

September 12, 2025

Executive Order 14276: Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness**Input from the Council's Plan Development Teams**

NOAA Fisheries tasked the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) with providing recommendations on how it will meet Executive Order (EO) 14276, *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness* to “reduce regulatory burdens” and “increase production in domestic fisheries.”

The Council requested input from all its Plan Development Teams (PDTs) that address one or more of the EO's stated goals: reduce burdens on domestic fishing; increase production; stabilize markets; improve access; enhance economic profitability; or prevent closures.

In response, the following summary highlights input received from the PDTs (Groundfish, Scallops, Monkfish, Herring, Habitat, Skates, and Whiting) by fishery management plan (FMP), that is in addition to ongoing actions and projects of the Council. This list is not exhaustive but meant to be representative of the discussions by each PDT. It does not represent consensus recommendations by each PDT. Additionally, Council staff collaborated with GARFO staff to discuss if PDT ideas could meet the goals of EO 14276.

- **Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish)**

- Revise the sector program to reduce burden to industry and improve access in the Northeast Multispecies Fishery. Remove program regulations that are no longer deemed necessary or effective, and revise those which can be streamlined.
- Reconsider the appropriateness of the 300lb combined trip limit for small vessel category for cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder.
- Allow possession of lobster gear in addition to hook gear, if a valid lobster permit is held.
- Consider alternative management for non-target stocks in the FMP, including evaluation of the potential use of Ecosystem Component management for candidate stocks.
- Remove programs and regulations that serve no purpose or are out of date. Initial limited access permit regulations are no longer relevant because the period in which initial limited access permit applications were being accepted has long passed. The Flexible Area Action System is very complex, has never been used, and the utility of the system is unclear. It is unlikely that this system will ever be used.

- **Atlantic Sea Scallops**

- Allow the Council to define management areas that could open or close based on a pre-defined trigger.
- Remove the requirement for federally-permitted commercial fishing vessels that are tied up and in port to have their VMS units powered-on and transmitting.
- Ensure consistency between Groundfish and Scallop regulations by removing language within the Scallop regulations pertaining to possession limits and prohibitions of Groundfish species for Limited Access scallop vessels issued a valid NE multispecies permit fishing within a Scallop Access Area.
 - Examples of possession limits include 1,000 lb of all NE Multispecies combined, 100 lb of Atlantic cod for personal consumption, a prohibition on possession or landing haddock from January 1 through June 30, and a prohibition on yellowtail flounder.

- **Monkfish**

- Evaluate joint monkfish and skate management as part of one fishery management plan.
- Eliminate or simplify the requirement for limited access monkfish Category C, D, F, G, and H permitted vessels to use Northeast Multispecies/Scallop DAS concurrently with Monkfish DAS.
- Remove or revise requirements for the Offshore fishery program (permit F). Revisions could include increasing trip limits, changes to prorated DAS allocations, removal of the restriction that monkfish may only be landed from the program area while on a monkfish DAS, etc. Removal of requirements could include converting the Offshore Fishery Program from a specific permit type to a more accessible gear area.

- **Atlantic Herring**

- Revise the specifications formula, including removing items and updating sub-ACL percentages, based on the latest science and fishery information.
- Revise the harvest control rule with respect to when the fishery would remain open.
- Consider modifying river herring/shad measures and removing haddock measures. Consider removing river herring and shad monitoring/avoidance areas – which have not been used in management.
- Consider revising midwater trawl and purse seine exempted fishery regulations, consulting with Groundfish.

- Consider removing slippage and consequence requirements and evaluate if these regulations are unnecessary / redundant.
- **Habitat/EFH**
 - No suggested revisions (i.e., neutral / not commenting).
- **Northeast Skate Complex**
 - Develop a performance trigger to increase skate possession limits in-season when quota use is low to increase utilization.
 - Consider if the timing of the skate wing seasons should be adjusted.
 - Consider reducing the minimum number of days that a bait Letter of Authorization is required to be held.
- **Small-Mesh Multispecies (Whiting)**
 - Evaluate and consider modifying the small-mesh exemption areas seasons and boundaries.
 - Evaluate and consider revising and standardize incidental species limits.
 - Consider removing Letter of Authorization requirements for exemption areas.
 - Evaluate and consider removing accountability measures for red hake.