



New England  
Fishery Management  
Council



**NOAA**  
FISHERIES



# East Coast Climate Coordination Group Charter May 2024



New England  
Fishery Management  
Council



**NOAA**  
FISHERIES



## Background

The changing climate is having significant impacts on the nation's marine life and ecosystems, and the many communities and economies that depend on them. Scientists expect environmental changes such as warming oceans, rising sea levels, increasing frequency and intensity of floods and droughts, and ocean acidification with continued shifts in climate.

The U.S. East Coast Fishery Management Councils (New England [NEFMC], Mid-Atlantic [MAFMC], and South Atlantic [SAFMC]), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), and NOAA's 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 and their management.

One of the outcomes of this process was the development of a Potential Action Menu, which describes practical next steps to address governance and management issues identified during the scenario planning process under the following three themes: 1) Cross-Jurisdictional Governance; 2) Managing Under Increased Uncertainty; and 3) Data Sources and Partnerships. Another outcome was the formation of the East Coast Climate Coordination Group (Coordination Group), which prioritizes and updates the Potential Action Menu each year. This body will ensure actions are prioritized, jointly or by individual management organizations, appropriately resourced, and executed in a coordinated fashion.

## Objectives and Roles

The Coordination Group's role is to make recommendations to coordinate resources and priorities among the participating organizations relative to actions being considered in the Potential Action Menu. Specifically, the Coordination Group will prioritize a collective set of actions for the participating organizations to consider that will make positive changes for fisheries governance and management in the face of climate change, given the limited resources available at any given point in time. The Coordination Group also directs the work of the Climate Core Team.

Specifically, the Coordination Group will:

- a. Prioritize actions, jointly and by promoting priorities within their individual management organizations:
  - i. Recommend a set of actions to be considered by individual management organizations as the organizations set annual priorities;
  - ii. Review individual management organization feedback; and

- iii. Interface with NMFS Regional Office/Science Center work planning efforts.
- b. Assess and recommend the allocation of resources available from participating groups to address issues and complete prioritized actions (including monetary and staff resources);
- c. Ensure joint/cooperative actions are executed in a coordinated manner, including identifying and tasking the appropriate group(s) to address each action based on the above priorities;
- d. Review and consider information provided by the Climate Core Team, including: (1) Climate-related trends in the fisheries; (2) core team suggested actions; and (3) progress updates on ongoing actions;
- e. In cooperation with the Climate Core Team, identify opportunities for external support and partnerships to address actions as they arise; and
- f. Populate and provide guidance to the staff-level Climate Core Team, including tasking and direction on gathering/summarizing information required by the Coordination Group and planning/completing special projects as needed beyond routine Climate Core Team tasks.

Priority actions set by the group will not always be worked on by every participating organization in the Coordination Group due to the nature of the action itself. Some actions could be completed by one or select organization(s). In addition, all potential actions do not need to be applied universally. Some actions might apply to only some areas, or management bodies, or fishery management plans. Some actions can be approved and undertaken solely by the recommendation of this group alone, while others will require Council, ASMFC, or NMFS approval.

## **Membership**

This body will include one leadership-level member from each of the following organizations: ASMFC, MAFMC, NEFMC, SAFMC, NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), NMFS Southeast Regional Office (SERO), NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), and NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). Additional participants from each organization, or external participants, may be invited to participate in some meetings as needed based on the topics of discussion but will not be considered members and will not be directly involved in consensus-based decision making. A staff member will be designated from the Chair's organization to help with planning, logistics, and documentation for meetings. This staff member may be drawn from the Climate Core Team or other staff. Summaries of meetings will be shared with NMFS Headquarters.

## **Operations**

The group will be led by a single member who will serve as Chair for one calendar year. The Chair will rotate through the organizations in the order identified in Table 1. The Chair will be the host for the meetings conducted in person or via webinar. The Chair will be offset from the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council (NRCC), so the Chair

would not chair the NRCC in the same year. The Climate Core Team member from the Coordination Group Chair's organization will chair the Core Team during that year.

The Chair will plan the Coordination Group meetings for that year, including determining meeting location and type (in-person or virtual) and providing financial support for the meeting space but not individual travel or per diem. Some meetings could be held in conjunction with other meetings (such as Council, ASMFC, NRCC, or Council Coordination Committee meetings) if desired and feasible; others would be held independently. Chairs are responsible for developing the agenda (in coordination with other Coordination Group members, the Climate Core Team, and other staff as necessary) and for facilitating discussion and decision making during the meeting. Meeting materials should ideally be distributed two weeks prior to the meeting but not less than one week before the meeting. Draft agendas should be developed and distributed at least one month in advance of the meeting. Meeting announcement and details will be posted on MAFMC's web page.

The group will meet twice per year, targeting one in-person meeting and one virtual meeting, plus intersessional meetings as needed. The first meeting each year will be in-person in late spring or early summer, to allow the Climate Core Team to review climate science and related fisheries information to support prioritization discussions, with the goal of the Coordination Group's recommendations feeding into the priorities setting processes for member organizations from the beginning of those processes (which begin in late summer or early fall). A limited number of Core Team members are expected to attend the in-person meeting (Core Team Chair and staff support from host). Additional Core Team attendance is at the discretion of their supervising E3CG member and should be coordinated with the host. The second meeting will be in the fall.

The Coordination Group will operate under consensus decision making. Only members of the Coordination Group may participate in building consensus; invited participants would not be a part of the decision-making process.

Coordination Group meetings are open to the public with webinar broadcasts, if available. Meeting location and webinar registration link (if available) can be shared by member organizations as appropriate. Some closed sessions may occur to discuss sensitive matters. Public comment opportunities will be at the discretion of the Chair and noted on the agenda.

**Table 1. Coordination Group/Core Team Chair/Host Rotation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Chair</b>
2024	GARFO
2025	ASMFC
2026	SERO
2027	MAFMC
2028	NEFSC
2029	SAFMC
2030	SEFSC
2031	NEFMC
2032	GARFO
2033	ASMFC
2034	SERO

## **Signatures and Approval**

We, the undersigned members of the East Coast Climate Coordination Group, hereby agree to the terms of this Charter, as finalized on [date to be added].

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Administrator, GARFO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Science and Research Director, NEFSC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Administrator, SERO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Science and Research Director, SEFSC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director, ASMFC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director, NEFMC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director, MAFMC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director, SAFMC