



#2

New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 15, 2017
TO: Council
FROM: Tom Nies, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **2018 Management Priorities**

1. The September Council meeting will include our first discussion of Council priorities for 2018. The goal of this first step is to identify the possible tasks for 2018. The actual selection of priorities will occur at the December meeting.

2. I've attached a first draft of the possible tasks for 2018. This list may be expanded at the September Council meeting. Council members will be asked to prioritize the list during the month of October. The Executive Committee will bring recommended priorities to the Council for a final decision at the December meeting. Please contact me if you have questions.

3. There are a few issues worth highlighting that will need further discussion in December.

- a. We have a backlog of projects that need to be completed. These include the Council Program Review, the RSA Program Review, the need to identify triggers that will lead to a review of allocations, update of a river herring/shad white paper and reconsideration of whether those species should be identified as stocks in the fishery, and an aquaculture FMP. These projects can require a large amount of staff and Council member time to complete. We should be careful about adding to this list before the existing projects are completed.
- b. There are a number of projects related to catch monitoring with little obvious coordination between them. This fractured approach does not seem the best use of our resources. Here is a list of known projects being pursued by the Council, NMFS, and others:
 - i. The IFM Amendment has not been formally submitted and may require additional work.
 - ii. Groundfish Amendment 23 addresses groundfish monitoring.
 - iii. The Fishery Dependent Data Visioning Project is expected to form an FMAT that will begin work on an Omnibus Amendment. The scope of that amendment is unknown.
 - iv. SBRM three-year review should be completed fall 2017 but may require follow-up activities.

- v. Several EM projects for the groundfish fishery are either on the water or are being developed.
- vi. An EM project for MWT vessels is on the water.
- vii. The Observer Committee recommended that the Council develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs.
- viii. The Scallop Committee may recommend refinements to the sea scallop industry funded observer program.
- ix. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation recently solicited applications for a grant to "...identify a plan to assess current efforts; identify priority opportunities to achieve integrated and multi-purposed data collection, management and use; and recommend priority actions to accelerate needed improvements in data collection and management. This roadmap will be based on interests and perspectives of diverse fisheries interests and articulate recommended actions and timelines for key implementation actions over the next three to five years."

Enclosures:

- (1) Stratus of 2017 Priorities
- (2) 2018 Draft Priority Tasks

9/14/2017	UNDERLINE: REGULATORY REQUIREMENT					<i>Italics: Not Recommended by Ex Comm</i>				
Strikethrough: Completed or Expecting Completion						Grey: Not approved				
FMP	Annual	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Status	Multi-Year	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Status
Groundfish										
	<u>Set ABCs/ACLs for all stocks, and adjust rebuilding plans as required; to include common pool trimester quota changes</u>	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion	Monitoring amendment (to include measures not addressed in FW 55; possibly to include EM)	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
	Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries; to include state water and other sub-component analysis review, identifying those stocks and segments of the fishery where sub-component catch exceeds 5 percent and determine if additional sub-ACLs are needed.	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion	Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop		✓	✓	Anticipated 2018
	Revise Atlantic halibut management measures	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion	<i>Amendment to consider limited entry in the groundfish party/charter fishery</i>	✓			
	Operational assessment of all stocks		✓	✓	Expect completion	<i>Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs</i>				
	<i>Modify SNE/MA Windowpane Flounder AMs in FW 57 (added June 2017)</i>			✓	Expect completion					
	<i>Investigate reclassification of both windowpane flounder stocks as Ecosystem Component Species, or other approaches that will improve flexibility.</i>			✓	Expect completion					
	<i>Improve recreational management measure process for GOM cod and GOM haddock, and include changes in 2017 framework adjustment</i>			✓	Expect completion					
	Staff: TMGC/TRAC		✓	✓	Expect completion					
	<i>Timing of recreational management measures and possible sub-ACL for GB cod</i>									
	<i>Modifications to common pool regulations: HA exemptions from broad stock area provisions</i>									
	<i>Adjust exemption areas as necessary due to OHA2 changes (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)</i>	✓								
	<i>Specify allocation review triggers</i>									
	<i>Electronic reporting for party/charter vessels</i>									
	<i>Staff: Five year sector review</i>									
Monkfish										
	Action to address strategies for better utilization of the TAL for NFMA and SFMA	✓			17	<i>Re-initiate Monkfish Amendment 6 to consider catch shares and DAS leasing</i>	✓			Cancelled
	Staff: Research Set Aside		✓	✓	NR					

Sea Scallops										
	<u>Prepare a specifications package to set FY 2018 and 2019 (2020 default) specifications (i.e. setting DAS, access area trips, Northern GOM TAC, limited access general category IFQ allocations, etc.).</u> Clarification needed on whether this is for one or two year specifications.	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
	Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised areas (including CAI carry-over trips in the north)	✓	✓	✓	Pends OHA2 approval					
	NGOM scallop management measure changes: such as changing opening date, consistent gear restrictions, possession limits, effort controls.	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion of some measures					
	Modify flatfish AMs	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
	Gear modifications to protect small scallops (extended link) (CANCELLED April 2017)	✓	✓							
	<u>Complete LAGC review (final report April 2017)</u>		✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff: Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.	✓	✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff: NMFS and PDT have new <u>annual responsibilities related to estimating scallop and YT catch during the year</u> (i.e. LA AM exception, re-evaluation of YT sub-ACL based on updated information).	✓	✓	✓	Completed					
	<i>Integrate findings from Sea Scallop Survey Methods Peer Review (process TBD, but may include additional review of how surveys are combined for management advice)</i>			✓	Ongoing					
	<i>RSA program review and modifications</i>	✓								
	<i>Measures to address high-grading of scallops and reduce discard mortality</i>									
	<i>Specify allocation review triggers</i>									
Herring										
	EM Pilot Project	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing	Amendment to address ABC control rule, localized depletion	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
	Staff: Preparation for 2018 benchmark		✓	✓	Ongoing					
	<i>Update of RH/S white paper in preparation for reconsideration of RH/S as stocks in the fishery in 2018.</i>									
	<i>Set control date</i>	✓								
	<i>Consider measure that would move ACL from one area to another in-season</i>									
	Staff: Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)									

SBRM										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
	Amend SBRM to address lobster trap fishing mode (NMFS lead)		✓	✓	Expect completion					
Red Crab										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Habitat	<i>(No Committee recommendations)</i>									
	Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment		✓	✓	Ongoing	Coordinate wind power issues with other agencies/spatial planning		✓	✓	Ongoing
	Framework action to address surfclam access to HMAs		✓	✓	Ongoing					
	Staff: Update and further development of the SASI model		✓	✓	Ongoing					
	Staff: <u>Habitat impacts of other management actions</u>		✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff: ASMFC Habitat Committee		✓	✓	Completed					
	<i>Staff: SBNMS Advisory Council</i>									
	<i>Staff: Monitor and comment on EFH consultations for major project, coordinated with GARFO HCD</i>									
Research Steering										
	<i>Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans.</i>			✓	Completed					
	Staff: Support S-K program		✓	✓	Completed					
SSC										
	Support SSC activities such as <u>recommending ABCs</u> and making recommendations in the FMP development process	✓	✓	✓	Completed					
	Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing					
	Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing					
	<i>Consider modifications to groundfish ABC control rules</i>	✓								
Enforcement, Safety, VMS										
	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	✓	✓	✓	Completed					
	<i>Develop cod end certification program</i>	✓								

Whiting										
	Develop final and preferred alternatives for Draft Amendment 22, limited entry; consider changes to possession limits for silver and offshore hake; conduct public hearings	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing					
	<u>Develop 2018-2020 specifications document for red, silver, and offshore hake stocks. Consider modifications to exemption area dates.</u>	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
	<u>Staff: PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advises Council whether management adjustments are needed</u>	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
Skates										
	Initiate action to allow landing of barndoor skates	✓	✓	✓		Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery; may include catch share alternatives	✓	✓	✓	Scoping hearings held
	<u>Specifications for 2018-2019</u>	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
	<u>Action to modify in-season adjustments to skate trip limits (added April 2017)</u>			✓	Completed					
	<u>Staff: Annual monitoring report</u>	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion					
EBFM										
	Assist in development of MREP EBFM module		✓	✓	Awaiting MREP program request	Complete example Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank and develop a Management Strategy Evaluation process to engage fishermen and other stakeholders while conducting testing and validation.	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
Observer Committee										
						Develop policy for monitoring commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs; strategic approach to bycatch monitoring		✓	✓	12
Risk Policy Working Group										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Trawl Survey AP										
	Address issues identified in AP charter	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing					

[illegible]

[illegible]

14-Sep-17	This worksheet identifies possible priorities or tasks for 2018. This list has not been prioritized by the Ex Comm.					
	September 2017 Council Meeting					
9/14/2017						
Number		Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source
	Groundfish					
1		<u>Set ABCs/ACLs for US/CA stocks</u>			Y	Requirement
2		Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs	Ongoing	Y		2014-2017 priorities
3		ASM action/Amendment 23	Ongoing	Y		Added mid-year 2015
4		Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries		Y		2015 Priorities
5		Cod Stock Structure Working Group	Ongoing	Y		Jan 2012 SSC report; 2015-2017 priorities
6		Specify allocation review triggers				NMFS allocation review policy
7		Adjust exemption areas as necessary (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)				Triggered by OHA2
8		Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery		Y		2016 priorities; not adopted 2017
9		Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod				
10		<u>Address SDC issue when analytic assessments fail</u>			Y	FW 56 approval letter
11		Address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data				
12		Electronic reporting for party/charter vessels				
13		Additional guidance on adjustments/penalties as a result of sector overages				Groundfish AP May 2017
14		<u>Revise rebuilding plans as needed (ocean pout, GB winter flounder, witch flounder, GOM/GB windowpane flounder)</u>			Y	
15		Modify the GF control rule for stocks without analytical models – i.e., empirical and index-based (see SSC list below, item 10 above)				SSC meeting August 2017
16		Consider requirement for eVTRs in the party/charter recreational fishery				
17		Get input on different ways to manage recreational fishery in light of highly variable catch estimates				
18	Staff	Sector five-year review				NMFS catch share policy
19	Staff	TRAC/TMGC				
	Monkfish					
20	Staff	No action planned				
	Sea Scallops					
21		<u>Prepare a specifications package to set FY 2019 and 2020 (2021 default) specifications (i.e. setting DAS, access area trips, Northern GOM TAC, limited access general category IFQ allocations, etc.).</u> Clarification needed on whether this is for one or two year specifications.			Y	Requirement
22		Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised areas				Triggered by OHA2
23		NGOM scallop management measure changes: such as changing opening date, consistent gear restrictions, possession limits, effort controls.				April 2017 for consideration
24		Amendment to create harvester associations				ECSHA letter
25		Measures to address DAS and IFQ carryover				
26		Gear modifications to protect small scallops (extended link)				

27		Specify allocation review triggers				NMFS allocation review policy
25		Adjustments to scallop industry funded observer program (NGOM coverage, etc.)				NEFSC letter August 2017
26		RSA program review and modifications				
27	Staff	NMFS and PDT have new annual responsibilities related to estimating scallop, YT, windowpane catch during the year (i.e. LA AM exception, re-evaluation of YT sub-ACL based on updated information).	Ongoing		Y	
28		Monitoring and catch accounting provisions				
29	Staff	Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.	Ongoing			
30	Staff	Integrate findings from 2018 benchmark (process TBD, but may include additional review of how surveys are combined for management advice)				
	Herring					
31		Amendment 8: MSE for ABC control rule and measures to address localized depletion	Ongoing	Y		2015 Priorities
32		Specifications for 2019-2021			Y	
33		Update of RH/S white paper and reconsideration of RH/S as stocks that need conservation and management (i.e. "stocks in the fishery")				Council motion January 2015
34	Staff	EM Pilot Project	Ongoing			
35	Staff	2018 benchmark assessment				
36	Staff	Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)	Ongoing			
	SBRM					
37		No action planned				
	Red Crab					
38		No action planned				
	Habitat					
39		Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment	Ongoing	Y		2015 Priorities
40		Framework action to address surfclam access to HMAs	Ongoing	Y		Triggered by OHA2
41	Staff	Update and further development of the SASI model	Ongoing	Y		Contract issued 2017 w/ NMFS support
42		Develop Council policies on non-fishing activities	Ongoing	Y		
43	Staff	Habitat impacts of other management actions	Ongoing	Y		
44	Staff	SBNMS advisory panel	Ongoing			
45	Staff	Develop habitat and fishery related comments on non-fishing activities, in consultation with other agencies, (including BOEM)	Ongoing			
	RSC					
45		Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans	Ongoing			
		Improve RSC priority process				RSC meeting July 2017
46	Staff	Support S-K program	Ongoing			
	SSC					
47		Support Council activities such as <u>recommending ABCs</u> and making recommendations in the FMP development process	Ongoing		Y	
48		Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)				
49		Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches				
50		Consider modifications to groundfish ABC control rules (see Groundfish)				August 2017 SSC meeting

		Enforcement, Safety, VMS				
50		Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	Ongoing			
51						Council, June 2016
		Whiting				
52		Submit final preferred alternatives with FEIS for Amendment 22, limited entry	Ongoing	Y		2014 and 2015 Priorities
53		<u>Address overfished condition for southern red hake</u>			Y	Requirement
54		Modify northern red hake AM				<i>May be bundled with item 51</i>
55		Consider whiting exemption area adjustments (see item 7 under groundfish)				<i>May be bundled with item 51</i>
56	Staff	PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed	Ongoing		Y	
		Skates				
57		Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery	Ongoing	Y		2016 Priorities
58	Staff	Skate monitoring report			Y	
		EBFM				
59		Complete example Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank and develop a Management Strategy Evaluation process to engage fishermen and other stakeholders while conducting testing and validation.	Ongoing	Y		2014 Priorities
60	Staff	Assist in development of MREP EBFM module				
		Observer Committee				
61		Develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs	Ongoing	Y		Jan 2015 Council motion
		Risk Policy Working Group				
62		No action planned	Ongoing			Anticipate 2016 completion
		Trawl Survey AP				
63		Address issues identified in AP charter	Ongoing			2015 Priorities

	Other: (Interspecies Type Actions)					
64		Fishery dependent data projects: FMAT to begin development of omnibus amendment	Ongoing	Y		NRCC
65		NRCC Working Group Participation	Ongoing	Y		NRCC
66		International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner	Ongoing		Y	
67	Staff	Protected Species issues	Ongoing			
68	Staff	Support for NERP; implementation of Regional Ocean Plan; support to data portal	Ongoing			
69		Preliminary work on Aquaculture FMP				GARFO/NRCC initiative
70		Complete programmatic review of Council operations		Y		2017 Priorities
71		Complete review of RSA programs in sea scallops, monkfish, and herring FMPs (see also RSA items above under scallop FMP)		Y		2017 Priorities
72	Staff	Participate on Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams				