



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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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.

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.

2020 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

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)^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}
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

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>Develop and approve new specifications:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass recreational management measures • 2021 bluefish recreational measures • 2021-2022 golden tilefish specifications • 2021-2022 specifications for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish • 2021-2023 specifications for longfin and <i>lllex</i> squids • 2021-2023 RH/S cap for Atlantic mackerel fishery • 2021-2026 surfclam and ocean quahog specifications
<p>Review specifications and recommend changes if needed:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass • 2021 bluefish specifications • 2021 blueline tilefish specifications • butterfish cap performance report • 2020-2021 chub mackerel specifications • 2021 spiny dogfish specifications

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
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB) and River Herring and Shad (RH/S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illex</i> Permitting & MSB Goals Amd: Review Public Hearing Doc and Select Preliminary Preferred Alternatives • <i>Illex</i> Working Group Update 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illex</i> Permitting & MSB Goals Amd: Final Action • <i>Illex</i> Working Group: Review Findings • <i>Illex</i> Squid 2021-2023 Specs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mackerel and Butterfish 2021-2022 specs • RH/S Cap (Mackerel) for 2021-2022 • Longfin Squid 2021-2023 Specs (Including Butterfish Cap) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chub Mackerel 2021 Specs Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review RH/S White Papers
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass (SF/S/BSB)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Review Scoping Plan and Doc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Review Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Alternatives • BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives • Summer Flounder Com/Rec Allocation Study: Update • Rec Reform Initiative: Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Joint Committee/ Board Mtg) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives • BSB Com State Allocation Amd: Final Action • SF/S/BSB 2021 Specs Review • BSB February Rec Fishery: Review • Commercial Scup Discards and GRAs: Review • Rec Reform Initiative: Update 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF/S/BSB Com/Rec Allocation Amd: Approve Public Hearing Doc • SF/S/BSB 2021 Recreational Mgmt Measures • Rec Reform Initiative: Update
Bluefish			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluefish Amd: Review Scoping Comments and Discuss Potential Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluefish Amd: Refine Draft Range of Alternatives (Joint Committee/ Board mtg) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluefish Amd: Approve Range of Alternatives • Bluefish 2021 Specs Review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluefish Amd: Approve Public Hearing Doc
Tilefish		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueline Tilefish 2021 Specs Review • Golden Tilefish 2021 Specs 					

	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
Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SC/OQ)					• SC/OQ 2021-2026 Specs	• SC/OQ Commingling Issue: Update • Surfclam Genetic Study: Update	
Spiny Dogfish						• Spiny Dogfish 2021 Specs Review	
Science Issues	• Approve New SSC Membership					• Research Priorities Update • Joint Council-SSC Meeting	
Other	• Approve 2020 Implementation Plan • Kitty Hawk Wind Pres • GARFO/NEFSC Joint Strategic Plan Pres • NEFSC Survey and Data Collection Program Overview	• Climate Change Scenario Planning: Intro and Plan for Potential East Coast/Mid-Atlantic Exercise • 2020 Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystem Report • EAFM Updates: Risk Assessment and Summer Flounder MSE		• Unmanaged landings update • Update on Habitat Activities		• Review 2020 Implementation Progress and Discuss 2021 Draft Deliverables • HMS Diet Study: Final Report	• 2021 Implementation Plan: Approve • Update on Habitat Activities

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

Table of Contents

- Acronyms..... 2
- Introduction 3
 - The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.....3
 - Strategic Plan Purpose4
 - The Strategic Landscape4
- Vision 5
- Mission 5
- Core Values..... 5
- Strategic Goals 6
- Theme 1: Communication 7
- Theme 2: Science 8
- Theme 3: Management 10
- Theme 4: Ecosystem 11
- Theme 5: Governance 13

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, *Illex* and longfin squids, butterfish, 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

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

Strategic Goals

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

Theme 1: Communication	Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.
Theme 2: Science	Ensure that the Council's management decisions are based on timely and accurate scientific information and methods.
Theme 3: Management	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: Ecosystem	Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.
Theme 5: 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.

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.¹

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.

¹ 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:

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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

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

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

12. EAFM Implementation

- Track EAFM implementation progress
- Use the structured framework process as a tool to implement EAFM
- Collaborate with science partners to address ecosystem information needs

13. Climate change

- Identify climate-related data needs
- Consider management and governance responses to shifting species distributions
- Evaluate ability of current management approaches to respond to shifting species distributions
- Consider management strategies that are responsive to the impacts of climate change on fishery allocations

14. Habitat

- Identify the contributions of inshore habitats to offshore productivity
- Review EFH designations
- Participate in regional habitat partnerships
- Develop the linkages between habitat science/conservation and fishery outcomes
- Ensure that Council habitat policies reflect current scientific information and best management practices
- Examine the use of EFH/HAPCs to ensure ecosystem integrity

15. Offshore energy

- Collaborate with partners on offshore energy issues to identify information needs and evaluate impacts
- Comment on proposed offshore energy projects

16. Forage

- Consider the role of Council-managed species in the ecosystem
- Consider and account for the impacts of Council-managed species on the forage base
- Monitor unmanaged forage landings

17. Ecosystem impacts

- Incorporate information from the SOE reports to identify impacts of Council decisions on the ecosystem
- Consider measures that promote fewer regulatory discards and greater utilization of catch
- Avoid/reduce negative impacts on protected resources

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.

18. Open, accessible process

- Develop/update policies for Council committees and advisory/technical bodies.
- Provide annual updates on Council activities
- Review/update SOPP on a regular basis
- Provide webinars whenever possible

19. Collaboration with management partners

- Review/update regional operating agreement
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, procedures with ASMFC for joint meetings/actions
- Develop agreements with NEFMC and SAFMC
- Review composition/operation of Council committees to address management partner concerns

20. Stakeholder interests

- Create new opportunities for general public comment during meetings
- Add opportunities for public comment on implementation plans
- Evaluate the composition of advisory bodies
- Improve communication regarding the use of public input in management decisions

21. Member and staff training and development

- Provide opportunities for Council member training
- Support staff development
- Promote staff-to-staff collaboration with management partners

Managed Fisheries

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

