

2026 Risk Policy Report for Witch flounder

October 01, 2026

Factor	Value	Supporting Information
Assessment and Uncertainty ¹	Assessment Type	The stock has an empirical assessment.
	Assessment Model	Empirical area swept
	Terminal Assessment Year	2023; data update through 2025 for survey indices and catch
	Retrospective Pattern	Not provided
	Retrospective Values	Not provided
	Data Used	NEFSC Spring and Fall Bottom Trawl survey data; Commercial fishery catch data
	Missing Data	2020 NEFSC Spring and Fall Bottom Trawl Survey; 2023 NEFSC Spring Bottom Trawl Survey
	Uncertainty Sources	Uncertainty in catch data due to criminal misreporting case; inability to incorporate age structure data into the current empirical assessment
Biomass ²	Overfished	Overfished status is unknown.
	Overfishing	Overfishing status is unknown for this stock.
	Rebuilding Plan	The stock is in a rebuilding plan.
	Rebuilding Target	2043. But empirical model does not estimate reference points.
	SSB	N/A - empirical model does not provide estimate of SSB
	Relative SSB	N/A - empirical model does not estimate reference points
Recruitment ³	Recruitment is estimated	Recruitment is not estimated.
	Recruitment Model	Not provided
	Initial year of time series	Not provided
	Recruitment estimates	Not provided
	Other Recruitment Information	Consideration of incoming recruitment is critical for catch advice that supports stock rebuilding. Based on the NEFSC surveys, there was no sign of a strong incoming year class in the 2024 assessment.

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Climate Vulnerability ⁴	Climate Vulnerability	High climate vulnerability
	Climate Direction	Negative directional effect of climate change
Fish Condition ⁵	No Of Prey	6
	Prey Information	Polychaeta (65%), Animal remains (19%), Ophiuroidea (7%), Euphausiacea (2.7%), Gammaridea (2.5%), miscellaneous (2.1%)
	Fish Condition	Not provided
Commercial Fishery Characterization ⁶	Commercial Ex-vessel Price per Pound	Not provided
	Commercial Revenue	\$3.34M (2023); \$3.38M (2024); and \$3.23M (2025) – all values in 2025 USD
	Commercial Catch	1,114.7 mt (FY2023); 1,124.6 mt (FY2024); and 944 mt (FY2025; preliminary)
	Commercial Management Uncertainty Buffer	5% management uncertainty buffer
	Commercial Vessels	110 vessels (2023); 109 vessels (2024); and 99 vessels (2025)
	Commercial Dealers	24 dealers (2023); 18 dealers (2024); and 21 dealers (2025)
	Commercial Ports	Top 4 ports in 2023, 2024, and 2025 in alphabetical order: Boston, MA; Gloucester, MA; New Bedford, MA; and Portland, ME
	Other Quota Reliance	Fishery does not rely on quota of another species
	Other Fisheries	Not provided
Recreational Fishery Characterization	Recreational Fishery Management	There is not a recreational sub-ACL for the fishery.
	Recreational Fishery Activity	Not provided
	Recreational Catch	Not provided
	Recreational Trips	Not provided
	Recreational Management Uncertainty Buffer	Not provided
	Recreational Ports	Not provided
Other Socioeconomic Information	Other Socioeconomic Information	Not provided
	FMSY Reference Point	Not provided
	SSB MSY Reference Point	Not provided
	MSY Reference Point	Not provided

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Additional Information ⁷	OFL	unknown
	ABC	1526 mt
	Harvest Control Rules	Using the January 2017 NEFMC PDT/SSC approach for catch advice, application of the mean exploitation rate of 5.4% (based on 9 years, 2007-2015) to the 3-year (2022-2024) moving average of exploitable biomass (28,252 mt) resulted in an estimated catch for 2025 of 1,526 mt which was held constant.
	Accountability Measures	Common Pool: Inseason trimester TAC closure areas for trawl gear. Sectors: pound-for-pound payback of ACE in following year.
	Significant Catch Present	There was significant catch in other fisheries
	Significant Catch Information	State waters fisheries (20.6 mt, 1.7%); Other Federal fisheries (56.8 mt, 4.7%).

¹2024 Management Track assessment; 2026 Data Update; ²2024 Management Track assessment; ³2024 Management Track assessment; ⁴Hare et al, 2016; ⁵Prey Habits Shiny App; ⁶CAMS; ⁷GARFO Fishing Year Final Catch Reports;

Scores and Weights

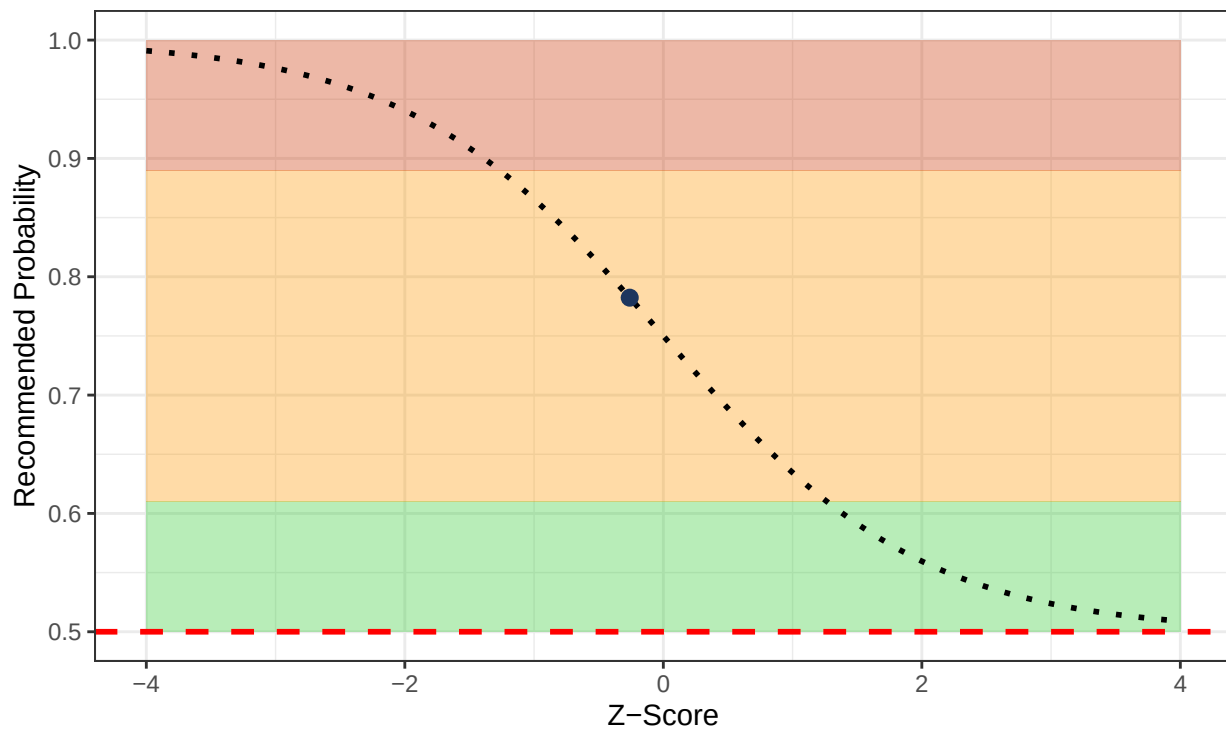
Report Year	Stock	Factor	Score	Average Weight
2026	Witch flounder	Biomass	0	3.44
2026	Witch flounder	Recruitment	0	2.89
2026	Witch flounder	Climate	-4	2.11
2026	Witch flounder	Commercial	2	2.83

The calculated z-score is **-0.26**

The recommended probability is **78.2%**

Recommended Probability

The level of risk that should be considered based on the z-score and recommended probability for Witch flounder is Intermediate Risk Tolerance.



Legend

— MSA 50% probability limit ● Recommended Probability

Tiers

High Risk Tolerance Intermediate Risk Tolerance Low Risk Tolerance