

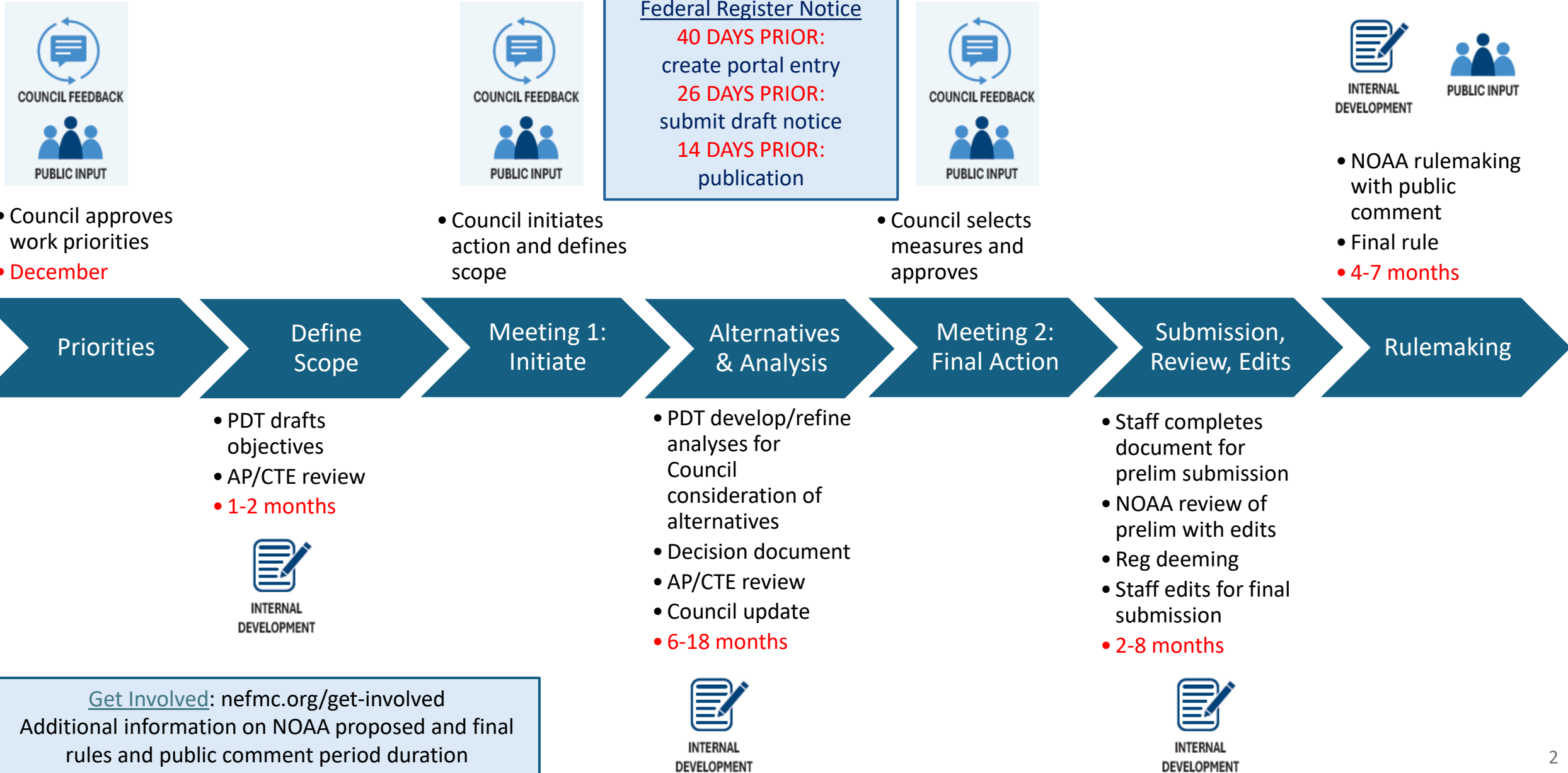
# Council Planning Update January 2026

Cate O'Keefe

New England Fishery Management Council  
January 29, 2026



# Council/NOAA Action Process-Timeline



# Priorities and Work Plans

- 2026 Council Priorities
  - Fishery Management Plan (FMP) actions and required tasks
  - Committees and Interagency efforts
    - SSC, Climate & Ecosystem Steering Committee, Enforcement
    - CCC, NRCC, ECCG/Core Team, International, Protected Species (TRT), NROC, Sanctuaries, etc.
  - Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) initiatives
  - Executive Order 14276 topics
- NOAA Additions
  - Regional “Risk/Value” prioritization to narrow the scope of NMFS management and science
  - Evaluation of additional EO14276 public comments and revisions to Council response
  - Continued evolution of NEPA requirements
- Overview of work plans with staff input

Staff activity

NMFS activity with Staff  
and/or PDT involvement

External activity with Staff  
and/or PDT involvement

# Groundfish

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Amendment 25	Final Submission	GARFO implement		
Framework 72	Final Submission	GARFO implement		
Amendment 23 Review	Conduct review analyses	Complete review, consider future actions		
Redfish Program Review	Conduct review analyses	Complete review, consider future actions		
ABC Control Rule Framework 68	Evaluate integration of revised Risk Policy with ABC CRs (contract)	Develop ABC CRs, conduct analysis	Final action	Implement ABC CRs for specs
Framework 7X		Develop scope Initiate action	Develop specifications and measures, conduct analyses	Final action
Atlantic Cod Management			Continue to develop transition plan; paused pending Amendment 25 decision	
White Hake Rebuilding			Conduct rebuilding plan analyses and review biological reference points	
Stock Assessments		GB haddock	Transboundary stocks	GOM haddock, plaice, pollock, witch fl, halibut

# Scallop

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec		
Framework 40	Final Submission					
FY 27/28 Specifications		2026 Field Season	Develop 2027/2028 (default) Specifications			
Framework 42	Analysis to develop measures for regional DAS, NGOM sub-areas			Final action		
Annual Scallop RSA Work		Share Day	NOFO	NOFO Closes	Proposal Reviews	Award Decisions
Develop New Projection Methods	RFP Solicitation	Contractor work				
LAGC IFQ Program Review	Final report					
Strategic Plan		Strategic Plan Implementation and Priority Development				

# Herring

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Herring specs 2027-2031, RH/S measures, other management measures	PDT completes Council tasking on RH/S	PDT develops specs, other measures, and conducts impacts analyses		Action submission
		Council: initiate action	Council: update	Council: final action
				NOAA review target Jan 1 implement
Stock Assessment		Peer Review: June	SSC: OFL/ABC	

# Monkfish and Skate

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun		July - Sept	Oct - Dec
IFQ Scoping	Draft IFQ scoping document	Councils: approve scoping doc	Conduct Scoping	Councils: Discuss scoping and guide next steps	TBD
Monkfish CPUE Review	SSC subpanel review				
IRA: Joint Governance of Monkfish and Skate	Evaluate 2025 coordinated approach; Staff Governance Workshop			Evaluate opportunities and tradeoffs of combining the Monkfish and Skate FMPs; Regional Governance Workshop	

# Small Mesh Multispecies (Whiting)

Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Whiting specifications 2027-2031, other management measures		Develop scope	Develop specifications and alternatives, conduct analysis, prepare document	
		Council: initiate action	Council: update on action	SSC: OFL/ABC
Exemption areas review and evaluation	Review prior research; evaluate use of LOA; summarize existing measures	PDT/AP Data Workshop		
Risk Policy application	Risk Policy factor development	Risk Policy matrix and identification of data needs	Risk Policy factor scoring	

Updated January 20, 2026, NEFMC Staff



# Habitat

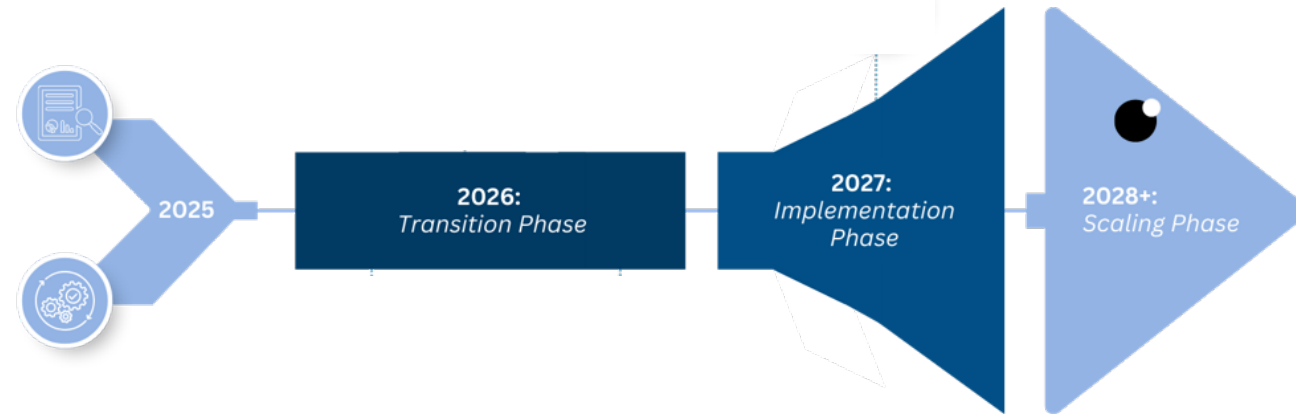
Council Priority	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jun	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	
2026 EFH Designation Framework	PDT/contractor complete species distribution models; develop alternatives			Council: final action	Action submission
Evaluation of GSC HMA surfclam exemption areas	EFP Research Concludes	EFP Report drafting; final available in June	Staff/PDT review of existing information and new research		
Ocean Planning	Ongoing: follow ocean planning and marine user activities (e.g., offshore energy, aquaculture, marine carbon dioxide, etc.				

# Risk Policy

	January	February	March	April	May	June
<b>Meetings – Input - Decisions</b>						
RPWG: Confirm Factors w/ goal/intent						
NEFMC January	Update					
RPWG: Refining Concept						
SSC: Check-in						
NEFMC: Check-in, feedback						
RPWG: Refining Concept, Prepare June						
NEFMC June: Approval, weightings						Decision
<b>Work – Refinement – Implementation</b>						
Support Factor Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoring and Data</li> <li>Accessibility</li> <li>Process</li> </ul>		<b>RPWG members and Implementation Team:</b> Applegate, Miller, Garrison, Peros, O’Keefe				Approval of Concept document
Refine Risk Policy Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shape of Curve</li> <li>Range of Scores</li> <li>Scaling</li> </ul>		<b>Risk Policy Mechanics sub-group:</b> Kerr, McNamee, Lawson, Peros, Ware, Brothers				Approval of Concept document
Prepare for Weightings exercise						Weightings

# IRA Initiatives

- IRA Update presentation on Jan 28
  - Large portfolio of interrelated work
  - Most contracts issued and underway
  - Continued planning needed for some initiatives
  - Multiple meetings to coordinate within and across organizations
  - Targeting outreach and presentations to specific groups and to align with project milestones
- Staff Effort
  - Staff directed work is all in progress
  - Activities planned throughout 2026
  - Request an extension through Dec 31, 2027



# Executive Order 14276

Ref #	Plan/Topic	Category	Priority/Task	Notes
EO1	EO14276	New	Modifications to Vessel Baseline Restrictions	Regional Coordination
EO2	EO14276	New	Atlantic Herring Slippage Measures	Multiyear
EO3	EO14276	New	Monkfish Management Modifications	Coordinate with Monkfish priorities
EO4	EO14276	New	Revisions to Accountability Measures	Multiyear
EO5	EO14276	New	Fishery Management Plan Revisions	Coordinate with FMP priorities
EO6	EO14276	New	Revisions to the Southern New England Spiny Dogfish Gillnet Exemption Area	Multiyear

# Upcoming Events

- IRA Initiatives

- Workshop planning
  - Governance Staff-to-Staff – Feb 24-26
  - SSC Dynamic Reference Points – Jun 1-2
  - Governance Regional – Oct/Nov
- Project Oversight Teams
  - Risk Policy Simulation
  - Ecosystem Components
  - Dynamic Reference Points
  - Governance
  - Portfolio Analysis
  - Holistic Strategic Plan
  - MAFMC Initiatives
    - Ecosystem/Habitat Indicators
    - Evaluating Data Needs
    - River Herring Forecast
    - Stock Distribution/Governance

- Staff Activities

- Staff Offsite Meeting – Feb 10
- GIS Training – Feb 18
- Cooperative Research Summit – Feb 26
- ME Fishermen's Forum – Mar 5-7
- Boston Seafood Expo – Mar 15-17
- Socioeconomic Workshop – Mar 23-24
- NEFMC-GARFO Staff-to-Staff – Jun 4

- Grant Activities

- Final report 2020-2025 award – Jan 30
- NCE request for IRA award – Feb 3
- Budget planning for 2026-2029 – Mar 30

# Questions