



Summer Flounder Conceptual Model

November 13, 2019

At the September 19-20, 2019 meeting, the EOP Committee reviewed the initial 10 draft management questions developed by the summer flounder conceptual model workgroup. The Committee considered the draft questions and identified seven potential topics for questions. The Committee tasked the workgroup with either re-scoping individual questions or developing new questions to address these topics. The questions in black are those that were retained without change by the Committee at the September meeting that address 3 of the topics. Those questions in green have been revised and/or represent newly created questions based on Committee feedback.

The Committee will review, provide feedback, and prioritize these draft questions during their November 13, 2019 webinar. The prioritized list of questions will be provided to the Council at the December 2019 meeting. The Council will then select a priority question to be further evaluated and analyzed through a management strategy evaluation (MSE) beginning in 2020.

Draft Management Questions:

- What are the mechanisms driving summer flounder distribution shift and/or population range expansion? What are the biological, management, and socioeconomic implications of these changes? Identify potential management and science strategies to help account for the impacts of these changes.
- Is the availability and quality of habitat a limiting factor for summer flounder stock productivity? Evaluate changes in critical habitat (i.e., quality, quantity, spatial extent and overlap) across summer flounder life stages, identify habitat thresholds and the implications for stock productivity. Develop potential management goals and strategies to address summer flounder habitat change and identify actionable outcomes for Council consideration.
- Evaluate the biological and economic benefits of minimizing discards and converting discards into landings in the recreational sector. Identify management strategies to effectively realize these benefits.
- What are the most influential elements that impact stock dynamics (i.e., recruitment, distribution, SSB, growth etc.) and management decisions? Identify data gaps for those elements and develop a research planning process to address these gaps.
- How does utilizing recreational data sources at scales that may be inappropriate for the data source (e.g., MRIP data at the state/wave/mode level) affect management variability,

uncertainty, and fishery performance? Evaluate the impact of that variability and uncertainty and its use in the current conservation equivalency process on recreational fishery outcomes.

- Are there alternative allocation schemes that would provide more flexibility in the commercial allocation strategy and allow fishermen to adapt to changing biological, economic, and social dynamics more effectively? Although this would apply for allocations across sectors as well, data limitations, modeling challenges, and mechanism complexities make this larger inter-sector question intractable, at this time. Identify and evaluate potential fleet efficiencies, economic and biological trade-offs and potential adjustments to baseline access to the summer flounder resource by the commercial sector through these alternate allocation schemes.
- Offshore wind construction and operation is likely to impact the ecological and socioeconomic environment for summer flounder and its fisheries. What are the key drivers of recreational and commercial fleet dynamics under different scenarios of opportunity and access level to offshore wind lease areas? Evaluate the changes to and potential trade-offs between sector fleet dynamics and evaluate the biological implications (e.g., spawning stock biomass, recruitment) of these fleet dynamic scenarios. Determine and evaluate fishery management options to address these sector specific implications and trade-offs.