

National Marine Fisheries Service
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov

Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Actions

Prepared for the September 23-25, 2025
Meeting of the
New England Fishery Management Council

September 18, 2025

New England Council Actions

Small-Mesh Multispecies

None at this time.

Groundfish

None at this time.

Scallops

None at this time.

Herring

On August 7, 2025, NMFS published a temporary rule in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 38612) implementing a 2,000-lb possession limit in Herring Management Area 1A. Herring regulations require that we implement this possession limit adjustment beginning on the date the catch is projected to reach 92 percent of the Area 1A sub-annual catch limit (ACL). If final fishery data indicate that total catch exceeded the Area 1A sub-ACL, the amount of the overage may be deducted from the Area 1A sub-ACL and ACL in fishing year 2025. This temporary rule expires on December 31, 2025. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or Ashley.Trudeau@noaa.gov.

Monkfish

None at this time.

Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab

None at this time.

Northeast Skate Complex

None at this time.

Mid-Atlantic Council Actions

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

None at this time.

Spiny Dogfish

None at this time.

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

None at this time.

Atlantic Bluefish

None at this time.

Tilefish

Specifications

On June 26, 2025, NMFS published a final rule in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 27257) that implemented 2025 blueline and golden tilefish specifications, and projected 2026 and 2027 golden tilefish specifications. The specifications for blueline tilefish are status quo, but with a slight decrease in the commercial total allowable landings to account for a commercial overage in fishing year 2024 (6.7-percent decrease). The specifications for golden tilefish include a reduction to the individual fishing quota total allowable landings (1.9-percent decrease), and are based upon results of the golden tilefish management track assessment completed in 2024. All other management measures remain unchanged. For additional information, please contact Matthew Rigdon at (978) 281-9336 or Matthew.Rigdon@noaa.gov.

On July 11, 2025, NMFS published a notice in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 30828) that announced an adjustment to the commercial per-trip possession limit for the blueline tilefish fishery. Regulations for the blueline tilefish fishery state that when NMFS projects that the blueline tilefish commercial catch will reach 70 percent of the total allowable landings (TAL), the possession limit should be reduced to 300 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year. Based on information collected through July 31, 2025, about 75 percent of the commercial TAL has been caught. NMFS will publish a notice to close the commercial fishery if 100 percent of the commercial TAL is caught before the end of the fishing year. For additional information, please contact Matthew Rigdon at (978) 281-9336 or Matthew.Rigdon@noaa.gov.

At its June meeting, the Mid-Atlantic Council approved blueline tilefish specifications for 2026 and reviewed prior recommendations for golden tilefish specifications, with no changes for 2026. The recommended 2026 blueline tilefish specifications would result in a large increase to the recreational and commercial total allowable catch and are based on the most recent assessment for blueline tilefish that was completed in March, 2025. On September 11, 2025, the Council submitted its recommended specifications to NMFS, and a proposed rule is being developed. For additional information, please contact Matthew Rigdon at (978) 281-9336 or Matthew.Rigdon@noaa.gov.

Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish

2025-2026 Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications

On May 13, 2025, NMFS published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 20265) for the 2025-2026 specifications for the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan. This action would set new 2025 and projected 2026 butterfish specifications, and reaffirm projected 2025 specifications for chub mackerel, *Illex* squid, longfin squid, and Atlantic mackerel. This action would also reduce the minimum size for square mesh used on directed butterfish trawl trips from 3 inches to greater than 2 5/8 inches, account for an overage of the 2024 Atlantic mackerel ACL (if necessary), and make corrections to existing regulations. The public comment period for this proposed rule closed on June 12, 2025. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov.

2025 Atlantic Mackerel Commercial Fishery Closure

On September 15, 2025, NMFS filed a temporary rule in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 44784) closing the commercial Atlantic mackerel fishery, effective September 16, 2025. Atlantic mackerel regulations require that NMFS implement this closure when the Regional Administrator projects that 80 percent of the domestic annual harvest (DAH) has been harvested. While this closure is in effect, the possession limit for limited access mackerel vessels is reduced to 10,000 lb per trip, and the mackerel possession limit for open access mackerel vessels is reduced to 2,500 lb per trip. Vessels may only land mackerel once per calendar day. This temporary rule expires on December 31, 2025. For additional information, please contact Maria Fenton at (978) 281-9196 or Maria.Fenton@noaa.gov.

Quota Transfers

On September 16, 2025, NMFS published a notice in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 44582) of a summer flounder quota transfer from North Carolina to New York. The transfer was made to ensure that New York does not exceed its 2025 summer flounder quota. For additional information, please contact Matthew Rigdon at (978) 281-9336 or Matthew.Rigdon@noaa.gov.

On September 16, 2025, NMFS published a notice in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 44582) of a bluefish quota transfer from Massachusetts to North Carolina. The transfer was made to ensure that North Carolina would not exceed its 2025 bluefish quota. For additional information, please contact Matthew Rigdon at (978) 281-9336 or Matthew.Rigdon@noaa.gov.

Other Actions

Paperwork Reduction Act

On July 14, 2025, the Department of Commerce published a notice of information collection and

request for comment related to the renewal of the OMB control number associated with the individual transferrable quota (ITQ) program in the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. Public comment was accepted through September 12, 2025.

Jonah Crab

None at this time.

Industry Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment

None at this time.

Lobster

None at this time.

Habitat Actions

None at this time.

Protected Resources Actions

None at this time.

Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Applications Under Review

On August 29, 2025, NMFS received an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application from the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries, to conduct on-demand fishing trials in Massachusetts coastal waters. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On September 4, 2025, NMFS received an EFP application from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, to conduct on-demand fishing trials in fixed gear fisheries. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On September 8, 2025, NMFS received an EFP application from the Maine Department of Marine Resources (ME DMR), to conduct ventless lobster trap surveys. For additional information, please contact Elise Scholl at (978)281-9189 or at elise.scholl@noaa.gov.

On September 12, 2025, NMFS received a Scientific Research Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) application from the Commercial Fishermen's Research Foundation (CFRF), to conduct its South Fork Wind Farm Beam Trawl Survey. For additional information, please contact Elise

Scholl at (978)281-9189 or at elise.scholl@noaa.gov.

Research Permits and Acknowledgments – Application Review Completed

On June 17, 2025, NMFS issued a Scallop Research-Set-Aside Letter of Authorization (RSA LOA) to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), to conduct compensation harvest of scallops in support of its assessment of scallop abundance and distribution for the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Nantucket Lightship, Closed Area II, and Southern Flank. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov

On June 18, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to Coonamesett Farm Foundation (CFF) to investigate the effects of baiting practices on bycatch of seabirds in gillnets. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov

On July 2, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to CFRF, to conduct its annual lobster and Jonah crab research fleet study. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 2, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute, to conduct a genomic population study of American lobster. For additional information, please contact Caroline Potter at (978) 281-9325 or at caroline.potter@noaa.gov.

On July 7, 2025, NMFS issued an LOA to ME DMR, to conduct its annual Maine New Hampshire inshore trawl survey. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 14, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, to conduct the Eastern Gulf of Maine Sentinel Survey. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 14, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to CFRF to conduct a study evaluating the effects of an increased trip limit for the skate wing fishery. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov

On July 18, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to CFF, to develop an oceanic squid fishery in the Northwest Atlantic. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 18, 2025, NMFS issued a Scientific Research Permit to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, to conduct its Northeast Deep Sea Coral Expedition. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 28, 2025, NMFS issued an Exempted Educational Activity Authorization to Quinn

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Fisheries, to conduct scallop fishing in support of Scallopooza 2025. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 29, 2025, NMFS issued an EFP to Atlantic Capes Fishing, to conduct a surfclam/ocean quahog mixing amendment protocols study. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On July 29, 2025, NMFS issued an LOA to the University of Massachusetts, to conduct a trawl survey for Orsted's Revolution and Sunrise Wind Development Areas. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov

On August 26, 2025, NMFS issued a Scallop RSA LOA to CFRF, to conduct compensation harvest of scallops in support of its study of dredge bag modifications to reduce bycatch of sand dollars and small scallops. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov

On September 4, 2025, NMFS issued an LOA to ME DMR, to conduct its Maine Research Array bottom trawl survey. For additional information, please contact Elise Scholl at (978)281-9189 or at elise.scholl@noaa.gov.

On September 8, 2025, NMFS issued an LOA to VIMS, to conduct its whelk surveys at the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Development Site. For additional information, please contact Christine Ford at (978) 281-9185 or at christine.ford@noaa.gov.

On September 10, 2025, NMFS issued a Scallop RSA LOA to CFRF, to conduct compensation fishing in support of its study expanding a research fleet approach to collecting year-round biological scallop data. For additional information, please contact Ashley Trudeau at (978) 281-9252 or at ashley.trudeau@noaa.gov.

On September 15, 2025, NMFS issued an LOA to the New England Aquarium, to conduct black sea bass and tautog acoustic monitoring in the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Wind Energy Area. For additional information, please contact Elise Scholl at (978)281-9189 or at elise.scholl@noaa.gov.