

New England Fishery Management Council Meeting
January 28-30, 2014, Portsmouth, NH

Regional Administrator's Report (updated)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) **Regional Office Name Change** (To be announced by John Bullard)

In the recent 2014 appropriations bill, Congress rejected previous language calling for a closure of the NOAA Fisheries Gloucester regional offices, but directed NOAA to change the name of the office to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office to better reflect the geographic region the office represents, which includes New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes areas. Starting this week, we are working on a transition where we will systematically communicate this name change to our constituents, and state and federal partners.

(2) **American Lobster**

Based on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission recommendations, NMFS published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register on **January 27, 2014**, to provide background information and request public comment on potential changes to Federal American lobster regulations under the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Fisheries Management Act. The comment period closes **February 26, 2014**.

This notice announces a control date (**January 27, 2014**) that may be applicable, but not limited to, limiting the number of permits or traps a business entity may own in Lobster Conservation Management Area 3 or in any of the Lobster Conservation Management Areas. NMFS intends this notice to promote awareness of possible rulemaking, alert interested parties of potential eligibility criteria for future access, and discourage speculative entry into and/or investment in the American lobster fishery while the Commission and NMFS consider if and how participation in the American lobster fishery should be controlled.

(3) **Atlantic Sea Scallops**

NMFS published a notice in the Federal Register on **December 6, 2013**, requesting comments on a renewal of collection of information requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act in the scallop fishery. The comment period is currently open and closes **February 4, 2014**. Details on the notice are in our handout Status Report of Northeast Region Actions.

(4) **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog**

Extension and Expansion of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Closed Area

NMFS has renewed the temporary PSP closure of Federal waters, which has been in

effect since 2005. The renewed closure became effective January 1, 2014, and will remain closed through December 31, 2014. The Northern Temporary PSP Closure Area is closed to the harvest of all bivalve molluscan shellfish. Also, the list of species prohibited for harvest under the closure has been expanded to also include gastropods. Gastropods include carnivorous snails, whelks, and conchs that feed on bivalves. The Southern PSP Closure Area is closed to the harvest of whole and/or roe-on scallops, and now gastropods. The closure remains in place at the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). For additional information, you can go to the Regional Office web site or contact the Regional Office.