<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
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| February 13-15, 2018 | Hilton Garden Inn Raleigh/Crabtree Valley  
3912 Arrow Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27612  
919-703-2525 |
| April 10-12, 2018 | Montauk Yacht Club  
32 Star Island Road  
Montauk, NY 11954  
631-668-3100 |
| June 5-7, 2018 | Doubletree by Hilton  
237 South Broad Street,  
Philadelphia, PA, 19107-5686  
215-893-1600 |
| August 14-16, 2018 | Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront  
3001 Atlantic Ave.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451  
757-213-3000 |
| October 2-4, 2018 | Congress Hall  
200 Congress Place  
Cape May, NJ 08204  
609-884-8421 |
| December 11-13, 2018 | Westin Annapolis  
100 Westgate Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-972-4300 |
2018 Planned Council Meeting Topics

February 13-14, 2018 – Hilton Garden Inn Raleigh/Crabtree Valley, Raleigh, NC

- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial Accountability Measures Framework – Framework meeting 2 (final action)
- Black Sea Bass 2018 Recreational Management Measures – Adopt
- Risk Policy Framework and MSE – Presentation and discussion
- Update on habitat activities – Regional assessment and update from GARFO-HCD
- Climate Change and Fisheries – Presentations and discussion
- Ricks E Savage Award

April 10-12, 2018 – Montauk, NY

- Golden Tilefish 2019 Specifications – Review
- Golden Tilefish Permit Issue
- Blueline Tilefish Specifications (2019-2021) - Develop and approve
- Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Framework With 2019-2021 Specifications and RH/S Cap – Framework meeting 1
- Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystem report

May 1, 2018 – Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Spring Meeting, Arlington, VA

Joint meeting of the Council and the Commission’s Bluefish Management Board
- Bluefish Allocation Amendment – Review scoping plan and approve document

Joint meeting of the Council and the Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board
- Summer Flounder Amendment: Commercial Issues/Goals and Objectives – Approve public hearing document and Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Framework – Review and approve draft alternatives
- Approve Black Sea Bass LOA Draft Addendum for Public Comment (ASMFC action)

June 5-7, 2018 – Philadelphia, PA

- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog 2019 Specifications – Review
- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment – Review and approve refined range of alternatives
- Recommend regulatory streamlining options
- Risk Policy Framework – Final action
- Strategic Planning – Update and discussion
- Collaborative research program review
August 14-16, 2018 – Virginia Beach, VA

- Swearing-in of new and reappointed Council members
- Election of officers
- Bluefish 2019 Specifications – Develop and approve
- Bluefish Allocation Amendment – Review scoping comments and present potential range of alternatives
- Summer Flounder 2019 Specifications – Develop and approve
- Scup 2019 Specifications – Review
- Black Sea Bass 2019 Specifications – Develop and approve
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Framework – Review alternatives and impact analysis; approve ASMFC public hearing document
- Black Sea Bass Wave 1 Letter of Authorization (LOA) Framework – Framework meeting 2 (final action)
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Framework – Review
- Black Sea Bass Wave 1 Letter of Authorization (LOA) Framework – Framework meeting 2 (final action)
- Draft 2019-2023 Strategic Plan – Review

October 2-4, 2018 – Cape May, NJ

- 2019-2021 Spiny Dogfish Specifications – Develop and approve
- 2019 Specifications for Squids and Butterfish - Review
- Commercial Fisheries eVTR Framework – Framework meeting 1
- 2019-2023 Strategic Plan – Approve
- Chub Mackerel Amendment – Approve public hearing document
- Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment update – Decide whether to proceed
- Revised MSB goals and objectives – Adopt

December 11-13, 2018 – Annapolis, MD

- Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment – Approve public hearing document
- Bluefish Allocation Amendment – Approve range of alternatives for public hearings
- Commercial Fisheries eVTR Framework – Framework meeting 2 (final action)
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass 2019 Recreational Management Measures - Adopt
- Summer Flounder Amendment: Commercial Issues/Goals and Objectives – Final action
- Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Framework – Final action
- Black Sea Bass Amendment – Review initiation and identify issues for consideration
- Chub Mackerel Amendment – Final action
- 2019 Implementation Plan - Approve
PROPOSED 2018 DELIVERABLES

This section provides an overview of deliverables expected by the end of the implementation plan period. Since many of the proposed implementation activities cannot be measured with traditional metrics, the list of deliverables establishes a mechanism for measuring the Council’s progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, BLACK SEA BASS
- 2019 specifications for summer flounder and black sea bass (develop and approve)
- 2019 specifications for scup (review)
- 2019 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
- Advisory panel fishery performance reports
- Summer flounder amendment: commercial issues and goals and objectives
- Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass recreational management framework (conservation equivalency, slot limits, and transit provisions)
- Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass commercial AM framework
- Black sea bass wave 1 LOA framework
- Summer flounder recreational management project (contract)

MACKEREL, SQUID, BUTTERFISH
- 2019 specifications for squids and butterfish (review)
- 2019-2021 specifications for Atlantic mackerel (develop and approve)
- Advisory panel fishery performance reports
- Butterfish cap review
- Review and revise FMP goals and objectives
- Chub mackerel amendment
- Atlantic mackerel framework/amendment to address rebuilding
- Industry funded monitoring amendment (ongoing - GARFO lead)

RIVER HERRING AND SHAD
- RH/S cap for Atlantic mackerel fishery for 2019-2021 (develop and approve)
- RH/S progress update

BLUEFISH
- 2019 specifications for bluefish (develop and approve)
- Advisory panel fishery performance report
- Bluefish allocation amendment (scoping and development)

GOLDEN AND BLUELINE TILEFISH
- 2019 specifications for golden tilefish (review)
- 2019-2021 specifications for blueline tilefish (develop and approve)
- Advisory panel fishery performance reports
- Golden tilefish permit issue
SURFCLAMS AND OCEAN QUAHOGS
- 2019 surfclam and ocean quahog specifications (review)
- Advisory panel fishery performance reports
- Excessive shares amendment (ongoing)
- ITQ review project (contract)

SPINY DOGFISH
- 2019-2021 spiny dogfish specifications (develop and approve)
- Advisory panel fishery performance report

ECOSYSTEM AND OCEAN PLANNING/HABITAT
- EFH redo (ongoing)
- Regional habitat assessment (ongoing)
- Add deep sea coral protection areas to national MPA network
- EAFM risk assessment
- Offshore energy development issues

GENERAL
- 2019-2023 strategic plan development
- Commercial fisheries eVTR framework
- Advisory panel appointments
- For-hire compliance/accountability issue (cooler labeling)

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH
- Implementation of council communication and outreach plan (ongoing)
- Council action web pages
- Fact sheets and outreach materials

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH
- Mid-Atlantic collaborative research program review
- 2016 – 2017 Mid-Atlantic collaborative research projects (review results)
- Omnibus amendment for data modernization (ongoing - GARFO lead)
- Risk policy framework

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS
- Black sea bass amendment
- Capacity amendment for Illex squid
- FMP for bullet and frigate mackerel, bonito, and false albacore
- Surfclam and ocean quahog framework adjustment to NEFMC habitat amendment
- Allocation review criteria for all FMPs
Date: January 29, 2018
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Matthew Seeley, Staff
Subject: Pilot Tilefish Survey Final Report

The Council has received a final report for the fisheries-independent pilot survey out of SUNY Stony Brook for golden and blueline tilefish from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras. A summary of the final report with future recommendations is below. The complete final report will be available for download here: [http://www.mafmc.org/s/FRISK_TILEFISH_MAFMC_finalreport_jan2018.pdf](http://www.mafmc.org/s/FRISK_TILEFISH_MAFMC_finalreport_jan2018.pdf) at the time of the February 2018 Council meeting.

The final report will go through a formal review process to identify the utility of the survey, next steps, and future directions for improving survey designs. The review team will consist of MAFMC and SAFMC staff/SSC members and individuals from the NEFSC and SEFSC (due to multijurisdictional issues) and will meet most likely via webinar in late winter/early spring of 2018.
FINAL REPORT: Fisheries-independent pilot survey for Golden (Lopholatilus chamaelonticeps) & Blueline (Caulolatilus microps) Tilefish throughout the range from Georges Bank to Cape Hatteras

AUTHORS: Michael G. Frisk, Jill A. Olin, Robert M. Cerrato, Paul Nitschke and Laurie Nolan

Key findings:

Abundance and distribution:
- Golden Tilefish showed a core area of abundance approximately from south of the Hudson Canyon near Toms Complex to southern Georges Bank near Veatch Canyon.
- Catches were patchy throughout the range.
- Depth strata 3 dominated catches, none were captured in depth strata 1 (41–44.9/75–82.1 fathoms/meters).
- Catches of Blueline Tilefish were low and patchy.
- Larger hooks failed to capture a greater number of large Tilefish of both species; however, small hooks captured a greater number of small Tilefish.

Environmental preferences:
- Golden Tilefish occupied a very narrow temperature range and relatively narrow depth, oxygen and salinity range.
  - Possible limitation for range expansion.
  - Sensitive to environment change.
- Blueline Tilefish environmental analysis results were not significant; however, the species also displayed a limited temperature and depth range.

Survey design analysis:
- Proportional and optimum allocation of samples increased survey precision compared to simple random sampling.
- For Golden Tilefish and the overall survey, it seems possible to obtain a cv of 10% or better by shifting sampling effort to strata with larger mean abundance, variance and area.
- Revenue generated by selling fish can reduce the survey cost by 2-10%.

Survey Design Recommendations:
- Considering statistical and biological concerns we recommend that future surveys continue with proportional sampling (i.e., survey (stratified random pilot with min 3 hauls per stratum) or proportional (stratified random) allocations designs) of the ‘expanded’ range at a similar effort level and regional coverage sampled in the pilot survey. See section “Survey Design Recommendations” for full list of recommendations.
Survey Design Recommendations:

1.0 Considering statistical and biological concerns we recommend that future surveys continue with proportional sampling (i.e., survey (pilot) or proportional allocation designs) of the ‘expanded’ range at a similar effort level and regional coverage sampled in the pilot survey. The design resulted in reasonable CV’s and uncertainty ranges for abundance estimates. Cost savings resulting from the optimum sampling do not out-weight the benefits of sampling a geographic range that extends to depths outside of each species core range. If future surveys employ the optimal allocation strategy it lowers the ability to detect range expansions or contractions. This is important for species that are distributed in an extremely patchy manner. Continual evaluation of survey design could be used to reduce the geographic range sampled as additional data is obtained; however, given analysis of the pilot survey we feel a proportional design similar to the pilot survey is recommended. This is also supported by observations of the fishing community that have noted small Tilefish in the shallow depths that the optimal strategy removes.

2.0 A smaller scaled survey targeting Golden Tilefish could also be successfully employed at a much lower cost and produce reasonable CVs by utilizing any of the three evaluated designs (Survey (pilot), proportional or optimal). Here again, we recommend continuing the ‘expanded’ range to detect potential distributional shifts. The pilot survey results for Blueline Tilefish did not provide adequate data to evaluate the best survey design.

3.0 The pilot survey did not produce a large amount of revenue from sold fish. However, we recommend that future surveys continue to sell Tilefish to offset survey costs for two primary reasons: first, some years may produce large revenues and second discarded fish have very low survival and would be wasted.

4.0 We recommend the continuation of using the three hook sizes in order to track cohorts and inform assessment models (i.e., domed shaped catchability).

5.0 The current project benefited from one unpaid participant and future surveys will require one additional person to assist is cruise and data analyses. Considering the current implementation of the survey this could be achieved by a graduate student and a modest increase in PI effort.

6.0 The spatially comprehensive data collected from this pilot survey is valuable for the design of a future potential long-term industry-based survey under the desired goals for indexing either both tilefish species or an individual tilefish stock with the known funding constraints.
Overcoming Development, Regulatory and Funding Challenges for Rope-less Fishing in the U.S. and Canada

Woods Hole, Massachusetts
February 1, 2018

Agenda

8:00  Registration and coffee

9:00  Welcome, purpose of workshop and expected outcomes, Mark Baumgartner, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Session 1: Need and technology

Chair: Amy Knowlton, Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium

9:15  Need for rope-less fishing, Scott Kraus, Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium

9:35  History of gear modifications, Tim Werner, Consortium for Wildlife Bycatch Reduction at the New England Aquarium

9:50  Rope-less fishing in practice today, Michael Moore, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

10:05  Bottom-stowed spooled rope, Jim Partan and Keenan Ball, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

10:20  Lift bag, Richard Riels, SMELTS

10:35  Break

10:55  Bottom-stowed bagged rope, Marco Flagg, Desert Star Systems

11:10  Resolving gear conflicts, Mark Baumgartner, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

11:30  Discussion: Rope-less need and technology

12:30  Lunch
Session 2: Regulatory challenges

Chair: Scott Kraus, Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium

1:30 Introduction to the regulatory landscape, Mike Asaro, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA Fisheries

1:45 Rules regulating gear location marking in the United States and the process to change those rules, Peter Burns, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA Fisheries

2:00 Rules regulating gear location marking in Canada and the process to change those rules, Annette Rumbolt, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

2:15 Discussion: Overcoming regulatory challenges to rope-less fishing

3:15 Break

Session 3: Development plan

Chair: Tim Werner, Consortium for Wildlife Bycatch Reduction at the New England Aquarium

3:35 Development plan for rope-less fishing, Mark Baumgartner, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

4:00 Discussion: Development plan for rope-less fishing

5:00 End of workshop
Rope-less Fishing: A vision for how it can work

Mark Baumgartner (WHOI), Tim Werner (NEAq), Amy Knowlton (NEAq), Michael Moore (WHOI), and Scott Kraus (NEAq)

The need

The latest assessment of the North Atlantic right whale population is bleak. The number of whales increased from around 270 in 1990 to almost 500 whales in 2010. Since 2010, however, the population has declined and now has fewer than 450 animals. Because the population size is so small, we unfortunately do not have much time to reverse this downward trend. There are only around 100 adult breeding females in the population right now. According to the recent assessment from both government and independent scientists, 20 right whales died each year between 2011 and 2015 (the most recent period analyzed) with females dying at a higher rate than males. At that rate, all of these 100 adult females will be gone in just 21 years. This means that in roughly 2 decades, there will be so few females left that recovery of right whales will be impossible.

Of the right whales whose cause of death can be determined, all but calves are found to die from fishing gear entanglements and ship strikes. Fishing gear entanglements currently account for 82% of documented right whale mortalities, while the remaining 18% are caused by ship strikes. An astounding 85% of all right whales bear scars from being entangled at least once in their lives, and more than half have been entangled two or more times. While fishermen may not see right whales often (or ever) at sea, right whales encounter fishing gear throughout their range regularly. Pot and trap gear, such as that used in the lobster and crab fisheries, are largely responsible for whale entanglements, although gillnets are sometimes involved as well. Injuries and death from entanglements are prolonged and gruesome, and the suffering inflicted on the whales would never be tolerated if it happened to a land animal in plain view of the public.

The time to help this species is now. The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be to solve this problem, since every lost female removes both that female from the population as well as all of the calves that she would have had in the future. We also must act now to help preserve the fisheries that interact with right whales. A variety of approaches, including seasonal closures, weak links, sinking ground lines, and fewer traps per trawl, have been tried in different areas along the U.S. east coast, and while some of these efforts have undoubtedly helped, none has solved the problem. As the population dwindles, regulatory action will almost surely become more restrictive, ultimately infringing on the economic viability of the industry. Fishing gear entanglements threaten the survival of both right whales and the fishing industry, and there is an urgent need to help both with new approaches to fishing.

When whales get entangled, they entangle in ropes; they do not entangle in traps or buoys, only in ropes. Therefore, one of the most effective approaches to addressing the entanglement problem will be to remove ropes from fixed fishing gear, particularly for the trap/pot fishery. Doing so will benefit not only right whales, but humpback, fin, sei, and minke whales, basking sharks, and sea turtles, all of whom regularly get entangled in rope off the northeast U.S. coast. To develop a rope-less fishery, however, many practical aspects need to be considered. In this document, we provide our vision of how rope-less fishing could work.
Remote gear identification method

The location of ropeless traps on the sea floor must be identifiable from the surface in the same way that surface buoys mark the location of fixed gear today. Gear location identification is critical to avoiding gear conflicts (e.g., gear overlay by fixed gear fishermen, damaging gear by draggers) as well as for enforcement. We intend to accomplish this by attaching an acoustic modem to the gear at the sea floor. Just as a cell phone modem allows data to be passed through air to another cell phone modem using electromagnetic waves, an acoustic modem allows data to be passed through water to another acoustic modem using high-frequency sound waves (above the hearing range of whales). A battery-powered acoustic modem is mounted on a trap and programmed to communicate information about the trap (or the trawl to which the trap is attached) to an acoustic modem at the sea surface (hereafter called a surface modem) (Figure 1). The surface modem could be mounted on any vessel, such as a dragger, scallop boat, lobster boat, or enforcement vessel, and it would send out broadcast messages regularly (e.g., once a minute) to request information from any nearby traps. In response to an information request from a surface modem, the trap modem would report its location (measured as the last known position of a GPS receiver integrated into the trap modem) as well as encrypted private data that would include the trap owner’s registration number, trap modem serial number, trap identifier, and possibly other sensor data (e.g., occupancy sensor to determine remotely how many lobsters are in the trap). Only the trap owner and enforcement would be able to decrypt the encrypted private data. For trawls, acoustic modems can be mounted to the terminal traps so that the location of both ends of the trawl (thus the orientation of the trawl) can be reported. We envision these location

Figure 1. Acoustic communication between a trap modem and a surface modem mounted on a passing ship. The trap modem only communicates when it receives a data request from a surface modem.

Figure 2. Example of a chart plotter showing the ship in the middle and the locations of traps (red circles) and trawls (red circles connected with a line) reported by trap modems.
data being displayed on commercially available chart plotters so that mariners will be able to visualize the location of nearby fixed gear in real time on their navigation displays (Figure 2).

**Enforcement**

Monitoring the location and ownership of rope-less gear equipped with the remote gear identification system described above would be straightforward, and we envision three possible approaches. First, an enforcement vessel could simply survey with a surface modem to detect gear at the sea floor (Figures 1 and 2). The enforcement vessel would be able to decrypt the private data sent by each trap modem to access the owner’s registration number. Second, an autonomous surface vehicle like a Liquid Robotics wave glider (Figure 3) can be used to accomplish the same at-sea survey as a manned enforcement vessel. The glider can survey, collect information about traps, and relay that information to shore in near real time 24 hours a day for months at a time, covering more area for longer periods of time at significantly reduced cost than a manned survey. Third, an automatic trap reporting system (ATRS) can be developed so that any vessel that carries a surface modem will automatically report collected trap modem data (location and encrypted private data) to enforcement (e.g., using a cell phone modem). With this approach, every dragger, scalloper, and lobster boat that goes to sea will act as an enforcement vessel. An additional and significant benefit to the development of an ATRS is the recovery of gear that has moved from its original deployment position (see below).

The trap modem also activates the mechanism used to bring the trap to the surface for recovery, so it is required for rope-less fishing to work. Thus, enforcement of the use of trap modems for locating and identifying gear is likely unnecessary. However, enforcement could check traps and trawls dockside for the presence and functionality of trap modems if necessary.

**Recovery methods**

There are several possible recovery methods for a single trap or a trawl at the sea floor (Figure 4). Ideas to date include bottom-stowed rope, variable buoyancy traps, and a docking system. Bottom-stowed rope involves an end line that is wrapped around a buoyant spool or housed together with a buoy in a casing such as a cylinder or hollow trap. Upon acoustic command from the gear owner’s surface modem to the trap modem, the spool or buoy releases from the trap (or from the first trap in a trawl) and floats to the surface with the end line. Once at the surface, the fisherman can retrieve the spool or buoy and haul in the trap or trawl using the end line. For the flotation spool, a pre-wrapped spool of line can be slipped on the spool frame...
to allow quick redeployment of the trap (reспooling of the retrieved spool can be done at a later time on the vessel or on land).

Variable buoyancy traps are negatively buoyant (i.e., they sink) when first deployed, but upon acoustic command from the gear owner’s surface modem to the trap modem, the trap becomes positively buoyant and floats to the surface where the fisherman can retrieve it. Buoyancy can be created by using (1) a piston pump that changes the volume of a cylinder (similar to buoyancy engines used in autonomous vehicles such as profiling floats or ocean gliders), or (2) compressed air to fill an inflatable bladder.

A docking system is conceived to be used with traps that are equipped with a docking station. A docking “vehicle” would be deployed from the fisherman’s vessel carrying a very strong, but thin, hauling line, such as Spectra line (the line must be thin to reduce drag on the docking vehicle). The vehicle would use a transponder to locate and connect with the docking station on the trap. Once connected, the fisherman can haul the trap using the hauling line. A special pot hauler would be required to haul the thin line.

A few fishermen in the Australian rock lobster fishery have used bottom-stowed rope operationally, and a prototype of the spooled end line concept has been developed in the U.S. A prototype of the variable-buoyancy trap concept has also been developed in the U.S. There has been no development of the docking system to date.

**Benefits of rope-less**

Rope-less fishing will have obvious benefits to whales, basking sharks, sea turtles and other marine wildlife by removing end lines from the water column, thus entirely eliminating the risk of entanglement in end lines. In addition, there will be benefits to fishermen as well. These benefits include the following:
1. **Significant reduction in lost catch and lost gear due to traps or trawls that have changed location between the time a fishermen deploys the gear and the time the fishermen seeks to recover the gear.** With the development of an ATRS, any vessel with a surface modem would report data received from a trap (location and encrypted private data), the vessel position when those data were received, and the distance between the vessel and the trap (derived from the travel time of acoustic signals between the trap and surface modems). These data could be made accessible to fishermen in a central database supported by government or the industry. By querying this database by their registration number, the serial number of a trap modem on lost gear, and a personal identification number (for privacy), a fisherman could determine the location of his lost gear and retrieve it himself (note that data on a specific fisherman’s gear in the ATRS database would be viewable only by that fisherman and enforcement). Alternatively, a fisherman could receive automatic notifications when a vessel has communicated with his lost gear, sending him the location of his gear directly in an email or text.

2. **Reduction in lost gear due to elimination of the surface system.** Vessels and whales can unintentionally foul and potentially destroy surface buoys and endlines, making fixed gear difficult or even impossible to recover. Rope-less traps will have no surface system.

3. **Elimination of ropes.** Truly rope-less fishing (e.g., variable buoyancy traps fished as singles) means there are no ropes to purchase or maintain.

4. **Improved retrieval opportunity.** Some fishermen struggle to locate and retrieve buoys that are submerged just below the surface during high tides or in strong surface currents. Rope-less techniques, particularly variable buoyancy traps, eliminate this problem.

5. **Reduction in gear conflict.** When fished as singles with no ground lines, there is no possibility of fishermen laying over other fishermen’s gear when using rope-less techniques.

6. **Safety.** Single variable buoyancy traps do not require any hauling or rope use, which is likely the most dangerous aspect of fixed fishing. Traps need only be retrieved from the sea surface, not from the sea floor.
Mid-Atlantic Council to Offer Training Workshops on Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting for the For-Hire Community

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will hold two workshops in February to help for-hire vessel operators prepare for upcoming electronic reporting requirements. Beginning March 12, 2018, all vessels with Federal charter or party permits for species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council will be required to submit electronic vessel trip reports (eVTRs) while on trips carrying passengers for hire. eVTRs must be submitted through a NOAA-approved software application within 48 hours following the completion of a fishing trip.

While all software options for electronic reporting will be briefly discussed, the workshops will primarily focus on training for the SAFIS eTrips/mobile and eTrips Online systems developed by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). Participants will receive hands-on assistance with navigating the eTrips application, setting up favorites, and creating and editing trip reports. Instruction will be led by Rick Bellavance, Owner/Operator of Priority Fishing Charters in Point Judith, Rhode Island, and ACCSP staff.

For more information about for-hire electronic reporting requirements and software options, visit http://www.mafmc.org/for-hire-evtr/.

**Workshop Dates and Locations**

**Saturday, February 10, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**
DoubleTree by Hilton Boston North Shore, 50 Ferncroft Rd., Danvers, MA, 978-777-2500

**Saturday, February 24, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**
Clarion Hotel & Convention Center, 815 Route 37 West, Toms River, NJ, 732-341-6101

*Instruction for SAFIS eTrips/mobile (for use on tablets) will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.*
*Instruction for eTrips Online (for use on desktop or laptop computers) will begin at 1:00 and conclude by 4:30.*
*Each session will be preceded by a discussion of all options for reporting. In the event that demand for eTrips/online instruction is low, a second eTrips/mobile session may be added in the afternoon.*

**Registration**
To register for one of the workshops, complete the registration form at [http://www.mafmc.org/forms/evtr-workshop-registration](http://www.mafmc.org/forms/evtr-workshop-registration) or email the workshop coordinator at aloftus@andrewloftus.com. There are a limited number of spaces available. Participants are strongly encouraged to register early so that workshop personnel can work with each individual prior to the workshop to establish needed accounts for reporting systems.

**What to Bring**
Participants should bring an electronic tablet or laptop capable of connecting to the internet via W-Fi. For the mobile-based version, participants will need either a Google account (for Android systems) or an iTunes account (for Apple systems) to download the eTrips/mobile app. This will allow you to work along with the instructors and be set up and ready to begin electronic reporting once you leave the workshop.

Please direct any questions to workshop coordinator Andrew Loftus, aloftus@andrewloftus.com, (410) 295-5997.
MEMORANDUM

Date: January 31, 2018
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Jessica Coakley, Staff
Subject: New England Fishery Management Council Framework to address clam fishery access in the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (HMA)

History of the Action

On December 15, 2014 the Mid-Atlantic Council submitted comments on the New England Fishery Management Council’s Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2 (OHA2). Specifically, the Council discussed impacts on its managed resources and fisheries, and adopted the following motion relative to the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries:

"I move that the Council send a letter to the New England Fishery Management Council with a copy to the Regional Administrator requesting with respect to this Amendment that sub-areas comprised predominantly of sand substrate be identified as clam management areas within the broader proposed habitat closure areas encompassing Nantucket Shoals, Georges Shoals, and Cultivator Shoals. The Council requests that if any of these broader areas are selected as preferred alternatives in the final action on the habitat omnibus amendment, then surfclam and ocean quahog dredges would be exempt within the sub-areas."

At the April 2015 New England Council meeting, the New England Council approved a large area east of Nantucket (the Great South Channel HMA) for targeted habitat protection. They recommended the Northeast corner of the area be closed to all dredges and bottom trawls, and the remainder of the area be closed to bottom trawls and scallop dredges with a 1-year exemption for clam dredges. That year would allow for consideration of a different program for clam dredges to access portions of that habitat area. The New England Council initiated action on a framework to address this issue in September 2015. Since action was initiated, their Habitat Plan Development Team (PDT) has met and worked on this issue.

At the October 2017 Mid-Atlantic Council meeting, the Council voted to, “send a letter to the [New England Fishery Management Council] requesting that the Surfclam/Ocean Quahog Access Program Framework action remain a 2018 priority.” The New England Council retained this item as one of their 2018 priorities.

In January 2018, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries approved the majority of recommendations contained in OHA2. The final rule implementing the new regulations will not be published until later this winter, but NOAA Fisheries informed the Council on January 3 of its decision, which set the stage for what’s to come. NOAA Fisheries approved the recommendation of the Council to establish the Great South Channel HMA, which will be closed to: (1) mobile bottom-tending gear throughout the area; and (2) clam dredge gear in the northeast section. Clam dredge gear will be allowed...
throughout other parts of the area for 1-year while the New England Council considers refinements through the framework, which is already under development and guided by the following statement of work:

“The SC/OQ fishery will be granted a one-year exemption for the Great South Channel Management Area (HMA) following implementation of OHA2, which will allow NEFMC to consider development of an access program for this fishery. The Council intends through this action to identify areas within the HMAs that are currently fished or contain high energy sand and gravel that could be suitable for a hydraulic clam dredging exemption that balances achieving optimum yield for the SC/OQ fishery with the requirement to minimize adverse fishing effects on habitat to the extent practicable and is consistent with the underlying objectives of OHA2.”

**Next Steps for the Framework**

Since work was initiated in September 2015, the Habitat PDT has worked to assemble information to support the framework. This includes reviewing image-based habitat surveys, trawl surveys to assess fish abundance, dredge surveys to assess clam abundance, and commercial fishery effort data. The PDT will continue this work in 2018 summarizing data and developing and analyzing alternatives.

The framework is a 2018 priority for the New England Council and their Habitat Committee anticipates work activity on this action to increase in spring and summer 2018.

The New England Council should have a complete framework package to consider and approve in the fall of 2018, to allow time for NOAA Fisheries rulemaking to occur prior to the end of the 1-year exception for clam dredges which would occur sometime in Spring 2019.

The Habitat Committee was supportive of working with the Mid-Atlantic Council to ensure that the Mid-Atlantic Council’s surfclam and ocean quahog advisory panel (SC/OQ AP) members will have the opportunity to provide input on the alternatives being considered for clam access. The Mid-Atlantic Council leadership has indicated their support for involving our SC/OQ AP.

New England and Mid-Atlantic Council staff are actively working to identify opportunities for the SC/OQ AP to be engaged as the development of this framework continues through 2018.
December 15, 2017

Tom Nies
Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Mr. Nies:

The modifications to the southern windowpane flounder accountability measures (AMs) recently approved by the New England Council should reduce the economic impacts of these AMs on fisheries managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council. However, even with these modifications, the AMs may still be problematic for fisheries managed by both of our Councils.

As you are aware, southern windowpane flounder are not overfished, overfishing is not occurring, and survey indices suggest that stock size has been increasing since the mid-1990s. Overfishing has not occurred since 2006 despite recent ABC and ACL overages. In addition, possession of windowpane flounder is prohibited. There is no economic value to this stock and it is not targeted.

My understanding is that GARFO staff, working in collaboration with the groundfish PDT, have completed much of the analysis needed to support managing southern windowpane flounder as an ecosystem component. Managing southern windowpane flounder in this way would remove the need for AMs and may not have negative impacts for the stock. I am aware that the New England Council narrowly decided against including an amendment to manage southern windowpane flounder as an ecosystem component among their 2018 priorities, despite the fact that much of the necessary analysis is already complete. If the New England Council were to reconsider this decision, I am willing to offer the support of my staff in development of the amendment.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Moore, PhD.
Executive Director, MAFMC

Cc: Luisi, Elliot, Nies, Beaty
From: Moore, Christopher  
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 2:48 PM  
To: Saunders, Jan <jsaunders@mafmc.org>; Mary Clark Sabo <msabo@mafmc.org>  
Subject: FW: Regulatory Reform Comments/Spreadsheet

Please include this in the BB – Thanks! C

From: Moore, Christopher  
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2018 2:40 PM  
To: Moore, Christopher <cmoore@mafmc.org>  
Subject: FW: Regulatory Reform Comments/Spreadsheet

Kelly – our plan is below:

- MAFMC and GARFO Staff review and come up with possible items to streamline

- Items presented to Executive Committee for discussion and approval

- Council and public comment on Executive Committee recommendations

- Final Council recommendations sent to NMFS for consideration on or before July 2

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Alan Risenhoover - NOAA Federal <alan.risenhoover@noaa.gov>  
Date: Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 5:52 PM  
Subject: Regulatory Reform Comments/Spreadsheet  
To: Tom Nies <TNies@nefmc.org>, "Moore, Christopher" <CMoore@mafmc.org>, "Waugh, Gregg" <gregg.waugh@safmc.net>, Miguel Rolon <Miguel_Rolon_CFMC@yahoo.com>, Doug Gregory <Doug.Gregory@gulfcouncil.org>, David Witherell - NOAA Affiliate <david.witherell@noaa.gov>, Kitty Simonds <kitty.simonds@wpcouncil.org>, Chuck Tracy - NOAA Affiliate <chuck.tracy@noaa.gov>  
Cc: John Bullard <john.bullard@noaa.gov>, Michael Pentony <Michael.Pentony@noaa.gov>, Roy Crabtree <roy.crabtree@noaa.gov>, John McGovern <john.mcgovern@noaa.gov>, Jim Balsiger <jim.balsiger@noaa.gov>, Glenn Merrill <glenn.merrill@noaa.gov>, Michael Tosatto <michael.tosatto@noaa.gov>, Bob Harman <bob.harman@noaa.gov>, Barry Thom <barry.thom@noaa.gov>, Ryan Wulff - NOAA Federal <Ryan.Wulff@noaa.gov>, Samuel Rauch <samuel.rauch@noaa.gov>, Emma Htun - NOAA Affiliate <emma.htun@noaa.gov>, Emily Menashes <Emily.Menashes@noaa.gov>, Kelly Denit <kelly.denit@noaa.gov>, Jennifer Lukens <jennifer.lukens@noaa.gov>, Heather Sagar <heather.sagar@noaa.gov>, Margo Schulze-Haugen <margo.schulze-haugen@noaa.gov>, Rey Marquez - NOAA Affiliate <rey.marquez@noaa.gov>

Executive Directors ---

Per our discussion at the last CCC meeting in May and our call last week, I am sharing the Council-specific public comments we received in response to the joint Federal Register notice NOAA Fisheries
and National Ocean Service published in August 2017. This notice broadly solicited public input on identifying existing regulations and processes that, among other things, may be outdated, unnecessary, ineffective, and/or can be further streamlined in a manner consistent with law.

The attached Excel spreadsheet includes those public comments that reference Region/Council-specific regulations. Each row contains a hyperlink (e.g. NOAA-NMFS-2017-0067-0004) to a public comment, the acronym of the affected region/council, and other metadata. Click on the hyperlink to view the public comment and, if applicable, any accompanying attachment. If you encounter any difficulties accessing these comments, all of these public submissions can also be found online at: https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2017-0067

We ask that you consider these public comments while you review your Council regulations. As a reminder, each Council should determine the process it wants to use to review their regulations. We ask that you provide a brief description of the process you plan to use to us by December 15, 2017, and that you work with your regional office to complete your review by July 2018. Please plan to provide a list of the regulations you consider outdated, unnecessary, and/or ineffective by July 2, 2018.

Thank you for your efforts, and we look forward to continue working with the Councils to improve our regulations. If you have any questions, please reach out to your regional SF ARA (i.e., Mike Pentony, Jack McGovern, Ryan Wulff, Glenn Merrill, Bob Harman) or Kelly Denit (Kelly.Denit@noaa.gov).

Thanks

Alan
Request for Proposals
For a Study to Assess the Importance of Atlantic Chub Mackerel to the Diets of Recreationally-Important Highly Migratory Species

Proposal Submission Deadline: February 16, 2018
Term of Contract: 2 years

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to design and carry out a study to assess the importance of Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*) to the diets of recreationally-important highly migratory species (e.g. tunas, billfish, wahoo, dolphinfish) in the mid-Atlantic. Preference will be given to proposals which use genetic barcoding to identify degraded stomach contents to the species level. Based on stakeholder input, priority predator species include bigeye and yellowfin tunas and white and blue marlin. Priority sampling locations include Virginia Beach, VA and Ocean City, MD. However, other predator species and locations are also of interest.

**Background**
The Council is developing management measures for chub mackerel fisheries and will consider the potential ecosystem impacts of any management alternatives. However, limited quantitative scientific information on the role of chub mackerel as prey is available to support such considerations. Stakeholders have expressed concerns related to the potential impacts of a commercial chub mackerel fishery on recreationally-important predators such as tunas, marlins, wahoo, and dolphinfish. A literature review and a webinar with scientific experts identified quantitative information on the importance of the Scombridae family to the diets of several predators; however, limited quantitative information on the importance of chub mackerel has been identified. Identification of species such as chub mackerel, Atlantic mackerel, frigate mackerel, and bullet mackerel can prove challenging for traditional diet studies due to similarities in their appearance.

The Council is interested in funding a study using methods other than visual identification of stomach contents to quantify the importance of chub mackerel in the diets of recreationally-important predators. Based on the recommendations of experts who participated in a recent webinar on this topic, preference will be given to proposals which incorporate genetic barcoding techniques; however, other methods (e.g. examination of hard part morphology) will be considered. Please see [http://www.mafmc.org/actions/chub-mackerel-amendment](http://www.mafmc.org/actions/chub-mackerel-amendment) for more information.

**Scope of Work**
The contractor will be responsible for all aspects related to design of the study, data collection, analysis, and presentation of final results to the Council.

**Contractor Qualifications**
Applicants should have demonstrated experience with food habits research on marine fish.
How to Apply
Applicants should submit a proposal to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, by email (cmoore@mamfc.org) by 11:59 pm on February 16, 2018. Proposals should include the following elements:

- **Executive Summary**: A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as brief summary of the applicant’s qualifications.
- **Proposed Scope of Work**: A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work described above. This should include a summary of potential analysis approaches, a project schedule, a brief summary of how the project will be managed, and a list of all personnel who may work on the project.
- **Qualifications of Applicant**: A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. Curriculum vitae should be included for all individuals who will work on the project.
- **Proposed Budget**: A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g. hourly rates, fixed fees).
- **References**: Names, full addresses, and phone numbers for three clients for whom the applicant has provided similar services to those requested.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated based on methodology, prior experience, references, qualifications, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

Requests for Further Information
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901
tel: 302-526-5255
email: cmoore@mafmc.org

Disclaimer
1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by applicants.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending civil/criminal legal actions.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify this request for proposals in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.
MEMORANDUM

Date: 2/1/18
To: Chris Moore
From: Jason Didden
Subject: Atlantic Mackerel Rebuilding Initial Approach

Given the findings of the recent mackerel assessment, plans are underway to implement a rebuilding program for Atlantic mackerel. This will be the first rebuilding plan initiated since the Council’s Risk Policy has been in effect.

The current plan is to use a framework action with meetings in April and August. Preliminary projections indicate that with a 10-year rebuilding schedule, the Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs) in the rebuilding plan may not need to be lowered from the current 19,898 mt ABC. Catch limits had already been reduced by 95% between 2005 and the ABC set for 2016-2018 of 19,898 mt.

The Council’s current Risk Policy states that the SSC should provide an ABC that is the lower of an ABC from the standard P* approach or the ABC consistent with a rebuilding plan. This policy could exclude the possibility of using a 5-10 year rebuilding plan to account for the needs of fishing communities, because the standard P* approach may result in ABCs that are substantially lower. Accordingly, since changes to the risk policy are frameworkable, staff plans to include for Council consideration an option that would modify the Council’s Risk Policy only for this particular rebuilding plan so that the Council has the option of using a rebuilding plan in the 5-10 year range. This change would allow using the ABCs associated with a rebuilding plan that is proceeding along successfully rather than always using the P* approach when the P* ABCs are lower.

Council staff will bring a range of preliminary rebuilding options to the Council in April for framework meeting #1. Once the Council identifies a set of rebuilding options for the framework, Council staff will request the SSC in May to confirm that the rebuilding options utilize the best available science. A completed framework document will then be presented to the Council in August for final action.

The current plan is for the framework to include the mackerel specifications for the first 3 years of the rebuilding timeline, along with the specifications for the river herring and shad cap, which typically is set when mackerel specifications are set.