

Science, Service, Stewardship



Northeast Cooperative Research Program Review

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This Presentation Will Cover

- Northeast Cooperative Research Program (NCRP) Review
 - Objectives
 - Timeline
 - Products
 - Findings
- The Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC)'s Response
 - Action Items
 - Next Steps

The Northeast Cooperative Research Program

- Improves and increases information about commercial fishing operations and the animals they harvest
- Fishermen and researchers work together to develop and conduct projects
- Promotes better science and management for fisheries
- Offers effective communication and collaboration among fishing professionals

“The NCRP finds itself at the interface of this vital relationship...not only improving the relationship between the NEFSC and the fishing industry but also for making it produce quality scientific information to underpin fisheries management.”

The Review

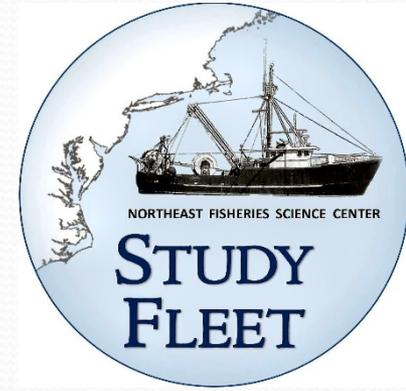
- Independent review conducted by IC Independent Consulting (ICIC), Steven J Kennelly
- Started in July 2016 and completed in September 2016
- To evaluate the effectiveness and success of the NCRP in three areas:
 - 1) High quality science
 - 2) Effective engagement
 - 3) Integration within NEFSC scientific programs
- Provide recommendations to enhance the program
- Produced a 34-page report: “Program Review of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center Northeast Cooperative Research Program”

What the Reviewer Covered

- Examined 150 NCRP documents
- Interviewed 98 people throughout the Northeast
 - Fishing industry members
 - NCRP staff
 - Fisheries managers
 - Scientists
 - Academia
- Port and facility visits, phone, and email

Successful Findings

- Study Fleet
- Development of electronic vessel trip reporting technology
- Enhanced biological sampling
- Industry-based survey collaborations
- Dedicated proficient staff



Areas for Improvement

- Recommendations were offered in five themes:
 - 1) Increase the usage of NCRP data products & services
 - 2) Consider separating out the Research Set Aside Program from the NCRP
 - 3) Improve communication about the roles and functions
 - 4) Develop organizational structure within the NCRP
 - 5) Explore synergies between the newly formed Cooperative Research Branch (CRB) and the Fisheries Sampling Branch within the newly created Fishery Monitoring and Research Division

NEFSC Review of the Review

- The NEFSC formed a working group from over a dozen different departments within the Center
- Reviewed the Review recommendations, drafted a response and related action items
- Twenty four action items were identified
- 20-page document entitled “Northeast Cooperative Research Program Review NEFSC Summary and Response”

Theme 1. Increase the usage of NCRP data products and services

- The NEFSC will convene workshops to communicate the value of cooperative research and improve awareness and integration of NCRP products and services
- NEFSC Goal for FY18 to institute: 1) cross-cutting cooperative research study teams and 2) mechanisms to engage industry in this process
- The NEFSC will continue to support and emphasize Fisheries Dependent Data Visioning Project (FDDV); continue to develop and support electronic data transfer from fishing vessels

Theme 2. Organizational structure

- The NEFSC will work with the Council(s) and GARFO to further evaluate improvements to the RSA programs. The NEFSC will engage in this joint comprehensive review of RSA programs
- The NEFSC will develop a joint work plan with the Council(s) and GARFO to further evaluate how awards are made and tracked within the RSA programs
- The recommendation to improve tracking of the performance of the projects and increase transparency and accountability will be discussed as part of the joint RSA review
- The recommendation to adjust the funding life-cycle will be further discussed in the joint RSA Program review

Theme 3. Improve communications on roles and functions of the NCRP

- The NEFSC should increase opportunities for cooperative research to be presented to staff of the NEFSC, by NCRP staff and other project collaborators, on at least a biennial basis
- Expand the Cooperative research curriculum in the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) to focus on the role of the NCRP, ongoing projects, and recent success stories
- NEFSC will provide more timely information about ongoing NCRP projects
- Cooperative Research Branch (CRB) will update the NCRP website to include a list of NCRP projects, with metadata summarizing how the information from these projects has been used in science and management applications, and listing project contacts
- The NEFSC will re-establish regular reports from the NCRP at the MAFMC and NEFMC meetings

Theme 4. Develop organizational structure

- Explore creating supervisory contract positions within the CRB
- The NEFSC will ensure that mentoring and training opportunities are understood, offered, and designed within the scope of acceptable contract activities
- To the extent possible, as additional Federal employees are hired within CRB, they should be located in a facility common to either their supervisor or direct reports
- CRB senior staff host meetings at each other's facilities for a couple of days each month
- Consider succession plan for CRB
- Consider organizational structure and strategic geographic placement of CRB staff
- Explore opportunities and resource availability to bring on temporary analytical support through a post-doctoral position

Theme 5. Explore synergies within the newly created Division

- Explore the development of a database to contain information on commercial fishing vessels suited for cooperative research projects
- Representative will engage with the FDDV, which is a project to modernize, integrate, standardize, adapt, and reduce redundancies with fisheries dependent data collections, keeping the utility and applications of FLDRS and PTNS in mind
- Ensure that considerations of existing and evolving ER are included in EM developments
- The NEFSC will ensure that cross-cutting activities, including administrative, IT, safety, and outreach support with the CRB, is detailed in the NEFSC 2021 Labor Planning

In Summary

- NCRP has demonstrated success working with fishing industry partners on research that improves fishery science and management
- NCRP has a good reputation with industry partners it has engaged
 - Respondents to the review surveys (written and in-person) praised the program for responsive staff and services
- NCRP improvements have been identified and actions to improve and enhance cooperative research across the Center are now being planned

In Summary

- Based on the review, we are pursuing five areas for improvement:
 1. More use of NCRP data and services in the region both within NOAA Fisheries and by management partners
 2. Better processes, transparency, and visibility of awards and results generated through the council-based research set-aside programs managed by the NCRP and NEFSC administrative staff
 3. More effective communication (internal and external) of NCRP roles, functions, capabilities, and opportunities to engage
 4. Program reorganization to better manage its diverse activities and geographically dispersed staff
 5. Leverage relationships and opportunities with the NEFSC's Fisheries Sampling Branch

Concluding Remarks

- The NEFSC Strategic Plan aspires to have more fisheries science done in cooperation with the fishing industry
- We will be seeking input and participation in upcoming workshops & mechanisms to engage industry in design/execution of research
- Work on action items has started and will be ongoing
- Requires much more than just CRB – Center-wide
- Building partnerships to improve the scientific information available to manage fisheries
- Cultivating trust and respect

Thank you!

We especially extend our appreciation to those who made time to participate and look forward to a continued and stronger partnership with others in the region as we move forward.

<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/coopresearch/>

