

2020 Deliverables – Supplemental Project Descriptions

This document contains descriptions of some of the projects and activities included in the “Proposed Actions and Deliverables” section of the Council’s 2020 Implementation Plan. Routine activities such as annual specifications and fishery performance reports are not included in this document. Descriptions and timelines are subject to change.

Item numbers in the table below are associated with the deliverable numbers on pages 2-3 of the Draft 2020 Implementation Plan.

#	Action/Project	Staff	Description
4	Recreational Reform Initiative (<i>“initiate action to revise recreational management system for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass to allow for greater stability and flexibility”</i>)	Beaty	This is a joint initiative with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and NOAA Fisheries to develop strategies to increase management flexibility and stability for jointly managed recreational fisheries (i.e., black sea bass, summer flounder, scup, and bluefish). This action is still in the planning stages. Depending on the desired outcomes, an FMP change (framework or amendment) may not be needed.
6	Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment	Beaty, Coutré, Dancy	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC amendment will reevaluate and potentially revise the commercial and recreational sector allocations for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. This action was initiated in part to address the allocation-related impacts of the revised recreational data from MRIP. Scoping hearings will be held February 13 – March 3. Amendment development is expected to continue into 2021. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment
7	Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment	Beaty	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC action will consider adjusting the allocations of the black sea bass commercial quota among states and whether the allocations should be managed jointly by the Council and Commission. The Council will review a scoping document and scoping plan in April 2020. The Council and Board plan to discuss next steps for this action during their joint meeting in May 2020. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bsb-commercial-allocation
8	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation for summer flounder	Muffley	Using the EAFM summer flounder conceptual model that was finalized in December 2019, the Council will conduct a management strategy evaluation (MSE) that will identify and evaluate the biological and management implications of alternative strategies to minimize recreational summer flounder discards. The recreational discards MSE, the third step in the EAFM decision framework, will begin in 2020 and will involve extensive science, management, and stakeholder engagement.
12	Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment	Seeley	This joint MAFMC/ASMFC amendment considers potential revisions to the allocation of Atlantic bluefish between the commercial and recreational fisheries and the commercial

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			allocations to the states. This action will also review the goals and objectives of the bluefish FMP and the quota transfer processes and establish a rebuilding plan for bluefish. The Council will hold a second round of scoping hearings February 13 -March 4. Amendment development is expected to continue into 2021. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment
16	Tilefish private recreational permitting and reporting issues (GARFO lead)	Seeley	This action will develop permitting and reporting regulations for private recreational tilefish vessels. The action was approved in a final rule amending the golden tilefish FMP to include blueline tilefish in November 2017 with delayed implementation. The proposed rule published in the Federal Register on January 29, 2020 with a comment period through February 28, 2020. Implementation and outreach are expected by May 1, 2020.
17	Tilefish survey	Seeley	The 2020 golden tilefish fishery-independent bottom longline survey was initiated with the goal of generating an index of abundance. The survey design was developed using the findings from the pilot golden and blueline tilefish survey conducted in the summer of 2017. The 2020 survey will be conducted between May and June. http://www.mafmc.org/tilefish
22	<i>Illex</i> Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	Didden	This action will consider modifications to the <i>Illex</i> permitting system as well as revisions to the goals and objectives for the MSB FMP. Final action is anticipated in June 2020. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment
23	<i>Illex</i> Working Group (real time <i>Illex</i> squid management and/or quota adjustments)	Didden	The <i>Illex</i> Working Group will address two closely related problems. The first is to develop an approach for in-year quota adjustments. The second is to lay the basis for a benchmark stock assessment (Research Track) in 2021. Each task will require involvement of scientists, industry, and managers. Both tasks are focused on the challenge of identifying appropriate catch limits for a dynamic, short-lived species whose survival, growth and abundance on the US shelf are driven by a complex interplay of environmental conditions. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-working-group
24	<i>Illex</i> growth and maturity data project	Didden	Using 2019 samples provided by industry, this project is developing information on seasonal <i>Illex</i> growth and maturity in order to inform assessment and management. AIS conducted the biological workups and a cephalopod expert in Spain (https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Angel_Gonzalez6) is conducting the aging work.
26	HMS/chub mackerel diet study	Beaty	In 2018, the Council funded Walt Golet (UMaine/GMRI) and three co-PIs to assess the diets of highly migratory species caught in recreational and commercial fisheries off New Jersey through South Carolina. This is intended to address a data gap identified through the Chub Mackerel Amendment. A final report is expected in the fall of 2020.

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28	River herring and shad (RH/S) discussion papers (e.g. biological caps, New England alignment, hotspots)	Didden	The discussion papers will explore: -Biological caps: can existing survey data provide sufficient information to make adjustments to the RH/S caps? -NE Alignment: how might alignment of the NE and M-A RH/S caps work? -Hotspots: do recent observer data suggest that time-area closures could be useful supplements to the existing RH/S caps?
33	Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Commingling/Discarding Issues Action	Coakley	As surfclams have shifted toward deeper water in recent years, catches including both surfclams and ocean quahogs (“commingling”) have become more common, resulting in increased discards of surfclams on quahog trips and vice versa. Current regulations do not allow surfclams and ocean quahogs to be landed on the same trip. The Council is exploring options to address this issue.
34	Surfclam genetic study	Coakley	This study, contracted with Cornell University, will document the distributions of <i>Spisula solidissima similis</i> and <i>Spisula solidissima solidissima</i> in the nearshore waters of the US Northwest Atlantic.
35	Research Set-Aside (RSA) program review workshop	Seeley	The Research Steering Committee will initiate a workshop to discuss re-development of the Mid-Atlantic RSA program. A workshop will take place after a Research Steering Committee meeting late in 2020.
36	Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (FDDI) (GARFO lead)	n/a	The FDDI is an ongoing GARFO/NEFSC initiative intended to modernize fishery dependent data collection programs that will result in: (1) The development of a modernized data system capable of supporting current and future data collection needs; (2) automated integration of multiple fisheries dependent data sets that will result in a single comprehensive fisheries dependent data set; and (3) consolidation of industry reporting requirements that will minimize the number of systems needed to fulfil reporting requirements while also eliminating redundancy wherever possible.
39	Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project	Didden	This project will use video recording and review to develop an estimate of ocean recreational fishing effort in Maryland. http://www.mafmc.org/s/2_Project-Plan-Video.pdf
41	Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)	Coakley	The NRHA is a collaborative effort to describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast. Work associated with the NRHA is expected to occur from July 2019 through July 2022. The project is being led by a Steering Committee composed of leadership from the major habitat conservation, restoration, and science organizations in the region. Council staff serves as the overall project coordinator and inshore team co-lead. http://www.mafmc.org/nrha

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42	Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo	Coakley	Once improved habitat science products are available from NRHA, the Council can consider an action to complete this review and update/revise its essential fish habitat descriptions.
43	EAFM Risk Assessment update	Muffley	The Council completed the first EAFM risk assessment in 2017 and was updated for the first time in 2019. The risk assessment, particularly the summary risk tables, is a planning tool and provides the Council with a quick synopsis of ecosystem considerations of highest priority and greatest risk to meeting Council management objectives. Staff from the NEFSC and Council will review and update the risk levels for the different risk elements in 2020 using updated stock assessment information, new data analyses, and any other appropriate and relevant information available. The updated risk assessment will be provided to the SSC in March and the Council in April.
45	Offshore wind web pages	Beaty/Sabo	The Council maintains three webpages and an email list to communicate updates on offshore wind energy development with interested stakeholders. The webpages are maintained jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and NOAA Fisheries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mafmc.org/northeast-offshore-wind • http://www.mafmc.org/offshore-wind-notice • http://www.mafmc.org/offshore-wind-comment-opportunities
46	Climate change and distribution shift scenario planning	Dancy	In coordination with a Northeast Regional Coordinating Council working group, the Council will consider initiating a scenario planning process to consider future management strategies in the face of climate change and species distribution shifts. Scenario planning is a tool that managers can use to develop planning and adaptation strategies in the context of uncertain and uncontrollable external forces. This process would involve one or more workshops and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders.
50	Council action web pages	Sabo	Staff maintain action pages for all ongoing Council pages. These pages provide status updates links to related documents. http://www.mafmc.org/council-actions
52	Website update and improvement project	Sabo	Council staff will update the look and feel of the Council website. New photos and graphics will be incorporated, and page organization will be streamlined and improved. New analytics tools will be incorporated to provide better data on site/page traffic and user activity. The overall site structure and organization will not be substantially changed.