

## 2025 Current Fiscal Year Report: Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

Report Run Date: 07/17/2025 07:16:20 AM

**1. Department or Agency**

Department of Commerce

**2. Fiscal Year**

2025

**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 04/09/2024 04/09/2026

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

Yes 02/28/2025

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

Terminate No 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** 0 **17b. Closed** 0 **17c. Partially Closed** 0 **Other Activities** 0 **17d. Total** 0

**Meetings and Dates**

No Meetings

**Current FY** **Next 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>	\$80,799.00	\$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. Administrative Costs (FRNs, contractor support, In-person/hybrid/virtual meetings)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18d. Other (all other funds not captured by any other cost category)</b>	\$245.00	\$0.00
<b>18e. Total Costs</b>	\$81,044.00	\$0.00
<b>19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)</b>	0.80	0.00

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

MAFAC advised 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 participated and identified topics for deliberation by the Committee that were timely and relevant to the Secretary. MAFAC in return provided

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 provided a public forum where candid discussions on complex issues of resource management and science could occur. During these discussions, various options and concerns were examined, objectives identified, and mutual understanding developed. MAFAC provided input from a wide variety of constituencies to improve the agency's knowledge, especially on proposals or work that stakeholders supported, as well as what could be controversial.

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

For over 50 years, MAFAC maintained a diverse group of professional and academic expert members who represent regional, tribal, and national perspectives on living marine resources. Through February 2025, the composition of the Committee balanced geographic and sectoral representation and included expertise in aquaculture; seafood and trade; commercial, recreational, subsistence fishing, and related industries; natural resource and protected species management; environmental issues; academia; and social, economic, and biological sciences. Per the approved Membership Balance Plan, "gender and ethnic diversity [were] considered in the selection of MAFAC members but [were] secondary to the subject matter expertise required and geography." Balance was maintained by holding widely announced open nominations when vacancies occurred. Partner organizations and stakeholder groups received nomination announcements and were asked to widely

distribute it, they were posted to the NOAA Fisheries website, distributed through NOAA Fisheries' weekly e-Newsletter (reaching over 65,000 in FY2025), and these announcements are usually shared through trade news outlets. Each year we strived to increase our reach to various 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 served as ex officio members to the Committee. The executive directors of the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Interstate Fisheries Commissions served as non-voting ex officio members, as well. All members were recognized leaders in their field and contributed a wide range of knowledge and experience. The caliber of the membership was exemplified by the fact that periodically, members of MAFAC were to step down because they were nominated by their governors and appointed by the Secretary to serve on the regional fishery management councils. Similarly, some applicants who wanted to serve on MAFAC had 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 met at least twice each calendar year in person or virtually, as needed. Topics for consideration on the agenda were 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 continued to make policy recommendations on key programs and legislative initiatives that addressed the science and

management of fisheries and protected species and emerging issues facing NOAA Fisheries. The detailed presentations and discussions that comprised all MAFAC meetings were necessary to support the thoughtful and deliberative work of the Committee. In FY2025, no meetings were held before MAFAC was terminated on February 28, 2025. MAFAC's first in-person meeting had been scheduled for April 22-24, 2025 in Washington, DC. Subcommittee work had been in progress from October through February. The Protected Resources Subcommittee had received OMB approval to release a survey to gather knowledge and perceptions about the nature of marine mammal interactions and use of deterrents currently employed by commercial, recreational, and tribal fishermen; aquaculture farmers; and marina and coastal property owners and managers. It was developed in response to a request from NOAA Fisheries. The survey was open from September 23, 2024 through December 22, 2024, and MAFAC members began their analysis of the responses. The data was to be used to create an index to identify the relative effectiveness of different allowable deterrents used by various user groups nationwide to reduce the risk of property losses, damage, or catch losses, while preventing any harm to marine mammals. Members strived to finish their analysis to present findings and potential recommendations to the whole Committee at the April 2025 meeting. The Climate and Ecosystems Subcommittee was continuing their second phase of work focused on building climate-ready fisheries. To help NOAA Fisheries understand how to better support fishery resources, habitats, ecosystems, and fishing communities under changing ocean conditions, this second phase work focused on identifying and drafting recommendations to enhance science,

management, communications, and coordination. They reflected on the discussions they had with local fishermen, processors, and community members they met in Kodiak, Alaska during their September 2024 meeting, and were including new topics and ideas gleaned from those conversations.

**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 had proven to be a valuable resource for NOAA, the Department, and Administration to identify common ground on which controversial and highly visible issues can move forward. MAFAC pre-dated FACA and was 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 was 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 had 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 could be established. While regional commissions and councils exist, MAFAC was the only national, open, transparent organization focused on ocean 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 aimed at supporting the mission and goals of NOAA Fisheries, NOAA, and the Department of Commerce. MAFAC meetings were open to the public and tended to be well attended. The detailed and explanatory discussions of complex issues provided the agency a degree of public education, which was proving increasingly valuable. MAFAC provided 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 was 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 valued MAFAC's policy advice and input on key marine resource issues, particularly controversial or challenging ones, as well as its open, transparent process. Per EO 14217, the Secretary of Commerce determined that the purposes for which the MAFAC was established have been fulfilled, and the committee has been terminated effective February 28, 2025.

**Designated Federal Officer**

Heidi Lovett DFO

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
----------------------	-------	-----	------------	-----------------------

Alexander, Kristina	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Endowed Chair of Marine Policy and Law, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Beal, Robert	10/20/2012	02/28/2025	Executive Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Ex Officio Member
Coit, Janet	06/21/2021	01/19/2025	Assistant Administrator for Fisheries	Ex Officio Member
Cowperthwaite, Hugh	09/11/2023	02/28/2025	Senior Program Director, Sustainable Fisheries & Aquaculture Program, Coastal Enterprises Inc. Fisheries Project	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Diamond, Jaime	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	CEO/General Manager, Santa Barbara Landing LLC; Owner, Stardust Sportfishing	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Donaldson, David	05/16/2014	02/28/2025	Executive Director, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	Ex Officio Member
Fote, Thomas	04/26/2019	02/28/2025	Recreational fisherman	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Green, Amy	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Assistant Professor, UMD	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Green, Jim	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Master/Captain, F/V American Spirit	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hagen, Jennifer	09/11/2023	02/28/2025	Marine Biologist/Marine Policy Advisor, Quileute Tribe	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member



Hayden, Natasha	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Fishermen and civil engineer	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hudson, Bobbi	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Executive Director, Pacific Shellfish Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Mercurieff, Marissa	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Director, Office of Justice and Governance Administration for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Moore, Meredith	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Fish and marine conservation	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
ODierno, Linda	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Fish and Seafood Development Specialist	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Prewitt, Ryan	09/11/2023	02/28/2025	Chef/Owner, Peche Seafood Grill	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Ralston, Kellie	10/19/2018	02/28/2025	Florida Fishery Policy Director, American Sportfishing Association	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Runnebaum, Jocelyn	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Marine scientist	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Schumann, Sarah	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	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

Sullivan, Patrick	04/26/2019	02/28/2025	Professor Emeritis, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Cooperative Fisheries Research Coordinator, Pacific Islands Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Tam, Clayward	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Research Coordinator, Pacific Islands Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Thom, Barry	03/12/2022	02/28/2025	Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	Ex Officio Member
Veerhusen, Brett	03/25/2022	02/28/2025	Fisherman & Principal, Ocean Strategies	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Young, John	04/29/2024	02/28/2025	Supply Chain Consultant	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

## Number of Committee Members Listed: 25

### Narrative Description

MAFAC was a national advisory body with diverse expertise and member viewpoints. As NOAA is a regulatory agency responsible for managing and sustaining living marine resources, many actions, decisions, and agency priorities were controversial. MAFAC provided a valuable forum by which controversial and key issues could be discussed, mutual understanding developed, and common ground established for expanded public dialogue and debate. The value and importance of this role continued through February 2025. MAFAC provided guidance and input on numerous topics, such as 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 had been adopted by the agency, they normally took 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 served in a voluntary capacity, and a rough approximation of the value of the time directly donated through MAFAC and its subcommittees was 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?**

568

**Number of Recommendations Comments**

The MAFAC produced advisory recommendations when it finalized projects and completed reports. Much of its work took more than one year to finalize. Depending on the topic and work, the recommendations were concise and reasonably feasible for the agency to pursue, while others were complex and were detailed in lengthy reports. The answer to this question was 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 were 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. Since no MAFAC meetings had convened in FY2025 before February 28, 2025, MAFAC did not finalize or adopt any formal recommendations in FY2025.

**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, were distributed throughout the agency and targeted the appropriate staff responsible for the issue of focus. The 65 percent was based on the most recent DFO's experience and not a reflection of what had been implemented over the lifetime of the Committee. Additionally, in some cases, MAFAC recommendations influenced the work of Fishery Management Councils, Commissions, and state agency 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 was an estimate. Some recommendations were individually very detailed and actionable; in other cases, an entire suite of recommendations was more policy-focused and not fully implementable in the short or medium term. It is important to note that in some years, recommendations to interagency bodies were 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, specific discussions, presentations, or recaps of what the agency did with MAFAC recommendations were provided in response to the most recent reports transmitted by the Committee. In addition, members of MAFAC were briefed by subject matter experts at each meeting on the progress and status of issues and questions raised by the Committee. Written reports, draft regulations, or policies were provided and discussed with the full Committee.

**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 served as a forum in which draft initiatives were candidly discussed in an open forum allowing for Committee input to be taken into consideration before the agency took formal action. The Committee provided 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**

MAFAC reports, activities, and minutes are posted on a web page located on the agency's website, along with DFO contact information. In the fall of 2017, NOAA Fisheries created a more user-friendly website. Old reports and documentation 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 or NOAA Fisheries Office of Policy.