



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
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MEMORANDUM

Date: November 20, 2019
To: Council
From: Mary Clark Sabo and Michelle Duval
Subject: Revised Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

At the December 2019 Meeting, the Council will review and consider approval of a revised version of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. The Council previously reviewed and provided feedback on the Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan at the October 2019 meeting. The draft plan was subsequently made available for public comment from October 15, 2019 through November 15, 2019. During this period, two public input webinars were held, and written comments were accepted via an online comment form, email, regular mail, and fax. A total of 15 individuals attended the two webinars, and seven written comments were received from five individuals.

The following attachments are included behind this memo:

1. Revised Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
2. Draft Evaluation Plan
3. Webinar comment summaries
4. Written public comment summary
5. Compiled written comments

Strategic Plan Revisions

Council staff reviewed and provided edits to improve the clarity of language throughout the document. Stakeholders and the public also suggested edits to clarify and enhance the language in the draft. Several modifications are noted for the Council's attention:

- The draft Mission statement now includes the word "fishing" in front of "communities."
- The last strategy under Objective 2 (Communication) incorporates "conference lines and other technologies" as methods of remote access and participation.
- The final bullet under Objective 3 (Communication) is a new strategy that reads "Use plain language in Council documents to improve public understanding."
- The phrase "consider the interests of fisheries, fishing communities, and the public" replaces the previous Governance goal statement language "consider fishery, community, and public interests."

The revised version of the Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan incorporates the wording and content changes described here. A version of the plan with all edits visible in track changes will be available as a supplemental material under this agenda item at <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/december-2019>.

Final formatting of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, including numbering of strategies according to associated objectives, will be completed once the Council has approved any changes.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council DRAFT 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

December 2019

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Acronyms

| | |
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| ASMFC | Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission |
| ACCSP | Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program |
| ACFHP | Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership |
| BREP | Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program |
| EAFM | Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management |
| EFH | Essential Fish Habitat |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| FMP | Fishery Management Plan |
| HAPC | Habitat Area of Particular Concern |
| GARFO | Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office |
| MSA | Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act |
| MSE | Management Strategy Evaluation |
| NCRP | Northeast Cooperative Research Program |
| NEAMAP | Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program |
| NEFMC | New England Fishery Management Council |
| NEFSC | Northeast Fisheries Science Center |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NRCC | Northeast Region Coordinating Council |
| OLE | Office of Law Enforcement |
| SOPP | Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures |
| RSA | Research Set-Aside |
| SSC | Scientific and Statistical Committee |
| S-K | Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program |

Introduction

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (hereafter the Council) is responsible for the conservation and management of more than 64 fish and shellfish stocks that are found within the federal 200-mile limit of the mid-Atlantic region (North Carolina through New York).

The Mid-Atlantic Council was established in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (later renamed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or MSA). The MSA created a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), eliminated foreign fishing within the EEZ, and charged eight regional councils with management of fishery resources in the newly expanded federal waters.

The Council develops fishery management recommendations which must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce before they are finalized and implemented by NOAA Fisheries. All of the Council's fishery management recommendations must be consistent with the ten national standards as defined by the MSA and must be developed in an open, public process as prescribed by law.

Fourteen species are directly managed with specific fishery management plans (FMPs). These include summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, Atlantic bluefish, Atlantic mackerel, *Illex* and longfin squids, butterfish, Atlantic surfclams, ocean quahogs, golden and blueline tilefish, spiny dogfish (joint with the New England Council), and monkfish (joint with the New England Council). In addition, more than 50 forage species are managed as "ecosystem components" in all seven FMPs. The Council partners with other fishery management organizations, including states and NOAA Fisheries, in the development of effective management plans. For instance, spiny dogfish and monkfish are managed under joint FMPs developed in coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). The Council also coordinates the management of summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, and spiny dogfish with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

The Council is made up of 21 voting members and four non-voting members. Seven of the voting members represent the constituent states' fish and wildlife agencies, one represents NOAA Fisheries, and 13 are private citizens who are knowledgeable about recreational fishing, commercial fishing, or marine conservation. Four non-voting members represent and facilitate coordination with the ASMFC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The Council also has a full-time support staff that is based in Dover, Delaware. The staff assists with tasks such as planning and facilitation of meetings, development of FMPs, and coordination with other management agencies. The Council also utilizes advisory bodies, including a Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and advisory panels for fisheries or other specific issues.

Over the last 43 years the Council has made significant progress toward rebuilding stocks that were once overfished and ensuring sustainable fisheries that provide the greatest overall benefit to the Nation. However, the Council still faces social, economic, and ecological challenges that impact the stability and sustainability of Mid-Atlantic fisheries. The strategic planning process is critical for defining the Council's future and will enable proactive, efficient, and effective responses to the challenges that lie ahead.

This strategic plan will guide the Council's activities and priorities for the years 2020 through 2024. The goals and objectives described in this plan have been informed by the foundation created and progress achieved under the Council's previous strategic plan, as well as stakeholders, the public, and management partners.

The Council's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was developed to meet the following overarching objectives:

- Maintain sustainable fisheries, ecosystems, and habitats in the Mid-Atlantic;
- Address specific issues identified by the Council and its constituents;
- Improve communication with constituents and other organizations;
- Improve the Council's ability to collect and use input from constituents and management partners;
- Increase efficiency in the management process;
- Promote stability in Mid-Atlantic fisheries; and,
- Establish a more proactive process for addressing management challenges.

The Strategic Landscape

The Council is operating in a rapidly changing world and faces increasing and competing demands on its time and resources. Over the next five years, the Council will confront new and ongoing challenges that will require it to prioritize management activities and make difficult decisions, including:

- Limited staff resources and capacity to respond to unforeseen circumstances.
- Competing constituent interests.
- Changing ocean conditions that impact the distribution, productivity, and sustainability of managed species.
- Competing ocean uses and their potential impacts on the Council's fisheries.
- Habitat loss and degradation.
- Interactions between protected resources and managed species.
- Availability of management partner resources to address the Council's needs/priorities.

Within this context, the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is designed to provide a framework to guide progress toward the Council's long-term goals and allow the Council to be responsive to changing circumstances.

Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Goals

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

Strategic Goals

The following goals have been identified to help the Council advance towards its Vision during the years 2020 through 2024.

Communication: *Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.*

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

Management: *Develop effective management strategies that provide for sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems while considering the needs of fishing communities and other resource users.*

Ecosystem: *Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.*

Governance: *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.*

For each of these goals, the Council has developed a suite of objectives and associated strategies to guide its progress over the next five years.

Communication

GOAL: *Engage stakeholders and the public through education and outreach that foster sustained participation in, and awareness of, the Council process.*

Objective 1. Use a wide range of communication tools and methods tailored to engage target audiences.

- Employ a variety of traditional, web-based, and social media tools to disseminate relevant information, updates, and communication materials.
- Upgrade the content and organization of the Council website to enhance usability for target audiences.
- Coordinate communication efforts with management partners and other organizations to expand the distribution of messages to a broader audience.
- Seek opportunities to expand media coverage of Council actions, managed fisheries, and opportunities for stakeholder participation.
- Expand the use of “interested-parties” email lists to deliver fishery- and action-specific information and updates to interested stakeholders.
- Maintain the online calendar of meetings and events with links to meeting materials and supplemental information.
- Establish a Communication/Outreach Advisory Panel to assist in the review and development of communication and outreach tools and approaches.

Objective 2. Increase stakeholder participation in the Council process.

- Hold workshops to facilitate collaborative development of innovative management approaches among fishermen, managers, scientists, and other interested stakeholders.
- Develop outreach materials to facilitate constructive stakeholder input on proposed management actions (e.g. scoping guides, fact sheets, etc.).
- Schedule, advertise, and conduct meetings and public hearings in a manner that encourages and enables stakeholder attendance and participation.
- Maintain action-specific web pages to inform stakeholders about opportunities to participate in the development of Council actions (e.g., FMPs, amendments, and frameworks).
- Expand the use of online comment forms to gather public input.
- Utilize webinars, conference lines, and other technology to provide opportunities for remote access and participation.

Objective 3. Broaden the public’s understanding and awareness of the Council and its managed fisheries.

- Develop and distribute general outreach and education materials to increase awareness and understanding of Council-managed fisheries and the Council process.
- Partner with external organizations to develop and promote workshops and other interactive educational opportunities for stakeholders.
- Collaborate with science and management partners and other academic or research institutions to develop outreach materials that explain fisheries science and data collection.
- Use plain language in Council documents to improve public understanding.

Science

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

Objective 4. Collaborate with science partners and research institutions to ensure that the Council's science priorities are addressed.

- Engage science and management partners to leverage opportunities for inclusion of the Council's research priorities in external funding programs (e.g. Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K), Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program (BREP), regional Sea Grant, etc.).
- Collaborate with management partners and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) to identify common research priorities and strategically address science, data, and information needs.
- Support implementation and continued development of the new Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) stock assessment process to improve assessment efficiency.
- Develop a process for cross-communication between the Council's SSC and other council SSCs to promote sharing of scientific approaches, methods, and information.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive research plan to address the research needs identified in the Five-Year Research Priorities document.

Objective 5. Support the use of collaborative research to meet the Council's science, data, and information needs.

- Collaborate with the NEFSC to expand and enhance existing cooperative research initiatives carried out under the umbrella of the NEFSC's Northeast Cooperative Research Program (NCRP)
- Identify research needs that can be addressed using collaborative approaches with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishery participants.
- Cooperate with management partners to support and identify funding opportunities for science priorities identified by the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) Operations Committee.
- Support development of cooperative research programs that use "vessels of opportunity" from all sectors to address science and research needs.
- Support innovations in gear development and configuration that increase efficiency and reduce catch of non-target species in commercial and recreational fisheries.
- Evaluate options for future research set-aside (RSA) program.

Objective 6. Promote efficient and accurate data collection, monitoring, and reporting systems.

- Support implementation of improvements in fishery data accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness as identified in the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)/NEFSC Fishery Dependent Data Initiative.
- Work with science and management partners to develop and implement a unique trip identifier to integrate different individual reporting programs (e.g., fisherman, dealer, observer, port sampler, etc.).
- Collaborate with science and management partners to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary reporting.

- Address inconsistencies in permitting, reporting, and vessel inspection requirements across commercial and for-hire fisheries.
- Determine the utility of electronic reporting phone apps to improve recreational harvest estimates in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Objective 7. Promote the collection of relevant social and economic data and on-the-water observations.

- 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.
- Support efforts to incorporate fishermen’s knowledge in the stock assessment process.
- Identify data/information gaps that can be addressed with on-the-water observations.
- Continue to support data collection efforts for improved social and economic impact analyses, such as cost-benefit analysis, for all fisheries.

Objective 8. Identify and prioritize the Council’s research needs.

- Conduct a biennial review of the Council’s Five-Year Research Priorities by the advisory panels, monitoring committees, and SSC to ensure the document is reflective of the current state of scientific knowledge and Council priorities.
- Review research needs identified in stock assessments for inclusion in the Council’s Five-Year Research Priorities.
- Develop a process to better track progress toward addressing the Council’s research priorities and to identify what research has been completed.

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 9. Strengthen state, federal, and interstate partnerships to promote coordinated, efficient management of fishery resources.

- Continue to use the NRCC process as a forum for Atlantic coast management entities to enhance communication, coordination, and pursue shared objectives.
- Coordinate with management partners to ensure efficient allocation of staff resources for jointly managed species and issues of common interest.
- Collaborate with management partners to address inconsistencies in regulations across state, federal, and regional boundaries.

Objective 10. Adapt management approaches and priorities to address emerging issues and changing fishery conditions.

- Monitor the variability and changes in species distribution, abundance, and availability and associated impacts on Council-managed fisheries.
- Use fishery performance reports and State of the Ecosystem reports as tools to develop management responses to changing fishery conditions.
- Regularly review the performance of existing management measures.

Objective 11. Ensure that management decisions consider social, economic, and community impacts and opportunities.

- Expand the use of Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to determine/evaluate the impacts of management decisions on fishing communities and other resource users.
- Evaluate the impacts of current management approaches on recreational angler fishery participation and satisfaction through the use of focus groups or workshops.
- Continue and expand the use of multi-year management approaches to increase fishery stability and predictability to the extent practicable.
- Evaluate the impacts of management decisions on the economic efficiency and sustainability of commercial and for-hire businesses and associated shoreside operations.

Ecosystem

GOAL: *Support the ecologically sustainable utilization of living marine resources in a manner that maintains ecosystem productivity, structure, and function.*

Objective 12. Implement the Council’s Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) as described in the EAFM Guidance Document.

- Establish a process to track implementation of the Council’s EAFM Guidance Document and ensure that progress is effectively communicated to the public.
- Use the EAFM structured framework approach as a tool to implement the Council’s EAFM policy and incorporate species, fleet, habitat, and climate interactions into the Council’s science and management programs.
- Collaborate with the Council’s science partners and stakeholders to increase the collection, utilization, and consideration of ecosystem-level biological, social, and economic information.

Objective 13. Collaborate with management partners to develop ecosystem approaches that are responsive to the impacts of climate change.¹

- Determine the data and information necessary to evaluate and respond to climate-induced species and habitat changes for both managed and unmanaged species.
- Work with Atlantic coast management partners to evaluate potential management and governance responses to shifting species distributions through scenario planning workshops and/or other exercises.
- Evaluate the flexibility/ability of current management approaches, including the NOAA Fisheries climate-ready fisheries management process, to respond to shifting species distributions.
- Consider management strategies that are responsive to the impacts of climate change on current fishery allocations.

Objective 14. Identify, designate, and protect habitat using an ecosystem approach.

- Identify and document the contributions of inshore habitats to offshore productivity.
- Review and strengthen essential fish habitat (EFH) designations to account for species interactions, connectivity, and changing ocean conditions.
- Develop the linkages between habitat science and conservation and fishery outcomes with a focus on ecosystem resiliency and productivity.
- Participate with management partners in the Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment Project, Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), and other regional habitat partnerships.
- Ensure that the Council’s habitat policies regarding both fishing and non-fishing activities reflect current scientific information and best management practices.
- Examine the use of the Council’s existing EFH/Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) authorities and designations to ensure ecosystem integrity and services are maintained.

¹ The term “climate change” encompasses related impacts such as global warming, ocean acidification, etc.

Objective 15. Engage in the offshore energy development process to address impacts to Council-managed species and associated habitats.

- Collaborate on offshore energy issues with state and federal management partners and other relevant organizations to identify information needs and evaluate potential impacts of offshore energy development on marine resources.
- Comment on proposed offshore energy projects to ensure developers and permitting agencies are aware of natural resource concerns and Council priorities.

Objective 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.
- Consider and account for, to the extent practicable, the impact of Council-managed fisheries on the forage base.
- Monitor landings of currently unmanaged forage species and respond to changes if necessary.

Objective 17. Develop management approaches that minimize adverse ecosystem impacts.

- Annually review information from the NEFSC's annual State of the Ecosystem reports to identify potential ecosystem impacts of the Council's management approaches.
- Develop management measures that consider ecological interactions to reduce regulatory discards, promote greater utilization of catch, and minimize impacts to habitat.
- Consider fishery management approaches that avoid or reduce negative impacts on protected resources.

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 18. Maintain an open, accessible, and clearly defined process.

- Develop, refine, and communicate policies regarding operations of committees and advisory and technical bodies, including the SSC.
- Provide annual updates on Council activities and progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that the Council's Statement of Organization Processes and Procedures (SOPP) are regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and made available on the Council's website.
- Provide conference lines or Webinar access to Council and advisory body meetings whenever feasible.

Objective 19. Engage management partners to promote effective collaboration and coordination.

- Review regional operating agreement with GARFO, the NEFSC, and Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and revise if necessary.
- Collaborate with the ASMFC to define roles, responsibilities, and procedures for joint meetings and joint action development.
- Consider development of agreements with the New England and/or South Atlantic Councils to define management roles and processes for joint and/or cross-jurisdictional species management.
- Review the composition and operation of Council committees to ensure that the concerns of management partners are effectively understood and addressed.

Objective 20. Ensure that stakeholder interests are understood and addressed.

- Consider incorporating additional opportunities for general public comment (i.e. not related to specific agenda items) during Council meetings.
- Expand opportunities for stakeholders to provide input during the development of annual Implementation Plans.
- Regularly evaluate the composition of advisory bodies to ensure effective representation of diverse interests.
- Explore options to better communicate how public input was used in management decisions.

Objective 21. Provide training and development opportunities for Council members and staff to enhance organizational performance.

- Provide opportunities for Council member training and development on topics such as parliamentary procedure and best practices for effective meetings.
- Support the ongoing professional development of Council staff.
- Continue to promote collaboration with GARFO, NEFSC, and ASMFC staff through staff-to-staff meetings.

Attachment 1: Evaluation Plan

Objectives

- Ensure that the Council's actions result in progress towards its vision.
- Provide flexibility to adapt strategies to accommodate changing circumstances.
- Maintain stakeholder and public engagement with the strategic planning process.
- Allow new Council members to become familiar with the Strategic Plan.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholder and public feedback on emerging issues and future Implementation Plan actions.

Annual Review

Purpose: Review the status of implementation activities from the previous year and consider suggestions from constituents regarding implementation activities for the following year.

Timing: *October – December*

Tasks:

- Council develops draft list of items for Implementation Plan in October.
- Provide opportunity for stakeholders and the public to review draft Implementation Plan and offer suggestions (e.g. via online comment form, webinar, etc.).
- Council reviews input and finalizes Implementation Plan in December.

Mid-Plan Review

Purpose: Mid-term review of the Strategic Plan to determine progress towards completion of objectives and to obtain stakeholder and public perceptions.

Timing: *October – December 2022*

Tasks:

- Determine which objectives have advanced, which have not, and circumstances contributing to delays.
- Provide opportunity for stakeholder and public feedback on progress and direction for remainder of the plan timeframe (e.g., via APs, online comment form, webinar, etc.)
- Council reviews input and considers any shifts in strategy or reordering of priorities based on current or anticipated conditions.

Comprehensive Review

Purpose: Review goals, objectives, and strategies, and evaluate overall progress towards achievement of the Council's Vision. Use results of the evaluation to inform development of the next five-year strategic plan.

Timing: *Mid- to late 2024*

Tasks:

- Develop a process to obtain stakeholder and public feedback regarding progress and perceptions of success.
- Evaluate goals and revise based on Council, stakeholder, and public input.
- Determine which objectives remain priorities for the next strategic plan and develop new objectives as necessary.
- Determine the efficacy of current strategies and consider necessary modifications.

Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Webinar Public Input Session
November 12, 2019

Attendees: Fred Akers, Katie Almeida, William Barnes, Bonnie Brady, Greg DiDomenico, Meghan Lapp, Carl LoBue, Pam Lyons Gromen, Joe Noble, Tom Smith, Mike Waine

Other attendees: Mary Clark Sabo (Council staff), Michelle Duval (contractor)

Only one question was asked: Will implementation of the new 2020-2024 Strategic Plan be similar to implementation of the last five-year Strategic Plan? In other words, will the Executive Committee have oversight and create an Implementation Plan that goes with the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan so that stakeholders can see what initiatives are being tackled each year and track progress? Staff responded that there will continue to be an annual Implementation Plan, but work is underway to improve the implementation planning process to more closely link the Strategic Plan with the Implementation Plan and make it easier for the Council to connect each year's activities with the five-year goals and objectives. The Executive Committee will continue to have oversight of that process.

Comments were received on the following sections of the draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

Mission

- One attendee commented that in the second sentence “associated ecosystems and communities” were essentially the same thing, as humans are effectively part of the ecosystem. Would “associated ecosystems, communities, and fisheries” be more appropriate, or is the second sentence even necessary? It was explained that the Council received significant public comment recommending inclusion of communities in this statement. The final suggestion was to insert the word “fishing” before “communities” to clarify this, i.e. “associated ecosystems and *fishing* communities.”

Core Values

- One attendee asked if the core values were ranked and staff responded there was no ranking.

Communication

- One attendee asked for clarification on the phrase “management partners” – are we all partners or are we stakeholders? Who are the management partners? Staff explained that the phrase is traditionally used to refer to other fisheries management organizations such as the ASMFC, GARFO, state fishery management agencies, etc. The suggestion was made to try to clarify this for the general public.
- An attendee asked if it would be possible to provide webinar or audio access to advisory panel meetings, monitoring committee meetings, and any Council-related meeting in order to increase stakeholder participation (Objective 2, last strategy). In order to provide a transparent and open process, having access to some kind of recording – whether it is a webinar recording, audio recording, podcast, etc. – for each of these meetings would allow stakeholders who cannot attend these meetings to better follow and participate in the process.

Science

- One attendee recommended replacing “Support” in the wording of Objective 7 with “Promote.” Promote is very specific and a more active word, and indicates the Council would actually do this, rather than just be supportive of it.

Management

- One attendee noted that the wording of Objective 11 did not include the word “ecological” along with “social, economic, and community impacts.” In considering things in the realm of optimum yield, we would want those ecological considerations to be included in management decisions. Is this just not specifically included because the Council has a whole new Ecosystem goal and set of objectives? Staff confirmed that this was the intent of the Ecosystem goal, which incorporates ecological considerations into management decisions in part under Objective 12, which implements the Council’s Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, as well as Objective 17, which includes ecosystem considerations in the development of management measures. The purpose of the Ecosystem goal was to capture ecosystem considerations that had been spread between both Science and Management into one place to better address them.

Ecosystem

- One attendee requested that “EAFM” be included in the list of acronyms.
- An attendee indicated strong support for the first strategy under Objective 12 to track implementation of the Council’s EAFM Guidance Document and to communicate that progress to the public. The danger of having the EAFM Guidance Document separate from the Strategic Plan is sometimes there is a lapse in communication in how these are integrated and moving forward.
- Another attendee noted that the third strategy under Objective 12 includes collaboration with science partners to collect social and economic information and suggested that perhaps this should also include stakeholders or fishing partners. Social and economic information might not just come from the Council’s science partners, whomever they may be. Stakeholders should be included with those science partners somehow.
- One attendee noted strong support for inclusion of the Ecosystem goal and set of objectives. Now that the EAFM Guidance Document is a living document and the Council is working from it, the Ecosystem goal is a good addition overall.
- A question was asked about the Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral protection area, which included frameworkable actions that were going to be revisited in some way through a dynamic process. That doesn’t appear to be reflected in the habitat objective, i.e. revisiting things we have done and making sure they are based on the best available and most current science. For example, with the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment, the Council receives an annual report on the harvest of species that don’t have federal FMPs – there is a process to track this and bring information back to the Council each year. There doesn’t appear to be the same process for deep-sea corals. Is this captured somewhere else in the document? This is not necessarily specific to deep-sea corals, but for any action the Council takes that includes a monitoring component, we need to create a dynamic process or feedback loop that will allow the Council to receive and improve information being used in decisions.
- Another commenter wondered if the deep-sea coral protected area is included in the NOAA Marine Protected Areas registry. These areas are supposed to be reviewed on a regular timeframe to ensure the information used is current.

Governance

- An attendee suggested a slight modification to the language of the goal statement to make “fishery” and “community” plural. Perhaps change this to “consider fisheries, fishing communities, and public interests.”
- One attendee asked if Objective 21 was meant to apply only to Council members and staff, and if it was possible to include opportunities for stakeholders to participate in training for topics such as Robert’s Rules. It would be useful for stakeholders to have extra knowledge regarding these topics as well, and

some would like to obtain information at a higher level regarding how to engage in the process. It would be great to have some way for people to obtain this information in a way they could absorb it. Staff responded that it might be more appropriate to include or expand upon one of the Communication strategies under Objective 3 to address training opportunities for stakeholders.

General Comments

- One attendee stated that Council staff did a good job putting the plan together, and that this would likely result in some changes to procedures or to issues that need to be considered and discussed when making management decisions. Will staff explain those anticipated changes as part of the discussion the Council will have when adopting the plan? Staff responded that there is unlikely to be much additional explanation beyond what is provided in the plan, as the objectives and strategies are meant to be self-explanatory. However, any suggestions regarding how to explain this information to the Council are welcome.
- Several attendees complimented staff on the effort to distill all stakeholder and public feedback into such a comprehensive plan.

Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Webinar Public Input Session
November 13, 2019

Attendees: Chris Batsavage (Council member), Ron Larsen, Rick Pearson, Tony Friedrich

Other attendees: Mary Clark Sabo (Council staff), Michelle Duval (contractor)

There were no questions from the attendees.

One attendee noted that he is a staff member with the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Division, which is in the process of conducting a similar exercise, so he was participating to hear what the Mid-Atlantic Council was doing.

There were no additional comments.

Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Written Comment Summary

A total of seven written comments were received from five individuals. Comments are summarized according to the sections of the Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan they address.

General

- One individual stated the Strategic Plan should be production of fish for food and economic value.

Vision

- One individual stated that the U.S. public is the major stakeholder that owns the fish, and the Council's Vision statement should include support and respect for healthy fish.

Core Values

- One individual noted the core value of "stewardship" and stated that Council stewardship has resulted in regulations that reduce domestic production of seafood while creating a market share for imports.
- An individual noted the core value of "integrity" and stated that the Council's regulations create waste and a policy of total utilization of all resource caught would be better.
- Regarding the core value of "effectiveness" one commenter stated that no management actions or regulations have ever been allowed sufficient time to produce results prior to being changed.
- A commenter stated that with respect to "fairness" that the Council and NOAA must address the discrepancy in reporting requirements between commercial and recreational fishermen by requiring recreational fishermen to report via phone app.
- One individual stated that "transparency" does not exist; any precaution from the Science Center or plan development team is not documented in any report.

Communication

- One comment suggested that creative social media solutions, such as online petitioning, may be a way to reach more interested but unaware individuals.
- One individual noted the challenge of integrating the results of science and monitoring with communication to a diverse array of constituents, including Councils. This results in the problem of being "data rich, but information poor." There are a number of examples of successful science translation.
- An individual noted that there is limited understanding of the effects of human activities in coastal watersheds.
- One individual stated that the Council's communication efforts were biased toward industry. Communication and outreach efforts needed to include environmental organizations and the general public, which currently receive no information, and are ignored.
- One individual stated that the Council's outreach is not reaching fishermen, and that communication uses acronyms that most do not understand and should be eliminated in all Council documents.

Science

- A commenter stated support for collaborative research as a tool to augment the research and monitoring efforts of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center.
- An individual supported development of an integrated vessels of opportunity/NOAA survey program by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

- One commenter stated that on-the-water observations are about money, not facts.
- One individual stated that the Science goal needs to focus on stock enhancement, reducing discards of saleable fish, providing alternatives to fishing on large female fish, and the effects of pharmaceuticals. The Council's science should investigate other causes for population declines before requiring harvest reductions by fishermen.

Management

- One individual noted that climate change and shifting species distributions will require adjustments in quotas and consideration of socioeconomic effects.
- A commenter stated that the Council should adopt an adaptive ecosystem-based management approach that incorporates atmospheric forcing.
- One individual stated that aquaculture is a dirty industry that hurts wild fish populations.
- A commenter stated that it was outrageous to allow commercial fishing that results in high levels of dead bycatch and that donating bycatch to feed the poor was unacceptable.
- One individual stated that the Strategic Plan must address seafood imports and why tariffs have not been imposed on foreign seafood. Mismanagement has resulted in a decline in domestic seafood production.
- One individual stated that management plans should be allowed sufficient time to demonstrate results prior to change.

Ecosystem

- One individual recommended that the Council include in the Strategic Plan setting up a task force to address potential contamination of managed fish species by microplastics and PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in order to respond to seafood safety concerns.
- One individual noted that the productive capacity of Essential Fish Habitat has been altered by a variety of factors.
- A commenter stated that promoters of wind farms are often ignorant of the impacts on fishing, but that both uses should be able to coexist.
- One individual stated that the Council's EAFM should also consider dynamic modeling approaches being developed on the west coast that incorporate the impacts of climate change on microbial food webs.
- An individual stated the Council should develop fishery management plans and habitat protection measures that are responsive to climate change.
- One person stated that the Council's management of forage species that are moving into New England and is a major management concern complicated by climate change.
- One individual stated that a healthy ecosystem is one that is free of driftnets.
- A commenter stated that the ecosystem has been altered by mismanagement such that dogfish make up the majority of biomass due to incorrect science.

Governance

- One commenter stated a need for increased coordination between federal/state ocean planning agencies and marine resources management agencies.
- One individual supported having a mechanism in place that allows the Council to continually assess progress towards the goals of the Strategic Plan, and incorporates stakeholder input and engagement as part of that process.

From: Michelle Duval michelleduval22@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Form Submission - Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan Comments
Date: November 18, 2019 at 9:29 PM
To: Michelle Duval michelleduval22@gmail.com

From: Squarespace <no-reply@squarespace.info>
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2019 6:46 AM
To: Mary Clark Sabo <msabo@mafmc.org>
Subject: Form Submission - Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan Comments

Name: Daniel Potrepka

Email: dan.potrepka@starpower.net

Which role(s) best describe you? (optional): Private Recreational Angler

Please type your comments on the draft strategic plan in the space below: Some of the challenges that the council faces such as limited resources and evolving challenges that require creative solutions could benefit from innovative social media solutions. Is the model of online petitioning for awareness through a major partner such as change.org a way to reach more who may be interested but unaware? I wasn't sure if there is a partner already who reaches the private angler, public at large. Otherwise the outreach plans and the rest of the strategic plan look well thought out and satisfactory. Thank you.

(Sent via [Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#))

From: David Dow ddow420@comcast.net
Subject: Strategic Plan Comments
Date: October 17, 2019 at 6:44 AM
To: michelleduval22@gmail.com
Cc: David Dow ddow420@comcast.net

I am a retired marine scientist from the Fisheries Lab in Woods Hole, Ma. and a grassroots environmental activist living on Cape Cod. I wanted to mention an emerging seafood safety issue that might effect some of the predator species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC). On October 2 I attended the University of Rhode Island STEEP (Sources, Transport, Exposure, Effects of PFAS) Science Day in Hyannis, Ma. where they discussed potential pathways where perflourinated chemicals could get into fish species from groundwater and freshwater sources (including sediments).

On October 15 I attended the Woods Hole Oceanographics Institution's (WHOI) Morss Colluquia on "Microplastics in the Ocean: Emergency or Exagerancy ?" which was the start of a 3 day scientific conference on this issue. Some of panelists at this program pointed out that microplastics can adsorb legacy toxic contaminants (PCBs; DDTs; PAHs; etc.). Because of ocean circulation patterns microplastics are often concentrated in subtropical gyres between 20-40 degrees latitude in the Northern and Southern Atlantic Ocean. One aspect of climate change is that it is altering ocean circulation (Gulf Stream flow; North Atlantic Oscillation strength; Atlantic Meridonal Overturning Circulation; etc.) and responsible for changes in the marine food web that have altered the distribution of fish species and their prey in space and time.

At this point in time it is unknown what threat consumption of fish contaminated by PFAS chemicals and microplastics pose to sensitive human populations (females of child bearing age and kids). As the former Recreational Fisheries Coordinator in the Northeast for NOAA Fisheries, I had to address concerns about mercury contamination of swordfish and PCB contamination of inshore predators (striped bass) in the Hudson River system/New Bedford Harbor. Both methyl mercury and PCBs accumulate in the marine food chain and it is feasible that microplastics/PFAS chemicals could do so as well.

There is more research and policy developments on the threats posed by microplastics and PFAS chemicals in the European Union than here in the United States because they utilize the "Precautionary Approach" for managing toxic chemicals. Even though the "PA" is used to manage fisheries in the US, it has not been adopted by EPA or the FDA for toxic chemicals. PFAS chemicals have biogeochemical pathways similar to PCBs/DDTs and there is rising concerns at the state levels on their health impacts on humans and wildlife. Thus the maximum contaminant levels for drinking water are being lowered from the EPA hazard level of 70 parts per trillion to 10-20 pt. in New Jersey and New York. Food is also a source of PFAS exposure.

I would recommend that the MAFMC set up a task force under its strategic plan to explore options to address microplastics and PFAS contamination of managed fish species near the top of the food chain in order to respond to potential seafood safety concerns. Climate change will alter the base of the marine food chain (microbial food web is longer than than the grazing food chain which cold reduce the yield of managed fish species and increase bioaccumulation of micronplastics and PFAS chemicals

the yield of managed fish species and increase bioaccumulation of microplastics and PFAS chemicals in the fish themselves) and increase seafood safety concerns.

It appeared to me at the Morss Colloquia that the scientists didn't take the effects of climate change into account in evaluating the potential pathways of microplastics in the environment and potential impacts on fish at the top of the food chain. It is hard to remove plastics from the ocean and their importance in the world economy (1.5 % or \$ 1.2 trillion per year) makes it unlikely that their production will be drastically reduced in the coming years. The estimates of plastic bag breakdown in the ocean vary widely (1-500 years). PFAS chemicals are referred to as "forever chemicals" and their environment persistence is also poorly understood.

Humans

have both microplastics and PFAS chemicals in their bodies with the health consequences being subject to cutting edge research studies. The microplastic scientists on the WHOI panel were divided on

whether this constituted an emergency or an exaggeration with a similar perspective on PFAS chemicals

at the URI STEEP Science Day.

Thanks for your consideration of these comments.

Dr. David D. Dow
East Falmouth, Ma.

From: David Dow ddow420@comcast.net
Subject: Mid-Atlantic FMC Strategic Plan Public Comments
Date: November 12, 2019 at 6:13 PM
To: michelleduval22@gmail.com
Cc: David Dow ddow420@comcast.net

DD

I am a retired marine scientist from the Fisheries Lab in Woods Hole and grassroots environmental activist living on Cape Cod. Since many Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (FMC) species are **migrating into Nantucket Sound** (Summer Flounder; scup; black sea bass; various forage fish species; extension of ocean quahog/surf clam fishery) **or emigrating into the warming Gulf of Maine** (American lobsters; declining sea herring and GoM cod fisheries; Winter flounder; etc.), these shifts in commercial/recreational fisheries in space and time will require adjustments in the quotas and associated socioeconomic effects. This also has effects on interactions of fisheries with sea turtles; marine mammals and seabirds. The **“productive capacity” of Essential Fish Habitat** has been altered by eutrophication; increased ocean noise; warming waters & increased ocean acidity and competing ocean usages (wind farms; US Naval Training; sonic surveys for oil/gas deposits; commercial and recreational vessels and fishing). Thus **federal/state ocean planning** needs to have better coordination/integration with **Marine Resource Management**. I recently participated in a meeting on Climate Change and the Cape Cod Commission’s Regional Policy Plan with no mention being made of ocean planning or state/federal marine resource management (Massa.DMF; ASMFC; MA FMC; NE FMC; NOAA Fisheries GARFO).

I will make comments on selected Components of the Strategic Plan (**Communications; Science; Management; Ecosystem and Governance**) and selected bullets under these 5 main categories (**one to twenty one**). A major challenge is integrating science and monitoring efforts with communication to constituents; general public; policy makers; managers and elected officials to overcome the problem of being data rich, but information poor for users of these products. This partly explains why regional ocean planning amongst federal/state government and tribal representatives promotes ocean wind farms (overseen by BOEM) which create problems with commercial fishing and large whale **Unusual Mortality Events (UME)** or the interaction between climate change/NorthAtlantic right whale increased mortalities from lobster gear entanglements in Northeastern waters and low calving rates off the southeastern US Coast. The Northeastern Regional Ecosystem Conceptual Model that underlies **living marine; protected and natural resources (LMR/PR/NTR)** management in our part of the world assumes that the ocean ecosystem is in a steady state, equilibrium condition rather than being a non-linear, dynamic ecosystem with a shifting ocean baseline with marine biota changing in place and time. The Northeastern Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) population dynamic

place and time. The **Northeastern Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC)** population dynamic models used to establish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) quotas incorporates most of these effects as “**natural mortality**” which has increased for sea herring; GoM cod; American Lobsters; Atlantic striped bass; etc.

Communication:

Objective 3- Here on Cape Cod there is limited understanding of the effects of human activities in coastal watersheds (nitrogen enrichment from septic systems; perflourinated chemical contamination of our groundwater; wetland and seagrass degradation of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH); relative sea level rise) on the productivity of marine biota and the surrounding ocean environment. The Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan (MOMP) promotes the Marthas Vineyard Wind Farm, but ignores its effects on fishing. Noise from the Wind Farms is being examined by BOEM/NEFSC as cumulative environmental impacts, but largely ignored local/state elected officials/ENGOS that support ocean renewable energy. Fishing and wind farms should be able to co-exist in the ocean off of Cape Cod and elsewhere. Ocean noise is an under appreciated threat to **LMRs/PRs/NTRs (Living Marine/Protected/Natural Trust Resources)**. The role of the warming ocean on increased temperature and humidity on land in the future, even if we drastically reduce greenhouse gases (ghg) released into the atmosphere is almost never discussed here on Cape where hot, humid weather creates health problems for sensitive populations.

Science:

Objective 5- Collaborative research is certainly an important tool to augment the research and monitoring surveys conducted by NOAA Fisheries NEFSC which faces declining funding and increased number of contractors replacing civil service staff. A major challenge exists in being data rich, but information poor when it comes to providing data products directed at Fishery Management Councils; ENGOS; fishermen/women; local/state/federal elected officials. I used to work for NASA conducting remote sensing research via 3-4 contractors for very civil servant and they are much better than NOAA Fisheries or the FMCs in converting science and monitoring data into useful information products to diverse constituents. The NOAA Sea Grant Program at the Massa. Institute of Technology/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; Woods Hole Research Center on Climate Change Effects; Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve offer case studies on successful science translation for diverse constituent groups.

Objective 6- The NEFSC needs to develop an integrated vessels of opportunity/NOAA survey ships to support an ecosystem approach to management monitoring program for both fish & shellfish/EFH and large whales (supporting this endeavor by restoring the Ecosystems Assessments Branch to resolve the challenge of being data rich, but information poor).

Objective 10- The MA FMC needs to adopt an Adaptive Ecosystems-based Management

Objective 10 - The MA FMC needs to adopt an adaptive, Ecosystems based management (AEbM) that includes atmospheric forcing (ice melting in Arctic and alteration in the atmospheric jet stream have been linked to changes in the North Atlantic Oscillation and Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation which effects coastal shellfish landings and cod recruitment in the North Atlantic Ocean) to shifts in the marine food chain (**NEFSC EMaX project**) from climate change in the ocean. One characteristic of **nonlinear, dynamic systems is surprises** which requires an adaptive component for EBM approaches.

Objective 12- I presume that the recent paper by Sarah K. Gaichas et al. Implementing ecosystem approaches to fishery management : Risk assessment in the US Mid-Atlantic. in Front. Mar. Sci. 2018. describes the framework for this Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM). This is a good start, but I would consider the following as well: dynamic Eco-coast modeling approach being developed on the West coast and the effects of climate change on the length of the microbial food web in the plankton/increased community respiration in the marine food chain. When I participated in the **NEFSC EMaX (energy modeling & analysis exercise)**, we had more primary production (estimated from satellite ocean color data) at the base of the food chain than yield of LMRs/PRs/NTRs at the top. We added the microbial food web to the grazing food chain to balance this energy flow (effectively increasing community respiration via a longer trophic food web). Since Climate Change increases the strength of the thermal stratification in the ocean from Spring to early Fall which favors the microbial food web which uses ammonia as its nitrogen source, this increases community respiration and thus lowers the yield of fish and shellfish. The forage fish in the water column link the planktonic community to most of the predacious fish managed by the MA FMC/NOAA Fisheries GARFO (Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office). Changes in the ocean's biology, chemistry and physics will require an EAFM approach to manage fisheries in a shifting marine ecosystem.

Objective 13 and 14 - Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 developed by the NE FMC and approved by NOAA Fisheries GARFO didn't mention climate change and they were caught by surprise by the rapid warming in the Gulf of Maine its consequences on cod; American lobster; Winter flounder, sea herring etc. The MA FMC should develop FMPs and associated habitat protection measures to avoid such surprises. Offshore the threats come from the effects of warming waters on recruitment and competition at the top of the food chain and the shifts at the base of the food chain between the grazing component and microbial food web. Inshore we face challenges from "N" eutrophication', increased ocean acidification, water stratification and hypoxia. In late Summer/early Fall we experienced hypoxia in Cape Cod Bay which killed lobsters in their cages. We have periodic hypoxia in embalmment off of Nantucket Sound which effect shellfish populations and leads to fish kills which wash up on our beaches. On the outer Cape we face increased seal and forage fish populations and predation by Great White sharks which pose threats to human recreational uses and our tourist economy.

Objective 15- As mentioned previously we face challenges of more offshore wind farms to produce more renewable energy and reduce our ghg emissions, while increasing commercial fishing/saltwater angling which are important parts of **Cape Cod's "Blue Economy"**. The economic multiplier effect of fishing is important to coastal communities. Loss of our **"working waterfront"** to other non-water dependent uses has diminished the **Blue Economy** on Cape Cod and elsewhere in New England.

Objective 16- Since the MA FMC manages a number of forage species which are migrating into southern New England waters which provide lobster trap bait and support twin paired mid-water trawlers (with a buffer of up to 25 miles offshore being proposed for Cape Cod), providing a forage base for the marine food chain (subject of **EMaX research project** for the NE Continental Shelf Ecosystem) and protect river herring generated by wetland restoration projects on Cape Cod are major fishery management concerns locally. This is a complicated issue given the shift in prey and predators in space and time due to climate change which effects competition and recruitment of both managed fish species and natural populations. Forage species serve as prey for seabirds and marine mammals which can lead to bycatch/entanglement challenges which lead to marine fishing gear restrictions from the Endangered Species Act/Marine Mammal Protection Act (lobsters/NARWS) and EFH designations (NE Canyons & Seamounts National Monument).

Thanks for your consideration of these comments.

Dr. David Dow
East Falmouth, Ma.

From: Jean Public jeanpublic1@yahoo.com

Subject: Re: public comment on federal register very disappointed that you dont outreach to enviro groups or to general public at all - they are underrepresented and they own the fish

Date: October 22, 2019 at 3:06 PM

To: contract@mafmc.org, michelleduval22@gmail.com, info@peta.org, info@idausa.org, info@cok.net, info@pewtrusts.org, information@sierraclub.org, info@greenpeace.org, scoops@huffpost.com, contact@thedodoc.com, info@nyclass.org, westchesterhumane@gmail.com

JP

i would like to be put on your list to receive from time to time any surveys you put out for public comment. it is clear that your surveys get to commercial profiteers but the general public and environmental groups are sadly ignored and blackballed from any comment. they should not be. they have comments on what is happening to the fish. they are all going extinct through regulatory capture of this agency by commercial fishing and recreational fishing groups. nobody else but them ever hears about this agency. that is a failure to the entire american public and keepign us all informed. failure to the grade of a f minus grad.

the u.s. public is the major stakeholder of all. they are the major major ones. we all own those fish. 328 million of us own those fish. and you dont make any effort to include the general public at all. you only want comment from profiteers in the fishing industry. your statement should include that we need and support and respect healthy fish. the communities with which you give such voice will allow the stealing and raping for their own selfish ends, leading to nothing for all who are not seabound communities.

a healthy ecosystem is free of drift fish nets that impale and kill whales dying in them day after day after day. fines should be levied to \$5 million on those who put out nets like that. if a whale dies in it \$5 million and you lose your fishing license. we need fines that count. allowing coastal communities to rape and pillage fish stocks is certainly not an attainable ecosystem at all. unfortunately, on the water observations are all about money, profiteering greed and are not fact situations at all. all users must include the welfare of the general public and that is of first importance. communication and outreach must include environmental groups and general public, both of which currently get zero information. this agencys regulatory capture by fish profiteers allow completely unscientific information to be used every single day.

ocean aquaculture is a dirty, polluting industry which produces dirty polluted water and diseased fish. it hurts wild populations immensely. we have endless escapes of such diseased fish into the wild meaning their diseases come with them. \rh

this agency should be working for all americans and not just for your hand picked alleged "stakeholders". the u.s. public is being screwed by this agency. you have absolutely zero comment from any environmental group interested in the ocean. not one single comment. you are doing biased communication since you pick out only profiteers to communicate with. this comment is for the public record. please receipt. jeanpublic1@yahoo.com

[Federal Register Volume 84, Number 204 (Tuesday, October 22, 2019)]

[Notices]

[Pages 56445-56446]

From the Federal Register Online via the Government Publishing Office [www.gpo.gov]

[FR Doc No: 2019-22987]

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XV111

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

[[Page 56446]]

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold two public webinars to solicit public comments on the Draft 2020-24 Strategic Plan.

DATES: The webinars will be held November 12, 2019, beginning at 6 p.m. and concluding by 8 p.m., and November 13, 2019, beginning at 10 a.m. and concluding by 12 p.m. Written comments must be received on or before 11:59 EST, November 15, 2019. For additional instructions for submitting written comments, see SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held via webinar, which can be accessed at: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/mafmc-strategic-plan/>. Meeting audio can also be accessed via telephone by dialing 1-800-832-0736 and entering room number 2122298.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council has released its Draft 2020-24 Strategic Plan for public review and comment. The plan includes updated vision and mission statements and proposes five major goals to guide the Council's activities and management priorities for the next five years. Development of the plan was informed by public input provided through a survey and outreach meetings in early 2019. The Draft Strategic Plan is available on the Council's website at <http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan>. All interested stakeholders and members of the public are invited to provide comments on the draft plan. The Council will hold two public input webinars during which participants will have an opportunity to ask questions and offer public comments on the draft strategic plan. The webinars will be held on the following dates:

1. Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 6 p.m.
2. Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 10 a.m.

The webinars can be accessed at: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/mafmc-strategic-plan/>. Meeting audio can also be accessed via telephone by dialing 1-800-832-0736 and entering room number 2122298.

Written comments may also be submitted by any of the following methods:

1. Online at <http://www.mafmc.org/comments/2020-2024-strategic-plan>

2. Email to michelleduval22@gmail.com
3. Mail to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
4. Fax to (302) 674-5399

Please include ``Strategic Plan Comments'' in the subject line if using email or fax or on the outside of the envelope if submitting comments by mail.

Comments must be submitted by Friday, November 15, 2019, 11:59 EST. The Council will review public comments and approve the final plan at its December meeting in Annapolis, MD.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to M. Jan Saunders at the Mid-Atlantic Council Office, (302) 526-5251, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.

Dated: October 17, 2019.

Tracey L. Thompson,
Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National
Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2019-22987 Filed 10-21-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

From: Jean Public jeanpublic1@yahoo.com
Subject: Re: Reminder: Strategic Plan Webinars November 12 & 13
Date: November 12, 2019 at 5:55 PM
To: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council contact@mafmc.org, michelle.duval22@gmail.com



the bycatch was reported today by a commercial fisherman to be 23% that are thrown back in the ocean and he has a plan to donate that 23% to trinity church to feed the poor. first of all it is outrageous that you are allowing commercial fishermen in nj to overcatch 23% of all fish. that is outrageous and needs to be curtailed so that they dont take 23% of fish out of the ocean to kill them by throwing them back

secondly feeding fish to the poor may mean they are eating mercury and plastic since both are in the fish that are in the ocean. we had kim guadagno, mart mchughe and a mr winkler at a meeting today with a plan to donate fish to trinity. they are looking for a whole new process. first of all fish feel pain when killed. they dont want to die either.

this plan is unacceptable and i am writing to you to say i am against this plan pushed by marty mchugh and kim guadanoa. kjean upbliee jeanpublic1@yahoo.com

On Tuesday, November 12, 2019, 02:15:29 PM EST, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council <contact@mafmc.org> wrote:

View this message in your [browser](#)



November 12, 2019

Reminder!

Strategic Plan Public Input Webinars November 12 & 13

Written Comments Due November 15

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will hold two webinars to gather public comments on the [Draft 2020-2024 Strategic Plan](#). The webinars will be held on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, November 12, 2019** at 6:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, November 13, 2019** at 10:00 a.m.

To join the webinars, go to: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/mafmc-strategic-plan/>. Audio connection instructions will pop up automatically when the webinar opens. Telephone-only access is available by dialing **1-800-832-0736** and entering room number **2122298#**.

The Draft Strategic Plan is available on the Council's website [here](#). The plan includes updated vision and mission statements and proposes five major goals, with associated objectives and strategies, to guide the Council's activities and management priorities for the next five years. Development of the plan was informed by public input provided through a survey and outreach meetings in early 2019.

through a survey and outreach meetings in early 2021.

Submit Written Comments

Written comments may also be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **ONLINE** at <http://www.mafmc.org/comments/2020-2024-strategic-plan>
- **EMAIL** to michelleduval22@gmail.com
- **MAIL** to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901
- **FAX** to 302.674.5399

Please include “Strategic Plan Comments” in the subject line if using email or fax or on the outside of the envelope if submitting comments by mail.

Comments must be submitted by **Friday, November 15, 11:59 EST**. The Council will review public comments and approve the final plan at its December meeting in Annapolis, MD.

For additional information and background documents, please visit www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan or contact Michelle Duval at michelleduval22@gmail.com or 919-601-3798.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

www.mafmc.org

800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901

Phone: (302) 674-2331 | Toll-Free: (877) 446-2362 | Fax: (302) 674-5399

Manage Your Subscription

This message was sent to jeanpublic1@yahoo.com from contact@mafmc.org

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

800 N. State St. Suite 201

Dover, DE 19901

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Comments on Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2020 – 2024

The Mid-Atlantic Council was established in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (later renamed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or MSA). The law created a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), eliminated foreign fishing effort within the EEZ, and charged eight regional councils with management of fishery resources in the newly expanded federal waters.

Draft Strategic plan for 2000 – 2024 must address why The Department of Commerce & the Department of State uses the National Marine Fisheries & the Council to make the U.S. 92% to 93% dependent on imported seafood! The strategic plan must reverse the policy by Philip Rondel director of NMFS in 1972 to make the agency resource oriented rather than user oriented” The former BCF had been user oriented.

Question! Why does the Country WITH THE SECOND LARGEST EEZ IN THE WORLD IMPORT 92% TO 93% OF THE SEAFOOD CONSUMED IN THE COUNTRY? LET THE 2020 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN ADDRESS THIS SINGLE QUESTION!

CONSIDER:

The Strategic plan **MUST ADDRESS WHY NOAA & COMMERCE** DOES NOT HAVE TARIFFS ON IMPORTED SEAFOOD.

WHY COUNCIL WILL NOT ADDRESS IMPORTS?

The paper uses Stewardship Why has the Council allowed regulations that allows imports 93% market share?

1. regulation that allow a closed season to allow imports market share.
2. Size regulations that allow smaller imports to fill a market void.
3. Regulations targeting larger females, thus reducing spawn, & long term breeding smaller slower growing species.

What stewardship reduces production of seafood while creating market share for imports? COUNCILS.

Integrity:: why does the Council write regulations that create **waste?**
WOULD NOT A POLICY OF TOTAL UTILIZATION OF ALL RESOURCE CAUGHT BE BETTER? IS A strategic plan of waste acceptable?

Effectiveness: Have any management action been allow time to effect the species prior to regulatory change? Has Commerce, State, NOAA, NMFS, OR COUNCIL

EVER ALLOWED A REGULATION TIME TO PRODUCE RESULTS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTING DIFFERENT REGULATIONS?

FAIRNESS, The Strategic plan must address the commercial fishing requiring to report with operator licenses, vessel permits log books & trip reports.

While NOAA NMFS Council will NOT REQUIRE RECREATIONAL TO REPORT WITH CELL PHONES!

80% of EEZ recreational fishermen return to private docks yet Council **does not require reporting, why?** Merfs could have required cell phone reporting and been fair, Why was mandatory reporting by recreational not mandated by NMFS, Council? STRATEGIC PLAN COULD ADDRESS THIS!

Transparency does not exist! When the science Center produces a report, if precaution is added it is not documented, the plan development team does not document caution added to it's report, when the advisors vote on the report or ask that total length to retain fish with no discarding The Council staff states **NOTHING IS ALLOWED! To be added by advisors,** Transparency is not allowed in the strategic or any other document.

Communication: Out Reach does not reach the fishermen, how many bank or bridge fishermen attend the meetings? The communication to them is in the terms of acronyms that most do not understand, the Council uses acronyms like the Catholic church used Latin to keep the public in the dark!

The strategic plan should prevent the use of acronyms in all Council Documents!

SCIENCE? The Council So Called science: Missed the dogfish population by 80%. The Science forced the council to basically stop dogfish fishing. The strategic plan should insist the science be asked why it directs the Council to make fishermen fish on large female fish. The science should be asked why it has never suggested stock enhancement of faster maturing fish as part of a strategic plan. Science should be asked the value to science of discarding small salable fish? Science in the strategic plan could suggest other reasons for fish population declines. {weakfish as an example} oh not a Council species so not council science} Instead of always over fishing. Perhaps science should investigate the effects of pharmaceuticals on fish reproduction in this strategic plan! Perhaps the strategic plan could have science list five other things to do before reducing harvest by fishermen as a goal for the strategic plan. Management: should review if any management plans have been allowed time to show results in the fish population before being changed at the suggestion of best science.

Management: under the Strategic plan should be asked!

Why does the Country with the second largest EEZ in the World import 92% to 93% of the seafood consumed in the Country?

ANSWER: Mismanagement by U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of State NOAA National Marine Fishery Service and the Council, in 43 years seafood production has only declined from what production was prior to Magnuson Act under incorrect management. The ecosystem: Has been changed by management; dogfish make up 70% of the biomass due to science being incorrect,
Will This strategic Plan Change this?

The strategic plan should be to produce fish for food and economic value.
James Fletcher as individual opinion 123 Apple Rd. Manns Harbor NC 27953

From: Mike Waine mwaine@asafishing.org
Subject: Strategic Plan Comments
Date: November 15, 2019 at 6:53 PM
To: michelleduval22@gmail.com



Hi Michelle,

This is a very thorough strategic plan and has many objectives and strategies that are directly in line with comments made today at the MSA listening session. I have a question, which may be a comment. How will the Council track the progress of the goals and objectives laid out in the strategic plan? I'm assuming it is through an annual planning process, but I wanted to make sure that there was a mechanism in place that allows the council to continue to reflect on this strong strategic plan as they navigate the everyday challenges of fisheries management in the Mid-Atlantic. The point I'm trying to make is I think it will be important to continually assess progress towards the goals of the strategic plan, and I think stakeholder input and engagement as part of that will be important.

Thanks,
MW

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