



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2022

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Monkfish: Council Initiates Framework 13 with Fishing Year 2023-2025 Specifications and Other Management Measures

The New England Fishery Management Council initiated Framework Adjustment 13 to the federal Monkfish Fishery Management Plan when it met [April 12-14, 2022](#) in Mystic, Connecticut. This was a hybrid meeting with both in-person and remote participation by webinar.

Framework 13 will include specifications for the 2023-2025 monkfish fishing years and consider the development of alternatives for:

- Revising days-at-sea allocations and possession limits, including the incidental possession limit;
- Management measures to reduce monkfish discards in the Southern Fishery Management Area;
- Requiring 12" mesh for monkfish gillnets; and
- Requiring vessel monitoring systems (VMSs) across the monkfish fishery.

Gillnet usage is more prevalent in the southern management area. In the north, monkfish tends to be caught more often in trawl gear.

In fishing year 2018, roughly 95% of the monkfish gillnet trips in the southern area were conducted with 12" mesh. Although the percentage of gillnet fishermen using less than 12" mesh appears to be very low, the Council wanted to keep consideration of a 12" mesh requirement in the framework, at least for now. This way, the Monkfish Advisory Panel would have a chance to weigh in, and the Monkfish Committee could further discuss the issue.



Plate 21 from the Naturalist's Library, published by Sir William Jardine in Edinburgh, 1843. Hand-colored engraving of a monkfish, also known as the angler, fishing-frog, or sea-devil. The engraver was William Lizars.

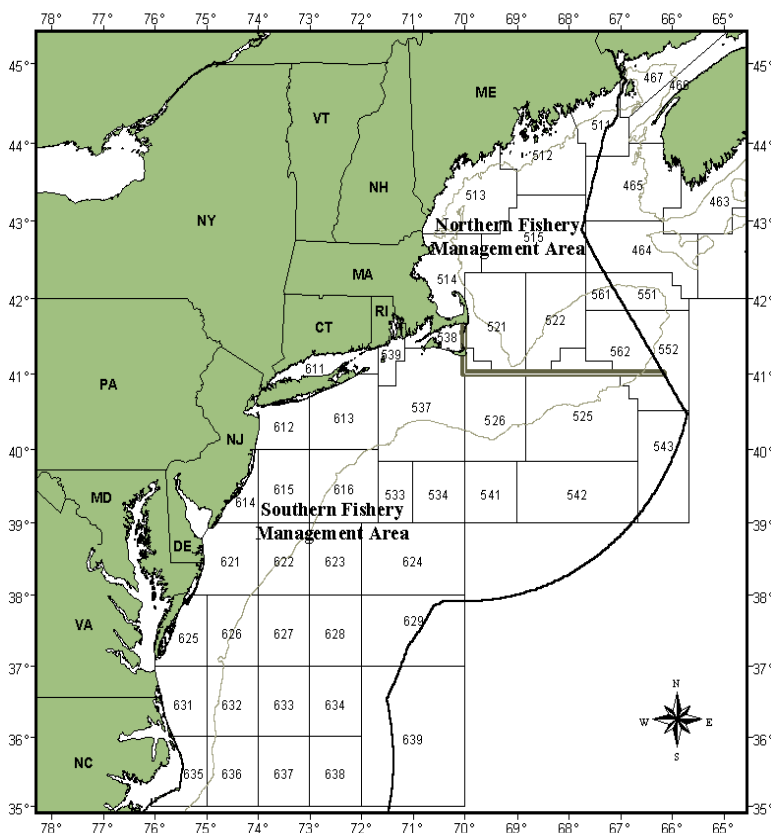


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Regarding consideration of a VMS requirement across the entire federal monkfish fishery, the Council took a similar approach and wanted to allow the Monkfish Advisory Panel and Committee to fully discuss the pros and cons of a VMS requirement. Currently, only 10% of limited access monkfish permit holders – roughly 60 vessels – are not required to use VMS if: (1) they fish in a single management area, north or south; and (2) declare the trip through the Interactive Voice Response system. VMS is also not required for open-access permits.

The Monkfish Advisory Panel will meet on [Wednesday, May 4, 2022](#) by webinar to discuss Framework 13 and these outstanding issues and more. Keep tabs on the [meeting webpage](#) for further information.

Northern and Southern Monkfish Fishery Management Areas



QUESTIONS? Contact Dr. Rachel Feeney, the Council's monkfish plan coordinator, at (978) 465-0492 ext. 110; rfeeney@nefmc.org. Monkfish materials reviewed during the Council's April 2022 meeting are posted [here](#). Also, visit the Council's [monkfish webpage](#) for more info.

Next Monkfish Assessment

Monkfish is scheduled to undergo a Management Track Stock Assessment in 2022. The Assessment Oversight Panel (AOP) meeting for this assessment will take place on [May 24, 2022](#). During the meeting, the AOP will decide which level of review is needed for the assessment: Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 as described on the [second slide here](#). The results of this assessment will be peer reviewed in [September 2022](#). The outcomes will help guide the Monkfish Committee's work down the road.

The Council discussed the upcoming assessment and agreed by consensus to recommend to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center that [recent monkfish discard mortality research](#) related to gear-specific discard rates be considered in this 2022 management track assessment.

Fishery Performance Report

The Council also will be developing a Monkfish Fishery Performance Report. This report will help the Council and Monkfish Committee better understand present conditions in the fishery and interpret data related to trends in and relationships between landings and abundance.