

Progress Update on American Lobster Management Objectives Process Process Steering Committee

August 4, 2026



- Winter 2026: TC recommended the Board initiate a management objectives process as a first step, before possibly initiating a management strategy evaluation for GOM/GBK fishery
- May 2026: Board formed the Management Objectives Process (MOP) Steering Committee (SC)
 - 17 SC members representing Board, TC, CESS, lobster industry, staff

1. Review existing management objectives, as outlined in Amendment #3 and subsequent addenda, relative to the current GOMGBK stock status, and social/economic conditions facing the fishery today.
2. Develop a process that would clearly identify new management objectives (across all stakeholders), to better understand socioeconomic status and concerns, and to identify potential management tools.

Proposed SC Timeline

- **June:** First SC meeting held
 - Reviewed existing management objectives and similar stakeholder processes
 - Discussed gaps in objectives and incorporating them into new process
- **August:** Meeting to discuss management objectives process (stakeholders, meeting details)
- **September:** Meeting to discuss management objectives process (cost estimates, final report)
- **November:** *Management objectives process report delivered to Board***

Questions?



LCMA 5 Proposal

Background

- LCMT 5 submitted a proposal to modify the season closure in LCMA 5 to allow earlier access to black sea bass
 - Allow traps to be set 15 days earlier (March 9 instead of 24) and to be re-hauled for harvesting black sea bass
- TC reviewed proposal
 - Suggested allowing pots to be set and fished for black sea bass March 9 instead of March 24 while maintaining the dates for no lobster possession (February 1-March 31)
 - No expected increase to lobster mortality

LCMT 5 proposal

- LCMT 5 recommendation:

The LCMA 5 LCMT recommends that the American Lobster Management Board (Board) request that the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office revise the LCMA 5 season to allow black sea bass pots to be set beginning on March 9 instead of March 24 while maintaining the current American lobster harvest closure (February 1 through March 31), as proposed by the American Lobster Technical Committee in its April 20, 2026 memo to the Board.



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PRT and LEC Comments on LCMA 5 proposal

- General support for Board consideration of the proposal
- Points of consideration for the Board:
 - Would Jonah crab landing be prohibited for the same period as lobster?
 - Would the change apply to all LCMA 5 permits (waiver or no)?
 - Changes to state and federal regulations would need to be implemented

- Overall, the LEC responses were supportive, with one concern noted
 - Possibility for use of black seabass traps to hold lobsters taken during this closure
 - Law enforcement has documented past incident of lobsters being held in traps pending the opening of the lobster season in LCMA 5
- LEC were not concerned with enforceability of proposed measures
- The proposal involves one management option evaluated in the *Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforceability of Fishery Management Measures*
 - Closed Seasons, which has a high enforceability score: 4.18 on a scale where 1 is least enforceable and 5 is most enforceable.

Policy on Overfished/Depleted Stocks

- SNE stock is depleted
- Depleted or overfished stocks require a 2/3 majority to approve CE proposals



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Request for Information

ASMFC Lobster Board Update

August 2026

Allison Murphy, Caroline Potter



Background

- On-demand gear research since 2019
 - Testing in TRP Restricted Areas
- Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 requirements
- Alternative Gear Marking Framework
 - Considers potential voluntary fixed-gear marking alternative
 - Could support on-demand gear and dynamic management (e.g., removing endline and/or one endline only)
 - Paused to gather additional information (e.g. RFI)
- Does not limit NMFS' ability to consider other innovative gear or management activities

Question Topics

- General authorization
- Safety and performance
- Alternative gear marking
- Gear viewing
- Gear conflict
- Equity
- Potential training requirements
- Law enforcement
- Data governance and management
- Other Considerations

How to comment

- www.regulations.gov/document/NOAA-NMFS-2026-2080-0001
OR
- www.regulations.gov
 - Type NOAA-NMFS-2026-2080 in Search box
 - Click on the “Comment” icon
 - Complete the required fields and enter or attach comments
 - Please label your response with the corresponding question number
 - Anonymous and non-anonymous comments are accepted
 - Comments accepted through October 14, 2026
- Next steps: summarize comments



Questions?



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