

**New England Fishery Management Council**  
**Groundfish Committee Report**  
April Council Meeting – Portland, ME and by Webinar  
April 14-16, 2026

**Meeting Motions**

**Other Business – Stock Assessments:**

**Motion 1:** [Committee Motion]

Related to the Georges Bank haddock 2026 Management Track assessment, the Council requests the NEFSC and the June 2026 Management Track Peer Review Panel specifically consider “review panel comments or SSC concerns from the most recent prior management track assessment” under Management Track Assessment TOR #6 (“Respond to any review panel comments or SSC concerns from the most recent prior research or management track assessment”).

These comments/concerns include the following:

- Decoupling recruits from ages 2+ to generate separate model estimates of yearly correlation for both recruits and age 2+
- Removing the bias correction (lognormal adjustment), which implied using the median instead of the mean recruits in the reference point calculation
- Exploring model-based index approaches that include a diel variable (day vs. night) in the model to account for potential catchability effects and seeing if there is improvement in the model diagnostics once new years are added to the assessment
- Continue the comparative analysis of the 2-year averaging of weight-at-age (WAA) and the Gaussian Markov Random Field (GMRF) model approaches to determine if the GMRF approach may not work well when there is a transition from decreasing WAA to increasing or vice versa.

**Motion 2:** [Committee Motion]

In response to the request for public input for the 2027 assessments, the Council requests the NEFSC and 2027 Management Track Peer Review Panel address the specific comments/concerns raised during the Atlantic cod 2024 Management Track assessments (all four stocks) under Management Track Assessment TOR #6 (“Respond to any review panel comments or SSC concerns from the most recent prior research or management track assessment”).

These comments/concerns include the following:

- Peer Review Panel comments about WHAM model formulations, Plan B backup approaches, and projections derived from the models
- Peer Review Panel concerns with estimates of scale coming out of the models (e.g., three of the four cod stock catches were close to the total SSB in recent years)
- Peer Review Panel requests for estimates of swept area biomass from the NEFSC survey and exploitable biomass for comparison of scale with model outputs
- Peer Review Panel recommendation for results to be shown in numeric tables to visualize differences in past vs. updated model results