**New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council**

**Executive Committee Meeting Summary**

**June 17, 2025**

The Executive Committee met virtually with the primary task of reviewing advisor applications. In total, 23 individuals submitted applications for 44 renewals and 24 new membership requests. The committee considered the applications with respect to geographic and sector representation, enforcement history, and current committee size. Ultimately, two applications were deferred due to committee size. The remainder of the applications are recommended for approval (Table 1).

Staff requested guidance from the committee on how to address the list of nontraditional species. With nearly a dozen species with varying life histories and uses, they will be difficult to address all at once, so some prioritization is needed. Several of the species on the list are sportfish, and there is potential for overharvest without appropriate management measures. Other species are primarily bait species and pose more of an enforcement concern, with people harvesting large quantities and selling to bait shops. It was noted that there may be regional differences in priorities based on availability and fishing practices. There was general agreement that there is no intent to restrict access unnecessarily for any of these species, but to allow opportunity while ensuring sustainability. The committee discussed several ideas for prioritizing the list and how to solicit advisors for such a broad range of species. Their input will be forwarded to the Nontraditional Species Committee which is scheduled to meet before the July Council meeting.

Staff also requested guidance on what species should be considered for the next state fishery management plan. The Blue Crab FMP is progressing, so staff could begin initial work on the next species. Discussion focused around two species: sheepshead, which has raised concerns recently over rapidly increasing harvest, and whelk, which has a well developed but largely undocumented fishery. Cownose ray was also discussed as a candidate because there may be a regulatory requirement to have an FMP in order to allow harvest. There was a slight preference for whelk, but it was suggested that staff check with enforcement for input on any evolving enforcement concerns with other species, and also to evaluate landings of unmanaged species over time to look for concerning trends. Staff will follow up on these suggestions before the September meeting.

The Executive Committee recommends the following advisor applications for approval.

Table

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