

New England Fishery Management Council Timelines

January 14, 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, consider area-based management measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley / Chandler Nelson

2025	
DEC	Council takes final action
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 / Chandler Nelson

2026	
JAN	Council receives final report

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

2025	
APR	Council takes final action
MAY	Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval
JUN	NMFS proposed rule published June 25; public comment period closed July 10
DEC	NMFS final rule

Groundfish

1. 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	
DEC	Council takes final action
2025	
JAN	Council staff completes preliminary submission
MAR	Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval
DEC	NMFS publishes proposed rule – cod measures removed
TBD	NMFS publishes final rule

2. Revised 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

2025	
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

3. Framework 72 – Fishing Years 2026-2030 Specifications and Management Measures

Scope: Update status determination criteria for GB yellowtail flounder; FY2026-FY2030 specifications for groundfish stocks; establish regulatory process for Regional Administrator to adjust recreational measures for cod and haddock.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede / Mark Grant

2025	
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

Monkfish

1. Monkfish Framework 17 – Specifications for FY 2026-2028

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2028 based on a data update from NEFSC.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Jenny Couture (NEFMC - lead) / Jason Didden (MAFMC)

2025	
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

2. Skate Specifications for FY 2026-2028

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2028 based on a data update from NEFSC.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Rachel Feeney / Emily Bodell

2025	
SEP	Council 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

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 Courane (NEFMC)

2025	
OCT	MAFMC final action
DEC	NEFMC final action
2026	
JAN	Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review; ASMFC summary
FEB-MAR	Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval
TBD	NMFS publishes rule
MAY	Target Implementation Date

Habitat

1. Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Michelle Bachman / Jenny Couture

2023	
APR	Council final action
2024	
JAN	Council staff final submission for review and approval
2026	
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	
SEP	Council takes final action
OCT	MAFMC receives update
DEC	Preliminary submission
TBD	Final submission
TBD	Implementation of 2025 EFH Designation Framework

On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group

1. 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)

2025	
SEPT	NEFMC: postpone final action until completion of NOAA Request for Information
OCT	MAFMC: postpone final action until completion of NOAA Request for Information
TBD	NMFS develops and publishes Request for Information
TBD	NEFMC final action
TBD	MAFMC final action

Management Flexibility

1. Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment

Scope: Increase management flexibility across FMPs: changes to specifications frequency, specifications setting process, in-season adjustment authority, and preparation of Council reports/reviews.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: Jamie Cournane / Cate O'Keefe (NEFMC – lead)

2025	
SEP	Council final action
OCT	MAFMC final action on monkfish aspects
NOV	Preliminary submission
DEC	Final submission
2026	
TBD	Implementation

Risk Policy

1. Revisions to Council's Risk Policy

Scope: Beta Phase: refinement of factors, scoring and weighting process, data flows, harvest control rules.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Jonathon Peros

2026	
JAN	Council receives update
FEB-APR	RPWG Meetings and presentation of revised Risk Policy to SSC
APR	Council receives update on Risk Policy Concept
JUN	Council approves Risk Policy; Council weighting of factors (global)
JUL-DEC	Quantitative application of Risk Policy in specification actions (PDTs, SSC).