



information point in the regulatory process for Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) actions and agency participation should be broad.

The following Headquarters and Regional Office entities are expected to participate in all Council meeting briefings: NMFS Front Office (F), F/Sustainable Fisheries (SF), NMFS Regional Fisheries Science Centers, and the appropriate Regional Administrator and Regional counterparts to the Headquarters Offices listed above. NOAA General Counsel for Fisheries (GCF) and the NOAA Office of General Counsel for Enforcement & Litigation (GCEL), both at the Regional and Headquarters levels, should routinely attend. Other NMFS Headquarters Offices and their Regional counterparts, such as F/Science and Technology (ST), F/Habitat Conservation (HC), and F/Protected Resources (PR), should attend as appropriate.

### **Council Meeting Briefing Memorandums**

As the primary lead in the Council Meeting Briefings, the Regional Office will prepare a briefing memorandum in advance of each Council meeting. It should be concise, emphasizing important and/or controversial issues, including those dealing with enforcement and protected species, and provide the Regional Administrators' anticipated position, with supporting rationale. The briefing memorandum should be distributed to all participants three days in advance of the briefing. NMFS Front Office staff are responsible for distribution of this memorandum in advance of any briefing. The Front Office staff should broadly distribute this memorandum to all of the other NMFS' offices, per the rationale mentioned above.

The author should list any controversial or especially important issues in a bulleted format at the beginning of the briefing memorandum. The author should outline the controversy, list the point of contact, identify necessary background information, and outline the applicable NMFS recommendation for each issue. An example of the memorandum can be found in Appendix A.

### **Post-Council Meeting Reports**

The Regional Administrator and regional staff will prepare and submit a Council meeting summary report to the NMFS Front Office within two weeks after each Council meeting. These reports keep the agency informed of upcoming events and schedules, as well as the directions the various Councils are taking in the management of fisheries. These reports provide a broader, national perspective of fisheries management and identify problems individual Councils are facing, including any management approaches the Councils are considering.

These reports are useful to other Regional and Headquarters Offices, and their distribution should include other Regional Offices. NMFS Front Office staff, or other staff as directed, will distribute the post-Council meeting reports to all Regional Administrators, Science Directors, and Headquarters Office Directors, as well as other appropriate staff including the SF Operations and Regulatory Services Division Chief. An example of this memorandum can be found in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A: Example of Council Meeting Briefing Memorandum

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chris Oliver  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

FROM: Michael Pentony  
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Briefing for the June 5-7, 2018, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management  
Council Meeting

**MAJOR ISSUES FOR THIS MEETING**

1. Committee Discussion: Surfclam and ocean quahog Excessive Shares Amendment
2. Public Hearing: Atlantic Herring Amendment 8 Public Hearing

**SURFCLAM AND OCEAN QUAHOG**

Issue 1: Excessive Shares Amendment

Type of Action: Committee Discussion

Background: The Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Committee will meet before the full Council convenes to review and discuss development of the Excessive Shares Amendment. A Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) has been working to identify the current ownership structure and develop potential alternatives on excessive shares of fishing privileges in the Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) fisheries. The FMAT will look to the Committee to provide guidance on how to best define an excessive shares, including any factors the FMAT should consider beyond market power for ITQ quota share. The Council is scheduled to consider a range of potential alternatives at its August 2018 meeting and expects to take final action on this amendment in June 2019.

Degree of Controversy: *Low/High: insert explanation here.*

Recommendation: Insert recommendation here.

Point of Contact: (Staff name)

Issue 2: 2019 Specifications Review

Action Type: Final Action

Background: The surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries are currently operating under multi-year specifications for 2018-2020, which are based on stock assessments completed in 2017. Neither stock is overfished nor subject to overfishing. The harvest quotas for both surfclam and ocean quahog have remained unchanged since 2004. On May 9, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed updated information on the fishery and recommended no change to the standing acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for 2019.

Degree of Controversy: *Low/High: insert explanation here.*

Recommendation: Insert recommendation here.

Point of Contact: (Staff name)

**ATLANTIC HERRING**

Issue 1: Amendment 8 Public Hearing

Type of Action: Public Hearing

Background: The New England Council is holding a series of public hearings on Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring FMP. This action considers establishing a long-term ABC control rule that explicitly accounts for herring's role in the ecosystem and addresses biological and ecological requirements of the stock. Amendment 8 also includes measures that would address potential localized depletion and user group conflicts between the directed herring fishery and fisheries targeting herring predators (e.g., tuna, groundfish) and ecotourism (whale watch) industries. The public comment period on the Amendment 8 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) ends on June 25, 2018.

Degree of Controversy: *Low/High: insert explanation here.*

Recommendation: Insert recommendation here.

Point of Contact: (Staff name)

**OTHER**

Personnel changes: None.

Unexpected individuals attending: The NOAA Administrator will be in attendance.

APPENDIX B: Example of Post Council Meeting Summary

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chris Oliver  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

FROM: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Summary Memorandum for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) Meeting, Biloxi, Mississippi, October 2-5, 2017

The Council took action on the fisheries management items listed below. Other activities included:

- The SEDAR Committee reviewed the stock assessment schedule.
- The Council selected members of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper/Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Advisory Panel. Background checks will be conducted and final selections will be announced at the January 2018 meeting.
- New Council members were inducted.
- Leann Bosarge and Johnny Greene were re-elected as Council Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.
- Presentations: Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Mississippi Law Enforcement, Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Annual Catch Limit Landings.

**Spiny Lobster Committee**

Amendment 13: This amendment would adjust federal regulations for bully net gear to be consistent with new Florida regulations. The amendment would also re-instate a protocol that allows similar adjustments in the future to be implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) without Council action. The Council requested modifications and additions to the actions.

**Joint Coral/Habitat Protection & Restoration Committees**

Amendment 9: This amendment would add protection for areas of deep-sea corals. The Council removed actions that would add some octocoral species back into the fishery management plan and chose preferred alternatives. The Council voted to take the document to public hearings.

**Sustainable Fisheries Committee**

Options Paper on Protocol for Authorizing Sea Turtle Release Gear: This document would approve new devices to meet current requirements for reef fish vessels, and modify the protocol for approving such gear in the future. The Council directed staff to continue work on the amendment.

Options Paper on a Framework Action to Require Descending Devices or Venting Tools: This document would require either the possession or use of such devices on board reef fish vessels.

The Council voted to stop work on this amendment and develop a policy statement and outreach program supporting the use of these devices when appropriate.

The Committee also received a presentation on a proposed new fishing gear for lionfish. The Council declined to make a recommendation to approve the gear, but did not take action to prohibit its use.

### **Reef Fish Committee**

Framework Action for Greater Amberjack: This document would adjust the greater amberjack fishing year and recreational closed seasons. The Council chose to change the fishing year to August-July, and have closed recreational fishing seasons November-April and June-July. The Council voted to submit this document for review by the Secretary of Commerce.

Amendments 41 and 42: These amendments would establish allocation-based management for charter boats and headboats, respectively, for several species of reef fish. The Council chose some preferred alternatives, made modifications to some alternatives, and requested the addition of several new actions.

State Management of Recreational Red Snapper: An amendment for each Gulf state would either delegate management to the state or require conservation equivalency plans. The Committee reviewed early drafts of these documents as well as an overview amendment that would establish state allocations and regulatory authority. The Council discussed management actions possible under delegation.

The Committee also discussed developing a joint amendment with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to combine management of yellowtail snapper.