

**Note:** The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

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

Dated: July 30, 2020.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-16915 Filed 8-3-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA331]

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Habitat Joint Committee and Advisory Panel via webinar to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This meeting will be held on Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** All meeting participants and interested parties can register to join the webinar at <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/55113428730454027>.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Agenda

The Joint Committee and Advisory Panel plan to discuss habitat-related aspects of regional offshore wind development, including essential fish habitat consultations, habitat mapping recommendations, and benthic survey guidance, including mechanisms for Council involvement. Updates on science planning, upcoming meetings, and specific projects. They will also receive an overview of aquaculture and submarine cable activities in New England, including environmental effects and best management practices

for mitigating these effects. Identify next steps for drafting Council policies on these issues. Discuss plans for updated offshore wind policy. The Committee and Advisory Panel will recommend actions to “reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries,” as requested in the Executive Order on Promoting Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth. They also plan to discuss and recommend habitat-related work priorities for 2021. Other business may be discussed as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council’s intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the date. This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

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

Dated: July 30, 2020.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA319]

#### Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The MAFMC’s Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel (AP) will meet to develop a Fishery Performance Report and/or other recommendations for spiny dogfish specifications.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Wednesday, August 19, 2020, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar link is: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/dogfishap2020/>.

*Council address:* Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N. State St., Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D. Executive Director, MAFMC; telephone: (302) 526-5255. The MAFMC’s website, [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org) also has details on the proposed agenda, webinar access, and briefing materials.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the meeting is to create a Fishery Performance Report by the MAFMC’s Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel. The report facilitates structured input from the Advisory Panel members into the specifications development process.

#### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aid should be directed to M. Jan Saunders, (302) 526-5251, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: July 30, 2020.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-16916 Filed 8-3-20; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA297]

#### Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an application submitted by the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance for the renewal of an exempted fishing permit contains all of the required

information and warrants further consideration. This exempted fishing permit would allow two commercial fishing vessels participating in an electronic monitoring program to fish in the Southern New England Regulated Mesh Area with a 6-inch (15.24 cm) diamond mesh codend. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed exempted fishing permits.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before August 19, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit written comments by the following method:

- *Email:* [nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov).

Include in the subject line "6-INCH MESH CODEND EM EFP."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Spencer Talmage, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9232.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On June 5, 2020, the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance (Alliance) submitted an application for a renewal of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) which would exempt two trawl vessels from the codend minimum mesh size restriction in the Southern New England (SNE) Regulated Mesh Area (RMA), as found in 50 CFR 648.80(b)(2)(i), to conduct an exploratory fishing project. Fishermen have reported a seasonally appearing abundance of haddock in the SNE RMA, and a 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh codend is intended to increase harvest of haddock while reducing discards of flounder species, relative to the current codend minimum mesh size of 6.5 inches (16.51 cm).

We issued the fishing year 2019 EFP in December 2019, and the EFP ended on April 30, 2020. The study period under the 2019 EFP did not provide sufficient time for participating vessels to fish for haddock with the 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh codend. Vessels completed only one tow on a single trip with the gear and encountered no haddock. The Alliance submitted a renewal application so that exploratory fishing could be completed, and requests an expanded study period from September 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021. This would provide an opportunity for participating vessels to locate and fish for seasonally available haddock when present. This EFP would be identical to the EFP issued for the 2019 fishing year.

Participating vessels would conduct commercial fishing with the 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh codend in SNE, specifically statistical areas 537, 539, 611, and 613. The application

estimates that each of the two vessels participating with the exemption from minimum codend mesh size would take 35 day-trips during the project. Of the 35 trips that each vessel plans to take during that time period, the number of trips taken with a 6-inch (15.24-cm) mesh codend under the proposed EFP would vary, based on the presence of haddock. On EFP trips, four to five hauls would be made per day, with each tow length averaging 2 to 3 hours. While on these trips, vessels may switch back to a standard 6.5-inch (16.51-cm) mesh codend to retain operational flexibility.

The applicant states that a switch from a 6.5-inch (16.51-cm) square mesh codend to the 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh codend would improve catch of haddock, a healthy stock, while reducing catch of several flounder species. Based on a codend mesh selectivity study which compared retention length and size selection range for 6.5- and 6-inch (16.51- and 15.24-cm) square and diamond mesh, the applicant additionally states that 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh is unlikely to retain undersized haddock (He, 2007).

The participating vessels must also participate in the audit-model electronic monitoring (EM) program, and participating vessels are required to use EM on 100 percent of trips. Vessels must adhere to a vessel-specific monitoring plan detailing at-sea catch handling protocols. Vessels also submit haul-level electronic vessel trip reports (eVTR) with count and weight estimates for all groundfish discards. The Alliance would compare the discard data collected from trips taken by vessels fishing with a 6-inch (15.24-cm) diamond mesh codend to trips with the standard 6.5-inch (16.51-cm) mesh codend. The Alliance states that this comparison would also demonstrate the usefulness of EM systems as tools for research.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

**References**

He, P. (2007). Selectivity of large mesh trawl codends in the Gulf of Maine: I. Comparison of square and diamond mesh. *Fisheries Research*, 83(1), 44-59.

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

Dated: July 29, 2020.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-16867 Filed 8-3-20; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648-XA284]

**Fisheries of the South Atlantic; South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council/SAFMC) will hold a meeting of its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) via webinar. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**DATES:** The SSC meeting will take place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:**

*Meeting address:* The meeting will be held via webinar.

*Council address:* South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N Charleston, SC 29405.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; phone: (843) 571-4366 or toll free: (866) SAFMC-10; fax: (843) 769-4520; email: [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The meeting is open to the public via webinar as it occurs. Webinar registration is required. Information regarding webinar registration will be posted to the Council's website at: <http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meetings/> as it becomes available. The meeting agenda, briefing book materials, and online comment form will be posted to the Council's website two weeks prior to the meeting. Written comment on SSC agenda topics is to be distributed to the Committee through the Council office, similar to all other briefing materials. Written comment to be considered by the SSC shall be provided to the Council office no later than one week prior to an SSC meeting. For this meeting, the deadline for