



## New England Fishery Management Council

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# DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

## Skate Advisory Panel

Hilton Providence, Providence, RI

May 21, 2019

The Skate Advisory Panel met on May 21, 2019 in Providence, RI to: review recent PDT analysis on limited access, define objectives for limited access, and other business, if necessary.

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

### **KEY OUTCOMES:**

- The AP identified potential objectives for limited access in the skate wing and bait fisheries for consideration by the Committee.
- The AP recommended separate management for the skate wing and bait fisheries.
- The AP recommended the Committee consider an ITQ program for the NE skate complex with regards to the skate wing fishery.

### **AGENDA ITEM #1: LIMITED ACCESS (LA)**

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/may-21-2019-skate-advisory-panel-meeting>.

The AP supported the separation of management for the skate wing and bait fisheries. The AP discussed the objectives derived from the scoping comments. The AP was not in favor of any objective that might restrict where landings could occur because fish move. The AP was strongly in favor of limiting access to the wing and bait fisheries to help prevent the triggering of the incidental possession limits. There was concern that the dynamic nature of fisheries could result in additional pressure from other fisheries shifting onto skate, e.g. reduced herring quota may increase need for skate bait. The demand for skate racks might also increase as the price is increasing (currently ~\$0.15/lb). An AP member thought that existing effort, in the skate wing and bait fisheries, was too high because of the abundance of groundfish DAS that are available. Limited access wouldn't solve this problem but was considered a good first step. Another AP member didn't want limited access to affect other fisheries that couldn't operate without landing skate. An AP member was concerned that limited access could further reduce the TAL, which was considered artificially low to begin with.

The AP didn't consider GF DAS to be a true barrier to harvest skate because of their low price and high abundance, further supporting the need for limited access. The potential need for sub-ACLs as part of

skate limited access was a deal breaker for the group. AP members considered that if an ITQ system was developed as part of limited access, ITQs would only be used on the focused wing fishery with any other user groups not part of an ITQ program but instead in a similar program to the common pool for groundfish. This was considered a good way to help the directed fishery without forcing other fisheries to account for their discards. Most of the AP members participating in the wing fishery were in favor of ITQs for the wing fishery. Reasons for implementing an ITQ program included reduced discards and improved product quality from harvesting gear when the vessel is ready. The AP members participating in the bait fishery were strongly opposed to ITQs in the bait fishery. The AP was not concerned about permits gaining value after a limited access program was established. The AP was in favor of maintaining the use of GF DAS and not creating a skate DAS program.

**1. MOTION: Platz/Connors**

That we separate the skate bait from the skate wing fishery for management.

**MOTION #1 CARRIED 7-0-0.**

**2. MOTION: Platz/Connors**

Recommend that the Committee consider developing ITQ options for the NE skate complex with regards to the skate wing fishery.

An AP member was very concerned that an ITQ program would shift skate management to a species-specific approach, which would reduce the TALs by removing the species that are not currently caught from the ABC calculation. Another AP member considered the ITQ program to continue to include all 7 species and not just be limited to winter skate. An AP member noted that allowing the landing of barndoor skate cut into the winter skate possession limit. The motion was friendly amended to include the NE skate complex, which would indicate the AP meant all 7 species were to be included in an ITQ program. An AP member participating in the wing fishery was opposed to an ITQ because it could limit access for associated fisheries. It might be more favorable if limited access was implemented first and after 12 years or so, ITQs could be considered. Monopolization of fisheries were a concern. If an ITQ program was not implemented, the fishery could operate under GF DAS with a tiered permit system. An AP member recommended that the availability of GF DAS should be restricted to help curb effort in that scenario.

**MOTION #2 CARRIED 4-3-0.**

DAS were considered to produce discards whereas ITQs were thought to reduce discards. An AP member informed the group that the directed fishery produced the lowest amount of discards. The AP agreed by consensus to recommend the continued use of GF DAS in a limited access program for the bait fishery and wing fishery, unless ITQs were developed for the directed wing fishery.

The AP agreed with the following objectives derived from the scoping comments:

- Limitation of participants could help prevent overfishing and overcapacity that would reduce the likelihood of triggering of the incidental possession limit
- LA would protect the business and access to skates for vessels that built the fishery
- Could improve efficiency for participating vessels – e.g. if ITQ in the wing fishery is created
- Reduce the ability to shift effort onto skates
- Allow some separation of bait and wing management

The AP further discussed the opposition to ITQs in the bait fishery. The primary concern for an AP member was how it would work on a complex and not require the breakup of that complex. Other AP members reiterated that ITQ management would occur after the split in TALs and therefore not break up the complex. If the TALs decreased, then the percentage of the TAL allocated to the ITQ program would also decrease.

Consensus statement: Objectives for the LA amendment should include:

- skate wing and bait fisheries staying open year-round,
- for skate and monkfish fisheries to be managed in harmony,
- efficient,
- profitable,
- and sustainable resource.

The AP discussed revising the qualification criteria in order to capture more of the fishery participants. The first round of recommended qualification criteria made at the April 23, 2019 meeting was considered preliminary, except for the 100,000 lb required minimum landings of wings required to qualify for the directed fishery. The AP recommended the Committee task the PDT to revise the qualification criteria with the intention to categorize the permits that didn't meet the definitions of the previous categories (Table 1). The AP also wanted the PDT to take a closer look at the uncategorized permits in the bait fishery to see if they are truly incidental or are relying on skate bait to some extent.

Table 1 – Revised qualification criteria for limited access in the skate wing fishery.

Wing Limited Access	Qualification	Qualification
Permit Category 1	landed 100k lb in any 1 yr between FY03-CD	landed 100k lb in any 1 yr between CD-18
Permit Category 2	landed 75k lb in any 1 yr between FY03-CD	landed 75k lb in any 1 yr between CD-18
Permit Category 3	landed 50k lb in any 1 yr between FY03-CD	landed 50k lb in any 1 yr between CD-18
Permit Category 4	landed 25l lb in any 1 yr between FY03-CD	landed 25l lb in any 1 yr between CD-18
Permit Category 5	incidental	incidental