



# New England Fishery Management Council

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## Council Receives Updates on Offshore Wind, Atlantic Herring, EBFM, and More; Approves 2021-2025 Research Priorities

The New England Fishery Management Council met [June 22-24, 2021](#) by webinar. In addition to the actions the Council took on [scallops](#), [groundfish](#), and [skates](#), here are other important highlights.

**Habitat/Offshore Wind** – The Council received offshore wind presentations from three different agencies.

- The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office ([GARFO](#)) covered how NOAA Fisheries cooperates and coordinates with other agencies on wind issues, develops checklists to help guide analyses of socio-economic impacts on fishing communities, as well as Endangered Species Act biological assessments and other analyses, conducts essential fish habitat (EFH) consultations and EFH mapping, and more;
- The Northeast Fisheries [Science Center](#) focused on offshore wind impacts on federal scientific surveys and the associated implications; and
- The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management ([BOEM](#)) provided a broad overview of offshore wind energy projects throughout the Atlantic region.

The Council agreed to develop comments on the Empire Wind and New York Bight offshore wind projects shown in the maps at right, as well as on: (1) the Coast Guard's [Port Access Route Study](#) regarding approaches to Chesapeake Bay, VA; and (2) the [Blue Water Fisheries](#) aquaculture project.

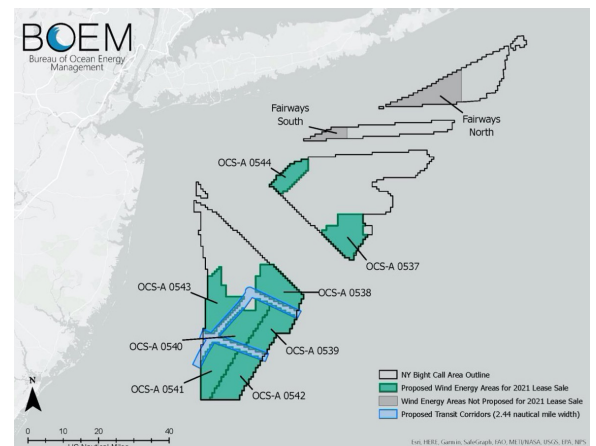
The Council also received a progress report on [other habitat-related work](#).

**Atlantic Herring** – The Council received [updates](#) on two actions that are under development for Atlantic herring.

- Framework Adjustment 9: This action includes alternatives to address the overfished status of the resource and adjust herring accountability measures. The Council will continue



*The New England Council agreed to develop comments – jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Council if possible – on BOEM's notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the [Empire Wind](#) project (above) and BOEM's [New York Bight](#) proposed sale notice (below).*





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To work on [Framework 9](#) over the summer and then take final action in September. Here is the [SSC report](#) and input on herring rebuilding strategies for the framework.

- Framework Adjustment 7: This action is focused on protecting adult spawning herring on Georges Bank. Work on [Framework 7](#) will continue throughout the summer, and the Council will receive a progress report in September.

**Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM):** The Council received an update on the EBFM Management Strategy Evaluation Steering Committee's [work](#) to set the stage for [public outreach workshops](#) to help fishermen and other stakeholders better understand the fundamentals of ecosystem-based fishery management. Through these workshops, the Council is striving to:

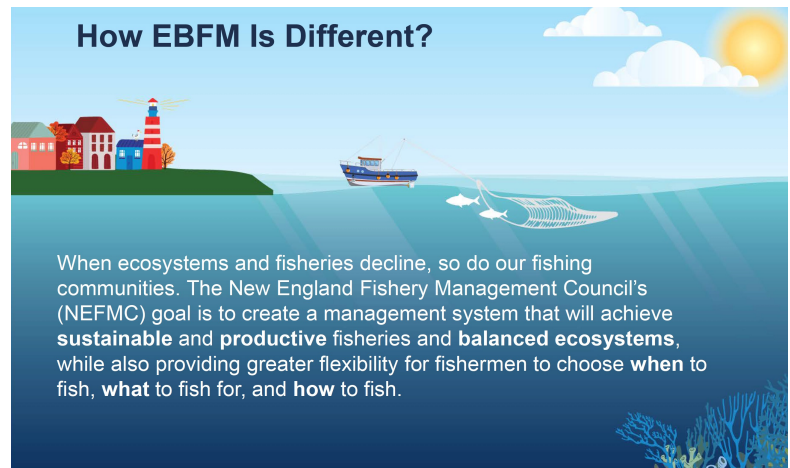
- Build a greater understanding of EBFM as a tool to assess and manage fisheries;
- Identify potential opportunities and concerns that different stakeholders see in EBFM; and
- Give stakeholders an opportunity to contribute feedback and build a willingness to keep participating in the process.

Additional work on this effort will continue through the summer and early fall. The Council will receive another progress report during its September meeting.

**2021-2025 Council Research Priorities:** As required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Council, in conjunction with its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), developed its five-year list of research priorities and data needs. As part of this effort, the former 2020-2024 list was [reviewed](#) by the Council's plan development teams, advisory panels, and committees, which in some cases suggested modifications. The SSC then discussed the proposed 2021-2025 list and [provided comments](#).

After weighing the collective feedback, the Council decided to keep all 108 priorities from the 2020-2024 list and add two more research priorities to the updated 2021-2025 list. These were:

- #109 – Increase understanding of scallop spatial population structure and population dynamics, including processes such as connectivity and source-sink dynamics, which would improve scallop stock assessments; and



The Council, working with [Green Fin Studio](#), has produced a wide range of public outreach materials to help fishermen and other stakeholders better understand what EBFM is all about. Infographics, stakeholder brochures, presentations, and other easy-to-read documents are posted on the Council's [EBFM Public Information Workshops webpage](#).



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- # 110 – Study whether dynamic reference points should be used given a changing climate since static reference points may not be appropriate as species shift due to climate change.

The final version of the New England Council's 2021-2025 Research Priorities and Data Needs is posted [HERE](#) in two formats – as a PDF file and as a searchable Excel file.

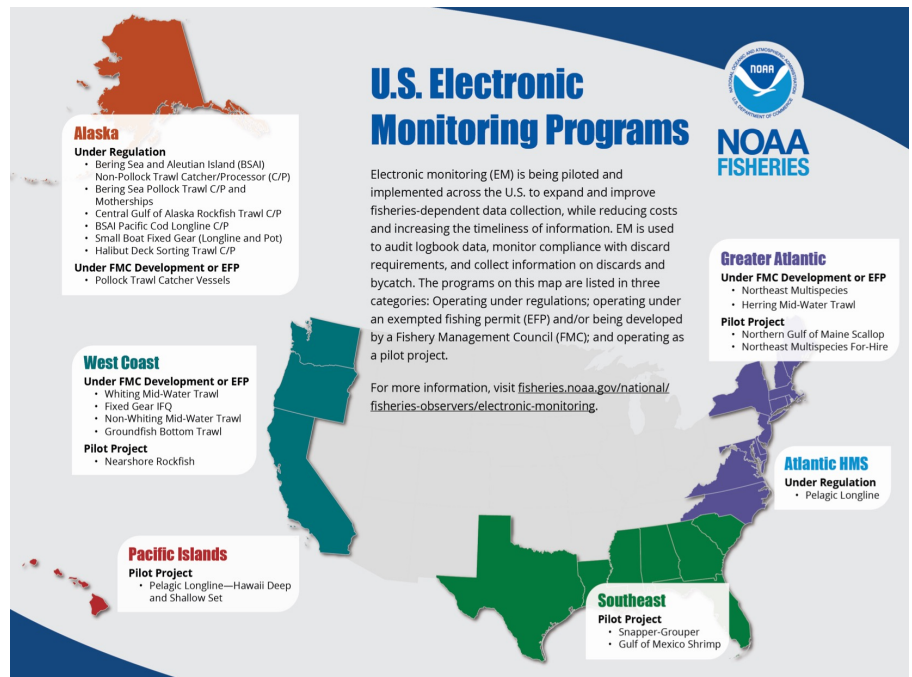
**White House Report** – The Council received a [briefing](#) from NOAA Fisheries leadership on a preliminary White House report titled [“Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful.”](#) Council members asked questions about how some of the provisions within the report applied to fisheries and whether the current conservation efforts by the Council would be considered in the [Administration's goal](#) of “conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC), which includes the chairs, vice chairs, and executive directors of all eight of the nation's regional fishery management councils, discussed the report during its [May 2021](#) meeting. The CCC agreed to form an Area-Based Management Subcommittee to ensure that current fishery management areas and marine protected areas are correctly described and counted as contributing to the Administration's 30x30 goal. New England Council Vice Chair Eric Reid is chairing the new CCC subcommittee.

**Electronic Monitoring** – The Council received a [presentation](#) on NOAA Fisheries' [draft procedural directive](#) on applying information law to electronic monitoring (EM) data in U.S. fisheries. The Council reviewed and approved a letter with comments about the draft directive.

**Financial Disclosures** – The Council reviewed a draft National Marine Fisheries Service [policy directive](#) containing procedural guidance for financial disclosures and recusals for regional fishery management councils. The Council agreed to submit a comment letter on the draft.

**Southeast For-Hire Reporting** – The Council was briefed on new reporting requirements implemented in January 2021 through the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. These requirements apply to all for-hire permits issued by the Southeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries. New England and Mid-Atlantic for-hire fishermen on vessels possessing dolphin/wahoo permits from the Southeast Regional Office have voiced concerns over the program. These vessel owners and captains now need to enter 12 additional data elements after each trip to meet the new requirements, regardless of whether they target and/or catch





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dolphin/wahoo. The Council said it was unclear how data from permit holders would be used, particularly on trips that do not land dolphin/wahoo. The Council agreed to send a letter requesting an explanation of how each of these [new data elements](#), most of which are socio-economic in nature, are to be utilized in management moving forward.

**Highly Migratory Species (HMS)** – The Council received a [presentation](#) on Amendment 13 to NOAA Fisheries' 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan. The amendment, which is out for [public comment through July 20, 2021](#), focuses on bluefish tuna issues.

**HMS AP, ICCAT AC** – The Council also received an update on recent meetings of the HMS Advisory Panel and the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). All related documents are posted [HERE](#).

## Fare Thee Well Class of 2012



## Thanks for Nine Years of Dedicated Service

The Council bid a fond farewell to [four members](#) who were attending their final full Council meeting. Pictured clockwise from the upper left, they included: Vincent Balzano of Maine; Dr. Matt McKenzie of Connecticut; Council Chairman Dr. John Quinn of Massachusetts; and Terry Alexander of Maine. All four have served three consecutive three-year terms on the Council and were ineligible for reappointment. Their final day of service is August 10, 2021. The Council paid tribute to each of them following their final committee reports. The Council also expressed appreciation to Tim Donovan, former assistant director of the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement's Northeast Division, who attended his final Council meeting as well.

## Commercial eVTR Update

The Council had an extensive debate about outreach efforts related to the upcoming implementation of new electronic vessel trip reporting requirements. Beginning [November 10, 2021](#), all commercial vessels with federal permits for species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council or New England Council will be required to submit vessel trip reports (VTRs) electronically as eVTRs within 48 hours of the end of a trip unless required sooner, as is the case with some sector allocations. This action also applies to for-hire party/charter vessels with permits for species managed by the New England Council.

- Links to additional information and training opportunities are posted on the New England Council's website [HERE](#) and on the [Mid-Atlantic Council's website](#).
- Information about eVTR software options is available on the [GARFO website](#), and many more training and outreach resources will become available soon.