



## New England Fishery Management Council

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### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** August 30, 2019  
**TO:** Executive Committee  
**FROM:** Tom Nies, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** **2019 Management Priorities**

1. The September Council meeting will include our first discussion of Council priorities for 2020. The goal of this first step is to identify the possible tasks. The actual selection of priorities will occur at the December meeting.
2. I've attached a first draft of the possible tasks for 2019. This list does not recommend for any specific task. The Committee may want to add possible tasks to the attached list, or delete those that are worthy of continued consideration. Several Oversight Committees will meet in September and I will add in any additions that surface at those meetings. This list may also be expanded at the September Council meeting.
3. The task list refers to the review and implementation of the RSA Program review recommendations, but is not specific. The Executive Committee will discuss the review and the results will be incorporated into the task list before the Council meeting.
4. There are two organizational issues to highlight that influence the number of tasks that will be approved in December. Since the Council typically updates Committee membership after the September Council meeting, the Executive Committee may want to have a discussion on these topics.

### Committees

5. In recent years the Council has added more Committees, and the size of Committees has increased. As an illustration, in 2008 there were 12 committees (not including liaison assignments such as ASMFC and MAFMC, but including TMGC, Ex Comm, etc). The Groundfish Committee was the largest, with 8 NEFMC members (this does not include MAFMC representatives). The average Committee size was 4.4 members. Most Council members served on three Committees or less; only one served on 4. In 2018, there were 15 Committees. There were four Committees with 8 or more members. The average Committee size is 6 members. Ten Council members serve on four or more Committees; three members serve on 7 or more.

6. The increase in the size and number of Committees complicates planning for meetings. In addition, Council members prefer not to meet on Mondays and Fridays; this further constrains meeting planning. Staff is spending increasing amounts of time deconflicting Committee meetings because of the overlap across Committees. This is a particular problem in the late summer and fall as specifications are prepared for Council action.

7. Supporting meetings can also be difficult to schedule, though there is less overlap across AP, PDT, and SSC members. The calendar in enclosure (1) shows the meeting schedule for 2019 (note that not all meetings likely in October and November have been scheduled). As can be seen, the calendar is quite full.

8. Over the years, the number of Council members on Committees has varied. It is easier for staff to schedule meetings when Committees are small and when there is less overlap of members across Committees. The risk of small Committees is that they may not reflect the range of opinions on the Council, such that Committee work is revisited during Council discussions. The Committee may want to discuss these tradeoffs. It would also help scheduling if the Committee allowed staff to schedule meetings on Mondays and Fridays a necessary.

### **Workload Planning**

9. Earlier this spring, the Executive Committee asked if it would be possible to quantify how long tasks take to complete. This would help Council members understand the limits on what can be accomplished over the course of the year. This work is ongoing.

10. One of the difficulties with this exercise is that reliably estimating the scope of any task is a challenge. Often the number of alternatives expands as actions are developed, increasing the workload and time necessary to complete the action. When we agree on priorities, there also isn't a commitment made on how quickly a Committee will act. A times, support from other PDT members is not predictable – for example, due to a federal shutdown – and slows progress or increases the demands on Council staff.

11. As an illustration, however, the development of scallop specifications usually takes place over the course of 20-21 meeting days (PDT, AP, Committee, and Council) that take place from April through December. Early in the period, only parts of the meetings are devoted to the specifications, but by late August that topic essentially fills the Committee/AP/PDT meetings. Staff estimates meeting planning, travel, summary preparation, and meeting time for these 20 meetings uses about 158 Council staff days – or nearly 8 months of staff time. Note that this does not include the analytic work and document preparation that would take place even without a meeting.

12. Once the Council votes on the specifications, about eight weeks (two months) of staff time are spent preparing various documents for final submission and regulations deeming. A minimum estimate for the staff time needed to prepare scallop specs is thus ten months – or just under half the available time for each of the two dedicated scallop staff. Again, note that this does not include document preparation and analytic tasks that would occur even without

meetings. The complexity of alternatives considered can have a large impact on how much time this takes.

13. We will try to refine these estimates in advance of the December Council meeting. Conceptually, it may be possible to give a crude estimate of the time necessary to complete many of the task items on the list.











Enclosure: (1) Meeting calendar

(2) 2020 Initial Priorities Task list for Executive Committee Review

# 2019

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M			
JAN			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
FEB						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28							
MAR					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
APR		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30									
MAY				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
JUN					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						
JUL		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
AUG				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
SEP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30										
OCT		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31								
NOV					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						
DEC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31									

Legend

-  Holiday
-  Leadership (CCC, NRCC, Ex Comm, etc.)
-  NEFMC Council
-  NEFMC Committee
-  NEFMC PDT
-  NEFMC AP
-  MAFMC
-  ASMFC
-  TRAC/TMGC/USCA
-  Assessment

- |        |                  |        |              |        |                  |
|--------|------------------|--------|--------------|--------|------------------|
| Jan 01 | New Year's Day   | Jan 21 | M L King Day | Feb 14 | Valentine's Day  |
| Feb 18 | Presidents' Day  | Apr 19 | Good Friday  | Apr 21 | Easter Sunday    |
| May 12 | Mother's Day     | May 27 | Memorial Day | Jun 16 | Father's Day     |
| Jul 04 | Independence Day | Sep 02 | Labor Day    | Oct 14 | Columbus Day     |
| Oct 31 | Halloween        | Nov 11 | Veterans Day | Nov 28 | Thanksgiving Day |

2020 Priorities  
Initial Task List  
Executive Committee, 9/04/2019

30-Aug-19	This worksheet identifies possible priorities or tasks for 2020. This list has not been prioritized by the Ex Comm.					
8/30/2019						
Number	Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source	
<b>Groundfish</b>						
1	<u>Set ABCs/ACLs for half of groundfish stocks for FY2021-2023 and US/CA stocks for FY 2021</u>			Y	Requirement	
2	Complete Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring action	Ongoing	Y			
3	Cod Stock Structure Working Group: review results and develop management approach	Ongoing	Y		Jan 2012 SSC report; 2015-2018 priorities	
4	Amendment to adopt limited access for the party/charter fishery		Y		Follow-up from 2019 priorities	
5	Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod					
6	Address SDC issue when analytic assessments fail		Y		2018 priorities	
7	Address commercial/recreational allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data	Ongoing	Y			
8	Modify the GF control rule for stocks without analytical models – i.e., empirical and index-based (see SSC list below, item 7 above)				SSC meeting August 2017 and 2018	
9	Get input on different ways to manage recreational fishery in light of highly variable catch estimates: for example, consideration of catch error estimates under MRIP, and errors in bioeconomic model used to determine measures	Ongoing			Groundfish Committee, Sept 2017 Council meeting, 2018 priorities	
10	Consider sub-ACL of haddock for the small-mesh multispecies fishery				Sept 2018 Council meeting	
11	Explore alternative ways to manage yellowtail flounder for the groundfish and scallop fisheries				Sept 2018 Council meeting	
12	US/CA trading provisions				Sept 2018 Council meeting	
13	Action to adopt electronic reporting for party/charter vessels				June 2019 Council Meeting	
14	Staff Complete sector five-year review	Ongoing	Y		NMFS catch share policy	
15	Staff Groundfish operational assessments					
16	Staff TRAC/TMGC					
<b>Monkfish</b>						
17	No actions planned			Y		

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Number	Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source
<b>Sea Scallops</b>					
18	<u>Prepare a specifications package to set FY 2021 (2022 default) specifications (i.e. setting DAS, access area trips, Northern GOM TAC, limited access general category IFQ allocations, etc.).</u>			Y	Requirement
19	Complete Amendment 21: NGOM management, LAGC trip limits, state waters fishing by LAGC vessels	Ongoing	Y		
20	Support action for access to Northern Edge HMA ( see Habitat)		Y		2018 priority
21	Review and implement recommendations from 2015 scallop survey review panel				
22	Modify RSA program as recommended by RSA Program Review (see below)				
23	Performance report for the LA component				
24	Evaluate rotational management program				Committee
25	Evaluate options for harvesting slow growing scallops in Nantucket Light Ship-South Deep				Added to 2019 priorities
26	Consider issues identified by East Coast Scallop Harvesters Association				October 2018 letter
27	Adjustments to scallop industry funded observer program (IFO coverage vs. required SBRM coverage, etc.)				NEFSC letter August 2017
28	Staff NMFS and PDT have annual responsibilities related to estimating scallop, yellowtail, and windowpane catch during the year (i.e. LA AM exception, re-evaluation of YT sub-ACL based on updated information).	Ongoing		Y	
29	Staff Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.	Ongoing			
<b>Herring</b>					
30	<u>Specifications for 2021-2023</u>			Y	
31	Action to adjust measures in the herring plan that potentially inhibit optimizing yield in the mackerel fishery (i.e. increase in herring incidental possession limit in the range of 2,000-40,000 pounds, modify seasonal closure of Area 1B)				
32	Action to consider GB spawning closures				
33	Staff Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)	Ongoing			
34	Staff Atlantic herring management track stock assessment				
<b>SBRM</b>					
35	No action planned				
<b>Red Crab</b>					
36	No action planned				

2020 Priorities  
Initial Task List  
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Number		Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source
<b>Habitat</b>						
37		Initiate action to revise Habitat Management Areas on Northern Edge of Georges Bank		Y		2015 Priorities; OHA2 follow-up
38		Participate in RODA and ROSA activities				
39		Develop Council policies on additional non-fishing activities (offshore energy policies adopted 2018)	Ongoing	Y		2018 priorities
40	Staff	Habitat impacts of other management actions	Ongoing	Y	Y	
41	Staff	SBNMS advisory panel and ASMFC habitat committee	Ongoing			
42	Staff	Develop habitat and fishery related comments on non-fishing activities, particularly wind power, in consultation with other agencies, (including NMFS, BOEM, and MAFMC). This includes addressing offshore energy development issues.	Ongoing			
43	Staff	Co-chair Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment Inshore Work Team		Y		
<b>Research</b>						
43		Consider implementation of RSA Program review recommendations for the sea scallop, monkfish, and herring FMPs				
44		Complete annual update to research priorities				Council Policy
45	Staff	Support S-K program	Ongoing			
<b>SSC</b>						
46		Support Council activities such as <u>recommending ABCs</u> and making recommendations in the FMP development process	Ongoing		Y	
47		Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)		Y		
48		Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches				
49		Develop ABC control rule for GB yellowtail flounder and other empirical approach stocks				August 2019 SSC meeting
<b>Enforcement, Safety, VMS</b>						
50		Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	Ongoing			
<b>Whiting</b>						
51		<u>Set OFLs/ABCs/ACLs for 2021-2023</u>			Y	Requirement
52		<u>Complete action that addresses overfished condition/develop rebuilding plan for southern red hake</u>			Y	Requirement
53		Action to make adjustments to possession limits, seasons, transfer at sea limit, northern red hake AM or other measures				
54		Action to address bycatch issues in the fishery				
55		Red hake research track assessment				
56	Staff	<u>PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed</u>	Ongoing		Y	

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<b>Skates</b>					
57	Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery	Ongoing	Y		2016 Priorities
58	Staff <u>Skate monitoring report</u>			Y	
<b>EBFM</b>					
59	Conduct information and educational workshops on EBFM, focusing on potential application to Georges Bank eFEP	Ongoing	Y		2014 Priorities
60	Conduct initial stakeholder-engaged management strategy evaluation workshops and work with the NEFSC (or others) to develop operating models to evaluate management procedures and strategies for potential application to a Georges Bank Ecosystem Production Unit.	Ongoing	Y		
61	Staff Support EBFM activities (WGNARS, SOE, etc.)				
<b>Observer Committee</b>					
62	Develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs		Y		Jan 2015 Council motion; 2018 priorities
63	Recommend to NMFS policy and procedures for NEFOP "no sail" list				September 2018 Council Meeting
64	Appropriate observer protocols				September 2018 Council Meeting
65	Study issue of full retention/no discards.		Y		September 2017 Council meeting
<b>Risk Policy Working Group</b>					
66	Review implementation of Council Risk Policy				
<b>Trawl Survey AP</b>					
67	Address issues identified in AP charter	Ongoing	Y		2015 Priorities
<b>Inter-organization Activities</b>					
69	CCC Working Group participation (EM, Legislative, CMOD)				
70	NRCC Working Group Participation	Ongoing	Y		NRCC
71	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner	Ongoing		Y	
76	Staff Review document preparation and approval procedures with GARFO, NEFSC (i.e. update 2014 Tiger Team report)				



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Number	Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source
<b>Other</b>					
68	Review and implement Program Review recommendations	Ongoing	Y		
72	Support Regional Fishery Dependent Data Initiative (FDDI)	Ongoing	Y		NRCC
73	Staff Protected Species issues, including actions as necessary to review Biological Opinion and implement NARW recovery plan	Ongoing	Y		
74	Participate on Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams	Ongoing			
75	Adopt additional measures for fisheries if required by Northern Right Whale Biological Opinion		Y		September 2018 Council Meeting
77	Preliminary work on Aquaculture FMP				GARFO/NRCC initiative
78	Dialogue meeting between Council, industry, and scientists to improve communications and cooperation				September 2018 Council Meeting