



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*

MEETING SUMMARY

Northeast Skate Complex Plan Development Team

Webinar

February 24, 2020

The Northeast Skate Complex Plan Development Team (Skate PDT) met on February 24, 2020 at 1:00 pm via webinar to discuss Amendment 5 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan, and other business.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Rachel Feeney (PDT Chair); Cynthia Ferrio, Ashleigh McCord and John Sullivan (GARFO); Jenny Couture and Lou Goodreau (Council staff); Eric Schneider (RI DEM DMF); and Walter Anoushian, Trish Clay, Kathy Sosebee and Samantha Werner (NEFSC).

UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trish Clay and Samantha Werner were welcomed as new members of the Skate PDT. John Whiteside has been appointed chairman of the Skate Advisory Panel. The next joint Skate AP/Cte meeting is March 26 in New Bedford.

AMENDMENT 5

Draft PDT memo on skate fishery data

The PDT discussed work to date on the October 2019 Committee tasking to provide additional fishery data. The PDT is preparing a memo to be finalized mid-March. Since the last meeting, additional trips were found in the data with duplicate records or landings doubled from the source data. A method was developed to fix this issue and the data in the memo has been updated. Also, there are trips where it appears that the disposition code is wrong, that what is coded as wing is likely bait. The PDT agreed to show the source data in the memo, flagging what appears to be trips with data errors. The PDT discussed what can be done to examine and correct these potential errors.

The data have not yet been checked to ensure that they meet the data confidentiality standard of having three dealers represented. Dealer number is not in the dataset that the PDT is working with. The PDT will have to do this.

Through removing data errors, the landings undeclared over incidental limits and landings exceeding possession limits have been greatly reduced. The PDT will describe these landings to the degree it can, given confidentiality constraints (e.g., paragraphs vs tables).

The PDT discussed possible steps towards improved reporting and compliance, including use of the outreach staff at GARFO (e.g., port agents).

Follow-ups

- Goodreau/Couture – Provide Sullivan with a spreadsheet of records with potential data errors to forward to the quality control staff within APSD at GARFO.
- Goodreau/Sullivan/Couture – Discuss the most efficient way to incorporate dealer number to check for data confidentiality issues.
- Couture – For undeclared wing landings over incidental limits, describe area, gear and other information to the degree data confidentiality allows.
- Goodreau – If time allows, determine the percent of skate dependence relative to other species landed on the trip by skate revenue by declaration (with a focus on monkfish, northeast multispecies, scallop, and undeclared declarations)
- Feeney – Coordinate memo finalization.

Draft PDT memo on the history of Amendment 5 development

The PDT reviewed a draft memo with past motions, scoping information, current objectives, etc. The PDT agreed that, for now, the history does not need to precede development of the skate bait control date (in 2009). An analysis of potential landings under current possession limits was presented. The PDT agreed that the analysis should be included with FY 2020 limits.

OTHER BUSINESS

2020-2024 Council Research Priorities

The PDT reviewed the draft memo on its research priority recommendations, which now includes notes from the NEFSC on related work it is doing. No PDT comments. Memo will be finalized soon.

Thorny skate research updates

The PDT will plan to have updates on thorny skate research at the next meeting. Work by other researchers may be presented at future meetings.

Plan for 2020 Annual Monitoring Report

The PDT discussed (again) how the change to the skate assessment schedule may impact creation of the 2020 annual monitoring report. After additional communication between NEFSC and NEFMC staff, Dr. Sosebee will plan to provide the PDT with the data and analyses it normally uses in creation of the annual monitoring report. Timing of the assessment process next year may be quicker than was originally estimated to better align with the specifications process.

Next Skate PDT meeting

The next in-person meeting will be after the April Council meeting. No interim webinars are scheduled at this point.

The meeting adjourned at about 3:00 p.m.