



New England Fishery Management Council

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Council Elects Eric Reid as Chair, Rick Bellavance as Vice Chair; Welcomes Eric Hansen and Peter Whelan to the Table

The New England Fishery Management Council opened the first day of its [September 26-29, 2022](#) hybrid meeting in Gloucester, MA by holding its annual election of officers. For the second year in a row, the Council elected Eric Reid and Rick Bellavance, both of Rhode Island, to lead the Council as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the year ahead.

Eric is a fisheries consultant based in North Kingstown, RI. He was the Council's Vice Chair for two years before taking over as Chair. Over his 48-year career in commercial and recreational fisheries, he has been actively engaged in all facets of the industry both at sea and shoreside. He previously owned and operated his own vertically integrated business for 11 years. Chair Reid is a founding member of several industry organizations and serves as the New England Council's liaison to the Mid-Atlantic Council. He also is a U.S. Commissioner to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and serves as Rhode Island State Senator Susan Sosnowski's proxy on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Rick Bellavance is the owner/operator of Priority Charters, LLC, a charter fishing business located in Point Judith. A lifelong Rhode Island resident, he has engaged in a variety of recreational and commercial fishing industries for over 30 years and currently serves as the president of the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association. Rick has worked steadily to help develop electronic reporting tools that can improve recreational catch estimates and strongly supports improvements to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). He represents the Council on the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section of ICCAT, as well as several Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Council committees. During this meeting, Vice Chair Bellavance was sworn in to serve his third consecutive term three-year term on the Council.



Photo: Eric Reid (left) and Rick Bellavance (right) will lead the Council as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for the 2022-2023 Council year. Both are from Rhode Island. —NEFMC photo



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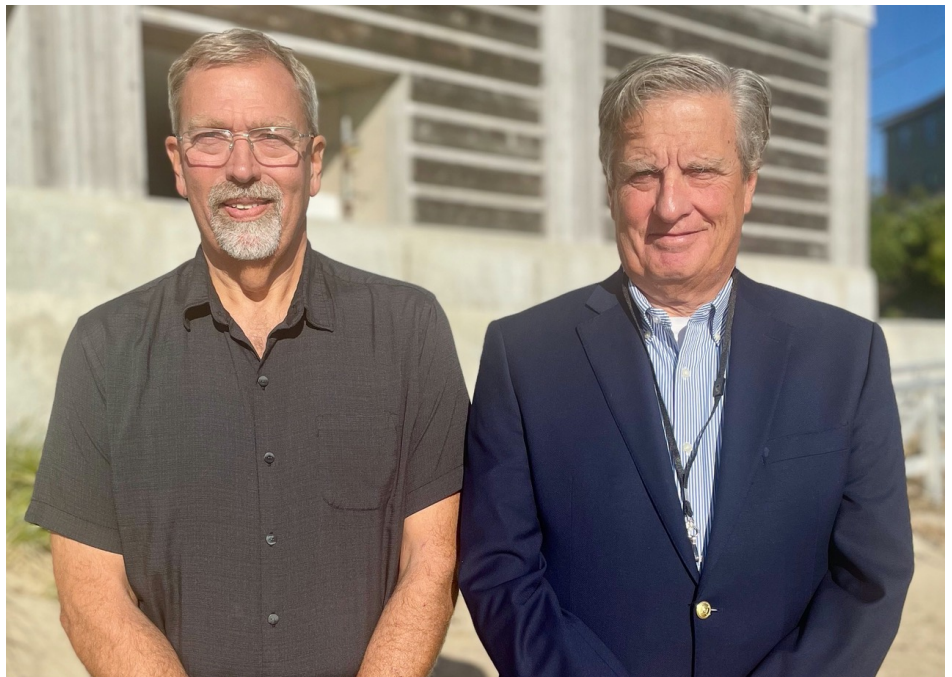
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Council's Executive Committee is made up of the Council Chair, Vice Chair, and three elected members. To fill out the slate this year, the Council once again elected Melanie Griffin and John Pappalardo, both of Massachusetts, and Megan Ware of Maine to serve on the committee. The Executive Committee oversees the Council budget, appoints advisory panel members, addresses administrative matters, and provides Council leadership and direction on numerous policy matters. The committee works closely with the Council's executive director and meets prior to each Council meeting.

NEW MEMBERS: The Council welcomed two new members to the table – Eric Hansen of Massachusetts, who replaced Dr. Mike Sissenwine of Massachusetts in an at-large seat, and Peter Whelan of New Hampshire, who replaced Mark Godfroy in New Hampshire's obligatory seat on the Council.

Eric Hansen has over 40 years of experience in the commercial scallop fishery. He started as a deckhand in 1978 and worked his way up the ladder. In 1988, he became the owner of the *F/V Endeavor*, which is based out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. He captained the vessel until 2004. In 2019, he expanded his business by purchasing an additional scallop vessel, the *F/V Intrepid*. Today, he focuses on running his business, Hansen Scalloping Inc., which oversees the operation of the two boats. Prior to becoming a New England Fishery Management Council member, Eric served on the Council's Scallop Advisory Panel and Monkfish Advisory Panel. He continues to be actively involved in fishing industry associations and serves on several advisory bodies, including the board of directors of the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA). He is president of the Fisheries Survival Fund.

Peter Whelan is the owner of Shoals Fly Fishing and Light Tackle, a Portsmouth, New Hampshire-based business that offers guided fly fishing and light tackle charters off the seacoast. He has over 15 years of experience as a charter captain and conducts trips from the *Miss Jodine*, a 23' Mako that docks in New Castle. Peter serves on the board of directors for both the American Saltwater Guides Association and the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire, of which he is a past president. He also is a member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel.

~~~ [Read Our Council Member Bios.](#) ~~~



*Eric Hansen of Massachusetts (left) and Peter Whelan of New Hampshire (right) were sworn in to serve their first three-year term on the New England Council. – NEFMC photo*