



**Collaborative Research Committee  
Webinar Meeting Summary**

*November 13, 2015, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.*

On November 13, 2015, the Council's Collaborative Research Committee met via webinar to identify research priorities for 2016/2017 collaborative research projects. These priorities will be included in a Request for Proposals, which will be available in late 2015. Briefing materials provided for the meeting are available at <http://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2015/collaborative-research-committee-meeting>.

**Attendance**

*Committee Members:* Jeff Kaelin (Chair), Steve Heins (Vice-Chair), Chris Batsavage, Peter deFur, Tony DiLernia, Warren Elliott, Howard King, Laurie Nolan, Adam Nowalsky, Rob O'Reilly, and Bob Beal. [*Not in Attendance:* Leroy Young.]

*Staff:* Mary Clark.

*Other Participants:* Andy Loftus, Chris Moore (Council Staff), David Bush, Eleanor Bochenek, Emerson Hasbrouck, Greg DiDomenico, Jose Montañez (Council Staff), John Boreman (SSC Chair), Jason Didden (Council Staff), Julia Byrd, Kate Wilke, Katie Almeida, Kiley Dancy (Council Staff), Rich Seagraves (Council Staff), and Tara Froehlich.

**Background**

The Council has allocated approximately \$700,000 to fund collaborative research (CR) projects in 2016/2017. These research projects will be conducted while the Council simultaneously evaluates options for long-term involvement in CR in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Council intends to publish a request for proposals (RFP) in late 2015 which will solicit proposals for research projects that address specific, Council-defined research priorities. At the October 2015 meeting, the Council provided input on a list of draft CR priorities and agreed that the Collaborative Research Committee (CRC) would complete the process of selecting final priorities.

**Meeting Summary**

During the November 13 webinar, staff presented a suite of revised CR priority options to serve as a starting point for Committee discussion. The research topics included on the list were selected with consideration given to each item's relevance to the Council's management objectives, suitability for collaborative research, and appropriateness for the time and budget considerations of this initiative. The committee's objective was to narrow the list down to 5-6 priorities for the upcoming RFP, although staff noted that the committee could decide to select more priorities if appropriate. Staff clarified that the priorities identified by the committee are only intended for the solicitation and selection of 2016/2017 projects and that the Council and CRC would have future opportunities to discuss long-term priorities for CR in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The CRC selected the following seven research priorities to be included in a RFP for 2016/2017 collaborative research projects.

1. Investigate NEFSC trawl survey efficiency, catchability, and availability relative to **summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, spiny dogfish**, and/or **Atlantic mackerel**. Projects which investigate calibration of an industry vessel relative to the NEFSC trawl survey will be prioritized.
2. Investigate abundance and/or distribution of **Atlantic mackerel** beyond the depth range of current NEFSC trawl surveys.
3. Develop innovative supplemental surveys (proof of concept) to derive fishery-independent indices of abundance for **golden tilefish** and **blueline tilefish**. Projects should focus primarily on development and evaluation of methodology, not on the collection of long-term data. The Council is particularly interested in projects which include video survey options.
4. Determine the discard mortality rate by gear type for the recreational **summer flounder** and/or **black sea bass** fisheries. Special consideration will be given to projects that address discard reduction.
5. Determine mesh selectivity for **summer flounder** and/or **black sea bass** to quantify selectivity at a range of mesh sizes, shapes, and configurations.
6. Develop and/or evaluate innovative approaches for avoidance or monitoring **river herring** and/or **shad** catch in small mesh fisheries (e.g. environmental cues and bycatch avoidance, electronic monitoring, etc.)
7. Collect sex-specific fishery-dependent data for **summer flounder** and compare against sex-specific data collected annually from the federal trawl survey, state trawl surveys, and the northeast area monitoring and assessment program trawl survey.

While the following research priorities were *not* selected for 2016/2017 CR projects, the committee agreed to retain the following priority items on a list to be considered for future research opportunities.

- a. Conduct fishery-independent sampling of **bluefish** to evaluate the dynamics of, and differences between, the offshore and inshore populations.
- b. Evaluate the influence of environmental factors on the **Atlantic Mackerel** stock.
- c. Determine the mortality rate for scup discarded in the commercial **scup** fishery.
- d. Develop gear engineering solutions to reduce discard mortality in the recreational **summer flounder** fishery.
- e. Develop solutions to reduce bycatch in the commercial **longfin squid** fishery. Possible areas of focus may include time/area correlations, gear modifications, and/or alternative gear types (e.g., jigging).

### **Project Administration**

During the meeting, staff introduced Mr. Andy Loftus, who has been selected to manage and administer the 2016/2017 CR projects. Mr. Loftus will be working with staff in the coming weeks to develop an RFP, collect project proposals, and present the proposals for review by the CRC. Mr. Loftus may be contacted at (410) 295-5997 or [aloftus@andrewloftus.com](mailto:aloftus@andrewloftus.com).