



**Biennial Review of the
Five-Year (2020 – 2024)
Research Priorities Document:
*Tracking Research Progress***

December 2021 Council Meeting

Annapolis, MD

Presentation Overview

- 2020-2024 Research Priorities background
- Biennial review process and findings
- Research Steering Committee feedback and recommendations
- Meeting goals and outcomes

Background

- Council approved new research priorities document in December 2019
- Align research needs with management objectives and resources in Strategic Plan and Cooperative Agreement
- Updated and new broad research priority themes; new prioritization approach for species-specific priorities



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Comprehensive Five Year (2020–2024) Research
Priorities

Approved December 2019

Background (cont.)

- New approach/process to evaluate utility and monitor implementation of priorities
- Review of Council supported projects – allocating resources to address priorities
- Biennial review – ensure document is reflective of current state of scientific knowledge and Council's science and management priorities



Strategic Plan

- *Objective 8* - Identify and prioritize the Council's research needs
- *Strategy 8.3* - Develop a process to better track progress toward addressing the Council's research priorities and to identify what research has been completed

2020 Updates to Priorities Document

- Linked the individual priorities to the broad research theme(s)
 - Ensure that priorities identified by the Council advance and address larger science goals

Review of 2019-2020 Council-supported projects

- **14** of projects covering **6** species and **all** FMPs
- All projects all support at least one research theme, many address multiple themes
 - Seven projects (50%) address 10 species-specific priorities
 - Accounts for nearly 10% of all species-specific priorities



2021 Comprehensive Biennial Review

- Used existing processes – spec setting/review and development of Fishery Performance Reports
- Input throughout 2020 – 2021



- Review outcomes of 2020 and 2021 Management Track assessments; input from Research Track Working Groups
- Revise & Update – retain/add/delete species-specific priorities list

Types of Recommended Modifications

- **Removal** – addressed or no longer a priority
- **Editing Existing Language** – add clarity/specificity; new information; reflect current status
- **Change in Priority Order/Grouping** – up/down with new/updated info or upcoming needs
- **New Priority** – recommendation from SSC, AP, work group, peer review

Modification Key

Purple text – new priority suggested for addition

~~Red strikethrough~~ – existing priority suggested for deletion

Green text – suggested language modification to existing priority

Highlighted number ↑ ↓ – suggested change in priority order with direction arrow

– work being done or in process to address priority

Highlighted priority – Research Steering Committee recommendation and edits

Example modifications and justification

Priority #	Species	Proposed Change	Rationale/Justification
82	Scup	Priority ranking #	Increased interest from the Monitoring Committee in understanding these dynamics; markets may change with possible MSC certification
83	Scup	Language modification	Some clarifying language added to indicate some/on-going analysis on some components of this priority are being conducted
85	Scup	Remove	This priority was addressed during the 2021 Management Track assessment (new 2013+ selectivity block added)
9 **	Summer Flounder	New	This was a new research priority identified by the SSC given new methods and research has been conducted on this topic

Summary of Review

Review and Update

- **34** proposed modifications – **33%** of existing priority list
- **44%** of proposed modifications are edits to existing language
- **9** new priorities covering **7** species/**1** cross-species

Monitoring Progress

- **41%** of all priorities completed, being reviewed, in progress
 - **3** priorities addressed
- Research track assessments and other Council projects – large impact in next review

Next Steps & Continued Development



- Next biennial review in 2023
 - Update comprehensive priorities list
 - Review 2021-2023 Council supported projects
- Longer-term comprehensive research priorities plan
 - Improve effectiveness and approaches to integrate priorities across region
 - Benefits/drawbacks to joint effort
 - Tracking NRCC process for stock assessment research priorities for region

Research Steering Committee Review

- Met on November 16th (research priorities and RSA)
- Supported all proposed changes except one
 - Retain priority #29 under Black Sea Bass with modifications
 - Consider or investigate new or alternative methods that effectively sample in black sea bass habitats.
- Found review process valuable and supporting information helpful – needed to keep priorities current
- Continue with biennial review process (2023) and revisit when developing next 5-year priority document
- Committee, or Council, philosophy regarding the goals and role of the research priorities

Meeting Goals

- Review and approve recommended changes to research priorities
 - RSC recommendation: *Support the proposed modifications to the 2020-2024 Research Priorities document as modified by the Research Steering Committee today.*
- Any feedback on biennial review and future considerations

