



New England Fishery Management Council

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Council Signs Off on Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework

The New England Fishery Management Council has finalized a framework adjustment to the [Atlantic Salmon Fishery Management Plan](#) (FMP) that will make it possible for industry members who obtain a letter of authorization from NOAA Fisheries to possess farm-raised Atlantic salmon in federal waters.

The Council's [original FMP](#) prohibits directed fishing and possession of Atlantic salmon in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). However, the FMP also gives the Council the ability to develop a framework action to authorize salmon aquaculture in federal waters – if it chooses to do so.

The possible need for action arose after a private business, Blue Water Fisheries, proposed a commercial-scale marine finfish aquaculture facility in federal waters roughly 7.5 miles east-northeast of Newburyport Harbor, MA. This prompted the Council to initiate Framework Adjustment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP in [September 2022](#) to establish a clear path forward for offshore aquaculture projects in general.

Offshore aquaculture facilities are permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, while the Council has authority to regulate fishing and fishing vessels. The Council's authority broadly covers at-sea operations that support the taking, harvesting, or processing of fish and includes the authority to regulate aquaculture fishing activities.

WHAT WILL CHANGE: In general, the goal of Framework 1 is to facilitate the legal possession of aquaculture-raised Atlantic salmon within the Council's jurisdiction by:

- Adjusting the management measures that prohibit the possession and harvest of wild Atlantic salmon in the EEZ to allow for possession of farm-raised salmon; and
- Ensure that aquaculture projects in the EEZ are conducted in a manner consistent

Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework Objectives At-a-Glance



- Differentiate authorized possession of farm-raised salmon from unauthorized possession of wild fish to allow for enforcement;
- Ensure federal dealers can purchase farmed salmon;
- Identify and address monitoring concerns;
- Identify and address reporting concerns;
- Avoid duplication of requirements by other agencies;
- And develop a generic adjustment to the FMP that will apply to farmed-salmon projects going forward.



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with the goals and objectives of the Atlantic Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

IMPORTANT: This framework is not implementing or sanctioning any specific aquaculture project. Rather, it is an overarching action to simply remove the prohibition on farmed-raised salmon in federal waters and remain consistent with the FMP's conservation objectives. The Council intends to consult with federal agencies, including NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, during permitting for individual projects as described in the Council's [Aquaculture Policy](#).

LOA AND GEAR STOWAGE: The Council's preferred alternative in Framework 1 is to:

- Allow possession of farm-raised Atlantic salmon through a letter of authorization (LOA) issued by NOAA Fisheries; and
- Require that wild-capture fisheries gear onboard vessels participating in offshore aquaculture operations be properly stowed and not available for immediate use as defined in existing regulations.

The Council determined that, at a minimum, the LOA should include:

- The name of the aquaculture company;
- The names and permit numbers of all vessels associated with the operation that might have farmed salmon onboard;
- The offshore location and permit numbers for the operation;
- The source of the farmed salmon;
- A list of other species being farmed that might also be onboard the vessel; and
- The point-of-contact for the project.

The Council further specified that the LOA could contain other information required by the regional administrator of the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office of NOAA Fisheries.

The Council voted on [April 18, 2023](#) during its meeting in Mystic, Connecticut to submit the framework to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation.

Atlantic Salmon Fishery Management Plan

Framework Adjustment 1

Including an Environmental Assessment and
Regulatory Flexibility Analysis



DRAFT

April 7, 2023

Prepared by the
New England Fishery Management Council
In consultation with the
National Marine Fisheries Service



*Download a copy of the draft framework adjustment [HERE](#).
Learn more about this action on the Atlantic Salmon Framework 1
[webpage](#). **Questions?** Contact Michelle Bachman, the Council's
habitat coordinator, at mbachman@nefmc.org.*