



2022 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 2022 Implementation Plan identifies specific activities the Council expects to undertake in 2022 to make progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. The document is organized into two sections:

1. The **2022 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 2022 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.

2022 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, BLACK SEA BASS

1. Review 2023 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
2. 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 Amendment (including 2023-2024 specifications)
24. Develop 2023-2024 specifications for butterfish
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 Amendment

SPINY DOGFISH

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

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 amendment to address surfclam and ocean quahog species separation requirements
34. Review surfclam genetic study final report

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

35. Complete final Research Set-Aside (RSA) workshop report with a recommendation on whether to redevelop the Mid-Atlantic RSA program
36. Approve Scientific and Statistical Committee (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 Council Coordination Committee (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, scup)

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 expand the reach and utility of 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. Continue to track thread herring EFP application and develop comments, if needed
- 65. Develop economic, recreational fleet dynamics, and population dynamic simulation models for black sea bass, scup, and/or bluefish (building on existing models, including those developed for the summer flounder MSE)
- 66. Develop a policy and/or process for reviewing EFP applications for new or expanding fisheries as it relates to the unmanaged forage amendment
- 67. Initiate a framework to consider additional spiny dogfish trip limit changes (contingent on assessment results)
- 68. Conduct additional outreach to improve awareness of, and compliance with, private recreational tilefish reporting requirements
- 69. Consider spatial management options for river herring and shad (contingent on seasonal analysis)
- 70. Initiate action to reimplement "did not fish" reports for commercial and/or for-hire operators
- 71. Explore the use of unused ACL carryover for the Council's fisheries

2022 Priority Activities

The purpose of this section of the document is to link the Council’s annual activities to the goals and objectives contained in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan to ensure that progress is being made in all five goal areas. The activities listed in this section include (1) the deliverables contained in the “Proposed Actions and Deliverables” section and (2) other ongoing/routine activities that address certain strategic plan objectives. The **Deliverable** column indicates whether the activity is in the list of proposed actions and deliverables from the previous section (Y=Yes; N=No). The **Timeframe** column describes the estimated timeframe for completion of the activity/deliverable (**2022**: Work is likely to be completed in 2022; **TBD**: Work is expected to extend beyond 2022; **Ongoing**: This item is part of the Council’s routine activities and does not have an expected end point; **Annually**: This activity occurs on an annual basis). Please note that these timeframes are subject to change.

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 2022	Deliverable	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).	Y	Ongoing
	Increase the use of website analytics to better understand site performance and visitor traffic	Y	2022
	Enhance the use of email distribution tools to inform and engage stakeholders	Y	Ongoing
	Continue to expand the reach and utility of the Council’s YouTube channel through the increased use of live streams and creation of recorded presentations and other informational videos.	Y	2022
2. Increase stakeholder participation in the Council process.	Utilize webinars, conference lines, and other technology to expand remote access to and/or participation in Council and advisory body meetings.	N	Ongoing
	Develop outreach materials to facilitate constructive stakeholder input on proposed management actions (e.g., scoping guides, video presentations, fact sheets, etc.).	Y	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.	Y	Ongoing
	Continue to promote relevant educational opportunities.	N	Ongoing
	Collaborate with science partners to develop outreach materials related to stock assessments for Council-managed species.	N	Ongoing
	Ensure that Council documents use plain language and minimize the use of acronyms to the extent possible.	N	Ongoing

SCIENCE

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

Objective	Priority Activities for 2022	Deliverable	Timeframe
4. Collaborate with science partners and research institutions to ensure that the Council's science priorities are addressed.	Support stock assessments for Council-managed species.	Y	Ongoing
	Complete Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project	Y	2022
	Review surfclam genetic study final report	Y	2022
	Conduct 2022 golden tilefish survey pending approval of funding/logistics	Y	2022
5. Support the use of collaborative research to meet the Council's science, data, and information needs.	Complete final RSA workshop report with a recommendation on whether to redevelop the Mid-Atlantic RSA program	Y	2022
	Identify research needs that can be addressed using collaborative approaches with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishery participants.	N	Ongoing
	Continue to support development of cooperative research programs that use "vessels of opportunity" from all sectors to address science and research needs.	N	Ongoing
6. Promote efficient and accurate data collection, monitoring, and reporting systems.	Continue to support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead).	Y	Ongoing
	Review performance of private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting.	Y	2022
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.	N	Ongoing
	Review outcomes and recommendations from SSC Economic Work group.	Y	2022
	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.	N	Ongoing
8. Identify and prioritize the Council's research needs.	<i>No specific activities related to this objective are planned for 2022.</i>		

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 2022	Deliverable	Timeframe
9. Strengthen state, federal, and interstate partnerships to promote coordinated, efficient management of fishery resources.	Participate on the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council.	N	Ongoing
10. Adapt management approaches and priorities to address emerging issues and changing fishery conditions.	Review and potentially revise commercial minimum mesh size regulations and exemptions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Y	2022
	Recreational Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addendum for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish	Y	2022
	Amendment to consider recreational sector separation and recreational catch accounting for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish	Y	TBD
	Framework action and technical guidance documents to address the remaining prioritized Recreational Reform Initiative topics for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish	Y	TBD
	Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas.	Y	2022
	Mackerel Rebuilding 2.0 Amendment	Y	2022
	Amendment to address surfclam and ocean quahog species separation requirements	Y	TBD
11. Ensure that management decisions consider social, economic, and community impacts and opportunities.	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder	Y	2022
	Continue to utilize multi-year management approaches.	N	Ongoing

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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"> • 2023 summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass recreational management measures • 2023-2025 chub mackerel specifications • 2023-2024 butterfish specifications • 2023 longfin squid specifications • 2023 <i>Illex</i> squid specifications • 2023-2024 Atlantic mackerel specifications (via Mackerel Rebuilding FW) • 2023-2026 spiny dogfish specifications
<p>Review specifications and recommend changes if needed:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass specifications • 2023 bluefish specifications • 2023 bluefish recreational management measures • 2023 golden tilefish specifications • 2023 blueline tilefish specifications • 2022 <i>Illex</i> squid specifications • 2023 surfclam and ocean quahog 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 2022	Deliverable	Timeframe
12. Implement the Council’s Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) as described in the EAFM Guidance Document.	Develop and review the 2022 EAFM risk assessment report.	Y	2022
	Comprehensive review and update to EAFM risk assessment	Y	TBD
	Review SSC Ecosystem Work Group recommendations regarding integration of ecosystem information into the management process	Y	2022
13. Collaborate with management partners to develop ecosystem approaches that are responsive to the impacts of climate change.	Continue development of the East Coast climate change and distribution shift scenario planning initiative.	Y	TBD
14. Identify, designate, and protect habitat using an ecosystem approach.	Coordinate the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)	Y	2022
	Continue work on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo	Y	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.	Y	Ongoing
	Maintain joint MAFMC-NEFMC Offshore Wind web page and Offshore Wind Notices to Mariners web page.	Y	Ongoing
	Engage offshore wind developers to support effective communication and outreach with the fishing industry.	Y	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.	N	Ongoing
	Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the impact of Council-managed fisheries on the forage base.	N	Ongoing
	Review report on unmanaged species landings and respond to changes if necessary.	Y	Annually
17. Develop management approaches that minimize adverse ecosystem impacts.	Review State of the Ecosystem Report	N	Annually
	Develop management measures that consider ecological interactions to reduce regulatory discards, promote greater utilization of catch, and minimize impacts to habitat.	N	Ongoing

	Consider fishery management approaches that avoid or reduce negative impacts on protected resources.	N	Ongoing
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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 2022	Deliverable	Timeframe
18. Maintain an open, accessible, and clearly defined process.	Convene joint Council-SSC meeting.	Y	2022
	Provide an update on Council activities and a summary of implementation Plan progress.	N	Annually
	Provide conference lines or Webinar access to Council and advisory body meetings whenever feasible.	N	Ongoing
19. Engage management partners to promote effective collaboration and coordination.	Participate on CCC Working Groups and Subcommittees (Habitat, Area-Based Management, Legislative)	Y	Ongoing
	Host the 2022 CCC Meeting	Y	2022
	Track relevant MSA/fisheries legislation and develop comments as requested.	N	Ongoing
	Review the composition and operation of Council committees.	N	Annually
	Respond to requests for information associated with audits for MSC-certified fisheries (Atlantic surfclam, ocean quahog, Illex squid, longfin squid, spiny dogfish)	Y	Ongoing
20. Ensure that stakeholder interests are understood and addressed.	Work with advisory panels to develop annual fishery performance reports	Y	Annually
21. Provide training and development opportunities for Council members and staff to enhance organizational performance.	Support the ongoing professional development of Council staff.	N	Ongoing
	Continue to participate in staff-to-staff meetings and collaborate with GARFO, NEFSC, and ASMFC on other initiatives.	N	Ongoing