



New England Fishery Management Council

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***A national program for the conservation and management of the fishery resources of the United States is necessary to prevent overfishing, to rebuild overfished stocks, to insure conservation, to facilitate long-term protection of essential fish habitats, and to realize the full potential of the Nation's fishery resources.
(Magnuson-Stevens Act)***

The New England Council, one of eight regional councils established by federal legislation in 1976, is charged with conserving and managing fishery resources from three to 200 miles off the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Rhode Island and Connecticut. The management authority of the Council extends to the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and southern New England, and overlaps with the Mid-Atlantic Council for some species in that region. Presently, the Council has nine fishery management plans (FMPs) in effect: Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish), Scallop,



Monkfish, Herring, Small Mesh Multispecies (whiting and two stocks of hake), Red Crab, and a plan for the Northeast Skate Complex, as well as two additional plans that are prepared jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Council, Monkfish and Spiny Dogfish.

The twenty-two member Council is made up of both federal and state officials as well as members who, by reason of their occupational or other experience, scientific expertise, or training, are

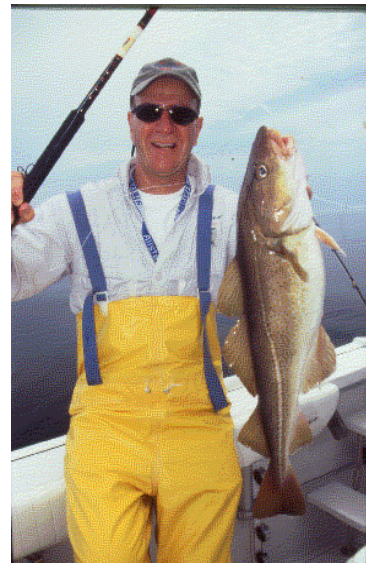
knowledgeable regarding the conservation and management, or the commercial or recreational harvest of the fishery resources in the New England region. These include the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the principal state officials with marine fishery management responsibility for Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut and twelve members nominated by the governors of the New England coastal states and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce for three-year terms. In addition, four non-voting members represent the United States Coast Guard, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of State, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The Council meets approximately five or six times a year. To more efficiently develop alternatives and management measures for Council consideration and eventual inclusion in a fishery management plan, each Council member serves on one or more oversight committees that meet independently throughout the year. Committees are related to a specific fishery or management issue.

Oversight Committees meet regularly to review and discuss individual fishery management plans and develop specific measures that will form the basis of the plan, plan amendment or framework adjustment to an FMP. Oversight committee recommendations are forwarded to the full Council for approval before inclusion in draft plans and accompanying documents such as Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements.

Advisory Panels are made up of members from the fishing industry (from both commercial and recreational sectors), scientists, environmental advocates, and others with knowledge and experience related to fisheries issues. They meet separately or jointly with the relevant oversight committee and provide input and assistance in developing management plan measures. Advisors are appointed every three years following a solicitation for candidates. After reviewing applications, the respective oversight committee chairman selects new or returning advisors. The Council's Executive Committee provides final approval of advisory panel members.

Plan Development Teams (PDTs) are made up of scientists, managers and other experts with knowledge and experience related to the biology and/or management of a particular species. Individuals serve as an extension of the Council staff. PDTs meet regularly to respond to any direction provided by the oversight committee or Council, to provide analysis of species-related information and to develop issue papers, alternatives, and other documents as appropriate. A member of the Council staff generally chairs each PDT and the team members are from state, federal, academic or other institutions.



The Council utilizes the recommendations of its committees, the advice of its advisory panels and the analyses provided by the PDTs, as well as the testimony of affected stakeholders and the public in considering proposed management actions. It is this cooperation, as well as partnerships with other agencies and organizations, coupled with a transparent process that forms the basis of the Council system.

Once fully approved by the Council, management actions are sent to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval. Generally, NOAA Fisheries acts on behalf of the Secretary to determine if all fishery management plan elements comport with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. The Secretary can approve, partially approve or disapprove a Council FMP. Once approved, measures go through a two-step process in which they are available for public comment as proposed and ultimately final regulations.

For further information about the New England Council and its activities, contact Patricia Fiorelli, Public Affairs Officer at 978.465.0492.