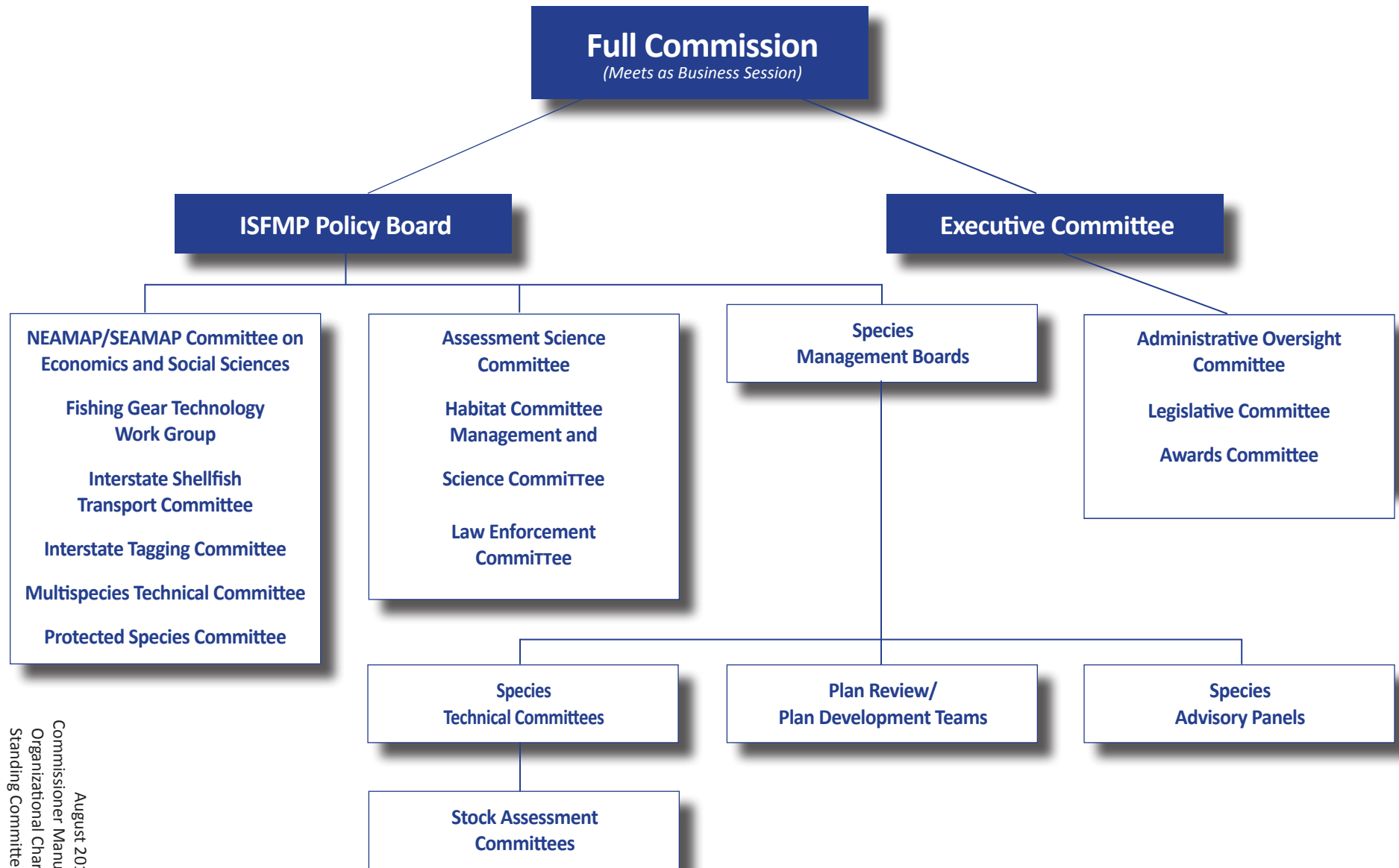


ASMFC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Dan McKiernan (MA), Chair

Doug Haymans (GA), Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal, Executive Director

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

TO: Commissioners and Proxies

FROM: Daniel McKiernan, Chair 

SUBJECT: Outlook for 2026 and Committee Assignments

DATE: February 26, 2026

Thank you, fellow Commissioners and Proxies, for providing me with the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the Commission. I look forward to working with each of you as we work toward achieving the goals in the 2026 Commission Action Plan.

In 2025, the Commission faced several challenges including the ongoing dispute with NOAA Grants Management regarding repayment of CARES assistance, legal challenges to management actions, and attempts to discredit fisheries science by stakeholder groups. Despite these challenges, we were able to make progress on a number of fisheries issues. Measures were implemented to continue progress toward striped bass stock rebuilding. A northern shrimp pilot winter sampling program was initiated to allow the industry to collect data to supplement existing assessment information. Regional allocation was established for cobia to reduce uncertainty in recreational data. Several important stock assessments were completed including American lobster Atlantic menhaden/ecological reference points, tautog, horseshoe crab and weakfish.

2026 will likely be a year of important transitions and potential continued headwinds however, we stand a better chance of adapting to these driving forces by working together as a group of 15 states and by evolving our partnerships with the regional councils, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, the Administration, Congress, and NGOs.

There are many high priorities for management in the upcoming year. The Striped Bass Board will take steps, if necessary, to stay on track to rebuild the stock by 2029. The lobster fishery will continue to work with NOAA Fisheries to develop measures to protect North Atlantic right whales and examine strategies to ensure the long-term health of the Gulf of Maine lobster resource. The Commission will conduct a stakeholder engagement process to identify possible changes to the Utility/Reward/Harvest Policy (U/R/H) functions of the horseshoe crab ARM Framework to better align with stakeholder values and consider recommendations. The Commission will continue to address recreational management reform in collaboration with MAFMC for black sea bass, summer flounder, scup, and bluefish by considering sector separation. Both the Atlantic Menhaden and Black Sea Bass Boards will consider the commercial allocation structure and determine if changes are needed. In addition, the Atlantic Menhaden Board will consider management in the Chesapeake Bay. The Commission's Fisheries Science Program will complete stock assessments for Atlantic croaker and cobia, as well as work on several other

assessments for completion in 2027. In addition to assessments, the Science Program will promote consistency in fishery-independent survey data collection across the Atlantic coast. In collaboration with NOAA, USGS, and USFWS, science committees will improve the collection and use of environmental data in stock assessments. The NEAMAP survey program will also work with the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP) to develop plans for wind energy area survey mitigation.

In 2026, the Habitat Committee plans to engage Commissioners, stakeholders, and the public about the importance of habitat to healthy fisheries and ecosystems. In addition, the Committee will work to strengthen engagement among the Committee and Commissioners by identifying near-term priorities that will best support the needs of the States and the Commission.

Timely and accurate data are the basis on which all our decisions are made. The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program will continue to coordinate with the Gulf and Pacific Commissions, regional management councils, and federal agencies on data collection and management initiatives.

FY26 funding level proposals from the President, House and Senate varied wildly. In the end, Congress rejected significant proposed cuts to many of our most essential programs. The value of these programs was reaffirmed by both the realized funding provided, and the narrative within the law itself. Beyond funding for our bread-and-butter programs, we also secured funding for novel priorities. These include the Chesapeake Bay menhaden study, an industry-based trawl survey pilot program to supplement the R/V Bigelow surveys, and funding to offset what SC DNR spent on the R/V Lady Lillian retrofit.

We received strong support from our partners on the Hill in our pursuit of an additional CARES Act disputed payments extension. Neither this nor the funding support could have been possible without strong relationships on the Hill and consistent engagement.

In the new Congress, beginning in January, staff will continue to promote our fiscal priorities, monitor new legislation on issues such as MRIP reform, Sportfish Restoration Reauthorization, and all other relevant fishery bills. We expect federal agency staffing levels and their capacity to complete tasks will be a challenge to address Commission priorities. Continued investment in staff and Commissioner relationships with members of Congress and their staff will help us even further over the next year.

Below are the standing committees of the Commission and their appointees. Please review the membership of each committee carefully, as changes have been made. If you are unable or unwilling to serve, let Bob Beal or me know. Participation reflects your commitment to the Commission and the sacrifices you make to be an active part of our process. I thank you in advance for your commitment to the success of the Commission.

Administrative Oversight Committee

Doug Haymans, Chair
Legislative Chair (Vacant)
Roy Miller
Spud Woodward
Joe Cimino
Dan McKiernan, (ex officio)

Jason Walsh (North Carolina)
Eugene Frimpong (Georgia)
Manoj Shivlani (Florida)
Bobby Murphy (NEFSC)
Tara Scott (NOAA)
José Montañez (MAFMC)
John Hadley (SAFMC)

Awards Committee

Spud Woodward, Chair
Marty Gary
Kurt Blanchard
Kathy Knowlton
Dr. Malcolm Rhodes
Eric Reid
Loren Lustig

Nominating Committee

David Borden, Chair
Spud Woodward
Roy Miller

Resolutions Committee

Joe Cimino, Chair
David Sikorski
Stephen Train

Legislative Committee

Bill Hyatt, Chair
Meredith Mendelson
Ray Kane
Rob Lafrance
Bob Caccese
Roy Miller
Brian McManus
David Sikorski

Committee on Economics & Social Sciences

Sabrina Lovell (NOAA), Chair
Andrew Scheld (Virginia), Vice Chair
Josh Stoll (Maine)
Michael Carroll (Massachusetts)
Todd Guilfoos (Rhode Island)
Syma Ebbin (Connecticut)
Suresh Sethi (New York)
Michael Russell (New Jersey)
George Parsons (Delaware)
Jorge Holzer (Maryland)

Artificial Reef Committee

State

Jordan Byrum (North Carolina), Chair
Christopher LaPorta (New York), Vice Chair
Mark Rousseau (Massachusetts)
Patrick Barrett (Rhode Island)
David Molnar (Connecticut)
Peter Clarke (New Jersey)
Scott Newlin (Delaware)
Michael Malpezzi (Maryland)
Alicia Nelson (Virginia)
Ryan Yaden (South Carolina)
Paul Medders (Georgia)
Jeff Renchen (Florida)

Federal

Michael Burton (NOAA Fisheries)
Dr. Pace Wilber (NOAA Fisheries)
Russ Dunn (NOAA Fisheries)

Habitat Committee

State

Kate Wilke (TNC), Chair
Eric Schneider (Rhode Island), Vice Chair
Lars Hammer (Maine)
Robert Atwood (New Hampshire)
Mark Rousseau (Massachusetts)
Robert LaFrance (Connecticut)
Alexa Fournier (New York)
Russ Babb (New Jersey)
David Dippold (Pennsylvania)
Zina Hense (Delaware)
Marek Topolski (Maryland)
Tiffany Birge (Virginia)
Michelle Brodeur (North Carolina)
Chris McDonough (South Carolina)
Paul Medders (Georgia)
Kent Smith (Florida)

Dr. Wilson Laney (North Carolina
Coastal Federation)

Federal

Phil Colarusso (EPA)
Suzanne Ayvazian (EPA)
Marnita Chintala (EPA)
Jessica Coakley (MAFMC)
Lou Chiarella (NOAA Fisheries)

Dr. Pace Wilber (NOAA Fisheries)
Virginia Croom (NOAA Fisheries)
Dr. Teresa McTigue (NOS)
Michelle Bachman (NEFMC)
Forest Vanderbilt (USGS)
Walter Boltin (US FWS)

Thank you for your willingness to serve, and please feel free to contact Bob or me if you have any questions or suggestions.

cc: Artificial Reef Committee
Commissioner Proxies
Committee on Economics and Social Sciences
Habitat Committee
Law Enforcement Committee

Standing Committees

The Commission operates through a network of committees; some of which are standing committees to which the Chair appoints Commissioners (or proxies or others with appropriate expertise) and others to which membership is determined by each state. A description of current committees follows.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall have full power to approve formal administrative policies of the Commission; to dismiss the Executive Director; to approve the formal position of the Commission on legislation; to provide for the orderly administration of the Commission's affairs; and generally to act in place of the Commission in the interim between meetings. The three Commissioners from each state shall caucus before the annual meeting to determine their representative on the Executive Committee for the coming year. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Chair of the Legislators, the Chair of the Governors' Appointees and the Chairs of the member states delegations not represented by the Chair or the Vice Chair. (Article IV, Section 2, Rules and Regulations)

ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) was appointed by Chair Bill Hogarth in 1993 to provide guidance to the Executive Director on personnel, fiscal and organizational matters. The minimum make-up of the AOC is: Commission Vice Chair (AOC Chair), Commission Chair, and a representative from each of the Legislators and Governors' Appointees. In addition, the Commission Chair may appoint additional Commissioners as members in order to provide full regional representation on the Committee (i.e., New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic.) The responsibilities of the AOC include, but are not limited to: (1) review of proposed budget (Spring); (2) review of annual audit (September); (3) review of human resources policies; (4) review of proposed new committees and/or changes to existing ones; (5) review and approve budget changes during the year; and (6) oversight on matters relating to Commission affairs that are not delegated to another committee. The AOC reports to the Executive Committee.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Commission, through the work of the Awards Committee, annually recognizes outstanding individuals in the field of fisheries. The David H. Hart Award is presented at the Commission's Annual Meeting to an individual who has contributed to the betterment of the fisheries of the Atlantic coast through significant biological, legislative, enforcement or management activities. The Annual Awards of Excellence are presented at the Commission's Spring Meeting, to individuals who have made highly significant contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coastal fisheries in each the following areas:

Scientific/Technical/Advisory; Congressional/Legislative; Law Enforcement; Management/Policy and Outreach/Advocacy. Such contributions must be for work on conservation issues of interstate, i.e. regional or Atlantic coastwide importance.

The Awards Committee is comprised of an Administrative Commissioner, a Legislative Commissioner, a Governor's Appointee Commissioner, representatives of the Management & Science Committee and the Law Enforcement Committee, and the Commission Chair (ex-officio).

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee reviews federal legislation of importance to the Commission and develops a recommended Commission position on pertinent bills and resolutions. Recommendations are then reviewed by the Executive Committee for approval or rejection, thereby, establishing the official Commission policy on pending federal legislation. These official positions are then presented to the U.S. Congress upon request, normally in the form of hearing testimony or staff communications.

Legislative Committee meetings are held at the Commission's Spring and Annual (Fall) meetings. Only ASMFC Commissioners in good standing are appointed to the Legislative Committee. The Commission Chair determines size and membership of the Legislative Committee, with consideration given to the geographic and social diversity of the Commission. Appointments are made annually but can be amended at any time at the discretion of the Commission Chair. Committee members are not restricted by term limits. If a member of the Committee leaves the Commission, the Commission Chair will appoint a replacement member to the Legislative Committee. (Please see "ASMFC's Legislative Tracking Sheet" under Guiding Legislation later in this manual.)

ISFMP POLICY BOARD

The ISFMP Policy Board, comprised of the Commissioners from the fifteen member states and representatives of District of Columbia (DC), the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC), the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, oversees the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program and meets at least bi-annually to establish and monitor the direction of the program.

ASSESSMENT SCIENCE COMMITTEE

The ISFMP Policy Board appoints membership to the Assessment Science Committee, with nominations provided by the 15 state marine fishery agencies, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. Individuals are nominated based on their stock assessment and population dynamics expertise. Agencies may nominate personnel that require some training prior to official appointment as a committee member. The ISFMP Policy Board reviews all nominations and appoints members to the ASC based on expertise, as opposed to agency representation. The ASC membership is kept to a maximum of 25 members and periodic rotation is considered.

MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE COMMITTEE

The Management & Science Committee (MSC) consists of 19 members, one from each of the 15 member states, two from the National Marine Fisheries Service (one each from the Northeast and Southeast Regions), and two from the Fish and Wildlife Service (one each from Regions 4 and 5). The state members are senior scientists within their individual organizations, representing the level between biologists and administrators. Thus, members possess a high level of scientific expertise along with extensive experience in practical fisheries management. A Chair is elected annually. The MSC reports to the Commission's Executive Committee, the ISFMP Policy Board or other Commission bodies depending on the issue.

HABITAT COMMITTEE

The Habitat Committee, under the direction of the ISFMP Policy Board, is a standing ASMFC Committee that conducts the activities of the Habitat Program, with the assistance of the Habitat Coordinator. According to the ISFMP Charter (2019), the purpose of the Habitat Committee is to review, research, and develop appropriate response to concerns of inadequate, damaged, or insufficient habitat for Atlantic coastal species of concern to the ASMFC. The Committee meets at least bi-annually – usually twice at Commission scheduled meeting weeks and often once independently. The Habitat Committee operates under the principle of consensus agreement.

The Habitat Committee Chair and Vice-Chair each serve a term of two years in their respective positions to coincide with the Commission Chair's term. Membership generally includes a representative from each member state, although this representative may not be a current ASMFC Commissioner. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries are each allowed two seats on the Habitat Committee, while the following federal agencies are allowed one seat each: National Ocean Service, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, two seats shall be available on the Habitat Committee for members from non-governmental organizations (NGO).

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Law Enforcement Committee's goal is to integrate law enforcement more fully into the decisions of the Commission. The Committee provides information requested by the Commission on law enforcement issues, brings resolutions before the Commission addressing enforcement concerns, coordinates law enforcement among the states, exchanges data, and identifies potential problems. A law enforcement officer from each of the member states, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard and the US Fish & Wildlife Service serves on this committee.