

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## 50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 072098C]

## New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 2-day public meeting on August 10 and August 11, 1998, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Monday, August 10, 1998, at 9 a.m. and on Tuesday, August 11, at 8:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Peabody Marriott Hotel, 8A Centennial Drive, Peabody, MA 01960; telephone (978) 977-9700. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1097; telephone: (781) 231-0422.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council (781) 231-0422.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Monday, August 10, 1998**

There will be a Stock Assessment Public Review Workshop on the status of haddock, Gulf of Maine cod, Georges Bank cod and Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, Southern New England yellowtail flounder, Atlantic herring, scup, black sea bass, and ocean quahogs. A special agenda item will be the initiation of consideration of emergency action for Gulf of Maine cod. The Groundfish Committee will then review public comments and committee and advisory panel recommendations on Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Northeast Multispecies Fishery. The measures being considered for final approval at this meeting are associated with new overfishing definitions and the specification of optimum yield (OY) as required by the Sustainable Fisheries Act, rebuilding winter flounder stocks, conserving Atlantic halibut, mesh size changes to reduce the bycatch of

flounders, and a prohibition of streetsweeper trawl gear. The committee will also review other issues under its consideration: The inclusion of cusk and wolffish in the FMP management unit, the transfer of days-at-sea (DAS), and the upcoming annual FMP adjustment (including measures to protect Gulf of Maine cod).

During the afternoon session, the Council will approve a public hearing document for the whiting amendment to the Northeast Multispecies FMP, including any new options brought before the Council, and the associated Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Measures in the public hearing document will include revised overfishing definitions and the specification of OY, a moratorium on commercial whiting permits, restrictions on the transfer of whiting and red hake at sea, options for management through whiting DAS, and management alternatives for northern and southern management areas and the Cultivator Shoal fishery. The Habitat Committee will review public comments received on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment followed by consideration and approval of final designations for EFH and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC), including management measures associated with the juvenile cod HAPCs. The day will conclude with the Herring Committee report, during which the Council will review public comments, committee and advisory panel recommendations, and vote on final management measures for inclusion in the Atlantic Herring FMP.

**August 11, 1998**

During the Sea Scallop Committee Report, there will be a briefing on the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee review of the sea scallop overfishing definition, scientific information on which management measures are based, and the stock rebuilding proposals under consideration for inclusion in Amendment 7 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP. There will also be consideration of committee and advisory panel recommendations and public comments on the Amendment 7 proposals to rebuild stocks, followed by approval of measures by the Council. The report will include an update on the status of the experimental fishery for scallops in the Georges Bank closed areas. During the Monkfish Committee Report, the Council will review and approve the final Monkfish FMP

documents for submission to the Secretary of Commerce. Following the election of 1998-99 Council officers, the Interspecies Committee will ask for approval of an amendment that would improve consistency among New England and Mid-Atlantic Council fishery management plans concerning vessel permitting and upgrading. This action would amend the New England Council's Atlantic Sea Scallop, Northeast Multispecies and American Lobster Plans and the Mid-Atlantic Council's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan, the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish Plan, and the Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Plan. Comments on the NMFS draft report to Congress titled "Proposed Implementation of a Fishing Vessel Registration and Fisheries Management Information System" will also be approved. The Mid-Atlantic Plans Committee will ask for approval of a Council position on mackerel joint venture allocations, summer flounder discards, and other issues, as well as seek approval of a public hearing document for dogfish management measures. Following any other outstanding business, the day will conclude with reports from the Council Chairman, Executive Director, NMFS Northeast Region Administrator, Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, and representatives of the Coast Guard and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.

**Special Accommodations**

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: July 21, 1998.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
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