



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
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Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 11, 2019

**To:** Chris Moore, Executive Director  
Scientific and Statistical Committee

**From:** Brandon Muffley, Staff

**Subject:** Overview of Comprehensive Five-Year (2020-2024) Research Plan Review

The 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) required that each federal Council develop a five-year research plan. The Mid-Atlantic Council (Council), in coordination with the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), completed its first research plan in 2008. That plan was primarily informed by reviewing research recommendations within the various stock assessment documents and the Council's Research Set-Aside Program. The current version of the research plan was approved in 2015 and the Council's Visioning Project and Strategic Plan played a critical role in developing and identifying key themes and elements contained in the plan. The current five-year research plan runs through 2020; however, the Council agreed to update the research plan early in order to align with and be informed by the development of the Council's next Strategic Plan (2020-2024) and 5-Year Cooperative Agreement.

Council staff intend to solicit input on the existing research plan and potential priorities for the next plan throughout 2019. Species/FMP specific input and recommendations will be obtained throughout the year as the fishery specification review for each species occurs. Input would be provided from a variety of sources and expertise covering management, science and fishery perspectives. Input from the different sources would generally follow the list identified below:

- **Advisory Panel** – input during the review of the Fishery Information Document and development of the Fishery Performance Report. Feedback on management and fishery research priorities.
- **Scientific and Statistical Committee** – input during stock assessment or data update overview as part of the specification review. Feedback on biology, stock assessment and socioeconomic research priorities.
- **Monitoring Committee** – input during the specification and regulatory review. Feedback on biology, stock assessment and management priorities.
- **Staff lead and NEFSC assessment lead** – input and review provided throughout this process. Feedback on biology, stock assessment, and management with the potential to align and identify NEFSC priorities.

- **Council** – input during the fishery specification review process. Provide any species-specific Council research priority recommendations.

The SSC will review and consider research priorities for blueline and golden tilefish at their March 2019 meeting.

The process to evaluate and consider species/FMP specific research priorities could then be conducted on an annual basis. This would help ensure the research plan is reflective of the current state of science and accurately reflects the Council's science and management research priorities.

In addition to the species/FMP specific research review and priority setting, a broader more holistic research review will occur later in the year. This will allow for incorporation of any major themes, objectives, or focus areas identified through the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. Potential broader areas the next research plan may consider are ocean planning, habitat and EAFM initiatives. Staff intend to seek feedback and guidance from the SSC on these broader areas of consideration when appropriate. The Council will take final action and approve the five-year comprehensive research plan at their December 2019 meeting.