Committee Name: Management and Science Committee (MSC)

Purpose: The MSC is an oversight committee that provides advice concerning fisheries management and coastal fisheries science to the Commission, Executive Committee, or the ISFMP Board. The MSC also carries out specific assignments requested by these bodies. Its major duties are to:

1. Serve as the senior review body of the Commission, Executive Committee, and ISFMP Policy Board
2. Provide oversight to the Commission’s Stock Assessment Peer Review Process
3. Upon request of the ISFMP Policy Board for any Management Board/Section, review and provide advice on species-specific issues
4. Evaluate the state of science regarding species interactions and provide guidance to fisheries managers on multispecies and ecosystem issues. Evaluations and/or recommendations focus on modifying the single-species approach in development of Commission fishery management plans and/or stock assessments
5. Evaluate and provide advice on cross-species issues, including tagging, ageing, invasive species, fish health, and protected species issues
6. Coordinate Commission technical and scientific workshops and seminars, when requested

Membership: The MSC is comprised of one representative from each member state, the NMFS Northeast and Southeast Regions, and the USFWS Regions 4 and 5 who possess scientific as well as management and administrative expertise.

Codifying Document: ISFMP Charter

Type & Frequency of Meetings: MSC meets twice in person per year during the Commission’s Spring and Annual Meetings.

Primary activities:
- Improving the peer review process through:
  - Updating the Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Process
  - Developing Terms of Reference for Peer Reviews
  - Identifying scientists to serve on Peer Reviews
  - Providing instructions to Peer Reviewers
- Identifying and prioritizing Research Needs for Stock Assessments and Fisheries Management
- Developing a Fish Ageing Manual to achieve consistent ageing methods among the states
- Identifying forage fish species of importance to management along the Atlantic Coast

**Major accomplishments:**

**Climate Change, Stock Distributions, and State Quota Allocations (2014)**
- MSC investigated whether climate change and warming coastal water temperatures are causing shifts in the geographic distributions of several ASMFC managed fish stocks; as well as where shifts are occurring, created options on how to reconsider the state-by-state allocation structure and need for adjustments.
- MSC collaborated with Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) scientists to summarize the state of knowledge for focal species and to demonstrate distribution shifts for stocks where it is occurring.
- The MSC created a number of straw-man reallocation options, to define the methods for possibly adjusting state-by-state allocations. To determine the applicability of each option, the Committee distributed a survey to ASMFC Commissioners. The MSC compiled a set of recommendations based on Commissioner responses to these reallocation options and presented them to the ISFMP Policy Board.
- The MSC also recommended that the ISFMP Policy Board task Technical Committees (TCs) with creating examples or scenarios to explore how any given reallocation option might function for each species.

**Prioritized Research Needs in Support of Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management (2008)**
- MSC assisted in compiling research needs that were prioritized by Commission stock assessment subcommittees and technical committees under the purview of the Plan Development/Review Teams.
- MSC also developed a List of Critical Research Needs (2009) derived from the prioritized research needs document, to highlight the most pressing needs for each ASMFC managed species. Furthermore, a Comprehensive Research Needs list was derived from the critical research needs, to identify projects which would cover multiple species in a coordinated effort to address common research needs.

**Fishing Gear Technology Work Group: Gear Evaluations in Priority Fisheries (2008)**
- MSC provides oversight and tasks the FGTWG with evaluating gear issues (bycatch, habitat impacts) and new gear technology in fisheries impacting ASMFC managed species.

**The Impacts of LNG and Alternative Energy Development on Fishery Resources Workshop (October 2006)**
- Workshop to determine the most effective role for the Commission to assist the states in protecting fishery resources and fish habitat throughout the energy policy, development, permitting, and/or monitoring process in state coastal waters.
- Recommendations included: an ASMFC permit review policy, appoint a staff member to serve as a point of contact for energy related issues, develop a source document as guidance on energy related issues, advocating for more time on energy issues.
Observer Program Workshop (July 2006)
- The MSC held a workshop to review state observer programs, to discuss opportunities for improved state-federal coordination of observer programs, and to identify and evaluate common issues across programs.

Power Plants publication: Assessing Coastwide Effects of Power Plant Entrainment and Impingement on Fish Populations: Atlantic Menhaden Example (April 2006)
- A method was developed for assessing coastwide effects of power plant impingement and entrainment on managed fish stocks.

Circle Hook Definition and Issues (July 2003)
- The ISFMP Policy Board called for an analysis of release mortality issues and the development of an enforceable definition of a circle hook. A Management and Science Committee (MSC) Workgroup comprised of hook manufacturers, ASMFC Commissioners, law enforcement representatives, recreational stakeholders, and technical personnel, was formed to address these charges.

Guidance Relative to Development of Responsible Aquaculture Activities in Atlantic Coast States (November 2002)
- In September 1998, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in cooperation with the Commission and its member states, conducted a state-federal Atlantic coastal aquaculture workshop (NMFS 1998). This workshop developed recommendations on several different areas, including strategic planning, fishery management plan integration, aquaculture data collection, and integration of mandates related to aquaculture. Several recommendations focused on potential future work in coordination of aquaculture activities.

Workshop on the Introduction of Asian Oysters (Crassostrea ariakensis) to the Chesapeake Bay (June 2002)
- Two-hour workshop to review information concerning the potential introduction of the Asian oyster in Virginia and Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The workshop also identified potential ecological risks over a broader geographical region since an introduced species could potentially spread throughout the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. This workshop was focused on obtaining information from ASMFC Commissioners and other agency personnel.

Conservation Equivalency Workshop (October 17, 2001)
- Two-hour workshop was held in conjunction with the ASMFC annual meeting to allow commissioners and advisors an opportunity to address the issues surrounding the application of conservation equivalency.
- Initiated the process for developing a clear policy to address the procedures for submitting plans, time lines for review and approval, and standards by which the plans will be evaluated to address many of the identified problems.
**History of Chairmanship:**

**Current Chair & Vice-Chair (4/14 – present):** Chair, Joe O’Hop & Vice-Chair, Cheri Patterson, NH  
5/12 – 4/14: Mike Armstrong, MA  
6/10 – 11/11: Pat Geer, GA  
5/08–5/10: Harley Speir MD  
10/06–10/07: Doug Grout NH  
10/04–10/06: Linda Mercer ME  
11/02–5/04: Chris Bonzek VA  
4/01–5/02: Charlie Lesser DE  
10/96–10/00: Dale Thieling SC  
10/94–10/96: Mike Street NC

**Staff Lead:** Sarah Murray, Fisheries Science Coordinator, smurray@asmfc.org