New England Fishery Management Council

2025 Risk Policy Matrix for the Groundfish FMP

Stock: **Ocean Pout**

Factor	Supporting Information
Stock Status and Uncertainty	
Biomass Stock Status	The stock is overfished (2022 MTA). Overfishing is not occurring (2022 MTA). ***Rebuilding target:*** 2029 ***2021 Biomass proxy:*** 0.263 kg/tow (5% of SSBMSY proxy = 4.94 kg/tow)
Recruitment	Assessment does not account for recruitment due to its empirical nature
Assessment Type and Uncertainty	Exploitation ratio, empirical assessment ***Terminal year:*** 2021 Exploitation ratio does not allow estimation of a retrospective pattern (2022 MTA) Data used in the 2022 assessment: - U.S. Commercial landings and discards; - Other fleet landings; - NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey Missing data in the 2022 assessment: - 2020 NEFSC spring survey year was treated as missing Data updated in the 2025 data update: - U.S. Commercial landings and discards through calendar year 2024; - NEFSC spring bottom trawl survey through 2025 in terms of stratified mean indices at length (cm) and in biomass (kg/tow) Additional missing data in the 2025 data update: - NEFSC 2023 spring survey treated as missing due to incomplete survey effort Sources of uncertainty in the 2022 assessment: - In spite of the no possession limit, stock size has not responded to low levels of catch. - Additional assessment uncertainty will occur as only a data update has been provided for the stock in 2025 in lieu of a formal assessment.
Climate and Ecosystem	
Climate Vulnerability	***High climate vulnerability:*** high climate exposure + high biological sensitivity **Negative directional effect** of climate change 13 prey categories of marine invertebrates such as sea stars, brittle stars, sea urchins, snails, mollusks, crabs, scallops, and marine worms
Fish Condition	Ocean pout on average is in good fish condition according to the 2025 SOE reports and based on the most frequent condition over the past three years of data between the mid-Atlantic, Gulf of Maine, and Georges Bank.
Economic and Community Importance	
Commercial Fishery Characterization	Ocean pout is a non-allocated stock and possession is not permitted. There is not a commercial fishery for this stock, and thus there is no commercial groundfish revenue or ex-vessel price data available. ***Total catch of Ocean Pout (GARFO Catch Accounting):*** 44.9 mt in FY2021; 55.5 mt in FY2022; 41.9 mt in FY2023 ***Commerical groundfish fishery catch of Ocean Pout (GARFO Catch Accounting):*** 24.6 mt in FY2021; 32.4 mt in FY2022; 33.7 mt in FY2023
Economic and Community Importance	

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Stock: **Ocean Pout**

Factor	Supporting Information
Commercial Fishery Characterization	A management uncertainty buffer of 7% was applied to the commercial groundfish fishery for ocean pout in FY2025, which is the default for non-allocated stocks.
Recreational Fishery Characterization	Ocean pout is a non-allocated stock and possession is not permitted. There is not a recreational fishery for this stock, and thus there is no recreational fishery trend data available for this stock.
Other Economic/Social Considerations	*No other considerations to present.*
Additional Information	
Reference Points	***FMSY proxy (2022 MTA):*** 0.76
	SSBMSY (2022 MTA): 4.94 kg/tow
	MSY (2022 MTA): 3,754 mt
OFLs	125 mt in FY2025
AMs	If ACL and buffer for an unallocated stock is exceeded, groundfish vessels (common pool & sector) are subject to an area closure/ gear restriction in a future year.
Harvest Control Rule	Option 4 of the GF ABC CR was used to set ACLs in FY2025.
	Commercial groundfish fishery FY2023 ACL utilization: 69%
	State fisheries FY2023 subcomponent utilization: 221%
	Other fisheries FY2023 subcomponent utilization: 21%
ABCs	87 mt in FY2025
Signficant source of catch outside the directed federal fishery?	***Scallop fishery catch of Ocean pout:*** 3.3 mt in FY2021, 4.1 mt in FY2022; 3.3 mt in FY2023
	Summer flounder fishery catch of Ocean pout: 0.4 mt in FY2021, 3.1 mt in FY2022; 0.5 mt in FY2023
	Squid fishery catch of Ocean pout: 13.6 mt in FY2021, 7.0 mt in FY2022; 1.5 mt in FY2023