

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
HABITAT PROTECTION AND ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Jekyll Island, Georgia
March 5, 2019

The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Committee approved the agenda and minutes from the December 2019 meeting.

Atlantic Coast-Wide Discussions: How to address species expansion northwards?

Council staff opened the March 2019 joint session by providing an overview of the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) discussions to date. The Committee then discussed each group's views on coordination to address movement of species to the north. NEFMC views were expressed by Dr. John Quinn (Chair), Terry Stockwell (Vice-Chair), and Tom Nies (Executive Director); MAFMC views by Mike Luisi (Chair), Warren Elliott (Vice-Chair), and Chris Moore (ED); ASMFC views by Bob Beal (ED); and SAFMC views by Jessica McCawley (Chair).

There was a general discussion about the need for research/data systems to be ready to pick up new species and the need for a governance system that preserves each group's authority.

There was agreement to move forward with the following two groups/activities:

1. Science/Data – the Northeast and Southeast Fisheries Science Centers are leading this effort and a workshop is currently being scheduled. The Councils want to be involved in the workshop/discussions, in part to ensure ongoing fishery independent data collection programs continue (e.g., SEAMAP, NEAMAP, SEFIS, and State programs). The South Atlantic Council's Citizen Science Program is exploring a mechanism for the public to act as an early warning system to report when new species show up in an area.
2. Governance – the CCC members of the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Councils and the ASMFC Executive Director will work to develop a way to manage these species that clearly identifies each group's roles/responsibility without any group losing any authority. This group should meet more frequently as needed via conference calls, webinars, and additional in-person meetings in conjunction with other meetings of the partners (e.g., NRCC meetings). The CCC/ASMFC group will designate staff from their respective organizations to evaluate the following approaches:
 - a. Options included in Attachment A5 from this meeting.
 - b. Scenario Planning Exercise used by the Pacific Council.
 - c. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) approach used to consider potential military base closures.
 - d. Identify roles for each group in this "obligatory partnership".

Habitat and Ecosystem Tools, Model Development and Regional Partner Coordination

Staff highlighted coordination and collaboration with habitat and ecosystem partners in the region. Debra Hernandez, Executive Director of the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) provided the Committee an overview of the organization composed of coastal and ocean scientists, businesses and stakeholders working together to monitor and observe the ocean to understand change and enable better decision-making.

Note: Council staff drafts the timing and task motion based on Committee action. If points require clarification, they will be added to the draft motion. The Committee should review this wording carefully to be sure it accurately reflects their intent prior to making the motion.

Timing and Task(s)

MOTION. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASK(S):

1. Coordinate with MAFMC, NEFMC and ASMFC to address both governance and science focus areas associated with species moving north as directed in the March 2019 SAFMC meeting.
2. Coordinate with Chair to consider a Council response on the proposed rule on the Waters of the United States impact on Essential Fish Habitat in the South Atlantic Region.
3. Others??

APPROVED BY COUNCIL