

**DRAFT Management Priorities for 2013
From Executive Committee of OCT 9, 2012**

***** Indicates an action needed to meet regulations requirement**

Groundfish

1. Continue to coordinate action on the Habitat Omnibus Amendment to include possible modifications of the Groundfish closed areas.
2. Continue Amendment 18 to consider fleet diversity and accumulation caps.
3. ***** Set specs for US/CA stocks for 2014.**
4. ***** Revise rebuilding programs for GOM cod, SNE winter flounder, plaice, and maybe white hake.**
5. Consider trading of quota under US/CA Understanding/TMGC.
6. Address any issues related to changes in cod stock areas, if necessary.

Strawman below the line for 2013:

7. Explore utilization of mixed stock exception for SNE/MA windowpane flounder
8. Potential action to address Groundfish sector monitoring requirements resulting from Oceana lawsuit.
9. Recreational issues: Council may want to react to new recreational catch estimates based on MRIP data.

Monkfish

1. Continue Monkfish Amendment 6 for modifications to DAS program (including leasing) and catch shares (sectors and IFQs).
2. ***** Set specs for 2014 - 2016 pending stock assessment update (date in 2013 for assessment yet to be determined)**

Sturgeon

1. Consider the Biological Opinion when published and develop alternative RPAs/RPMs if appropriate.

Sea Scallops

1. Prepare a framework to set FY 2014 specifications (i.e. setting DAS, access area trips, Northern GOM TAC, limited access general category IFQ allocations, potential modification of scallop access area boundaries, etc.). *This was added at Sep 2012 Council meeting based on Scallop Cmte motion.* (May-Dec 2013)
 - ***** NMFS and PDT have new annual responsibilities related to estimating scallop and YT catch during the year (i.e. LA AM exception, re-evaluation of YT sub-ACL based on updated information).**
 - ***** If GF FW48 implements a sub-ACL for windowpane flounder for the scallop fishery, this scallop action will have to consider AMs.**
2. Support and analyses for Habitat Omnibus Amendment in terms of potential impacts of new EFH measures on scallop fishery and coordination with habitat process concerning future scallop access areas (Jan-May 2013)
3. Staff and PDT participation on NEFSC peer review of sea scallop survey methods (March/April 2013)
4. Complete Evaluation of the LAGC IFQ program (Council still considering if workshop included)(Jan-April 2013)
5. If GF plan explores utilization of mixed stock exception for SNE/MA windowpane flounder the scallop plan will have to coordinate relevant analyses. *(If this is added for 2013 priorities something will have to be removed from scallop priorities)*

Strawman below the line for 2013:

6. Amendment 16 – Consideration of IFQs for the limited access scallop fishery
7. Amendment 17 - Added at September 2011 Council meeting by motion: *Coordinate action with Groundfish Cte to develop strategies to manage YT flounder bycatch under the Scallop FMP including those strategies listed in Motion 13 from Sep 13, 2011 Scallop Cte meeting* (For example, participation in GF sectors for LAGC fishery & re-designing the access area program etc. This action would focus on YT initially, but could be expanded to other bycatch species if needed).
8. Measure to address 5% allocation versus % of actual catch for LAGC fishery (specifically expand current disclaimer to include LAGC fishery as well that allows catch above ACL if updated projection of F lower);
9. Consider modifying the small dredge exemption program (See additional letter to Council). This issue has been raised before and does not appear to be widely supported by the industry, but additional correspondence has requested consideration again.

Herring

1. ***** Develop specifications package for 2013-2015 based on new assessment (SAW 54)**
 - Include alternatives to address Amendment 4 court order (ABC control rules and AMs)
 - Target completion ASAP, implementation ASAP 2013-2015
2. Prepare a framework to establish river herring caps
3. Prepare a framework to establish an industry-funded monitoring program for Amendment 5 (coordination with MAFMC) – target completion one year after Amendment 5 implementation
4. Prepare an amendment to consider river herring/shad as stocks in the fishery (TBD)

SBRM Amendment

1. Continue SBRM Amendment w/NMFS lead (response to lawsuit) – expected completion June 2013

Red Crab

1. ***** Set specs for 2014 – 2016**

Habitat

1. Continue Omnibus Habitat Amendment (expected completion 2014)
2. Continue Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment with range of alternatives already approved as part of the Omnibus EFH Amendment 2 process (as time and resources permit)

RSC

1. Continue to steer research to support NEFMC plans.

SSC

1. Support SSC activities such as recommending ABC and making recommendations in the FMP development process.

Enforcement, Safety and VMS

1. Continue to support enforcement, safety and VMS issues.

Choose one from Ecosystem Based Management, Whiting/Skates

Ecosystem Based Management

1. Prepare Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Plan. **Phase I** to establish Goals and Objectives and establish ecosystem production units throughout GOM, GB and SNE. Hold workshops to gather public input. This action will hopefully have a Categorical Exclusion (CE) from NEPA. (*1 year*)
2. **Phase II:** Prepare Amendment 1. Identify management and scientific requirements to implement EBFM. Establish Monkfish and skate complex as part of Multispecies Plan. Consider predation and competition and consider new reference points based on new modeling approaches for the new Multispecies complex. This action will have an EIS (2 years)
3. **Phase III:** Prepare Amendment 2. Implement Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management. Implement quota based management in all Ecosystem Production Units (EPU, i.e. GOM, GB and SNE). Allocate all fishery resources (9 current FMPs) to each EPU (new spatial management). Establish accumulation limits, transferability requirements, and permitting and monitoring requirements, etc. (identified in Phase II). This action will have an EIS. (*3 years*)

Whiting/ Skates

1. Continue to prepare an Amendment for limited entry to the whiting fishery.
2. ***** Set specs for 2014 and 2015 pending stock assessment update (date in 2013 for assessment yet to be determined)**
3. Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery.

Strawman below the line for 2013:

Hagfish

1. Prepare new Hagfish FMP

Other: (Interspecies Type Actions)

1. Develop a strategy including goals and objectives, issues and recommendations to improve monitoring in all FMPs.
2. Prepare Amendment to respond to NRCC working group recommendations to simplify vessel baseline, upgrade, and replacement restrictions. [NMFS lead – Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published on October 5, 2011]

Regulatory requirements in 2014

Groundfish specs for FY 2015-2016

Scallop specs for FY 2015-2016

Whiting specs for FY 2015-2017

Skate annual monitoring