



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Mid-Atlantic Council Completes 2014-2018 Strategic Plan**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council unanimously approved a first-ever strategic plan during last week's meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. The plan maps out a series of goals and strategies that will guide the Council's management activities from 2014 through 2018.

"This is the culmination of more than 3 years of work with our stakeholders and management partners," said Council Chairman Rick Robins. "We took a deliberate and collaborative approach to make sure that the interests and concerns of our stakeholders were accurately reflected in the plan."

After initiating the strategic planning effort in 2010, the Council spent nearly a year collecting and analyzing input from stakeholders throughout the Northeast region. More than 1,500 individuals provided input and ideas for the plan through online surveys and position letters. Council members and staff also held roundtable meetings with fishermen in ports from North Carolina to Massachusetts to discuss their observations and ideas for improving management of Mid-Atlantic fisheries.

The plan is organized around four priority areas: Communication, Governance, Science, and Management. Each section includes a single goal with a series of objectives and strategies. In total, the plan includes 18 objectives and 85 strategies.

Executive Director Dr. Chris Moore highlighted the plan's emphasis on strengthening partnerships. "This is not just a strategic plan for the Mid-Atlantic Council. It's a plan for Mid-Atlantic fisheries. Our success in achieving these goals will depend on coordination and collaboration with our management partners."

Leaders of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Northeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries have both voiced their support for the Council's effort to strengthen partnerships. "I am particularly pleased to see that the science section focuses on strengthening the existing relationship with the Science Center," commented NEFSC Director Dr. Bill Karp during a discussion of the draft strategic plan earlier this year. He added that "there is a clear need for better engagement among all the participants in the Council process relative to the way we use science."

Northeast Regional Administrator John Bullard also lauded the Council's focus on working more effectively with NMFS, specifically noting that the Mid-Atlantic Council was the first of the eight fishery management Councils to complete an operating agreement with the NMFS regional office.

The Council will spend the remainder of the year developing an implementation plan which will serve as a link between the Council's ongoing management activities and the long-term strategies outlined in the strategic plan. The Executive Committee will meet in October to draft an implementation plan for full Council review in December.

The final strategic plan is available online at [www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan).