



New England Fishery Management Council

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Monkfish-Skate Joint Advisory Panel

Webinar

September 16, 2025

The Monkfish and Skate Advisory Panels met jointly on September 16, 2025, via webinar at 10:30 am to discuss: 1) monkfish and skate specifications actions, including recommending preferred alternatives for specifications and effort controls on Monkfish Framework 17 and Skate FY 2026-2030 Specifications; 2) alternative gear-marking framework; 3) 2026 Council priorities; and 4) other business, as necessary.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Dr. Jeff Kneebone (Skate AP Chair), Greg Mataronas (Monkfish AP Chair, S), Aubrey Church (Monkfish Vice-Chair, S), Terry Alexander (M), Bonnie Brady (M), James Dopkin (M, S), Patrick Duckworth (M, S), Tim Froelich (M), Andrea Incollingo (S), Daniel Nordstrom (S), Chris Rainone (M) (Skate and Monkfish Advisors); Scott Olzsewski (Skate Committee Chair), Matthew Gates (Monkfish Committee Chair); Jenny Couture (Monkfish PDT Chair), Dr. Rachel Feeney (Skate PDT Chair), Emily Bodell, Dr. Jamie Cournane (NEFMC staff); Sam Duggan (NOAA General Counsel); Caroline Potter (GARFO). In addition, about 27 other people attended.

KEY OUTCOMES

- **Monkfish Framework 17:**
 - **Specifications:** The Monkfish Advisory Panel recommended acceptable biological catch (ABCs) for FY 2026-2028 for the southern area as recommended by the SSC (Status quo, 5,861 mt) and maintaining status quo for FY 2029-2030 until a stock assessment is provided. Similarly, the AP recommended ABCs for FY 2026-2028 for the northern area as recommended by the SSC (status quo, 6,224 mt). The AP also recommended setting specifications for three vs five years.
 - **Effort controls:** The Monkfish AP recommended status quo effort controls (days at sea, possession limits).
- **Skate FY 2026-2030 Specifications Action:**
 - **Specifications:** The Skate AP recommended the ABCs as recommended by the SSC of 41,282 mt for FY 2026-2027 and 37,154 mt for FY 2028-2030. The AP also recommended that a data update be performed in two years, and the specifications be revisited.
 - **Effort controls:** The Skate AP recommended an increase in the Bait possession limit by 5,000 lb to 30,000 lb, increasing Wing DAS possession limits by 500 lb for each season, to 4,500 lb in Season 1 and 6,500 lb in Season 2, and revisiting in two years considering fishery performance.
- **2026 Council work:** The Skate and Monkfish APs recommended a skate action that would consider moving from possession limits per trip to limits based on the number of DAS a trip is charged and exploring ways to reduce latent effort in the monkfish fishery.

- **Alternative gear-marking framework:** The APs received a presentation from GARFO staff regarding the joint alternative gear-marking framework and provided feedback that will be shared with the Council at the September meeting.
- **Other business:** Council Advisory Panel applications are due on October 3. All current Advisors must reapply for the new three-year term if interested.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Monkfish AP Chair reviewed the agenda and Council staff reviewed the 2025 Council priorities for the Monkfish and Skate FMPs, overall timeline for both monkfish and skate specifications actions, an overview of the Council's Omnibus Management Flexibility Action, monkfish and skate fishery performance, including updates to the FY 2024 annual catch limit accounting numbers for monkfish, and welcomed a discussion on recent fishery performance by both fisheries.

Skate Bait: Advisors noted that the bait skate fishery is comparable to last year, with no dramatic changes in landings or the market. An Advisor commented that their fishing habits had changed due to offshore wind development, causing them to fish different grounds this time of year. They are also traveling further, with an estimated increased steam time of 8 hours per trip. They suggested a potential increase in skate bait possession limits, noting that while 25,000 lb provides a steady amount of catch across seasons, they are using more steam time to land the same amount.

Monkfish and Skate Wing: An Advisor stated that there was a large amount of winter skate catch in the spring fishery, which might be hurting the chances of catching monkfish. Nets get filled up with skates overnight. By the time the skate possession limits increased last year, the skates were gone, but this year the Advisor noted they were fishing until they got a possession limit, then would land it and go back out for another trip. They were primarily targeting skates due to the lack of monkfish. Another Advisor from the southern area agreed that they were seeing a lot of skates, and that they generally have a few weeks after the skates leave where monkfish fishing is good. A few Advisors agreed that they were seeing fewer monkfish, with some noting that the increased skate possession limits helped them move through gear. There were also some concerns about skate prices, with prices decreasing in the fall and some reduced effort by the fleet due to market conditions. An Advisor from the southern area noted that transportation to New Bedford lowers the price that they get for their catch, and that increased landings could drive prices down further. A few Advisors expressed a preference for a stronger, steady price rather than a substantial increase in landings.

GARFO staff asked the group about the impacts of changes to the monkfish days-at-sea structure implemented through Framework 13. An Advisor noted that the DAS for monkfish have not had a large impact on how they haul monkfish gear, though there is an impact because they are skate fishing on a monkfish DAS. They felt that it would be helpful to see a similar strategy for skates as monkfish where one could declare an overage and land a second possession limit when gear is catching more than one could take under a single trip limit. Another Advisor explained that on Cape Cod, many fishermen use groundfish DAS, then use monkfish DAS in the southern area for the winter and spring fishery and generally liked that there are separate DAS for the northern and southern area. Advisors noted that there are not many individuals who fish both the northern and southern area for monkfish. One Advisor pointed out that the northern area caught almost 100% of the TAL and did not want to see a DAS cut in the south due to this high catch. They suggested possibly having a lower cap on the northern area so the southern area could get a few more days. An Advisor from the northern area noted that monkfish fishing has been very good over the last few years and has not exceeded catch limits. They felt that with the conservative TAL, it was not necessary to change the DAS in the northern or southern areas.

A few Advisors commented on the potential impacts of offshore wind development, with one noting that there was increased surveying south of Long Island in 2020-2022 which could have impacted monkfish. An Advisor felt that there is a real issue with the offshore wind farms and the displacement of the fishery, which has changed how their business operates.

AGENDA ITEM #1: SPECIFICATIONS ACTIONS: OVERFISHING LIMITS, ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL CATCH, ASSOCIATED SPECIFICATIONS

Council staff presented the 2025 NEFSC data updates for monkfish and skates, and reviewed the recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee on overfishing limits and acceptable biological catches, as well as the associated specifications.

Questions/ Discussion related to Monkfish Framework 17

Overall, Advisors expressed hesitation and concern for setting monkfish specifications for five years. An Advisor stated that there are some other fisheries (i.e., squid vessels) that are seeing small monkfish, which could end up in the fishery in a few years and noted potential offshore wind surveying impacts. They also stated that there is not much information on monkfish ageing and were nervous about setting specifications so far out given the age of the fish they are currently catching is unknown. Another Advisor was also concerned about offshore wind survey impacts, noting that monkfish can hear some of the tools used for wind development, which could have impacted the year classes during surveying efforts. An Advisor stated that effort has decreased exponentially in recent years, cautioning that if the Ismooth approach was used, catch should also be considered, and noting that there are other factors (such as skates) impacting catch. Council staff explained that with no management track assessment, the Ismooth method was not used, but the SSC used more precautionary values from the last I-smooth run in 2022 for the last 2 years of recommendations for the southern area. Another Advisor noted that with larger mesh size requirements, they are not catching the smaller fish. Another Advisor had a question about the SSC's recommended ABCs for FY 2029-2030 – Council staff noted that the SSC was concerned about setting specifications for five years at a time and saw that the southern stock appeared to be in a stable but depleted state, so they opted for a more precautionary approach. The SSC also discussed the transition in the application of I-smooth from Framework 13. The Monkfish AP Chair understood the rationale for setting specifications for five years and the precautionary approach but was concerned that the values might remain in place.

An Advisor asked about discards in the southern area, noting that there is a much higher incidental monkfish limit in the northern area because one can fish on a northeast multispecies DAS; fishermen are also able to use both a Northeast Multispecies DAS and a Monkfish DAS to have an unlimited trip limit in the northern area, which is not permitted in the southern area. Council staff explained that most discards are from the scallop dredge fishery in scallop access areas, and the discards are dead discards, but the discard mortality rate was adjusted to 64% based on recent research.

Questions/ Discussion related to Skate Specifications

The Skate AP Chair asked about the slight positive impact to human communities listed in the document, noting that the Advisors had expressed concerns about skate prices, and asked about how the analysis was conducted. Council staff noted that the slight positive impact was more of a general statement that did not consider recent price impacts, and did not include the impacts of possession limit changes, which will be added to the document if the Council opts to change possession limits.

Feedback and Recommendations on Specifications

An Advisor understood the Council's desire to be more efficient but did not support setting specifications for 5 years. The Skate AP Chair agreed, explaining their concern about the little skate biomass indices approaching the biomass threshold, and that while the increase in ABC is largely driven by increases in winter and barndoor skate biomass, it is distributed across the complex. They felt it was prudent to revisit these ABCs sooner rather than later. The Monkfish AP Chair felt similarly about monkfish, expressing concern about setting specifications for so long, and noting that the 10% reduction was just a number they selected considering the lack of information. Council staff explained that the SSC's concerns can be communicated to the Council ahead of their deliberations on the management flexibility action. Another Advisor noted the data poor nature of the stocks, and another was hesitant to support the monkfish

recommendations because the scallop dredge discard data was not incorporated. An Advisor was supportive of the FY 2026-2028 recommendations for monkfish but was not in favor of the reduction in the southern area for FY 2029-2030.

1. MONKFISH MOTION: DUCKWORTH/BRADY

The Monkfish AP recommends ABCs for FY 2026-2028 for the southern area as recommended by the SSC (status quo, 5,861 mt) and maintaining status quo for FY 2029-2030 until a stock assessment is provided. The AP recommends setting specifications for three vs five years.

Rationale: The AP is concerned about the data that is being used to make these recommendations for the southern area (how old the data is, use of I-smooth, not using other information sources like monkfish CPUE), as the basis for setting specifications for five years. Monkfish is data-poor; the data should be updated, and specifications should be revisited more frequently. The AP supports getting a stock assessment as soon as possible but recommends that a data update include more information on sources of discards (fisheries and locations) and information from the scallop survey. The AP also believes that with wind farm surveys finished, monkfish will recover.

Discussion on Motion:

An Advisor asked several questions about the discard data, noting that southern management area monkfish discards are higher than landings. Council staff explained that the PDT examined discards in prior work presented to the AP in March, which indicated that most discards are from scallop dredges, but the information included in the data update does not have discards by gear type. They also noted that the Monkfish PDT is interested in working with the Scallop PDT to examine the spatial distribution of discards. The Advisor suggested comparing scallop catch areas to where monkfish effort used to be. An Advisor noted that because the ABC values were recommended by the SSC, the Council can only set ABCs at or below the recommended levels, and asked about recommending that the Council not set specifications for 5 years. Council staff explained that one option in the management flexibility action is to set specifications for 1-5 years, and the Council could opt to set specifications for any number of years within that range. While the Council does need to be at or within the SSC recommendations, the Council could recommend only setting specifications for a certain number of years. An Advisor offered some clarifications for the rationale, and asked how the monkfish Research Set-Aside CPUE projects would be considered, noting industry concern with the I-smooth approach. Council staff noted that the projects would need to be peer reviewed for use in management, but that the Council could prioritize a peer review.

An Advisor suggested revisiting specifications yearly, though it was noted that this would likely be a staff time issue. The Monkfish AP Chair felt that a longer specifications cycle was not the right approach until there is an assessment or more data. Other Advisors agreed on the need for an assessment – Council staff reviewed the current planning for assessments in the coming years, and noted that the AP could provide some rationale in support of an assessment. An Advisor expected to see less dead discards from the scallop fishery as the fleet shifts, and the Chair noted that the SSC is aware of this change and the impacts it may have on discards.

MOTION #1 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

2. MONKFISH MOTION: ALEXANDER/DUCKWORTH

The Monkfish AP recommends ABCs for FY 2026-2028 for the northern area as recommended by the SSC (status quo, 6,224 mt). The AP recommends setting specifications for three vs five years.

Rationale: Like the prior motion, the AP is concerned about the data that is being used to make these recommendations for the northern area (how old the data is, use of I-smooth, not using other information sources like monkfish CPUE), as the basis for setting specifications for five years. Monkfish is data-poor; the data should be updated, and specifications should be revisited more frequently. The AP supports getting a stock assessment as soon as possible but recommends that a data update include more information on sources of discards (fisheries and locations) and information from the scallop survey.

Discussion on Motion:

The Advisors noted that the scallop discard issue is more prevalent in the southern area but it does occur in the north, and that wind farm surveying is also more limited to the southern area.

MOTION #2 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Discussion on Skate Specifications

The Skate AP Chair stated that an increased ABC made sense, but was concerned that it was based largely on the 2023 increase in winter skate biomass, which the SSC noted had a high degree of uncertainty. They were also concerned about the proximity of little skate to the biomass threshold given it is a target species for the bait skate fishery. They voiced support for setting specifications for 2 years and requesting a data update to understand how it has impacted the less abundant species in the complex. Another Advisor agreed, noting that the 10% reduction in FY 2028-2030 was somewhat arbitrary but a precaution taken due to lack of data. They also felt that the fishery should not be penalized for not utilizing the whole TAL, which should not be an indicator of stock health.

An Advisor asked which trawl surveys are included in the data used to calculate little skate biomass, and whether any of those surveys had changed given recent offshore wind development. Council staff noted that the Northeast Bottom trawl survey, which provides the data used for the calculation, has been able to operate as usual without impacts from offshore wind development due to the stratified random sample design, though that is likely to change with additional offshore wind project activity.

3. SKATE MOTION: MATARONAS/DUCKWORTH

The Skate AP recommends the ABCs as recommended by the SSC of 41,282 mt for FY 2026-2027 and 37,154 mt for FY 2028-2030. The AP recommends revisiting the specifications in two or three years with updated data.

Rationale: The AP is concerned about using these data as the basis for setting specifications for five years. Skates are data-poor; the data should be updated, and specifications should be revisited more frequently. The AP supports getting a stock assessment as soon as possible.

Discussion on Motion:

The Skate AP Chair recommended amending the motion to specify revisiting specifications in 2 years.

3a. MOTION TO AMEND: KNEEBONE/DUCKWORTH

The Skate AP recommends the ABCs as recommended by the SSC of 41,282 mt for FY 2026-2027 and 37,154 mt for FY 2028-2030. The AP recommends that a data update be performed in two years and the specifications be revisited.

Rationale: Acknowledging that skate complex remains data poor and that the increase in ABC is driven largely by increase in winter skate in the 2023 survey, it is prudent to look at the data in two years to ensure that the data point is real (has a large error) and to ensure that other skates

that have a declining index or are near the biomass threshold are not adversely impacted by the increased ABC.

Discussion on Motion: No other discussion.

MOTION #3a TO AMEND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

3b. MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:

The Skate AP recommends the ABCs as recommended by the SSC of 41,282 mt for FY 2026-2027 and 37,154 mt for FY 2028-2030. The AP recommends that a data update be performed in two years and the specifications be revisited.

Rationale: see above.

MOTION #3b CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

AGENDA ITEM #2: SPECIFICATIONS ACTIONS: EFFORT CONTROLS

Council staff reviewed tasks completed by the Joint Monkfish/Skate Plan Development Team on monkfish and skate fishery effort and overlaps.

One advisor asked about the trips landing over the possession limits; staff thought that this is likely due to a variety of reasons from vessel trip reporting issues, converting whole weight or live weight to landed weight, etc. Another advisor commented that dealers have unique numbering and that mistakes are not uncommon in the dealer data, which is then transmitted to the NOAA databases.

Skate wing: The AP had a lengthy discussion on the magnitude of any increase in skate wing possession limits due to the concern related to flooding the market and reducing an already low price for skate wings. Several advisors suggested a more moderate increase or even status quo to avoid working harder / landing more skate wings and receiving less money as a result. One advisor commented that fishermen are already experiencing a price drop and that he lost some money during the springtime when he was catching more skate wings but making less money due to the lower price. A couple of advisors cautioned that shipping costs have increased and that having higher volume reduces shipping costs and ultimately results in slightly higher pay for fishermen. He further suggested removing seasonal skate wing possession limits such that there is consistent management measures throughout the year.

A couple of advisors wanted a daily possession limit (like Monkfish DAS) instead of a trip limit and wanted the ability to declare an overage (24 hours 1 minute = 2 Monkfish DAS used). Staff explained that this would require a Council action that is out of scope for this specifications action but could be considered in Council priorities if desired.

Overall, several advisors preferred setting effort controls for two years and revisiting fishing performance in 2027 to make any adjustments to skate wing possession limits.

Skate bait: One of the skate bait advisors wanted an increase in skate bait possession limits to help offset the added steaming time to transit around offshore wind activities, which is reducing his catch by half. He liked the idea of having possession limits based on DAS, like what is done in the monkfish fishery. The advisor explained that to fish for skate bait, a vessel needs to be declared under a DAS unless fishing in an exempted fishing area. Another advisor initially wanted status quo possession limits because of the lower trawl survey index for little skate, though is not opposed to an increase to help offset any steaming times for those fishermen who are impacted by offshore wind activity. Like the skate wing advisors, the advisors in the skate bait fishery also wanted to revisit possession limits in 2027 based on fishery performance data with the increase in trip limits.

4. SKATE MOTION: NORDSTROM/INCOLLINGO

The Skate AP recommends an increase in the Bait possession limit by 5,000 lb to 30,000 lb in FY 2026-2030 and revisit in two years (in 2027) for the future considering fishery performance.

Rationale: With increased steam time to travel around wind farms (+8 hours/day), bait vessels need to use two DAS. An increase in the bait limit would help compensate for that increased steam time.

Discussion on Motion

An advisor thought the current 25,000 lb skate bait possession limit was sufficient, though wasn't opposed to the increase to help offset the increase in steaming time to transit around offshore wind activity. Another advisor supported an increase and was interested in evaluating any new data on fishery performance in 2027 to make any further adjustments to possession limits. There was a brief discussion on switching from skate possession limits based on a trip to skate possession limits based on number of DAS used. This type of change would require a new Council priority and is out of scope for this year's specifications action.

MOTION #4 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

5. SKATE MOTION: MATARONAS/DUCKWORTH

The Skate AP recommends an increase in Wing DAS possession limits by 500 lb for each season, to 4,500 lb in Season 1 and 6,500 lb in Season 2 for FY 2026-2030 and revisit in two years (in 2027) for the future considering fishery performance.

Rationale: This recommendation accounts for the increase in ABC while acknowledging concerns about negative impacts on price from increasing possession limits. The AP is seeing some softening of skate wing prices in the current year and is hesitant to make more substantial increases currently. Catching more skates for the same revenue does not make sense. The increase would help pay for increased shipping costs that the industry is experiencing.

Discussion on Motion

The small increase in skate wing possession limits will help take advantage of the increase in the increase in skate ABC, without flooding the market with excess landings and a subsequent price decrease. The processors are unable to handle any large influx of skate landings without substantially lowering the price; one dealer anticipates lower prices this winter. An advisor recommended re-evaluating fishery performance in the next year or two to evaluate any changes in fishery performance from the small increase in skate wing possession limits. Another advisor was hesitant to support an increase given the current problems with lower prices while a different AP member expressed concern about the recent Exempted Fishing Permit which allows for a substantial increase in skate possession limits, which could result in a further reduction in price this year. There is hope that with the small increase in skate possession limits that more monkfish can be landed without overloading the market and that an increase in landings will help offset shipping costs.

MOTION #5 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

6. MONKFISH MOTION: DUCKWORTH/RAINONE

The Monkfish AP recommends status quo DAS and possession limits for monkfish for FY 2026-2030 for the northern and southern areas.

Rationale: The AP is concerned about potential price decreases with increased effort, and negative impacts on profitability. We need to incentivize use of RSA DAS, and status quo would support that.

Discussion on Motion

An advisor noted that Monkfish DAS are used to catch skates in Southern New England, so thought a lower monkfish possession limit and a higher Monkfish DAS could work, especially due to an increase in skate wing possession limits. The advisor mentioned that a Committee member suggested the idea of having skate possession limits based on number of DAS used, rather than per trip (like monkfish), to be able to have more efficient monkfish and skate fishing. Another advisor suggested status quo effort controls would generally work if there is not a reduction in FY 2029-2030 like that proposed for the southern management area ABC. He commented that fundamental issues need to be addressed first. There was a brief discussion on the economics of both the monkfish and skate fisheries and not wanting to flood the market with landings, which would result in a drop in price. One advisor cautioned against increasing monkfish effort controls in addition to any increase in skate possession limits for this economics reason. The advisor suggested that if fishermen use all their Monkfish DAS allocation, then they should participate in the Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) program, which would help gather additional data for this data-poor fishery, and that paying for these RSA DAS is the cost of doing business. Another advisor explained that he didn't want to do more work (increase landings) for less money and that offshore wind farms are being overlooked on their adverse impact on fish and fisheries. The fisheries have already seen reductions in quota and in landings, and he urged against crisis management of the monkfish and skate fisheries.

MOTION #6 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OBJECTION.

AGENDA ITEM #3: ALTERNATIVE GEAR-MARKING FRAMEWORK

GARFO staff provided an overview of the NEFMC, MAFMC, and GARFO joint 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 23rd On-Demand Working Group [meeting](#), the group specifically recommended the Monkfish and Skate APs receive a presentation during their next meeting.

Overall, Advisors expressed hesitation around moving forward with the action. An Advisor explained that they were not against the action but did not feel it was ready for final action in September and October, noting that the Council's On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group has also discussed the action. They have used the technology to view on-demand gear locations and it seems to work but does require an internet connection. An Advisor expressed several concerns, including the cost of the on-demand fishing gear and satellite internet service, dangerous retrieval, and potential gear conflicts/ghost gear. They felt that the technology is not ready for widespread use, and that NMFS and NOAA should cover costs. Another Advisor was concerned about recovering gillnet gear if it is moved and noted that there would be added time to trips. GARFO staff stated that depending on how location information is shared, it may be easier to locate gear, noting that some moved gear had been located during testing.

Another Advisor asked about the obligations for mobile vessels, particularly whether they would need to purchase technology to see the gear and if the burden is on mobile vessels to stay away from the gear. An Advisor felt that the action came about in a back-handed way starting with the closure of areas then re-entry through exempted fishing permit testing, noting that some testing in the spring off of Rhode Island occurs in areas where lobstermen want to fish but draggers do not. They also explained that they used Starlink, noting the cost and concern that the gear would require a lot of data. They also stated that on-

demand gear could open under a gillnet and cause problems with retrieval. NEFSC Staff explained that none of the vessels testing on-demand gear had used more than the 50 GB/month Starlink plan, and that acoustics have been used to recover lost gear. The acoustic technology can operate from ½ to ¾ miles away, but generally it is best to get closer to the gear. Another Advisor expressed concerns about the cost of on-demand gear as well as the potential for ghost gear. GARFO staff clarified that the action would not require the use of gear marking alternatives, but it would be an option for those who want to use it, and it could result in less ghost gear since it could be located after a conflict or if it was moved in a storm. Finally, an Advisor was concerned that if the framework were adopted, it could be easier for the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to push for fishery closures and easier to approve new closures.

AGENDA ITEM #4: 2026 COUNCIL WORK PRIORITIES RELATED TO MONKFISH AND SKATES

Council staff prefaced the 2026 priorities discussion that recommendations from the APs and Committees will be considered but not guaranteed. Staff briefly discussed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) project that is pertinent to monkfish and skates, the Executive Order 14276 de-regulatory item (specifically the recommendation from the Council's Executive Committee for monkfish), and mentioned that there are regulatory / required actions the Council must work on in 2026. Monkfish staff summarized the Monkfish Catch per Unit Effort meeting that was held for monkfish groups in July to raise awareness of this ongoing work and to help inform any discussion on 2026 work priorities.

An Advisor noted that there are 211 permits in the confirmation of permit history that they felt should be addressed before increasing trip limits or DAS, potentially though an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program, though they stated that latent permits are an issue. Another Advisor was not against the IFQ idea depending on the years chosen and felt that latent effort should be addressed. A skate bait Advisor was not interested in participating in an IFQ, noting that they appreciate smaller vessels participating and that they would not want to exclude the younger generation who may purchase permits. An Advisor recalled discussions from a few years back on this topic where the results were to leave the skate fishery as is to let younger fishermen in. Council staff clarified the process for EO 14276, which will be discussed at the September Council meeting. There was also an idea to propose considering a daily skate limit. The Advisors ultimately decided to forward a recommendation around latent effort in the monkfish fishery rather than on IFQs.

The Monkfish and Skate APs recommend the following for 2026 Council work priorities, listed in order of importance:

1. A skate action that would consider moving from possession limits that are per trip to limits based on the number of DAS that a trip is charged. This would allow more trip efficiency and improve access to the skate and monkfish fisheries. This could likely be done through a framework adjustment action.
2. A monkfish action that would consider ways to reduce latent effort. This would likely require an FMP amendment.

AGENDA ITEM #5: OTHER BUSINESS

Council staff reminded the group of the upcoming NEFMC and MAFMC (monkfish-only) meetings for final actions for both monkfish and skates and that applications for the next AP term are due in October and can be submitted via email or in the mail.

The meeting adjourned around 5:00 pm.