

DRAFT Greater Atlantic Region 2026 Stock Prioritization

This document captures the process and decisions made to complete a risk/value matrix tool in support of regional stock prioritization (*formerly known as the “Risk/Value Evaluation¹”*) in the Greater Atlantic Region. This tool is intended to provide management partners and NOAA Fisheries with a way to visualize our managed stocks and prioritize them relative to value and risk factors. The Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC; comprising the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, New England Fishery Management Council, NOAA’s Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center) formed a Working Group to conduct the risk/value evaluation, following a request from NOAA Fisheries.

Objectives and Definitions

As noted above, the overarching objective of this exercise is to visualize our collective managed species, while recognizing the differences in the overall economic and social value and the biological, ecological, and social impacts of management on stocks and fisheries. The results are intended to provide additional information for the Councils, Commission, GARFO, and the Science Center to prioritize science product timing and complexity, staff resource allocation, or whether a stock in a fishery management plan is still in need of conservation and management, among other uses.

For the purposes of this exercise, the Working Group used these definitions:

Value is defined as the economic value added to the regional economy for the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Risk is defined as the possibility that an event will occur that affects the achievement of fisheries management objectives (which covers ecological, economic, social, food production, and management goals). **Risk** occurs at the biological and ecological stock levels (*e.g.*, susceptibility to overfishing, vulnerability to changing environmental conditions), as well as at the fishery management level (*e.g.*, fishery dependence, the impact of not meeting objectives).

¹ NOAA Fisheries leadership initially requested all regional/council partners to develop a risk/value matrix to support national discussions regarding better aligning Federal fisheries science and management resources with the highest priorities. However, during the development of the matrix, and in response to [requests from the Council Coordinating Committee](#), the exercise was shifted to a regional process, without the national view originally proposed.

Greater Atlantic Region Approach

Step 1 - Current Organizational Investment

For the Greater Atlantic Region, our first step was to create a baseline summary of the relative investment each organization is currently making for each stock, on a scale of *0-none* to *3-high*. Because the tool is intended primarily to focus on federally supported stocks, stocks where the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was the only NRCC partner involved were removed from further consideration. Several Commission-led stocks remain in the exercise, namely American lobster, American shad, Atlantic sturgeon, Jonah crab, Northern shrimp, river herring, and striped bass.

Step 2 - Value Considerations

The second step involved summarizing the calculated value added of each stock remaining after step 1. Total value added was provided for both 3- and 7-year horizons. For commercial fisheries, ex-vessel value at the year-stock level was pulled from available GARFO and NEFSC databases and value added was calculated by multiplying the ex-vessel value by a national value-added multiplier from the Input-Output models, used regularly for the annual *Fisheries Economics of the United States* reports². For recreational fisheries, total trips were constructed at the year-state-mode-stock level. Trips were assigned to stocks using the target-species field and the intercept site, and for species with multiple stock areas, trips were assigned to the nearest stock area. Recreational expenditure survey data were used to estimate recreational expenditures at that level. Similar to the commercial fisheries, value added was constructed by multiplying recreational expenditure by the value-added multiplier from the Input-Output models. The combined commercial and recreational value added was used in this process.

Step 3 - Risk Factors

In 2017, the NRCC finalized³ an assessment prioritization process to facilitate a longer-term assessment schedule. The prioritization process consisted of NRCC partner organization representatives scoring each stock using the factors listed below. The scores were then averaged across the organizations and then combined to assist in prioritizing the frequency of stock assessments. Because many of the factors recommended for risk consideration by [NOAA Fisheries headquarters staff](#) overlapped with this prior NRCC effort, the Working Group decided to use scores from this prior, extensive effort, rather than start over.

² From [FEUS 2023 Methods](#): *The NOAA Commercial Fisheries and Seafood Industry Input-Output Model uses an IMPLAN platform to estimate the economic impacts associated with the harvesting of fish by U.S. commercial fishermen and other major components of the U.S. seafood industry. The NOAA Recreational Fisheries Input-Output Model, which also uses an IMPLAN platform, estimates the economic impacts generated by expenditures made by marine (saltwater) anglers.*

³ A description of the 2017 process can be found beginning on page 5 of the [Description of New England and Mid-Atlantic Region Stock Assessment Process](#).

These factors included:

1. Management Needs a. Specification timing	3. Stock Status and Trend a. Relative abundance /trend b. Relative fishing mortality/trend	5. Assessment information a. Unexpected changes to stock indicators b. New type of information c. Research readiness d. Years overdue for assessment e. Model performance
2. Fishery Importance a. Commercial fishery b. Recreational fishery c. Rebuilding status d. Constituent demand	4. Ecosystem Importance a. Trophic importance b. Climate vulnerability	6. Stock biology a. Mean age in the catch (or proxy) b. Maximum age c. Stock variability

The final stock assessment prioritization scores from 2017 consisted of the averages of factors 1a, 2a-d, 3a-b, 4a, 5a, and 5d. Because of the potential overlap with the value-added calculations, the Working Group also considered using only the “biological” scores from the prior effort (*i.e.*, 3a-b, 4a-b, 6a-c). However, because the value component of step 2 included only the economic value, the Working Group decided it was appropriate to use the final 2017 score because of the incorporation of the social factors in “commercial importance” and “recreational importance” that better align with management risk considerations. In some cases, the 2017 score was unavailable. Where possible, inferences were made to assign an appropriate score (*e.g.*, using the prior Georges Bank cod scores for the new Georges Bank and Southern New England cod stocks) or the Working Group’s best professional judgement was used to assign a stock to a risk category (*e.g.*, blueline tilefish).

Step 4 - Quadrant Placement

The value and risk scores for each species/stock were plotted with value after a lognormal transformation due to the range of values (*i.e.*, from \$0 to \$2.7 billion) on the horizontal axis and risk on the vertical axis. Visualizing the data in this way illustrated the threshold between “high” value and “low” value stocks at approximately \$2 million, and a dividing line at ~2.2 for the risk scores. The Working Group’s initial consideration of risk characterization primarily reflects inherent risk to each stock.

The resulting initial quadrant placement was as follows:

High Risk/Low Value		High Risk/High Value	
Atlantic Sturgeon American Shad Chub Mackerel EGOM Cod GOM Winter Flounder Offshore Hake River Herring Smooth Skate Thorny Skate		American Lobster Atlantic Mackerel Bluefish Butterfish GB Cod GB Winter Flounder Golden Tilefish Herring Illex Squid Jonah Crab Little Skate Longfin Squid	Scup SNE Cod SNE/MA Winter Flounder Spiny Dogfish Striped Bass Summer Flounder WGOM Cod Winter Skate Witch Flounder GB Haddock
Low Risk/Low Value		Low Risk/High Value	
Atlantic Wolffish Barndoor Skate CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder Clearnose Skate GOM/GB Windowpane Flounder N. Red Hake Northern Shrimp Ocean Pout Rosette Skate SNE/MA Windowpane Flounder SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder		American Plaice Atlantic Halibut Black Sea Bass Blueline Tilefish Deep-Sea Red Crab GOM Haddock NFMA Monkfish N. Silver Hake Ocean Quahog	Pollock Redfish Scallop SFMA Monkfish S. Red Hake S. Silver Hake Surfclam White Hake

Because the risk factor scores were completed nearly a decade ago, the Working Group used its best professional judgment to consider how the risk score might change with updated information. Generally, the stocks were adjusted to account for more up-to-date understanding of stock conditions, climate vulnerability, fishery dependency, and risks to the management enterprise (*e.g.*, the management enterprise is poorly informed or that management objectives may not be fully realized). Specific descriptions for each stock are provided in the [Appendix](#). In addition, the working group determined that it was appropriate to split American lobster by stock area ([GOM/GB and SNE](#)). Both stocks remain in the “high risk, high value” category.

Some stocks may be at high risk biologically, but investment in science or management may not be able to meaningfully mitigate those risks, due to fisheries interactions not being the primary cause of those risks. Further, some stocks may be biologically/ecologically low risk (*e.g.*, due to a robust stock size), but the risk of management underperformance may be significant and warrant consideration as high risk to emphasize the importance to the fishery as a whole. For example, black sea bass is impacted by changing environmental conditions, but in a positive direction. The risk for that stock could be considered high due to the possibility that the management objective of maximum sustainable yield would not be achieved.

Stock	Original Quadrant	Final Quadrant	Justification Summary
Black Sea Bass	Low Risk, High Value	High Risk, High Value	Updated stock status Risk to management
Atlantic Sea Scallop	Low Risk, High Value	High Risk, High Value	Updated stock status, climate vulnerability
White Hake	Low Risk, High Value	High Risk, High Value	Updated stock status, climate vulnerability Risk to management
Illex Squid	High Risk, High Value	Low Risk, High Value	Updated understanding of less climate vulnerability Low exploitation
Longfin Squid	High Risk, High Value	Low Risk, High Value	Updated understanding of less climate vulnerability Low exploitation
Blueline Tilefish	Low Risk, High Value	High Risk, Low Value	Value estimate included SAFMC region, Correction to risk score
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	Low Risk, Low Value	High Risk, Low Value	Updated stock status, climate vulnerability Risk to management
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	High Risk, High Value	High Risk, Low Value	Updated stock status, climate vulnerability
Chub Mackerel	High Risk, Low Value	Low Risk, Low Value	Likelihood of low exploitation
Northern Shrimp	Low Risk, Low Value	High Risk, Low Value	Updated stock understanding Lack of species-specific fishery independent data may delay recognition of rebuilding

FINAL PLACEMENT

High Risk/Low Value	High Risk/High Value	
Atlantic Sturgeon American Shad Blueline Tilefish CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder EGOM Cod GOM Winter Flounder Northern Shrimp River Herring Smooth Skate SNE/MA Winter Flounder Thorny Skate	Atlantic Herring Atlantic Mackerel Black Sea Bass Bluefish Butterfish GB Cod GB Winter Flounder Golden Tilefish GOM/GB American Lobster Jonah Crab Little Skate Scallop	Scup SNE American Lobster SNE Cod Spiny Dogfish Striped Bass Summer Flounder WGOM Cod White Hake Winter Skate Witch Flounder GB Haddock
Low Risk/Low Value	Low Risk/High Value	
Atlantic Wolffish Barndoor Skate Chub Mackerel Clearnose Skate GB Yellowtail Flounder GOM/GB Windowpane Flounder N. Red Hake Ocean Pout Rosette Skate SNE/MA Windowpane Flounder SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	American Plaice Atlantic Halibut Deep-Sea Red Crab Illex Squid GOM Haddock Longfin Squid NFMA Monkfish N. Silver Hake Ocean Quahog	Pollock Redfish SFMA Monkfish S. Red Hake S. Silver Hake/Offshore Hake Surfclam

Lead Management Partner:

[ASMFC](#)

[MAFMC](#)

[NEFMC](#)

Moved from their original placement

Next Steps

NRCC partner organizations are encouraged to compare the current investment level (step 1, above) with the final results and to consider if staff resources and time are aligned with the results. These activities and other responses to the final results are most appropriately applied at the individual partner level, with consideration to the shared resources at the Regional Office and Science Center.

The Working Group strongly recommends against assigning default management reactions to quadrant placement. The characterizations are intended to provide an additional data point for potential management responses and prioritization processes. The Councils are encouraged to consider the prioritization exercise in reviewing which stocks require full Federal management and if any stocks might be more appropriately characterized as ecosystem component species. This may be particularly important for those stocks where management interventions are unlikely to result in meaningful changes to status. For low risk/low value stocks, one Council may choose to designate a stock as an ecosystem component species and another Council may choose to set specifications on a longer time horizon. Other management responses might include revising regulations that require frequent action (by the Council, the Regional Office, or the Science Center) to better align with current resources and appropriate investment levels. The resource savings from these approaches to addressing low risk/low value stocks could be redirected into investment in high risk/high value stocks in terms of prioritizing research needs and annual Council priorities/workplans.

In addition to regionally focused uses, the Working Group noted that there may be circumstances where the NRCC or a partner organization would include the placement of a stock or stocks in the regional prioritization process as information to support a request of NOAA Fisheries. For example, if there were a request to increase funding for a specific scientific survey or project that would benefit multiple stocks in the high risk/high value quadrant, that could bolster the recommendation to NOAA Fisheries for funding or other resources. The NRCC or a partner organization could also consider the regional prioritization results to respond to proposals from NOAA Fisheries. Proposed revisions to data collection systems or fishery-independent survey methods (*e.g.*, monitoring and sampling levels, use of advanced technology, etc.) should consider investment levels related to the collective risk and value of regional fishery resources.

Working Group Membership

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Bob Beal, Executive Director

Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director

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Appendix

Summary Table

Stock	Management Lead	STEP 1					STEP 2	STEP 3
		GARFO	NEFSC	NEFMC	MAFMC	ASMFC	Value Score	Risk Score
Acadian redfish	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$29,555,013	1.50
American plaice	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$15,165,780	2.11
Atlantic deep-sea red crab	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	\$19,122,873	2.00
Atlantic halibut	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	\$2,633,164	2.11
Atlantic herring	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	1 - Small	\$40,289,315	2.26
Atlantic mackerel	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	3 - High	0 - None	\$36,578,241	2.61
Atlantic wolffish	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	\$53,874	2.11
Barndoor skate	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$478,853	1.83
CC/GOM yellowtail	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	0 - None	0 - None	\$116,160	2.61
Clearnose skate	NEFMC	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$189,648	1.67
Eastern Gulf of Maine cod	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$44,412	3.03 ⁴
Georges Bank cod	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$3,812,187	3.28 ⁵
Georges Bank haddock	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$43,995,298	1.94
GB winter flounder	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	0 - None	0 - None	\$8,680,633	3.28
GB yellowtail flounder	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	0 - None	0 - None	\$103,142	2.31
Gulf of Maine haddock	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$35,877,084	1.94
GOM winter flounder	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	0 - None	1 - Small	\$50,797	2.56
GOM/GB windowpane	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	0 - None	0 - None	\$123	2.47
Little skate	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$6,315,703	2.22
NFMA Monkfish ⁶	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	0 - None	\$31,453,833	1.86

⁴ applied original GOM cod score

⁵ applied original GB cod score

⁶ Jointly managed with MAFMC

Stock	Management Lead	STEP 1					STEP 2	STEP 3
		GARFO	NEFSC	NEFMC	MAFMC	ASMFC	Value Score	Risk Score
Northern red hake	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$228,181	1.86
Northern silver hake	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$15,469,759	1.89
Ocean pout	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	\$807	2.58
Offshore hake	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$6,365	1.89 ⁷
Pollock	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$33,510,578	1.83
Rosette skate	NEFMC	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$202	1.33
Scallop	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	0 - None	\$2,321,997,768	1.86
SFMA Monkfish ⁶	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	0 - None	\$21,109,532	2.03
Smooth skate	NEFMC	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$859,798	2.17
SNE cod	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$2,277,863	3.28 ⁸
SNE/MA windowpane	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	0 - None	0 - None	\$352,393	1.64
SNE/MA winter flounder	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	0 - None	1 - Small	\$3,307,215	2.83
SNE/MA yellowtail	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	\$56,313	2.97
Southern red hake	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$2,142,146	2.53
Southern silver hake	NEFMC	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$27,281,618	1.89
Thorny skate	NEFMC	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	\$8,277	2.50
WGOM cod	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$10,168,312	3.03 ⁹
White hake	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$21,332,826	2.25
Winter skate	NEFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	\$21,337,925	2.00
Witch flounder	NEFMC	3 - High	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	\$10,634,917	2.19
Atlantic Bluefish ¹⁰	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	0 - None	3 - High	2 - Moderate	\$172,635,844	2.78
Atlantic Surfclam	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	0 - None	\$127,387,055	1.53

⁷ applied *S. silver hake* score

⁸ applied original GB cod score

⁹ applied original GOM cod score

¹⁰ Jointly managed with ASMFC

Stock	Management Lead	STEP 1					STEP 2	STEP 3
		GARFO	NEFSC	NEFMC	MAFMC	ASMFC	Value Score	Risk Score
Black sea bass ¹⁰	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	3 - High	3 - High	\$154,634,641	2.03
Blueline tilefish	MAFMC	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	0 - None	3 - High	0 - None	\$2,710,346	<i>high risk</i>
Butterfish	MAFMC	2 - Moderate	3 - High	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	0 - None	\$15,549,199	2.03
Chub mackerel	MAFMC	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	0 - None	\$126,680	<i>low risk</i>
Golden tilefish	MAFMC	3 - High	2 - Moderate	0 - None	3 - High	0 - None	\$28,267,827	2.39
<i>Illex</i> squid	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	0 - None	\$90,689,538	2.89
Longfin squid	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	0 - None	\$186,045,130	2.61
Ocean quahog	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	0 - None	\$97,953,764	1.53
Scup ¹⁰	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	3 - High	\$141,662,536	2.06
Spiny dogfish ¹¹	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	2 - Moderate	3 - High	2 - Moderate	\$13,230,077	2.17
Summer flounder ¹⁰	MAFMC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	3 - High	3 - High	\$626,749,242	3.28
American shad	ASMFC	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	\$1,027,143	3.31
Atlantic sturgeon	ASMFC	1 - Small	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	1 - Small	\$0	2.17
GOM/GB lobster	ASMFC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	0 - None	3 - High	\$2,709,069,887	1.61
Jonah crab	ASMFC	1 - Small	0 - None	1 - Small	0 - None	1 - Small	\$23,560,236	2.03
Northern shrimp	ASMFC	1 - Small	1 - Small	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	\$132,360	2.58
River herring	ASMFC	2 - Moderate	1 - Small	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	2 - Moderate	\$61,315	3.53
SNE American lobster	ASMFC	3 - High	3 - High	1 - Small	0 - None	3 - High	\$74,569,368	2.28
Striped bass	ASMFC	1 - Small	3 - High	0 - None	0 - None	3 - High	\$794,897,822	2.36
American eel	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	2 - Moderate	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Atlantic croaker	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	2 - Moderate	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Atlantic menhaden	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	3 - High	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Black drum	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Coastal sharks	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>

¹¹ Jointly managed with NEFMC

Stock	Management Lead	STEP 1					STEP 2	STEP 3
		GARFO	NEFSC	NEFMC	MAFMC	ASMFC	Value Score	Risk Score
Cobia	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	3 - High	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Horseshoe crab	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	3 - High	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Red drum	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	2 - Moderate	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Spanish mackerel	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	2 - Moderate	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Spot	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Spotted sea trout	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Tautog	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	2 - Moderate	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>
Weakfish	ASMFC	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	0 - None	1 - Small	<i>not included</i>	<i>not included</i>

Quadrant Adjustment Justification Details

Scallop - High Risk/High Value (shifted from Low Risk/High Value)

- 2025 Research Track Assessment - TOR #1
 - The most important environmental driver of the U.S. sea scallop fishery in recent years has been increasing bottom temperatures in the Mid-Atlantic Bight area that has resulted in a reduction in the productivity of scallops in this region.
 - Surveys indicate a gradual truncation of the southern and inshore range of Atlantic sea scallop in the Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB) and increasing adult mortality in these areas.
 - Analyses showed a decrease in baseline thermal habitat from 1993 to 2023 with a shift in suitable habitat offshore. The spatial extent and duration of heat stress events also increased over this time, particularly in September and October.
 - Additional risk factors include observed increases in predators (e.g., sea stars and crabs) and infectious disease (e.g., resulting from Apicomplexa and Sulcascaris), and decreases in food supply, which impact scallop growth at depth.

White Hake - High Risk/High Value (shifted from Low Risk/High Value)

- 2025 Management Track Assessment - Special Comments
 - The rebuilding target date for White Hake is 2031 fishing at a F-rebuild of 70% F40%. Population projections are not well determined since rebuilding of the stock does not seem to be occurring as predicted from past assessments. Survey indices continue to show declining trends and recent recruitment estimates are also near time series lows.
- 2026 SSC Recommendations - January 26, 2026 SSC Memo to NEFMC
 - The SSC discussed that recommended ABC at 70% FMSY could be expected to have meaningful socioeconomic short-term costs borne by the industry (estimated by the PDT at ~\$2M and as described per public comment and inferred per recent utilization data) and that it was likely that the stock would not be rebuilt under 70% FMSY by the rebuild date, unless there was an unexpected increase in recruitment.

SNE/MA Winter Flounder - High Risk/Low Value (shifted from High Risk/High Value)

- 2025 Management Track Assessment - Special Comments
 - During the 2022 management track assessment, an important and impactful change was made to the stanza of recruitment used in the projections. The new recruitment stanza used the last 20 years of estimates (2002-2021) for both short term projections, and to estimate the biomass target (SSBMSY) from a long term (100 year) projection. This was a shift from previous assessments that used the entire time-series of recruitment (1981-present), which included historical recruitment estimates that were overly optimistic

for the recent stock size and productivity. Some of the early recruitment estimates are 20 times the levels seen in recent years.

- Framework 72 to Northeast Multispecies Plan - Landings and Revenue
 - Stock-level commercial (sector and common pool) revenue:
 - Most recent 5-year (2020-2024) average = ~\$300,000
 - Most recent 3-year (2022-2024) average = ~\$200,000

CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder - High Risk/Low Value (shifted from Low Risk/Low Value)

- 2025 Management Track Assessment - Special Comments
 - The current WHAM model results suggest that Cape Cod-Gulf of Maine Yellowtail Flounder stock remains below the new SSBMSY proxy even though fishing pressure has been at historically low levels in recent years. Recruitment has been generally weak to moderate over the past decade, with no large year classes to accelerate rebuilding. While catches have been very low largely because of reduced market demand constraints, this has not led to rapid biomass growth, as recruitment has not provided the necessary boost. As a result, SSB is still below the long-term reference point, and the stock is considered overfished, even though overfishing is not currently occurring.

Black Sea Bass - High Risk/High Value (shifted from Low Risk/High Value)

- Complex life history with a high climate vulnerability, in a positive directional effect, with the current assessment model including bottom temperature as an environmental covariate informing recruitment.
- Significant ecosystem role - impacting predator/prey dynamics
- Significant advances in stock assessment methods and modeling that have performed well, but short-term projections have performed poorly.
- Stock is well above biomass target and overfishing is not occurring, but recent catches (last 10 years) have exceeded the ABC in many years and OFL in some years.
- Overall, ecosystem/biological risks are likely minimal and/or in a positive direction and, similar to scup, the stock has been robust to recent high catch and likely little risk to the stock becoming overfished and stock status changing quickly and in the short-term. Quadrant placement is consistent with similar highly abundant Mid-Atlantic stocks with sound stock assessments (e.g., scup and butterfish)

Illex Squid - Low Risk/High Value (shifted from High Risk/High Value)

- Complex life history and data limited stock, but climate vulnerability indicates low biological sensitivity to climate change.
- Environmental drivers likely play a much more significant role in driving stock dynamics and availability than the fishery.
- No approved assessment model, but current methods to evaluate stock suggest stock is lightly exploited at current catches/fishing levels.

Longfin Squid - Low Risk/High Value (shifted from High Risk/High Value)

- Complex life history and climate vulnerability indicates low biological sensitivity to climate change.

- For the first time, two brand new assessment models (likely to have passed peer review) and available to inform management and catch advice. Initial outputs suggest current ABC and recent catches are very low and stock is lightly exploited.

Blueline Tilefish - High Risk/Low Value (shifted from Low Risk/High Value)

- Value added estimates range from \$2.3 million (3 year) to \$2.7 million (7 year) but includes the total value added along the Atlantic coast (MAFMC and SAFMC jurisdictions). The total value added is already near the \$2 million value threshold used by the Working Group and is likely below if just accounting for MAFMC jurisdiction.
- A long-lived, relatively slow growing life history with a high biological climate sensitivity to climate change.
- Very data limited stock and data limited tool based on recent catch used to determine catch limits. Some new survey information may improve understanding of stock in future.
- New commercial markets are opening and a growing and targeted recreational fishery is emerging. Recent catches are at or exceeding catch limits.
- Complicated management and ABC allocation with the MAFMC and SAFMC.

Chub Mackerel - Low Risk/Low Value (shifted from High Risk/Low Value)

- A warmer water, pelagic, and highly migratory species found around the globe that likely has a low climate vulnerability to climate impacts (not included in 2016 Hare et al CVA).
- While limited information is available, expert judgement of the SSC indicates the stock is likely lightly exploited and at sustainable levels.
- Catches have been at 6% or less of the implemented catch limits. Catches do not appear to be impacted by management but more likely driven by other factors (e.g., squid availability, fleet/gear capacity).

American Lobster - split by stock region

- Lobster should be done by stock so there would be two quadrant placements one for GOM/GBK and one for SNE

Northern Shrimp High Risk/Low Value (move from Low Risk/Low Value)

- Stock is depleted and has been under a moratorium for 13 years and has not responded
- Indices are at historic lows