

Comment from Brian and Tracey Pearce

Hi - Thank you for allowing us to comment on Monday, here are the thoughts we attempted to share but typed and elaborated, following the listening session in Portland.

Please consider these comments from someone who has targeted monkfish largely in Maine in the last 30 years, but from 1997-1999 also in Ocean City, MD. It would be good to learn more precisely the fishing history of those that are commenting at future meetings (or precisely who are their stakeholders, as in the case of sector managers).

Feel free to forward.

Addressing IFQ Challenges

- IFQs present significant implementation challenges.
- A more practical alternative is to **adjust monkfish Days-at-Sea (DAS)** based on **recent effort within a reasonable timeframe**.

Revisiting the Original DAS Premise

- Monkfish DAS were originally set assuming all permit holders might become active simultaneously.
- That assumption no longer reflects the fishery.
- Recommend a **full review and redistribution** of DAS based on **current participation**.

Latent Effort

- **Revoke DAS** from permits with no activity within a defined period.
- **Redistribute DAS** to active participants, consistent with how DAS were originally qualified.
- Allow monkfish DAS to be **leased** to improve flexibility and efficiency.

Streamlined Management for the Northern Area

- Create a **monkfish-only fishery option** for vessels using **12" mesh**:
 - Charge **only monkfish DAS**.
 - Set a reasonable trip limit (e.g., **1,500 lbs per DAS**).

- For vessels using multiple mesh sizes or retaining groundfish:
 - Charge **one monkfish DAS** and **one Category A groundfish DAS** consecutively.
 - If groundfish are retained on a monkfish-only trip, allow the vessel to **add an A-day**.

Periodic Reallocation

- Reallocate monkfish DAS **every five years** to reflect participation trends.
- This allows **new entrants** to build DAS as they demonstrate activity.

Northern vs. Southern Fisheries

- Any redevelopment of monkfish management must recognize that the **Northern and Southern Management Areas are fundamentally different fisheries** and should be managed accordingly.

With warm regards,

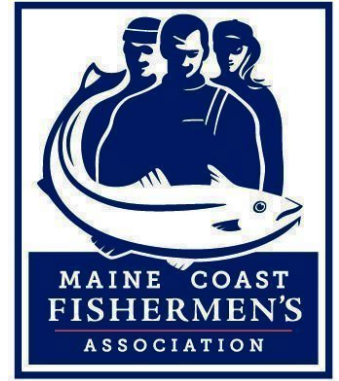
Brian and Tracy Pearce

F/V Gracelyn Jane

Follow up:

Again for the record, we highly oppose leaving this fishery as is and at risk for the influx of effort which could devastate the stock and disrupt the markets.

Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill #2
Newburyport, MA 01950



May 18, 2026

Re: Monkfish and Skate Fishery Improvement Comments

Dear Dr. Cate O'Keefe,

The Maine Coast Fishermen's Association (MCFA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the New England Fishery Management Council's 2026 monkfish and skate management priorities.

MCFA does not support scoping an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program for monkfish and/or skate wing fisheries. An IFQ would fundamentally restructure access to these fisheries in ways that threaten the owner-operators and small-boat businesses that form the backbone of Maine's fishing communities. The current management framework is working for the majority of Maine fishermen and members of the Maine Coast Community Sector, and we do not believe a restructuring of this magnitude is warranted.

We also note that the 2025 joint Advisory Panel and Committee process produced a set of priority recommendations that did not include an IFQ program. The Council should give weight to the consensus built through that stakeholder process. While MCFA is open to targeted, incremental management adjustments where there is demonstrated need and broad industry support, the IFQ scoping action should be removed from the Council's 2026 work priorities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hannah MacDonald

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah MacDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director of Policy and Innovation
Maine Coast Fishermen's Association