



New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

NOTICE OF SCOPING HEARINGS – REVISED DATE
AMENDMENT 23 TO THE NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES FISHERY

Date and Time

Location

Rockland, ME Friday, March 3, 2017 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Maine Fishermen’s Forum Samoset Resort 220 Warrenton Street, Rockport, ME 04856
RESCHEDULED Via Webinar Tuesday, March 14, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Webinar Hearing Register to participate: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4567763108442151939 Call in info: Toll: +1 (415) 930-5321 Access Code: 702-360-151
Portsmouth, NH Tuesday, March 21, 2017 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Portsmouth Library 175 Parrott Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801
Gloucester, MA Tuesday, March 21, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
Plymouth, MA Wednesday, March 22, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Hilton Garden Inn 4 Home Depot Drive, Plymouth, MA 02360
Groton, CT Thursday, March 23, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Hilton Garden Inn 224 Gold Star Highway, Groton, CT 06340
Via Webinar Tuesday, March 28, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Webinar Hearing Register to participate: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4567763108442151939 Call in info: Toll: +1 (415) 930-5321 Access Code: 702-360-151

The New England Fishery Management Council is conducting six public hearings to solicit comments on developing Amendment 23 to the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) fishery. The purpose of this action is to adjust the groundfish monitoring program to improve reliability and accountability. The need for this amendment is to consider changes to the groundfish monitoring and reporting system to ensure it is providing accurate catch information necessary to manage the fishery efficiently.

Recent Council discussions have focused on the groundfish sector at-sea monitoring program, which is expected to be fully funded by fishermen in 2017, because it provides the highest quality data, but it is expensive, and given the current low quotas in the fishery, the expense of at-sea monitoring is difficult for many fishermen to afford. There are also questions about the accurate representation of the information, since there is evidence that fishing behavior may be different on observed and unobserved trips. For these reasons, the Council may explore alternatives to at-sea monitors, such as using cameras to monitor fishing activity, which is usually referred to as Electronic Monitoring, or EM. The Council may also consider changes to the way landings information is provided by both dealers and vessel operators and how it is assigned to stock areas. In summary, the Council may consider changes to any part of the system used to collect and report commercial catch information in the Northeast multispecies fishery. The scoping document includes a list of questions to consider when commenting on any aspect of the existing groundfish monitoring and reporting system.

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 for changing the monitoring and reporting system.

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-23> 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, April 3, 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 Multispecies Amendment 23 Scoping Comments."

For information about meeting materials and detailed agenda, please consult the Council's website at www.nefmc.org.

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

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

cc: Council Members, Groundfish Cte., AP, PDT and IP's
Notice date: February 17, 2017