

prioritize planned marine conservation projects. Although no foreign fishing in the PRIA is being considered at this time, the Council reviewed and approved the draft MCP at its March 2023 meeting. On April 5, 2023, the Council’s Executive Director submitted the MCP to NMFS for review and approval.

The MCP contains the following five conservation and management objectives that are consistent with the FEP for the PRIA and the FEP for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific:

1. Support quality research and monitoring to obtain the most complete scientific information available to assess and manage fisheries within an ecosystem approach;
2. Conduct education and outreach to foster good stewardship principles and broad and direct public participation in the Council’s decision making process;
3. Promote regional cooperation to manage domestic and international fisheries;
4. Encourage development of technologies and methods to achieve the most effective level of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) and to ensure safety at sea; and
5. Western Pacific Community Development Program and Western Pacific Community Demonstration Projects Program.

In addition, the MCP contains seven conservation and management objectives that are consistent with the FEP for the Hawaii Archipelago:

1. Support quality research and monitoring to obtain the most complete scientific information available to assess and manage fisheries within an ecosystem approach;
2. Promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries management including reducing bycatch in fisheries and minimizing impacts on marine habitat and impacts on protected species and addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation;
3. Conduct education and outreach to foster good stewardship principles and broad and direct public participation in the Council’s decision making process;

4. Recognize the importance of island cultures and traditional fishing practices in managing fishery resources and foster opportunities for participation;

5. Promote responsible domestic fisheries development to provide long term economic growth and stability by reducing foreign imports and increasing local seafood production;

6. Promote regional cooperation and capacity building to manage domestic and international fisheries; and

7. Encourage development of technologies and methods to achieve the most effective level of monitoring, control and surveillance and to ensure safety at sea.

Please refer to the MCP for projects and activities designed to meet each objective, the evaluative criteria, and priority rankings.

This notice announces that NMFS has reviewed the MCP and determined that it satisfies the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Accordingly, we have approved the MCP for the 3-year period from August 4, 2023, through August 3, 2026. This MCP supersedes the one approved previously for August 4, 2020, through August 3, 2023 (85 FR 65389, October 15, 2020).

Dated: May 22, 2023.

**Ngagne Jafnar Gueye,**  
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.  
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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XD002]

**Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permit**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an exempted fishing permit renewal application from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The exempted fishing permit would allow federally permitted fishing vessels to fish outside fishery regulations in support of exempted fishing activities proposed by the applicant. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act require publication of this notice to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed exempted fishing permits.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before June 12, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* NMFS.GAR.EFP@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line “Comments on MA DMF Ventless Trap EFP.” If you cannot submit a comment through this method, please contact Allison Murphy at (978) 281–9122, or email at allison.murphy@noaa.gov.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Allison Murphy, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978–281–9122, allison.murphy@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) submitted a complete application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. This EFP would exempt the participating vessels from the following Federal regulations:

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS

CFR Citation	Regulation	Need for exemption
50 Part 697.21(c)(1) and (2)	Gear specification requirements for Lobster Management Area 1 for Area 2.	To allow for the use of traps without escape vents.
§ 697.19(a) and (b)	Trap limit requirements for Area 1 and 2.	To allow for trap limits to be exceeded.
§ 697.19(i)	Trap tag requirements	To allow for alternatively-tagged traps.
§§ 697.20(a)(2) 697.20(b)(2), 697.20(a)(3), and 697.20(b)(3).	Minimum and maximum carapace length requirements for Areas 1 and 2.	To allow sub-legal and over-sized lobsters to be landed for research purposes.
§ 697.20(g)(1) and (3)	V-notch possession requirement for Areas 1 and 2.	To allow landing of female lobsters for research purposes.

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS—Continued

CFR Citation	Regulation	Need for exemption
§ 697.20(d)(1) and (3)	Berried female possession requirements.	To allow landing of egg-bearing female lobsters for research purposes.
§ 697.20(h)(1)	Minimum carapace width requirements.	To allow sub-legal Jonah crabs to be landed for research purposes.
§§ 697.20(h)(2)(i) and (ii)	Berried female possession requirement.	To allow landing of egg-bearing female Jonah crabs for research purposes.

TABLE 2—PROJECT SUMMARY

Project title	2023 MA DMF Ventless Trap Survey
Institution	MA DMF.
Principal Investigator	Tracy Pugh.
Division action number	DA23–045.
Funding source	State funded.
Continuing project (yes/no)	Yes.
Project objectives	To provide fishery-independent data on lobster growth and abundance within Massachusetts State waters of statistical areas 514 and 538.
Initial application date	May 3, 2023.
Final application date	N/A.
Project Start	June 2023.
Project End	October 2023.
Project location	Statistical Areas 514 and 538.
Number of vessels	Up to 4.
Number of trips	Approximately 10.
Trip duration (days)	1.
Total number of days	Approximately 40.
Gear type(s)	Lobster traps.
Number of tows or sets	n/a.
Duration of tows or sets	3 days soak time.

**Project Narrative**

The purpose of this survey is to provide fishery-independent data on lobster growth and abundance within Massachusetts State waters of statistical areas 514 and 538. MA DMF funds this lobster abundance survey through their commercial and recreational lobster license fees. This survey has occurred annually since 2006. At least one MA DMF scientist would be on board for the sampling trips. MA DMF personnel would not be on board when traps are baited and deployed. Exemptions would not substantively chance vessel operations. All catch during sampling trips would be retained temporarily to collect biological data. MA DMF staff may collect lobster and/or Jonah crab, including undersized, oversized, v-notched, and egg-bearing lobsters. Collected samples would be used for research projects on growth and maturity. No catch from the experimental traps would be landed for sale. All gear would be Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan compliant. Survey traps will be separate from each vessel’s commercial lobster traps and would be tagged as, “MADMF Research Traps.”

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the

year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate the completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing in <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/information-technology/foia-reading-room> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “anonymous” as the signature if you wish to remain anonymous).

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: May 22, 2023.

**Ngagne Jafnar Gueye,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XD040]

**New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Herring Advisory Panel via webinar to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This webinar will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Webinar registration URL information: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8047175401522362205>.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.