

New England Fishery Management Council Timelines

August 29, 2025

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Scallops

1. Framework 40 – Fishing Years 2026 specifications, 2027 default specifications

Scope: Update reference points, set specifications for FY 2026 and FY 2027 default specifications.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley

2025	
JUN	Council initiates action
AUG	SSC discusses reference points for developing catch advice
SEP	Council receives update
OCT	SSC recommends OFL/ABC for FY2026-2027
OCT-NOV	Committee and PDT complete documents
DEC	Council takes final action
DEC	Council staff completes decision draft
2026	
JAN-FEB	Council staff completes preliminary submission
FEB	NMFS completes review of preliminary submission
FEB-MAR	NMFS publishes proposed rule
MAR	Council staff completes final submission for NMFS review and approval
APR 1	NMFS publishes final rule, Implementation

2. LAGC IFQ Fishery Program Review

Scope: Determine progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the Scallop LAGC IFQ Program as specified in Amendment 11 and the MSA.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley

2024	
MAY	Initial meeting of work group
JUN	Council receives update
JUL-DEC	Work group meetings, assembling data and beginning analysis
2025	
JAN	Council receives update
APR-MAY	Work group completes analyses
JUN	Council reviews preliminary analyses
JUL-DEC	Work group drafts and finalizes report
2026	
JAN	Council receives final report

3. Development of a Long-Term (3-5 year) Scallop Strategic Plan

Scope: Develop a strategic plan for management of Atlantic sea scallops including consideration of rotational management review, scallop enhancement, and overall fishery objectives.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley

2024	
JUL	Initial meeting of PDT
SEP	Council receives update
DEC	Council receives update
2025	
JAN-MAR	Visioning sessions and development of SWOT analysis
APR	Council reviews input from visioning sessions and provides guidance for the development of a draft Strategic Plan
MAY	Development of draft Strategic Plan
JUN	Council receives update
JUL-AUG	Continue development of draft Strategic Plan
SEP	Council receives update
OCT-NOV	Finalize elements and focus areas of the Strategic Plan
DEC	Council approves Strategic Plan

Groundfish

1. Amendment 25 – Incorporate Cod Stock Units into FMP

Scope: Identify four new stock units for Atlantic cod, consistent with the 2023 Atlantic Cod Research Track Assessment and incorporate the new stock units into the Fishery Management Plan.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2024	
APR	Council defines action
JUN	Council receives update
JUN-SEP	Committee/PDT develop alternatives
SEP	Council takes final action
NOV	Council staff completes preliminary submission
DEC	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval
2025	
MAR	NMFS publishes Notice of Availability
MAY	NOAA decision – action disapproved
JUN	Council changes 2025 priorities to initiate revised action
JUL-AUG	Council staff reformats cod-specific management measures from A25 & FW69
SEP	Council takes final action for resubmission
NOV	Council staff completes preliminary submission
DEC	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval
TBD	NMFS publishes proposed rule

2. Framework 69 – Fishing Years 2025-2027 Specifications/Measures

Scope: Set FY2025-2027 specifications for groundfish stocks; revise accountability measures triggers for GB yellowtail and N. windowpane in the scallop fishery; modify sector reporting requirements

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2024	
JUN	Council initiates action
JUL	SSC OFLs/ABCs for cod stocks and GB yellowtail
SEP	Peer review – Management Track Assessments for groundfish stocks
SEP	Council receives update
OCT	TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary stocks; SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks
DEC	Council takes final action
2025	
JAN	Council staff completes preliminary submission
MAR	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval
TBD	NMFS publishes proposed rule – cod measures removed

3. Framework 72 – Fishing Years 2026-2028 Specifications and Management Measures

Scope: Update status determination criteria (as needed); FY2026-FY2028 specifications for groundfish stocks; measures to address recreational management as part of Phase 1 of cod management transition.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2025	
JUN	Council initiates action
JUL-NOV	Committee/PDT develop draft alternatives
SEP-OCT	TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary management units; Peer review – Management Track Assessments for groundfish stocks
SEP	Council receives update
OCT	SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks
DEC	Council takes final action
2026	
JAN	Council staff completes preliminary submission
MAR	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval
TBD	NMFS publishes proposed rule
MAY	Target implementation

4. Develop Atlantic Cod Management Transition Plan

Scope: Consider options for transitioning cod management based on four new stock units.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2023	
APR	Council provides feedback on work plan
APR-NOV	RAP, GAP, Committee discuss topics at each meeting
JUN/SEP/DEC	Council receives update
2024	
APR	Council decides initial transition plan
MAY	Focused public workshops
SEP	Council receives update
DEC	Council approves transition plan Phase 1
2025	
JAN-MAR	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval for Phase 1 actions
MAY 1	Target implementation for Phase 1 actions*
JAN-DEC	Council planning for work on Phase 2 actions/management measures**

*see Amendment 25 decision – NOAA disapproval and Emergency Action published on May 1, 2025

**see Framework 69 status – NOAA proposed rule with cod measures removed TBD

5. Framework 68 – Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules

Scope: Modify/revise groundfish Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) control rules.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2023	
JUN	Council initiates action
AUG	Facilitated Session and Groundfish Committee input to goals/objectives
SEP	Council discusses goals and objectives, timeline and overlap with Risk Policy
DEC	Council receives update
2024	
JAN-DEC	PDT, Committee tracking Risk Policy development
SEP	Council action on Risk Policy
2025	
JAN-DEC	Develop plan for integration of revised Risk Policy, simulation testing of Risk Policy with Groundfish ABC Control Rules; IRA contracted project
JUN	Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting

6. Develop Amendment 23 Review Metrics and Indicators

Scope: Develop metrics and indicators to be used in the review of A23 monitoring measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

2022	
MAY-OCT	Initial list of potential metrics and indicators
JUN	Council receives update
2023	
JAN	Council receives update
MAR	SSC input on list of potential metrics and indicators
APR	Council receives update
MAY-DEC	Continue developing metrics and indicators, preliminary analyses
2024	
JAN	Council receives update
JAN-DEC	Continue developing metrics and indicators
2025	
JAN-JUN	Continue development of metrics and initiate review
JUN	Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting

7. Redfish Sector Exemption Program Review

Scope: Develop and conduct review of redfish sector exemption program.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: Robin Frede

2025	
MAR-JUN	PDT, Committee develop review
JUN	Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting

Herring

1. Herring Specifications for 2025-2027

Scope: Set specifications for 2025 through 2027, management uncertainty, annual catch limit (ACL), management area sub-ACLs, river herring and shad catch caps.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jamie Cournane / Emily Bodell

2024	
JUN	Council initiates action
JUL	SSC recommends OFLs and ABCs
SEP	Council takes final action*; Tasks review of 2024 catch and updated projections
OCT	Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review
2025	
JAN	Council receives updated projections and requests the SSC reconsider OFLs and ABCs with new information (2024 catch and Research Track products)
MAR	Peer Review of Research Track Stock Assessment
APR	SSC recommends OFLs and ABCs
APR	Council takes final action
MAY	Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval
TBD	NMFS publishes rule
TBD	Target implementation date

* The Council recommended an in-season adjustment to reduce 2025 specifications; approved Dec 2024.

2. Amendment 10

Scope: To address spatial and temporal allocation of herring at the management unit level to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield, and support rebuilding of the resource; and to enhance river herring and shad avoidance and other catch reduction measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jamie Cournane / Emily Bodell

2023	
APR	Council receives update
JUN	Council develops problem statement
SEP	Council initiates action; development of a public scoping document
DEC	Council revises problem statement to include river herring and shad
2024	
JAN	Council approves the public scoping document
MAR-APR	Public scoping comment period including six public scoping meetings
APR	Council receives update
JUN	Council receives summary of public scoping
2025	
JAN	Council receives update
APR	Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting

Monkfish

1. Monkfish Framework 17 – Specifications for FY 2026-2030

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2030 based on a data update from NEFSC.

Note: Monkfish and Skate Council staff are coordinating PDT, AP, and Committee activities for this year's specifications.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: **Jenny Couture (NEFMC - lead) / Jason Didden (MAFMC)**

2025	
FEB-MAR	PDT prepares background information, joint with Skate PDT
MAR	AP and Committee meet, joint with Skate
APR	NEFMC/MAFMC receive update, initiate Framework 17
AUG	PDT prepares ABCs based on NEFSC data update
AUG	SSC recommends ABCs
SEP	NEFMC takes final action
OCT	MAFMC takes final action
NOV	Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review
2026	
JAN-FEB	Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval
APR	NMFS publishes rule
MAY	Target implementation date

Skates

1. Skate Specifications for FY 2026-2030

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2030 based on a data update from NEFSC.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: **Rachel Feeney / Emily Bodell**

2025	
FEB-MAR	PDT prepares background information, joint with Monkfish PDT
MAR	AP and Committee meet, joint with Monkfish
APR	Council receives update
AUG	PDT prepares ABCs based on NEFSC data update
AUG	SSC recommends ABCs
SEP	Council takes final action
OCT-NOV	Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review
2026	
JAN-FEB	Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval
APR	NMFS publishes rule
MAY	Target implementation date

Spiny Dogfish

1. Accountability Measures and Specifications for 2026 and 2027 Framework Adjustment

Scope: Considers modified/relaxed payback AMs; specifications for 2026-2027 based on updated projections.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jason Didden (MAFMC- lead) / Jamie Cournane (NEFMC)

2025	
FEB	MAFMC receives update
MAY	Monitoring Committee recommendations
JUN	MAFMC/NEFMC set range of alternatives
AUG	Monitoring Committee recommendations
AUG	AP meets and Council staff facilitates creation of AP Fishery Performance Report
SEP	MAFMC SSC recommends ABCs for 2026-2027
SEP	Monitoring Committee recommendations
SEP	Committee meets
OCT	MAFMC final action
DEC	NEFMC final action
DEC-JAN	Council staff prepares document for submission to GARFO (SIR)
2026	
JAN	Preliminary submission
JAN-FEB	ASMFC receives summary from Council staff
FEB-MAR	Final submission
MAY	Target Implementation Date

Habitat

1. Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Michelle Bachman / Jenny Couture

2022	
SEP	Council initiates Atlantic salmon framework action
2023	
APR	Council final action
MAY	Council staff preliminary submission
2024	
JAN	NMFS completes review of preliminary submission
JAN	Council staff final submission for review and approval
2025	
TBD	NMFS publishes proposed rule
TBD	NMFS publishes final rule

2. Essential Fish Habitat Designation Framework

Scope: Consider updates to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) designations for 10 species across four FMPs: Atlantic herring, monkfish, Atlantic cod (Northeast Multispecies), and skates complex (barndoor, clearnose, little, rosette, smooth, thorny, and winter skate). Adjustments to habitat management area designations or associated restrictions on fishing are not being considered as part of this action.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Michelle Bachman / Julian Garrison

2025	
FEB-MAY	PDT finalizes species distribution models; drafts revised EFH designations (maps and text); and develops draft alternatives
APR	Council initiates 2025 EFH Designation Framework
MAY-SEP	Review EFH designation alternatives with PDTs, APs and Hab AP, CTE
AUG-SEP	Habitat Committee recommends preferred alternatives
SEP	Council takes final action
OCT	MAFMC receives update
OCT	Preliminary submission
TBD	Final submission
TBD	Implementation of 2025 EFH Designation Framework

On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group

1. Addressing on-demand gear conflict with Council-managed fisheries

Scope: On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group formed to address Terms of Reference (TORs) to identify strategies for reducing gear interactions between on-demand gear and other fisheries and consider interactions resulting from measures adopted for sink gillnet and other trap/pot fisheries.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Emily Bodell/ David McCarron/ Robin Frede

2023	
JAN	Initial Council discussion of working group
APR	Council approves work plan
SEP	Council approves terms of reference
2024	
JAN	Council receives update
JUN	Council receives update
SEP	ODWG drafts gear marking strawman and report on reducing gear conflict
SEP	Council receives report with proposed actions/management measures
2025	
JAN	Council receives update
FEB-APR	ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs
JUN	Council receives update
JUL-SEP	ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs
SEP	Council receives final report on strategies to reduce gear interactions between on-demand and other types of fishing gear

2. Joint Alternative Gear Marking Framework

Scope: In conjunction with MAFMC and GARFO, develop alternative surface marking requirements for all fixed-gear fisheries to allow the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Emily Bodell/ David McCarron/ Robin Frede (NEFMC)
Hayden Dubinczki (MAFMC)
Alli Murphy, Caroline Potter (GARFO - lead)

2024	
DEC	Council prioritizes joint gear marking action with MAFMC and GARFO
2025	
JAN	Council receives update
JAN-APR	FMAT/PDT meets
APR	Council initiates framework; MAFMC Framework meeting 1
APR-JUN	FMAT/PDT meets
JUN	Council receives update
SEPT	NEFMC final action
OCT	MAFMC final action
TBD	NMFS publishes proposed rule
TBD	NMFS publishes final rule

Management Flexibility

1. Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment

Scope: Increase management flexibility through administrative measures across FMPs.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jamie Cournane/Cate O’Keefe (NEFMC - lead)

2025	
APR	Council adds omnibus action to 2025 priorities
JUN	Council initiates action
SEP	Council final action
NOV	Preliminary submission
DEC	Final submission
2026	
TBD	Implementation