

## 2024 Current Fiscal Year Report: Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

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### 1. Department or Agency

Department of Commerce

### 2. Fiscal Year

2024

### 3. Committee or Subcommittee

Marine Fisheries Advisory  
Committee

### 3b. GSA Committee No.

359

### 4. Is this New During Fiscal Year? 5. Current Charter 6. Expected Renewal Date 7. Expected Term Date

No 04/08/2024 04/08/2026

### 8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year? 8b. Specific Termination Authority 8c. Actual Term Date

No

### 9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year 10a. Legislation Req to Terminate? 10b. Legislation Pending?

Continue Not Applicable Not Applicable

### 11. Establishment Authority Agency Authority

### 12. Specific Establishment Authority 13. Effective Date 14. Committee Type 14c. Presidential?

Secretary's Decision Memorandum 12/28/1970 Continuing No

### 15. Description of Committee National Policy Issue Advisory Board

### 16a. Total Number of Reports

No Reports for  
this Fiscal Year

### 17a. Open 17b. Closed 17c. Partially Closed 17d. Total

### Meetings and Dates

No Meetings

Current Next  
FY FY

<b>18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18d. Total</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)</b>	0.00	0.00

**20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?**

MAFAC advises the Secretary of Commerce on policies and guidance for stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources. The Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (or designee) and the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries actively participate and identify topics for deliberation by the Committee that are timely and relevant to the Secretary. MAFAC in return provides recommendations to the Secretary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regarding policies, regulations, and programs that are the responsibility of the Department. As a national advisory group, MAFAC provides a public forum where candid discussions on complex issues of

resource management and science can occur. During these discussions, various options and concerns are examined, objectives identified, and mutual understanding developed. MAFAC provides input from a wide variety of constituencies that improve the agency's knowledge regarding what will be supported as well as what will be controversial.

**20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?**

For 50 years, MAFAC has maintained a diverse group of professional and academic expert members who represent regional, tribal, and national perspectives on living marine resources. The current composition of the Committee balances gender, ethnic, geographic, and sectoral representation and includes expertise in aquaculture; seafood and trade; commercial, recreational, subsistence fishing, and related industries; natural resource and protected species management; environmental issues; and social, economic, and biological sciences. Balance is maintained by holding widely announced open nominations when vacancies occur. Partner organizations and stakeholder groups receive nomination announcements and are asked to widely distribute it, they are posted to the NOAA Fisheries website, distributed through NOAA Fisheries' weekly e-Newsletter (reaching 67,070 in August 2023), and these announcements are usually shared through trade news outlets. Each year we strive to increase our reach to diverse audiences through new outreach tools and engagement methods. The Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and the Department's Assistant Administrator for Fisheries serve as ex officio members to the Committee. The executive directors of the Atlantic, Gulf of

Mexico, and Pacific Interstate Fisheries Commissions serve as non-voting ex officio members, as well. All members are recognized leaders in their field and contribute a wide-range of knowledge and experience. The caliber of the membership is exemplified by the fact that periodically, members of MAFAC must step down because they are nominated by their governors and appointed by the Secretary to serve on the regional fishery management councils. Similarly, some applicants wishing to serve on MAFAC have past experience serving on regional fishery management councils.

**20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?**

As required by the Charter, the full Committee meets at least twice each calendar year in person or virtually, as needed. Topics for consideration on the agenda are derived from a mix of Department of Commerce (DOC) and NOAA current or forthcoming issues put forth by the agencies, as well as timely and relevant topics suggested or requested by MAFAC members. MAFAC continues to make policy recommendations on key programs and legislative initiatives that address the science and management of fisheries and protected species and emerging issues facing NOAA Fisheries. The detailed presentations and discussions that comprise all MAFAC meetings is necessary to support the thoughtful and deliberative work of the Committee. In FY2023, MAFAC held two in-person meetings, one in Silver Spring, MD and the other in San Diego, CA. During both meetings, MAFAC members gathered input from external experts and discussed, considered, and finalized recommendations on several high level policy issues. Additionally, several of MAFAC's subcommittees met

in-conjunction with full Committee meetings.

Relevant, major topics and activities that the MAFAC members focused on in FY2023 included:

(1) identifying guiding principles to better define and help NOAA support climate-ready fisheries, fisheries management, and fishing communities; (2) gathering stakeholder knowledge and perceptions about the effectiveness of deterrents to mitigate or eliminate harmful interactions of marine mammals with fishing gear in the water and at docks and related structures; (3) developing recommendations for the agency to build greater transparency and stakeholder support for strategic multi-year investments in core mission critical infrastructure; and (4) recommendations for the agency to consider when developing an implementation roadmap for using electronically reported recreational fishing data. At the November/December 2022 meeting, MAFAC members met the new acting Deputy Assistant Administrator of Operations for NOAA Fisheries, Jim Landon, and received an update on Administration priorities, workforce, and the Agency's 'return to office' plan (post-COVID). Members received informational presentations from staff on the America the Beautiful Initiative, the Draft Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Strategy, and the Bilateral Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding and restoration opportunities. Additional updates were provided on the FY23 budget outlook; recreational fishing program activities; the Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative; the Next-Gen Data Acquisition Plan (NG-DAP), and other activities since the May 2022 meeting from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Janet Coit. The group received special presentations on the NOAA Fisheries Aquaculture Program and Tribal engagement from Senior Tribal Policy Advisor, Zach Penney. A large portion of the

November/December 2022 meeting focused on the agency's strategy "Fisheries & Seafood Resilience, Priorities, and Vision for the Future." Members approved three recommendations to the Agency: (1) suggestions for updating the National Saltwater Fishing Policy; (2) a final report on "Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce;" and (3) flexible work policies for remote and telework. The primary focus of the May 2023 meeting in San Diego, CA was climate-ready fisheries. The Committee received a science update from the NOAA Fisheries Senior Science Advisor on the science challenges that NOAA Fisheries faces and how we are working to address them through the NOAA Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative. MAFAC members also organized a two part panel with external experts to discuss with MAFAC how NOAA Fisheries can connect climate science to management decisions now and into the future, explore what industry is already doing, and elicit thoughts on how to better incorporate climate change in management and decision making. A secondary focus of the May 2023 meeting was the NOAA National Seafood Strategy. In addition to receiving an update on the status of the Strategy and an overview of the agency's social science and economics portfolio as it relates to the Strategy, Fisheries staff organized a field trip and tour of Tuna Harbor in San Diego where the opportunities and challenges that exist for the seafood sector are representative of those across the country. Members met representatives from the San Diego commercial, bait, and aquaculture seafood sectors; agency economists; and local partners. They learned about seafood infrastructure (processing) challenges and opportunities, the feasibility of a

fresh catch auction for the city, aquaculture activities, challenges and opportunities for the sector associated with planned redevelopment of the downtown San Diego waterfront, and the history of Tuna Harbor Dockside Market. Members also received updates on the National EEJ Strategy; an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making to potentially update Magnuson Stevens Act National Standards 4, 8, and 9; BIL and restoration funding opportunities; and the FY24 budget outlook. While no actions took place, MAFAC subcommittees met and continued their work on ongoing efforts to inform actions planned for the November 2023 meeting.

**20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?**

As a unique national advisory committee comprised of individuals with diverse expertise in the fields of living marine resource management and science or representing an important stakeholder group, MAFAC has proven to be an invaluable resource for NOAA, the Department, and Administration to identify common ground on which controversial and highly visible issues can move forward. MAFAC pre-dates FACA and is the oldest advisory body in NOAA, having advised on implementation of such landmark initiatives as the Law of the Sea and the original Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 1976. It is the only FACA-chartered advisory committee with responsibility to "advise the Secretary on all living marine resources that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce." Many marine resource management issues can be highly controversial and require a great deal of public transparency and consensus building. The MAFAC has become an increasingly useful asset for serving in this role, providing the agency and the Administration with a

public sounding board to identify issues and develop strategies on which common ground and mutual agreement can be established. While regional commissions and councils exist, MAFAC is the only national, open, transparent organization that focuses on oceans policy and living marine resource stewardship from the unique perspective of stakeholders collaborating with the government to provide advice on national policy. MAFAC's work is always aimed at supporting the mission and goals of NOAA Fisheries, NOAA, and the Department of Commerce. MAFAC meetings are open to the public and tend to be well attended. The detailed and explanatory discussions of complex issues (that are not always articulated well in the media) provide the agency a degree of public education that is proving increasingly valuable. MAFAC provides a valuable and candid forum for the anticipated debates revolving around the implementation of ocean management initiatives.

**20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?**

N/A.

**21. Remarks**

MAFAC is a unique national advisory body with diverse expertise and member viewpoints on living marine resource conservation and management issues. NOAA and the Department of Commerce value MAFAC's policy advice and input on key marine resource issues, particularly controversial or challenging ones, as well as its open, transparent process.

**Designated Federal Officer**

Heidi Lovett Acting DFO

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
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Beal, Robert	10/20/2012	04/12/2025	Executive Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Ex Officio Member
Coit, Janet	06/21/2021	01/19/2025	Assistant Administrator for Fisheries Senior Program Director, Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture Program, Coastal Enterprises Inc. Fisheries Project	Ex Officio Member
Cowperthwaite, Hugh	09/11/2023	09/11/2026	Florida Atlantic University, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Davis, Megan	03/12/2018	03/12/2024	Executive Director, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Donaldson, David	05/16/2014	04/12/2025	Recreational fisherman	Ex Officio Member
Fote, Thomas	04/26/2019	04/25/2025	Marine Biologist/Marine Policy Advisor, Quileute Tribe	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hagen, Jennifer	09/11/2023	09/11/2026	Fishermen and civil engineer	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hayden, Natasha	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Owner/Manager, Dana Wharf Sportfishing	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Kalez, Donna	03/12/2018	03/12/2024	Director of Conservation, Sara McDonald	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

McMahon, Donald	04/26/2019	04/25/2025	Aquaculture; President, Pensacola Bay Oyster Co., LLC, Pensacola Bay Oyster Hatchery, LLC	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Moore, Meredith	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Fish and marine conservation	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Moreland, Stefanie	03/12/2018	03/12/2024	Director of Government Relations and Seafood Sustainability for Trident Seafood	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
ODierno, Linda	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Fish and Seafood Development Specialist	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Prewitt, Ryan	09/11/2023	09/11/2026	Chef/Owner, Peche Seafood Grill	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Ralston, Kellie	10/19/2018	10/19/2024	Florida Fishery Policy Director, American Sportfishing Association	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Runnebaum, Jocelyn	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Marine scientist	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Schumacker, Ervin "Joe"	03/12/2018	03/12/2024	Marine Scientist, Quinault Department of Fisheries, Quinault Indian Nation	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Schumann, Sarah	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Fisherman, & Owner/Principal Fisheries Consulting	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Spinrad, Richard	06/22/2021	01/19/2025	Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere	Ex Officio Member

			Professor Emeritis, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Sullivan, Patrick	04/26/2019	04/25/2025		
			Cooperative Fisheries Research Coordinator, Pacific Islands Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Tam, Clayward	03/25/2022	03/24/2025		
Thom, Barry	03/12/2022	03/12/2025		Ex Officio Member
				Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Upton, Matthew	03/12/2018	03/12/2024	Attorney, United States Seafood	
				Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Veerhusen, Brett	03/25/2022	03/24/2025	Fisherman & Principal, Ocean Strategies	
				Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
			Owner, Shelter Lodge, an Alaska Sportfishing Lodge	
Yamada, Richard	03/12/2018	03/12/2024		Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

## Number of Committee Members Listed: 26

### Narrative Description

MAFAC is a national advisory body with diverse expertise and member viewpoints. As NOAA is a regulatory agency with responsibility for managing and sustaining living marine resources, many of the actions, decisions, and priorities of the agency are controversial. MAFAC provides an invaluable forum in which controversial and key issues can be discussed, mutual understanding developed, and common ground established for expanded public dialogue and debate. The value and importance of this role continues. MAFAC continues to provide guidance and input on numerous topics such as the climate-ready fisheries and communities; enhanced seafood marketing opportunities, amplifying the economic and social value of commercial and recreational fisheries while ensuring their sustainability; and

conserving and recovering protected species.

**What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?**

Checked if  
Applies

Improvements to health or safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust in government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Major policy changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Outcome Comments**

Not Applicable

**What are the cost savings associated with this committee?**

Checked if Applies

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Cost Savings Comments**

Although many MAFAC recommendations have been adopted by the agency, they normally take the form of general policy guidance, priorities, and advice, rather than specific regulatory or fisheries management actions for which benefit-cost computations are made. Members serve in a voluntary capacity, and a rough approximation of the value of the time directly donated through MAFAC and its subcommittees is on the order of

\$200,000 -\$350,000 per year.

**What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?**

550

**Number of Recommendations Comments**

The MAFAC produces advisory recommendations when it finalizes projects and completes reports. Much of its work lasts more than one year. Depending on the topic and work, the recommendations can be concise and reasonably feasible for the agency to pursue, while others can be complex and are detailed in lengthy reports. The answer to this question is an estimate based on the DFO and staff's experience and tracking of recommendations since 2006 (prior to FY2006, the FACA did not require tracking recommendations). MAFAC recommendations are based on the work and activities undertaken by subcommittees, task forces, or working groups that were brought to the full Committee for deliberation and approval. In FY2023, MAFAC finalized three reports: 1) Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce. Following the May 2022 meeting, MAFAC submitted a recommendation regarding workforce development and conducting local needs assessments of all industries linked to fishing and seafood production and distribution. At that time, they pledged to continue working to identify strategies that ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. fisheries and seafood and improve their resilience in the face of changing climate and other stressors to coastal ecosystems and communities. The resulting work was the report, Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce. The Report provides recommendations on four overarching themes (4 recommendations): completing a workforce development needs assessment; education; training; and innovation and entrepreneurship through education, mentoring, and knowledge sharing. 2) Recommendations for Updating the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. MAFAC reviewed and provided input on the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy, established in 2015, in order to reflect current conditions. The Report provides 10 recommendations to NOAA on the revision of the Policy. High level recommendations emphasized the importance of: including principle of equity and environmental justice within the strategy; comprehensive impacts of climate change on recreational management and need to address this within the Policy; the need to improve saltwater recreational harvest data; and use of metrics to monitor the effectiveness of National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy (4 recommendations). Specific recommendations were provided for each guiding principle in the Policy (6 recommendations). 3) Recommendation that the Department of Commerce and NOAA

adopt a more flexible work policy to allow NOAA Fisheries employees to telework and remote work, with supporting justifications (1 recommendation. MAFAC members discussed and recognized the importance of flexible work policies to improve employee retention, morale, and work-life balance; provide the opportunity to live in more affordable, non-urban areas; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with commuting. To highlight the importance, recommended that the Department of Commerce and NOAA adopt a more flexible work policy to allow NOAA Fisheries employees expanded telework and remote work opportunities.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?**

65%

**% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments**

The final report and minutes of each meeting along with any advisory recommendations are distributed throughout the agency and target the appropriate staff responsible for the issue of focus. The 65 percent is based on the recent DFO's experience and is not a reflection of what has been implemented over the lifetime of the Committee. In FY2023—approximately 65% of the Committee's recommendations were implemented or continue to be under consideration. In some cases, such as recommendations related to centering equity and environmental justice in all marine resource actions, MAFAC recommendations can influence the work of Fishery Management Councils, Commissions, and state agencies partners.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?**

20%

**% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments**

This is an estimate. Some recommendations are individually very detailed and actionable; in other cases, an entire suite of recommendations may be more policy focused not fully implementable in the short or medium term. It is important to note that in some years, recommendations to interagency bodies are beyond the sole control and authority of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

**Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

## Agency Feedback Comments

At the beginning of each meeting, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries or other agency leaders provide presentations on the actions the agency has taken in response to the most recent recommendations or reports that were transmitted by the Committee. Leaders may also discuss past recommendations or reports, if they continue to influence the work of the agency, or they may discuss that review and deliberation on their recommendations is still in progress. In addition, members of MAFAC are briefed by subject matter experts at each meeting on progress and status of issues and questions raised by the Committee. These presentations and discussions are captured in the transcripts of each meeting, available to the public, and the public has access to all presentations and documents shared with MAFAC through each meeting's webpage. These are linked directly in the meeting agenda or under "Key documents."

## What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Action Comments

MAFAC has served as a forum in which draft initiatives are candidly discussed in an open forum allowing for Committee input to be taken into consideration before the agency takes any formal action. The Committee provides advice and feedback to the agency on strategic priorities, formal guidance documents, draft regulations, as well as on elements related to public outreach, constituent communication, and 'marketing messages' for complicated and/or controversial issues.

## Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

## Grant Review Comments

Not Applicable

## How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Access Comments**

Current MAFAC reports, activities, and minutes are posted and maintained on a web page located on the agency's web site, along with DFO contact information. In the fall of 2017, NOAA Fisheries created a new user-friendly website. Old reports and documentation that are not on the site are maintained per the customary records management regulations. Copies of past reports and documentation are available to the public by sending requests to the DFO's office.