

NEFMC Program Review

A summary of high-level recommendations

Dan Hull, NPFMC

**Program Review Meeting
Chair**

**NEFMC Meeting
April 17, 2018**



Prior to Review Meeting

- Review panel members were provided with numerous reference documents to review
- Held two conference calls to prepare
- Reviewed Terms of Reference
- Prepared agenda
- Arranged speakers and panelists
- Scientist, manager, and stakeholder outreach – Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum
 - Review panel members reviewed reports from these efforts



Review Meeting

- March 13-16, 2018 (Boston) and webinar option
- Five reviewers:
 - Dan Hull (Chair)
 - Dr. Bonnie McCay
 - Dr. Kenny Rose
 - Dr. Pamela Mace
 - Bob Beal
- Presentations and panels
- Deliberations on Terms of Reference 1-5
- Started drafting preliminary recommendations
- Planned the report outline and tasks



Post Review Meeting

- Finalized recommendations (50)
- Preparing a group report (several drafts)
- Prepared a summary presentation of ~20 recommendations
- Review panel members prepared individual reports
- Review panel members will evaluate the meeting and overall process



General Themes

- Relationships, relationships, relationships
- Forward-thinking
- Performance evaluation
- Interconnected nature of science and research, data collection and fisheries management.
- Best practices from other regions



Panel Member Observations



POLICY & LEGISLATION

Social and Economic Information

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Panel recommends the Council increase its ability to meet NS8, on the participation of fishery-dependent communities and minimization of economic impacts of its measures, and the requirements of Executive Orders that pertain to minority, low-income, and Native American populations (1a).
 - The Council PDTs could also explore the use of Fishery Performance Reports (as used in the MAFMC) and/or SAFE reports to provide updated social and economic information, including information from APs, to complement social and economic data that usually lag in time (1f).



Ecosystem Based Fishery Management

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends the Council accelerate its work on EBFM and continue to strategically plan how to integrate EBFM into fisheries management. This planning will need to consider how other issues and policies, such as climate change and the National Climate Science Strategy, affect NEFMC fish stocks and management. Preparation now, while not in crisis mode, will allow for thoughtful consideration and interaction with the Center and Regional offices (1b).



**OVERALL MODEL, PRIORITIES,
MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

In-Season Adjustments to Priorities

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends the Council develop a more strategic approach to adjusting annual priorities during the year, in order to align time and resources more efficiently among annual regulatory requirements, ongoing and discretionary projects, and new projects the Council is considering adding. This strategic approach should include adopting thresholds or criteria for adding new actions, and removing or setting aside lower priority actions to make room for new or revised actions that will take more time and resources (2b).



Cross-cutting Issues

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that the Council develop ways to address issues that cut across all FMPs (e.g. monitoring, incidental catch, climate change, shifts in system productivity and EBFM) more efficiently and consistently (2a).



Agreement on Goals/Objectives for Management Actions

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that clear goals, objectives, purpose, and rationale be stated and agreed upon at the start of management actions and be repeated periodically as a reminder. There also should be stronger resistance to modifications that are not directly related to the original purpose as the action proceeds. Shared understanding of terms will enable actions to stay focused on their original purpose (2c).



Proactive Management Response to Sudden Changes

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel notes that even management successes are fragile and that the Council and Council staff should be proactive and develop management responses to sudden drops in stock size, corrections when there is uncertainty in catches (e.g., action associated with the discovery of under-reporting that leads to reductions in allowable catches), changes in bycatch rules in other fisheries, new Endangered Species Act (ESA) issuances, and other events that may cause unforeseen changes in stock status or required management actions (1d).



Early Intervention – Management Actions

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that a process be put in place that is triggered by early warning signs of a troubled action and that there be an intervention mechanism, likely from Council staff leadership, to try to correct the issues early on in the development of the action.
(2c).



SUPPORT & COORDINATION

Scientific Information & Streamlining Staffing Resources

RECOMMENDATION:

The Panel recommends that Council and Center staff should continue to work together to better align the need for scientific (biological, ecological, economic and social) information with Center and Council staff resources, with the outcome of streamlining the processes for acquiring the science and increasing efficiency (e.g., is it more effective or efficient for Center or Council staff to perform certain analyses?) (1d).



Recreational Representation

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends continued efforts to ensure adequate recreational representation across its committees and advisory panels, and to ensure appropriate attention to recreational fisheries in its FMPs (1b).



Staff Professional Development

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends continued development of the skills of the staff, including technical skills and training in effective ways to work in groups (teamwork) as well as how to communicate effectively with the public, particularly in terms of science communication (1e).



PDT Policy/Guidance Document

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that Council staff develop guidance on PDT activities to ensure consistency across species and staff. This includes how data are analyzed and results interpreted and the way the process interacts with the public during meetings. While each FMP has unique characteristics, there are also similarities that, if treated consistently, would add to transparency and reinforce that results are science-driven rather than dependent on the people involved. (2a).



Council Subsidiary Bodies: Oversight Committees, PDTs, APs, and SSC

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that steps be taken to ensure that there is consistency in how the subsidiary bodies interact with each other, and in their internal operations and processes. This includes defining clear lines of authority, workflow, and roles/responsibilities between the Council and subsidiary bodies.
 - This should not limit the independence of Committees, PDTs and APs to function in ways that best reflect their tasking and composition, but should instead formalize or strengthen the most critical aspects of their operations for the benefit of a consistent and reliable public process (2d).



Coordination Among Fishery Management Authorities

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends the NEFMC, ASMFC, and MAFMC should follow through on the commitment to have leadership meet to develop more effective ways to collaborate on shared issues (e.g. Atlantic herring, winter flounder, habitat issues). Where appropriate, coordinate to develop a strategy to express a unified voice on issues including climate change and offshore energy (2e).



Interagency Coordination - Streamline

RECOMMENDATION:

The Panel recommends that Council staff should, with assistance from the Center, Region and SSC as appropriate, examine the stock assessment/peer review and research planning/prioritization processes that are followed, with a view to eliminating potential duplication, or better coordinating or streamlining processes (1e).



DATA AND PERFORMANCE METRICS

Data Limitations, Uncertainty & the Council Process

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that the Council be fully informed about the limitations of biological, ecological, economic and social data and how uncertainty affects the ability for Council staff and others to answer specific questions. In general, further explanation and training about sources, treatment, and communication of uncertainty would benefit the Council members and staff. Sometimes the correct answer to a question is that is not answerable with the available information and attempts to do so can result in loss of credibility (1d).



Stock Assessments & Council Performance

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that Council staff perform, contract out, or request the SSC or Center staff to undertake selected analyses to determine if they would be beneficial to the scientific input for the Council's decision making. A few examples would be selected to evaluate the sensitivity and robustness of stock assessment results to the adequacy of the input data, particularly misreported or under-reported commercial and recreational catch data and, inaccurate discard information from both of these fisheries components. From these analyses, the adequacy of input data may be able to be formally defined and quantified using statistical and simulation methods applied to evaluate the robustness of stock assessment outputs. Results of such analyses should be clearly communicated to stakeholders (1d).



Data Access and Protocols

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends that standard protocols and formats for how Council staff requests, transfers, and maintains data be developed and implemented. This will reduce the potential for errors, which results in credibility issues, and allow for easier replication of analyses and interchanging of staff (1f).
 - For example, continue discussions at NRCC meetings where ACCSP staff are engaging Council staff in discussions around centralized data collection to improve the speed and ease of obtaining data.



Performance Evaluation

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Panel recommends an evaluation of past performance of management actions to show successes and problems using specific examples and to identify what factors in the process relate to success (so they can be repeated) and to problems (to avoid repeating them). More reflection on lessons learned by Council staff and leadership, including revisiting the two earlier reports (Touchstone, Tiger Team), would identify further best practices. It is important to present an overall evaluation showing successes and problems and to learn from them for use into the future (2g).



Next Steps

Term of Reference 5: Specifically for the operating environment identified at the beginning of this prospectus, build on preliminary recommendations to more successfully address the challenges in the future by responding to the following questions:

1. What action/initiative is recommended?
2. How would you implement this action or initiative?
3. Who is the lead agency/organization?
4. Who is the primary point of contact?
5. When would this start?
6. List any limitations this recommendation may come up against.
7. Once in place, how would you measure progress?



Acknowledgements



Questions – Program Review

