



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: September 24, 2021
To: Executive Committee
From: Chris Moore, Executive Director
Subject: 2022 Implementation Plan – Initial Discussion

The Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, October 5 to receive an update on the 2021 Implementation Plan and discuss proposed actions and deliverables for 2022. The Council will review and approve a complete 2022 Implementation Plan in December. The following items are enclosed for Committee review:

1. 2021 Proposed Actions and Deliverables – End-of-Year Updates
2. Draft 2022 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

2021 Actions and Deliverables

End-of-Year Updates

The table below provides an update on the status of proposed actions and deliverables from the Council's 2021 Implementation Plan. This document reflects the expected status of each item by the end of 2021 (tasks may be marked as "Completed" if they will be addressed at the October or December meetings).

- **Completed:** The task is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. Amendments, frameworks, and specifications are considered "Completed" once the Council has taken final action.
- **In Progress:** The task is on track, and work will carry over into the following year.
- **Ongoing:** The task is part of the Council's routine activities and does not have an expected end point.
- **Delayed or Postponed:** The original timeline has shifted.

(A) before an item signifies that it is an addition to the deliverables originally approved for 2020

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass		
Develop 2022-2023 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Completed	
Develop 2022 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Completed	
Review and potentially revise commercial minimum mesh size regulations and exemptions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	In Progress	Further review needed. Council may hire a contractor to conduct an in-depth analysis of multiple commercial measures within the FMP including mesh size regulations
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Continue development of a framework action and technical guidance documents to address the prioritized Recreational Reform Initiative topics.	In Progress	Recreational Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addendum is in progress. Other framework and technical guidance document topics are delayed.
Begin development of an amendment to consider recreational sector separation and recreational catch accounting for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish.	Delayed	Delayed to allow more staff time to be dedicated to the Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addendum.
Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas	Postponed	This evaluation focuses on previous year discards compared with overall trends. Commercial discards were not available for 2020 due to 6 month suspension of observer program.

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Complete the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment	Completed	Final action expected Dec 2021. Additional staff work related to rulemaking will occur in 2022.
Continue development of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder	In Progress	Project is on track. Council and Board approved range of objectives and alternatives for evaluation in August. Expected completion – May/June 2022.
Support management track assessments for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Completed	
(A) Support industry and MSC requests during Scup MSC certification process	In Progress	
(A) Consider ASMFC remand of Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation Amendment	Completed	The remand resulted in modifications to final action. Rulemaking is expected in 2022 for the 2023 fishing year. The Commission will implement the state allocation changes for the 2022 fishing year.
(A) Support 2022 research track assessment for black sea bass	Ongoing	
Bluefish		
Develop 2022-2023 bluefish specifications	Completed	
Develop 2022 bluefish recreational management measures	Completed	
Develop advisory panel fishery performance report	Completed	
Complete the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment	Completed	
Initiate action to implement a possession limit for frigate and bullet mackerel in the Mid-Atlantic	Delayed	No progress expected in 2021 due to other priorities. Note: This action was proposed for inclusion in the Bluefish FMP due to the high co-occurrence of bullet/frigate mackerel and bluefish catch.
Support management track assessment for bluefish	Completed	
(A) Support 2022 research track assessment for bluefish	Ongoing	
Golden and Blueline Tilefish		
Review 2022 specifications for golden tilefish and develop 2023-2024 specifications	Completed	
Develop 2022-2024 blueline tilefish specifications	Completed	

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Review performance of private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting	Completed	
Support management track assessment for golden tilefish	Completed	
Initiate golden tilefish multi-year specifications framework (EO 13921 recommendation)	Completed	
Review 2020 tilefish survey report and consider funding/logistics for 2022 survey	Completed	
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB)		
Review 2022 Atlantic mackerel, chub mackerel, longfin, and butterfish specifications	Completed	
Develop 2022 <i>Illex</i> specifications	Completed	
Consider modifications to the <i>Illex</i> incidental possession limit during closures (EO 13921 recommendation)	Completed	No changes recommended by Council.
Consider modifications to the butterfish minimum mesh size regulations (EO 13921 recommendation)	Completed	No changes recommended by Council.
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Review butterfish cap performance report	Completed	
Review HMS/chub mackerel diet study final report	Completed	
Support management track assessment for Atlantic mackerel	Completed	
Support research track assessments for butterfish and <i>Illex</i> squid (including possible additional <i>Illex</i> working group products)	Ongoing	Peer reviews are in 2022.
(A) Mackerel Rebuilding 2.0 FW	In Progress	
(A) Modification of 2021 <i>Illex</i> quota (implemented via MSB Specs final rule)	Completed	
River Herring and Shad (RH/S)		
Review RH/S cap performance and RH/S update	Completed	
(A) RH/S Run Count Story Map	Completed	Carried over from 2020
Spiny Dogfish		
Review 2022 spiny dogfish specifications	Completed	

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Develop advisory panel fishery performance report	Completed	
Develop spiny dogfish trip limit white paper (EO 13921 recommendation)	Completed	
(A) Support 2022 research track assessment for spiny dogfish	Ongoing	
Surfclam and Ocean Quahog		
Review 2022 specifications for surfclam and ocean quahog	Completed	
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Continue work on an action to address issues with surfclam and ocean quahog species separation requirements	In Progress	The Council will review a white paper and discuss next steps in December
Review surfclam genetic study final report	In Progress	To be reviewed in 2022
Science and Research		
Convene a workshop to review and consider redevelopment of the research set-aside (RSA) program	Completed	Three webinar workshops (July, August, October) and one in-person workshop (November)
Conduct a biennial review and update of the 2020-2024 research priorities document	In Progress	Scheduled for the December 2021 Council meeting.
Convene a joint Council/SSC meeting	Completed	
Review outcomes and recommendations from SSC Economic Work Group	In Progress	Input part of RSA Workshops to date. Final Work Group products to be presented at December 2021 Council meeting.
Support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead)	Ongoing	Continue to work with GARFO on this initiative including electronic reporting
(A) Establish an SSC Ecosystem Work Group	Completed	
(A) Ocean City, MD Video project	In Progress	Covid, tech issues, and additional video capture may delay into early 2022 (not on 2021 deliverables as originally scheduled for completion in late 2020)
(A) SSC sub-group peer review of recreational fishing models	Completed	Peer review meeting was held on September 20, 2021. Peer review report and next steps are currently under development.
Ecosystem and Ocean Planning/Habitat		
Develop and review the 2021 EAFM risk assessment report	Completed	
Coordinate the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)	In Progress	To be completed July 2022

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Continue work on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo	Delayed	Work to advance upon completion of NRHA
Maintain joint MAFMC and New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) offshore wind web pages	Ongoing	
Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development	Ongoing	
Continue development of East Coast climate change and distribution shift scenario planning initiative	In Progress	Project currently on schedule. Currently doing public scoping; focused workshops late 2021 and early 2022. Completion expected late 2022.
(A) SSC and EOP Committee review of thread herring exempted fishing permit application	Completed	
General		
Review commercial landings of unmanaged species	Completed	
Complete advisory panel reappointment for all APs	Completed	
Develop comment letters to various agencies regarding E.O. 13921 recommendations	Completed	
(A) Participate on CCC Working Groups and Subcommittees (Habitat, Area-Based Management, Legislative)	Ongoing	
(A) Transition to Webex for virtual meetings	Completed	
Communication and Outreach		
Continue to implement the Council communication and outreach plan	Ongoing	
Develop and maintain Council action web pages	Ongoing	
Develop fact sheets and outreach materials as needed	Ongoing	
Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel	Completed	
Conduct virtual or in-person workshops to support commercial eVTR implementation	Completed	
Maintain general and issue-specific email distribution lists	Ongoing	
Staff Wrap-Up on Completed Council Actions		
Illux Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	Completed	Awaiting NMFS EA edits as of 9/22/2021

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2021	Notes
Possible Additions <i>The items below were included in the 2021 Implementation Plan to be considered if time and resources allowed.</i>		
Establish a working group to evaluate potential approaches for incorporating additional stakeholder knowledge and input in the stock assessment process		
Review red crab and lobster fishery exemptions for discrete deep sea coral protected zones		
Initiate action to address right whale issues	In Progress	More clarity anticipated after Oct. Council Meeting
Develop a white paper on collecting fixed/variable costs and employment information (for all Northeast fisheries)		
Modify list of ecosystem component species from Unmanaged Forage Amendment (e.g., addition of cancer crabs)		

2022 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass

1. Review 2023 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
2. Review/Develop 2023 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
3. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
4. Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas
5. Complete Recreational Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addendum for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish
6. Continue development of an amendment to consider recreational sector separation and recreational catch accounting for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish
7. Continue development of a framework action and technical guidance documents to address the remaining prioritized Recreational Reform Initiative topics for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish
8. Support 2022 research track assessment for black sea bass
9. Review and potentially revise commercial minimum mesh size regulations and exemptions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
10. Complete the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder

Bluefish

11. Review 2023 specifications for bluefish
12. Review/Develop 2023 recreational management measures for bluefish
13. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
14. Support 2022 research track assessment for bluefish

Note: Deliverables 5, 6, and 7 in the previous section will also address bluefish recreational management issues

Golden and Blueline Tilefish

15. Review 2023 specifications for golden tilefish
16. Review 2023 specifications for blueline tilefish
17. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
18. Review performance of private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting
19. Conduct 2022 golden tilefish survey pending approval of funding/logistics
20. Initiate golden tilefish 5-year ITQ program review

Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB)

21. Develop MSB advisory panel fishery performance reports
22. Develop 2023-2025 chub mackerel specifications

23. Complete Mackerel Rebuilding 2.0 Framework (including 2023-2024 specifications)
24. Develop 2023-2024 butterfish specifications
25. Review 2023 specifications for longfin squid
26. Review 2022 specifications for *Illlex* and develop 2023 specifications for *Illlex*
27. Support 2022 research track assessments for butterfish and *Illlex*

River Herring and Shad (RH/S)

28. Develop 2023-2024 RH/S Cap via Mackerel Rebuilding 2.0 Framework

Spiny Dogfish

29. Support 2022 research track assessment for spiny dogfish
30. Develop 2023-2026 Specifications

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

31. Review 2023 specifications for surfclam and ocean quahog
32. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
33. Continue work on an action to address surfclam and ocean quahog species separation requirements
34. Review surfclam genetic study final report

Science and Research

35. Complete final RSA workshop report with a recommendation on whether to redevelop the Mid-Atlantic RSA program
36. Approve SSC membership
37. Convene a joint Council/SSC meeting
38. Review outcomes and recommendations from SSC Ecosystem Work Group
39. Review outcomes and recommendations from SSC Economic Work Group
40. Support 2023 applying state-spaced model research track assessment
41. Complete Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project

Ecosystem and Ocean Planning/Habitat

42. Maintain joint MAFMC and New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) offshore wind web pages
43. Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development
44. Coordinate the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)
45. Continue work on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo
46. Develop and review the 2022 EAFM risk assessment report
47. Initiate comprehensive review and update to EAFM risk assessment
48. Continue development of East Coast climate change and distribution shift scenario planning initiative

General

49. Review commercial landings of unmanaged species

50. Participate on CCC Working Groups and Subcommittees (Habitat, Area-Based Management, Legislative)
51. Host 2022 CCC Meeting
52. Respond to requests for information associated with audits for MSC-certified fisheries (Atlantic surfclam, ocean quahog, Illex squid, longfin squid, spiny dogfish)

Communication and Outreach

53. Continue to implement the Council communication and outreach plan
54. Develop new and maintain existing Council action web pages
55. Develop fact sheets and outreach materials as needed
56. Enhance the use of email distribution tools to inform and engage stakeholders
57. Increase the use of website analytics to better understand site performance and visitor traffic
58. Continue to grow the Council's YouTube channel

Staff Wrap-Up on Completed Actions

The following actions have been, or are expected to be, approved by the Council by the end of 2021 but will require staff work in 2022 to finalize for submission to NMFS:

59. Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment
60. Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment

Possible Additions

To be considered for addition to the 2022 implementation plan if time and resources allow:

61. Initiate action to address sea turtle bycatch in MAFMC trawl fisheries
62. Initiate action to address right whale issues
63. Initiate action to implement a possession limit for frigate and bullet mackerel in the Mid-Atlantic
64. Comment on thread herring exempted fishing permit application