

EAST COAST CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO PLANNING INITIATIVE

Update following:

February 2023 Climate Change Scenario Planning Summit Meeting,
May 2023 NRCC Meeting

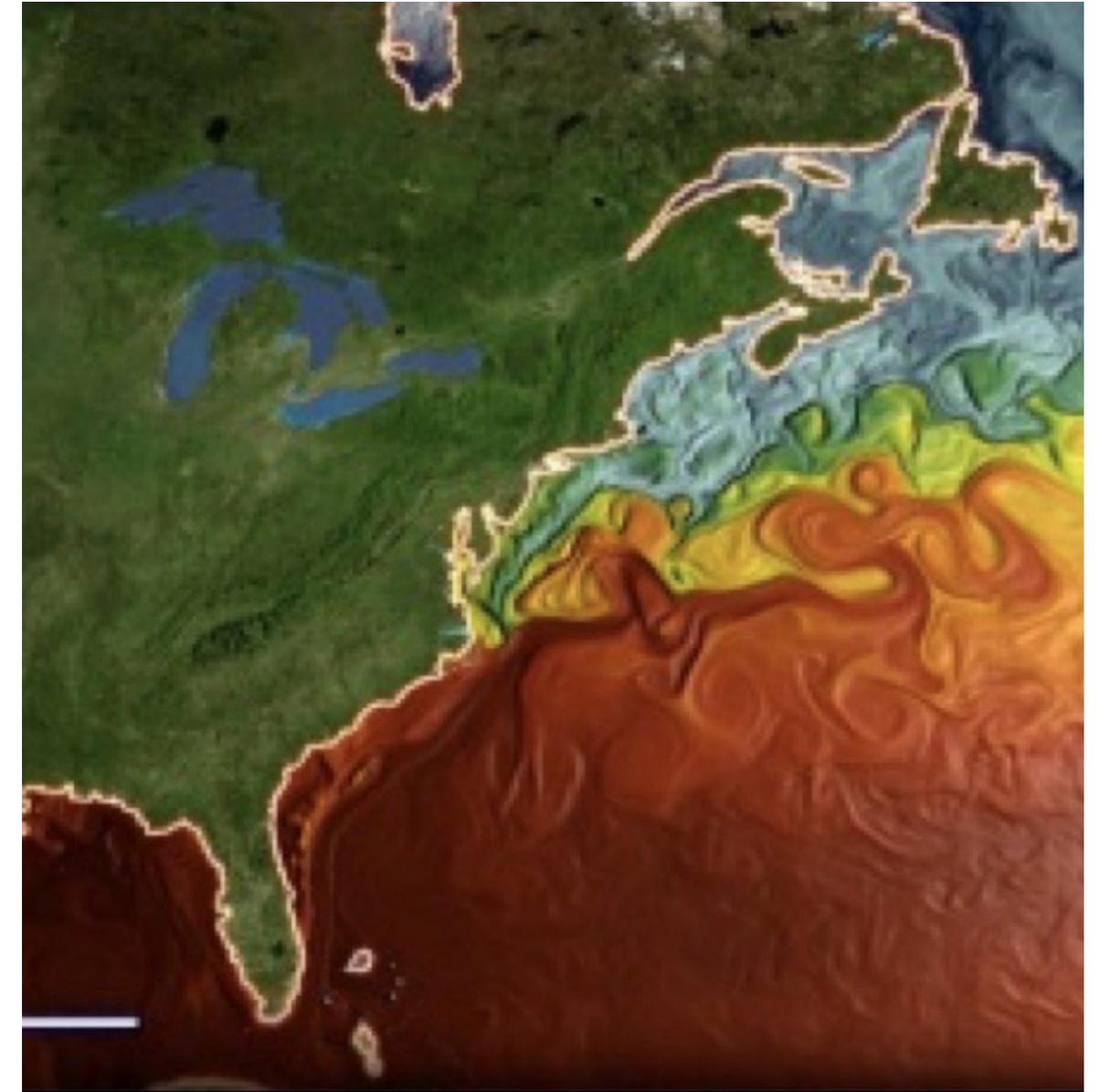
Roger Pugliese, SAFMC Core Team

SAFMC Meeting, September 11, 2023



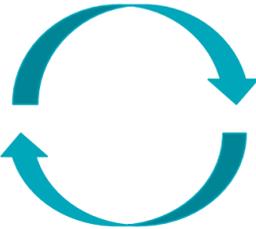
Initiative Objectives

1. Explore how **East Coast fishery governance and management issues** will be affected by climate driven change in fisheries, particularly changing stock availability and distributions.
1. **Advance a set of tools and processes** that provide flexible and robust fishery management strategies, which continue to promote fishery conservation and resilient fishing communities, and address uncertainty in an era of climate change.



East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative Timeline

Steps in this Multi-Year Initiative



Key Topics identified by Councils/Commissions

1. Cross-Jurisdictional Governance

- Identify improvements to structure and representation for governance on the U.S. East Coast
- Identify guidelines for when and how management responsibility should change
- Improve the efficiency and the efficacy of joint fishery management plans (FMP)
- Improve coordination and collaboration among management entities

2. Managing Under Uncertainty

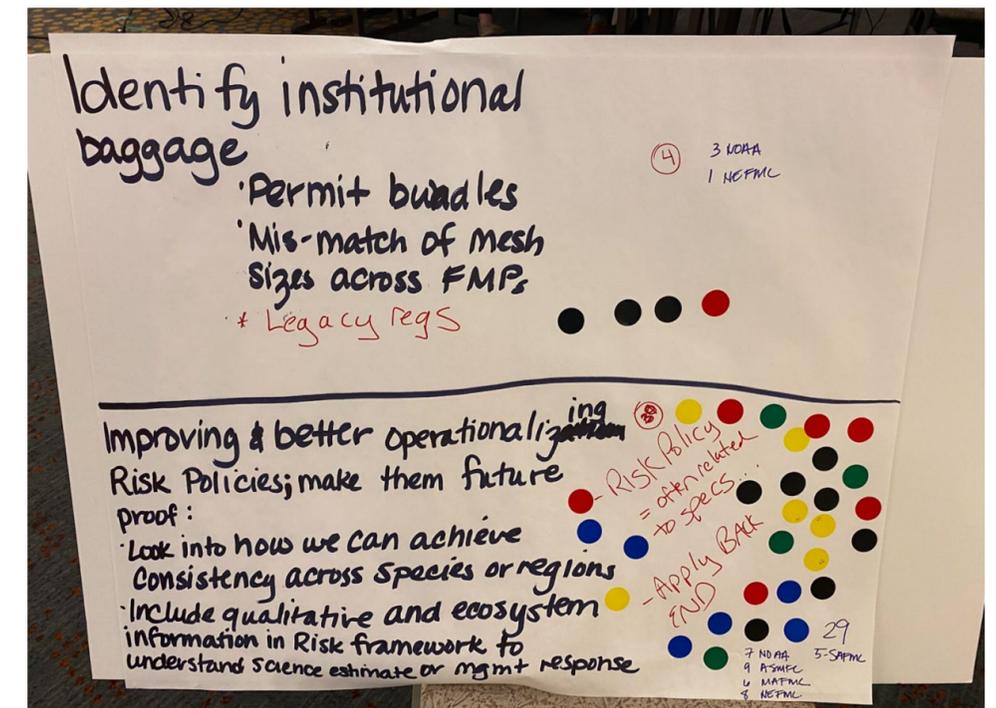
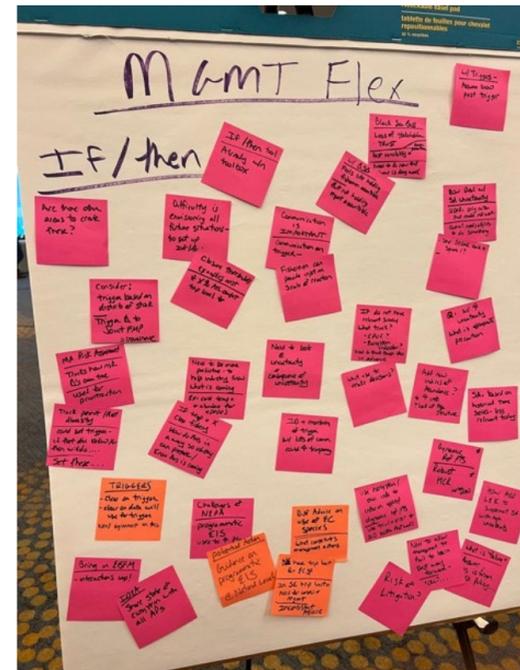
- Better accommodate uncertainty in the stock assessment process and address related management challenges
- Increasing flexibility, adaptability, and robustness in management

3. Data Sources and Partnerships

- Prioritizing data and information needed to manage in a changing environment
- Using funding more efficiently
- Utilize the fishing industry for data collection
- Foster partnerships for data sharing

Summit Meeting - February 2023

- **Goal:** develop set of potential governance & management actions resulting from scenario-based exploration of the future
- Attended by over 50 fishery managers representing 3 East Coast Councils, ASMFC, and NOAA Fisheries
- Facilitated discussion addressing the 3 previously identified key topics
- Resulting Products:
 - Detailed Summit Report
 - Action Menu
- Meeting Materials: [East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Summit — Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council \(mafmc.org\)](https://mafmc.org)



Introduction to Action Menu

Purpose of the Potential Action Menu

- Expands on, clarifies, and prioritizes the potential governance and management actions identified during the summit.
- Intended to be an evolving document, used as a planning tool to guide development of collective and individual priorities, and a place to capture future issues and ideas.

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning
Potential Action Menu
June 2023



INTRODUCTION

The U.S. East Coast Fishery Management Councils (Councils, New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducted an East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative to explore jurisdictional, governance, and management issues related to climate change and fishery stock distributions. Representatives from these fishery management organizations have worked collaboratively and engaged diverse stakeholders to explore how climate change will affect fishery management. This exploration was based on a multi-stage scenario planning process, where stakeholders generated several different possibilities for how climate change might affect east coast fisheries.

East Coast Scenario Planning Summit

The capstone to this initiative was the East Coast Scenario Planning Summit, held on February 15-16, 2023. It was attended by representatives from each of the organizations identified above. The goal of the Summit was to develop a set of potential governance and management actions resulting from a scenario-based exploration of the future. It was not possible for the Summit to cover all the issues raised throughout the scenario process. Instead, focus was placed on three overarching themes: Cross-Jurisdictional Governance, Managing Under Increased Uncertainty, and Data Sources and Partnerships. A report of the Summit meeting proceedings is available at: https://www.mafmc.org/s/ECSP-Summit-Report_April-2023.pdf.

As described in the Summit report, participants discussed ideas already generated throughout the process, reflected on them, and added new ideas for potential actions. The core team then grouped comments and ideas raised by participants into potential areas for action. After a prioritization exercise, Summit participants identified potential practical next steps for a limited number of ideas under each of the three themes. There was not time to develop practical next steps for all potential actions that generated some level of support.

Role and Structure of Potential Action Menu

This potential action menu reviews the actions identified at the Summit and suggests possible next steps beyond what could be considered at that meeting. In some cases, the core team has taken the list of potential actions from the Summit and consolidated those with similar themes and would have similar next steps. Thus, the list of potential actions in this document does not always align completely with those in the Summit report. Each potential action includes multiple next steps items.

The Northeast Region Coordinating Council plus the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council leadership reviewed all the potential actions and prioritized them into three levels (high priority, medium priority, and parking lot). Details for parking lot actions are provided in Appendix 1. A full list of potential actions by priority level can be found in Appendix 2.

High priority potential actions are those that could be quick wins and/or that the NRCC working with SAFMC leadership viewed as important issues to address in the near term. Some of these actions

ECSP Potential Action Menu - 1

NRCC + SAFMC Review of Action Menu - May 2023

● Provided input on

- Are the descriptions adequate and clear for common understanding of each action?
- Whether each action is a high, medium, or low priority
- Revisions to specific next steps
- Where additional groundwork is needed before considering certain issues

SUGGESTED STANDING WORKING GROUPS

| Group | Level | Members | Meetings | Charge |
|--|------------|---|--|---|
| East Coast Climate Coordination Group | Leadership | 1 each: MAFMC, NEFMC, SAFMC, ASMFC, NOAA-GARFO, NOAA NEFSC, NOAA SEFSC, NOAA SERO | 1x per year in person, with NRCC | Oversee and Coordinate Implementation |
| Climate Innovation Group | Staff | TBD; will likely rely on the Core Team | TBD; likely webinar and occasional in-person | Monitor progress and actions for each organization; support the Coordination Group. |

High Priority Potential Actions

HIGH PRIORITY POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Only includes High Priority Actions identified by the NRCC review
- Listed by Theme
- Those involving SAFMC are highlighted

SAFMC Considerations:

Does the Council support staff and advisors (APs, SSCs) devoting time and effort to the highlighted actions?

Are there any actions that the Council considers high priority?

Are there any actions that the Council opposes pursuing as a high priority (if so, could recommend moving to the medium priority or the “parking lot”)

Are there medium priority or parking lot topics that the Council would like staff to consider pursuing?

High priority actions - Cross-Jurisdictional Governance theme

Theme 1: Cross Jurisdictional Governance

| Potential Action | Tasks | Lead |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Reevaluate Council committee structure, use, and decision making | Conduct a leadership planning exercise to further explore options for committee-based decision-making, committee structure, and committee use, building on ideas discussed at the Summit | Coordination Group |
| Re-evaluate and potentially revise Advisory Panel representation | Evaluate AP representation and appointment process, recruitment and selection, consider underrepresented and underserved groups | Each management body |
| Develop joint management agreements with aim of clarifying roles and increasing efficiency | Review joint FMPs and agreements between the MAFMC and Commission (summer flounder/scup/black sea bass/bluefish) to identify areas for improved efficacy and efficiency | Commission and MAFMC staff |
| Improve coordination across NOAA offices and regions | GARFO and SERO review respective management action procedures and processing to highlight opportunities each employs which may benefit or expedite implementation of actions approved by the Councils. | GARFO, SERO |

High Priority Potential Actions - Managing Under Increased Uncertainty Theme

Theme 2: Managing Under Increased Uncertainty

| Potential Action | Tasks | Lead |
|--|---|---|
| Identify ecosystem-level contextual information that can be considered within the management process to help incorporate climate information into decisions | NMFS offers to present findings of newly released Tech Memo looking at example ecosystem risk assessments to Councils and Commission | NMFS staff coordinating with Councils/Commission |
| | Consider adding major state-only-managed fisheries to these ecosystem risk assessments for a more complete perspective | NMFS |
| | Identify opportunities to use specific types of quantitative and qualitative ecosystem information to identify and avoid risks | Climate Innovations Group, individual Councils and Commission |
| | Share lessons learned | NRCC or other |
| Streamline FMP documentation and rulemaking | Review the use of programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for Council actions and encourage their use where appropriate | MAFMC; considering this near-term |
| | Identify areas where NEPA documents can be streamlined, including when incorporation by reference to recent related documents would be appropriate | GARFO, SERO, NMFS HQ, Councils |
| | Develop more clear and consistent guidelines for use of Categorical Exclusions (CEs) under NEPA, including MSA document templates; identifying NMFS vs. Council responsibilities | GARFO, SERO, NMFS HQ, Councils |
| | Work with NOAA General Counsel (GC) to establish consistent GC guidance with regards to the use of CEs and Supplemental Information Reports (SIRs), rulemaking, public comment etc. | GARFO, SERO, NMFS HQ, Councils |
| | Identify process steps Council and NFMS staff can take to use MSA documents to satisfy NEPA requirements | GARFO, SERO, NMFS HQ |
| | Consider alternative rulemaking approaches or action development approaches | GARFO, SERO, NMFS HQ, Councils |

High Priority Potential Actions - Data Sources and Partnerships Theme

Theme 3: Data Sources and Partnerships

| Potential Action | Tasks | Lead |
|---|--|---|
| Expand study fleet, include recreational fisheries, and ensure data are used | Identify places where study fleet and associated projects' data can be used; address data access; ID incentives; include environmental data | Councils, Commission, and Centers |
| | Include Recreational Study Fleet Pilots in GARFO's Recreational Saltwater Fishing draft policy implementation plan | GARFO, NEFSC |
| Use survey mitigation around offshore wind to transition to industry-based surveys or other survey platforms | Implement the NOAA Fisheries and BOEM Federal Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy - Northeast U.S. Region | NEFSC, |
| | Explore opportunities to utilize smaller platforms such as commercial vessels for conducting surveys | NEFSC, SEFSC |
| | Develop plan for integrating multiple survey data streams into the assessment process | NEFSC, SEFSC |
| Improve the use of existing data | Hold meetings to discuss what existing data streams and historical datasets could be better utilized to inform decision making, assessments, and monitoring. Do this across regions and management bodies. | Councils, Commission, Regional Offices, and Centers |
| | Have similar meetings at the PDT/FMAT (IPT for SAFMC) level for more immediate FMP needs. | Councils and Commission |

Next Steps

- **Communication**

- Share summit report and potential action menu
- Press release

- **Finalize scenario planning toolkit**

- Designed to be used by any East Coast fishery stakeholder
- Summarizes the ECSP scenario work and offers suggestions for how other groups can use the material to have valuable conversations about the challenges of climate change
- Includes presentations, draft agendas, scenario creation worksheets, and guidelines for use

- **Review summit outcomes and action menu with other organizations**

- August and September ASMFC, MAFMC, SAFMC meetings

- **Initial East Coast Climate Coordination Group and Climate Innovation Group meetings**

- Core Team will continue to coordinate pending establishment of Climate Innovation Group

- **Councils and Commission consider incorporating these actions into work plans**

- Timing / mechanisms to be discussed