

# CORRESPONDENCE



## 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*

November 21, 2016

Dr. Christopher Moore  
Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Suite 201, 800 N. State Street  
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Dr. Moore:

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) discussed priorities for 2017 at our November Council meeting. The Council is interested in developing an amendment to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan that will consider catch shares for that fishery. Before we initiate that action as lead Council, we would like to know whether the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council shares our interest.

In 2010, our Councils initiated an amendment to consider catch shares in the fishery. As explained in the scoping document, the Councils believed that catch shares would improve the economic performance of the fishery, increase flexibility for fishermen, and would reduce the regulatory burden on fishermen. Scoping hearings were held from Maine to North Carolina in early 2011. The public response to the proposal to develop catch shares was mixed, with fishermen on both sides of the issue. For the next four years the Monkfish Committee struggled to develop the amendment. Ultimately, a lack of progress led to a suspension of the effort in 2014 largely because the Committee could not reach agreement on catch share alternatives. However, interest in considering a catch share program for the monkfish fishery remains high in New England. The issue was raised at a recent Monkfish Committee meeting, and seemed to be supported by some Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council members on the Committee.

Because there appears to be some confusion in the industry, I would like to explain what we mean by a “catch share” program. We use this term in the same way as that used by the National Marine Fisheries Service. A catch share program is a fisheries management strategy that dedicates a secure share of fish to individual fishermen, cooperatives, or fishing communities for their exclusive use.

Our Council has not determined what form of catch share program is best for this fishery. The wide variety of possible catch share alternatives include individual fishing quotas (IFQs) as well as a program similar to groundfish sectors. We are willing to consider the full range of programs that are identified. We believe that by keeping the amendment focused only on catch share alternatives, the Councils will be able to prepare an amendment for consideration in a reasonable time period.

On behalf of the NEFMC, please consult with your Council and determine whether there is interest in an amendment that would consider catch share programs for the Monkfish FMP. Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas A. Nies".

Thomas A. Nies  
Executive Director

cc: Mr. John Bullard, RA, GARFO



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**

800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901  
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)  
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

January 3, 2017

Mr. Tom Nies  
New England Fishery Management Council  
50 Water Street, Mill 2  
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Tom:

At our December 2016 meeting the Council reviewed your letter dated 11/21/16 asking that we consider the initiation of an amendment with the New England Council to consider a catch share program in the monkfish fishery. In general, the Council was supportive of exploring the concept, and recommended holding a meeting of the Monkfish Committee and Advisory Panel to gauge interest in such an action among Mid-Atlantic fishery participants.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

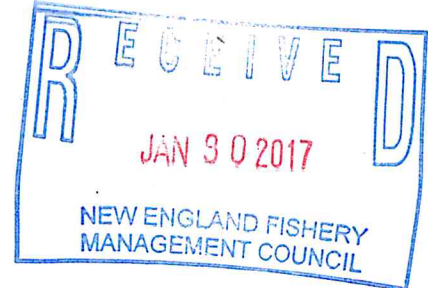
cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, J. Didden



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE  
55 Great Republic Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Emerson Hasbrouck  
Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Marine Program  
423 Griffing Avenue  
Riverhead, NY 11901

JAN 26 2017



Dear Mr. Hasbrouck:

Thank you for your request to include Category E monkfish permit holders in the Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) program. I support the research you are conducting and understand the importance of utilizing the Days-At-Sea (DAS) that your program has acquired, however, this question needs to be further explored by the Monkfish Committee.

The regulations governing the monkfish RSA program specifically identify that this is a DAS set-aside program. Because monkfish RSA DAS are set aside from those available only to limited access permit holders, and because a limited access permit is required to use a monkfish DAS to land more than an incidental amount of monkfish, it follows that a monkfish limited access permit is required to use an RSA DAS. Allowing a Category E monkfish permit, which is not a limited access permit, access to Monkfish DAS or to land an amount of monkfish greater than the incidental catch limit is outside the current scope of the RSA program and is not an adjustment that we can make unilaterally.

We will raise your concerns to the Monkfish Committee. Limited interest in the monkfish RSA program has made it difficult for programs to utilize all of the monkfish RSA DAS and there may be ways to increase participation and improve overall program performance. Meanwhile, I encourage you to reach out to the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils to discuss potential modifications to the RSA program so that your organization can better utilize its RSA DAS. Changes like your request would require a framework adjustment to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan.

Please feel free to contact William Whitmore at (978) 281-9182 or [William.Whitmore@noaa.gov](mailto:William.Whitmore@noaa.gov) with any additional comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

for John K. Bullard  
Regional Administrator

cc: Tom Neis, NEFMC Executive Director  
Chris Moore, MAFMC Executive Director

Attachment



fh 1/31/17

December 8, 2016

William Whitmore

Reid Lichwell

Ryan Silva

Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)

Re: Monkfish RSA Program extending EFP to accommodate E permitted vessels

Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program (CCE) is currently working on a 2016-17 Monkfish RSA funded project entitled, "Fine Scale Genetic Population Structure of Monkfish". For the project, we have received 250 RSA days-at-sea (DAS) for 2016 and 300 DAS for 2017. The DAS are to be utilized by the industry as compensation harvest to fund the research component of the project. RSA DAS are sold to the industry to generate the funds needed for research. To date we have sold 160 of the 2016 RSA DAS and 0 of the 2017 RSA DAS, leaving a balance of 390 RSA DAS remaining unsold at this time. We have contacted all industry partners and continue to market these days. We have received interest from vessel owners South of NY who currently own E category, open access or incidental permitted vessels.

CCE would like to request that NMFS include E category monkfish permit holders in the Monkfish RSA program. Granting this request will enable CCE to fully utilize the allocated RSA DAS granted through the Monkfish RSA program. There has been a decline in the purchase of Monkfish RSA DAS for this project because fishermen are either using previously purchased 2015 RSA DAS or have previously committed to other Monkfish RSA projects. The pool of applicants for purchasing RSA DAS is limited. Only a handful of monk fishermen from Category A, B, C or D have participated since inception of the program. These participants are mostly from the Southern New England area and utilize the full 2 years to use and pay for their RSA DAS. This limits the amount of demand needed to fully fund all projects.

Accommodating our request to include E category vessels will increase opportunity for CCE and other Monkfish RSA programs to fully utilize RSA DAS allocations and open up the field of participants to include areas north and south. Currently, fishermen from the Northern Management Area do not participate in purchasing RSA DAS and fishermen South of NY have not participated either.

Another factor inhibiting the sale of RSA DAS will be the result the Monkfish Specifications for 2017-2019, A 15% increase in days-at-sea allocation for the southern management area equates to an additional 5 days for each permit holder. A trip limit increase for these years has also been determined based on permit category. These increases are a result of under harvest for 2015. Only 52% of the specified TAL was landed for the Southern Area and 71% for the Northern Area in 2015. Currently, small vessel owners fishing for monkfish RSA typically only purchase 2-5 RSA DAS. This 15% increase in 2017 will reduce the amount of current participation.

To completely fund research, it is imperative that all Monkfish RSA DAS allocated to the project must be sold. This can be accomplished by expanding the access to Monkfish RSA DAS to E category permit holders. All Monkfish RSA DAS are previously allocated an amount of effort and catch per day that is figured into the annual TAL. Expanding the approach to fully utilize the RSA allocation and allow increased participation in purchasing Monkfish RSA DAS will not increase the effort already set aside for research compensation harvest. Vessels with E category permits will be listed on the EFP and bound to report for each day used and pounds landed by the confines of the RSA program and the federal exempted fishing permit issued. Reporting RSA DAS can be accomplished through the existing IVR system or vessels satellite, vessel-monitoring system (VMS). Specific instructions are to be followed when using a monkfish RSA DAS such as; calling in to start a RSA DAS, calling out to end a RSA DAS, reporting pounds landed along with permit number and port. Another restriction in place for RSA programs are the limiting amount of vessels listed on the EFP. Current restrictions allow each project to list 50 participants on the permit. This mechanism already in place will inhibit excessive involvement and burden on NMFS.

When the RSA DAS allocations are made to the successful RSA projects, it is assumed in the management process and in TAL projections all of the DAS with their associated harvest limits will be fully utilized. In terms of fishing mortality on the monkfish resource it should not matter what permit category is used to harvest the fish associated with a DAS. A maximum of 3,552 lbs. (whole weight) can be harvested now by A, C, B, D and H permits under a RSA DAS even though the fishery issued DAS landing limits are different for these different permits. Category E permits should likewise be allowed to participate in the total RSA DAS and total harvest will be limited by our EFP.

**Joan O'Leary**

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**From:** Jason and Cheri Amaru <jcamaru5@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2017 10:17 AM  
**To:** comments

To whom it may concern,  
I am opposed to converting the monkfish management plan, or ANY additional fishery management plans, to limited access fisheries.

This has already been proven (with groundfish and scallop) to make a handful of stakeholders very well off, while leaving the majority of fishermen and any new entrants to the fishery at the mercy of market conditions that should not be part of this business.

The limited access management approach is not justifiable; it causes excessive and unnecessary financial burden on most fishermen, particularly in a fishery which is already robust.

In my opinion, as an owner operator who fishes in multiple fisheries, going to limited access hurts small businesses and provides no more protection for the species for which they are developed to protect.

Sincerely,  
Jason Amaru  
FV Joanne A III  
Cape Cod

Ph 5/12/17