

# RSA Program Review Final Report (Draft)

**Scallop, Herring, Monkfish  
Committee Meetings - 2019**



# RSA Review Panel

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# Executive Committee Guidance (ToR) Issued February 2018 (Appendix II)

- RSA widely viewed as successful, but Council and NMFS agreed to conduct review as a matter of good governance.
- Categories of ToR (24 individual questions)
  1. Program Administration
  2. Program Structure
  3. Results
- Consensus not required – present all ideas.

# ToR: Examples

- Priorities- how are they set?
- Process used to make awards?
- Is conflict of interest an issue?
- Is there financial accountability?
- Factors that limit or promote interest in RSA?
- Is there enough RSA?
- Alternatives to competitive grants?
- Consistency of RSA fishing with FMP objectives?
- Are projects used for management?
- Is RSA cost effective?

# Review Methodology

- One year process interrupted by gov. shutdown!
- Based on:
  - Knowledge and experience of review panel
  - Written documents about RSA
  - Communications with PDTs, APs, Committees
  - On line survey (55 responses – 40 questions)
  - Select confidential interviews (20+)
- Report outline designed to address ToR.
- Review panel held about a dozen webex meetings.
- Face to face meeting to prepare Findings and Recommendations (*Note: not consensus on all rec's – rich diversity of ideas more valuable*).

# **RSA Review Panel Report**

## **Table of Contents**

### **1.0 Overview**

### **2.0 Introduction** (History, roles, methodology)

### **3.0 RSA programs by FMP** (amount, priority setting, implementation, awards to date, etc.)

### **4.0 What makes federal grants unique** (monetizing RSA, funding vehicles, project selection, etc.)

### **5.0 RSA program deliverables and outreach** (monitoring, RSA results, communication and participation, administrative challenges)

### **6.0 RSA review panel findings and recommendations**

### **7.0 References**

# RSA Review Panel Report - Appendices

- I. RSA review panel membership
- II. Terms of Reference from Executive Committee
- III. Online survey results
- IV. RSA projects funded to date and overall impact on management and scientific information
- V. Sample of RSA process and timeline
- VI. RSA review panel response by term of reference
- VII. Templates used at NEFMC Scallop Share Days
- VIII. Funding of federal fisheries management
- IX. Evolution of fisheries science and who pays for it

# RSA Awards in numbers and \$

| <b>2000-2018</b>   | <b>Sea Scallops</b> | <b>Atlantic Herring</b> | <b>Monkfish</b> |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <b># of Awards</b>   | 172                 | 4                       | 24              |
| <b>Total Est. Value<br/>(Res. + Comp.)</b>                     | \$ 146.3 million    | \$ 2.4 million          | \$ 22.1 million |
| <b>Total Est. Research<br/>only value</b>                      | \$ 34.1 million     | \$ 0.6 million          | \$ 3.8 million  |
| <b>Average ratio of<br/>estimated<br/>research/total value</b> | 0.23                | 0.25                    | 0.17            |

Since 2000, just under \$40 million toward research, about \$170 million total.

# Review Panel Findings

*Finding 1. Research Set Aside programs performing well, and generally regarded as highly successful, especially the Scallop RSA program.*

*Finding 2. Concerns about several aspects of RSA (10)*

*Finding 3. The role of RSA is unspecified.*

*Finding 4. Sea scallop surveys lack an overall design.*

*Finding 5. Implementing RSA programs generates a substantial administrative workload.*

*Finding 6. One or more of the current RSA programs may no longer be viable, but other species may be candidates for RSA programs in the future.*

# Review Panel Recommendations

*Recommendation 1. When it comes to making changes in NEFMC RSA programs, caution should be exercised not to “screw up a good thing.”*

- Success shouldn't be an excuse for complacency.
- The recommendation for caution is about the importance of Stakeholder engagement.
- Changes should be designed collaboratively with stakeholders.

# Review Panel Recommendations

*Recommendation 2. Several ideas for improving RSA programs that emerged during this review should be considered by the NEFMC and NMFS.*

- These ideas were too numerous (over 30 specific ideas) and sometimes too detailed to be fully analyzed by the RSA review panel (see matrix).
1. Inadequacies in priority setting,
  2. Lack of transparency in review processes,
  3. Limited pool of RSA applicants,
  4. Challenges of awards in “fish” instead of dollars,
  5. Fairness in the way RSA compensation fishing awards used,
  6. Timeliness of awards,
  7. Lack of clarity in financial oversight,
  8. Results not feeding back into management as well as they could be,
  9. Access and ownership of RSA results,
  10. Lack of collaboration with NMFS scientists.

# Review Panel Recommendations

*Recommendation 3. To clarify the role of RSA, the NEFMC should adopt a mission statement for RSA.*

- The RSA review panel does not have a consensus recommendation on the content of a mission statement.
- The panel identified some things the mission statement could include.
- The report also identifies possible roles RSA should not fulfill, such activities that are NMFS' traditional mission.

# Review Panel Recommendations

*Recommendation 4. A series of options for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resource surveys for scallops should be considered.*

- Option 1. Improve the current approach, issue multi-year grants (up to 5 years).
- Option 2. Re-establishing the Survey AP to design surveys.
- Option 3. Using an RSA for a cooperative agreement (CA) to prepare a statistically rigorous survey design. The agreement should engage NMFS throughout.
- Option 4. Expand option 3 to include implementation of surveys.
- Option 5. Expand option 4 into a long term Cooperative Agreement for RSA Programs (CARSAP).

**No consensus on the options,  
and some review panel members question if NMFS  
has the authority for CARSAP**

# Review Panel Recommendations

***Recommendation 5. NMFS, in consultation with the Council, should evaluate and document RSA program administrative capacity to determine where support is sufficient and where it could or should be increased.***

Review the operational efficiency of RSA programs including:

- grant competition administration,
- compensation fishing and research permitting administration and oversight,
- pre and post award programmatic and fiscal oversight,
- access to project data and results, and
- outreach.

# Review Panel Recommendations

***Recommendation 6. The NEFMC should consider preparing an Omnibus FMP for Research Set Aside Programs that would be available for all fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Council.***

The Omnibus Plan could include:

- Codify the role of RSA and principles to guide use of RSA;
- Processes to be used for implementation (i.e. setting priorities, amount of RSA set-aside, funding vehicle, etc.); and
- A flexible procedure for deciding when and how much RSA should be available as needs and opportunities arise, for any FMP.

Preparation of an omnibus RSA FMP would assure broad, transparent participation in shaping the future of RSA in consideration of this report.

# Discussion Today

- 6 overall findings and over 50 recommendations.
- What next?

Recommendations fall into two broad categories:

- Stay the course with recommended program refinements within the confines of the same approach.
  - Begin a discussion to potentially explore a new approach.
- Which recommendations do you agree with? Which ones do you disagree with? Which ones should the Council try to address first? (*Matrix provided*)