Percent of quota (%)	66%	46%

FY 2026 TALs (proposed)

- Wing = 30.7M
- Bait = 15.5M



Note: Skate wing exempted fishery permit project underway.

Image & Data source: [NOAA GARFO Quota Monitoring](#) 10

Discussion: Recent Fishery Performance

- What factors have influenced recent fishing activity and how (e.g., Skate Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP), environment/ecosystem, species distribution, domestic and foreign markets, costs)?
- How might these factors change in FY 2026? How do you expect the fisheries to adjust?
- Have any recent regulatory changes affected the fisheries and how (e.g., pending management measures to reduce Atlantic sturgeon bycatch, other protected species concerns, etc.)?
- Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved and how would the improvements affect the monkfish and skate fisheries?
- What other factors may impact the monkfish and skate fisheries going forward?

Draft Summary of Feedback on 2025 Coordinated Monkfish and Skate Efforts



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2025 Joint Efforts Across Monkfish and Skate

- Coordinated Committee, Advisory Panel, and Plan Development Team activities & began reviewing effectiveness of joint planning.
- **Why?**
 - Prior Monkfish and Skate AP and Committee meetings emphasized overlap and interdependencies between monkfish and skate wing fisheries.
 - Targeting monkfish but incidentally catching large amounts of skate wings → hit skate trip limits before monkfish limit.
 - Both monkfish and skate had specifications actions in 2025.
- **End goals?**
 - Near-term: support both specifications actions; joint meetings was a stepping-stone to consider whether joint management should continue.
 - Longer-term: to inform cross-jurisdictional governance discussions and whether joint management should be more formalized.

Informants for feedback on joint processes

- Held individual / small group interviews Dec 2025 – Jan 2026.
- Asked questions related to how 2025 joint process went, effectiveness of joint meetings, ways to improve, etc.

Council Group	Total Informants	Monkfish only	Skate only	Monkfish & Skate
Monkfish and Skate PDTs	11	4	3	4
Monkfish and Skate APs	10	2	3	5
Monkfish and Skate Committee	4	0	0	4
Council leaders	2	n/a	n/a	n/a

What's worked well with the joint arrangement?

- **Joint meeting structure:**

- *Improved efficiency:* overlap in fishery participation; improved context and broader perspectives provided; more thoroughly considered recommendations for management changes; easier to plan one set of meetings.
- *Improved engagement, attendance.*

- **Joint data analysis:**

- FMP-specific PDT mtgs were helpful; delegation of tasks went smoothly; one NOAA person pulled all data; joint analyses helped answer questions related to interactions between fisheries.

What were governance/coordination challenges?

- **Joint meeting structure**

- *Not inclusive / representative*: some participants disregarded info not pertinent to their fishery; some discussions not relevant to all stakeholders (skate bait fishery); lack of representation from all fishery sectors; confusion on voting protocols.
- *Mismatch of expectations & Not focused*: lengthy discussions that were at times unrelated to overall mtg goals; confusion around goals & potential outcomes of joint process.
- *Unclear on utility, expectations*: final Council work priorities for 2026 not aligned with joint group recommendations (i.e., scoping for IFQ program) → discouraging that joint discussions built strong consensus on certain issues that did not have traction during Dec Council meeting; changing understanding of the problem that adjusting effort limits would resolve led to analyses not formulated in the best way.

• **Joint data analysis**

- *General approach*: wide scope of PDT tasking (& focus on one species), varying interests, shifting timelines; some work didn't address questions being asked → inefficient time/effort.
- *Unclear on utility*: analyses didn't consistently match monkfish & skate industry perception (varies based on external factors); perception of overabundance of skates limiting monkfish could incorrectly lead to increased effort; very specific/off-topic analyses that were not helpful for joint evaluation; shifting interests over time → last minute analyses.

Suggestions for improvement

- **Meeting prep / materials:**

- Clearly outline purpose, goals, process, expectations of any joint endeavors to avoid confusion on multiple simultaneous projects.
- Clarify roles/responsibilities of PDT, AP, Cte and where/when/how input will be solicited and incorporated into the process.
- More background information given staff turnover; continue sharing email updates.

- **Meeting structure:**

- Closed meetings of a PDT subgroup to have more focused discussions before receiving input from wider audience.
- Could be helpful to have joint PDT and AP meetings.
- Joint management discussions separate from regulatory topics.
- Suggestions to allow participants to engage on only their topics of interest (quorum issues).



- **General approach:**

More focused PDT tasking by Cte to answer specific questions:

- Council staff working more closely with Cte Chairs on meeting direction.
- Improved Cte Chair mtg facilitation → unproductive/unfocused discussions.
- Set clear goals/expectations/timeline before PDT tasking, esp. for joint efforts.
- PDT learn from AP/Cte 1st for context before data pulls/analyses.
- Analyses that account for different fishing behavior between segments.

More approachable informational materials to explain science/data/assessment (presentation recordings, workshop with mock data, frequent ‘open’ meetings to ask questions/provide input, etc.).

• Data

Focus on simpler data analyses/trends in fishery performance (as informed by subset of joint PDT) → basic biological & socioeconomic analyses across both fisheries.

- *Note: not consistent with other feedback received suggesting Cte tasking first.*
- Would help determine what's feasible/sensible to reduce unnecessary analyses not used in decision-making.
- Would reduce shifting AP/Cte priorities tasking (early in 2025, focus was on economic analyses then this was sidelined later).
- Create one base dataset for all PDT members to use for analyses; provide code to improve reproducibility in future.

Lessons learned to inform any future joint management

- Improved efficiency but overall mixed opinions on success, overall outcomes, & whether joint approach was beneficial.
- Meetings inherently focused on overlap of southern monkfish and SNE skate wing fisheries; diminished focus/input for other sectors (GOM monkfish, skate bait, etc.).
 - Could affect quorum at future meetings if folks only attend portions of the mtg.
 - Non-joint meetings inherently have fewer fishery subcomponents.
- Created hierarchy of species (winter skate and southern monkfish were high priority) .
 - Discussions, input, and impacts on other species diminished / not worth their time.
- Will likely need a large AP with diverse sectors/representatives with one AP, one Cte Chair.
 - Key sectors were absent during 2025 mtgs and from representation on Council groups (northern trawl fishery, dragger skate fishery on groundfish DAS in GOM).

Lessons learned to inform any future joint management

- For effective management:
 - More proactive management aligning regulations than reactive (e.g., consistent use of DAS; possession limits per DAS vs per trip; ability to land overages).
 - Consistent data/science provided across fisheries is helpful and important.
- If plans were formally merged, should monkfish continue to be jointly managed with MAFMC if skates are not?
 - Evaluation is being considered as part of IRA project.
- Fishery data doesn't show consistent patterns in overlap/interaction between southern monkfish and skate wing fisheries.
 - *NOTE: this was the primary impetus for joint management, thus, harder to garner support for joint action when sometimes the interactions aren't there.*
 - Data show a lot of variation/unpredictability with external factors → impacts degree of utility of any joint management.

Link to IRA project?

- IRA 4.1 and 4.2 focus on improving cross-jurisdictional governance to:
 - Evaluate advisory body structure, use, and decision-making; consider representativeness of membership given shifting species distributions.
 - Evaluate joint management approaches and consider the need to more clearly document and revise them.
 - Evaluate opportunities to combine fishery management plans within or across Councils and consider the benefits and costs.
 - Collaborate with partner organizations to develop regionally consistent approaches where possible.
- Monkfish/Skate feedback contributed to East Coast staff-to-staff governance workshop (Feb 2026).
- Early 2027 East Coast regional workshop, planning exercise, potential revisions to management operations, plan structures, etc.

Discussion Questions

- Overall, how do you think the joint process went, coordinating meetings and analyses for monkfish and skate fisheries? Did this coordination help inform any changes to monkfish and/or skate possession limits and other management measures?
- Were the joint monkfish and skate AP / Committee meetings efficient and effective? What were the pros and cons of meeting jointly?
- How can we improve this joint process if/when it occurs again? This can include meeting format, topics that are more appropriate to be discussed jointly vs separately (i.e., any discussions that are more appropriate for just one group?), etc.
- Is there any other feedback you'd like to share?

Draft Scoping Document for a Potential IFQ Program for Monkfish and/or Skate Wing Fisheries



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How did the idea for IFQ scoping originate?

August 19 Committee consensus on 2026 priorities

Green = recommended by Advisory Panels
Underline = recommended by Executive Committee

- Highest Priority (in priority order)
 1. Have the monkfish CPUE research peer-reviewed.
 2. Explore options for moving from skate possession limits that are per trip to limits based on the number of DAS that a trip is charged. This could allow more trip efficiency and improve access to the skate and monkfish fisheries.
 3. Create a skate wing RSA program to provide research opportunities for relevant fisheries. This would help forward research such as on discard mortality rates.
 4. Develop a 3-season approach for managing the skate wing fishery.
- Lower Priority (not in order)
 5. Explore options for ways to reduce latent effort in the monkfish fishery.
 6. Explore if the boundary of the Southern New England Skate Bait Trawl Exemption Area could be moved to the south (increasing the area).
 7. Create skate wing DAS to replace Northeast multispecies DAS for fishing on skate wings.
 8. Create a DAS leasing program for monkfish and skate wings to allow flexibility (once skate DAS are created).
 9. Create an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)/sector management program for the monkfish and wing skate fisheries.



How did the idea for IFQ scoping originate?

December Council meeting motion (carried 14/1/1)

- Motion to replace work on skate possession limits and seasons and monkfish latency with: “Scope an IFQ program for monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries; consider EO14276 response related to monkfish management modifications” (Platz/Pappalardo)
- Rationale from Platz/Pappalardo:
 - IFQ program has been supported by southern New England fishermen; historically opposed by Mid-Atlantic fishermen, but that has changed in recent years, and they have been advocating for an IFQ system.
 - Offers a more comprehensive solution for monkfish and/or skate fisheries; less resource-intensive than pursuing various proposed monkfish and skate priorities in a piecemeal approach.
 - Fisheries not efficient or profitable; need relief [*unclear if this applied to monkfish and/or skates*].
 - IFQs may not be a perfect solution, but it would improve management.
 - Would reduce skate discards.
 - Understanding that creating an IFQ program(s) is a long process, but improving monkfish and skate management needs more focus by the Council.

Overview of Scoping Document

Timeline

- Scoping document review & approval
 - April 7-9 by MAFMC (NYC)
 - April 14-16 by NEFMC (Portland)
- Scoping period begins April 20
 - Mon, April 27: Portland, ME
 - Wed, April 29: New Bedford, MA
 - Thurs, April 30: Riverhead, NY
 - Tues, May 5: Manahawkin, NJ
 - Mon, May 11: Webinar only
- Scoping period ends May 18

Written comments accepted
April 20-May 18
via postal mail or
to comments@nefmc.org

Overview of Scoping Document

Your comments are invited

Council is scoping to consider catch share management, specifically an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program, for the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries.

The Council seeks comments on:

1. the need for an IFQ program, and
2. what elements the program should include.

Overview of Scoping Document

Why is the Council conducting scoping? – Section needs work!

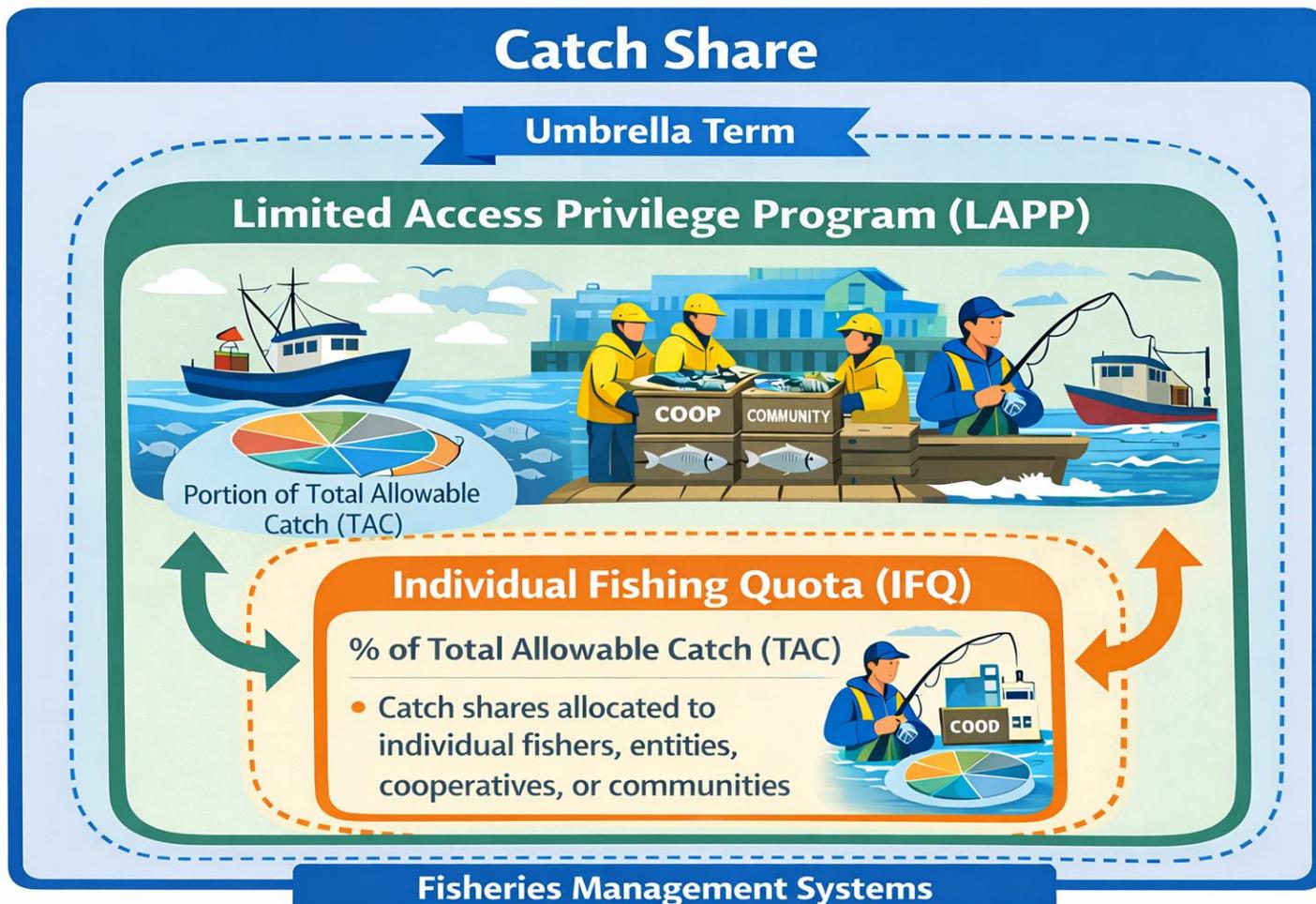
- Document notes theoretical benefits of catch shares (e.g., increase in flexibility, reduces discards, promotes safety).
- Scoping discussed briefly by Council; rationale needs more development by the Committees.

Discussion Questions:

- Why may an IFQ program for the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries be needed?
- How could an IFQ program address issues in the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries?

Overview of Scoping Document

What is the Council considering?



Why should I comment?

One of the best opportunities to share your input for Council decisions on whether or not to develop an action.

Relevant literature on Limited Access Privilege Programs

- [NOAA Tech Memo \(2007\)](#)
- NOAA Fisheries Catch Shares [website](#)
- [Community Participation in US Catch Share Programs](#)

Overview of Scoping Document

What should my comments address?

In your opinion...

- What are the current problems in managing the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries?
- Can a catch share program, and specifically an IFQ program, address those problems? Why or why not? If not, what other approaches should be considered?
- Should an IFQ program be developed for the monkfish and skate wing fisheries or just one of these fisheries?
- What would be the benefits and/or drawbacks of managing either/both fisheries with an IFQ program?

Overview of Scoping Document

What should my comments address?

If a fishing quota program were developed...

- What should the goals and objectives of the program be?
- What should be the basis or criteria of allocating quota (e.g., fishing history, active permits versus lease-only permits, etc.)?
- How should the program be designed to avoid excessive shares of quota?
- Should leasing and/or transfer of quota be allowed?
- Should the IFQ program apply across the full range of the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries, or should it be limited to specific components (e.g., by area or gear type)?
- How should an IFQ program intersect with other fisheries that vessels participate in?

Overview of Scoping Document

What is the process?

- *Step 1:* Public input gathered through scoping.
- *Step 2:* Input summarized. Councils decide whether to initiate an action (June for NEFMC, August for MAFMC) with input from plan teams, advisory panels, committees.
- *Step 3:* If initiated, Councils would develop and analyze alternatives in a multiyear action.
- *Step 4:* Draft NEPA document published, Councils hold comment period and select final preferred alternatives.
 - NEFMC and MAFMC must agree on proposed action for the Monkfish FMP.
 - Proposed action must include eligibility criteria for fishery participants to vote to approve the IFQ program via a referendum.

Overview of Scoping Document

What is the process?

- *Step 5:* Secretary of Commerce initiates a referendum if the Council-recommended voter eligibility criteria is determined to be fair.
 - Proposed and final rulemaking on the referendum process.
 - Voting occurs. Program needs approval by over 2/3 of eligible voters.
 - If approved, then Councils would submit the action to the Secretary for approval.
 - If disapproved, then the Councils can revise the program and ask for another referendum.
- *Step 6:* Councils submit the action to the Secretary for rulemaking and implementation.

Back to
Step 3.

Overview of Scoping Document

Will
detail in
scoping
slides

Background Information

- Assessment and management approaches for monkfish and skates.
- Recent fishery performance.
- Related prior actions:
 - Monkfish Amendment 6: considered ITQs from 2010-2016, stopped work – catch shares not best approach.
 - Skate Amendment 5: considered limited access from 2016-2021, withdrew amendment – concerns about effort and triggering incidental limits could be addressed through other approaches.

Questions/Discussion

- Why may an IFQ program for the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries be needed?
- How could an IFQ program address issues in the monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries?
- Do you have any other input on the content of the scoping document?

Other Business



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Backup slides



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Overview of Monkfish Fishery Management Plan

Monkfish Fishery

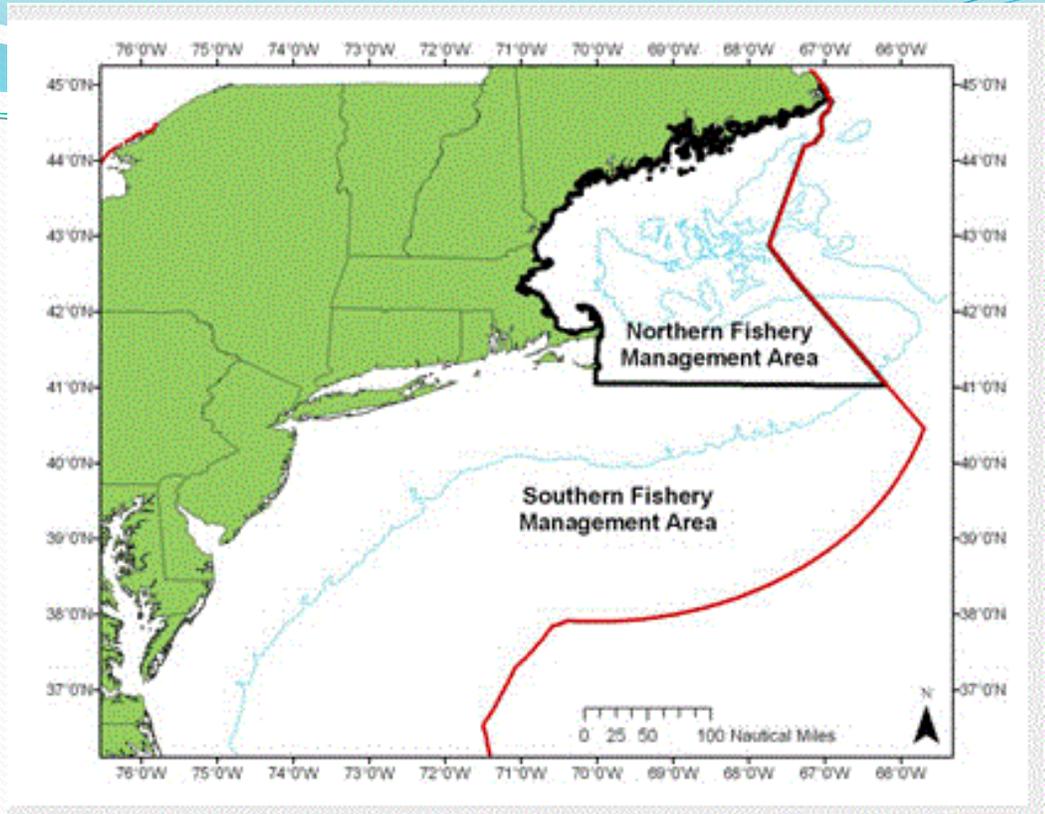


Northern Stock:

Gulf of Maine +
Northern
Georges Bank

Southern Stock:

Southern
Georges Bank +
Mid-Atlantic



- ❖ *Each area has a separate Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Total Allowable Landings (TAL), Days-at-Sea (DAS), allocation, daily possession limits*
- ❖ *Six Limited Access Permits + One Open Access Permit*

Table 11. Monkfish permits issued by GARFO for FY 2024.

Monkfish Permit Type	Category	Number of Permits
Limited Access	A	13
	B	30
	C	235
	D	187
	F	15
	H	7
Total Limited Access	A, B, C, D, F, H	487
Total Open Access	E	1,390
Total Monkfish Permits		1,877

Source: Greater Atlantic Region Vessel, Dealer, Operator, and Tuna Permit Data [website](#), accessed October 16, 2025.

Related Prior Actions: Monkfish Amendment 6

Existing Management System

- Limited access permits
- DAS
- Trip Limits
- Size & gear regulations



2010 – 2011
Scoping



Over 2011 - 2014

Goal: maximize yield & profitability while minimizing changes in relative fleet distribution & composition, preserving monkfish bycatch allowance for other fisheries, minimizing impacts on protected species

Objectives:

- Modifications to DAS allocations/landing limits (latent effort)
- DAS leasing option
- Change RSA approach/measures
- Integrate monkfish into groundfish sectors
- Create monkfish ITQ program



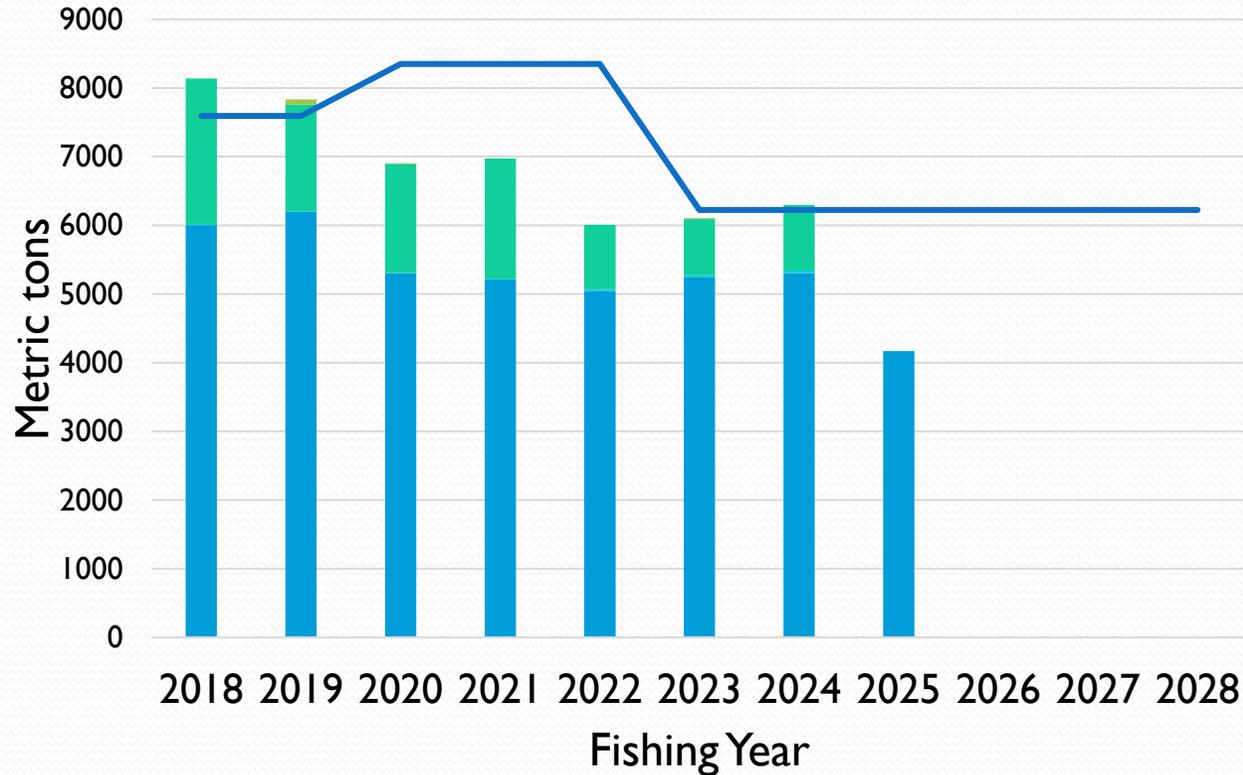
2016 Amendment 6
withdrawn: catch shares not best approach

Monkfish Catch Relative to ACL, FY 2018-2025

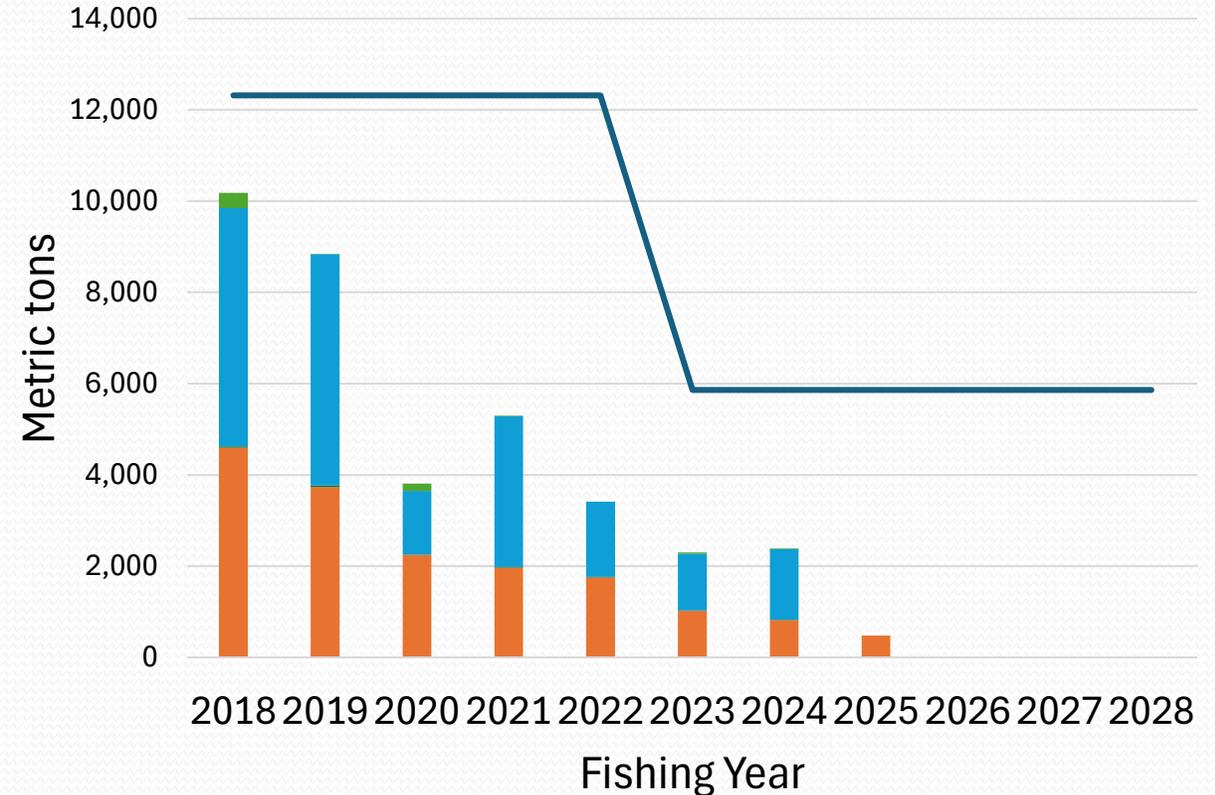
FY 2026-2028 are Council ABC recommendations

FY 25 data through 3/11/2026
 Source: GARFO Quota Monitoring

Northern Area



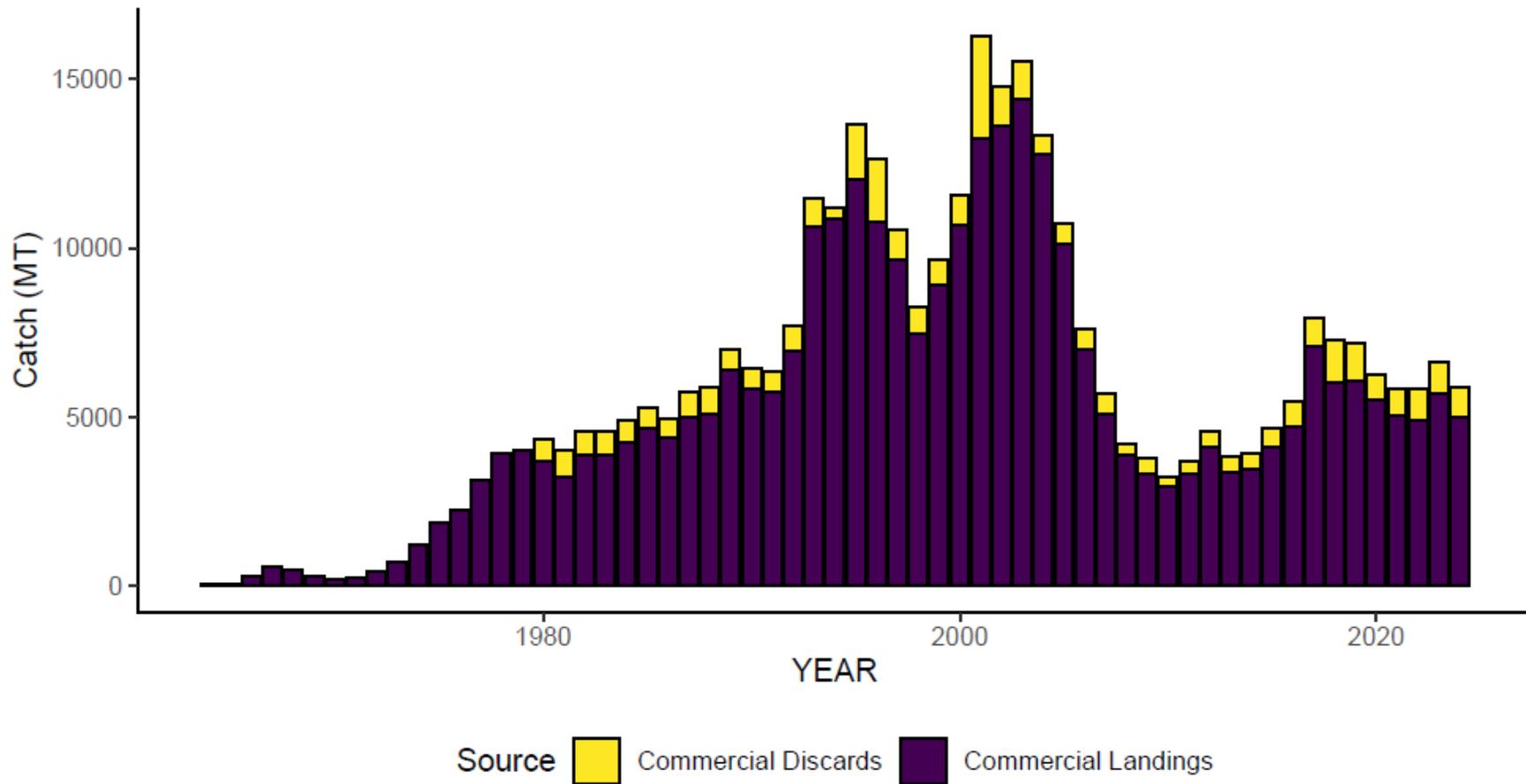
Southern Area



- Recreational catch (MRIP landings & discards)
- Estimated discards
- State commercial landings
- Federal commercial landings
- ABC = ACL

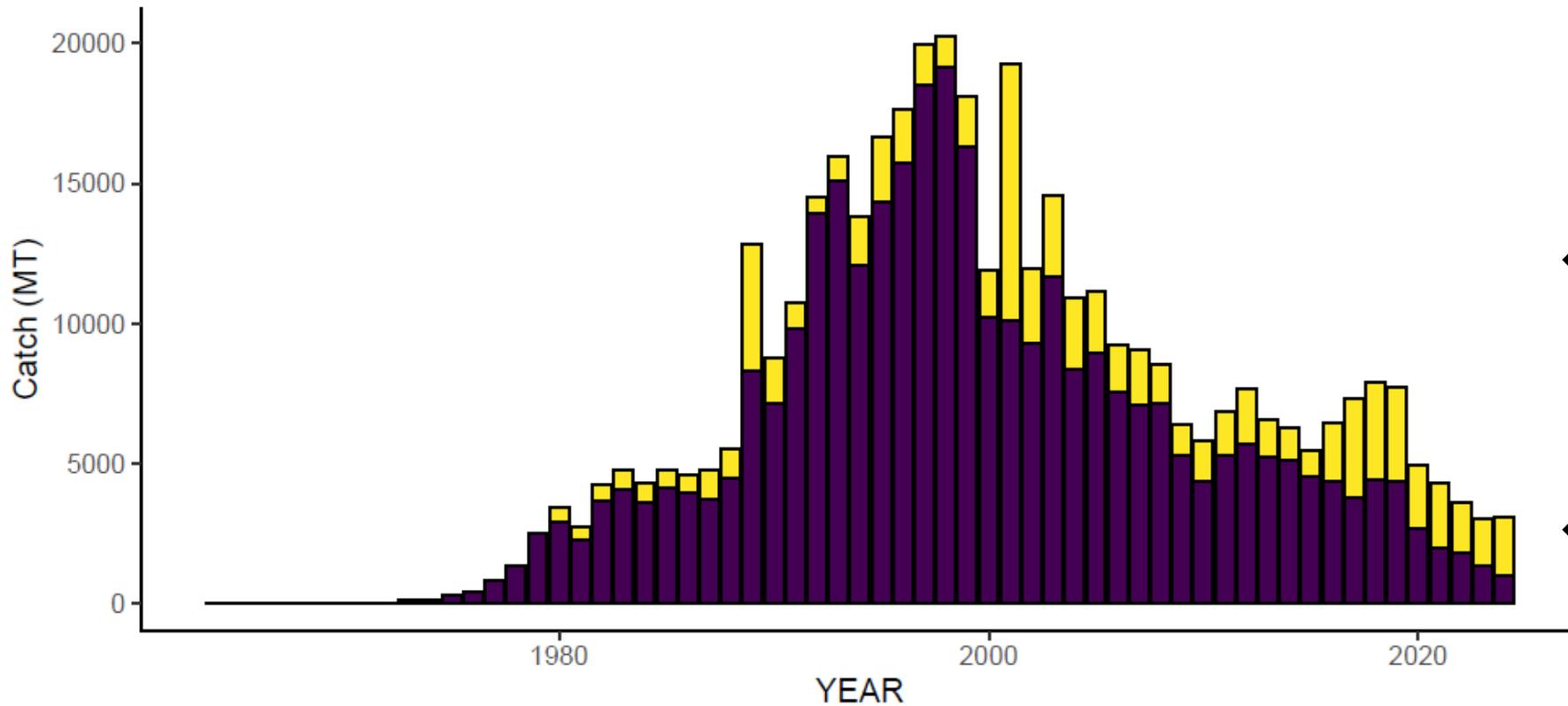
- Recreational catch (MRIP landings & discards)
- Estimated discards
- State commercial landings
- Federal commercial landings
- ABC=ACL

Monkfish landings (mt) and discards (mt) in the Northern Fishery Management Area from calendar year 1964 through 2024



- ❖ *Proportion of landings and discards generally similar in recent calendar years*
- ❖ *Majority of monkfish landings from Multispecies sector declared trips*

Monkfish landings (mt) and discards (mt) in the **Southern Fishery Management Area** from calendar year 1964 through 2024.



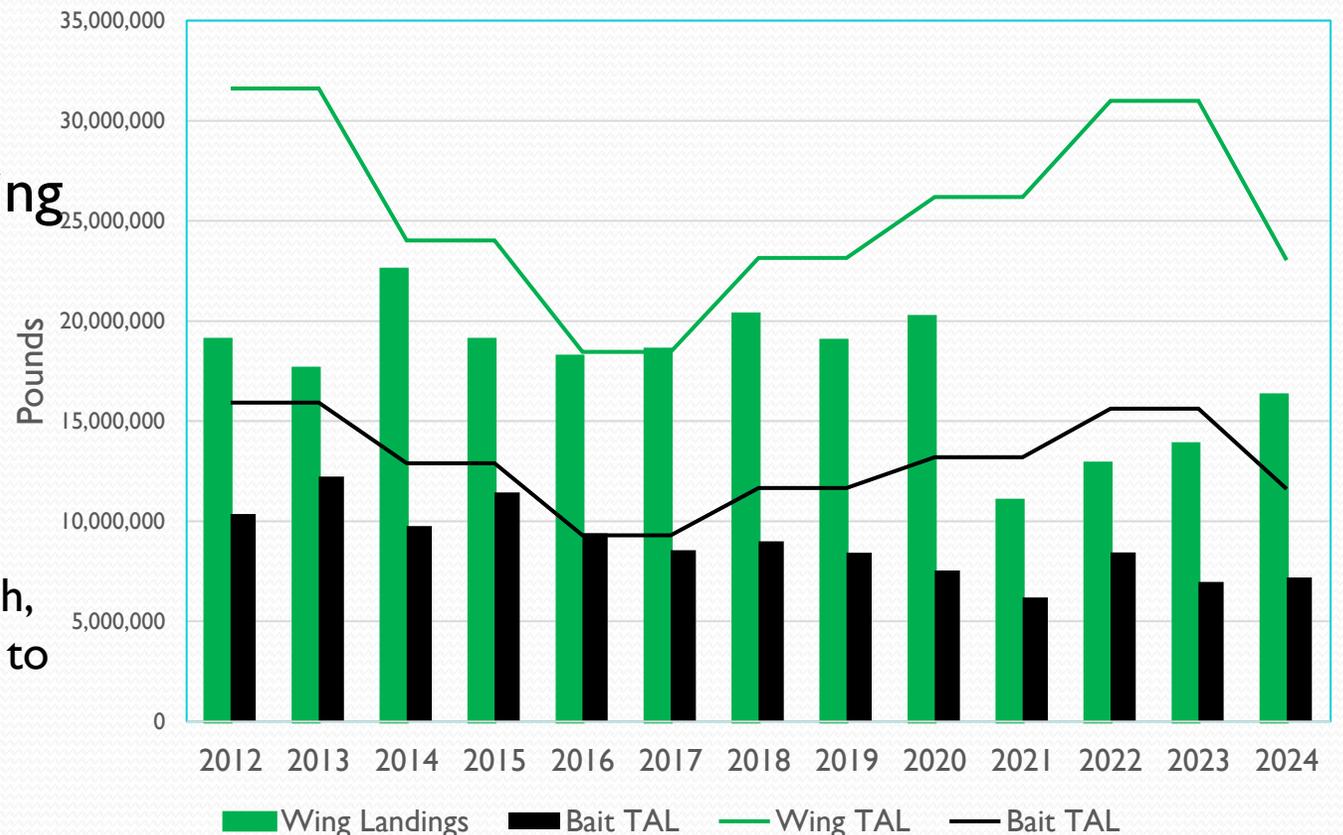
Source  Commercial Discards  Commercial Landings

- ❖ *Proportion of landings has declined, and discards increased in recent calendar years*
- ❖ *Majority of monkfish landings from Southern Monkfish only trips*
- ❖ *Majority of monkfish discards from scallop dredge*

Overview of the Skate Fishery

- Seven skate species managed as a complex; only thorny skate is overfished, overfishing is not occurring for any species
- Open access permit, ~243 vessels landing skate in FY 2024
- 2 fishery components:
 - Skate wing (66.5% of TAL)
 - Primarily targets winter skates
 - Vessels need to have a limited access groundfish, monkfish, or scallop permit and declare a DAS to land more than incidental limits
 - Skate bait (33.5% of TAL)
 - Vessels fish under a skate bait Letter of Authorization (LOA)

FY 2020-2024 in-season monitoring of federal Northeast skate wing and bait landings



Data Source: CAMS Database; see [2026-2028 Skate Specifications Final Submission, Table 9](#)

Related Prior Actions: Skate Amendment 5

Existing Management System

- Limited access permits
- Trip limits
- Total allowable landings
- Seasonal quotas

2016 - Interest in:

- Limited access
- Concerns about shifting effort from other fisheries into skate fishery

2017 First Scoping

2020

Problem statement, goals, types of measures developed

Overarching goal: limited access skate permit for skate wing and/or bait fisheries

Overall problem: an increase in effort could achieve quota sooner, triggering reduced skate trip limits and other negative economic impacts

2021 Amendment 5

withdrawn: limited access not necessary

2021 Second Scoping:

- Limited access
- Additional measures (intermediate triggers & landing limits, monitoring/reporting requirements, restricting switching between state/federal, year-round permit, gear mods, etc.)