

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

ISFMP Policy Board

*May 2, 2012
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Alexandria, Virginia*

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

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|---|-----------|
| 1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>P. Diodati</i>) | 3:30 p.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 3:35 p.m. |
| • Approval of Agenda | |
| • Approval of Proceedings from February 2012 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 3:40 p.m. |
| 4. Compliance Committee Report (<i>J. Gilmore</i>) | 3:45 p.m. |
| 5. Assessment Science Committee Report (<i>P. Campfield</i>) | 4:20 p.m. |
| 6. Law Enforcement Committee Report (<i>M. Robson</i>) | 4:40 p.m. |
| 7. Update on ACFCMA funding for FY 2012 and FY2013 | 4:55 p.m. |
| 8. NEAMAP Report (<i>R. O'Reilly</i>) | 5:10 p.m. |
| 9. Initiate the 2013 Annual Action Plan (<i>V. O'Shea</i>) | 5:30 p.m. |
| 10. Discussion on Research Set Aside Program (<i>R. Beal</i>) | 5:35 p.m. |
| 11. Other Business/Adjourn | 5:55 p.m. |

The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 901 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; 703-683-6000

Healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

MEETING OVERVIEW

ISFMP Policy Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 2, 2012
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Alexandria, Virginia

Chair: Paul Diodati (MA) Assumed Chairmanship: 11/11	Vice Chair: Louis Daniel (NC)	Previous Board Meeting: February 8, 2012
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS (19 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from February 8, 2011

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Compliance Committee Report (3:45 p.m.-4:20 p.m.)

Background

- The Policy Board agreed to convene a committee of Commissioners to examine issues related to actions taken by several states to extend their recreational fisheries for scup.
- The Committee reviewed the Commissions policies related to calling board meetings, the definition of an emergency, and the Commission's ability to respond to a state or group of states deviating from an FMP with no apparent conservation impact and provided an initial report at the Winter Meeting.
- The Committee met a second time to complete the charge from the Policy Board.

Presentation

- The Committee Chair, Jim Gilmore, will present the results of the Committee's second meeting and the recommendation for next steps.

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Determine if the Policy Board should take any action based on the recommendations from the committee.

5. Assessment Science Committee Report (4:20 p.m.-4:40 p.m.)

Background

- The Assessment Science Committee met on April 2, 2012.
- Previous recommendations to the Board from ASC regarding stock assessment capacity

<p>issue included the following: <i>Modify assessment frequencies to reflect each species' stock status and life history.</i></p>
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will provide an update on ASC activities.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve the stock assessment schedule through 2015 • Provide direction to ASC on evaluating assessment frequencies for Board consideration, in order to address assessment capacity recommendation • Provide direction to ASC on developing Commission guidance on use of new MRIP estimates in stock assessments and Technical Committee analyses • Provide direction to ASC on 2012 Action Plan tasks regarding uncertainty

<p>6. Law Enforcement Committee Report (4:40 p.m.-4:55 p.m.)</p>
<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law Enforcement Committee will meet on May 1, 2012
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law Enforcement Committee Coordinator will present a summary of the LEC meeting.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

<p>7. Update on ACFCMA funding for FY 2012 and FY2013 (4:55 p.m.-5:10 p.m.)</p>
<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President has submitted the FY2013 budget request which includes a reduction in ACFCMA funding for FY2013.
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS staff will provide an update on the status of ACFCMA funding for FY2012 and FY 2013.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a Commission response needed regarding the FY2012 and FY2013 funding levels.

<p>8. NEAMAP Report (5:10 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)</p>
<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEAMAP Board met on February 17, 2012. • Received updates on the 3 NEAMAP program trawl surveys • Discussed the use of NEAMAP trawl surveys data in stock assessments • Completed 2012-2016 NEAMAP Management Plan
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEAMAP Board Chair will provide an update on NEAMAP activities.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

9. Initiate the 2013 Annual Action Plan (5:30 p.m.-5:35 p.m.)
<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission develops Annual Action Plans to detail the work that will be completed to implement the 5-Year Strategic Plan.
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director will describe the timing and process for developing and approving the 2013 Annual Action Plan. • Commissioners will be encouraged to talk with Board Chairs about the priorities for activities in 2013.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

10. Discussion on Research Set Aside Program (5:35 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.)
<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NMFS administer a research set-aside (RSA) program for a number of species including summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. • The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board held a conference call in March and raised concerns regarding the administration of the RSA program. • The Board requested that this issue be added to the Policy Board agenda for further discussion.
<p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will present a brief background on the program highlighting the administration and research that has been funded.
<p>Board actions for consideration at this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if the Commission wants to notify the Mid-Atlantic Council of its concerns regarding the RSA program.

11. Other Business/Adjourn

MEETING OVERVIEW

ISFMP Policy Board Meeting
Thursday, May 3, 2012
11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Alexandria, Virginia

Chair: Paul Diodati (MA) Assumed Chairmanship: 11/11	Vice Chair: Louis Daniel (NC)	Previous Board Meeting: February 8, 2012
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS (19 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Review Non-Compliance Recommendations (If Necessary) (12:00 p.m.-12:15 p.m.)

Background

- Species management boards and sections review compliance on an on-going basis.
- If a board/section recommends that a state be found out of compliance, the Policy Board must review this finding prior to the Commission taking action.

Presentations

- Staff will provide background on any non-compliance recommendations

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Determine if a recommendation should be made for the Commission to notify the Secretaries of Interior and Commerce of a state's non-compliance

5. Other Business/Adjourn

Compliance Committee Report to ISFMP Policy Board

May 2, 2012

Committee Attendance:

Jim Gilmore, Chair
Dennis Abbott
Robert Boyles
Bill Cole
John Duren
Adam Nowalsky
David Simpson
Jack Travelstead

Staff:

Bob Beal

Relevant ASMFC Guidance Documents

- ASMFC Rules and Regulations language regarding calling meetings (*Attachment 1*)
- ISFMP Charter language regarding Emergency Actions (*Attachment 2*)
- ISFMP Charter language regarding delayed implementation (*Attachment 3*)
- Addendum XVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP language regarding delayed implementation (*Attachment 4*)

Discussion Summary

The Compliance Committee met twice via conference call to respond to the charge from the Commission Chair, Paul Diodati. The Committee divided the tasking into four components.

The practice and adequacy of the procedures for calling a board meeting

The Committee reviewed the guidance contained in the Commission Regulations and determined the current language is appropriate for calling meetings. The Committee did not recommend any changes. The Committee agreed there are benefits and justification for maintaining the current process. The procedure of the Commission Chair calling ordinary and extra-ordinary board meetings provides the following:

- Consistent criteria for calling meetings across all boards
- Consideration of approved Action Plan and budget
- Encouragement for boards to make decisions in the four scheduled Commission meetings
- Consideration of consequences of board action that might impact all states.

The meaning, application, and adequacy of the definition of an emergency

The Committee reviewed the language in the ISFMP Charter that defines an emergency. The Committee also was provided with a description of how difficult it was to develop and approve the current emergency language. The Committee agreed the current emergency provisions in the Charter provide adequate flexibility to address unforeseen issues through board action. The

requirement to approve emergency actions by 2/3 vote reduces the potential for boards to overuse this option. The Committee provided the following reasons for maintaining the current emergency language in the Charter.

- The Commission has infrequently used emergency actions to modify FMPs in response to urgent, unforeseen, and serious conservation issues (8 emergency actions since 2001).
- Modifying the definition of an emergency would be difficult given the range of emergency provisions in states laws.
- Modifying the emergency language to increase flexibility for boards may result in more frequent use of emergencies to adjust management. This will decrease transparency and public participation.
- Crafting language in the Charter to increase flexibility for all FMPs may not be possible or will result overuse of emergency actions.

Commission's ability to respond to state(s) deviating from an FMP

The Committee reviewed the options available to the Commission to respond to a state implementing regulations that are not consistent with the compliance requirements in an FMP. The Committee agreed the non-compliance provisions in ACFCMA are adequate and effective in addressing issue where there is a conservation impact. However, the Committee indicated there are not sufficient options to address short-term non-compliance and deviations that don't impact conservation. The Committee agreed to the following:

- The recent actions regarding scup highlighted deficiencies in the system to address deviations from FMPs.
- Staff should explore the legal issues involved with penalizing states through actions such as reduced future quotas, reduce ACFCMA funding, etc.
- Consideration should be given to including delayed implementation provisions in other FMPs and removing the link to conservation to invoke delayed implementation penalties.
- State deviations from an FMP cause significant problems for all states and for the Commission process.

Increasing the Flexibility for species management boards

The Committee agreed that additional flexibility should be provided to the species management boards especially in the case of fully rebuilt stocks. The Committee determined that modifying the Charter to provide flexibility would not be appropriate. Given that FMPs differ significantly, it would likely not be possible to create generic language to address the specifics of each FMP. The Committee agreed on the following statements:

- Each species board should consider modifying FMPs to provide increased flexibility for in-season adjustment if the stock is fully rebuilt. Not all FMPs will need to be modified.
- The FMPs already include conservation equivalency provisions that provide flexibility to the states.

- The transparency and public comment process should be considered when boards explore details to increase flexibility.

Committee Recommendations

The following are recommendation made by the Committee for consideration and approval by the ISFMP Policy Board. These recommendations are intended to use the existing Board and FMP structure to develop species-specific provisions to additional flexibility for healthy stocks.

1. No changes are needed to the ASFMC guidance documents regarding the emergency action provisions or the procedures for calling a meeting.
2. The species management boards should consider modifying the FMPs to provide increased flexibility for in-season adjustments if a stock is in healthy condition. Boards should consider provisions to address harvest rates that are higher or lower than anticipated.
3. The species management boards should consider modifying FMPs to establish penalties for delayed implementation of required management measures. The boards should determine if there must be a “conservation impact” to invoke delaying implementation penalties.
4. The following species management boards should report to the Policy Board regarding plans for addressing additional flexibility and delayed implementation. These species were selected based on stock status and FMP characteristics.
 - Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass
 - Bluefish
 - Atlantic Herring
 - Striped Bass
 - Northern Shrimp
5. The Commission should continue to use the existing non-compliance provisions in the ACFMCA when state regulations are not consistent with FMP requirements and this negatively impacts conservation of a species.
6. With the expanded use of conference calls and web-based meetings, the Commission should consider developing protocols to address public comment, participation, and conduct during these meetings. There have been examples of effective and disruptive public participation in Board/Section conference calls.

Attachment 1

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Article II. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. MEETINGS. Annual, semi-annual and other meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the Chair. Upon the written request of five states, submitted to the Executive Director, the Chairman shall call a meeting of the Commission. The Commission shall also conduct meetings of committees, sections, boards, advisory panels or other groups such as are established to assist in carrying out the Commission's responsibilities. Such meetings shall be called by the Executive Director with the approval of the Commission Chair. The Executive Committee shall establish guidelines for meetings, including meetings conducted by conference call or teleconference. A public notice will be provided at least two weeks prior to all meetings of the Commission and its various bodies, and at least 48 hours notice will be provided for any meetings held by conference call or teleconference; provided exceptions to these notice requirements may be granted by the Commission Chair.

Attachment 2

ISFMP CHARTER

Section Six. Standards and Procedures for Interstate Fishery Management Plans

(10) Emergencies - A management board/section may, without regard to the other provisions of Section Six (c), authorize or require any emergency action that is not covered by an FMP or is an exception or change to any provision in an FMP. Such action shall, during the time it is in effect, be treated as an amendment to the FMP.

(i) Such action must be approved by two-thirds of all voting members (i.e., entire membership) of the management board/section prior to taking effect. The decision may be made by meeting, mail, or FAX ballot in the case of an emergency.

(ii) Within 30 days of taking emergency action, the states and the Commission shall hold at least four public hearings concerning the action, including at least one in each state that requests it.

(iii) Any such action, with the exception of public health emergencies, shall originally be effective for a period not to exceed 180 days from the date of the management board/section's declaration of an emergency, but may be renewed by the management board/section for two additional periods of up to one year each, provided the board/section has initiated action to prepare an FMP, or initiated action to amend the FMP in accordance with Section Six(c). Emergency actions taken to address a public health emergency shall remain in effect until the public health concern ceases to exist (this determination to be made by the management board/section). The management board/section may terminate an emergency action at any time with approval of two-thirds of all voting members (i.e., entire membership).

(iv) Definition of Emergencies. The provisions of this subsection shall only apply in those circumstances under which public health or the conservation of coastal fishery resources or attainment of fishery management objectives has been placed substantially at risk by unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery.

Attachment 3

ISFMP CHARTER

(h) **Procedure to Address Management Program Implementation Delays** –Each species management board shall evaluate the current FMP, amendment, and/or addendum to determine if delays in implementation have impacted, or may negatively impact, the achievement of the goals and objectives of the management program. Each of the species management boards, with the assistance of the respective technical committee if necessary, will conduct this evaluation and provide, in writing, a summary of its findings to the ISFMP Policy Board. Each species management board that determines that there is a negative impact due to delayed implementation will provide the ISFMP Policy Board a proposed timeline to develop an amendment or addendum to address delayed implementation.

If the ISFMP Policy Board determines that an amendment or addendum should be developed to address delayed implementation, the amendment or addendum should, at a minimum, include any penalties and repayments for delays in implementation, the minimum notification time that Commission staff must provide a state/jurisdiction prior to requiring an in-season management adjustment; and establishment of a reporting and tracking system for management changes.

Attachment 4

Addendum XVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP

The addendum is intended to provide a species-specific mechanism of ensuring that a state meet its obligations under the plan in a way that minimizes the probability that a state's delay in complying does not adversely affect other states' fisheries or conservation of the resource. These measures are deemed critical for the long term conservation of the species. This Addendum does not propose to modify the existing compliance review and sanction process that is described in the ASMFC guidance documents and the ACFCMA. This Addendum also does not propose to modify the existing conservation equivalency procedures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. States have the ability to adopt measures that are more conservative than those approved by the Board.

Issue 1: Delayed Implementation of Commercial Regulations

A) Failure to adopt annual adjustments to minimum fish size for summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass

B) Failure to adopt initial Winter I trip limits by January 1 and Winter II trip limits by November 1 for the scup fishery.

C) Failure to adopt reduced scup trip limit for the Winter I and Winter II periods when required due to established triggers.

For each day that a state does not implement these commercial measures, an equal number of days during the same or equivalent time period will be closed in the following fishing season. For example, if a state does not implement appropriate minimum fish sizes for the first 2 weeks of the fishing season, in the following year the season would be closed for the first 2 weeks of the season. Similarly, if a state does not reduce scup trip limits for the Winter I or Winter II periods as required by established triggers, the following fishing season would be closed for an equal number of days the delay occurred after the trigger had been met.

D) Failure to close the black sea bass fishery and/or the summer scup fishery after the state quota has been reached.

The ASMFC allocates the black sea bass coastwide commercial quota and the summer scup commercial quota to states from Massachusetts to North Carolina. The ASMFC also monitors state landings to prevent individual states from exceeding their quota. The NMFS monitors the coastwide black sea bass and scup quota and closes the commercial fishery in federal waters when the coastwide quota has been reached. An individual state has the potential to exceed their state quota to the level that contributes to the NMFS closing the federal commercial coastwide fishery before all states have the opportunity to harvest their individual state allocation. This scenario has the potential to result in inequities between state and federal permit holders.

If a state fails to close its black sea bass and/or its summer scup fishery after the state quota has been reached, states will compensate pound for pound for up to 25% of the original state quota. Any overages beyond 25% of the state quota are compensated for at 1.5 times.

Issue 2: Delayed Implementation of Recreational Regulations

The following proposed compensation strategies would be applied to a state even if that state did not exceed its recreational harvest limit.

- A) Failure to adopt Board-approved size limits for summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass**
- B) Failure to adopt Board-approved seasonal closures for summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass**
- C) Failure to adopt Board-approved possession limits for summer flounder and/or scup by the date the current season opens.**
- D) Failure to adopt Board-approved possession limits for black sea bass by Jan 1 or the date the current season opens, whichever is later.**

**ASMFC NEAMAP Board
Report to the ISFMP Policy Board
May 2, 2012**

The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) Board met February 17, 2012 to discuss the following issues:

- Developed a log on the use of NEAMAP data; will be available on the NEAMAP website
- Presentations given by leaders of surveys part of NEAMAP at Board meeting in November:
 - NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Nearshore Trawl Survey (MA-NC)
 - Chris Bonzek and Jim Gartland presented recent field work, gear comparison study results and survey catches
 - Demonstrated early version of GIS based survey results. The final version is now active. The current address is <http://fluke.vims.edu/fishgis/faovims/index.htm> and will likely be: fluke.vims.edu/mrg/gis. There will also be a registration page soon.
 - Also demonstrated early version of food habits database which is now available online at www.vims.edu/fisheries/fishfood with information and registration pages.
 - Data provided for use in stock assessments: scup, fluke, black sea bass, river herring, croaker, weakfish, winter flounder, spiny dogfish, bluefish, spot, Loligo, butterfish
 - Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey
 - Linda Mercer provided a presentation on behalf of the survey leader, Sally Sherman
 - Spring, Fall surveys conducted annually since the Fall of 2000
 - Data provided for use in stock assessments: lobster, shad, GOM winter flounder, 10 species of groundfish in GARM III, silver and red hake, Loligo squid; management decisions for monkfish, Northern shrimp, herring
 - Massachusetts Resource Assessment Inshore Trawl Survey
 - Jeremy King provided a presentation on this survey, ongoing since 1978
 - Data used in stock assessments: GOM lobster, NE horseshoe crab, black sea bass, summer flounder, tautog, SNE and GOM winter flounder
- 2012-2016 NEAMAP Management Plan completed
 - Highlights the regional nature of NEAMAP
 - Lays out tasks and goals for next five years of NEAMAP
 - Work to re-engage NEAMAP committees and have prioritized tasks to be carried out
 - Will form a NEAMAP Analytical Committee: ASMFC TC Chairs of species within NEAMAP range. Committee addresses how NEAMAP data can be most useful in stock assessments and to improve understanding of management issues. Committee assists Data Management Committee in specifications of data management system.
 - Will annually review tasks and add any prioritized tasks as desired to each upcoming year's Operations Plan
- 2012 NEAMAP Operations Plan completed
 - Revised the website and include links to ME-NH and MA projects for data access

**Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program
(NEAMAP)**

**Management Plan
2012-2016**

Introduction

The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) is a cooperative state/federal fishery-independent research and data collection program conducted from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras, NC. The program is intended to maximize the effective capability of fishery-independent survey activities and the usefulness of collected data, through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of functional data into a useful data management system. The overall approach of NEAMAP emphasizes the collection of fishery-independent data to accommodate specific short-term and long-term management needs.

Mission

The mission of NEAMAP is to provide an integrated and cooperative state-federal program to facilitate collection and dissemination of fishery-independent information, for use by government agencies, the fishing industry (commercial and recreational), researchers, and others requesting such information. To meet the needs of fishery management and fish stock assessment, NEAMAP provides the framework for collection and use of fishery-independent data. This includes coordination of existing programs, development and implementation of new programs where necessary, and dissemination of the collected data. NEAMAP will serve to coordinate fishery-independent data collection and data management among states in the northeast region, as well as between NEAMAP and other existing regional programs (*e.g.*, SEAMAP, ACCSP). The intent of the program is not to change existing programs, but to coordinate and standardize procedures and improve data accessibility.

Goals

The four goals of NEAMAP are:

- Goal 1: Cooperatively plan, evaluate, and administer fishery-independent data collection programs, including a state/federal near shore trawl survey and other NEAMAP-sponsored activities.
- Goal 2: Establish a coordinated, long-term, fishery-independent data collection program of Atlantic coast living marine resources from Cape Hatteras to Maine for the purpose of resource and habitat assessment and management.
- Goal 3: Operate the NEAMAP data management system, for efficient management and timely dissemination of fishery-independent data and information
- Goal 4: Establish a comprehensive outreach program, to secure funding and educate constituents on the actions, results, and benefits of the NEAMAP.

Operations

A. NEAMAP Administration

In October 1997, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) passed a resolution to develop a cooperative fishery-independent data collection program, in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In June 1998, a workshop was held to begin the design and development of such a program. Details were added to the program during workgroup meetings in late 1998 and early 1999. The NEAMAP MOU was approved on March 28, 2003 and provides the framework for implementation of NEAMAP.

Membership: Board membership consists of one representative of each signatory Partner (Maine to North Carolina). Operations Committee members are appointed by their respective agencies and its membership consists of one representative of each signatory Partner. NEAMAP Partner agencies appoint members to NEAMAP Technical Committees (e.g., Trawl Technical Committee). Each committee elects their own Chair and Vice Chairs; Chairs serve two-year terms. At all levels, the NEAMAP is consensus driven.

The **Board** serves as the executive-level committee for the program and oversees the design and implementation of NEAMAP, establishes policy to guide program and Partner participation therein, and serves as the final decision-making authority for the program. The Board directs tasks for the various NEAMAP committees via the Operations Committee. The Board meets in person once per year, generally during the ASMFC Annual Meeting or near the end of the year.

The **Operations Committee** serves as the vehicle for coordination of Technical Committee input into the NEAMAP and provides recommendations from the Technical Committees and the Operations Committee to the Board. The Operations Committee holds at least one conference call per year to make recommendations for the coming year's Operations Plan, in addition to any other tasks given by the Board.

The **Technical Committees** develop recommendations on technical details of individual surveys and other relevant tasks as assigned by the Operations Committee. The Technical Committees (TCs) report directly to the Operations Committee. The NEAMAP TCs do not meet on a regular schedule but only to discuss tasks when they are assigned. Meetings take place via conference call or in person as needed. The current technical committees:

- **Data Management Committee:** members are appointed by their respective agencies and its membership consists of signatory Partner representatives which have data management experience. Committee deals with coordination of NEAMAP data.
- **Trawl Technical Committee:** members are appointed by their respective agencies and its membership consists of representatives from signatory Partners which have trawl experience. Committee deals with issues in conducting and coordinating NEAMAP surveys.
- **Analytical Committee:** comprised of chairs from ASMFC TCs of species which occur in the NEAMAP region. Committee addresses how NEAMAP data can be most useful in stock assessments and to improve understanding of management issues. Committee assists Data Management Committee in specifications of the data management system.

All committees shall reach decisions by consensus, if possible. If consensus is not possible at the committee level, that committee shall identify options and present the benefits and drawbacks of each option. These options and associated recommendations will be forwarded to the NEAMAP Board for review via the Operations Committee and the NEAMAP Board will reach a final decision by vote, with each partner agency casting one vote.

The ASMFC will provide staff support and other administrative functions. Staff will also maintain the website www.neamap.net

B. Data Collection and Data Management

Data collection and data management procedures for individual surveys will be coordinated among participating agencies, in order to enhance the usefulness of the data, minimize costs, and increase the accessibility of information to fishery managers, administrators, and researchers. NEAMAP Technical Committees will review these surveys and programs and make recommendations for their possible integration into the NEAMAP.

NEAMAP will coordinate with current activities such as SEAMAP, and individual data collection programs, to develop optimum resource sampling and assessment capabilities. The NEAMAP Data Management Committee has developed a NEAMAP Data Management Guidance Plan which they will continue to update as the data management system is implemented. Links and query functions will be available on www.neamap.net to access summary data of NEAMAP projects.

C. Activities

NEAMAP projects in the nearshore area are defined as waters bounded by the 6.1m and 18.3m depth contours between Montauk, NY and Cape Hatteras, NC and the 18.3m and 36.6m depth contours in Rhode Island Sound and Block Island Sound; waters of the Gulf of Maine bounded by the New Hampshire/Massachusetts border and the US/Canadian border from the 6m contour to the 12 mile territorial limit, excluding Cobscook Bay; and Massachusetts territorial waters including all of Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound.

NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Nearshore Trawl Survey

One of the first major efforts of the NEAMAP was to design a bottom trawl survey that would operate in the coastal zone (i.e., between the 6.1 m and 27.4 m depth contours) of the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB - i.e., Montauk, New York to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina). The NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center's (NEFSC) Bottom Trawl Survey has been sampling from Cape Hatteras to the U.S./Canadian border in waters less than 366 m since 1963 (NEFSC 1998, R. Brown, NMFS, pers. comm.), however areas inshore of the 27.4 m contour have been sampled at lower densities than desired to assess coastal species managed by the ASMFC. In addition, of the six coastal states in the MAB, only New Jersey conducts a fishery-independent trawl survey in its coastal zone (Byrne 2004). The NEAMAP Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England (M-A/SNE) Nearshore Trawl Survey was therefore developed to address this gap in fishery-independent survey coverage, which is consistent with the program goals. In addition to the MAB, the survey also samples the waters between the 18.4 m and 36.6-m depth contours in

Rhode Island Sound and Block Island Sound, per the request of NEFSC to accommodate the potential changes in survey coverage by the Science Center's new survey vessel, FSV *Henry B. Bigelow*. The main objectives of this survey are the estimation of abundance, biomass, length frequency distribution, age-structure, diet composition, and various other assessment-related parameters for fishes and select invertebrates inhabiting the survey area. The survey is a collaborative program conducted on the *F/V Darana R* (commercial vessel owned and operated by Captain James Ruhle of Wanchese, NC) and conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).

Accomplishments:

- In addition to the pilot survey conducted in Fall 2006, full surveys have been successfully completed in fall and spring since Fall 2007.
- During each of these surveys, 150 sites are selected and sampled using a stratified random design (coverage rate of 1:30 nm).
- Survey was successfully peer-reviewed in December 2008. An external peer review protocol was developed for NEAMAP surveys.
- VIMS personnel conduct public demonstrations of survey operations and sample processing during the Spring and Fall surveys.
- NEAMAP personnel participated in an ongoing summer flounder age sample exchange with NEFSC. Expanded to include scup, winter flounder, and black sea bass.
- NEAMAP M-A/SNE Trawl Survey data have been used in weakfish and river herring stock assessments. This survey has also supplied data for assessments of: American lobster, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic sea scallop, Atlantic sturgeon, black sea bass, bluefish, butterfish, river herring, scup, skates (clearnose, little, and winter), spiny dogfish, spot, summer flounder, weakfish, and winter flounder. Additional data requests and uses included supplying data to various groups involved with the Rhode Island Ocean SAMP (Special Area Management Plan) process, and collaborating with approximately eight other scientists/organizations to collect specimens for several projects.

Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl Survey

The Maine-New Hampshire (ME/NH) Inshore Trawl Survey is a resource assessment survey performed along the coastal waters of Maine and New Hampshire. Bi-annual surveys (spring and fall) have been conducted since the fall of 2000. This survey is a collaborative research project using a commercial fishing vessel as the platform. The boat owner, captain, and crew have been actively involved in the design and implementation of this survey.

Accomplishments:

Trawl survey staff provided data to MEDMR co-workers for Northern shrimp assessment and management, Atlantic herring management, scallop research, wolffish research, and Atlantic halibut. Data was provided to New Hampshire Fish and Game on that portion of the survey.

MENH Trawl data were provided to NEFMC technical committees and NMFS personnel for assessments and assessment updates of GOM cod, GOM haddock, witch flounder, white hake, yellowtail flounder, pollock, windowpane flounder, redfish, *Loligo* squid, halibut, river herring, and wolffish. Winter flounder otoliths were digitized for 2007 and 2011. We also began preparation of cod otoliths for age determination.

Data were provided to the Census of Marine Life's Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) to update the current data to 2009 and metadata were added. Data were provided to the Nature Conservancy to update the current data to 2011 and metadata were added. Additional data requests were filled from Acadia University in Canada, University of Maine, Penobscot East Resource Center, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, University of Maryland for Environmental Science, Fresh Pond Research Institute in Massachusetts, Marine Research Institute in Iceland, and other independent researchers.

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Bottom Trawl Survey

The Massachusetts trawl survey has been conducted every spring and fall since 1978 to monitor distribution, abundance and size composition of fish populations in Massachusetts territorial waters. All species of finfish and select invertebrates are weighed and measured. A subset of species are sampled for sex, maturity and age structures. The survey follows a random stratified (by depth) design with a station density of approximately 1 station/19 nmi². All surveys since 1981 have been conducted aboard the *R/V Gloria Michelle* operated by NOAA Corps officers.

Accomplishments:

6,500 stations accomplished over 34 years.

Survey indices utilized in monitoring stock status on numerous ASMFC and NEFMC managed species.

Survey data important component in Massachusetts' Ocean Management Plan.

Activities for 2012-2016

The NEAMAP Board and Operations Committee have identified certain tasks that must be accomplished to reach the goals of NEAMAP. The following document outlines the identified tasks that should be accomplished over the next five years. Tasks are prioritized within each category in order of importance for completion.

Operations

Task 1: Support continuation of the NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Surveys.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Board and Operations Committee
APPROACH: Develop options and strategies; discuss coordination with existing programs
TIMING: Ongoing
COST: Administrative budget; Implementation costs
PRIORITY: High

Task 2: Identify and secure long-term stable funding sources.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Board and ISFMP Policy Board
APPROACH: Develop options and strategies; discuss coordination with existing programs
TIMING: Ongoing
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: High

Task 3: Develop coordinated objectives and approaches for outreach and education regarding the NEAMAP program to convey coordination among NEAMAP survey activities.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Operations Committee
APPROACH: Review ongoing outreach efforts by the NEAMAP Nearshore Surveys and develop objectives and approaches for a coordinated message and effort.
TIMING: 2012
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: Medium

Task 4: Develop five-year management plans.
Subtask: Develop annual operations plans and associated budgets.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Operations Committee and Board
APPROACH: Review and approval at Board meeting
TIMING: 4th/1st quarter of the transition year; 3rd/4th quarter for the annual plans
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: Low

Task 5: Develop protocols and procedures for internal and external program reviews.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Operations Committee
APPROACH: Utilize protocols developed for reviews of NEAMAP M-A/SNE Nearshore Trawl Survey, ME/NH Inshore Trawl Survey and the MA DMF Survey.
TIMING: Ongoing
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: Low

Data Management

Task 1: Inventory data utility and specific questions data should answer for use in stock assessments.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Analytical Committee, Operations Committee

APPROACH: Identify management and assessment questions and associated data required to answer those questions. Analytical Committee to identify data that should be collected for use in stock assessments. Operations Committee to evaluate how well NEAMAP surveys respond to these data needs.

TIMING: 2012

COST: Administrative budget

PRIORITY: High

Task 2: Research and evaluate new technologies for incorporation into the field, laboratory, and analysis components of NEAMAP Trawl Surveys.

LEAD COMMITTEE: NEAMAP Trawl Technical & Data Management Committees

APPROACH: Look to other similar surveys to identify equipment and software that could potentially streamline the collection of existing data types, augment the types and amounts of useful data collected, and/or facilitate the handling and analysis of these data for the NEAMAP Trawl Surveys. Use other sources (e.g., internet, trade shows, etc.) to identify these technologies as well. Evaluate the equipment/software with respect to feasibility of implementation and benefit to the surveys in terms of additional data collected and efficiencies gained. Use documentation developed by other programs as well as contacts within these programs to guide the evaluation process. Acquire and implement the desirable technologies as resources permit.

TIMING: Ongoing

COST: Funds are required for equipment purchase

PRIORITY: High

Task 3: Enhance NEAMAP data management system, including metadata. Provide data in support of research and fisheries management.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Consultant working with Data Management Committee and Analytical Committee

APPROACH: Data Management and Analytical committees develop specifications; system developed through contract. Coordinate with new SEAMAP data management system.

TIMING: 2012 and Ongoing

COST: Contract data programmer

PRIORITY: High

Task 4: Development of a GIS-compatible Trawl Station Database: Use state survey data to make GIS-compatible distribution and abundance maps of several species from existing surveys.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Data Management

APPROACH: Create once trawl data uploaded to database. Build on work by NEAMAP M-A/SNE Nearshore Survey. Follow progress of SEAMAP-related databases.

TIMING:

COST: May need to be developed through contract

PRIORITY: Medium

Task 5: Establish data collection, handling and processing protocols (data entry, editing,

auditing, qa/qc) to ensure quality of data.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Data Management

APPROACH: Compile existing protocols from partners

TIMING: To be developed at same time data is ready to be uploaded to database

COST: Only cost is time expenditure from committee members

PRIORITY: Medium

Coordination and Standardization

Task 1: Identify and recommend how to fill gaps in sampling (expand existing surveys); including temporal gaps in surveys occurring in only spring and fall.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Trawl Survey TC

APPROACH: Communicate with other regional fisheries research programs that are also addressing survey gaps - e.g., trap surveys for sea bass or scup, long line surveys; send NEAMAP representatives to their workshops to assist in planning or consider taking on as new NEAMAP surveys.

TIMING: Ongoing

COST: Travel for NEAMAP representatives to attend external research program workshops

PRIORITY: Medium

Task 2: Develop approaches for research to better understand catchability processes among the various NEAMAP surveys. Recommend approaches for intentional changes in survey operations (research vessels, gear, protocols) that have the potential to change catchability within surveys.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Analytical Technical Committee and Trawl Technical committee

APPROACH: Board to appoint committee; Develop comparison methods; Conduct tows when funding available

TIMING: Ongoing

COST: Administrative budget (Planning); Implementation costs

PRIORITY: Low

Task 3: Promote consistency and compatibility among regional programs

LEAD COMMITTEE: Board and Staff

APPROACH: Coordinate with existing regional fisheries statistics initiatives (SEAMAP, ASMFC Lobster Database, FIN, etc.) to promote consistency and compatibility between the programs. Provide liaison from the NEAMAP to these programs.

TIMING: Ongoing

COST: Administrative budget

PRIORITY: Low

Task 4: Conduct special symposia, including topics on understanding catchability processes (see task above), species identification, subsampling techniques, standardizing data (geometric or arithmetic mean, count zeros or not, effort/CPUE standardization, advances in sampling theory and design, training of survey staff).

LEAD COMMITTEE: Operations Committee

APPROACH: Develop priorities in coordination with Tech Committees

TIMING:

COST:
PRIORITY: Low

Task 5: Investigate potential for regional processing centers for biological samples.

LEAD COMMITTEE: Staff
APPROACH: Coordinate with ongoing activities by other organizations
TIMING: Ongoing
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: Low

Task 6: Develop standards for processing of biological samples (ageing, stomachs, etc).

LEAD COMMITTEE: Operations Committee and Staff
APPROACH: Staff to compile information from other groups; Operations Committee to identify gaps and develop standards as necessary
TIMING: Ongoing
COST: Administrative budget
PRIORITY: Low

Appendix I

Summary of Committee Responsibilities

NEAMAP Board

Operations

Task 1: Support continuation of the NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Surveys.

Task 2: Identify and secure long term stable funding sources.

Task 4: Develop five-year management plans.

Coordination and Standardization

Task 3: Promote consistency and compatibility among regional programs

Operations Committee

Operations

Task 1: Support continuation of the NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Surveys.

Task 3: Develop coordinated objectives and approaches for outreach and education regarding the NEAMAP program to convey coordination among NEAMAP survey activities.

Task 4: Develop five-year management plans.

Task 5: Develop protocols and procedures for internal and external program reviews.

Data Management

Task 1: Inventory data utility and specific questions data should answer for use in stock assessments.

Coordination and Standardization

Task 4: Conduct special symposia, including topics on understanding catchability processes, species identification, subsampling techniques, standardizing data (geometric or arithmetic mean, count zeros or not, effort/CPUE standardization, advances in sampling theory and design, training of survey staff).

Task 6: Develop standards for processing of biological samples (ageing, stomachs, etc).

Data Management Technical Committee

Data Management

Task 2: Research and evaluate new technologies for incorporation into the field, laboratory, and analysis components of NEAMAP Trawl Surveys.

Task 3: Enhance NEAMAP data management system, including metadata. Provide data in support of research and fisheries management.

Task 4: Development of a GIS-compatible Trawl Station Database: Use state survey data to make GIS-compatible distribution and abundance maps of several species from existing surveys.

Task 5: Establish data collection, handling and processing protocols (data entry, editing, auditing, qa/qc) to ensure quality of data.

Analytical Technical Committee

Data Management

Task 1: Inventory data utility and specific questions data should answer for use in stock assessments.

Task 3: Enhance NEAMAP data management system, including metadata. Provide data in support of research and fisheries management.

Coordination and Standardization

Task 2: Develop approaches for research to better understand catchability processes among the various NEAMAP surveys. Recommend approaches for intentional changes in survey operations (research vessels, gear, protocols) that have the potential to change catchability within surveys.

Trawl Survey Technical Committee

Data Management

Task 2: Research and evaluate new technologies for incorporation into the field, laboratory, and analysis components of NEAMAP Trawl Surveys.

Coordination and Standardization

Task 1: Identify and recommend how to fill gaps in sampling (expand existing surveys); including temporal gaps in surveys occurring in only spring and fall.

Task 2: Develop approaches for research to better understand catchability processes among the various NEAMAP surveys. Recommend approaches for intentional changes in survey operations (research vessels, gear, protocols) that have the potential to change catchability within surveys.

Staff

Coordination and Standardization

Task 3: Promote consistency and compatibility among regional programs

Task 5: Investigate potential for regional processing centers for biological samples.

Task 6: Develop standards for processing of biological samples (ageing, stomachs, etc).

Appendix II Goal Specific Tasks

Goal 1: Cooperatively plan, evaluate, and administer fishery-independent data collection programs, including a state/federal near shore trawl survey and other NEAMAP-sponsored activities.

Operations

- Task 1:* Support continuation of the NEAMAP Nearshore Trawl Surveys.
Task 2: Identify and secure long-term stable funding sources.
Task 4: Develop five-year management plans.
Subtask: Develop annual operations plans and associated budgets.
Task 5: Develop protocols and procedures for internal and external program reviews.

Goal 2: Establish a coordinated, long-term, fishery-independent data collection program of Atlantic coast living marine resources from Cape Hatteras to Maine for the purpose of resource and habitat assessment and management.

Coordination and Standardization

- Task 1:* Identify and recommend how to fill gaps in sampling (expand existing surveys); including temporal gaps in surveys occurring in only spring and fall.
Task 2: Develop approaches for research to better understand catchability processes among the various NEAMAP surveys. Recommend approaches for intentional changes in survey operations (research vessels, gear, protocols) that have the potential to change catchability within surveys.
Task 3: Promote consistency and compatibility among regional programs
Task 4: Conduct special symposia, including topics on understanding catchability processes (see task above), species identification, subsampling techniques, standardizing data (geometric or arithmetic mean, count zeros or not, effort/CPUE standardization, advances in sampling theory and design, training of survey staff).
Task 5: Investigate potential for regional processing centers for biological samples.
Task 6: Develop standards for processing of biological samples (ageing, stomachs, etc).

Goal 3: Operate the NEAMAP data management system for efficient management and timely dissemination of fishery independent data and information

Data Management

- Task 1:* Inventory data utility and specific questions data should answer for use in stock assessments.
Task 2: Research and evaluate new technologies for incorporation into the field, laboratory, and analysis components of NEAMAP Trawl Surveys.
Task 3: Enhance NEAMAP data management system, including metadata. Provide data in support of research and fisheries management.
Task 4: Development of a GIS-compatible Trawl Station Database: Use state survey data to make GIS-compatible distribution and abundance maps of several species from existing surveys.
Task 5: Establish data collection, handling and processing protocols (data entry, editing, auditing, qa/qc) to ensure quality of data.

Goal 4: Establish a comprehensive outreach program to secure funding and educate constituents on the actions, results, and benefits of the NEAMAP.

Operations

Task 3: Develop coordinated objectives and approaches for outreach and education regarding the NEAMAP program to convey coordination among NEAMAP survey activities.

Log of NEAMAP data use for species assessment and management

	SNE/MA	ME/NH	MASS
American Shad		Provided data for stock assessment 2007, data not used	
River Herring	Growth, size, distribution for 2012 assessment		
American Lobster		Data for stock assessment 2009 GOM	2009 Abundance indices by sex and size groupings, sex ratio, mean size for GOM
Atlantic Cod			Utilize GOM data in assessments
Atlantic Croaker	Growth, size, distribution for 2010 SEDAR; NEAMAP Trawl Survey should be considered for use in future assessments when a sufficient time series is available.		
Atlantic Menhaden	Diet data used for MSVPA updates, in turn used for menhaden nat. mort. est.		
Atlantic Sea Herring		Provided data for management	
Atlantic Striped Bass			
Atlantic Sturgeon	Provided data to ASMFC		
Black Drum	Provided data to ASMFC		
Black Sea Bass	Provided data to NMFS/ASMFC		Aged indices
Bluefish	Growth, size, distribution for update		
Butterfish	Provided data to NMFS/Councils		
Horseshoe Crab	Could have used some age and growth data, did not		Abundance indices by sex and size groupings, mean size
Jonah Crab		Provided data for designing video assessment survey	
Loligo squid	Swept area biomass estimates used in 2011 assessment		
Monkfish		Provided data for management	

Multispecies VPA	Diet data used in updates 2009, 2012		
Northern Shrimp		Provided data for determination of fishing season	
Sea Scallop	Provided data to NMFS/Councils	Provided data for designing species-specific survey	
Scup	Biomass indices used in update 2011		Biomass indices used in update 2011
Silver Hake (Whiting)			
Skates	Provided data to NMFS/Councils		
Smooth Dogfish			
Spiny Dogfish	Growth, size, distribution for TRAC 2010		
Large Coastal Sharks			
Small Coastal Sharks			
Spot	Provided data to ASMFC		
Summer Flounder	Provided data to NMFS/ASMFC		Aged indices
Tautog			Abundance indices
Weakfish	Lengths, weights, and ages were used to help characterize the stock during the 2009 assessment		
Winter Flounder - SNE	Provided data to NMFS/ASMFC		Aged indices
Winter Flounder - GOM		Indices at age were not included in the models for 2011 assessment due to time constraints and missing age data for some years. Used in the direct biomass area swept estimate.	Aged indices
Yellowtail Flounder			Cape Cod/GOM data used in assessments