Conservation Equivalency
Guidance Document

ISFMP Policy Board
August 2023
CE Review Process

• The application of conservation equivalency (CE) is described in the Conservation Equivalency Policy and Technical Guidance Document.

• The Executive Committee and a subset of MSC Committee members provided information that informed staff revisions to the CE Guidance Document.
Proposed Changes

• Removal of CE in the development of FMPs

  – The entire 3rd paragraph should have been deleted on pg 3, not just the last sentence and the first paragraph under the review process on pg 6

• Requires state to include single more restrictive measures in compliance reports

• Multi measure more restrictive changes must be approved by a Board
Proposed Changes

• CE programs are required to be described and evaluated in the annual compliance review, unless alternative time has been set.

• CE programs will have a length of time it is in place.

• PRTs review proposals, not approve.
DECISION POINT for the Policy Board

• When should CE not be allowed?

Option 1: if the stock is overfished

Option 2: if overfishing is occurring

Option 3: if overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished

Option 4: Board Discretion
Proposed Changes

• Measures that cannot be quantified are not permitted in CE if their sole purpose is credit for a reduction
  – State would show a measurable reduction
  – Measures could be used as a buffer
  – TC determines if something is non-quantifiable
  – E.g. circle hooks, non-targeting zones/period, no gaffing, outreach promoting best practices for release, and other measures expected to reduce release mortality or overall discards.
Proposed Changes

- If there is a target coastwide reduction needed it cannot be achieved through a combination of some states implementing the coastwide measure and some states implementing the coastwide percent reduction at the state level.
- Options will be kept to a reasonable level
  - Boards can cap the number
- Proposals have requirements for what is included
Proposed Changes

• Provides recommendation for minimum data standards
• Requires availability to be considered with closed seasons
• Proposals will include timeframe, an annual review
• Extensions of the timeframe can be granted under specific conditions but not beyond the next benchmark
Proposed Changes

• Steps in the review process would be required
• Changes in the review timeline

Question to the PB: for submission is three months reasonable?
• Proposals cannot be submitted less than 3 weeks before the board meets
Consideration Today

Consider approval of the Conservation Equivalency Policy and Technical Guidance Document as modified today.
Red Drum Risk & Uncertainty Decision Tool

Report to the ISFMP Policy Board
ASMFC Summer Meeting 2023
Refresher

• The draft Risk and Uncertainty Policy & Decision Tool provides a method for arriving at the appropriate risk tolerance level for a stock, given management priorities and characteristics of the species and fishery
  – This risk tolerance level can then be used to select a harvest level based on projections
  – It is not a tool for assessing the varying risk levels of different management approaches, this could be done using other tools such as an MSE
• Technical Committee assesses key R&U factors
  o Stock status
  o Model uncertainty
  o Management uncertainty
  o Environmental uncertainty
  o Ecosystem importance
  o Socioeconomic considerations

• Board weights the importance of each factor

• R&U Tool provides the recommended probability of achieving F or SSB reference points for setting specifications
  → E.g., set the quota to have a 55% chance of achieving F target
Tautog Pilot Case

• Policy Board recommended using tautog as a pilot case in Aug. 2021
• Preliminary Risk and Uncertainty Decision Tools were developed for each of the four tautog management regions using input from the Tautog Management Board, Tautog TC, and the CESS
• Board reviewed the decision tool and the Preliminary Tautog Risk and Uncertainty Report
• Tautog Board did not initiate a management action, the final steps were not completed
• Staff developed hypothetical scenarios to illustrate how the tool would have worked to complete the process
Updates

• Red Drum is selected as the next test case for the policy:
  – Data-rich
  – Stock assessment scheduled for August 2024
  – Chance of management action needed in the near-future
  – Management framework aligns with tool output
    • No quota, but if a reduction in removals is necessary, the tool can provide the probability of achieving the SPR reference points that the reduction should achieve
Updates

• Next steps:
  – R&U WG meets to begin this process
  – Jainita reaches out to Red Drum TC & CESS to provide technical inputs
  – The Red Drum Board provide input on weightings
Any questions?
Report to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
ISFMP Policy Board
August 3rd, 2023
Steering Committee Meeting

Met July 26-27, 2023 in Philadelphia, PA

- Strategic Planning: 2022-2026 Strategic Plan
- 2023 Melissa Laser Habitat Conservation Award
- Discussions on
  - BIL/IRA Funding Opportunities
    - No match requirements
  - FY25 ACFHP RFP (Sep./Oct. 2023)
  - National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP, Alex Atkinson, NOAA)
    - Beyond the Pond
    - Congressional Designation
Steering Committee Meeting

Fish Habitat Partnership (FHP) Congressional Designation Process

- ACE Act requirement (Sec 204(g))

FHPs → NFHP Board → Congress

- ACFHP submits draft application to the NFHP Board
  - (Dec. 31, 2023)

- Votes on final list of FHPs to recommend
  - (June 2024)

- Funding continues through USFWS
  - (2025)
FY24 NFHP-Funded Projects

Two on-the-ground projects + operational support

• **New Jersey**: Engineering, Design, and Permitting for the Removal of the Upper E.R. Collins Dam (NJ Dam #24-29) on the Pequest River

• **Maryland**: Maryland Coastal Bays Salt Marsh Restoration Project (Phase 1)

• ACFHP remains in top funding tier

• Estimated $300,000 in NFHP funding for FY24.
#1 Removal of the Upper ER Collins Dam (NJ)

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Restoring 3 miles of Pequest River spawning and foraging habitat
- Tributary to the Delaware River
- Priority species (ranking):
  - American Shad (very high)
  - American Eel (high)
  - Blueback herring (high)
  - Sea Lamprey (high)
FY24 NFHP-Funded Projects

Credit: TNC-NJ

Belvidere, Warren County New Jersey
#2 Maryland Coastal Bays Salt Marsh Restoration

- Delmarva Resource Conservation and Development Council
- 39 acres of salt marsh restored
- Priority species (high ranking for all):
  - Atlantic Silverside (very high)
  - Blue Crab
  - Red Drum
  - Spot
  - Summer Flounder
  - Atlantic Croaker
  - Winter Flounder
  - Atlantic Needlefish
Revised Timeline of the Recreational Sector Separation and Catch Accounting Amendment to the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish FMPs

August 3, 2023
## Revised Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer/Fall 2023</td>
<td>Form FMAT/PDT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 2024</td>
<td>FMAT/PDT develops issues for consideration and draft scoping document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2024</td>
<td>Council and Policy Board approve a scoping and public information document for public comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring/Summer 2024</td>
<td>Scoping hearings and comment period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2024</td>
<td>APs and FMAT/PDT review scoping comments and provide input to Council and Policy Board on scope of amendment and possible approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2024</td>
<td>Council and Policy Board review scoping comments and FMAT and AP recommendations; define scope of action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2024</td>
<td>FMAT/PDT begins to develop draft alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2024</td>
<td>Council and Policy Board review preliminary alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter/Spring 2025</td>
<td>Continued FMAT/PDT development and analysis of alternatives; AP input on draft alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring/Summer 2025</td>
<td>Council and Policy Board approve final range of alternatives for a public hearing document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2025</td>
<td>FMAT/PDT develops public hearing document/Commission draft amendment document</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2025</td>
<td>Council and Policy Board approve public hearing document; Policy Board approves draft amendment document for public comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter 2026</td>
<td>Public hearings and comment period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter/Spring 2026</td>
<td>AP meeting to provide input on preferred alternatives; FMAT/PDT meeting to provide recommendations to Council/Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2026</td>
<td>Final action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2026</td>
<td>Staff develop and submit draft EA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2026</td>
<td>NMFS and other agencies review EA; final edits completed; Rulemaking and comment periods</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Target effective date</td>
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