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MRAG Americas, Inc.

Gulf of Maine Lobster

MSC 3rd Surveillance and Expedited Audit Announcement

February 25, 2021

MRAG Americas announces that we are beginning the process of the 3rd regular annual surveillance audit, as well as an expedited audit, of the Gulf of Maine Lobster fishery. We are combining the remote site visit for both of these purposes into one set of meetings, however we will produce two separate reports—one expedited audit report dealing only with the North Atlantic Right Whale issues that gave rise to the suspension of the fishery (to be completed first), and one normal 3rd surveillance audit report covering the usual fishery updates including progress against conditions, which will be completed second.

Table 1 – Surveillance announcement

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|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Fishery name | |
| | Gulf of Maine lobster | |
| 2 | Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA) | |
| | American lobster (<i>Homarus americanus</i>) Traps-pots Lobster Management Area 1 FAO area 21 Northwest Atlantic American lobster | |
| 3 | Date certified | Date of expiry |
| | 13 December 2016 | 12 June 2022 |
| 4 | Surveillance level and type | |

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| | Third surveillance audit (Level 5) and expedited audit—remote Surveillance activity has changed. See Appendix 2 for details. | |
| 5 | Surveillance number | |
| | 1st Surveillance | |
| | 2nd Surveillance | |
| | 3rd Surveillance (and expedited) | X |
| | 4th Surveillance | |
| | Other (Expedited, etc.) | X |
| 6 | Proposed team leader | |
| | <p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot will serve as team leader for the assessment. Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Pirlot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team leader as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • She has passed the MSC team leader training; • She has the required competencies described in Table PC1, section 2; • She has passed the MSC Traceability training module; • She meets ISO 19011 training requirements; • She has undertaken two fishery assessments as a team member in the last five years, and • She has experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques and is able to effectively communicate with clients and other stakeholders. <p>In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 2 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> | |
| 7 | Proposed team members | |
| | <p>Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Fisheries Consultant. She has collaborated as a team member on several MSC assessments, including North and South Pacific albacore tuna fishery, US West Coast Groundfish fishery, US Atlantic Spiny dogfish</p> | |

and winter skate, and is team leader for all the Alaska Groundfish fisheries. She provides routine audit services for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and is the MRAG Project Manager for the ISSF ProActive Vessel Registry (PVR). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she spent 2 years working at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor.

MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Wilson meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:

- She has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries;
- She has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last five years;
- She is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored;
- She has passed the MSC Traceability training module.

In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 3 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms she has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.

Dr. Mónica Valle-Esquivel joined MRAG Americas in 2010 as Senior Fisheries Biologist. She has over 15 years of experience in sustainable management of marine fisheries. She specialized in fish and shellfish population dynamics, stock assessment, design and evaluation of management strategies, statistical analysis, risk analysis, and fishery simulation modeling. Dr. Valle worked with the University of Miami and NOAA Fisheries as a post-doctoral stock assessment scientist, and has provided scientific advice to FAO, CITES, CARICOM, ACP Fish II, and other international organizations for the management of tropical marine species the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In Mexico she coordinated a United Nations (UNIDO) coastal management project within the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem program. At MRAG, Dr. Valle has worked with institutions, scientists, fishers, managers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote and achieve sustainability of fishery resources around the world. She is a certified Marine Stewardship Council lead assessor, and for seven years has served as a team leader and member for several fisheries, ranging from invertebrate fisheries to highly migratory fish. Among other professional achievements, Dr. Valle has acquired wide experience in the development and implementation of fishery improvement projects and fishery management plans, in the design and analysis of various monitoring programs, and in essential fish habitat and ecosystem assessments. Dr. Valle received a B.S. degree in Biology from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami.

MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Valle-Esquivel meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:

- She has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries;
- She has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last five years;
- She is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored.

In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 1 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms she has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.

The whole assessment team collectively meets the requirements as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.

A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.

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| 8 | Audit/review time and location |
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|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>A remote expedited audit will occur March 29-31, 2021. This audit will be held in conjunction with the 3rd surveillance audit for the fishery.</p> <p>The MSC September 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic Derogation enables CABs to conduct surveillance audits remotely.</p> |
| 9 | Assessment and review activities |
| | <p>Expedited audit to review new information pertaining to the lobster fishery management in relation to impacts to North Atlantic Right Whales, and otherwise regular third surveillance audit to assess any relevant changes affecting the fishery and to assess progress against any open conditions.</p> |
| 10 | Stakeholder opportunities |
| | <p>Participate in the site visit: all team members are available to meet remotely (FCP v2.2 7.28.15.b).</p> <p>Provide input or comments to the team regarding the Surveillance Audit. Stakeholders must use the MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Surveillance Audits v1.0 (Ctrl+click to follow link).</p> |

MRAG Americas invites stakeholders to provide any information considered relevant, including knowledge and concerns about the fishery, to the regular surveillance and expedited assessments of this fishery. Unless covered by FCP 4.3.3 any information that cannot be shared with other stakeholders even under a confidentiality agreement shall not be: referenced in the surveillance audit, used to determine the surveillance audit outcome or used as the basis for an objection to certification. The MSC has developed a guide for stakeholder input, available at <https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/engage-with-a-fishery-assessment> and a template ([MSC template for stakeholder input into a surveillance audit](#)) for stakeholder response available at [MSC program supporting documents](#). Stakeholders are encouraged not to withhold information, including concerns and knowledge about the fishery.

You must use the template to provide your response. All comments and inquiries should be directed to MRAG Americas. MRAG will schedule meetings with stakeholders if requested. To schedule a meeting please provide:

- your name and contact details
- your association with the fishery
- the issues you would like to discuss
- where and when you would like to meet

We request that stakeholders provide written information or request a meeting by 5pm UTC on March 22, 2021.

More information on the fishery is available at <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/gulf-of-maine-lobster-fishery/@@view>.

Please send any documentation, requests for meetings, or inquiries to:

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Submitted by: Michealene Corlett

Date: February 24, 2021

Appendix 1: Summary of CVs of team leader and team member(s)

Ms. Amanda Stern-Piriot will serve as team leader for the assessment. Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Piriot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.

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Appendix 2: Surveillance frequency - if amended since PCDR

The CAB shall include in the announcement:

1. A justification for any reduction from the default surveillance level following FCP v2.2 7.28.4-7.28.7,
2. A justification for any deviations from carrying out the surveillance audit before or after the anniversary date of certification, and
3. A completed fishery surveillance program.

Table 2 – Surveillance level justification

| Year | Surveillance activity | Number of auditors | Rationale |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | Off-site audit | 3 auditors working remotely | The MSC September 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic Derogation enables CABs to work remotely when conducting a surveillance audit. |

Table 3 – Timing of surveillance audit

| Year | Anniversary date of certificate | Proposed date of surveillance audit | Rationale |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | June 2021 | March 2021 | Timing to coincide with the expedited audit of the fishery. |

Table 4 – Fishery surveillance program

| Surveillance level | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Level 5 | On-site surveillance audit | On-site surveillance audit | Off-site surveillance audit | On-site surveillance audit & re-certification site visit. |