



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2014

PRESS CONTACT: Mary Clark
(302) 674-2331 (ext. 261)

Mid-Atlantic Council Hosts Workshop on East Coast Fisheries and Climate Change

Last week the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened more than 70 fishery managers, scientists, policy makers, and other stakeholders in Washington, D.C. for a workshop on East Coast Climate Change and Fisheries Governance. The three-day event offered participants a platform to examine the flexibility of the existing fisheries management framework to address potential governance and management challenges that could arise as a result of climate change.

"The decision to hold this workshop was driven largely by input from our stakeholders," said Mid-Atlantic Council Chairman Rick Robins, noting that many participants in the Council's 2011-2012 Visioning Project had emphasized the importance of preparing for the impacts of climate change on marine fisheries.

During the first day of the workshop, a series of presentations gave participants a broad overview of the biological, social, and economic impacts of climate change. The following days provided more interactive opportunities for participants to share regional experiences and evaluate potential adaptation strategies.

Participants included representatives and staff from the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic fishery management councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and NOAA Fisheries. The Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum provided planning and facilitation support for the workshop.

Fishermen and fishery managers have already observed climate-related changes in some East Coast fisheries. As the marine environment becomes warmer and more acidic, some species have shifted north, moved offshore, or exhibited changes in productivity and recruitment. While it is evident that climate change will have profound impacts on marine fisheries, scientists and managers are less certain about the timing and extent of these impacts across regions and fisheries. Despite this uncertainty, fishery managers have begun working to develop management strategies for addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

For the Mid-Atlantic Council, "climate readiness" has involved an explicit and strategic focusing of attention on coordination with East Coast fishery management partners. This approach is exhibited in the Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, which calls for the Council to begin addressing the management implications of climate change in cooperation with its management partners. Implementation of this strategy has involved two workshops this year. The first, a Climate Science and Fisheries Workshop held in February 2014, focused on the current state of climate science and the potential impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems. Last week's workshop shifted the focus toward the management and governance implications of climate change.

"No one can predict exactly what kinds of climate-related challenges we'll be facing 5, 10, and 20 years down the road," said Chris Moore, Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Council. "However, this workshop was an important step in opening up lines of communication with our management partners so that we can begin developing a strategic response to climate change."

Workshop presentations and materials are available on the Council's website at the link below, and a full workshop report will be posted on the Council's website when it is available.

More Information: www.mafmc.org/workshop/2014/east-coast-climate-change-and-fisheries-governance-workshop