



## New England Fishery Management Council

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## MEETING SUMMARY

### Skate Advisory Panel

Fairfield Inn, New Bedford, MA

April 23, 2019

The Skate Advisory Panel met on April 23, 2019 in New Bedford, MA to: receive an update on the impacts that recent NEFSC trawl survey issues will have on the upcoming specifications framework for FYs 2020 & 2021 and review recent PDT analysis on limited access, and other business, if necessary.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Mr. Dave Wallace (Chairman), Mr. Greg Connors, Mr. Charlie Dodge, Ms. Andrea Incollingo, Mr. Bill McCann, and Mr. Dan Nordstrom; Dr. Matthew McKenzie (Skate Committee Chair); Lou Goodreau and Fiona Hogan (NEFMC staff). In addition, approximately 5 members of the public attended.

The AP **did not** have quorum; consensus was reached among AP members present.

#### **KEY OUTCOMES:**

- The AP members present recommended separate limited access permits for the skate bait and wing fisheries.
- The AP members present proposed qualification criteria for tiered limited access permits for the skate bait and wing fisheries.

#### **PRESENTATION: SKATE ACTIONS 2019**

Staff updated the AP on the recent issues with the NEFSC trawl survey that will impact the survey indices that are used to set specifications. The presentation and meeting documents can be found at <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/apr-23-2019-skate-advisory-panel-meeting>.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #1: SPECIFICATIONS FOR FYs 2020 & 2021**

The AP asked clarifying questions on specifications. Further discussion on specification will occur after the PDT begin work on the next specification framework.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #2: LIMITED ACCESS/AMENDMENT 5**

Staff provided the AP with an overview of the PDT's analysis for Amendment 5. The presentation and meeting documents can be found at <https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/apr-23-2019-skate-advisory-panel-meeting>.

An AP member was frustrated that the PDT had not provided number of vessels landing various pounds of skate wings. AP members were also frustrated that data were frequently provided as general skate and not broken out by wing or bait fishery. Staff explained that there was currently only one skate permit with

two fisheries operating under that permit. An AP member wanted to preserve the historic participants and their preferred business model. Another AP member was strongly in favor of using the existing control date for the skate bait fishery. Staff explained that if the AP wanted to publish a new control date that a date could not be picked rather the new control date would be the date that it published in the Federal Register.

The AP members present agreed by consensus that limited access was a good way forward for the skate wing and bait fisheries. There was concern that demand could increase for skate bait given current restrictions on herring that could attract effort into that fishery. The AP members present preferred separate limited access permits but skate wing and bait fisheries but vessels that qualified for both permits could continue to participate in both fisheries. The AP members present considered some form of a declaration would be needed to identify which fishery a vessel was operating under on any given trip. The AP members present also agreed by consensus that only one permit type could be fished under on a trip.

Latent effort could occur if vessels active before the control date were no longer active. AP members present didn't see the need to move away from the groundfish DAS currently used because that part of the system worked well. However, some improved flexibility in possession limits and 2 for 1 counting of groundfish DAS was recommended. An AP member noted that the possession limits to be raised, the current 2,600 lb limit was too low and could be caught in less than an hour. AP members present clarified for staff that the price of skate bait can differ between dealers and direct sale to another boat.

The AP members present discussed permit structure and qualification criteria for each fishery. A tiered permit program was recommended for both fisheries. Table 1 summarizes the 3 skate bait permit categories proposed by the AP members present. Qualification criteria for the bait fishery would require a combination of letter of authorization (LOA), the control date, and landings depending on the permit category (Table 1). Each permit category would have a specific possession limit.

Table 2 summarizes the 3 skate wing permit categories proposed by the AP members present. Qualification criteria for the wing fishery would require a minimum of 100,000 lb of skate wings landed in any one year during 2 different time periods (Table 2). The AP members present were not ready to identify appropriate possession limits for the skate wing permit categories until more data were available. An AP member also recommended double DAS counting be set up for the skate wing fishery just like in the monkfish fishery. The AP noted that the time between the skate wing control date and now was fairly short. Some vessels may have joined the wing fishery in that time and not qualify or could qualify for permit category 2. Further discussion on that topic was held until the number of vessels qualifying for each category could be provided.

Public comment:

- John Williamson – I left for an hour to take part in a phone call and you've done a huge amount of work. It's impressive watching this group.

Table 1 – Bait fishery qualification criteria and structure of limited access program as proposed by AP members present at the April 23, 2019 meeting

	Qualification	Trip Limit (lb)
Permit Category 1	LOA prior to CD + active 2014 - 2018	25,000
Permit Category 2	LOA + 50,000 lb in any 1 yr between 09-18	10,000
Permit Category 3	Incidental amounts	1,200

Table 2 – Wing fishery qualification criteria and structure of limited access program as proposed by AP members present at the April 23, 2019 meeting

	Qualification	Trip Limit (lb)
Permit Category 1	landed 100k lb in any 1 yr between FY03-CD	TBD
Permit Category 2	landed 100k lb in any 1 yr between FY14-18	TBD
Permit Category 3	incidental	500