



## New England Fishery Management Council

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Ernest F. Stockwell III, *Acting Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 18, 2014  
**TO:** Council  
**FROM:** Tom Nies  
**SUBJECT:** **2015 Council Priorities – Executive Committee Recommendations**

1. Final decisions on 2015 priorities will be made at the November Council meeting. Executive Committee recommendations are shown in enclosure (1); this replaces enclosure (1) in my memo of November 7 (document #1 under tab 1 of the Council binder). Most of the recommendations are consistent with those of the respective committees; differences are highlighted and explained below. Additional information will be discussed at the Council meeting.

#### **Groundfish**

2. Recommendations do not include new SNE/MA windowpane flounder sub-ACLs, an amendment to allocate windowpane flounder to sectors, or party/charter limited access. These are primarily due to workload concerns. In addition, there seems little need to create additional SNE/MA windowpane flounder sub-ACLs. The squid fishery only catches a small amount and the existing large-mesh sub-ACL covers the fluke and other non-groundfish large mesh fisheries. Even without these tasks, the groundfish priorities are ambitious. The Council also needs to keep time available to respond to the Operational Assessments in the fall.

3. US/CA trading was a multi-year priority that is no longer being pursued. TMGC has advised that there is little likelihood of trades in the near future, and the measure was recently dropped from Amendment 18.

#### **Skates**

4. A limited entry program is not recommended due to workload concerns.

Enclosure:

(1) 2015 Priorities – Executive Committee recommendations

2015 Council Priorities Task List  
Executive Committee Recommendations

11/18/2014	UNDERLINE: REGULATORY REQUIREMENT					Executive Committee Recommendations				
FMP										
	Annual	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Rank
<b>Groundfish</b>										
	<u>Set specs for all groundfish stocks 2016-2018</u>	✓	✓		1	Continue to coordinate action on the Habitat Omnibus Amendment to include possible modifications of the Groundfish closed areas.	✓	✓		Not ranked
	<u>Set specs for US/CA stocks for 2016</u>	✓	✓		3	Complete Amendment 18 to consider fleet diversity and accumulation caps.	✓	✓		50
	<i>Sector ACE carryover provisions</i>				42	Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs	✓	✓		11
	<i>EM</i>				28	<i>Consider trading of quota under US/CA Understanding/TMGC (measured progress)</i>				60
	Recreational measures management process	✓	✓		15	<i>ACE Trading between scallop/groundfish fisheries</i>				53
	<i>Changes to trawl gear regs to improve enforceability</i>				44	Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries	✓	✓		14
	<i>NEW: Sub-ACLS for fluke, squid, etc. for SNE Windowpane Flounder</i>	✓			Not ranked	<i>Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery</i>	✓			44
	Staff: Five year sector review	✓	✓		53	<i>Consider changes to spawning closures</i>				11
	Staff: TMGC/TRAC	✓	✓		18	Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop	✓	✓		37
	Staff: Operational/update assessments	✓	✓		8	<i>NEW: Amendment for windowpane flounder</i>	✓			Not Ranked
<b>Monkfish</b>										
	Complete framework adjustment to address several issues taken out of Amendment 6	✓	✓		28	Continue Monkfish Amendment 6 for modifications to DAS program (including leasing) and catch shares (sectors and IFQs).	✓	✓		37
	Staff: Research Set Aside		✓		44					

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<b>Sea Scallops</b>										
	Prepare a framework to set FY 2016 (2017 default) specifications (i.e. setting DAS, access area trips, Northern GOM TAC, limited access general category IFQ allocations, potential modification of scallop access area boundaries, etc.). May include measures deferred from FW 26 in fall 2014.	✓	✓		3	Consider measures to improve management of inshore areas: improve YPR for those areas and address how areas are fished by all permit categories				44
	Modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised areas	✓	✓		6	NEW: Amendment to streamline the scallop specifications process	✓	✓		Not ranked
	Consider consistent rules for all vessels fishing in the NGOM (all catch applied against the NGOM TAC; same gear and possession limits for all permit types)				37					
	Staff: Research Set Aside		✓		37					
	Staff and PDT participation on NEFSC peer review of sea scallop survey methods (Spring 2015)		✓		23					
	Staff: Annual catch monitoring		✓		18					
	Staff: Begin preparations for five year review of LAGC IFQ program		✓		34					
<b>Herring</b>										
	Herring Specs Action Herring ACL/Sub-ACLs 2016-2018 RSA etc. specs 2016-2018 RH/S catchcaps 2016-2018 Adjust RSA program Adjust ABC control rule	✓	✓		7	Prepare an amendment to consider river herring/shad as stocks in the fishery				53
	Adjust herring management area boundaries Address fishing effort east of Cape Cod Modify haddock catch cap AMs Measures to protect spawning Atlantic herring in the GB/Nantucket Shoals area				23	MAFMC River Herring/Shad Management Coordination		✓		28
						Catch share alternatives for the limited access herring fishery				53
<b>SBRM</b>										
	No Action Planned		✓		62					
<b>Red Crab</b>										
	No Action Planned		✓		63					
	Consider allowing landing of female red crab and modify specs accordingly				60					

2015 Council Priorities Task List  
Executive Committee Recommendations

<b>Habitat</b>										
	Complete Omnibus Habitat Amendment (expected implementation 2015)		✓		3	Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment with range of alternatives already approved as part of the Omnibus EFH Amendment 2 process (as time and resources permit)		✓		31
	Staff: Habitat impacts of other management actions		✓		Not ranked	Coordinate wind power issues with other agencies		✓		34
	Staff: SBNMS Advisory Committee		✓		Not ranked					
<b>Research Steering</b>										
	Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans.		✓		23					
	Collaborative Research Project		✓		31					
<b>SSC</b>										
	Support SSC activities		✓		8					
<b>Enforcement, Safety, VMS</b>										
	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.		✓		18					
<b>Whiting</b>										
	<u>Staff: PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed</u>		✓		15	Prepare an Amendment for limited access/catch shares to the whiting fishery and other issues: groundfish AMs,	✓	✓		13
<b>Skates</b>										
	<u>Action for 2016-2017 skate specifications</u>	✓	✓		1	<i>Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery</i>	✓			48
	<u>Staff: Annual monitoring report</u>		✓		50	Action to end overfishing on thorny, winter skates	✓	✓		10

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<b>EBFM</b>										
						Prepare Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Plan.		✓		18
<b>Hagfish</b>										
						<i>Prepare new Hagfish FMP</i>				
<b>Observer Committee</b>										
	Complete Industry Funded Monitoring Amendment	✓	✓		18					
<b>Risk Policy Working Group</b>										
	Review FMP risk policies for consistency with overall policy	✓	✓		23					
<b>Other</b>										
	EM Working Group	✓	✓		34	Fishery dependent data (NERO lead)		✓		37
	NRCC SAW Working Group Participation		✓		31	<i>Omnibus Permit Splitting Amendment</i>				50
	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee <u>ICCAT</u> <u>HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP</u> <u>NAFO Commissioner</u>		✓		15					
	Staff: Protected Species issues		✓		53					
	Review/revise priority setting process		✓		23					
	Collaborative Research Project		✓		31					
	<i>Omnibus Vesse Baseline Amendment Version 3</i>				48					
	<i>Modify sink gillnet regulations in the Northeast Multispecies, monkfish, and skate fisheries</i>				53					
	<i>Examine and improve Council process</i>				42					
	<i>Trawl Survey Advisory Panel</i>				Unranked					