# Framework to Narrow Scope of NMFS Management and Science

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# NOAA Risk/Value Matrix Process – (NMFS 1/20/26)

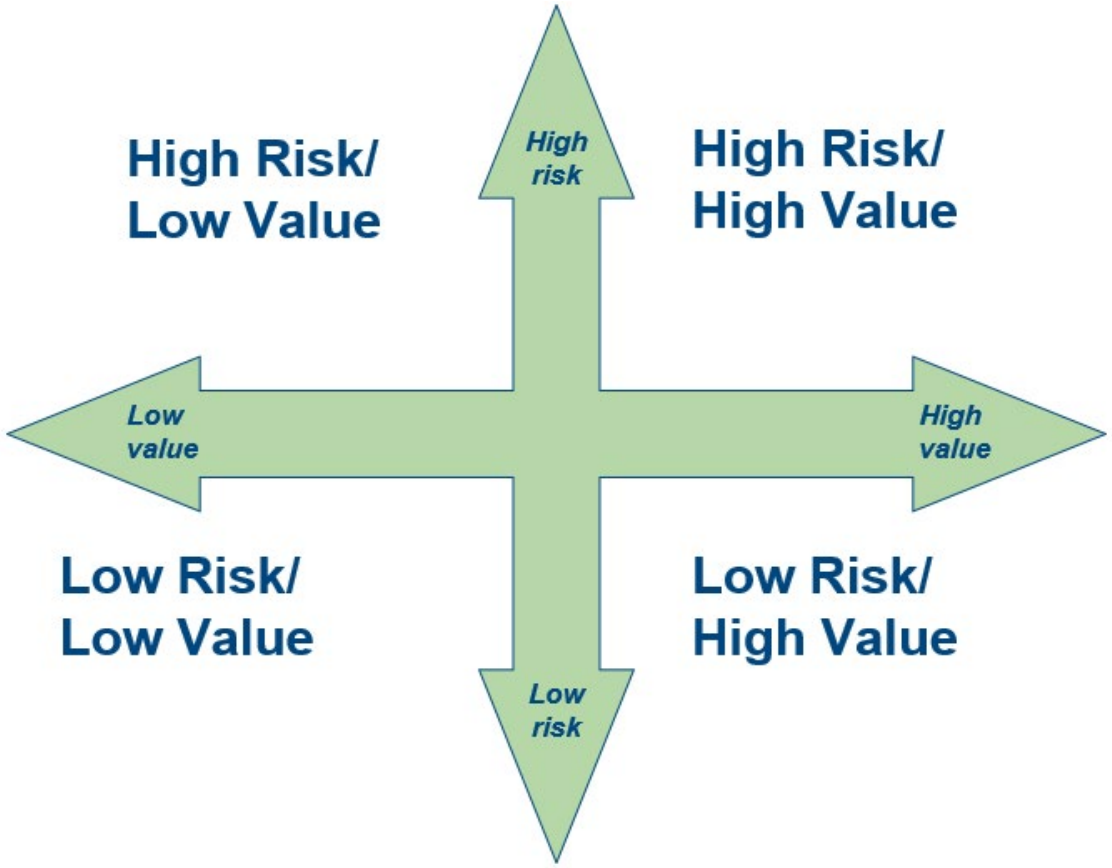
Goal:

- Provide framework for narrowing the scope of NMFS management and science

Baseline Assumptions:

- NMFS cannot continue to manage the 500+ stocks/complexes currently in FMPs
- There will be impacts to changing how NMFS manages fisheries
  - NOAA staff, Councils, fishing industry, and communities
- Balance national consistency and interoperability with regional flexibility while maintaining accountability
- Creation and application of regional Risk/Value matrices must be co-developed with Science Center, Regional Office, and Councils
  - Scientists involved with management changes; Managers involved with science changes

# NOAA Risk/Value Matrix process




## Value Categories

- Commercial
- Recreational
- Social

## Risk Categories

- Relative stock status – B/B target
- Susceptibility to environmental phenomenon
  - Climate Vulnerability Analysis (CVA)
  - Probability & Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)
- Proven impact on ecosystem
- Effectiveness of management
  - Considered at end of process

# NOAA Risk/Value Process

9 Steps in Applying Matrix

1. Articulate objectives – narrow scope of NOAA science and management
2. **Regional Working Groups** – acquire data, quantify risk and value (qualitative as needed)
3. Place stocks/fishery in matrix – identify potential management changes
4. Review and adjust for cultural value, international, management effectiveness
5. Prioritize stock assessments and analytical approaches
6. Calculate data requirements
7. Prioritize data collection needs
8. Submit results to NMFS
9. Concurrently:
    a. Combine regional matrices to national matrix
    b. Councils and Regional Offices identify FMP/database changes needed

**Complete submission by April 3, 2026 – extended to June 30, 2026**

# Regional Risk/Value Matrix Process

- NRCC initial discussion – January Intersessional Meeting

- Representation from all NRCC organizations
  - Moira Kelly, Jay Hermsen – Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
  - Mike Simpkins – Northeast Fisheries Science Center
  - Cate O'Keefe, Jamie Cournane – New England Council
  - Chris Moore, Brandon Muffley – Mid-Atlantic Council
  - Bob Beal, Toni Kerns, Pat Campfield – Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

- Consider expertise and representation for value and risk categories
  - Management – policy and regulatory
  - Science – surveys, assessment, fishery information
  - Socioeconomics – risk policy, community impacts, cultural importance

- Convene Working Group meetings, develop work plan, complete matrix
  - March – Working Group meetings, work plan, initial "investment" evaluation
  - Spring/Summer – complete matrix and submit to NOAA

# Regional Risk/Value Meetings – Mar 4 & 25, 2026

- Defined Scope
  - To determine priority level of all stocks to inform management priorities
    - Leveraging previous NRCC approaches to prioritize stock assessments
    - Considering outputs from methodology developed by NOAA HQ
- Discussion
  - Discussion about process for recategorizing/removing stocks under legal mandates
  - Ownership of the final product – regional effort without specific approvals
- Workplan
  - High-level efforts to populate the R/V matrix and compare to expectations/objectives
  - Complete draft by June 30, 2026

# Regional Risk/Value Approach

Stepwise approach to consider qualitative and quantitative information

- Step 1:
  - Current Investment Level
    - GARFO, NEFSC, NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC
    - None, Small, Moderate, High
    - Qualitative assessment for each stock of level of investment (time, resources, etc.)
    - Completed on 3/25
- Step 2:
  - Risk/Value Considerations
    - Consider outcomes from 2017-2018 NRCC stock assessment prioritization process
    - Update metrics with new information, if needed for specific stocks

# Regional Risk/Value Approach

- NRCC Prioritization Metrics:

| Factors | Metrics | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Management Needs | Specification timing | Rebuilding status |
| 2. Fishery Importance | Commercial fishery importance | Recreational fishery importance |
| 3. Stock Status and Trend | Relative stock abundance and trend | Relative fishing mortality and trend |
| 4. Ecosystem Importance | Trophic importance | Climate vulnerability |
| 5. Assessment Information | Unexpected changes to stock indicators | Years overdue for assessment |
| 6. Stock Biology | Mean age in catch (or proxy) | Stock variability |

- Step 4:
  - Quadrant Placement Summary
    - Based on investment and metrics, consider where the stock falls in the matrix
    - Iterative to consider if final rankings align with organizational/regional perspectives
    - Compare results with outputs developed by NOAA HQ

# Risk/Value Perspectives

- CCC Letter to NOAA – February 2, 2026
  - Request for more information
  - Concerns about lack of transparency in objectives and Council input
  - Awaiting response
- Media coverage of process at Pacific Council – March 18, 2026
- Press Releases from Western Pacific Council – March 2026
  - SSC Reviews Science Priorities as NOAA Funding Tightens
  - WP Council Demands Inclusion of Cultural Value in Federal Prioritization Framework

# Risk/Value Next Steps

- Executive Directors – April 2, 2026
  - High-level questions about the objectives and applications
- New England Council discussion - TODAY
  - Consider management options based on R/V outputs
    - Low Risk/Low Value
      - Ecosystem Component options
      - Removal from Fishery Management Plans
    - Low/High combinations
      - Level of investment, management objectives
- CCC Meeting May 19-21 – discussion with NOAA HQ