



New England Fishery Management Council

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Council Selects Cate O'Keefe to be Next Executive Director

The New England Fishery Management Council has chosen Dr. Catherine "Cate" O'Keefe of South Dartmouth, Massachusetts to be its next executive director. Cate will replace Tom Nies, who is [retiring](#).

Cate has over 20 years of experience in fisheries science and management. She is the owner of [Fishery Applications Consulting Team](#). As its principal consultant, she has provided technical, research, and facilitation services to a wide range of clients, including the New England Council for scallop and monkfish projects. She also has provided services to offshore wind energy companies, fishing industry organizations, global consulting firms, academic institutions, and research organizations. She currently serves as vice chair of the Council's [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#).

Cate earned her doctoral degree at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST). Her dissertation was titled: "An incentive-based, collaborative approach to maximize yield by avoiding bycatch in the US sea scallop fishery." She earned a master's degree through the Boston University Marine Program in Woods Hole and a bachelor of arts in biology and fisheries from Hampshire College.



Dr. Catherine "Cate" O'Keefe

"Extensive Experience"

Cate spent four years as a marine science and policy analyst at the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries prior to launching her own business. Before that, she held several positions at SMAST, climbing the ladder from research technician to research assistant to research professor to adjunct faculty. During her time at SMAST, she oversaw and managed the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute's seven-year \$25 million budget.

Council Chair Eric Reid said, "Dr. O'Keefe has extensive experience with New England fisheries, and her broad-based background makes her uniquely suited for this position. We look forward to advancing the work of the Council under her leadership."



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HOW WE GOT HERE: After Executive Director Nies announced his retirement in January, the Council [solicited a contractor](#) to help conduct a nationwide search for his replacement. The Council took this step to ensure it carried out a thoughtful, objective, and trusted search process. A vacancy announcement for the position was issued on [April 5, 2023](#).

A Search Committee, which was made up of the Council's [Executive Committee](#) and the NOAA Fisheries regional administrator, conducted an initial round of interviews among a pool of highly qualified candidates. The full Council then met with the finalists in closed session on [May 31, 2023](#). Cate was offered and accepted the position on June 1, 2023.

Cate is expected to assume her new duties in mid-July. She will attend the Council's [June 27-29, 2023](#) meeting in Freeport, ME, which will be Tom Nies' last in his official capacity as executive director. The meeting will culminate Tom's 26-year career with the Council, 10 years of which he served as executive director, managing a [20-member staff](#) and reporting directly to the Council chair.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S WIDE SKILL SET: Cate is well known for being a dynamic, approachable, and detail-oriented colleague in a broad range of scientific and management circles. She has experience on commercial fishing vessels and with offshore survey work, as well as with the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Her familiarity with the Council's plan development teams and her grant-writing and

budget-management skills are all key assets that will facilitate a smooth transition from one executive director to the next.

Cate has received numerous recognition awards and has several professional affiliations, including membership in the American Fisheries Society and the American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists, in which she currently serves as president. She has authored or co-authored over two dozen scientific publications and reports.

"I'm honored to have been selected as the next executive director," said Cate. "I'm truly excited to join the Council community. I look forward to working collaboratively with Council staff and regional partners to support the New England Council and our region's invaluable fishing industries."



At left, Dr. Catherine "Cate" O'Keefe enjoying time on the water.
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