

## FISHERIES SCIENCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# *Management and Science Committee*

**Committee Name:** Management and Science Committee (MSC)

**Purpose:** The MSC is an oversight committee that examines issues spanning fisheries management and fisheries science and provides advice to the Commission, Executive Committee, and the ISFMP Policy Board. The MSC also carries out specific requested assignments. Major duties are to:

1. Serve as the senior review body of the Commission, Executive Committee, and ISFMP Policy Board
2. Periodically update the Commission's Research Priorities to address scientific gaps and emerging questions, in order to support stock assessments and fisheries management
3. Provide oversight to the Commission's Stock Assessment Peer Review Process
4. Upon request of the ISFMP Policy Board for any Management Board/Section, review and provide advice on individual species issues
5. Evaluate the state of science regarding species interactions and provide guidance to fisheries managers on multispecies and ecosystem issues. Evaluations and/or recommendations focus on modifying the single-species approach in development of Commission fishery management plans and/or stock assessments
6. Evaluate and provide advice on cross-species issues, including climate change, bycatch and discards, fish tagging and ageing protocols, invasive species, and protected species
7. Coordinate Commission technical and scientific workshops and seminars, when requested

**Membership:** The MSC is comprised of one representative from each member state, the NMFS Northeast and Southeast Regions, and the USFWS Regions 4 and 5 who possess scientific as well as management and administrative expertise.

**Codifying Document:** ISFMP Charter

**Type & Frequency of Meetings:** MSC meets once per year during the Commission's Annual Meetings. Conference calls of MSC and subcommittees are held as necessary.

**Primary activities:**

- Improving the peer review process through:
  - Updating the Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Process
  - Identifying scientists to serve on Peer Reviews
  - Providing instructions to Peer Reviewers
- Identifying Research Priorities for Stock Assessments and Fisheries Management
- Maintaining a Fish Ageing Manual to achieve consistent ageing methods among the states
- Identifying forage fish species of importance to management along the Atlantic Coast

## **Major accomplishments:**

### **Public Engagement in the Commission Process (2020)**

- MSC led a survey of the states to evaluate a suite of tools and approaches used to collect public input to fishery management decisions, including collaboration with the Committee on Economic and Social Sciences to devise future public surveys; results were presented to the Commission's Executive Committee with options for adapting the process of soliciting and collecting stakeholders' input

### **Climate Change, Stock Distributions, and State Quota Allocations (2014)**

- MSC investigated whether climate change and warming coastal water temperatures are causing shifts in the geographic distributions of several ASMFC managed fish stocks; where shifts are occurring, the MSC creates options for reconsidering the state-by-state allocation structure and need for adjustments.
- MSC collaborated with Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) scientists to summarize the state of knowledge for focal species and to demonstrate shifts in distribution and productivity for stocks where changes are occurring.
- The MSC created a number of straw-man reallocation options, to define the methods for possibly adjusting state-by-state allocations. To determine the applicability of each option, the Committee distributed a survey of reallocation options to Commissioners. The MSC compiled survey responses and presented a set of reallocation recommendations to the ISFMP Policy Board.
- The MSC also recommended that the ISFMP Policy Board task Technical Committees (TCs) with creating examples or scenarios to explore how any given reallocation option might function for each species.

### **Research Prioritizes in Support of Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management (2008, 2013, 2018)**

- MSC assisted in compiling research priorities that were identified by Commission stock assessment subcommittees and technical committees.
- MSC also developed a List of Critical Research Priorities (2009) to highlight the most pressing needs for each ASMFC managed species, as well as identify projects covering multiple species in a coordinated effort to address common research needs. Multistate proposals were then developed to seek funding to address high priority research.

### **Fishing Gear Technology Work Group: Gear Evaluations in Priority Fisheries (2008)**

- MSC provides oversight and tasks the FGTTWG with evaluating gear issues (bycatch, habitat impacts) and new gear technology in fisheries affecting Commission species.

### **The Impacts of LNG and Alternative Energy Development on Fishery Resources Workshop (October 2006)**

- Workshop to determine the most effective role for the Commission to assist the states in protecting fishery resources and fish habitat throughout the energy policy, development, permitting, and/or monitoring process in state coastal waters.
- Recommendations included: a Commission permit review policy, appoint a staff member to serve as a point of contact for energy related issues, develop a source document as guidance on energy related issues, advocating for more time on energy issues

### **Observer Program Workshop (July 2006)**

- The MSC held a workshop to review state observer programs, to discuss opportunities for improved state-federal coordination of observer programs, and to identify and evaluate common issues across programs.

### **Power Plants publication: Assessing Coastwide Effects of Power Plant Entrainment and Impingement on Fish Populations: Atlantic Menhaden Example (April 2006)**

- A method was developed for assessing coastwide effects of power plant impingement and entrainment on managed fish stocks.

### **Circle Hook Definition and Issues (July 2003)**

- The ISFMP Policy Board called for an analysis of release mortality issues and the development of an enforceable definition of a circle hook. A Management and Science Committee (MSC) Workgroup comprised of hook manufacturers, Commissioners, law enforcement representatives, recreational stakeholders, and technical personnel, was formed to address these charges.

### **Guidance Relative to Development of Responsible Aquaculture Activities in Atlantic Coast States (November 2002)**

- In September 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in cooperation with the Commission and its member states, conducted a state-federal Atlantic coastal aquaculture workshop (NMFS 1998). This workshop developed recommendations on several different areas, including strategic planning, fishery management plan integration, aquaculture data collection, and integration of mandates related to aquaculture. Several recommendations focused on potential future work in coordination of aquaculture activities.

### **Workshop on the Introduction of Asian Oysters (*Crassostrea ariakensis*) to the Chesapeake Bay (June 2002)**

- A workshop to review information concerning the potential introduction of the Asian oyster in Virginia and Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The workshop also identified potential ecological risks over a broader geographical region since an introduced species could potentially spread throughout the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The workshop was focused on obtaining information from Commissioners and other agency personnel.

### **Conservation Equivalency Workshop (2001)**

- A workshop among Commissioners and Advisors as an opportunity to address the issues surrounding the application of conservation equivalency.
- Initiated the process for developing a clear policy to address the procedures for submitting plans, time lines for review and approval, and standards by which the plans will be evaluated to address many of the identified problems.

**History of Chairmanship:**

**Current Chair** (2019 – present): Kathy Knowlton, GA

2017 – 2018: Jim Gartland, VA

2015 – 2016: Joe O’Hop, FL

2013 – 2014: Mike Armstrong, MA

2011 – 2012: Pat Geer, GA

2009 – 2010: Harley Speir MD

2007 – 2008: Doug Grout NH

2005 – 2006: Linda Mercer ME

2003 – 2004: Chris Bonzek VA

2001 – 2002: Charlie Lesser DE

1997 – 2000: Dale Thieling SC

1995 – 1996: Mike Street NC

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