

Council Organizational Diagrams

Prepared by the Fisheries Leadership
& Sustainability Forum

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Introduction

These diagrams have been developed to provide a visual tool to help understand the complex organization of each of the Regional Fishery Management Councils across the U.S. These visualizations draw on information compiled over the course of a year from each of the council’s public websites and supplemental, targeted research, as well as personal experience watching the councils convene and operate. Some oversimplification has been made out of necessity to keep the diagrams consistent across very different regions with different processes, but have also been reviewed by council staff from each region to ensure that each stays true to the most current information.

The diagrams are intended to provide a snapshot in time (as of early 2015) of the various groups involved in the input, decision-making, and review processes in each region. Each diagram highlights the composition of the council staff, associated scientific, stakeholder and other expert groups, and various other coordinating bodies that allow each council to effectively manage our nation’s federal fisheries. While there are specific membership guidelines written into the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the National Marine Fisheries Services’ Operational Guidelines, many groups involve unique compositions. Valuable similarities and interesting differences across the councils emerge from how they each structure groups and leverage the expertise of staff, advisory bodies and panels, stakeholders, scientific experts, and international, federal, regional, state, and other management partners. These groups can and do change over time to adapt to shifting workloads, priorities, opportunities, and challenges, and therefore this information is not set in stone.

Through compiling this research, the diagrams raise several important themes in how council bodies are organized and leveraged:

What’s in a name?

Groups with very similar functions are known by different names and may have different membership across regions. For example, a “committee” in one region may be solely made up of stakeholders that give management recommendations to a council, where in another region a “committee” is made up exclusively of a subset of council members that bring management recommendations to the full council for consideration.

Divide and conquer

The councils divide up responsibilities slightly different among their scientific, stakeholder, advisory and management groups. The memberships and workload of groups with similar functions across regions can vary significantly, and this poses both challenges and opportunities to leverage their limited resources in ways that create efficiencies well suited to their purposes and management context.

Meeting time and place

Each council meets several times a year, but how and where their respective constituent bodies meet varies significantly. Some regions meet much more frequently than others. In regions where travel is long and difficult, advisory bodies, committees, and all other management partners may meet concurrently with the council to create efficiencies in finding meeting sites. In other regions, councils may meet in an entirely different city and only after the advisory groups meet to allow them to prepare analyses and craft recommendations in advance of the full council meetings.

Relationships among groups

The diagrams are static representations of the different composite groups that keep the council working efficiently. They cannot and are not intended to illustrate the complex inner-workings of the relationships between groups and how they interact to keep the management process working smoothly. Each council relies heavily on some combination of their own staff, regional National Marine Fisheries Service Staff, regional Science Center staff, and others involved in the management process to coordinate, conduct, and communicate analyses of management alternatives to the other bodies. There is a considerable amount of coordination and cross-pollination of individuals serving on multiple groups required to keep everyone on the same page and allow management recommendations to be taken up by the councils for consideration and implementation in a timely and efficient manner. Some examples of bodies that help to coordinate workloads, planning, and facilitation of these processes include Fishery Management Action Teams, Plan Development Teams, and Interdisciplinary Plan Teams.

Council Process Organizational Diagrams Acronyms List

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
- Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC)
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
- Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC)
- Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS)
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
- Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP)
- Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT)
- Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI)
- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)
- Highly Migratory Species (HMS)
- Individual Transferable Quota (IFQ)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)
- Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSA)
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration General Counsel (NOAA GC)
- New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC)
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC)
- Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC)
- Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC)
- Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)
- Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC)
- Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO)
- Pacific Remote Island Area (PRIA)
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC)
- Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)
- Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR)
- Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)
- Southeast Regional Office (SERO)
- Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC)
- United Nations (UN)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
- Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC)

Caribbean Fishery Management Council

7 voting members, 3 non-voting members

Council Staff

– 10 members including: Executive Director, FMP and Habitat Specialist, Economic Consultant, Liaison to U.S. Caribbean territories, and administrative staff; part-time staff help with analyses as needed.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

– 10 members including staff from: NMFS Southeast Regional Office (SERO), the Southeast and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers (SEFSC and SWFSC), academics, and independent experts in economics, social sciences, and biology.

Council Standing Committees

- Administrative
- Outreach and Education
- Grievance
- Enforcement

Ad Hoc Committee

– Stakeholder group meets to give input to Council on social and economic impacts of alternatives as needed.

Queen Conch FMP

Reef Fish FMP

Spiny Lobster FMP

Corals and Associated Species FMP

Plan Team

No FMP-specific Committees; FMPs will be merged into island-based FMPs by 2016.

Advisory Panel

Advisory Panel

– 15 members from Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, and St. Croix including: seven commercial fishers, four recreational fishers, three ex-officio members, and a marine export industry representative; this panel will be substituted by three panels for each of the island groups (Puerto Rico, Saint Thomas/Saint John, and Saint Croix) to work on the island-based FMPs.

Fishing Industry Advisory Committee

– Members appointed to balance commercial and recreational fishing interests; provides input on FMPs and amendments. Will be merged with the Advisory Panels above.

Outreach/Education Advisory Panel

– 10 members from SERO, Puerto Rico Sea Grant, academia, commercial fishing, and consultants.

Coordinating Fishery Bodies

- Council cooperatively manages spiny lobster, queen conch, and others with:
- United Nations (UN)
- Fisheries offices of Caribbean nations

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

17 voting members, 4 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 18 members including: Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, four Fishery Biologists (coordinate FMPs, stock assessments and statistics), GIS Analyst, Economist, Anthropologist, Public Information Officer, Outreach Specialist, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Standing SSC: 14 members including staff from: NMFS, SEFSC, state agencies, academia, industry, and independent experts in the fields of law, biology, and ecology; includes FMP-specific SSCs.

Ecosystem SSC: 12 members; reviews models and advises on model development.

Socioeconomic SSC: 13 members; reviews and advises on allocations and research.

Management Committees

- Mackerel (joint with SAFMC)
- Migratory Species
- Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem
- Ad Hoc Restoration
- Marine Reserves

Interdisciplinary Plan Teams

- Made up of staff from: Southeast Regional Office (SERO), Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), NOAA General Counsel (GC), and Council; lead plan teams to do analyses and coordinate workloads across groups

Reef Fish

Management Committee

Special SSC

Advisory Panel

Aquaculture

Shrimp

Management Committee

Special SSC

Advisory Panel

Corals

Management Committee

Special SSC

Advisory Panel

Additional Advisory Panels

- Data Collection
- Law Enforcement
- Outreach and Education
- Red Snapper
- Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) Workshop
- Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate
- Ad Hoc Private Recreational Data Collection
- Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ
- Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire IFQ

Spiny Lobster

Management Committee

Special SSC; shared with Stone Crab

Advisory Panel

Coastal Migratory Pelagics

Management Committee

Special SSC

Advisory Panel

Red Drum

Management Committee

Special SSC

Advisory Panel

Essential Fish Habitat

Management Committee

Administrative Committees

- Administrative Policy Committee
- Advisory Panel Selection Committee
- Artificial Reef Committee
- Budget/Personnel Committee
- Data Collection Committee
- Habitat Protection Committee
- Law Enforcement Committee
- Outreach and Education Committee
- Retirement Plan Trustees Committee
- SSC Selection Committee

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

21 voting members; 4 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 12 members including: Executive Director, six Fishery Management Specialists, Senior Scientist, Information Manager, Communication Program Coordinator, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 20 members including: academics, NMFS scientists from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) and GARFO, and private citizens with expertise in biology, economics, and social sciences.

Additional Species Committees

- Monkfish (joint w/ NEFMC)*
- River Herring and Shad*
- Sturgeon

* committees include representatives from the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC)

Additional Advisory Panels

- Ecosystems and Ocean Planning
- River Herring and Shad
- Sturgeon
- Members include representatives from commercial and recreational sectors, charter boats, seafood processors and distributors, and consumers.

Golden Tilefish FMP

Species Committee

Advisory Panel

Monitoring Committee

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP

Advisory Panel

Bluefish FMP

Demersal Species Committee

Advisory Panel

Monitoring Committee

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass FMP

Advisory Panel

Monitoring Committee

Spiny Dogfish FMP

Species Committee
- Joint with NEFMC

Advisory Panel

Monitoring Committee

Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP

Species Committee
- Joint with NEFMC

Advisory Panel

Monitoring Committee

Fishery Management Action Teams

- Members include staff from: Council, NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) staff, and NEFSC staff that form to address specific amendments or specific actions; Fishery Management Action Teams (FMATs) dissolve after the issue is resolved or completed.

Monitoring Committees

- Technical advisory including: staff from Council, NEFSC, GARFO, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC); provide advice on management uncertainty and implementation of fishery management measures.

Functional Committees

- Ecosystems and Ocean Planning
- Protected Resources
- Law Enforcement
- Research Set-Aside
- Highly Migratory Species
- Executive

New England Fishery Management Council

18 voting members, 4 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 19 members including: Executive Director, Deputy Director/ SSC Coordinator, five FMP Coordinators (Small Mesh Multispecies and Ecosystem-Based Management, Sea Scallop, Groundfish, Skate and Monkfish, Herring), two Fishery Specialists, VMS/ Enforcement Coordinator, EFH Omnibus Amendment Coordinator, Fishery Analyst, Economist for Sea Scallop FMP, Social Impact Analyst, Public Affairs Officer, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 18 members including staff from: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office (GARFO), Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), academics, Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), States, NGO representatives, and private citizens from the U.S. and Canada.

Additional Committees

- Executive
- Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)/Enforcement
- Risk Policy Working Group
- Electronic Monitoring Working Group
- Ad Hoc Sturgeon
- Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) Reauthorization
- Northeast Region Coordination
- Ad Hoc Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology
- Cooperative Research
- Ecosystem Based Management
- Observer Policy

Groundfish FMP

Species Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Scallop FMP

Oversight Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Monkfish FMP

Oversight Committee
- Joint with MAFMC

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Herring FMP

Oversight Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Skate Complex FMP

Species Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Small Mesh Multispecies FMP

Oversight Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Dogfish FMP

Species Committee
- Joint with MAFMC

Advisory Panel

Plan Development Team

Red Crab FMP

Advisory Panel

Additional Advisory Panels

- Enforcement
- Habitat
- Recreational Sector

Plan Development Teams

- Members include staff from: GARFO, NEFSC, Council, and academia; conduct analyses and provide technical information to the Council that meet scientific and legal requirements for review.

Atlantic Salmon FMP

Species Committee

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

11 voting members, 4 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 15 members including: Executive Director, Deputy Director, three Economists, two Plan Coordinators, Fisheries Analyst, Protected Resources Coordinator, Data Manager, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 15 members including staff from: federal and AK State, AFSC, academics, and independent experts in fields of social sciences, economics, statistics, and biology.

Advisory Panel

- 21 members including: catcher/processors, sport fishers, subsistence and commercial fishers, observers, consumers, and environmental representatives.

Coordinating Fishery Bodies

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
- International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)

Fishery Management Action Teams

- Made up of staff from NMFS Alaska regional office, ADF&G, Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), NOAA General Counsel (GC), and Council; conduct analyses and shepherd them through decision-making process.

Bering Sea/ Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

Plan Team

Bering Sea/ Aleutian Islands Crab FMP

Plan Team

Salmon FMP

Plan Team
- Management
deferred to ADF&G

Advisory Panel

Scallop FMP

Plan Team
- Management
deferred to ADF&G

Arctic FMP

Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

Plan Team

Advisory Panel

Committees

- Council/AK Board of Fisheries Joint Protocol Committee
- Council Executive/Finance Committee
- Bering Sea Crab Advisory Committee
- Bering Sea Salmon Bycatch Workgroup Committee
- Comprehensive Economic Data collection Committee
- Charter Management Implementation Committee
- Crab Interim Action Committee
- Ecosystem Committee
- Enforcement Committee

- Golden King Crab Arbitration Workgroup
- Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee
- Rural Outreach Committee
- Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee
- Observer Advisory Committee
- Non-Target Species Committee
- IFQ Implementation Committee
- Halibut Charter Stakeholder Committee

Plan Teams

- Each Plan Team made up of staff from: NMFS, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), AFSC, ADF&G, IPHC, Washington and Oregon, academics, and Council.

Pacific Fishery Management Council

14 voting members, 5 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 17 members including: Executive Director, Deputy Director, eight Officers responsible for groundfish; halibut; salmon; Ecosystem-Based Management; highly migratory species (HMS); coastal pelagic species (CPS); NEPA; overseeing the SSC and groundfish committees; Essential Fish Habitat reviews; and the groundfish electronic monitoring program; economist, and administrative staff; Transition Specialist and Ecosystem Fishery Management staff are relied on part-time.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 17 members including staff from: Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers (NWFSC and SWFSC), NMFS regional office, academia, and independent experts in stock assessment, biology, ecology, economics, and social sciences from tribes, states, and the public.

Ad-Hoc Committees

- Ecosystem Workgroup
- Cost Recovery Committee
- Groundfish Amendment 24 Workgroup
- Groundfish Electronic Monitoring, Technical Committees
- Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Committee
- Groundfish Process Improvement Committee
- Groundfish Trawl Rationalization Evaluation Committee
- Mitchell Act Committee (Columbia River salmon)
- South of Humboldt Pacific Halibut Policy Workgroup and Committee
- Lower Columbia River Natural Coho Workgroup

Coastal Pelagic Species FMP

Advisory Subpanel

SSC Subcommittee

Management Team

Additional Advisory Groups

- Enforcement Consultants Committee
- Legislative Committee
- Budget Committee
- Habitat Committee

Highly-Migratory Species FMP

Advisory Subpanel

SSC Subcommittee

Management Team

Ecosystem FMP

Advisory Subpanel

SSC Subcommittee

Habitat Committee

Salmon FMP

Advisory Subpanel

SSC Subcommittee

Modeling Team

Technical Team

Groundfish FMP

Advisory Subpanel

SSC Subcommittee

Management Team

Endangered Species Committee

Allocation Committee

Coordinating Fishery Bodies

- International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

13 voting members, 4 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 17 members including: Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, four Fishery Biologists, two SEDAR Coordinators, Public Information Officer, Economist, Social Scientist, Stock Assessment Scientist, Outreach Specialist, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 19 members including staff from: SERO, SEFSC and SWFSC, FL, SC, GA, and NC state departments of fisheries, National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS), academics, independent experts, and the Council; a socioeconomic sub-panel also gives input on social and economic issues.

Committees

- Ad Hoc Data Collection
- SSC Selection
- Advisory Panel Selection
- Highly Migratory Species
- Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR)
- Catch Shares
- Information and Education
- Law Enforcement
- Standard Operations and Procedures
- Executive/Finance
- Personnel
- Protected Resources
- Habitat and Environmental Protection

Coastal Pelagics (Mackerels)

Committee

Advisory Panel

Coral

Advisory Panel

Dolphin/Wahoo

Committee

Advisory Panel

Golden Crab

Committee

Advisory Panel

Spiny Lobster

Committee

Advisory Panel

Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Committee

Shrimp

Committee

Advisory Panel

Snapper Grouper

Committee

Advisory Panel

Additional Advisory Panels

- Information and Education
- Law Enforcement
- Deepwater Shrimp
- SEDAR Pool

Interdisciplinary Plan Teams

- Members include staff from: Southeast Regional Office (SERO), Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), NOAA General Counsel (GC), and Council; lead and coordinate plan teams to do analyses and coordinate workloads across groups

Sargassum

Habitat

Habitat and
Environmental
Protection

Habitat and
Environmental
Protection

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

13 voting members, 3 non-voting members

Council Staff

- 20 members including: Executive Director, Coordinators for each archipelago, Coordinators for: Bottomfish; Education; Pelagics; Corals; Indigenous Program; NEPA; and Protected Species; Social Scientist, Ecology Scientist, Communications Officer, and administrative staff.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

- 20 members including staff from: NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Hawaii, American Samoa, IATTC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC), SPC, and independent experts of biology, economics, social sciences.

Additional Committees

- Enforcement/Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)
- Executive and Budget
- Fishery Rights of Indigenous People
- Protected Species Advisory Committee
- Pelagic and International Ecosystems
- Program Planning and Research

Additional Advisory Bodies

- Fishing Industry Advisory Committee
- Community Demonstration Program Advisory Panel
- Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee
- Protected Species Advisory Committee
- Non-Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee
- Social Science Planning Committee
- Hawaii Bottomfish Advisory Review Board
- Marine Planning and Climate Change Committee
- Education Committee

Marianas FEP

Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Team

Action Teams

- Members include staff from: PIRO, PIFSC, and Council; coordinate before and after Council meetings to divide workload and responsibilities and coordinate actions.

Hawaii FEP

Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Team

Pacific Remote Islands Area FEP

American Samoa FEP

Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee

Advisory Panel

Plan Team

Pelagics FMP

Plan Team

Plan Teams

- Members include staff from: each archipelago FEP, with the exception of the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIAs); the Pelagics Plan Team FMP includes staff from every other region, academics and independent experts.

Coordinating Fishery Bodies

- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)