



#2

New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
E.F. "Terry" Stockwell III, *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 18, 2015
TO: Council
FROM: Tom Nies, Executive Director
SUBJECT: 2016 Possible Priorities List

1. Attached is a list of possible Council tasks for 2016, without regard to available resources. This list incorporates a few minor changes made by the Executive, Herring, and Scallop Committees. It will be reviewed for completeness 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.

Groundfish

2. In 2015, we continued to struggle with changing priorities mid-year primarily with respect to management of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. With groundfish stock assessment updates just completed, the current list of potential items for 2016 may need to be revised at the Council meeting.

Scallops

3. The date of implementation of OHA2 may affect scallop priorities. Ideally, new access areas will be defined in time to be considered in the 2017 specifications package but it is not clear that will be the case. The Scallop Committee and Council will also need to decide whether specifications will be set for one or two years, but this decision does not need to be made yet.

Other Actions

4. There are likely to be increasing demands on staff (including NMFS) time that are not obvious in this list. For example, the staff spends increasing amounts of time helping to manage the S-K program that brings millions of dollars of research to the northeast; the draft NE Ocean Plan will be released next spring and the Council will probably want to comment; and the fishery dependent data project will require increased Council participation, at least at the staff level. These demands need to be considered when selecting priorities.

Enclosures:

- (1) Status of 2015 priorities
- (2) 2016 Draft Priority Tasks

9/10/2015	UNDERLINE: REGULATORY REQUIREMENT					Final Council Priorities for 2015				
	Strikethrough: Completed or expected completion									
FMP										
	Annual	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Status	Multi-Year	Comm.	ExCom	Council	Status
Groundfish										
	Set specs for all groundfish stocks 2016-2018	✓	✓	✓	Expect Completion	Continue to coordinate action on the Habitat Omnibus Amendment to include possible modifications of the Groundfish closed areas.	✓	✓	✓	Completed
	Set specs for US/CA stocks for 2016	✓	✓	✓	Expect Completion	Complete Amendment 18 to consider fleet diversity and accumulation caps.	✓	✓	✓	Completed
	Recreational measures management process	✓	✓	✓		Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
	Management action to address ASM requirements			✓	Ongoing	Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries	✓	✓		
	Staff: Five year sector review	✓	✓	✓		Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
	Staff: TMGC/TRAC	✓	✓	✓	Completed	Consider trading of quota under US/CA Understanding/TMGC (measured progress)				
	Staff: Operational/update assessments	✓	✓	✓	Completed	ACE Trading between scallop/groundfish fisheries				
	Staff: discussion paper on management alternatives for windowpane flounder			✓		Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery	✓			
	Staff: Coordinate with ASMFC Lobster TC on lobster trap bycatch of groundfish species			✓		Consider changes to spawning closures				
	Sector ACE carryover provisions					NEW: Amendment for windowpane flounder	✓			
	EM									
	Changes to trawl gear regs to improve enforceability									
	NEW: Sub-ACLS for fluke, squid, etc. for SNE Windowpane Flounder	✓								
Monkfish										
	Complete framework adjustment to address several issues taken out of Amendment 6	✓	✓	✓	Completed	Continue Monkfish Amendment 6 for modifications to DAS program (including leasing) and catch shares (sectors and IFQs).	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
	Staff: Research Set Aside		✓	✓	Completed					

Sea Scallops	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: reactive AMs for N WINP; changes to reactive AMs for YTF	✓	✓	✓	Expect Completion	Amendment to streamline the scallop specifications process	✓	✓	✓	Expect Completion
	Modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised areas	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing	Consider measures to improve management of inshore areas: improve YPR for those areas and address how areas are fished by all permit categories				
	Workshop and discussion paper to address localized depletion of inshore areas and mitigation of effects on LAGC fishery			✓	Ongoing					
	Staff: Research Set Aside		✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff and PDT participation on NEFSC peer review of sea scallop survey methods (Spring 2015)		✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff: Annual catch monitoring		✓	✓	Completed					
	Staff: Begin preparations for five year review of LAGC IFQ program		✓	✓	Ongoing					
	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)									
Herring										
	Herring Specs Action Herring ACL/Sub ACLs 2016-2018 RSA etc. specs 2016-2018 RH/S catchcaps 2016-2018 Adjust RSA program	✓	✓	✓	Expect Completion	MAFMC River Herring/Shad Management Coordination		✓	✓	Completed
	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					Prepare an amendment to consider new ABC control rules that account for herring's role as a forage species; coordinate with EBFM Committee/PDT			✓	Ongoing
						Catch share alternatives for the limited access herring fishery				
SBRM										
	No Action Planned		✓		Completed					
Red Crab										
	No Action Planned		✓	✓	Completed					
	Consider allowing landing of female red crab and modify specs accordingly									

Habitat										
	Complete Omnibus Habitat Amendment (expected implementation 2015)		✓	✓	Completed	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)		✓	✓	Ongoing
	Staff: Habitat impacts of other management actions		✓	✓	Completed	Coordinate wind power issues with other agencies		✓	✓	Ongoing
	Staff: SBNMS Advisory Committee		✓	✓	Completed					
Research Steering										
	Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans.		✓	✓	Completed					
	Collaborative Research Project		✓	✓	Completed					
SSC										
	Support SSC activities		✓	✓	Completed					
Enforcement, Safety, VMS										
	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.		✓	✓	Completed					
Whiting										
	Staff: PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed		✓	✓	Completed	Prepare an Amendment for limited access/catch shares to the whiting fishery and other issues: groundfish AMs (after EBFM guidance to Herring ABC Control Rule)	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing
Skates										
	Action for 2016-2017 skate specifications	✓	✓	✓	Expect completion	Action to end overfishing on thorny, winter skates	✓	✓	✓	Completed
	Staff: Annual monitoring report		✓	✓	Completed	Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery	✓			
EBFM										
						Prepare Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Plan.		✓	✓	Ongoing
Hagfish										
						Prepare new Hagfish FMP				
Observer Committee										
	Complete Industry Funded Monitoring Amendment	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing	Develop Comprehensive Observer/Monitoring Policy			✓	

Risk Policy Working Group										
	Review FMP risk policies for consistency with overall policy	✓	✓	✓	Completed					
Other										
	EM Working Group	✓	✓	✓	Completed	Fishery dependent data (NERO lead)		✓	✓	Ongoing
	NRCC SAW Working Group Participation		✓	✓	Completed	<i>Omnibus Permit Splitting Amendment</i>				
	International Fisheries Management									
	TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee									
	ICCAT		✓	✓	Completed					
	HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP									
	NAFO Commissioner									
	Staff: Protected Species issues		✓	✓	Completed					
	Review/revise priority setting process		✓	✓						
	Trawl Survey Advisory Panel			✓	Ongoing					
	<i>Omnibus Vesse Baseline Amendment Version 3</i>									
	<i>Modify sink gillnet regulations in the Northeast Multispecies, monkfish, and skate fisheries</i>									
	<i>Examine and improve Council process</i>									

18-Sep-15	This worksheet identifies possible priorities or tasks for 2016. This list has not been prioritized by the Ex Comm.								
	This worksheet identifies possible priorities or tasks for 2016. It has not been prioritized by the Executive Committee								
								Priority	
Number		Priority/Task Title	Status	Multi_Year	Legal/Regulatory Requirement?	Source	High	Medium	Low
	Groundfish								
1		Set specs for US/CA stocks for 2017			Y	Requirement			
2		Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs	Ongoing	Y		2014 and 2015 Priorities			
3		Recreational management measures process				2015 Priorities (dropped mid-year)			
4		ASM framework	Ongoing			Added mid-year 2015			
5		Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries		Y		2015 Priorities			
6		Windowpane flounder management alternatives				2015 Priorities (Dropped mid-year)			
7		Staff: Work with ASMFC Lobster TC on groundfish bycatch in lobster traps				2015 Priorities (dropped mid-year)			
8		Cod Stock Structure Working Group		Y		Jan 2012 SSC report; 2015 priorities			
9		Adjust exemption areas as necessary due to OHA2 changes (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)				Triggered by OHA2			
10		Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery		Y					
11	Staff	Sector five-year review				NMFS catch share strategy; 2015 priorities (dropped mid-year)			
12	Staff	TRAC/TMGC							
	Monkfish								
13		Continue Monkfish Amendment 6 for modifications to DAS program (including leasing) and catch shares (sectors and IFQs).	Ongoing	Y		2014 Priorities			
14		Monkfish specifications for 2017-2019			Y				
15	Staff	Monkfish RSA							
	Sea Scallops								
16		Prepare a specifications package to set FY 2017 and 2018 (2019 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.). Clarification needed on whether this is for one or two year specifications.			Y				
17		Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised areas (including CAI carry-over trips in the north); develop gear modifications to further protect small scallops (same as reactive windowpane flounder AM)				Triggered by OHA2			
18		Host a workshop to address concerns raised about scallop fishing pressure in inshore areas.				2015 Priorities			
19	Staff	NMFS and PDT have new annual responsibilities related to estimating scallop and YT catch during the year (i.e. LA AM exception, re-evaluation of YT sub-ACL based on updated information).	Ongoing						
20		Five year review of LAGC IFQ program (will require staff and Committee time)			Y				
21	Staff	Support technical and management reviews for Research Set Aside Program							
22		Integrate findings from Sea Scallop Survey Methods Peer Review (process TBD)							

	Herring								
23		Amendment to address ABC control rule, localized depletion	Ongoing	Y		2015 Priorities			
24		Catch share alternatives for the limited access herring fishery		Y					
25		Framework action to allow seasonal allocation of the RH/S catch caps							
	SBRM								
26		No action planned							
	Red Crab								
27		Update 2017-2019 specifications							
28		Consider allowing landing of female red crab and modify specs accordingly							
29		Consider management of Jonah crab and additon to this FMP (or a new FMP)				Jan 2015 Council motion			
	Habitat								
30		Continue Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment with range of alternatives already approved as part of the Omnibus EFH Amendment 2 process (some modification of alternatives may be necessary)	Pending	Y		2015 Priorities			
31		Framework action to address surf clam access to HMAs				Triggered by OHA2			
32	<i>Staff</i>	Update and further development of the SASI model		Y					
33		Wind power coordination with BOEM		Y					
34	<i>Staff</i>	Habitat impacts of other management actions		Y					
35	<i>Staff</i>	SBNMS advisory panel							
	RSC								
36		Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans.	Ongoing						
37	<i>Staff</i>	Support S-K program							
	SSC								
38		Support SSC activities such as recommending ABCs and making recommendations in the FMP development process	Ongoing		Y				
	Enforcement, Safety, VMS								
39		Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	Ongoing						
	Whiting								
40		Conducte scoping and prepare a draft amendment with limited access alternatives and possibly other management issues	Ongoing	Y		2014 and 2015 Priorities			
41	<i>Staff</i>	PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed			Y				
	Skates								
42		Action for 2016-2017 skate specifications			Y				
43		Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery		Y	Y				
44	<i>Staff</i>	Skate monitoring report							
	EBFM								
45		Develop and validate an example Fishery Ecosystem Plan; prepare scoping document	Ongoing	Y		2014 Priorities			

	Observer Committee							
46	Complete Industry funded monitoring amendment	Ongoing	Y		2014 Priorities			
47	Develop policy for monitoring commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs	Ongoing	Y		Jan 2015 Council motion			
	Risk Policy Working Group							
48	Review FMP risk policies for consistency with overall policy	Ongoing			Anticipate 2016 completion			
	Trawl Survey AP							
49	Address issues identified in AP charter				2015 Priorities			
	Other: (Interspecies Type Actions)							
50	Fishery dependent data projects: likely initiation of an Omnibus Amendment to adopt recommendations of GARFO/NEFSC		Y		NRCC			
51	NRCC Working Group Participation	Ongoing	Y		NRCC			
52	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner	Ongoing						
53	Protected Species issues	Ongoing						
54	<i>Staff</i> Support for NERP; review and comment on the Draft Regional Ocean Plan	Ongoing						