



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
 John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

DRAFT MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 24, 2018
TO: Groundfish Committee
FROM: Jamie M. Cournane, Council Staff
SUBJECT: **Planning for Listening Sessions for Possible Limited Entry for Party and Charter in the Recreational Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery**

This year, I formed a sub-group of the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) to focus on recreational issues. The recreational sub-group plans to report out to the PDT at an upcoming meeting. The sub-group includes Council, state and federal agency staff. To date, the sub-group worked on several topics, including: 1) planning for listening sessions for possible limited entry for party and charter in the recreational Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery, 2) reviewing final 2017 and in-season 2018 catch and effort statistics for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, GOM haddock, and Georges Bank cod, and 3) examining calibrated Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data. This memorandum focusses on the first topic.

Background

The Council's 2018 groundfish priorities include several recreational fishery priorities¹. One of which is to "scope limited entry in the groundfish party/charter fishery". Additionally, following a request from the Council in January, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) refreshed the control date in the party and charter fishery to March 19, 2018 (see Attachment²).

Proposed Process to Gather Public Comments

To address the limited entry priority, the Council could ***collect public comments on possible limited entry for party and charter in the recreational Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery***. The public comment period could include opportunities to submit written comments and provide comments in person at several listening sessions across the region.

The Council could also consider preparing a draft overview document to help solicit public comments. This document may be similar in content to recent scoping documents for whiting and skate actions on limited entry/access³. The major difference is the Council is not initiating an amendment at present – so this would not be considered a typical "scoping" process. Rather, the

¹ https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/180706_NEFMC_Priorities_Updated.pdf

² <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-03-19/pdf/2018-05505.pdf>

³ <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/a-22-whiting-Scoping-document-4.pdf> and https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Skate_Scoping-Documents_Final_2.pdf

Council could create an opportunity to gather public comments to help determine the Council's next steps – which may include a limited entry amendment. The results of the public comment period would be summarized for the Council to consider at a future meeting, most likely in early 2019.

In the past, the Recreational Advisory Panel suggested that meetings to reach participants in the recreational groundfish fishery are best held between November and February. The Council could consider holding listening sessions in late 2018/early 2019. When selecting dates for the listening sessions, public meeting notices must be finalized at least 25 days in advance for publication in the Federal Register.

Recreational Sub-Group Feedback

The recreational sub-group: A) drafted an outline of the overview document and B) provided some initial listening session planning ideas.

A. Draft Outline of Overview Document

1. Cover page
2. Listening session meeting schedule - dates, times, and locations
3. Written comment instructions and deadline
4. Purpose of listening sessions
5. Explain why the Council is seeking public input
6. Background information
 - a. Control date
 - b. Trends in the number of for-hire vessels with groundfish permits
 - c. Recreational allocations and catch performance
 - d. Recent catch statistics for groundfish stocks
 - e. Stock status of groundfish stocks
7. Overview of the process
8. Questions to consider when making public comments
9. Point of contact at the Council office

B. Initial Listening Session Planning Ideas

Some initial listening session planning ideas include:

- Working with state partners,
- Holding sessions in the evening, starting at 5pm or 6pm, and
- Reaching the public in a variety of suggested locations:
 - Maine – southern coast, Kittery
 - New Hampshire – Hampton or Seabrook
 - Massachusetts – top three – Gloucester, Plymouth, Hyannis, followed by Outer Cape – Truro area and Buzzards Bay
 - Rhode Island/Connecticut - Point Judith
 - New York/New Jersey – Montauk and Barnegat Light.