



New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEETING SUMMARY

Northeast Skate Complex Plan Development Team

webinar

December 17, 2021

The Northeast Skate Complex Plan Development Team (Skate PDT) met on December 17, 2021, via webinar at 10:00 AM to discuss Framework Adjustment 9 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Dr. Rachel Feeney (PDT Chair), Ms. Jenny Couture and Mr. Lou Goodreau (Council staff); Ms. Cynthia Ferrio, Ms. Ashleigh McCord, and Ms. Alicia Schuler, Mr. John Sullivan (GARFO); Ms. Kathy Sosebee and Ms. Samantha Werner (NEFSC); and Eric Schneider (RIDEM). Skate Committee Chair Mr. Scott Olszewski and Committee member Mark Alexander attended. No others attended.

TIMELINE AND UPDATES

On the skate specifications action, GARFO has sent comments on the preliminary submission back to the Council. Final action on Framework 9 is expected in February 2022. The PDT briefly discussed 2022 work items; the near-term focus is finishing specifications and Framework 9.

FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 9

Alternatives

The PDT discussed a few issues related to the alternatives. First, during the November AP-Committee meeting, some Committee members were concerned that an alternative that would prohibit cancelling the federal skate permit (Alternatives 2 and 3) would inhibit that ability for permits to be transferred or have the limited access permits in Confirmation of Permit History. The PDT drafted a caveat to the alternatives consistent with GARFO policies about such instances (see [Application for Vessel Replacement or Confirmation of Permit History](#)) for the Committee to review in January. PDT members were also concerned about other reasons that permits get cancelled, such as permits being sanctioned or vessel sinkings. If the Council indicates that the intent is to prevent active skate fishing without a federal skate permit, the PDT felt that the specific exceptions to cancellations could be an implementation detail left to GARFO.

Second, related to the 30-day deadline before a fishing year to submit a federal skate permit (in Alternative 2), the PDT agreed that the exact deadline would be an implementation detail for GARFO and to prepare the Framework 9 background data and impacts analysis assuming a deadline of March 31.

Next steps:

- Ferrio – check with the GARFO Permit office on any further input about potential exceptions to limits on cancelling permits.

Background data

The PDT reviewed progress on developing fishery background data and the impact analysis and identified additional data that would be helpful (see working draft for specific notes).

Next steps:

- Goodreau – For unique vessels that have had a skate permit issued after April 1, how many of those permits were active subsequently.
- Werner – Data that shows that skate permits are issued all throughout the fishing year for use that fishing year
- Goodreau – for unique vessels that cancelled a federal skate permit, if they were active before (federal) and after (non-federal) cancellation.
- Goodreau – Provide FY2017 and 2019 data on skate landings with a permit #>0 by vessels that did not have a federal skate permit on the day of landing but did at some other point that year.
- General – where possible, identify the number of vessels and where they are from (state/port) and effort (# of trips).

Impacts analysis

Because a Categorical Exclusion will be prepared, the PDT agreed that a full NEPA-style analysis is not needed but is describing the impacts and implications of the alternatives. The PDT developed questions to be addressed and discussed potential impacts to landings, discards, participation, and administration.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM. The next Skate PDT meeting will likely be after the February 2022 Council meeting.