

NMFS Cooperative Research Strategic Planning

12/23/08

Background

NOAA Fisheries has engaged in funding cooperative research in New England through two key programs. The **Cooperative Research Partners Program (CRPP)** began in 1999 with the mission to formalize and expand collaborative research among New England's commercial groundfish industry, scientists and managers. The goal of this initiative is to improve the data upon which fishery management decisions are made as well as to improve communication and collaboration among commercial fishermen, scientists and fishery managers. In addition to CRPP, the **Research Set-Aside (RSA)** programs established by the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils (Councils) provide a mechanism to fund cooperative research and compensate vessel owners through the sale of fish harvested under a research quota. This funding has provided a significant opportunity to NOAA Fisheries Service to develop collaborative relationships with the fishing industry and has served as a mechanism to build trust and understanding among the various players in the fisheries community and management agencies.

The CRPP and RSA programs are administered by NOAA Fisheries while working in close collaboration with the Councils in setting research priorities to meet management and fishing industry needs. Not all research lends itself to support through these funding mechanisms (e.g. long-term monitoring) and there are severe limits on the amount of funds that are available. The most effective way to leverage the assets of each of these programs is to provide a forum for an open discussion about current plans and jointly develop a strategic vision. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center is launching a strategic planning process to help better inform NOAA leadership as it plans for its cooperative research program from the next 3-5 years. This is meant to complement the research priorities that have been set by the Councils by further refining the list of research projects to identify a focused subset particularly appropriate and suited for industry involvement.

Purpose

To define a clear set of strategic *cooperative* research priorities to inform the evolution of NOAA Fisheries' cooperative research programs from 2010-2016.

Cooperative Research Planning Committee

A Cooperative Research Leadership Committee will be formed to serve as a mechanism to improve communication and jointly strategize among NOAA Fisheries, the Councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The Committee will develop an initial set of cooperative research priorities, review the results of the broad stakeholder input and develop a prioritized cooperative research strategy to present to NOAA Fisheries leadership. Members include:

Chris Kellogg	New England Fisheries Management Council
Rich Seagraves	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Bob Beal, Director, ISFMP	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Frank Almeida	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
George Darcy	Northeast Regional Office
Pat Fiorelli	New England Fishery Management Council
Clayton Heaton	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Fred Serchuk	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
John Hoey (ex officio)	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Earl Meredith (ex officio)	Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Broad Stakeholder Review

Cooperative research has had a significant impact in New England over the past ten years. While the collaborative research priorities will be driven by the management needs and research gaps identified by the CRLC, it is equally important to provide an opportunity to solicit input from stakeholders about their observations. We will hold four meetings in Galloway, NJ, Narragansett, RI, Waltham, MA and Portland, ME. An additional brief discussion will also be held at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum in Rockland, ME. Each meeting will be facilitated to solicit feedback on the proposed list of priorities and address the key areas to focus cooperative research.

Process

1. Facilitate conference call with Cooperative Research Leadership Committee to agree upon planning process and objectives, review cooperative research stakeholder assessment conducted by UNH, and gather resources/ideas for shaping priorities.
2. Facilitate 1-day meeting of CRLC to establish initial priority research strategy.
3. Conduct four broad stakeholder evening meetings in New England and Mid-Atlantic.
4. Provide written summary of key points of each meeting via mail or e-mail to NOAA/CRPP and the Cooperative Research Leadership Committee.
5. Facilitate 1-day meeting with CRLC to review results of constituent meetings and refine planning document.
6. Draft strategic planning document draft for review of CRLC via e-mail.
7. Compile and present a final draft report to NOAA leadership of the cooperative research priorities for the next 3-5 years.

Estimated timeline

Oct – Nov	Planning meetings with NOAA/CRPP
Early December	Convene Cooperative Research Leadership Committee (#1)
Jan 15	Convene Cooperative Research Leadership Committee (#2)
Feb 12 - March	Conduct 4 Constituent meetings in Mid-Atlantic and New England
March 19	Convene Cooperative Research Leadership Committee (#3)
March 26	Draft strategic cooperative research report to Leadership Committee
April 1	Draft strategic cooperative research report presented to NRCC
April 30	Final strategic cooperative research report to NOAA leadership