



## New England Fishery Management Council

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**DATE:** September 4, 2026  
**TO:** Council  
**FROM:** Executive Committee  
**SUBJECT:** NOAA Request for Executive Order 14276 – Executive Committee Recommendations

The Executive Committee met on September 1, 2026, to consider the July 2, 2026, letter from Assistant Administrator Eugenio Piñeiro Soler regarding Executive Order 14276 (Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness). The Assistant Administrator requested that the New England Fishery Management Council focus on six priority areas to address the objectives of the Executive Order. The Executive Committee provided the following recommendations for each Executive Order priority (EO1 through EO6) to guide Council deliberations (summarized in Table 1).

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. EO1: Northern Edge Scallop Access

- **NOAA Request:** Advance a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment to consider establishing a controlled, rotational limited-access scallop fishery within the Northern Edge Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC).
- **Recommendation: Defer decision to December 2026.**
  - *Rationale:* Deferring the decision allows the Council to evaluate this request in the broader context of all potential 2027 priority topics during the annual priority-setting process in December.

#### 2. EO2: Scallop Permit Stacking

- **NOAA Request:** Reconsider initiating action on scallop permit stacking with proper guardrails to prevent adverse risks such as foreign ownership and job reductions. NOAA noted that if the Council is unable to take this up, Secretarial action will be considered.
- **Recommendation: Acknowledge capacity limitations for 2027 and note NOAA's option for Secretarial Action.**
  - *Rationale:* Communicate formally to NOAA that the Council currently lacks the operational capacity to initiate a scallop permit stacking action in 2027, while explicitly noting that NOAA may pursue a Secretarial Amendment independently if it chooses to do so.

### **3. EO3: Herring Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Rescission**

- **NOAA Request:** Initiate action to rescind IFM requirements from the Herring FMP to relieve financial burdens on the fleet.
- **Recommendation: Recommend a September Council vote to add IFM rescission to the ongoing Atlantic Herring action to revise management measures for river herring/shad.**
  - *Rationale:* Incorporating IFM rescission into the existing river herring/shad action during the September meeting maintains an efficient administrative pathway toward achieving the target April 2027 final action timeline.

### **4. EO4: Ropeless Gear Mandates**

- **NOAA Request:** Consider deprioritizing the advancement of complex gear marking for ropeless gear to mitigate operational costs for trap fisheries.
- **Recommendation: Pause additional activity while acknowledging NOAA's Request for Information (RFI) and pending federal legislation.**
  - *Rationale:* Pausing further Council action aligns with NOAA's request to deprioritize gear marking requirements while allowing staff to monitor external developments, including NOAA's ongoing RFI process and relevant federal legislative initiatives.

### **5. EO5: Vessel Baseline Restrictions**

- **NOAA Request:** Pursue a joint framework action with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) to remove or adjust the 10% length and 20% horsepower upgrade restrictions.
- **Recommendation: Receive the Vessel Baseline Evaluation report in September and consider prioritization of joint action with MAFMC in December.**
  - *Rationale:* The Council should review the completed evaluation report during the September meeting to understand the scope and impact before formally considering the initiation and prioritization of a joint framework with MAFMC in December.

### **6. EO6: Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (HMA) Surfclam Access**

- **NOAA Request:** Draft a framework amendment creating adaptive, data-driven exemptions to allow surfclam dredging in the Great South Channel HMA based on updated cod spawning data.
- **Recommendation: Receive the Great South Channel HMA Evaluation report in September and consider prioritization of activities in December.**
  - *Rationale:* Reviewing the evaluation report at the September meeting will provide the necessary technical foundation for the Council to weigh potential HMA management activities during the December prioritization process.

**Table 1. Summary of EO14276 topics with Council milestones.**

| <b>Priority Area</b> | <b>Action Topic</b>          | <b>Immediate Response (Sept 2026)</b>       | <b>Longer-Term Consideration (Dec 2026 / 2027)</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>EO1</b>           | Northern Edge Scallop Access | Defer decision                              | Evaluate during Dec 2027 priority setting          |
| <b>EO2</b>           | Scallop Permit Stacking      | Acknowledge lack of Council capacity        | Note potential Secretarial Action by NOAA          |
| <b>EO3</b>           | Herring IFM Rescission       | Vote to fold into River Herring/Shad action | Target Final Action by April 2027                  |
| <b>EO4</b>           | Ropeless Gear Mandates       | Pause activity; monitor RFI & legislation   | Re-evaluate as federal guidance updates            |
| <b>EO5</b>           | Vessel Baseline Restrictions | Receive evaluation report                   | Consider joint action with MAFMC in Dec            |
| <b>EO6</b>           | Great South Channel HMA      | Receive evaluation report                   | Consider prioritization in Dec                     |