

# Fisheries of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan

Created: January 6, 2026

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commercial and recreational fisheries are experiencing a declining trend across performance and participation metrics.

## COMMERCIAL FISHERY CHARACTERIZATION

### Fishery trends

Overall declining trend

#### Management uncertainty in the fishery

The default management uncertainty buffer of 5% is applied to allocated stocks in the commercial groundfish fishery, unless otherwise stated in the following risk policy matrices.

#### Commercial fishing communities

The top 5 ports based on the Groundfish-Specific Commercial Engagement Indicator (2004-2023) are Gloucester, MA; New Bedford, MA; Boston, MA; Narragansett, RI; and Portland, ME.

#### Dealer Activity between 2019-2023

The number of registered dealers buying allocated groundfish: **Decreased to 46 dealers**

The number of dealers buying any species on groundfish trips: **Decreased to 79 dealers**

#### Reliance on other species quota

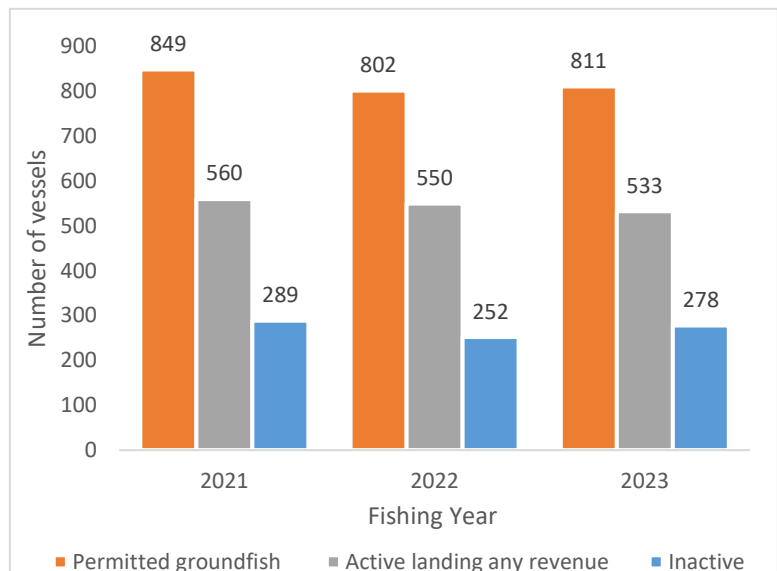
The groundfish fishery on a whole relies on quota within the multispecies complex.

Fishing Year	Total groundfish landings (mil lbs.)	Groundfish revenue (\$ mil)	Average groundfish ex-vessel prices (\$/lb)
2021	36.88	\$ 56.13	\$ 1.38
2022	33.26	\$ 46.14	\$ 1.34
2023	32.53	\$ 41.60	\$ 1.28

Pounds and revenue reflect total landings (landed lbs.) on groundfish trips in millions of pounds and dollars, respectively.

Ex-vessel prices are averaged across all observations of landed fish (dressed and whole).

Source: Human Communities section in Groundfish Framework 69.



Source: Human Communities section in Groundfish Framework 69.

## RECREATIONAL FISHERY CHARACTERIZATION

### Fishery trends

Overall declining trend

#### Management uncertainty in the fishery

The default management uncertainty buffer of 7% is applied to stocks with a recreational component in the groundfish fishery, unless otherwise stated in the following risk policy matrices.

#### Recreational fishing communities

Most of the top communities are in the Mid-Atlantic region, except for Narragansett/Point Judith, RI. Recreational fishermen in these communities are unlikely to rely on Northeast Multispecies.



## **SPECIES IN THIS PACKET**

White hake

## 2025 Risk Policy Matrix for the Groundfish FMP

Stock: **White Hake**

Factor	Supporting Information
<b>Stock Status and Uncertainty</b>	
Biomass Stock Status	The stock is not overfished.
	Overfishing is not occurring.
	<b>Rebuilding target:</b> 2031
	<b>2024 SSB:</b> 14,153 mt (57% of SSBMSY proxy = 25,004 mt)
Recruitment	<b>Recruits (000s) in the most recent three years of the assessment:</b> 577 in 2022; 623 in 2023; and 866 in 2024
	<b>Beginning of recruitment time series:</b> 1963
	Recruitment continues to show weak trends and no strong year classes to drive rebuilding. Thus, there is not a strong stock-recruitment relationship.
	Short term catch projections use a recruitment time series from 1995-2022.
Assessment Type and Uncertainty	ASAP model, analytical assessment
	<b>Terminal year:</b> 2024
	Retrospective pattern in the assessment is minor and no adjustments were made.
	<u>Data used in the 2025 assessment:</u> - U.S. Commercial landings and discards - Foreign and other landings - NEFSC spring and fall bottom trawl survey - ASFMC Shrimp survey - NEFSC spring and fall bottom longline survey
	<u>Missing data in the 2025 assessment:</u> - NEFSC 2020 fall and spring survey treated as missing; 2023 spring survey treated as missing due to daytime samples only - ASFMC 2020 shrimp survey treated as missing - NEFSC 2020 spring survey treated as missing
	<u>Sources of uncertainty in the 2025 assessment:</u> - Catch-at-age (CAA) information is not well characterized due to mis-identification in early years, low sampling of commercial landings, and sparse discard length data. Additionally reliance on age/length keys, requires augmentation for ages 5 and older. Better specification was achieved for 2015-2024 with the inclusion of the bottom longline survey. - Commercial CAA is not available prior to 1989; coupled with low survey catchability at older ages leads to high uncertainty in initial numbers at age. - Potential bias in age composition of landings due to culling of extra-large fish from the large market category. - Reliance on pooled age/length keys may add uncertainty to the representation of temporal and spatial variability in age-length relationships - Observed trends may reflect shifts in distribution due to migration shifts rather than changes in abundance. - Projections are not well determined due to evidence of lack of rebuilding as predicted from previous assessments. - An exploration of internal consistency between biological reference points and projections was conducted and considered in this assessment; however, this issue remains unresolved with further research recommendations.

## 2025 Risk Policy Matrix for the Groundfish FMP

Stock: **White Hake**

Factor	Supporting Information
<b>Climate and Ecosystem</b>	
Climate Vulnerability	<b>Moderate climate vulnerability:</b> high climate exposure + moderate biological sensitivity
	<b>Negative directional effect</b> of climate change
	22 prey categories: species in the gadidae family which could include pollock; silver hake; Atlantic cod; Atlantic mackerel; haddock; atlantic hagfish; Acadian redfish; species in the hake family; Atlantic herring and other fish in the clupeidae family; four beard rockling fish; squid; and 6 families of marine crustaceans.
Fish Condition	White hake was reported to have poor fish condition in the 2025 SOE report and based on the most frequent condition sampled and reported over the past three years in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank.
<b>Economic and Community Importance</b>	
Commercial Fishery Characterization	<b>Commercial Groundfish Revenue for White Hake (2023\$):</b> \$6.2 million in FY2021; \$5.5 million in FY2022; \$4.8 million in FY2023; \$5.3 million 5-year average
	<b>Ex-vessel price/lb for White Hake (2023\$/lb):</b> \$1.98/lb in FY2021; \$1.82/lb in FY2022; \$1.68/lb in FY2023; \$1.72/lb 5-year average
	<b>Total catch of White Hake (GARFO Catch Accounting):</b> 1,941.6 mt in FY2021; 1,850.2 mt in FY2022; 1,765.9 mt in FY2023
	<b>Commercial groundfish fishery catch of White Hake (GARFO Catch Accounting):</b> 1,930.1 mt in FY2021; 1,843.4 mt in FY2022; 1,760.3 mt in FY2023
Recreational Fishery Characterization	There is not a recreational fishery for this stock, and thus there is no recreational fishery trend data available for white hake.
Other Economic/Social Considerations	<b>ACE lease prices modeled using a hedonic price model from inter-sector leases for FY2018-2023:</b> In recent years, inter-sector ACE lease trades for white hake are not associated with prices greater than \$0.80.
	Utilization of white hake is high (over 90% in each of the most recent 3 years) and can be constraining to other groundfish stocks.
<b>Additional Information</b>	
Reference Points	<b>FMSY proxy:</b> 0.176
	<b>SSBMSY:</b> 25,004 mt (19,125 mt - 32,611 mt)
	<b>MSY:</b> 3,818 mt (2,892 mt - 5,021 mt)
OFLs	2,591 in FY2025
AMs	In-season closures and lb-lb for commercial groundfish fishery
Harvest Control Rule	Frebuild of 70% FMSY in FY2025
	<b>Commercial groundfish fishery FY2023 ACL utilization:</b> 96%
ABCs	1,921 mt in FY2025
Significant source of catch outside the directed federal fishery?	<i>No significant catch outside the groundfish fishery.</i>