



Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office **Strategic Plan**

FY 2015-2019

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Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
Strategic Plan - FY15-FY19

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) is responsible for the stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources from Maine to North Carolina, and includes the Great Lakes under its authority. We have drafted a five-year strategic plan that identifies objectives associated with seven primary strategic goals: sustainable fisheries; protected resources; habitat conservation; community resiliency; aquaculture; organizational excellence; and customer service.

GARFO's vision is a future in which the American people continue to benefit from a healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems in the Greater Atlantic Region. Our mission encompasses the stewardship of living marine and diadromous resources through science-based conservation and management, focused on protection and restoration of healthy coastal ecosystems. Through this strategic plan, GARFO's vision and mission strive for:

- productive and sustainable fisheries that create and sustain jobs, supporting vibrant fishing communities, as well as provide opportunities for recreational enjoyment,
- plentiful domestic sources of seafood,
- the recovery and conservation of protected resources, and
- healthy habitats that support a healthy ecosystem.

Our strategic plan had three main sources of input:

1. The seven primary goals aligned with the strategic direction as presented in Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NOAA Fisheries strategic plans.
2. An internal assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
3. Input from our partners and stakeholders.

Section 2 addresses the vision, background and purpose of our strategic plan, within the context of Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NOAA Fisheries strategic guidance. Section 3 presents an overview of the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. Section 4 stresses the importance of our day to day core responsibilities and also the importance of collaboration with other federal offices, especially with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Achievement of many of our GARFO goals and strategic objectives rely on close coordination with, and participation of, our partners and stakeholders including the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the states, the fishing industry, and federally recognized tribes.

Appendix 1 describes the NOAA Fisheries mission and vision, within the organizational context of NOAA and the Department of Commerce strategic guidance. Appendix 2 provides a summary of our regional organization, core responsibilities, and public outreach. Appendix 3 provides a partial listing of our partners and stakeholders in achieving our strategic objectives. Appendix 4 presents a list of acronyms and abbreviations used in the report, and Appendix 5 presents our implementation actions during the next five years. At the end of each year, we will conduct an annual review of how well we have achieved our strategic goals, objectives, strategies, and implementation actions.

Our Strategic Goals are:

1. Sustainable Fisheries

Our Sustainable Fisheries Goal highlights:

- science-based service and stewardship of fishery resources to implement the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act,
- collaboration and guidance on fishery management issues that threaten fishery sustainability and community resiliency and the development and implementation of regulations stemming from collaborative efforts,
- identification and facilitation of fishing opportunities for abundant fishery stocks not fully utilized,
- implementation of the Greater Atlantic Recreational Fisheries Plan, and
- improvement of fishery-dependent data collection to support science-based stewardship of fishery resources.

2. Protected Resources

Our Protected Resources Goal emphasizes:

- science-based service and stewardship to implement the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act,
- proactive efforts for species at risk, and collaborative agreements for recovery of Atlantic salmon, sturgeon, whales, and sea turtles listed under the Endangered Species Act,
- strengthened outreach and education programs related to protected species, and
- domestic and international fishery partnerships.

3. Habitat Conservation

Our Habitat Conservation Goal highlights:

- science-based service and stewardship under the MSA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and the Federal Power Act,
- actions to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing habitat advice through consultative and stewardship opportunities, and
- Habitat Blueprint activities in the North Atlantic.

4. Community Resiliency

Our Community Resiliency Goal proposes:

- an integrated framework of GARFO programs aimed at rebuilding fish stocks, maintaining and restoring healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, and promoting the economic vitality of fishery working waterfront communities, for the long term benefit of the public and future generations. The objectives under this goal also include attention to the impacts of climate change and ecosystem-based management.

5. Aquaculture

Our Aquaculture Goal supports:

- further implementation of the DOC and NOAA Marine Aquaculture Policy,
- a collaborative approach to streamline shellfish, finfish and algal aquaculture permitting processes, and
- helping to reduce aquaculture industry impediments at the local and regional level.

6. Organizational Excellence

Our Organizational Excellence Goal is integral to the successful attainment of the six other goals.

It recognizes that GARFO's success in meeting our mission is dependent on:

- a commitment to maintaining a professional and proficient workforce,
- clear and concise communication skills, tools, and processes,
- our success in ensuring adherence to internal controls and fiscal accountability,
- the continuous development and use of customer-focused and cost-effective information technology,
- our resolve to fully inform management decisions as required by the National Environmental Policy Act,
- our dedication to a structured and continuous process for self-evaluation through strategic planning, and
- successful coordination with other line offices on common activities throughout the region.

7. Customer Service

Our Customer Service Goal advocates for a well-informed public that:

- understands the NMFS mission of science-based stewardship of living marine resources,
- understands the regional organization (what we do) and can access staff and resources (who does what) to accomplish business as needed with GARFO,
- understands the associated fishery regulations (what they need to do and why), and
- interacts constructively with GARFO in meaningful dialogue with appropriate feedback communication opportunities when necessary.

2.0 Vision, Background and Purpose

The GARFO strategic plan is predicated on overarching guidance from NOAA and NOAA Fisheries Headquarters and is further expanded to address unique opportunities in the Greater Atlantic Region that establish a framework for development of FY 2015 – 2019 (five year) strategic objectives. As described below, these strategic objectives consider our core mission functions in the context of current fiscal conditions. They are intended to guide the development and execution of an Annual Operating Plan and associated strategic milestones over the next five years.

Our Vision

A future in which the American people continue to benefit from a healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems in the Greater Atlantic Region

Our Mission

Stewardship of living marine and diadromous resources in the Greater Atlantic Region through science-based conservation and management, focused on protection and restoration of healthy coastal ecosystems

Through this strategic plan, GARFO's vision and mission strive for:

- productive and sustainable fisheries that create and sustain jobs supporting vibrant fishing communities, as well as provide opportunities for recreational enjoyment,
- plentiful domestic sources of seafood,
- the recovery and conservation of protected resources, and
- healthy habitats that support a healthy ecosystem.

This plan assists larger efforts at NOAA Fisheries Headquarters that are focused to support two core mandates:

- Ensure the productivity and sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities through science-based decision-making and compliance with regulations, and
- Recover and conserve protected resources through the use of sound natural and social sciences.

This planning effort also complements NOAA and the Department of Commerce implementation of the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (2011) (GPRA). Additional background on our mission and vision is presented in Appendix 1.

3.0 Role of the Regional Office

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) is responsible for the science-based stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources and their habitats over approximately 100,000 square miles of the Northwest Atlantic. The region encompasses the temperate, structurally complex large marine ecosystem from Maine to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and also includes the Great Lakes, as well as rivers and estuaries within this range. GARFO is not planning to expand its efforts around the Great Lakes, but notes that its partner, the NMFS Restoration Center, has many projects in the area.

Working with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (NEFMC, MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), GARFO manages commercial and recreational marine fisheries. An important focus is given to needed measures for providing sustainable jobs in working waterfront communities, increasing the domestic supply of healthy affordable seafood, and with regard to recreational fisheries, enjoyable angling experiences. GARFO works with the Councils and Commission, as well as other partners such as other federal agencies, states, federally recognized tribes, academics, and environmental organizations, to recover protected species and restore and enhance important marine, estuarine and riverine habitats throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. GARFO employs approximately 170 federal staff, and has an average annual budget (2012-2014) of approximately \$51 million. Directed from the Regional Office in Gloucester, MA, there are field offices throughout the region.

GARFO's organizational overview and a description of our regional outreach with the public, our partners, and our stakeholders are further described in Appendix 2.

4.0 GARFO Strategic Goals and Objectives

We have identified seven primary goals that encompass our strategic objectives for new/enhanced initiatives over the next five years, concurrent with addressing our core marine stewardship responsibilities and associated activities (as outlined in Appendix 2), in accordance with our legislative mandates.

We recognize that many achievements of our GARFO responsibilities will rely on close coordination with and participation of other federal offices (including the Northeast Fisheries Science Center [NEFSC] and NMFS Headquarters), as well as other partners and stakeholders. These partners in particular include the NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, state resource agencies, federally recognized tribes, and our industry constituents. Our strategic plan strives to further build these partnerships and reach appropriate common goals and initiatives. A partial listing of our partners in achieving our strategic objectives is shown in Appendix 3.

Goal 1 [Sustainable Fisheries]: *Ensure sustainable fisheries and promote fishing communities throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic.*

Narrative:

Core activities under this goal include the development of fishery management regulations in partnership with the NEFMC and the MAFMC, consistent with the requirements of the MSA, NEPA, ESA and MMPA; analysis of fishery-dependent data to support Council technical teams and internal NOAA management decisions; issuance of permits and other fishery authorizations to vessels, dealers, and vessel operators; implementation of limited access vessel permit programs, including requirements related to the transfer of eligibilities and catch histories; implementation of transferable allocation programs, including cost recovery programs; review of fishing vessel and seafood dealer reports for compliance and data quality; provision of advice and notifications to fishermen on the interpretation of federal fishing regulations; and provision of fiscal and administrative support for NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC operations.

During 2015 – 2019, special emphasis under this Goal highlights efforts to maintain abundant fishery stocks, fishing opportunities for fishery resources not currently fully utilized, vibrant fishing communities, implementation of the Recreational Fisheries Action Plan, and improving fishery-dependent data collection and availability to allow enhanced evaluation of fishery management measures.

Objective 1.1. Refine and advance fishery management planning, cooperative research, data analysis, and seafood marketing. (See Objectives 4.1 and 4.2)	Strategy 1.1.1. Coordinate and collaborate with NEFSC to improve fishery-dependent data collections, including advancements of electronic reporting technology, timeliness and quality of reports, and involvement of fishing industry. [APSD, IRM, SFD, SED]
	Strategy 1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct review of MSA catch share programs. [SFD, APSD].
	Strategy 1.1.3. Develop measures to increase fishing opportunities for abundant healthy fish stocks that have low interest in current fisheries and markets. [SFD, SED]
	Strategy 1.1.4. Establish a plan to proactively identify and resolve fishery management issues that threaten fishery sustainability and community resiliency, including potential avenues by which ecosystem approaches to management and climate change could be integrated into more traditional single species management. [SFD]
	Strategy 1.1.5. Strengthen internal communications and coordination to ensure that the effects of commercial and recreational fishing on species protected under the ESA and/or MMPA are fully considered during the development of fishery management actions. [SFD, PRD, NEPA]
	Strategy 1.1.6. Improve the collection, quality and availability of fishery-dependent data. [APSD, IRM]
	Strategy 1.1.7.

	In coordination with NEFSC, and other vested parties, facilitate experimental fishing initiatives and cooperative research to acquire scientific information, including fishery independent data improvements, needed for fishery management. [SFD, OBD]
Objective 1.2. Implement the GARFO Recreational Fishing Action Plan. (See Objective 7.5)	Strategy 1.2.1. Provide coordination outreach, education, and promotion of regional recreational fisheries. [SFD, SED]
	Strategy 1.2.2. Monitor and update the 2014-2015 Recreational Fishing Action Plan. [SFD, SED]

<p>Goal 2. [Protected Resources]: <i>Managing, conserving and rebuilding populations of marine mammals, and endangered and threatened marine and anadromous species in rivers, bays, estuaries, and marine waters of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Through management, conservation and recovery efforts, and public outreach and education under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, we strive to ensure the survival and recovery of the protected marine species in the Greater Atlantic Region for future generations.</i></p>	
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Core activities under this goal include evaluation of petitions to list or delist species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); work with agency partners to develop and monitor species recovery plans; respond to marine mammal and sea turtle entanglements and strandings; conduct ESA section 7 consultations both internally and with other federal agencies; work with partners and constituents to reduce injury and mortality of marine mammals through the Take Reduction Team process of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA); and other ESA and MMPA related activities including public outreach and management of associated grants and contracts.</p> <p>During 2015 – 2019, special emphasis under this goal highlights proactive efforts for species at risk; collaborative agreements for recovery of Atlantic salmon, sturgeon, sea turtles, and marine mammals; and implementation of actions under the Penobscot Habitat Focus Area.</p>	
<p>Objective 2.1. Engage in domestic and international partnerships to conserve and recover ESA and imperiled species.</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1.1. Implement measures to prevent the extinction of critically endangered Atlantic Salmon. [PRD]</p>
	<p>Strategy 2.1.2. Recover species such as Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, sea turtles, and large whales, and conserve other marine and anadromous at risk species (such as river herring, rainbow smelt, and cusk). [PRD, HCD, NMFS Restoration Center]</p>
	<p>Strategy 2.1.3. Enhance ESA section 7 consultation processes for ESA listed species including Atlantic salmon, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, marine mammals, and sea turtles, including ensuring efficient and effective communication about fisheries related issues. [PRD, SFD, NEPA]</p>
<p>Objective 2.2. Conserve and protect marine mammals under the MMPA. [PRD]</p>	<p>Strategy 2.2.1. Oversee Marine Mammal Take Reduction Team process.</p>
	<p>Strategy 2.2.2. Implement regulatory measures to conserve marine mammals.</p>
<p>Objective 2.3. Implement proactive conservation efforts for river herring.</p>	<p>Strategy 2.3.1. Work with ASMFC and other partners to implement coordinated coast-wide effort to address data gaps, and proactively conserve river herring and their habitat. [PRD, HCD]</p>
<p>Objective 2.4. Conduct outreach for protected resources.</p>	<p>Strategy 2.4.1. Improve public compliance and understanding of MMPA and ESA mandates and fostering stewardship of protected marine resources through outreach to the general public and the fishing industry through educational programs such as Whale SENSE and SCUTES. [PRD, SED]</p>

Goal 3 [Habitat Conservation]: *Protected and restored marine, estuarine and riverine habitats to support sustainable fisheries and protected resources.*

Narrative:

Core activities under this goal include the identification and monitoring of essential fish habitat for sustainable finfish and shellfish fisheries managed under the MSA; advice to federal action agencies on how their activities can avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts on living marine resources; and advice to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission about impacts of hydropower dams on migratory fish species and prescription of fish passage facilities when needed.

During 2015 – 2019, special emphasis under this goal highlights actions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in providing habitat advice through consultative and stewardship opportunities as well as focused attention to place-based and species-based initiatives. Such actions include improved internal coordination, development of programmatic agreements with federal action agencies, collaborations with NEFSC, development of a diadromous fish plan, and implementation of Habitat Blueprint activities in the North Atlantic.

Objective 3.1. Enhance habitat program effectiveness and efficiencies.	Strategy 3.1.1. Improve internal coordination across NOAA and NMFS offices to maximize habitat program effectiveness. [HCD, PRD, SFD, NMFS Restoration Center, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office]
	Strategy 3.1.2. Develop programmatic consultations/agreements to provide habitat advice to other action agencies. [HCD]
	Strategy 3.1.3. Develop policy/guidance on various habitat issues to promote conservation of fish habitats and other living aquatic resources. [HCD]
Objective 3.2. Cultivate place-based and species-based habitat initiatives. (See Objective 4.1)	Strategy 3.2.1. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to implement coast-wide and NOAA Habitat Blueprint activities. [HCD]
	Strategy 3.2.2. Develop and design a regionally integrated diadromous fish plan. [HCD, PRD, NMFS Restoration Center]

Goal 4 [Community Resiliency]: *An integrated approach among programs to enhance fishery community resiliency in order to ensure sustainable fisheries, recovery of protected resources, and healthy habitat.*

Narrative:

In accordance with the 2015 NOAA Annual Guidance Memorandum, GARFO has identified a combination of actions to provide information and services to make communities more resilient. The following activities investigate an integrated framework among GARFO programs that are intended to enhance community resilience, from both fishery working waterfront (economic) and living marine resource community (ecological) perspectives. This goal seeks a better understanding of climate change and ocean acidification so that we can help to minimize the disruptions they cause, adapt to the changes that are coming, and ensure that future generations can enjoy the benefits of healthy marine ecosystems.

<p>Objective 4.1. Develop and implement an integrated and collaborative approach to identify, understand, and take actions to enhance community and marine resource resiliency. (See Objective 1.1., Objective 3.2., Objective 7.3., and Objective 7.4).</p>	<p>Strategy 4.1.1. Working with partners and stakeholders, and in collaboration with other NOAA/federal offices, identify approach for community resiliency as it applies to sustainable fisheries, recovery of protected resources, habitat, place-based conservation, aquaculture, resource disaster financial assistance, and economic recovery. [SFD, PRD, HCD, OBD]</p>
<p>Objective 4.2. Undertake internal programmatic and workforce management actions to address climate change, ocean acidification, and ecosystem information. (See Objective 6.1.)</p>	<p>Strategy 4.1.2. Work to develop solutions to improve groundfish business practices and economic vitality. [SFD, SED, RO]</p> <p>Strategy 4.2.1. Incorporate climate change, ocean acidification, and ecosystem analytical information into GARFO program activities. [RO]</p> <p>Strategy 4.2.2. Build regional capacity and expertise in climate change and ecosystem based resource management. [RO]</p>
<p>Objective 4.3. Implement and oversee collaborative resource disaster spending plans.</p>	<p>Strategy 4.3.1. Administer funding proposals for Superstorm Sandy and Northeast groundfish resource disaster determinations. [OBD, RO]</p>

Goal 5 [Aquaculture]: *A thriving marine aquaculture industry off New England and the Mid-Atlantic in both state and federal waters, providing jobs to working waterfront communities, harmonious with the Region’s commercial and recreational fisheries, and increasing the domestic supply of healthy sustainable seafood.*

Narrative:
 Core activities under this goal includes the provision of technical expertise to the aquaculture industry and GARFO fishery management, protected resources, and habitat regional programs; the sharing of aquaculture information with agency partners and the general public; and facilitation of permitting requirements for aquaculture projects in state and federal waters.

Landings from marine aquaculture (predominantly Atlantic Salmon and oysters, but also including clams, mussels, and other species) totaled approximately \$219 million in the Greater Atlantic during 2013. This makes Aquaculture the third most valuable fishery in the region in terms of economic revenue, behind scallops and American lobster. Objectives under this goal support the DOC and NOAA Marine Aquaculture Policies, involve a collaborative internal/external approach to encourage and foster marine aquaculture development (including finfish, shellfish, and algae), and are intended to help increase seafood production, create jobs, and enhance the economic resiliency of fishing and coastal seafood communities.

<p>Objective 5.1. Enhance the marine aquaculture permitting process in state and federal waters by ensuring that NOAA’s consultation role under MSA and ESA is streamlined through improved understanding by federal, state, and local government agencies and industry. [OBD, PRD, HCD, SFD]</p>	<p>Strategy 5.1.1. Facilitate and promote communications internally, and in collaboration with other federal and state agencies, and the marine aquaculture industry, to identify information needs essential for streamlining NOAA’s consultation activities as part of the permitting process.</p>
<p>Objective 5.2. Advance the availability and evaluation of scientific and statistical information needed to support marine aquaculture development. [OBD, APSD].</p>	<p>Strategy 5.2.1. Facilitate collaboration between GARFO, NEFSC, state agencies, and with the regional aquaculture industry, to identify and evaluate research and information needs to promote marine aquaculture development in the Greater Atlantic Region.</p>
<p>Objective 5.3. Conduct aquaculture outreach. [OBD, SED]</p>	<p>Strategy 5.3.1. Advance public understanding with respect to benefits, potential impacts, and management of marine aquaculture by increasing outreach activities and associated funding opportunities in the Greater Atlantic Region.</p>

Goal 6 [Organizational Excellence]: *Organizational excellence through a well-trained and proficient workforce, internal communications, financial integrity/internal controls, the enhancement and security of information technology, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, and strategic planning.*

Narrative:
 As emphasized in NOAA Policy, the phrase, “Mission First, People Always”, is an important aspect of meeting our mission. Core activities under this goal include recruitment, professional growth, and training; development of effective internal communications among regional staff, the NEFSC, NMFS Headquarters, NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC; informing regional management actions and decisions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); oversight of the regional budget, including adherence to internal controls and administration of the region’s grants and contracts; facility management; regional telephone/mail/delivery and supply services; vehicle fleet activities; associated safety and security responsibilities; maintenance of customer-focused and cost-effective information technology (IT); responding to public requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); and strategic planning.

During 2015 – 2019, the objectives under this heading are integral to the successful attainment of other goals under this Strategic Plan. We recognize that GARFO’s success in meeting our mission depends on: our commitment to maintain a professional and proficient workforce; our ability to ensure effective internal communications and collaboration; our success in ensuring continued adherence to internal controls and fiscal accountability; our ability to maintain and enhance customer-focused and cost-effective information technology; our ongoing effort to frontload and streamline compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act through improved coordination and planning; and our dedication to a structured and continuous process for self-evaluation through adherence to a strategic plan.

<p>Objective 6.1. Maintain a proficient, diverse and professional workforce. (See Objective 4.2.) [RO]</p>	<p>Strategy 6.1.1. Oversee GARFO workforce composition, staff training opportunities, and evaluate staff morale.</p>
<p>Objective 6.2. Ensure effective internal and GARFO – NEFSC communications and collaboration.</p>	<p>Strategy 6.2.1. Enhance GARFO-NEFSC communications for more effective management–science collaboration, and clarify roles in cross-organizational programs required to implement agency mission and program responsibilities. [RO]</p>
	<p>Strategy 6.2.2. Improve response efficiencies under the Freedom of Information Act. [OBD]</p>
	<p>Strategy 6.2.3. Develop in consultation with NEFSC and HQ, an enhanced management-science approach toward proactive species recovery. [PRD]</p>
	<p>Strategy 6.2.4. Enhance collaborative and working relationships between GARFO and NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, Office of General Counsel, and Office of Law Enforcement to ensure successful incorporation of</p>

	expertise and perspectives in the administration of approved measures under the MSA. [SFD]
Objective 6.3. Ensure necessary internal controls to ensure fiscal accountability. [OBD, RO]	Strategy 6.3.1. Oversee all financial transactions and maintain internal controls to ensure federal funds are expended responsibly.
	Strategy 6.3.2. Develop annual spending plans to monitor GARFO’s Strategic Plan’s goals and objectives.
Objective 6.4. Maintain and enhance customer-focused and cost-effective information technology (IT). (See Objective 7.1.)	Strategy 6.4.1. Identify opportunities for improvement of GARFO’s IT services, and associated measures for emergency preparedness. [IRM]
	Strategy 6.4.2. Develop and establish GARFO records management procedures. [IRM, OBD]
Objective 6.5. Inform GARFO management decisions under the National Environmental Policy Act. [RO, NEPA]	Strategy 6.5.1. Maintain and streamline the incorporation of NEPA into management decisions across applicable GARFO programs.
Objective 6.6. Incorporate strategic planning into GARFO activities. [RO, OBD]	Strategy 6.6.1. In consultation with the NEFSC, NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, and the Greater Atlantic regional state fishery management agencies, identify shared priorities in strategic planning and out-year budget planning.
	Strategy 6.6.2. Align strategic planning with GARFO’s Workforce Management Plan.
	Strategy 6.6.3. Conduct annual review and evaluation of GARFO’s strategic plan.
Objective 6.7. Strengthen GARFO partnerships. (See Objective 7.2) [RO]	Strategy 6.7.1. Increase GARFO coordination with coastal state agencies having shared responsibilities for management of living marine resources.
	Strategy 6.7.2. Work with federally recognized tribes through formal government to government consultation and informal communications in fulfillment of NOAA’s federal trust responsibility and to address shared interests. [RO]

<p>Goal 7 (Customer Service/External Communications): <i>A well informed and engaged public that understands: GARFO’s mission of science-based service and stewardship of regional living marine resources; the nature and scope of our program activities (what we do); the regulations established by NOAA Fisheries (what they have to do); how and when to provide meaningful input into policy and rulemaking; and how to contact the appropriate GARFO staff who will understand public concerns and can help address them.</i></p>	
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Core activities under this goal are described in detail in Appendix 2. During 2015 – 2019, GARFO will strive to improve customer service and stakeholder satisfaction with agency interactions. It aims to provide clear and accessible information about regulatory requirements established by GARFO. It also seeks to increase public and internal knowledge of NOAA Fisheries and to improve dialogue and feedback mechanisms between stakeholders and GARFO. This should result in more effective external communications and better informed decision making.</p>	
<p>Objective 7.1. Upgrade and enhance GARFO communication channels and technology, including increased access to standardized Geographic Information System (GIS). (See Objective 7.4.)</p>	<p>Strategy 7.1.1. Improve accessibility and timely delivery of information to constituents and stakeholders. [SED]</p>
	<p>Strategy 7.1.2. Increase access to GIS data with full metadata documentation for regulators, enforcement, and constituents. [IRM, SED, PRD, SFD, HCD]</p>
<p>Objective 7.2. Maintain GARFO– State agency communications. (See Objective 6.7) [RO, SED]</p>	<p>Strategy 7.2.1. Implement effective means to enhance communications and shared stewardship responsibilities and budget capabilities between GARFO and state fishery management agencies.</p>
<p>Objective 7.3. Encourage the consumption of U.S. seafood. (See also Objective 1.1, and Objective 4.1.) [RO, SED]</p>	<p>Strategy 7.3.1. Promote marketing communications with constituents.</p>
<p>Objective 7.4. [RO, OBD] Improve the accessibility of federal funding opportunities. (See Objective 4.1)</p>	<p>Strategy 7.4.1. Improve public knowledge of NMFS/GARFO grant programs to increase public awareness of funding opportunities.</p>
<p>Objective 7.5. Increase outreach and collaboration with the commercial and recreational fishing industry. (See Objective 1.2) [SED, SFD]</p>	<p>Strategy 7.5.1. Enhance communications with commercial and recreational fishing constituents.</p>
<p>Objective 7.6. Improve public knowledge of fishery management, the GARFO organization, and the value of living marine resources. [SED, RO]</p>	<p>Strategy 7.6.1. Provide current and updated information on GARFO program activities to the public.</p>
	<p>Strategy 7.6.2. Develop regional communications plan.</p>

Appendix 1: NOAA Mission, Vision and Strategies

1.0 NOAA Mission and Vision

1.1 NOAA Overview

Through its long-standing mission of science, service, and stewardship, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) advances our understanding of and ability to anticipate changes in the Earth's environment, by improving society's ability to make scientifically informed decisions, and by conserving and managing ocean and coastal resources. The mission and vision are articulated in NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan.

1.2 NOAA Mission

NOAA's Mission: *Science, Service, and Stewardship*

To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

NOAA's mission is central to many of today's greatest challenges:

- Climate change
- Severe weather
- Natural and human-induced disasters
- Declining biodiversity
- Ocean acidification
- Threatened or degraded ocean and coastal resources.

These challenges convey a common message: Human health, prosperity, and well-being depend upon the health and resilience of coupled natural and social ecosystems. Managing this interdependence requires timely and usable information to make decisions and relies on the science that underpins our knowledge of these systems. NOAA's mission of science, service, and stewardship is directed to a vision of the future where societies and their ecosystems are healthy and resilient in the face of sudden or prolonged change.

1.3 NOAA Vision

NOAA's Vision of the Future: *Resilient Ecosystems, Communities, and Economies*. Healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies that are resilient in the face of change.

Resilient ecosystems, communities, and economies can maintain and improve their health and vitality over time by anticipating, absorbing, and diffusing change. This vision of resilience guides NOAA and its partners in a collective effort to reduce the vulnerability of communities and ecological systems in the short-term, while helping society avoid or adapt to long-term environmental, social, and economic changes.

2.0 NOAA Strategic Goals and Objectives

2.1 Higher level planning

There are several layers of Strategic Plans that currently guide NOAA Fisheries:

Department of Commerce Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2014-2018 (2014) (DOCSP)

<http://www.commerce.gov/blog/2014/03/10/department-commerce-releases-fy-2014-2018-strategic-plan>

NOAA's Next – Generation Strategic Plan (2010) (NGSP)

<http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp/>

NOAA Annual Guidance Memorandum (2012) (AGM)

http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/FY14-20_AGM_Final_Signed_130816.pdf

NOAA Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2014 (2013) (APG)

<http://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/CM/cm112713/NOAAFisheriesPriorities2014.pdf>

2.1.1 Department of Commerce Strategic Plan (2014)

NOAA is located within the Department of Commerce. The Department is comprised of 12 bureaus that work in five key areas: Trade and investment, innovation, environment, data and operational excellence. NOAA furthers the Department's mission with strong stewardship of the ocean's resources which contribute more than \$250 billion annually to the Nation's economy. (2014)

Specifically tied to the NOAA mission in the Department of Commerce Strategic Plan (2014) are the following goal, objective and key strategies:

Strategic Goal 3:

Ensure communities and businesses have the necessary information, products, and services to prepare for and prosper in a changing environment.

Strategic Objective 3.4

Foster healthy and sustainable marine resources, habitats, and ecosystems through improved management and partnerships (NOAA),

Key Strategies for 3.4

- *Strengthen capabilities to assess and monitor fish and protected resources (NOAA).*

Ensuring sustainable populations of living marine resources is a key Departmental mandate. NOAA will increase the precision of stock assessments, performing more robust monitoring, and applying ecosystem-based management to ensure healthy, sustainable populations of living marine resources. NOAA will incorporate integrated biological, physical, and chemical data and ecosystem modeling into fish stock and protected species assessments. NOAA will also produce more advanced technologies for monitoring of living marine resources and ecosystems.

- *Improve recovery of listed species through innovative partnerships (NOAA).*

International, federal, state, local, tribal, and nongovernmental organizations play a role in conservation. NOAA will strengthen partnerships with these stakeholder groups to ensure greater collaboration toward the recovery and conservation of protected species in marine and coastal ecosystems. Greater collaboration will improve the development and implementation of effective recovery and conservation plans for marine mammals and endangered and threatened species.

- *Enhance place-based conservation (NOAA).*

Through its coastal management and place-based conservation programs, NOAA will expand protections at current sites, add protections at new sites, and work with public and private partners. This place-based approach will preserve the economic and environmental benefits of these special places to local communities. NOAA will implement efforts such as the Habitat Blueprint framework, which employs partnerships to improve habitat conditions for fisheries, and coastal and marine life, to achieve economic, cultural, and environmental benefits.

2.1.2 NOAA's The Next Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP)

The Next Generation Strategic Plan (2010) (NGSP) conveys NOAA's mission and future vision, as well as the road map for achieving the vision as laid out through the long term goals, and objectives. With the release in 2010 of the Plan and Executive Summary and in the 2013 Addendum, Dr. Kathy Sullivan, Acting Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, called on NOAA to focus on the following areas:

1. **Climate:** Through collaborative strategies, continue to advance the observations, modeling, and research necessary to understand climate change and its impacts; and transition mature climate science into regular, reliable, and relevant information services;
2. **Weather:** NOAA will build a "Weather-ready" nation by preserving and improving its ability to provide timely and accurate forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property through science, technology, infrastructure improvements and collaborative efforts with partners;
3. **Oceans:** NOAA will advance our efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries and recovery of protected species and their habitats;
4. **Coasts:** NOAA will deliver integrated data, information, products, and services needed to support resilient coastal communities and economies;
5. **Science and Technology:** NOAA will focus on developing systems-level understanding of ecosystems and phenomena—across missions and disciplines—with the goal of increasing the resilience of ecosystems, economies, and communities;
6. **Engagement:** NOAA will expand efforts to listen and respond to our customers' and stakeholders' concerns and better relate NOAA mission responsibilities and activities to those concerns; and

7. Organization and Administration: NOAA will further capitalize on recent initiatives to cut costs and improve effectiveness.

As one of five line offices in NOAA, the Fisheries mission is most closely tied to the objectives for the Healthy Oceans goal:

Healthy Oceans: *Marine fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity sustained within healthy and productive ecosystems.*

The Healthy Ocean's goal is to ensure that ocean, estuarine and related ecosystems and the NOAA trust resources that inhabit them are resilient and sustainable in the face of increasing threats and changing conditions. A sound understanding of these ecosystems, communication of this knowledge to decision makers and stakeholders, and the capacity and resources to support key NOAA programs are critical to fulfilling this goal (Draft Goal Implementation Plan, 2012).

The Strategic objectives of the Healthy Oceans Goal are:

- Improved understanding of ecosystems to inform resource management decisions
- Recovered and healthy marine and coastal species
- Healthy habitats that sustain resilient and thriving marine resources and communities
- Sustainable fisheries and safe seafood for healthy populations and vibrant communities

2.1.3 Annual Guidance Memorandum (2012) (AGM)

The Annual Guidance Memorandum (2012) (AGM) focuses the agency's corporate attention on near-term execution challenges and a balanced implementation of NOAA's strategy across mission areas given our mandates, stakeholder priorities, and the fiscal outlook.

From the AGM, Fisheries Focus Areas for Planning:

- *Improve ocean and coastal stewardship by focusing habitat efforts in priority areas and demonstrating landscape-scale results*

The NOAA Habitat Blueprint is the framework for NOAA to integrate better, focus its efforts, and leverage internal and external collaborations to achieve measurable benefits within key habitats — such as coral reefs and wetlands. We will improve the delivery of science to decision makers to facilitate complementary habitat conservation actions across federal, state and local levels. We will leverage and expand local, inter-agency and NGO partnership efforts in targeted/priority areas to achieve measurable conservation results.

- *Improve the methodologies to assess and manage fish stocks and protected resources*

To continue to meet management needs in this resource-constrained environment, NOAA will implement further improvements and efficiencies in fisheries science that informs management through advanced sampling techniques and next generation stock assessments.

NOAA will also continue international efforts to end overfishing, enhance development of sustainable aquaculture, and provide enhanced compliance assistance to optimize fishing opportunities and jobs.

2.1.4 NOAA Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2014

This document provides guidance to all NOAA Fisheries employees in executing our mission responsibilities by establishing a framework for development of FY2014 priority milestones. These priorities consider the core mission functions in context of current fiscal conditions. For FY2014, the focus remains on the two core mandates:

Ensure the productivity and sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities through science-based decision-making and compliance with regulations.

Recover and conserve protected resources through the use of sound natural and social sciences.

All other NOAA Fisheries programs, projects, and investments (including Science and Technology, Habitat Conservation, Enforcement, etc.) should be designed and conducted in a manner that supports these two core mission functions.

Appendix 2: GARFO Organizational Overview, Core Stewardship Responsibilities, and Regional Outreach

Following is an organizational overview, a summary of core marine stewardship activities, and a summary of regional outreach for the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. Designations of multiple regional divisions or teams responsible for each activity are noted, where applicable.

Organizational Overview

The GARFO Regional Directorate [RO] includes the Regional Administrator, the Deputy Regional Administrator, their direct staff, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Program staff. The NEPA Program facilitates the compliance of actions with NEPA and related environmental requirements.

The Regional Directorate is supported by seven divisions. Below is a description of the key responsibilities for each.

Analysis and Program Support [APSD]:

The Analysis and Program Support Division provides permit services to the public and fisheries data and analytical products to support quota monitoring and management decisions. Core responsibilities include:

- Close fisheries when catch limits or other triggers have been reached [APSD, SFD];
- Issue permits and other fishery authorizations to vessels, dealers and vessel operators [APSD, IRM];
- Implement limited access vessel permit programs, including vessel upgrade and replacement requirements [APSD, IRM];
- Implement transferable allocation programs the Atlantic scallop, tilefish, and surf clam/ocean quahog fisheries, including associated cost recovery programs [APSD, SFD, OBD, IRM];
- Review vessel trip reports submitted by vessel operators, conduct data entry and data quality programs, including compliance reporting [APSD, IRM];
- Maintain fishing vessel catch histories [APSD];
- Review mandatory seafood dealer reports, and conduct data quality programs, including compliance reporting [APSD, IRM, SED];
- Provide weekly catch and landings reports, and provide projections to determine when in-season management adjustments should be enacted [APSD];
- Analyze fishery-dependent data to support council technical teams and internal NOAA management decisions [APSD]; and
- Advise fishermen on interpretation of federal fishing regulations related to permit and mandatory reporting requirements, including requirements related to limited access vessel permit eligibilities, fishing and catch histories, and the transfer of fishing allocations [APSD].

Habitat Conservation [HCD]:

The Habitat Conservation Division protects, restores, and promotes stewardship of marine, estuarine, and riverine habitat to support fisheries and protected resources for future generations. The program focuses on two principal activities: (1) The identification and conservation of Essential Fish Habitat through the fishery management process of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and (2) consultation and advice to federal agencies whose actions may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat and other living marine resources. HCD provides recommendations on ways that federal actions can avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts on living marine resources.

Habitat conservation is essential to maintaining sustainable fisheries and recovering populations of protected species. The Division has responsibilities for requirements of the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Federal Power Act. Core responsibilities include:

- Advise federal action agencies how their activities can avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts on living marine resources. This includes impacts from fishing and non-fishing activities [HCD]; and
- Advise the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission about impacts of hydropower dams on migratory fish species and prescribe fishways when necessary. [HCD]

Information Resource Management [IRM]:

The Information Resource Management Division provides support for divisions across GARFO. The division is responsible for the development and maintenance of the technological infrastructure needed for fisheries management and provides GIS data and analyses both internally and externally. In addition, IRM is responsible for customer support services, IT security management, and website design and development. Core responsibilities include:

- Maintain and safeguard the computer network [IRM];
- Collect, store, protect, and distribute mission critical data and associated files [IRM];
- Assist GARFO staff with the effective use of information technology [IRM];
- Maintain and enhance the GARFO web site and web-based applications [IRM]; and
- Develop software applications to assist in the efficient execution of GARFO responsibilities [IRM];
- Effectively communicate about and train customers on use of new technologies. [IRM, SED];
- Produce and maintain high-quality, standardized geospatial data, analyses, tools, and other GIS products for use by GARFO staff. Work with program staff to ensure regulated area spatial definitions are precise, unambiguous, and easily understood [IRM, RO wide].

Operations and Budget [OBD]:

The Operations and Budget Division provides regional programs with planning, budgeting, and management analysis support. Within GARFO, OBD oversees GARFO financial operations, manages facility and property, ensures coordination of and input into the development of aquaculture issues/policies, coordinates the budget processes, and administers financial assistance to states and other non-Federal interests for carrying out projects through grants and contracts. Core responsibilities include:

- Oversee all financial transactions and maintain a system of internal controls to ensure federal funds are expended responsibly and GARFO's budget is not exceeded [OBD, RO wide];
- Provide fiscal and administrative support for NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC operations;
- Support NMFS transparency of financial reporting initiatives [OBD];
- Ensure that grants administered by GARFO are based on a fair process and conducted in accordance with federal laws and regulations [OBD, PRD, SED];
- Ensure that contracts awarded by GARFO follow all federal requirements for fair and open competition and that funds expended through the contracts are done so in accordance with the contract and in compliance with federal laws [OBD, RO wide];
- Ensure that purchases comply with Federal Acquisition Regulations [OBD];
- Ensure that all GARFO facilities are maintained to federal standards and that the use of space complies with General Services Administration requirements [OBD];
- Oversee the process of hiring GARFO staff to ensure that hiring practices comply with federal laws and regulations and meet the objectives for equal employment opportunity [OBD];
- Maintain the fleet of GARFO vehicles to ensure that vehicles and drivers comply with safety standards and that access to government owned vehicles is not abused [OBD];
- Ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act [OBD, RO wide];
- Ensure that GARFO – administered grants comply with the legislative provisions of the MSA, the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Act, the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Act, and the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program [OBD];
- Promote a safe and hazard free work environment [OBD];
- Conduct outreach, striving for an informed/educated public with respect to benefits, potential impacts, and management of marine aquaculture [OBD, SED];
- Maintain services to coordinate and support aquaculture regional management activities by providing expertise and assistance to the aquaculture industry and GARFO fishery management, protected resources, and habitat programs [OBD, PRD, HCD];
- Maintain high standards of ethics and conduct in GARFO, consistent with NOAA/NMFS EEO and workforce diversity policy [RO wide].

Protected Resources [PRD]:

The Protected Resources Division manages, conserves, and rebuilds populations of marine mammals and endangered and threatened species, as well as NMFS species of concern in rivers, bays, estuaries, and marine waters within the region. Programs within the division include: (1) The marine mammal and sea turtle program, (2) Endangered Species Consultations (Section 7), and (3) ESA listed fish (i.e., Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, and Atlantic salmon), and species of concern.

Through conservation and recovery efforts, PRD works to ensure the survival of protected marine and diadromous species for future generations. The Protected Resources Division is responsible for the execution of two primary laws—the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Core responsibilities include:

- Respond to petitions to list or delist species under the ESA within 90 days of receipt of petition (to the maximum extent practicable) [PRD];
- Work with our partners to develop recovery plans for newly listed species and update and implement existing recovery plan actions [PRD];
- Address take of ESA listed species through section 10 of the Act when the taking is incidental to and not the purpose of the carrying out of an otherwise legal activity [PRD];
- Work with regional partners to respond to marine mammal and sea turtle entanglements and strandings [PRD];
- Develop new techniques for assessing marine mammal health and condition when responding to entangled large whales [PRD, IRM];
- Conduct section 7 consultations in a collaborative manner both internally and with other federal agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, EPA, FWS, FERC and NRC [PRD];
- Incorporate climate change information into ESA and MMPA actions based on national guidelines [PRD];
- Annually evaluate marine mammal and sea turtle entanglement risk from commercial fishing gear through the List of Fisheries (LOF) and Annual Determination (AD) processes in coordination with NEFSC and HQ [PRD];
- Coordinate with state agencies to register commercial fishermen who engage in fisheries posing moderate to high risk of entanglement to marine mammals in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) [PRD];
- Coordinate with NEFSC and HQ to monitor right whale ship strike reduction rule compliance and effectiveness [PRD];
- Work with industry, scientists, environmentalists, state and federal agencies to design, implement, and monitor strategies for reducing serious injury and mortality of marine mammals in commercial fishing gear through the Take Reduction Team process under the MMPA [PRD];
- Coordinate with Office of Law Enforcement to strategically monitor compliance with MMPA laws and regulations [PRD];
- Conduct constituent outreach, workshops, and educational events on relevant management objectives [PRD, SED];
- Implement voluntary ocean stewardship programs for non-regulated constituent groups, such as the whale watching industry, to increase compliance with voluntary guidelines and measures that support the objectives of the MMPA and ESA [PRD];
- Manage grants and contracts using federal funds to assist in the research and recovery of ESA listed species, species of concern, and marine mammals under our jurisdiction under the MMPA [PRD, OBD]; and
- Provide funding and support for protected species conservation through mechanisms such as the ESA section 6 species recovery grants to states and federally recognized tribes.

Stakeholder Engagement [SED]:

The Stakeholder Engagement Division is responsible for public affairs, communications support and fishing industry outreach. The division includes: (1) The GARFO communications team, which is responsible for providing public affairs support, promoting ocean literacy, and developing communication policies; and (2) The fishing industry outreach team that provides in-person advice and support to fishermen and seafood dealers and provides current information to GARFO staff regarding the fishing industry. The Division serves a crucial role in facilitating the execution of other divisions and communicating the work occurring in the region to the affected public. Core activities are described below under regional outreach.

Sustainable Fisheries [SFD]:

The Sustainable Fisheries Division executes provisions of the MSA and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. Sustainable Fisheries Division staff work cooperatively with NEFMC, MAFMC, NEFSC, and ASMFC to develop, review, and implement fishery management plans in federal waters in the Greater Atlantic Region (GARFO). There are 14 fishery management plans within GARFO. The primary goal is to end overfishing and rebuild and maintain sustainable fisheries. Core responsibilities include:

- Provide support to NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC, to facilitate the development of management measures to achieve optimum yield from fisheries [SFD, APSD, RO, NEPA];
- Draft fishery management regulations consistent with the recommendations of the Fishery Management Councils and with the requirements of the MSA and NEPA [SFD, NEPA];
- Conduct reviews of fishery management regulations [SFD, NEPA]; and
- Advise fishermen on the interpretation of federal fishing regulations [SFD, SED, APSD].

Regional Outreach

GARFO is committed to providing information about its activities and about the ocean in a clear and timely manner. Through its stakeholder engagement, GARFO strives to:

- provide clear and accessible information about regulatory requirements established by GARFO;
- improve and increase dialogue and feedback mechanisms among the general public, stakeholders, and GARFO;
- improve customer service and stakeholder satisfaction with Agency interactions;
- increase public and internal knowledge of NOAA Fisheries programs;
- improve collaboration and teamwork among NOAA Fisheries workforce, Councils, and other partner organizations; and
- integrate regional communications program with NOAA Fisheries national communication campaigns as appropriate.

GARFO provides information to the public through a variety of channels. Information about regional activities and about living marine resources is available through:

- Reports to the Councils and Commission about our activities;
- *Federal Register* Notices informing of regulations, grant opportunities, etc.;
- GARFO web site with information on specific regulations and requirements and with matters of general interest;
- person to person communications from GARFO port agents or other staff;
- public hearings on proposed regulations;
- "town hall" style meetings on select topics;
- permit holder letters;
- press releases and media stories;
- information about GARFO regulations published in "NOAA Navigator" by Commercial Fisheries News;
- announcement of regulations through VMS system;
- announcement through text alert system;
- fact sheets and informational materials (pamphlets, cards, etc.) that provide information about our programs and/or regulatory requirements;
- sector manager books/guides that provide information sector managers need to know, including regulatory updates;
- announcement of time sensitive regulations through NOAA Weather Radio and USCG bulletins;
- talks to school groups or informal education lectures;
- boat and fishing shows and other public information events; and
- GARFO staff attendance at meetings of fishermen at their request.

Ways a member of the public can provide information to us include:

- responding in writing to a solicitation for information in a *Federal Register* Notice;
- commenting during public sessions at Fishery Management and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission;

- commenting during GARFO public hearings or town halls;
- writing a letter to GARFO at any time;
- calling GARFO staff at any time during working hours;
- sending an email to relevant staff or to GARFO feedback email address found on our website or in announcements
- seeking comments
- asking for an appointment to meet a staff member and
- visiting any port agent office

Appendix 3: Partial Listing of Participants in Achieving GARFO Strategies *

	Strategy	Regional/External Participants
Goal 1 [Sustainable Fisheries]: <i>Ensure sustainable fisheries and promote fishing communities throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic.</i>	1.1.1. Coordinate and collaborate with NEFSC to improve fishery-dependent data collections, including advancements of electronic reporting technology, timeliness and quality of reports, and involvement of fishing industry.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 20
	1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct review of MSA catch share programs.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9
	1.1.3. Develop measures to increase fishing opportunities for abundant fish stocks that have low interest in current fisheries and markets.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
	1.1.4. Establish a plan to proactively identify and resolve fishery management issues that threaten fishery sustainability and community resiliency.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 23, 24
	1.1.5. Strengthen internal communications and coordination to ensure that the effects of commercial and recreational fishing on species protected under the ESA and/or MMPA are fully considered during the development of fishery management actions.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
	1.1.6. Improve the collection, quality, and availability of fishery-dependent data.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 20
	1.1.7. In coordination with NEFSC, and other vested parties, facilitate experimental fishing initiatives and cooperative research to acquire scientific information needed for fishery management.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 25
	1.2.1. Provide coordination outreach, education, and promotion of regional recreational fisheries.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
	1.2.2. Monitor and update the 2014-2015 Recreational Fishing Action Plan.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
Goal 2 [Protected Resources]: <i>Managing, conserving and rebuilding populations of marine mammals, and endangered and threatened marine and anadromous species in rivers, bays, estuaries and marine waters of the Northeast. Through</i>	2.1.1. Implement measures to prevent the extinction of critically endangered Atlantic salmon.	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 23, 24
	2.1.2. Recover species such as Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, sea turtles, and large whales and conserve other marine and anadromous at risk species.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24
	2.2.1. Oversee Marine Mammal Take Reduction Team process.	1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 21, 22, 23, 24
	2.2.2. Implement regulatory measures to conserve marine mammals.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 21, 22, 23, 24

<i>management, conservation and recovery efforts, and public outreach and education under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, we strive to ensure the survival of the protected marine species in the Greater Atlantic Region for future generations.</i>	2.3.1. Work with ASMFC and other partners to implement coordinated coast-wide effort to address data gaps and proactively conserve river herring and their habitat.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 18, 23, 24
	2.4.1. Improve public compliance and understanding of MMPA and ESA mandates and fostering stewardship of protected marine resources through outreach to the general public and the fishing industry through educational programs such as Whale SENSE and SCUTES.	1, 2, 9, 21, 25
Goal 3 [Habitat Conservation]: <i>Protected and restored marine, estuarine and riverine habitats to support sustainable fisheries and protected resources.</i>	3.1.1. Improve internal coordination across NOAA and NMFS offices to maximize habitat program effectiveness.	1, 2, 3
	3.1.2. Develop programmatic consultations/agreements to provide habitat advice to other action agencies.	1, 18
	3.1.3. Develop policy/guidance on various habitat issues to promote conservation of fish habitats and other living aquatic resources.	1, 2, 7, 18
	3.2.1. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to implement coast-wide and NOAA Habitat Blueprint activities.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 18, 23, 24, 26
	3.2.2. Develop and design a regionally integrated diadromous fish plan.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 23, 24, 26
Goal 4 [Community Resiliency]: <i>An integrated approach among regional programs to enhance fishery community resiliency in order to ensure sustainable fisheries, recovery of protected resources, and healthy habitat.</i>	4.1.1. Working with partners and stakeholders, and in collaboration with other NOAA/federal offices, identify approach for community resiliency as it applies to sustainable fisheries, recovery of protected resources, habitat, place-based conservation, aquaculture, resource disaster financial assistance and economic recovery.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 23, 24, 26
	4.1.2. Work to develop solutions to improve groundfish business practices and economic vitality.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18
	4.2.1. Incorporate climate change, ocean acidification, and ecosystem analytical information into GARFO program activities.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26
	4.2.2. Build regional capacity and expertise in climate change and ecosystem based resource management.	1, 3, 16
	4.3.1. Administer funding proposals for Superstorm Sandy and Northeast groundfish resource disaster determinations.	1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10
Goal 5 [Aquaculture]: <i>A thriving marine aquaculture industry off</i>	5.1.1. Facilitate and promote communications internally, and in collaboration with other federal and state agencies, and the marine aquaculture	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18, 25

<i>New England and the Mid-Atlantic in both state and federal waters, providing jobs to working waterfront communities, harmonious with the Region's commercial and recreational fisheries, and increasing the domestic supply of healthy sustainable seafood.</i>	industry, to identify information needs essential for streamlining NOAA's consultation activities as part of the permitting process.	
	5.2.1. Facilitate collaboration between GARFO, NEFSC, state agencies, and with the regional aquaculture industry, to identify and evaluate research and information needs to promote marine aquaculture development in the Greater Atlantic Region.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 25
	5.3.1. Advance public understanding with respect to benefits, potential impacts, and management of marine aquaculture by increasing outreach activities and associated funding opportunities in the Greater Atlantic Region.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 25
Goal 6 [Organizational Excellence]: <i>Organizational excellence through a well-trained and proficient workforce, internal communications, financial integrity/internal controls, the enhancement and security of information technology, assistance under the National Environmental Policy Act, and strategic planning.</i>	6.1.1. Oversee GARFO workforce composition, staff training opportunities, and evaluate staff morale.	1, 3, 16
	6.2.1. Enhance GARFO-NEFSC communications for more effective management-science collaboration, and clarify roles in cross-organizational programs required to implement agency mission and program responsibilities.	1, 2
	6.2.2. Improve response efficiencies under the Freedom of Information Act.	1, 2, 3
	6.2.3. Develop in consultation with NEFSC and HQ, an enhanced management-science approach toward proactive species recovery.	1, 2, 3
	6.2.4. Enhance collaborative and working relationships between GARFO and the NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, Office of General Counsel, and Office of Law Enforcement to ensure successful incorporation of expertise and perspectives in the administration of approved measures under the MSA.	1,2,4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15
	6.3.1. Oversee all financial transactions and maintain internal controls to ensure federal funds are expended responsibly.	1, 3
	6.3.2. Develop annual spending plans to monitor GARFO's Strategic Plan's goals and objectives.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
	6.4.1. Identify opportunities for improvement of GARFO's IT services, and associated measures for emergency preparedness.	1, 2, 3, 13, 17
	6.4.2. Develop and establish GARFO records management procedures.	1, 3, 17
	6.5.1. Maintain and streamline the incorporation of NEPA into management decisions across applicable GARFO programs.	1, 2, 3
6.6.1. In consultation with the NEFSC, NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, and the Greater Atlantic regional state fishery management agencies,	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	

	identify shared priorities in strategic planning and out-year budget planning.	
	6.6.2. Align strategic planning with GARFO's Workforce Management Plan.	1, 3, 16
	6.6.3. Conduct annual review and evaluation of GARFO's strategic plan.	1
	6.7.1. Increase GARFO coordination with coastal state agencies having shared responsibilities for management of living marine resources.	1, 6, 7
	6.7.2. Work with federally recognized tribes through formal government to government consultation and informal communications in fulfillment of NOAA's federal trust responsibility and to address shared interests.	1, 3, 8, 13
Goal 7 [Customer Service/External Communications]: <i>A well informed and engaged public that understands: GARFO's mission of science-based service and stewardship of regional living marine resources; the nature and scope of our program activities (what we do); the regulations established by NOAA Fisheries (what they have to do); how and when to provide meaningful input into policy and rulemaking; and how to contact the appropriate GARFO staff who will understand public concerns and can help address them.</i>	7.1.1. Improve accessibility and timely delivery of information to constituents and stakeholders.	1, 2, 3
	7.1.2. Increase access to GIS data with full metadata documentation for regulators, enforcement, and constituents.	1, 2,
	7.2.1. Implement effective means to enhance communications and shared stewardship responsibilities and budget capabilities between GARFO and state fishery management agencies.	1, 3, 6, 7
	7.3.1. Promote marketing communications with constituents.	1, 3, 9
	7.4.1 Improve public knowledge of NMFS/GARFO grant programs to increase public awareness of funding opportunities.	1, 3
	7.5.1. Enhance communications with commercial and recreational fishing constituents.	1, 2, 9, 10
	7.6.1. Provide current and updated information on GARFO program activities to the public.	1, 3

*See Participant Key on page 33

*** Participant Partners and Stakeholders**

- 1 Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)
- 2 Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC)
- 3 NMFS Headquarters, including Habitat Restoration and Aquaculture Program Offices
- 4 New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC)
- 5 Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC)
- 6 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
- 7 State agencies
- 8 Federally recognized tribes
- 9 Commercial fishing industry
- 10 Recreational fishing interests
- 11 Aquaculture industry
- 12 Local communities, city and town governments
- 13 Other NOAA Line Offices including National Ocean Service/Marine Sanctuary Program, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (Sea Grant), Economic Development Administration (EDA), and National Weather Service
- 14 NOAA Office of General Counsel
- 15 NMFS Office of Law Enforcement
- 16 NOAA Workforce Management Office
- 17 NOAA Office of the Chief Information Officer
- 18 Other federal agencies including United States Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Federal Highway Administration
- 19 Canada/International
- 20 Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)
- 21 Take Reduction Teams (TRTs)
- 22 Whale watch industry
- 23 Conservation groups
- 24 NGO partners

25 Educational institutions

26 Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

Appendix 4: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCSP	.....	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics
ACOE	.....	Army Corps of Engineers
AGM	.....	Annual Guidance Memorandum
APSD	.....	Analysis and Program Support Division
ASMFC	.....	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
COOP	.....	Continuity of Operations Plan
DOC	.....	Department of Commerce
EDA	.....	Economic Development Administration
EFH	.....	Essential Fish Habitat
EPA	.....	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	.....	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	.....	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERC	.....	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FHWA	.....	Federal Highway Administration
FOIA	.....	Freedom of Information Act
FWS	.....	Fish and Wildlife Service
FY	.....	Fiscal Year
GARFO	.....	Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
GCNE	.....	General Council, Northeast
GIS	.....	Geographical Information Systems
GPRA	.....	Government Performance and Results Act
HCD	.....	Habitat Conservation Division
HQ	.....	Headquarters
IRM	.....	Information Resource Management

IT	.....	Information Technology
MAFMC	.....	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
MMAP	.....	Marine Mammal Authorization Program
MMPA	.....	Marine Mammal Protection Act
MREP	.....	Marine Resource Education Program
MSA	.....	Magnuson – Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
NEFMC	.....	New England Fishery Management Council
NEFSC	.....	Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NEPA	.....	National Environmental Policy Act
NGO	.....	Non-Governmental Organization
NGSP	.....	Next Generation Strategic Plan
NMFS	.....	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	.....	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOS	.....	National Ocean Service
NRC	.....	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
OBD	.....	Operations and Budget Division
OLE	.....	Office of Law Enforcement
PRD	.....	Protected Resources Division
RO	.....	Regional Office
S-K	.....	Saltonstall-Kennedy
SED	.....	Stakeholder Engagement Division
SFD	.....	Sustainable Fisheries Division
TRT	.....	Take Reduction Team
USCG	.....	U.S. Coast Guard

APPENDIX 5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

STRATEGIC PLAN

GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE

Implementation Action	Fiscal Year				
	15	16	17	18	19
Goal 1 (Sustainable Fisheries)					
1.1.1. Develop joint GARFO/NEFSC catalog of fishery dependent data requirements. (February) [RO]	X				
1.1.1. Complete GARFO Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan in partnership with NEFSC, NEFMC, and MAFMC to enhance data reporting and monitoring. (January) [APSD, IRM, SFD, SED, RO]	X				
1.1.1. In partnership with NEFSC, finalize new generation fishery dependent data collection program. (May) [APSD, IRM, SFD, SED, RO]			X		
1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct 5- year review of multispecies catch share program to determine if program revisions are necessary. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct 5- year review of Atlantic sea scallop catch share program to determine if program revisions are necessary. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct 5- year review of tilefish catch share program to determine if program revisions are necessary. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.2. Work with the Councils to conduct 5- year review of surf clam/ocean quahog catch share program to determine if program revisions are necessary. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.3. Collaborate with the NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC to identify measures for increasing fishing opportunities for abundant and healthy fish stocks by January 2016; implement plan by January 2017. [SFD]	X	X	X		
1.1.3. Work with groundfish sectors to develop strategies that could result in increased harvest and increased value of abundant fish stocks. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.4. Develop approach and timeline in collaboration with NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC to identify and resolve fishery management issues that threaten fishery sustainability and community resiliency; begin plan implementation by June 2016. [SFD]	X	X			
1.1.6. Work with NEFSC, HQ and ACCSP to adopt consistent approaches for use of current state and federal fishery-dependent data, including quality assurance and quality control process by 2016. [APSD, IRM]	X	X			
1.1.6. Develop a mobile application to be used by industry to submit electronic vessel trip reports by September 2015. Incorporate user suggestions for additional capabilities when consistent with the overall data collection program (September). [IRM, APSD]	X				
1.1.6. Improve the availability of non-confidential information summarizing fishery participation and activity for use by GARFO/NEFSC staff, as well as the public (e.g., permit information, landings, catch, and fishing activity). [APSD]		X	X		
1.1.7. Collaborate in the review of cooperative research projects, e.g., funded under the NEFSC's Research Set-Aside and GARFO's S-K grant programs. [SFD, OBD]	X	X	X	X	X
1.2.1. Attend five saltwater fishing/boating shows to inform public about GARFO actions that affect recreational fisheries. [SFD]	X				
1.2.1 Meet with saltwater fishing clubs to present information on New England groundfish management and saltwater recreational fishing permits. [SFD]	X				
1.2.2. Update the GARFO Recreational Fishing Plan.	X	X			

Goal 2 (Protected Resources)					
2.1.1. Lead U.S. participation in the international efforts for management of Atlantic Salmon. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.1. Work with USFWS, Maine Department of Marine Resources, and Maine Native American Tribes to finalize the recovery plan for Atlantic salmon and implement recovery actions through the Atlantic Salmon Framework and Recovery Plan.	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.2. Exchange information with Canada on programs and activities to address anthropogenic threats to protected resources. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.2. Implement actions under the Penobscot Habitat Focus Initiative to ensure recovery of Atlantic salmon, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, river herring, and other diadromous species of concern. [PRD, HCD, NMFS Restoration Center]	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.2. Prepare a proposed rule to support the critical habitat designation for the three Atlantic sturgeon Distinct Population Segments in the GAR. [PRD]	X				
2.1.2. Respond to ESA listing/delisting petitions and initiate status reviews as necessary to determine if listing/delisting species under the ESA is warranted. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.3. Collaborate with federal partners to develop agreements under section 7(a)(1) of the ESA to recover ESA listed species. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.1.3. Increase efficiency of ESA section 7 process by collaborating with internal partners and external action agencies by developing technical guidance and a streamlined approach to consultation. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.2.1. Convene Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to consider measures to reduce threats to large whales from fisheries. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.2.1. Monitor compliance and effectiveness of marine mammal take reduction plans. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.2.2. Prepare proposed rule to support revision to the critical habitat designation for North Atlantic right whales. [PRD]	X				
2.2.2. Prepare proposed and final rule to amend the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan to modify minimum trap per haul requirements. [PRD]	X				
2.2.2. Prepare proposed and final rule for modification to the ALWTRP's MA restricted area. [PRD]	X				
2.3.2. Draft proactive river herring conservation strategy. [PRD]	X				
2.3.2. Collaborate with ASMFC to fund high priority research and proactive conservation efforts for river herring. [PRD]	X	X	X		
2.4.1. Increase number of SCUTES educational kits at elementary, middle, and high school educational centers. (September) [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.4.1. Host annual teacher workshop to supply participants with necessary SCUTES outreach information. [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
2.4.1. Implement and monitor educational/outreach programs such as SCUTES and whale SENSE to ensure goals are attained. (January 2016) [PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 3 (Habitat Conservation)					
3.1.1. Refine geographic team procedures to integrate habitat – protected resource project review/consultations. [HCD, PRD]	X				
3.1.1. Coordinate and collaborate with NEFSC in development of research priorities in support of habitat management and development of refined EFH designations. [HCD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.1.2. Develop programmatic EFH consultations with ACOE for New England States. [HCD]	X	X	X		
3.1.2. Develop programmatic EFH consultation with FEMA for emergency activities.	X				

[HCD]					
3.1.2. Develop an agreement with FHWA to specify consultation procedures for design-build procurement process. [HCD, PRD]	X				
3.1.2. Develop a manual of best management practices for highway infrastructure projects. [HCD, PRD]		X			
3.1.2. Develop programmatic EFH and ESA consultations/processes with FHWA on state highway infrastructure projects. [HCD, PRD]			X		
3.1.3. Increase effectiveness of EFH consultations by collaborating with federal and state action agencies in development of technical guidance. [HCD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.1.3. Publish monthly habitat “web stories” to highlight to the public the importance of habitat and the role of HCD. [HCD, SED, IRM]	X	X	X	X	X
3.2.1. Coordinate and collaborate with Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership to ensure NOAA habitat conservation needs are fully considered; represent NOAA on Steering Committee. [HCD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.2.1. Collaborate with ASMFC Habitat Committee to ensure NOAA habitat conservation needs are fully considered by coastal states. [HCD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.2.1. Provide technical and policy advice to the NEFMC and MAFMC on development of deep sea coral conservation actions. [HCD]	X	X			
3.2.1. Collaborate with MAFMC on the characterization and identification of habitat areas of particular concern; and the development of habitat policy statements. [HCD]		X			
3.2.1. Develop and implement action plan for the Choptank River (MD/DE) Focus Area. [HCD, PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.2.1. Develop and implement action plan for the Penobscot River Focus Area. [HCD, PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
3.2.2. Develop an integrated regional anadromous fish plan detailing priority watersheds for protection, restoration, and hydropower activities. [HCD, PRD, NMFS Restoration Center]	X	X			
Goal 4 (Community Resiliency)					
4.1.1. Meet with NOS to identify collaborative approach toward addressing resiliency in New England and Mid-Atlantic waterfront communities. [RO]	X	X			
4.1.1. Support the development, by federal and state agencies, of Regional Ocean Plans in the Mid-Atlantic and North Atlantic. [SED, HCD]	X				
4.1.1. Collaborate with the NOAA Restoration Center and other partners to implement measures to address fish passage needs for important freshwater habitat communities for diadromous fish (Atlantic salmon, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, American shad and river herring, and American eel) in order to provide them with increased access to important habitats and better respond to changing climatic conditions. [HCD, PRD]			X	X	
4.1.1. Collaborate and coordinate with federal, state and local government agencies in the development and implementation of “green infrastructure” projects. [HCD, PRD]	X	X	X	X	X
4.1.1. Meet with the City of Gloucester to discuss and identify approaches associated with short-term assistance and opportunities and longer-term direction for the fishing industry. (January) [RO]	X				
4.1.1. Enhance communications with USCG, NOS, and other federal and state agencies to better define GARFO’s role in the development of regional emergency response planning (e.g., such as oil spills, chemical contamination, natural disasters, etc.) as it pertains to protection and recovery of living marine resources. [SFD, PRD, HCD, SED, OBD]	X	X			

4.1.2. Convene GARFO’s Groundfish Economic Coordinating Committee to address short-term and longer-term measures for collaborative approaches to industry sustainability. [RO]	X	X			
4.1.2. Complete an updated “Fishing Through Hard Times” overview, identifying possible avenues for economic relief and recovery associated with the Northeast groundfish fishery. [RO]	X				
4.1.2. Work with groundfish sectors to determine potential for improving use of sector annual catch entitlements (ACE) and increasing the value of landed species. [SFD]	X				
4.1.2. Work with commercial fishery industry to explore rationale/feasibility of seafood marketing initiatives for healthy/abundant low value species (e.g., spiny dogfish, redfish, skate, pollock, etc.) – [SFD, SED]	X	X			
4.1.2. Provide technical assistance to groundfish sectors to determine potential for gear mesh selectivity studies to increase U.S. catch of Georges Bank haddock. [SFD]	X				
4.1.2. Working with the groundfish industry, explore the feasibility of a fishing vessel buyback program. [RO, SFD]	X	X			
4.1.2. Work with EDA to identify programs that can support the fishing industry. [RO]	X	X			
4.2.1. Incorporate enhanced climate change, ocean acidification, and ecosystem information into Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. [RO, NEPA]	X	X	X	X	X
4.2.1. Work with NMFS HQ, NEFSC, NEFMC, MAFMC, and the public to identify potential regional avenues by which ecosystem approaches to management and climate change could be integrated into the NMFS HQ Climate Strategy. [RO]					
4.2.1. Work with the NEFSC and other partners to better integrate information on the geographic and temporal distribution and abundance changes of protected species as a result of climate change for use in developing long term conservation/restoration plans. (January) [PRD, HCD]		X			
4.2.1. Develop communication plans to support GARFO division work to understand and enhance community resiliency. [SED]					
4.2.2. Incorporate climate change and ecosystem expertise as a critical skill in the GARFO workforce management plan and include as a desired qualification in appropriate staff recruitment actions. [OBD, RO]	X	X	X	X	X
4.3.1. Work with state fishery agencies and industry, through communications and funding opportunities, to develop and monitor groundfish disaster recovery activities supported by \$32.8 million made available in FY14. [RO, SFD, APSD, SED, OBD]	X	X	X		
4.3.1. Work with the States of NJ and NY to approve and monitor the Super Storm Sandy fisheries economic recovery supported by \$7.8 million under the FY13/14 disaster funding for Super Storm Sandy, and continue providing habitat and protected species technical support, as needed. [OBD, HCD, PRD]	X	X	X		
Goal 5 (Aquaculture)					
5.1.1. Conduct a review and hold a workshop on mussel aquaculture and protected resource interactions. [OBD, PRD]	X	X			
5.2.1. Improve collaboration with the NEFSC as well as external researchers to better align research priorities with aquaculture management and industry development needs – including, the development management tools and technology development and transfer. [OBD]	X	X	X	X	X
5.2.1. Increase the accuracy of reported aquaculture production in the Greater Atlantic Region by implementing a collaborative state/federal approach to better characterize aquaculture’s contribution to domestic seafood supply, the regional economy, job creation, and community resilience. [OBD, APSD, SED]	X	X			

5.3.1. Provide and manage external grant opportunities that encourage and foster the development of marine aquaculture, the use of aquaculture as a tool for species restoration, and as a means for providing training opportunities to commercial fishermen interested in marine aquaculture. [OBD]	X	X	X		
Goal 6 (Organizational Excellence)					
6.1.1. Update GARFO Workforce Management and Staffing Plan. [OBD, RO]	X				
6.1.1. Develop GARFO Training Manual. [OBD]	X				
6.1.1. Encourage employees to develop Individual Development Plans. [RO]	X	X			
6.1.1. Convene GARFO team to evaluate workplace morale in response to the NOAA Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. [RO]	X				
6.2.1. Clarify GARFO-NEFSC fishery data collection responsibilities {see also implementation activity 1.1.1.}(May) [RO]			X		
6.2.2. Finalize revised GARFO FOIA procedural guidelines. [OBD]	X				
6.2.3. Participate in NEFSC protected species program review. [PRD]	X				
6.2.4. Implement operating agreements with NEFMC and MAFMC. [SFD]	X	X	X	X	X
6.3.1. Revise GARFO program and fiscal internal controls to reflect associated current/revised DOC/NOAA/NMFS policies and regulations. [OBD]	X	X	X	X	X
6.3.2. Develop annual budget spending plans in coordination with NMFS HQ and NEFSC. [OBD]	X	X	X	X	X
6.4.1. Increase access to standardized geographic information both internally and externally, and coordinate GIS and associated geospatial activities across GARFO. [IRM]	X	X			
6.4.1. Conduct testing of GARFO's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure safeguarding of regional databases. [IRM]	X				
6.4.2. Provide GARFO input to HQ implementation of NMFS agency wide Records Information Management initiative. [IRM, OBD]	X	X			
6.5.1. Provide NEPA training to GARFO staff. [RO, NEPA]	X				
6.5.1. Enhance NEPA coordination with the awarding of federal grants. [RO, NEPA, OBD, PRD]	X				
6.5.1. Develop guidance on the applicability of supplemental Environmental Assessments/Environmental Impact Statements and supplemental information reports. (SIR) [RO, NEPA]	X				
6.6.1. At least once annually, coordinate with the Councils, ASMFC, and the NEFSC on strategic planning and budget planning through meetings of the Northeast Regional Coordination Committee. [RO, OBD]	X	X	X	X	X
6.6.2. Update GARFO's Workforce Management Plan to reflect the new regional strategic plan. [OBD]	X	X			
6.6.3. Conduct an annual review and evaluation of FY15 implementation accomplishments. [RO, OBD]	X	X			
6.7.1. Hold GARFO/state director meetings twice a year to discuss shared state/federal stewardship responsibilities and shared budget capabilities. [RO]	X	X	X	X	X
6.7.2. Convene GARFO's Tribal Coordination Team to improve internal communications and coordination on tribal issues to facilitate regional interactions with the Tribes in accordance with our Federal Trust Responsibility and the NOAA Tribal Consultation Handbook. [RO]	X	X			
6.7.2. Meet with Federally Recognized Tribes in the Greater Atlantic region to consult on shared living marine resource priorities. [RO]	X	X	X	X	X

Goal 7 (Customer Service/External Communications)					
7.1.1. Update the GARFO website when new fishery management measures are in place. [SED, SFD, IRM]	X	X	X	X	X
7.1.2. Increase access to GIS data with full metadata documentation for regulators, enforcement, and constituents. [IRM, SED, PRD, SFD, HCD]	X	X	X	X	X
7.2.1. Meet with state fishery agency directors (See Activity 6.7.1.)	X	X	X	X	X
7.3.1. Explain Fish Watch to the interested public at boat shows and education events. [SED]	X	X	X	X	X
7.3.1. Hold meetings of the GARFO Seafood Marketing Steering Committee to promote communications among seafood suppliers and restaurateurs. [SED]	X	X			
7.4.1. Update the description of grants and funding opportunities on the GARFO website. [SED, OBD, PRD, IRM]	X	X			
7.4.1. Describe and communicate relevance of grants to the agency mission and GARFO Strategic Plan. [SED, OBD, PRD]	X	X			
7.4.1. Support cooperative research through grants (e.g., S-K grant program) that generates scientific data needed for better understanding of living marine resources, in partnership with fishermen. [SED, OBD]	X	X			
7.4.1. Support grant funding applicants with webinars. [SED, OBD, IRM]	X	X			
7.5.1. Arrange SFD and port agent presentations at saltwater angling club meetings.	X	X			
7.6.1. Use the GARFO website to explain fishery management, protected resources, habitat, and aquaculture goals and successes by adding at least one new web story per month. [SED, RO wide]	X	X	X	X	X
7.6.1. Continue to use plain language information and guidance to stakeholders through permit holder bulletins and letters, stakeholder correspondence, compliance guides, and outreach materials at council meetings, public hearings, and other outreach events. [SED, RO wide]	X	X	X	X	X
7.6.1. Support regional educational and outreach programs (MREP, groundfish sector workshops, BWET, etc.) [SED, RO wide]	X	X	X	X	X
7.6.2. Review, update and finalize draft regional communications plan.	X				