



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 20, 2017

PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

NEFMC Adopts Monkfish RSA Priorities; Shelves Amendment 6

The New England Fishery Management Council today approved 2018-2019 priorities for the Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The seven categories of priorities are equally ranked and cover:

- Research on monkfish life history, focusing on: (a) age and growth; (b) longevity; (c) reproduction; and (d) natural mortality;
- Studies related to: (a) stock structure and stock identification; and (b) implications for stock assessment and fisheries management;
- Migration patterns focusing on: (a) short- and long-term movements with respect to management areas and off-shelf movements; and (b) habitat use;
- Research concerning trophic interactions of monkfish with other species;
- Cooperative research surveys to supplement current survey coverage;
- Research concerning bycatch and discard mortality focusing on: (a) target species, including monkfish and groundfish; and (b) non-target species, including non-marketable monkfish or skates; and
- Trawl and gillnet gear studies focusing on: (a) size and/or species selectivity; and (b) bycatch reduction, including reducing bycatch of and interactions with protected species.

In late July or August, NOAA Fisheries will issue a notice soliciting research proposals from interested applicants. More information is available at https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/rsa_program.html.

Monkfish Amendment 6 “Shelved”

The Council also voted to “permanently shelve” Amendment 6 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. The original purpose of Amendment 6 was to “consider one or more catch share management approaches for the monkfish fishery, including, but not limited to, individual fishing quotas (IFQs), sectors, and/or community quotas.”

Given the lack of consensus and limited support among industry members for pursuing some – or even *any* – of these approaches, the joint New England/Mid-Atlantic Monkfish Committee voted to “shelve Amendment 6 permanently.” The Mid-Atlantic Council concurred during its June 6-8 meeting in Norfolk, VA, and the New England Council followed suit during its June 20-22 meeting in Portland. Next, the Monkfish Plan Development Team will summarize state regulations and state waters landings for the Monkfish Committee to review. For more information, visit the Council’s monkfish website page at <http://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/monkfish>.



– Northeast Fisheries Science Center photo