

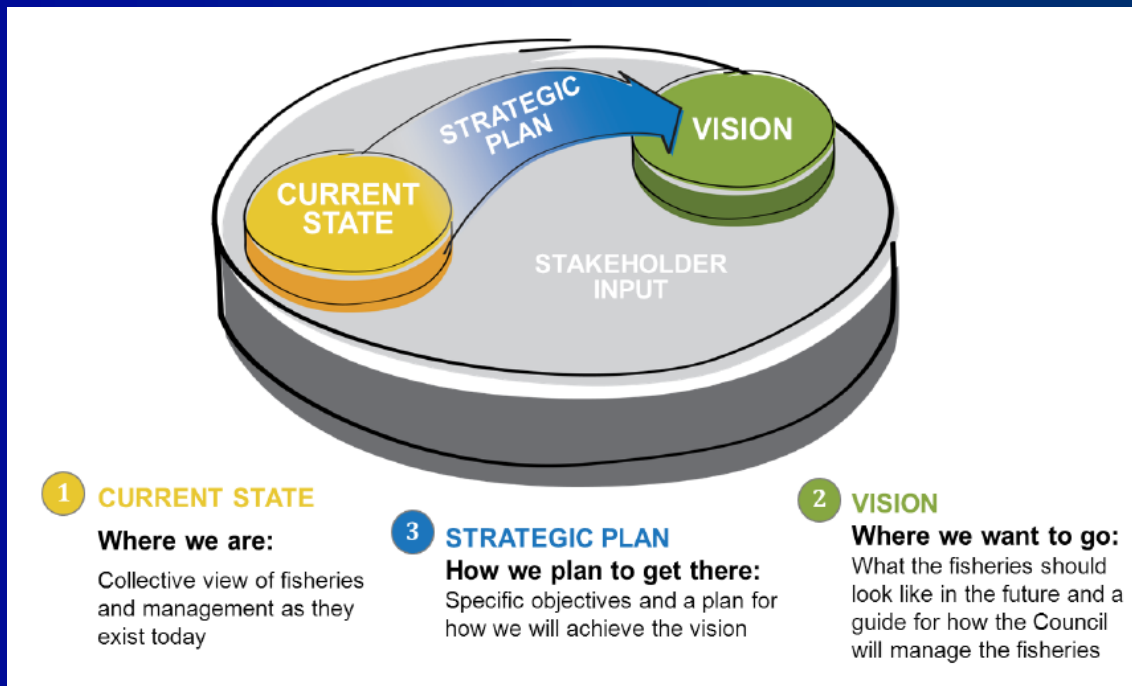


Visioning and Strategic Planning: Stakeholder Input Report

June 13, 2012

Visioning and Strategic Planning

Objective: Develop a comprehensive, stakeholder-informed vision for Mid-Atlantic fisheries that will be used to inform the Council's strategic plan



Phase 1: Stakeholder Data Gathering

Engage
Stakeholders

Build
Trust/Improve
Relationships

Solicit Input
on
Regulations
and
Management
Process

WYSIATI



“What you see is all there is”

2011 National SSC Workshop Recommendations

Ecosystems

- “better information is needed to describe interactions among species and trophic levels”

Social Science

- “there was general recognition of the need for collection and analysis of additional social and economic fisheries data”

What can we learn from stakeholders?

- “On the water” knowledge
 - Social and economic impacts of regulations
 - Ecosystem interactions
 - Fishery trends
- Effective communication strategies
- Ideas for improving management
- ??? (We don’t know what we don’t know)

Data Collection Methods

Surveys

General

1,253
responses

Fishery-specific

1,048
responses



Position Letters

12
Letters

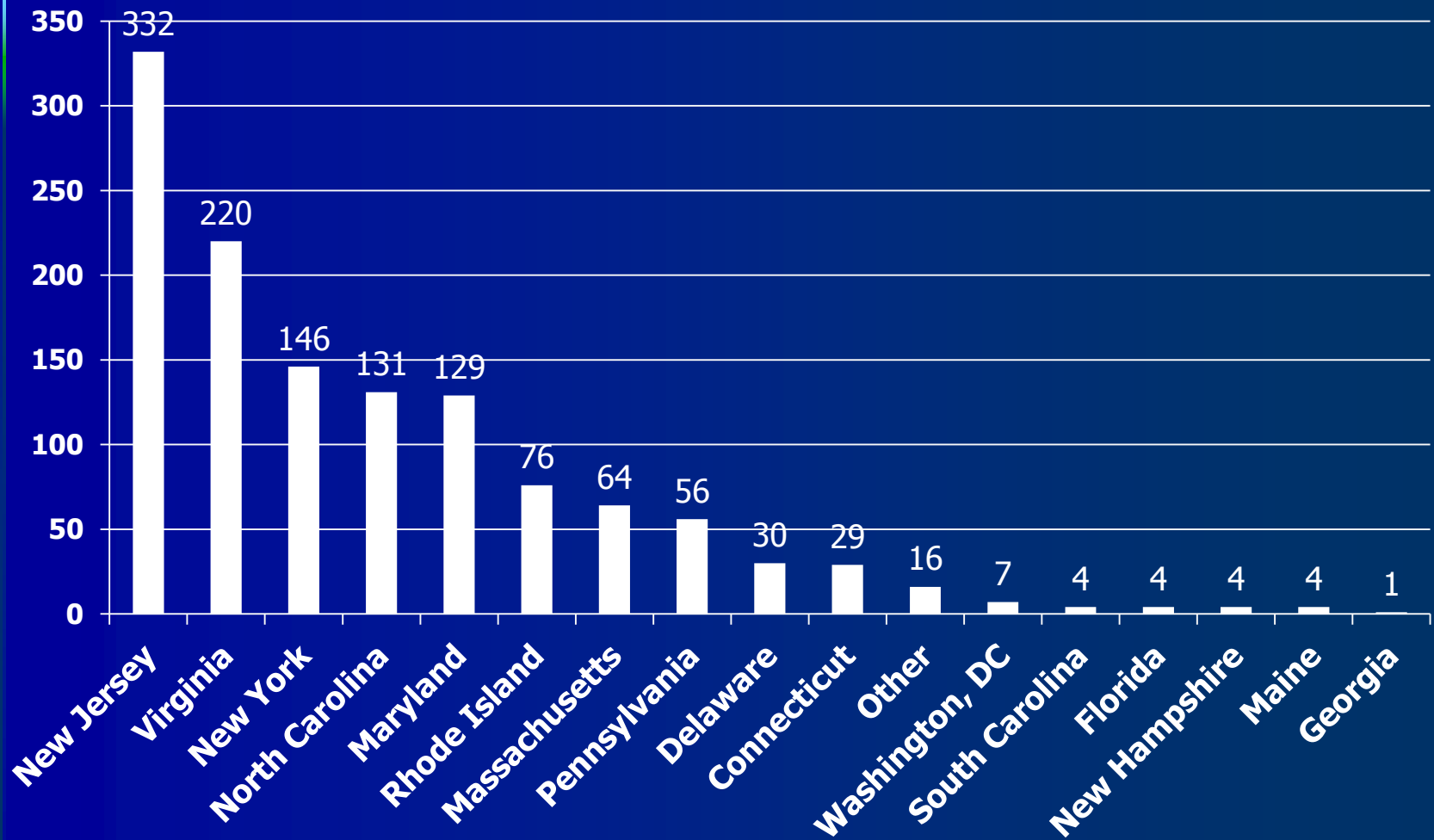
Results

Participants	Roles in Mid-Atlantic Fisheries
	States of Residence
	Council Participation
Themes and Recommendations	Common- All Stakeholder Groups
	Commercial
	Recreational
	ENGO
Visions	Common- All Stakeholder Groups
	Commercial
	Recreational
	ENGO

Survey Respondent Roles

Description	Primary Role	All Roles
Recreational Fisherman	717	968
Commercial Fisherman, Industry, or Association	205	245
For Hire Operator or Crew	71	120
Interested Public	69	252
Recreational User (boating, diver, etc.)	52	375
Environmental Non-Governmental Organization (ENGO)	30	60
State or Local Government	29	47
Federal Government	24	24
Recreational Industry (bait and tackle, etc.)	22	61
Academic Institution	20	29
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	12	31
Elected Government Official	1	4
Other	1	53
Grand Total	1253	2269

Survey Responses by State



Council Participation

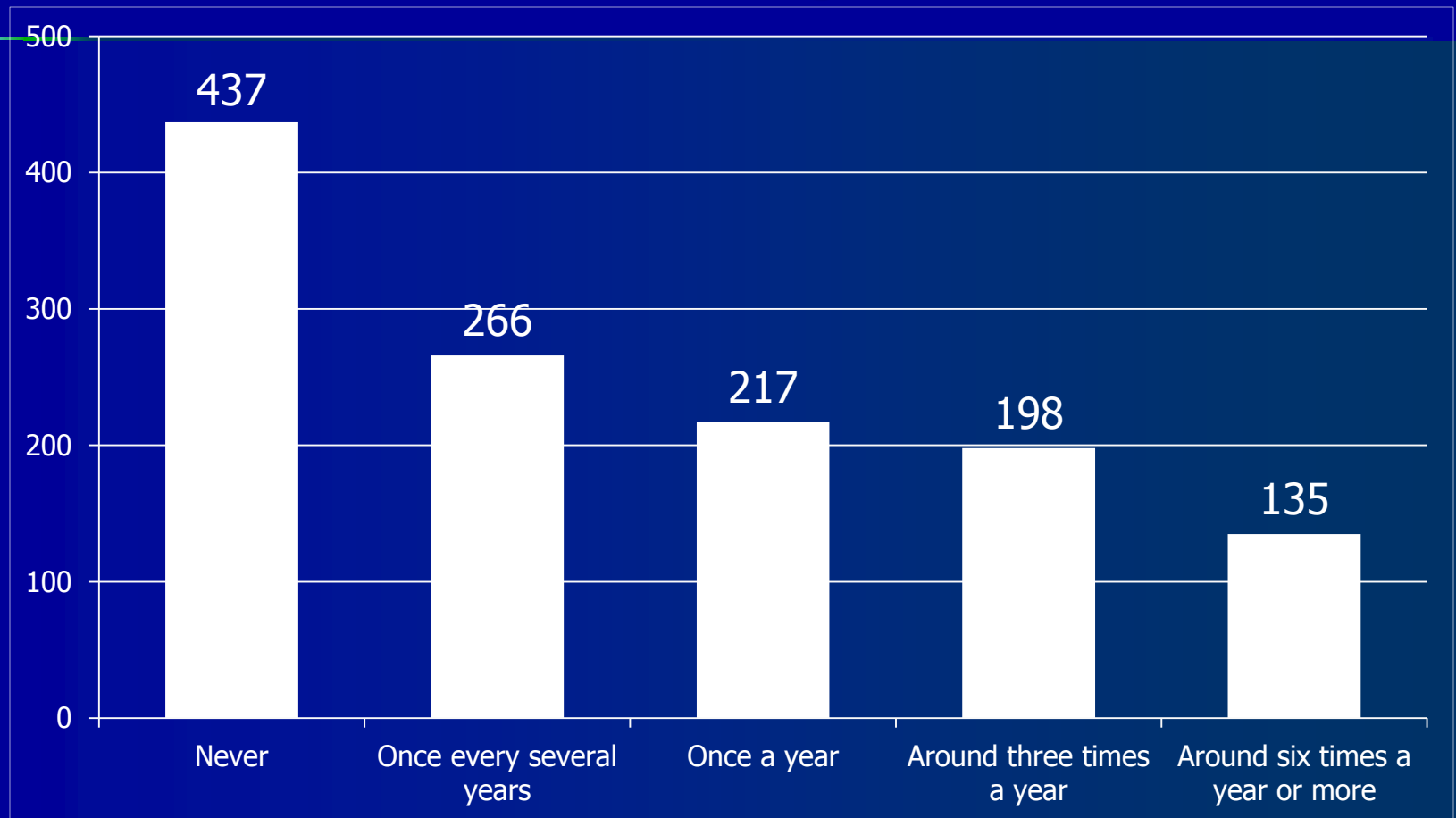


Figure 1: Frequency of participation in the Council's management process by all survey respondents. (pg. 10)

Theme & Recommendation Categories

**Information
and Data**

**Management
Strategies**

**Economic
Challenges**

**Communication
and
Participation**

Governance

Ecosystems

55 themes across
3 stakeholder groups

123 stakeholder
recommendations

Common Stakeholder Themes

Lack of confidence in the data used to inform management decisions

Insufficient stakeholder involvement in management

Confusion about jurisdictions, regulations, and authority of fishery management organizations

Need better communication and greater transparency in the decision-making process

Ecosystem and trophic interactions should be given more consideration

The Council is not set up to truly represent stakeholder interests

Pollution is degrading health of fisheries

Commercial Industry: Themes and Recommendations

Information
and Data
(pp. 18-20)

Commercial Themes

A1. Science and Data- insufficient accuracy, precision, and detail

A2. NMFS Trawl Survey- methodology and implementation concerns

A3. Observer Program- methodology and implementation concerns

A4. Time lag between data collection and management decisions

A5. Reporting process- redundant and inefficient

A6. Research Set-Aside (RSA) program- Insufficient transparency and industry involvement

Management
Strategies
(pp. 20-22)

Commercial Themes

B1. Discards- Some management strategies result in discards that could be avoided

B2. State-by-state management- some regulations reduce efficiency by preventing fishermen from landing fish in nearest port

B3. Quota Setting- process is unfair

B4. Access- difficult to gain or maintain access to a fishery

B5. Unpredictable and excessive regulations- regulations are constantly changing, and the cumulative weight of regulations is overwhelming

B6. Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization of 2006- hinders the Council's flexibility and authority

B7. Protected resources- given disproportionate consideration

B8. Coast Guard- Fishermen feel unduly persecuted by the Coast Guard in day-to-day interactions

**Economic
Challenges
(pp. 22-23)**

Commercial Themes

C1. Markets- Management strategies often have negative impacts on markets

C2. Economic Impact Consideration- Council does not sufficiently consider economic impacts of regulations on the commercial fishing industry

C3. Fuel Costs- Rising fuel costs are a major challenge for the commercial industry

Communication
and
Participation
(p. 24)

Commercial Themes

D1. Why participate? Many commercial fishermen have stopped participating in the Council process because they feel their voices are ignored

D2. Council meetings- intimidating, difficult to attend

D3. Poor Communication- Council does not clearly communicate the process, discussion, and rationale associated with decisions

Governance
(p. 25)

Commercial Themes

E1. Representation- There is a lack of appropriate industry representation on the Council

E2. Regulatory complexity & redundancy- multiple fishery management organizations w/ overlapping jurisdictions result in unnecessary complexity and confusion

Ecosystems
(p. 26)

Commercial Themes

F1. Predators- overabundant in the ocean (e.g., cormorants, striped bass, marine mammals, dogfish)

F2. Env. Degradation- Pollution, development, and other human activities are damaging the marine ecosystem

F3. EBM/EBFM- Confusion and skepticism about the implementation and potential implications of EBM

F4. Climate Change- Fish are moving north as the ocean temperatures increase

Recreational: Themes and Recommendations

Information
and Data
(pp. 30-31)

Recreational Themes

A1. MRFSS- Recreational fishing data (MRFSS) is inaccurate and has negative impacts on the recreational fishing community

A2. Mismatch between regulations and reality- The Council's management actions are not consistent with what the fishermen see on the water

A3. Economic Data- Economic impact analyses are not sufficiently factored in to management decisions

Recreational Themes

B1. Size Limits- Current regulations result in discard mortality of larger, more fertile breeding fish (pg. 30)

B2. Access- Current regulations excessively limit recreational fishing access

B3. Seasonal Closures- result in transfers of effort into other fisheries

B4. Inconsistency- Annual fluctuations and inconsistency in state and federal fishing regulations are unreasonable

B5. Regulatory inequality- Regulations favor commercial fishermen over recreational fishermen

B6. Recreational community complexity- The needs and interests of different recreational user groups are not adequately factored into management decisions

Economic
Challenges
(p. 32)

Recreational Themes

C1. Closures and Instability- shortened/closed seasons and substantial annual fluctuations in regulations/quotas are the top economic challenge

C2. Concern about exceeding quotas & penalization- recreational fishermen fear that they will be penalized drastically if they exceed their quota

Communication
and
Participation
(pp. 32-33)

Recreational Themes

D1. How to participate? Most recreational fishermen do not know how or when to participate in the Council process

D2. Complex Communications- Council communication materials are difficult to understand

Governance
(p. 31)

Recreational Themes

E1. Management organizations- Fishery management efforts by the different management organizations are confusing and disjointed

E2. Representation- Recreational fishing interests are not adequately represented in the Council process

Ecosystems
(p. 34)

Recreational Themes

F1. Habitat- loss and degradation of fish habitat over the last several decades

F2. Environmental degradation- Pollution and human activities have degraded water quality

F3. Forage pressure- There is excessive pressure on forage species due to the number of predators and overfishing by the commercial industry

F4. Climate change- Fish populations are moving further north as ocean temperatures increase

Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGO): Themes and Recommendations

Information
and Data
(p. 37)

ENGO Themes

A1. Monitoring- Catch monitoring and at-sea observer coverage is insufficient

A2. Cooperative research- brings legitimacy to scientific decision making and the Council's management as a whole

Management
Strategies
(pp. 38-39)

ENGO Themes

B1. Risk policy- The current ACL-setting system does not provide adequate precautionary buffers to prevent overfishing

B2. Forage- Council actions do not take in to account the need for abundant forage fish populations

B3. Habitat- Protection and monitoring of fish habitat are not emphasized as key elements of sustainable fishery management

B4. Enforcement- There is inadequate enforcement of both recreational and commercial fisheries regulations

Communication
and
Participation
(p. 40)

ENGO Themes

C1. Communication Priorities-
Communications must be elevated in importance to rebuild trust across all stakeholder groups

C2. Council Accessibility-The Council process is not as interactive and accessible as it could be

Governance
(p. 41)

ENGO Themes

D1. Lack of coordination- There is complexity and insufficient coordination among fishery management organizations

**Ecosystems
(p. 41)**

ENGO Themes

E1. Single-species management- narrow management approach does not account for ecosystem complexity

E2. Pollution & climate change- will continue to substantially alter ecosystem dynamics in the years to come

Stakeholder Visions

Common Stakeholder Vision

Sustainable

- Fish populations are thriving and are harvested at sustainable levels.

Adequate, High-Quality Data

- Management decisions are based on sound data and science.

Fairness

- Fair consideration of all stakeholder interests; the interest of no one stakeholder group outweighs another.

Efficient fishing practices

- There is little waste in the fisheries, and regulatory discards are minimal.

Stakeholder involvement

- More stakeholders are involved in the management process.

Commercial Vision Concepts

Thriving fishing communities

Clear, plain language regulations

Regulatory stability

Fleet diversity

Thriving and diverse commercial fishing infrastructure

Entry in to the fisheries is feasible and is not prohibitively expensive

Fishing is a respectable and desirable profession

Stakeholders have equal opportunities to utilize fishery resources

Marketing for domestic fisheries is greatly improved

Minimal discards

Recreational Vision Concepts

Thriving recreational fishing community

Ample opportunity and access for recreational fishermen

Focus on ecosystem protection, particularly forage species

Recreational catch data

- accurate
- timely
- reflective of fishing effort

Fishermen are able to target more species of fish on any given day

Stable fish populations

- Closures are rare
- Regulations are consistent year-to-year

Economic data are fully considered in the management process.

Recreational licensing

- efficient
- centralized

Fish habitats are significantly restored

Fishery mgmt organizations

- collaboration
- consistency
- Cohesive management plans

Bycatch, discards, and bycatch mortality are minimal

ENGO Vision Concepts

Sustainable management

- Fisheries
- Ecosystems

Management decisions are based on actual resource availability.

Health of the marine ecosystem is restored

Ecosystem resiliency is a high priority

Innovative monitoring and research approaches

Forage

- Data
- Protection

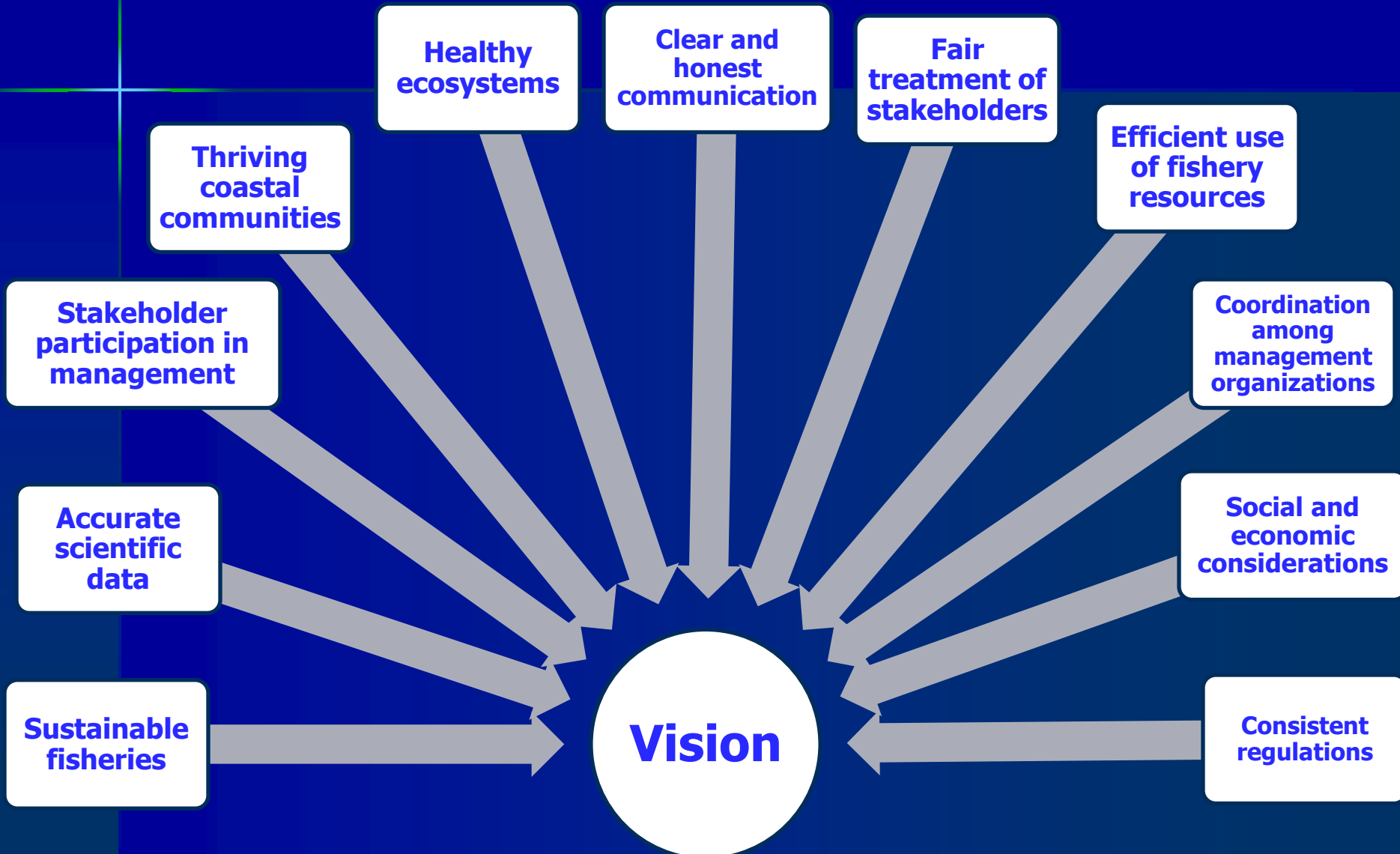
Consistent enforcement

Accurate data

- Fisheries
- Ecosystems

Bycatch, discards, and discard mortality are minimized

Stakeholder Visions



Immediate Actions

- Advisory Panel review
- Council meeting logistics
- Communication plan development
 - Website redesign
 - 3x Council contact list growth
- Strategic Planning...