



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

May 18, 2023

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your April 26 letter providing recommendations for the 2023 Skate Management Track Stock Assessment. The NEFSC is grateful to have a better understanding of the science-related management needs for the skate stocks, as clearly elucidated in your letter. Although the Assessment Oversight Panel review for the 2023 Skate Management Track Stock Assessment has not yet occurred, discussion with the assessment lead for skates indicates that inclusion of the following recommendations is likely to proceed:

Recreational data in the catch time series

An evaluation of the methods for attributing commercial fishery landings and recreational catch by species

A reevaluation of the biomass targets for thorny skate

The Gulf of Maine longline survey index

Again, the NEFSC thanks you for the opportunity to better understand your science-related management needs for skates and cooperatively develop the best possible assessment.

Respectfully,

Jon Hare, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director

Cc: Kristan Blackhart
Katherine Sosebee
Tasker

