



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF725]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

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

DATES: This webinar will be held on Friday, May 29, 2026, at 9 a.m. Webinar registration URL information:

https://nefmc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/ytzdupHcTOK9MZxDp_rAcg.

ADDRESSES:

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cate O’Keefe, PhD, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda:

The Habitat Advisory Panel will meet to review Advisory Panel policies and procedures. They will consider how past and potential future scientific surveys and studies within two Dedicated Habitat Research Areas (Stellwagen DHRA, Georges Bank

DHRA) address habitat research questions posed by the Council via Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 and develop a recommendation to the Habitat Committee as to whether to request administrative removal of either designation. The Advisory Panel will also discuss scope, structure, and information sources for a review of the clam dredge exemption program within the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area and suggest refinements to the approach. They also plan to review draft essential fish habitat designations for groundfish, small mesh, and Atlantic sea scallops, and comment on spatial coverage of maps, key descriptions of habitat use to include in text, and additional information sources or experts that could be considered/consulted to improve each designation. Species list: Acadian redfish, American plaice, Atlantic halibut, Atlantic sea scallop, Atlantic wolffish, haddock, ocean pout, offshore hake, pollock, red hake, silver hake, white hake, windowpane flounder, winter flounder, witch flounder, and yellowtail flounder. At least 12 of the 16 species in the 2026 framework will be available for review at this meeting. Other business will be discussed, if necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council 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. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: May 5, 2026.

Rey Israel Marquez,

Acting Deputy Director,

Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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