

Risk Policy Working Group

March 9, 2026
Webinar



New England
Fishery Management
Council

Today's Meeting:

- Check in on timeline of Risk Policy development.
 - Develop recommendations around the mechanics of the Risk Policy.
 - Review input on factors and data for scoring.
 - Guidance on use → input on how SSC will interact with Risk Policy.
 - Demonstration of Risk Policy toolkit.
- *Working group decisions needed for Risk Policy mechanics.*



Risk Policy Concept + ABC Control Rules

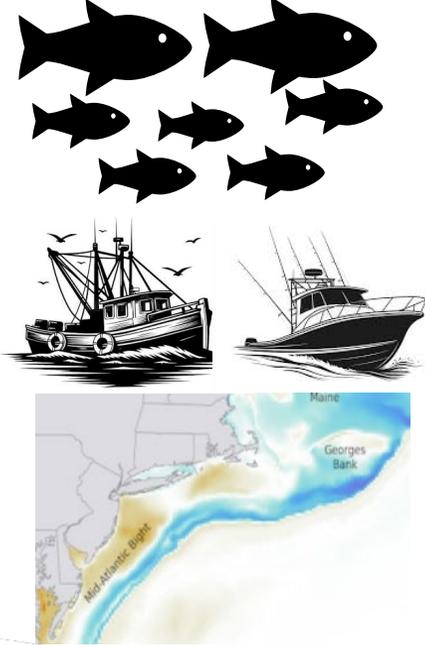
Factors (5)

1. Global Weighting



Weights apply to all stocks

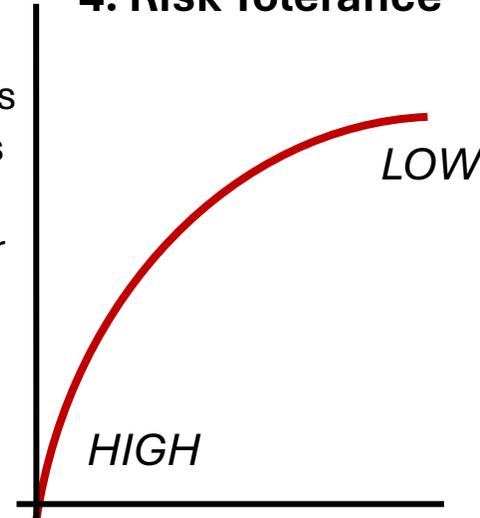
2. Scoring (data)



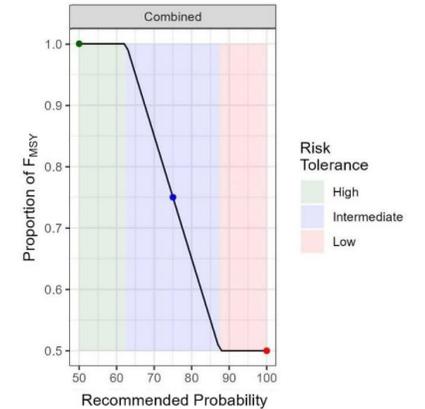
3. Z-Score

Combination of weights and scores. 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)



Overview of Factors, Recommendations

- NEFMC initially approved 7 factors for use. At the January NEFMC meeting, the Council recommended advancing 5 factors for use in 2026.

	Factor	Council Recommendation	Keep for 2026?
Stock Status and Uncertainty	Biomass/Stock Status	Use in 2026. No changes proposed at this time.	✓
	Recruitment	Use in 2026. Adjustments to how factor is scored.	✓
	Assessment Type and Uncertainty	Remove for 2026 and catalogue. Revisit later this year, form sub-group.	✗
Climate and Ecosystem Considerations	Climate Vulnerability	Use in 2026. No change proposed at this time.	✓
	Fish Condition	Remove for 2026 and catalogue. Revisit later this year, support for ecosystem characterization factor.	✗
Economic and Community Importance	Commercial Fishery	Use in 2026. Changes to scoring questions, AP input.	✓
	Recreational Fishery	Use in 2026. Updates to scoring questions, AP input.	✓

Outlook for 2026.



- Changes in June: Council approve revised Risk Policy Concept (Beta Phase) that will allow for quantitative applications of the Risk Policy. Some continued qualitative applications.
 - Council to complete global weightings (1 weight for each factor that applies to all stocks).
 - Revised Concept document, revised scoring guidance. New guidance on use, document mechanics.
 - Revised Risk Policy Matrix (as needed).
- Transitioning from sole use of “Alpha phase” in June (Risk Policy matrix + qualitative application).



Upcoming Meetings for Risk Policy:

- *March 9th – RPWG Meeting (today, webinar)*
- *March 30th – SSC Meeting (Boston, webinar)*
 - *Revised factors and scoring, guidelines for use*
 - *Mechanics of Risk Policy, worked example with an ABC Control Rule*
- *April 15th – April Council Meeting (Portland)*
 - *Same four topics as SSC meeting, plus SSC input*
- *May – TBD – RPWG Meeting*
- *June 23rd-25th – June Council Meeting – Approve Concept and Council Weightings*



Biomass (SSB) / Stock Status

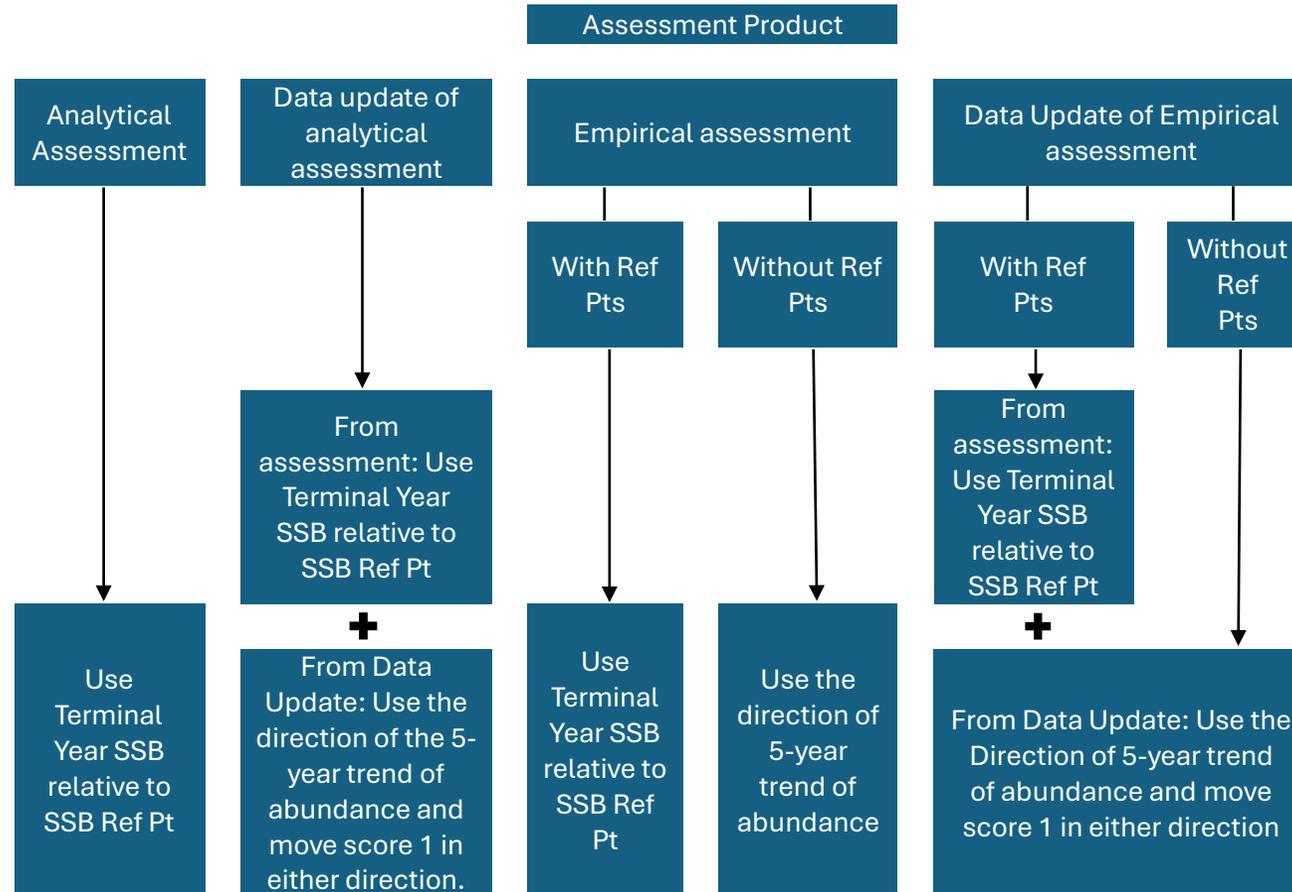


- **Risk associated** with current productivity of the stock
- **Relationship to Risk:** As status (SSB/SSBMSY) increases, risk tolerance increases
- **Scoring Development:**
 - Focus on scenarios with analytical assessments, empirical assessments, and data updates.
 - How to use data updates?
 - 1) Risk Policy vs. ABC CR;
 - 2) If Risk Policy, ideas for using available information.
 - Determine the statistical approach for determining trends.

SSB / Stock Status Decision Tree:

- Consider the role of Date Updates in Risk Policy.

Figure 1. A flow chart for which data products to use and how when scoring SSB / Stock Status.



Recruitment



- **Risk associated** with future productivity of the stock
- **Relationship to Risk:** As recruitment increases, risk tolerance increases
- **Use in 2026,** changes to how factor is scored (quantiles)
- **Scoring Development:**
 - Write up of quantile approach that has been recommended (5-step scoring).
 - Staff: Considering ways to score this factor when data may not be readily available from a Data Update or assessment.
 - Existing age-length keys + surveys

Climate Vulnerability



- **Risk associated** with climate change
- **Relationship to Risk:** As climate vulnerability increases, risk tolerance decreases
- **Scoring Development:**
 - Guidance document outlines the procedure. No changes.
 - Includes a table applying the scores for all species in the analysis.
 - Scoring at species level (e.g. red hake).
 - Stock level scoring will require PDT input (e.g. southern red hake).

Commercial Fishery Characterization



- **Risk associated** with socioeconomic health of the commercial fishery
- **Relationship to Risk:** As socioeconomic stress increases, risk tolerance increases
- **Scoring Development:**
 - Continuing to focus on 5 questions, multi-directional answers (+/- 1)
 - Revised (inverted) scoring scale would be 0-4 (neutral to risk averse)
 - Challenges with criteria of the community question (primary/secondary ports). Proposal to assess this at the regional level different metric.
 - Draft list of what would constitute a constraint, looking to pre-define this.

Recreational Fishery Characterization



- **Risk associated** with socioeconomic health of the commercial fishery
- **Relationship to Risk:** As socioeconomic stress increases, risk tolerance increases
- **Scoring Development:**
 - Engagement around questions, and opportunities to some revisions.
 - Add AP question, like Commercial factor.
 - Consider a question on usage, like question 1 in the Commercial scoring. Look beyond cod, haddock → pollock, red fish, winter flounder...
 - Opportunity to focus on community participation, in-season information, PSEs, choke-stocks?

Draft Scoring Guidance:

- Factor Matrix with Input
- SSB/Stock Status, Recruitment, Climate Vulnerability
- Commercial and Recreational Fishery Characterization



SSC use and interaction with Risk Policy

- The way the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) interacts with the Risk Policy (and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rules) is still being developed, and several key decisions remain open.
- **Today:** Seeking input from its SSC members on how the SSC could interact with the Risk Policy when it is being applied quantitatively.
 - Ideas will be brought to the full SSC on March 30, 2026.
 - How the Risk Policy interacts with ABC CRs is a key question that is still being addressed.



Straw person Concepts for SSC use

- Topic for Discussion: How/where in the catch setting process does the SSC interact and apply the Risk Policy.
 - Catch setting recommendations using both Risk Policy and ABC Control Rules.
- Council staff have drafted a range of ideas that can be considered, intended to generate discussion.
 - Focus on WHERE the SSC interacts (none, factor scoring, after Z-score generated, focus on ABC CR).
 - Can address the details of the how based on feedback.



Straw person Concepts

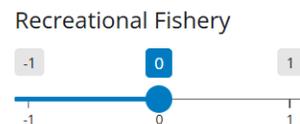
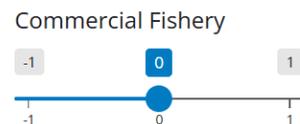
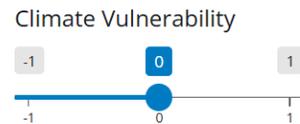
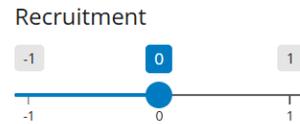
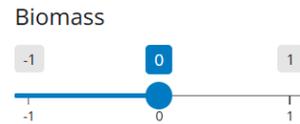
1. Strict Application – Was the process followed? Limited role.
2. Adjustments to Scores – Can adjust to scores of individual factor (impacts X-axis output, where you land on the curve).
3. Adjustments to “Probability of Success” (unconstrained) – moving along the curve up or down. Assumes relationship with ABC CR.
4. Adjustments to “Probability of Success” but within Risk Zones. Allows for flexibility after Z-score generated.
5. Advisory ABC. Outputs from the Risk Policy with ABC CR are starting point only.



Two Examples:

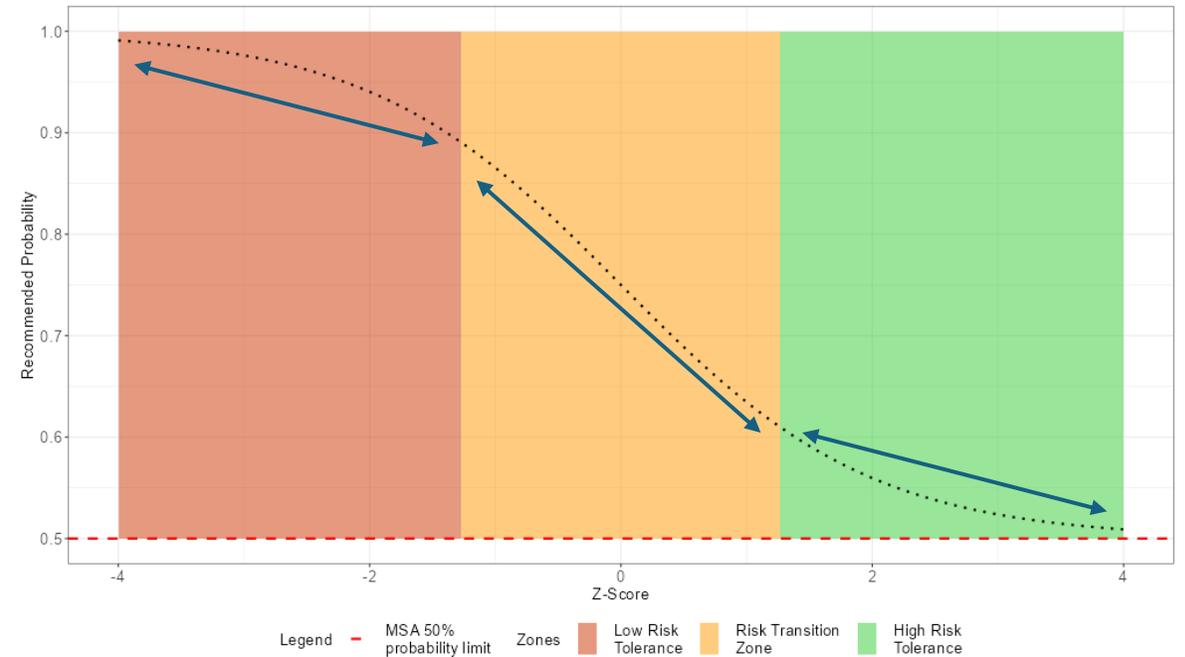
Adjustments to Scores:

Factor level adjustments (+/-1), recalculate Z-score
Formulaic approach, keeps the Policy “weighting”



Adjustments to “Probability of Success” but within Risk Zones:

Movement after Z-score is plotted, but only within Risk Zone.



Consider use of ABC Control Rule.

Questions?



**New England
Fishery Management
Council**

Risk Policy ToolKit

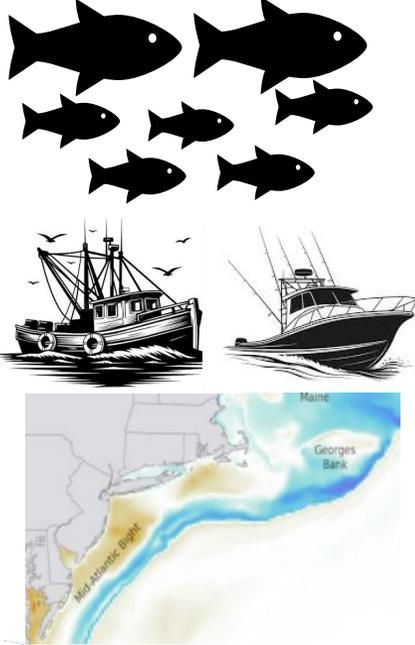
Factors (5)

1. Global Weighting



Weights apply to all stocks

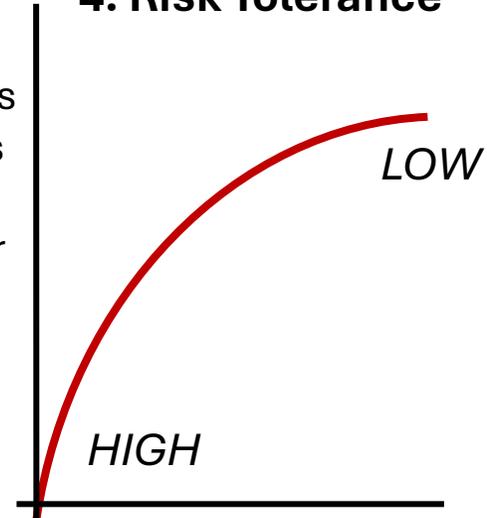
2. Scoring (data)



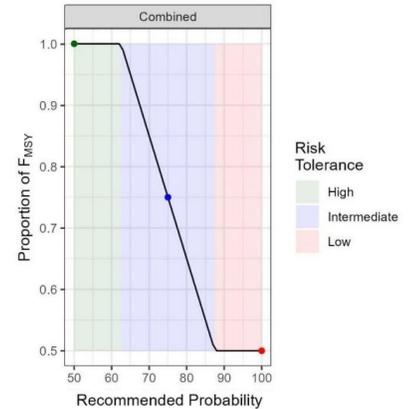
3. Z-Score

Combination of weights and scores. 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)



Risk Policy ToolKit

1. Risk Policy Weighting Form NEFMC Council Weightings Form

Weighting Form

Introduction

Public

2a. Risk Policy Scoring Form NEFMC PDT Scoring Form

Scoring Form

Public

2b. Risk Policy Matrix NEFMC Risk Policy Matrix Form

Matrix Form

Public



NEFMC Risk Policy Application Matrix Recommended Probability

Use the dropdown menus to select parameters for filtering data throughout the application:

3. Z-score Data **4. Alpha Z-score Plot** Beta Z-score Plot

Report Year	Stock	Factor	Score	Average Weight
2025	Acadian redfish	Biomass	2	3.29
2025	Acadian redfish	Recruitment	4	3.00
2025	Acadian redfish	Climate	2	2.95
2025	Acadian redfish	Commercial	-3	1.90
2025	Acadian redfish	Recreational	-4	3.24

The Z-score value based on the scores and weights table above:

0.1025

The recommended probability based on the calculated z-score:

52.6%

Action Year: 2025

Select FMP: Northeast Multispecies

Select stock: Acadian redfish

Generate report



Questions?



**New England
Fishery Management
Council**