



8950 Martin Luther King Jr. Street N. #202
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702-2211
Tel: (727) 563-9070
Fax: (727) 563-0207
Email: MRAG.Americas@mragamericas.com

President: Andrew A. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

MRAG Americas, Inc.

Gulf of Maine Lobster

MSC 4th Surveillance Audit Announcement

November 17, 2021

Table 1 – Surveillance announcement

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	
	Fourth surveillance audit (Level 5)—On-site Surveillance timing has changed. See Appendix 2 for details.	
5	Surveillance number	
	1st Surveillance	

	2nd Surveillance	
	3rd Surveillance (and expedited)	
	4th Surveillance	X
	Other (Expedited, etc.)	
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 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.</p>	

	<p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Wilson meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members 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 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. <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Valle-Esquivel meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members 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 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. <p>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.</p> <p>The whole assessment team collectively meets the requirements as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p>
8	<p>Audit/review time and location</p> <p>A surveillance audit will occur January 4-7, 2022 in Massachusetts and Maine. This audit will be held in conjunction with the first reassessment for the fishery.</p>
9	<p>Assessment and review activities</p> <p>Regular fourth 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 December 28, 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:

Amanda Stern-Pirlot
MRAG Americas, Inc.
8950 Martin Luther King Jr. St. N., Suite 202
St. Petersburg FL 33702

Ph: 1-206-669-0439
Fax: 1-727-563-0207
certification@mragamericas.com

Submitted by: Michealene Corlett

Date: November 16, 2021

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

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.

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Appendix 2: Surveillance frequency - if amended since PCDR

Table 2 – Surveillance level justification

Year	Surveillance activity	Number of auditors	Rationale
3	On-site audit	3 auditors	

Table 3 – Timing of surveillance audit

Year	Anniversary date of certificate	Proposed date of surveillance audit	Rationale
3	June 2021	January 2022	The 4 th surveillance audit is being held in conjunction with the first reassessment 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 (Covid-19 pandemic)	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification site visit.