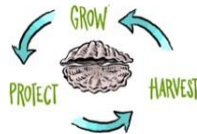

Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative Strategic Plan Overview

Finalized March 30, 2021



MASSACHUSETTS
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www.MassShellfishInitiative.org

Creation of the MSI Strategic Plan

- Assessment Report (3 Assessment Committee meetings, responses from 41 coastal municipalities, 15 NGOs/academic institutions, 4 state agencies)
- Scoping Report (3 Scoping Committee meetings and 4 Public Scoping Meetings)
- 218 Public Comments on Scoping Report
- Strategies and Recommended Actions were developed by Strategic Plan Work Group (6 virtual meetings with public comment at each meeting), based on the Assessment Report and Scoping Report; Objectives and Goals came directly from Scoping Report
- 38 Public Comments on draft Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Overview

6 Objectives set by the Task Force

11 Goals from the Scoping Report

51 Recommended Actions

Rationale

Resources Needed

Lead & Participants

Timeline



Recurring Themes

- Enhanced communication and coordination among local, state, federal agencies and stakeholders
- Formal Massachusetts Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) as venue for continued cooperation and communication between stakeholders and state and local government
- Most recommendations provide benefits for all shellfish stakeholders, with a focus on: commercial wild harvest, aquaculture, recreational harvest, and tribal

Objective 1: Foster communication and coordination between community groups, local, state and federal managers and developing improved guidance.

Goal 1.1 Developing and strengthening means of communication between managers, regulators and community groups both within and across all levels of government.

- Formally constitute a MA Shellfish Advisory Panel that shall be inclusive of shellfish stakeholders so that it may provide a forum for all regulatory, economic and social aspects of MA nearshore shellfish resources.
- Regularly assess MSI strategic plan progress and initiate recommended actions, including outreach to lead and participating offices and entities.

Objective 2: Building Public and Stakeholder Capacity to Support Shellfish Resources and Shellfish Fisheries

Goal 2.1 Improve how local and state shellfish managers communicate and engage with stakeholders.

- Communications plans with improved stakeholder engagement

Goal 2.2 Increase public support and awareness around the economic and ecological value of shellfish resources and shellfisheries.

- Financial support for projects that educate the public about the benefits of shellfish and the adverse impacts of coastal pollution

Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.1 Strengthening state and local capacity to effectively manage shellfish resources and shellfish fisheries in the face of increasing management challenges.

- Increase resources (staff, equipment, labs) to expand monitoring and testing required for growing area classification, shellfish human health hazards, and shellfish disease
- Incentivize municipal shellfish program efficacy (patrol activities, reporting, resource assessments, BMPs)

Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.2 Support for research focused on issues impacting shellfish resource health, public health, and shellfish production at the local, state and federal level.

- Identify, strengthen support for or establish grant programs and prioritize projects that address pollutants prior to making it into coastal waters
- Prioritize shellfish disease research/monitoring in state aquaculture center funding authorizations

Objective 3: Development of management, research, and industry resources

Goal 3.3 Support for resources that promote industry development, communication, market opportunities, and resiliency.

- Provide shellfish grower and harvester education/training and incentives to implement best management practices
- Simplify state aquaculture licensing and permitting
- SAP to evaluate/recommend changes for direct to consumer sales
- Strengthen shellfish labelling for traceability to retail consumer
- Educate growers on species diversification opportunities
- Enhanced marketing for Massachusetts shellfish

Objective 4: Supporting and promoting balanced and sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish.

Goal 4.1 Encourage economic opportunities around shellfish, but ensure they are managed in a way that is consistent with the character and interests of individual communities.

- Incentive program to encourage outcome-defined municipal shellfish management plans
- SAP working group to resolve issues re: consistency in licensing and permitting, including aquaculture license transferability
- SAP to serve as forum for stakeholder discussion on any future proposed changes that impact municipal control

Objective 4: Supporting and promoting balanced and sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish.

Goal 4.2 Improve and refine existing state management strategies that increase sustainable economic opportunities around shellfish resources and shellfisheries while balancing shellfish sanitation concerns.

- Increase state and local patrol capacity, formalize patrol MOU's, support Constable trainings
- Unified MA stakeholder delegation to ISSC
- Prioritize data collection for insufficient datasets, i.e., recreational harvest number and shellfish population/stock assessments
- Develop shellfish training for municipal decision makers (BOS, CC, SAC)

Objective 5: Supporting and promoting cultural and historical uses of shellfish.

Goal 5.1 Protect public access to coastal waters and habitat quality in support of cultural uses of shellfish resources.

- Clear guidance on aquaculture permitting requirements with consideration for protecting public access and wild harvest
- Increased research dollars for social and natural science related to shellfish resources and resource use
- Expansion of programs to improve water quality and reduce coastal pollution
- Incentivize nature-based solutions to stormwater and wastewater mgmt that limits negative impact to shellfish resources
- Tribal, recreational, and wild harvest representation on SAP

Objective 6: Ensure ecologically sound management/ enhancement of shellfish resources & coastal ecosystems

Goal 6.1 Ensuring shellfish and coastal restoration efforts are designed to consider animal health and management implications, and do not result in adverse economic impacts to existing industry.

- EEA working group for 208 shellfish: BMPs, evaluation of cumulative economic impacts, limit negative impact on commercial shellfish markets
- Seed source approval and pathology testing for propagation programs and restoration efforts
- Develop metrics to account for nutrient remediation provided by private shellfish aquaculture, propagation and harvest, and shellfish habitat restoration

Objective 6: Ensure ecologically sound management/ enhancement of shellfish resources & coastal ecosystems

Goal 6.2 Greater support for shellfish and coastal restoration efforts by developing minimum standards and further best practice guidance, examine and revise as needed restrictions on restoration activities in contaminated waters, and a requirement that restoration efforts demonstrate balance between shellfish fisheries interests and public health.

- Explore how to allow for shellfish restoration in contaminated waters
- Review of and increased funding for grant projects to prevent coastal pollution

MSI Task Force Members

** = Strategic Plan Work Group*

Dan McKiernan, Deputy Director, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, Acting Chair *

Paul Bagnall, President, Mass. Shellfish Officers Association *

Matt Charette, Director, Woods Hole Sea Grant Program (Proxy: Josh Reitsma) *

Michael DeVasto, Grower/Harvester, Wellfleet *

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Lisa Engler, Director, Coastal Zone Management (Proxy: Todd Callahan) *

Seth Garfield, President, Massachusetts Aquaculture Association (Proxy: Scott Soares) *

Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager, Chatham

Tori Kim, Director, Mass. Environmental Policy Act Office (Proxy: Paige Czepiga)

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Deb Markowitz, Mass. State Director, The Nature Conservancy (Proxy: Steve Kirk) *

John Mitchell, Mayor, New Bedford (Proxy: George Krikorian)

Michael Moore, Dept. of Public Health

Lt. Col. Pat Moran, MA Environmental Police

Senator Susan Moran (Proxy: Maria Syrniotis)

Rob O'Leary, Mass Maritime

John Pappalardo, CEO, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance (Proxy: Melissa Sanderson) *

Representative Sarah Peake

Rene Read, Town Manager, Duxbury

Sefatia Romeo Theken, Mayor, Gloucester (Proxy: Pete Seminara)

Dan Sieger, Exec. Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection (Proxy: Lisa Rhodes)

MSI Steering Committee

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Chris Schillaci, NOAA Fisheries:Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

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Steve Kirk, The Nature Conservancy

Melissa Sanderson, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

Rob O'Leary, Mass Maritime

Jeff Kennedy, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries

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