



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Risk Policy Working Group

March 7, 2025

1 p.m. Webinar

The New England Fishery Management Council's (NEFMC) Risk Policy Working Group (RPWG) met by webinar on March 7, 2025 to: 1) Plan for a Council run-through of the Risk Policy weightings process to be presented at the April Council meeting; 2) continue to work on the implementation of the Risk Policy. Focus on refinements to the Risk Policy Matrix and plans for simulation testing and coordination with other ongoing Council efforts such as the Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee; 3) discuss other business.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Megan Ware (Chair), Dan Salerno (Vice-Chair), Jonathon Peros (Council Staff), Dr. Lisa Kerr, Dr. Jason McNamee, Dr. Naresh Pradhan, Cheri Patterson, Melanie Griffin, Moira Kelly, Rick Bellavance, Dr. Joe Caracappa. Andy Applegate (Council Staff) also participated in the discussion.

Materials for the meeting can be found at [this link](#).

KEY OUTCOMES

- The working group developed recommendations for how to structure the weightings exercise at the April 2025 Council meeting:
 - Multiple weightings exercises for the Council to complete.
 - For each factor, define what is considered for scoring and what is considered for weighting, noting that they are not exactly the same.

The meeting began at 1:02 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RISK POLICY IN 2025 AND APRIL COUNCIL MEETING

The Council is expected to complete a practice weightings exercise at the April Council meeting in Mystic, CT. Council staff provided an overview of plans for the meeting, and noted that the objectives are to familiarize the Council and members of the public with the Risk Policy concept and to allow Council members to gain experience with weightings at the Council meeting. Staff shared a draft agenda of the Risk Policy report at the April meeting, before reviewing results of a

weighting exercise that the working group was asked to do in preparation for the group's meeting on March 7. Council staff noted that working group members had expressed a clear preference for how weightings questions would be asked (grid/matrix), and had questions about how much data should be provided to support the weightings process.

The working group felt that having background information available for Council members as they completed the exercise would be useful, but noted the tension between providing data that would be used for scoring as part of a weightings exercise. The working group also discussed the importance of balancing the need for detailed information with the potential for overwhelming Council members. The group recommended having more information explaining each of factor, and describing the difference between scoring and weighting. The working group saw value in having the Council do the weightings exercise multiple times to build familiarity with the process. There was discussion around how the weightings could be done, including limits on the number of times a factor could be weighted as critically important. The working group debated the merits of weighting at the species/stocks individually versus at the fishery management plan level, or just one weighting for all Council managed species. The group noted some of the challenges of conceptually separating weighting from scoring (objective, done by the PDT). The working group also spent time discussing the recreational fishery characterization, and how there is no recreational fishery component in some FMPs. In these cases, the score for this factor should be 0, which would mean that the factor would not contribute to the Z score in the Risk Policy concept. The working group agree that more communication is needed in this area.

RISK POLICY MATRIX AND SCORING

The working group discussed the revised Risk Policy Matrix. Council staff explained that members of the working group would be meeting with the Council's technical staff to roll-out the new matrix and solicit input. Staff also touched on the data sources that would inform scoring, noting that information needed to support the risk policy comes from a multitude of sources. The working group discussed opportunities to integrate data needed to support the risk policy into annual monitoring reports, SAFE reports, NEPA analyses that the Council produces (affected environment). The group discussed the need for a long-form document to support the scoring process and reduce redundancy. Mr. Andy Applegate discussed the potential to automate annual monitoring reports and integrate them with the risk policy matrix with the group. The working group supported the concept of automating data, noting that the availability and timeliness of data are key issues that need to be considered. The working group emphasized the importance of collaboration with Council staff to streamline processes and reduce workload in the implementation of the Risk Policy. A member of the working group suggested looking at NOAA stock smart for potential automation and data integration opportunities, and Dr. Joe Carracappa offered to share code for pulling data from the NOAA Stock Smart database.

OTHER BUSINESS

Under other business, Council staff noted that Megan Ware and Dan Salerno would be meeting with Council staff to discuss weightings and scoring, and highlighted that the Council has recently formed a Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee (CESC). Council staff explained that the CESC aims to provide overarching guidance and support for climate-ready fishery

measurement approaches, and that they would be supporting the work of the risk policy working group. Council staff also noted that Dr. Lisa Kerr and Dr. Roger Brothers from the University of Maine were under contract to conduct simulation testing of the Risk Policy in conjunction with the development of new ABC control rules for the Northeast multispecies FMP. The simulation testing will help understand the impact of weightings and scoring factors on the Risk Policy outputs, and the influence it will have on catch advice. Working group members stated they the looked forward to working with Lisa and Roger as the project gets underway.

The meeting ended at 3:42pm.