



2019 Planned Council Meeting Topics

Updated 9/25/19

October 7-10, 2019 – Durham, NC

- Black Sea Bass 2020-2021 Specifications – *Develop and Approve*
- Scup 2020-2021 Specifications – *Develop and Approve*
- Bluefish 2020-2021 Specifications – *Develop and Approve*
- Bluefish Allocation Amendment – *Update and Discuss*
- Summer Flounder 2020 Specifications – *Review*
- Scup Discard Report – *Update and Discuss*
- ~~Evaluation of Mesh Size Regulations for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass~~
- Monkfish 2020-2022 Specifications – *Develop and Approve*
- 2020-2024 Comprehensive Research Priorities – *Review and Discuss Draft*
- 2020-2024 Strategic Plan – *Review Draft*
- 2020 Implementation Plan - *Review Draft Deliverables*
- *Illex* Permitting & MSB FMP Goals Amendment – *Update and Discuss*
- Spiny Dogfish 2020 Specifications – *Review*
- Black Sea Bass Commercial ~~and Recreational Issues~~ Amendment - *Discuss and Consider Initiating Action*
- *Illex* Working Group – *Update*
- Recreational Reform Initiative – *Update*

December 10-12, 2019

- Bluefish Allocation Amendment – *Approve Range of Alternatives*
- Summer Flounder 2020 Recreational Management Measures – *Develop and Approve*
- Scup 2020 Recreational Management Measures – *Develop and Approve*
- Black Sea Bass 2020 Recreational Management Measures – *Develop and Approve*
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment - *Approve scoping plan*
- EAFM Summer Flounder Conceptual Model – *Review Results and Next Steps*
- 2020-2024 Comprehensive Research Priorities – *Review and Approve*
- Risk Policy Framework – *Framework Meeting 2 (Final Action)*
- Review of New SSC Membership
- 2020 Implementation Plan – *Approve*
- 2020-2024 Strategic Plan – *Approve*
- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment – *Final Action* (moved from October)
- Summer Flounder Commercial/Recreational Allocation Study Update (moved from October)
- Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework – *Framework Meeting 2 (Final Action)* (moved from August)
- Update on Habitat Activities (moved from October)

- Illex Permitting & MSB FMP Goals Amendment – Review Public Hearing Document and Select Any Preliminary Preferred Alternatives (moved from October)



Status of Council Actions Under Development

AS OF 09/24/19

FMP	Action	Description	Status	Staff Lead
Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish	Illex Permit and MSB Goals and Objectives Amendment	To ensure optimal management and fishery operation, the Council is considering modifications to the Illex permitting system as well as revisions to the goals and objectives for the MSB FMP.	The Council reviewed comments in June, and development is expected through 2019 and in to 2020.	Didden
Bluefish	Bluefish Allocation Amendment	This amendment considers potential revisions to the allocation of Atlantic bluefish between the commercial and recreational fisheries and the commercial allocations to the states. As part of this amendment the Council and ASMFC will also review the goals and objectives of the bluefish FMP and the quota transfer processes. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment	The bluefish FMAT will meet in August to discuss draft alternatives.	Seeley
Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs	Excessive Shares Amendment	This amendment considers options to ensure that no individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) privileges. In addition, the goals and objectives for the SCOQ FMP will be reviewed and potentially revised. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/scoq-excessive-shares-amendment	Council will review public comments and input from the SCOQ AP and SCOQ Committee will be presented to the Council at its December 2019 Council meeting, when the Council discusses the final action/approval of the Excessive Shares Amendment.	Montañez
Omnibus	Risk Policy Framework	The purpose of this framework action is to provide for a review of the ABC control rule framework and Council Risk Policy established in 2010 and to recommend any changes.	The Council held Framework Meeting 1 at the August 2019 meeting. Staff, along with a workgroup, is currently evaluating nine different control rule alternatives approved by the Council that consider both biological and economic factors and trade-offs. The Council will take final action on the risk policy framework at their December meeting.	Muffley

FMP	Action	Description	Status	Staff Lead
	Omnibus Amendment for Data Modernization	This amendment will address the regulatory changes needed to fully implement the Agency's Fishery-Dependent Data Initiative.	The Council received an update at the October 2018 meeting.	GARFO/ NEFSC
	Commercial eVTR Framework	This framework considers requiring commercial fishing vessels with federal permits for species managed by the Council to submit VTRs electronically. http://www.mafmc.org/actions/commercial-evtr-framework	The first Framework meeting for this action was held in April 2019. In June the NEFMC initiated a joint eVTR action with the MAFMC and chose to expand the framework action to include all NEFMC-managed fisheries.	Coutre

Timeline and Status of Recent MAFMC Actions and Amendments/Frameworks Under Review

As of 9/26/2019

The table below summarizes the status of actions after they have been approved by the Council. For information about the status of Council actions under development, please see the document titled "Status of Council Actions Under Development."

Status	Amendment/Framework	Action Number	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	NOA Published	Proposed Rule Published	Approval/Disapproval Letter	Final Rule Published	Regs Effective
Complete	Squid Amendment	MSB AM 20	6/7/17	12/12/17	7/20/18	7/27/18	8/31/18	10/23/18	12/14/18	3/1/19
Open	Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Framework	MSB FW 13	8/13/18	9/27/18	2/28/19	N/A	6/7/19			
Open	Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Framework on Conservation Equivalency, Block Island Sound Transit, and Slot Limits	SFSBSB FW 14	12/11/18	3/21/19	5/8/19	N/A	8/8/19			
Open	Summer Flounder Commercial Issues and Goals and Objectives Amendment	TBD	3/6/19							
Open	Chub Mackerel Amendment	TBD	3/7/19	5/31/19	9/9/19					

Timeline and Status of Current and Upcoming Specifications for MAFMC Fisheries

As of 9/26/2019

Current Specifications	Year(s)	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Final Rule	Regs Effective	Notes
Golden Tilefish	2018-2020	4/11/17	6/5/17	8/16/17	9/7/17	11/7/17	11/2/17	2019 specs were reviewed in April 2018. No changes were recommended.
Surfclam and Ocean Quahog	2018-2020	6/6/17	8/14/17	9/22/17	12/8/17	2/6/18	3/8/18	2019 specs were reviewed in June 2018. No changes were recommended.
Longfin Squid and Butterfish	2018-2020	6/7/17		8/24/17	12/13/17	3/1/18	4/2/18	2019 specs were reviewed in October 2018. No changes were recommended.
<i>Illex</i> Squid	2019-2021	10/3/18	12/4/18	2/11/19	5/1/19	8/2/19	8/1/19	
Atlantic Mackerel (MSB FW 13)	2019-2021	8/13/18	9/27/18	2/28/19	6/7/19			
Chub mackerel	2020-2022	3/7/19	5/31/19	9/9/19				
Scup	2018-2019	8/8/17	10/2/17	12/1/17	11/7/17	12/22/17	12/22/17	
Scup	2020		6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19			Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Blueline Tilefish	2019-2021	4/11/18	8/17/18		11/19/18	2/12/19	2/12/19	
Bluefish	2019	8/15/18			12/26/18	3/12/19	3/12/19	
Bluefish	2020	3/7/19	6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19			Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Summer Flounder	2019 (interim)	8/15/18	10/12/18	11/28/18	11/15/18	12/17/18		
Summer Flounder	2019 (revised)	3/6/19	4/12/19	4/12/19	N/A	5/17/19	5/17/19	
Summer Flounder	2020-2021	3/6/19	6/25/19	7/18/19	7/26/19			
Black Sea Bass	2019	8/14/18	10/12/18	11/28/18	11/15/18	12/17/18		
Black Sea Bass	2020	3/7/19	6/11/19	7/24/19	7/26/19			Interim specs to be replaced as soon as possible after results of 2019 operational assessment are available
Spiny Dogfish	2019-2021	10/2/18	11/30/18	3/5/19	3/29/19	5/15/19	5/15/19	

Recreational Management Measures

Current Management Measures	Year(s)	Council Approval	Initial Submission	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Final Rule	Regs Effective	Notes
Summer flounder recreational measures	2019	3/6/19	4/18/19	4/18/19	5/17/19	7/3/19	7/3/19	
Black sea bass recreational measures	2019	2/14/18	3/5/18	4/10/18	4/11/18	5/31/18	5/31/18	Reviewed in 2018. No changes from previous year's measures.
Scup recreational measures	2019	12/10/14	3/20/15		5/5/15	6/19/15	6/19/15	Reviewed in 2018. No changes from previous year's measures.



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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 26, 2019
To: Council
From: Jason Didden, staff
Subject: Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology 3-year Review Report

The Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology 3-year Review Report covering the 2015-2017 SBRM years will soon be published to the NEFSC's website (<https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/tm/>). Upon official publication, a link will be distributed to the Council.

This review did not find any aspect of the SBRM that is inconsistent with the national guidelines specified at 50 CFR Part 600.1610, and no deficiencies were identified that would require an amendment to an FMP to meet these requirements. This report is provided to NMFS for its consideration in making a formal determination in this regard. If, based on the information contained in this report along with other available information, NMFS concludes the Greater Atlantic SBRM is consistent with the national guidance, no additional council action would be required. A variety of recommendations are made in the report, excerpted below. If the Council would like additional details, a future presentation can be arranged.

- The SBRM FMAT recommends excluding compliance/state/other observed trips in the evaluation of the effectiveness of SBRM for fish species. The stratification and differential coverage levels of the compliance monitoring trips could create potential bias within SBRM fleets. The SBRM FMAT also recommends the exclusion of individual FMP compliance monitoring program trips from future SBRM annual analysis of discard estimation, precision and sample size analyses for fish.
- The SBRM Omnibus Amendment requires 30% CV or less to be attained for each species group within that fleet. Some fleet/species combinations contribute very little to the total mortality or discard of the species, but may require significant resources to characterize the precision of the estimate. Thus, the use of the importance filter is a key feature to the SBRM in that it focuses the sampling to fleets where it is needed most and not wasted on small imprecisely estimated discards. The SBRM FMAT recommends continued use of importance filters.
- High levels of monitoring are typically required to estimate the magnitude of rare events, such as sea turtle encounters, with high precision (low CVs). The SBRM FMAT recommends using a “rarity” filter (see section 6.0) for sea turtles to prevent sea day needs in some fleets from being

driven by species with a low probability of encounter with the fishing gear. If a rare species is filtered from the sea day estimation process, monitoring of the rare species would still occur, but the targeted level of monitoring would be driven by other species groups. In addition to recommending the rarity filter for sea turtles, the SBRM FMAT recommends that rarity filters be developed and implemented, as appropriate, for other ESA-listed species such as Atlantic salmon and sturgeon.

- Using the formulaic prioritization process since SBRM 2014 results in more fleets with allocated sea days. However, there were instances in which some fleets did not receive the number of sea days needed or initially estimated. A funding shortfall in SBRM 2015 triggered the prioritization process in which 2 fleets did not receive sufficient sea days. Because of allocation decisions made prior to the prioritization process, 1 fleet in SBRM 2016 and 2 fleets in SBRM 2017 did not receive the full number of needed sea days. The SBRM FMAT recommends continued use of the formulaic prioritization process for transparent determination of how limited funds are allocated.

- Evidence suggests the assumption that discard variances are stable over time is valid, particularly for a one-year lag. If fishing behavior changes because of a regulatory change, then relationship between years may weaken in the year following the regulatory change. A similar weakening in the relationship may occur when fish populations change – for example, if a strong year class is moving through the fishery. These types of analyses should be conducted on a periodic basis. Conducting sample size analyses annually minimizes the time to a one-year lag. The SBRM FMAT recommends continued use of the most recent data available to track changes in discarding because of changes in management or fleet behavior when allocating future observer coverage.

- No evidence of systematic vessel selection bias and no strong evidence of observer bias was detected in the analyses conducted for this report. Recent studies examining observer data for potential bias have mostly focused on groundfish fleets (sub-components of selected fleets within SBRM). A comprehensive examination of potential bias in all SBRM fleets is a large task that will continue to require future work. Future analyses could consider additional trip outcome metrics such as mean number of species reported, number of areas fished, and an evaluation of minimum observer sample size (e.g., could fleets with less than 30 observed trips be considered). The SBRM FMAT recommends continued exploration of potential biases in the data collection process and examination of how these might impact sea day allocations.

- The SBRM FMAT recommends the following planned changes (some of which will be implemented in 2018 SBRM annual analysis):

- (1) The inclusion of blueline tilefish in the Tilefish species group in 2018 SBRM analyses;

- (2) The consideration of ESA-list species such as sturgeon (Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon) as species groups;

- (3) Expanding the sampling frame for New England and Mid-Atlantic lobster pot fleets to include all vessels using lobster pot gear in future SBRM analyses; and

- (4) Utilize a PTNS-like system for all fleets as identified in the regional fishery dependent data initiative (implementation date to be determined).

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2019

Dr. Christopher Moore
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901



Dr. Moore:

I am writing to request the Council's general analysis and feedback on H.R. 2236, "*The Forage Fish Conservation Act*." I would like to receive the Mid-Atlantic Council's analysis of the need for further management and conservation of forage fish, along with the feasibility to develop management plans that meet requirements outlined in this legislation. As Congress evaluates this legislation, it would be helpful to receive your assessment on how this legislation would alter management plans and affect communities in your region.

Respectfully,

Rob Bishop
Republican Leader
Committee on Natural Resources

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2236

To improve the management of forage fish.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 10, 2019

Mrs. DINGELL (for herself, Mr. MAST, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. LONG, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. HUFFMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To improve the management of forage fish.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Forage Fish Conservation Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. References to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
- Sec. 3. Findings.
- Sec. 4. Definitions.
- Sec. 5. Scientific advice.
- Sec. 6. Council functions.
- Sec. 7. Contents of fishery management plans.
- Sec. 8. Action by the Secretary.

Sec. 9. River herring and shad.

Sec. 10. Rule of construction.

1 **SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO THE MAGNUSON-STEVENSONS FISH-**
2 **ERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT.**

3 Except as otherwise expressly provided, wherever in
4 this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms
5 of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provi-
6 sion, the reference shall be considered to be made to a
7 section or other provision of the Magnuson-Stevens Fish-
8 ery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801
9 et seq.).

10 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

11 Section 2(a) (16 U.S.C. 1801(a)) is amended by add-
12 ing at the end the following:

13 “(13) Forage fish are generally small to inter-
14 mediate-sized species, occurring in schools or dense
15 aggregations, and function as a main pathway for
16 energy to flow from phyto- and zooplankton to high-
17 er trophic level predators, such as tuna, Alaska pol-
18 lock, and other wildlife, in marine ecosystems. While
19 most species function as prey of others at some life
20 stage, especially when small and young, forage fish
21 maintain this important trophic role throughout
22 their life. Further, fluctuations in their populations
23 can result in significant changes in marine commu-
24 nities and ecosystems. Therefore, particular atten-

1 tion to management of forage fish species, and ad-
2 dressing their unique role in marine ecosystems, is
3 critical to maintaining ecosystem function and sus-
4 tainable fisheries.”.

5 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

6 Section 3 (16 U.S.C. 1802) is amended—

7 (1) by redesignating the second paragraph (33)
8 (relating to waters of a foreign nation) as paragraph
9 (53);

10 (2) by redesignating paragraphs (28) through
11 (50) as paragraphs (30) through (52), respectively;

12 (3) by redesignating paragraphs (19) through
13 (27) as paragraphs (20) through (28), respectively;

14 (4) by inserting after paragraph (18) the fol-
15 lowing:

16 “(19) The term ‘forage fish’ means—

17 “(A) any fish that, throughout its life
18 cycle—

19 “(i) is at a low trophic level;

20 “(ii) contributes significantly to the
21 diets of other fish, marine mammals or
22 birds; and

23 “(iii) serves as a conduit for energy
24 transfer to species at a higher trophic
25 level; or

1 “(B) any other fish specified as a forage
2 fish for purposes of this paragraph in a fishery
3 management plan or amendment that is trans-
4 mitted by a Council and approved by the Sec-
5 retary in accordance with section 304(a).”;

6 (5) by inserting after paragraph (28), as redes-
7 igned by paragraph (3), the following:

8 “(29) The term ‘low trophic level’ means a posi-
9 tion in the marine food web in which the fish gen-
10 erally consume plankton.”; and

11 (6) in paragraph (35), as redesignated by para-
12 graph (2)—

13 (A) in subparagraph (B), by striking
14 “and”;

15 (B) in subparagraph (C), by striking the
16 period and inserting “; and”; and

17 (C) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(D) in the case of a forage fish, is re-
19 duced, pursuant to subparagraph (B), to pro-
20 vide for the diet needs of fish species and other
21 marine wildlife, such as marine mammals and
22 birds, for which forage fish is a significant part
23 of their diet.”.

1 **SEC. 5. SCIENTIFIC ADVICE.**

2 Section 302(g)(1)(B) (16 U.S.C. 1852(g)(1)(B)) is
3 amended to read as follows:

4 “(B) Each scientific and statistical com-
5 mittee shall provide its Council ongoing sci-
6 entific advice for fishery management decisions,
7 including recommendations for—

8 “(i) acceptable biological catch;

9 “(ii) preventing overfishing;

10 “(iii) maximum sustainable yield;

11 “(iv) achieving rebuilding targets;

12 “(v) maintaining a sufficient abun-
13 dance, diversity, and localized distribution
14 of forage fish populations to support their
15 role in marine ecosystems; and

16 “(vi) reports on stock status and
17 health, bycatch, habitat status, social and
18 economic impacts of management meas-
19 ures, and sustainability of fishing prac-
20 tices.”.

21 **SEC. 6. COUNCIL FUNCTIONS.**

22 (a) RESEARCH PRIORITIES.—Section 302(h)(7) (16
23 U.S.C. 1852(h)(7)) is amended, in the matter preceding
24 subparagraph (A), by inserting “forage fish populations
25 and distribution,” after “habitats,”.

1 (b) UNMANAGED FORAGE FISH.—Section 302(h) (16
2 U.S.C. 1852(h)) is amended—

3 (1) in paragraph (8) by striking “; and” and in-
4 serting “;”;

5 (2) by redesignating paragraph (9) as para-
6 graph (10); and

7 (3) by inserting after paragraph (8) the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(9) develop a list of unmanaged forage fish oc-
10 ccurring in the area under its authority and prohibit
11 the development of any new directed forage fish fish-
12 ery until the Council has—

13 “(A) considered the best scientific informa-
14 tion available and evaluated the potential im-
15 pacts of forage fish harvest on existing fish-
16 eries, fishing communities, and the marine eco-
17 system;

18 “(B) determined whether conservation and
19 management of the forage fish fishery is need-
20 ed;

21 “(C) if a determination is made that con-
22 servation and management is needed, prepared
23 and submitted to the Secretary a fishery man-
24 agement plan or amendment consistent with
25 section 303; and

1 “(D) received final, approved regulations
2 from the Secretary pursuant to section
3 304(b)(3); and”.

4 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
5 subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect 2 years after the
6 date of enactment of this Act.

7 **SEC. 7. CONTENTS OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS.**

8 (a) FORAGE FISH MANAGEMENT.—Section 303(a)
9 (16 U.S.C. 1853(a)) is amended—

10 (1) in paragraph (14) by striking “and;” and
11 inserting “;”;

12 (2) in paragraph (15) by striking the period
13 and inserting “; and”; and

14 (3) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(16) when setting annual catch limits for for-
16 age fish fisheries, assess, specify, and reduce such
17 limits by the diet needs of fish species and other ma-
18 rine wildlife, such as marine mammals and birds, for
19 which forage fish is a significant part of their diet.”.

20 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
21 subsection (a) shall take effect 5 years after the date of
22 enactment of this Act.

23 **SEC. 8. ACTION BY THE SECRETARY.**

24 Section 304 (16 U.S.C. 1854) is amended—

1 (1) by redesignating the second subsection (i)
2 (relating to international overfishing) as subsection
3 (j); and

4 (2) by adding at the end the following:

5 “(k) FORAGE FISH MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months
7 after the date of enactment of the Forage Fish Con-
8 servation Act, the Secretary shall establish by regu-
9 lation guidelines to assist the Councils in imple-
10 menting sections 3(19), 302(h)(9), and 303(a)(16).

11 “(2) WORKSHOPS.—In developing the guide-
12 lines under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall con-
13 duct workshops with Councils and other scientific,
14 fisheries, and conservation interests.”.

15 **SEC. 9. RIVER HERRING AND SHAD.**

16 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

17 (1) RIVER HERRING.—The term “river herring”
18 means blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*) and ale-
19 wife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*).

20 (2) SHAD.—The term “shad” means American
21 shad (*Alosa sapidissima*) and hickory shad (*Alosa*
22 *mediocris*).

23 (b) AMENDMENTS OF PLANS.—Not later than 180
24 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
25 of Commerce shall—

1 (1) amend the fishery management plans for
2 the Atlantic Herring and Atlantic Mackerel, Squid,
3 and Butterfish fisheries for the New England and
4 Mid-Atlantic Regions to add shad and river herring
5 as managed stocks in such plans consistent with sec-
6 tion 302(h)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
7 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
8 1852(h)(1));

9 (2) initiate additional fishery management plan
10 amendments to be completed in not more than 1
11 year from the date of the addition of the species
12 identified in paragraph (1) in order to develop and
13 implement all required conservation and manage-
14 ment measures for such stocks consistent with the
15 Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Man-
16 agement Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), and all other
17 applicable law; and

18 (3) notwithstanding any other law, rule, or fish-
19 ery management plan provision, including conserva-
20 tion and management measures under section
21 303(a)(11) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Con-
22 servation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
23 1853(a)(11)), reallocate existing resources to pro-
24 vide, for not less than 60 percent of all relevant fish-
25 ing trips, not fewer than one at-sea observer or an

1 on-board electronic or video means of producing
2 equivalent at-sea monitoring information, for any
3 vessel using mid-water trawl or paired mid-water
4 trawl fishing gear in the Atlantic herring and Atlan-
5 tic mackerel fisheries.

6 **SEC. 10. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

7 Nothing in this Act shall be construed as—

8 (1) extending or diminishing the jurisdiction or
9 authority of any State within its boundaries; or

10 (2) affecting—

11 (A) section 306 of the Magnuson-Stevens
12 Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16
13 U.S.C. 1856); or

14 (B) the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooper-
15 ative Management Act (16 U.S.C. 5107 et
16 seq.).

○

New or Recently Updated Web Pages

<http://www.mafmc.org/council-policies>



Home	
About	+
People & Groups	+
Fisheries	+
Ecosystem and Habitat	+
Science and Research	+
Council Meetings	+
Documents	-
Council Meetings	
SSC Meetings	
Council Policy and Process Documents	
Fishery Management Plans	
Fishery Performance Reports	
Correspondence	
Workshops	
Strategic Plan	
Current Issues	+

Council Policies

Guiding Documents

- Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures (revised June 2017)
- 2014-2018 Strategic Plan (note: the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is currently under development)

Council Process Documents

- MAFMC - Original FMP and Major Amendment Work and Timeline
- NMFS Policy Guidelines for the Use of Emergency Rules
- MAFMC Framework Action Development - Process Overview (5/6/14)
- Regional Operating Agreement Between MAFMC, NOAA Fisheries GARFO, NOAA Fisheries NEFSC, and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (7/22/13)

Issue-Specific Council Policies

- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Guidance Document (revised 2/8/19)
- Council Policies on Impacts of Fishing on Fish Habitat (8/12/16)
- Council Policies on Non-Fishing Activities that Impact Fish Habitat (2/12/16)
- MAFMC Allocation Review Policy (8/19/19)

Administrative Policies and Informational Documents

- Webinar Policy (8/17/17)
- Fishery Management Action Teams (8/2/17)
- Advisory Panel Overview (8/22/18)
- Travel Guidelines

<http://www.mafmc.org/correspondence>



Home	
About	+
People & Groups	+
Fisheries	+
Ecosystem and Habitat	+
Science and Research	+
Council Meetings	+
Documents	-
Council Meetings	
SSC Meetings	
Council Policy and Process Documents	
Fishery Management Plans	
Fishery Performance Reports	
Correspondence	
Workshops	
Strategic Plan	

Correspondence

This page includes links to recent letters sent from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

2019

January

- Letter to SCS Global Services: Marine Stewardship Council *Illex* Certification (1/23/19)
- Letter to GARFO: eVTR FMAT Request (1/28/19)
- Letter to NEFMC: eVTR FMAT Request (1/28/19)
- Letter to NEFSC: eVTR FMAT Request (1/28/19)

February

- Letter to GARFO: Participation on *Illex* Workgroup (2/11/19)
- Letter to NEFSC: Participation on *Illex* Workgroup (2/11/19)
- Letter to GARFO: Exempted Fishing Permit application from Coonamesset Farm Foundation (2/19/19)

March

- SSC Appointment Letters: Anderson, Boreman, Frisk, Gabriel, Gaichas, Holliday, Houde, Jensen, Jiao, Jones, Latour, Miller, Rago, Rothschild, Secor, Wilberg (3/12/19)
- Letter to Doug Lipton: Service on SSC (3/13/19)
- Letter to GARFO: Exempted Fishing Permit application from Coonamesset Farm Foundation (3/18/19)
- Letter to Katie Almeida In Support of Project Entitled "Piloting a Low-Bycatch Commercial Squid Jig Fishery in Southern New England" (3/25/19)



- Home
- About +
- People & Groups +
- Fisheries +
- Ecosystem and Habitat -
 - Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
 - Habitat
 - Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment**
 - Protected Resources
 - Deep Sea Corals
 - Unmanaged Forage
- Science and Research +
- Council Meetings
- Documents +
- Current Issues +
- Resources +
- News
- Calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

List View | Calendar View

October 2019 Council Meeting
Mon, Oct 7, 2019, 9:00 AM – Thu, Oct 10, 2019, 1:00 PM
Durham Convention Center (map)

Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment - Offshore Team Meeting
Wednesday, October 9, 2019
9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Fairfield Inn & Suites New Bedford (West Chop Room) (map)

NEFMC - December 2019 Council Meeting
Tue, Dec 3, 2019, 9:00 AM –

[SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES](#)

QUICK LINKS

- [Council Meetings](#)
- [Travel Guidelines](#)
- [SSC Meetings](#)
- [Status of the Stocks](#)
- [Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures \(SOPP\), June 2017](#)
- [Public Comment Deadlines](#)
- [Website Overview](#)
- [Offshore Wind Notices \(NEW!\)](#)
- [2019 Stock Assessment Information](#)

Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment

The Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment (NRHA) is a collaborative effort to describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast. The project aims to align habitat science goals and priorities with human and financial resources to develop habitat science products that support an assessment. Work associated with the NRHA is expected to occur over a three-year time period from July 2019 through July 2022.

The project is being led by a Steering Committee composed of leadership from the major habitat conservation, restoration, and science organizations in the region.

Core Actions

Four core actions have been identified to support the habitat assessment:

- 1. Abundance and trends in habitat types in the inshore area.** This action will map the location and extent of habitat types utilized by the focus species and quantify the areal coverage, status and trends of these habitats. It will also compile metrics that may inform an assessment of habitat quality.
- 2. Habitat vulnerability.** This action will involve Council and Commission staff coordination with, and participation in, the NOAA Habitat Climate Vulnerability Assessment (HCVA). That assessment will use habitat experts to examine fish habitat vulnerability to climate and non-climate stressors.
- 3. Spatial descriptions of species habitat use in the offshore area.** This action will use model-based and empirical approaches to identify, predict, and map habitat use for each of the focus species and track and quantify changes in habitat use over time (e.g. seasonal, annual, and future predicted use).
- 4. Habitat data visualization and decision support tool.** Habitat information will be incorporated into a publicly accessible decision support tool, making this information available to partners to visualize habitat location, extent, and use throughout the region, and provide access to relevant data and habitat metrics developed by the assessment.

Please see the workplan linked in the "Documents" section for additional information about key outcomes and timelines for each of these actions.

Documents

- [Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment Work Plan as of 6/17/19](#)

Meetings

[Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment - Offshore Team Meeting](#)
Oct 9, 2019 · [Fairfield Inn & Suites New Bedford \(West Chop Room\)](#)

[Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment - Inshore Team Meeting](#)
Sep 24, 2019 · [University of Connecticut Avery Point](#)

Steering Committee Member Organizations

- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Chair)
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership
- Duke University
- Monmouth University
- National Fish Habitat Partnership
- New England Fishery Management Council
- NOAA Fisheries Offices of Habitat Conservation (Headquarters and Region)
- NOAA Fisheries Offices of Science and Technology (Ecosystems and Monitoring)
- NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center
- NOAA NCCOS Marine Spatial Ecology Division
- The Nature Conservancy

Contacts

For more information, please contact the action leads:

- Jessica Coakley**, MAFMC - overall project coordinator, inshore co-lead (jcoakley@mafmc.org, 302-526-5252)
- Michelle Bachman**, NEFMC - inshore co-lead (mbachman@nefmc.org, 978-465-0492)
- Laurel Smith**, NMFS NEFSC - offshore lead (laurel.smith@noaa.gov, 508-495-2278)



- Home
- About +
- People & Groups +
- Fisheries +
- Ecosystem and Habitat +
- Science and Research +
- Council Meetings
- Documents +
- Current Issues +
- Resources -
- Get Involved
- Public Comment
- Marine Resource Education Program
- Council Member Resources
- Regulations
- State Resources
- Offshore Wind Notices to Fishermen**
- Travel
- For-Hire Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting
- News
- Calendar

Offshore Wind Notices to Fishermen

The following list includes notices to fishermen from offshore wind developers in the New England and Mid-Atlantic region regarding offshore surveys, buoy installations, and other activities that may occur in areas used by fishermen. As developers provide the Mid-Atlantic or New England Fishery Management Councils with this information, it will be updated here. This list may not be comprehensive or consistently up to date. Please contact the fisheries liaisons for individual projects for the most up to date information. For information on individual projects, please see: <https://www.boem.gov/Atlantic-Fishing-Industry-Communication-and-Engagement/>. For general information about offshore wind in the Northeast region, please visit the [Joint MAFMC/NEFMC Offshore Wind Page](#).

Southern New England/New York Bight

- Vineyard Wind geological survey: May - August 2019 (5/22/19)
- Equinor Wind survey and buoy update (6/24/19)
- Bay State Wind and Revolution Wind survey activity (7/8/19)
- Vineyard Wind geologic survey: July 9 -19, 2019 (7/15/19)
- Equinor Wind survey and buoy update (7/16/19)
- Bay State Wind buoy decommissioning activity (7/22/19)
- Bay State Wind survey activity (7/25/19)
- Revolution Wind survey activity (7/29/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (7/30/19)
- Revolution Wind survey activity (8/2/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/5/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/8/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/12/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/14/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/16/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/19/19)
- Vineyard Wind lease area - lobster ventless trap survey (8/23/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/26/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (8/28/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (9/3/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (9/18/19)
- Vineyard Wind survey activity (9/19/19)
- Bay State Wind, Revolution Wind, and Sunrise Wind survey activity (9/26/19)

Mid-Atlantic Bight

- Ocean Wind survey activity (7/19/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (7/22/19)
- Skipjack Wind Farm survey activity (8/6/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/8/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/12/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/13/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/19/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/26/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (8/28/19)
- Ocean Wind survey activity (9/3/19)
- Ocean Wind and Skipjack Wind survey activity (9/9/19)
- Ocean Wind and Skipjack Wind survey activity (9/16/19)
- Ocean Wind and Skipjack Wind survey activity (9/18/19)
- Ocean Wind and Skipjack Wind survey activity (9/27/19)

South Atlantic Bight

- Avangrid Renewables survey notice for Kitty Hawk Wind Lease Area: June - October 2019

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List View | Calendar View

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Home
About +
People & Groups +
Fisheries +
Ecosystem and Habitat +
Science and Research +
Council Meetings
Documents +
Current Issues +
Resources +
News
Calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

List View | Calendar View

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T, D, 2019, 2:00 AM

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QUICK LINKS

- [Council Meetings](#)
- [Travel Guidelines](#)
- [SSC Meetings](#)
- [Status of the Stocks](#)
- [Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures \(SOPP\), June 2017](#)
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- [Website Overview](#)
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COUNCIL ACTIONS

Commercial Electronic Vessel Trip Report (eVTR) Framework

Overview

Commercial fishing vessels with federal permits for MAFMC and NEFMC-managed species are required to submit Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs) documenting all fishing activity and catches. Electronic Vessel Trip Reports (eVTRs), which allow direct entry of data by the vessel operator using an electronic device, have been available as an option for all Northeast Region federally permitted fisheries since 2013. The MAFMC and NEFMC are considering requiring commercial vessels with federal permits for species managed by either council to submit their VTRs electronically. This action is intended to change the submission method and would not modify existing requirements regarding data types being collected. This action may also change the eVTR submission deadline depending on the alternative chosen. The goal of the action is to increase the timeliness and accuracy of fisheries data submitted to NMFS.

Currently, there are several approved applications that can be used to submit VTRs electronically, including free options. A list of all approved eVTR applications and contact information for each system can be found here: <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/evtr/electronic/index.html>.

Contact

Karson Coutre, Fishery Management Specialist, kcoutre@mafmc.org, (302) 526-5259

Action Status

Framework Meeting 1 for the MAFMC occurred at the [April 2019 Council meeting](#). After considering Advisory Panel and Fishery Management Action Team recommendations, the Council approved a range of alternatives, including a no action alternative, an alternative to require electronic submission of VTRs, and four alternatives that could change the VTR reporting deadline to 24 hours, 48 hours, 72 hours, or weekly. NMFS indicated that they would likely have an extended implementation deadline of up to a year after the final rule if the Council selects an alternative to require electronic reporting. The NEFMC received an update on this framework action including the MAFMC approved alternatives at their [April Council meeting](#). At their June meeting, the NEFMC initiated a joint eVTR action with the MAFMC and chose to expand the framework to include all NEFMC-managed fisheries. The MAFMC and NEFMC are working together to develop action documents and outreach. The NEFMC will have framework meeting 1 at their September Council meeting. A draft timeline for joint action can be found [here](#).

Sign up to receive email updates:

First Name Last Name

Email*

Documents

- [Draft Timeline for Joint Action, September 2019](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions Related to Electronic Vessel Trip Reports in Commercial Fisheries \(September 2019\)](#)
- [Comparison of Systems Certified by NOAA to Submit Electronic Vessel Trip Reports, August 2019](#)
- [Framework Discussion Document, updated July 2019](#)
- [Action Plan \(As of 3/27/19\)](#)
- [Framework Meeting 1 Discussion Document \(April 2019\)](#)
- [FMAT Meeting 1 Summary \(March 2019\)](#)
- [Joint Advisory Panel Meeting Summary \(March 2019\)](#)