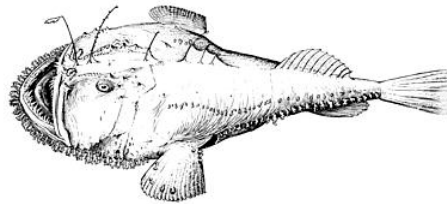


DECISION DOCUMENT - DRAFT

Monkfish Fishery Management Plan

Framework Adjustment 13



This document was developed to help the NEFMC select preferred alternatives for Framework Adjustment 13.

November 25, 2022

Version – NEFMC

[This document will be updated and finalized after the November 28 and 29 Monkfish Advisory Panel and Committee meetings.]

Anticipated Council Action:

Prior to selecting final preferred alternatives, Council staff will present the measures under consideration in Framework Adjustment 13 and their draft analyzed impacts on target species, non-target species, protected resources, physical environment (EFH), and human communities (economic and social impacts). Council staff will also answer questions, as needed, about the document.

1. Select *preferred alternatives* in each of the actions in Framework Adjustment 13
 - a. Action 1: Fishing Year (FY) 2023-2025 specifications
 - b. Action 2: Effort controls (Days-at-Sea and incidental possession limits)
 - c. Action 3: Monkfish gillnet mesh size
2. Motion to submit Framework Adjustment 13 to NOAA Fisheries.

Note: Monkfish is managed under a joint management plan with the MAFMC. The MAFMC will select preferred alternatives during its meeting December 12-15, 2022.

Per the monkfish fishery [regulations](#):

“Management adjustments made to the Monkfish FMP require majority approval of each Council for submission to the Secretary”

“If either the NEFMC or MAFMC has rejected all options, then the Regional Administrator may select any measure that has not been rejected by both Councils and that meets the Monkfish FMP's goals and objectives.”

“If the Councils fail to submit a recommendation to the Regional Administrator by February 1 that meets the goals and objectives of the Monkfish FMP, the Regional Administrator may implement through rulemaking in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act one of the options reviewed and not rejected by either Council, provided the option meets the goals and objectives of the Monkfish FMP, and is consistent with other applicable law.”

Action 1 – FY 2023-2025 Specifications

| Section 4.1 – Action 1 – FY 2023-2025 Specifications <i>Choose one alternative</i> | | Preferred by | |
|---|---|--------------|-----------|
| | | AP | Committee |
| Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.1.1) | No action OFL = 0 mt; ACL = 0 mt; TALs = 0 mt | | |
| Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.1.2) | Status Quo North: OFL = 17,805 mt; ACL = 8,351 mt; TAL = 6,624 mt South: OFL = 23,204 mt; ACL = 12,316 mt; 5,882 mt Discard deduction = 3-year mean discard:catch | | |
| Alternative 3 (Sec. 4.1.3) | Updated Specifications (SSC recommendation) North: OFL = undetermined; ACL = 5,526.0 mt; TAL = 4,631.7 mt South: OFL = undetermined; ACL = 3,766.0 mt; 1,448.5 mt Discard deduction = 10-year median discards | | |
| Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider | | | |
| <p>Document #2a and 2b are the 2022 management track assessment report and peer review report, respectively.</p> <p>Document #3 is the SSC memo to the NEFMC on recommendations for specifications.</p> <p>Document #5 is the 2022 monkfish fishery performance report which provides context on recent fishery performance and input from the Advisory Panel. Some of this background material is repeated in FW13 Section 5.5 Affected Environment.</p> | | | |
| Other important Considerations/Draft EA References | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target species impacts: Section 6.2.1 (p. 85) • Non-target species impacts: Section 6.3.1 (p. 89) • Protected resource impacts: Section 6.4.1 (p. 92) • Impacts on physical environment and Essential Fish Habitat: Section 6.5.1 (p. 96) • Human community impacts: Section 6.5.1 (p. 98) | | | |

Action 2 – Effort Controls

| Section 4.2 – Action 2 – Effort Controls | | Preferred by | |
|---|---|---------------------|------------------|
| <i>The Council may choose Alternative 2 and 3. Within Alternative 2, choose one option for North and one option for South. Within Alternative 3, choose one option.</i> | | AP | Committee |
| Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.2.1) | No action 46 (45.2 after RSA deduction) DAS for each limited access monkfish permit, 37 of which may be used in the South | | |
| Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.2.2) | Separate monkfish DAS allocation by area, reduce DAS allocation North DAS options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A = 20 DAS • Option B = 10 DAS • Option C = 0 DAS South DAS options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A = 20 DAS • Option B = 10 DAS • Option C = 0 DAS | | |
| Alternative 3 (Sec. 4.2.3) | Reduce NFMA permit category C and D incidental possession limits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A = 20% reduction • Option B = 40% reduction | | |
| Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider | | | |
| <p>Document #4 is the draft environmental assessment. Section 6.1.1 includes analyses for how these effort control options would have reduced recent fishery landings and compares these reductions to the landings reduction that would be necessary to keep landings within the FY 2023-2025 TALs proposed under Action 1, Alternative 3.</p> <p>Document #5 is the 2022 monkfish fishery performance report which provides context on recent fishery performance and input from the Advisory Panel. Some of this background material is repeated in FW13 Section 5.5 Affected Environment.</p> | | | |
| Other important Considerations/Draft EA References | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target species impacts: Section 6.2.2 (p. 86) • Nontarget species impacts: Section 6.3.2 (p. 90) • Protected resource impacts: Section 6.4.2 (p. 94) • Impacts on physical environment and Essential Fish Habitat: Section 6.5.2 (p. 97) • Human community impacts: Section 6.6.2 (p. 101) | | | |

Action 3 – Monkfish Gillnet Mesh Size

| Section 4.3 – Action 3 – Gillnet Measures | | Preferred by | |
|--|--|---------------------|------------------|
| <i>If the Council chooses Alternative 2, choose one option.</i> | | AP | Committee |
| Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.3.1) | No action 10" minimum mesh size when on a Monkfish-only DAS, also in the GOM/GB Dogfish and Monkfish Gillnet Fishery Exemption Area. | | |
| Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.3.2) | Increase gillnet mesh size Increase minimum mesh size when on a Monkfish-only DAS, also in the GOM/GB Dogfish and Monkfish Gillnet Fishery Exemption Area. Two-year implementation delay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A = Increase to 11" • Option B = Increase to 12" | | |
| Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider | | | |
| This would not impact vessels fishing only for dogfish in the GOM/GB exemption area (Document #4a, p. 17). | | | |
| Other important Considerations/Draft EA References | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target species impacts: Section 6.2.3 (p. 88) • Nontarget species impacts: Section 6.3.3 (p. 91) • Protected resource impacts: Section 6.4.3 (p. 95) • Impacts on physical environment and Essential Fish Habitat: Section 6.5.3 (p. 98) • Human community impacts: Section 6.6.3 (p. 106) | | | |

Table 1 – Summary of potential impacts of the alternatives under consideration in Framework 13 across the valued ecosystem components.

| Actions & Alternatives | | | Direct and Indirect Impacts | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | | Target Species | Non-target Species | Protected Resources | Physical Env. (EFH) | Human Communities |
| Action 1: ABC, ACL, TAL | Alt. 1: No Action | | Uncertain or moderate + | Positive | Slight + to moderate + | Slight + | Economic: High - Social: High - |
| | Alt. 2: Status Quo | | Uncertain or slight - | Slight + | Slight – to slight + | Slight - | Economic: Moderate + Social: Moderate + |
| | Alt. 3: Update (SSC Rec.) | | Uncertain or moderate + | Moderate + | Slight – to moderate + | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Moderate - |
| Action 2: Effort Controls | Alt. 1: No Action | | Slight - | Negligible | Slight – to slight + | Slight - | Economic: Negligible Social: Slight - |
| | Alt. 2: Separate DAS Alloc. by area, Reduce DAS | Option 2A: 20 DAS | Slight + | Slight + | Slight - | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Slight - |
| | | Option 2B: 10 DAS | Slight + to moderate + | Slight + to moderate + | Slight – to moderate + | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Slight - |
| | | Option 2C: 0 DAS | Moderate + | Moderate + | Moderate + | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Slight - |
| | Alt. 3: Reduce NFMA Incidental Limits | Option 3A: 20% reduction | Negligible to slight + | Negligible to slight + | Slight – to slight + | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Slight - |
| | | Option 3B: 40% reduction | Negligible to slight + | Negligible to slight + | Slight – to slight + | Slight - | Economic: Negative Social: Slight - |
| Action 3: Monkfish Gillnet Mesh Size | Alt. 1: No Action | | Slight - | Slight - | Slight – to slight + | No impact | Economic: Negligible Social: Slight + |
| | Alt. 2: Increase Mesh Size | Option A: Increase to 11” | Slight + | Slight + | Slight – to slight + | No impact | Economic: Slight - Social: Slight + |
| | | Option B: Increase to 12” | Slight + | Slight + | Slight – to slight + | No impact | Economic: Slight - Social: Slight + |