MEMORANDUM

To: Risk Policy Working Group

From: Stock Assessment Sub-Group

Date: January 21, 2025

Subject: Recommendations on Stock Assessment Factor

Purpose

The group met via webinar on January 13, 2026, to discuss the use of the stock assessment factor and develop recommendations. The discussion focused on developing a recommendation for using the stock assessment factor in the Council's Risk Policy Concept in 2026.

Sub-group:

- Dan Salerno (lead)
- Dr. Jamie Cournane
- Dr. Cate O'Keefe
- Jonathon Peros

Discussion & Key Recommendations

- The sub-group recommends dropping the stock assessment factor (for June 2026), and continuing to develop this factor for future use. ·Originally the RPWG was looking at this factor to differentiate between analytical and empirical assessments while also considering uncertainty from retrospective patterns and missing survey data. The stock assessment factor is still very important and should be considered for longer-term incorporation, particularly with unknows around assessment cycles and data updates.
- The sub-group noted substantial changes to the stock assessment process that have occurred over the last year (advent of data updates), and felt more time is needed to incorporate these changes into the factor.
- The sub-group considered alternative guidance for scoring this factor. See figures below.
- The group recommended revisiting the stability language in the Risk Policy concept to ensure that it is relevant to new changes to the stock assessment process. This should include adjusting the stability definition to include management stability that

allows for incremental changes in specification setting based on assessment trends.

Outstanding Questions and Areas for Follow-Up:

- **Stock assessment products:** Stock assessment outputs and products from the NEFSC are evolving, and data updates may be available more frequently.
    - How should the Risk Policy consider stock assessment data updates? (Both the information and the frequency)
- **The Woods Hole Assessment Model (WHAM):**
    - This model is designed to address retrospective patterns in assessments, and precaution can be built into model runs.
    - The Risk Policy scoring rubric for the Assessment factor includes references to minor and major retrospective patterns. There may be other indicators of uncertainty that could be considered from WHAM assessment, such as confidence intervals around SSB, F, or projections.
    - The WHAM model can also produce projections. The sub-group noted that there have been instances where the model produced non-intuitive out year projections.
    - The sub-group felt that the factor scoring guidelines need to be worked on to account for WHAM.
- **Factor Scoring (Assessment Factor):** When scoring the factor, the sub-group recommends evaluating the factor based on the last completed stock assessment.
- **Near Term Application of Risk Policy:**
    - The Risk Policy should include a "diagnostic" of the most recent assessment to eliminate double-counting of uncertainty – this will determine what factors need to be scored by the PDT.
    - The sub-group felt that trends should be considered when a factor is scored (vs. change between two years in the data set). For this factor, trends in data may be informative. For example, if there is a reference point (already in the SSB/status factor), then there are parts of the assessment that could be looked at individually.
    - Scaling of scores (Overall Risk Policy): The current scoring scale for this factor is from neutral (0) to 4 (lowest score, lowest risk tolerance). The score range for this factor is truncated compared to other factors, where scores range from -4 (most risk tolerant) to 4.
    - The group was supportive of developing a process to continue to revisit Risk Policy factors.

Current Risk Policy Scoring Rubric for Stock Assessment/Uncertainty:

Score	0	1	2	3	4
	Analytical	**Analytical, Minor Retro**	**Analytical, Major Retro**	**Empirical**	**Empirical, Missing Survey Data**
Description	Analytical assessment with no retrospective pattern, **OR** state-space model with limited sources of uncertainty as described in assessment report	Analytical assessment with minor retrospective pattern **OR** state-space model with at least two significant sources of uncertainty as described in assessment report	Analytical assessment with major retrospective pattern **OR** state-space model with at least three significant sources of uncertainty as described in assessment report	Empirical assessment approach	Empirical assessment approach with missing data in one of the three most recent years

Other Ideas for Scoring Rubric (v.1):

Score	0	1	2	3	4
	Analytical, No/Minor Retro	**Emperical with stock status**	**Analytical, Major Retro**	**Emperical without stock status**	**Emperical, Missing Survey Data**
escription	**Analytical assessment with no or minor retrospective pattern**	**Empirical/Index Based Assessment with complete stock status determination**	**Analytical assessemnt with major retrospective patterns that requires rho adjustments**	**Empirical/Index Based Assessment without stock status determination(s)**	**Empirical/Index Based Assessment with missing survey data in one of the three most recent years**

Other Ideas for Scoring Rubric (v.2):

SCORE	0	1	2	3	4	
Description	**Analytical assessment with no or minor retrospective pattern**	**Analytical assessemnt with major retrospective patterns that requires rho adjustments**	**Empirical/Index Based Assessment**		**Empirical/Index Based Assessment with missing survey data in one of the three most recent years**	
OTHER ideas to consider or that have come up related to this factor						
emperical/index assessments with biomass based references points (overfished status avaliable?)						
emperical/index assessments - 1 versus multiple survey indicies						
conflicting trends in catch vs survey biomass						
time since last assessemnt						
assessment vs data update only vs data update with projections						
reliability/accuracy of projections						