

## CCC Climate Change Workgroup September 2023

In May 2023 the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) created a Climate Change workgroup (CCWG) to develop a common understanding and voice among the Councils on current capacity, future needs, and fishery management designs that can respond to climate change, while assisting the regional councils in coordinating with NOAA on a response to the Ocean Climate Action Plan. The proposed scope of work for the work group and staff membership from each Council are attached.

The workgroup has met organizationally twice on August 28th and September 25th to begin to address the CCC requests. The first step (Step 1 as outlined below) is to provide an overview and common understanding of climate capacity and needs across all Councils. In order to begin to develop a useful product to form this baseline understanding, the workgroup developed the following draft questions for review and input across all SSCs and Councils.

### Feedback from the CCC:

- Any input on survey questions?
- General feedback on the CCWG's direction?

**Step 1: An overview to the CCC on respective capacity, needs, and lessons learned at the RFMCs to assess risks and take action to adapt to changing ocean conditions.**

Develop survey questions to identify the ways that each Council is currently working on climate resilient management, how these efforts work in synergy and build from existing capacity, and any techniques that have the likelihood to be adaptable across multiple Councils.

**Task 1:** Draft Survey questions for discussion and modification prior to asking individual Councils to fill these out.

#### A) Effect on or response to climate change in fishery management process

1. What challenges is your Council facing with respect to climate change and how the Council adapts and responds to climate change effects?
2. Has your region begun any formal initiatives to frame/address climate change issues (e.g., scenario planning, harvest control rule adaptation, policy revisions, etc.)? Are any of these activities on the Council's planning horizon in the next 1-3 years? If so, please describe.
3. What climate change, climate vulnerability, and ecosystem status information are your Council receiving and how is it being used?
  - a. What types of ecosystem status reports, climate vulnerability assessments, or other similar information is your region receiving, and with what frequency?
  - b. How has this information been used in your region (if it has) to inform changes to specific management measures or policies (e.g., annual catch limits, stock assessments, risk policies, allocation policies)?

- c. How has this information been used in your region (if it has) to inform broader climate-related initiatives, Council priorities, Council research and monitoring plans, or the management process more generally?
- d. If this type of information is not currently being used or not being used to its full potential in your region, why not?
- e. Has your Council identified other potential/planned ways of using this type of information in your processes and actions in the future?
- f. Has social and economic vulnerability to climate change impacts by fisheries been assessed in your region? If so, is this information used in management decisions?

**B) Information needs (science) to support adaptation**

- 1. What data and information does your Council need to begin to, or continue to, address climate issues?
  - a. What data and information needs specific to your region would address previously identified needs
- 2. What would be the appropriate forecasting and planning period for consideration of climate effects on managed species for your Council?
  - a. Does this forecasting and planning period vary by species and/or FMP? Climate projections are often beyond Council's management planning horizons when interannual variability in recruitment are more important considerations.

**C) Institutional (Council) capacity/needs**

- 1. How does your Council engage with its advisors, stakeholders, and other groups on climate change issues? Does your Council engage with particular NGOs, academic institutions, other advisory bodies, etc.? Do these groups work on collaborative initiatives with your Council? If so, please describe how these collaborations are realized.
- 2. What type of staffing or capacity issues does your region have that limit developing measures to address climate change and/or addressing critical research gaps?
- 3. Do you have any other comments on institutional capacity needs?

Following feedback from the CCC, the working group will establish a meeting schedule to address answering these survey questions amongst Councils (including identifying the appropriate bodies from which to provide responses) and working to address the other steps identified in the scope of work (attached) for the workgroup.

## Proposal to form a Climate Change CCC Workgroup

The SCS7 workshop highlighted the need for Councils to begin now to prepare for increasingly complex management decisions due to climate change. In addition to emphasizing the need for more investment by the agency in data collection and analysis tools, the report recommends that Councils should consider approaches to introduce additional flexibility into the management process, diversify fishing portfolios in light of anticipated significant changes in abundance, distribution and productivity, and educate members and stakeholders about how uncertainty and risk due to environmental variability will affect current fishery management decision making. The administration's Ocean Climate Action Plan also includes action items to establish goals and operational approaches for how RFMCs should consider climate resilience of fish stocks in management, under its objective to "advance and implement climate-ready management of fisheries and aquaculture."

A new CCC workgroup is proposed to develop a common understanding and voice among the Councils on current capacity, future needs, and fishery management designs that can respond to climate change, while assisting the regional councils in coordinating with NOAA on a response to the Ocean Climate Action Plan.

**Products:** The workgroup would provide the following products and services.

1. An overview to the CCC on respective capacity, needs, and lessons learned at the RFMCs to assess risks and take action to adapt to changing ocean conditions.
  - Develop survey questions to identify the ways that each Council is currently working on climate resilient management (e.g. scenario planning, harvest control rule adaptation, etc.), how these efforts work in synergy and build from existing capacity, and any techniques that have the likelihood to be adaptable across multiple Councils.
  - Identify tools for risk assessment and uncertainty in each region that Councils and stakeholders have confidence in, and emerging tools and areas where plain language explanation is needed
  - Identify preliminary Council needs for data collection to understand the risks of environmental variability to sectors and fishing communities, especially where concerns arise about equitable management adaptation.
  - Identify lessons learned from the above experiences, including ways to improve those processes, or different approaches that may be better suited to diagnosing climate challenges and designing measures to address them.
2. Provide an opportunity for information exchange and collaboration across regions: what techniques are and are not working, and how other Council regions can learn from incidents of disruption occurring in specific regions.
3. Assist the CCC in communicating with NMFS on development of goals, guidance, and operational approaches to enable RFMCs to incorporate climate-ready approaches and decision-making.
4. Work with the CCC Legislative Work Group to build out the CCC Working Paper's existing policy statement on climate change. The policy statement should address RFMC needs for investment in data collection and other climate-ready tools.

**Membership:** The workgroup membership would include one staff person from each council. Additional staff could provide assistance as needed.

**Process:** The workgroup will meet virtually at regular intervals as needed to develop the products in a timely fashion and report progress to the CCC. In-person meeting(s) may be called, if deemed necessary. The Workgroup updates to the CCC will be provided by the workgroup chair and/or the workgroup staff from the Council hosting the CCC annual meeting that year.

**Proposed Timeline:** The following is a tentative timeline to meet initial milestones.

- CCC Fall meeting 2023 – A workgroup report with an outline of survey questions for the report, and preliminary responses.
- Spring 2024 – based on survey responses, work with CCC Legislative Work Group on draft language for an expanded policy statement.
- CCC Spring meeting 2024 – A final report on respective capacity and scientific support needs presented to the CCC.

## Membership

Andy Applegate	New England Fishery Management Council
Kiley Dancy	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Roger Pugliese	South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
<i>Kathleen Howington (in 2024)</i>	South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Ryan Rindone	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Graciela Garcia Moliner	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
Kit Dahl	Pacific Fishery Management Council
Diana Stram	North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mark Fitchett	West Pacific Fishery Management Council