CORRESPONDENCE

May 2026

2025 Community Input on the June 2026 Management Track Assessments

In 2025 NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) began an initiative to increase opportunities for science-focused input in the Management Track (MT) Assessment process. The overall goal of this initiative is to improve the science products we deliver to our management partners. Objectives include soliciting community input and on-the-water observations from industry experts that may help during the assessment process, and doing so on a timeline that would allow sufficient time to investigate issues identified prior to modeling and assessment delivery. During planning, we collaborated with our Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) partners to ensure that the process would meet their needs.

This report summarizes how we solicited input during the spring of 2025 for the June 2026 MT Assessments and the input we received. Note that subsequent to soliciting input, the assessment schedule for 2026 was modified by the NRCC at its January 2026 meeting; the stocks now scheduled for peer review in June 2026 are Atlantic herring and Georges Bank haddock. The longfin inshore squid MT will be delivered to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) in October 2026 following peer review of its Research Track Assessment in August. All stocks considered during the 2025 process are included in this report; input received will be considered during the next scheduled MT assessment.

We look forward to evolving and improving the community input process to make it accessible for all participants. Please reach out to NEFSC's Assessment Process Lead (brian.hooper@noaa.gov) with suggestions on how to improve the way we collect or present community input on MT Assessments.

Requesting Input from Community Partners

For the June 2026 MT stocks, we solicited community input via a virtual meeting (see Appendix 1 for agenda) on February 26, 2025 (see Appendix 2 for a list of attendees), as well as through a connected online form (open February 3 – April 30, 2025). Participants were welcome to attend the meeting, submit the form, or a combination of both. We also invited Council staff to provide summaries of feedback received via Council Advisory Panels, Plan Teams, and other Council groups. To help guide discussion and input for all stocks, we developed five general topic areas with sample questions (Appendix 3). The topic areas included:

1. Fishing Dynamics and Management: Changes in fishing techniques, discarding, market patterns, enforcement

2. Stock Distribution: Changes in timing, location, depth, size, movement patterns of fish
3. Stock Biology: Changes in fish condition, size, spawning timing or location, recruitment
4. Ecosystem Interactions: Changes in what fish are eating, predator/prey dynamics, prey availability
5. Other Topics

Additional stock/assessment specific questions were included during presentations by assessment leads at the virtual meeting on February 26, 2025.

Summary of Community Input

The NEFSC is grateful to everyone that contributed their time and knowledge to help inform development of the June 2026 MT assessments. The collaborative input will help our scientists better understand what is happening on the water and improve the science for the assessment. This section summarizes the input we received from the community input meeting, online form, and NEFMC staff.

Where applicable and feasible, we will use this input to help guide development of the MT assessments. While not all observations received can be incorporated directly into assessment modeling due to time and resource constraints, some may contribute to supporting future improvements in MT assessments. Others may be useful for providing context to assessment results, improving understanding of trends in assessment data, refining treatment of assessment data inputs, or identifying research priorities for future assessments.

To follow up from the input received, NEFSC will:

1. Identify in the MT assessment plans any components that were informed by community input
2. Provide a summary of how community input informed the assessment during the MT peer review

Atlantic Herring

Assessment Lead: Jonathan J. Deroba, NEFSC

Background

Atlantic Herring was last assessed in a 2024 MT assessment using the Age Structured Assessment Program (ASAP) model for the years 1965-2023. Results indicated that the stock has had below average recruitment for 11 years. At the time of the February 2025 community input meeting, a Research Track Assessment was ongoing for the stock, which was subsequently completed and peer reviewed in March 2025. In addition to the general community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting:

- What could be causing poor recruitment or reduced production in general?
- Have you observed changes in the timing or direction of migration patterns, especially outside of the EEZ?
- Do you have any possible data sources to indicate early cohort strength?

Input Summary

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- One commenter noted there was almost no midwater trawl landings prior to 1995.
- A Maine lobsterman commented they have had to change bait because the herring is quite expensive due the stock's decline.
- A fisherman said that they have not been fishing for herring due to its low quotas, therefore it was difficult for them to provide us up to date answers to our questions. They noted mackerel is showing back up but that its quota is so low that they have to avoid them while trying to get a herring.
- One commenter saw a large increase in herring seine fishery effort in the area from Seguin to Mohegan, Maine in 2023 and 2024. They noted some areas where herring had been previously, specifically south of Damariscove Island, were completely eliminated.
- Another commenter noted the shrimpers are catching a lot of herring.
- Several fishermen expressed concern via the online form about the lack of access to herring for small boats in Maine.

Stock Distribution

- Several commenters thought migratory patterns were changing. They noted Atlantic herring are coming in later in the year (March-May) and moving a lot shallower. They are not finding herring as much in deeper waters. They attributed the shifting times to increasing water temperatures as they are tracking temperatures more to find the fish. One commenter's hunch was that herring are coming in spring, leaving and then coming back late. Another commenter noted a large influx in November on Georges Bank and that the quota was quickly met.
- A commercial fishing representative commented that the stock has contracted into the GOM.
- A fisherman who fishes throughout the GOM commented there was not real abundance of herring anywhere throughout the 2024 season.
- Commenters observed seeing herring mix with other species. One noted menhaden are coming in thicker (most since the 1980's) between April and September and this is pushing the herring offshore.
- A Department of Fish and Ocean Canada (DFO) employee communicated that their assessment for Southwest Nova Scotia/Bay of Fundy herring is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2026. They are also planning a pilot program for the summer of 2025 to put acoustic tags in some juvenile herring in Passamaquody Bay and utilize a large existing array of acoustic receivers in the Bay of Fundy to get data on movement.

Stock Biology

- A commenter, who conducts sampling work in the Gulf of Maine (GOM), noted a very interesting mix of age and size classes compared to the past when mackerel schooled up based on similar sizes/ages.
- A commercial fishing representative thought something could be occurring between recruitment and the survey.

Ecosystem Interactions

- Several commenters noticed a mixing of mackerel and herring in the last couple of years. They said that years ago the two species would school separately but in the last few years they seem to school together inshore and offshore.
- Commenters have also seen a large increase in mackerel abundance over the past year. Some expressed concerns that an increase in mackerel could hurt herring stocks because mackerel will eat herring roe and juvenile fish.
- One commenter noticed the presence of more predators like black sea bass and false albacore in areas where they had not previously seen them. They also noted that bluefin tuna are coming in closer to shore, and that the gray seal population has gone up significantly.

Other Topics

NEFMC staff reviewed the record of Council-related meetings from December 1, 2023, to January 31, 2025, providing links to key meeting notes and reports as well as highlighting particular input (Table 1). A commercial fishing representative commented that missing from the NEFMC summary was, in the context of food availability and recruitment, the consideration and analysis of surface and bottom temperature trends.

Table 1. *Key NEFMC related meeting notes, reports, and input for Atlantic herring*

Summary of Input	Community Input Topics
Atlantic Herring Research Track Working Group Stakeholder Engagement Session, June 13, 2024 All fishermen and other members of the public with an interest in the Atlantic herring resource were encouraged to participate. There were 41 individuals in attendance in person and online. The Working Group prepared a series of questions for stakeholders to help guide discussion. See meeting summary on this page: https://www.nefmc.org/library/atlantic-herring-stock-assessments	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions
Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, July 30-31, 2024 See meeting summary, “Additional Comments and Research Recommendations”, pp. 3-4 https://www.nefmc.org/library/jul-30-31-2024-ssc-report-re-atlantic-herring	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions

Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel meeting, September 12, 2024 CONSENSUS STATEMENT *The Advisory Panel recommends evaluation of the Canadian catches in the projections and the management uncertainty buffer in the next specification cycle (2027-2029) and the movement of herring from Canadian waters to US waters (e.g., German Bank, Grand Manan, Scots Bay).* See meeting summary, "Other Business", pp. 3-4: https://www.nefmc.org/library/sep-12-2024-herring-advisory-panel-meeting-summary	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution
Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team meeting, November 25, 2024 Dr. Micah Dean provided an overview of an upcoming S-K project on Atlantic herring genomics to inform fishery management. See doc 5A, November 25, 2024, PDT meeting summary, section 2, pp. 3-4: https://www.nefmc.org/calendar/jan-23-2025-herring-joint-committee-and-advisory-panel-webinar	Stock Distribution Stock Biology
Updates to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) The Council plans to update Atlantic herring EFH in 2025. Council motions on January 28, 2025 *That the Council endorses the EFH Technical Review approaches, findings, and recommended Council actions, with implementation of recommended actions in coming years subject to available resources.* *That the Council commence development of EFH designation alternatives for skates, monkfish, herring, and cod during 2025, within ongoing Council actions or via an EFH framework, as appropriate.* See relevant materials from the January 2025 Council meeting, under the Habitat Committee Report: https://www.nefmc.org/library/january-2025-habitat-committee	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions
Council's Research Priorities, 2024-2028 The Council approved its latest list of research priorities in June 2024. The list is available at: https://www.nefmc.org/library/research-priorities-for-2024-2028 Filter for "Atlantic herring" under the "FMP" or "Species" columns	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions

Butterfish

Assessment Lead: Charles Adams, NEFSC

Background

Butterfish was last assessed in a 2024 MT assessment using the Wood Hole Assessment Model (WHAM) model. The assessment included data from 1989 to 2023 and had one fleet with two time blocks (1989-2013 & 2014-2023). Results showed continued interannual variability in spawning stock biomass (SSB) and recruitment. In addition to the general community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting:

- The spring 2022 and 2024 survey indices are the highest in the time series – does this fit with what you're seeing on the water?
- Are there any market patterns driving fishing patterns in recent years?
- Are you seeing changes in the condition or health of butterfish?

Input Summary

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- On the market patterns, a commenter noted that in the 1980's butterfish was a breakfast item in Asian markets and that this is no longer the case as demand has shifted to other foods.

We did not receive further input on other topics or questions for butterfish.

Georges Bank Atlantic Cod

Assessment Lead: Amanda Hart, NEFSC

Background

Georges Bank (GB) Atlantic Cod was last assessed in a 2024 MT assessment using the Wood Hole Assessment Model (WHAM) model. The assessment included data from 1978 to 2023 and one fleet that combined Canadian landings, Canadian discards, U.S. landings, and U.S. discards, as well as 3 survey indices (DFO Spring, NEFSC Spring, and NEFSC Fall). In addition to the general community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting:

- Have you seen any changes in the size of cod caught?
    - We have had persistent port sampling gaps and will be exploring all data available to characterize US catch age composition.
- Are you seeing seasonal changes in the location or size of cod caught on GB?
- Are there concurrent ecosystem changes that you've seen that could be impacting cod?

    - This information will help provide context for changes in age structure and seasonality.
- Have there been any changes to the recreational fishery on GB?
    - Following the recent change to the GB cod assessment footprint, we don't anticipate substantial recreational fishing activities but intend to keep an eye on this.

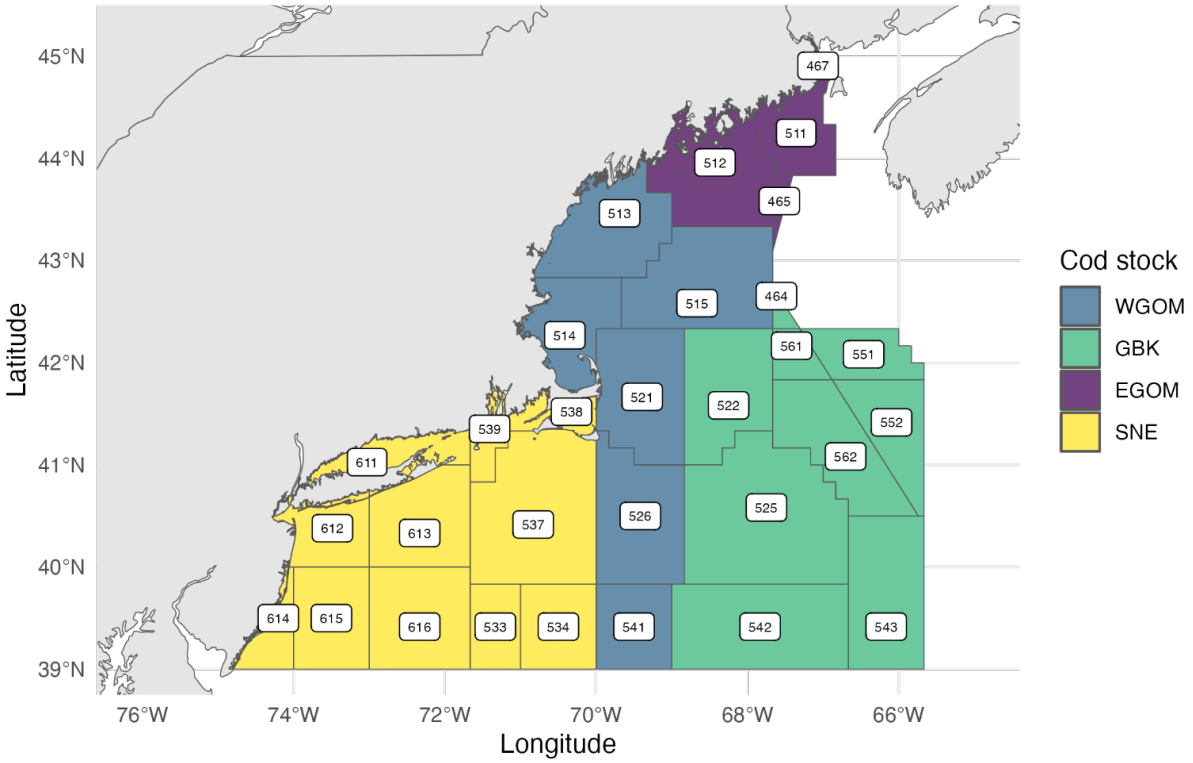

Figure 1. *Map of the four Atlantic cod stock areas with statistical areas. Western Gulf of Maine (WGOM, blue), Georges Bank (GBK, green), Eastern Gulf of Maine (EGOM, purple), Southern New England (SNE, yellow). Please note that the footprint of the biological stock areas differ from the managed GBK and GOM footprints.*

Input Summary

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- A fisherman noted they have observed catches of cod longer than 20 inches in lobster traps. They thought it a reasonable assumption that a significant amount of cod mortality is coming from pot/trap fisheries.
- One participant was concerned that net changes are allowing more large fecund females to be captured.
- A commenter had concerns with the apportionment of cod quota and wanted to know what commercial catch data was used in the assessment. Another commenter questioned if commercial biomass is a reliable source of data because of low quotas.

Stock Distribution

- One commenter expressed concerns about warming oceans and the potential for temperature sensitive species to migrate towards the poles faster than they normally would.
- A fishing industry representative was concerned with the implications of seasonal changes.

Stock Biology

- A commenter asked if we are expecting better ageing data for port sampling data. The assessment lead responded that we do not expect that for 2024.

Other Topics

NEFMC staff reviewed the record of Council-related meetings from December 1, 2023, to January 31, 2025, providing links to key meeting notes and reports as well as highlighting particular input (Table 2).

Table 2. *Key NEFMC related meeting notes, reports, and input for George's Bank Atlantic cod*

Summary of Input	Community Input Topics
Cod Transition Workshops, April 30-May 2, 2024 Opportunities for the public to provide input on the Council's Atlantic cod management transition plan. See workshop summary https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/Atlantic-Cod-Management-Transition-Workshops_FINAL_Report_June2024.pdf	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions
Joint Groundfish Advisory Panel and Recreational Advisory meeting, June 10, 2024 Industry Updates: Advisors shared observations on fishing performance, both from the previous fishing year and considerations for the current fishing year, including Georges Bank cod and haddock. Groundfish Advisory Panel Motion: *In relation to recent fishery performance and quota utilization, the Groundfish Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee to seek a deeper understanding of the factors that continue to constrain the commercial groundfish fleet due to exceedingly low quotas (low stock abundance) as reported by assessments.* • FY 2022 data shows only 6,700 Days at Sea used by the fleet (approximately 10% of A16 baseline period average) • 100% of the sector ACE is available to the fleet through leasing while only a small percentage of the fleet permits are on active vessels. • Availability of ACE for both cod stocks, white hake, GOM haddock and witch flounder constrained the fleet both in quantity and lease cost relative to ex-vessel value. See meeting summary, "Industry Updates", pp. 3-5 https://www.nefmc.org/library/jun-10-2024-recreational-and-groundfish-advisory-panels-meeting-summary	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution
Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, July 30-31, 2024 See meeting summary, "Additional Comments and Research Recommendations", Georges Bank Cod, pp. 3-4 See "Recommendations for possible future revisions to the methods", Apportioning the Biomass of Georges Bank Cod and Haddock into the Eastern Georges Bank Management Area, pp. 7 https://www.nefmc.org/library/jul-30-31-2024-ssc-report-re-gbytf-gb-cod-haddock	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology

Summary of Input	Community Input Topics
Joint Groundfish Advisory Panel and Recreational Advisory meeting, September 9, 2024 Groundfish Advisory Panel Motion: *The GAP recommends the Committee to request the PDT conduct an analysis of the commercial minimum fish size for cod. This could evaluate the current commercial minimum size limit (19 inches) up to 25 inches, in 1-inch increments, and its effects on potential recruitment.* See meeting summary, pp. 7 https://www.nefmc.org/library/sep-9-2024-recreational-and-groundfish-advisory-panels-meeting-summary	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Biology
Groundfish Committee meeting, September 11, 2024 Motion: *Move that the Committee to request the PDT conduct an analysis how potential increases in the minimum fish size for cod in the commercial fishery may impact stock status, including recruitment indices, probability of stock rebuilding, and magnitude of regulatory discards. Minimum fish size increases should be analyzed on one inch increments from the current minimum size of 19 inches up to 25 inches.* See meeting summary, pp. 14 https://www.nefmc.org/library/sep-11-2024-groundfish-committee-meeting-summary	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Biology
Updates to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) The Council plans to update Atlantic cod EFH in 2025. Council motions on January 28, 2025 *That the Council endorses the EFH Technical Review approaches, findings, and recommended Council actions, with implementation of recommended actions in coming years subject to available resources.* *That the Council commence development of EFH designation alternatives for skates, monkfish, herring, and cod during 2025, within ongoing Council actions or via an EFH framework, as appropriate.* See relevant materials from the January 2025 Council meeting, under the Habitat Committee Report: https://www.nefmc.org/library/january-2025-habitat-committee	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions
Council's Research Priorities, 2024-2028 The Council approved its latest list of research priorities in June 2024. The list is available at: https://www.nefmc.org/library/research-priorities-for-2024-2028 Filter for "Northeast Multispecies" under the "FMP" column	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions

Georges Bank Haddock

Assessment Lead: Liz Brooks, NEFSC

Background

GB Haddock was last assessed in a 2024 MT assessment using the WHAM model. The assessment included data from 1931 to 2023 and used one fleet with two time blocks; a fixed selectivity (1931-1962) and a time varying selectivity (1963-2023) that shows changes in selectivity that align with changes in size. The assessment indicates several' boomer' year classes (2003, 2010, 2013) for the stock, and also shows that the most recent 'boomer' year class in 2013 no longer has a large influence on current population abundance. The 2020 and 2021 classes were projected to account for a large proportion of 2024-2025 catch. In addition to the general community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting.

- As boomer year classes have aged out, are you seeing improved growth?
- Are the bulk of your landings from those 2020/2021 year classes?
- Any indication of strong year classes behind them (in discards)?
- Any fish distribution shifts?
- Any fishery distribution shifts?

Input Summary

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- A commenter wondered if the price of other fish caught as bycatch are affecting catch of haddock and cod, and if fishermen are having to buy fish from other sector members to allow catch of these other fish.
- NEFMC staff highlighted having specifications in time for May 1 allowed more targeting of haddock. They also noted that market instability is driving catches across the GOM and GB.
- Another commenter noted that regulations not being implemented on time can lead to scarcity of fish when it shouldn't happen and this can influence leasing prices and catch. They thought we should consider catch in relation to how the fishery is operating. They noted leasing has had low costs recently, but it may increase dramatically as low quota kicks in.

Stock Distribution

- NEFMC staff described that early in the year GB saw a smaller run of haddock than normal but saw haddock longer over time and in the eastern portion of stock.
- A fisherman described still seeing landings in statistical areas 521 and 522, with about 90 percent of GB haddock coming from there in 2024 and 2025.
- A commenter described their experience of otter trawling about 30 years ago during winter. They saw large amounts of 3-4 inch baby haddock from Georges Bank to Hudson Canyon one year but they vanished by the next year.

- A commenter noted fish distribution continues to be all west. They expressed concerns with not sampling trips that fish in both stock areas, apportionment methods, and a reliance on the bottom trawl for distribution information.

Stock Biology

- A fisherman stated that anecdotally the ratio of large to small haddock has increased over time, noting they had almost no smalls on some trips. They suggested looking at the distribution of landings by market class. The assessment lead noted the snapper market category picked up in 2016 to account for the boomer 2013 year class.
- A commenter described the 2020 and 2021 year classes as good but not boomer. They noted industry has seen the strong 2019 to 2021 year classes entering landings. The assessment lead noted the last assessment showed the 2013 year class was an order of magnitude greater than the 2020 year class. The assessment lead described the 2020 and 2021 year classes as slightly above average, but that previous year classes were well below average, giving the appearance of big year classes recently.

Other Topics

NEFMC staff reviewed the record of Council-related meetings from December 1, 2023, to January 31, 2025, providing links to key meeting notes and reports as well as highlighting particular input (Table 3).

Table 3. *Key NEFMC related meeting notes, reports, and input for Georges Bank Haddock*

Summary of Input	Community Input Topics
Joint Groundfish Advisory Panel and Recreational Advisory meeting, June 10, 2024 Industry Updates: Advisors shared observations on fishing performance, both from the previous fishing year and considerations for the current fishing year, including Georges Bank cod and haddock. Groundfish Advisory Panel Motion: *In relation to recent fishery performance and quota utilization, the Groundfish Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee to seek a deeper understanding of the factors that continue to constrain the commercial groundfish fleet due to exceedingly low quotas (low stock abundance) as reported by assessments.* • FY 2022 data shows only 6,700 Days at Sea used by the fleet (approximately 10% of A16 baseline period average) • 100% of the sector ACE is available to the fleet through leasing while only a small percentage of the fleet permits are on active vessels. • Availability of ACE for both cod stocks, white hake, GOM haddock and witch flounder constrained the fleet both in quantity and lease cost relative to ex-vessel value. See meeting summary, "Industry Updates", pp. 3-5 https://www.nefmc.org/library/jun-10-2024-recreational-and-groundfish-advisory-panels-meeting-summary	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution
Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, July 30-31, 2024 See "Recommendations for possible future revisions to the methods", Apportioning the Biomass of Georges Bank Cod and Haddock into the Eastern Georges Bank Management Area, pp. 7 https://www.nefmc.org/library/jul-30-31-2024-ssc-report-re-gbytf-gb-cod-haddock	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology
Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, October 21, 2024 See meeting summary, "Additional Comments and Research Recommendations", Georges Bank Haddock, pp. 5-6 https://www.nefmc.org/library/oct-9-and-21-2024-ssc-report-re-groundfish	Stock Distribution Stock Biology
Council's Research Priorities, 2024-2028 The Council approved its latest list of research priorities in June 2024. The list is available at: https://www.nefmc.org/library/research-priorities-for-2024-2028 Filter for "Northeast Multispecies" under the "FMP" column	Fishing Dynamics and Management Stock Distribution Stock Biology Ecosystem Interactions

Longfin Inshore Squid

Assessment Lead: Jessica Blaylock, NEFSC

Background

Longfin inshore squid was last assessed in a 2023 MT assessment using data-limited methods. A Research Track (RT) Assessment for the stock is scheduled for peer review in 2026; results of the RT will inform the next MT scheduled in 2026. Work for the RT includes life history investigations, development of new assessment models, and extensive collaboration with the squid industry (e.g., summit, fishery-dependent data). In addition to the general community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting.

- What large scale movement/migration patterns do you see?
    - Evidence of north-south migration? If so, when and where?
    - When and where do you see small squid in the late winter/early spring?
- Are there seasonal patterns in fishing behavior (e.g., locations fished, net configuration, etc.) that affect the sizes of squid that are caught?

Input Summary

Stock Distribution

- A researcher noticed that last summer the squid came in early then just disappeared in September. They noted they usually see squid south of Long Island. The assessment lead confirmed the “squid squad” was watching this last summer and saw the same thing.

Stock Biology

- A commenter observed that the squid abundance where they fish has gone down in the last 10 years, but recognized that might not adequately represent the overall picture.

Ecosystem Interactions

- A commenter noted squid is forage for most of New England's inshore species such as bluefish, striped bass, fluke, black sea bass, and tuna.

Ocean Quahog

Assessment Lead: Daniel Hennen, NEFSC

Background

Ocean quahog was last assessed in a 2020 MT assessment using a length-based Stock Synthesis model. The assessment included two areas, Georges Bank and everything else. Discards in the assessment were assumed to be essentially zero. For the 2026 MT, the assessment lead is interested in exploring discards and ages. In addition to the general

community input topics, the assessment lead posed the following discussion questions during the input meeting:

- How common is discarding at sea?
- What has changed in the fishery since 2020?
- What important information is not in the data available to the assessment?

Input Summary

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- A fishing industry representative commented that efforts to reduce discards are underway. The work was funded in the fall and work should start in 2025, likely under an exempted fishery permit.

Stock Distribution

- A fishing industry representative commented that landings patterns shifting more towards New England has been cited as climate change evidence, but that is not the case. They said landings in the Mid-Atlantic have come back recently. They noted the shift in landings were operational decisions and not based on the scarcity of quahogs in some regions.

Appendix 1 - Agenda

Management Track Community Input Meeting

For June 2026 Management Track Assessments

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

To join the meeting: meet.google.com/jkh-mjbj-ppc
Phone: (US) +1 862-243-5239; PIN: 933 800 690#

Time	**Subject**	**Presenter**
9:00 a.m.	Welcome/Logistics Background Information	Brian Hooper Kristan Blackhart
9:15 a.m.	Atlantic Herring Assessment Overview	Jon Deroba
9:25 a.m.	Atlantic Herring Assessment Input	**Public**
9:45 a.m.	Butterfish Assessment Overview	Chuck Adams
9:55 a.m.	Butterfish Assessment Input	**Public**
10:15 a.m.	Georges Bank Atlantic Cod Assessment Overview	Amanda Hart
10:25 a.m.	Georges Bank Atlantic Cod Assessment Input	**Public**
10:45 a.m.	**Break**	
11:00 a.m.	Georges Bank Haddock Assessment Overview	Liz Brooks
11:10 a.m.	Georges Bank Haddock Assessment Input	**Public**
11:30 a.m.	Longfin Inshore Squid (*Loligo*) Assessment Overview	Jessica Blaylock
11:40 a.m.	Longfin Inshore Squid (*Loligo*) Assessment Input	**Public**
12:00 p.m.	Ocean Quahog Assessment Overview	Dan Hennen
12:10 p.m.	Ocean Quahog Assessment Input	**Public**
12:30 p.m.	Wrap Up and Adjourn	Kristan Blackhart

Appendix 2 - Attendance

Management Track Community Input Meeting
For June 2026 Management Track Assessments

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Industry Representatives

Paul Axelsson, Commercial Fishermen, New Jersey
Tim Barrett, Commercial Fisherman, Massachusetts
Rick Bellavance, Priority Charters
John Paul Bilodeau, New England Fish Company
Cassie Canastra, Canastra Fishing Company
Patrick Chadbourne, CBS Lobster
Jessica Daniels, New England Fish Company
Dustin Delano, Commercial Fisherman, Maine
Greg DiDomenico, Lund's Fisheries
Ben Durkee, Bring It Bait
Aubrey Ellertson, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance
James Fletcher, United National Fishermen's Association
Sam Fuller, Commercial Fisherman, Massachusetts
Vito Giacalone, Commercial fisherman, Massachusetts
Tony Hooper, Commercial Fisherman, Maine
Kimberly Matthews, F/V Ocean Venture, Maine
Jerry Morgan, Recreational Fisherman, Connecticut
Emily Morse, Cribstone Guide and Charters
Joseph Myers, SeaWatch International
Jacqueline O'Dell, Northeast Seafood Coalition
Gerry O'Neill, Cape Seafoods Inc
Nicholas O'Toole, Commercial fisherman, Massachusetts
Michael Pierdinock, Steelwater Bank Waterman's Association
Suzannah Raber, New England Fish Company
Jeffrey Stevens, Commercial Fisherman
Mary Beth Tooely, O'Hara Corporation

Academics

Ryan Adams, University of New Hampshire
Steve Cadrin, University of Massachusetts
Tara McClintock, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Angelia Miller, University of Massachusetts
Hailee Nigro, University of Southern Mississippi
Eric Powell, Rutgers
Molly Spencer, University of Southern Mississippi

NGO/Non-profits

Elizabeth Etrie, Conservation Law Foundation

Geoff Klein, Wildlife Conservation Society
Gareth Lawson, Conservation Law Foundation
Bill Lucey, Save the Sound
Zane Ruzicka, Wild Oceans
Matthew Seeley, Environmental Defense Fund

State Government Employees

Chris Batsavage, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Addie Binstock, Maine Department of Marine Resources
Matt Cieri, Maine Department of Marine Resources
Tara Dolan, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
Corrin Flora, Maine Department of Marine Resources
Kevin Job, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Cheri Patterson, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
Sefatia Romeo Theken, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game
Melissa Smith, Maine Department of Maine Resources
Kelly Whitmore, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Other Government Employees

Irene Andrushchenko, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Melanie Barrett, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Andrew Jacobs, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Council Staff

Jessica Coakley, MAFMC
Jose Montanez, MAFMC

Emily Bodell, NEFMC
Jamie Cournane, NEFMC
Alexander Dunn, NEFMC
Cate O'Keefe, NEFMC

NOAA Fisheries Staff

Charles Adams, NEFSC
Larry Alade, NEFSC
Kristan Blackhart, NEFSC
Jessica Blaylock, NEFSC
Liz Brooks, NEFSC
Russell Brown, NEFSC
Jonathan Deroba, NEFSC
Teri Frady, NEFSC
Giovanni Gianesin, NEFSC
Alex Hansell, NEFSC
Amanda Hart, NEFSC
Daniel Hennen, NEFSC
Brian Hooper, NEFSC
Chris Legault, NEFSC

Chengxue li , NEFSC
Dave McElroy, NEFSC
Anna Mercer, NEFSC
Charles Perretti, NEFSC
Michael Simpkins, NEFSC
Michele Traver, NEFSC

Andy Ostrowski, Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Alexander Jensen, Southwest Fisheries Science Center

Ashley Asci, GARFO
Benjamin Galuardi, GARFO
Emily Gilbert, GARFO
Jerome Hermsen, GARFO
Laurie McKenna, GARFO
Heather Nelson, GARFO
Carrie Nordeen, GARFO
Douglas Potts, GARFO
Liz Sullivan, GARFO
Spencer Talmage, GARFO
Samantha Tolken, GARFO
Ashley Trudeau, GARFO

Appendix 3 - Management Track Assessment Community Input Topics

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center seeks on-the-water observations about changes in fisheries that may affect the upcoming management track assessments. Input on the five topic areas below may help guide development of the assessment and improve our scientists' understanding of what is happening on the water.

Fishing Dynamics and Management

- Have there been changes in effort and/or fishing techniques used to target the stock?
- Do you think discards are under- or over-estimated? If so, why?
- Are there any market patterns driving fishing patterns in recent years?
- Is enforcement of fishing regulations effective? If not, why?

Stock Distribution

- Have there been recent changes in the timing that you're seeing fish in usual locations?
- Have there been recent changes in the locations that you're seeing fish?
- Have you noticed any changes in movement or migration patterns for the stock?
- Have you seen larger or smaller fish in areas that is not typical?
- Have there been recent changes in the depths that you're seeing fish?

Stock Biology

- Are you seeing changes in the condition or health of fish?
- Are you seeing fish that are larger or smaller than typical?
- Are there changes to the timing and location of spawning compared to what you're used to seeing?
- Are you seeing any notable patterns in recruitment?

Ecosystem Interactions

- Are you seeing 'fatter' or 'skinnier' fish more than usual?
- Have you noticed any changes in what fish are eating?
- Are you noticing other changes that indicate shifts in predator/prey dynamics for the stock?

Other Topics

- Do you have other information that might be helpful to the Management Track Assessment?
- Do you know of a data source that could help resolve known uncertainties in the assessment?
- Does the trend in population size from the most recent assessment match your perception of the stock? If not, why do you think that might be so?

From: Brian Hooper - NOAA Federal <brian.hooper@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2026 12:48 PM
Subject: September 2026 Management Track Assessment Plans

Greetings AWG and assessment partners,
NEFSC's assessment plans for September 2026 Management Track stocks (American Plaice and Gulf of Maine Haddock) are now available on our website at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/management-track-assessment-plans.

Our intent with these documents is to provide brief summaries of planned changes for each scheduled Management Track assessment around the same timeline that information has traditionally been provided via the Assessment Oversight Panel. We recognize that assessment plans can change during implementation, and peer reviews can also alter the final model configuration and assessment results. We'll do our best to communicate any significant changes to our partners.

Best,
Brian

Brian Hooper
Assessment Process Lead
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA Fisheries | U.S. Department of Commerce
(508) 258-9580