



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2013

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Council Meeting Summary

August 13-16, 2013
Wilmington, DE

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

The Council proposed several actions relative to the development of the Cost Recovery Amendment (Amendment 17) for the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Based on input from industry members from the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Committee, the Council voted to include alternatives that would streamline the process for updating stock status determination criteria for both fisheries. The Council also voted to revisit the optimum yield (OY) range for the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries and consider how this range relates to the recently applied catch limit system. In addition, the Council approved motions to form a fishery management action team (FMAT) for the amendment and conduct another series of scoping hearings to reacquaint the public with the issues to be addressed and expected timelines for amendment development.

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Audio](#)

Deep Sea Coral Amendment

The Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee met jointly with the Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel and the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Advisory Panel to review the current range of alternatives for Amendment 16 to the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP (Protections for Deep Sea Corals). The full Council met the following day and approved several additions to the range of alternatives before approving them for public hearings. Additional information about the amendment and the public hearing schedule will be posted on the [Deep Sea Coral Page](#) of the Council's website.

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Amendment 16 Decision Document](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Audio](#)

Strategic Plan

The Council reviewed more than 7,500 public comments submitted on the draft strategic plan. After discussing the comments, the Council voted to revise one strategy and add an additional strategy related to securing funding for cooperative research. With those two revisions, the Council approved the final 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. The Council also discussed next steps for development of an implementation plan. Council staff will draft an implementation plan for review and revision by the Executive Committee in October and review by the full Council in December.

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Implementation Presentation](#)
- [Audio](#)

RSA Committee

The Research Set Aside (RSA) Committee developed draft RSA research priorities for Council consideration. However, because 2014 specification setting for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish will not occur until October 2013, the Committee agreed to wait until the SSC considered research needs for those species at its upcoming September meeting. The RSA Committee will meet again in October to incorporate any necessary revisions before finalizing the research priorities.

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Audio](#)

The Committee also discussed the Council's policy for developing requests for proposals (RFPs) for the RSA program. RSA funding has not been available for any projects other than the NEAMAP program in recent years, and given the fact that the Council has consistently identified NEAMAP as its top funding priority, the Committee recommended that future RFPs clearly notify the public that the NEAMAP program is the highest priority for funding until permanent funding for NEAMAP is secured from alternative sources. As such, the Council passed a motion to indicate that the Council intends to maintain NEAMAP as top priority project and that other projects may be funded depending on available resources.

Omnibus Baseline Amendment

NMFS Northeast Regional Office staff gave a presentation on a proposed omnibus baseline amendment that would simplify vessel baseline, upgrade, and replacement restrictions for Northeast fisheries. The proposed action would include measures to eliminate gross and net tonnage specifications and remove the one-time upgrade restriction for fishing vessels. The amendment was initiated in response to concerns that the vessel upgrade restrictions have become increasingly burdensome for the fishing industry and that they may no longer be necessary.

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Audio](#)

SAFMC Public Hearing

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council conducted a public hearing for three proposed amendments affecting the fishery management plans for dolphin and wahoo, coral, and coastal migratory pelagics (includes king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia). Additional information about the amendments is available on the [SAFMC website](#).

More Information

- [Briefing Materials](#)
- [Audio](#)

Other Business

Richard B. Robins and Lee A. Anderson were unanimously reelected to serve as Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. Jeff Kaelin of Cape May, New Jersey, who will be serving his first term, was sworn in as a new Council member. Council members and staff recognized departing Council member Ering Berg of Cape May, New Jersey, with thanks and appreciation for his six years of service on the Council.

Next Meeting: October 8-11, 2013
Courtyard Marriott Downtown Philadelphia
21 N. Juniper St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107