

New England Fishery Management Council

Annual Priority Setting Process

Every fall the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) determines what issues and/or actions it will work on the following calendar year. This exercise is commonly referred to as “setting priorities” and is coordinated by the Executive Director. The steps of the process have evolved over the last 15 years. It is not delineated in the Operations Handbook or SOPPs.

In early summer, the Council staff is reminded to begin discussing with their Committees to identify future issues. By late August, the Executive Director works with the staff to prepare a list of possible tasks. Tasks include Council actions (for example an amendment or a framework) as well as issues expected to absorb significant staff or Council member time (assessments, annual monitoring reports, etc.). This initial list is prepared without regard to available resources and includes any suggestions received from the public. The list is first discussed with the Executive Committee and then delivered to the Council at the September Council meeting. This Council discussion is focused on making sure the list is complete and all suggested additions are usually accepted. Tasks are roughly characterized as regulatory requirements (e.g. setting ABCs/ACLs, preparing a rebuilding plan for an overfished stock, etc.) and whether they are expected to be completed in one year or are likely to be a multi-year task. At this point the list does not reflect a Council commitment to address any specific task.

After the September Council meeting the list is circulated to individual Council members and Committees. Council members rank each individual task as a high, medium, or low priority. This information is scored to rank each task in overall order of importance. This ranking is not binding but serves as a guide to how the Council as a whole values each task. Committees identify the tasks in their area of responsibility that they believe should be completed.

The Executive Director uses this information to prepare a recommendation on what tasks should be undertaken, taking into account available resources. At this stage some tasks may be bundled into combined management actions. The Executive Committee (augmented by the Regional Administrator and Science Center Director) reviews this recommendation and prepares a proposal for the Council. The Council considers this proposal at its last meeting of the year (November/December) and either accepts the proposal or votes to modify it.

Once the priorities list is approved the Executive Director coordinates with the staff to address the planned actions. This forms the basis for Council activities for the coming year.

While the Council leadership attempts to discourage changes over the course of the year tasks can be added or deleted. This generally occurs when an unexpected problem surfaces and a majority of the Council agrees that it should be addressed.

The attachments track the priority setting process completed in fall 2017 for calendar year 2018.



#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) Status 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	Re-initiate Monkfish Amendment 6 to consider catch shares and DAS leasing	✓			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					

7

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				



#2a

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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: November 21, 2017
TO: Council
FROM: Tom Nies
SUBJECT: 2018 Council Priorities

1. The attached documents will help the Council develop 2018 Council priorities. Enclosure (1) reflects the Executive Committee recommendations, while enclosure (2) shows the ranking by Council members (Executive Committee recommendations are highlighted in yellow).

- a. The first attachment lists possible tasks. Tasks are listed by FMP. Tasks that should be completed by the end of the year are in the first column and multi-year tasks in the second column. A checkmark marks Executive Committee recommendations. Tasks that are not recommended are also in italics. The list includes major staff tasks that are expected to occur. Recommendations assume that most multi-year tasks in progress will be completed and that all regulatory requirements will be addressed.
- b. The second attachment summarizes the prioritization of the tasks by Council members. The Executive Director recommended tasks highlighted in yellow to the Executive Committee. The prioritization and other issues are discussed below.

2. Not all Committees identified their preferred priorities for 2018. Groundfish Committee recommendations will be brought to the Council meeting.

Resource Use

3. The results of the priority exercise guide how the Council uses its resources, so it may be useful to look the previous year's expenditures. Figure 1 below summarizes our resource use from 1 October 2016 through 30 September 2017. Meeting and contract expenses were summarized by topic, Council costs were allocated to topics by the amount of actual time spent on each topic (last year's report used scheduled time), and personnel costs were assigned based on staff tasking.

Figure 1 – Summary of resource allocation from October 2016 through September 2017. Numbers in parentheses reflect last year's ranking if different from this year. CORRECTED

2b-a



Meetings	Council Time	Personnel Costs	Overall
Herring (3)	Misc.	Scallops	Scallops
Groundfish (4)	Groundfish	Whiting (6)	Herring(3) Groundfish (2)
Scallops (1)	Herring (5)	Groundfish (2)	
EBFM (6)	Habitat (NR)	Herring	Whiting (6)
SSC (2)	Scallops (3)	Habitat (3)	Habitat (4)
Skates (NR)	Reports (4)	EBFM (5)	EBFM (5)

Prioritization Exercise

4. In order to help the Executive Committee allocate Council resources, each Council member was asked to rank each task as a high, medium, or low priority task. Sixteen of eighteen Council members replied, but some respondents did not rank every task. The ratings were converted to a score (high=3, medium = 2, and low = 1), summed for each task, and the tasks ranked in order. The average score (33.4) and standard deviation (SD) (6.7) across all tasks was calculated. Given the standard deviation, scores within a few points of each other do not reflect a difference in importance as evaluated by the Council. The SD for each task was also calculated. Lower SDs for a task could be interpreted as indicating more agreement on the task's ranking; higher SDs indicate less agreement on the task's importance. Perfect agreement would result in an SD of 0; an even distribution (4 high, 6 medium, 4 low) results in an SD of 0.82, and an even split (8 high, 8 low) results in an SD close to 1.

5. There are a few observations worth noting from this ranking exercise.

- a. Council members generally agree on the importance of the top twelve tasks. With a few exceptions, they also agree on the relative importance of the bottom five or ten ranked tasks.
- b. Tasks with the highest SD (over 0.8) include one that was ranked above average and some below average. This high SD indicates a divergence of opinion among Council members on the importance of these tasks. The above average task with a divergence of opinion was eVTRs for party/charter vessels. Below average tasks included completion of limited entry for the whiting fishery (Amendment 22), increasing LAGC trip limits, and the Trawl Survey AP.
- c. While Council members were asked to rank all tasks, some are not discretionary, even if ranked low.

Groundfish

6. The highest-ranked groundfish priorities are adjusting rebuilding programs as required and the ASM amendment. The Council showed little interest in pursuing party/charter limited entry, a GB cod sub-ACL for the recreational fishery (this may change given the FY 2016 catch), or the five-year sector review.

7. The MAFMC recently adopted an action that requires p/c permit holders to use eVTRs. While there is interest in an action that would require eVTRs for multispecies party/charter vessels, GARFO recently provided information that only 16 p/c multispecies permit holders do not hold a MAFMC p/c permit. It may not be worthwhile to pursue an action that would extend the eVTR requirement to only these additional vessels.

8. The issue of stock structure surfaces after almost every cod assessment. A working group is being formed and it appears that progress will be made this year. At the same time Council member interest is waning. The Executive Committee recommends this be pursued in spite of its lower ranking because this has long been of interest to the Council. In addition, the approach used for cod may be relevant for addressing other stock structure issues that have been raised.

9. New MRIP catch estimates will be released to the NEFSC on July 1. The NEFSC will update several stock assessments with the new data in fall 2018/early 2019. The new catch estimates – which are expected to show recreational catches were higher than previously reported – may lead to calls to revisit commercial/recreational allocations.

Monkfish

10. No actions are planned for this FMP.

Sea Scallops

11. There is general agreement on the importance of the top three scallop tasks: specifications and management measures for 2019, modifying the access areas because of Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 (OHA2), and NGOM management changes. The NGOM changes are listed as a one-year task but if the action becomes more complicated it may extend over a longer period.

12. We have fallen into the practice of adjusting scallop specifications each year even though the FMP and the regulations call for a two-year cycle. This inhibits the ability of the Committee and PDT to address other scallop management issues. It also increase uncertainty for the industry as the annual adjustments cannot be determined until late fall. On the positive side this means scallop specifications are based on very recent surveys. The Council may want to return to a biennial adjustment process. One idea that may be worth considering is a two-year cycle with an annual review to see if an adjustment is warranted.

13. The Executive Committee recommended action for the NGOM as well as monitoring and catch accounting provisions. The Executive Committee suggests the Council consider doing one or the other of these two tasks, but not both, in order to streamline the workload for the Scallop Committee

14. While the Scallop Committee supports considering a change to the LAGC trip limit, this was not ranked highly by the Council as a whole. Should the Council choose to pursue this issue another task should be deleted.

Herring

15. The main task facing this committee is to complete the herring amendment that considers a new ABC control rule and localized depletion. The herring benchmark assessment will also lead to new specifications for 2019-2021. The Council should also update the RH/S white paper and consider whether any of those stocks should be added to the FMP.

16. Timing of herring actions could be problematic. Amendment 8 will need to be completed during the first half of the year. This is also when initial work will begin on the 2018 benchmark assessment, which will occupy key PDT members. The specifications package will be prepared in the second half of the year. The Council may hire a contractor to update the RH/S white paper during the first half of the year so that there is time to consider whether these stocks are in need of conservation and management.

Habitat

17. Deep-Sea Coral amendment and surfclam vessel access to habitat management areas work will continue. Both should be completed this year. There is a need for the Council to pay close attention to wind-power developments, a task assigned to the Habitat Committee.

18. NMFS final action on OHA2 may lead to additional work on habitat management areas.

Whiting/Small Mesh Multispecies

19. Completion of the whiting limited entry program and the specifications package will delay work on the southern red hake rebuilding requirements and several other small-mesh issues until roughly mid-year.

Skates

20. Last year the Council agreed to develop a limited entry program for the skate fishery. Limited progress was made on this task, but scoping hearings were held in the spring. Public comments were mixed on the issue. This year the Council shows little interest in continuing this effort. The Executive Committee recommends following this project through to a decision.

EBFM

21. Work will continue on the fishery ecosystem plan. If progress is made on this FEP, next year the Council will need to decide how to incorporate this work into management. Work on the EBFM FEP will compete for staff time with several small-mesh multispecies projects.

Trawl Survey Advisory Panel

22. This AP was ranked below average by Council members. Participation does not tax Council staff because the panel is staffed by the MAFMC with funding from the NEFSC. The Executive Committee recommends this effort continue.

SSC

23. The SSC submitted three recommendations for priorities. Two address groundfish assessments and projects, and one addresses a larger issue often associated with groundfish. The SSC suggested similar topics last year but made little progress. It is likely that any SSC effort will require some staff support or will lead to future Council actions.

24. The Council may want to discuss the role of the SSC in efforts like this. For example, one of the identified projects is “Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance.” While an important topic, is this within the scope of the SSC or is a broader research topic that should be pursued by the NEFSC? There is no question that the members represent a wealth of talent; the issue is what the appropriate role is for the SSC. Does the Council want to use the SSC as a research or technical body? My suggestion is that staff engage with the SSC to explore this issue.

25. The SSC will probably be involved in the review of revised rebuilding plans for groundfish stocks, as well as identifying status determination criteria for empirical assessments.

Grouping

26. Enclosure (1) groups most tasks into management actions. These should be viewed as initial suggestions. There could be changes made to these suggestions after the Council makes its decisions.

Other

27. Several monitoring initiatives that are being pursued with little apparent coordination. The risk is that this fractured approach will not be an effective use of our resources. While this was discussed by the NRCC a clear solution was not identified.

28. The Council ranking exercise revealed little appetite for two tasks delegated by NMFS: the five year review of the Northeast Multispecies sector program and the identification of allocation review triggers. These are important tasks that cannot be delayed indefinitely. The allocation review trigger issue may benefit from pursuing a simple approach that is applied to all FMPs, rather than an FMP by FMP approach as shown.

29. The Council staff will need to spend some time on the review of regulations early next year so this was added to the priorities list after the list was distributed for ranking by Council members.
30. One of the items listed on the ranking spreadsheet - considering whether to have the Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) report directly to the Council rather than through the Groundfish Committee - was difficult to read due to a formatting issue. This may have contributed to its low ranking. Council members may want to clarify their position on this issue.
31. As mentioned in my September memorandum to the Council, we have a number of ongoing projects to complete (RSA program review, Council program review, FDDV project). At the same time, in recent years we have deferred action on planned activities (RH/S white paper update, sector program review, allocation review triggers). Projects like this can absorb a surprising amount of staff time. The Council should be cautious about starting additional discretionary projects before this backlog is addressed.

Enclosures: (1) 2018 Draft Priorities – Executive Committee Recommendations
(2) 2018 Priority Ranking

	UNDERLINE: REGULATORY REQUIREMENT					<i>Italics: Not Recommended by Ex Comm</i>				
11/21/2017										
FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
Groundfish										
	<u>Revise rebuilding plans as needed (ocean pout, GB winter flounder, witch flounder, GOM/GB windowpane flounder, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder); set ABCs/ACLs for US/CA stocks; additional guidance on sector overages</u>		✓		4/18/18	ASM action/Amendment 23		✓		4
						Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop		✓		67
	<i>Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries</i>				72	<i>Amendment to consider limited entry in the groundfish party/charter fishery</i>				75
	<u>Address SDC issue when analytic assessments fail</u>		✓		18	<i>Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs</i>				18
	Address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data		✓		50					
	<i>Develop amendment that considers changes to management status of windowpane flounder stocks</i>				57					
	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		✓		50					
	Staff: TRAC/TMGC		✓		13					
	Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod		✓		65					
	<i>Modify the GF control rule for stocks without analytical models – i.e., empirical and index-based (see SSC list below, item 9 above)</i>				35					
	<i>Adjust exemption areas as necessary due to OHA2 changes (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)</i>				47					
	Specify allocation review triggers		✓		63					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	Consider requirement for eVTRs in the party/charter recreational fishery		✓		35					
	Staff: Sector five-year review		✓		54					
Monkfish										
	<i>Staff: Research Set Aside</i>				NR					
Sea Scallops										
	<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.). Clarification needed on whether this is for one or two year specifications.</u>	✓	✓		1	<i>Amendment to consider harvester associations</i>				78
	Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised management areas	✓	✓		13					
	NGOM scallop management measure changes: such as changing opening date, consistent gear restrictions, possession limits, effort controls.	✓	✓		16					
	<i>Action to consider increasing General Category trip limits</i>	✓			57					
	Gear modifications to protect small scallops (extended link)	✓	✓		35					
	<i>Measures to address DAS and IFQ carryover</i>				67					
	Staff: Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.		✓		29					
	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).		✓		18					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	2018 benchmark. Integrate findings from 2018 benchmark (process TBD, but may include additional review of how surveys are combined for management advice)	✓	✓		9					
	<i>RSA program review and modifications</i>				42					
	Specify allocation review triggers		✓		73					
	Monitoring and catch accounting provisions		✓		29					
	<i>Adjustments to scallop industry funded observer program (NGOM coverage, etc.)</i>				18					
Herring										
	Specifications for 2019-2021; consider different stratification for RH/S in SA 521		✓		1	Amendment 8: MSE for ABC control rule and measures to address localized depletion		✓		9
	2018 benchmark assessment		✓		4					
	Update of RH/S white paper and reconsideration of RH/S as stocks that need conservation and management (i.e. "stocks in the fishery")		✓		29					
	Staff: Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)		✓		43					
	<i>EM MWT Pilot Project</i>				26					
SBRM										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Red Crab										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Habitat	<i>(No Committee recommendations)</i>									
	Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment		✓			Coordinate wind power issues with other agencies/spatial planning		✓		NR
	Framework action to address surfclam access to HMAs		✓		9					
	Staff: Update and further development of the SASI model		✓		57					
	Staff: <u>Habitat impacts of other management actions</u>		✓		47					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	Staff: ASMFC Habitat Committee		✓		NR					
	Staff: SBNMS Advisory Council		✓		73					
	Develop habitat and fishery related comments on non-fishing activities, in consultation with other agencies, (including BOEM)		✓		29					
	<i>Develop Council policies on non-fishing activities</i>				43					
Research Steering										
	Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans	✓	✓		26					
	Staff: Support S-K program	✓	✓		54					
	Improve RSC priority process	✓	✓		29					
SSC										
	Support Council activities such as recommending ABCs and making recommendations in the FMP development process	✓	✓		4					
	<i>Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)</i>	✓			12					
	<i>Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches</i>	✓			18					
	<i>Consider modifications to groundfish ABC control rules (see Groundfish)</i>	✓			26					
Enforcement, Safety, VMS										
	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	✓	✓		47					
Whiting										
	Submit final preferred alternatives with FEIS for Amendment 22, limited entry	✓	✓		54					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	<u>Address overfished condition/develop rebuilding plan for southern red hake; modify northern red hake AM; consider whiting exemption area adjustments</u>	✓	✓		8/35/50					
	Staff: <u>PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advises Council whether management adjustments are needed</u>	✓	✓		61					
Skates										
	<i>Submit action to allow landing thorny skate caught by vessels fishing in the NAFO area</i>				50	Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery		✓		61
	Staff: Annual skate monitoring report		✓		61					
EBFM										
	Assist in development of MREP EBFM module		✓		67	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.		✓		57
Observer Committee										
	<i>Study issue of full retention/no discards.</i>				35	Develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs		✓		29
Risk Policy Working Group										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Trawl Survey AP										
	Address issues identified in AP charter		✓		61					
Other										
	NRCC Working Group Participation		✓		35	Fishery dependent data projects: FMAT to begin development of omnibus amendment		✓		43

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner		✓		16	Preliminary work on aquaculture FMP				77
	Support for NERPB; implementation of Regional Ocean Plan; support to data portal		✓		61					
	Complete programmatic review of Council operations		✓		18					
	Complete review of RSA programs in sea scallops, monkfish, and herring FMPs (see also RSA items above under scallop FMP)		✓		13					
	Participate on Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams		✓		35					
	<i>Staff: Protected Species issues</i>				67					
	<i>Develop measures necessary to encourage use of fuel-efficient fishing vessels</i>				81					
	<i>Develop Forage Fish Amendment, possibly in partnership with ASMFC</i>				65					
	<i>Consider creating a Seal Oversight Committee</i>				75					
	<i>Review structure of Recreational Advisory Panel and whether it should be a stand-alone committee that reports directly to the Council</i>				79					
	<i>Consider creating a Sand Eel Oversight Committee</i>				79					

Original Number		Priority/Task Title	High	Medium	Low	Score	Rank	Row SD
20	Sea Scallops	<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.	15			45	1	0.000
32	Herring	Specifications for 2019-2021; consider different stratification for RH/S in SA 521	15			45	1	0.000
39	Habitat	Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment	14	1	1	45	1	0.544
3	Groundfish	ASM action/Amendment 23	14	1	0	44	4	0.258
35	Herring:Staff	2018 benchmark assessment	14	1		44	4	0.258
49	SSC	Support Council activities such as <u>recommending ABCs</u> and making recommendations in the FMP development process	14	1		44	4	0.258
13	Groundfish	<u>Revise rebuilding plans as needed (ocean pout, GB winter flounder, witch flounder, GOM/GB windowpane flounder, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder)</u>	12	4	0	44	4	0.447
56	Whiting	<u>Address overfished condition/develop rebuilding plan for southern red hake</u>	13	2		43	8	0.352
30	Sea Scallops:Staff	Integrate findings from 2018 benchmark (process TBD, but may include additional review of how surveys are combined for management advice)	12	3	0	42	9	0.414
31	Herring	Amendment 8: MSE for ABC control rule and measures to address localized depletion	13	1	1	42	9	0.561
40	Habitat	Framework action to address surfclam access to HMAs	11	4	1	42	9	0.619
50	SSC	Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)	10	5	1	41	12	0.629
21	Sea Scallops	Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised management areas	12	2		40	13	0.363
18	Groundfish:Staff	TRAC/TMGC	9	6	1	40	13	0.632
76	Other: (Interspecies)	Complete review of RSA programs in sea scallops, monkfish, and herring FMPs (see also RSA items above under scallop FMP)	8	8		40	13	0.516
22	Sea Scallops	NGOM scallop management measure changes: such as changing opening date, consistent gear restrictions, possession limits, effort controls.	11	3		39	16	0.426
71	Other: (Interspecies)	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner	10	4	1	39	16	0.632
1	Groundfish	<u>Set ABCs/ACLs for US/CA stocks</u>	12	1		38	18	0.277
10	Groundfish	<u>Address SDC issue when analytic assessments fail</u>	10	4	0	38	18	0.469
27	Sea Scallops: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).	10	4	0	38	18	0.469
2	Groundfish	Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs	9	5	1	38	18	0.640
24	Sea Scallops	Adjustments to scallop industry funded observer program (NGOM coverage, etc.)	9	5	1	38	18	0.640
12	Groundfish	Additional guidance on adjustments/penalites as a result of sector overages	7	8	1	38	18	0.619
51	SSC	Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches	6	10		38	18	0.500
75	Other: (Interspecies)	<u>Complete programmatic review of Council operations</u>	7	8	1	38	18	0.619
34	Herring:Staff	EM MWT Pilot Project	7	8		37	26	0.516
46	RSC	Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans	7	8		37	26	0.516

Original Number		Priority/Task Title	High	Medium	Low	Score	Rank	Row SD
52	SSC	Consider modifications to groundfish ABC control rules (see Groundfish)	7	8		37	26	0.516
29	Sea Scallops:Staff	Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.	8	6	0	36	29	0.514
47	RSC	Improve RSC priority process	7	7	1	36	29	0.632
65	Observer Committee	Develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs	7	7	1	36	29	0.632
28	Sea Scallops	Monitoring and catch accounting provisions	5	10	1	36	29	0.577
33	Herring	Update of RH/S white paper and reconsideration of RH/S as stocks that need conservation and management (i.e. "stocks in the fishery")	7	6	3	36	29	0.775
45	Habitat:Staff	Develop habitat and fishery related comments on non-fishing activities, in consultation with other agencies, (including BOEM)	7	6	3	36	29	0.775
70	Other: (Interspecies)	NRCC Working Group Participation	7	7		35	35	0.519
25	Sea Scallops	Gear modifications to protect small scallops (extended link)	7	6	2	35	35	0.724
77	Other:Staff	Participate on Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams	5	10		35	35	0.488
14	Groundfish	Modify the GF control rule for stocks without analytical models – i.e., empirical and index-based (see SSC list below, item 10 above)	5	9	2	35	35	0.655
15	Groundfish	Consider requirement for eVTRs in the party/charter recreational fishery	7	5	4	35	35	0.834
58	Whiting	Consider whiting exemption area adjustments (see item 7 under groundfish)	4	11	1	35	35	0.544
66	Observer Committee	Study issue of full retention/no discards.	6	7	3	35	35	0.750
25	Sea Scallops	RSA program review and modifications	6	7	2	34	42	0.704
36	Herring:Staff	Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)	6	7	1	33	43	0.633
62	Skates:Staff	Skate monitoring report	5	9		33	43	0.497
69	Other: (Interspecies)	Fishery dependent data projects: FMAT to begin development of omnibus amendment	5	8	2	33	43	0.676
42	Habitat	Develop Council policies on non-fishing activities	5	7	4	33	43	0.772
43	Habitat:Staff	Habitat impacts of other management actions	6	6	2	32	47	0.726
53	Enforcement, Safety	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	5	8	1	32	47	0.611
7	Groundfish	Adjust exemption areas as necessary (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)	4	8	4	32	47	0.730
57	Whiting	Modify northern red hake AM	5	7	2	31	50	0.699
16	Groundfish	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	4	8	3	31	50	0.704
11	Groundfish	Address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data	4	7	5	31	50	0.772
61	Skates	Submit action to allow landing thorny skate caught by vessels fishing in the NAFO area	2	11	3	31	50	0.574
48	RSC:Staff	Support S-K program	5	7	1	30	54	0.630
55	Whiting	Submit final preferred alternatives with FEIS for Amendment 22, limited entry	7	3	3	30	54	0.855
17	Groundfish:Staff	Sector five-year review	3	8	5	30	54	0.719
41	Habitat:Staff	Update and further development of the SASI model	4	8	1	29	57	0.599

Original Number		Priority/Task Title	High	Medium	Low	Score	Rank	Row SD
	Groundfish	Develop amendment that considers changes to management status of windowpane flounder stocks	3	9	2	29	57	0.616
26	Sea Scallops	Action to consider increasing General Category trip limits	5	4	6	29	57	0.884
63	EBFM	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.	3	8	4	29	57	0.704
59	Whiting:Staff	PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advise Council whether management adjustments are needed	3	9	1	28	61	0.555
68	Trawl Survey AP	Address issues identified in AP charter	5	5	3	28	61	0.801
60	Skates	Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery	4	6	4	28	61	0.784
73	Other:Staff	Support for NERP; implementation of Regional Ocean Plan; support to data portal	2	10	2	28	61	0.555
9	Groundfish	Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod	1	9	6	27	65	0.602
80	Other: (Interspecies)	Develop Forage Fish Amendment, possibly in partnership with ASMFC	2	7	7	27	65	0.704
72	Other:Staff	Protected Species issues	4	6	2	26	67	0.718
5	Groundfish	Cod Stock Structure Working Group	3	6	5	26	67	0.770
64	Staff	Assist in development of MREP EBFM module	2	8	4	26	67	0.663
24	Sea Scallops	Measures to address DAS and IFQ carryover	1	9	5	26	67	0.594
26	Sea Scallops	Specify allocation review triggers		11	4	26	67	0.458
4	Groundfish	Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries		10	5	25	72	0.488
44	Habitat:Staff	SBNMS advisory panel	1	8	5	24	73	0.611
6	Groundfish	Specify allocation review triggers	1	6	9	24	73	0.632
8	Groundfish	Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery	1	5	10	23	75	0.629
81	Other: (Interspecies)	Consider creating a Seal Oversight Committee	2	3	11	23	75	0.727
74	Other: (Interspecies)	Preliminary work on Aquaculture FMP		6	10	22	77	0.500
23	Sea Scallops	Amendment to consider harvester associations	1	5	8	21	78	0.650
79	Other: (Interspecies)	Review structure of Recreational Advisory Panel and whether it should be a stand-alone committee that reports directly to the Council	2	2	10	20	79	0.756
82	Other: (Interspecies)	Consider creating a Sand Eel Oversight Committee	1	2	13	20	79	0.577
78	Other: (Interspecies)	Develop measures necessary to encourage use of fuel-efficient fishing vessels		1	15	17	81	0.250

	UNDERLINE: REGULATORY REQUIREMENT					<i>Italics: Not Recommended by Ex Comm</i>				
1/3/2018										
FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
Groundfish										
	<u>Revise rebuilding plans as needed (ocean pout, GB winter flounder, witch flounder, GOM/GB windowpane flounder, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder); set ABCs/ACLs for US/CA stocks;additional guidance on sector overages</u>		✓	✓	4/18/18	ASM action/Amendment 23 (including work groups/workshops necessary and working group on how fishery dependent data can be used to inform stock abundance).		✓	✓	4
						Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop		✓	✓	67
	<i>Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries</i>				72	<i>Scope limited entry in the groundfish party/charter fishery</i>			✓	75
	<u>Address SDC issue when analytic assessments fail</u>		✓	✓	18	<i>Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs</i>				18
	Address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data		✓	✓	50					
	<i>Develop amendment that considers changes to management status of windowpane flounder stocks</i>				57					
	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		✓	✓	50					
	Staff: TRAC/TMGC		✓	✓	13					
	Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod		✓		65					
	<i>Modify the GF control rule for stocks without analytical models – i.e., empirical and index-based (see SSC list below, item 9 above)</i>				35					
	<i>Adjust exemption areas as necessary due to OHA2 changes (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)</i>				47					
	Specify allocation review triggers		✓	✓	63					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	Consider requirement for eVTRs in the party/charter recreational fishery		✓		35					
	Staff: Sector five-year review		✓	✓	54					
Monkfish										
	<i>Staff: Research Set Aside</i>				NR					
Sea Scallops										
	<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.	✓	✓	✓	1	<i>Amendment to consider harvester associations</i>				78
	Framework action to modify scallop access areas to be consistent with OA2 revised management areas	✓	✓	✓	13	NGOM scallop management measure changes: such as changing opening date, consistent gear restrictions, possession limits, effort controls. Minimal activity in 2018.	✓	✓	✓	16
	<i>Action to consider increasing General Category trip limits</i>	✓		✓	57					
	Gear modifications to protect small scallops (extended link)	✓	✓	✓	35					
	<i>Measures to address DAS and IFQ carryover</i>				67					
	Staff: Support annual scallop RSA process, including priority setting, and technical and management reviews.		✓	✓	29					
	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).		✓	✓	18					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
	2018 benchmark. Integrate findings from 2018 benchmark (process TBD, but may include additional review of how surveys are combined for management advice)	✓	✓	✓	9					
	<i>RSA program review and modifications</i>				42					
	Specify allocation review triggers		✓	✓	73					
	Monitoring and catch accounting provisions		✓	✓	29					
	<i>Adjustments to scallop industry funded observer program (NGOM coverage, etc.)</i>				18					
Herring										
	Specifications for 2019-2021; consider different stratification for RH/S in SA 521		✓	✓	1	Amendment 8: MSE for ABC control rule and measures to address localized depletion		✓	✓	9
	2018 benchmark assessment		✓	✓	4					
	Update of RH/S white paper and reconsideration of RH/S as stocks that need conservation and management (i.e. "stocks in the fishery")		✓	✓	29					
	Staff: Coordination with MAFMC, ASMFC on various herring issues (RH/S, etc.)		✓	✓	43					
	<i>EM MWT Pilot Project</i>				26					
SBRM										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									
Red Crab										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
Habitat	<i>(No Committee recommendations)</i>									
	Complete Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment		✓	✓		Coordinate wind power issues with other agencies/spatial planning		✓	✓	NR
	Framework action to address surfclam access to HMAs		✓	✓	9					
	Staff: Update and further development of the SASI model		✓	✓	57					
	Staff: <u>Habitat impacts of other management actions</u>		✓	✓	47					
	Staff: ASMFC Habitat Committee		✓	✓	NR					
	Staff: SBNMS Advisory Council		✓	✓	73					
	Develop habitat and fishery related comments on non-fishing activities, in consultation with other agencies, (including BOEM)		✓	✓	29					
	<i>Develop Council policies on non-fishing activities</i>				43					
Research Steering										
	Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans	✓	✓	✓	26					
	Staff: Support S-K program	✓	✓	✓	54					
	Improve RSC priority process	✓	✓	✓	29					
SSC										
	Support Council activities such as <u>recommending ABCs</u> and making recommendations in the FMP development process	✓	✓	✓	4					
	<i>Understand and resolve poor assessment model performance (primarily groundfish assessments)</i>	✓			12					
	<i>Develop consistent guidelines for application of Plan B approaches</i>	✓			18					
	<i>Consider modifications to groundfish ABC control rules (see Groundfish)</i>	✓			26					

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
Enforcement, Safety, VMS										
	Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.	✓	✓	✓	47					
Whiting										
	Submit final preferred alternatives with FEIS for Amendment 22, limited entry	✓	✓	✓	54					
	<u>Address overfished condition/develop rebuilding plan for southern red hake; modify northern red hake AM; consider whiting exemption area adjustments</u>	✓	✓	✓	8/35/50					
	Staff: PDT receives annual monitoring report from Regional Office and advises Council whether management adjustments are needed	✓	✓	✓	61					
Skates										
	<i>Submit action to allow landing thorny skate caught by vessels fishing in the NAFO area</i>				50	Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery		✓	✓	61
	<i>Action to modify skate wing possession limits</i>			✓	NR					
	Staff: Annual skate monitoring report		✓	✓	61					
EBFM										
	Assist in development of MREP EBFM module		✓	✓	67	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.		✓	✓	57
Observer Committee										
	<i>Study issue of full retention/no discards.</i>				35	Develop a policy and strategic approach to monitor commercial fisheries to address multiple information needs		✓	✓	29
Risk Policy Working Group										
	<i>No Action Planned</i>									

2018 Priorities
Council Approved Actions

NEFMC Program Review Ref Doc 76 1/19/2018

FMP	Annual	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank	Multi-Year	Comm.	Executive Committee	Council	Rank
Trawl Survey AP										
	Address issues identified in AP charter		✓	✓	61					
Other										
	NRCC Working Group Participation		✓	✓	35	Fishery dependent data projects: FMAT to begin development of omnibus amendment		✓	✓	43
	International Fisheries Management TMGC/TRAC/Steering Committee ICCAT HMS Advisory Panel/HMS FMP NAFO Commissioner		✓	✓	16	Preliminary work on aquaculture FMP				77
	Support for NERP; implementation of Regional Ocean Plan; support to data portal		✓	✓	61					
	Complete programmatic review of Council operations		✓	✓	18					
	Complete review of RSA programs in sea scallops, monkfish, and herring FMPs (see also RSA items above under scallop FMP)		✓	✓	13					
	Participate on Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Teams		✓	✓	35					
	<i>Staff: Protected Species issues</i>				67					
	<i>Develop measures necessary to encourage use of fuel-efficient fishing vessels</i>				81					
	<i>Develop Forage Fish Amendment, possibly in partnership with ASMFC</i>				65					
	<i>Consider creating a Seal Oversight Committee</i>				75					
	<i>Review structure of Recreational Advisory Panel and whether it should be a stand-alone committee that reports directly to the Council</i>				79					
	<i>Consider creating a Sand Eel Oversight Committee</i>				79					
	Regulatory review - response to EOs		✓	✓	NR					