



February 2020 Council Meeting Report

The following summary highlights actions taken and issues considered at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's meeting February 11-13, 2020 in Duck, NC. Presentations, briefing materials, and webinar recordings are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/february-2020>.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Appointed four new members to the Scientific and Statistical Committee
- Approved a public hearing document for the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Goals and Objectives and *Illex* Permit Amendment and opted not to select any preferred alternatives
- Received an updated on the *Illex* Working Group
- Approved a 2020 Implementation Plan
- Received a presentation on the NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Programs
- Received a presentation on the Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind Project

New SSC Membership

In 2019, the Council completed a comprehensive review of its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) membership in order to align new membership expertise with the future needs of the Council. Based on that review, the Council solicited applications to fill four vacancies that align with four different Council priority areas. The Council received applications from 11 highly qualified candidates covering a range of expertise and experiences. After reviewing all applications, the Council appointed the following four new members to the SSC:

- **Dr. Geret DePiper**, NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Social Sciences Branch (Economist/Social Scientist)
- **Dr. Gavin Fay**, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's School of Marine Science and Technology (Fisheries Biologist/Ecologist)
- **Dr. Jorge Holzer**, University of Maryland, Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics (Economist/Social Scientist)
- **Dr. Alexei Sharov**, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Service (Stock Assessment)

The new members will serve a 3-year term beginning March 1, 2020.

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

The Council reviewed a public hearing document for the amendment considering changes to the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Goals and Objectives as well as changes to permitting for the *Illex* fishery. The Council approved taking the document out for public hearings once final editing is completed by staff. The Council decided not to identify any preliminary preferred alternatives at this time but did simplify the potential *Illex* fishery permitting requalification options by removing several redundant alternatives. Hearings are anticipated in April 2020, with final action considered in June 2020. The status of this action can be tracked at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment>.

Update on *Illex* Working Group

The Council received an update on the *Illex* Working Group's progress related to analyses for modifying the *Illex* quota. The Working Group will have several products ready to present to the Council's SSC for the May 2020 SSC meeting. Additional information related to this working group is available at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-working-group>.

2020 Implementation Plan

The Council reviewed and approved its 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. The 2020 Implementation Plan identifies the specific activities, amendments, frameworks, specifications, and other projects the Council expects to initiate, continue, or complete during the year. The plan also organizes the Council's planned work for the year within the context of the goals and objectives defined in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan to ensure that progress is made in each area. During the meeting, the Council also discussed the planned meeting topics for 2020. The strategic plan and implementation plan are both available at www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan.

NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Programs

Dr. Jon Hare presented a comprehensive overview of the Northeast Fisheries Science Fisheries Science Center's (NEFSC) Survey and Data Collection Programs. The presentation included details on the NEFSC's organization, priorities and strategic goals, data collection programs, assessment and modeling programs, other scientific initiatives, and budget structure. Dr. Hare also described the Center's involvement with various MAFMC activities. Council members and members of the public noted that this agenda item was very informative and provided a great opportunity for questions and dialogue. The presentation can be viewed online [here](#).

Kitty Hawk Wind Project

The Council received a presentation on the Kitty Hawk Offshore Wind Project from Brian Benito, the project's permitting manager. Kitty Hawk Wind is being developed by Avangrid Renewables in a lease area located 24 miles off the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina. Mr. Benito's presentation described recent and upcoming planning and assessment activities and fisheries outreach.

Other Business

Omnitracs VMS Units: The Council discussed the recent announcement that the McMurdo 'Omnitracs' VMS operated by vessels with Greater Atlantic Region permits will not be supported by its satellite provider after March 31, 2020. According to GARFO's notice to fishermen (distributed January 15, 2020) the 'Omnitracs' 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. Several stakeholders in the Mid-Atlantic region have voiced their concern with both the cost burden and the short timeframe allowed to complete this transition. The Council agreed to write a letter to the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement addressing these concerns.

Next Council Meeting

April 7-9, 2020

Stockton Seaview Hotel
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<http://www.mafmc.org/council-events/april-2020-council-meeting>