

1.0 Introduction

This Amendment 13 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) proposes changes to the management program for this fishery. It is prepared by the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC, Council) in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). It is developed in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA, M-S Act), the primary domestic legislation governing fishery management of the nation's marine fisheries and resources. In 1996, Congress passed the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA), which amended and re-authorized the M-S Act and introduced new emphasis on rebuilding overfished fisheries, ending overfishing, minimizing bycatch and bycatch mortality, and minimizing to the extent practicable the adverse impacts of fishing activity on essential fish habitat (EFH).

Although this FMP has been prepared primarily in response to the requirements of the M-S Act, it also addresses the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). However, these are not the only laws and administrative orders that the Council must consider in developing an FMP. In preparing a Fishery Management Plan, the Council must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the Data Quality Act (P.L. 106-554), and Executive Orders 12612 (Federalism), 12630 (Property Rights), 12866 (Regulatory Planning), 12898 (Environmental Justice), and 13158 (Marine Protected Areas). These other applicable laws and administrative orders help ensure that in developing an FMP, the Council considers the full range of alternatives and their expected impacts on the marine environment, living marine resources, and the affected human environment. This integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), which is required by NEPA, addresses these requirements.

This document is organized into four volumes:

- Volume I: Introductory material
 Proposed action and other alternatives considered
 Impacts of the proposed action and other alternatives considered
- Volume II: Affected environment
- Volume III: Appendices
- Volume IV: Public comments

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