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New England Fishery Management Council

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Daniel Salerno, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Recreational Advisory Panel Meeting

Webinar

November 17, 2025

The Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) met on November 17, 2025, via webinar to discuss: 1) Framework Adjustment 72 (FW72)/Specifications and Management Measures, 2) Recreational measures development for fishing year 2026, 3) Recreational fishing data for fishing year 2024 and preliminary fishing year 2025, and 4) Other business, as necessary.

#### **MEETING ATTENDANCE:**

*Recreational Advisory Panel:* Frank Blount (Chair), Jonathon Sterritt (Vice-Chair), Leo Chomen, Rip Cunningham, Patrick Paquette, and Tim Tower

*Groundfish Committee Chair:* John Pappalardo

*New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) Staff:* Robin Frede, Mark Grant, Dr. Jamie Cournane, and Angelia Miller (Maris Collaborative)

*Presenters:* Kimberly Bastille, Lou Carr-Harris, and Dr. Min-Yang Lee (Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC))

In addition, about 14 other people attended. Among them were: Jackie Odell, Melanie Griffin, and Peter Whelan (Groundfish Committee members); Liz Sullivan and Heather Nelson (Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)); Paul Nitschke and Glenn Chamberlain (NEFSC); Matt Ayer and Kelly Whitmore (Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries), Corrin Flora (Maine Department of Marine Resources (ME DMR)); Sefatia Romeo Theken (Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner), Mike Waine (American Sportfishing Association); and Rick Bellavance.

The meeting began at approximately 1:02 pm.

#### **KEY OUTCOMES**

- For FW72: The RAP supports 4.3 Action 3 (Recreational Fishery Management), 4.3.2 Alternative 2 – Establish a Regulatory Process for the Regional Administrator to Adjust Recreational Measures for Cod and Haddock.
- The RAP discussed the latest updates to the bioeconomic model and preliminary catch and effort data for cod and haddock.

## ***AGENDA ITEM #1: FRAMEWORK 72 / SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES***

### ***Presentation by Council staff (Robin Frede):***

Council staff provided an overview of draft Framework Adjustment 72 (FW72) including specifications and management measures.

### ***Questions/Discussion on the presentation:***

The RAP did not have questions specific to the presentation. The chair of the RAP asked a question about any recent management discussions of wolffish. Specifically, has there been any discussion of allowing for wolffish retention of one fish per trip. By comparison, the wolffish ABC is greater than the halibut ABC. In addition, the wolffish catch relative to ABC is low. Council staff indicated that there had not been any recent management discussions on changes in retention of wolffish – but this species is one under consideration in the Council’s review for possible reclassification as an ecosystem component species. Council staff also indicated that the current discard mortality rate for wolffish is 8%, which is considered very low. With no further questions or discussion, the RAP developed the following consensus statement.

### ***CONSENSUS STATEMENT 1***

The RAP supports 4.3 Action 3 (Recreational Fishery Management), 4.3.2 Alternative 2 – Establish a Regulatory Process for the Regional Administrator to Adjust Recreational Measures for Cod and Haddock.

*Rationale:* This alternative provides greater flexibility and efficiency for setting recreational measures for cod and haddock. The timing of the Regional Administrator (RA) consultation with the Council may address the lag in Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data/information (e.g., RAP recommendations in January using as much as possible of prior years’ information).

## ***AGENDA ITEM #2: RECREATIONAL FISHING DATA AND RECREATIONAL MEASURES DEVELOPMENT FOR FISHING YEAR 2026***

### ***Presentation by NEFSC staff (Lou Carr-Harris and Kimberly Bastille):***

NEFSC staff provided an overview of the bioeconomic model and status of the decision support tool.

### ***Questions/Discussion on the presentation:***

A RAP member asked for clarification on the treatment of Massachusetts (MA) data use in bioeconomic model. The member indicated that MA has increased sampling protocols and wondered if that influences the analysis of the recreational catch.

NEFSC staff indicated that the MRIP data is pooled/aggregated, but they were uncertain as to whether “oversampling” in MA compared to other states would influence the model results. For example, if it would lead to less certainty in catch estimation or any bearing on equity between states.

The RAP chair asked if the other cod stocks (not presented today) would be updated for the January RAP meeting. NEFSC staff indicated they had some preliminary information at the end of the presentation (Tables 2 and 3) and reviewed those estimates. All the cod stock estimates would be updated for January. The preliminary information indicates a decline in angler effort from 2024 to 2025 for “old” GOM cod and “old” GB cod for the same waves. The RAP chair indicated that when he looked at the MRIP data that he noticed that angler trips were down except for in Rhode Island. He requested that the state review the information.

Mr. Matt Ayer asked a question on Table 1 noting that the discard mortality rate for haddock (0.15) appeared incorrect as it would be season and size specific<sup>1</sup>. NEFSC staff indicated that they used the rate as an approximation and would correct in the updated analysis for the January RAP meeting.

***AGENDA ITEM #3: OTHER BUSINESS***

Council staff indicated that Council member Pierdinock requested that staff share International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICATT) discussions occurring about bluefin tuna concurrent with the RAP meeting – of which an increased quota may be of general interest. In addition, at the upcoming December Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting<sup>2</sup>, an agenda topic of interest is recreational sector separation. In addition, the Recreational Biology (RecBio) sampling pilot project, which had an original focus of cod, now includes winter flounder. The Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association and Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association are participating in the project.

Council staff also noted that the Council is processing advisory panel applications with notification of appointment anticipated by mid-December.

Mr. Patrick Paquette is retiring from the RAP, after over fifteen years, and he appreciates all the time and support of other members over the years. The RAP chair thanked Mr. Paquette on behalf of the RAP for his service to the recreational community and the Council process.

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 pm.

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<sup>1</sup> Summary of Gulf of Maine haddock recreational discard rates by season, wave and size class.

<b>GOM Haddock Recreational Discard Mortality Rates</b>			
<b>Season</b>	<b>Waves</b>	<b>Size Class (cm)</b>	<b>Estimated Mortality (percent)</b>
Spring	1,2,3	<50	32.1
Spring	1,2,3	>=50	11.3
Fall	4,5,6	<50	74.2
Fall	4,5,6	>=50	45.9

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mafmc.org/briefing/december-2025>