

DECISION DOCUMENT

For

Framework Adjustment 9 to the

Northeast Skate Complex

Fishery Management Plan



This document was developed to help the Council select final preferred alternatives for Framework 9.

January 19, 2021

Anticipated Council Action:

Prior to selecting final preferred alternatives, the Council will receive a presentation on measures under consideration in Framework 9 and their analyzed impacts on the skate fishery.

1. Select the *preferred alternative* for revising the conditions of the open-access federal skate permit (Section 5.0).

Note: In April 2021, the Council approved updates to Objectives 2 and 5 of the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan. These are included in this Framework (Section 4.2). In January 2022, the Skate Committee made a minor edit to Objective 5 (noting that this objective on research is specific to skates). This will need Council approval.

Section 5.0 – Alternatives Under Consideration <i>Choose one alternative.</i>		Preferred by		
		PDT	AP	CTE
Alternative 1 (Sec. 5.1)	No Action. Can add and drop federal skate permit throughout fishing year.		X	X
Alternative 2 (Sec. 5.2)	Year-round federal skate permit. Must apply for permit 30 days prior to start of fishing year.			
Alternative 3 (Sec. 5.3)	Must retain federal skate permit for remainder of fishing year once obtained.			
Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the ~350 vessels with active federal skate permits each year since FY 2016, about 25 or fewer have been using this flexibility, adding or dropping to fish under state regulations (Tables 1,3,4). States have no skate possession limits except Rhode Island, which matches federal limit on a weekly basis. Action alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intent is to have vessels commit to fishing either with or without a federal skate permit all year (Alt. 2) or prevent fishing without a federal skate permit once obtained (Alt 3). Cancellations for vessel replacement, permit sanctions, vessel sinkings or other logistical reasons would be allowed. Proportion of landings tracked against Federal TAL would not necessarily increase. Depends on who opts for the federal permit and if they had other federal fishing permits when landing skate without federal permit. Negligible impact to ACL accounting. May increase discards if vessels don't opt for a federal skate permit. When they fish in federal waters for other fisheries, all skates caught would be discarded. Likely substantial administrative effort to ensure that permit cancellation reasons are appropriate. If the Council recommends No Action as the preferred alternative, normally the Council would not then submit the action to NOAA Fisheries. However, as this action includes updates to FMP objectives (Section 4.2), the Council needs to decide if the action should still be submitted or wait to include these updates in a future action. 				
Other Important Considerations/Draft Framework References				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skate fishery description: Section 6.0 Skate fishery impacts: Section 7.0 				