



Synthesis Document for

**Review of Goals and Objectives for the
Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan**

October 2017

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1 Context for revising goals and objectives

1.1 Project overview

The Council is reviewing and potentially revising goals and objectives for the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in support of the Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and 2017 Implementation Plan, which identified reviewing and updating FMP goals and objectives as a priority. This initiative allows the Council to revisit and "refresh" FMP goals and objectives to ensure that they provide meaningful guidance and are consistent with today's fisheries and management context. The Council will follow a similar process to update goals and objectives for all FMPs.

The Council contracted with the Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum (Fisheries Forum) to support this work by developing a process to support the Council's discussion. Between April and July 2017, Fisheries Forum staff conducted planning conversations with members of the Council's SCOQ Committee, SCOQ Advisory Panel (AP), and additional state agency representatives from states engaged in the fisheries. The Fisheries Forum also reviewed comments provided by the public during scoping hearings held in July 2017.

The Fisheries Forum synthesized this feedback to identify the major ideas and themes of discussion. The Council's Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) reviewed this information and provided recommendations to help guide the Council's discussion. This document combines the Fisheries Forum's synthesis of feedback and the FMAT's recommendations. This information is intended to help frame and focus the Council's review of goals and objectives, and is not intended to be comprehensive of all ideas and perspectives.

The Council will discuss SCOQ FMP goals and objectives at the October 2017 Council meeting (October 10-12, 2017 in Riverhead, New York). At this time, the Council may adopt revisions to SCOQ FMP goals and objectives for inclusion in a public hearing document. The Council and public will have additional opportunities to provide input on this issue.

1.2 Original FMP objectives

The current FMP objectives were adopted in 1988 through Amendment 8 to the SCOQ FMP.

1. Conserve and rebuild Atlantic surf clam and ocean quahog resources by stabilizing annual harvest rates throughout the management unit in a way that minimizes short term economic dislocations.
2. Simplify to the maximum extent the regulatory requirement of clam and quahog management to minimize the government and private cost of administering and complying with regulatory, reporting, enforcement, and research requirements of clam and quahog management.
3. Provide the opportunity for industry to operate efficiently, consistent with the conservation of clam and quahog resources, which will bring harvesting capacity in balance with processing and biological capacity and allow industry participants to achieve economic efficiency including efficient utilization of capital resources by the industry.
4. Provide a management regime and regulatory framework which is flexible and adaptive to unanticipated short term events or circumstances and consistent with overall plan objectives and long term industry planning and investment needs.

1.3 Terms: Goals, objectives, and strategies

As part of the Council’s discussion and review of goals and objectives, it will be important to consider the appropriate terminology.

- Goals are broad, big picture, and aspirational. They can help communicate high-level values and priorities for SCOQ management.
- Objectives are more specific and actionable. They can help describe important steps toward accomplishing goals.
- Strategies refer to specific processes, decision points, and actions the Council may take to achieve objectives and support goals.

Goals and objectives are appropriate for the Council’s discussion; however, specific management strategies would be appropriate to discuss in the context of other Council actions and will not be part of this discussion. Appendix 2 includes additional examples to help demonstrate the difference between goals, objectives, and strategies.

The four current SCOQ FMP objectives are described in Amendment 8 as objectives and not goals. Other Council FMPs include a combination of goals and objectives. Appendix 3 includes goals and objectives from all Mid-Atlantic FMPs. The Council could choose to consider structuring guidance for the SCOQ FMP in terms of goals, objectives, or both. The FMAT’s recommendation includes a set of five goal statements with optional objectives for the Council’s consideration.

1.4 MAFMC Strategic Plan

The Council’s review of SCOQ FMP goals and objectives supports the Council’s Strategic Plan and the 2017 Implementation Plan. The Council’s 2014-2018 Strategic Plan identifies reviewing and updating FMP goals and objectives as a priority:

Management Goal: Develop fishery management strategies that provide for productive, sustainable fisheries.

Objective 11: Evaluate the Council’s fishery management plans

Strategy 11.2: Review and update FMP objectives as appropriate to ensure that they remain specific, relevant, and measurable.

The Council’s 2017 Implementation Plan has a list of proposed deliverables including “Review and revise FMP goals and objectives” for the SCOQ FMP.

1.5 Scoping questions

The following questions were included in the Council’s July 2017 Scoping Guide for the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment to elicit feedback on SCOQ FMP goals and objectives. (The Excessive Shares Amendment will consider excessive shares and FMP goals and objectives as two separate issues.)

- Are the existing objectives appropriate for managing the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries?

- Are there any objectives that appear outdated or do not reflect the way these fisheries are managed today? If so, how could they be updated?
- Is the intent of each objective clear? If not, how could they be reworded or clarified?
- Should any new goals and/or objectives be added?
- What else should the Council consider during the process of reviewing the objectives for the SCOQ FMP?

2 Feedback on goals and objectives

This section provides an overview of ideas and feedback to help inform the Council's review of SCOQ FMP goals and objectives. Contributors include members of the Council's SCOQ Committee and AP, additional state representatives from states engaged in the fisheries, and stakeholders who provided comments during the Council's July 2017 scoping hearings. Contributors commented briefly on the use of goals and objectives. Additional feedback focused on three themes: 1) relevance of the current objectives, 2) opportunities for revisions, and 3) other issues that may be pertinent to goals and objectives, including Council priorities and unique aspects of the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries.

2.1 Use of goals and objectives

Managers and advisors who contributed to this project shared the following ideas related to the use of FMP goals and objectives. Most managers and advisors do not refer back to goals and objectives on a regular basis, if at all, but felt they have an important role in the FMP.

Purpose: Goals and objectives provide high level guidance or the "ground rules" for a fishery to ensure it is managed sustainably. Managers and advisors described goals and objectives as foundational to the FMP (e.g., the "blueprint", the "benchmark", the National Standards of the FMP) and the Council's message to the public and industry about how it intends to manage the SCOQ fisheries. Goals and objectives need to be long term and flexible to accommodate changing conditions.

Time horizon: Goals are meant to be long term; objectives are shorter term and a measure of the effectiveness of the set goals. Managers and advisors felt that goals and objectives need to be set for the long term to provide stability and allow the industry to make business decisions. Goals and objectives should also provide managers and the industry with short-term flexibility to address challenges and changing conditions. The appropriate time horizon for goals and objectives can also depend on the circumstances of a fishery and what is needed.

Audience: The intended audience for goals and objectives is a large group that includes the Council, NOAA Fisheries, industry, interested stakeholders, state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and consumers.

2.2 Relevance of the current objectives

Many contributors felt that the current FMP objectives continue to remain relevant and provide meaningful guidance despite significant changes in the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries.

Contributors shared the following reasons why they felt that the current objectives are relevant and appropriate in their current form.

Flexibility: Contributors felt that the objectives have remained relevant through significant biological changes to the SCOQ resources and regulatory changes to the fisheries. They described seeing changes including a shift in the center of biomass to the north, a decrease in fishing activity in the southern end of the range, encountering surfclams among ocean quahogs in deeper water, fleet consolidation after implementation of the Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) system, and improvements to the science and research supporting management of the SCOQ resources. Contributors felt that the current objectives are sufficiently flexible to accommodate future changes.

Process and intent: Some contributors described their high regard for the wording and intent of the current set of objectives and the process that was originally followed to develop them, as well as their respect for the people who participated.

Performance: Contributors feel that management is working well, that the current objectives are being achieved, and that these objectives define one of the most successfully managed fisheries in the U.S. The objectives reflect the current social and economic circumstances of the fisheries and have minimized government and industry costs. In particular contributors noted that the stock is rebuilt, harvest rates are stable, management uncertainty is low, short-term economic dislocations have been minimized, and regulatory requirements are simplified. Some contributors also noted that safety has been improved.

Stability and consistency: Contributors feel that the current objectives and adoption of the ITQ program have allowed the industry to make efficient planning and business decisions.

Relationships and process: Contributors feel that the current objectives support an efficient and cooperative relationship between the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and industry.

Overall, contributors felt the fisheries are managed well and these original FMP objectives are still relevant. Some felt no changes or updates are necessary to the current objectives, while others felt a refresh and/or some minor wording updates could be helpful to modernize them.

2.3 Opportunities for revisions

Although contributors generally felt that the current SCOQ FMP objectives are still relevant, many suggested opportunities for revisions to ensure that objectives provide meaningful guidance, are clearly worded, and are consistent with the way the fisheries and the Council currently operate. These opportunities include minor wording adjustments as well as more comprehensive structural and content-related revisions.

2.3.1 Minor revisions

The following section describes opportunities identified by contributors for the Council to adjust, update, or clarify specific terms within each objective while preserving its intent. Contributors felt that objectives should be clearly worded to ensure that their intent is clear to managers, stakeholders, and enforcement.

Objective 1

Conserve and rebuild Atlantic surf clam and ocean quahog resources by stabilizing annual harvest rates throughout the management unit in a way that minimizes short term economic dislocations.

- Update the objective: The Council could update this objective to reflect the need to maintain rather than “rebuild” the surfclam and ocean quahog resources, which are not overfished or undergoing overfishing. Many contributors felt “rebuild” is an outdated term and that refreshing this objective would acknowledge the progress made and that the SCOQ resources are sustainably managed.
- Clarify specific terms: Some felt it could be helpful to clarify some of the terms in this objective including “stabilizing” and “economic dislocations”. For example, harvest rates are stable and

the quota has been the same for years, so “stabilizing” may be a term that is more reflective of the fisheries in previous years.

- Other considerations: Some felt this objective could take the longevity of the species into consideration.

Objective 2

Simplify to the maximum extent the regulatory requirement of clam and quahog management to minimize the government and private cost of administering and complying with regulatory, reporting, enforcement, and research requirements of clam and quahog management.

- Wording: This objective could acknowledge other relevant aspects of managing the fisheries, such as monitoring.
- Update the objective: Many felt management of the SCOQ fisheries is straightforward and simple, and that this objective might reflect a time when management was more complicated. The Council could update this objective, for example, to focus on maintaining current regulatory requirements.

Objective 3

Provide the opportunity for industry to operate efficiently, consistent with the conservation of clam and quahog resources, which will bring harvesting capacity in balance with processing and biological capacity and allow industry participants to achieve economic efficiency including efficient utilization of capital resources by the industry.

- Update the objective: The current objective refers to “bringing harvest capacity into balance”, however, contributors felt that harvesting capacity is in alignment with processing and biological capacity in the sustainable SCOQ fisheries. This portion of the objective could be updated to reflect the current fisheries and status of the resources.
- Clarify specific terms: Some weren’t clear on the meaning of “economic efficiency” in this objective.

Objective 4

Provide a management regime and regulatory framework which is flexible and adaptive to unanticipated short term events or circumstances and consistent with overall plan objectives and long term industry planning and investment needs.

- Clarify specific terms: Some contributors weren’t sure what is meant by “unanticipated short term events” because there are not a lot of sudden changes in these fisheries and they are not aware of disruptions or destabilizing events that could occur in today’s fisheries. However, some thought that changing environmental conditions could be considered an unanticipated event that could be reflected in this objective.

2.3.2 Structural and content revisions

In addition to the minor revisions above, some contributors felt that there are opportunities for the Council to make more significant structural and/or content-related revisions, ranging from minor to comprehensive changes to the existing objectives. (There may not be a clear delineation between “minor” and “significant” revisions, given that multiple minor revisions to one objective could result in substantial changes).

Order: The objectives could be ordered in terms of importance or priority.

Structure: Objectives could be combined or reorganized. For example, contributors noted that current objectives 3 and 4 both address industry operations.

Comprehensive revisions: The objectives could be completely revised. One example of a complete new set of goals and objectives was provided during the Council’s July scoping hearings and is included as appendix to this document (Appendix 4: Example of revised goals and objectives provided by Bumble Bee Seafoods).

2.4 Other issues

The Council could consider how goals and objectives intersect with other Council priorities and unique aspects of the SCOQ resources and fisheries. Contributors identified several topics that are relevant to the SCOQ fisheries and could be relevant to a review of goals and objectives.

Ecosystem and habitat considerations: Implementation of the Council’s Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and effective use of the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) authorities are Council priorities.

Climate and ecosystem changes: Some contributors are concerned about the impacts of ocean acidification to the long-lived, sessile surfclam and ocean quahog resources and feel that the fisheries need to remain adaptable to changing environmental conditions.

Scientific advances: Supporting advances in fishery-independent data collection and modeling that reflect the unique biology of surfclams and ocean quahogs helps to enhance the effective management of the SCOQ resources.

Changes to the fisheries: Contributors commented about the fisheries (both the biomass and fishing activity) shifting north into the geographical bounds of the New England Fishery Management Council and issues with accessible areas in New England due to the Omnibus Habitat Amendment.

Contributors noted other attributes of the fisheries that could be reflected in revised goals and objectives, including surfclams and ocean quahogs being a safe, high quality product. The longevity of the species is another unique attribute. Some also noted the importance of continuing to improve understanding of the resources, fisheries, and dependent communities, and the shared role of managers, industry, and science in the sustainable management of the SCOQ fisheries.

3 FMAT recommendation development

3.1 Context for FMAT recommendations

3.1.1 Outcomes from FMAT discussion

The Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMAT convened via webinar on September 20, 2017, to consider the feedback obtained from planning conversations and scoping hearings, and to provide recommendations to help guide the Council's review of FMP goals and objectives. The FMAT recognizes that the Council will consider a range of possible options including:

- Making no changes to the current objectives
- Making minor changes or wording adjustments to the current objectives
- Making significant changes to the current objectives
- Developing a new set of revised objectives

The FMAT's discussion resulted in two outcomes to help support the Council's consideration of these options. The FMAT recommends that the Council discuss these two outcomes and determine how to proceed.

Outcome 1: Discussion questions

The FMAT developed a set of discussion questions (Section 3.2.1) to help guide the Council's discussion of SCOQ FMP goals and objectives and consideration of the options above.

Outcome 2: Revised goals and objectives

The FMAT recommended a set of goal statements and objectives (Section 3.2.2) for the Council's consideration of revised goals and/or objectives.

3.1.2 Rationale for FMAT recommendations

The FMAT developed Outcomes 1 and 2 after considering the guidance provided by the Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan (Section 1.4), the discussion questions used to elicit feedback from the public during the July 2017 scoping hearings (Section 1.5), and the feedback obtained from planning conversations and public comment (Section 2). The FMAT concluded that while the current SCOQ FMP objectives were carefully considered at the time they were developed, they should be revised to provide more useful guidance to the Council for the following reasons.

Acknowledge achievement and success. The current SCOQ FMP objectives reflect the intended and desired outcomes of Amendment 8. Aspects of these objectives have already been achieved. Revising FMP goals and objectives would acknowledge the improvements that have been made to the management of the SCOQ fisheries, recognize what is working well, and focus on maintaining and sustaining these improvements.

Clarify intent. Goals and objectives are an important public statement about what an FMP is trying to accomplish, and should be clear to stakeholders of all backgrounds. The current objectives and specific terms may not be clear to those who were not involved in the management process at the time

Amendment 8 was developed. Terms may also be confusing because they are not defined or have multiple definitions (e.g., economic efficiency). In addition, the current objectives are complicated and combine topics (e.g., Objective 1 addresses biology and economics). Revising goals and objectives would simplify and focus this guidance to clarify the Council's intent while still acknowledging the need to balance different objectives.

Provide flexible long-term guidance. The current SCOQ FMP objectives are short-term and focus on implementation of the ITQ program. Revising goals and objectives is an opportunity for the Council to develop broad, high-level guidance that describes the Council's longer-term intent for the fisheries, and is flexible to remain relevant over time and through changes to the fisheries.

Clearly identify FMP-level guidance. In addition to setting FMP goals and objectives, the Council may identify goals and/or objectives for specific amendments. For example, the Council identified objectives for Amendment 10 to the SCOQ FMP in 1998 (see Question 6 below). Furthermore, fisheries and FMPs evolve over time, and this can lead to a disconnect between the stated goals and/or objectives for an FMP and the way a fishery currently operates. Through the process of reviewing and revising FMP goals and objectives, the Council should clearly identify FMP-level guidance that is intended to carry forward through future Council actions, and ensure that this guidance reflects the current state of a fishery.

3.2 FMAT recommendations

3.2.1 Outcome 1: Discussion questions

The FMAT identified several discussion questions that may help inform the Council's consideration of goals and objectives for the SCOQ FMP.

Question 1: How does the Council want to structure guidance for the SCOQ FMP?

The Council could choose to structure guidance for the SCOQ FMP in the form of goals, objectives, or both. The FMAT feels that goals would provide valuable long-term guidance, but notes that this is an important structural consideration for the Council to discuss. The FMAT's recommendations include both goals and objectives but the FMAT could provide these in a different format.

Question 2: What does the Council view as the time frame for goals and objectives?

Time frame is an important consideration related to Question 1. Goals and objectives for biological sustainability may be essentially permanent, but other guidance may need to be adjusted over time. The FMAT suggests the Council consider the time frame for long-term guidance, how frequently the Council is likely to revisit FMP goals and objectives, and whether reviews are likely to occur as needed or on a set schedule. The FMAT considered how frequently the Council might revisit goals and objectives (for example, every 10 years, with every other iteration of the Council's Strategic Plan, or in conjunction with ITQ reviews) though did not endorse or recommend a time frame for review.

Question 3: What is the Council's intent for reviewing and potentially revising goals and objectives?

The FMAT suggests the Council consider whether goals and objectives are meant to maintain the current state of the fisheries or look ahead to the future. The FMAT's recommendations for revised goals and objectives (Section 3.2.2) reflect the current fisheries; the development of

forward-looking goals and/or objectives that imply change to the fisheries would be the purview of the Council.

Question 4: How could the Council’s review of FMP goals and objectives acknowledge what is working well in the SCOQ fisheries?

Feedback from planning conversations and public comments emphasized that the current objectives are still viewed as relevant and that the fisheries are performing well, though opinions differed on whether the current objectives should be revised. The FMAT felt that revising goals and objectives would refocus FMP guidance and acknowledge improvements to the fisheries that should be maintained. The Council should consider how FMP goals and objectives can most effectively acknowledge what is working well in the SCOQ fisheries.

Question 5: How does the Council want to address measuring the performance of FMP goals and objectives?

The Council’s 2014-2018 Strategic Plan states: *Review and update FMP objectives as appropriate to ensure that they remain specific, relevant, and measurable.* The FMAT suggests that the Council discuss this issue. In the future, the Council could request that FMATs give further consideration to measuring the performance of goals and objectives. Some FMAT members indicated that the goals recommended in Section 3.2.2 could be measured using quantitative and/or qualitative metrics.

Question 6: Does the Council want to acknowledge the Maine mahogany quahog fishery in FMP goals and objectives?

Amendment 10 to the SCOQ FMP in 1998 recognizes and provides for the continuation of a small fishery for ocean quahogs in federal waters off the state of Maine. Amendment 10 recognizes the overall objectives of the SCOQ FMP established by Amendment 8 and specifies an additional set of objectives¹. The FMAT suggests that the Council consider whether this fishery should be acknowledged in overall FMP objectives. The FMAT also notes that the existence of amendment-specific objectives reinforces the need to clearly identify overall FMP objectives as guidance that should be carried forward into future actions.

Question 7: If the Council chooses to consider the draft goals and objectives proposed by the FMAT (Outcome 2), is the wording appropriate?

The FMAT and members of the public noted that the wording of goals and objectives is very important. The FMAT suggests the Council carefully consider the wording of each proposed goal and objective, possible interpretations and consequences, and the balance among goals and objectives as a whole.

¹ The additional objectives specifically for Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP) are:

1. Protect the public health and safety by the continuation of the State of Maine's PSP (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) monitoring program for ocean quahogs harvested from the historical eastern Maine fishery.
2. Conserve the historical eastern Maine portion of the ocean quahog resource.
3. Provide a framework that will allow the continuation of the eastern Maine artisanal fishery for ocean quahogs.
4. Provide a mechanism and process by which industry participants can work cooperatively with Federal and State management agencies to determine the future of the historical eastern Maine fishery.

3.2.2 Outcome 2: Revised goals and objectives

The FMAT developed the following goal statements, optional objectives, and questions for the Council's consideration. These goals are derived from the existing SCOQ FMP objectives, statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), and feedback from planning conversations and public comment; and are reframed as overarching long-term aspirations. The FMAT notes that several long-term goals are embedded within the current SCOQ FMP objectives. The proposed goals and objectives are an effort to distinguish between longer-term goals and shorter-term objectives, simplify and clarify the wording and intent of the current objectives, and provide meaningful long-term guidance. The FMAT believes that the proposed goals are longer-term and would not need to be revised frequently. The objectives, though shorter-term, describe ongoing practices to maintain rather than action items to be completed.

This section includes a summary of the five goals and supporting objectives recommended by the FMAT, followed by a discussion of the FMAT's rationale for each proposed objective and an explanation of how the proposed goal and/or objectives relate to the current FMP objectives (e.g., an update, reorganization, or new content).

Summary of revised goals and objectives

Goal 1: Ensure the biological sustainability of the surfclam and ocean quahog stocks to maintain sustainable fisheries.

Goal 2: Maintain a simple and efficient management regime.

Objective 2.1: Promote compatible regulations between state and federal entities.

Objective 2.2: Promote coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council.

Objective 2.3: Promote a regulatory framework that minimizes government and industry costs associated with administering and complying with regulatory requirements.

Goal 3: Manage for stability in the fisheries.

Objective 3.1: Provide a regulatory framework that supports long-term stability for surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries and fishing communities.

Goal 4: Provide a management regime that is flexible and adaptive to changes in the fisheries and the ecosystem.

Objective 4.1: Advocate for the fisheries in ocean planning and ocean use discussions.

Objective 4.2: Maintain the ability to respond to short and long-term changes in the environment.

Goal 5: Support science, monitoring, and data collection that enhance effective management of the resources.

Objective 5.1: Continue to promote opportunities for government and industry collaboration on research.

Goal 1: Biological sustainability

Goal 1: Ensure the biological sustainability of the surfclam and ocean quahog stocks to maintain sustainable fisheries.

FMAT Discussion

Goal 1 is an update and simplification of the “conserve and rebuild” language from current Objective 1 (*Conserve and rebuild Atlantic surf clam and ocean quahog resources by stabilizing annual harvest rates throughout the management unit in a way that minimizes short term economic dislocations.*) This revision reflects the current status of the stocks, which are not overfished, undergoing overfishing, or undergoing rebuilding; and is versatile to provide guidance under all resource scenarios. This goal and the two objectives are consistent with the requirements of the MSA and are worded in a way that is more straightforward and understandable to the public.

The Council’s recent review of summer flounder FMP goals and objectives may provide useful context for this proposed goal. The Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) considered a similarly worded goal for biological sustainability during their December 2015 review of summer flounder FMP goals and objectives, as part of the Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment. The FMAT for this amendment initially recommended a goal (“Ensure the biological sustainability of the summer flounder resource in order to maintain a sustainable summer flounder fishery”) paired with two objectives (“Achieve and maintain a sustainable spawning stock biomass” and “Achieve and maintain a sustainable rate of fishing mortality.”) The Council and Board recommended merging the two proposed objectives into a single objective that draws on the language of National Standard 1 to specifically address the topics of yield and avoiding overfishing, as follows: “Prevent overfishing, and achieve and maintain sustainable spawning stock biomass levels that promote optimum yield in the fishery.” This proposed wording also builds on one of the original objectives for the FMP (Objective 3: Improve the yield from the fishery.) The Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment is ongoing and goals and objectives for this FMP have not yet been finalized.

Questions

- Does the Council want to develop one or more objectives related to this goal? For example, objectives could include “Maintain a sustainable biomass” and “Maintain a sustainable rate of fishing mortality.” The FMAT notes that these objectives could reinforce and make explicit what is required by the MSA, though the FMAT feels adding objectives is not necessary.
- The Maine mahogany quahog fishery was developed after the current objectives were established. Does the Council want to explicitly acknowledge the Maine mahogany quahog fishery in goals and objectives? If so, where is the appropriate place to do so? An optional objective could read: Maintain the Maine mahogany quahog fishery.

Goal 2: Simplicity and efficiency

Goal 2: Maintain a simple and efficient management regime.

Objective 2.1: Promote compatible regulations between state and federal entities.

Objective 2.2: Promote coordination with the New England Fishery Management Council.

Objective 2.3: Promote a regulatory framework that minimizes government and industry costs associated with administering and complying with regulatory requirements.

FMAT Discussion

Goal 2 is a simplification and reorganization of the language in current Objective 2 (*Simplify to the maximum extent the regulatory requirement of clam and quahog management to minimize the government and private cost of administering and complying with regulatory, reporting, enforcement, and research requirements of clam and quahog management.*) The words “maintain” and “promote” recognize that these aspects of managing the fisheries have been improved over time.

Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 are new ideas. The FMAT felt that promoting compatibility between state and federal regulations (Objective 2.1) is important “common sense” guidance for supporting simple and efficient management. Objective 2.2 was added in response to planning conversations and public comments and refers to the Council’s interest in coordinating and having a presence when the New England Council develops management measures that may impact the SCOQ fisheries.

Questions

Current Objective 2 recognizes specific aspects of the management process for which managers should minimize the government and private cost of administering and complying with requirements. These include regulatory, reporting, enforcement, and research requirements.

- Does the Council want to continue to recognize these specific requirements, for example by adding them to Objective 2.3?

Goal 3: Stability

Goal 3: Manage for stability in the fisheries.

Objective 3.1: Provide a regulatory framework that supports long-term stability for surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries and fishing communities.

FMAT Discussion

This goal is a simplification and reorganization that focuses on the overarching value of stability by drawing on the language of two current objectives, Objective 3 (*Provide the opportunity for industry to operate efficiently, consistent with the conservation of clam and quahog resources, which will bring harvesting capacity in balance with processing and biological capacity and allow industry participants to achieve economic efficiency including efficient utilization of capital resources by the industry*) and Objective 4 (*Provide a management regime and regulatory framework which is flexible and adaptive to unanticipated short term events or circumstances and consistent with overall plan objectives and long term industry planning and investment needs.*) Specifically, this overarching goal of stability addresses

the language of Objectives 3 and 4 referring to balancing harvesting, processing, and biological capacity; efficient utilization of capital resources, and long-term industry planning and investment needs.

The FMAT discussed the most appropriate terminology to describe stakeholders in the management of the surfclam and ocean quahog resources. FMAT members noted that the current objectives use the terms “industry” and “industry participants” and refer to both the harvesting and processing sectors. The FMAT also discussed whether the term “industry” explicitly includes the processing sector, and the relationship of the Council’s management decisions to the processing sector. The FMAT suggested the phrase “surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries and fishing communities” as a simple and more encompassing term that includes all components of the SCOQ fishery.

Goal 4: Flexibility

Goal 4: Provide a management regime that is flexible and adaptive to changes in the fisheries and the ecosystem.

Objective 4.1: Advocate for the fisheries in ocean planning and ocean use discussions.

Objective 4.2: Maintain the ability to respond to short and long-term changes in the environment.

FMAT Discussion

Goal 4 is an update and revision of Objective 4 (*Provide a management regime and regulatory framework which is flexible and adaptive to unanticipated short term events or circumstances and consistent with overall plan objectives and long term industry planning and investment needs*) and focuses on the values of flexibility and adaptability. Goal 4 and Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 also acknowledge issues identified during planning conversations, including concerns about changing environmental conditions and the Council’s implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

Objective 4.1 is a new idea recommended by the FMAT. The Council is able to comment on proposed plans (e.g., wind energy development) that may impact fish habitat. The Mid-Atlantic Council also has a representative to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. The FMAT recommended Objective 4.1 to recognize the opportunity for the Council to engage more proactively in ocean planning processes to consider and communicate the SCOQ fisheries’ interests. The FMAT also recommended including the reference to long-term changes in Objective 4.2 to recognize the need to respond to both short and long-term changes, as current Objective 4 refers only to short term events.

Goal 5: Information

Goal 5: Support science, monitoring, and data collection that enhance effective management of the resources.

Objective 5.1: Continue to promote opportunities for government and industry collaboration on research.

FMAT Discussion

Goal 5 and Objective 5.1 are new and are not based on any of the current SCOQ FMP objectives. This goal and objective are based on feedback from planning conversations and scoping comments. The FMAT and public participants in the FMAT’s webinar discussed the use of the words “support” and “promote” in Goal 5. Public participants noted that the SCOQ industry has been proactive in supporting

and investing in research, and preferred the word “support” for Goal 5. The FMAT agreed that the use of the word “support” in Goal 5 is consistent with the Council’s role and responsibilities relative to science, monitoring, and data collection. The use of “promote” in Objective 5.1 recognizes that the Council can encourage and provide guidance to partners and other entities to focus research that will benefit management.

4.1 Appendix 1: Contributors

The Fisheries Forum requested input from members of the Council's SCOQ Committee and AP and additional state agency representatives in order to develop this document and to inform the FMAT's recommendations. Contributors shared feedback on fishery management plan goals and objectives for SCOQ management to help focus and frame the Council's discussion of this issue.

Fisheries Forum staff conducted 18 informal planning calls with Committee and AP members and state representatives involved in surfclam and ocean quahog management. In addition, Council staff collected public comments on this issue during scoping hearings held in July 2017.

The following individuals contributed to the development of this document through short planning calls.

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Committee members

- Peter deFur, Appointee (VA)
- Peter Hughes, Appointee (NJ)
- Roger Mann, Appointee (VA)
- Stew Michels, Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Steve Heins, New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Howard King, Appointee (MD)
- Wes Townsend, Appointee (DE)
- Patricia Bennett, U.S. Coast Guard
- Mike Ruccio, NOAA Fisheries
- Doug Potts, NOAA Fisheries

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog AP members

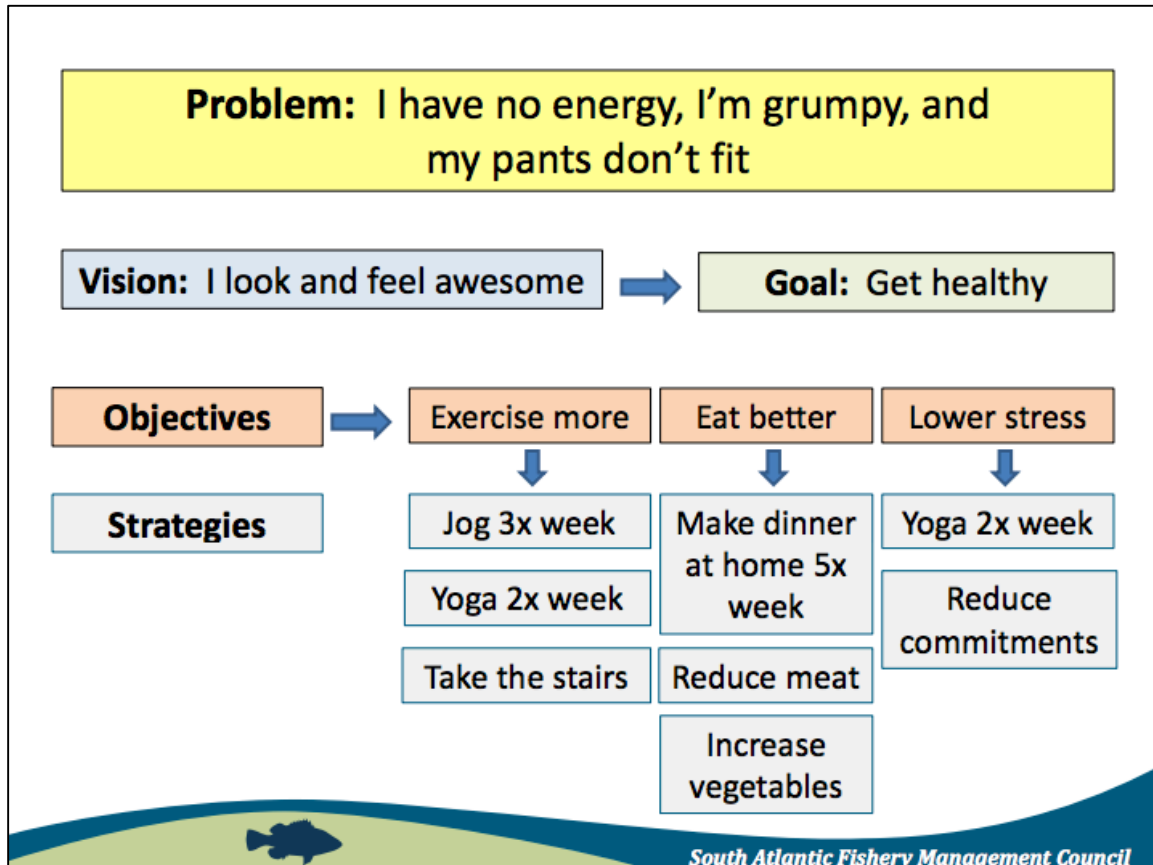
- Thomas Alspach (MD)
- Thomas Dameron (PA)
- Peter Himchak (NJ)
- Sam Martin (NJ)
- Joseph Myers (NJ) with Jeff Pike and Mike Kraft
- David Wallace (MD)

State agency representatives

- Tom Baum and Jeff Normant, New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Terry Stockwell, Maine Department of Marine Resources

4.2 Appendix 2: South Atlantic Council example: Goals, objectives, and strategies

This diagram includes examples of goals, objectives, and strategies, and is excerpted from a staff presentation on strategic planning from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's March 2013 Council Visioning Workshop.



The full presentation is available online:

http://cdn1.safmc.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/28101424/2BB_Attach2b_StrategicPlanningPres-1.pdf

Additional information about the Council's Snapper-Grouper Visioning Process, and resources from past meetings, are available on the council's website.

<http://www.safmc.net/resource-library/council-visioning-project>

4.3 Appendix 3: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council FMP goals and objectives

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass

1. Reduce fishing mortality in the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries to assure that overfishing does not occur.
2. Reduce fishing mortality on immature summer flounder, scup, and black seabass to increase spawning stock biomass.
3. Improve the yield from the fishery.
4. Promote compatible management regulations between state and Federal jurisdictions.
5. Promote uniform and effective enforcement of regulations.
6. Minimize regulations to achieve the management objectives stated above.

Bluefish

1. Increase understanding of the stock and of the fishery.
2. Provide the highest availability of bluefish to U.S. fishermen while maintaining, within limits, traditional uses of bluefish.
3. Provide for cooperation among the coastal states, the various regional marine fishery management councils, and federal agencies involved along the coast to enhance the management of bluefish throughout its range.
4. Prevent recruitment overfishing.
5. Reduce the waste in both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Spiny dogfish

1. Reduce fishing mortality to ensure that overfishing does not occur.
2. Promote compatible management regulations between state and Council jurisdictions and the US and Canada.
3. Promote uniform and effective enforcement of regulations.
4. Minimize regulations while achieving the management objectives stated above.
5. Manage the spiny dogfish fishery so as to minimize the impact of the regulations on the prosecution of other fisheries, to the extent practicable.
6. Contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function.

Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish

1. Enhance the probability of successful (i.e., the historical average) recruitment to the fisheries.
2. Promote the growth of the U.S. commercial fishery, including the fishery for export.
3. Provide the greatest degree of freedom and flexibility to all harvesters of these resources consistent with the attainment of the other objectives of this FMP.
4. Provide marine recreational fishing opportunities, recognizing the contribution of recreational fishing to the national economy.
5. Increase understanding of the conditions of the stocks and fisheries.
6. Minimize harvesting conflicts among U.S. commercial, U.S. recreational, and foreign fishermen.

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

1. Conserve and rebuild Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog resources by stabilizing annual harvest rates throughout the management unit in a way that minimizes short term economic dislocations.
2. Simplify to the maximum extent the regulatory requirement of surfclam and ocean quahog management to minimize the government and private cost of administering and complying with

regulatory, reporting, enforcement, and research requirements of surfclam and ocean quahog management.

3. Provide the opportunity for industry to operate efficiently, consistent with the conservation of surfclam and ocean quahog resources, which will bring harvesting capacity in balance with processing and biological capacity and allow industry participants to achieve economic efficiency including efficient utilization of capital resources by the industry.
4. Provide a management regime and regulatory framework which is flexible and adaptive to unanticipated short term events or circumstances and consistent with overall plan objectives and long term industry planning and investment needs.

Tilefish

The overall goal of this FMP is to rebuild tilefish so that the optimum yield can be obtained from this resource. To meet the overall goal, the following objectives are adopted:

1. Prevent overfishing and rebuild the resource to the biomass that would support MSY.
2. Prevent overcapitalization and limit new entrants.
3. Identify and describe essential tilefish habitat.
4. Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing and to reduce bycatch in all fisheries.

4.4 Appendix 4: Example of revised goals and objectives provided by Bumble Bee Seafoods

The following is an excerpt from scoping comments provide in a letter from Bumble Bee Seafoods to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, July 12, 2017. These comments are the only example of a new full set of goals and objectives suggested by contributors to this project, and are included in this document for reference.

Bumble Bea Seafood supports the Council’s effort to revise the goals and objectives for the OQSC FMP as they are not consistent with today’s fishery and management issues. Provided below is a list of revised/rewritten goals and objectives which we believe more accurately reflect today’s fishery:

1. Conserve and sustainably manage the Atlantic surf clam and ocean quahog resources throughout the management unit to prevent overfishing and ensure that the resource is not overfished while achieving optimum yield from the resource.
2. Promote opportunities for government and industry scientific research, especially into the effects of warming ocean temperatures and changing ocean conditions on the OQSC resources, and research necessary for sound management decisions.
3. Provide a simplified management regime and regulatory framework that minimize government and industry cost while allowing participants to achieve economic efficiency including efficient utilization of capital resources by industry.
4. Promote compatible management regulations between state and Councils jurisdiction.
5. Strengthen coordination between the New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council so that actions by one Council do not negatively impact the ability of industry to achieve optimum yield.