

Risk Policy Report

New England Fishery Management Council Meeting

Newport, RI

December 3, 2025

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Today's Presentation

- Review of Risk Policy work in 2025.
- Work Plan and goals for 2026, and outlook for use of Risk Policy.
- Overview of expected adjustments to Risk Policy Concept.
- No Action Required.



2025 Focus of Risk Policy and Working Group

- New Risk Policy became effective on January 1, 2025.
- Two phases (use and development) are happening concurrently.
- Alpha Phase (Use): Risk policy matrix, qualitative application.
- Beta Phase: Simulation testing, weightings exercise, incorporate input and revise concept. Connection to HCRs. Quantitative application.



2026 Risk Policy Goals

Building on input from Council, SSC, CESC, University of Maine Risk Policy Concept and Demonstration...

- 1. Apply the Risk Policy Concept with Harvest Control Rules for catch setting in 2027+ (quantitative approach)**



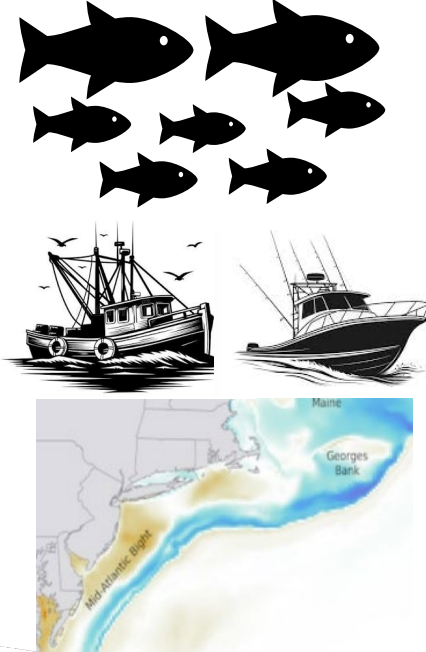
Risk Policy Concept + ABC Control Rules

1. Global Weighting



Weights apply to all stocks

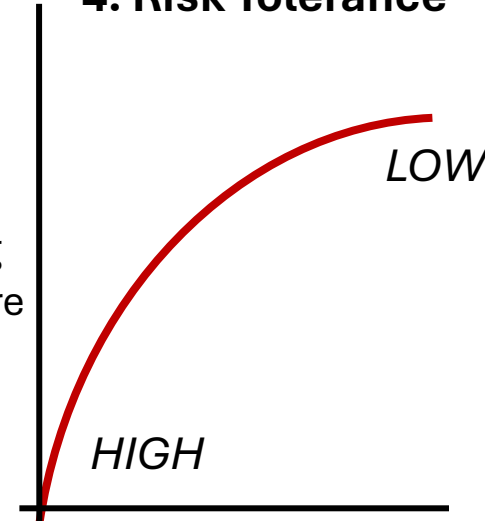
2. Scoring (data)



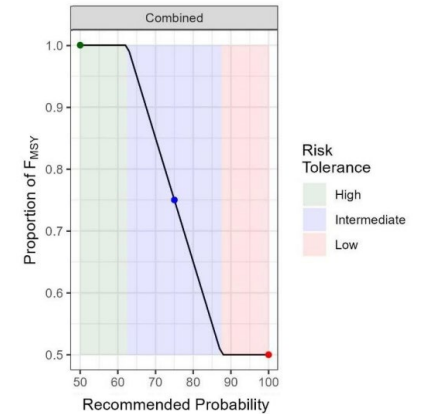
3. Z-Score

Stock conditions that require increased caution produce higher values, implying a greater need to ensure that overfishing is avoided.

4. Risk Tolerance



5. Set ABC using Risk Policy + HCR (TBD, being developed)



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Risk Policy Workplan Overview (Beta Phase)

- Deliverable: Updated Risk Policy Concept Document.
 - Procedural document that outlines what the Risk Policy is, and how to apply it.
- Target Date: 2026 June Council meeting.
 - Enough time for PDTs, SSC to apply the Risk Policy in upcoming specification setting.
- Description: Add/change/revise the concept document based on results of simulation testing and other feedback.



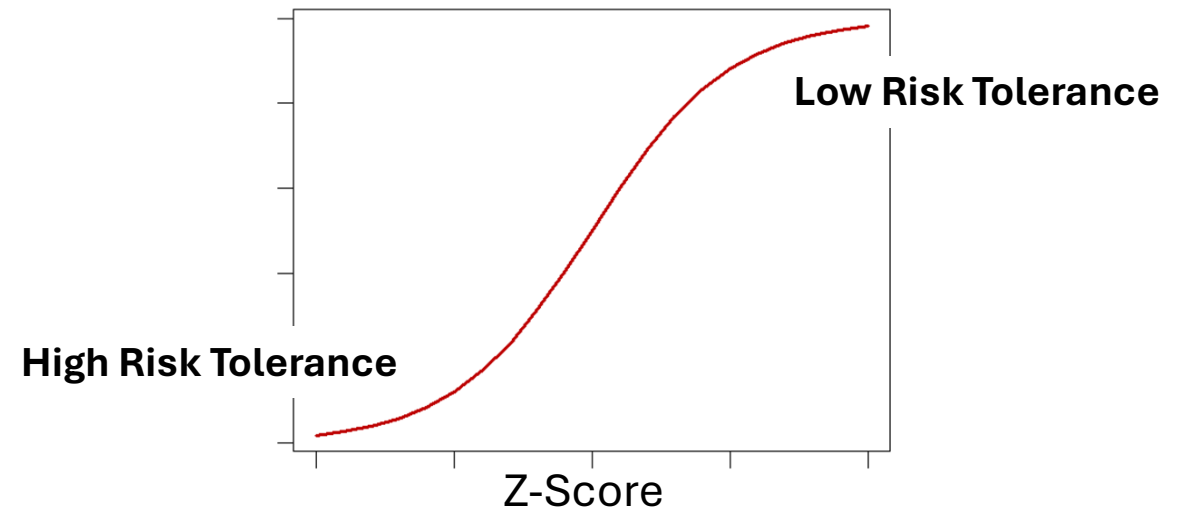
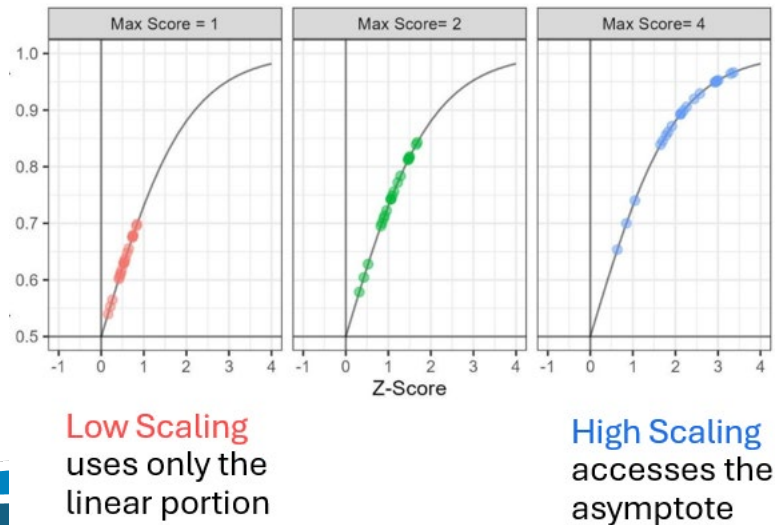
Risk Policy Workplan Milestones

- Demonstration of weighting (complete)
- Delivery of Risk Policy Demonstration/Evaluation White Paper (complete)
- Update Risk Policy Concept document based on feedback (ongoing)
- Gather feedback from Council, SSC on revisions (March, April 2026)
- Council approves revisions to the Risk Policy (June 2026)
- Council complete a global weightings exercise (June 2026)
- Risk Policy used with ABC CRs for 2027+ specifications (outcome)



Under Consideration: Concept Mechanics

- Working Group Recommendations:
 - Adjust shape of risk curve so that risk tolerance moves quickly at intermediate Z-scores and moves slowly at high and low risk tolerance.
 - Revise Z-Score scaling to access the full curve.
 - Revisit factor score ranges (e.g. -4 to 4, 0-4) in concert with scaling and curve shape.



Under Consideration: Factors

- Recommending revisions to the number of factors used initially.
- Considerations:
 - Clear goal statement on intention of each factor
 - Data used to score the factor. Guidelines on how to score factors.
 - Directional relationship with risk.
 - Number of factors to start with may decrease.

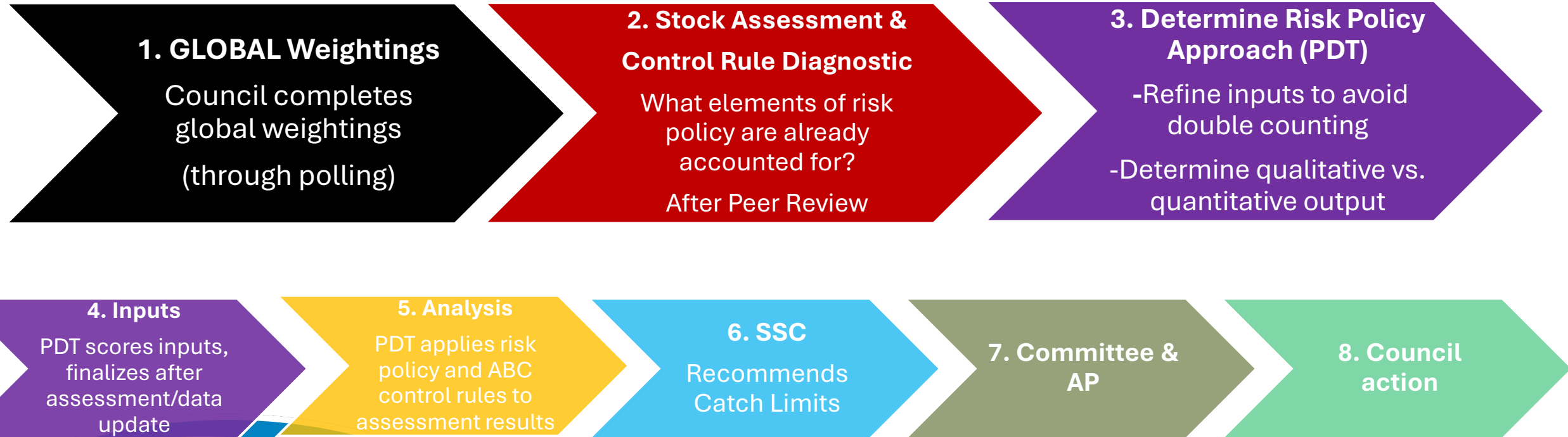
Current Factor Sub-Groups
Recruitment
Assessment Type
Fish Condition / Ecosystem Productivity
Commercial and Recreational Fishery Characterization



Draft Implementation (Starting June 2026)

Potential Process for Specifications

The first time Council completes the implementation of this risk policy concept it will be a big lift, but should get easier

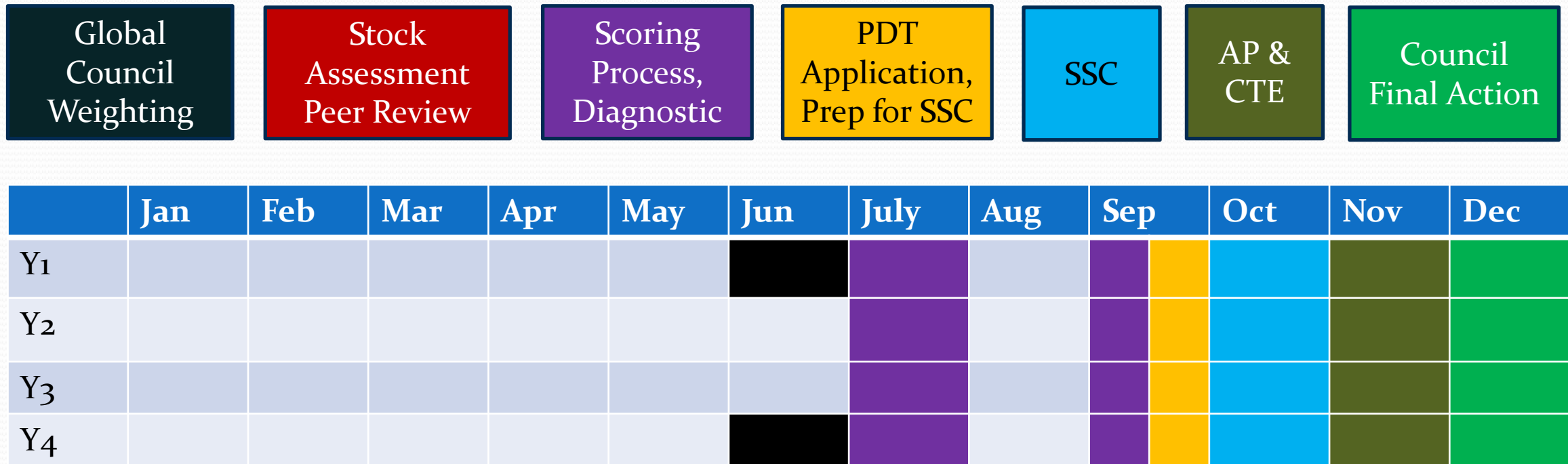


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Timing of Weighting, Scoring, PDT, SSC, Action



Example Timeline for Risk Policy and HCR use.
Implementation by month and over several years.



Coordination with Other Efforts

- Framed as contingencies in the workplan.
- Several other initiatives that are relevant to the Risk Policy:
 - University of Maine ABC Control Rule project (Phases 2 + 3).
 - Groundfish Framework 68 that will update ABC Control Rules (regulatory alignment)
 - Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee, Communications Group (support).
 - Science and Statistical Committee, and its Social Science Subcommittee (review).
 - Internal Process Mapping for Reporting, Document Development, AI.



Project Outlook:

- Anticipate increase in Risk Policy meetings and workload starting now.
- Early 2026: Results of simulation testing that combines Risk Policy with groundfish harvest control rules.
- March/April 2026: SSC & Council feedback on proposed revisions.
- June 2026 Council Meeting: Update Concept and Complete Weightings.
- Use in specifications for 2027+.



Questions?



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