



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*

*****REVISED*****

**NOTICE OF SCOPING HEARINGS
AMENDMENT 5 TO THE NORTHEAST SKATE FISHERY**

Date and Time

Location

Portsmouth, NH Tuesday, January 24, 2017 5:00 p.m. (or immediately following the Council Meeting)	Sheraton Harborside Hotel 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801
Via Webinar Tuesday, January 31, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Webinar Hearing Register to participate: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/194149773 Call in info: Toll: +1 (646) 749-3122 Access Code: 194-149-773
Buzzards Bay, MA Tuesday, February 7, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Mass Maritime 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532
Narragansett, RI Thursday, February 9, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Graduate School of Oceanography Coastal Institute Building – Hazard Room 215 S Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882
<u>PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE</u> Cape May, NJ Tuesday, February 21, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Grand Hotel of Cape May 1045 Beach Avenue, Cape May, NJ 08204
<u>PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE</u> Montauk, NY Wednesday, February 22, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Montauk Playhouse Community Center Foundation, Inc. 240 Edgemere Street, Montauk, New York 11954

The New England Fishery Management Council is conducting six public hearings to solicit comments on developing Amendment 5 to the Northeast Skate Fishery. The purpose of this action is to implement measures that would prevent unrestrained increases in fishing effort by new entrants to the fishery. The need for the amendment is to reduce the potential for a rapid escalation of effort in the skate fisheries, possibly causing overfishing and having a negative effect on the wing and bait markets, both outcomes having negative effects on fishery participants.

Through limited access criteria and measures that would apply to qualifying and non-qualifying vessels, the amendment is intended to help ensure that catches of the skate and other non-target species will be at or below specifications, reducing the potential for causing accountability measures to be triggered and resulting closure of the directed fishery. Three types of measures listed below could be considered. The scoping document includes a list of questions to consider when commenting for each of the following: 1) Limited access qualification criteria that would determine whether vessels may target skates; 2) Limited access permit characteristics and conditions; and 3) Permit categories and associated measures.

Addressing this purpose and need requires the development of an amendment to the FMP to fully consider and analyze an appropriate range of management alternatives. The Council is seeking comments and input from the public on this specific issue. The hearings are being held by the Council in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

A scoping document is available on the Council's website (<http://www.nefmc.org/library/amendment-5-3>) or may be obtained by contacting the Council office at (978) 465-0492.

Members of the public may submit oral and/or written comments at any public hearings or submit written comments directly to the New England Fishery Management Council. Written comments must be received on or before 5 p.m. EST, Monday, March 6, 2017.

Written comments should be sent to:

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950
Fax (978) 465-3116
Email: comments@nefmc.org

Please note on your correspondence; "Northeast Skate Complex Amendment 5 Scoping Comments."

*This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 USC 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.
This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities.*

This schedule is subject to change. If you have questions, please call the Council office

Directions:

Please contact the Council office for directions to the above meetings.

cc: Council Members, Skate IPs, AP and PDTs

Notice date: January 17, 2017