New England Fishery Management Council
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Daniel Salerno, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 21, 2026

TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)

CC: Groundfish Committee

FROM: Groundfish Plan Development Team

SUBJECT: Possible overfishing limits (OFLs) and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) for Gulf of Maine (GOM) haddock, American plaice, and pollock, for fishing years (FY) 2027 through 2031

The Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) met by webinar on September 10, 2026, September 28, 2026, and October 8, 2026, to discuss the management track assessments and data update, and to develop possible OFL and ABC options for three groundfish stocks: GOM haddock, American plaice, and pollock. The PDT includes one appendix to this memorandum: Appendix 1- Bridge-year catch estimates for calendar year (CY) 2026.

Overview

In general, the PDT applies the Council's current ABC control rule (see Amendment 16 and below) for groundfish stocks to provide catch advice options for the SSC's consideration.

The ABC control rules will be used in the absence of better information that may allow a more explicit determination of scientific uncertainty for a stock or stocks. If such information is available – that is, if scientific uncertainty can be characterized in a more accurate fashion -- it can be used by the SSC to determine ABCs. These ABC control rules can be modified in a future Council action (an amendment, framework, or specification package):

a. *ABC should be determined as the catch associated with 75% of F_{MSY}.*
b. *If fishing at 75% of F_{MSY} does not achieve the mandated rebuilding requirements for overfished stocks, ABC should be determined as the catch associated with the fishing mortality that meets rebuilding requirements ($F_{rebuild}$).*
c. *For stocks that cannot rebuild to B_{MSY} in the specified rebuilding period, even with no fishing, the ABC should be based on incidental bycatch, including a reduction in bycatch rate (i.e., the proportion of the stock caught as bycatch).*
d. *Interim ABCs should be determined for stocks with unknown status according to case-by-case recommendations from the SSC*

GOM haddock and American plaice had management track assessments in fall 2026. Pollock received a data update with projections.

To develop options, the PDT reviewed the 2026 management track assessment or data update, and past specification setting information (SSC report and PDT report) for each stock.

Summary by Groundfish Stock

For GOM haddock and American plaice, this memorandum provides a brief overview of the 2026 management track assessment highlighting key points and main sources of uncertainty, summarizes stock status, provides fishery performance and socioeconomic information, and provides possible OFLs and ABCs for SSC consideration for FY2027-2031. For pollock, this memorandum provides a brief overview of the last management track assessment, summarizes the 2026 data update, summarizes the stock status, provides fishery performance and socioeconomic information, and provides possible OFLs and ABCs for SSC consideration for FY2027-2031.

The PDT provides OFL and ABC options resulting from following the control rule for the five years in the projections (FY2027-2031). The PDT notes past work which demonstrated projections beyond 2 to 3 years are not reliable and reflects on the experience last year with setting specifications for 5 years and concerns with reliance of projected recruits (aka "paper fish") in the outyears of the projections. For each stock, the PDT provides a second option that addresses projection uncertainty. The exact details differ by stock and are described below.

1. Gulf of Maine haddock

Information Reviewed

Information the PDT reviewed included: the 2026 management track assessment, SSC reports, PDT reports, catch information, and socioeconomic information.

2026 Management Track Assessment

Key Points:

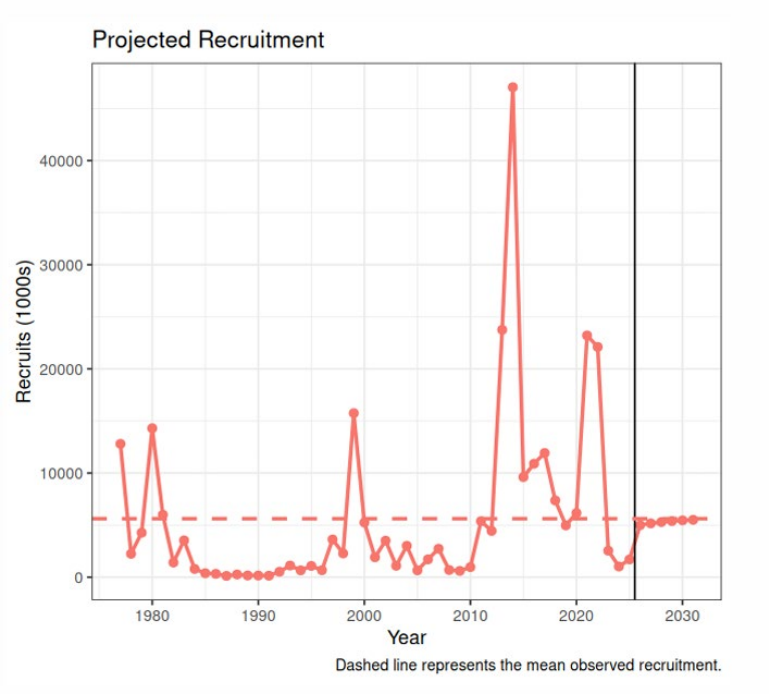
The 2026 assessment is an update to the Woods Hole Assessment Model (WHAM). No changes were made to the assessment model other than incorporating additional years of data.

Main sources of uncertainty:

Future recruitment represents a primary source of uncertainty. The fishery is heavily reliant on the 2020 and 2021 cohorts given the below-average recruitment since 2021. Somatic growth in both cohorts has slowed recently, and without improved recruitment the population will continue to decline.

The PDT notes that recruitment in the projections reverts to the long-term mean (Figure 1), while recruitment in recent years has been below average, and recruitment for this stock appears to be episodic.

Figure 1- Projected recruitment for GOM haddock.

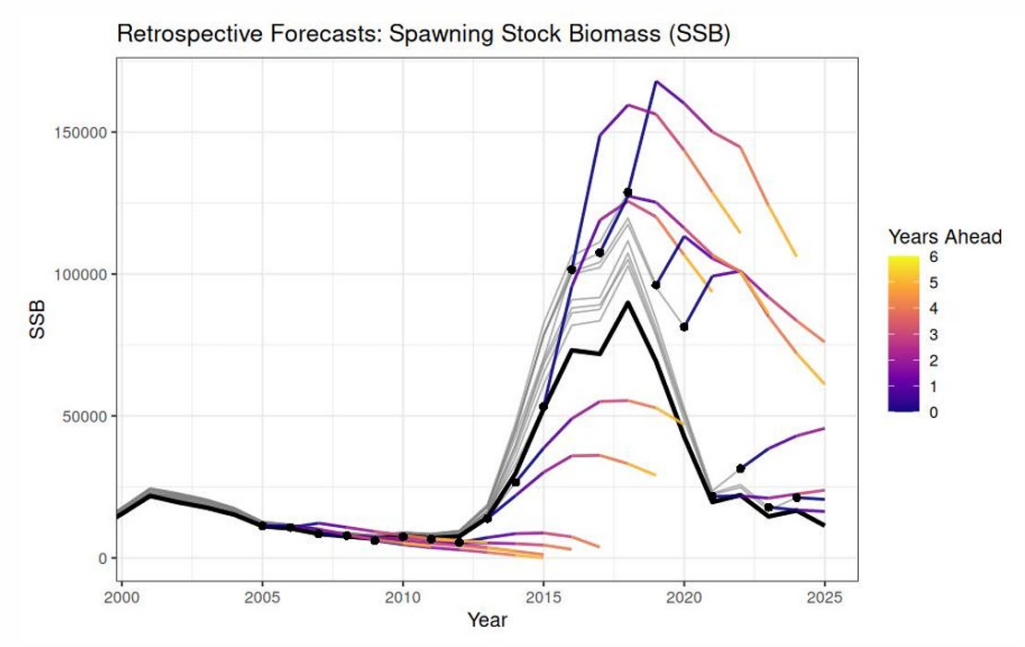


Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment.

The assessment includes an evaluation of projection performance using retrospective forecasting. This work builds upon previous research and addresses research recommendations provided by the 2024 Peer Review Panel and the SSC to develop retrospective forecasting as a diagnostic tool for characterizing error in projections. For the retrospective forecasting, SSB forecasts were compared to the final SSB estimates and bias calculated as median percent error (Figure 2). The results demonstrate that projections have been both overly pessimistic and in more recent years, overly optimistic; projection bias was relatively low in the last two years; and longer-term forecasts have higher error than short-term forecasts. An evaluation of past projection performance also shows good correspondence between past projections and the updated model results (Figure 3).

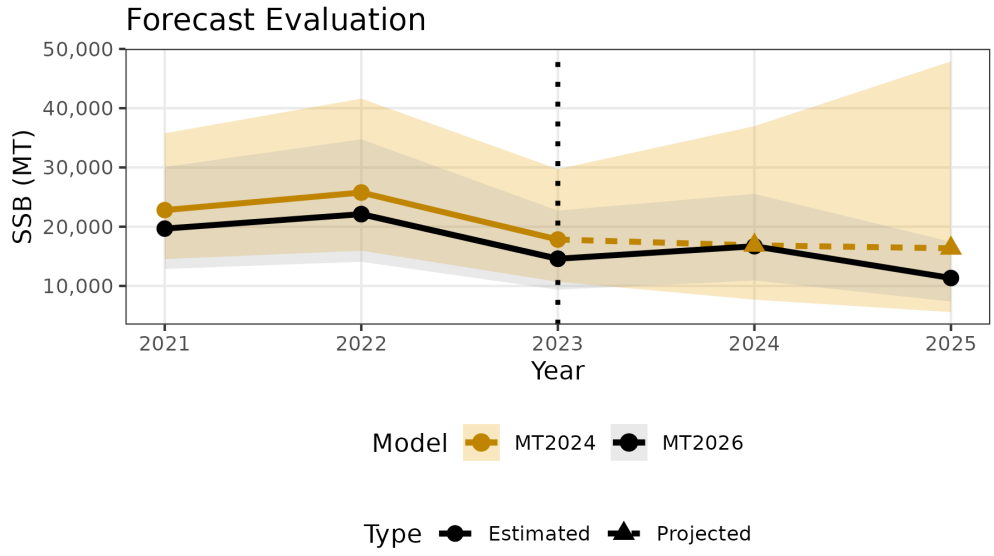
The PDT appreciates the retrospective forecasting work and evaluation of past projection performance as important context for understanding projection uncertainty, especially now with the consideration for setting longer specifications.

Figure 2- Retrospective forecast evaluation of projection performance for GOM haddock. Black line is the actual SSB.



Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment

Figure 3- Forecast evaluation comparing projections from the prior assessment (2024) to estimates from the current assessment (2026). The dashed line denotes the projected years from the prior assessment and the vertical dotted line (black) represents the terminal year of the prior assessment (2023).



Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment

Stock Status

Based on the 2026 stock assessment report and Peer Review Panel, GOM haddock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Catch Projections

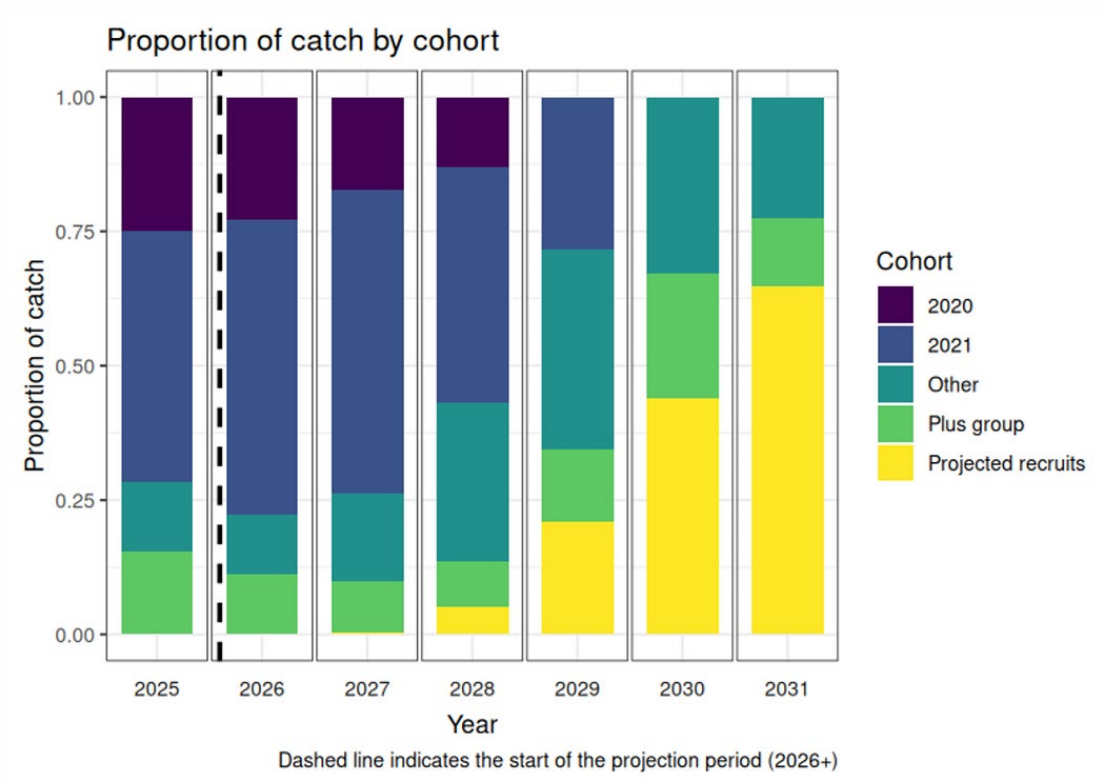
Table 1 provides possible OFLs and ABCs for FY2027-FY2031 for GOM haddock, under 75%F_{MSY} projections. The PDT notes that the decrease in the projections is attributed to the weak recruitment (2023-2025) and slowing growth of the 2020 and 2021 year classes leading to decreases in projected SSB and catch. Following SSB decreases, the projections result in increases in SSB by 2030; however, these increases are a product of projected recruitment that may or may not materialize.

The PDT discussed uncertainties and past work demonstrating projections to be unreliable beyond 2 to 3 years and the 2026 Peer Review Panel comments on projection uncertainty. Figure 4 demonstrates that by 2029, projections are relying on greater than 25% of future year classes from assumed recruitment (aka "paper fish").

The 2026 Peer Review Panel suggests that 4-year projections should be used for catch advice for Gulf of Maine haddock. The peer review panel stated "*The use of projections to set management advice beyond four years (2026-29) should be avoided if possible. While the projections represent the best available science, the Panel and the assessment lead noted particular uncertainty in the 2030-2031 projections, and the Panel recommended that a future update assessment be used to inform catch recommendations for those years."* Therefore, the PDT developed a second option for OFLs and ABCs under 75%F_{MSY} projections holding the 2029 ABC constant through 2031 (Table 2).

The PDT discussed holding the 2029 ABC constant through 2031 as a way to address concerns about increased uncertainty in the outyears of the projections for this stock; however, the PDT highlights the importance of assessment frequency and timing for a stock like haddock, which possesses episodic recruitment life history characteristics. The PDT recommends having an updated assessment within 2 years to verify incoming recruitment and does not recommend basing the catch advice for later years on assumed recruitment.

Figure 4- Proportion of catch by cohort from 75%F_{MSY} projections for FY2027-FY2031 for GOM haddock.



Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment

Table 1- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for GOM haddock, following 75%F_{MSY} projections. Projected F and SSB (mt), as well as probabilities of overfishing, overfished, and rebuilt are also provided (F_{MSY} = 0.35 and SSB_{MSY} = 7,809 mt).

					Probability		
Fishing Year	**Possible OFL (mt)**	**Possible ABC (mt)**	**F**	**SSB (mt)**	**Overfishing**	**Overfished**	**Rebuilt**
2027	2,099	1,634	0.264	7,434	0.36	0.16	0.47
2028	1,730	1,342	0.264	6,710	0.38	0.25	0.43
2029	1,640	1,268	0.264	6,851	0.40	0.28	0.45
2030	1,711	1,321	0.264	7,287	0.41	0.30	0.48
2031	1,804	1,393	0.264	7,613	0.43	0.31	0.49

Table 2- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for GOM haddock, following 75%F_{MSY} projections and holding FY2029 OFL and ABC constant. Projected F and SSB (mt), as well as probabilities of overfishing, overfished, and rebuilt are also provided (F_{MSY} = 0.35 and SSB_{MSY} = 7,809 mt).

					Probability		
Fishing Year	**Possible OFL (mt)**	**Possible ABC (mt)**	**F**	**SSB (mt)**	**Overfishing**	**Overfished**	**Rebuilt**
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2028	1,730	1,342	0.264	6,710	0.38	0.25	0.43
2029	1,640	1,268	0.264	6,851	0.40	0.28	0.45
2030	1,711	1,268	0.252	7,301	0.40	0.30	0.48
2031	1,815	1,268	0.236	7,691	0.40	0.31	0.50

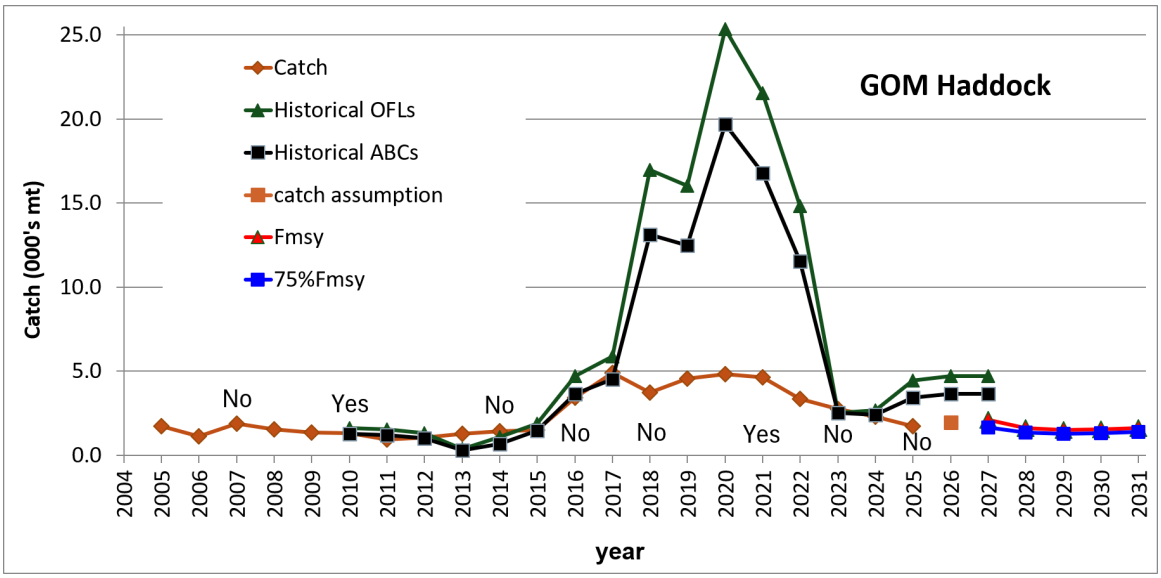
Catch Performance

Table 3 and Figure 5 summarize catch performance and changes in overfishing status for GOM haddock.

Table 3- Catch performance (CY2010-CY2025), historical OFLs and ABCs (FY2010-FY2027), and F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} estimates for FY2027-FY2031 for GOM haddock.

Year	Catch	Historical OFLs	Historical ABCs	Catch Assumption	F_{MSY}	75%F_{MSY}
2010	1,295	1,617	1,265			
2011	926	1,536	1,206			
2012	1,060	1,296	1,013			
2013	1,277	371	290			
2014	1,410	1,085	677			
2015	1,512	1,871	1,454			
2016	3,406	4,717	3,630			
2017	4,894	5,873	4,534			
2018	3,710	16,954	13,131			
2019	4,542	16,038	12,490			
2020	4,810	25,334	19,696			
2021	4,618	21,521	16,794			
2022	3,353	14,834	11,526			
2023	2,734	2,515	2,515			
2024	2,288	2,651	2,406			
2025	1,741	4,430	3,410			
2026		4,709	3,634	1,944		
2027		4,700	3,631		2,099	1,634
2028					1,618	1,342
2029					1,481	1,268
2030					1,524	1,321
2031					1,599	1,393

Figure 5- Catch performance for GOM haddock including: catches from CY2005-CY2025, historical OFLs and ABCs since FY2010, and F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} for FY2027-FY2031. Overfishing status in the terminal year of the assessment indicated on the x-axis ("Yes" = overfishing; "No" = not overfishing).



Additional Fishery Information

Commercial Fishery – Utilization by the commercial groundfish fishery has been high in recent years, approaching, or exceeding, 80%, although utilization appeared to decline in FY2025 (Table 4). The PDT is aware of multiple factors that likely impacted utilization in FY2025, in particular the delayed implementation of Framework 69 specifications which prevented the fishery from accessing the higher incoming quota until late in the fishing year. Additionally, interactions with, and avoidance of cod, is another factor and was exacerbated by the delay in implementation of the Framework 69 specifications.

Sectors – Table 5 compares the performance of the Quota Change Model (QCM) since FY2012 to the realized outcomes for GOM haddock. Performance of the QCM varies year to year (in some years it under-predicts, while in others it over-predicts). From FY2014-2021, the model under-predicted catch and utilization, likely explained by the increasing trend in quotas and realized catches. In FY2022-2024, the model over-predicted catch, utilization, and revenue, likely explained by the decline in quotas and realized catches. The model under predicted catch, utilization, and revenue in FY2025.

Annual catch entitlement (ACE) lease prices for GOM haddock were estimated for FYs 2021-2025 using a hedonic price model (Figure 6). Input data into the model is comprised of inter-sector ACE leases over the FYs 2019-2023 period. ACE lease prices for GOM haddock were $0 prior to FY2023, when they rose dramatically following the decline in sub-ACL and increased utilization.

Recreational Fishery - Presently, 33.9% of the GOM haddock ABC is allocated to the recreational fishery. A 7% management uncertainty buffer is applied to determine a recreational

sub-ACL. Management measures (fish sizes, seasons, and bag limits) are generally set to achieve, but not exceed, the recreational sub-ACL. Reactive measures may apply when an overage occurs. Table 6 shows recent recreational fishery catch and utilization. In FY2024, the recreational fishery exceeded its sub-ACL, contributing to an ACL overage of 1 mt; however, the criterion for implementing reactive AMs, a 3-year average recreational catch exceeding the 3-year average recreational sub-ACL, was not met. For a recent history of recreational management measures see Framework 72.[1]

Table 4- Recent commercial groundfish fishery catch and utilization for GOM haddock.

	Commercial Groundfish Fishery – GOM Haddock		
	Sub-ACL (mt)	**Total Catch (mt)**	**Utilization (%)**
FY2023	1,569.0	1,325.4	84.5%
FY2024	1,509.0	1,205.9	79.9%
FY2025 (preliminary)	2,172.0	1,511.8	69.6%

Source: Multispecies FY2023 and FY2024 Year-End Final Catch Reports; FY2025 Quota Monitoring, GARFO.

Table 5- Quota Change Model results for GOM haddock.

		Sector sub-ACL	**Catch (mt)**		***Utilization (%)***		**Gross Rev ($mil, 2025)**	
	FY		**Realized**	**Predicted**	***Realized***	***Predicted***	**Realized**	**Predicted**
GOM Haddock	2012	648	208	308	*0.32*	*0.39*	1.5	0.8
	2013	251	148	224	*0.59*	*0.89*	0.8	1.4
	2014	218	293	167	*1.34*	*0.76*	1.5	1.1
	2015	948	681	124	*0.72*	*0.13*	2.5	0.5
	2016	2,385	1,500	365	*0.63*	*0.15*	5.8	1.3
	2017	2,985	2,161	1,383	*0.72*	*0.46*	6.6	4.8
	2018	8,643	2,791	1,995	*0.32*	*0.23*	7.9	7.2
	2019	8,219	3,452	2,964	*0.42*	*0.36*	10.2	8.4
	2020	11,918	3,992	2,734	*0.33*	*0.23*	11.9	7.5
	2021	10,223	3,447	3,312	*0.34*	*0.33*	13.0	9.0
	2022	6,915	2,831	4,420	*0.41*	*0.64*	9.5	13.1
	2023*	1,537	1,323	1,183	*0.86*	*1.00*	3.7	4.6
	2024	1,478	1,214	1,472	*0.82*	*1.00*	4.2	3.2
	2025	2,125	1,510	1,263	*0.71*	*0.59*	6.3	3.5

[1] See Framework 72 Supplemental Information Report Final Submission, page 56: https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/260423_Groundfish_FW72_SIR_FINAL-Submission.pdf

Figure 6- ACE lease prices estimated for GOM haddock for fishing years 2021-2025 using a hedonic price model comprised of inter-sector ACE leases. First quarter (May-July) lease prices are indicated by the vertical gray bars.

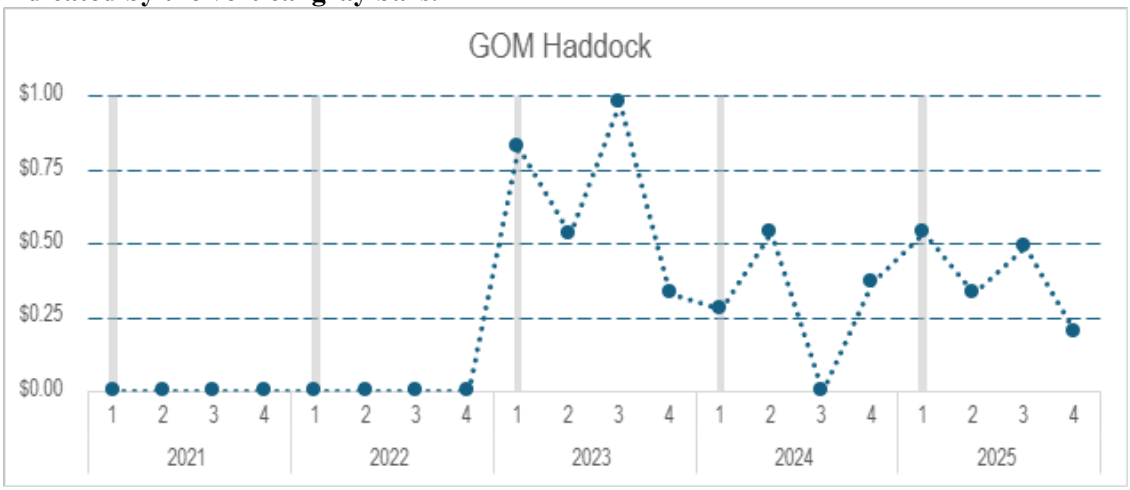


Table 6- Final year-end catch data for GOM haddock by the recreational groundfish fishery for FYs 2022 through 2024.

	Recreational Groundfish Fishery – GOM Haddock					
Fishing Year	**Total ACL (mt)**	**Total Catch (mt)**	**Percent Total ACL Caught**	**Recreational sub-ACL (mt)**	**Recreational Catch (mt)**	**Percent Recreational ACL Caught**
2022	10,873	3,354.4	30.9%	3,634	477.2	13.1%
2023	2,452	1,801.9	73.5%	793	474.3	59.8%
2024	2,346	2,346.9	100.0%	759	1,135.4	149.6%

Sources: Multispecies FY2022 – FY2024 final year-end catch reports, GARFO.

2. American plaice

Information Reviewed

Information the PDT reviewed included: the 2026 management track assessment, SSC reports, PDT reports, catch information, and socioeconomic information.

2026 Management Track Assessment

Key Points:

The 2026 assessment is an update to the Woods Hole Assessment Model (WHAM). The largest change was the incorporation of commercial age composition and weight-at-age data from 2018-2023 which had been excluded from the 2024 Management Track assessment due to an unresolved data processing issue. Incorporating these data had minimal impacts on model fit, but generally increased estimated survey selectivity-at-age for the oldest age classes, influencing

abundance-at-age which in turn likely contributed to changes in the scale of fishing mortality (average +21.1%) and spawning stock biomass estimates (average -7.2%), relative to the 2024 assessment. Slightly lower weight-at-age for spawning age also likely contributed to small downward changes in the scale of SSB estimates.

Following advice published after the 2024 Management Track, the lognormal adjustment was turned off. This had a minimal impact on model fit but scaled SSB and recruitment downward (on average -9.6% and -20.5% difference respectively), and scaled fishing mortality upward (on average 9.9%).

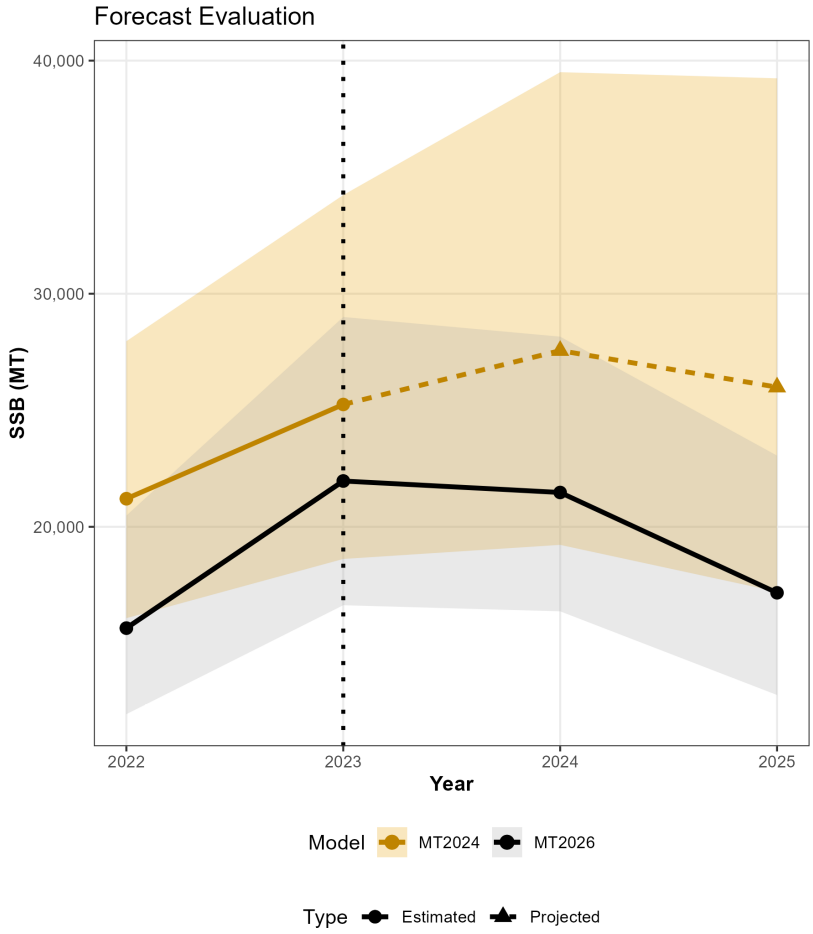
Other changes include incorporation of 2 additional years of data and use of an updated version of WHAM.

Main sources of uncertainty:
Survey selectivity is the most important source of uncertainty in this stock assessment. Variable survey selectivity estimates-at-age across model runs contributed to differing fit and scaling of key model results (e.g. F, SSB). Sensitivity analyses suggested that ages with large confidence intervals may overestimate uncertainty and that survey selectivity-at-age point estimates in the candidate model all fall within a narrower range of likely values.

Recruitment is another important source of uncertainty for American plaice. Surface and bottom temperatures in the terminal 2 years of the time series (2024-2025) were the lowest in recent years and were nearer the optimal spawning temperature range reported in the literature (Behan et al. 2022), but corresponded with the lowest recruitment on record (2024). This record low recruitment could be influenced by data availability as survey and fleet selectivity for ages 1-2 is generally low; and reduced survey sampling in fall 2025 further limits the information available to estimate the size of this cohort. Declining SSB across both years may also impact recruitment trends, but the assessment estimated larger recruitment in 2025 at lower SSB compared to 2024. This suggests that low SSB alone does not fully account for the record low 2024 recruitment and there is still uncertainty in other ecosystem drivers of recruitment. For further detail on environmental drivers of recruitment, see the American Plaice Snapshot Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP). The PDT notes the Snapshot ESP as an important resource for tracking trends in environmental drivers moving forward.

An evaluation of past projection performance also shows relatively good correspondence between past projections and the updated model results despite some of the changes in the modeling and mean weights at age (Figure 7).

Figure 7- Forecast evaluation comparing projections from prior assessment (2024) to estimates from current assessment (2026). Dashed line denotes the projected years from the prior assessment and the vertical dotted line (black) represents the terminal year of the prior assessment (here, 2023).



Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment

Stock Status

Based on the 2026 stock assessment report and Peer Review Panel, American plaice is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Catch Projections

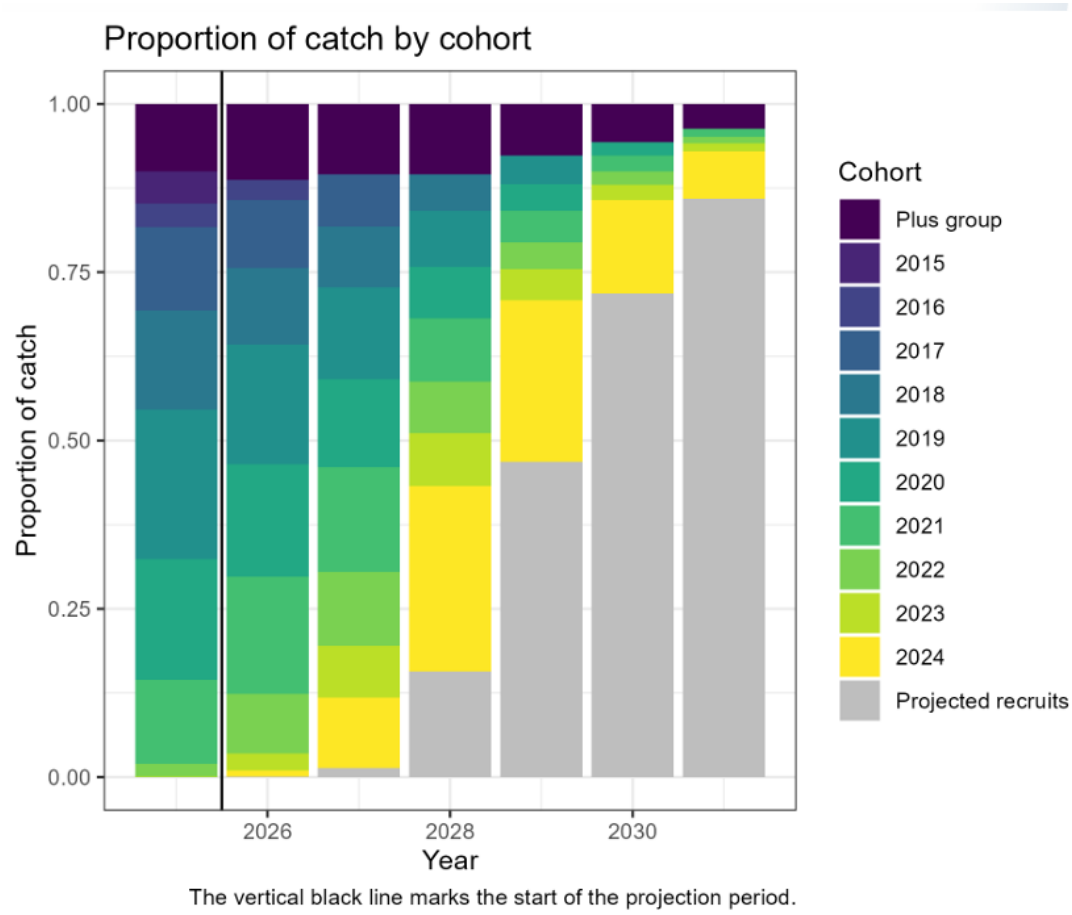
Table 7 provides possible OFLs and ABCs for FY2027-FY2031 for American plaice, under 75%F_{MSY} projections. The PDT notes that the decrease in the projections is attributed to the weak recruitment (2023-2025) leading to decreases in projected SSB. Following SSB decreases, the projections result in increases in SSB by 2029; however, these increases are reliant on project recruitment that may or may not materialize.

The PDT discussed uncertainties and past work demonstrating projections to be unreliable beyond 2 to 3 years. Figure 8 demonstrates that by 2029, projections are relying on greater than

25% of future year classes from modeled recruitment (aka “paper fish”). The 2026 Peer Review Panel did not have the same level of concern for projection uncertainty as with GOM haddock due to differences in life history and recruitment variability, but still acknowledged the lower recruitment in recent years as a concern.

The PDT provides a second option for OFLs and ABCs under 75%F_{MSY} projections holding the FY2028 ABC constant for FY2030-FY2031 (Table 8). Justification for this option is to account for additional uncertainty associated with increases in catch advice due to the assumed recruitment within the projections. In addition, projections indicate that SSB will decline below the SSB_{MSY} reference point in 2027.

Figure 8- Proportion of catch by cohort from 75%FMSY projections for FY2027-FY2031 for American plaice.



Source: 2026 Management Track Assessment

Table 7- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for American plaice, following 75%F_{MSY} projections. Projected F and SSB (mt), as well as probabilities of overfishing, overfished, and rebuilt are also provided (F_{MSY} = 0.43 and SSB_{MSY} = 12,711 mt).

					Probability		
Fishing Year	Possible OFL (mt)	Possible ABC (mt)	F	SSB (mt)	Overfishing	Overfished	Rebuilt
2027	4,219	3,298	0.319	11,610	0.15	0.00	0.34
2028	3,880	3,020	0.319	10,973	0.21	0.03	0.31
2029	4,053	3,152	0.319	11,324	0.26	0.06	0.38
2030	4,276	3,327	0.319	11,798	0.29	0.08	0.43
2031	4,420	3,441	0.319	12,147	0.30	0.09	0.46

Table 8- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for American plaice, following 75%F_{MSY} projections and holding FY2028 ABC constant. Projected F and SSB (mt), as well as probabilities of overfishing, overfished, and rebuilt are also provided (F_{MSY} = 0.43 and SSB_{MSY} = 12,711 mt).

					Probability		
Fishing Year	Possible OFL (mt)	Possible ABC (mt)	F	SSB (mt)	Overfishing	Overfished	Rebuilt
2027	4,219	3,298	0.319	11,610	0.15	0.00	0.34
2028	3,880	3,020	0.319	10,973	0.21	0.03	0.31
2029	4,053	3,020	0.304	11,355	0.22	0.06	0.38
2030	4,311	3,020	0.284	11,967	0.21	0.07	0.44
2031	4,533	3,020	0.268	12,558	0.19	0.07	0.49

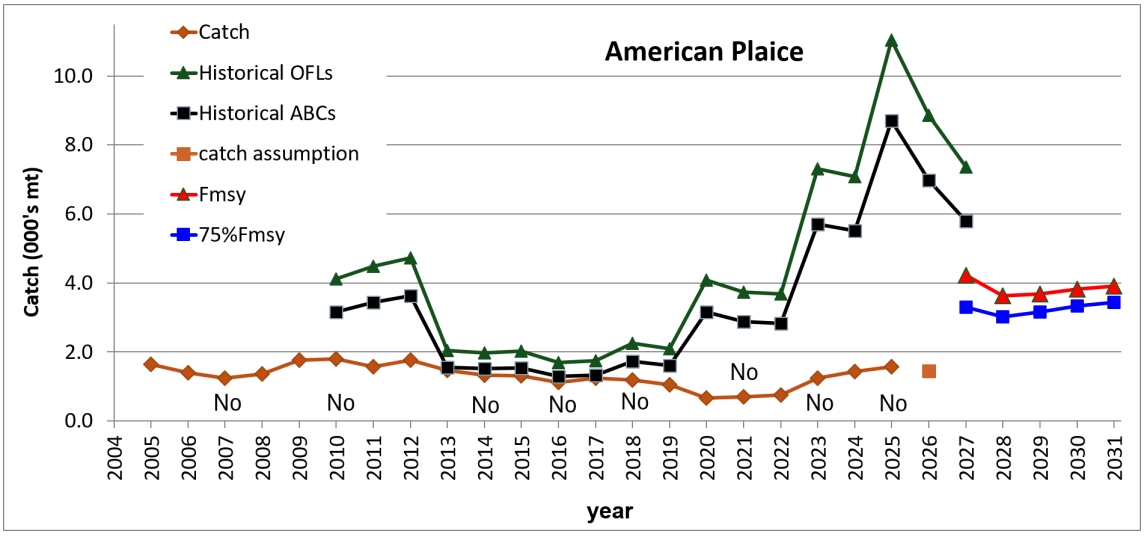
Catch Performance

Table 9 and Figure 9 summarize catch performance and changes in overfishing status for American plaice.

Table 9- Catch performance (CY2010-CY2025), historical OFLs and ABCs (FY2010-FY2027), and F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} estimates for FY2027-FY2031 for American plaice.

Year	Catch	Historical OFLs	Historical ABCs	Catch Assumption	F_{MSY}	75%F_{MSY}
2010	1,795	4,110	3,156			
2011	1,569	4,483	3,444			
2012	1,765	4,727	3,632			
2013	1,465	2,035	1,557			
2014	1,331	1,981	1,515			
2015	1,317	2,021	1,544			
2016	1,117	1,695	1,297			
2017	1,235	1,748	1,336			
2018	1,196	2,260	1,732			
2019	1,048	2,099	1,609			
2020	671	4,084	3,155			
2021	702	3,740	2,881			
2022	756	3,687	2,825			
2023	1,242	7,316	5,699			
2024	1,436	7,091	5,520			
2025	1,564	11,048	8,697			
2026		8,866	6,979	1,442		
2027		7,368	5,791		4,219	3,298
2028					3,638	3,020
2029					3,691	3,152
2030					3,830	3,327
2031					3,916	3,441

Figure 9- Catch performance for American plaice including: catches from CY2005-CY2025, historical OFLs and ABCs since FY2010, and F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} for FY2027-FY2031. Overfishing status in the terminal year of the assessment indicated on the x-axis ("No" = not overfishing).



Additional Fishery Information

Commercial Fishery –Utilization by the commercial groundfish fishery has been stable at low levels in recent years and catch is well below the sub-ACL (Table 10). In FY2025, catch increased slightly but utilization declined, following the large increase in ACL.

Sectors – Table 11 compares the performance of the QCM since FY2012 to the realized outcomes for American plaice. The model has tended to over-predict catch, utilization, and revenue in recent years, likely due to the declining trends in quota and realized catch. However, in the most recent 2 years (FY2024-2025), the model under predicted catch, utilization, and revenue. Utilization steadily decreased from around 100% from FY2013-2015 to less than 40% beginning in FY2020, and has remained at these levels since then, declining further in FY2025 following the large increase in sub-ACL. Realized and predicted revenue declined from around $5-6 million to $2-3 million, but have since increased to $4-6 million beginning in FY2023, suggesting increased ex-vessel prices in recent years. Trends in ACE lease prices have followed utilization trends, and except for Quarter 2 in FY2023, have been $0 in recent years (Figure 10).

Table 10- Recent commercial groundfish fishery catch and utilization for American plaice.

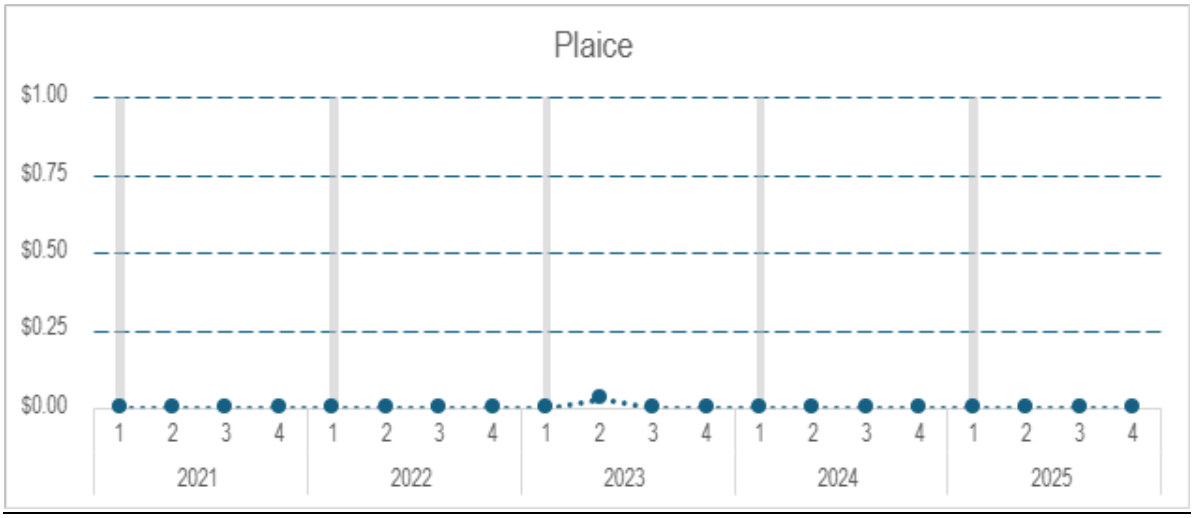
	Commercial Groundfish Fishery – American Plaice		
	Sub-ACL (mt)	**Total Catch (mt)**	**Utilization (%)**
FY2023	5,360.0	1,390.6	25.9%
FY2024	5,457.0	1,357.4	24.9%
FY2025 (preliminary)	8,637.6	1,441.8	16.7%

Source: Multispecies FY2023 and FY2024 Year-End Final Catch Reports; FY2025 Quota Monitoring, GARFO.

Table 11- Quota Change Model results for American plaice.

		Sector sub-ACL	Catch (mt)		*Utilization (%)*		Gross Rev ($mil, 2025)	
	FY		**Realized**	**Predicted**	***Realized***	***Predicted***	**Realized**	**Predicted**
American Plaice	2012	3,223	1,601	1,463	*0.50*	*0.30*	6.9	5.8
	2013	1,395	1,392	1,482	*1.00*	*0.78*	6.3	5.9
	2014	1,356	1,293	1,193	*0.95*	*0.88*	6.4	5.2
	2015	1,381	1,366	1,218	*0.99*	*0.88*	7.3	5.4
	2016	1,163	1,122	961	*0.97*	*0.83*	7.6	5.0
	2017	1,196	1,069	952	*0.89*	*0.79*	7.0	5.8
	2018	1,552	1,065	1,550	*0.69*	*1.00*	6.1	10.0
	2019	1,436	836	1,441	*0.58*	*1.00*	3.8	9.1
	2020	2,859	592	1,105	*0.21*	*0.38*	2.6	6.1
	2021	2,592	688	818	*0.27*	*0.31*	2.9	3.5
	2022	2,566	887	719	*0.35*	*0.28*	2.8	2.8
	2023	5,210	1,383	741	*0.27*	*0.14*	4.5	2.8
	2024	5,313	1,350	1,176	*0.25*	*0.23*	5.3	3.5
	2025	8,383	1,438	1,288	*0.17*	*0.15*	6.2	4.1

Figure 10- ACE lease prices estimated for American plaice for fishing years 2021-2025 using a hedonic price model comprised of inter-sector ACE leases. First quarter (May-July) lease prices are indicated by the vertical gray bars.



3. Pollock

Information Reviewed

Information the PDT reviewed included: the 2026 NEFSC data update with projections, the 2024 stock assessment, SSC reports, PDT reports, catch information, and socioeconomic information.

2024 Management Track Assessment and Fishing Years 2025-2027 Specifications

The 2024 assessment was an update to the Age Structured Assessment Program (ASAP). The main source of uncertainty in the assessment is selectivity. In addition to the base model (dome-shaped survey selectivity), which is used to provide management advice, a flat-topped sensitivity model (flat-topped survey selectivity) was conducted for the sole purpose of demonstrating the sensitivity of the assessment results to survey selectivity assumptions.

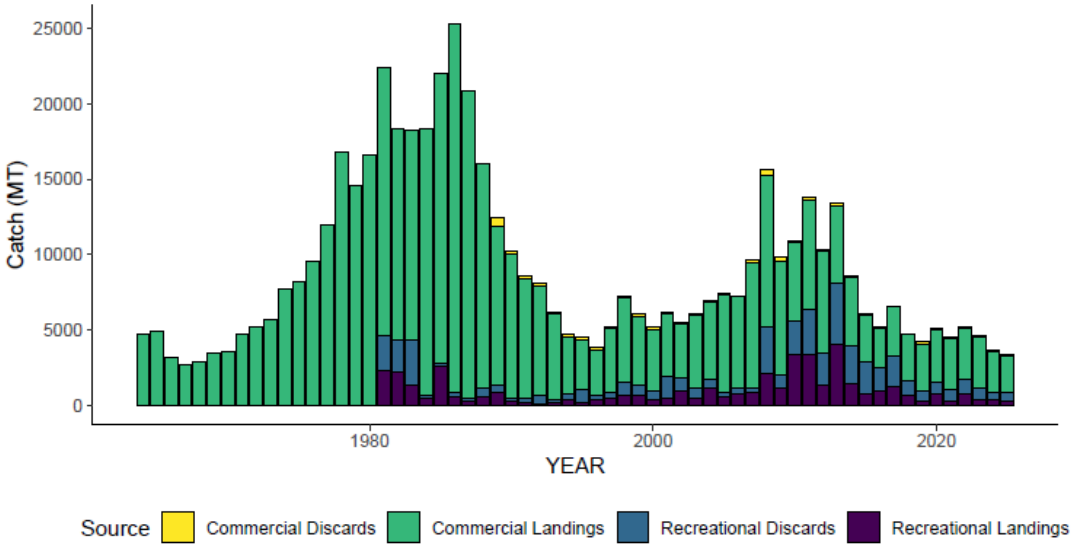
OFLs and ABCs for FYs 2025-2027 were determined based on the Council's ABC control rule (following option A) at 75%F_{MSY}.

2026 NEFSC Data Update

The NEFSC provided a data update in 2026 with projections. This update includes landings and discards from calendar year 1964 through 2025. Commercial landings begin in 1964, commercial discards begin in 1989, and recreational data begins in 1981.

Total catch by calendar year is provided in the data update (Figure 11). Total catches have declined since the early 2010s, and again in recent years since 2022, driven by declines in commercial fishery landings. Recreational catches are more variable but also show similar declining trends.

Figure 11- Landings and discards in metric tons (mt) of pollock from calendar year 1964 through 2024.

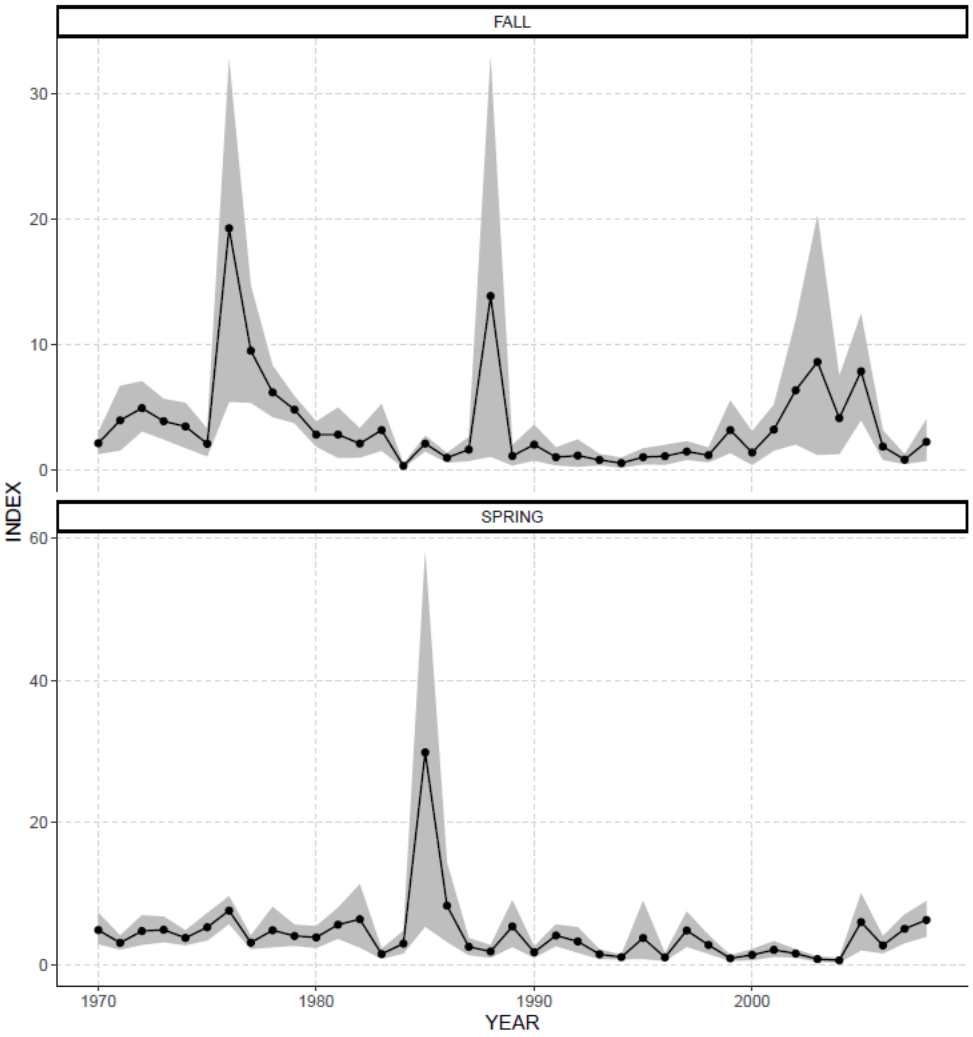


Source: 2026 NEFSC Data Update.

NMFS spring and fall survey indices are provided in the data update. The pollock assessment has separate Albatross and Bigelow indices for the spring and fall surveys (Figure 12 and Figure 13). The fall survey shows declines in recent years from 2022 through 2025. The spring survey shows variable trends in recent years. Note the incomplete 2023 spring survey and missing 2020 surveys.

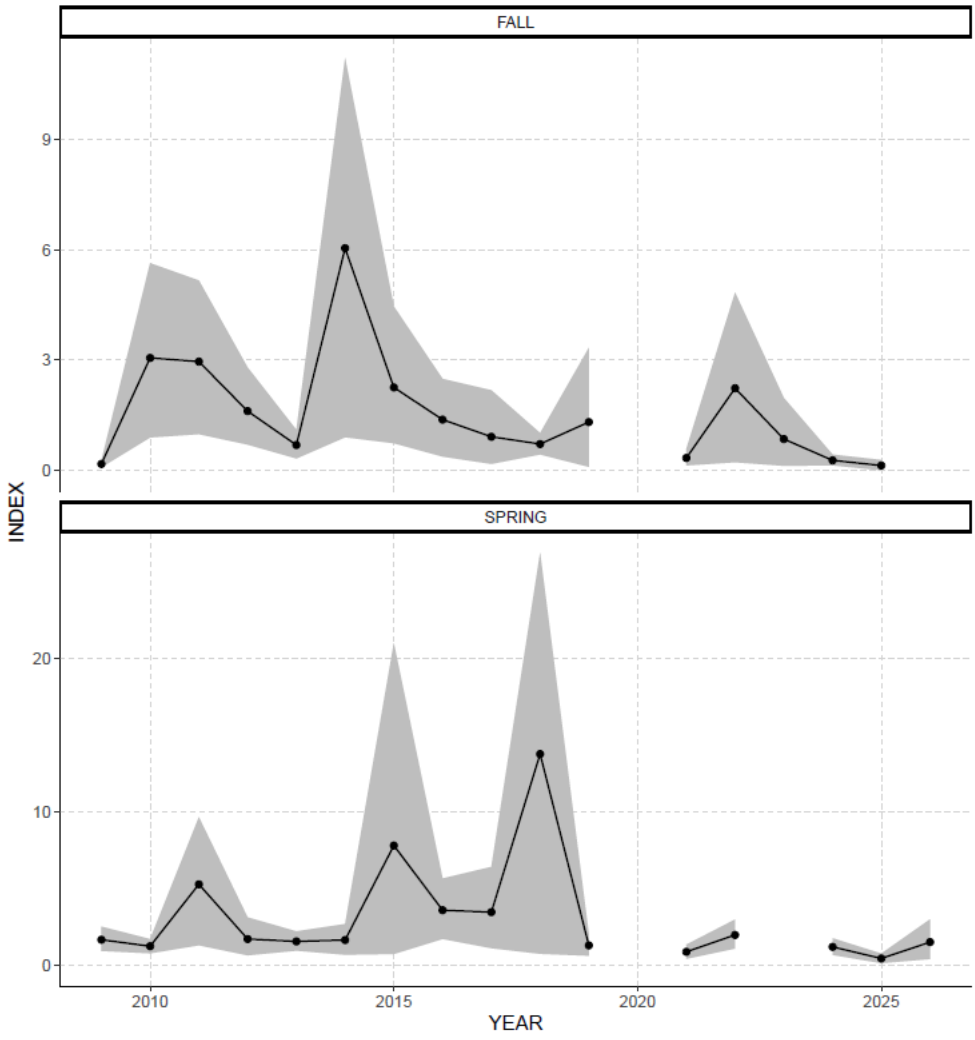
The 2024 management track assessment noted that at the time "fishery and survey data suggest the existence of a relatively strong 2019 year class, which has begun to enter the fishery." The 2026 data update points to the 2019 year class contributing significantly to catch in 2024 and 2025 (Figure 13).

Figure 12- Bottom trawl survey index (biomass, kg/tow) of pollock during the Albatross years from 1970 through 2008.



Source: 2026 NEFSC Data Update.

Figure 13- Bottom trawl survey index (biomass, kg/tow) of pollock during the Bigelow years from 2009 through 2026.



Source: 2026 NEFSC Data Update.

Stock Status

Based on the 2024 stock assessment report, pollock is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring.

Catch Projections

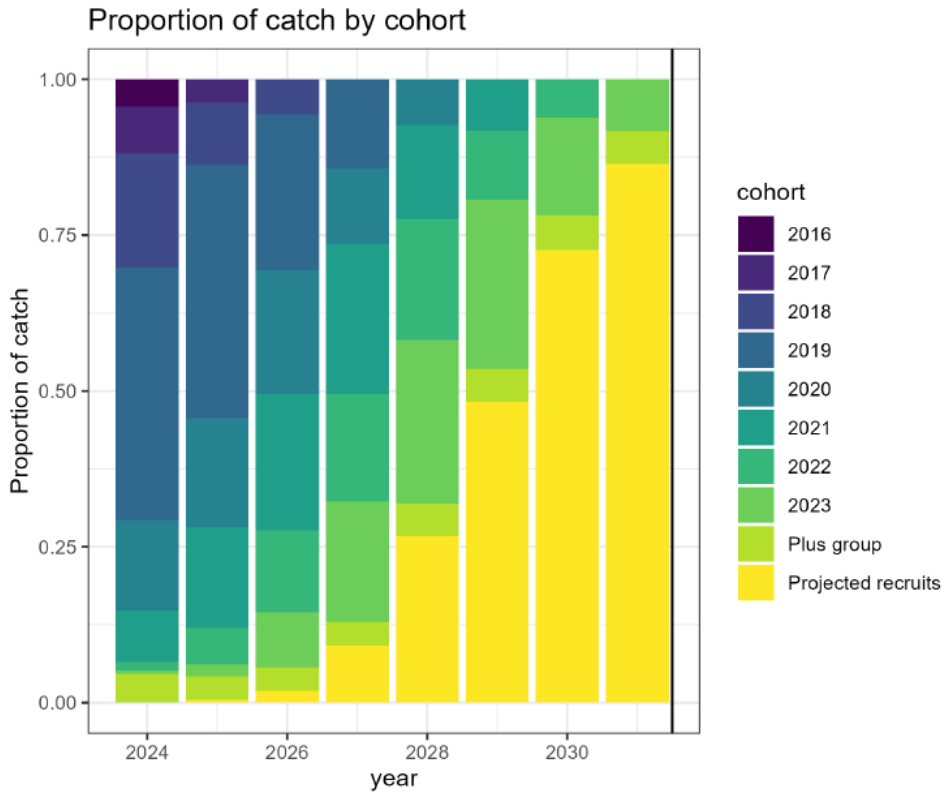
Table 12 provides possible OFLs and ABCs for FY2027-FY2031 for pollock, under 75%F_{MSY} projections. The flat-topped selectivity sensitivity model run was also conducted for the 75%F_{MSY} projections (provided below in Table 14 and in the 2026 Data Update). The PDT notes that the decrease in the projections is attributed to "fishing down" to the SSB_{MSY} given the stock is presently above SSB_{MSY}. The projections are based off the 2024 Management Track Assessment with a terminal year of 2023 and three bridge years (2024-2026). Thus, the longer projection results in greater reliance on projected recruits, with projections relying on greater

than 25% of future year classes from assumed recruitment (aka “paper fish”) by 2028 (Figure 14).

Given the increased uncertainty associated with longer term projections based off an older assessment model, a second set of projections were run using the equilibrium long-term catch at 75%F_{MSY} held constant (see description in 2026 Data Update). Table 13 provides possible OFLs and ABCs for FY2027-FY2031 for pollock under equilibrium long-term catch, held constant for all five years.

The PDT notes that these projections are entirely separate from and do not use the standard projection approaches. The PDT acknowledges that this projection is not explicitly used to estimate the ABCs. The projections were instead used to estimate the OFLs and to illustrate the longer-term projection results (8-year projections). This option intentionally does not rely on the projection to estimate the ABCs given that longer term projections have been shown to be unreliable. This second option was developed because the stock is estimated to be over twice the SSB_{MSY} reference point, there is uncertainty associated with cryptic biomass resulting from the assumed dome shaped selectivity (which is reflected in the flat-topped sensitivity projections) and increased uncertainty associated with 4-8 year projections. This option would put in place the long-term catch associated with 75%F_{MSY} instead of using projections that estimate higher ABCs which decline over time to approach the equilibrium long-term 75%F_{MSY} catch estimate as specified in the 75%F_{MSY} control rule (75%F_{MSY} option 1). Therefore, this option does not explicitly rely on the estimated fishing down exercise in 75%F_{MSY} option 1. Given uncertainties with long-term projections and reliance on projected recruits, the PDT recommends the OFLs and ABCs under this second option, equilibrium long-term 75%F_{MSY} catch held constant. The PDT also discussed the need for a pollock assessment in the near-term future.

Figure 14- Proportion of catch by cohort from 75%Fmsy projections for FY2027-FY2031 for pollock.



Source: 2026 Data Update

Table 12- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for pollock, following 75%F_{MSY} projections. Projected F and SSB (mt) are also provided.

Fishing Year	Possible OFL (mt)	Possible ABC (mt)	F	SSB (mt)
2027	15,903	12,184	0.154	170,220
2028	13,910	10,661	0.154	164,447
2029	13,251	10,159	0.154	155,257
2030	12,546	9,616	0.154	147,487
2031	12,251	9,390	0.154	140,114

Table 13- Possible OFLs and ABCs (mt) for FY2027- FY2031 for pollock, holding equilibrium long-term catch at 75%F_{MSY} constant. Projected F and SSB (mt) are also provided.

Fishing Year	Possible OFL (mt)	Possible ABC (mt)	F	SSB (mt)
2027	15,903	9,005	0.112	170,220
2028	14,428	9,005	0.124	167,738
2029	14,031	9,005	0.127	160,532
2030	13,361	9,005	0.134	154,424
2031	13,016	9,005	0.138	147,945

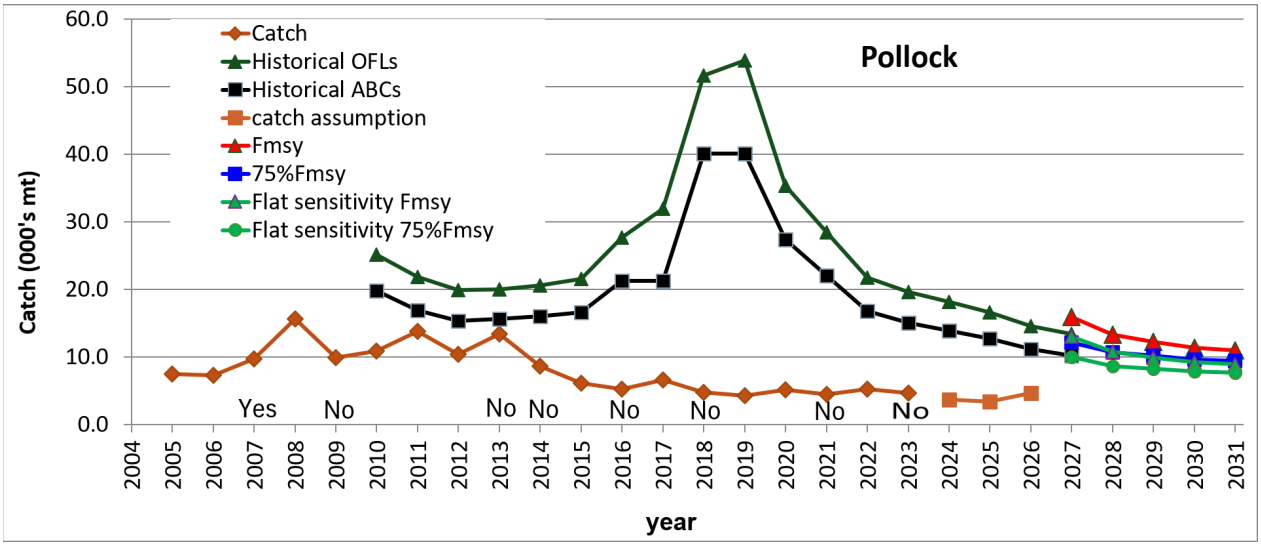
Catch Performance

Table 14 and Figure 15 summarize catch performance and changes in overfishing status for pollock, including the flat-topped sensitivity projections.

Table 14- Catch performance (CY2010-CY2025), historical OFLs and ABCs (FY2010-FY2027), F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} estimates for FY2027-FY2031 under the base model and sensitivity model for pollock.

Year	Catch	Historical OFLs	Historical ABCs	Catch Assumption	F_{MSY}	75%F_{MSY}	Flat F_{MSY}	Flat 75%F_{MSY}
2010	10,897	25,200	19,800					
2011	13,792	21,853	16,900					
2012	10,370	19,887	15,400					
2013	13,428	20,060	15,600					
2014	8,613	20,554	16,000					
2015	6,138	21,538	16,600					
2016	5,230	27,668	21,312					
2017	6,597	32,004	21,312					
2018	4,788	51,680	40,172					
2019	4,270	53,940	40,172					
2020	5,133	35,358	27,447					
2021	4,512	28,475	22,062					
2022	5,225	21,744	16,812					
2023	4,658	19,617	15,016					
2024		18,208	13,940	3,714				
2025		16,585	12,733	3,409				
2026		14,583	11,170	4,656				
2027		13,383	10,252		15,903	12,184	13,043	10,008
2028					13,309	10,661	10,791	8,655
2029					12,242	10,159	9,909	8,229
2030					11,338	9,616	9,239	7,837
2031					10,939	9,390	8,969	7,707

Figure 15- Catch performance for pollock including: catches from CY2005-CY2025, historical OFLs and ABCs since FY2010, and F_{MSY} and 75%F_{MSY} for FY2027-FY2031 under the base model and sensitivity model. Overfishing status in the terminal year of the assessment indicated on the x-axis ("Yes" = overfishing and "No" = not overfishing).



Additional Fishery Information

Commercial Fishery – Catch by the commercial groundfish fishery has been similar over time. Utilization is low with catches well below the sub-ACL (Table 15).

Sectors – Table 16 compares the performance of the QCM since FY2012 to the realized outcomes for pollock. In recent years, the model has slightly under-predicted catch and utilization. In FY2020 and FY2021 gross revenue was under-predicted by over $3.5 million due to a sharp increase in pollock ex-vessel price from FY2019-2021. ACE lease prices for pollock have been close to zero, which is logical given the recent low utilization rate.

Recreational Fishery - Other Fisheries and State Fisheries Sub-components – While there is no recreational sub-ACL, other significant sources of pollock catch include the recreational fishery, in both federal and state waters. In FY2024, recreational catches in federal fisheries were 192.4 mt and in state waters were 220.5 mt.

Table 15- Recent commercial groundfish fishery catch and utilization for pollock.

	Commercial Groundfish Fishery - Pollock		
	Sub-ACL (mt)	**Total Catch (mt)**	**Utilization**
FY2023	13,124.0	3,519.4	26.8%
FY2024	12,819.0	2,290.7	17.9%
FY2025 (preliminary)	11,256.2	3,315.1	29.5%

Source: Multispecies FY2023 and FY2024 Year-End Final Catch Reports; FY2025 Quota Monitoring, GARFO.

Table 16- Quota Change Model results for pollock.

		Sector sub-ACL	Catch (mt)		*Utilization (%)*		Gross Rev ($mil, 2025)	
	FY		**Realized**	**Predicted**	***Realized***	***Predicted***	**Realized**	**Predicted**
Pollock	2012	12,530	6,395	4,296	*0.51*	*0.23*	17.6	11.1
	2013	12,802	4,878	7,133	*0.38*	*0.51*	14.6	17.4
	2014	13,139	3,972	5,384	*0.30*	*0.41*	13.1	14.6
	2015	13,634	2,877	3,707	*0.21*	*0.27*	8.9	11.0
	2016	17,704	2,962	3,739	*0.17*	*0.21*	8.0	12.5
	2017	17,704	2,990	3,564	*0.17*	*0.20*	7.2	11.5
	2018	37,170	3,476	2,796	*0.09*	*0.08*	6.8	8.1
	2019	37,152	3,070	2,898	*0.08*	*0.08*	6.8	7.4
	2020	23,752	3,936	2,935	*0.17*	*0.12*	10.5	5.6
	2021	18,356	3,069	3,034	*0.17*	*0.16*	10.4	6.4
	2022	14,020	3,613	2,644	*0.26*	*0.19*	9.2	7.9
	2023	13,001	3,497	3,242	*0.27*	*0.25*	9.4	9.2
	2024	12,696	2,291	3,440	*0.18*	*0.29*	4.3	8.4
	2025	11,142	3,290	2,991	*0.30*	*0.27*	8.5	7.8

CY2026 Northeast Multispecies Projected Catch Estimates (mt)

Stock	**Total Catch**	Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Scallop	Herring	Small Mesh	State	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
American Plaice	1442	1431	1429	2	-	NA*	NA*	NA*	6	5
Pollock	3742	3742	3716	26	-	NA*	NA*	NA*	0	0
GOM Haddock	1527	1525	1523	2	-*	NA*	0.1†	NA*	2	0

* - Recreational estimates are typically based on previous fishing year totals. Data are not yet available for FY25

† - GOM Haddock Herring Midwater Trawl based on previous fishing year

NA* - When no sub-ACL is allocated, component is part of 'other' category

NA** - Sector and Common Pool values combined for confidentiality

Methods: Calendar 2025 catch data are scaled using the mean difference in catch from CY25 to CY26 over the period June 1st - July 20th.
Amounts in metric tons of live weight.
Data source: CAMS database, data through 7/20/2026, queried 7/30/2026.
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
July 31, 2026