



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: September 24, 2020
To: Executive Committee
From: Chris Moore, Executive Director
Subject: 2021 Implementation Plan – Initial Discussion

The Executive Committee will meet on Monday, October 5 to receive an update on the 2020 Implementation Plan and discuss proposed actions and deliverables for the 2021 Implementation Plan. The Council will review and approve a complete 2021 Implementation Plan in December. The following items are enclosed for Committee review:

1. 2020 Proposed Actions and Deliverables – End-of-Year Updates
2. Draft 2021 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

Related to this discussion is the ongoing development of recommendations in response to the President’s Executive Order 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth. Each Council has been asked to submit a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries. Each recommendation must include a proposal for initiating action by May 6, 2021. The Council is scheduled to finalize its recommendations on Tuesday, October 6. If approved, several of the proposed recommendations would need to be incorporated into the 2021 Implementation Plan. Because the Council’s list has not yet been finalized, these items are noted in a section titled “Possible Additions – E.O. 13921” at the bottom of page 2 in the 2021 Proposed Actions and Deliverables. This list does not include actions or projects that have already been initiated or recommendations that would be directed to other agencies. A complete list of draft recommendations is available in Tab 4 on the October 2020 Council Meeting page at <https://www.mafmc.org/briefing/october-2020>.

2020 Proposed 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 2020 Implementation Plan. This document reflects the expected status of each item by the end of 2020 (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 2020. 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 2020	Notes
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass		
Review 2021 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Completed	
Develop and approve 2021 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass	Completed	Planned for December meeting.
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Initiate action to revise recreational management system for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass to allow for greater stability and flexibility (“Recreational Reform Initiative”)	In Progress	The Council and Board are expected to initiate an action in October.
Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas	Completed	
Continue development of Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Commercial/ Recreational Allocation Amendment	In Progress	Final action expected in 2021.
Continue development of Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment	Completed	Final action expected in December. Amendment submission to NMFS expected in 2021.
Initiate Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder	In Progress	Initiation complete; project is in progress.
(A) Complete summer flounder commercial/recreational allocation study (contract)	Completed	

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2020	Notes
(A) Complete summer flounder recreational F-based management study (contract)	Completed	
Bluefish		
Review 2021 bluefish specifications	Completed	
Develop and approve 2021 bluefish recreational management measures	Completed	Planned for December meeting.
Develop advisory panel fishery performance report	Completed	
Continue development of Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment	In Progress	Final action expected in 2021.
Golden and Blueline Tilefish		
Develop and approve 2021-2022 golden tilefish specifications	Completed	
Review 2021 blueline tilefish specifications	Completed	
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Address private recreational permitting and reporting issues (NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Fisheries Regional Office (GARFO) lead)	Completed	Outreach conducted throughout the year to support implementation of permitting and reporting requirements. Funding provided for eFin Logbook app development.
Tilefish survey	In Progress	Survey complete. Report expected in 2021.
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB)		
Develop and approve 2021-2022 specifications for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish	Completed	
Develop and approve 2021-2023 specifications for longfin and <i>Illex</i> squids	Completed	
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Review butterfish cap performance report	Completed	
Take final action on <i>Illex</i> Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	Completed	Amendment submission to NMFS expected in early 2021.
Review recommendations of <i>Illex</i> Working Group regarding real time <i>Illex</i> squid management and/or quota adjustments	Completed	Work extended in to 2021.
<i>Illex</i> growth and maturity data project	Completed	
Review 2020-2021 chub mackerel specifications	Completed	Planned for October meeting.
HMS/chub mackerel diet study (final report)	Delayed due to COVID-19	

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2020	Notes
River Herring and Shad (RH/S)		
Develop and approve RH/S cap for Atlantic mackerel fishery for 2021-2022	Completed	
Develop RH/S discussion papers (e.g. biological caps, New England alignment, hotspots)	Completed	Council will review at February 2021 meeting.
Spiny Dogfish		
Revise 2021 and develop 2022 spiny dogfish specifications	Completed	Planned for October meeting.
Develop advisory panel fishery performance report	Completed	
Surfclam and Ocean Quahog		
Develop and approve 2021-2026 specifications for surfclam and ocean quahog	Completed	
Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports	Completed	
Initiate Commingling/Discarding Issues Action	In Progress	Initiation complete; project is in progress.
Surfclam genetic study (contract; ongoing)	In Progress	
Science and Research		
Initiate a workshop to review and consider redevelopment of the Research Set-Aside (RSA) program	Postponed	The RSC agreed to postpone the workshop due to COVID-19. Staff continues to work with the RSC chair on development.
Continue to support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead)	Ongoing	Monthly calls with GARFO on eVTR implementation.
Identify new Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) membership	Completed	
Convene joint Council-SSC meeting	Completed	Planned for October meeting.
Maryland Recreational Ocean Effort Video Estimation project (contract)	In Progress	Video capture in progress since Wave 4 (installation delayed by COVID-19).
Develop a process to track progress toward addressing the Council's research priorities.	Completed	Planned for October meeting.
(A) Complete additional analysis needed to complete Omnibus Risk Policy Framework	Completed	
(A) Establish SSC Economic Work Group	Completed	
Ecosystem and Ocean Planning/Habitat		
Coordinate Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)	Ongoing	
Continue work on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo	Ongoing	

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2020	Notes
Update the EAFM risk assessment	Completed	
Develop habitat- and fishery-related comments on offshore energy development	Completed/ Ongoing	Several letters sent on habitat and wind issues.
Maintain joint MAFMC and New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) Offshore Wind web page and Offshore Wind Notices to Mariners web page	Ongoing	Additional page for “Offshore Wind Public Comment Opportunities” page created
Initiate climate change and distribution shift scenario planning	Ongoing	Update expected at October meeting.
General		
Complete the Commercial Fisheries Electronic Vessel Trip Report (eVTR) Framework	Completed	
Track relevant fisheries legislation, including Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and develop comments as requested	Ongoing	
(A) Review commercial landings of unmanaged species	Completed	
(A) Develop recommendations as required by EO 13921	Completed	Planned for October meeting.
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	
Complete the website update and improvement project	In Progress	
Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel	Postponed	Moved to 2021 to align with 3 year appointment cycle for all APs.
(A) Create Council YouTube channel and pre-recorded scoping/public hearing videos	Completed	
(A) Develop webinar participation guide and web page to support increased reliance on webinars	Completed	www.mafmc.org/webinar
(A) Develop new web page on MRIP/Recreational Data Collection	Completed	www.mafmc.org/mrip
(A) Develop eVTR webpages and outreach materials	Completed	www.mafmc.org/evtr

Deliverable	Expected status by end of 2020	Notes
Possible Additions <i>The following items were included in the 2020 Implementation Plan to be considered if time and resources allowed:</i>		
Expand summer flounder recreational management strategy evaluation to include scup and black sea bass (contract)		
Review red crab and lobster fishery exemptions for discrete deep sea coral protected zones		
Develop a white paper on fixed/variable costs and employment information (all Northeast fisheries)		
Initiate action to address right whale issues		
Modify list of ecosystem component species from Unmanaged Forage Amendment (e.g., addition of cancer crabs)		
Review RH/S annual progress update		
Convene a workshop to discuss the impacts of pollutants on Mid-Atlantic fisheries		
Review eVTR submission timeframe		
Aquaculture (address as needed)		

2021 Proposed Actions and Deliverables

DRAFT 9/18/20

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass

1. Develop 2022-2023 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
2. Develop 2022 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
3. Review and potentially revise commercial minimum mesh size regulations and exemptions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
4. Develop advisory panel fishery performance report
5. Continue development of the Recreational Reform Initiative
6. Evaluate commercial scup discards and gear restricted areas
7. Complete the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment
8. Continue development of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) management strategy evaluation (MSE) for summer flounder
9. Support management track assessments for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass

Bluefish

10. Develop 2022-2023 bluefish specifications
11. Develop 2022 bluefish recreational management measures
12. Develop advisory panel fishery performance report
13. Complete the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment
14. Support management track assessment for bluefish

Golden and Blueline Tilefish

15. Review 2022 golden tilefish specifications
16. Develop 2022-2023 (or just 2022) blueline tilefish specifications
17. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
18. Review performance of private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting
19. Support management track assessment for golden tilefish

Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB)

20. Review 2022 Atlantic mackerel, chub mackerel, longfin, and butterfish specifications
21. Develop 2022 *Illex* specifications
22. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
23. Develop and review *Illex* Working Group report
24. Review HMS/chub mackerel diet study final report
25. Support management track assessment for Atlantic mackerel
26. Support research track assessments for butterfish and *Illex* squid

River Herring and Shad (RH/S)

27. Review RH/S cap performance and RH/S update

Spiny Dogfish

28. Review 2022 spiny dogfish specifications
29. Develop advisory panel fishery performance report

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

30. Review 2022 specifications for surfclam and ocean quahog

31. Develop advisory panel fishery performance reports
32. Continue work on Commingling/Discarding Issues Action
33. Review surfclam genetic study final report

Science and Research

34. Convene a workshop to review and consider redevelopment of the research set-aside (RSA) program
35. Conduct a biennial review and update of the 2020-2024 research priorities document
36. Convene a joint Council/SSC meeting
37. Review outcomes and recommendations from SSC Economic Workgroup
38. Support the Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (GARFO lead)

Ecosystem and Ocean Planning/Habitat

39. Develop and review the 2021 EAFM risk assessment report
40. Coordinate the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)
41. Continue work on the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Redo
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. Continue development of East Coast climate change and distribution shift scenario planning initiative

General

45. Review commercial landings of unmanaged species
46. Complete advisory panel reappointment for all APs

Communication and Outreach

47. Continue to implement the Council communication and outreach plan
48. Develop and maintain Council action web pages
49. Develop fact sheets and outreach materials as needed
50. Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel
51. Conduct virtual or in-person workshops to support commercial eVTR implementation
52. Maintain general and issue-specific email distribution lists

Staff Wrap-Up on Completed Actions

The following actions have been, or are expected to be, approved by the Council by the end of 2020 but will require staff work in 2021 to finalize for submission to NMFS:

53. Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment
54. *Illex* Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment

Possible Additions – E.O. 13921

The following items from the Council's draft list of E.O. 13921 recommendations would need to be added to the 2021 deliverables if they are included in the Council's final recommendations submitted to NMFS. Note that this list excludes actions already contained in the sections above or recommendations that would be directed to other agencies. See tab 4 on the October 2020 meeting page for more details.

55. Consider increasing the *Illex* incidental possession limit for vessels possessing a certain amount of longfin squid after the *Illex* fishery closes (could be considered when setting 2022 *Illex* specifications)
56. Consider increasing the amount of butterfish that can be landed by vessels using smaller than 3-inch mesh (could be considered when reviewing 2022 butterfish specifications)
57. Develop a white paper on the potential economic impacts of changing the federal spiny dogfish trip limit
58. Initiate a framework to allow golden tilefish specifications to be set for more than 3 years
59. Develop comment letters to various agencies regarding E.O. 13921 recommendations

Possible Additions – Other

To be considered for addition to the 2021 implementation plan if time and resources allow:

60. Establish a working group to evaluate potential approaches for incorporating additional stakeholder knowledge and input in the stock assessment process
61. Initiate an action to consider recreational sector separation for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish
62. Review red crab and lobster fishery exemptions for discrete deep sea coral protected zones
63. Initiate action to address right whale issues
64. Develop a white paper on collecting fixed/variable costs and employment information (for all Northeast fisheries)
65. Modify list of ecosystem component species from Unmanaged Forage Amendment (e.g., addition of cancer crabs)
66. Initiate a framework action to implement a possession limit for frigate and bullet mackerel in the Mid-Atlantic