

New England Fishery Management Council Management Plans and Committee Structure

The NEFMC has ten fishery management plans (FMPs) they oversee: Atlantic Herring, Atlantic Salmon, Habitat, Monkfish, Northeast Multispecies, Red Crab, Skate, Sea Scallop, Small Mesh Multispecies, and Spiny Dogfish.

In general, each plan has an Oversight Committee, an Advisory Panel (AP), and a Plan Development Team (PDT) (Atlantic Salmon is an exception). There is also one Science and Statistical Committee that provides scientific information to all management plan committees.

See *NEFMC Reference Document #6c* for a graphical depiction of all the committees for each NEFMC management plan, the staff assignments, and a list of names and affiliations for all Council members.

An **Oversight Committee** is established by the Council for each FMP, or group of FMPs, or on the basis of cross-cutting issues (e.g., Habitat Committee), to develop alternatives for actions related to the FMP or issues. The oversight committee provides guidance and direction to the associated PDT to assist in technical development of management alternatives and analyses. The committee also brings forward recommendations for alternatives, and preferred alternatives, to the full Council for consideration and final approval.

Membership The Council Chair will appoint Council members to the oversight committee, and appoint a Chair of that committee. The Council's Executive Director will assign Council staff to support each oversight committee.

Council **Advisory Panels** (APs) that meet the requirements for a fishing industry advisory committee (FIAC) are charged with carrying out the objectives and duties listed below for a specific FMP or management problem. The Council may establish or abolish its APs as necessary.

New England Council APs shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Council. When a Council oversight committee determines that an Advisory Panel will facilitate its work in preparing or amending an FMP or providing assistance in addressing a special issue or problem, the Council will appoint an AP.

Every fall, each oversight committee reviews its existing AP membership and recommends any changes to the Council's Executive Committee. A maximum of 15 individuals may be appointed to any AP.

The Executive Committee provides final approval for membership on all NEFMC APs. The three-year term of advisors begins on October 1 or as soon thereafter as possible. All decisions and recommendations made by an AP are considered to be advisory in nature and are not binding on the Council.

Membership The APs shall be composed of individuals who are either: (1) actively engaged in some aspect of the region's commercial or recreational fisheries; or (2) knowledgeable and interested in the conservation and management of a fishery or group of fisheries that are managed by the Council. Panel membership shall also, to the extent possible, reflect a broad cross-section of interests and expertise from the standpoint of geographical distribution, user group representation, and social and economic diversity that generally may be found within the Council's geographical area of concern.

Other Councils may be invited to name advisors to serve as members of the NEFMC AP if the FMP, amendment, or problem under consideration extends into the management area of the other Council.

Organization A chairman for each AP will be designated by the oversight committee chairman (with the advice of committee members), reviewed by the Executive Committee, and approved by the Council Chairman. The AP Chair is expected to routinely fulfill this responsibility and communicate meeting results to the relevant oversight committee. If an oversight committee determines it is necessary, the AP may also designate a vice chairman who will be selected in the same manner as the AP Chairman.

Advisory panel chairs are encouraged to attend meetings of their respective committees and will be seated at the committee table with other members. On rare occasions, and with the concurrence of the Committee Chair, the Executive Director may authorize the AP Vice Chair to attend committee meetings in place of the AP Chair.

The above text is an excerpt from the Operations Handbook. For more information on APs, refer to the NEFMC Operations Handbook (Pgs. 26-28), Reference Document #5e.

Plan Development Teams provide an expanded pool of expertise for the purpose of conducting data analyses and providing information to the Council. The PDTs also help ensure that Council FMPs, amendments and framework adjustments meet scientific, legal and technical requirements for review and approval. The Council's Executive Director appoints all PDT members based on the criteria listed below in this policy.

The responsibilities of the PDT are as follows:

- To evaluate management proposals with respect to achieving FMP objectives;
- To incorporate SSC recommendations as accepted by the Council into management alternatives;

- To provide guidance and assistance, as appropriate, to the Council staff in the development and preparation of FMP and amendment submission documents; and
- To provide plan monitoring, and scientific and technical expertise to the Council and its committees and, if appropriate, to the Stock Assessment Workshops.

The PDT will provide options to meet FMP objectives, analyses and relevant data for use by the appropriate oversight committee or Council. The individual members of the PDT will carry out their responsibilities to their parent agencies, but as a group, the PDT is responsible to the Council.

Criteria for Membership

The Executive Director, in consultation with the PDT Chair and Deputy Director, shall review the qualifications of each prospective PDT member. At a minimum, the following four criteria shall be evaluated.

1. Knowledge and skills commensurate with PDT tasks.
2. An ability to remain unbiased during PDT deliberations.
3. The capacity to discuss, negotiate and compromise if necessary with other PDT members; in other words, possess an ability to “fit in.”
4. A unique skill set and/or perspective that does not currently exist on the PDT.

Terms of Reference

The oversight committee chairs will provide detailed guidance (terms of reference) to the PDTs. Committees may ask PDTs to evaluate management proposals, develop options to meet FMP objectives, or to provide guidance on a variety of scientific, technical or FMP implementation issues. The terms of reference should clearly identify the management objectives against which management proposals should be evaluated and options developed. The goal is to direct the PDTs to develop and/or analyze a variety of options consistent with FMP objectives.

PDT chairs will attend meetings of the relevant committee to facilitate accurate preparation of written terms of reference, and subsequently will present PDT reports and analyses to the committees or the Council. PDT chairs may designate other PDT members to make special presentations to the committees as appropriate.

In meeting the management objectives specified by the committees, PDTs should consider as broad a range of options as possible. All management alternatives shall be consistent with the advice provided by the Council’s SSC.

The above text is an excerpt from the NEFMC PDT Operating Policy. Refer to the NEFMC Operations Handbook (Pgs. 22-25), Reference Document #5e, for more detailed information on PDT process, meetings, report, and membership composition.

The **Science and Statistical Committee** will assist the Council in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information relevant to the development and amendment of fishery management plans.

The SSC also will provide ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and the sustainability of fishing practices.

Reference Document #6d depicts how these committees function.