



## New England Fishery Management Council

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### DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

#### Monkfish Advisory Panel

Radisson Airport Hotel, Warwick, RI

August 17, 2016

The Monkfish Advisory Panel met on April 7, 2015 in Warwick, RI to discuss specifications for FYs 2017 - 2019.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Mr. Timothy Froelich, Mr. Eric Hansen, Mr. Chris Hickman, Mr. Michael Karch, Mr. William P. McCann, Mr. Ted Platz, and Mr. Christopher Rainone; Dr. Fiona Hogan (NEFMC staff). In addition, approximately 2 members of the public attended. The AP didn't have quorum at this meeting resulting in no motions being made; recommendations were made by AP members present.

#### KEY OUTCOMES:

- The Advisory Panel members present supported status quo specifications.
- The Advisory Panel members present supported an update to the DAS allocation and trip limit analysis.
- The Advisory Panel members present supported future action(s) that would address latent effort and DAS leasing.

#### AGENDA ITEM #1: REVIEW OF THE 2016 MONKFISH OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Staff provided a brief overview of the 2016 monkfish operational assessment. The SCALE model was not updated because new research questioned the validity of the growth data used. Landings have remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. Landings are dominated by trawl in the NFMA and gillnet in the SFMA. The survey trend adjustment factor, if used, would result in a slight increase (2%) in the NFMA and a decline (13%) in the SFMA. The 2015 year class in the SFMA appears to be large but will be tracked by the PDT to determine what contribution it may make when it recruits to the fishery. In recent years, landings have been below the ACLs and TALs.

#### AGENDA ITEM #2: 2016 MONKFISH FISHERY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Staff summarized the 2016 Fishery Performance Report. This report is new and is part of the Risk Policy Working Group recommendations; it was also presented to the SSC at their August 10, 2016 meeting. The TAL was under-harvested in FY2015 by 30% in the NFMA and 47% in the SFMA. Landings in the NFMA were higher than the previous 4 years in the time series but it is not clear whether this indicates a changing trend yet. Landings were down in the SFMA in FY2015 but fishery participants indicated that warmer water temperatures and weather affected the ability to catch monkfish. Total landings and revenues have remained relatively stable over the last 4 years. Category A and B permits continue to rely more on monkfish for landings and revenues than Category C and D permits. A large amount of latent effort continues to exist in the fishery. Approximately 10% of total DAS allocated were used by limited access vessels. Only 42% of the DAS allocated to active vessels were used in FY 2015.

## **Discussion on the Presentation**

An AP member questioned what the impact on landings was from the 1970s and 1980s when there were no reporting requirements. AP members pointed out that the northern DAS allocated cannot be used in the SFMA, which may affect the ability of vessels to use their full DAS allocation. It was recommended that the analysis of allocated DAS used be done for vessels that target monkfish, as it was expected to show these vessels are using over 90% of their allocated monkfish DAS. An AP member asked about a catch per unit effort analysis for the SFMA for directed vessels. It was also recommended that observer data be compared annually as observers were considered to be on the same vessels at the same time every year, which should show any changes in monkfish landings and discards.

### ***AGENDA ITEM #3: MONKFISH SPECIFICATIONS FOR FYS 2017 - 2019***

Staff provided an overview of the specifications for FYS 2017 – 2019. The SSC recommended status quo overfishing limit and Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) of 17,805 mt and 7,592 mt respectively for the NFMA and 23,204 mt and 12,316 mt respectively for the SFMA.

## **Discussion on the Presentation**

Overall, the members present were in favor of status quo, although it was noted by at least one member that an increase in the TAL would always be welcome. An AP member did not think management should be overly cautious since the TAL was not being achieved so the DAS allocation or the trip limits could be increased. Another AP member was hesitant as updated work could support a decrease in allocations or trip limits. Overall, the AP members present did recommend that the DAS allocation and trip limit analysis be updated. An AP member recommended an additional analysis of skate landings verses monkfish landings on a trip by trip basis be completed to show whether the skate trip limits are being reached before the monkfish limit forcing trips to end prematurely.

1. The AP members present were in favor of status quo specifications.

### ***AGENDA ITEM #4: 2017 PRIORITIES***

Staff reviewed the monkfish priorities for 2016. An AP member recommended adding monkfish discard mortality to the monkfish Research Set Aside priorities, when they're updated. An AP member suggested that current tagging studies may help improve the assumed discard mortality rate of 100%. An AP member thought this assumption was incorrect as monkfish are hardy and have been recaptured as part of tagging studies.

The AP members present were still concerned about latent effort, which was included in Amendment 6. Staff explained that Amendment 6 was not currently being worked on since it was removed from Council priorities. Amendment 6 also included catch shares, ITQs, and DAS leasing. An AP member reminded the group that there was already a proposal on monkfish DAS leasing that would not increase latent effort but would provide flexibility for current participants in the fishery, e.g. to use all their DAS on one vessel. AP members were hesitant to take away someone's ability to fish but wanted to limit the impact on the directed fishery if the monkfish fishery became attractive in the future.

1. The AP members present recommended a future action to address:
  - Latent effort,
  - Monkfish DAS leasing.