Ecosystem Component Species: Scoring Demonstration

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

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FOR TODAY

- Receive a demonstration of information that will be used for evaluating stocks through the Ecosystem Component screening process
    - The DRAFT Guidance for screening was presented at the June 2026 Council meeting

- Consider recommendation to prioritize Ecosystem Component screening in one or more FMPs, starting in 2027

THE SCREENING PROCESS

- A prioritization tool to evaluate species for potential suitability as an ecosystem component (EC)
  - An analytical exercise that is consistent across all species (managed and unmanaged)
- Functions:
  - Helps PDTs identify stocks to consider for potential designation before initiating an FMP action
  - Supports Committee and Council discussions on work priorities
  - Serves as a starting point for additional work and rationale in FMP action development
- Boundaries:
  - A set of metrics to address each factor to build a high level overview of the stock
  - Does not determine EC status
    - Requires an FMP action to assign designation to a stock

SCORING

- Each question in the screening process is scored based on criteria:
  - Score of 0: supports suitability for an ecosystem component designation
  - Score of 1: does not support suitability for an ecosystem component designation
- A total score across the screening signals the stock's suitability as a potential Ecosystem Component
  - Lower total score: potential suitability, consider an EC action
  - Higher total score: ECS designation likely not appropriate, no further action needed
- All factors must be addressed as part of the screening process
  - No factor in this process disqualifies a species from being further investigated for a potential ecosystem component designation

GENERAL SCORING GUIDANCE

FACTORS		INFORMATION CONSIDERED	SCORE 0	SCORE 1
i	Ecosystem Importance	Qualitative information from PDTs	The stock is important to the marine ecosystem	The stock is not important to the marine ecosystem
iii	Stock status / condition	Trends in the estimated metrics by the most recent stock assessment	Trends across metrics are decreasing and statistically significant	The trend of at least one metric is constant or increasing
vii	Fishery conflicts	Qualitative information from PDTs	There are no competing interests or conflicts.	There are competing interests or conflicts.
x	State of management	Qualitative information from state managers and regulations	There is adequate management of the fishery beyond an FMP.	There is not adequate management of the fishery.

GENERAL SCORING GUIDANCE

FACTORS		INFORMATION CONSIDERED	SCORE 0	SCORE 1
viii, ix	Economic condition of the fishery	Commercial catch and effort data	Trends across metrics are decreasing and statistically significant	The trend of at least one metric is constant or increasing
ii, iv, v, vi	Importance to the fishery		*All must be true*	*At least one must be true*
		Commercial catch and effort data	The stock's metric is less than the median.	The stock's metric is greater than or equal to the median.
		Party/charter catch and effort data	The stock's metric is less than the median.	The stock's metric is greater than or equal to the median.
		MRIP catch and effort data	The stock is not caught, targeted by anglers, or data does not meet MRIP standards.	The stock is caught or targeted by anglers, and data meets MRIP standards.

SCORING DEMONSTRATIONS

- Catch and effort data from fishing year 2016 – 2025 for stocks within the Groundfish FMP
  - CAMS Commercial data as of October 2026
    - Evaluates all stocks within the FMP
  - MRIP data as of October 2026
    - Evaluates stocks within the pilot screening
    - Qualifies annual catch estimates with percent standard error < 50% as acceptable data quality

FACTOR	METRIC
ii*	**The proportion of total fishery catch.**
iv*	**The proportion of total trips that occurred in the fishery.**
v*	**The proportion of total fishery revenue.**
vi	The proportion of total revenue generated at primary ports for the fishery.
viii* & ix	**Directionality and significance across trends in revenue, trips, and permitted vessels at top ports for the stock.**

Examples for today

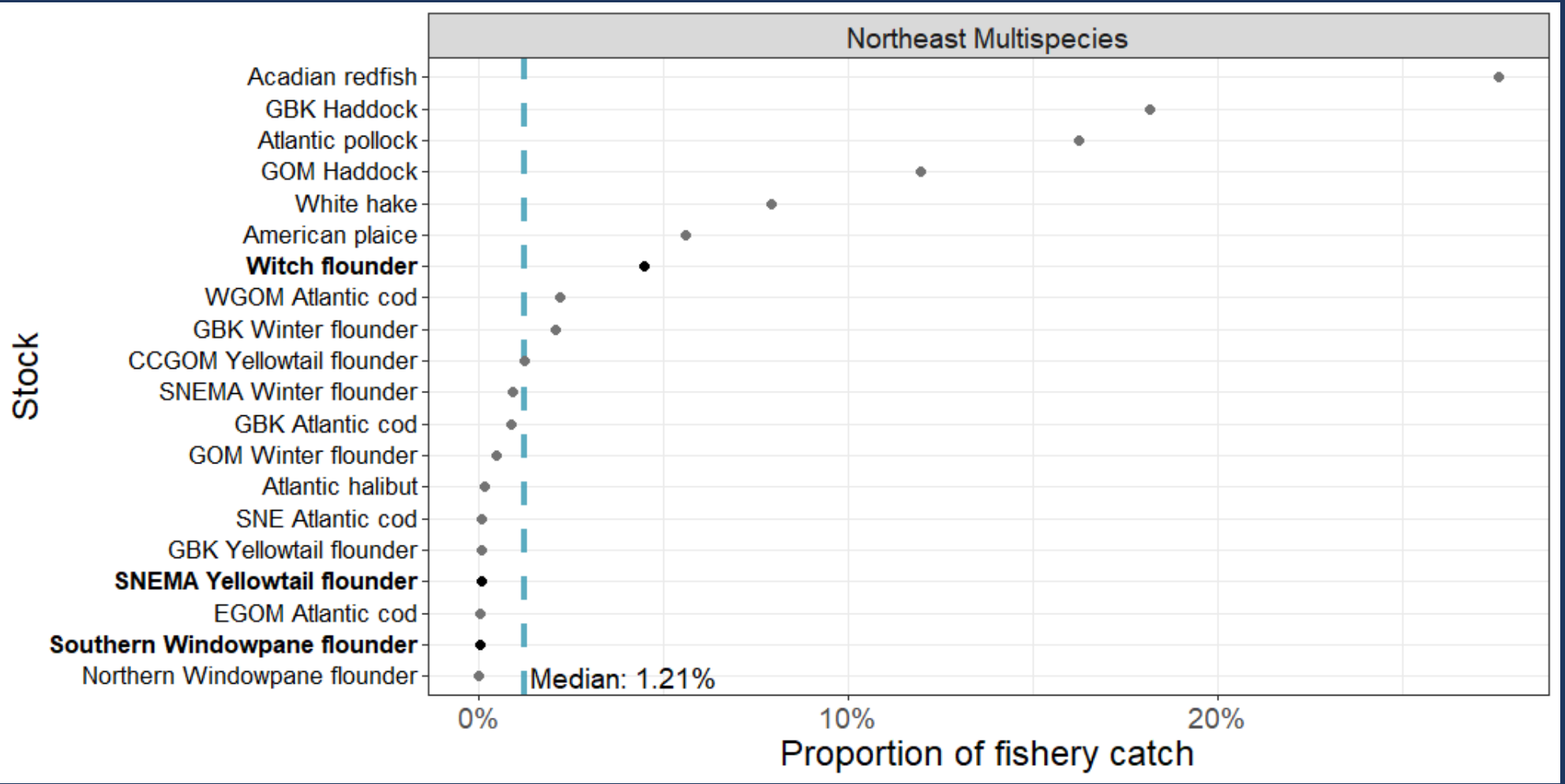
Factor ii: Is the stock caught by the fishery?

- ***Commercial Fishery Metric:*** The proportion of total fishery catch.

$$\frac{Total\ stock\ catch}{Total\ fishery\ catch}$$

- ***Commercial fishery:*** represented by trips assumed as part of the commercial fishery based on activity plan declarations in the Vessel Monitoring System, permits, days-at-sea (DAS), and gear type criteria
- ***Recreational fishery:*** represented by catch and effort reported in MRIP or in Vessel Trip Reports (VTR) for party or charter trips

Factor ii: Stocks are scored based on their proportion relative to the median



***Bold* = Case study stocks**

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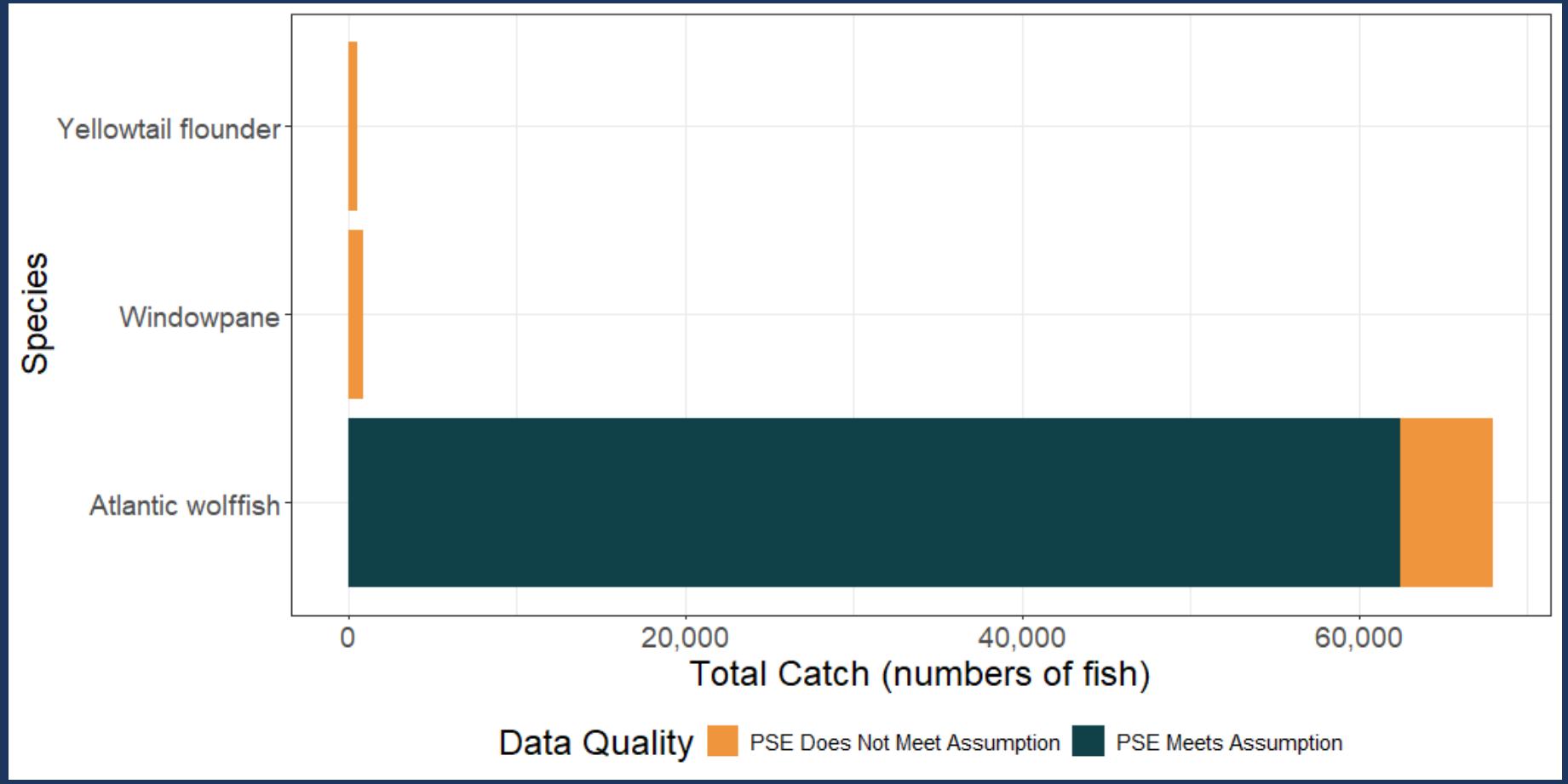
Factor ii: Yellowtail flounder and windowpane flounder would be considered as not caught by the recreational fishery



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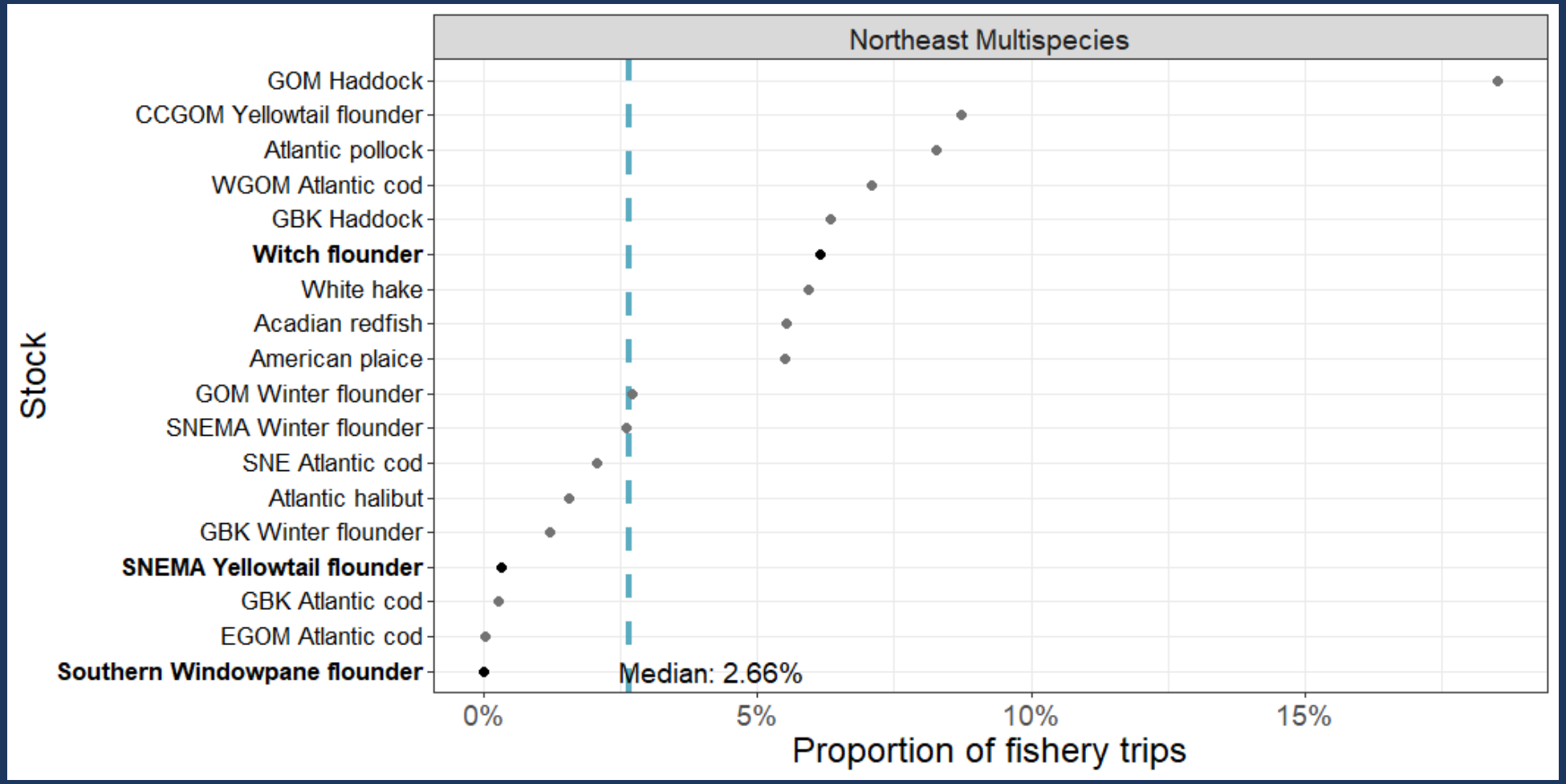
Factor iv: Is the stock a target of the fishery?

- ***Commercial Fishery Metric:*** The proportion of total trips that occurred in the fishery

$$\frac{Number\ of\ trips_{stock}}{Total\ number\ of\ trips_{fishery}}$$

- ***Target stocks:*** stocks that fishers seek to catch for sale or personal use including fish that are discarded for economic or regulatory reasons (50 CFR 600.305(d)(11))
- ***Targeted commercial trip:*** where a stock makes up the largest proportion of total catch on a given trip

Factor iv: Stocks left of the median would receive a score of 0



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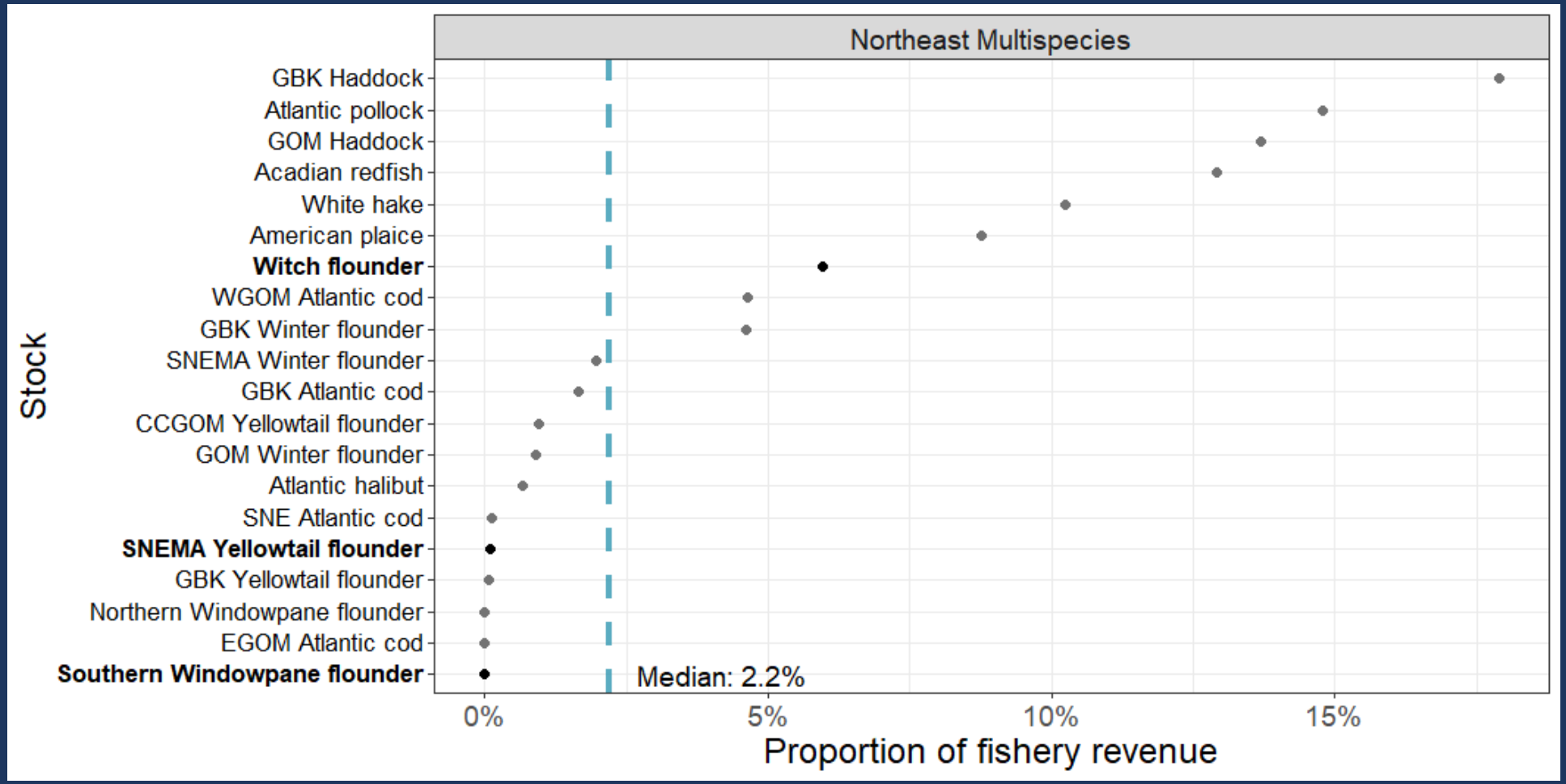
Factor v and vi: Is the stock important?

- ***Commercial Fishery Metric:*** The proportion of total revenue.

$$\frac{Total\ stock\ revenue}{Total\ revenue}$$

  - To users, evaluated at the fishery level (Factor v)
  - To the regional or national economy, evaluated at primary ports (Factor vi)
- ***Primary Ports:*** the 5 most important communities or ports as defined by the FMP in the most recent FMP action.

Factor v: Stocks left of the median would receive a score of 0



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Factor viii and ix: What is the economic condition of the fishery?

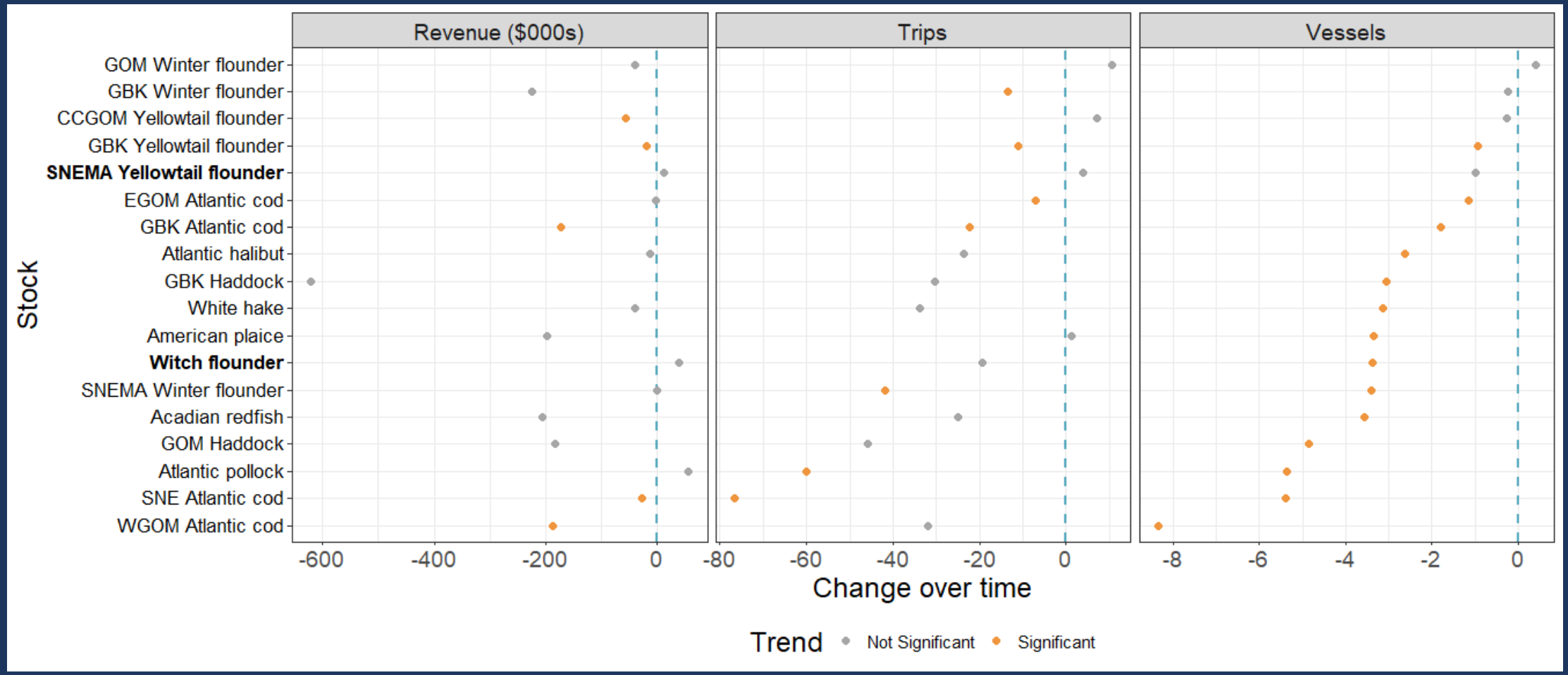
- ***Commercial Fishery Metric:*** The directionality and significance across trends in revenue, trips, and permitted vessels at the top ports for the stock

$$Metric\ Value = Trend * Year + \ Metric\ Value_{year=0}$$

  - For a developed fishery, evaluated only for stocks under existing FMPs (Factor viii)
  - For a developing fishery, evaluated only for stocks not managed by a federal FMP (Factor ix)

- ***Top Ports:*** ports where the stock generated the highest revenue across the time series (i.e., economically important ports *for the stock/species*)
  - May differ from the primary ports (Factor vi; important ports *to the fishery*)

Factor viii: Stocks with statistically significant decreasing trends across metrics would receive a score of 0



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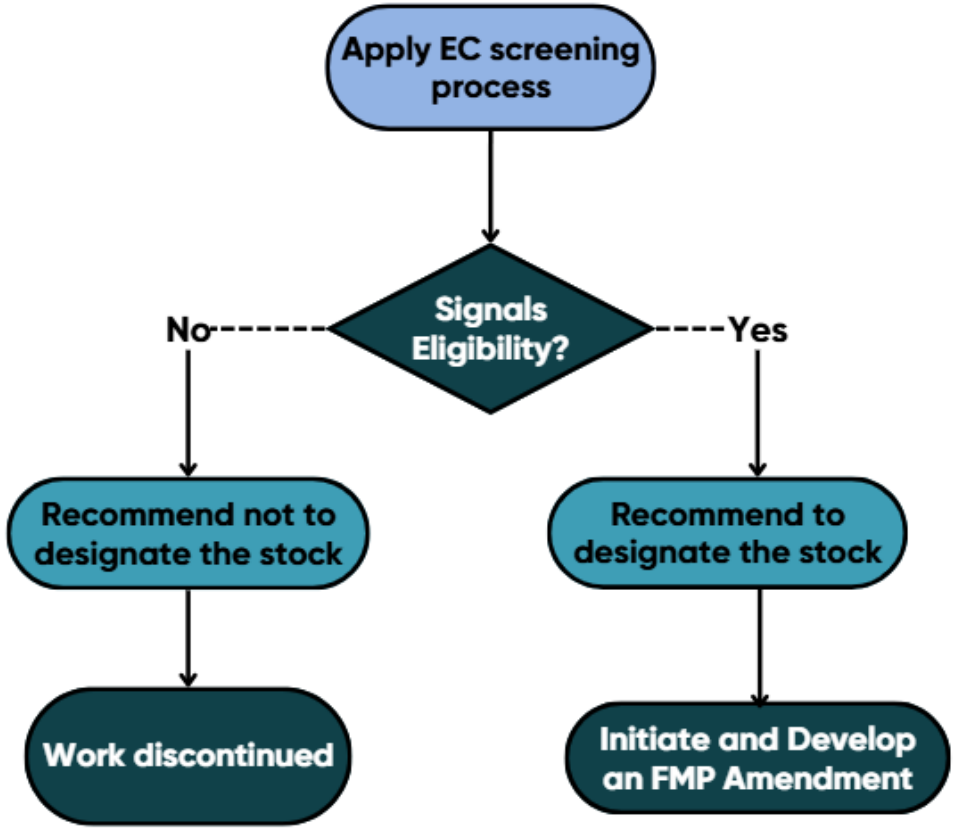
COMPLETING THE SCREENING PROCESS

- PDT (with contractor support)
  - Calculates a total score across factors for the screening
  - Provides technical interpretations and key considerations
  - Recommends stocks that may be considered for designation
- Committee and Council
  - May prioritize an action based on recommendations and NOAA guidance
  - May task PDT with additional analyses to supplement the screening analyses



QUESTIONS?