

**Amendment 2**

**to the**

**MONKFISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Including a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS),  
Regulatory Impact Review, and  
Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report for the 2002 Fishing Year**

**Prepared by the  
New England Fishery Management Council  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
National Marine Fisheries Service**

**DSEIS Submitted by NEMFC: 3/19/04 (revised 4/16/04)  
FSEIS Submitted by NEMFC: 11/19/04 (rev. 12/9/04)**

## COVER SHEET

### RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20235

New England Fishery Management Council  
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Newburyport, MA 01950

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Federal Building, 300 South New Street  
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### PROPOSED ACTIONS:

Adoption, approval, and implementation of Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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### TYPE OF STATEMENT:

DRAFT

FINAL

### ABSTRACT:

The New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries propose to adopt, approve, and implement Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (the Act). The FSEIS presents the details of a management program designed to ensure compliance with the Act. It proposes measures to address a wide range of management issues, to resolve problems in the fishery that have arisen as a result of the implementation of the original FMP in 1999, and to minimize bycatch and adverse fishery impacts on essential fish habitat, to the extent practicable, while achieving optimum yield from the fishery during the stock rebuilding program.

DATE BY WHICH COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ERRATA SHEET FOR THE FSEIS FOR AMENDMENT 2 TO THE MONKFISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Section 4.1.8.2. (page 41)** Replace "...six of these species overlap with the two areas proposed for closure, including pollock, redfish, whiting (silver hake), clearnose skate, and tilefish" with "six of these species (redfish, tilefish, and four species of skates) overlap with the two proposed area closures".

**Section 5.4.1.3. (page 255)**

1. "... and 10 (instead of 5) of them occupy hard substrates in depths >200m."
2. Replace the 3 species summaries listed under this section with the 3 species summaries in Section 6.3.1.5.3, page 329.

## TABLE OF ACRONYMS

<b>A</b>	Adult life stage
<b>A13</b>	Amendment 13 to the Multispecies FMP
<b>ALWTRP</b>	Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan
<b>APA</b>	Administrative Procedures Act
<b>ASMFC</b>	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
<b>CA I</b>	Closed Area I under the Multispecies FMP
<b>CA II</b>	Closed Area II under the Multispecies FMP
<b>DAM</b>	Dynamic Area Management
<b>DAS</b>	days-at-sea
<b>DMF</b>	Division of Marine Fisheries (Massachusetts)
<b>DMR</b>	Department of Marine Resources (Maine)
<b>DSEIS</b>	Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
<b>E</b>	Egg life stage
<b>EA</b>	Environmental Assessment
<b>EEZ</b>	exclusive economic zone
<b>EFH</b>	essential fish habitat
<b>EIS</b>	Environmental Impact Statement
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>ESA</b>	Endangered Species Act
<b>FMP</b>	fishery management plan
<b>FW</b>	Framework
<b>FW 13</b>	Framework 13 to the Scallop FMP
<b>FY</b>	fishing year
<b>GB</b>	Georges Bank
<b>GOM</b>	Gulf of Maine
<b>GRT</b>	gross registered tons/tonnage
<b>HAPC</b>	habitat area of particular concern
<b>HCA</b>	Habitat Closed Area
<b>HPTRP</b>	Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan
<b>IFQ</b>	individual fishing quota
<b>IWC</b>	International Whaling Commission
<b>J</b>	Juvenile life stage
<b>LOA</b>	letter of authorization
<b>MA</b>	Mid-Atlantic
<b>MAFMC</b>	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
<b>MMC</b>	Monkfish Monitoring Committee
<b>MMPA</b>	Marine Mammal Protection Act
<b>MPA</b>	marine protected area
<b>MSFCMA</b>	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
<b>MSMC</b>	Multispecies Monitoring Committee
<b>MSY</b>	maximum sustainable yield
<b>NAAA</b>	Northwest Atlantic Analysis Area
<b>NEFMC</b>	New England Fishery Management Council
<b>NEFSC</b>	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
<b>NEPA</b>	National Environmental Policy Act
<b>NERO</b>	Northeast Regional Office

<b>NFMA</b>	Northern Fishery Management Area
<b>NLCA</b>	Nantucket Lightship Closed Area
<b>NMFS</b>	National Marine Fisheries Service
<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>OY</b>	optimum yield
<b>PBR</b>	Potential Biological Removal
<b>PRA</b>	Paperwork Reduction Act
<b>PREE</b>	Preliminary Regulatory Economic Evaluation
<b>RFA</b>	Regulatory Flexibility Act
<b>RMA</b>	Regulated Mesh Area
<b>RPA</b>	Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives
<b>SAFE</b>	Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation
<b>SARC</b>	Stock Assessment Review Committee
<b>SAW</b>	Stock Assessment Workshop
<b>SBNMS</b>	Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary
<b>SEIS</b>	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
<b>SFA</b>	Sustainable Fisheries Act
<b>SFMA</b>	Southern Fishery Management Area
<b>SIA</b>	Social Impact Assessment
<b>SMAST</b>	U. Mass. Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology
<b>SNE</b>	southern New England
<b>SNE/MA</b>	southern New England-Mid-Atlantic
<b>SSB</b>	spawning stock biomass
<b>TAC</b>	total allowable catch
<b>TED</b>	turtle excluder device
<b>USCG</b>	United States Coast Guard
<b>USFWS</b>	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>USGS</b>	United States Geological Survey
<b>VMS</b>	vessel monitoring system
<b>VPA</b>	virtual population analysis
<b>VTR</b>	vessel trip report
<b>YPR</b>	yield per recruit

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Executive Summary**

This document presents the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' (Councils', NEFMC and MAFMC, respectively) goals and objectives for modifying the jointly managed Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), the proposed action and alternatives considered but not adopted to achieve those goals and objectives, and the analysis of expected impacts of each alternative. As discussed in Section 2.0, Background and History, the amendment is necessary to address a number of issues that arose out of the implementation of the original FMP, including displacement of some vessels from their established monkfish fisheries and permit qualification for vessels in the southern end of the range of the fishery; to address deficiencies in meeting Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements, particularly as identified in several court decisions pertaining to protection of essential fish habitat and reducing bycatch; and to reduce scientific uncertainty about the biology and population dynamics of monkfish and the optimal gear configurations for minimizing bycatch, protected species interactions and habitat effects. The amendment, along with its associated analyses, is also necessary to update the environmental impact statement for the FMP that was originally prepared in 1998.

To address those needs, the Councils adopted a set of specific Goals and Objectives for the amendment, as detailed in Section 3.0. In summary, those goals are:

- I.** Prevent overfishing or rebuild overfished stocks as necessary.
- II.** Address problems created by the implementation of the FMP.
- III.** Promote improved data collection and research on monkfish
- IV.** Comply with CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) Guidelines to update Environmental Documents
- V.** Address deficiencies in meeting Magnuson Act requirements
- VI.** Address protected resources/fishery interactions, and
- VII.** Reduce FMP complexity where possible.

Starting with a public scoping process in December 2001, the Councils, and the Industry Advisory Panel and Monkfish Oversight Committee, developed through a series of public meetings, a range of alternatives designed to address the stated goals and objectives. During 2003 and early 2004 the Monkfish Committee and the Council staff completed the development of the alternatives and preparation of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

The Councils published a Notice of Availability of the DSEIS on April 30, 2004 (*69 Federal Register 23571*) and held public hearings between June 15 and June 24, 2004 in six locations between North Carolina and Maine. Following the close of the public comment period on July 28, the Industry Advisory Panel and Monkfish Oversight Committee, as well as the NEFMC's Habitat Committee met to review public comment and recommend final measures. The NEFMC met in September, and the MAFMC in October to approve final measures to be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation by the May 1 start of the 2005 fishing year.

The proposed action comprises 14 measures that address the range of goals outlined in Section 3.0 and issues identified in the scoping and amendment development process. These measures, as well as the corresponding no-action alternatives, are summarized below in Table 1, and described in detail in Section 4.1. In addition to the proposed actions described in that table, the Councils are taking no action on four measures considered in the DSEIS (separation of DAS usage requirements, monkfish trawl minimum mesh size, NFMA experimental fishery, and changing the fishing year). The alternatives considered by the Councils in the DSEIS but not adopted are described in Section 4.2.2, along with a rationale for their disapproval. Appendix I contains a summary table of all the alternatives with their respective impacts and issues as presented in the DSEIS.

The proposed action is not likely to have significant impacts on the human environment, as discussed in Section 6.0, Environmental Consequences. The impacts of each measure, compared to the no-action alternative, are summarized below for biological impacts on monkfish and other managed species (Table 2) and protected species (Table 3), fishery impacts on habitat (Table 4), and socio-economic impacts (Table 5). In addition, the cumulative effect of the proposed action and all other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions on these environmental components is discussed in Section 6.6.

Of particular note in this amendment, is the proposal to close two offshore canyons to vessels fishing on a monkfish DAS. When the FMP was implemented in 1999, the offshore monkfish fishery that developed along the edge of the continental shelf was no longer profitable due to the restrictiveness of the trip limits and DAS usage requirements. A number of industry members who fished in that offshore fishery worked with the Councils to re-establish the fishery in a way that would be profitable for the participating vessels while being equitable with non-participating vessels and consistent with the rebuilding program. Since the offshore fishery takes place along the edge of the continental shelf where deep-sea corals exist, the Councils are proposing to close the deeper portions of two offshore canyons on the southern edge of Georges Bank where corals have been observed as a precautionary measure that minimizes the economic impact on the fishery as the offshore fishery becomes established, and as advances in deepwater fishing technology enable vessels to extend their activity into the canyon areas. The benthic life stages of six managed species that inhabit these two canyons utilize EFH that is adversely impacted by bottom trawls. While corals are not strictly part of the essential fish habitat (EFH) designation for any managed species in the region, protecting corals from the adverse effects of bottom trawls and gill nets may also indirectly benefit other managed species that occupy the closed areas, or species with EFH in adjacent areas.

Since a major part of the impetus to undertake this amendment is a court order pursuant to a lawsuit challenging the EFH provisions of the original FMP (*AOC v. Daley*, see Section 2.5.2.2), the Councils considered a range of alternatives to meet the goal and mandate to minimize, to the extent practicable, the effect of the fishery on EFH. The gear effects evaluation and adverse impacts determination (see Appendix II) has concluded that trawl gear (but not gillnets) used in the monkfish fishery, has an adverse impact on the EFH of some other species, however, gears used in the monkfish fishery and other fisheries have a low impact on monkfish EFH. In addition to the aforementioned canyon

area closures and a monkfish trawl roller restriction, the Councils are assessing the effect of other measures in this amendment, measures in the current FMP (the no action alternative), and actions taken in recent amendments to the Multispecies and Sea Scallop FMPs, Amendments 13 and 10, respectively, for their efficacy in minimizing the effect of the monkfish fishery on EFH of other species. Since the majority of vessels in the monkfish fishery are also involved in either the scallop or multispecies fisheries, the EFH protection measures in those amendments will directly effect how the monkfish fishery interacts with the EFH for those species.

Another major impetus for the amendment is the disqualification for a limited access permit under the original FMP for a number of monkfish vessels at the southernmost range of the fishery, off the North Carolina and Virginia coasts for reasons outlined in Section 4.1.5. To address this issue, the Councils are proposing to modify the limited access permit qualification criteria and to limit any newly qualifying vessels to fishing for monkfish to the area south of 38°20'N. Of the four action alternatives considered, the Councils propose one that is expected to qualify five vessels for a limited access permit, enabling them to fish for monkfish in the EEZ. The impact of this action on the resource or the fishery is not likely to be significant, especially considering the small number of affected vessels, the area restrictions placed on those newly qualifying vessels, the limited season of the fishery in that area, and the measures in place to protect sea turtles from entanglement. Admitting these vessels into the limited access program could have a modestly positive effect on the communities where those vessels operate as a result of the potential additional revenue and diversification that would result.

Two main issues identified in the scoping process remain unresolved by this amendment (see Section 8.1.4), the restrictiveness of current regulations to protect sea turtle interactions on gillnet vessels off the North Carolina/Virginia coast, and completion of the mandatory five-year review of the elements in the FMP pertaining to EFH requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, such as EFH designation and consideration of Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). The Councils considered including in this amendment alternative approaches to the sea turtle protection measures implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Endangered Species Act, but the needed analysis was not completed in time to be used to develop appropriate management measures for this document. The Councils may take action in the future under the framework adjustment process. With regard to the EFH issues, the New England Council is initiating an omnibus amendment to all its FMPs (Amendment 3 to the Monkfish FMP) that will address those and other habitat issues.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>No Action (Current Rules)</b>
<b>Incidental Catch – 50 lbs./day, 150 max.</b>	Applies on all vessels not on a DAS and fishing with small mesh, and handgear, includes multispecies limited access vessels that are less than 30 feet (and, therefore, exempt from multispecies DAS) regardless of gear used.	50 lbs. possession limit, regardless of trip length.
<b>Incidental Catch – GC scallop dredge and surf clam dredge vessels</b>	Applies incidental limit above.	No monkfish possession allowed.
<b>Incidental Catch – Summer flounder vessels west of 72°30'W</b>	Restores incidental limit of 5% total weight on board, adds 450 lbs. (tail wt.) cap	50 lbs. possession limit,; or 50 lbs./day, 150 max. under Amendment 2 revision above
<b>Minimum Fish Size</b>	11" tail, 17" whole, both areas	NFMA - No change SFMA - 14" tail, 21" whole
<b>Closed Season</b>	Eliminate April – June 20-day block out requirement on Category A and B vessels	Category A & B vessels: April – June, 20-day block out of the fishery; Category C & D (Multispecies): March – May, 20-day block (per MS FMP) Category C & D (Scallop): no requirement
<b>Offshore SFMA Fishery Program</b>	Enrollment program; Oct. – April; 1,600 lbs. (tail) per DAS; pro – rated DAS allocations; VMS; Category A & B gear requirement; (see text for area and other details)	Vessels subject to permit category trip limits
<b>Modification of Permit Qualification – South of 38°N</b>	Vessels qualify for limited access permit with landings south of 38°N, during 3/15 – 6/15, 1994-1998; 50,000 lbs. (tail) for Category A or C permit; 7,500 lbs. for Category B or D; may only fish for monkfish south of 38°20'N	Vessels do not qualify for limited access permit
<b>Modify the Framework Adjustment Procedure</b>	Framework adjustments can be done to implement transferable MF DAS; measures to minimize impact on protected species; or bycatch reduction devices	These actions would require plan amendment
<b>NAFO Regulated Area Exemption Program</b>	Vessels exempt from permit, mesh size, effort control and possession limit rules while fishing under High Seas Permit in NAFO Area; landings do not count against TAC	Vessels must comply with MF FMP regulations
<b>EFH – SFMA Roller Gear Restriction</b>	6" max. diameter trawl roller gear in SFMA on MF DAS	No restriction
<b>EFH – Canyon Area closures</b>	Vessels on a MF DAS prohibited from fishing in Oceanographer and Lydonia Canyons (see text for area description)	No restriction
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS set aside</b>	Vessels responding to cooperative research RFP may be allocated MF DAS; pool of 500 DAS deducted from total DAS allocation	No DAS allocated for cooperative research
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS exemption</b>	Vessels applying for MF cooperative research may obtain exemption from DAS usage requirements; available DAS limited to residual of DAS set-aside pool after RFP awards	Vessels may seek exemption from DAS for cooperative research; must complete Environmental Assessment
<b>Clarification of Vessel Baseline</b>	Vessel length, tonnage and horsepower baseline to be set at those of first federal permit; only on request of vessel owner during first year after implementation	Vessels may have dual baselines, if permit transferred to another vessel between issuance of first permit and MF limited access permit

**Table 1 Summary of Amendment 2 proposed action and corresponding no-action alternatives**

Proposal	Biological Impacts (compared to no action)	
	Monkfish	Other Managed Species
<b>Incidental Catch – 50 lbs./day, 150 max.</b>	No impact – incidental catch accounted for in calculation of annual trip limits/DAS for directed fishery. Reduces bycatch of small monkfish. Improved catch data.	No impact
<b>Incidental Catch – GC scallop and surf clam dredge vessels</b>	No impact – incidental catch accounted for in calculation of annual trip limits/DAS for directed fishery. Reduces bycatch of small monkfish. Improved catch data.	No impact
<b>Incidental Catch – Summer flounder vessels west of 72°30'W</b>	No impact – incidental catch accounted for in calculation of annual trip limits/DAS for directed fishery. Reduces bycatch of small monkfish. Improved catch data.	No impact
<b>Minimum Fish Size</b>	Could have a minor impact on yield-per-recruit if vessels target smaller monkfish in SFMA. No impact if measure simply converts discards to landings. Improved catch-at-age data.	No impact
<b>Closed Season</b>	No impact. Spawning area closure (no action) has no apparent biological benefit.	No impact
<b>Offshore SFMA Fishery Program</b>	May shift effort from inshore to offshore stock component with no overall increase in effort. May also result in some overall effort increase compared to no action if vessels participate who are not currently active in MF fishery (cannot predict the amount of participation by such vessels). Unsustainable effort increases can be mitigated by adjustment to trip limits and/or DAS allocations in subsequent years.	Could reduce impact on inshore and multispecies stocks by vessels shifting effort to offshore monkfish, where catch of other species is minimal. Category C and D multispecies vessels will use multispecies DAS while fishing in the offshore program (and, therefore, not have those DAS available to target multispecies).
<b>Modification of Permit Qualification – South of 38°N</b>	May shift effort from inshore (state waters) to offshore grounds with no overall effort increase. May also result in some effort increase compared to no action if vessels participate who are not currently active in MF fishery (<5 vessels expected). Overall potential effort limited by season/area. Effort increases can be mitigated by trip limits and/or DAS adjustment in subsequent years.	No impact likely, since any resulting effort shifts are limited seasonally and by area.
<b>Modify the Framework Adjustment Procedure</b>	No direct impact since no action is being taken. If and when a framework adjustment is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed.	No direct impact since no action is being taken. If and when a action is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed.
<b>NAFO Regulated Area Exemption Program</b>	No direct impact on domestic stocks. Could result in increase in effort on NAFO Area stocks, limited greatly by logistical considerations.	No impact
<b>EFH – SFMA Roller Gear Restriction</b>	No impact. Vessels targeting monkfish already use this gear, which is intended to prevent expansion of the fishery into complex bottom types, especially offshore canyon areas.	No direct impact but could be positive on species inhabiting complex habitats, particularly offshore canyons by limiting ability to trawl in those areas.
<b>EFH – Canyon Area closures</b>	No immediate or direct impact. Vessels targeting monkfish do not fish in these areas currently, but this proposal will prevent expansion into these areas.	Same as impact on monkfish.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS set aside</b>	No direct impact. DAS set aside is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could be positive if research results in reduced bycatch, or habitat effects, or improves scientific understanding of monkfish.	Same as impact on monkfish.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS exemption</b>	No direct impact. DAS exemption is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could be positive if research results in reduced bycatch, or habitat effects, or improves scientific understanding of monkfish.	Same as impact on monkfish.
<b>Clarification of Vessel Baseline</b>	No impact. This is an administrative change.	No impact. This is an administrative change.

**Table 2 Summary of biological impacts of the proposed action.**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Protected Species Impacts (compared to no action)</b>
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – 50 lbs./day, 150 max.	No impact – alternatives including no action will not affect protected species interactions
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – GC scallop dredge and surf clam dredge vessels	No impact
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – Summer flounder vessels west of 72°30'W	No impact
<b>Minimum Fish Size</b>	No impact (including no action) – does not affect magnitude or distribution of effort
<b>Closed Season</b>	Could have a negative impact on protected species, but not clearly or significantly, since varying amounts of gear is still deployed during this period under no action.
<b>Offshore SFMA Fishery Program</b>	Would likely have a positive impact, or at least mitigate impacts on protected species since overall effort (DAS) is reduced under proposed action, and vessels must use VMS which will improve information regarding protected species interactions, to the extent they occur offshore.
<b>Modification of Permit Qualification – South of 38° N</b>	Impact expected to be minimal due to small number of affected vessels, seasonal availability of monkfish in the area, area restriction of the proposed action, and established sea turtle closures.
<b>Modify the Framework Adjustment Procedure</b>	No direct impact since no action is being taken. If and when a framework adjustment is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed. Indirectly proposed action could have a positive impact because it will allow for timely action to address protected species issues if, and when they arise.
<b>NAFO Regulated Area Exemption Program</b>	No significant impact expected due to small number of vessels capable of participating, and also that such an exemption already exists in the Multispecies FMP.
<b>EFH – SFMA Roller Gear Restriction</b>	No impact – sets a maximum diameter equivalent to size currently in use; prevents expansion of trawl effort into complex bottom areas and canyons at continental margin.
<b>EFH – Canyon Area closures</b>	No immediate or direct impact. Vessels targeting monkfish do not fish in these areas currently, but this proposal will prevent expansion into these areas and may have some positive (preventative) impact on offshore protected species.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS set aside</b>	No direct impact. DAS set aside is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could have a positive impact if research results in measures that reduce interactions with protected species.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS exemption</b>	No direct impact. DAS exemption is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could have a positive impact if research results in measures that reduce interactions with protected species.
<b>Clarification of Vessel Baseline</b>	No impact. This is an administrative change.

**Table 3 Summary of impacts of the proposed action on protected species.**

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Habitat Impacts (compared to no action)</b>
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – 50 lbs./day, 150 max.	No impact
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – GC scallop dredge and surf clam dredge vessels	No impact
<b>Incidental Catch</b> – Summer flounder vessels west of 72°30'W	No impact
<b>Minimum Fish Size</b>	No impact (including no action) – does not affect magnitude or distribution of effort
<b>Closed Season</b>	No impact – Short time of closure period under no action is not significantly different, in terms of habitat impacts than proposed elimination of closed season.
<b>Offshore SFMA Fishery Program</b>	No impact, or slightly negative. May affect deep water benthic habitats on the edge of the continental shelf by enabling vessels to return to traditional areas. Potential exists for some interaction if vessels expand the range of their operations beyond historical areas. EFH Alt. 5AB, roller gear restriction and pro-rated DAS on enrolled vessels contribute to mitigate these potential effects.
<b>Modification of Permit Qualification</b> – South of 38° N	No, or minimal impact due to small number of affected vessels, seasonal availability of monkfish in the area, area restriction of the proposed action, and that probable qualifiers are all vessels that fish exclusively with gillnets.
<b>Modify the Framework Adjustment Procedure</b>	No impact since this is administrative, and no immediate action is being taken. If and when a framework adjustment is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed.
<b>NAFO Regulated Area Exemption Program</b>	No impact due to small number of vessels capable of participating, and also that such an exemption already exists in the Multispecies FMP.
<b>EFH – SFMA Roller Gear Restriction</b>	Positive but not a significant impact – sets a maximum roller gear diameter equivalent to size currently in use in the area; prevents expansion of trawl effort into complex bottom areas and canyons at continental margin.
<b>EFH – Canyon Area closures</b>	Positive but not a significant habitat impact since minimal monkfish fishing occurs in those areas (preventative measure).
<b>Cooperative Research</b> – DAS set aside	No direct impact. DAS set aside is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could have a positive impact if research results in measures that minimize habitat impacts.
<b>Cooperative Research</b> – DAS exemption	No direct impact. DAS exemption is taken from existing allocation. Indirectly could have a positive impact if research results in measures that minimize habitat impacts.
<b>Clarification of Vessel Baseline</b>	No impact. This is an administrative change.

**Table 4 Summary of impacts of the proposed action on habitat.**

Proposal	Socio-Economic Impacts (compared to no action)	
	Economic	Social
<b>Incidental Catch – 50 lbs./day, 150 max.</b>	Likely slightly positive due to increased allowable landings, but difficult to quantify with available data.	Slightly positive due to reduced discards and improved profitability.
<b>Incidental Catch – GC scallop dredge and surf clam dredge vessels</b>	Likely slightly positive due to increased allowable landings, but difficult to quantify with available data.	Slightly positive due to reduced discards and improved profitability.
<b>Incidental Catch – Summer flounder vessels west of 72°30'W</b>	Slightly positive. Average benefit to 114 vessels of \$825 annually, ranging from \$0 to about \$10,000.	Slightly positive due to reduced discards and improved profitability.
<b>Minimum Fish Size</b>	Likely slightly positive, including reduced enforcement costs, but difficult to quantify with available data.	Slightly positive due to reduced discards and improved profitability.
<b>Closed Season</b>	Likely slightly positive, due to reduced regulatory burden/enforcement costs, but difficult to quantify with available data.	Slightly positive due to increased flexibility on Category A and B vessels.
<b>Offshore SFMA Fishery Program</b>	Likely positive due to higher profitability. Participation is voluntary, so presumably enrolled vessels anticipate positive economic effects.	Positive for larger vessels able to fish offshore due to higher profitability, and restores a pre-FMP fishery
<b>Modification of Permit Qualification – South of 38°N</b>	Likely positive for qualifying vessels, but unknown for rest of fleet.	Positive for the small number of affected vessels due to increased opportunity and value of vessel permit, and their communities.
<b>Modify the Framework Adjustment Procedure</b>	No impact since no action is being taken. If and when a framework adjustment is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed.	No impact since no action is being taken. If and when a framework adjustment is proposed, impacts of specific measures would be analyzed.
<b>NAFO Regulated Area Exemption Program</b>	Likely positive due to increased flexibility, but cannot be quantified.	Likely positive due to increased flexibility, but cannot be quantified.
<b>EFH – SFMA Roller Gear Restriction</b>	Could have short-term negative impact on vessels not already using this gear, although most already are. Could limit future expansion of the fishery into complex bottom areas. Cannot be quantified.	Slightly negative for vessels not already using this gear, otherwise neutral.
<b>EFH – Canyon Area closures</b>	No impact. Vessels targeting monkfish do not fish in these areas.	No impact likely. Vessels targeting monkfish do not fish in these areas.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS set aside</b>	Would negatively impact those vessels that use their entire MF DAS allocation, but could be recouped, or even be positive if those vessels engaged in coop research under this program.	Negligible social impact, except that cooperative research has improved science/industry relationship, and fosters industry “buy-in” to science supporting management.
<b>Cooperative Research – DAS exemption</b>	Would negatively impact those vessels that use their entire MF DAS allocation, but could be recouped, or even be positive if those vessels engaged in coop research under this program.	Negligible social impact, except that cooperative research has improved science/industry relationship, and fosters industry “buy-in” to science supporting management.
<b>Clarification of Vessel Baseline</b>	No impact on vessel earnings, but could affect value of vessel permits.	Unknown social impact, or slightly positive since any adjustment is at vessel owner's request only.

**Table 5 Summary of economic and social impact of proposed action.**

## 1.2 Document Organization

This document incorporates information required to meet the requirements of FMP amendments under the Magnuson-Stevens Act in a format that integrates the requirements of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA, the parent agency to NMFS) guidelines for Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements (SEIS) to meet the mandates of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The document also contains sections explicit to a number of other applicable federal laws and executive orders. Thus, the document is divided into the following sections:

1. Cover sheet
2. Table of Contents
3. Introduction and Summary (Section 1.0)
4. Background, Purpose and Need (Section 2.0)
5. Goals and Objectives (Section 3.0)
6. Proposed Action and Alternatives (Section 4.0)
7. Affected Environment (Section 5.0)
8. Environmental Consequences (Section 6.0)
9. Magnuson-Stevens Act Consistency (Section 7.0)
10. Consistency with Other Applicable Law (Section 8.0)
11. Appendices

Information contained in the Affected Environment section of the SEIS also serves as the Council's annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report for the 2002 fishing year, ending April 30, 2003. (The 2003 SAFE report is being incorporated into a separate document supporting the annual adjustment for the 2005 fishing year). Appendix I contains a summary table of the alternatives that were under consideration in the DSEIS, including a synopsis of the main elements of each alternative and the issues and impacts associated with each decision. The table also identifies the goals and objectives from Section 3.2 that each preferred alternative addresses. Appendix I has a second table that identifies the alternatives recommended by the Industry Advisory Panel and the Monkfish Committee and summarizes their respective comments following the DSEIS public comment period. Appendix II contains a summary of the Habitat Considerations – Gear Effects, incorporating information from the NMFS, NEFMC and MAFMC-sponsored Gear Effects Workshop that evaluated the effects of fishing gears used in the Northeast Region. Appendix III contains DSEIS public hearing summaries, written comments, summary of comments and the Councils' response.