



## New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 4, 2019  
**TO:** MSE for EBFM Steering Committee  
**FROM:** Matt McKenzie, Steering Committee Chair  
**SUBJECT:** Purpose and agenda for meeting

The MSE Steering Committee (MSE SC) will meet at the **Hyatt Place** on **Wednesday, September 4, starting at 9:30 am.**

**Meeting Purpose:** The committee should agree on Terms of Reference and what types of recommendations it will develop for conducting a stakeholder-engaged Management Strategy Evaluation on EBFM for the Georges Bank Ecosystem Production Unit.

In January 2019, the Council approved the following motion to appoint a steering committee to advise the Council on a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process for a Fishery Ecosystem Plan on Georges Bank. During our planning, we initially scheduled delivery of steering committee advice at the September 2019 Council meeting, when the EBFM Committee is scheduled to present a draft example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP). Due to the time it took to appoint a steering committee, we are now scheduling the steering committee to present this advice in December, so that we can begin the MSE process shortly thereafter.

*“To recommend that the Council begin MSE planning with the establishment of a steering committee to develop strategies for soliciting input and evaluation of management strategies consistent with ecosystem management.”*

The steering committee will discuss terms of reference and types of recommendations for structuring a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process that focuses on development of a Georges Bank Fishery Ecosystem Plan. These recommendations will be made to the Council in December and will include approaches to soliciting stakeholder engagement and facilitating stakeholder participation in the MSE effort. Summaries of previous stakeholder-engaged MSE workshops and the Council’s example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP) framework will be presented at this meeting. Other business may be discussed as necessary.

There are two new concepts that are under development. One is a new system of fishery management (i.e. EBFM) that integrates management of different fisheries in a specific area, accounting for biological and technical interactions to achieve a wider range of goals and objectives than are usually considered. Georges Bank is an ecologically well-defined and highly

productive area where we have excellent biological data and frequent sampling. As such, many ecosystem models have been developed to simulate the biology and effects of fishing, as well as positive and negative effects on fishermen, communities, and ocean users. We can use this information from ecosystem models and a variety of analyses to evaluate strategies that can be adopted and applied in a Fishery Ecosystem Plan. Although Council members and the public have heard about EBFM as a general concept, they may be unfamiliar with it and therefore have some anxiety about it.

The second new concept is the MSE process itself. Council members and some public are familiar with or participated in previous MSE processes, but these were more narrowly focus to management of a specific species and specific management questions. Instead of focusing on producing maximum sustainable yield from every managed fish stock, EBFM broadens the scope of fisheries management to include a balance of objectives and considers the biological interactions among species as well as a variety of effects from fishing and other ocean uses. It requires more complex models to estimate the effects of fishing on the ecosystem, especially when the interactions between predators and prey are taken into account. MSE is a structured approach to consider a complex system and involve stakeholders in the design and evaluation of management strategies. The Council would like to conduct an evaluation of a new approach, getting input from stakeholders to identify viable strategies that may be implemented with a Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank.

The eFEP is intended to be a high-level document that describes a potential framework for implementing EBFM for the Georges Bank Ecosystem Production Unit (EPU). In addition to a harvest control rule framework and catch limits for stock complexes, the document includes options for several components of a fishery ecosystem plan with a discussion of their strengths and weaknesses. This document is not intended to be a worked example, like what was done for the 2018 peer review or what will be done during Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). It is also not intended to describe specific alternatives in detail to solicit public comment.

This document describes a management approach, or operational framework, to conduct an evaluation of potential ecosystem management strategies using one or more operating models. The purpose of the document is to support evaluation of management procedures through Management Strategy Evaluation. Nothing in this document is set in stone or implies that it is the only way to implement ecosystem management, but lays out a high-level framework that we believe is a possible way forward.

This document also describes the concept of ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) applied to a Georges Bank Ecosystem Production Unit (EPU). It defines the scope of what can be managed under a FEP, including the spatial extent, the species and stocks that can be managed, and the management jurisdiction of stocks and fisheries included in the FEP. The document gives examples of management procedures (i.e. a framework of catch limits for stock complexes, floors to prevent depletion of stocks, and allocations to fishery functional groups defined by fisheries that have specific characteristics and that catch co-occurring fish) that may be used to manage the EPU, as well as the scope of technical measures that can be utilized.

**Meeting materials.** Paper copies of the documents listed below will be provided at the meeting. A PDF of each document is posted to [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org). Staff will provide copies of any additional meeting materials that are not included in this package. If you have any questions about the documents, please contact Andrew Applegate ([aapplegate@nefmc.org](mailto:aapplegate@nefmc.org) ; 978-465-0492 ext. 114).

1. Meeting memo and agenda (this memo)
2. MSE Presentations (Documents 2A to 2E)
3. Draft example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP)
4. Draft Terms of Reference and Relevant Process Questions

## **AGENDA**

### **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION for ECOSYSTEM BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Hyatt Place  
50 Forbes Road  
Braintree, MA 02184  
Phone: (781) 848-0600**

**September 4, 2019**

- 9:30 am Introductions, agenda and purpose of meeting (Document 1).....(M. McKenzie)
- Why is the Council developing EBFM?
  - Why is the Council planning to apply MSE to this development process
  - What is the intended outcome of the MSE process, i.e. how will the Council use the results
  - What is the Steering Committee mandate?
- 10:00 Presentations:
- The MSE concept focusing on the use and interpretation of operating models to support MSE (Document 2A).....(S. Gaichas)
  - Lessons learned about stakeholder engagement in the Herring MSE (Document 2B) .....(R. Feeney)
  - Summary of the Atlantic Bluefin tuna MSE process (Document 2C) ..... (L. Kerr)
  - The Council's example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP) framework intended purpose (Documents 2D and 3).....(A. Applegate)
  - Draft MSE processes and timelines (Document 2E).....(A. Applegate)
- 12:30 pm Lunch break
- 1:30 Draft Terms of Reference and Relevant Questions about the MSE process (Document 4)..... (Committee discussion)
- Are the draft Terms of Reference appropriate?
  - Are the draft process questions relevant and appropriate? How should they be grouped according to overarching issues?
  - What type of feedback from the September Council meeting be most helpful to the Steering Committee?
- 4:30 Future work, meetings and conference calls, timeline
- What is the committee's internal work plan going forward
- 5:00 Adjourn