



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

REVISED - NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS **DEEP-SEA CORAL AMENDMENT**

The New England Fishery Management Council is conducting seven public hearings to solicit comments on the alternatives under consideration in the Draft Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment. More specifically, the Council is seeking feedback from the public on which alternatives should be selected and why. These hearings are being held by the Council in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Council plans to take final action on the amendment during its June 20-22, 2017 meeting in Portland, Maine.

<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Monday, May 22, 2017 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Montauk Playhouse Community Center 240 Edgemere Street, Montauk, NY 11954
Tuesday, May 23, 2017 1:00-3:00 p.m.	University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium 215 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882
Tuesday, May 23, 2017 5:30-7:30 p.m.	Fairfield Inn and Suites 185 MacArthur Drive, New Bedford, MA 02740
Wednesday, May 24, 2017 1:00-3:00 p.m.	NEW LOCATION – Mass. Division Marine Fisheries, Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Field Station, 30 Emerson Ave., Gloucester, MA 01930
Wednesday, May 24, 2017 5:30-7:30 p.m.	Sheraton Harborside 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801
Thursday, May 25, 2017 5:00-7:00 p.m.	Ellsworth High School 299 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605
Friday, May 26, 2017 1:00-2:30 p.m.	Webinar See registration information below

Deep-sea corals are fragile, slow-growing organisms that play an important role in the marine ecosystem and are vulnerable to various types of disturbance of the seafloor. The alternatives in the amendment are designed to reduce the potential impacts of fishing activity on corals, as allowed under the Council's discretionary authority. Restrictions on bottom-tending gear are being considered, with possible exemptions for some or all types of fixed gears. Potential coral management areas are located off the eastern Maine coast, in Jordan Basin and Georges Basin in the offshore Gulf of Maine, and in the canyon and slope region south of Georges Bank.

During each hearing, Council staff will brief the public on the draft amendment before receiving comments. The hearings will begin promptly at the time indicated above. If all attendees who wish to do so have provided their comments prior to the end time indicated, the hearing may conclude early. To the extent possible, the Council may extend hearings beyond the end time indicated above to accommodate all attendees who wish to speak.

Documents will be posted on the Council's website <http://www.nefmc.org/library/omnibus-deep-sea-coral-amendment>. For questions, contact the office at (978) 465-0492.

Members of the public may submit oral and/or written comments at any of the public hearings or submit written comments directly to the Council. Written comments must be received on or before close of business, Monday, June 5, 2017. Please note on your correspondence "Comments on Deep-Sea Coral Amendment". Written comments received on or before Wednesday, May 24 at close of business, as well as comments provided at the hearings, will be reviewed by the Council's Habitat Committee on May 30 (see separate notice for information about this meeting).

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

Webinar registration

To register for the webinar hearing on May 26, please go to the following link: <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/98257139389273345>. Advance registration is encouraged but not required. To provide a high-quality experience for all attendees, if you plan to call in to the webinar via telephone and wish to ask questions or provide testimony, you must use an audio pin. To get an audio pin, which will be unique to you, register via the link above, and log in to the webinar through the GoToWebinar application on a computer or mobile device. Once you are logged in, the audio pin will be shown on the display. The audio pin will allow you to raise your hand to ask a question or provide testimony. The audio pin allows staff to call on attendees individually and unmute participants one at a time to ask a question or provide a comment. If you call in without an audio pin, you will be in listen-only mode for the duration of the webinar. Alternatively, you may use a microphone and speakers on your computer or mobile device to participate. The phone number for the webinar is (562) 247-8422 and the access code is 204-076-626.

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; Habitat Committee, Advisory Panel, Plan Development Team, and Interested Parties
Notice date: April 28, 2017