



## **FEBRUARY 2020 MEETING AGENDA**

**February 11-13, 2020**

The Sanderling Resort  
1461 Duck Road  
Duck, NC 27949  
Telephone 855-412-7866

### **Tuesday, February 11th**

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- 2:00 p.m. Council Convenes**
- 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 2020 Implementation Plan (Tab 1)**
- Review and approve 2020 Implementation Plan
  - Discuss 2020 Council Meeting Topics
- 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Review and Approve New SSC Membership (Tab 2)**
- 5:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Kitty Hawk Wind Project (Tab 3)**  
*Craig Poff - Avangrid Renewables*
- 5:30 p.m. Council Adjourns**

### **Wednesday, February 12th**

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- 9:00 a.m. Council Convenes**
- 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Programs (Tab 4)**
- Fish and redesigned clam surveys
  - Ecosystem data programs
  - Gear testing and gear innovation work (including an overview of the role of Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel)
  - Social and economic data collections
  - Cooperative research
- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. GARFO/NEFSC Joint Strategic Plan**  
*Mike Pentony - GARFO*
- Presentation on final NEFSC/GARFO Regional Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 and Annual Implementation Plan
- 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Lunch**
- 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Update on *Illex* Working Group (Tab 5)**

**2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Review and Approve Public Hearing Document for Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Goals and Objectives and *Illex* Permit Amendment (Tab 6)**

- Review Fishery Management Action Team input
- Review Advisory Panel input
- Review Committee recommendations
- Select any preferred alternatives

**5:00 p.m.**

**Council Adjourns**

**Thursday, February 13th**

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**9:00 a.m.**

**Council Convenes**

**9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Business Session**

**Committee Reports**

- Scientific and Statistical Committee Report

**Executive Director's Report (Tab 7)**

*Chris Moore*

**Organization Reports (Tab 8)**

- NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office
- NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center
- NOAA Office of General Counsel
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
- US Coast Guard

**Liaison Reports (Tab 9)**

- New England Council
- South Atlantic Council

**Continuing and New Business**

**MAFMC December 2019 Council Meeting  
Annapolis, MD**

**2020-2024 Strategic Plan**

Move to approve MAFMC 2020-2024 Strategic Plan with revisions approved today.

Elliott/deFur

Motion carries by consent

**Five-Year Research Priorities**

On behalf of the Research Steering Committee, move that the Council approve the Five-year (2020-2024) Research Priorities document as modified by the Committee and reviewed by the Council today.

Motion carries by consent

**Risk Policy Framework**

Move to approve Alternatives 8 and 9 and a review of the revised risk policy be completed in not more than 10 years.

Nowalsky/DiLernia

Move to amend Alternative 2 for Alternative 8.

Heins/Bolen (11/9/0)

Motion to amend carries

Main motion:

Move to approve Alternatives 2 and 9 and a review of the revised risk policy be completed in not more than 10 years.

(18/1/1)

Motion carries

Move to reconsider the approved motion for Alternative 2 for the risk policy framework.  
Nowalsky/Hemilright (18/1/0)  
Motion to reconsider carries

Move to postpone discussion of Alternative 2 of the risk policy framework until the New Business agenda.  
Nowalsky/DiLernia  
Motion carries by consent

*Note: please see additional motions on the risk policy framework under the Continuing and New Business agenda item*

### **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment**

#### Goals and Objectives

Move that the Council adopt the goals and objectives as drafted by the FMAT and as you see here.  
deFur on behalf of the Committee  
Motion carries by consent

**Goal 1:** Ensure the biological sustainability of the surfclam and ocean quahog stocks to maintain sustainable fisheries.

**Goal 2:** Maintain a simple and efficient management regime.

**Objective 2.1:** Promote compatible regulations between state and federal entities.

**Objective 2.2:** Promote coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council.

**Objective 2.3:** Promote a regulatory framework that minimizes government and industry costs associated with administering and complying with regulatory requirements.

**Goal 3:** Manage for stability in the fisheries.

**Objective 3.1:** Provide a regulatory framework that supports long-term stability for surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries and fishing communities.

**Goal 4:** Provide a management regime that is flexible and adaptive to changes in the fisheries and the ecosystem.

**Objective 4.1:** Advocate for the fisheries in ocean planning and ocean use discussions.

**Objective 4.2:** Maintain the ability to respond to short and long-term changes in the environment.

**Goal 5:** Support science, monitoring, and data collection that enhance effective management of the resources.

**Objective 5.1:** Continue to promote opportunities for government and industry collaboration on research.

#### **Excessive Shares Alternatives**

Move that the Council select sub-alternative 4.4 as the preferred excessive shares cap alternative: Two-part cap – Quota share ownership would be capped and a second cap, an annual allocation cap based on the possession of cage tags (Surfclams: 35/65%, Ocean quahogs: 40/70%), with the selection of the family affiliate level and the cumulative 100% model for tracking of ownership.  
deFur on behalf of the Committee  
Motion carries by consent

#### **Excessive Shares Review Alternatives**

Move that the Council select Alternative 2 as the preferred excessive shares review alternative: Require the periodic review of the excessive share measures at least every 10 years or as needed.  
deFur on behalf of the Committee  
Motion carries by consent

#### **Multi-year Management Measures Alternatives**

Move that the Council select Alternative 2 as the preferred multi-year management measure alternatives: Specifications will be set for maximum number of years consistent with the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council approved stock assessment schedule.  
deFur on behalf of the Committee  
Motion carries by consent

#### **Framework Adjustment Process Alternatives**

Move that the Council select Alternative 2 as the preferred framework adjustment process alternative: Add excessive shares cap levels to the list of measures to be adjusted via framework.  
deFur/Davidson

Motion to substitute:

Move that the Council select Alternative 1, No changes to the list of management measures that can be addressed via the framework adjustment process.  
Hughes/Nolan (17/3/0)  
Motion to substitute carries

Main motion:

Move that the Council select Alternative 1, No changes to the list of management measures that can be addressed via the framework adjustment process.  
18/2/0  
Motion carries

Move to approve the Excessive Shares Amendment and submit to NMFS for rulemaking.  
deFur/Hughes  
Motion carries by consent with 1 abstention

**EAFM Summer Flounder Conceptual Model**

Move to select question 1 (recreational data) to move forward with a management strategy evaluation.  
Nowalsky/Lenox

Motion to substitute for question 3 (recreational discards).  
Nolan/Hemilright (14/5/1)  
Motion to substitute carries

Main motion:

Move to select question 3 (recreational discards) to move forward with a management strategy evaluation.  
(17/1/2)  
Motion carries

**Bluefish 2020 Recreational Measures with Board**

Move to adopt 2020 coastwide recreational bluefish management measures with a 3-fish bag limit for the shore and private mode and a 5-fish bag limit for the for-hire mode.

Board: Davis/Maniscalco (7/3/2)  
Council: Heins/Davidson (9/8/2)  
Motion carries

Move to amend:

5-fish bag limit for the for-hire uninspected boat (6 or less passengers), a 10-fish bag limit for the inspected for-hire boat (7+ passengers), and 16" minimum size (TL) limit for all for-hire vessels.  
Council: DiLernia/deFur (4/14/1)  
Board: Hasbrouck/Clark  
Motion fails

Move to amend:

3-fish for private/rental and shore, 5-fish for uninspected (6 or less passengers) for-hire vessels, and a 7-fish limits for inspected (7+ passengers) for-hire vessels.  
Council: DiLernia/Nowalsky  
Board: Hasbrouck/Hart (5/5)  
Motion fails

**Bluefish Allocation Amendment**

Move that we approve the bluefish supplemental scoping document for public comment.  
Council: Davidson/Gwin  
Motion carries by consent

**Summer flounder 2020 recreational measures with Board**

Move to adopt conservation equivalency for 2020 summer flounder recreational management, with non-preferred coastwide measures including a 19-inch minimum size, 4 fish possession limit, and open season from May 15-September 15. In addition, the precautionary default measures would include a 20-inch minimum size, 2 fish possession limit, and open season from July 1-August 31.

Board: Clark/Borden - motion carries by consent  
Council: Cimino/Batsavage - motion carries by consent with one abstention

**Scup 2020 Recreational Measures with Board**

Move to adopt a 40 fish bag limit, 9-inch minimum size, and open season for Jan 1 to December 31 in federal waters in 2020.

Council: Nolan/DiLernia  
Board: Borden/Kane

Move to substitute:

Recommend status quo in state and federal waters for the scup recreational fishery in 2020.  
Board: McNamee/Davis (9/0/2)  
Council: Heins/Hughes (14/3/1)  
Motion carries

Main motion:

Move to recommend status quo in state and federal waters for the scup recreational fishery in 2020.  
Board: roll call: (8/0/1/2)  
Council: (18/0/1)  
Motion carries

**Black Sea Bass 2020 Recreational Measures**

Move to maintain status quo state and federal waters recreational measures for black sea bass in 2020, including a federal waters minimum size limit of 12.5 inches, a 15 fish federal waters possession limit, and open federal waters seasons of Feb 1-28 and May 15-Dec 31.

Board: Davis/McNamee - Motion carries without objection and with 1 abstention  
Council: Cimino/Heins (19/0/1)  
Motion carries

**Summer Founder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass**



Move to approve the scoping/public information document for the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass commercial/recreational allocation amendment as modified today.

Council: DiLernia/deFur - Motion carries by consent

Board: Clark/Allen - Motion carries by consent

### **Black Sea Bass Commercial Issues**

October meeting motion postponed to December meeting: I move to activate the black sea bass commercial amendment in a joint action with ASMFC.

Nolan/Hughes (18/1/1)

Motion carries

### **eVTR**

Move to recommend alternative 1e to require that commercial VTRs be submitted electronically with a weekly deadline following the completion of a fishing trip.

Hemilright/Elliott

Move to amend:

Recommend alternative 1c, commercial eVTR with a 48-hour submission deadline following the completion of a fishing trip.

Nowalsky/Pentony (15/4/1)

Motion carries

Main motion:

Move to recommend alternative 1c, commercial eVTR with a 48-hour submission deadline following the completion of a fishing trip.

(18/2/0)

Motion carries

Move to submit the framework document with the preferred alternative to NMFS.

Elliott/deFur

Motion carries by consent, 1 abstention

### **Continuing and New Business**

#### **Risk Policy Framework**

Move to substitute:

Adopt a hybrid of Alternative 2 and Alternative 8 as follows -  $P^*$  equal to 0 when the B/Bmsy ratio is less than or equal to 0.1, with linear ramping to a maximum  $P^*$  of 0.45 when the B/Bmsy ratio is less than or equal to 1.0, and a linear ramping to a maximum of 0.49 when the B/Bmsy ratio is equal to or greater than 1.5.

Nolan/Nowalsky (13/6/1)

Motion carries

Main motion:

Move to adopt a hybrid of Alternative 2 and Alternative 8 as follows -  $P^*$  equal to 0 when the B/Bmsy ratio is less than or equal to 0.1, with linear ramping to a maximum  $P^*$  of 0.45 when the B/Bmsy ratio is less than or equal to 1.0, and a linear ramping to a maximum of 0.49 when the B/Bmsy ratio is equal to or greater than 1.5.

(13/6/1)

Motion carries

Move to postpone this motion until the February 2020 meeting.

Davidson/deFur (6/11/2)

Motion fails

Move to submit the risk policy framework to the service.

Nowalsky/DiLernia

Motion carries by consent

#### **2020 Implementation Plan**

Move to approve 2020 Actions and Deliverables.









Elliott/deFur








Motion carries by consent

The above agenda items may not be taken in the order in which they appear and are subject to change as necessary. Other items may be added, but the Council cannot take action on such items even if the item requires emergency action without additional public notice. Non-emergency matters not contained in this agenda may come before the Council and / or its Committees for discussion, but these matters may not be the subject of formal Council or Committee action during this meeting. Council and Committee actions will be restricted to the issues specifically listed in this agenda. Any issues requiring emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act that arise after publication of the Federal Register Notice for this meeting may be acted upon provided that the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The meeting may be closed to discuss employment or other internal administrative matters.

## Stock Status of MAFMC-Managed Species

(as of 1/30/20)

SPECIES	STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA		Stock Status	Most Recent Assessment
	Overfishing $F_{\text{threshold}}$	Overfished $\frac{1}{2} B_{\text{MSY}}$		
 <b>Summer Flounder</b>	$F_{35\%MSP}=0.448$	63 million lbs	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2018.
 <b>Scup</b>	$F_{40\%MSP}=0.215$	103.64 million lbs	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent operational assessment was 2019.
 <b>Black Sea Bass</b>	$F_{40\%MSP}=0.46$	15.53 million lbs	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent operational assessment was 2019.
 <b>Bluefish</b>	$F_{35\%SPR}=0.183$	219.05 million lbs	No overfishing Overfished	Most recent operational assessment was 2019.
 <b>Illex Squid (short finned)</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown Unknown	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2006; not able to determine current exploitation rates or stock biomass.
 <b>Longfin Squid</b>	Unknown	46.7 million lbs	Unknown Not overfished	Most recent assessment update was 2017; not able to determine current exploitation rates.
 <b>Atlantic Mackerel</b>	$F_{40\%}=0.26$	217.0 million pounds	Overfishing Overfished	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2017
 <b>Butterfish</b>	$F_{\text{Proxy}}=2/3M=0.81$	50.3 million lbs	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent assessment update was 2017.

SPECIES	STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA		Stock Status	Most Recent Assessment
	Overfishing $F_{\text{threshold}}$	Overfished $\frac{1}{2} B_{\text{MSY}}$		
<b>Surfclam</b> 	$F/F_{\text{threshold}} = 1^a$	$SSB/SSB_{\text{threshold}} = 1^b$	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2016.
<b>Ocean Quahog</b> 	$F/F_{\text{threshold}} = 1^c$	$SSB/SSB_{\text{threshold}} = 1^d$	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2017.
<b>Golden Tilefish</b> 	$F_{38\%MSP} = 0.310$	10.46 million lbs	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent assessment update was 2017.
<b>Blueline Tilefish</b> 	Unknown	Unknown	South of Cape Hatteras: No overfishing Not overfished  North of Cape Hatteras: Unknown Unknown	Most recent benchmark assessment was 2017.
<b>Spiny Dogfish</b> (Joint mgmt with NEFMC) 	$F_{\text{MSY}} = 0.2439$	175.6 million lbs Female SSB	No overfishing Not overfished	Most recent assessment update was 2018.
<b>Monkfish</b> (Joint mgmt with NEFMC) 	NFMA & SFMA $F_{\text{MAX}} = 0.2$	NFMA - 1.25 kg/tow  SFMA - 0.93 kg/tow (autumn trawl survey)	Unknown Unknown	Recent benchmark failed peer review and invalidated previous 2010 benchmark assessment results. Operational assessment in 2019 used survey data to scale earlier ABC.
<b>Chub Mackerel</b> 	At least 3,026 MT of catch per year <sup>e</sup>	At least 3,026 MT of catch three years in a row <sup>e</sup>	No overfishing Not overfished	No stock assessment.

SOURCES: Office of Sustainable Fisheries - Status Report of U.S. Fisheries; SAW/SARC, SEDAR, and TRAC Assessment Reports.

<sup>a</sup>  $F_{\text{threshold}}$  is calculated as 4.136 times the mean F during 1982 - 2015

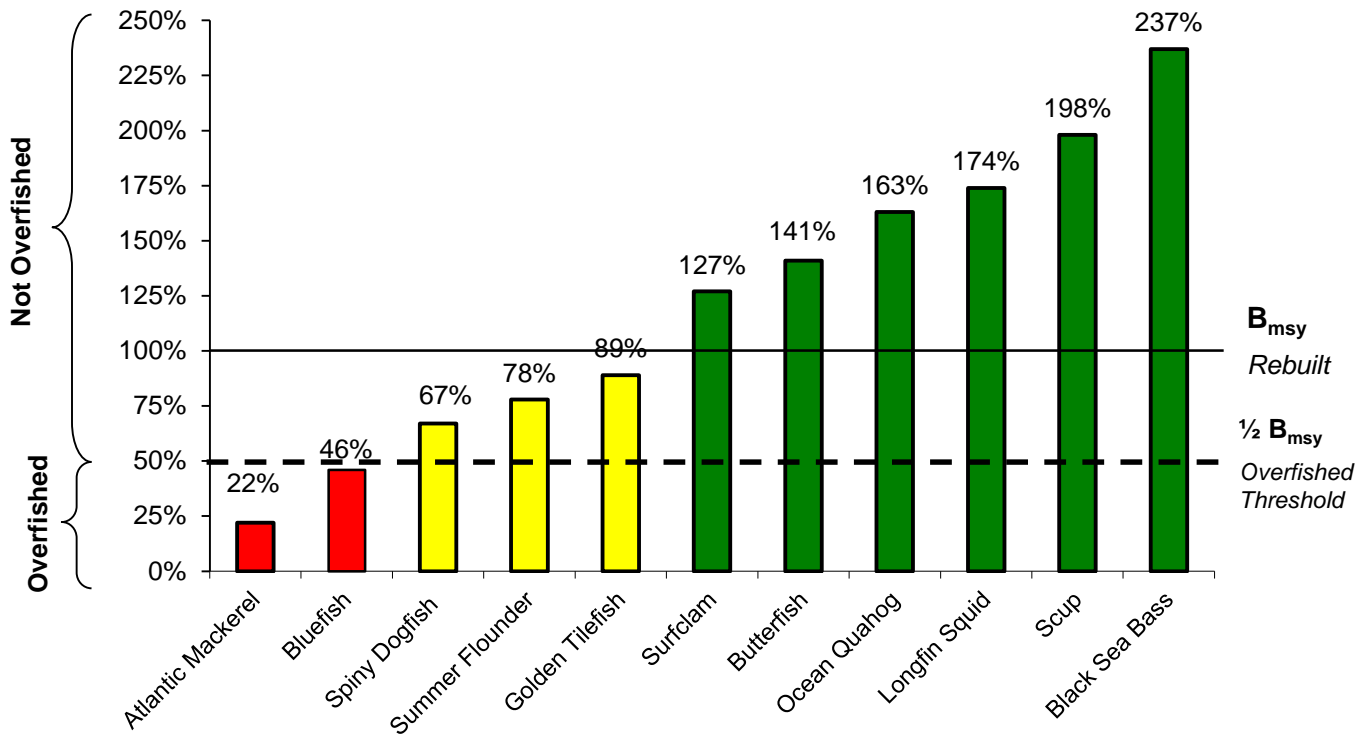
<sup>b</sup>  $SSB_{\text{threshold}}$  is calculated as  $SSB_0/4$

<sup>c</sup>  $F_{\text{threshold}}$  is 0.019

<sup>d</sup>  $SSB_{\text{threshold}}$  is calculated as  $0.4 * SSB_0$

<sup>e</sup> The Council approved these chub mackerel status determination criteria in March 2019; however, they have not yet been approved by NOAA Fisheries.

## Stock Size Relative to Biological Reference Points (as of 1/30/20)



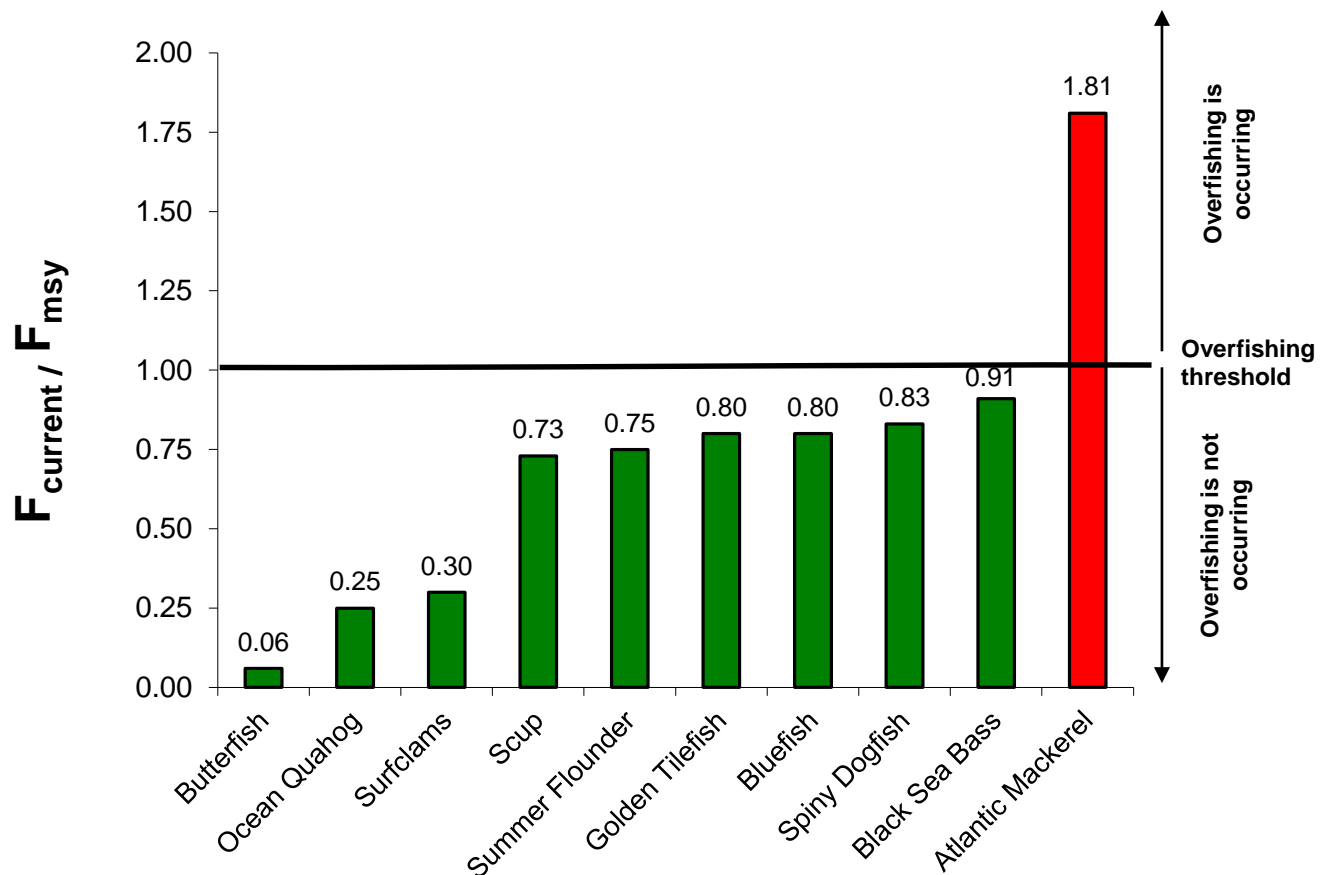
### Notes:

- Unknown  $B_{msy}$  - *Illex* squid, monkfish (NFMA & SFMA), blueline tilefish (North of Cape Hatteras)
- Of the 14 stocks managed by the Council, 6 are above  $B_{msy}$ , 5 are below  $B_{msy}$ , and 3 are unknown.
- In March 2019, the Council approved an amendment with management measures for Atlantic chub mackerel. These measures have not yet been approved by NOAA Fisheries. Chub mackerel  $B_{msy}$  is unknown.

Year of data used to determine stock size	
Atlantic Mackerel	2016
Black Sea Bass	2018
Bluefish	2018
Butterfish	2016
Golden Tilefish	2016
Longfin Squid	2016
Ocean Quahog	2016
Spiny Dogfish	2018
Surfclam	2015
Scup	2018
Summer Flounder	2017

## Fishing Mortality Ratios for MAFMC-Managed Species

(as of 1/30/20)



**Notes:**

- Unknown fishing mortality: *Illex* squid, Longfin squid, monkfish (NFMA and SFMA), and blueline tilefish (North of Cape Hatteras).
- In March 2019, the Council approved an amendment with management measures for Atlantic chub mackerel. These measures have not yet been approved by NOAA Fisheries. The chub mackerel fishing mortality rate is unknown.

Year of data used to determine stock size	
Atlantic Mackerel	2016
Black Sea Bass	2018
Bluefish	2018
Butterfish	2016
Golden Tilefish	2016
Ocean Quahog	2016
Spiny Dogfish	2017
Surfclam	2015
Scup	2018
Summer Flounder	2017



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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 31, 2020  
**To:** Council  
**From:** Mary Sabo  
**Subject:** 2020 Implementation Plan

During the December 2019 meeting, the Council approved a 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and a list of actions and deliverables for the 2020 Implementation Plan. The annual implementation plan is developed each year as a tool for planning and prioritizing activities for the upcoming year within the broader context of the Council's longer-term goals and objectives.

At the February 2020 meeting, the Council will review a draft 2020 Implementation Plan, which has been developed based on the list of deliverables approved in December. The Council will also review and discuss the schedule of planned meeting topics for the upcoming year.

The following documents are enclosed for Council consideration:

1. Draft 2020 Implementation Plan
2. 2020 Planned Council Meeting Topics
3. Final 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
4. Evaluation Plan and Schedule
5. Strategic Plan Overview Table

Additional background documents related to strategic planning are available at [www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan).





# 2020 Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan is a companion document to the Council's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan identifies five goals, 21 objectives, and 87 strategies. Implementation of the strategic plan will be a long-term process supported through the annual development of one-year implementation plans that identify specific tasks necessary for achieving the Council's goals and objectives. Annual implementation plans are used as a planning tool by the Council and staff and as a way to update the public on progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Each year's plan is designed to provide a comprehensive and realistic framework for merging the Council's ongoing projects with new initiatives.

The 2020 Implementation Plan identifies specific activities the Council expects to undertake in 2020 to make progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. The document is organized into two sections:

1. The **2020 Proposed Actions and Deliverables** section provides a high-level overview of the activities, amendments, frameworks, specifications, and other projects the Council expects to initiate, continue, or complete during the year. This section is organized by Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and topic areas.
2. The **Strategic Plan Framework and 2020 Priority Activities** section organizes the Council's planned activities for the upcoming year under the five goal areas and 21 objectives defined in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. This section provides information about the anticipated timeframe for each item.

## STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

### Vision

Healthy marine ecosystems and thriving, sustainable fisheries and fishing communities that provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation.

### Mission

The Council manages fisheries in federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region for their long-term sustainability and productivity consistent with the national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is committed to the stewardship of these fisheries, and associated ecosystems and fishing communities, through the collaborative development of effective, science-based fishery management plans and policies.

### Core Values

The Council's activities, operations, and decisions are guided by the following core values:

- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Effectiveness
- Fairness
- Competence
- Transparency

*The complete 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and other related documents are available at [www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan).*



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# 2020 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

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## SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, BLACK SEA BASS

1. Review 2021 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
2. Develop and approve 2021 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
3. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
4. Initiate action to revise recreational management system for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass to allow for greater stability and flexibility
5. Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas
6. Conduct scoping and develop alternatives for Recreational/Commercial Allocation Amendment
7. Continue development of Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment
8. Initiate Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder

## BLUEFISH

9. Review 2021 bluefish specifications
10. Develop and approve 2021 bluefish recreational measures
11. Develop advisory panel fishery performance report
12. Continue development of Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment

## GOLDEN AND BLUELINE TILEFISH

13. Develop and approve 2021-2022 golden tilefish specifications
14. Review 2021 blueline tilefish specifications
15. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
16. Support efforts to address private recreational permitting and reporting issues (NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Fisheries Regional Office (GARFO) lead)
17. Tilefish survey (ongoing)

## MACKEREL, SQUID, BUTTERFISH (MSB)

18. Develop and approve 2021-2022 specifications for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish
19. Develop and approve 2021-2023 specifications for longfin and *Illex* squids
20. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
21. Review butterfish cap performance report
22. Take final action on *Illex* Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment
23. Review recommendations of *Illex* Working Group regarding real time *Illex* squid management and/or quota adjustments
24. *Illex* growth and maturity data project
25. Review 2020-2021 chub mackerel specifications
26. HMS/chub mackerel diet study (final report)

## RIVER HERRING AND SHAD (RH/S)

27. Develop and approve RH/S cap for Atlantic mackerel fishery for 2021-2022
28. Develop RH/S discussion papers (e.g. biological caps, New England alignment, hotspots)

## SPINY DOGFISH

29. Review 2021 spiny dogfish specifications
30. Develop advisory panel fishery performance report

## SURFCLAMS AND OCEAN QUAHOGS

31. Develop and approve 2021-2026 specifications for surfclams and ocean quahogs
32. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
33. Initiate Commingling/Discarding Issues Action
34. Surfclam genetic study (contract; ongoing)

## SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

35. Initiate a workshop to review and consider redevelopment of the Research Set-Aside (RSA) program
36. Continue to support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead)
37. Identify new Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) membership
38. Convene joint Council-SSC meeting
39. Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project (contract)
40. Develop a process to track progress toward addressing the Council's research priorities.

## ECOSYSTEM AND OCEAN PLANNING/HABITAT

41. Coordinate Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)
42. Continue work on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo
43. Update the EAFM risk assessment
44. Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development
45. Maintain joint MAFMC and New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) Offshore Wind web page and Offshore Wind Notices to Mariners web page
46. Initiate climate change and distribution shift scenario planning

## GENERAL

47. Complete the Commercial Fisheries Electronic Vessel Trip Report (eVTR) Framework
48. Track relevant fisheries legislation, including Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and develop comments as requested

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

49. Continue to implement the Council communication and outreach plan
50. Develop and maintain Council action web pages
51. Develop fact sheets and outreach materials as needed
52. Complete the website update and improvement project
53. Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel

## POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

*To be considered for addition to the 2020 implementation plan if time and resources allow:*

54. Expand summer flounder recreational management strategy evaluation to include scup and black sea bass (contract)
55. Review red crab and lobster fishery exemptions for discrete deep sea coral protected zones
56. Develop a white paper on fixed/variable costs and employment information (all Northeast fisheries)<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>
57. Initiate action to address right whale issues
58. Modify list of ecosystem component species from Unmanaged Forage Amendment (e.g., addition of cancer crabs)
59. Review RH/S annual progress update
60. Convene a workshop to discuss the impacts of pollutants on Mid-Atlantic fisheries
61. Review eVTR submission timeframe
62. Aquaculture (address as needed)

# 2020 Priority Activities

## COMMUNICATION

**Goal:** Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.

Objective	Priority Activities for 2020	Timeframe
1. Use a wide range of communication tools and methods tailored to engage target audiences.	Continue to employ a variety of traditional, web-based, and social media tools to disseminate relevant information, updates, and communication materials (as outlined in the Council's communication and outreach plan).	Ongoing
	Complete the website update and improvement project: (1) update the look and feel of the Council website; (2) upgrade web analytics tools to provide more detailed information about page visits, downloads, traffic, etc.	2020
	Expand the use of "interested-parties" email lists to deliver fishery- and action-specific information and updates to interested stakeholders.	Ongoing
	Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel.	2020
2. Increase stakeholder participation in the Council process.	Review and potentially revise organization of action pages for Council amendments and frameworks to improve consistency across pages.	2020
	Evaluate the current online commenting system and identify potential new public comment opportunities (or ways to improve the utility of existing comment forms).	2020
	Utilize webinars, conference lines, and other technology to expand remote access to and/or participation in Council and advisory body meetings.	Ongoing
	Evaluate the Council's webinar policy and update if needed.	2020
	Develop new "Council process" outreach materials and web page.	2020
	Develop outreach materials to facilitate constructive stakeholder input on proposed management actions (e.g. scoping guides, video presentations, fact sheets, etc.).	Ongoing
3. Broaden the public's understanding and awareness of the Council and its managed fisheries.	Develop fact sheets and outreach materials to provide information on current fisheries issues and topics of public interest.	Ongoing
	Continue to promote relevant educational opportunities, such as MREP and the Rutgers IFISSH course.	Ongoing
	Collaborate with science partners to develop outreach materials related to stock assessments for Council-managed species.	Ongoing
	Ensure that Council documents use plain language and minimize the use of acronyms to the extent possible.	Ongoing

## SCIENCE

**Goal:** Ensure that the Council's management decisions are based on timely and accurate scientific information and methods.

Objective	Priority Activities for 2020	Timeframe
4. Collaborate with science partners and research institutions to ensure that the Council's science priorities are addressed.	Review <i>Illex</i> Working Group recommendations regarding real time <i>Illex</i> squid management and/or quota adjustments	2020 - 2021
	Surfclam genetic study (contract)	2020 - 2021
	HMS/chub mackerel diet study	2020
	Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project (contract)	2020 - 2021
5. Support the use of collaborative research to meet the Council's science, data, and information needs.	<i>Illex</i> growth and maturity data project	2020
	Tilefish survey	2020 - 2021
	RSA program review workshop	2020
	Identify research needs that can be addressed using collaborative approaches with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishery participants.	Ongoing
6. Promote efficient and accurate data collection, monitoring, and reporting systems.	Continue to support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead)	2020 - TBD
	Support efforts to address private recreational permitting and reporting issues (GARFO lead)	2020
	Complete the Commercial Fisheries eVTR Framework	2020
7. Promote the collection of relevant social and economic data and on-the-water observations.	Collaborate with the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council (NRCC) Stock Assessment Communications Group to facilitate increased stakeholder involvement in (and awareness of) the stock assessment process.	Ongoing
	Engage the Council's SSC to identify existing studies or other sources of social and economic information that could be used to inform management decisions.	Ongoing
8. Identify and prioritize the Council's research needs.	Develop a process to track progress toward addressing the Council's research priorities.	2020

## MANAGEMENT

**Goal:** Develop effective management strategies that provide for sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems while considering the needs of fishing communities and other resource users.

Objective	Priority Activities for 2020	Timeframe
9. Strengthen state, federal, and interstate partnerships to promote coordinated, efficient management of fishery resources.	Participate on the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council.	Ongoing
	Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment (joint MAFMC/Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) action).	2020
	RH/S discussion papers (e.g. biological caps, New England alignment, hotspots)	2020
10. Adapt management approaches and priorities to address emerging issues and changing fishery conditions.	Develop fishery performance reports for each Council FMP.	Annually
	Initiate action to revise recreational management system for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass to allow for greater stability and flexibility (joint MAFMC/ASMFC action).	2020 - TBD
	Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas.	2020
	Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment (joint MAFMC/ASMFC action)	2020 - 2021
	Illex Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	2020
	Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Commingling/Discarding Issues Action	2020 - TBD
	Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational/Commercial Allocation Amendment (joint MAFMC/ASMFC action)	2020 - 2021
11. Ensure that management decisions consider social, economic, and community impacts and opportunities.	Develop EAFM management strategy evaluation for summer flounder.	2020 - 2021
	Continue to utilize multi-year management approaches.	Ongoing

*Continued on the following page*

## Specification-Setting Activities

<p>In addition to the activities associated with specific management objectives, the Council will also develop new or review existing specifications for each of its managed species. These activities are listed below.</p>	
<p>Develop and approve new specifications:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass recreational management measures</li> <li>• 2021 bluefish recreational measures</li> <li>• 2021-2022 golden tilefish specifications</li> <li>• 2021-2022 specifications for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish</li> <li>• 2021-2023 specifications for longfin and <i>lllex</i> squids</li> <li>• 2021-2023 RH/S cap for Atlantic mackerel fishery</li> <li>• 2021-2026 surfclam and ocean quahog specifications</li> </ul>
<p>Review specifications and recommend changes if needed:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass</li> <li>• 2021 bluefish specifications</li> <li>• 2021 blueline tilefish specifications</li> <li>• butterfish cap performance report</li> <li>• 2020-2021 chub mackerel specifications</li> <li>• 2021 spiny dogfish specifications</li> </ul>

## ECOSYSTEM

**Goal:** Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.

Objective	Priority Activities for 2020	Timeframe
12. Implement the Council's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) as described in the EAFM Guidance Document.	Update the EAFM risk assessment.	2020
	Establish a process to track implementation of the Council's EAFM Guidance Document.	2020 - Ongoing
13. Collaborate with management partners to develop ecosystem approaches that are responsive to the impacts of climate change.	Initiate East Coast/Mid-Atlantic climate change and distribution shift scenario planning exercise.	2020
14. Identify, designate, and protect habitat using an ecosystem approach.	Participate in the Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment Project (in partnership with Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership and other regional partners)	2020 - 2021
	EFH Redo	Ongoing
15. Engage in the offshore energy development process to address impacts to Council-managed species and associated habitats.	Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development.	Ongoing
	Maintain joint MAFMC-NEFMC Offshore Wind web page and Offshore Wind Notices to Mariners web page.	Ongoing
	Engage offshore wind developers to support effective communication and outreach with the fishing industry.	Ongoing
16. Support the maintenance of an adequate forage base to ensure ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.	Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the role of Council-managed species in the ecosystem, including roles as prey, predator, and food for humans.	Ongoing
	Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the impact of Council-managed fisheries on the forage base.	Ongoing
	Review report on unmanaged species landings and respond to changes if necessary.	Annually
17. Develop management approaches that minimize adverse ecosystem impacts.	Review State of the Ecosystem Report	Annually
	Develop management measures that consider ecological interactions to reduce regulatory discards, promote greater utilization of catch, and minimize impacts to habitat.	Ongoing
	Consider fishery management approaches that avoid or reduce negative impacts on protected resources.	Ongoing

## GOVERNANCE

**Goal:** Ensure that the Council's practices accurately represent and consider the interests of fisheries, fishing communities, and the public through a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

Objective	Priority Activities for 2020	Timeframe
18. Maintain an open, accessible, and clearly defined process.	Convene joint Council-SSC meeting	2020
	Provide an update on Council activities and a summary of implementation Plan progress.	Annually
	Provide conference lines or Webinar access to Council and advisory body meetings whenever feasible.	Ongoing
19. Engage management partners to promote effective collaboration and coordination.	Track relevant MSA/fisheries legislation and develop comments as requested.	Ongoing
	Review the composition and operation of Council committees.	Annually
	Evaluate the need for (1) revisions to existing operating agreement with GARFO/NEFSC/OLE and (2) development of new agreements with ASMFC, NEFMC, or SAFMC.	2020
20. Ensure that stakeholder interests are understood and addressed.	Identify additional opportunities for general public comment during Council meetings.	2020
	Provide additional opportunities for public input during development of Implementation Plans.	Annually
	Explore options to improve communication regarding the use of public input in management decisions.	2020
21. Provide training and development opportunities for Council members and staff to enhance organizational performance.	Provide Council member training on Robert's Rules of Order.	2020
	Support the ongoing professional development of Council staff.	Ongoing
	Continue to participate in staff-to-staff meetings and collaboration with GARFO, NEFSC, and ASMFC.	Ongoing





# 2020 Planned Council Meeting Topics

*Updated 1/30/20*

## **February 2020 Council Meeting: February 11-13, 2020 (Duck, NC)**

- 2020 Implementation Plan: Approve
- Review and approve new SSC membership
- *Illlex* Permitting & MSB FMP Goals Amendment: Review Public Hearing Document and Select Any Preliminary Preferred Alternatives
- Kitty Hawk Wind Project: Presentation
- GARFO/NEFSC Joint Strategic Plan: Presentation
- *Illlex* Working Group: Update
- NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Program Overview

## **April 2020 Council Meeting: April 7-9, 2020 (Galloway, NJ)**

- Climate Change Scenario Planning: Introduction to Scenario Planning and Plan for Potential East Coast/Mid-Atlantic Scenario Planning Exercise
- Blueline Tilefish 2021 Specifications Review
- Golden Tilefish 2021 Specifications
- 2020 Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystem Report
- EAFM Updates: Risk Assessment and Summer Flounder Management Strategy Evaluation
- Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment: Review Scoping Plan and Document

## **May 2020 Council Meeting: May 4-7\*, 2020 (Arlington, VA)**

*\* Note: The date of the joint Council/Board portion of the meeting is TBD. Check for updates at <http://www.mafmc.org/meetings>.*

- Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment: Review scoping comments and approve range of alternatives
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment: Review Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Management Alternatives
- Summer Flounder Commercial/Recreational Allocation Study: Update
- Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment: Review Supplemental Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Management Alternatives
- Recreational Reform Initiative: Update

## **June 2020 Council Meeting: June 16-18, 2020 (Virginia Beach, VA)**

- Unmanaged Landings Update
- Update on Habitat Activities
- *Illlex* Working Group: Review Findings
- 2021-2023 *Illlex* Squid Specifications
- *Illlex* Permitting & MSB FMP Goals Amendment: Final Action

- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Summer Flounder, Scup, And Black Sea Bass Committee Meeting with Subset of Board)
- Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Bluefish Committee Meeting with Subset of Board)

**August 2020 Council Meeting: August 10-13, 2020 (Philadelphia, PA)**

- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass 2021 Specifications: Review
- Commercial Scup Discards and Gear Restricted Areas: Review
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment: Approve Range of Alternatives
- Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment: Final Action
- Bluefish 2021 Specifications: Review
- Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment: Approve Range of Alternatives
- Recreational Reform Initiative: Update
- Black Sea Bass February Recreational Fishery: Review
- Atlantic Surfclam And Ocean Quahog 2021-2026 Specifications
- Mackerel and Butterfish 2021-2022 Specifications
- River Herring and Shad Cap (RH/S) (Mackerel) for 2021-2022
- Longfin Squid (Including Butterfish Cap) 2021-2023 Specifications

**October 2020 Council Meeting: October 6-8, 2020 (Riverhead, NY)**

- 2020/2021 Implementation Plans: Review 2020 Progress and Discuss 2021 Draft Deliverables
- Research Priorities Update: Tracking Progress to Address Priorities
- Review 2021 Spiny Dogfish Specifications
- Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Commingling Issue: Update
- Surfclam Genetic Study: Update
- Joint Council-SSC meeting
- Final Report on HMS Diet Study
- Chub Mackerel 2021 Specifications: Review

**December 2020 Council Meeting: December 14-17, 2020 (Baltimore, MD)**

- 2021 Implementation Plan: Approve
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass 2021 Recreational Management Measures: Develop and Approve
- Summer Flounder, Scup, And Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment: Approve Public Hearing Document
- Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment: Approve Public Hearing Document
- Recreational Reform Initiative: Update
- Update on Habitat Activities
- Review RH/S White Papers

# 2020 Council Meeting Topics At-a-Glance

	Feb 11-13 Duck, NC	April 7-9 Galloway, NJ	May 4-7 Arlington, VA	June 16-18 VA Beach, VA	Aug 10-13 Philadelphia, PA	Oct 6-8 Riverhead, NY	Dec 14-17 Baltimore, MD
<b>Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB) and River Herring and Shad (RH/S)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Illex</i> Permitting &amp; MSB Goals Amd: Review Public Hearing Doc and Select Preliminary Preferred Alternatives</li> <li>• <i>Illex</i> Working Group Update</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Illex</i> Permitting &amp; MSB Goals Amd: Final Action</li> <li>• <i>Illex</i> Working Group: Review Findings</li> <li>• <i>Illex</i> Squid 2021-2023 Specs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mackerel and Butterfish 2021-2022 specs</li> <li>• RH/S Cap (Mackerel) for 2021-2022</li> <li>• Longfin Squid 2021-2023 Specs (Including Butterfish Cap)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chub Mackerel 2021 Specs Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review RH/S White Papers</li> </ul>
<b>Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass (SF/S/BSB)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Review Scoping Plan and Doc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Review Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Alternatives</li> <li>• BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Summer Flounder Com/Rec Allocation Study: Update</li> <li>• Rec Reform Initiative: Update</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Joint Committee/ Board Mtg)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Final Action</li> <li>• SF/S/BSB 2021 Specs Review</li> <li>• BSB February Rec Fishery: Review</li> <li>• Commercial Scup Discards and GRAs: Review</li> <li>• Rec Reform Initiative: Update</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Approve Public Hearing Doc</li> <li>• SF/S/BSB 2021 Recreational Mgmt Measures</li> <li>• Rec Reform Initiative: Update</li> </ul>
<b>Bluefish</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluefish Amd: Review Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluefish Amd: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Joint Committee/ Board mtg)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluefish Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives</li> <li>• Bluefish 2021 Specs Review</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluefish Amd: Approve Public Hearing Doc</li> </ul>
<b>Tilefish</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blueline Tilefish 2021 Specs Review</li> <li>• Golden Tilefish 2021 Specs</li> </ul>					

	Feb 11-13 Duck, NC	April 7-9 Galloway, NJ	May 4-7 Arlington, VA	June 16-18 VA Beach, VA	Aug 10-13 Philadelphia, PA	Oct 6-8 Riverhead, NY	Dec 14-17 Baltimore, MD
<b>Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SC/OQ)</b>					• SC/OQ 2021-2026 Specs	• SC/OQ Commingling Issue: Update • Surfclam Genetic Study: Update	
<b>Spiny Dogfish</b>						• Spiny Dogfish 2021 Specs Review	
<b>Science Issues</b>	• Approve New SSC Membership					• Research Priorities Update • Joint Council-SSC Meeting	
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve 2020 Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Kitty Hawk Wind Pres</li> <li>• GARFO/NEFSC Joint Strategic Plan Pres</li> <li>• NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Program Overview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change Scenario Planning: Intro and Plan for Potential East Coast/Mid-Atlantic Exercise</li> <li>• 2020 Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystem Report</li> <li>• EAFM Updates: Risk Assessment and Summer Flounder MSE</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmanaged landings update</li> <li>• Update on Habitat Activities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review 2020 Implementation Progress and Discuss 2021 Draft Deliverables</li> <li>• HMS Diet Study: Final Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 Implementation Plan: Approve</li> <li>• Update on Habitat Activities</li> </ul>

#### Acronyms/Abbreviations

Amd	Amendment	MSB	Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish
BSB	Black Sea Bass	MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
Com/Rec	Commercial/Recreational	Mtg	Meeting
Com	Commercial	NEFSC	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Doc	Document	Pres	Presentation
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management	Rec	Recreational
FMP	Fishery Management Plan	RH/S	River Herring and Shad
GARFO	NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	SC/OQ	Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog
GRAs	Gear Restricted Areas	SF/S/BSB	Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass
HMS	Highly Migratory Species	Specs	Specifications
Mgmt	Management	SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee

#### Actions Referenced in this Document

- **BSB Com State Allocation Amd:** Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment
- **Bluefish Amd:** Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment
- **Rec Reform Initiative:** Recreational Management Reform Initiative
- **SF-S-BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd:** Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment
- **Illex Permitting & MSB Goals Amd:** Illex Permitting and Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP Goals and Objectives Amendment





MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

*Approved December 2019*

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# Acronyms

ASMFC	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
ACCSP	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
ACFHP	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership
BREP	Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
HAPC	Habitat Area of Particular Concern
GARFO	Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
MAFMC	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
MSE	Management Strategy Evaluation
NCRP	Northeast Cooperative Research Program
NEAMAP	Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program
NEFMC	New England Fishery Management Council
NEFSC	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRCC	Northeast Region Coordinating Council
OLE	Office of Law Enforcement
SOPP	Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures
RSA	Research Set-Aside
SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee
S-K	Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program



# Introduction

## The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (hereafter the Council) is responsible for the conservation and management of more than 64 fish and shellfish stocks that are found within the federal 200-mile limit of the mid-Atlantic region (North Carolina through New York).

The Mid-Atlantic Council was established in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (later renamed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or MSA). The MSA created a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), eliminated foreign fishing within the EEZ, and charged eight regional councils with management of fishery resources in the newly expanded federal waters.

The Council develops fishery management recommendations which must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce before they are finalized and implemented by NOAA Fisheries. All of the Council's fishery management recommendations must be consistent with the ten national standards as defined by the MSA and must be developed in an open, public process as prescribed by law.

Fourteen species are directly managed with specific fishery management plans (FMPs). These include summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, Atlantic bluefish, Atlantic mackerel, *Illlex* and longfin squids, butterfly, Atlantic surfclams, ocean quahogs, golden and blueline tilefish, spiny dogfish (joint with the New England Council), and monkfish (joint with the New England Council). In addition, more than 50 forage species are managed as "ecosystem components" in all seven FMPs. The Council partners with other fishery management organizations, including states and NOAA Fisheries, in the development of effective management plans. For instance, spiny dogfish and monkfish are managed under joint FMPs developed in coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). The Council also coordinates the management of summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, and spiny dogfish with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

The Council is made up of 21 voting members and four non-voting members. Seven of the voting members represent the constituent states' fish and wildlife agencies, one represents NOAA Fisheries, and 13 are private citizens who are knowledgeable about recreational fishing, commercial fishing, or marine conservation. Four non-voting members represent and facilitate coordination with the ASMFC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Council also has a full-time support staff that is based in Dover, Delaware. The staff assists with tasks such as planning and facilitation of meetings, development of FMPs, and coordination with other management agencies. The Council also utilizes advisory bodies, including a Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and advisory panels for fisheries or other specific issues.

Over the last 43 years the Council has made significant progress toward rebuilding stocks that were once overfished and ensuring sustainable fisheries that provide the greatest overall benefit to the Nation. However, the Council still faces social, economic, and ecological challenges that impact the stability and sustainability of Mid-Atlantic fisheries. The strategic planning process is critical for defining the Council's future and will enable proactive, efficient, and effective responses to the challenges that lie ahead.

## Strategic Plan Purpose

This strategic plan will guide the Council's activities and priorities for the years 2020 through 2024. The goals and objectives described in this plan have been informed by the foundation created and progress achieved under the Council's previous strategic plan, as well as stakeholders, the public, and management partners.

The Council's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was developed to meet the following overarching objectives:

- Maintain sustainable fisheries, ecosystems, and habitats in the Mid-Atlantic;
- Address specific issues identified by the Council and its constituents;
- Improve communication with constituents and other organizations;
- Improve the Council's ability to collect and use input from constituents and management partners;
- Increase efficiency in the management process;
- Promote stability in Mid-Atlantic fisheries; and,
- Establish a more proactive process for addressing management challenges.

## The Strategic Landscape

The Council is operating in a rapidly changing world and faces increasing and competing demands on its time and resources. Over the next five years, the Council will confront new and ongoing challenges that will require it to prioritize management activities and make difficult decisions, including:

- Limited staff resources and capacity to respond to unforeseen circumstances.
- Competing constituent interests.
- Changing ocean conditions that impact the distribution, productivity, and sustainability of managed species.
- Competing ocean uses and their potential impacts on the Council's fisheries.
- Habitat loss and degradation.
- Interactions between protected resources and managed species.
- Availability of management partner resources to address the Council's needs/priorities.

Within this context, the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is designed to provide a framework to guide progress toward the Council's long-term goals and allow the Council to be responsive to changing circumstances.

# Vision

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Healthy marine ecosystems and thriving, sustainable fisheries and fishing communities that provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation.

# Mission

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The Council manages fisheries in federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region for their long-term sustainability and productivity consistent with the national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is committed to the stewardship of these fisheries, and associated ecosystems and fishing communities, through the collaborative development of effective, science-based fishery management plans and policies.

# Core Values

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The Council's activities, operations, and decisions are guided by the following core values:

- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Effectiveness
- Fairness
- Competence
- Transparency

# Strategic Goals

The following goals have been identified to help the Council advance towards its Vision during the years 2020 through 2024.

Theme 1: <b>Communication</b>	Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.
Theme 2: <b>Science</b>	Ensure that the Council's management decisions are based on timely and accurate scientific information and methods.
Theme 3: <b>Management</b>	Develop effective management strategies that provide for sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems while considering the needs of fishing communities and other resource users.
Theme 4: <b>Ecosystem</b>	Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.
Theme 5: <b>Governance</b>	Ensure that the Council's practices accurately represent and consider the interests of fisheries, fishing communities, and the public through a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

For each of these goals, the Council has developed a suite of objectives and associated strategies to guide its progress over the next five years.

# Theme 1: Communication

**Goal:** Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.

**Objective 1.** Use a wide range of communication tools and methods tailored to engage target audiences.

**Strategy 1.1:** Employ a variety of traditional, web-based, and social media tools to disseminate relevant information, updates, and communication materials.

**Strategy 1.2:** Upgrade the content and organization of the Council website to enhance usability for target audiences.

**Strategy 1.3:** Coordinate communication efforts with management partners and other organizations to expand the distribution of messages to a broader audience.

**Strategy 1.4:** Seek opportunities to expand media coverage of Council actions, managed fisheries, and opportunities for stakeholder participation.

**Strategy 1.5:** Expand the use of “interested-parties” email lists to deliver fishery- and action-specific information and updates to interested stakeholders.

**Strategy 1.6:** Maintain the online calendar of meetings and events with links to meeting materials and supplemental information.

**Strategy 1.7:** Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel to assist in the review and development of communication and outreach tools and approaches.

**Objective 2.** Use a wide range of communication tools and methods tailored to engage target audiences.

**Strategy 2.1:** Hold workshops to facilitate collaborative development of innovative management approaches among fishermen, managers, scientists, and other interested stakeholders.

**Strategy 2.2:** Develop outreach materials to facilitate constructive stakeholder input on proposed management actions (e.g. scoping guides, fact sheets, etc.).

**Strategy 2.3:** Expand the use of online comment forms to gather public input.

**Strategy 2.4:** Schedule, advertise, and conduct meetings and public hearings in a manner that encourages and enables stakeholder attendance and participation.

**Strategy 2.5:** Maintain action-specific web pages to inform stakeholders about opportunities to participate in the development of Council actions (e.g., FMPs, amendments, and frameworks).

**Strategy 2.6:** Utilize webinars, conference lines, and other technology to provide opportunities for remote access and participation.

**Objective 3.** Broaden the public’s understanding and awareness of the Council and its managed fisheries.

**Strategy 3.1:** Develop and distribute general outreach and education materials to increase awareness and understanding of Council-managed fisheries and the Council process.

**Strategy 3.2:** Partner with external organizations to develop and promote workshops and other interactive educational opportunities for stakeholders.

**Strategy 3.3:** Collaborate with science and management partners and other academic or research institutions to develop outreach materials that explain fisheries science and data collection.

**Strategy 3.4:** Use plain language in Council documents to improve public understanding.

# Theme 2: Science

**Goal:** Ensure that the Council's management decisions are based on timely and accurate scientific information and methods.

**Objective 4.** Collaborate with science partners and research institutions to ensure that the Council's science priorities are addressed.

**Strategy 4.1:** Engage science and management partners to leverage opportunities for inclusion of the Council's research priorities in external funding programs (e.g. Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K), Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program (BREP), regional Sea Grant, etc.).

**Strategy 4.2:** Collaborate with management partners and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) to identify common research priorities and strategically address science, data, and information needs.

**Strategy 4.3:** Support implementation and continued development of the new Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) stock assessment process to improve assessment efficiency.

**Strategy 4.4:** Develop a process for cross-communication between the Council's SSC and other council SSCs to promote sharing of scientific approaches, methods, and information.

**Strategy 4.5:** Develop and implement a comprehensive research plan to address the research needs identified in the Five-Year Research Priorities document.

**Objective 5.** Support the use of collaborative research to meet the Council's science, data, and information needs.

**Strategy 5.1:** Collaborate with the NEFSC to expand and enhance existing cooperative research initiatives carried out under the umbrella of the NEFSC's Northeast Cooperative Research Program (NCRP)

**Strategy 5.2:** Identify research needs that can be addressed using collaborative approaches with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishery participants.

**Strategy 5.3:** Support development of cooperative research programs that use "vessels of opportunity" from all sectors to address science and research needs.

**Strategy 5.4:** Cooperate with management partners to support and identify funding opportunities for science priorities identified by the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) Operations Committee.

**Strategy 5.5:** Support innovations in gear development and configuration that increase efficiency and reduce catch of non-target species in commercial and recreational fisheries.

**Strategy 5.6:** Evaluate options for future research set-aside (RSA) program.

**Objective 6.** Promote efficient and accurate data collection, monitoring, and reporting systems.

**Strategy 6.1:** Support implementation of improvements in fishery data accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness as identified in the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)/NEFSC Fishery Dependent Data Initiative.

**Strategy 6.2:** Work with science and management partners to develop and implement a unique trip identifier to integrate different individual reporting programs (e.g., fisherman, dealer, observer, port sampler, etc.).

**Strategy 6.3:** Collaborate with science and management partners to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary reporting.

**Strategy 6.4:** Address inconsistencies in permitting, reporting, and vessel inspection requirements across commercial and for-hire fisheries.

**Strategy 6.5:** Determine the utility of electronic reporting phone apps to improve recreational harvest estimates in the Mid-Atlantic region.

**Objective 7.** Promote the collection of relevant social and economic data and on-the-water observations.

**Strategy 7.1:** Engage the Council’s SSC to identify existing studies or other sources of social and economic information that could be used to inform management decisions.

**Strategy 7.2:** Support efforts to incorporate fishermen’s knowledge in the stock assessment process.

**Strategy 7.3:** Identify data/information gaps that can be addressed with on-the-water observations.

**Strategy 7.4:** Continue to support data collection efforts for improved social and economic impact analyses, such as cost-benefit analysis, for all fisheries.

**Objective 8.** Identify and prioritize the Council’s research needs.

**Strategy 8.1:** Conduct a biennial review of the Council’s Five-Year Research Priorities by the advisory panels, monitoring committees, and SSC to ensure the document is reflective of the current state of scientific knowledge and Council priorities.

**Strategy 8.2:** Review research needs identified in stock assessments for inclusion in the Council’s Five-Year Research Priorities.

**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.

# Theme 3: Management

**Goal:** Develop effective management strategies that provide for sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems while considering the needs of fishing communities and other resource users.

**Objective 9.** Strengthen state, federal, and interstate partnerships to promote coordinated, efficient management of fishery resources.

**Strategy 9.1:** Continue to use the NRCC process as a forum for Atlantic coast management entities to enhance communication, coordination, and pursue shared objectives.

**Strategy 9.2:** Coordinate with management partners to ensure efficient allocation of staff resources for jointly managed species and issues of common interest.

**Strategy 9.3:** Collaborate with management partners to address inconsistencies in regulations across state, federal, and regional boundaries.

**Objective 10.** Adapt management approaches and priorities to address emerging issues and changing fishery conditions.

**Strategy 10.1:** Monitor the variability and changes in species distribution, abundance, and availability and associated impacts on Council-managed fisheries.

**Strategy 10.2:** Use fishery performance reports and State of the Ecosystem reports as tools to develop management responses to changing fishery conditions.

**Strategy 10.3:** Regularly review the performance of existing management measures.

**Strategy 10.4:** Address emerging issues, such as aquaculture, as needed.

**Objective 11.** Ensure that management decisions consider social, economic, and community impacts and opportunities.

**Strategy 11.1:** Expand the use of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to determine/evaluate the impacts of management decisions on fishing communities and other resource users.

**Strategy 11.2:** Evaluate the impacts of current management approaches on recreational angler fishery participation and satisfaction through the use of focus groups or workshops.

**Strategy 11.3:** Continue and expand the use of multi-year management approaches to increase fishery stability and predictability to the extent practicable.

**Strategy 11.4:** Evaluate the impacts of management decisions on the economic efficiency and sustainability of commercial and for-hire businesses and associated shoreside operations.



# Theme 4: Ecosystem

**Goal:** Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.

**Objective 12.** Implement the Council’s Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) as described in the EAFM Guidance Document.

**Strategy 12.1:** Establish a process to track implementation of the Council’s EAFM Guidance Document and ensure that progress is effectively communicated to the public.

**Strategy 12.2:** Use the EAFM structured framework approach as a tool to implement the Council’s EAFM policy and incorporate species, fleet, habitat, and climate interactions into the Council’s science and management programs.

**Strategy 12.3:** Collaborate with the Council’s science partners and stakeholders to increase the collection, utilization, and consideration of ecosystem-level biological, social, and economic information.

**Objective 13.** Collaborate with management partners to develop ecosystem approaches that are responsive to the impacts of climate change.<sup>1</sup>

**Strategy 13.1:** Determine the data and information necessary to evaluate and respond to climate-induced species and habitat changes for both managed and unmanaged species.

**Strategy 13.2:** Work with Atlantic coast management partners to evaluate potential management and governance responses to shifting species distributions through scenario planning workshops and/or other exercises.

**Strategy 13.3:** Evaluate the flexibility/ability of current management approaches, including the NOAA Fisheries climate-ready fisheries management process, to respond to shifting species distributions.

**Strategy 13.4:** Consider management strategies that are responsive to the impacts of climate change on current fishery allocations.

**Objective 14.** Identify, designate, and protect habitat using an ecosystem approach.

**Strategy 14.1:** Identify and document the contributions of inshore habitats to offshore productivity.

**Strategy 14.2:** Review and strengthen essential fish habitat (EFH) designations to account for species interactions, connectivity, and changing ocean conditions.

**Strategy 14.3:** Participate with management partners in the Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment Project, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), and other regional habitat partnerships.

**Strategy 14.4:** Develop the linkages between habitat science and conservation and fishery outcomes with a focus on ecosystem resiliency and productivity.

**Strategy 14.5:** Ensure that the Council’s habitat policies regarding both fishing and non-fishing activities reflect current scientific information and best management practices.

**Strategy 14.6:** Examine the use of the Council’s existing EFH/Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) authorities and designations to ensure ecosystem integrity and services are maintained.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “climate change” encompasses related impacts such as global warming, ocean acidification, etc.

**Objective 15.** Engage in the offshore energy development process to address impacts to Council-managed species and associated habitats.

**Strategy 15.1:** Collaborate on offshore energy issues with state and federal management partners and other relevant organizations to identify information needs and evaluate potential impacts of offshore energy development on marine resources.

**Strategy 15.2:** Comment on proposed offshore energy and development projects to ensure developers and permitting agencies are aware of natural resource and habitat concerns and Council priorities.

**Objective 16.** Support the maintenance of an adequate forage base to ensure ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.

**Strategy 16.1:** Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the role of Council-managed species in the ecosystem, including roles as prey, predator, and food for humans.

**Strategy 16.3:** Monitor landings of currently unmanaged forage species and respond to changes if necessary.

**Strategy 16.2:** Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the impact of Council-managed fisheries on the forage base.

**Objective 17.** Develop management approaches that minimize adverse ecosystem impacts.

**Strategy 17.1:** Annually review information from the NEFSC's annual State of the Ecosystem reports to identify potential ecosystem impacts of the Council's management approaches.

**Strategy 17.3:** Consider fishery management approaches that avoid or reduce negative impacts on protected resources.

**Strategy 17.2:** Develop management measures that consider ecological interactions to reduce regulatory discards, promote greater utilization of catch, and minimize impacts to habitat.

# Theme 5: Governance

**Goal:** Ensure that the Council's practices accurately represent and consider the interests of fisheries, fishing communities, and the public through a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

**Objective 18.** Maintain an open, accessible, and clearly defined process.

**Strategy 18.1:** Develop, refine, and communicate policies regarding operations of committees and advisory and technical bodies, including the SSC.

**Strategy 18.2:** Provide annual updates on Council activities and progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan.

**Strategy 18.3:** Ensure that the Council's Statement of Organization Processes and Procedures (SOPP) are regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and made available on the Council's website.

**Strategy 18.4:** Provide conference lines or Webinar access to Council and advisory body meetings whenever feasible.

**Objective 19.** Engage management partners to promote effective collaboration and coordination.

**Strategy 19.1:** Review regional operating agreement with GARFO, the NEFSC, and Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and revise if necessary.

**Strategy 19.2:** Collaborate with the ASMFC to define roles, responsibilities, and procedures for joint meetings and joint action development.

**Strategy 19.3:** Consider development of agreements with the New England and/or South Atlantic Councils to define management roles and processes for joint and/or cross-jurisdictional species management.

**Strategy 19.4:** Review the composition and operation of Council committees to ensure that the concerns of management partners are effectively understood and addressed.

**Objective 20.** Ensure that stakeholder interests are understood and addressed.

**Strategy 20.1:** Consider incorporating additional opportunities for general public comment (i.e. not related to specific agenda items) during Council meetings.

**Strategy 20.2:** Expand opportunities for stakeholders to provide input during the development of annual Implementation Plans.

**Strategy 20.3:** Regularly evaluate the composition of advisory bodies to ensure effective representation of diverse interests.

**Strategy 20.4:** Explore options to better communicate how public input was used in management decisions.

**Objective 21.** Provide training and development opportunities for Council members and staff to enhance organizational performance.

**Strategy 21.1:** Provide opportunities for Council member training and development on topics such as parliamentary procedure and best practices for effective meetings.

**Strategy 21.2:** Support the ongoing professional development of Council staff.

**Strategy 21.3:** Continue to promote collaboration with GARFO, NEFSC, and ASMFC staff through staff-to-staff meetings.

### **For Additional Information:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
800 North State St., Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901

Phone: (302) 674-2331

Toll Free: Toll-Free: (877) 446-2362

[www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan)

# Appendix: Evaluation Plan

## Objectives

- Ensure that the Council's actions result in progress towards its vision.
- Provide flexibility to adapt strategies to accommodate changing circumstances.
- Maintain stakeholder and public engagement with the strategic planning process.
- Allow new Council members to become familiar with the Strategic Plan.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder and public feedback on emerging issues and future Implementation Plan actions.

## Annual Review

**Purpose:** Review the status of implementation activities from the previous year and consider suggestions from constituents regarding implementation activities for the following year.

**Timing:** *October – December*

### Tasks:

- Council develops draft list of items for Implementation Plan in October.
- Provide opportunity for stakeholders and the public to review draft Implementation Plan and offer suggestions (e.g. via online comment form, webinar, etc.).
- Council reviews input and finalizes Implementation Plan in December.

## Mid-Plan Review

**Purpose:** Mid-term review of the Strategic Plan to determine progress towards completion of objectives and to obtain stakeholder and public perceptions.

**Timing:** *October – December 2022*

### Tasks:

- Determine which objectives have advanced, which have not, and circumstances contributing to delays.
- Provide opportunity for stakeholder and public feedback on progress and direction for remainder of the plan timeframe (e.g., via APs, online comment form, webinar, etc.)
- Council reviews input and considers any shifts in strategy or reordering of priorities based on current or anticipated conditions.

## **Comprehensive Review**

**Purpose:** Review goals, objectives, and strategies, and evaluate overall progress towards achievement of the Council's Vision. Use results of the evaluation to inform development of the next five-year strategic plan.

**Timing:** *Mid- to late 2024*

### **Tasks:**

- Develop a process to obtain stakeholder and public feedback regarding progress and perceptions of success.
- Evaluate goals and revise based on Council, stakeholder, and public input.
- Determine which objectives remain priorities for the next strategic plan and develop new objectives as necessary.
- Determine the efficacy of current strategies and consider necessary modifications.

# MAFMC 2020 -2024 Strategic Plan Overview

*This overview is intended to provide an abbreviated, “at-a-glance” view of the topics addressed in the Council’s 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Please refer to the complete plan for additional details.*

[www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan)

## Mission

The Council manages fisheries in federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region for their long-term sustainability and productivity consistent with the national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is committed to the stewardship of these fisheries, and associated ecosystems and fishing communities, through the collaborative development of effective, science-based fishery management plans and policies.

## Vision

Healthy marine ecosystems and thriving, sustainable fisheries and fishing communities that provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation.

## Core Values

- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Effectiveness
- Fairness
- Competence
- Transparency

<p><b>Communication:</b> Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.</p>		
<p><b>1. Tools and methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a variety of traditional, web-based, and social media tools</li> <li>• Upgrade the website content and organization</li> <li>• Coordinate with management partners</li> <li>• Expand media coverage</li> <li>• Expand the use of “interested parties” lists</li> <li>• Maintain online calendar</li> <li>• Establish Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Stakeholder participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold workshops to develop innovative management approaches</li> <li>• Develop outreach materials to facilitate stakeholder participation</li> <li>• Schedule and conduct meetings/hearings in a manner that encourages participation</li> <li>• Expand use of online comment forms</li> <li>• Develop action-specific web pages</li> <li>• Use webinars and other technologies to enable remote participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Education and awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop outreach and education materials on Council fisheries and process</li> <li>• Promote partner organizations’ workshops and educational opportunities</li> <li>• Collaboratively develop outreach materials on fisheries science and data collection</li> <li>• Use plain language in Council documents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Science:</b> Ensure that the Council’s management decisions are based on timely and accurate scientific information and methods.</p>		
<p><b>4. Planning and addressing research needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage opportunities to include Council research priorities in external funding programs</li> <li>• Engage in regional collaboration on research priorities and planning</li> <li>• Support the new NRCC stock assessment process</li> <li>• Develop a process for cross-communication between SSCs</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive research plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Collaborative research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand/enhance existing Northeast Cooperative Research Program initiatives</li> <li>• Identify research needs suitable for collaborative research</li> <li>• Support the use of “vessels of opportunity”</li> <li>• Support priorities identified by NEAMAP operations committee</li> <li>• Support innovations in gear development to reduce bycatch</li> <li>• Evaluate future RSA options</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Data collection, monitoring and reporting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Fishery Dependent Data Initiative</li> <li>• Support development of a unique trip identifier</li> <li>• Work to eliminate duplicative/unnecessary reporting</li> <li>• Address inconsistencies in commercial and for-hire permitting/reporting/inspection requirements</li> <li>• Consider phone apps for recreational reporting</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Social and economic data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify existing social/economic data sources</li> <li>• Incorporate fishermen’s knowledge in the stock assessment process</li> <li>• Identify data/information gaps that can be addressed with on-the-water observations.</li> <li>• Support improvements to social/economic analyses</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. Priority setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct periodic reviews of Five-Year Research Priorities</li> <li>• Review research needs identified in stock assessments</li> <li>• Track progress toward addressing the Council’s research priorities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Management:</b> Develop effective management strategies that provide for sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems and consider the needs of fishing communities and other resource users.</p>		
<p><b>9. Coordinated management through partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the NRCC to enhance coordination and communication</li> <li>• Coordinate with partners to ensure efficient allocation of staff resources</li> <li>• Address inconsistencies across state/federal/regional boundaries</li> </ul>	<p><b>10. Adapt management approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor variability in species distribution, abundance, and availability</li> <li>• Use FPRs and SOE reports to develop management responses to changing conditions</li> <li>• Review the performance of existing measures</li> </ul>	<p><b>11. Consider social/economic impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the use of MSEs to determine social/economic impacts</li> <li>• Evaluate the impacts of current measures on recreational participation and satisfaction</li> <li>• Expand the use of multi-year management approaches</li> <li>• Evaluate the impacts of management on fishing businesses</li> </ul>

**Ecosystem:** Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.

<p><b>12. EAFM Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track EAFM implementation progress</li> <li>Use the structured framework process as a tool to implement EAFM</li> <li>Collaborate with science partners to address ecosystem information needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>13. Climate change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify climate-related data needs</li> <li>Consider management and governance responses to shifting species distributions</li> <li>Evaluate ability of current management approaches to respond to shifting species distributions</li> <li>Consider management strategies that are responsive to the impacts of climate change on fishery allocations</li> </ul>	<p><b>14. Habitat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the contributions of inshore habitats to offshore productivity</li> <li>Review EFH designations</li> <li>Participate in regional habitat partnerships</li> <li>Develop the linkages between habitat science/conservation and fishery outcomes</li> <li>Ensure that Council habitat policies reflect current scientific information and best management practices</li> <li>Examine the use of EFH/HAPCs to ensure ecosystem integrity</li> </ul>
<p><b>15. Offshore energy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with partners on offshore energy issues to identify information needs and evaluate impacts</li> <li>Comment on proposed offshore energy projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>16. Forage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the role of Council-managed species in the ecosystem</li> <li>Consider and account for the impacts of Council-managed species on the forage base</li> <li>Monitor unmanaged forage landings</li> </ul>	<p><b>17. Ecosystem impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate information from the SOE reports to identify impacts of Council decisions on the ecosystem</li> <li>Consider measures that promote fewer regulatory discards and greater utilization of catch</li> <li>Avoid/reduce negative impacts on protected resources</li> </ul>

**Governance:** Ensure that the Council's practices accurately represent and consider the interests of fisheries, fishing communities, and the public through a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.

<p><b>18. Open, accessible process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop/update policies for Council committees and advisory/technical bodies.</li> <li>Provide annual updates on Council activities</li> <li>Review/update SOPP on a regular basis</li> <li>Provide webinars whenever possible</li> </ul>	<p><b>19. Collaboration with management partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review/update regional operating agreement</li> <li>Clarify roles, responsibilities, procedures with ASMFC for joint meetings/actions</li> <li>Develop agreements with NEFMC and SAFMC</li> <li>Review composition/operation of Council committees to address management partner concerns</li> </ul>	<p><b>20. Stakeholder interests</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create new opportunities for general public comment during meetings</li> <li>Add opportunities for public comment on implementation plans</li> <li>Evaluate the composition of advisory bodies</li> <li>Improve communication regarding the use of public input in management decisions</li> </ul>	<p><b>21. Member and staff training and development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for Council member training</li> <li>Support staff development</li> <li>Promote staff-to-staff collaboration with management partners</li> </ul>
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## Managed Fisheries

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass • Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish  
 Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs • Golden and Blueline Tilefish  
 Bluefish • Spiny Dogfish • Monkfish







## **Request for Nominations: Scientific and Statistical Committee**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is seeking four qualified candidates to serve on its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Successful candidates will serve a three-year appointment beginning in March of 2020. Applications must be received by 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 24, 2020.

The SSC serves as the Council's primary scientific/technical advisory body and provides independent scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch and achieving rebuilding targets. The SSC also provides science advice and information on stock status, bycatch, habitat, social and economic impacts of management measures, and research priorities. The SSC typically meets 4-5 times per year, with meetings lasting from one to three days. In-person meetings are usually held in Baltimore, MD.

Membership is comprised of state and federal employees, academia, and independent experts with scientific and technical expertise in biology, statistics, economics, social science, and other relevant disciplines. The Council recently completed a comprehensive review of SSC membership in order to align new membership expertise with the future needs of the Council. Based on that review, the Council is seeking four candidates in the following areas:

- One additional member with quantitative stock assessment expertise
- One fisheries biologist/ecologist with experience and expertise in ecosystem science and approaches
- One economist/social scientist with experience and expertise in ecosystem science and approaches
- One economist and/or social scientist to help support Council priorities and actions that will have socioeconomic implications

Individuals interested in applying for nomination to the SSC must submit a current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume and a brief letter describing qualifications and relevant experience in priority areas identified above. All applications received will be reviewed by the Council and will require a nomination by a Council member in order to be considered for appointment.

Applications and materials may be submitted by email to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, at [cmoore@mafmc.org](mailto:cmoore@mafmc.org). **All applications must be received by 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 24, 2020.** If you have any questions or need further information about the process, please contact Brandon Muffley at [bmuffley@mafmc.org](mailto:bmuffley@mafmc.org); 302-526-5260.



## Summary of Scientific and Statistical Committee Applications

January 2020

In 2019, the Council completed a comprehensive review of SSC membership in order to align new membership expertise with the future needs of the Council. Based on that review, the Council solicited applications<sup>1</sup> to fill four vacancies in the following areas:

- One member with quantitative stock assessment expertise
- One fisheries biologist/ecologist with experience and expertise in ecosystem science and approaches
- One economist/social scientist with experience and expertise in ecosystem science and approaches
- One economist and/or social scientist to help support Council priorities and actions that will have socioeconomic implications

Below is a summary table (Table 1) of all applications received by the January 24, 2020 deadline including the applicant's affiliation and area(s) of expertise. A breakdown of applicants associated with each of the four priority areas is provided in Table 2.

The Council will review the list of applicants and nominate and approve new SSC members at the February 2020 meeting. New SSC members will begin a three-year term in March 2020 and attend the March 10-11, 2020 SSC meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> The January 2, 2020 announcement seeking SSC applications can be found at: <http://www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2020/request-for-nominations-scientific-and-statistical-committee>

**Table 1.** Summary of Mid-Atlantic SSC applicants, their affiliation and area(s) of expertise.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Expertise</b>
Dr. Geret DePiper	NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Social Sciences Branch	Economics, ecosystem science, socioeconomic trade-offs
Dr. Gavin Fay	University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's School of Marine Science and Technology	Stock assessments and statistics, ecosystem science and management, management strategy evaluation
Dr. Edward Hale	Delaware Sea Grant, University of Delaware	Stock assessments, fisheries ecology, aquaculture
Dr. Jorge Holzer	University of Maryland, Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics	Economics, allocation, sector evaluation, multispecies fisheries
Dr. Desmond Kahn	Fisheries Investigations; Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Fisheries Section (retired)	Stock assessments, fisheries ecology and population dynamics
Dr. Holly Kindsvater	Virginia Tech University, College of Natural Resources and Environment	Stock assessments, data limited methods, management strategy evaluation, unique life-history species
Ms. Emily Markowitz	NMFS Office of Science and Technology, Division of Economics and Social Analysis	Fisheries biology/ecology, ecosystem and climate science, stock assessments
Dr. Janet Nye	Stony Brook University, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences / University of North Carolina, Institute of Marine Science	Fisheries ecology, ecosystem and climate science, population dynamics, bioenergetics
Dr. Andrew Scheld	Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, College of William and Mary	Economics, fisheries science, recreational fisheries, gear interactions
Mr. Richard Seagraves	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (retired)	Fisheries biology/ecology, ecosystem science, fisheries management, stock assessment
Dr. Alexei Sharov	Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Service	Stock assessments, survey design, ecosystem and multi-species science

**Table 2.** List of applicants associated with the four Council priority areas.

<b>Area of Expertise</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
Stock assessment	G. Fay, E. Hale, D. Kahn, H. Kindsvater, E. Markowitz, R. Seagraves, A. Sharov
Fisheries biologist/ecologist with expertise in ecosystem science	G. Fay, D. Kahn, E. Markowitz, J. Nye, R. Seagraves, A. Sharov
Economist/social scientist with expertise in ecosystem science	G. DePiper, J. Holzer, A. Scheld
Economist/social scientist to support Council priorities and actions	G. DePiper, J. Holzer, A. Scheld



**AVANGRID  
RENEWABLES**

February 2020

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# **Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind**



# Planned activities offshore NC & VA

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2018

Planning, assessment & stakeholder outreach

2019

Planning, assessment & stakeholder outreach

Aerial Surveys of wind energy area – Avian, Marine Mammals, Sea Turtles, Fish

Marine geophysical, geotechnical, & benthic reconnaissance surveys

SAP submittal

2020

Planning, assessment & stakeholder outreach

Aerial Surveys of wind energy area – Avian, Marine Mammals, Sea Turtles, Fish

Marine geophysical, geotechnical, & benthic surveys of potential project area(s) & cable routes

SAP Approval/Buoy deployment

Potential

2021-2022

Planning, assessment & stakeholder outreach

Project permitting

2023 Onshore construction

2024-2025 Offshore construction



**NOAA FISHERIES**

**NEFSC Science and Research Director's  
Annual Guidance Memo for Fiscal Year 2020**

June 2019

**Northeast Fisheries Science Center**

**NOAA Fisheries**

# Preface

This Annual Guidance Memo gives specific guidance for activities to be conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Fiscal Year 2020 in support of the NOAA Fisheries' vision and mission.

*"We provide vital services for the nation: productive and sustainable fisheries, safe sources of seafood, the recovery and conservation of protected resources, and healthy ecosystems—all backed by sound science and an ecosystem-based approach to management."*<sup>1</sup>

Within this broad vision, this Annual Guidance Memo identifies high priority activities that we will endeavor to support in Fiscal Year 2020 consistent with the NOAA Fisheries mission and consistent with national and regional strategic goals and priorities.

This Annual Guidance Memo builds off of the framework for the science enterprise - of which the NEFSC is part - and highlights the anticipated results we would achieve in Fiscal Year 2020 to support NOAA Fisheries' three national Strategic Goals:

1. Amplify the economic value of commercial and recreational fisheries, while ensuring their sustainability.
2. Conserve and recover protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development
3. Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency

In addition to the three strategic goals, communication and collaboration will remain cross-cutting priorities for the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. We must demonstrate these cross-cutting priorities within the Center and with our external stakeholders and partners.

The NEFSC faces a number of challenges and is presented with a number of opportunities. These opportunities can be used to improve our science and improve our organization. These opportunities also can be used to strengthen our partnerships and collaborations, which are essential to the NEFSC mission.

Our work is important, our mission is broad, and we need to work with our stakeholders and partners to be successful.



Jon Hare  
Science and Research Director  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about-us>



## NOAA Fisheries Mission

*Stewardship of living marine resources  
through science-based conservation  
and management and the promotion of  
healthy ecosystems*

# Mission

The mission of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) is to provide scientific advice in support of living marine resource management. More specifically, the NEFSC conducts individual species, multi-species and ecosystem monitoring and assessments of living marine resources, with a focus on the Northeast U.S. Shelf Ecosystem. These assessments and advice promote the recovery and long-term sustainability of living marine resources in the region, and generate social and economic opportunities and benefits from the use of these resources<sup>2</sup>. These assessments and advice are based on the best available science and are provided in an objective and impartial manner.

The [Northeast Fisheries Science Center Strategic Science Plan](#) (2016-2021) prioritized science activities around three themes: *Sustainable Fisheries*, *Protected Species*, and *Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management*. In addition, *Aquaculture* is a national and regional priority.

*Organizational Excellence* is also a priority for the NEFSC, which recognizes the importance of our people and infrastructure, and the need to invest in an engaged workforce.

# Challenges and Opportunities

The NEFSC faces a number of challenges. One major challenge is the availability of resources to do our job.

Appropriated funding continues to be constraining, and despite efforts to identify and implement efficiencies, the NEFSC science enterprise continues to narrow. In addition, the NEFSC is increasingly reliant on highly-directed appropriated funds and directed temporary funds. These funds support specific activities but often do not support base monitoring, assessment, and research activities. The days-at-sea allocated to the NEFSC by the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations continues to decrease, limiting some of the core NEFSC monitoring and data collection programs. These funding challenges provide the NEFSC the opportunity to find efficiencies and develop new partnerships and collaborations. These challenges also create the opportunity to more effectively communicate the importance of science produced by the NEFSC.

Another major challenge in the Northeast region is trust. There is a history of mistrust among stakeholders and partners but the situation is improving. The NEFSC has the opportunity to continue to improve trust in the region through increased and effective communication and open and collaborative science.

There are multiple scientific challenges facing the region and the NEFSC. First and foremost is the complexity and array of issues related to living marine resource management: wild-captured fisheries, aquaculture, protected species, habitat, various natural and human interactions, and broader ecosystem interactions. Second is that the Northeast U.S. Shelf Ecosystem is one of the fastest changing ecosystems in the world. Third, is that the Northeast U.S. Shelf Ecosystem is home to two highly endangered marine species: North Atlantic Right Whales and Atlantic Salmon. Finally, there are a number of challenges associated with stock assessments in the region including data collection, assessment modeling, and stock identification.

These challenges create opportunities for the NEFSC including: developing Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management and Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management in the region, incorporating climate change into our science and advice, conducting science that contributes to the recovery of endangered species, improving our fisheries, protected species, and ecosystem data collection systems and assessments, implementing and new stock assessment process, and strengthening our relationships with partners and stakeholders. We also have the opportunity to be on the forefront of science in support of marine aquaculture and science in support of the coexistence of wind energy development, fisheries, and protected species.

We work in challenging time, but these challenges create opportunities to conduct the best science possible, while making the NEFSC and the Northeast region the best place to work in NOAA.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/mission.html>

# Science Enterprise

Our goal is science excellence: accurate, precise, accountable, objective, efficient, timely, useful, transparent, trusted, and novel. Our science is conducted to support the management of living marine resources in the Northeast U.S. Shelf Ecosystem, which extends from North Carolina to Maine, and includes watersheds, estuaries, the continental shelf, and open ocean. The NEFSC science enterprise has five components: i) research, ii) monitoring, iii) modeling, iv) innovative technologies, and v) data, assessments, and advice. These five components are supported by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center operations and administration. These five components also depend on collaboration and cooperation with partners. These components support management, stakeholders whose actions are managed, and the services that stakeholders provide. We must work across this enterprise to be successful.

**Monitoring** is the systematic collection of data that provide information on changes in biological, physical, chemical, or human conditions. NEFSC data collection systems are designed to provide data for innovative research, support the development of assessments and other decision-support tools, and serve as the basis for scientific advice.

**Research** includes laboratory experiments, field-based experiments and process studies, retrospective analyses, and modeling studies designed to understand and predict changes to living marine resources, the ecosystems they depend upon, and the human communities within which they interact. The NEFSC strives to strengthen research efforts by engaging partners and stakeholders across the region.

**Modeling** includes activities that synthesize understanding and provide the basis for prediction, forecasting, and projection. Model outputs can be tested with additional research, monitoring and application of new technologies. Modeling and synthesis can also serve to support the provision of data, assessments, and advice in support of management. Modeling includes a range of activities from conceptual, to numerical, to visual.

**Innovative Technologies** are developed, applied, and evaluated to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fishery-independent data collection, fishery-dependent data collection, and advance scientific understanding and to better support management. These technologies can apply to any element of the NEFSC science enterprise or connecting elements across the NEFSC science enterprise. New technologies include passive and active acoustics, imaging of water column and benthic habitats, gear engineering, electronic monitoring of fisheries, survey data collection, and genetic applications such as measurements of environmental DNA to assess ecosystem services. New technologies can also include new approaches including more involvement of industry in monitoring and research activities and improvements to assessment and advice processes. Using existing technologies in innovative ways can help maximize investments across multiple programs and activities.

**Data, Assessments, and Advice** broadly support management programs and decision-making. These activities develop a wide variety of products that support the NOAA Fisheries mission and the decisions of managers in the region. In some cases these products are a dataset; in other cases these products are formal assessments; while in other cases these products are more general advice provided by the NEFSC. The goal is to develop science-based decision tools to support the sustainability of living marine resources, to enhance coastal community resilience and society's capability to respond to changing ecosystem conditions, and to manage risk to different components of the ecosystem. Examples include data summarized in Ecosystem Status Reports, fishery and protected species stock assessments, input into management actions, and advice in support of offshore wind development and aquaculture. These data, assessments, and advice include natural and human dimensions of the Northeast U.S. Shelf Ecosystem.

**Operations and Administration** are fundamental to the science enterprise and represent the internal functions and services necessary for the NEFSC to operate. These functions and services include secure and safe facilities and IT infrastructure, highly functioning workforce management support, effective personnel management, active communication techniques and strategies; effective and compliant budget execution, budget planning, procurement, grants, and contracts; and enabling IT support at the facility- and programmatic levels.

*Collaboration and Cooperation* are essential to the NEFSC. Stewardship of living marine resources requires that components of the NEFSC work together and require that the NEFSC work with our partners and stakeholders. The NEFSC recognizes that a variety of approaches are necessary to foster collaborations internally externally and is dedicated to diversifying and strengthening these efforts going forward.

*Management* includes all organizations involved in managing living marine resources in the Northeast U.S. Shelf ecosystem. First and foremost is the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fishery Office (GARFO), which is responsible for management of living marine resources in the Northeast region. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the two regional federal fishery management councils, and the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Management Division are also important management bodies in the region. Other federal agencies are also supported, including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Where resources overlap, management organizations in the southeast U.S. are also supported. These include the Southeast Regional Office and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. There are also a number of advisory groups that review and use NEFSC science including those concerned with protected species, including whales: the Atlantic Scientific Review Group, Status Review Teams, and Take Reduction Teams. NEFSC science also supports internationally managed resources through engagement in bilateral discussions of transboundary resources with Canada, and contributions to the advisory processes in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization. At the state level, we support management by participating on state planning bodies such as the Long Island Sound Management Committee and groups focused on oyster restoration in the Chesapeake Bay. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but provides examples of the wide array of managers and decision-makers who use NEFSC science.

*Partners and Stakeholders* include the individuals, communities, businesses, organizations, and agencies that rely on or have an interest in living marine resources and/or contribute to efforts to achieve the NEFSC mission. Examples are commercial and recreational fishermen and businesses; aquaculture operations; fish and shellfish dealers, processors, and sellers; the shipping, offshore energy, and pharmaceutical industries; local, state, and federal agencies; federally-recognized tribes; other nations; non-governmental organizations; and research organizations and institutions. Defined as such, the NEFSC works with a large array of individuals, groups, and governments concentrated in the northeastern U.S. and extending nationally and internationally.

*Services* include all the benefits that stakeholders obtain from living marine resources. These services can be divided into four categories<sup>3</sup>. Supporting services are necessary for the production of other services. For example, forage fish provide a supporting service to their predators. Provisioning services are products obtained from living marine resources, for example, seafood purchased by consumers. Regulating services are benefits obtained from management of living marine resources. For example, conserving Essential Fish Habitat<sup>4</sup> protects the productivity and carrying capacity of fish and shellfish populations. Cultural services are nonmaterial benefits obtained from living marine resources through spiritual enrichment, recreation, and aesthetic and educational experiences such as recreational fishing, whale watching, aquariums or waterfront festivals.

## Core Science

*Core science* is science that falls within the NEFSC Science Enterprise and directly addresses the elements of the NOAA Fisheries mission: fisheries management, protected species management, habitat and ecosystem-based management, and aquaculture science. As such, core science is broad, but there are boundaries; the connection to the NOAA Fisheries mission must be direct. *Core monitoring and modeling* includes those programs that directly contribute data, synthesis and models to the NEFSC's fisheries, aquaculture, protected species, and ecosystem assessment and advice activities. *Core data, assessment and advice* activities include fisheries, protected species, and ecosystem assessments, economic and social analyses associated with fisheries, protected species, aquaculture and ecosystems, and scientific advice provided in support of management activities. *Core research and innovative technologies* are those directed and designed to support the other elements of the NEFSC Science Enterprise and

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/ecosys/ecosystem-status-report/ecosystem-services.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/aboutus/statutoryauthorities.html>

seek to improvement of monitoring, data, assessments, and advice for our management partners and stakeholders. *Core operations and administration* functions of the NEFSC are those fundamental to executing our work: facilities, IT, budget, procurement, grants, communication, and administration. *Core collaboration and cooperation* includes work with the fishing and aquaculture industries, work with the Greater Atlantic Regional Fishery Office, work with our management partners, and work with our academic and other research partners.

# FY20 Priorities and Anticipated Results

## National Goals and Priorities

Overall, the priority for FY20 is to support activities that achieve results that directly contribute to the three national NOAA Fisheries Strategic Goals:

- Amplify the economic value of commercial and recreational fisheries while ensuring their sustainability.
- Conserve and recover protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development.
- Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency.

The priorities and anticipated results outlined here are consistent with overarching national strategic goals, national priorities, and shared priorities with GARFO and our management partners.

## Regional Science Priorities

Numerous reviews of NEFSC science and operations have been conducted over the past 10 years. Addressing actions identified in these reviews and plans should continue to be an important element of FY20 activities. These reviews have identified numerous opportunities for improving our science and our organization. Some of these reviews have been part of a formal NOAA Fisheries Program review process<sup>5</sup> or part of a HQ or NEFSC-specific review: [Stock Assessment Data Collection Program](#), [Stock Assessment Methods](#), [Protected Species Science](#), [Economics and Human Dimensions Program](#), [Ecosystem and Climate Science](#), [Observer Program](#), [Northeast Cooperative Research Program](#), [Scallop Survey Methods](#), [Aquaculture Science Program Review](#), Communications & Stakeholder Engagement, and Data Management Systems Program Review.

In addition to these reviews, there are agency and regional plans for improving NEFSC science that guide our work: [Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan](#), [Stock Assessment Improvement Plan](#), [Northeast Regional Action Plan](#), [Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Roadmap](#), [NEFSC Strategic Plan](#), and [NOAA Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan](#)

There are also fishery management council-led reviews of programs in which the NEFSC is involved: Three-year review of the standardized bycatch reporting methodology, and [Research Set-Aside Program Review](#)

The Fishery Management Councils and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission also identify research priorities and data needs: [New England Fisheries Management Council](#), [Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council](#), [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#) (research priorities are provided on species-specific webpages).

## NEFSC Priorities and Expected Results

Based on these national goals and priorities and informed by the regional science priorities, the following priorities have been developed for the NEFSC for FY20.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/science-program-review/>

## 1. Amplify the economic value of commercial and recreational fisheries while ensuring their sustainability.

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for managing U.S. fisheries in federal waters to help secure our nation's food security. U.S. fisheries are among the largest and most sustainable in the world. The U.S. science-based fishery management process is designed to provide optimum yield while preventing overfishing and taking into account the protection of marine, estuarine, and coastal riverine ecosystems. Commercial (including seafood and support industries), recreational, and subsistence fishing opportunities strengthen the economy and our coastal communities. Aquaculture is an important and growing U.S. industry with the potential to provide a significant sustainable supply of healthy seafood for national and global markets. The NEFSC provides high-quality stock assessments and ecological and socioeconomic information required for federal management of fisheries, and contributes to the science and assessment of state-managed fisheries. With our partners, NOAA Fisheries executes its science enterprise to ensure sustainable management of fisheries, promote the conservation and recovery of protected species, support and enhance aquaculture, and develops ecosystem-based fisheries management approaches in the region. These activities substantially benefit local, regional, and national economies in terms of revenue, jobs, tourism, and business diversity.

The NEFSC also provides and continues to develop ecosystem-based fisheries management, which recognizes the physical, biological, economic, and social interactions among fishery-related components of the ecosystem, including humans; and seeks to optimize benefits among a diverse set of societal goals. For most priorities, the lead NEFSC Division is bolded but this is not exclusive and the lead division should include other divisions where appropriate. For some priorities multiple divisions are bolded indicating joint lead.

- 1.1 Surveys and Data Collection - Modernize and streamline our fishery information systems and enhance data sharing and accessibly through continued implementation of the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative in partnership with the GARFO and ACCSP. **(National Priority) (FMRD)**
- 1.2 Surveys and Data Collection - Advance effective and practical electronic technologies to improve collection of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data. **(National Priority) (FMRD)**
- 1.3 Surveys and Data Collection - Complete core survey and data collection activities, strengthen partnerships with other ecosystem observing activities in the region, and increase accessibility to data products. **(PEMAD, READ, FMRD, EAD, DMS, OMI, D)**
- 1.4 Surveys and Data Collection - Conduct gear-performance evaluations for the NEFSC bottom-trawl survey operation and examine potential effects on stock assessments in collaboration with the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP). Collaborate on other priority joint research with NTAP and provide research results and improved understanding to the stock assessment process. **(PEMAD, FMRD)**
- 1.5 Surveys and Data Collection - Develop a common database structure to support HabCam datasets at the NEFSC so data can be readily accessed by all NEFSC staff. **(PEMAD, DMS)**
- 1.6 Surveys and Data Collection – Explore the collection of environmental DNA data as a tool to augment fisheries, protected species, and ecosystem data collection programs. **(EAD)**
- 1.7 Surveys and Data Collection - Produce a common set of indicators of social and economic well-being for the Northeast region's fishing fleets and for each Northeast region fishery management plan. **(READ)**
- 1.8 Fisheries Assessments - Focus assessments on highest priority stocks through implementation of the new NRCC research- and management-track assessment framework **(National Priority) (READ)**
- 1.9 Fisheries Assessments - Incorporate understanding of ecosystem, climate, and habitat condition into assessment and management of U.S. fisheries through the implementation of the regional Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Plan. **(National Priority) (READ)**

- 1.10 Fisheries Assessments - Develop protocols and guidelines for incorporating cooperative and external research into the new NRCC assessment processes working across the NEFSC and with partners and stakeholders. **(READ)**
- 1.11 Fisheries Assessments - Continue to integrate the new Marine Recreational Information Program catch estimates into NEFSC assessments and advice as scheduled by the Northeast Regional Coordinating Committee. **(READ)**
- 1.12 Fisheries Assessments - Coordinate with the Greater Atlantic Regional Fishery Office, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Highly Migratory Species Management Division on high priority research and assessments including bluefin tuna, sharks, and species moving into the Northeast U.S. Shelf from the Southeast U.S. Shelf. **(READ, FMRD, PEMAD, EAD)**
- 1.13 Fisheries Assessments - Complete the second year of tasking for the Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Working Group, a US- Canadian effort to better understand cod stock structure in the Northwest Atlantic and the management implications of insights gained from that work. **(PEMAD)**
- 1.14 Fisheries Assessments - Disseminate the results of the fishing crew survey to document differences in crew remuneration and perceptions of fishery management processes among fisheries and ports to better understand the effects of fishery management on fishing crew and coastal community resilience. **(READ)**
- 1.15 Habitat and Ecosystem Science - Make habitat conservation investments in habitat requirements and limiting factors identified in MSA fishery management plans. **(National Priority) (EAD)**
- 1.16 Habitat and Ecosystem Science - Better understanding through field and model studies of how the changing climate is affecting living marine resource population dynamics, monitoring, assessment, and management. **(READ, EAD)**
- 1.17 Habitat and Ecosystem Science - Proactively address regional fisheries issues in offshore wind development projects and regional planning by working with GARFO, and ensuring NEFSC science advice and data streams are considered in these processes. To address fisheries and offshore energy interactions, support establishment of an inclusive and effective regional fisheries monitoring and research framework. **(D)**
- 1.18 Aquaculture - Invest and partner in marine aquaculture science, including coastal planning and siting, disease prevention, and genetics research. **(National Priority) (EAD)**
- 1.19 Aquaculture - Support aquaculture projects that improve water quality, fish production, and coastal economies. **(National Priority) (EAD)**
- 1.20 Aquaculture - Provide biological and socioeconomic science products and advice to support coastal and offshore aquaculture. **(EAD)**
- 1.21 Aquaculture - Promote the development of a sustained social license for aquaculture in the Northeast. **(National Priority) (READ, EAD)**.

## 2. Conserve and recover protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for recovering protected species that are facing extinction and conserving marine mammals. These species are key components of their ecosystems and have particular social and cultural importance. These valuable and vulnerable living marine resources depend on our collective efforts to conserve them. The NEFSC conducts high-quality science for the recovery and conservation of protected species, including assessments of current status and research to understand and reduce human impacts. Science activities include using innovative technologies to survey and assess protected species populations and track their movement; investigating contributing



factors to the well-being or mortality of protected species; developing bycatch reduction techniques; supporting the implementation of adaptive management measures; implementing guidelines for reducing anthropogenic sound in oceans; understanding impacts of habitat loss; and focusing on science related to understanding the effects of changes in climate on the resources we manage. In 2019, NOAA Fisheries will continue to focus efforts on the recovery Atlantic salmon and North Atlantic right whales, other marine mammals, diadromous fish, and sea turtles.

- 2.1 Protected Species Science - Improve the quality of protected species stock assessments through the testing and implementing of innovative and cost-effective technologies. **(National Priority) (READ)**
- 2.2 Protected Species Science - Investigate and develop measures to mitigate threats to the recovery of North Atlantic right whales (e.g., ropeless technologies, gear modification). **(National Priority) (READ)**
- 2.3 Protected Species Science - Investigate and develop measures to mitigate threats to the recovery of Atlantic Salmon. **(READ)**
- 2.4 Protected Species Science - Understand the factors limiting the recovery of the endangered populations of Atlantic salmon and North Atlantic right whales. **(READ)**
- 2.5 Surveys and Data Collection - Complete core survey and data collection activities, strengthen partnerships with other ecosystem observing activities in the region, and increase accessibility to data products. **(PEMAD, READ, FMRD, EAD, DMS, OMI, D)**
- 2.6 Habitat and Ecosystem Science - Support offshore energy and coastal development, and national defense by minimizing or mitigating their conflict with protected species. **(National Priority) (D)**

### 3. Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency

Improving organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency is a continual process that helps us be more responsive, to deliver better services, and to fulfill our mission. To achieve organizational excellence, NOAA Fisheries emphasizes strategic planning, effective program execution and performance monitoring, and identification and management of risks and challenges. Regulatory efficiency includes identifying and addressing existing regulations and processes that may be outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective, or that inhibit job creation and growth. Increased and improved interactions with GARFO is critical to supporting organizational excellence and regulatory efficiencies goals.

- 3.1 Collaboration - Expand cooperative partnerships with industry to develop cost-effective resource surveys and research and produce meaningful scientific results. **(National Priority) (FMRD)**
- 3.2 Collaboration - NEFSC work with GARFO leadership to improve the working relationships between the two organizations through development and implementation of a Regional Strategic Plan. **(D)**
- 3.3 Collaboration – Develop implementation plans based on Regional Strategic Plan in collaboration with the Greater Atlantic Regional Fishery Office **(D)**
- 3.4 Communication - Improve communication of data, products, and activities to external audiences. **(National Priority) (OMI)**
- 3.5 Operations and Management - Proactively recruit qualified individuals at all experience levels and grades, whose diverse backgrounds, educational experiences, and skills will advance the overall mission of the agency. **(National Priority) (D, OMI)**
- 3.6 Operations and Management - Develop and implement comprehensive safety standards through all phases of an observer's career and integrate additional safety measures into observer training, equipment, pre-deployment vessel tours, at-sea reporting, and post-deployment debriefing **(National Priority) (FMRD)**



- 3.7 Operations and Management - Review and develop options for the delivery of Administrative Services across the Center **(OMI)**
- 3.8 Operations and Management - Complete “welcoming” process that prepares new staff to better understand the NEFSC mission, operation, culture, and our regional fisheries to better unify our workforce’s sense of purpose and collective understanding of our work. **(OMI)**
- 3.9 Operations and Management - Successfully complete transition of contracting services to ProTech **(OMI)**
- 3.10 Operations and Management - Continue working toward the renovation and consolidation of the James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at Sandy Hook, NJ. **(OMI)**
- 3.11 Operations and Management - Implement recommendations from the DMS program review. **(DMS)**
- 3.12 Operations and Management - Ensure the Public Access for Research Results timeline and requirements are achieved. **(DMS)**
- 3.13 Operations and Management - Initiate external review of the NEFSC Director’s Office to evaluate operations and make recommendations for improvement. **(D)**
- 3.14 Operations and Management – Support staff development and training to improve employee engagement and organizational health **(D)**



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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 31, 2020  
**To:** Council  
**From:** J. Didden, staff  
**Subject:** *Illex* Working Group Update

Staff and Dr. Paul Rago will update the Council on efforts by the *Illex* Working Group to investigate if current information suggests that adjustments to the *Illex* quota may be appropriate, and if there are ways to make the *Illex* quota more responsive to real-time conditions.

There are eight short-term tasks the *Illex* Working Group is pursuing, and the status of each will be reviewed. Staff will also describe the proposed longer-term tasks.

Additional information is available at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-working-group>.

### Short Term Tasks (for May 2020 SSC meeting review)

1. Summarize world-wide squid assessment and management approaches.
2. List and describe key existing available data sources.
3. Summarize our knowledge about *Illex* growth including length/weight data from industry.
4. Begin biological information project (maturity and aging) using 2019 industry-provided samples.
5. Develop/refine meaningful catch per unit of effort (CPUE) measures.
6. Conduct a preliminary evaluation of CPUE relative to potential stock depletion.
7. Summarize the NAFO assessment and NAFO quota situation.
8. Conduct analyses that describe the proportion of *Illex* habitat fished in any given year and consider related implications for potential overfishing (or lack thereof).



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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 31, 2020  
**To:** Council  
**From:** J. Didden, staff  
**Subject:** MSB FMP Goals/Objectives and Illex Permits Amendment

Please find in this tab the draft public hearing document for this action. The proposed hearing locations are listed on the first page of the document. The document builds off of previous Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT), Committee, and Council input on alternatives and related analyses. Preliminary preferred alternatives can be useful for focusing public comments but the Council does not need to identify any preferred alternatives at this time. There are no recommendations regarding preferred alternatives from staff at this time.

Several Appendices are not included in the printed briefing book, but will be posted to <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/february-2020>.

A recent FMAT summary and related public comments received before the briefing book deadline are attached. Older documents may be found at: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment>.

Summaries from a February 6, 2020 MSB Advisory Panel meeting and a February 7, 2020 MSB Committee Meeting will be forwarded to the Council and posted to <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/february-2020> soon after those meetings.

In order to simplify the range of alternatives, staff recommends the following:

-Eliminate the 48,000 pound single trip threshold. Other options create similar outcomes and mixing annual and trip-based thresholds may cause confusion.

-Eliminate the 95% landings threshold. The 1,000,000 pound threshold creates similar outcomes, and mixing annual and percentage of landings-based thresholds may cause confusion.

-Eliminate the 1997-2013 and 2014-2018 period. This is very similar to the 1997-2013 and 2014-2019 period, which still addresses the idea of requiring both historical and recent participation.

-Eliminate the 2004-2013 period. 2004 (10 years before the 2013 control date) may be arbitrary. Starting in 1997 aligns with the collection of better data in this fishery.





# MSB FMP Goals/Objectives and *Illex* Permits Amendment

## Public Hearing Document

January 2020 DRAFT

### How to Provide Comments

Written comments should be submitted by 11:59 pm on DATE, through one of the following methods with subject “MSB Goals and *Illex* Permits”:

- **Email** to Jason Didden, Fishery Management Specialist, at [jdidden@mafmc.org](mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org)
- Through an **online form** at: <http://www.mafmc.org>
- **Mail** to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE, 19901
- **Fax** to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council at 302-674-5399

Oral or written comments may be submitted at the following public hearings (Proposed):

- Gloucester, MA
- Narragansett, RI
- Montauk, NY
- Cape May, NJ
- Hampton, VA
- **Webinar**



For more information and to sign up to receive email updates on this action, visit <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/Illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment>

# 1. Overview, Tables of Contents, and Acronyms

## Overview

This amendment to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (MSB FMP) considers revisions to the MSB goals and objectives and modifications to *Illex illecebrosus* squid (simply “*Illex*” hereafter) fishery permitting (plus related management measures).

The goals and objectives revisions are addressed in the introduction section and are not treated as alternatives per se, similar to how goals and objectives were handled in the chub mackerel amendment. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks to ensure that the MSB goals and objectives align with the Council’s current vision and priorities. Related to *Illex* permitting, the Council is evaluating effort in the *Illex* squid fishery, which closed early in 2017-2019 after reaching its quota. The majority of annual landings have been harvested by a relatively small portion of permitted vessels, and the Council is responding to concerns from some fishery participants that recent and/or future activation of latent effort/permits could exacerbate a race to fish and associated negative outcomes. Accordingly, the objectives of this action are to A) consider revising the MSB goals and objectives and B) consider the appropriate number of permits and related management measures in the *Illex* fishery and reduce the number of directed permits if appropriate.

After reviewing Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT), Advisory Panel, and other public recommendations, the Council developed a range of alternatives and associated analyses described in this document. The Council will select final preferred alternatives after considering comments received during public hearings, written comments, and comments at relevant Council meetings. The Council can modify the alternatives before final action provided there is sufficient rationale for such modification.

If the Council recommends some action alternatives, NOAA Fisheries will then publish a proposed rule along with an Environmental Assessment for public comment. After considering public comments on the proposed rule and deciding on the approvability of the measures, NOAA Fisheries will publish a final rule that will include implementation details if the action is approved.

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## **Acronyms and Other Wording Conventions**

ABC	Acceptable Biological Catch
Council	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
MAFMC	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
MRI <sup>1</sup>	moratorium right identification
MSB	Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish
MT	Metric Tons (1 metric ton = 2,204.62 pounds)
NEFSC	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

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<sup>1</sup> The term MRI or moratorium right identification may be a new term for some people. The MRI tracks fishing history of a limited access permit even if it moves between vessels.



## 2. Introduction

This amendment to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish (MSB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) considers A) revisions to the MSB FMP goals and objectives and B) modifications to *Illex* fishery permitting and related management measures. The Council is seeking public input on all aspects of this action.

### **A) MSB FMP Goals and Objectives**

The Council identified review of FMP goals and objectives via strategic planning in order to ensure that FMP goals and objectives remain relevant. The current MSB objectives have not been reviewed since the merged MSB plan was adopted in 1981. The Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (“Magnuson-Stevens Act”) has been amended several times since then, and the Council has also since adopted two Strategic Plans and an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) Guidance Document (<http://www.mafmc.org/eafm>). Chub mackerel were also added to the FMP with specific goals and objectives that were informed by the EAFM Guidance Document. The EAFM goal is to manage for ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources while maintaining ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.

The Goals and Objectives are not alternatives in the traditional sense, but inform decision making, so the existing and potentially new Goals and Objectives are reviewed in this section rather than in the alternative section.

#### **The current MSB FMP objectives are:**

1. Enhance the probability of successful (i.e., the historical average) recruitment to the fisheries.
2. Promote the growth of the U.S. commercial fishery, including the fishery for export.
3. Provide the greatest degree of freedom and flexibility to all harvesters of these resources consistent with the attainment of the other objectives of this FMP.
4. Provide marine recreational fishing opportunities, recognizing the contribution of recreational fishing to the national economy.
5. Increase understanding of the conditions of the stocks and fisheries.
6. Minimize harvesting conflicts among U.S. commercial, U.S. recreational, and foreign fishermen.

#### **The Council recently adopted goals and objectives for managing chub mackerel within the MSB FMP:**

*Goal 1:* Maintain a sustainable chub mackerel stock.

*Objective 1.1:* Prevent overfishing and achieve and maintain sustainable biomass levels that achieve optimum yield in the fisheries and meet the needs of chub mackerel predators.

*Objective 1.2:* Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the role of chub mackerel in the ecosystem, including its role as prey, as a predator, and as food for humans.

*Goal 2:* Optimize economic and social benefits from utilization of chub mackerel, balancing the needs and priorities of different user groups.

*Objective 2.1:* Allow opportunities for commercial and recreational chub mackerel fishing, considering the opportunistic nature of the fisheries, changes in availability that may result from changes in climate and other factors, and the need for operational flexibility.

*Objective 2.2:* To the extent practicable, minimize additional limiting restrictions on the *Illex* squid fishery.

*Objective 2.3:* Balance social and economic needs of various sectors of the chub mackerel fisheries (e.g. commercial, recreational, regional) and other fisheries, including recreational fisheries for highly migratory species.

*Goal 3:* Support science, monitoring, and data collection to enhance effective management of chub mackerel fisheries.

*Objective 3.1:* Improve data collection to better understand the status of the chub mackerel stock, the role of chub mackerel in the ecosystem, and the biological, ecological, and socioeconomic impacts of management measures, including impacts to other fisheries.

*Objective 3.2:* Promote opportunities for industry collaboration on research.

### **Unified Goals and Objectives**

Over the course of several meetings the Council and the FMAT worked to meld the above two sets of goals/objectives into a single unified goals and objectives that can apply to the entire FMP (**suggested edits/new text beyond October materials/discussion are highlighted**):

*Goal 1:* Maintain sustainable MSB stocks.

*Objective 1.1:* Prevent overfishing and maintain sustainable biomass levels that achieve optimum yield in the MSB fisheries.

*Objective 1.2:* Consider and, to the extent practicable, account for the roles of MSB species/fisheries in the ecosystem.

*Goal 2:* Acknowledging the difficulty in quantifying all costs and benefits, achieve the greatest overall **net** benefit to the Nation, balancing the needs and priorities of different user groups and effects of management on fishing communities.

*Objective 2.1:* Provide the greatest degree of freedom and flexibility to harvesters and processors (including shoreside infrastructure) of MSB resources consistent with attainment of the other objectives of this FMP, including minimizing additional restrictions.

*Objective 2.2:* Allow opportunities for commercial and recreational MSB fishing, considering the opportunistic nature of the fisheries, changes in availability that may result from changes in climate and other factors, and the need for operational flexibility.

*Objective 2.3:* Consider and strive to balance the social and economic needs of various sectors of the MSB fisheries (commercial including shoreside infrastructure and recreational) as well as other fisheries or concerns that may be ecologically linked to MSB fisheries.

*Objective 2.4:* Investigate opportunities to access international/shared quotas of MSB species.

Goal 3: Support science, monitoring, and data collection to enhance effective management of MSB fisheries.

*Objective 3.1:* Improve data collection to better understand the status of MSB stocks, the role of MSB species in the ecosystem, and the biological, ecological, and socioeconomic impacts of management measures, including impacts to other fisheries.

*Objective 3.2:* Promote opportunities for industry collaboration on research.

*Objective 3.3:* Encourage research that may lead to practicable opportunities to further reduce bycatch in the MSB fisheries.

## **B) Modifications to Illex Fishery Permitting and Related Management Measures**

As discretionary provisions of FMPs, the Magnuson-Stevens Act states that any FMP may establish a limited access system for the fishery in order to achieve optimum yield if, in developing such system, the Council and the Secretary take into account—

- (A) present participation in the fishery;
- (B) historical fishing practices in, and dependence on, the fishery;
- (C) the economics of the fishery;
- (D) the capability of fishing vessels used in the fishery to engage in other fisheries;
- (E) the cultural and social framework relevant to the fishery and any affected fishing communities;
- (F) the fair and equitable distribution of access privileges in the fishery; and
- (G) any other relevant considerations.

The Council must also take into account the Magnuson-Stevens Act's ten national standards during all decisions (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/laws-and-policies/national-standard-guidelines>). National Standards 4, 5, 6, and 8 are particularly relevant to this action:

National Standard 4 - Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different states. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocation shall be (a) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (b) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (c) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privilege.

National Standard 5 - Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, consider efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources; except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose.

National Standard 6 - Conservation and management measures shall take into account and allow for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.

National Standard 8 - Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities by utilizing economic and social data... in order to (a) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (b) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.

Some fishery participants requested that the Council consider modifying limited access *Illex* permits to reduce the number of directed permits in the fishery given the increasing participation and early closure in 2017, which was repeated in 2018 and 2019. While the *Illex* fishery had only landed more than 75% of its quota three times between 2000 and 2016, the majority of annual landings (including 2017-2019) have been harvested by a relatively small portion of permitted vessels. The Council is responding to concerns from some fishery participants that recent and/or future activation of latent effort/permits could exacerbate racing to fish. With racing to fish, fishery participants typically use more and more capital and/or effort in an increasingly rushed attempt to catch a limited quota before closure. Capital continues to enter the fishery if there are any profits, increasing costs until profits are dissipated, creating a loss of efficiency (see Warming 1911 and Gordon 1954 for some of the first of many discussions of this phenomena). Besides tending to erode profits from the fishery overall, racing to fish can cause a number of other negative outcomes that the Council is considering including:

- Safety at sea: Racing to fish may lead to taking more risks related to weather, maintenance and overloading (e.g. see NRC 1991, FAO 2016 for reviews of related literature as well as Pfeiffer and Gratz 2016).

- Monitoring difficulties: Higher weekly landings make it more difficult to close the fishery near the quota (at least without adding reporting burden or setting aside more quota for larger closure buffers).

- Business disruptions: More rapid catch by additional vessels could lead to shorter seasons for vessels that have been historically dependent on *Illex*. The fishery can operate into October or November but closed in August in 2018 and 2019, and in September in 2017.

- Yield reduction: Catching the quota earlier may mean that smaller squid are harvested, which means that more individuals are harvested per metric ton, which may reduce yield per recruit and total yield given the fast-growing nature of *Illex* (NAFO 1978, NEFSC 1999).

- Increased bycatch: Racing to fish can lead to higher bycatch given the focus on rapid catches. If there is less of a race to fish, fishermen may have more time to execute bycatch minimization strategies, such as moving to a new area after a bycatch event, though such gains are generally more strongly associated with rights-based management (see Holland and Ginter 2001, Fujita and Bonzon 2005, Branch et. al. 2006, Hilborn 2007, and Birkenback et al 2017 for a few examples of many discussions of this issue). Bycatch is very low in the *Illex* fishery and has not increased in recent years based on observer data, so while bycatch is a general concern related to racing to fish, bycatch is not currently a substantial factor for this particular fishery.

Community impacts: The Council is also concerned about disruptions in communities if new entrants rapidly change the distribution of landings at relevant ports in communities that have dependence on *Illex*.

These issues would not be completely solved by reducing permits in the *Illex* fishery. Solving the race to fish is generally very challenging with quota-based management unless individual quotas or effort controls are utilized. Based on public scoping comments that were predominantly opposed to individual quotas, the Council is not considering individual quotas at this time. Given the variability in *Illex* productivity and availability, the Council believes that effort controls are not appropriate for the primary directed fishery. However, the Council believes that given the latent permits that have existed in this fishery and recent effort levels, reducing the number of permits may be appropriate at this time in order to at least slow the worsening of the race to fish in the *Illex* fishery. So one purpose of this action is to mitigate worsening of the race to fish by considering reducing the number of permits that have unlimited access to the fishery.

In 2019, landings by the top 20 vessels (out of 76 potential permits<sup>2</sup>), accounted for 90% of the landings, and ranged from approximately 7.3 to 0.8 million pounds, with a median of 1.6 million pounds. The season lasted approximately 14 weeks, so the top vessel averaged around 0.52 million pounds per week and the median vessel (out of the top 20) averaged 0.12 million pounds per week. Based on this information, five less active vessels performing like the top vessel for 10 weeks could thus land nearly 26 million pounds, or 47% of the quota. Five less active vessels performing like the median of the top 20 vessels for 10 weeks could likewise land nearly 6 million pounds, or 11% of the quota. While it's not possible to know how vessels may participate in the future or at what level, it does appear that increased catch by even a handful of formerly latent/less active participants could have a substantial impact on racing to fish and how soon the fishery closes at the current quota.

### **3. *Illex* Life History and Status of the Stock**

*Illex* squid is a benthopelagic schooling species distributed between Newfoundland and the Florida Straits. Current research indicates they live less than one year but several aspects of their life cycle are unknown due to their generally offshore habitat. Spawning is believed to take place in the water column with pelagic egg masses. *Illex* squid prey mostly on crustaceans at small sizes but increasingly prey on fish as they grow larger. Cannibalism of small squid by larger squid is especially prevalent during fall. A wide variety of fish (including large pelagics), seabirds, and marine mammals are predators of *Illex* squid. Additional life history information is detailed in the EFH document for the species, located at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/habitat/efh/>. The current stock status of *Illex* is unknown with respect to either stock biomass or fishing mortality, due to the fact that the data necessary for assessing this species, given its short lifespan, is lacking and productivity of the resource is uncertain. The current acceptable biological catch (ABC) (26,000 metric tons (MT) or 57.3 million pounds) resulted from a generally qualitative evaluation by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) that determined catches associated with an ABC up to 26,000 MT are unlikely to cause overfishing. More details on the rationale for the current ABC are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/ssc-meetings/2018/sept-11>.

The Council has also established a working group (<http://www.mafmc.org/actions/Illex-working-group>) to investigate if current information suggests that adjustments to the *Illex* quota are appropriate, and if there are ways to make the quota more responsive to real-time conditions. There is also a benchmark *Illex* assessment planned for 2021. At this time, the outcome of these endeavors is uncertain.

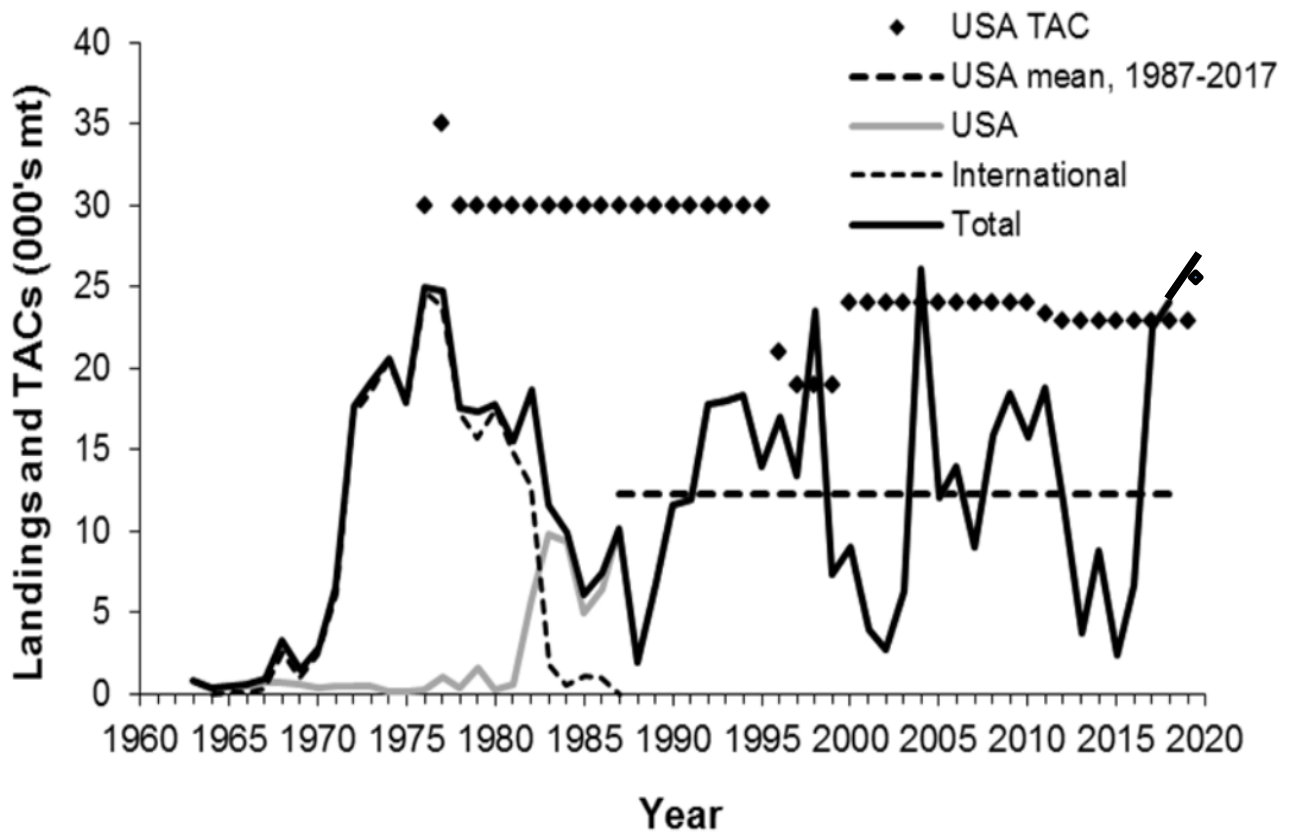
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<sup>2</sup> There were 76 *Illex* permits as of late 2019, but this number can change (shrink) if a permit is relinquished.

## 4. U.S. *Illex* Fisheries and Communities

International jig and trawler fleets initially fished *Illex* in U.S. waters, ramping up quickly in the 1970s to about 20,000-25,000 metric tons (MT) (52.9-55.1 million pounds) annually before being phased out by 1987. Development of the domestic *Illex* squid bottom trawl fishery began in the early 1980s as the U.S. industry developed the appropriate technology to catch and process squid in large quantities. Domestic landings have been highly variable (see Figure 1). The 2019 *Illex* landings were the highest on record, over 27,000 MT (the quota was exceeded by nearly 10%).

Figure 1. Landings and Quotas (TAC) (000's mt) of *Illex* from NAFO Subareas 5+6, by fleet during 1963-2019.



Annual *Illex* ex-revenues (Figure 2, red-dashed line) are determined by the combination of availability, global and domestic squid prices, and the resulting landings. Ex-vessel values during 2017-2019 were the three highest points in the time series due to the combination of high landings and high prices (see Figures 2 and 3). 2019 ex-vessel value was just over \$28.0 million. Input from industry has noted that international squid supply and demand can have strong effects on *Illex* prices. Industry has also noted that recent processing advancements and sustainability certifications have expanded markets for *Illex*. As *Illex* availability, *Illex* prices, and opportunities in other fisheries have changed, so has vessel participation in the *Illex* fishery (Table 1).

Figure 2. U.S. *Illex* Landings and Nominal *Illex* Ex-Vessel Values 1982-2019

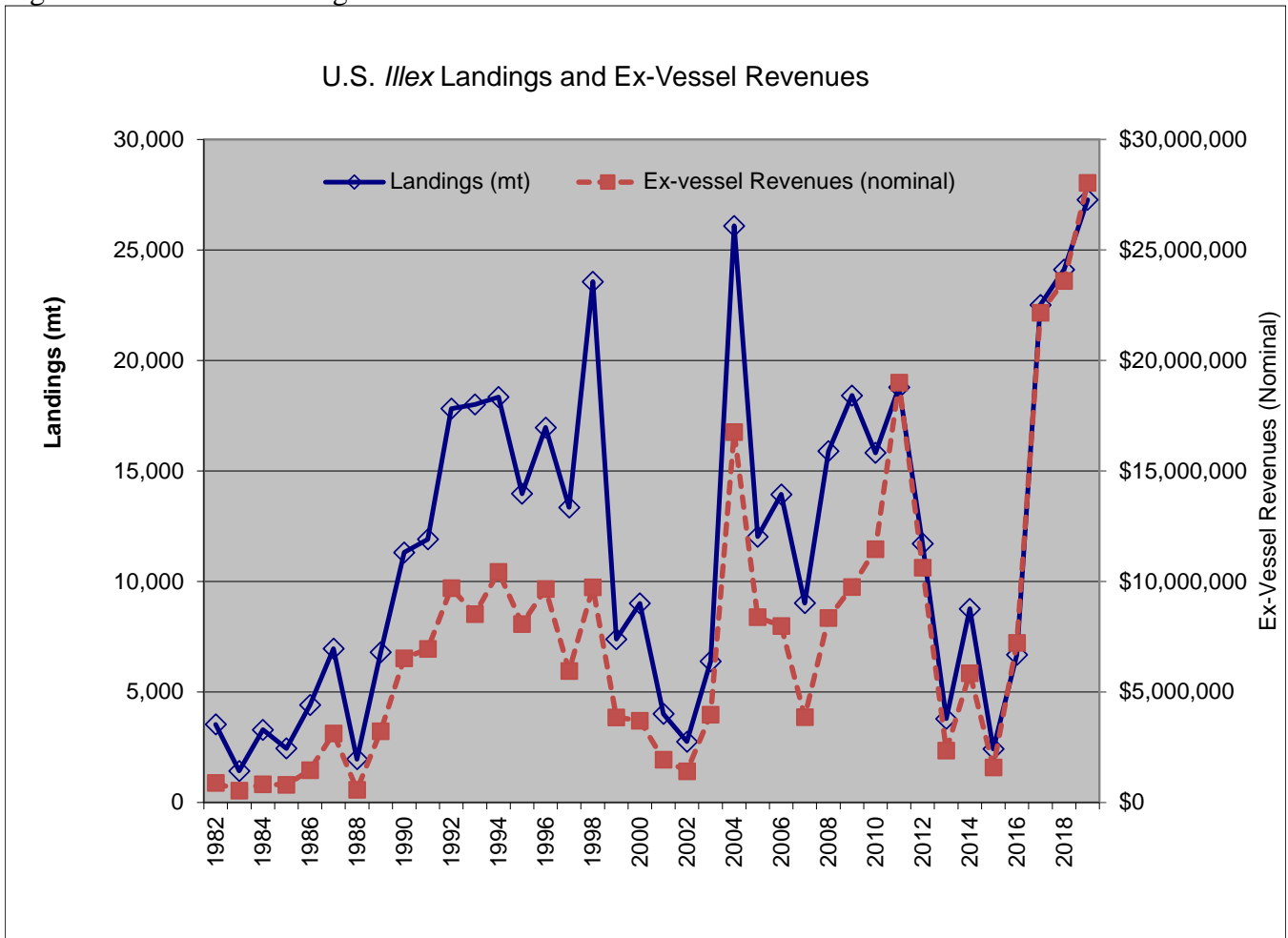


Figure 3. Ex-Vessel *Illex* Prices 1994-2019 Adjusted to 2019 Dollars Based on Producer Price Index.

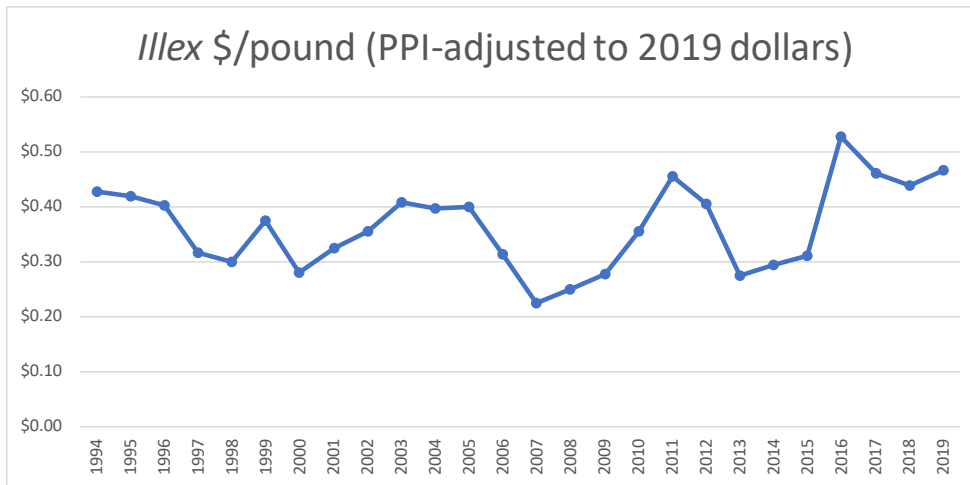


Table 1. 1994-2019 vessel activity (pound ranges developed previously with MSB AP).

YEAR	Vessels 500,000+	Vessels 100,000 - 500,000	Vessels 50,000 - 100,000	Vessels 10,000 - 50,000	Total
1994	21	7	5	8	41
1995	24	5	2	7	38
1996	24	5	6	4	39
1997	13	9	2	0	24
1998	25	4	1	3	33
1999	6	9	2	10	27
2000	7	7	0	2	16
2001	3	4	1	2	10
2002	2	3	1	1	7
2003	5	6	1	2	14
2004	23	5	2	0	30
2005	10	10	2	2	24
2006	9	8	1	2	20
2007	8	2	1	0	11
2008	12	4	0	0	16
2009	10	3	1	1	15
2010	12	3	0	6	21
2011	17	4	2	0	23
2012	8	3	2	2	15
2013	5	4	3	5	17
2014	5	3	2	2	12
2015	3	0	1	1	5
2016	4	3	3	2	12
2017	14	6	0	0	20
2018	19	7	0	5	31
2019	26	7	0	3	36



Cape May, NJ, N. Kingstown, RI, Point Judith, RI, Wanchese, NC, and Hampton, VA have historically been ports with substantial *Illex* landings. Table 2 lists the active ports in recent years, and Table 3 provides information regarding the dependence of those ports on *Illex* in 2011-2013, 2014-2016, and 2017-2019. Following Table 3 is information on social indicators that NMFS has developed for fishing communities, with the various ratings for the ports that have been active in the *Illex* fishery in recent years.

Table 2. Rankings of ports with substantial *Illex* landings 2017-2019.

Port Rank	2017	2018	2019
1	Cape May	Cape May	Cape May
2	N Kingstown	N Kingstown	New Bedford
3	Pt. Judith	Pt. Judith	N Kingstown
4	Hampton, VA	New Bedford	Pt. Judith
5		Hampton, VA	Gloucester
6			Hampton, VA

Table 3. Dependence on *Illex* for Relevant Ports

	Illex as a percent of total port vessel revenues					
	Cape May	New Bedford	N. Kingstown	Pt Judith	Gloucester	Hampton
2011-2013	7%	<1%	44%	1%	<1%	1%
2014-2016	2%	<1%	31%	1%	<1%	1%
2017-2019	16%	<1%	59%	4%	1%	4%

## Social Indicators for Fishing Communities

Social indicators are measures that describe and evaluate the social, economic, and psychological well-being of individuals or communities. They were developed to characterize community well-being for coastal communities engaged in fishing activities. First the various indices are described, and then the most recent (2016) indicator ratings for the active *Illex* ports from Tables 2/3 are provided. Additional details on the social vulnerability indicators is available at

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/socioeconomics/social-indicators-fishing-communities-0>.

### **Social Vulnerability Indices**

The social vulnerability indices represent social factors that can shape either an individual or community's ability to adapt to change. These factors exist within all communities regardless of the importance of fishing.

**Labor force** characterizes the strength and stability of the labor force and employment opportunities that may exist. A high rank means likely fewer employment opportunities and a more vulnerable population.

**Housing characteristics** is a measure of infrastructure vulnerability and includes factors that indicate housing that may be vulnerable to coastal hazards. A high rank means a more vulnerable infrastructure

and a more vulnerable population. On the other hand, the opposite interpretation might be that more affordable housing could be less vulnerability for some populations.

**Poverty** is a commonly used indicator of vulnerable populations. A high rank indicates a high rate of poverty and a more vulnerable population.

**Population composition** shows the presence of populations who are traditionally considered more vulnerable due to circumstances often associated with low incomes and fewer resources. A high rank indicates a more vulnerable population.

**Personal disruption** represents factors that disrupt a community member's ability to respond to change because of personal circumstances affecting family life or educational levels or propensity to be affected by poverty. A high rank indicates more personal disruption and a more vulnerable population.

### **Gentrification Pressure Indices**

The gentrification pressure indices characterize those factors that, over time, may indicate a threat to the viability of a commercial or recreational working waterfront, including infrastructure.

**Housing Disruption** represents factors that indicate a fluctuating housing market where some displacement may occur due to rising home values and rents. A high rank means more vulnerability for those in need of affordable housing and a population more vulnerable to gentrification.

**Retiree migration** characterizes areas with a higher concentration of retirees and elderly people in the population. A high rank indicates a population more vulnerable to gentrification as retirees seek out the amenities of coastal living.

**Urban sprawl** describes areas experiencing gentrification through increasing population and higher costs of living. A high rank indicates a population more vulnerable to gentrification.

### **Fishing Engagement and Reliance Indices**

The fishing engagement and reliance indices portray the importance or level of dependence of commercial or recreational fishing to coastal communities.

**Commercial fishing engagement** measures the presence of commercial fishing through fishing activity as shown through permits, fish dealers, and vessel landings. A high rank indicates more engagement.

**Commercial fishing reliance** measures the presence of commercial fishing in relation to the population size of a community through fishing activity. A high rank indicates more reliance.

**Recreational fishing engagement** measures the presence of recreational fishing through fishing activity estimates. A high rank indicates more engagement.

**Recreational fishing reliance** measures the presence of recreational fishing in relation to the population size of a community. A high rank indicates increased reliance.

### **Climate Change Indices**

The climate change indices characterize environmental conditions that may affect the sustainability of essential commercial and recreational fishing businesses and infrastructure.

**Sea level rise risk** signifies the overall risk of inundation from sea level rise from one foot level to six foot level projections over the next ~90 years. The indicator represents the possibility of inundation

based upon the combined projections at each stage of sea level rise and could vary depending upon future circumstances. A high rank indicates a community more vulnerable to sea level rise.

**Storm surge risk** refers to the overall risk of flooding from hurricane storm surge categories 1-5. The indicator represents the "worst-case" possibility of inundation based on the combined hurricane storm surge categories and could vary depending on future circumstances. A high rank indicates a community more vulnerable to a particular hurricane storm surge.

Figure 4. Cape May Vulnerability Indicators

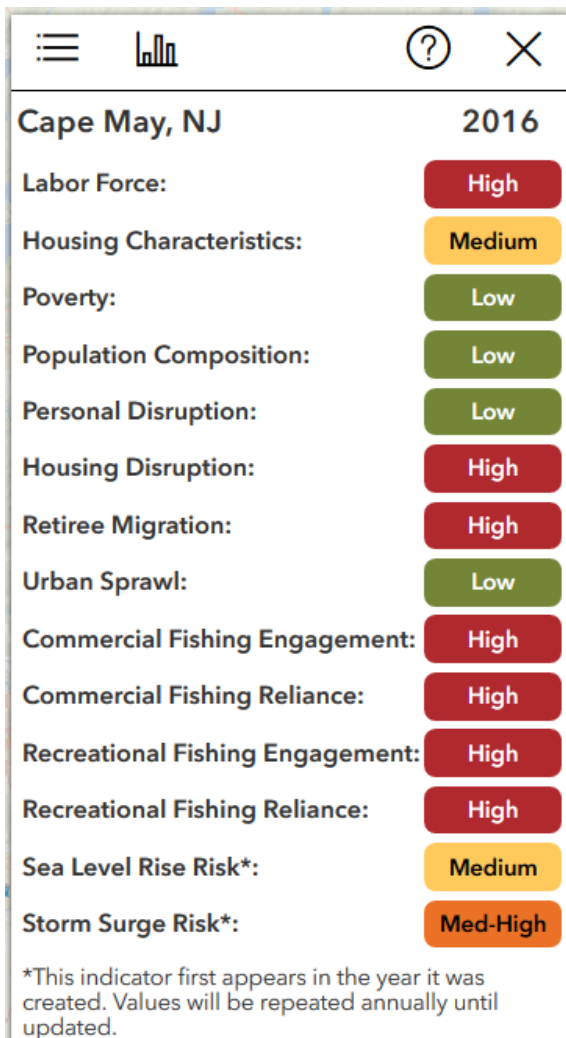


Figure 5. New Bedford Vulnerability Indicators

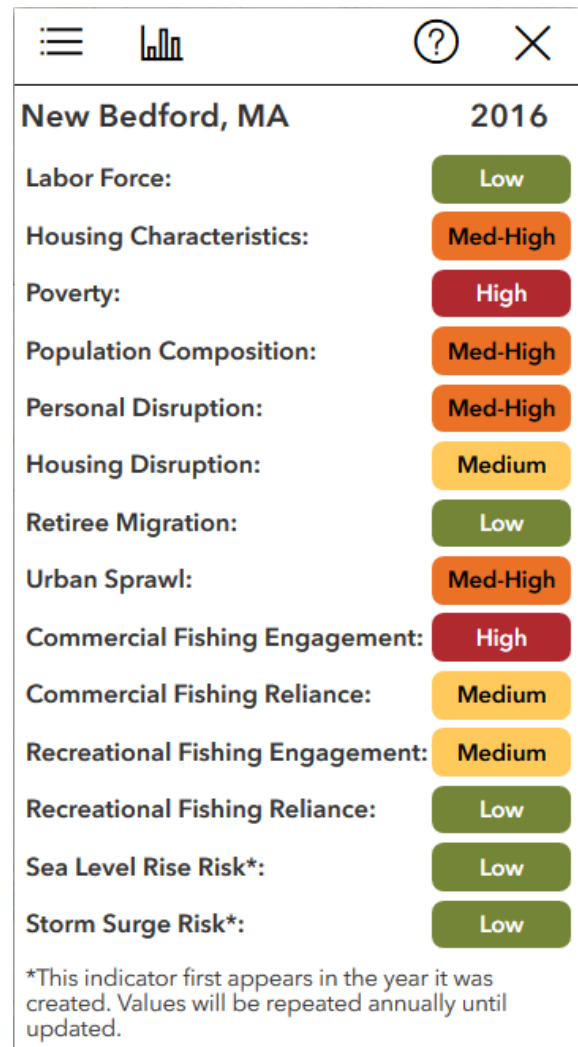


Figure 6. North Kingston/Saunderstown, RI Vulnerability Indicators

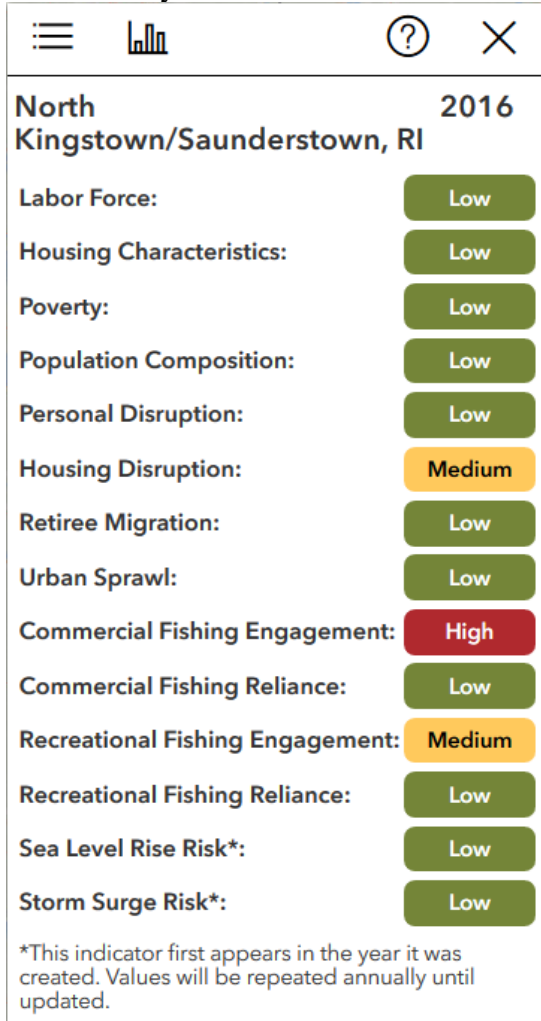


Figure 7. Narragansett/Point Judith RI Vulnerability Indicators

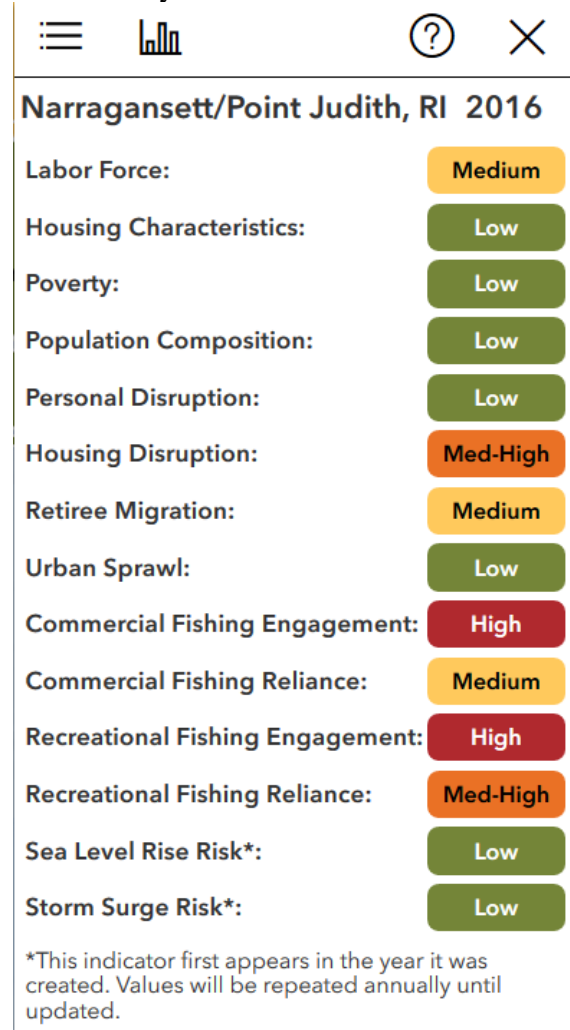


Figure 8. Gloucester, MA Vulnerability Indicators

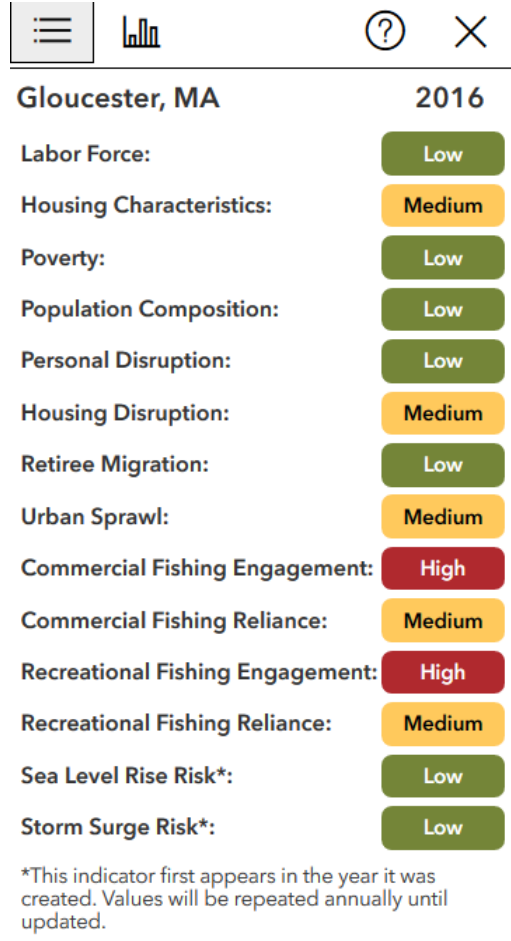
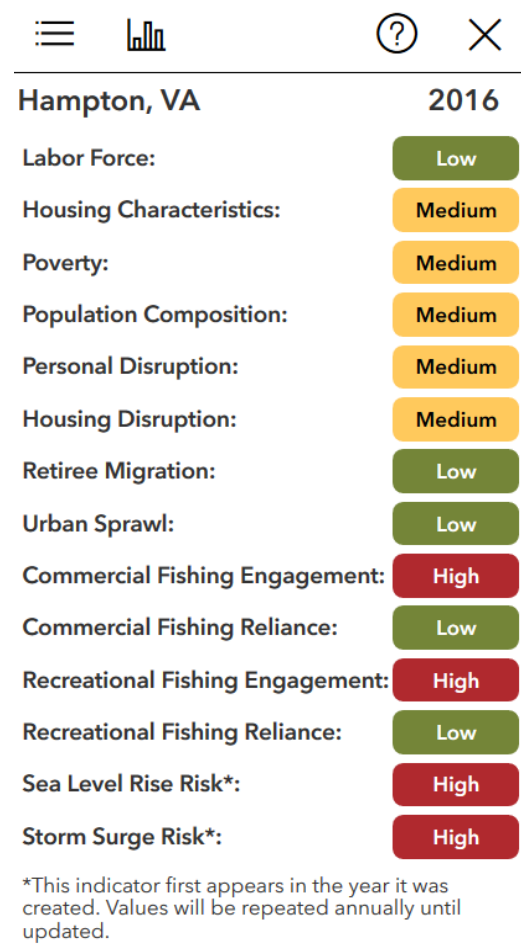


Figure 9. Hampton, VA Vulnerability Indicators



## 5. Current Management Measures

It is currently anticipated that the 2020 ABC for *Illex* will be 26,000 MT with a commercial quota of 24,825 MT to account for discards. In 2019 there are 76 limited access “moratorium” permits. These vessels have unlimited trip limits and no effort restrictions. Open access incidental permits can be obtained and are allowed up to 10,000 pounds of *Illex* per trip. The season runs on the calendar year. The directed fishery closes when NOAA Fisheries predicts that 95% of the quota will be landed. After that closure a 10,000 pound trip limit is in place for the remainder of the year. An overview of additional management measures is available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/shortfin-squid-0#management>.

## 6. Alternatives in this Action

Note: The term MRI or moratorium right identification may be a new term for some people. The MRI tracks fishing history of a limited access permit even if it moves between vessels.

If the Council decides to take action to change *Illex* permits through a requalification, the time period(s) chosen, the threshold(s) chosen, and other related management measures combine to create the effects on participants. While the Council is taking a matrix of alternatives out for public comment (there are 42 possible options between the various time period and threshold options), the Council may narrow the options for additional analysis prior to final action. The Council could also create an alternative that combines several of the 42 options to create a Tiered system. For example, the Council could select more restrictive requalification criteria that requalify fewer MRIs for a Tier that operates as current (no trip limit), and then create a second Tier managed with trip limits for the MRIs that don’t requalify under the more restrictive criteria, but would requalify under a more liberal requalification option.

It is generally expected that the Council will select from the time periods (Alternative Set A) and thresholds (Alternative Set B) to create requalification criteria, and then Alternative Set C may be used to create limitations for non-requalifying MRIs, or a second Tier. Alternative Set D options could be added to create a vessel hold measurement and baseline and/or clarify daily Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements.

### **6A - ALTERNATIVE SET A: TIME PERIODS FOR RE-QUALIFICATION**

Alternative A1: No action/status quo. No changes to the current permitting system could occur without establishing a requalification time period. The 76 2019 limited access “moratorium” permit would retain unlimited trip limits and no effort restrictions. Open access incidental permits can be obtained and allow up to 10,000 pounds of *Illex* per trip.

#### **Introduction for time period action alternatives**

The Council has developed six possible time periods for an *Illex* permit requalification. Some options consider landings through 2019 for requalification, and some do not consider landings after 2013. August 2, 2013, was published as a control date for *Illex* squid. The control date notification in the Federal Register stated that “NMFS intends this notice to promote awareness of possible rulemaking, alert interested parties of potential eligibility criteria for future access, and discourage speculative entry

into and/or investment in the *Illex* squid fishery while the Council considers if and how access to the *Illex* squid fishery should be controlled.” The Council reaffirmed the August 2, 2013, control date at its August 2018 Council meeting. The alternatives are presented in approximately the order that would result in the most to the fewest requalifiers. The thresholds for amounts of landings during the time periods are considered in Alternative Set B, and the numbers of requalifiers when combining the time periods and thresholds are provided in the impacts section.

Alternative A2: Use a requalification time period that considers landings between 1997-2019. This allows a broad consideration of historic and present participation.

Alternative A3: Use a requalification time period that considers landings between 1997-2018. This allows consideration of historic and recent participation through 2018 when then Council reaffirmed the control date.

Alternative A4: Use a requalification time period that considers landings between 1997-2013. This allows consideration of alternatives that utilize the control date and landings from the previous seventeen years.

Alternative A5: Use a requalification time period that considers landings between 2004-2013. This allows consideration of alternatives that utilize the control date and landings from the previous ten years.

Alternative A6: Use a requalification time period that considers, and requires, landings both between 1997-2013 and 2014-2019. If MRIs did not have landings in both time periods they would not requalify. This allows consideration of alternatives that requalify MRIs that demonstrate both historic and recent participation.

Alternative A7: Use a requalification time period that considers, and requires, landings both between 1997-2013 and 2014-2018. If MRIs did not have landings in both time periods they would not requalify. This allows consideration of alternatives that requalify MRIs that demonstrate both historic and recent participation.

## **6B - ALTERNATIVE SET B: THRESHOLDS FOR RE-QUALIFICATION**

Alternative B1: No action/status quo. No changes to the current permitting system could occur without establishing a requalification threshold. The 76 2019 limited access “moratorium” permit would retain unlimited trip limits and no effort restrictions. Open access incidental permits can be obtained and allow up to 10,000 pounds of *Illex* per trip.

### **Introduction for threshold action alternatives**

The Council has developed seven possible thresholds for an *Illex* permit requalification. Most options focus on the MRIs’ best year, one is based on having at least one trip above a certain size, and one is based on the percentage of landings represented by requalifying MRIs. The alternatives are presented in approximately the order that would result in the most to the fewest requalifiers, but B3 and B4 have relatively similar numbers of predicted requalifiers, as does B7 and B8. The time periods are considered in Alternative Set A, and the numbers of requalifiers when combining the thresholds and time periods are provided in the impacts section.

The range of options was chosen to achieve a range of requalifying MRIs given the activity levels observed in the fishery (see Table 1). All of the poundage options (best year or trip limit) also represent thresholds that account for the majority of landings in most years. For example, vessels landing over 1,000,000 pounds accounted for 85-95% of landings from 2014-2019. Vessels landing at least 50,000 pounds accounted for at least 99% of landings in the same period. So based on how the fishery operates, these thresholds represent either a strong majority of landings in a given year or nearly all landings in a given year. Alternative B8 takes a different approach based on cumulative landings during the particular time periods from Alternative Set A. For each alternative, a vessel whose *Illex* landings exceed the threshold during the period(s) identified in Alternative Set A above would requalify and be able to continue to land an unlimited amount of *Illex* squid until the fishery is closed.

Alternative B2: Use a threshold of at least 50,000 pounds in a MRI's best year during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

Alternative B3: Use a threshold of at least 100,000 pounds in a MRI's best year during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

Alternative B4: Use a threshold of at least one trip above 48,000 pounds during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A. Trips of at least 48,000 pounds accounted for 95% of total landings from 1997-2018.

Alternative B5: Use a threshold of at least 300,000 pounds in a MRI's best year during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

Alternative B6: Use a threshold of at least 500,000 pounds in a MRI's best year during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

Alternative B7: Use a threshold of at least 1,000,000 pounds in a MRI's best year during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

Alternative B8: Requalify the MRIs that represent 95% of landings during the requalification period selected in Alternative Set A.

#### **6C - ALTERNATIVE SET C: PROVISIONS FOR TIERS AND/OR NON-REQUALIFYING PERMITS.**

In October 2019 the Council requested that the FMAT develop options for a Tiered system. As discussed above, the Council could use a mix of the previously-contemplated requalification criteria to construct a Tiered system. For example, if 30 MRIs requalified under one set of criteria and 40 MRIs with a more liberal criteria, the difference, 10 MRIs, could be in a second Tier. The FMAT discussed options for limiting the second Tier, and recommended against a separate quota, as that might effectively increase the race to fish, or just create two races to fish (one for each Tier). Accordingly, the other two ways to limit a second Tier would be days at sea or trip limits. The Council has previously indicated that it is not interested in a days at sea approach, which leaves trip limits. Trip limits are not a perfect way to limit effort in this high-volume fishery, because of the way catch is handled and the potential for discarding to occur as vessels near/achieve their trip limit. There is also difficulty in enforcing trip limits on a high volume fishery. However, given the Council's intent, trip limits appear to be the only remaining practicable way to limit a secondary tier. These limits could apply to non-



requalifying MRIs generally, or only apply to MRIs that are placed in a secondary Tier. In all cases, trip limits would be a measure that could be monitored and changed via annual specifications.

For alternatives C4-C6: During a January 8, 2019, FMAT meeting, the FMAT discussed the trip limit issue, and public comments noted that given the nature of the *Illex* fishery (high volume with substantial travel time), trip limits up to 48,000 pounds do not allow any real directed fishing and that higher trip limits should be considered. To explore this issue considering the FMAT meeting discussion, staff sorted 2019 trips by the 17 permits (51-34=17) that would not qualify under a 1997-2013 500,000 pound criteria but would qualify under a more liberal 1997-2019 50,000 pound criteria (see Table 4). Those permits made 157 trips over 10,000 pounds in 2019. The median pounds of *Illex* on those trips was 66,485 pounds, 75% of the trips were below 85,000 pounds, and 95% of trips were below 124,000 pounds. During review of the FMAT summary after the call, the FMAT concurred that these thresholds could be used as the basis for additional (higher) trip limit options for a 2nd tier.

Alternative C1: No action/status quo. No additional trip limits would be considered, so non-requalifying MRIs would only be eligible for an open-access incidental catch squid/butterfish permit that allows up to 10,000 lb of *Illex* squid per trip.

Alternative C2: Use longfin squid approach of providing non-requalifying/Tiered MRIs with double the current incidental permit limit (10,000 pounds \* 2 = 20,000 pounds) in consideration of their historic participation that qualified them originally for the *Illex* permit but does not meet the requalification criteria.

Alternative C3: Provide non-requalifying/Tiered MRIs with a 48,000 pound trip limit. Trips landing up to 48,000 pounds 1997-2018 only accounted for 5% of landings, so 48,000 pounds could be a *higher than incidental* trip limit that would be unlikely to result in using a large percentage of the quota (but performance would need to be monitored in case 48,000 pound trips utilized more of the quota than anticipated).

Alternative C4: Provide non-requalifying/Tiered MRIs with a 67,000 pound trip limit. This represents the median (half above and half below) trip for the 157 2019 trips over 10,000 pounds by the 17 permits that would not qualify under a 1997-2013 500,000 pound criteria but would qualify under a more liberal 1997-2019 50,000 pound criteria, rounded up to the nearest 1,000 pounds.

Alternative C5: Provide non-requalifying/Tiered MRIs with an 85,000 pound trip limit. This represents the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (covers 75% of trips) for the 157 2019 trips over 10,000 pounds by the 17 permits that would not qualify under a 1997-2013 500,000 pound criteria but would qualify under a more liberal 1997-2019 50,000 pound criteria, rounded up to the nearest 1,000 pounds.

Alternative C6: Provide non-requalifying/Tiered MRIs with a 124,000 pound trip limit. This represents the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (covers 95% of trips) for the 157 2019 trips over 10,000 pounds by the 17 permits that would not qualify under a 1997-2013 500,000 pound criteria but would qualify under a more liberal 1997-2019 50,000 pound criteria, rounded up to the nearest 1,000 pounds.

## **6D - ALTERNATIVE SET D: OTHER *ILLEX* PERMITTING MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

In Set D the Council is considering several other alternatives that could accompany the requalification options. The Council had some discussion of a start date for the *Illex* fishery and the FMAT discussed additional changes to reporting, but the FMAT recommended that these issues are not ripe for action given ongoing work of the *Illex* Working Group, which may generate relevant information on *Illex* growth, productivity, and more responsive monitoring/assessment approaches.

Alternative D1: No action/status quo. No changes to other *Illex* management measures.

Alternative D2: Require a maximum volumetric fish hold measurement for limited access *Illex* MRIs. To remain in the *Illex* limited access fishery, vessels would be required to obtain a fish hold measurement from an individual credentialed as a Certified Marine Surveyor with a fishing specialty by the National Association of Marine Surveyors (NAMS) or from an individual credentialed as an Accredited Marine Surveyor with a fishing specialty by the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors (SAMS). In terms of hold changes, vessels that are upgraded or used as replacement vessels would have to be resurveyed by a surveyor (accredited as above) unless the replacement vessel already had an appropriate certification and the documentation would have to be submitted to NMFS. Vessels that are sealed by the Maine State Sealer of Weights and Measures will also be deemed to meet this requirement. The hold capacity measurement submitted at the time of requalification would serve as another permit baseline in addition to existing vessel length and horsepower baselines. The hold volume could only be increased once, whether through refitting or vessel replacement. Any increase cannot exceed 10 percent of the MRI's baseline hold measurement. NMFS staff has noted concerns with enforcing the upgrade restrictions – they don't have anyone to inspect fish holds and rely on the documentation provided by applicants and surveyors. The FMAT has also noted that while there might be some impact on capacity utilization by regulating fish hold, there are many factors that can affect capacity use. Existing hold measurements and baselines (from the mackerel and/or herring fisheries) would be used where applicable.

Alternative D3: Clarify that daily catch of *Illex* is required via Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for vessels with limited access *Illex* permits. Vessels are currently required to declare into the *Illex* fishery with VMS but some of the language for daily catch reporting is vague.

## 7. Impacts of the Alternatives



This section summarizes the expected potential impacts of this action. Biological and socioeconomic, as well as potential impacts to habitat and protected species, will be analyzed in more detail in an environmental assessment which will be finalized in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act after the Council selects preferred alternatives (tentatively scheduled for June 2020). Significant habitat and/or protected species impacts are not expected. The environmental assessment will be subject to an additional public comment period.

The impacts of the alternatives depend on how many of the 2019 76 *Illex* MRIs<sup>3</sup> requalify, what their recent participation in the fishery has been, and what restrictions are placed on non-requalifiers. The first step in understanding impacts is to identify how many MRIs re-qualify (or not) under each alternative, and what their fishery participation has been.

### Re-Qualifiers

The following tables provide the numbers of MRIs that first do requalify (Table 4) and next do **not** requalify (Table 5, next page) for each combination of time period (Alternative Set A) and threshold (Alternative Set B). The numbers of non-requalifiers are simply calculated as 76 minus the number of requalifiers. For both tables, the percentages in parentheses reflect expected permit reduction proportions (from the 76 total in 2019), for each combination.

Table 4. Numbers of Requalifiers and Percent Permit Reduction from 76 2019 Limited Access Permits for Each Possible Time Period and Threshold Option.

Note: All re-qualifier estimates preliminary.		More re-qualifiers 					Less re-qualifiers	
Percent in parentheses is percent reduction of MRIs <sup>(1)</sup> (76 total in 2019)	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds <sup>(2)</sup>	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period <sup>(3)</sup>
	Qualification Periods							
	1997-2019	51 (-33%)	49 (-36%)	50 (-34%)	47 (-38%)	45 (-41%)	35 (-54%)	28 (-63%)
	1997-2018	50 (-34%)	48 (-37%)	48 (-37%)	44 (-42%)	41 (-46%)	30 (-61%)	25 (-67%)
	1997-2013	43 (-43%)	42 (-45%)	40 (-47%)	38 (-50%)	34 (-55%)	28 (-63%)	24 (-68%)
	2004-2013	38 (-50%)	37 (-51%)	35 (-54%)	34 (-55%)	30 (-61%)	21 (-72%)	21 (-72%)
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019	30 (-61%)	30 (-61%)	28 (-63%)	27 (-64%)	21 (-72%)	13 (-83%)	15 (-80%)
Less re-qualifiers	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018	25 (-67%)	25 (-67%)	24 (-68%)	21 (-72%)	15 (-80%)	12 (-84%)	13 (-83%)
<p>(1) A Moratorium Rights Identifier (MRI) is a unique NMFS-issued number that identifies a unique permit history, and may move between vessels over time.</p> <p>(2) 48,000 pounds is the trip size (rounded to 1000s of pounds) that accounts for 95% of total landings from 1997-2018</p> <p>(3) And these vessels are those with the highest total landings in the time period. While the 95% option (far right column) could be a stand-alone option, it also provides information regarding all the other options in the same row. For example, about 50 vessels would requalify if a threshold of 50,000 pounds was used over 1997-2018, and 28 of those 50 MRIs accounted for 95% of landings during that time period.</p>								

<sup>3</sup> MRI = Moratorium right ID, which tracks fishing history of a limited access permit even if it moves between vessels.

Table 5. Numbers of Non-Requalifiers and Percent Permit Reduction from 76 2019 Limited Access Permits for Each Possible Time Period and Threshold Option.

Note: All re-qualifier estimates preliminary.		More re-qualifiers					Less re-qualifiers	
Percent in parentheses is percent reduction of MRIs <sup>(1)</sup> (76 total in 2019)	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds <sup>(2)</sup>	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period <sup>(3)</sup>
	Qualification Periods							
More re-qualifiers	1997-2019	25 (-33%)	27(-36%)	26 (-34%)	29 (-38%)	31 (-41%)	41 (-54%)	48 (-63%)
	1997-2018	26 (-34%)	28 (-37%)	28 (-37%)	32 (-42%)	35 (-46%)	46 (-61%)	51 (-67%)
	1997-2013	33 (-43%)	34 (-45%)	36 (-47%)	38 (-50%)	42 (-55%)	48 (-63%)	52 (-68%)
	2004-2013	38 (-50%)	39 (-51%)	41 (-54%)	42 (-55%)	46 (-61%)	55 (-72%)	55 (-72%)
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019	46 (-61%)	46 (-61%)	48 (-63%)	49 (-64%)	55 (-72%)	63 (-83%)	61 (-80%)
Less re-qualifiers	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018	51 (-67%)	51 (-67%)	52 (-68%)	55 (-72%)	61 (-80%)	64 (-84%)	63 (-83%)
(1) A Moratorium Rights Identifier (MRI) is a unique NMFS-issued number that identifies a unique permit history, and may move between vessels over time.								
(2) 48,000 pounds is the trip size (rounded to 1000s of pounds) that accounts for 95% of total landings from 1997-2018								
(3) And these vessels are those with the highest total landings in the time period. While the 95% option (far right column) could be a stand-alone option, it also provides information regarding all the other options in the same row. For example, about 50 vessels would requalify if a threshold of 50,000 pounds was used over 1997-2018, and 28 of those 50 MRIs accounted for 95% of landings during that time period.								

**Potential Impact Relative to Recent Landings**

The next step is to generally identify how *Illex* landings might be impacted based on the requalification options. The following three tables identify how much of the revenues in three time periods, 2011-2013, 2014-2016, and 2017-2019 (one table per timeframe) were made by permits that would **not** requalify under each option. The take home message from these tables is that if the most recent landings are not used for requalification, MRIs representing about a quarter of 2017-2019 *Illex* revenues (see Table 8) would not be able to participate in the directed fishery, or be subject to reduced trip limits, depending on Council action in other alternative sets.

Table 6. Percent of total **2011-2013** *Illex* revenues landed by MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.

Percent of 2011-2013 revenues coming from MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.							
Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period
Qualification Periods							
1997-2019	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	3%
1997-2018	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%
1997-2013	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%	3%
2004-2013	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	4%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%	6%	7%
<b>Rounded to Nearest Percent</b>							

Table 7. Percent of total **2014-2016** *Illex* revenues landed by MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.

		Percent of 2014-2016 revenues coming from MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.						
Qualification Periods	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period
	1997-2019		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
1997-2018		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
1997-2013		0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
2004-2013		0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019		0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018		0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Rounded to Nearest Percent</b>								

Table 8. Percent of total **2017-2019** *Illex* revenues landed by MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.

		Percent of 2017-2019 revenues coming from MRIs that would not requalify under each requalification option.						
Qualification Periods	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period
	1997-2019		0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	17%
1997-2018		4%	4%	4%	12%	17%	26%	27%
1997-2013		22%	22%	24%	24%	27%	28%	27%
2004-2013		24%	24%	25%	25%	27%	30%	28%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019		20%	20%	22%	22%	27%	27%	28%
Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018		24%	24%	25%	27%	30%	28%	31%
<b>Rounded to Nearest Percent</b>								

Based on recent fishery performance and the early *Illex* closures, during a good year requalifying vessels could likely make up the potential “lost” proportion of catch/revenues at current quota levels. In other words, the MRIs that would requalify under each alternative would likely still be able to catch the current quota if the landings of non-requalifying MRIs are reduced. During slower fishing years, eliminating the more recently active vessels may reduce total landings (less vessels would be out looking for *Illex*), but it is not possible to determine by how much, since participation will broadly change during slower fishing years.

**Dependence on *Illex* by Non-Requalifying and Requalifying MRIs**

The proportion of overall *Illex* revenues represented by non-requalifying MRIs translates into impacts on individual vessels. Tables 9 and 10 count the number of first **non**-requalifying and then requalifying MRIs that had *Illex* representing at least 25% of their 2019 revenues for each alternative set. Similar to the fishery revenue tables above, one can observe that not using the most recent years to requalify MRIs results in more MRIs not requalifying that had *Illex* as at least 25% of their 2019 revenues. One can also observe in these tables however, that the threshold is also important – the higher thresholds also exclude a substantial number of MRIs that had *Illex* as a substantial percent of their 2019 revenues, but under the higher thresholds did not land enough poundage to requalify even if landings through 2019 are utilized.

Table 9. Number of **non**-requalifying MRIs that had *Illex* representing at least 25% of their 2019 revenues for each qualification period and landing threshold combination.

		Number of non-requalifying vessels that had <i>Illex</i> representing at least 25% of their 2019 revenues under each requalification option.						
Qualification Periods	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds <sup>(2)</sup>	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period <sup>(3)</sup>
		1997-2019	0	0	0	0	0	3
	1997-2018	1	1	1	3	4	8	9
	1997-2013	6	6	6	6	8	9	9
	2004-2013	7	7	7	7	9	12	11
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019	6	6	6	6	10	14	11
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018	9	9	9	10	14	15	14

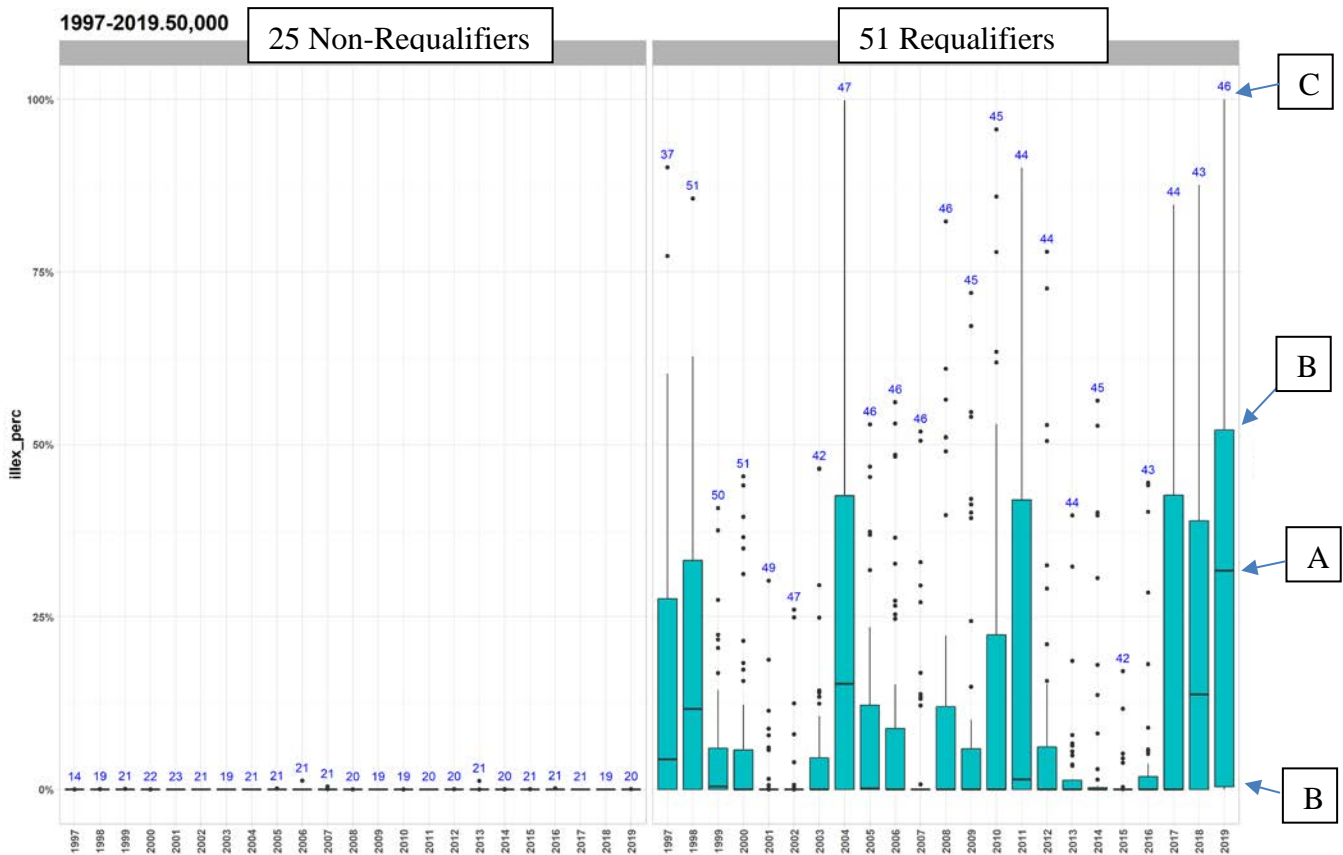
Table 10. Number of requalifying MRIs that had *Illex* representing at least 25% of their 2019 revenues for each qualification period and landing threshold combination.

		Number of requalifying vessels that had <i>Illex</i> representing at least 25% of their 2019 revenues under each requalification option.						
Qualification Periods	Thresholds	At least 50,000 pounds in any one year	At least 100,000 pounds in any one year	At least one trip above 48,000 pounds <sup>(2)</sup>	At least 300,000 pounds in any one year	At least 500,000 pounds in any one year	At least 1,000,000 pounds in any one year	MRIs that accounted for 95% of total landings in time period <sup>(3)</sup>
		1997-2019	25	25	25	25	25	22
	1997-2018	24	24	24	22	21	17	16
	1997-2013	19	19	19	19	17	16	16
	2004-2013	18	18	18	18	16	13	14
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2019	19	19	19	19	15	11	14
	Need landings in <b>both</b> 1997-2013 <b>and</b> 2014-2018	16	16	16	15	11	10	11

Tables 9 and 10 above were the results for 2019 from a broader analysis that looked at each MRI's annual dependence on *Illex* for revenues over time from 1997-2019. We cannot list *Illex* dependence for each permit due to data confidentiality constraints, but figures called "boxplots" can communicate the information for the fleet in some detail. Appendix A provides boxplot figures that describe the requalifying and non-requalifying MRI's annual dependence on *Illex* for each time period/threshold option (42 figures). Three of those options are provided below, both to explain how to generally interpret the figures in Appendix A and because their comparative findings are generally instructive. They are not chosen to suggest them as preferred options. The example time period/threshold options are: 1997-2019 with 50,000 pounds in any year (requalifies the most), 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each (requalifies the least), and 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in any year (middle option). The general result is that more MRIs are impacted, and impacted to a greater degree, if more recent years are not used for requalification, or if higher thresholds are used, especially relative to their recent landings.

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Figure 10. MRI *Illex* Dependencies for the 1997-2019/50,000-pound option. Bar is the interquartile (middle) range (IQR); black horizontal line is the median; vertical lines extend to observations near 1.5 \* IQR; outliers are dots.



This is an example figure from the 42 figures in Appendix A and describes *Illex* dependency relative to all revenues for the 1997-2019/50,000 pounds requalification option. Dependence on *Illex* revenues for **non**-requalifiers is on the **left** and for **requalifiers** is on the **right**. The blue numbers for each year show the MRIs that had at least some revenues (any species) in each year. For example there are 51 requalifiers in this option but in 2019 only 46 had some revenues from any species (“C”). The median of active MRIs’ *Illex* dependence is represented by a black horizontal line (e.g. “A”). If the median is zero or close to zero in a year it will not be visible. The solid bars indicate the typical (i.e. the middle 50% group) MRIs’ dependence on *Illex* revenues. This is called the interquartile range (IQR). If no bar is visible then that middle group’s dependence is at or near zero for that year. The vertical lines or “whiskers” extend to an observation about 1.5 times the IQR to highlight outliers (the dots) even further out. This boxplot (Figure 10) shows that for the 1997-2019/50,000 pounds option there are no non-requalifiers with any substantial ongoing dependence on *Illex* (note the nearly empty left side). There is a wide range of dependencies for the 51 requalifying MRIs on the right side. In 2019, the median dependency on *Illex* by requalifiers (far right) was about 30% (“A”) and the typical MRIs (middle 50% of MRIs) ranged from 0% dependence to about 50% dependence (“Bs”) but at least one had about 100% dependence on *Illex* (the top of the vertical line near “C”).



Figure 11. MRI *Illex* Dependencies for the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each period option.

Bar is the interquartile (middle) range (IQR); black horizontal line is the median; vertical lines extend to observations near 1.5 \* IQR; outliers are dots.

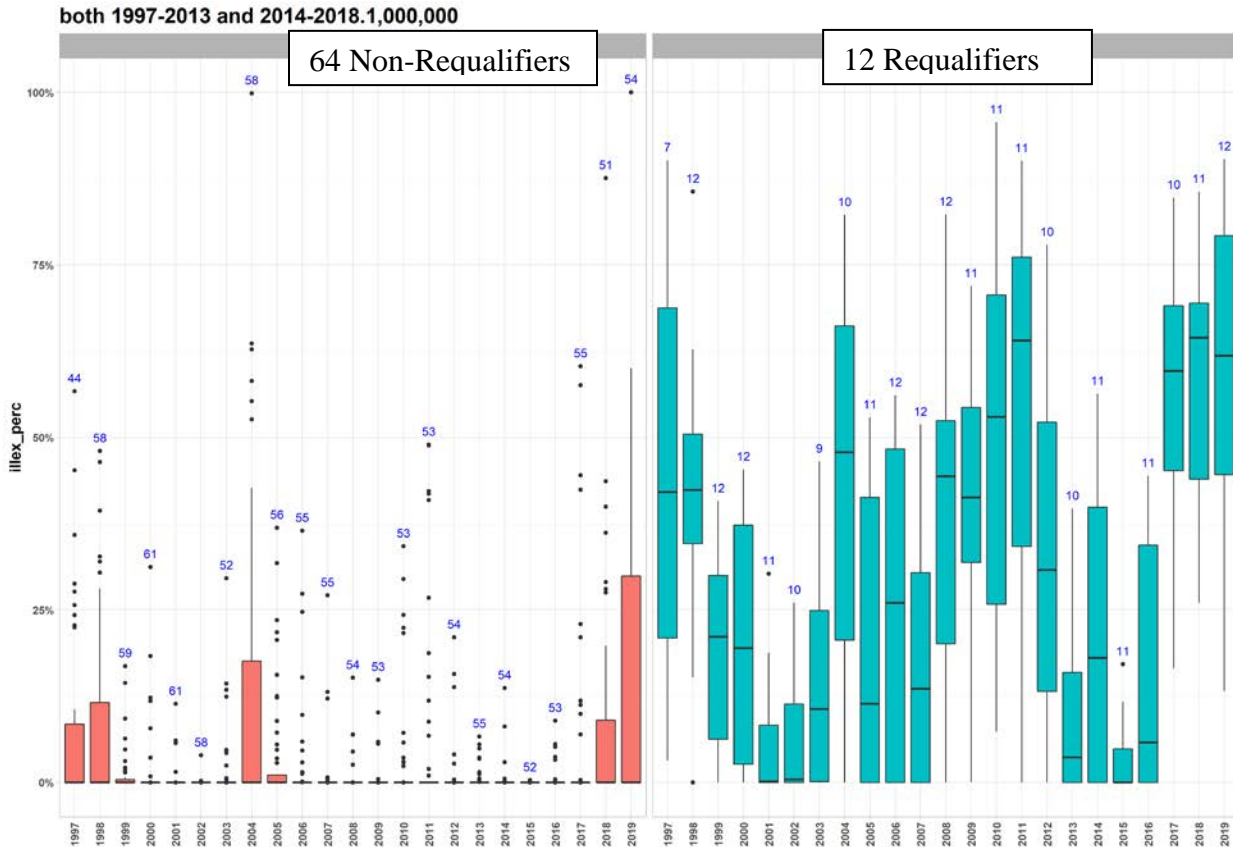
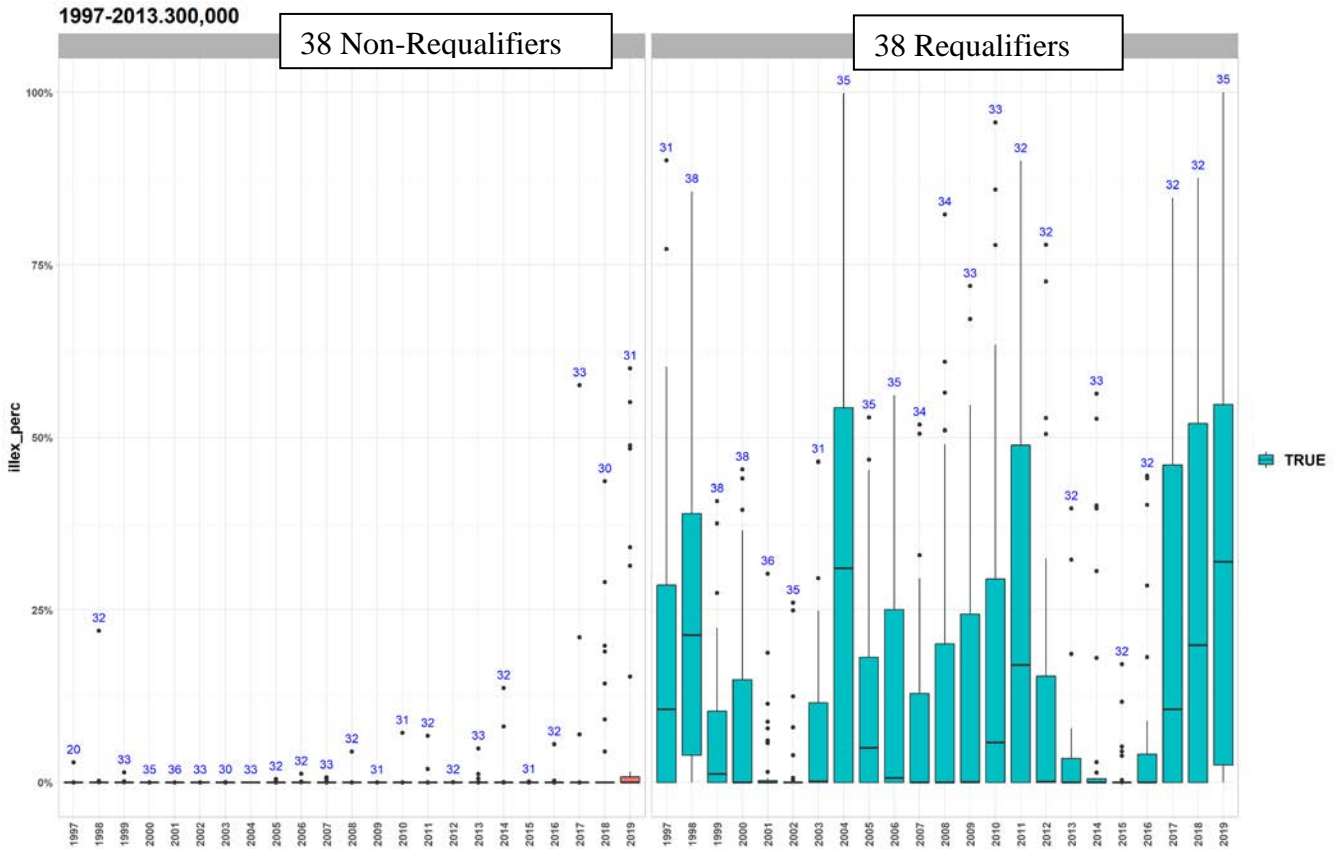


Figure 11 contrasts with Figure 10 since the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each period option requalifies the fewest (12) MRIs. While in most years most non-requalifiers (left side) still had relatively little dependence on *Illex* (the bars are on or near zero in most years), there are some years where the range of the bars (representing the middle 50% of MRIs) extends beyond 10% dependence (including in 2019 which was above 25%), and there are numerous outliers in nearly every year, indicating ongoing participation but not enough to requalify under this option. There is a wide range of dependencies for the 12 requalifiers, and the requalifying MRIs tend to have relatively high dependencies compared to other options.

Figure 12. MRI *Illex* Dependencies for the 1997-2013/300,000 pounds option.  
 Bar is the interquartile (middle) range (IQR); black line horizontal is the median; vertical lines extend to observations near 1.5 \* IQR; outliers are dots.



The figure above illustrates a relative middle ground between the other two illustrated extremes from an analytical perspective - these are the results for the requalification using 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in any year (38 requalifiers). Most non-requalifying MRIs have minimal dependence on *Illex*, as evidenced by the bars on the left being at or near zero, but there are a number of outliers that had more dependence, especially in the most recent years, as would be expected given this option utilizes the 2013 control date.

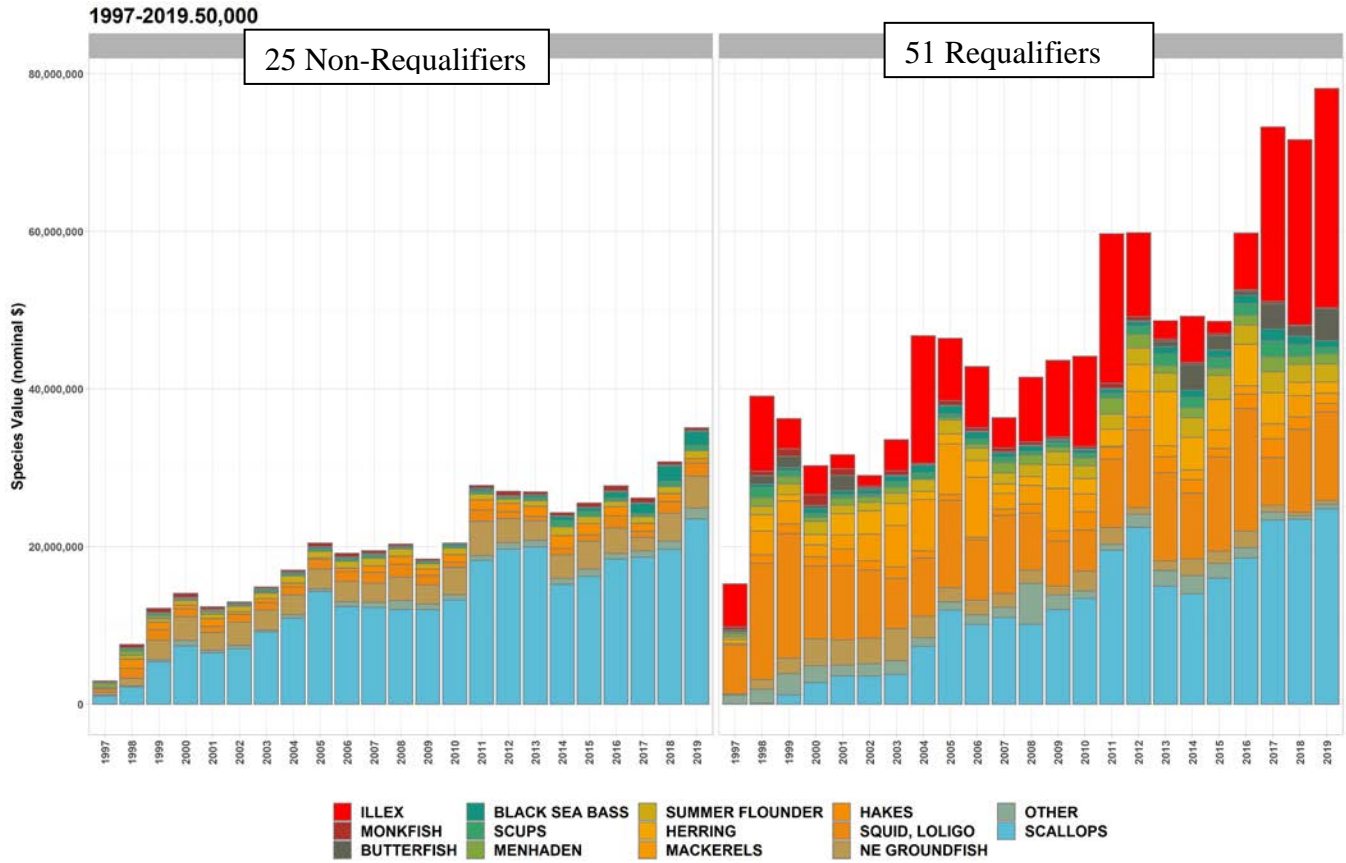
## **Participation in Other Fisheries**

The figures in Appendix B build off of the revenue dependence to ask what species (*Illex* and others) make up MRIs' revenue portfolios when sorted into non-requalifying (left side) and requalifying (right side) groups for each of the 42 requalification criteria options. Several general conclusions can be made after reviewing the figures in Appendix B. As above, the same three options are provided immediately below, both to explain how to generally interpret the figures in Appendix B and because the general findings of the analysis aligns with these three examples. Again the three example illustrative time period/threshold options are: 1997-2019 with 50,000 pounds in any year (requalifies the most), 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each (requalifies the least), and 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in any year (middle option).

The general result observable in Appendix B is that if more recent years are not used for requalification, or if higher thresholds are used, *Illex* contributes a greater portion of revenues for non-requalifiers, though still relatively low for most. Scallops are the dominant revenue source in recent years for non-requalifiers across all options. Requalifiers have a relatively high contribution from *Illex* but other species make substantial contributions as well, including in recent years scallops, longfin squid, and butterfish. Appendix B can be consulted for each time period/threshold option to see more precisely how MRIs are affected under various options.

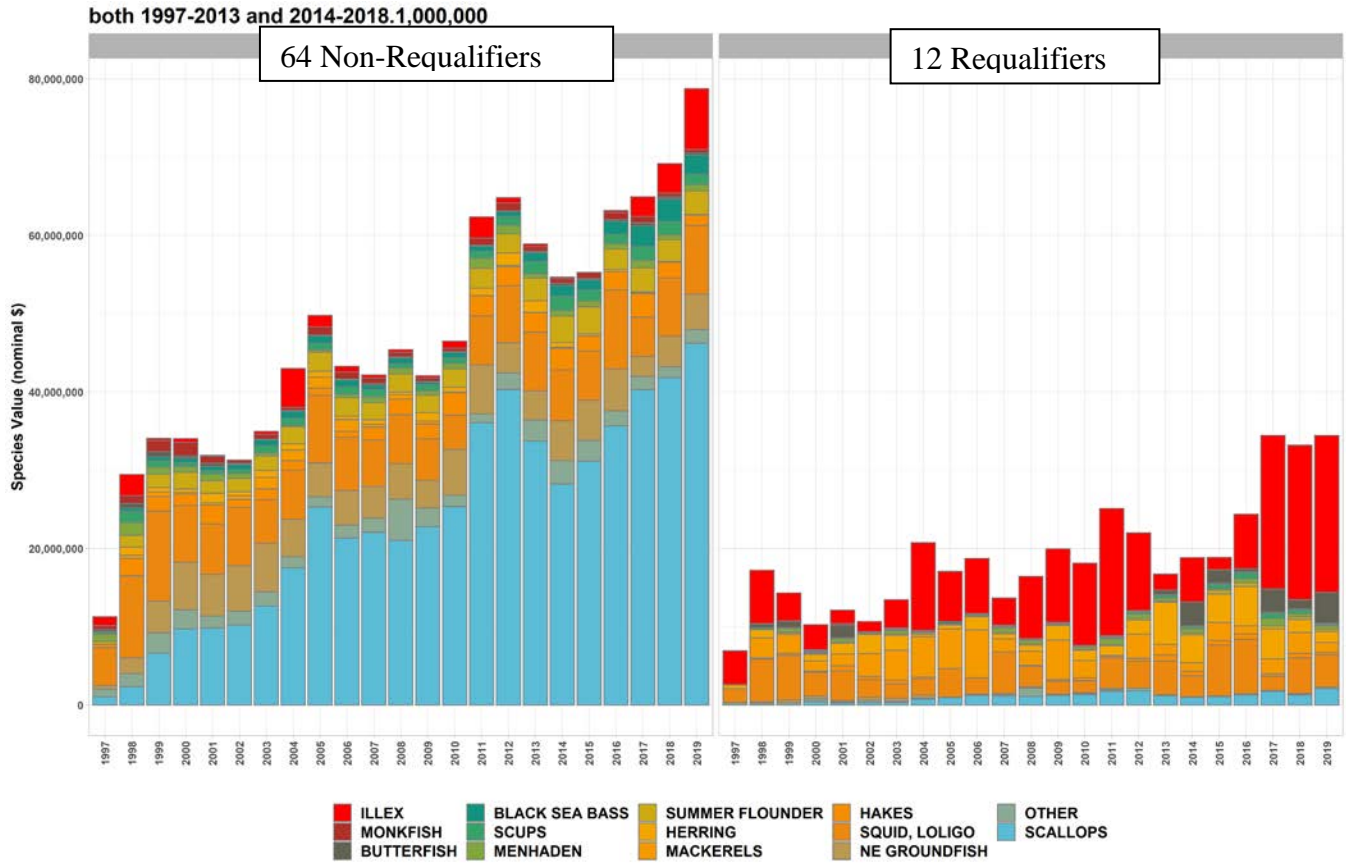
Revenues from other fisheries (this section) and possession of other permits (next section) provide information about fleet behavior generally and the capabilities of vessels to participate in other fisheries.

Figure 13. Species revenues, by year, for the 1997-2019/50,000-pound option. Species in the top 10 for any year are included.



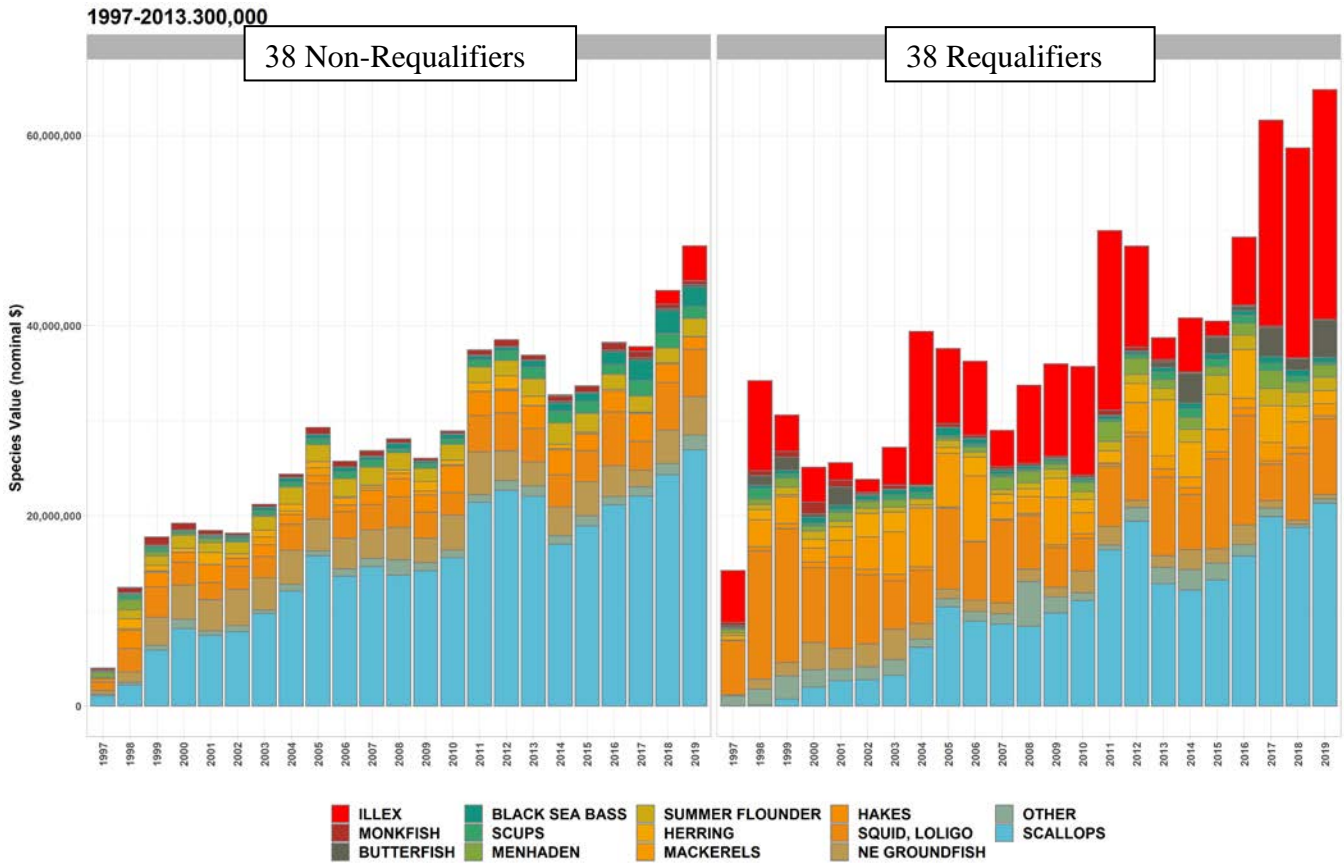
An immediate observation is that for the 1997-2019 50,000 pound option, non-requalifiers as a group have very little revenue from *Illex* (top red component), matching the MRI-level analysis in Appendix A. Most of their revenues in recent years came from scallops (bottom blue component). For qualifiers, in addition to *Illex*, scallops and longfin squid (middle orange component) are major contributions.

Figure 14. Species revenues, by year, for the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each period option. Species in the top 10 for any year are included.



For the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each option, the revenue distributions change. *Illex* contributes more for the non-requalifiers revenues as a group, but is still a relatively small portion. Scallops remain the dominant revenue source in recent years. For the few (12) requalifiers in this group, *Illex* frequently contributes more to total revenues than other individual species. For requalifiers, total revenues are lower as would be expected with so few vessels in the requalifying group.

Figure 15. Species revenues, by year, for the 1997-2013/300,000-pound option. Species in the top 10 for any year are included.



For the 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in one year option the revenue distributions change again. For non-requalifiers *Illex* revenues are in between the other two previous examples, and are still a relatively small portion. Scallops remain the dominant revenue source for non-requalifiers in recent years. For the requalifiers in this group, *Illex* is a major portion of revenues, with scallops, longfin squid, and butterfish also making substantial contributions.

## Permits in Other Fisheries

Depending on the vessel and the vessel’s permit suite, possession of other permits may allow participation in other fisheries, which is a required consideration for limited access systems. The figures below provide information on permits that the FMAT determined might be relevant – some permits such as spiny dogfish and tilefish have been omitted. Counts of MRIs that have the permit are shaded black, and counts of MRIs that do not have the permit are shaded grey. The figures in this section reflect the same three illustrative example time period/threshold options as above: first 1997-2019 with 50,000 pounds in any year (requalifies the most), then 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each (requalifies the least), and finally 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in any year (middle option). Inactive permits currently in confirmation of permit history are not included in this analysis so not quite all 76 2019 *Illex* MRIs are included. Permit counts for all combinations are included in Appendix C.

Figure 16. Permits held by non-requalifying (left) and requalifying (right) MRIs for the 1997-2019/50,000-pound option.

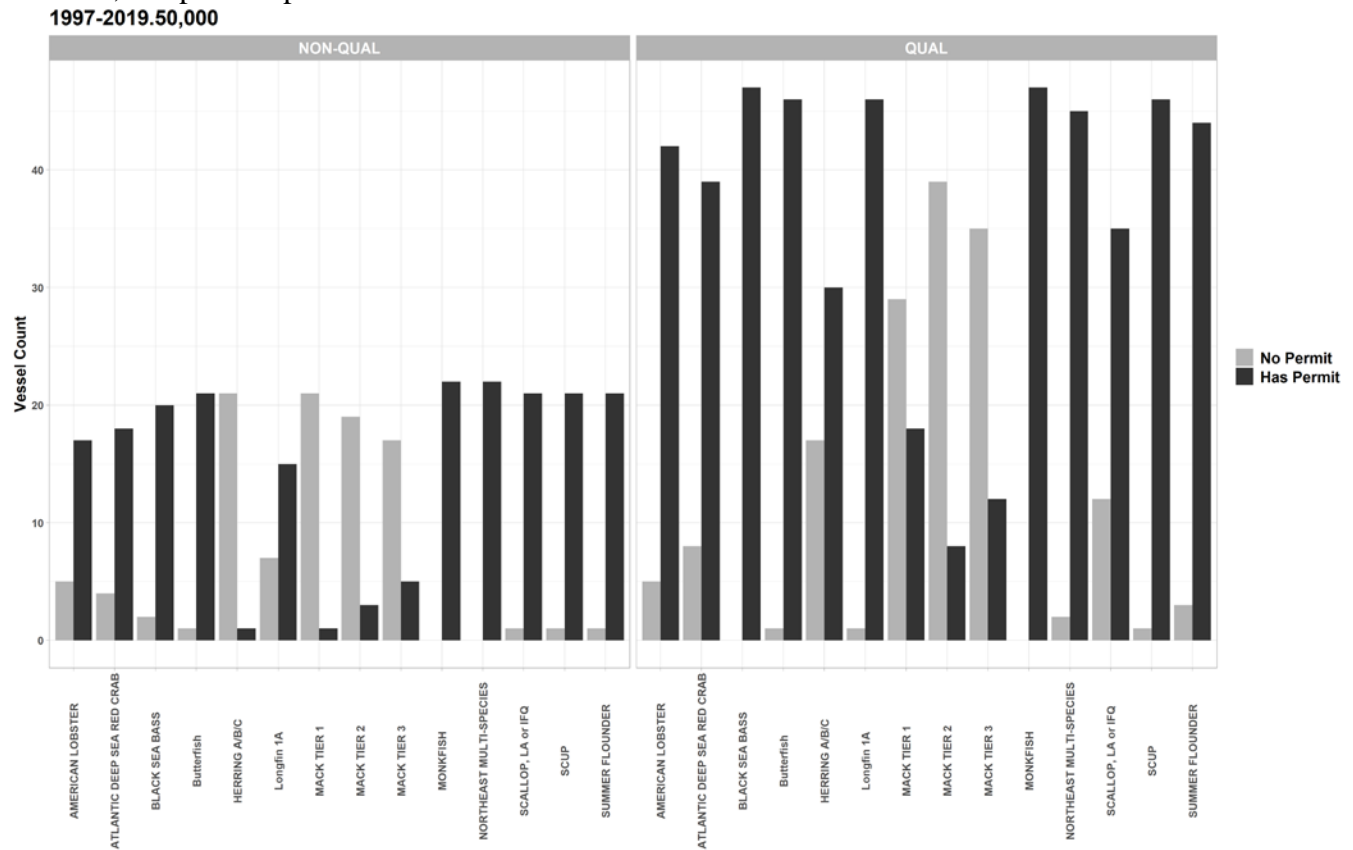


Figure 17. Permits held by non-requalifying (left) and requalifying (right) MRIs for the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each period option

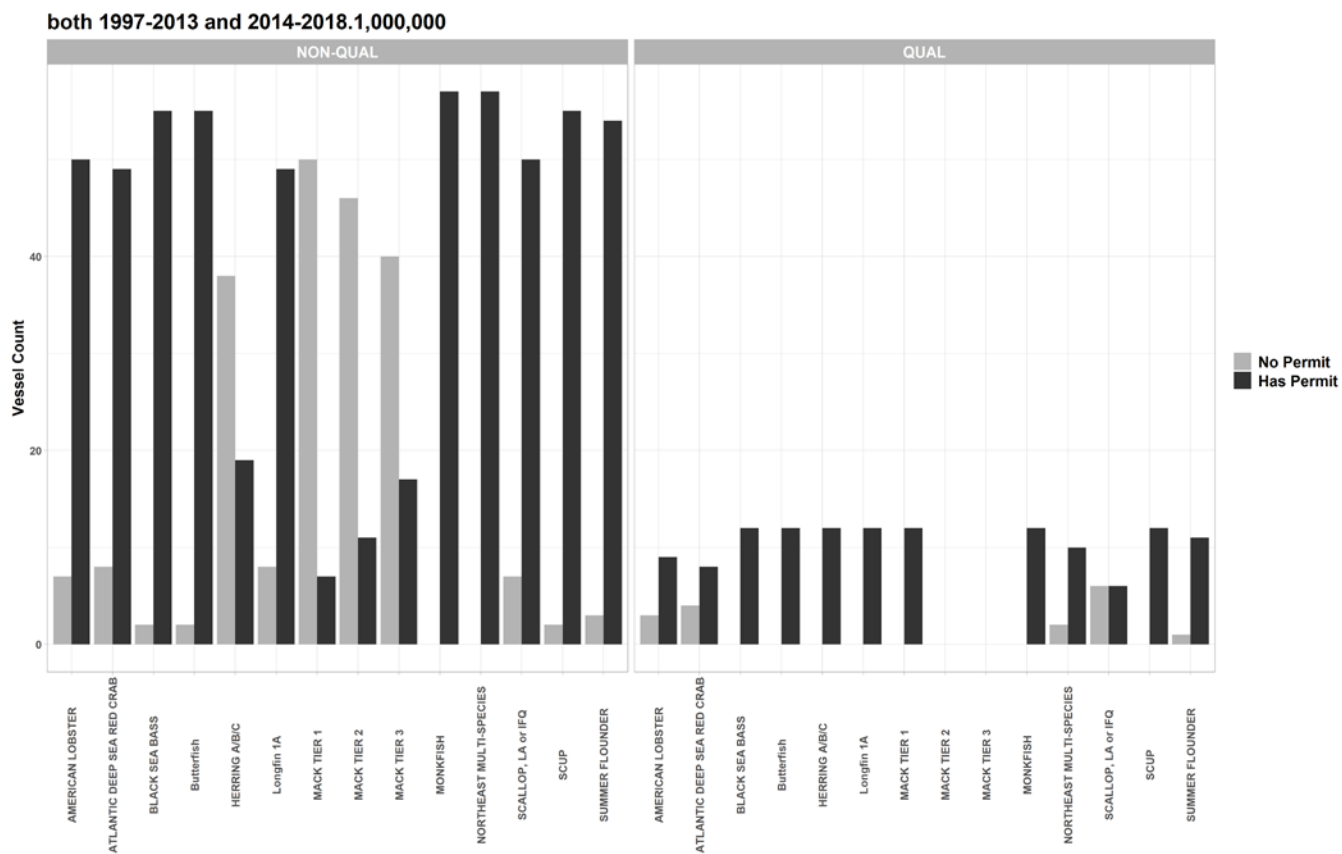
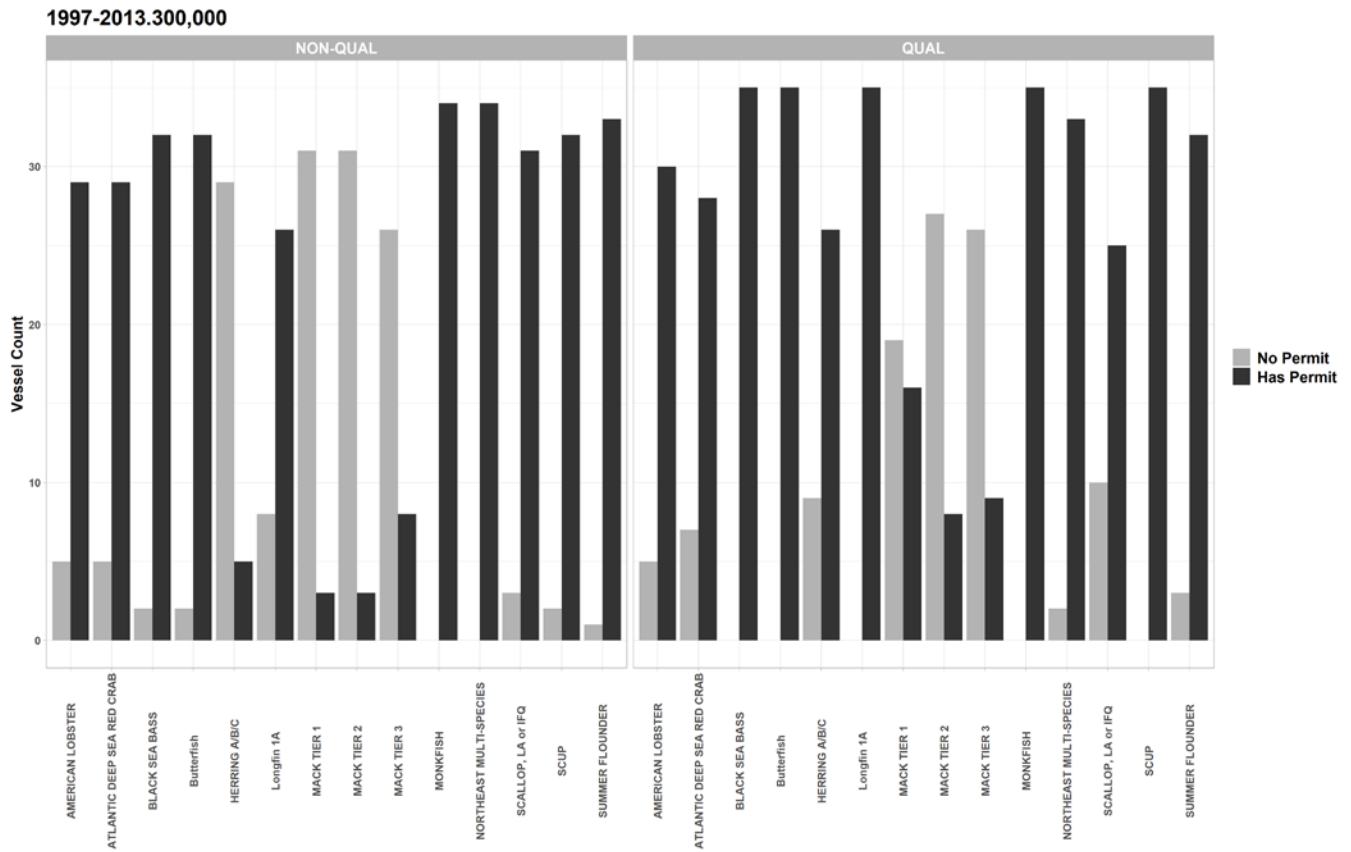




Figure 18. Permits held by non-requalifying (left) and requalifying (right) MRIs for the 1997-2013/300,000-pound option.



## Impacts

With an understanding of qualification and participation, several likely conclusions can be made regarding the impacts from the alternatives. Impacts will be analyzed in more detail in an environmental assessment which will be finalized in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act after the Council selects preferred alternatives (tentatively scheduled for June 2020) but before additional public comment on any proposed rule.

### Biological Impacts on the *Illex* Stock

Requalification alternatives (Sets A and B) will impact the number of vessels that have access to the *Illex* squid fishery, in varying degrees. Since the resulting fleet will likely still have the capacity to harvest the full *Illex* quota in a manner similar to previous years when fishing is good, these alternatives are not likely to substantively change the amount or character of overall *Illex* fishing effort. However, since further racing to fish should be mitigated to some degree by reducing recent/additional activation of latent effort, requalification alternatives could help closures occur in a timely fashion to the degree they reduce participants and avoid even faster landings. There could thus be a positive impact to the *Illex* squid resource condition from being able to more effectively close the fishery before quota overages occur, but the impact is low positive due to the limited and indirect nature of the impact (with quota management, overages should be slight in most years).

If the trip limits provided for non-requalifying MRIs allow them to substantially increase effort compared to recent activity, then the goal of avoiding increase in racing to fish (and indirectly avoiding quota overages) may be subverted. Accordingly, higher trip limits for non-requalifying MRIs may have negative impacts compared to only allowing non-requalifying MRIs to obtain an incidental permit, but the impact is low negative due to the limited and indirect nature of the impact.

The hold measurement/upgrade restrictions, in combination with permit requalification, should help to slow additional capacity development in this fishery, reducing additional racing to fish. There would thus be a positive impact to the *Illex* squid resource condition from being able to more effectively close the fishery before quota overages occur, and the impact is low positive due to the limited and indirect nature of the impact. Clarifying that daily VMS reporting of *Illex* is required should have a positive impact on the *Illex* squid resource condition from collecting additional information to more accurately estimate catch rates and more effectively close the fishery before quota overages occur.

## Economic Impacts

Requalification alternatives (Sets A and B) will impact the number of vessels that have access to the *Illex* squid fishery, in varying degrees. Since the resulting fleet will likely still have the capacity to harvest the full *Illex* quota in a manner similar to previous years when fishing is good, these alternatives are not likely to substantively change the amount of overall ex-vessel revenues from *Illex* fishing. During slower fishing years, eliminating the more recently active MRIs may somewhat reduce total landings (less vessels out looking for *Illex*), but it is not possible to determine by how much, since participation will broadly change during slower fishing years.

Alternatives that eliminate or reduce access for recent or additional entrants could have a positive impact on re-qualifiers because they would have more secure access to the squid quota and the value of their permit would likely increase. While the non-qualifying MRIs have generally not landed a large proportion of *Illex* historically, with more restrictive alternative combinations some individual non-qualifying MRIs have derived a substantial portion of their revenues from *Illex* in recent years, especially during 2017-2019. These MRIs would have a negative impact compared to their recent performance, and would also lose the value of their permit itself. It is not clear what the current value of an *Illex* permit with low catch history is currently, since to some degree catch history is factored into permit values, and permit trading entities have been aware that requalification is on the table for *Illex* (Council staff receives periodic calls from individuals and entities involved in the buying and selling of permits, requesting information on the status of this action).

If the trip limits provided for non-requalifying MRIs allow them to increase or maintain recent effort, then impacts on them would be mitigated, but then less quota would be available for the other requalified MRIs.

The hold measurement/upgrade restrictions, has costs associated. Informal contacts by council staff with a few marine surveyors revealed that a fish hold measurement could run approximately \$10-\$80 per foot of vessel length, which could range from as low as \$750 for a 75 foot vessel to as high as \$12,000 for a 150 foot vessel, depending on the surveyor, the boat design, and travel expenses. To the extent that surveys are already required for insurance purposes these costs may be already part of a vessel's operating costs, and many of the *Illex* permitted vessels already have hold documentation due to their mackerel and/or herring permits.

All limited access permitted *Illex* vessels must already use VMS and many already report their daily *Illex* catches via VMS. Accordingly, costs for clarifying that daily *Illex* catches must be reported via VMS should be minimal.

## **Safety at Sea Impacts**

Racing to fish can have negative impacts on safety at sea related to weather, deferred maintenance, and overloading. Requalification alternatives (Sets A and B) may impact the number of vessels that have access to the *Illex* squid fishery, in varying degrees. Since exacerbation of racing to fish should be mitigated to some degree by reducing recent/additional activation of latent effort, requalification alternatives should benefit safety at sea to the degree they reduce participants. If the trip limits provided for non-requalifying MRIs allow them to substantially increase effort, then the goal of avoiding increase in racing to fish may be subverted. It is not anticipated that other alternatives would affect safety at sea.

## **Community Impacts**

The Council is also concerned about impacts to communities if re-activated permits rapidly change the distribution of landings at relevant ports in communities that have dependence on *Illex*. Based on Table 4, only in North Kingston, RI and Cape May, NJ are *Illex* revenues a sustained and substantial portion of port revenues, with North Kingston substantially more dependent on *Illex* than any other port. While Cape May, NJ has less reliance on *Illex*, according to NMFS' Social Indicators for Fishing Communities, Cape May has relatively higher vulnerability scores (see Figures 4 and 6). Based on these findings, both North Kingston, RI and Cape May, NJ seem potentially disproportionately impacted by disruption or rapid change in the *Illex* fishery.

## 8. References

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Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 30, 2020  
**To:** File  
**From:** Jason Didden  
**Subject:** January 8, 2020 Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) Summary (*Illex*)

The FMAT for the *Illex* Permitting and Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP Goals and Objectives Amendment met via webinar on January 8, 2020. FMAT participants included Jason Didden, Doug Christel, John Walden, Lisa Hendrickson, Ben Galuardi, and Ashleigh McCord.

Other participants who identified themselves included Aly Pitts, Aimee Ahles, Katie Almeida, Dan Farnham, Don Fox, Jeff Kaelin, Greg DiDomenico, Meghan Lapp, Jimmy Elliott, Mike Roderick, Ryan Clark, Brendan Mitchell, Meade Amory, Sam Martin, Eric Reid, and Alissa Wilson.

The purpose of the call was to plan/develop related options/analyses.

This summary follows the agenda for the call, which was made up of items 1-6 below, as well as some general initial discussion.

1. Vessel performance/impacts analysis
2. Community Descriptions
3. Tiers
4. Reporting
5. Hold baseline
6. Start date

### General

There was an initial discussion about the need and purpose of the action and metrics to see whether the purpose would be achieved. Staff reviewed the need and purpose as discussed on the last FMAT call. The need is summarized as recent and potential additional entry as causing/worsening racing to fish. The purpose is summarized as at least slowing increases in racing to fish by requalifying vessels based on landings so there are less vessels participating. While anything besides an ITQ is not likely to completely solve racing to fish, limiting participation should

qualitatively slow worsening of the issue. Follow-up analysis by staff indicated that in 2019, landings by the top 20 vessels (out of 76 potential permits), accounted for 90% of the landings, and ranged from approximately 0.8 to 7.3 million pounds, with a median of 1.6 million pounds. The season lasted approximately 14 weeks, so the top vessel averaged around 0.52 million pounds per week and the median vessel (out of the top 20) averaged 0.12 million pounds per week. Five additional vessels performing like the top vessel for 10 weeks could thus land nearly 26 million pounds, or 47% of the 2019 quota. Five additional vessels performing like the median of the top 20 vessels for 10 weeks could likewise land nearly 6 million pounds, or 11% of the quota. While it is not possible to know how vessels may participate in the future or at what level, it does appear that the addition of even a handful of additional participants could have a substantial impact on how soon the fishery closes at the current quota.

The FMAT discussed that there are many combinations of alternatives possible. After public hearings, an option would be to identify 3-5 specific combinations to simplify final decision making. Two of those could be extremes (few and many qualifiers) presented in the public hearing document, and then there could be several combinations presented as middle-range alternatives for final consideration.

### 1. Vessel performance/impacts analysis

Council and GARFO staff collaborated to develop several analyses for requalification options. It is important to note that the requalification options chosen for analyses were strictly so that the analyses could be evaluated rather than any conclusions about the particular options.

Several of the counts of requalifiers for different criteria changed by a few permits in the updated analysis due to corrections in the computer code used to predict the resulting requalifiers. Discussion noted that the terms high (more requalifiers) and low (less requalifiers) were confusing and should be avoided.

Generally, the FMAT highlighted that clear textual description of the analyses would be key given the number of options and the effects of changing the relevant years and/or landings thresholds. The FMAT revisited whether time periods before 2017 were necessary to include in terms of performance, and staff reviewed that the three time periods 2017-2019, 2014-2016, and 2011-2013 had been previously identified as providing useful information during varying levels of recent fishery activity, with 2017-2019 being a high activity, 2014-2016 being a period of relatively low activity, and 2011-2013 being a period of intermediate activity.

The FMAT discussed that for the bar graphs demonstrating dependence on *Illex*, an important and useful summary table would highlight how many vessels recently derived more than 25% of their revenues from *Illex* but would also *not* requalify under the various scenarios. The FMAT discussed that it would be useful for purposes of explanation to use three examples from the 42 qualification combinations that result in more and less numbers of qualifiers to illustrate the trends that exist among all the possible alternatives. The 1997-2019 with 50,000 pounds in any year option requalifies the most, the 1997-2013 plus 2014-2018 with 1,000,000 pounds in one year in each requalifies the least, and the 1997-2013 with 300,000 pounds in any year option would be a middle



option. Public comment noted that price influences the revenue makeup from various species and changes in price would be good to include for reference..

## 2. Community Descriptions

Staff described that the plan is for the public hearing document to include the top ports for 2011-2019, resiliency indicators for the relevant ports, and the dependence by the various ports on *Illex* for 2011-2013, 2014-2016, and 2017-2019 (*Illex* revenues compared to total revenues).

## 3. Tiers

At the October 2019 meeting the Council directed staff to work with the FMAT to develop a Tiered approach. The FMAT concurred that in this fishery, creating a separate quota for a recently active group of vessels was likely to just create two races to fish and might worsen overall racing to fish. The FMAT discussed several options for trip limits for a secondary Tier that would not requalify based on the criteria chosen by the Council. Double the incidental trip limit (10,000 \* 2 = 20,000 pounds) would follow the longfin squid model. Trips landing 48,000 pounds or less only accounted for 5% of landings so could be a higher than incidental trip limit that would be unlikely to result in using a large percentage of the quota (but would need to be monitored in case 48,000 pound trips became profitable). Higher trip limit options could also be considered, but would need to be rooted in some behavior of the fishery. It was noted that allowing flexibility in trip limits during specifications would allow year to year adjustments.

There was discussion that the Council could use one requalifying option for a top tier and then another less restrictive requalifying option for a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier. Recent performance of vessels in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier could be used to establish additional trip limit options. As a follow-up, staff sorted 2019 trips by the 17 permits (51-34=17) that would not qualify under a 1997-2013 500,000 pound criteria but would qualify under a 1997-2019 50,000 pound criteria. Those permits made 157 trips over 10,000 pounds in 2019. The median pounds of *Illex* on those trips was 66,485 pounds, 75% of the trips were below 85,000 pounds, and 95% of trips were below 124,000 pounds. During review of this summary after the call, the FMAT concurred that these thresholds could be used as additional trip limit options for a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier.

The FMAT recommended against having a sub-option that looked at providing a Tier for more recent entrants at each threshold as doing so would likely result in an overly complicated set of alternatives.

The FMAT discussed whether an option could be included that would allow NMFS to decide to suspend a trip limit for a Tier if it determines that the annual quota is unlikely to be harvested (i.e. during a poor year). Such an option would be difficult to feasibly administer in a real time manner. Another option would be to allow such an option to be frameworked at a later date – the *Illex* working group is considering the question of how to identify “good” vs “bad” years and may produce relevant information.

Public comments noted that: even 48,000 pounds is unworkable as a directed landing and that a range up to 200,000 pounds would be appropriate; the longfin squid model of focusing on active versus inactive vessels should be considered; allowing high trip limits will give tiered non-requalifying vessels more daily capacity than some requalifying vessels (especially freezer vessels); low trip limits may allow some useful access for longfin but even 48,000 pounds would not be useful for *Illex* given the nature of the fishery and the distance traveled; a 100,000 pound trip limit would not allow scaling up to the level of the historical RSW fleet; there should be a qualification option specific to a lower Tier.

#### 4. Reporting

The action can clarify the VMS reporting is required but considering tow-by-tow reporting seems premature at this time given there is ongoing investigation by the *Illex* working group of related issues and there would not be an immediate management mechanism to use the data. Tow-by-tow reporting requirements can be considered via a framework already so if there was a future determination that such reporting was necessary and appropriate, it would not need an amendment.

#### 5. Hold baseline

A baseline measurement and baseline like was used with mackerel can be included in the hearing document, and enforcement limitations (as previously discussed) will be highlighted.

#### 6. Start date

Staff reviewed several analyses related to when the fishery starts. Depending on the year the fishery typically begins between mid-May and mid-June. There did not appear to be a strong price signal within a year looking at recent average price data, but based on 2010-2019 observer data May squid appear to be shorter than June squid. Several previous analyses have suggested that delaying the season could increase yield (NAFO 1978, NEFSC 1999), but given the ongoing work by the *Illex* working group may be relevant, the FMAT recommends that a start date not be considered in this action. Pending outcomes of the *Illex* working group, its likely that a season start date could be considered via a framework and not need an amendment.

A public comment asked about discards in May potentially being higher. Follow-up analysis indicated there were 8 observed trips in the Mays of 2017-2019. The discard rate was higher (5% versus the typical 1%-2%; species were mostly butterfish, Atlantic mackerel, scup, and smooth dogfish), but with so few trips it would be difficult to base any decision on this information.

**From:** [Moore, Christopher](#)  
**To:** [Didden, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Illex comment Due 1/29/2020  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2020 9:22:12 AM

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Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
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-----Original Message-----

From: Jimmy Elliott <captjimmy@aol.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2020 11:37 PM  
To: Moore, Christopher <cmoore@mafmc.org>; jidden@mafmc.org  
Subject: Illex comment Due 1/29/2020

To Director and Council

This email is in regard to the “ Illex Permitting” Goals and Objectives

I have 2 permitted vessels In the Illex fishery F/V Maizey James and F/V M.F. Hy-Gradet At this time I can only support the least restrictive option of the 50,000 lbs in a given year from 1997-2019. This option as explained a few times is a 34% reduction of permits. How much more could you need . Anything more in reduction you might as well consider it monopolizing.

As stated before the market and fishery have changed in many ways since a control date of 2013 was established and this needs to change with the growth of a renewed development of the fishery with new markets that have been established and the increased biomass of this fishery. If you eliminate too many vessels markets will collapse . New Markets that have been developed will fold and the consumer will go other places or Countries to replace the product . This has happened in other fisheries.

Some of the boats that would qualify under a higher restrictions like one of my vessels do need the vessels that would qualify under the lowest restrictions in order to survive due to certain new markets fishing styles , processing etc. If enough of a fleet is eliminated it could make things tougher on those who do qualify . Example limited or reduction in pack out facilities.

Tiers have been mentioned in meetings prior.I cannot support a tiered system or any type of division or separation of quota.

This is a high volume , fast paced , fishery that needs volume to be profitable. Illex squid is also a very perishable product it doesn't have time to be toted , basketed n weighed . Illex has to be put in the fish hole FAST to ensure quality. Accountability would be near impossible and this could create a heavy discard issue .

“Example” hypothetically you have a trip limit of 50,000 lbs I do an hour tow and estimate it to be 30,000 lbs .This tow alone we are layed up for sometime to get it down in the fish hole . Get the deck clear and I put it back in for 40 minutes hoping to catch less well I do another 30,000 lb tow well that's 10,000 pounds that has to get WASTED and has to go overboard. Now we get back to the dock and Enforcement wants to do a weight check.We check the weight . Turns out I misjudged by 2000 pounds a tow which is easy to do now . A) I'm either 4000 lbs over and in violation or I could be 4000 pounds under which then I discarded fish I could have used.

Also some of us aren't as close to the Illex grounds as others . Boats fishing to the east out of Point Judith n New Bedford if you pull VMS data I'm sure you will find the average trip is 2.5 days long . It's an average steam of 16

hours one way just to one of the canyons that are fished and 16 hours back 32 hours total of just steaming not included fishing time and packing . Lucky to get 2 maybe 3 landings a week.

Fish Hold capacity should not be considered in this amendment. Once again those who are pushing for this have already stretched , converted and upgraded their vessels recently to make them larger capacity then their original designs respectively within the laws of the elimination of gross and net on permitted vessels . Also it could make it very difficult, challenging and costly for those who wish to replace their older vessels in years to come . Let's let the individual owners dictate their workable capacities with in the current NMFS vessel baseline requirement of length and horsepower .Also as stated in a previous meeting by a NMFS representative fish hold size would be tough to enforce.

In closing let's not rush this amendment . This amendment is not being driven by a decline in biomass or over fishing issue . It's being driven by some to control it more. Let the working groups take the proper time they need to possibly find the opportunity to increase the quota before the "Council" makes a rushed decision. Fixing the quota could just fix the issue.

Respectfully

Jimmy Elliott  
Owner F/V Maizey James  
F/V M.F. Hy-Grader

Sent from my iPad

Gabby G Fisheries Inc.  
Po Box 2242  
Montauk, NY 11954

01/24/2020

Executive Director Dr. Moore,

These comments are in regards to the proposed illex squid amendment. As per the scoping document,

“...the Council is proposing to develop an amendment because there is considerable latent effort in the Illex squid fishery, which closed early in 2017 and 2018. In most years, the majority of landings are harvested by a small number of vessels with limited access permits.”

I believe that the reasoning for this amendment has been misconstrued, 2017, 2018 and 2019 should not be looked at as early closures but as the fleet having successfully caught the quota for those years, which has rarely been done in the past, the quota has only been caught 5 times in the last 38 years. At this time illex is not considered overfished nor is overfishing occurring, and the council has a working group to consider various ways to increase illex quota in years of high abundance. For the council to be considering cutting out active participants in the fishery while also looking to increase the quota makes this amendment look like nothing other than an economic allocation of a national resource to a small group of individuals. This is plainly stated in the November FMAT meeting summary where it states “[t]he Council needs to be clearer about what the purposes are for this action beyond economic allocation.” There are no documented bycatch, recruitment, or safety issues in the fishery at this time, and the FMAT seems to have unease with this since it is plainly stated that it is not legal to make regulations solely for economic purposes.

The November FMAT summary goes on to state that “[p]art of Council consideration regarding any requalification option should be the ability of the remaining fleet to harvest optimum yield on an ongoing basis.” If the 2013 control date is used it has been documented that the current fleet would not be able to consistently harvest the optimum yield, having done so only in 1998 and 2004. The recent successful harvest of the TAC in 2017-2019 can be attributed to two main factors, the high availability of illex squid and the ability of a number of permitted vessels to reenter the fishery since processors will now accept iced product.

As the council continues to move forward with this amendment I would ask that they use the least restrictive requalification alternatives available, and that they not use a tiered approach. If the council does use a tiered approach I request that they develop one such that there is an economically viable option for those vessels that do not requalify but have significant landings. In addition there should not be a sub-allocation of quota amongst the different tiers to do so would be the same as cutting out all non-tier 1 boat from the fishery entirely. In the past a tiered approach or aggressive requalification has only been used when a fishery is heavily overfished

and near collapse. This is not the case with the illex fishery, as said previously the Council is currently looking to increase the TAC.

I implore the council to take the time to get this amendment right and put the appropriate time into deliberation and analysis. Currently there is no information available as to what the qualifying options or possible tiers are, nor will there be prior to the written comment deadline of January 29<sup>th</sup>. The Council has then crammed an AP and a Committee meeting on the Thursday and Friday before the Council meeting. The speed at which this amendment is moving seems rushed and does not give the public, or members of the council an appropriate amount of time to take AP and Committee input into account before picking preferred alternatives 5-6 days later. There is no current ticking time bomb or race against the clock due to the current healthy status of the stock, to not slow this process down and allow the time for the right alternatives to be developed and analyzed would be rash and an unnecessary risk to properly regulating this fishery.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Daniel J. Farnham  
Gabby G Fisheries Inc.  
F/V Gabby G

**Subject:** Form Submission - February 2020 Public Comments

**Name:** Brendan Mitchell

**Email:** [bpm@norpel.com](mailto:bpm@norpel.com)

**Topic:** Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Goals and Objectives and Illex Permit Amendment

**Comments:** Thank you for the opportunity to publicly comment on the possibility of modifications to the Illex squid permitting system, as well as revisions to the goals and objections for the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

I am writing this comment on behalf of Northern Pelagic Group, LLC "NORPEL", a fish processing facility located in New Bedford, MA. NORPEL was established in 2002, primarily as a pelagic (herring and mackerel) processing facility. Since 2012, NORPEL has provided contract freezing services to the summer Illex squid fishery for vessels and squid processing companies based in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.

Additionally, NORPEL has acquired an Illex squid permit to be used by the fishing vessel Nordic Explorer, which began fishing for illex squid in 2019.

As an employee for a company directly involved in the Illex squid fishery, I am fearful that any modifications to the current permitting system could have negative socioeconomic impacts to the region. Modifications to the permitting system will certainly lead to reallocation of permits, quota and landings to areas in which processing Illex is not feasible for NORPEL or the Rhode Island fleet. NORPEL relies on the geographic and spatial diversity of the Illex squid fishery and fishing fleet. Modifications to the current system will, without a doubt, disrupt this diversity and have tremendous negative impacts on the region.

I urge the Council and the Committee to consider the following points and the negative impacts outlined above when determining the future of the Illex permitting system:

1. NORPEL has invested significant financial resources in the Illex squid fishery including a permit for the Nordic Explorer, boat and gear renovations to the Nordic Explorer and plant updates.
2. NORPEL employs over 50 men and women full time from the New Bedford area. The summer Illex squid fishery allows NORPEL to retain employees throughout the summer months, when NORPEL has traditionally closed.
3. Due to the complimentary seasonality of herring, mackerel, squid and butterfish, the Illex squid fishery assists in providing year long employment to many fishermen and shoreside workers.
4. The Illex squid fishery supports the vibrant economy of thousands shoreside workers and hundreds of businesses including net and gear manufacturers, diesel mechanics, ice houses, packaging suppliers, cold storage facilities and logistics companies in the New Bedford region.

As mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NOAA Fisheries has developed guidelines for each National Standard. The National Standards are principles that must be followed in any fishery management plan to ensure sustainable and responsible fishery management. If the Council were to modify the current Illex squid permitting system, they would do so in potential violation of National Standards 4 (Allocations), and 8 (Communities).

Under National Standard 4, Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different states. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States

fishermen, such allocation shall be (a) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (b) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (c) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privilege. By implementing a new permitting system, much of the fishery, which is currently geographically distributed throughout the East Coast, would be consolidated to a significantly smaller region. The fisheries based in Rhode Island and Massachusetts would truly suffer.

Under National Standard 8, Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities by utilizing economic and social data that meet the requirement of paragraph (2) [i.e., National Standard 2], in order to (a) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (b) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities. By implementing a new permitting system, there would be a great loss of economic activity in the Rhode Island and Massachusetts regions, as outlined above. Not only would the companies directly involved in the fishery suffer, there would be a negative impact on all the related shoreside workers and businesses. Many of these companies rely on the Illex fishery as it often bridges the gap between Spring and Fall fisheries.

The main goal and objective of the MSB FMP should be to determine an accurate and real time Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for the Illex fishery that takes into consideration the squid's extremely short lifespan and highly migratory pattern. The issue at hand with the Illex squid fishery is not one of allocation. I believe all Council and Committee effort should be focused on completing a scientifically acceptable stock assessment for Illex squid. This will greatly assist in setting the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) and reaching Optimum Yield (OY). Upon completion of a successful and scientifically accepted stock assessment, when we have satisfied National Standards 1 (Optimum Yield) and 2 (Scientific Information), the Council and Committee should direct their resources to making management decisions for the Illex squid fishery.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our comments. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Brendan Mitchell

(Sent via [Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#))



January 29,2020

Dear council members:

I was the only boat in the 80s from NY that went Illex fishing. I put 2 JVs together with boats from Montauk those boats only did the loligo part of the JV. I also did JVs for Illex with Danny Cohen. I lost that boat in a freak accident. I went to most of the meetings for the original qualifier for Illex and explained everything at the time. Joel McDonald was the NMFS legal counsel at the time. Joel and most of the council assured me there was no problem with me qualifying but when I applied I was told I didn't qualify because the 2 boats were different size. I watched multiple boats owners lie and falsify information to qualify claiming they caught enough illex in the loligo fishery, it was all lies but NMFS didn't care and allowed it. Lie and falsify landings and you qualify, tell the truth and you get punished.

Now we have the same thing going on with west coast boats that can carry  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  a million pounds of Illex yet some of them will get in, one of them went last year with a permit that didn't fit the boat he landed in New Bedford. Another boat is using a permit with half the horsepower and is quite a bit longer than the permit, yet I had plenty of history at the time and abided by the rules and decisions and was kicked out.

I got bumped on herring along with 10 other boats to allow 1 west coast pollack boat in the fishery and 1 new build the Voyager in, just one of those boats would catch more than the 11 of us combined but that wasn't what NMFS wanted, big boats with companies that know how to play the game, just like Carlos.

Because the landings that I had and the games that NMFS has allowed to happen in this fishery I would like my permit rejection relooked at.

Thank You,

Mark S Phillips  
F/V Illusion

210 Atlantic Ave

Greenport NY 11944

**From:** [Meghan Lapp](#)  
**To:** [Moore, Christopher](#)  
**Cc:** [Didden, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** Illex Permit Amendment/AFA vessels  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2020 3:13:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Huntress pic.jpg](#)  
[Nordic Explorer pic.png](#)  
[2019.12.19 amendment to HR 3409 Section 410 language.docx](#)  
[Congressional Letter Re FV Messiah Vessel Replacement.pdf](#)  
[Letter Vessel Replacement 12\\_20\\_19.pdf](#)

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Hi Chris,

I would appreciate if you can include this information in the briefing book and circulate amongst Council members. In light of the Illex permit Amendment, I believe it is important for Council members to know about ongoing efforts to introduce large scale West Coast pollock vessels into the Mid Atlantic illex fishery via permit transfers off of smaller capacity East Coast vessels. All of these vessels are American Fisheries Act vessels, some of which require special Congressional pardon to enter into any other US fishery due to the prohibitions of that Act.

These efforts have been ongoing for some time now. Below you will find attempted Congressional language from 2018 to obtain Congressional waiver for two AFA pollock vessels to come East and enter the illex fishery, which was intended as an amendment to a must-pass DHS Appropriations bill, but was never introduced.

Then, in 2019, a permit transfer occurred to take an illex permit off of the F/V/ Huntress, picture attached, and put the permit on the F/V Nordic Explorer, picture attached. The Nordic Explorer is a former Alaskan pollock/American Fisheries Act vessel that required a Congressional exemption to come East and enter the mackerel fishery many years ago, but which had been sitting idle until it was activated in 2019 into the illex fishery. The capacity difference between the two vessels is significant, on the order of hundreds of thousands of pounds a day.

Then, late in December 2019, another Congressional American Fisheries Act amendment waiver was introduced, to allow the F/V Messiah, another large capacity Alaskan pollock vessel, to come East and enter the illex fishery. Attached you will find a copy of the language of that bill, as well as a letter of support for the action signed by two Virginia Congressional Representatives. I have also attached a letter that Seafreeze sent to our Senator regarding our reasons for opposing this action. It is my understanding that the amendment, which has been attached to the US Coast Guard Bill, is in conference at this time between the House of Representatives and Senate. Meanwhile, I am told the other American Fisheries Act pollock vessel named in the 2018 language below has already made its way to the East Coast, as it is not subject to the same restrictions as the F/V Messiah.

None of these are small scale vessels. The added capacity that these vessels will bring to the illex fishery, as well as other Mid Atlantic fisheries they may enter such as the loligo fishery, is staggering. I believe the Council needs to be aware of this issue, as well as of the fact that such permit transfers of latent/smaller scale vessel permits and West Coast vessel waivers/introductions will continue absent strong Council action. As it is, we are looking at the introduction of 3 Alaskan pollock boats into the Mid Atlantic illex fishery in the span of approximately a year.

This influx of new and unprecedented effort, and unprecedented speculation in this fishery, has come due to the increased stock availability in the past few years, unprecedented global price, and is occurring simultaneously with efforts to bypass the Council control date on this fishery. This is exactly the type of situation that control dates are created to avoid. The availability of latent permits on smaller capacity East Coast vessels, the availability of cheap West Coast AFA vessels, combined with high stock availability and price, is creating a “gold rush” permit swap situation that now involves the United States Congress. I would also remind the Council that these new vessels will not remain limited to the illex fishery but will undoubtedly increase effort in other Council managed fisheries, which may lead to conflicts with current participants in those fisheries as well. Additionally, there is nothing preventing “small scale” latent or new entrant vessels from alterations doubling or tripling current hold capacities, even outside permit swap situations. All vessels which have directed illex effort prior to the control date are already built with the capacity to direct in this high tonnage fishery. As such, I believe it is paramount to utilize the Council’s control date, in order to retain the true footprint of the illex fishery and avoid continued and uncontrolled speculation.

Very best,  
Meghan

Meghan Lapp  
Fisheries Liaison, Seafreeze Ltd.  
Office: (401) 295-2585 Ext. 15  
Cell: (401) 218-8658  
Email: [Meghan@seafreezeld.com](mailto:Meghan@seafreezeld.com)

**Draft 2018 VA Rep Taylor amendment language:**

*SEC. \_\_ Vessel Amendment*

*Section 210(b)(7)(C)(i) of the American Fisheries Act (title II of division C of Public Law 105-277; 112 Stat. [2681-627](#), as amended by Section 602 of Public Law 111-281; 124 Stat. 2905) is amended by inserting after “vessels” the following: “MESSIAH (United States official number 610150), PEGGY JO (United States official number 502779),”*

Here’s what that amendment would have done (bold and italic text):

**(7) FISHERY COOPERATIVE EXIT PROVISIONS.—**

**(A) FISHING ALLOWANCE DETERMINATION.—**For purposes of determining the aggregate percentage of directed fishing allowances under paragraph (1), when a catcher vessel is removed from the directed pollock fishery, the fishery allowance for pollock for the vessel being removed—

(i) shall be based on the catch history determination for the vessel made pursuant to section 679.62 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010; and

(ii) shall be assigned, for all purposes under this title, in the manner specified by the owner of the vessel being removed to any other catcher vessel or among other catcher vessels participating in the fishery cooperative if such vessel or vessels remain in the fishery cooperative for at least one year after the date on which the vessel being removed leaves the directed pollock fishery.

(B) ELIGIBILITY FOR FISHERY ENDORSEMENT.—Except as provided in subparagraph (C), a vessel that is removed pursuant to this paragraph shall be permanently ineligible for a fishery endorsement, and any claim (including relating to catch history) associated with such vessel that could qualify any owner of such vessel for any permit to participate in any fishery within the exclusive economic zone of the United States shall be extinguished, unless such removed vessel is thereafter designated to replace a vessel to be removed pursuant to this paragraph.

(C) LIMITATIONS ON STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed—  
(i) to make the vessels **MESSIAH (United States official number 610150)**, **PEGGY JO (United States official number 502779)**, AJ (United States official number 905625), DONA MARTITA (United States official number 651751), NORDIC EXPLORER (United States official number 678234), and PROVIDIAN (United States official number [1062183](#)) ineligible for a fishery endorsement or any permit necessary to participate in any fishery under the authority of the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council established, respectively, under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act; or  
(ii) to allow the vessels referred to in clause (i) to participate in any fishery under the authority of the Councils referred to in clause (i) in any manner that is not consistent with the fishery management plan for the fishery developed by the Councils under section 303 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Public Law 105-277 - <https://www.congress.gov/105/plaws/publ277/PLAW-105publ277.pdf>

Public Law 111-281 - <https://www.congress.gov/public-laws/111th-congress>

*Huntress*

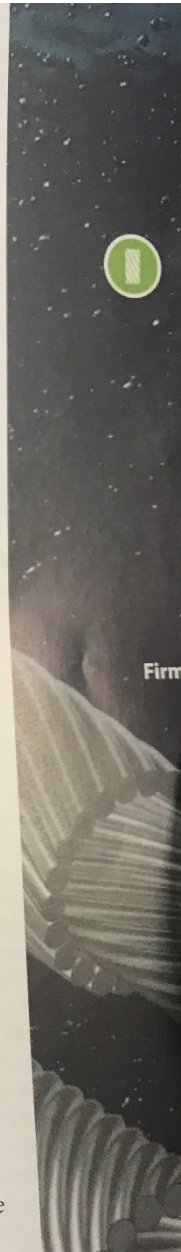


Chris Oliver, assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries.

“The settlement also clears

days and are based on the number and severity of each captain’s violations.

The captains also must serve probationary periods ranging



*Nordic Explorer*

# NORDIC EXPLORER

★★★★★ 1 26

back to gallery

New Bedford, MA

2017-09-04 10:24:00

Charlie Allen



© Charlie Allen  
MarineTraffic.com

*Amendment language:*

Section 210(b)(7)(C)(i) of title II of Division C of Public Law 105-277; 112 Stat.2681-627, as amended by Section 602 of Public Law 111-281; 124 Stat.2905, is further amended by inserting after the term “vessels” the following: “MESSIAH (United States official number 610150),”

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*This would amend Section 210(b)(7)(C)(i) of title II of Division C of Public Law 105-277, as amended by Section 602 of Public Law 111-281, to read:*

(B) Eligibility for fishery endorsement.--Except as provided in subparagraph (C), a vessel that is removed pursuant to this paragraph shall be permanently ineligible for a fishery endorsement, and any claim (including relating to catch history) associated with such vessel that could qualify any owner of such vessel for any permit to participate in any fishery within the exclusive economic zone of the United States shall be extinguished, unless such removed vessel is thereafter designated to replace a vessel to be removed pursuant to this paragraph.

(C) Limitations on statutory construction.--Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed--

- (i) to make the vessels **MESSIAH (United States official number 610150)**, AJ (United States official number 905625), DONA MARTITA (United States official number 651751), NORDIC EXPLORER (United States official number 678234), and PROVIDIAN (United States official number 1062183) ineligible for a fishery endorsement or any permit necessary to participate in any fishery under the authority of the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council established, respectively, under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act; or
- (ii) to allow the vessels referred to in clause (i) to participate in any fishery under the authority of the Councils referred to in clause (i) in any manner that is not consistent with the fishery management plan for the fishery developed by the Councils under section 303 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 19, 2019

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,  
and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio  
Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,  
and Transportation  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2164 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wicker, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Ranking Member Graves,

We write to request your support for an amendment to Section 410 of H.R. 3409 (the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019) that would allow a West Coast fishing vessel to be used as a replacement vessel for a fishing vessel on the East Coast.

An aging fleet of commercial fishing vessels means that there are relatively few U.S.-flag fishing vessels available on the East Coast to replace vessels that are lost at sea or otherwise in need of replacement. Current law (16 U.S.C. §1851 note) authorizes certain named vessels that have exited West Coast fisheries to participate in East Coast fisheries under the authority of the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. This amendment would add to that law the name of one additional vessel. With the adoption of this amendment, the vessel in question would be able to move from the West Coast to the East Coast, replacing a vessel of comparable size with one that is much safer.

Section 410 (e) of H.R. 3409 as passed by the House already contains a provision regarding a replacement vessel. The attached proposed amendment to the same underlying statute would ensure that the replacement fishing vessel named in the attachment could operate on the East Coast without increasing the size of the existing fleet in the Mid-Atlantic.



As you work with your colleagues in the Senate to pass an amended version of H.R. 3409, we encourage you to include this narrowly-crafted, commonsense provision. Should you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Gerstell with Congresswoman Luria's office at 202-225-4215, or Brent Robinson in Congressman Wittman's office at 202-225-4261. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



**Seafreeze Ltd.**  
100 Davisville Pier  
North Kingstown, R.I. 02852 U.S.A.  
Tel: (401)295-2585

December 20, 2019

Senator Jack Reed  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed,

I am writing to ask that you oppose the request made by Representatives Luria and Wittman of Virginia on December 19, 2019 to Senators Wicker and Cantwell and Representatives DeFazio and Graves, to amend the American Fisheries Act to allow a West Coast fishing vessel, the F/V Messiah, to be used as a replacement vessel for an East Coast vessel. See attached.

Seafreeze Ltd. is an established East Coast fishing operation, with vessels engaging in East Coast fisheries for over 30 years. Our substantial investments into these fisheries over decades of work and development, all while adhering to the rules and regulations established by Congress, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Greater Atlantic Regional Office regarding permits, vessels and vessel upgrades, vessel purchases and replacements, etc., should not be devalued by entities wishing to enter vessels into these fisheries with a Congressional waiver. In contrast to the allegation made in Rep. Luria and Wittman's request that few replacement vessels exist on the East Coast, Seafreeze has recently completed an extensive renovation of an older East Coast vessel, in order to comply with the existing permit/vessel regulations. If merely requesting a Congressional exemption could make that process cheaper and easier, then those of us who have played by the rules are certainly conducting business at a disadvantage. Should this exemption be allowed, it will create an uneven playing field and undoubtedly lead to such requests becoming the norm.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the other American Fisheries Act vessels already granted waivers by Congress to enter East Coast fisheries were only granted due to the fact that at that time, National Marine Fisheries Service was encouraging new entrants into the mackerel fishery, which the agency at that time alleged was undercapitalized and underutilized. The situation is not the same today. East Coast fisheries are fully utilized.

One fishery, in particular, in which recent years of increased stock availability have caused significant increased participation by new/previously inactive vessel entrants is the illex squid fishery. From 1997-2015, the two Seafreeze vessels have accounted for 40% of all U.S. illex landings, have developed world markets, and continue to be very reliant on this fishery. However due to newly increased participation, this fishery has reached the quota and closed unprecedentedly early the last 3 years, resulting in Seafreeze vessels being tied to the dock for months at a time with no income. Undoubtedly, the waiver being requested by the Virginia delegates is intended for use in this fishery, which would create even more negative impacts to historic and current fishery stakeholders such as Seafreeze. Because of this issue, the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council is currently developing an Illex Permit Amendment, which would seem to be at odds with allowing Congressional waivers for new West Coast vessels into this already fully utilized fishery.

One final concern is that East Coast vessel permits, and therefore vessel replacements, have traditionally been restricted to the "10-10-20" rule, which only allowed a 10% length, 10% tonnage and 20% horsepower upgrade to any vessel/vessel replacement associated with any permit, for the life of the permit. This rule was intended to ensure the continued characteristics of a fishery and efficacy of related regulations by precluding overcapitalization. However, in the past few years, the tonnage restriction, which essentially limits vessel hold capacity, was removed. Typically, West Coast vessels have larger vessel hold capacities than East Coast vessels, so it is possible that although the request from the Virginia Representatives states that the vessel requesting a waiver would be "of comparable size", that may not necessarily mean of comparable hold capacity, leading to an increase of fleet capacity which the illex fishery and other East Coast fisheries certainly do not need.

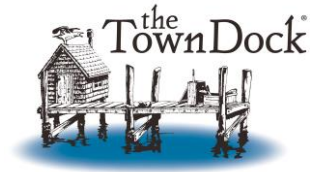
Therefore, I am writing to respectfully request that you oppose this amendment to Section 410 of H.R. 3409 (the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019) and thank you for your continued support for Rhode Island businesses and our East Coast fisheries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Meghan Lapp". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Meghan Lapp

Fisheries Liaison, Seafreeze Ltd.



2 State Street | PO Box 608  
Narragansett, RI 02882

Dear Director Moore,

I am writing regarding the *Illex Permitting and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment*.

The Town Dock has been a significant buyer and processor of illex squid for many years. We purchase illex from our owned fleet of illex permitted boats, independently owned illex permitted boats, and other shoreside processors of illex squid.

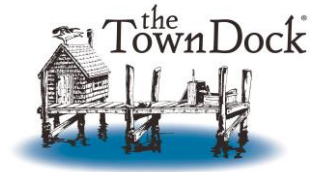
After careful review of the options that have been discussed to date, we cannot support action that is going to limit or eliminate *active* participants in the Illex fishery. We define active participants as those permit holders that have landed a minimum of 50,000 lbs in any one year between 1997 – 2019, equating to approximately 50 permit holders. We do not support enforcement of the 2013 control date due to the negative impacts to several of my vessels, our company, and many independent vessels owners that rely on illex landings to support their businesses. There have been several recent dynamic changes to the fishery since the implementation of the seven year old control date, including overall Illex abundance, improved international marketability, a new USA processed illex demand, enhanced shoreside freezing and processing capacity, and sustained dramatic ex-vessel boat price increases per pound that essentially double or triple revenues on harvested illex squid compared to the years preceding 2013.

The Town Dock does not support the concept of tiers. We cannot support a tiered system where those that requalify for a permit are treated differently in any aspect, especially in a fishery that has so few permits compared to other fisheries. This is a volume fishery that requires a large amount of squid to make it worth the effort and investment. Any effort to tier active permit holders will result in decrease of access to the fishery for those in a secondary tier, devaluing their permits and catch potential but creating an economic windfall for those that qualify for an “unlimited” tier.

Regarding Vessel Hold Capacity, Town Dock does not support changes to enact new vessel hold capacity limitations. These changes may limit or eliminate our ability to upgrade our fleet at a future date. Several of our boats were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. We, along with many others vessel owners, plan on retiring older vessels and upgrading our fleet in the future. It is extremely difficult to find newer boats that are an exact match to our existing fleet. The current rules allow for limited, but much needed, flexibility to upgrade our fleet to newer boats in future years. Also, in certain cases, those currently supporting implementation of a rule change regarding limiting hold-capacity, may be the very ones that have completed increases to their own hold capacity in recent years based upon the existing laws. Those of us that need to



TOWNDOCK.COM  
INFO@TOWNDOCK.COM  
PH 401-789-2200 | FAX 401-782-4421



2 State Street | PO Box 608  
Narragansett, RI 02882

complete future upgrades may be held at a disadvantage should this change be enacted, and there are already rules established on this topic.

Throughout this process, we have heard about the financial concerns from some regarding an illex season that has closed a few weeks early. During the most recent FMAT meeting, data was presented to show that in contrary, relatively all participants are fishing in other fisheries and/or have permits to access other fisheries to combine for their annual gross stock. We respectfully request that the Council / Council staff examine the following:

- Examine overall annual revenue trends of active illex participants over the time span 1997-2019 regarding their illex landings. If the season is closing a few weeks early, are these closures negatively impacting overall revenue for both individual participants or the participants as an aggregate, given the doubling of boat price in recent years? Is there evidence that recent early closures are a threat to put vessels out of business? What is the trend of participants' Illex revenues during the time span of 1997-2019?
- Examine the annual revenue trends of active illex participants for their illex landings plus the other fisheries that they participate in over a timespan of 1997- 2019. Have vessel annual revenues been on the incline or decline as a measure of overall health of our participants over time? Has this illex fishery had a positive impact or a negative impact on overall vessel revenue as an aggregate despite "closing early" over that time span?
- Is Illex the only specie that active participants catch, or do all participants catch multiple species year round, across the time span of 1997-2019?

My final concern is about the speed of this amendment process. There are two Illex working groups that have positively identified ways to possibly increase the quota in years of squid abundance. It may be prudent to let those groups complete their analysis prior to creating a document or choosing action that may result in unintended consequences. We suggest that the Council consider slowing down the amendment process in order to let the working groups complete their mission. More quota for all participants would most likely translate to an enhanced revenue stream that would benefit all active permit holders, communities, and all Illex stakeholders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Clark  
President and CEO

cc: Katie Almeida



TOWNDOCK.COM  
INFO@TOWNDOCK.COM  
PH 401-789-2200 | FAX 401-782-4421

January 28, 2020

Dr. Christopher M. Moore  
Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
800 North State Street, Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901 – by email: [cmoore@mafmc.org](mailto:cmoore@mafmc.org)

Dear Dr. Moore:

We are writing concerning the Illex Permitting Amendment, to ask the Council to use the 2013 control date, previously reaffirmed by the Council, to requalify fishing vessels working in the Illex squid fishery. Newer participants in the fishery should not have the same access that boats who have worked in this fishery historically have earned through their effort and investment.

Our families operate two vessels that regularly work on the edge of the Continental Shelf where the Illex fishery takes place. One vessel, the 75 foot longline vessel Captain Bob, and the other, a 75 foot offshore lobster vessel, Two Dukes, have worked in this area for years. The longtime participants in this fishery know us and know where are gear is set and understand how to work with us to avoid it.

Within the last two or three years, as the Illex fishery has become more successful, vessels new to the fishery have operated in the vicinity of our gear and we are very concerned that additional entrants to the fishery will lead to gear conflicts in our fixed gear fisheries.

While we look forward to participating in the public hearing process on the amendment, we do not believe that the Council has been made aware of the potential for fixed gear conflicts on the offshore fishing grounds from new vessels coming into the Illex fishery. We are concerned that the Captains of these vessels do not understand the nature of and extent of our longline and lobster fisheries, as those who have been in the fishery over a long period of time do.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Robbie and Eric Bucaw  
Captain Eric, Inc.  
Sea Isle City, NJ 08243  
603-231-4450  
[rbsword3@comcast.net](mailto:rbsword3@comcast.net)

## MAFMC 2020 COUNCIL MEETINGS

February 11-13, 2020	The Sanderling Resort 1461 Duck Road Duck, NC 27949 855-412-7866
April 7-9, 2020	Seaview 401 South New York Road, Galloway, NJ 08205 609-652-1800
<b>**NEW DATE**</b> <b>June 16-18, 2020</b>	Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront 3001 Atlantic Avenue Virginia Beach, VA 23151 757-213-3000
August 10-13, 2020	The Notary Hotel 21 N. Juniper St. Philadelphia, PA 19107 215-496-3200
October 6-8, 2020	Hyatt Place Long Island East End 451 East Main St. Riverhead, NY 11901 631-208-0002
December 14-17, 2020	Royal Sonesta Harbor Court Baltimore 550 Light St. Baltimore, MD 21202 410-234-0550





# Status of Council Actions Under Development

AS OF 1/30/20

FMP	Action	Description	Status	Staff Lead
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish	<i>Illex</i> Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	This action will consider modifications to the <i>Illex</i> permitting system as well as revisions to the goals and objectives for the MSB FMP. <a href="http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment">http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment</a>	The Council reviewed comments in June, and development is expected through 2019 and in to 2020. Public hearings are planned for Spring, with final action anticipated in June 2020.	Didden
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC amendment will reevaluate and potentially revise the commercial and recreational sector allocations for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. This action was initiated in part to address the allocation-related impacts of the revised recreational data from MRIP. <a href="http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment">http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment</a>	Scoping hearings will be held February 13 – March 3.	Beaty/Coutre/Dancy
	Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC action will consider adjusting the allocations of the black sea bass commercial quota among states and whether the allocations should be managed jointly by the Council and Commission.	The Council will review a scoping document and scoping plan in April 2020. The Council and Board plan to discuss next steps for this action during their joint meeting in May 2020.	Beaty
Bluefish	Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC amendment considers potential revisions to the allocation of Atlantic bluefish between the commercial and recreational fisheries and the commercial allocations to the states. This action will also review the goals and objectives of the bluefish FMP and the quota transfer processes and establish a rebuilding plan for bluefish. <a href="http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment">http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment</a>	The Council will hold a second round of scoping hearings February 13 - March 4.	Seeley



<b>FMP</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Staff Lead</b>
Omnibus	Omnibus Amendment for Data Modernization	This amendment will address the regulatory changes needed to fully implement the Agency's Fishery-Dependent Data Initiative.	The Council last received an update at the October 2018 meeting.	GARFO/ NEFSC
	Commercial eVTR Framework	This joint MAFMC/NEFMC framework considers requiring commercial fishing vessels with federal permits for species managed by the MAFMC or NEFMC to submit VTRs electronically. <a href="http://www.mafmc.org/actions/commercial-evtr-framework">http://www.mafmc.org/actions/commercial-evtr-framework</a>	The MAFMC and NEFMC approved this framework at their December 2019 and January 2020 meetings, respectively. Both Councils approved a 48 hour reporting deadline.	Coutre
Non-FMP	Golden and Blueline Tilefish Private Recreational Permitting and Reporting Issues	This action will develop permitting and reporting regulations for private recreational tilefish vessels. The action was approved in a final rule amending the golden tilefish FMP to include blueline tilefish in November 2017 with delayed implementation.	The proposed rule for tilefish recreational permitting and reporting is expected to publish in the Federal Register on January 29, 2020 with a comment period through February 28, 2020. Implementation and outreach are expected by May 1, 2020.	GARFO lead  MAFMC Contact: Seeley
	Recreational Reform Initiative	This is a joint initiative with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop strategies to increase management flexibility and stability for jointly managed recreational fisheries (i.e., black sea bass, summer flounder, scup, and bluefish).	A steering committee has met several times to prioritize specific topics to address. The Council and Board will receive an update during their joint meeting in May 2020.	Beaty

# Timeline and Status of Recent MAFMC Actions and Amendments/Frameworks Under Review

As of 1/30/2020

The table below summarizes the status of actions after they have been approved by the Council. For information about the status of Council actions under development, please see the document titled "Status of Council Actions Under Development."

Status	Amendment/Framework	Action Number	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	NOA Published	Proposed Rule Published	Approval/Disapproval Letter	Final Rule Published	Regs Effective	Notes
Open	Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Framework	MSB FW 13	8/13/18	9/27/18	2/28/19	N/A	6/7/19		10/30/19	11/29/19	
Complete	Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Framework on Conservation Equivalency, Block Island Sound Transit, and Slot Limits	SFSBSB FW 14	12/11/18	3/21/19	5/8/19	N/A	8/8/19		11/19/19	12/30/19	
Open	Summer Flounder Commercial Issues and Goals and Objectives Amendment	TBD	3/6/19								
Open	Chub Mackerel Amendment	MSB AM 21	3/7/19	5/31/19	10/25/19						
Open	Excessive Shares Amendment	TBD	12/9/19								
Open	Omnibus Risk Policy Framework	TBD	12/9/19								Workgroup is updating analyses to evaluate the modified alternative recommended by the Council

# Timeline and Status of Current and Upcoming Specifications for MAFMC Fisheries

As of 1/30/2020

Current Specifications	Year(s)	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Final Rule	Regs Effective	Notes
Golden Tilefish	2018-2020	4/11/17	6/5/17	8/16/17	9/7/17	11/7/17	11/2/17	2019 specs were reviewed in April 2018. No changes were recommended.
Surfclam and Ocean Quahog	2018-2020	6/6/17	8/14/17	9/22/17	12/8/17	2/6/18	3/8/18	2020 specs were reviewed in June 2019. No changes were recommended.
Longfin Squid and Butterfish	2018-2020	6/7/17		8/24/17	12/13/17	3/1/18	4/2/18	2019 specs were reviewed in October 2018. No changes were recommended.
<i>Illex</i> Squid	2019-2021	10/3/18	12/4/18	2/11/19	5/1/19	8/2/19	8/1/19	
Atlantic Mackerel (MSB FW 13)	2019-2021	8/13/18	9/27/18	2/28/19	6/7/19	10/30/19	11/29/19	
Atlantic Mackerel (including RH/S cap)	2020	6/5/19	8/22/19	9/30/19	12/17/19			
Chub mackerel	2020-2022	3/7/19	5/31/19	10/25/19				
Scup	2020	3/7/19	6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19	10/9/2019	1/1/2020	Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Scup	2020-2021	10/8/19	1/15/20					Revised specifications based on the 2019 operational stock assessment
Blueline Tilefish	2019-2021	4/11/18	8/17/18	10/24/18	11/19/18	2/12/19	2/12/19	
Bluefish	2020	3/7/19	6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19	10/9/2019	1/1/2020	Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Bluefish	2020-2021	12/10/19	1/23/20					
Summer Flounder	2020-2021	3/6/19	6/25/19	7/18/19	7/26/19	10/9/19		
Black Sea Bass	2020	3/7/19	6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19	10/9/2019	1/1/2020	Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Black Sea Bass	2020-2021	10/9/19	1/15/20					Revised specifications based on the 2019 operational stock assessment
Spiny Dogfish	2019-2021	10/2/18	11/30/18	3/5/19	3/29/19	5/15/19	5/15/19	In multi-year specs

**Recreational Management Measures**

Current Management Measures	Year(s)	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Final Rule	Regs Effective	Notes
Summer flounder recreational measures	2020	12/10/19	1/22/20					Rulemaking required each year to continue use of conservation equivalency
Black sea bass recreational measures	2020	2/14/18	3/5/18	4/10/18	4/11/18	5/31/18	5/31/18	Reviewed in 2019. No changes from previous year's measures.
Scup recreational measures	2020	12/10/14	3/20/15		5/5/15	6/19/15	6/19/15	Reviewed in 2019. No changes from previous year's measures.
Bluefish recreational measures	2020	12/10/19	1/23/20					

## Memorandum

**Date:** January 29, 2020

**To:** Chris Moore and Mike Luisi

**From:** Fiona Hogan and Nick Napoli

**Re:** Ocean Data Portals Project

NROC and MARCO have partnered with RODA to engage commercial fishermen in the development of updated maps and data for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portals. The goals of this project include increased collaboration with the fishing industry on the development of products that represent their interests and improved fishing industry trust in regional data products and the data that are being used to inform decisions. This will be achieved by partnering with fishing industry representatives and organizations to determine the need and potential uses for fisheries data products, to design and review draft products, and to develop documentation and communications about the appropriate application and use of final data products that are available on the ocean data portals.

Most fishing industry participation in this project will be facilitated by the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA). RODA is a broad membership-based coalition of fishing industry associations and fishing companies with an interest in improving the compatibility of new offshore development with their businesses. RODA includes members from throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions and it is broadly representative of the different sectors, gear types, and businesses that operate in the area. NROC and MARCO will identify additional industry contacts, will use other venues, and may partner with additional fishing industry organizations, as necessary, to fill gaps in RODA's membership and reach. This will be determined on an as needed basis.

This use of funds will improve products and collaboration around the highest data priority for ocean management decision-making in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. It also overlaps with several of the top ten national priorities identified in the Regional Data Platform Scoping Study conducted by BOEM and NOAA OCM under Executive Order 13840. Fisheries maps and data products are among the most highly used and requested data on both regional data portals. Recently they've been used to inform planning, management, and regulatory processes related to offshore wind development, aquaculture, telecommunications cables, and ocean disposal site designation. There is a critical need to update fisheries data products in collaboration with the industry as the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regional Data Portals are increasingly being used to inform these and other decisions. This project will increase collaboration, trust, and data and information sharing around a high priority ocean management data need in both regions and set an example and road map for ensuring that data products are updated and developed in collaboration with the industry in the future.

Please feel free to reach out to RODA staff if you are interested in providing feedback. RODA staff will be reaching out to individual fishermen for feedback and Council Advisory Panels.

Contact email: Fiona Hogan at RODA: [fiona@rodafisheries.org](mailto:fiona@rodafisheries.org)

Nick Napoli at NROC: [nicknapoli01@gmail.com](mailto:nicknapoli01@gmail.com)



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## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Updates for January 17, 2020:

**February Council Meeting Agenda:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will meet February 11-13, 2020 in Duck, North Carolina. The agenda is available [here](#).

**Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment:** The MAFMC has scheduled eleven scoping hearings to gather public input for the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. Hearings will be held between February 13 and March 4, 2020. Written comments will be accepted through March 17, 2020. Additional details are available in the [hearing announcement](#) and [scoping document](#).

**Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment:** The MAFMC and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission have scheduled eleven scoping hearings to gather public input on the range of issues and information to be considered in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. Hearings will be held between February 13 and March 3. Written comments will be accepted through March 17, 2020. Additional details are available in the [hearing announcement](#) and [scoping document](#).

**SSC Nominations:** The MAFMC is seeking candidates to fill four seats on its Scientific and Statistical Committee. Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2020. View the [announcement](#) for details and application instructions.

**IT Specialist Vacancy:** The MAFMC is seeking candidates for the position of IT Specialist and Data Manager. Applications are due January 31, 2020. See the [vacancy announcement](#) for more information.

**Offshore Wind Updates:** The latest update on offshore wind activities in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England is available [here](#). Sign up for our [offshore wind email list](#) to receive these updates (be sure to check the box next to "Offshore Wind Updates").

**SSC Agenda:** An agenda for the March 10-11 Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting is now available [here](#).

**Longfin Squid:** Longfin squid incidental catch permit applications are due by February 29, 2020. See the [NOAA Fisheries bulletin](#) for more information.

**Rutgers IFISSH Course:** January 24th is the deadline to register for Rutgers Cooperative Extension's Introductory Fisheries Science for Stakeholders (IFISSH) Course. This course was developed to educate New Jersey's commercial and

recreational fishing industries' stakeholders on fisheries science and management. Classes will meet every Tuesday from January 28 through March 31, 2020. Learn more on the [IFISSH web page](#).

**Spanish Mackerel Trip Limits:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is seeking input on proposed commercial trip limit reductions for Spanish mackerel in the Atlantic Northern Zone (federal waters from the North Carolina/South Carolina line northward to the New York/Rhode Island/Connecticut line). The reductions are proposed to help extend the commercial season. Webinar hearings will be held January 22 and 23 at 6:00 p.m. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on February 7. More information is available [here](#).

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- **Jan 31:** [Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel Meeting \(Webinar\)](#)
- **Feb 4:** [Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Advisory Panel Meeting - Illex Quota Discussion #1 \(Webinar\)](#)
- **Feb 6:** [Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Advisory Panel Meeting \(Webinar\)](#)
- **Feb 7:** [Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Committee Meeting \(Webinar\)](#)
- **Feb 11-13:** [February 2020 Council Meeting](#)
- **Feb 18:** [Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Advisory Panel Meeting - Illex Quota Discussion #2 \(Webinar\)](#)
- **Feb 25:** [Spring 2020 Management Track Assessment Oversight Panel Meeting](#)

**Questions?** Contact Mary Sabo - [msabo@mafmc.org](mailto:msabo@mafmc.org), (302) 518-1143.

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**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**

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**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 22, 2020  
**To:** Chris Moore, Executive Director  
**From:** Julia Beaty, staff  
**Subject:** Council outreach on offshore wind

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) maintains three webpages and an email list to communicate updates on offshore wind energy development with interested stakeholders.

The webpages are maintained jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and NOAA Fisheries. The main webpage, <http://www.mafmc.org/northeast-offshore-wind> (see screenshot), provides general background information on offshore wind energy development in the northeast region and includes links to all MAFMC and NEFMC comment letters on offshore wind energy projects.

**Offshore Wind in the Northeast Region**  
This webpage is collaboratively managed by the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils.

There is growing interest in the development of offshore wind energy resources in the Northeast. The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils are working with NOAA Fisheries to provide input on wind development activities in our region to ensure the impacts to the marine environment and the Councils' managed resources and fisheries are considered.

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils, working with NOAA Fisheries, collaboratively developed this page to link to information and resources that may be relevant to wind siting discussions. This page also provides information related to the Councils' involvement in, and comments on, wind energy development activities, as well as resources for its stakeholders.

**Stay Informed**

**Notices to Fishermen**  
As developers provide the Councils with information regarding offshore surveys, buoy installations, and other activities that may occur in areas used by fishermen, those notices will be posted on our [Offshore Wind Notices to Fishermen](#) page.

**Comment Opportunities**  
As the Councils are made aware of formal and informal opportunities for comments solicited by BOEM, wind developers, or other organizations, they will be posted on our [Offshore Wind Comment Opportunities](#) page.

**Council Email Lists**  
The Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils both send periodic updates related to offshore wind activities.

- **Mid-Atlantic Council:** Visit our [Email Sign Up](#) page and check the box for "Offshore Wind Updates"
- **New England Council:** General updates, including some offshore wind topics. Send a request to Janice Plante at [jplante@nefmc.org](mailto:jplante@nefmc.org)

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)**  
Development of offshore wind resources falls under the purview of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Visit the pages listed below to engage in and stay informed about BOEM activities.

- BOEM Fishing Industry Communication and Engagement Web Page
- BOEM State Activities Web Page
- Sign up to receive email updates

**Council Engagement on Offshore Wind**

A second webpage titled "Offshore Wind Notices to Fishermen" (<http://www.mafmc.org/offshore-wind-notices>) includes notices provided by offshore wind project developers regarding offshore surveys, buoy installations, and other activities that may occur in areas used by fishermen. This page is updated frequently.

The third webpage is titled "Offshore Wind Comment Opportunities" (<http://www.mafmc.org/offshore-wind-comment-opportunities>) and contains links to open public comment periods. We expect this page to be updated with many additional comment opportunities in 2020.

Lastly, in October 2019, the Council created an email list for offshore wind updates relevant to Mid-Atlantic fisheries. Anyone can subscribe using the form at <http://www.mafmc.org/email-list>. Updates are sent approximately once a month. We have received very positive feedback on this list. Almost 250 email addresses are currently subscribed.





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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 31, 2020  
**To:** Chris Moore, Executive Director  
**From:** Karson Coutre, Staff  
**Subject:** McMurdo's Omnitrac's VMS Unit Replacement

### **What is the current situation?**

A total of 705 commercial vessels in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions use McMurdo's Omnitrac's (previously 'Boatrac's') Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) units to fulfill Greater Atlantic Region fishing permit requirements. Mid-Atlantic species permits with associated VMS requirements include monkfish, mackerel, Illex and longfin squid, surfclam, and ocean quahog. On December 19, 2019, McMurdo notified NMFS and its customers that the McMurdo 'Omnitrac's' VMS operated by vessels with Greater Atlantic Region permits would not be supported by its satellite provider after March 31, 2020. According to GARFO's notice to fishermen (distributed January 15, 2020) the 'Omnitrac's' VMS unit will not function with any other satellite provider and **must be replaced by April 1, 2020 or risk being out of compliance** with VMS regulations in the region. There are currently 2 other vendors that have approved VMS units and McMurdo has a new replacement VMS called 'OmniCom' which is currently undergoing expedited testing and approval in the Greater Atlantic Region.

### **What are the associated issues?**

Several stakeholders in the Mid-Atlantic region have voiced their concern with this transition. Currently, fishermen are responsible for coordinating the purchase and installation of a new VMS unit. This is a costly burden that may not be able to be accomplished through no fault of the vessel owner/operators (new units vary in price but are approximately \$3,000). In addition, according to the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) update to the New England Fishery Management Council (January 28, 2020), the new McMurdo unit undergoing testing for approval lacks the inventory to support the 705 vessels that will require new hardware.

**Next Steps**

Finally, due to the ongoing approval process, inventory issues, and installation services needed across a large geographic range, it may not be realistic to expect all affected vessels to have compliant VMS units by April 1, 2020, raising enforcement issues. Additionally, NOAA has a VMS reimbursement program managed by OLE headquarters, however a vessel owner is only eligible if they have not received a previous reimbursement for a unit for that vessel. The reimbursement policy only allows a second reimbursement if the government caused the unit to become non-compliant. The Council should discuss with NMFS what options may be available to address these issues.



January 2020

Each year, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council reviews commercial landings of unmanaged species from Maine through North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> To date, these reports have not filtered out species managed by individual states. To assist the Council in creating a more meaningful report, please check the box for each species below which is managed with the associated type of management measure in your state waters. You do not need to provide details on any management measures. The list below does not contain species managed in the Mid-Atlantic or New England by one of the regional fishery management councils or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

If you have any questions, please contact Julia Beaty ([jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org), 302-526-5250).

Please email the completed form to [jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org) by March 31, 2020.

State name \_\_\_\_\_

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
<b>FISH</b>			
AFRICAN POMPANO	ALECTIS CILIARIS		
ALMACO JACK	SERIOLA RIVOLIANA		
AMBERJACK, GREATER	SERIOLA DUMERILI		
AMBERJACK, LESSER	SERIOLA FASCIATA		
ANGELFISH/BUTTERFLY FISH	CHAETODONTIDAE		
ARGENTINE	ARGENTINIDAE		
BANDED RUDDERFISH	SERIOLA ZONATA		
BARBIER, RED	BALDWINELLA VIVANUS		
BARRACUDAS	SPHYRAENIDAE		
BARRELFISH	HYPEROGLYPHE PERCIFORMIS		
BAY ANCHOVY	ANCHOA MITCHILLI		
BEARDED BROTLA	BROTULA BARBATA		
BIG ROUGHY	GEPHYROBERYX DARWINII		
BIGEYE, ATLANTIC	PRIACANTHUS ARENATUS		
BIGEYES	PRIACANTHIDAE		
BLACK BELLY ROSE FISH	HELICOLENUS DACTYLOPTERUS		
BLUE RUNNER	CARANX CRYSOS		
BONITO	SARDA SARDA		
BOWFIN	AMIA CALVA		
BULLET MACKEREL	AUXIS ROCHEI		
BUTTERFISH, GULF	PEPRILUS BURTI		

<sup>1</sup> The 2019 version of this report is available at: [http://www.mafmc.org/s/Tab05\\_UnmanagedLandingsUpdate\\_2019-06.pdf](http://www.mafmc.org/s/Tab05_UnmanagedLandingsUpdate_2019-06.pdf)

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
CAPELIN	MALLOTUS VILLOSUS		
CATFISH, SEA	ARIIDAE		
CERO	SCOMBEROMORUS REGALIS		
CREVALLE	CARANX HIPPOS		
CUNNER	TAUTOGOLABRUS ADSPERSUS		
CUSK	BROSME BROSME		
CUTLASSFISH, ATLANTIC	TRICHIURUS LEPTURUS		
DOGFISH, BLACK	CENTROSCYLLIUM FABRICII		
DOGFISH, CHAIN	SCYLIORHINUS RETIFER		
DOGFISH, OTHER (NOT BLACK, CHAIN, SPINY, OR SMOOTH DOGFISH)	SQUALIDAE		
DOLPHINFISH, POMPARO	CORYPHAENA EQUISELIS		
DORY	ZEIFORMES		
EEL, CONGER	CONGER OCEANICUS		
EEL, OTHER (NOT CONGER OR AMERICAN EEL)	ANGUILLIFORMES		
ESCOLAR	LEPIDOCYBIUM FLAVOBRUNNEUM		
FLORIDA/ COMMON POMPARO	TRACHINOTUS CAROLINUS		
FLOUNDER, FOURSPOT	HIPPOGLOSSINA OBLONGA / PARALICHTHYS OBLONGUS		
FLOUNDER, GULFSTREAM	CITHARICHTHYS ARCTIFRONS		
FLOUNDER, SOUTHERN	PARALICHTHYS LETHOSTIGMA		
FRIGATE MACKEREL	AUXIS THAZARD		
GARFISHES	LEPISOSTEIDAE		
GOOSEFISH, BLACKFIN	LOPHIUS GASTROPHYSUS		
GRAYSBY	CEPHALOPHOLIS CRUENTATA		
GROUPEL, GAG	MYCTEROPERCA MICROLEPIS		
GROUPEL, RED	EPINEPHELUS MORIO		
GROUPEL, SCAMP	MYCTEROPERCA PHENAX		
GROUPEL, SNOWY	EPINEPHELUS NIVEATUS		
GROUPEL, YELLOWEDGE	EPINEPHELUS FLAVOLIM		
GROUPERS	SERRANIDAE		
GRUNTS	HAEMULIDAE		
HAGFISH	MYXINIDAE		
HAKE, SOUTHERN	UROPHYCIS FLORIDANA		

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
HAKE, SPOTTED	UROPHYCIS REGIA		
HALIBUT, GREENLAND	REINHARDTIUS HIPPOGLOSSOIDES		
HARVESTFISH	PEPRILUS ALEPIDOTUS/ PEPRILUS PARU		
HERRING, ATLANTIC THREAD	OPISTHONEMA OGLINUM		
HERRING, ROUND	ETRUMEUS TERES		
HIND, RED	EPINEPHELUS GUTTATUS		
HIND, ROCK	EPINEPHELUS ADSCENSIONIS		
HOGCHOKER	TRINECTES MACULATUS		
HOGFISH	LACHNOLAIMUS MAXIMUS		
HOUNDFISH	TYLOSURUS CROCODILUS		
JACK, BAR	CARANGOIDES RUBER		
JOHN DORY	ZENOPSIS OCELLATA		
KINGFISH, NORTHERN	MENTICIRRHUS SAXATILIS		
LADYFISH	ELOPS SAURUS		
LAMPREY	PETROMYZON MARINUS		
LITTLE TUNNY/ FALSE ALBACORE	EUTHYNNUS ALLETTERATUS		
LIZARDFISH	SYNODUS FOETENS		
LOOKDOWN	SELENE VOMER		
LUMPFISH	CYCLOPTERUS LUMPUS		
MACKEREL, KING	SCOMBEROMORUS CAVALLA		
MARGATE	HAEMULON ALBUM		
MULLET, STRIPED	MUGIL CEPHALUS		
MULLETS	MUGILIDAE		
NEEDLEFISH, ATLANTIC	STRONGYLURA MARINA		
NEEDLEFISHES	TYLOSURUS SPP		
OILFISH	RUVETTUS PRETIOSUS		
OPAH	LAMPRIS GUTTATUS		
PARROTFISH	SCARIDAE		
PERCH, ATLANTIC	SEBASTES MARINUS		
PERCH, SAND	DIPLECTRUM FORMOSUM		
PERCH, WHITE	MORONE AMERICANA		
PERCH, YELLOW	PERCA FLAVESCENS		
PERMIT	TRACHINOTUS FALCATUS		
PIGFISH	ORTHOPRISTIS CHRYSOPTERA		
PINFISH	LAGODON RHOMBOIDES		
PINFISH, SPOTTAIL	DIPLODUS HOLBROOKII		
PIPEFISH	SYNGNATHIDAE		
PITAR	PITAR		

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
POMFRETS	BRAMIDAE		
POMPANO	TRACHINOTUS		
PORGY, JOLTHEAD	CALAMUS BAJONADO		
PORGY, KNOBBED	CALAMUS NODOSUS		
PORGY, LITTLEHEAD	CALAMUS PRORIDENS		
PORGY, RED	PAGRUS PAGRUS		
PORGY, SAUCEREYE	CALAMUS CALAMUS		
PORGY, WHITEBONE	CALAMUS LEUCOSTEUS		
PORGIES, OTHER (NOT JOLTHEAD, KNOBBED, LITTLEHEAD, RED, OR SCUP)	SPARIDAE		
PUFFER, NORTHERN	SPHOEROIDES MACULATUS		
PUFFER, OTHER (NOT NORTHERN)	SPHOEROIDES & TETRAODONTIDAE		
RAINBOW TROUT/ STEELHEAD TROUT	ONCORHYNCHUS MYKISS		
RAY, COWNOSE	RHINOPTERA BONASUS		
RAY, OTHER (NOT COWNOSE)	RAJIFORMES		
RED LIONFISH	PTEROIS VOLITANS		
RIBBONFISH	TRACHIPTERIDAE		
SAND LANCE, AMERICAN	AMMODYTES AMERICANUS		
SAND LANCE, NORTHERN	AMMODYTES DUBIUS		
SAND SEA TROUT/ SAND WEAKFISH	CYNOSCIION ARENARIUS		
SCAD, ROUND	DECAPTERUS PUNCTAUS		
SCAD, ROUGH	TRACHURUS LATHAMI		
SCORPIONFISH	SCORPAENIDAE		
SCULPIN, LONGHORN	MYOXOCEPHALUS OCTODECEMSPINOSUS		
SCULPINS, OTHER (NOT LONGHORN)	COTTIDAE		
SEA BASS, BANK	CENTROPRISTIS OCYURUS		
SEA BASS, ROCK	CENTROPRISTIS PHILADELPHICA		
SEA BASS, OTHER (NOT BANK, ROCK, OR BLACK)	CENTROPRISTIS		
SEA CHUBS	KYPHOSIDAE		
SEA CUCUMBERS	HOLOTHUROIDEA		
SEA RAVEN	HEMITRIPTERUS AMERICANUS		
SEA ROBIN, ARMORED	PERISTEDION MINIATUM		
SEA ROBIN, NORTHERN	PRIONOTUS CAROLINUS		
SEA ROBIN, STRIPED	PRIONOTUS EVOLANS		
SEA ROBIN, OTHER (NOT ARMORED, NORTHERN, OR STRIPED)	TRIGLIDAE		

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
SEA URCHINS	STRONGYLOCENTROTUS		
SHEEPSHEAD	ARCHOSARGUS PROBATOCEPHALUS		
SHEEPSHEAD MINNOW	CYPRINODON VARIEGATUS		
SILVERSIDE, ATLANTIC	MENIDIA MENIDIA		
SILVERSIDE, OTHER (NOT ATLANTIC)	ATHERINIDAE		
SMELTS	OSMERIDAE		
SNAPPER, BLACKFIN	LUTJANUS BUCCANELLA		
SNAPPER, CUBERA	LUTJANUS CYANOPTERUS		
SNAPPER, DOG	LUTJANUS JOCU		
SNAPPER, GRAY	LUTJANUS GRISEUS		
SNAPPER, MUTTON	LUTJANUS ANALIS		
SNAPPER, QUEEN	ETELIS OCULATUS		
SNAPPER, RED	LUTJANUS CAMPECHANUS		
SNAPPER, SILK	LUTJANUS VIVANUS		
SNAPPER, VERMILLION	RHOMBOPLITES AURORUBENS		
SNAPPER, YELLOWTAIL	OCYURUS CHRYSURUS		
SNAPPER, OTHER (NOT BLACKFIN, CUBERA, DOG, GRAY, MUTTON, QUEEN, RED, SILK, VERMILLION, OR YELLOWTAIL)	LUTJANIDAE		
SPADEFISH, ATLANTIC	CHAETODIPTERUS FABER		
SPOTTED SEA TROUT/SPOTTED WEAKFISH	CYNOSCION NEBULOSUS		
SEA TROUT, OTHER (NOT SPOTTED)	CYNOSCION SPP		
SQUIRRELFISH	HOLOCENTRIDAE		
STARGAZER, NORTHERN	ASTROSCOPUS GUTTATUS		
STINGRAY, ATLANTIC	DASYATIS SABINA		
STINGRAY, OTHER (NOT ATLANTIC)	DASYATIDAE		
TARPON	MEGALOPS ATLANTICUS		
TILEFISH, SAND	MALACANTHUS PLUMIERI		
TILEFISH, OTHER (NOT SAND, GOLDEN, OR BLUELINE)	MALACANTHIDAE		
TOADFISH, OYSTER	OPSANUS TAU		
TOADFISH, OTHER (NOT OYSTER TOADFISH)	BATRACHOIDIDAE		
TORPEDO, ATLANTIC	TORPEDO NOBILIANA		
TRIGGERFISH, GRAY	BALISTES CAPRISCUS		
TRIGGERFISH, QUEEN	BALISTES VETULA		
TRIGGERFISH, OTHER (NOT GRAY OR QUEEN)	BALISTIDAE		
TRIPLETAIL	LOBOTES SURINAMENSIS		

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
TUNA, BLACKFIN	THUNNUS ATLANTICUS		
WHITING, KING	MENTICIRRHUS		
WOLFFISH, NORTHERN	ANARHICHAS DENTICULATUS		
WOLFFISH, SPOTTED	ANARHICHAS MINOR		
WRECKFISH	POLYPRION AMERICANUS		
<b>INVERTEBRATES</b>			
BLOODWORM	GLYCERA DIBRANCHIATA		
CLAM, ARCTIC SURF	MACTROMERIS POLYNYMA		
CLAM, BLOODARC	ANADARA OVALIS		
CLAM, FALSE QUAHOG	PITAR MORRHAUNUS		
CLAM, RAZOR	ENSIS DIRECTUS		
CLAM, SOFT	MYA ARENARIA		
CLAM, STOUT RAZOR	TAGELUS PLEBEIUS		
CLAM, RANGIA	RANGIA CUNEATA		
CLAM, SUNRAY VENUS	MACROCALLISTA NIMBOSA		
CLAM, OTHER (NOT ATLANTIC SURF, ARCTIC SURF, BLOODARC, FALSE QUAHOG, RAZOR, SOFT, STOUT RAZOR, RANGIA, OR SUNRAY VENUS)	BIVALVIA		
CONCHS	STROMBIDAE		
CRAB, BLUE	CALLINECTES SAPIDUS		
CRAB, FLORIDA STONE	MENIPPE MERCENARIA		
CRAB, GREEN	CARCINUS MAENAS		
CRAB, HERMIT	PAGURUS		
CRAB, JAPANESE SHORE	HEMIGRAPSUS		
CRAB, LADY	OVALIPES OCELLATUS		
CRAB, ROCK	CANCER IRRORATUS		
CRAB, SNOW	CHIONOECETES OPILIO		
CRAB, SPIDER	MAJIDAE		
LOBSTER, SPINY	PANULIRUS ARGUS		
MANTIS SHRIMP	STOMATOPODA		
MUSSEL, BLUE	MYTILUS EDULIS		
NORTHERN QUAHOG/ HARD CLAM	MERCENARIA MERCENARIA		
SOUTHERN QUAHOG/HARD CLAM	MERCENARIA CAMPECHIENSIS		
OCTOPUS	OCTOPODIDAE		
OYSTER, EASTERN	CRASSOSTREA VIRGINICA		
OYSTER, EUROPEAN FLAT	OSTREA EDULIS		
PERIWINKLES	LITTORINIDAE		
SANDWORMS	NEREIS		
SCALLOP, BAY	ARGOPECTEN IRRADIANS		
SCALLOP, CALICO	ARGOPECTEN GIBBUS		



Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Possession limit or prohibition, size limit, seasonal closure, and/or limited access	Permit and/or reporting requirement
SCALLOP, ICELANDIC	CHLAMYS ISLANDICA		
SHRIMP (SICYONIA)	SICYONIA		
SHRIMP, BROWN	FARFANTEPENAEUS AZTECUS		
SHRIMP, CARIDEAN	CARIDEA		
SHRIMP, PENAEID	PENAEIDAE		
SHRIMP, PINK	FARFANTEPENAEUS DUORARUM		
SHRIMP, ROYAL RED	PLEOTICUS ROBUSTUS		
SHRIMP, WHITE	LITOPENAEUS SETIFERUS		
SHRIMP, OTHER (NOT NORTHERN, SICYONIA, BROWN, CARIDEAN, PENAEID, PINK ROYAL RED, OR WHITE)	DENDROBRANCHIATA		
SNAIL, SLIPPER	CREPIDULA FORNICATA		
SNAILS (MOON)	NATICIDAE		
STARFISH	ASTEROIDEA		
WHELK, CHANNELED	BUSYCOTYPUS CANALICULATUS		
WHELK, KNOBBED	BUSYCON CARICA		
WHELK, LIGHTNING	BUSYCON SINISTRUM		
WHELK, WAVED	BUCCINUM UNDATUM		
<b>ALGAE</b>			
BLADDER WRACK	FUCUS VESICLOSUS		
BROWN ALGAE	PHAEOPHYTA		
DULSE	PALMARIA PALMATA		
FINGERED KELP	LAMINARIA DIGITATA		
KELP, SUGAR	LAMINARIA SACCHARINA		
OARWEED KELP	LAMINARIA LONGICRURIS		
WINGED KELP	ALARIA ESCULENTA		
ROCKWEED/ KNOTTED WRACK/ WORMWEED	ASCOPHYLLUM NODOSUM		
ROCKWEED, OTHER	FUCACEAE		



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901  
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)  
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 31, 2020  
**To:** Chris Moore, Executive Director  
**From:** Julia Beaty, staff  
**Subject:** Scoping for Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation Amendment

### **Background**

During their joint meeting with the Council in October 2019, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission's) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) initiated an addendum to consider changes to the allocations of the black sea bass commercial quota among states. At the December 2019 joint meeting, the Council voted to make this a joint action. For the Council, the allocation changes under consideration must be made through an amendment. More information on this developing action is available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bsb-commercial-allocation>.

Typically, the Council undertakes a public scoping process shortly after initiation of an amendment. This includes one or more public scoping hearings and a written comment period. Scoping helps the Council decide which types of management alternatives should be further developed through the amendment process.

The Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation Amendment is unique in that development of potential management alternatives began several months before the joint amendment/addendum was formally initiated. Potential alternatives were discussed at many public meetings between October 2018 and December 2019, including eight Council and/or Board meetings and one Advisory Panel meeting.

NOAA Fisheries staff have advised that based on the anticipated range of alternatives and the fact that these alternatives have already been discussed at multiple public meetings, additional public scoping meetings are not required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act or the National Environmental Policy Act.

### **Staff Recommendation for Scoping**

Although an additional public scoping process is not required, staff recommend that, during their February 2020 meeting, the Council agree to hold one public scoping webinar in late April or early May 2020 with an associated written comment period. A draft scoping document will be presented to the Council at their April meeting.

The proposed webinar scoping meeting will provide an additional formal public comment opportunity prior to finalization of a range of alternatives, which is expected to occur during the May 2020 joint meeting. An extensive scoping period with multiple hearings is not recommended as many potential alternatives for this amendment have already been partially developed and discussed in detail at multiple public meetings, as described above.



# NEWS RELEASE



Robert E. Beal, Executive Director

Christopher Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
January 7, 2020

MAFMC PRESS CONTACT: Mary Sabo, 302-518-1143  
ASMFC PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger, 703-842-0740

## MAFMC and ASMFC to Hold Scoping Hearings for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) have scheduled a series of scoping hearings to gather public input on the range of issues and information to be considered in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. Hearings will be held February 13 – March 3. Written comments will be accepted through **March 17, 2020**. All comments provided at public hearings or in writing will be presented to the Council and Commission.

This amendment will consider potential modifications to the allocations of catch or landings between the commercial and recreational sectors for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The commercial and recreational allocations for all three species were set in the mid-1990s based on historical proportions of landings (for summer flounder and black sea bass) or catch (for scup) from each sector. In July 2018, the Marine Recreational Information Program released revisions to its time series of catch (harvest and discards) estimates. These revisions resulted in much higher recreational catch estimates compared to previous estimates, affecting the entire time series of data going back to 1981. Some changes have also been made to commercial catch data since the allocations were established. The current commercial and recreational allocation percentages for all three species do not reflect the current understanding of the recent and historic proportions of catch and landings from the two sectors. This amendment will consider whether changes to these allocations are warranted.

Scoping is the first and best opportunity to raise concerns related to the scope of issues that will be considered. You are encouraged to submit comments on which options may or may not be useful or practical for meeting the goal of this action and any other relevant issues the Council and Commission should consider.

### Learn More

The Scoping and Public Information Document contains background information on summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass management and on issues that may be addressed in the amendment, as well as a description of the amendment process and timeline. This document, along with additional information and updates on development of this amendment, is available on the Council's website at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment>.

### Contacts

**Julia Beaty**, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, [jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org), 302-526-5250

**Dustin Colson Leaning**, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, [dleaning@asmfc.org](mailto:dleaning@asmfc.org), 703-842-0740

[www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)

*Given summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass's presence in, and movement between, state waters (0-3 miles from shore) and federal waters (3-200 miles from shore), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council jointly manage these species.*

[www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)

## Hearing Schedule

Date and Time	Location	Contact
<b>Thursday, Feb. 13</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Admiral's Hall</b> 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532	<a href="#">Nichola Meserve</a> 617-626-1531
<b>Wednesday, Feb. 19</b> 6:00-7:00 PM	<b>Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources &amp; Environmental Control</b> DNREC Auditorium, Richards & Robbins Building 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901	<a href="#">John Clark</a> 302-739-9914
<b>Monday, Feb. 24</b> 6:00-8:00 PM	<b>Belmar Municipal Court Room</b> 601 Main Street, Belmar, NJ 07719	<a href="#">Joe Cimino</a> 609-748-2020
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 25</b> 3:30-4:45 PM	<b>Berlin Library</b> 13 Harrison Avenue, Berlin, MD 21811	<a href="#">Steve Doctor</a> 410-213-1531
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 25</b> 6:00-8:00 PM	<b>Galloway Township Branch Library</b> 306 East Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway, NJ 08205	<a href="#">Joe Cimino</a> 609-748-2020
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 25</b> 6:00-8:00 PM	<b>North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Pamlico District Office</b> 943 Washington Square Mall, US Highway 17, Washington, NC 27889	<a href="#">Chris Batsavage</a> 252-808-8009
<b>Wednesday, Feb. 26</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium</b> South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882	<a href="#">Jason McNamee</a> 401-423-1943
<b>Wednesday, Feb. 26</b> 7:00-8:00 PM	<b>Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection Marine Headquarters Boating Education Center (Rear Building)</b> 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371	<a href="#">Justin Davis</a> 860-447-4322
<b>Thursday, Feb. 27</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>Stony Brook University, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences</b> Room 120 Endeavor Hall, Stony Brook, NY 11794-5000	<a href="#">Maureen Davidson</a> 631-444-0483
<b>Monday, Mar. 2</b> 5:00-6:00 PM	<b>Virginia Marine Resources Commission</b> 380 Fenwick Road, Building 96, Fort Monroe, VA 23651	<a href="#">Patrick Geer</a> 757-247-2078
<b>Tuesday, Mar. 3</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>Internet Webinar</b> <a href="http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/sfsbsb_com_rec_allocation_scoping/">http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/sfsbsb_com_rec_allocation_scoping/</a> <i>Audio: 1-800-832-0736 and entering room number 5068871.</i>	<a href="#">Julia Beaty</a> 302-526-5250

Please note that some hearings will be held in conjunction with (immediately before or after) supplemental scoping hearings for an ongoing Bluefish Allocation Amendment. A schedule for the bluefish hearings will be posted at: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>.

## Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled public hearings, you may submit written comments by 11:59 pm EST on **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**. Written comments may be sent by any of the following methods:

1. **ONLINE:** <http://www.mafmc.org/comments/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment>
2. **EMAIL:** [jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org)
3. **MAIL or FAX:** Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
800 North State Street, Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901  
FAX: 302.674.5399

Please include "Fluke/Scup/Sea Bass Allocation Amendment" in the subject line if using email or fax, or on the outside of the envelope if submitting written comments. All comments, regardless of submission method, will be compiled into a single document for review and consideration by both the Council and Commission. **Please do not send separate comments to the Council and Commission.**



## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 13, 2020

PRESS CONTACT: Mary Sabo  
(302) 518-1143

### **Mid-Atlantic Council to Hold Supplemental Scoping Hearings for Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold eleven supplemental scoping hearings to gather public input for the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. The Council is developing this action in cooperation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) in order to (1) update the goals and objectives of the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP); (2) perform a comprehensive review of the bluefish sector allocations, commercial allocations to the states, and transfer processes; and (3) initiate a bluefish rebuilding plan. Scoping hearings will be held between **February 13 and March 4, 2020**. Written comments will be accepted through **March 17, 2020**.

An initial round of scoping was conducted in the summer of 2018 to gauge public interest in the development of an amendment. Since then, recalibrated Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimates became available and were incorporated into the 2019 bluefish operational assessment. The assessment concluded that the stock was overfished but not experiencing overfishing. The Council and Commission subsequently recommended including the rebuilding plan into this ongoing amendment. Because the additional issue modifies the scope of the amendment, the Council is holding additional hearings to provide the public ample opportunities to comment on the expanded scope of the amendment.

Public comments during scoping will help the Council address issues of public concern in a thorough and appropriate manner. Some management questions for consideration in this amendment include:

- Are the existing goals and objectives appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Is the existing allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors based on the annual catch limit appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Are the existing commercial state allocations appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Are the existing transfer processes appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- What is the appropriate approach to take for rebuilding?

#### ***Learn More***

The Supplemental Scoping and Public Information Document contains background information on bluefish management and on issues that may be addressed in the amendment. This document, along with additional information and updates on development of this amendment, is available on the Council's website at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>.

#### ***Contact***

Please direct any questions about the amendment to Matt Seeley, (302) 526-5262, [mseeley@mafmc.org](mailto:mseeley@mafmc.org).

## Hearing Schedule

Date and Time	Location
<b>February 13, 2020,</b> 7:30-9:00 PM	<b>Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Admiral's Hall</b> 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532
<b>February 18, 2020,</b> 6:00-8:00 PM	<b>Ocean County Administration Building – Room 119</b> 101 Hooper Avenue, Toms River, New Jersey 08753
<b>February 19, 2020,</b> 7:00-8:00 PM	<b>Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources &amp; Environmental Control Auditorium</b> Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware 19901
<b>February 25, 2020,</b> 4:45-6:00 PM	<b>Berlin Library</b> 13 Harrison Ave. Berlin, MD 21811
<b>February 26, 2020,</b> 7:30-9:00 PM	<b>University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium</b> South Ferry Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882
<b>February 26, 2020,</b> 8:00-9:00 PM	<b>Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection Marine Headquarters Boating Education Center (Rear Building)</b> 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371
<b>February 27, 2020,</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>NC Division of Marine Fisheries Central District Office</b> 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, North Carolina 28557
<b>February 27, 2020,</b> 7:30-9:00 PM	<b>Stony Brook University, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences</b> Room 120 Endeavour Hall; Stony Brook, NY 11794
<b>March 2, 2020,</b> 6:00-8:00 PM	<b>Merritt Island Service Center Complex</b> 2575 N. Courtenay Pkwy #205, Merritt Island, FL 32953
<b>March 2, 2020,</b> 6:00-7:00 PM	<b>Virginia Marine Resources Commission</b> 380 Fenwick Road Bldg 96 Fort Monroe, VA 23651
<b>March 4, 2020,</b> 6:00-7:30 PM	<b>Internet webinar:</b> <a href="http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/bf_allocation_rebuilding_scoping/">http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/bf_allocation_rebuilding_scoping/</a> For audio-only access, dial 800-830-0736 and enter room number 5068609.

Please note that some hearings will be held immediately before or after scoping hearings for an ongoing Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. A schedule for those hearings is available at <http://www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2020/mafmc-asmfc-sfsbsb-allocation-scoping-hearings>.

## Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled public hearings, you may submit written comments by 11:59 pm EDT on **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**. Written comments may be sent by any of the following methods:

1. **ONLINE:** <http://www.mafmc.org/comments/bluefish-allocation-rebuilding-amendment>
2. **EMAIL:** [mseeley@mafmc.org](mailto:mseeley@mafmc.org)
3. **MAIL or FAX:** Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
800 North State Street, Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901  
FAX: 302.674.5399

Please include “Bluefish Scoping Comments” in the subject line if using email or fax, or on the outside of the envelope if submitting written comments. All comments, regardless of submission method, will be compiled into a single document for review and consideration by both the Council and Commission.





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 29, 2020

**PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante, [jplante@nefmc.org](mailto:jplante@nefmc.org)**  
**PRESS CONTACT: Mary Sabo, [msabo@mafmc.org](mailto:msabo@mafmc.org)**

## Councils Approve Omnibus Commercial eVTR Framework

The New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council have taken final action on an omnibus framework adjustment that will require commercial fishermen to submit vessel trip reports (VTRs) electronically as eVTRs instead of on paper for all species managed by both Councils. The Mid-Atlantic Council initiated the action in December of 2018 and signed off on the framework during its December 2019 meeting. The New England Council joined the framework in June of 2019 and took final action during its late-January 2020 meeting in Portsmouth, NH.

Once approved and implemented by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries), the framework will:

- Require commercial vessels with federal permits for all species managed by both Councils to submit currently required VTRs to NOAA Fisheries through electronic means; and
- Change the VTR reporting deadline to 48 hours after entering port at the conclusion of the trip.

This action does not change any other existing requirements associated with VTRs but would be an administrative modification in the method and timing for submitting these reports.

The vast majority of fishermen currently submit VTRs on paper even though the option to submit vessel trip reports electronically has been available since 2013. NMFS is aware that the learning curve will be steep, and the agency already has indicated that a final rule would include an extended implementation deadline of up to a year to allow for

### Number of Commercial eVTRs Submitted in 2018

<b>Paper</b>	<b>73, 132</b>
<b>Electronic</b>	<b>7,727</b>

*The above VTR numbers were reported by GARFO for vessels issued a commercial permit in 2018 for New England or Mid-Atlantic Council-managed species.*

<b>New England Fishery Management Council Affected Stocks / Management Plans</b>	<b>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Affected Stocks / Management Plans</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish)</b></li> <li>• <b>Atlantic Sea Scallops</b></li> <li>• <b>Atlantic Herring</b></li> <li>• <b>Skates</b></li> <li>• <b>Small-Mesh Multispecies (Whiting)</b></li> <li>• <b>Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab</b></li> <li>• <b>Monkfish – managed jointly with Mid-Atlantic</b></li> <li>• <b>Spiny Dogfish – managed jointly with Mid-Atlantic</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass</b></li> <li>• <b>Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish</b></li> <li>• <b>Bluefish</b></li> <li>• <b>Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs</b></li> <li>• <b>Tilefish</b></li> <li>• <b>Spiny Dogfish – managed jointly with New England</b></li> <li>• <b>Monkfish – managed jointly with New England</b></li> </ul>





adequate preparation and training for software developers, managers, and affected users. The Mid-Atlantic Council is arranging for in-person training sessions and workshops throughout the Greater Atlantic Region and will be hosting online webinars. Any video-based training materials provided by software distributors will be posted on the [eVTR webpage](#) along with available presentations and other helpful outreach tools.

Vessel operators will be able to choose which NMFS-approved eVTR application they prefer to use, and operators will be able to switch applications at any time.

The table below lists free applications that currently are NMFS-approved. Additional systems may be developed and will be added to the list if approved.

The table on the next page lists two applications that come with fees, generally for installation and/or monthly or annual usage. These two fee-based applications are pending recertification to meet GARFO’s technical requirements.

**NOTE:** *The Mid-Atlantic Council already has an eVTR requirement in place for the [charter and party fleet](#) for species managed by the MAFMC. The New England Council will develop a **separate action** to address eVTRs for recreational for-hire vessels later this year.*

The Mid-Atlantic Council has posted a recorded demonstration of the free ACCSP eTrips Mobile app and GARFO’s Fish Online app. Watch the [demo recording](#).

## FREE NMFS-APPROVED eVTR APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION / (PROVIDER)	COMPATIBLE DEVICES
eTrips Mobile 2 (ACCSP)	Android and Apple tablet/smartphone, Windows 10, or web browser
Fish Online (GARFO)	iPhone/iPad or web browser
Elog (Teem Fish)	Android and Apple tablet/smartphone, Windows 10, or web browser (used with electronic monitoring)
FLDRS (NEFSC)*	Computer (used for cooperative research)

*The applications above are maintained at **no cost to the user**. \*FLDRS is designed to collect high resolution fisheries data for research that also satisfies eVTR requirements. FLDRS also is the only current application that complies with reporting guidelines for ocean quahog and surfclams.*



## FEE-BASED eVTR APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION / (PROVIDER)	COMPATIBLE DEVICES
FACTS (Electric Edge)	Windows computer
Olrac DDL (OLSPS)	Web browser, Windows computer, Windows tablet

*(1) Fees are associated with above the applications. (2) The above applications are currently pending recertification to meet GARFO's technical requirements.*

### Why Is This Happening?

The Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework states that this action is needed to:

- 1) Increase the timeliness and availability of data submitted through VTRs;
- 2) Reduce the reporting burden on data providers (commercial vessel operators) by eliminating the need for paper-based reporting, and
- 3) Increase the accuracy and quality of data by reducing recall bias associated with delayed completion and submission of paper forms.

*NOAA Fisheries said, "Electronic reporting will make the collection of important data on fishing vessel activity more efficient, convenient, and timely" for fishery managers, and other data users.*

Materials used during the New England Council's January 28, 2020 discussion and decision-making are available at [commercial eVTRs](#).

For more information contact either:

- **Mid-Atlantic Council** – Karson Coutre at (302) 526-5259, [kcoutre@mafmc.org](mailto:kcoutre@mafmc.org)
- **New England Council** – Sam Asci at (978) 465-0492 ext. 116, [sasci@nefmc.org](mailto:sasci@nefmc.org)



### Find Out More! Visit the Commercial eVTR Webpage

The Mid-Atlantic Council established a webpage containing documents and meeting materials related to the joint Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework Adjustment.

- Take a look at [eVTR info](#).
- Scroll down and sign up to receive eVTR [email updates](#). The sign-up box looks like this:

Sign up to receive email updates:

First Name  Last Name

Email\*

Submit

**Name:** William Bartlett

**Email:** [wbartlett@md.metrocast.net](mailto:wbartlett@md.metrocast.net)

**Comments:** MENHADEN

I think that most people familiar with the menhaden issue know that the Secretary of Commerce has placed a moratorium on fishing for the menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay to begin effective June 17, 2020. Omega Protein (owned by Cooke of Canada) is the only company still in the business of catching menhaden in the Bay.

Much has been discussed and written about how important the menhaden are to the Bay. Menhaden have been called the most important fish in the sea. It is always mentioned that menhaden feed numerous other fishes like striped bass and bluefish, as well as whales and sharks, but there is more to the menhaden story.

We seem to dwell on the oyster as the great water filterer to clean the Bay. Oysters do not move. They lay on the bottom or may be in some manmade floats at the surface. They have to wait for the tide or the current to bring them food or they filter the same water over and over. The opening of an oyster shell to feed is almost imperceptible. Menhaden have large mouths compared to other fish and they leave them wide open as they move through the water collecting anything that floats. They feed mostly on plankton: phytoplankton (tiny plants) and zooplankton (tiny animals), the two things that cloud so much of the water. We need to improve the clarity of the water to a point where the sun can penetrate it. This would allow grasses to grow which in turn would remove more nutrients and help clear the water. You may notice that menhaden swim in schools near the surface of the water. This is because phytoplankton grows there, where they can receive the sunlight they need to grow.

Zooplankton then feeds on the phytoplankton. As part of the food chain, several species of whales eat zooplankton. The largest fish in the sea is the whale shark and it also eats zooplankton. Doesn't it seem a little strange that some of the largest creatures on earth eat the smallest creatures? Shrimp, snails, jelly fish and menhaden also feed on zooplankton. Even most baby fish feed on some plankton. We need to have enough filter feeders in the water to keep it clean or stop putting so many nutrients into the water. The filter feeders, grasses and oysters are all part of cleaning up the Bay.

Let's do one scenario to the nth degree. Let's say an osprey is returning to her nest with a menhaden fish when she encounters an eagle. The eagle is bigger and stronger than the osprey, but the osprey is a better fisher. The eagle steals the fish. The osprey must now start to hunt for another school of menhaden. She can't find a menhaden close by and has to fly far to get one. By the time she returns to her nest she finds that a group of crows has found her nest and eaten the eggs. Could happen.

Many people use omega 3 oil as a supplement. It is touted as being good for your health. Omega 3 oil is extracted from commercially caught menhaden and sold as fish oil. The actual omega 3 oil is not produced by the fish but comes from the plankton they eat. It is a plant oil and no animal can produce it. We could grow phytoplankton to produce omega 3 oil instead of getting it from the menhaden.

Another scenario we must look at is filial cannibalism. This is where fish eat their own young. Many fish do this and also eat each others' young, though studies suggest they would prefer to eat menhaden. If there were enough menhaden around maybe so many young fish would not be eaten by other fish. This same theory could also be applied to fish eating crabs.

We do not want the Bay to look like a swimming pool. We need all the things in the Bay to be in balance. But removing so many menhaden is keeping things out of balance. To get things in balance we need to remove a lot of plankton. Menhaden are filter feeders and are well equipped to do the job. Just consider what Omega Protein is doing by removing up to 51,000 metric tons of menhaden. That is over 10 million pounds of fish. And that is just in the Bay. Most fish have a food conversion rate of 1.5 to 2. That means the menhaden have to eat 1.5 to 2 pounds of plankton to gain 1 pound. The number of menhaden Omega Protein is allowed to catch would eat over 20 million pounds of plankton. And the company recently caught 87,000 metric tons that put them "not in compliance." The numbers of menhaden caught in total by Omega Protein makes the situation almost incomprehensible.

It is interesting to note how bluefish play an important role in the Bay. Bluefish will attack a school of menhaden and keep on attacking even after they are full of menhaden. When they are caught they may even regurgitate some of the menhaden they ate. Other fish that don't have sharp teeth like the bluefish wait below to eat the pieces that float by. In past years I remember large flocks of seagulls sitting on piers waiting for the bluefish to start feeding. They would get up and fly to the school of fish and feed on the scraps that the bluefish tore up. Sea gulls can't catch menhaden on their own. Many of the pieces of menhaden sink to the bottom where bottom feeding fish and crabs find a meal. So the bluefish feed other fish, crabs and birds. Ain't Mother Nature great.

I remember a project in St. Mary's County where there was an attempt to grow oysters in floats. It was on a large tidal pond off the Potomac River. They used only one finger of the creek. The tide came in and raised the level of water in the finger but there was no exchange of water in the finger. Therefore there were no new plankton for the oysters to feed on. Without more food, the project was bound to fail. One day when I was in the finger I used my oar and pushed it down as far as I could. I could still see the end of the oar, another sign that there were no plankton in the water. When I returned to the river I did the same experiment with the oar. The tip disappeared before the oar was halfway down.

It is ludicrous to think you can remove millions of pounds of fish from an area without damaging the ecology of that area. We have been trying to bring back the oysters and grasses only with varying degrees of success. Why is it that one foreign country can take for free what belongs to all of us and then sell it back to us in the form of fish oil and farmed fish. Our last best chance to return the Chesapeake Bay to some semblance of its past, is to abolish the wholesale slaughter of menhaden.  
Bill Bartlett Valley Lee, Maryland

(Sent via [Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#))

# FIFTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT ENFORCEMENT REPORT



**26 November 2019 – 27 January 2020**

*Presented to the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council*

*Prepared By:*

*Enforcement Branch*

*Fifth Coast Guard District*

## **Table of Contents**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

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CFVS – Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety	SAR – Search and Rescue
HC-130 – USCG Fixed-Wing Aircraft	WLB – 225’ Buoy Tender
WPB – 87’ Patrol Boat	P/C – Pleasure Craft
STA – USCG Small Boat Station	F/V – Fishing Vessel
EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon	A/S – Air Station
WMEC – 210’ or 270’ Medium Endurance Cutter	SEC - Sector
M/V – Motor Vessel	M/T – Motor Tanker
FRC – 154’ Fast Response Cutter	

# I. Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Enforcement and Marine Protected Species Operations

## Operations Summary

During this period, major cutters, patrol boats and stations conducted fisheries patrols in the Mid-Atlantic in an effort to curtail illegal fishing and promote safety of life at sea within D5’s AOR. Throughout this period, units conducted 178 boarding’s.

## Boarding Statistics (Note: “This Period” data should be considered preliminary and is subject to change)

<u>26 November 2019 – 27 January 2020 Activities</u>	<u>Comparison to FY19</u>
Fisheries Boarding’s .....	112..... 109
Fisheries Boarding’s w/Fishery Violations.....	3..... 3
Violation Rate .....	2.6%.....2.7%
<u>Activities Fiscal Year 2020</u>	<u>Comparison to FY19</u>
Fisheries Boarding’s .....	290..... 310
Fisheries Boarding’s w/Fishery Violations.....	11..... 21
Violation Rate .....	3.7%.....6.7%

## Violation Summary

CGC DOLPHIN issued 02 EARs for vessels targeting HMS without federal permits. CGC ANGELA MCSHAN issued 01 EAR for violation of crew manning requirements.

## Marine Protected Species Support Summary

1. Operation RIGHT SPEED began on 01 November. This seasonal operation is primarily for Sector Command Center watchstanders, and targets vessels 65’ or greater exceeding speed restrictions through migratory whale zones. The op will conclude on 30 April

## II. Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Efforts

(November 26, 2019 –January 27, 2020)

Fishing Vessel Dockside Safety Examinations.....	This Period.....	Fiscal Year to Date
Dockside Exams.....	33.....	75
Decals Issued .....	25.....	64
Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Terminations.....	02.....	04

## III. Search and Rescue Highlights

From November 26, 2019 – January 27, 2020, there were 21 marine casualties reported involving commercial fishing vessels:

- Allision – 0
- Capsize – 1
  - MD3794BK (O.N. MD3794BK) 08 JAN 2020 – F/V MD3794BK capsized due to flooding as a result of an unexpected wave hitting the stern.
- Collision – 1
  - MISS SAYLOR AUBREY (O.N. 506789) 03 JAN 2020 – F/V MISS SAYLOR AUBREY collided with the M/V ASL ERA at the Cape Fear entrance.
- Damage to Environment (Pollution/Hazmat) – 1
  - DORA LYNN (O.N. 570215) 02 DEC 2019 – F/V DORA LYNN discharged approximately 1 gallon of oily bilge water into The Chester River.
- Death – 1
  - PAPA’S GIRL (O.N. 566278) 08 JAN 2020 – F/V PAPA’S GIRL sank in the Pamlico Sound for unknown reasons.
- Fire – 0
- Flooding – 3
  - MD3794BK (O.N. MD3794BK) 08 JAN 2020 – F/V MD3794BK began flooding due to an unexpected wave hitting the stern, ultimately resulting in the vessel capsizing.
  - SEA ANGELS (O.N. 1125310) 09 DEC 2019 – F/V SEA ANGELS began to take on water and flooded due vessel grounding when it lost population resulting from a mechanical issue.
  - JO MEG (O.N. 959173) 09 JAN 2020 – F/V JO MEG began to take on water while oyster fishing. Vessel was able to make its way to Scotts Cove marina.
- Fouling – 0
- Grounding – 2
  - SEA ANGELS (O.N. 1125310) 09 DEC 2019 – F/V SEA ANGELS grounded in Brown’s Inlet due to a mechanical problem.
  - SHARON NICOLE (O.N. 1106603) 16 JAN 2020 – F/V SHARON NICOLE ran aground in the Chincoteague Channel between buoys #28 and #28.
- Injury – 1



- MCKENZIE (O.N. 1069510) 19 JAN 2020 – a crewmember onboard the F/V MCKENZIE fell and hurt their shoulder.
- Loss of Propulsion/Steering – 5
  - SEA ANGELS (O.N. 1125310) 09 DEC 2019 – F/V SEA ANGELS lost propulsion resulting in the vessel drifting into the shoal near Brown’s Inlet.
  - FOUR GIRLS (O.N. 944207) 09 DEC 2019 – F/V FOUR GIRLS lost propulsion near Cape May.
  - OLD MAN (O.N. 612811) 15 DEC 2019 – F/V OLD MAN lost propulsion due to unknown reasons.
  - HALLELUJAH (O.N. 1125310) 22 DEC 2019 – F/V HALLEJUAH suffered a steering casualty and became disabled approximately 30 NM east of Oregon Inlet.
  - FRANCES LEE (O.N. 506789) 20 JAN 2020 – F/V FRANCES LEE became disabled in rough seas at the mouth of the Nansemond River.
- MEDEVAC – 1
  - FLEETON (O.N. 570668) 17 DEC 2019 – a crewmember onboard the F/V FLEETON was MEDEVAC off the vessel due to a seizure and the member becoming disoriented.
- Fall(s) Overboard – 0
- Sinking – 3
  - MD3794BK (O.N. MD3794BK) 08 JAN 2020 – F/V MD3794BK began flooding due to an unexpected wave hitting the stern, ultimately resulting in the vessel sinking.
  - WHOPPER STOPPER (O.N. 902804) 22 DEC 2019- F/V WHOPPER STOPPER sank at the pier with no POB.
  - PAPA’S GIRL (O.N. 566278) 08 JAN 2020 – F/V PAPA’S GIRL sank in the Pamlico Sound for unknown reasons.
- Terminations – 2
  - BABY RAMBLER (O.N. 580961) 07 DEC 2019- F/V BABY RAMBLER was terminated due to expired EPIRB battery, inoperable PDF lights, unserviceable immersion suits, and PFDs not readily accessible.
  - BONNIE M (O.N. 1057269) 07 JAN 2020 – F/V BONNIE M was terminated due to missing lights and improperly marked immersion suits, missing visual distress signals, retro-reflective material was painted over on the PFDs and expired registration for EPIRB.

## **IV. Outreach - CFVS Information**

NSTR.



## Council Report – 1st Quarter 2020

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**October 1, 2019 – December 30, 2019**

To Report a Violation Call  
800-853-1964

# Quarterly Metrics

Table 1: Summary of Incidents by Law/Regulation

Law/Regulation/Program	Incident Totals
ACFCMA	26
Endangered Species Act	7
HMS	41
Lacey Act	14
Marine Mammal Protection Act	8
MSFCMA	143
Other Federal Law	20
State Law/Regulation	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>

- 875 hours of Patrol (Land and Sea)
- 22 cases forwarded to General Counsel Enforcement Section:
  - 2 ACFCMA
  - 18 MSFCMA
  - 1 HMS
  - 1 MMPA
- 4 Summary Settlements issued for total of \$2,250
- 17 Summary Settlements Paid for total of \$18,400.00

# Enforcement Highlights

In support of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) RFMO, 2 Enforcement officers conducted a two week joint law enforcement patrol with the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans aboard a Canadian Coast Guard Cutter. OLE sent 3 agents and 2 officers to the Azores for a NAFO international inspector workshop.

OLE also hosted a US/Canada Regional Enforcement Meeting in Portsmouth, NH. This focused on regional enforcement issues. In attendance were representatives from Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the US Coast Guard and the Maine Marine Patrol. Agenda items included intelligence programs, RFMO engagement, emerging technologies and enforcement operations.

An EO conducted a boarding of a Rhode Island based offshore lobster vessel, after observing it landing at an unusual time. The EO's investigation of the entire offload resulted in the detection of multiple violations, including 116 undersized lobsters, four V-notched female lobsters, and a FVTR logbook which had not been completed for the vessels previous seven trips, investigation continues.

Lou's Fish Market and its owner Mark Parente were sentenced following a criminal conviction. Parente was sentenced to six months home confinement and five years' probation and must surrender his federal and New York state dealer permits. Parente also received a fine of \$50,000, a community service payment of \$10,000 and restitution of \$481,000. Lou's Fish Market was sentenced to three years' probation and has to undergo an environmental compliance-auditing plan. Lou's received a fine of \$400,000 and must make a community service payment of \$100,000. Monetary penalties for Parente/Lou's totaled \$1,041,000. This sentencing was the last matter directly involving the Research Set-Aside investigation, which began with a vessel inspection in Point Lookout, New York on July 23, 2010.

Two New York corporations and their owners pleaded guilty in federal court for their scheme to falsely-label seafood that they later sold nationwide. In a plea agreement with the government, Roy Tuccillo Sr, his son, Roy Tuccillo Jr, and two of their Westbury, New York, food processing and distribution companies, Anchor Frozen Foods Inc, and Advanced Frozen Foods Inc, pleaded to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. They admitted to importing giant squid from Peru, marketing it as octopus, and using e-mail and wire transactions to sell it to grocery stores in interstate commerce. The maximum sentence for Tuccillo Sr and Tuccillo Jr is five years imprisonment and a fine up to \$250,000. The corporations may be placed on five years of probation and pay a fine up to \$500,000.

Capt. Neill's Seafood, Inc. of Columbia, North Carolina, and Phillip R. Carawan, the owner, President, and Chief Executive, of the Capt. Neill's, were sentenced in North Carolina. Capt. Neill's was sentenced to a period of five years' probation and required to pay a \$500,000 fine. Carawan was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison, a \$250,000 fine and three years supervised probation for his role in falsely labeling millions of dollars' worth of foreign crab meat as "Product of USA".

# Northeast VMS Program

## NE-Approved VMS Vendors and Units:

- McMurdo – Omnitrac FMCT/G
- SkyMate - I1500 & M1500
- Network Innovations - Sailor Platinum
- Woods Hole Group - Thorium Leo & Thorium Triton

## NE VMS Unit Population:

- 972 registered vessels
  - McMurdo - 705
  - SkyMate - 138
  - Woods Hole Group - 124
  - Network Innovations - 5
- 8 vendor test units (installed at NED OLE)

**NE VMS Population breakdown by Permits** (Note: The total count below exceeds the VMS population count since most vessels hold multiple permits):

- 396 Multispecies (MUL-A,D,F)
- 47 Combination (MUL-E)
- 16 Monkfish (MNK-F)
- 560 Scallop General Category (LGC-A,B,C)
- 344 Scallop Limited Access (SC-2,3,5,6,7,8)
- 610 Surfclam (SF-1)
- 609 Ocean Quahog (OQ-6)
- 10 Maine Mahogany Quahog (OQ-7)
- 131 Herring (HER-A,B,C,E)
- 130 Mackerel (SMB-T1,T2,T3)
- 228 Longfin Squid (SMB-1A)
- 51 Longfin Squid (SMB-1B)
- 68 Illex Squid (SMB-5)

**Groundfish Sector/Common Pool:** There are 324 groundfish sector vessels and 122 common pool vessels registered to the NE VMS Program.

**Power-Down & Letter of Exemption (LOE) Program:** A total of 136 VMS-equipped vessels are on a NMFS -approved LOE; of these, the owners of 59 vessels have deactivated their VMS with their vendor during the LOE period. Additionally, there are 26 vessels with LAGC scallop permits on a Power Down declaration in port.

## Industry Contact Log Report:

The NE Investigative Support (IS) Team addressed 266 industry issues in this quarter and closed 207 issues or 78%. The most-frequently reported issues were (1) Power Down LOE; (2) Eforms Compliance; and (3) Non-Reporting. A total of 18 issues were referred, primarily to: (1) VMS Vendors, and (2) GARFO Permits Office.

## Significant VMS Issues:

**MCMURDO CYBERATTACK.** On December 19, 2019, VMS vendor McMurdo formally notified its customers via letter that on November 19, 2019 the vendor experienced a cyberattack against its U.S. and Canadian Fleet Management operations that affected its services. Immediately following the November incident, OLE began working very closely with the vendor to identify and resolve related issues that impacted both the industry's VMS services and enforcement monitoring/operations.

**MCMURDO OMNITRACS REPLACEMENT.** On December 19, 2019, McMurdo formally notified OLE and its Northeast customers that the vendor's satellite service provider, Omnitrac LLC, had confirmed its intent to discontinue satellite services provided by Omnitrac-Canada on March 31, 2020. Additionally, on December 19, 2019, McMurdo notified its customers that the vendor has a new replacement VMS, 'OmniCom', for which the vendor has applied for type approval in the Greater Atlantic Region. McMurdo requested that OLE expedite the testing and approval of the OmniCom VMS.

**VMS SOFTWARE RELEASE.** On November 25, 2019, VMS vendors SkyMate and Woods Hole Group released the latest version (Format 16) of the Northeast reporting software. McMurdo was not prepared for the release due to the cyberattack and systems recovery efforts. Network Innovations was not prepared and testing was ongoing beyond December 31, 2019.

## Observer Program Highlights

During this quarter the observer program deployed on 1,130 trips for 2,544 sea days.

Eight enforcement related incidents were received by the Northeast Division. More than 99% of all selected or observed trips were completed without an enforcement incident referral.

### Observer Assault

Two reports involving observer assault were received and both are ongoing. One report involved a crewmember who threatened an observer with a fish pick and the other involved an incident being investigated as unlawful sexual contact.

### Observer Harassment/Intimidation

Two Harassment and/or Intimidation reports were received. One was closed under Compliance Assistance, and the other is ongoing.

### **Observer Interference**

Three observer interference complaints were received and all three are ongoing.

### **Observer Refusal**

One complaint was received and is ongoing.

### **Miscellaneous**

A NOVA for \$15,000 was issued by NOAA GCES in an investigation into observer interference and failure to notify the observer program.

A summary settlement of \$1,000 was issued by an EO in an investigation into observer interference. The subject of the investigation promptly paid the civil penalty.



**New England Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday - Thursday, January 28-30, 2020**  
**Portsmouth Harbor Events Center, 100 Deer Street at 22 Portwalk Place, Portsmouth, NH 03801**  
**tel: (603) 422-6114 | [Portsmouth Harbor Events and Conference Center](https://www.portsmouthharbor.com)**

Sending comments? Written comments must be received at the NEFMC office no later than 8 a.m., Thursday, January 23, 2020 to be considered at this meeting. Please address comments to Council Chairman Dr. John Quinn or Executive Director Tom Nies at: NEFMC, 50 Water St., Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Email submissions should be sent to [comments@nefmc.org](mailto:comments@nefmc.org).

**Tuesday, January 28, 2020**

- 9:00 a.m. Introductions and Announcements** (Chairman Dr. John Quinn)
- 9:05 Reports on Recent Activities**  
Council Chairman, Council Executive Director, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) Regional Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) General Counsel, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, U.S. Coast Guard, and NOAA Enforcement
- 10:30 Habitat Committee Report** (Eric Reid; Brian Hooker, BOEM)  
Offshore Energy: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) overview of ongoing activities in the Northeast, other offshore energy updates; Habitat-Related Work: develop comments on Great South Channel-related Exempted Fishing Permit if notice is available, other habitat updates
- 11:45 Northeast Ocean Data Portal** (Nick Napoli, NROC; Dr. Fiona Hogan, RODA)  
Update on upcoming work on Northeast Ocean Data Portal using industry input
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Break**
- 1:45 Seafood Market Development Options** (Dr. Michael Rubino, NOAA Fisheries)  
Presentation on seafood market development options and role of the senior advisor for seafood strategy
- 2:30 U.S. Scallop Delegation Visit to Hokkaido, Japan** (Staff; GARFO)  
Video presentation covering June 2019 visit by scallop industry, NOAA Fisheries, academia, and Council staff to Hokkaido to learn about seed-sowing practices used in Japanese scallop aquaculture
- 3:00 Commercial Electronic Vessel Trip Reports (eVTRs)** (Staff)  
Final action on joint omnibus framework with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) to implement eVTRs for all commercial vessels with permits for all species managed by both the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils
- 4:30 South Atlantic Electronic Vessel Reporting** (George Lapointe, NOAA Fisheries contractor)  
Overview of final action on and implementation of new and revised electronic vessel reporting requirements for charter/headboat (for-hire) vessels with South Atlantic permits
- 4:45 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)** (NOAA Fisheries)  
Report on the November 2019 annual ICCAT meeting in Spain; input from the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to ICCAT

**Wednesday, January 29, 2020**

- 8:30 a.m. Use of Sociocultural Information in NEFMC Process** (Dr. Lindsey Williams, MIT Sea Grant)  
Presentation on recent findings; Council discussion
- 9:15 Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)** (SSC Chair Dr. Jason McNamee)  
Report on SSC's ABC recommendations for four groundfish stocks remanded for further review
- 10:15 Open Period for Public Comment**  
Opportunity for the public to provide brief comments on issues relevant to Council business but not listed on this agenda (please limit remarks to 3-5 minutes)

**10:30 Groundfish Committee Report** (Terry Stockwell)  
Recreational Measures: develop recommendations for submission to GARFO on fishing year 2020 recreational measures for Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock; Monitoring Amendment 23: approve Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public hearings; select preliminary preferred alternatives

**12:30 p.m. Lunch Break**

**1:45 Groundfish Committee Report Continued** (Terry Stockwell)

**Thursday, January 30, 2020**

**8:30 a.m. Closed Session** (Chairman Dr. John Quinn)  
Consult on Scientific and Statistical Committee appointments for 2020-2022 and discuss personnel issues

**9:00 GARFO/NEFSC Joint Strategic Plan** (Regional Administrator Mike Pentony)  
Presentation on final NEFSC/GARFO Regional Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 and Annual Implementation Plan

**9:30 NEFSC Annual Planning Process and Use of NEFMC Research Priorities** (NEFSC Director Dr. Jon Hare)  
Presentation on Northeast Fisheries Science Center's annual planning process and how the center uses the New England Fishery Management Council's research priorities

**10:30 Congressional Update** (David Whaley)  
Update on Congressional activities; Council discussion

**11:15 Small-Mesh Multispecies (Whiting) Report** (Rick Bellavance)  
Approve range of alternatives for action to rebuild southern red hake

**12:15 p.m. Lunch Break**

**1:15 Atlantic Herring Report** (Peter Kendall)  
Framework Adjustment 8: initiate action for 2021-2023 specifications; consider adjusting herring measures that potentially inhibit the Atlantic mackerel fishery from achieving optimum yield

**1:35 Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Amendment** (Carrie Nordeen, GARFO)  
Update on Omnibus IFM Amendment and associated herring measures

**2:05 Other Business**

*Times listed next to the agenda items are estimates and are subject to change.*

*This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Council member financial disclosure forms are available for examination at the meeting.*

Although other non-emergency issues not contained on this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

**Documents pertaining to Council actions are available for review prior to a final vote by the Council.**

**Please check the Council's website, [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org), or call (978) 465-0492 for copies.**

**This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 USC 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.**



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405  
 Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

Jessica McCawley, Chair | Mel Bell, Vice Chair  
 Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

## DECEMBER 2-6, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s December 2019 meeting in Wilmington, North Carolina. Briefing materials, presentations, and public comments are available on the Council’s website at:

<http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/>

Final Committee Reports contain more details of what was accomplished for each committee and are located on the December 2019 briefing book page. In addition, the Summary of Motions on the Council’s website includes all motions from the meeting. Read further details and see images and other links at the December 2019 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=683b6570b2444ac8949710a512a31325>

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<p><b>Mackerel</b> Emergency Action</p>	<p>In June 2019, the Council approved a request for NMFS to raise the commercial king mackerel trip limit south of the Flagler/Volusia County line, Florida from 50-fish to 75-fish for the 2019-2020 season via emergency rule. The value of unharvested quota over the last four fishing seasons averaged \$3,880,961 per season.</p>	<p>The Council’s letter requesting emergency action was sent to NMFS on June 21, 2019 with a request to implement this prior to Season 2 of the 2019-2020 season (October 1<sup>st</sup>). NMFS implemented the emergency action effective October 1<sup>st</sup>.</p>
<p>Spanish Mackerel Control date</p>	<p>In June 2019, the Council approved a motion requesting that a control date be established for the open access commercial Spanish mackerel permit as of March 7, 2019, the date at which the Council first dis used limited-access for the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery.</p>	<p>The request for a control date in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery was sent to NMFS on June 21, 2019. NMFS published an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking on October 15, 2019. The public comment period concluded on November 14, 2019. NMFS is drafting responses to the comments.</p>

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
CMP Framework Amendment 8 – increase the king mackerel commercial trip limit in the southern zone.	The Council approved the following preferred alternative for formal review: <b>Preferred:</b> 100 fish October 1 <sup>st</sup> to the end of February.	Staff and the IPT will prepare CMP Framework Amendment 8 <b>for formal Secretarial review</b> . The Council’s intent is to have these permanent regulations in place prior to the start of the second season of the 2020/21 fishing year (October 1 <sup>st</sup> ).
CMP Framework Amendment 9 – Spanish mackerel commercial trip limit in the northern zone.	The Council reviewed the Advisory Panel’s recommendations and approved alternative trip limits for the Northern Zone of 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, or 3,500 pounds whole or gutted weight (no action). The Council selected 2,000 pounds as preferred and approved the amendment for public hearings.	Staff and the IPT will prepare CMP Framework Amendment 9 for public hearings to be held prior to the March 2-6, 2020 Council meeting.
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>ABC’s for Unassessed Snapper Grouper Stocks</b>	The Council reviewed the SSC recommendations and directed staff to begin an information paper to evaluate the continued need for conservation and management of species recommended by the SSC for Ecosystem Component designation and evaluate additional species for management (barrel fish and African pompano).  The Council also recommended that gray snapper, almaco jack, knobbed porgy, and jolthead porgy be considered for assessment through the SEDAR process.	The Council will review this information paper at the March 2-6, 2020 Council meeting.  The SEDAR Steering Committee will review this request at their May 2020 meeting.
<b>Snapper Grouper Abbreviated Framework Amendment 3 (South Atlantic Blueline Tilefish ACL)</b>	The Council approved the following preferred alternative for formal review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the total ACL from 174,798 to 233,968 lbs ww</li> <li>• Increase the commercial ACL from 87,521 to 117,148 lbs ww</li> <li>• Increase the recreational ACL from 87,277 to 116,820 lbs ww</li> <li>• Increase the recreational ACT from 54,653 to 70,886 lbs ww</li> </ul>	Staff and the IPT will prepare SG Abbreviated Framework Amendment 3 <b>for formal Secretarial review</b> . The Council’s intent is to send for review prior to the March 2020 Council meeting.

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>Snapper Grouper</b> Regulatory Amendment 31 (Modifications to Recreational Accountability Measures)	The Council revised the purpose and paused future work on Regulatory Amendment 31 until December 2020 when more will be known about how MRIP revisions will affect ACL and allocation revisions.	The Council will discuss SG Regulatory Amendment 31 at the December 2020 Council meeting.
<b>Snapper Grouper</b> Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Season Modifications)	The Council revised the purpose and need for the amendment, decided not to change the start date of the commercial red snapper season, kept the preferred alternative to remove the minimum #days (3) for a season, and approved the amendment for formal review.	Staff and the IPT will prepare SG Regulatory Amendment 33 <b>for formal Secretarial review.</b> The Council's intent is to send for review prior to the March 2020 Council meeting.
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>Snapper Grouper</b> Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices & Powerheads)	The Council approved the amendment at the September meeting and the document is being finalized before sending for formal Secretarial review. At the December meeting, they reviewed a summary of current and past outreach efforts on best fishing practices in the South Atlantic and their results. Council staff also presented plans for future outreach efforts.	Council staff are planning an outreach program to coincide with the anticipated approval and implementation of the amendment in 2020.
<b>System Management Plan Workgroup</b>	The System Management Plan Workgroup met in October 8-9, 2019 to go over the Spawning Special Management webpage and begin an outline for evaluation of the Oculina Experimental Closed Area. Council staff briefed the Committee on the meeting and the evaluation plan.	Council staff will continue working with the System Management Plan Workgroup to complete the plan during 2020.
<b>Landing Snapper Grouper Species in whole condition</b>	The Committee discussed the regulation that requires that all snapper grouper species be landed with heads and fins intact. Staff provided background on the rationale for this regulation and recent inquiries from fishermen regarding whether certain species can be cut up to be used as bait.	The Law Enforcement Advisory Panel discussed the issue at their May 2019 meeting and stated there were no enforcement concerns. This was reiterated at the Committee meeting by the USCG representative who stated there had been very few cases where fishermen were found to be in violation of this regulation. The Committee did not express intent to modify the current regulation.

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>Shrimp Amendment 11</b> (Transit Provisions)	The Council reviewed scoping comments, modified the need statement, modified alternative 2 as shown below, and approved the amendment for public hearings: Alternative 2. A vessel may transit with non-stop progression through the South Atlantic cold-weather closed area with fishing gear appropriately stowed with trawl doors and nets out of the water. The bag straps must be removed from the nets.	Staff and the IPT will prepare Shrimp Amendment 11 <b>for public hearings</b> . Public hearings and review by the Shrimp/Deepwater Shrimp, and Law Enforcement Advisory Panels will be held prior to the March 2020 Council meeting.
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>SEDAR</b>	The Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved appointments to the Gag operational assessment (SEDAR 71) and modified appointments to the Tilefish assessment (SEDAR 66).</li> <li>• Approved the schedule and the terms of reference for the Gag operational assessment (SEDAR 71).</li> <li>• Approved the scopes of work for the red snapper, blueline tilefish, and vermilion snapper assessments. The red snapper operational assessment will begin in early 2021.</li> </ul>	The Council will monitor progress of the assessments.
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>Advisory Panel Selection</b>	The Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved appointments to the Dolphin Wahoo, Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management, Information and Education and Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panels.</li> <li>• Discussed concerns expressed by some Advisory Panel members about reimbursements for travel expenditures. The Council recognizes the importance of the AP members to the management process and the need to fairly cover expenses for travel for their voluntary participation.</li> </ul>	Staff will advertise open seats on the AP's as appropriate for consideration at the June 2020 Council meeting.  Staff will draft edits to the Council Handbook that allow leeway for travel reimbursements as recommended for consideration at the March 2020 Council meeting.

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<p><b>Dolphin Wahoo</b> SSC recommendations on ABC levels</p>	<p>The Council discussed and provided the following requests for the SSC to consider at their April 2020 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsider the time series used for dolphin when setting catch level recommendations for dolphin.</li> <li>• Consider if a different time series that is more reflective of the current fishery for wahoo would be more appropriate in setting catch level recommendations for wahoo.</li> <li>• Would application of the ORCs method be a superior approach to the “third highest landings” approach in setting catch level recommendations for dolphin and wahoo? If so, does the SSC deem this approach best scientific information available (BSAI) and thus this method can be applied rather than the existing approach?</li> </ul>	<p>Staff will work with the SSC to be sure they address the request from the Council at their April 2020 SSC meeting.</p>
<p>Goals and Objectives</p> <p>Amendment 10 (Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures)</p>	<p>The Council reviewed Amendment 10 and provided guidance to staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To modify the goals and objective of the FMP.</li> <li>• Determined additional scoping was not necessary given the extensive discussions and public input during past meetings.</li> <li>• Moved Action 8 (Allow adaptive management of sector ACLs for dolphin) to the considered but rejected section. Directed staff to move Alternatives 3 &amp; 4 in Action 8 to the Comprehensive ABC Control Rule amendment.</li> <li>• Removed Alternatives 2 and 3 in Action 9 (Revise the commercial accountability measures for dolphin).</li> </ul> <p>Postponed further discussion of Amendment 10 until the June 2020 Council meeting when revised catch level recommendations from the SSC will be available.</p>	<p>The revised goals and objectives will be added to the next plan amendment.</p> <p>The Council will review a revised Amendment 10, with the SSC’s new ABC recommendations, at the June 8-12, 2020 meeting in Key West, FL.</p>
<p><b>Dolphin Wahoo</b> Amendment 12 (Bullet &amp; Frigate Mackerel)</p>	<p>The Council approved modifications to the purpose &amp; need and approved further development of the amendment at the March 2020 Council meeting when the NMFS and NOAA GC will provide recommendations on regulatory measures.</p>	<p>The Council will review a revised Amendment 12 at the March 2-6, 2020 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.</p>

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>MyFishCount</b>	<p>BeBe Harrison gave the Council an update on activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff participated in the American Sportfishing Association Industry Summit, Oct. 7-11, Stevenson, WA.</li> <li>• Staff presented at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Meeting, Oct. 28-31, Hilton Head, SC.</li> <li>• Staff secured booth space at the November 1-2, 2020 National Seminar Series hosted by George Poveromo at the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show.</li> <li>• Staff participated in the North Carolina Boating and Fishing Industry Summit, Nov. 6-7, Greensboro, NC.</li> <li>• Staff participated in the South Carolina Sportfishing Industry Summit, Dec 4, Columbia, SC</li> <li>• Modifications have been made to give a new look and feel to MyFishCount.com.</li> <li>• Upgraded the software for iOS and Android MyFishCount apps.</li> <li>• Developed a MyFishCount message with monthly incentives and featured anglers to keep the public interested and informed.</li> </ul>	<p>Council staff are continuing to work on MyFishCount during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year (2019-2020).</p> <p>Information from the pilot project will be used by the Council when they continue work on the permitting and reporting amendment at a future meeting.</p>
<b>Issue:</b> <b>Citizen Science Program</b>	<p>The Council covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julia Byrd, Program Manager, gave an update on the 2019 Programmatic activities, pilot projects in progress, and projects and collaborations under development. Staff have been very busy presenting and participating at meetings and further developing the program.</li> <li>• Data collection for the SAFMC Scamp Release project is underway. The project has been and is still recruiting fishermen to participate in the program. Additionally, staff have been pursuing additional grant funding to help promote and expand the SAFMC Release mobile app. .</li> <li>• The FISHstory project is under development and a demonstration of the FISHstory test project in Zooniverse was conducted.</li> <li>• An additional collaboration is under development with the SEFSC to expand their series of Participatory Modeling</li> </ul>	<p>Work will continue on the program, the two pilot projects, and in developing new projects and collaborations.</p> <p>Data from the SAFMC Scamp Release project will be made available for 2020 scamp assessment.</p> <p>Work will continue on the FISHstory project. The tentative schedule is to beta test the project in Zooniverse in Dec 2019 and launch the project in early 2020.</p>



	<p>Workshops from the Gulf of Mexico to the South Atlantic. The South Atlantic workshops would focus on the Dolphin/Wahoo fishery. The tentative plan is for workshops to be held in the Carolinas and FL Keys in 2020 and have initial information available for the Council in late 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council reviewed, modified, and adopted the updated Citizen Science research priorities which incorporated feedback from the Citizen Science Projects Advisory and Operations Committees.</li> <li>• Dr. Jennifer Shirk, Interim Director of the Citizen Science Association, presented preliminary findings from her research on the development of the Council’s Citizen Science Program. Her findings found a high return on the Council’s investment in the development of the Citizen Science Program. By supporting the Citizen Science Project Design Workshop and one staff person, a volunteer corps of over 45 people was mobilized, devoting the estimated equivalent of over \$50k worth of time to develop the SOPPS and the community capacity to implement them, as well as the development of 2+ pilot projects. Recommendations for the continued development and growth of the Council’s Program included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Investing in the continuity of the Program by maintaining and growing staff support</li> <li>○ Retaining the Action Teams, which will both require and offset staff time (e.g. mobilize to review/update products)</li> <li>○ Seeking and securing funds on hand to anticipate and enable timely project roll-out; and</li> <li>○ To conduct an analytical study of success factors and evaluation of both the Program and individual projects.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rick Bonney gave a presentation on evaluation, highlighting its importance in order to determine whether a project or program is working and to identify ways to improve overall effectiveness. He noted that evaluation can be complicated and requires a careful look at goals, objectives, and indicators of success. He noted that the Council has led the way in the development of its Citizen Science Program by focusing on the Program first approach and that they will need to lead the way in the development of an evaluation plan for this Program.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff will work with the SEFSC and reach out to the states and Dolphin/Wahoo AP members to help determine when and where to hold the workshops.</p> <p>The Council reviewed, made modifications, and approved the updated Citizen Science research priorities.</p> <p>The Council reiterated their support for the program and thanked Dr. Shirk and Rick Bonney for all their help and support.</p> <p>The Committee supported pursuing evaluation for both the overall Citizen Science Program and individual projects. As a next step for the Program evaluation, they supported staff working with Rick Bonney and the Operations Committee to draft Program objectives and indicators of success based on the Program goals identified in the SOPPS. These draft objectives and indicators of success would then be brought to the Council for their review and consideration.</p>
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<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action Taken:</b>	<b>Schedule:</b>
<b>For-Hire Recreational Reporting</b>	The Amendment was sent for formal review on March 4, 2017 with a request for implementation by January 1, 2018. The amendment was approved on June 12, 2018 and the Final Rule was expected to publish in mid-April 2019 with a 60-day cooling off period.	At the December meeting, the Council was told the <b>final rule package has been sent from the Region to NMFS HQ and is under review</b> . No specific timing was available on publication of the final rule.
<b>Full Council Actions:</b> 1. Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary  2. Menhaden  3. Council staff will develop a proposal for the South Atlantic/Gulf Council work group to look at flexible management options and bring back to the Committee at the March 2020 Council meeting.  4. Next Executive Director	<p>Sarah Fangman, FKNMS Superintendent, presented an overview of their proposed actions and alternatives. The Council discussed the input from the public and the Advisory Panels and requested some additional input from staff and NOAA GC for the March 2020 Council meeting.</p> <p>The Council discussed the request for input from NMFS on the finding of non-compliance by the State of Virginia with the ASMFC's Menhaden Plan.</p> <p>The Council directed staff develop a proposal for the work group looking at flexible management options.</p> <p>The Council thanked Gregg Waugh for his service to the Council over the past 39 years and for the excellent support provided by all Council staff under his leadership.</p>	<p>The Council will develop final recommendations at the March 2-6, 2020 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.</p> <p>The Council approved sending a letter to NMFS supporting the non-compliance determination of Virginia with the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The letter was sent on December 5, 2019.</p> <p>Council staff will coordinate with Gulf Council staff for input at the Gulf's January 2020 meeting and bring back recommendations to the South Atlantic Council's March 2-6, 2020 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.</p> <p>John Carmichael assumes duties as the next Executive Director effective December 13, 2019 at 5:01 p.m.</p>