



## New England Fishery Management Council

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Rick Bellavance, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Joint Monkfish and Skate Plan Development Teams

Webinar

July 16, 2025

The Monkfish and Skate Plan Development Teams (PDT) met jointly on July 17, 2025, at 9:00 am to: 1) continue development of analyses of fishery performance and identifying fishery overlaps, and 2) discuss other business, as necessary.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Jenny Couture (Monkfish PDT Chair) and Dr. Rachel Feeney (Skate PDT Chair; Monkfish PDT); Emily Bodell (NEFMC staff); Sharon Benjamin, Laura Deighan, Ashleigh McCord, Matthew Rigdon, Spencer Talmage, and Dr. Sara Turner (NMFS/GARFO); Dr. Jason Boucher, Dr. Chris Legault, and Samantha Werner (NMFS/NEFSC); Jason Didden (MAFMC); Tara Dolan (MADMF); Renee St. Amand (CTDEEP); Matt Gates (Monkfish Committee Chair); and Scott Olszewski (Skate Committee Chair). In addition, about eight other people attended.

#### **KEY OUTCOMES**

- The PDTs discussed data to address Committee tasking and identified next steps.
- The PDTs discussed plans for upcoming meetings, ways to address Executive Order 14276, and the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) omnibus action.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #1: INTRODUCTIONS/ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting opened at 9:00 am. Attendees were introduced. There were no changes to the agenda.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #2: CONTINUE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIFICATIONS ACTIONS FOR BOTH FISHERIES**

The PDTs discussed progress on fulfilling the eight tasks provided by the Joint Monkfish-Skate Committee in March. For each task, Council staff presented the task and data that had been pulled thus far, which was followed by questions and discussions to identify additional work needed for each task. A member of the Joint Monkfish-Skate Committee provided feedback and recommendations as well.

#### *Follow-ups:*

- Couture, Feeney: coordinate follow up data acquisition and analyses and lead generation of a document to the Committees including the data and discussion.
- Bodell: Assist with developing documentation.
- Turner: If time allows, provide data on monkfish and skate activity on declared groundfish trips for task #2 and trip level data for task #3, otherwise the PDT plans to provide the Committee with data pulled for prior actions.
- Werner: Write a short paragraph summarizing a nascent NOAA workgroup on understanding foreign markets.
- All PDT: Review documentation when available.

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

#### ***Other Meetings***

The PDTs reviewed the timeline and work expected for upcoming meetings of the PDTs, Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Advisory Panels, and Committees to prepare specifications for final action by the Council in September (and October for monkfish by the Mid-Atlantic Council). The PDT expects the data update by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center by August 1 and will be developing information for the SSC during the next individual PDT meetings on August 5 (skates) and August 7 (monkfish).

#### ***Executive Order (EO) 14276: Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness***

By August 15, the PDTs need to deliver recommendations on ideas for addressing this EO to the Council's Executive Director. The ideas need to focus on Council actions that would reduce burdens on domestic fishing, increase production, stabilize markets, improve access, enhance economic profitability, and prevent closures. The Council would commit to a work plan for any action items it puts forth.

#### ***Follow-ups:***

- Feeney: Resend link to the list of ideas generated by the PDTs in late spring.
- All PDT: Review ideas by August 6.
- Council/SFD staff: Review list for feasibility and prioritization and submit to the Council's Executive Director by August 15.

#### ***Omnibus action on essential fish habitat (EFH) designations***

Council staff reported on work by PDT members to provide input on draft EFH designations being considered in 2025. It was noted that the Habitat PDT will meet on the afternoon of July 21 to review input received across PDTs in which EFH designations are being updated in 2025. Monkfish and Skate PDT members were encouraged to attend if they want to give additional input.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.