

NOAA Fisheries Policy Directives

Science and Technology, Law Enforcement, Seafood Inspection, International Affairs, National Environmental Policy Act, and Policy Formation – An overview of all policies relevant to the NEFMC Program Review is provided, along with the purpose and goals (if available). The date listed after each policy is the original implementation date, and all policies with a description have been renewed unless otherwise noted. Full copies of all policies are available online from NOAA Fisheries:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/laws-and-policies/policy-directive-system>

04 - Science and Technology

- **04-101 Policy on the Document Preparation and Clearance (1/5/2006)**
 - 04-101-01 NMFS Policies on Scientific and Technical Publications (1/05/2006)
- **04-105 Standards and Protocols for Surveys (1/05/2006)**
 - 04-105-01 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Ichthyoplankton Surveys 2011 final (1/15/2003)
 - 04-105-02 NOAA Protocols for Groundfish Bottom Trawl Surveys (3/16/2003)
 - 04-105-03 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Mid-Water Pelagic Trawl Surveys (11/03/2003)
 - 04-105-04 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Fixed Gear Trap, Pot and Camera Pod Surveys (12/22/2003)
 - 04-105-05 NOAA Protocols for Fisheries Acoustics Surveys and Related Sampling (1/15/2004)
- **04-105-05-01-akc NOAA Protocols for Fisheries Acoustics Surveys and Related Sampling: AKFSC (1/15/2004)**
- **04-105-05-02-NEC NOAA Protocols for Fisheries Acoustics Surveys and Related Sampling in the NEFSC (1/15/2004)**
 - 04-105-06 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Longline Surveys (12/31/2003)
 - 04-105-07 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Shrimp Trawl Surveys (12/31/2003)
 - 04-105-08 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Hydro-Dynamic Dredge Surveys and Ocean Quahogs (12/19/2003)
- **04-105-08-01-NEC Regional Operating Protocols for Standard Hydro-Dynamic Dredge Surveys: Surf Clams and Ocean Quahogs (12/19/2003)**
 - 04-105-09 NOAA Fisheries Protocols for Scallop Dredge Surveys (1/07/2004)
- **04-105-09-01-NEC Regional Operating Protocols for Standard Sea Scallop Dredge Surveys (1/07/2004)**

- **04-108 Data Quality Act (7/27/2012)**

It is the policy of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to comply with NOAA's Information Quality Guidelines. To achieve this policy objective, NMFS has developed procedures and guidance to assist staff with compliance with the NOAA Information Quality Guidelines. This policy directive directs staff to comply with the IQA and the NMFS IQA procedures. The directive applies to all NMFS staff involved in the generation of information disseminated to the public and to those who review and approve such information prior to release.

As NMFS provides data to NEFMC, the agency complies directly with the Data Quality Act (DQA), and NEFMC references this compliance with DQA in relevant sections of management actions.

- 04-108-02 **Section 515 Pre-Dissemination Review and Documentation Form (6/1/2012)**
- 04-108-03 **Section 515 Pre-Dissemination Review and Documentation Guidelines (7/27/2012)**
Natural Resource Plans are information products that are prescribed by law and have content, structure, and public review processes (where applicable) that will be based upon published standards, e.g., statutory or regulatory guidelines. Examples of such published standards include the National Standard Guidelines (50 CFR Part 600, Subpart D), Essential Fish Habitat Guidelines, and Operational Guidelines - Fishery Management Plan Process, all under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; and the National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Handbook (16 U.S.C. section 1434) under the National Marine Sanctuary Act. These Natural Resource Plans are a composite of several types of information (e.g., scientific, management, stakeholder input, and agency policy) from a variety of internal and external sources. Examples of Natural Resources Plans include fishery, protected resource, and sanctuary management plans and regulations, and natural resource restoration plans.
- 04-108-04 **OMB Peer Review Bulletin Guidance (12/12/11)**
- **04-109 National Minimum Eligibility Standards for Marine Fisheries Observers (8/06/2007)**
 - 04-109-01 **National Minimum Eligibility Standards for Marine Fisheries Observers (8/06/2007)**
- **04-110 NOAA Fisheries Observer Safety (11/15/2007)**
 - 04-110-01 **NOAA Fisheries Observer Safety Training Standards (11/15/2007)**
- **04-111 NMFS Data and Information Management (7/05/2010)**
 - 04-111-01 **NMFS Data Documentation (3/27/2011)**
 - 04-111-02 **Data Management Planning (05/25/2015)**
- **04-112 NMFS Animal Care and Use Policy - revised 8/11/2015**
 - 04-112-01 **Animal Care and Use Committee Standards**
- **04-113 NMFS Policy on the Internal Review and Approval of Fundamental Research Communications (November 4, 2014)**
 - 04-113-01 **NMFS Guidance on Internal Review and Approval of Fundamental Research Communications (November 7, 2014)**
- **04-114 Transition Plans for Modification to Recreational Fishing Catch and Effort Survey(12/18/2015)**

○ 04-114-01 **Guidance and Procedures for the Transition Process for Modification of Recreational**

Fishing Catch and Effort Methods (12/18/2015)

The document specifies guidance and procedures to implement Policy Directive 04-114, which addresses the transition process for modification of methods to estimate recreational fishing catch and effort under the Marine Recreational Information Program. It establishes and describes the role and responsibilities of the MRIP Transition Team, the general transition approach when new survey designs are implemented, and provides an example of a transition plan outline. It also describes the Terms of Reference for the Transition Team. The Transition Team includes representatives from the Regional Fishery Management Councils. The Transition Team plays an important role in coordinating consistent approaches and methods for councils, interstate commissions, and NMFS Regions to apply to recreational catch estimates derived from new or improved survey designs for fishery management purposes.

■ **04-114-01-01 Transition Plan for the Fishing Effort Survey (11/28/16)** **Also see Reference Document 3a, Section 3(c) Recreational Fishing/MRIP Implementation Plan Update (2016-2017)*

In this plan, an Atlantic and Gulf coast Subgroup (henceforth, Subgroup) of the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Transition Team details a comprehensive three-year timeline for transitioning from the current Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) conducted on the Atlantic coast and in the Gulf of Mexico to a new mail survey design for estimating marine recreational shore and private boat fishing effort, known as the Fishing Effort Survey (FES). All members of the Subgroup agree the timeline presented in this document is the most efficient and scientifically sound approach to implement the FES.

There are several steps that must be taken before estimates based on any new design can be used effectively in the management process:

1. **Benchmarking**: The newly designed survey should be conducted side-by-side with the legacy survey to allow measurement and evaluation of consistent differences in the statistical estimates produced. During this benchmarking period, statistical estimates produced by the legacy design are the "best available" for use in monitoring catches relative to ACLs and making management decisions.

2. **Calibration model development**: Consistent differences between new design and legacy design estimates should be evaluated to determine possible sources of bias in the legacy design to explain those differences. In addition, literature research should be conducted to assess how biases identified in the legacy design would most likely have changed over time. Based on the information gained, one or more calibration models should be developed and evaluated for possible use in correcting past catch statistics. Alternative models should be considered and one should be selected and defended as the most appropriate, validated by an external peer review.

3. **Re-estimation of historical catch statistics**: Once a calibration model has been proposed, peer reviewed, and approved, the model should be used to generate a corrected time series of recreational catch statistics. The revised time series should immediately be made available to stock assessment scientists and fishery managers.

4. **Incorporation of new estimates into stock assessments**: The revised catch statistics should be incorporated into stock assessments as soon as possible to provide the most accurate assessments of stock status and provide new ACLs for use in fisheries management. Stocks with very substantial mortality levels due to recreational fishing (high proportion of total mortality relative to that caused by commercial fishing) should be identified as "key stocks" and prioritized for assessment scheduling. Depending on the magnitude of the estimation changes and potential disruption of the management process, assessments scheduled for key stocks may have to be moved to earlier dates while those scheduled for non-key stocks are moved to later dates.

5. **Incorporation of new estimates and ACLs into management actions**: Once revised catch statistics and new assessment results become available, management should begin to use both for decision making as soon as possible. If revised statistics are available but new assessments are not, then managers may need to continue using the statistics based on the legacy design until new assessment results are available. In years when the legacy design is no longer being conducted, the approved calibration model would be used to convert catch estimates based on the new design into estimates that are compatible with the legacy design for use in management.

Other relevant sections: III. Fishing Effort Survey Transition Timeline (Pgs. 9-12), IV. Potential Stock Assessment Impacts and Schedule (Pg. 13), V. Potential Management Impacts and Schedule (Pgs. 14-15), Appendix 2, Key Stocks with Priority Ranking (Pg. 25)

06 - Law Enforcement

- **06-101 VMS Data Access and Dissemination Policy (6/17/2006)**

NEFMC has very limited access (i.e., one staff member) to VMS data.

- **06-102 Vessel Monitoring Systems Funding Prioritization Process (7/04/2007)**

07 - Seafood Inspection

- No additional policies or supplements

08 - International Affairs

- No additional policies or supplements

09 - National Environmental Policy Act

- No additional policies or supplements in this section as they are included under 30- Administrative and Operations

10 - Policy Formulation

- **10-101 NMFS Policy Directive System: Managing Marine Ecosystems**

- 10-101-01 Guidance for Contributing to the NMFS Policy Directive System, Managing Marine Ecosystems directives