

New England Fishery Management Council Timelines

November 7, 2025

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Scallops

1. Framework 40 – Fishing Years 2026 specifications, 2027 default specifications

Scope: Update reference points, set specifications for FY 2026 and FY 2027 default specifications, consider area-based management measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley / Chandler Nelson

| 2025 | |
|---------|---|
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| AUG | SSC discusses reference points for developing catch advice |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| OCT | SSC recommends OFL/ABC for FY2026-2027 |
| OCT-NOV | Committee and PDT complete documents |
| DEC | Council takes final action |
| DEC | Council staff completes decision draft |
| 2026 | |
| JAN-FEB | Council staff completes preliminary submission |
| FEB | NMFS completes review of preliminary submission |
| FEB-MAR | NMFS publishes proposed rule |
| MAR | Council staff completes final submission for NMFS review and approval |
| APR 1 | NMFS publishes final rule, Implementation |

2. LAGC IFQ Fishery Program Review

Scope: Determine progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the Scallop LAGC IFQ Program as specified in Amendment 11 and the MSA.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley / Chandler Nelson

| 2024 | |
|---------|---|
| MAY | Initial meeting of work group |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| JUL-DEC | Work group meetings, assembling data and beginning analysis |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| APR-MAY | Work group completes analyses |
| JUN | Council reviews preliminary analyses |
| JUL-DEC | Work group drafts and finalizes report |
| 2026 | |
| JAN | Council receives final report |

3. Development of a Long-Term (3-5 year) Scallop Strategic Plan

Scope: Develop a strategic plan for management of Atlantic sea scallops including consideration of rotational management review, scallop enhancement, and overall fishery objectives.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley / Chandler Nelson

| 2024 | |
|-------------|--|
| JUL | Initial meeting of PDT |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| DEC | Council receives update |
| 2025 | |
| JAN-MAR | Visioning sessions and development of SWOT analysis |
| APR | Council reviews input from visioning sessions and provides guidance for the development of a draft Strategic Plan |
| MAY | Development of draft Strategic Plan |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| JUL-AUG | Continue development of draft Strategic Plan |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| OCT-NOV | Finalize elements and focus areas of the Strategic Plan |
| DEC | Council approves Strategic Plan |

Groundfish

1. Amendment 25 – Incorporate Cod Stock Units into FMP

Scope: Identify four new stock units for Atlantic cod, consistent with the 2023 Atlantic Cod Research Track Assessment and incorporate the new stock units into the Fishery Management Plan.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2024 | |
|---------|--|
| APR | Council defines action |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| JUN-SEP | Committee/PDT develop alternatives |
| SEP | Council takes final action |
| NOV | Council staff completes preliminary submission |
| DEC | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval |
| 2025 | |
| MAR | NMFS publishes Notice of Availability |
| MAY | NOAA decision – action disapproved |
| JUN | Council changes 2025 priorities to initiate revised action |
| JUL-AUG | Council staff reformats cod-specific management measures from A25 & FW69 |
| SEP | Council takes final action for resubmission |
| NOV | Council staff completes preliminary submission |
| DEC | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval |
| TBD | NMFS publishes proposed rule |

2. Framework 69 – Fishing Years 2025-2027 Specifications/Measures

Scope: Set FY2025-2027 specifications for groundfish stocks; revise accountability measures triggers for GB yellowtail and N. windowpane in the scallop fishery; modify sector reporting requirements

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2024 | |
|------|--|
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| JUL | SSC OFLs/ABCs for cod stocks and GB yellowtail |
| SEP | Peer review – Management Track Assessments for groundfish stocks |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| OCT | TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary stocks; SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks |
| DEC | Council takes final action |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council staff completes preliminary submission |
| MAR | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval |
| TBD | NMFS publishes proposed rule – cod measures removed |

3. Framework 72 – Fishing Years 2026-2030 Specifications and Management Measures

Scope: Update status determination criteria for GB yellowtail flounder; FY2026-FY2030 specifications for groundfish stocks; establish regulatory process for Regional Administrator to adjust recreational measures for cod and haddock.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede / Mark Grant

| 2025 | |
|---------|---|
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| JUL-NOV | Committee/PDT develop draft alternatives |
| SEP-OCT | TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary stocks; Peer review – Management Track Assessments for groundfish stocks |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| OCT | SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks |
| DEC | Council takes final action |
| 2026 | |
| JAN | Council staff completes preliminary submission |
| MAR | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval |
| TBD | NMFS publishes proposed rule |
| MAY | Target implementation |

4. Develop Atlantic Cod Management Transition Plan

Scope: Consider options for transitioning cod management based on four new stock units.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2023 | |
|-------------|---|
| APR | Council provides feedback on work plan |
| APR-NOV | RAP, GAP, Committee discuss topics at each meeting |
| JUN/SEP/DEC | Council receives update |
| 2024 | |
| APR | Council decides initial transition plan |
| MAY | Focused public workshops |
| SEP | Council receives update |
| DEC | Council approves transition plan Phase 1 |
| 2025 | |
| JAN-MAR | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval for Phase 1 actions |
| MAY 1 | Target implementation for Phase 1 actions* |
| JUN | Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting |

*see Amendment 25 decision – NOAA disapproval and Emergency Action published on May 1, 2025

*see Framework 69 status – NOAA proposed rule with cod measures removed TBD

5. Framework 68 – Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules

Scope: Modify/review groundfish Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) control rules.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2023 | |
|---------|--|
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| AUG | Facilitated Session and Groundfish Committee input to goals/objectives |
| SEP/DEC | Council discusses goals and objectives, timeline and overlap with Risk Policy |
| 2024 | |
| SEP | Council action on Risk Policy |
| 2025 | |
| JAN-DEC | Simulation testing of Risk Policy with ABC Control Rules; IRA contracted project |
| JUN | Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting |

6. Develop Amendment 23 Review Metrics and Indicators

Scope: Develop metrics and indicators to be used in the review of A23 monitoring measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2022 | |
|---------|--|
| MAY-OCT | Initial list of potential metrics and indicators |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| 2023 | |
| JAN/APR | Council receives update |
| MAR-DEC | Develop list of metrics and indicators; SSC review; preliminary analyses |
| 2024 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| 2025 | |
| JAN-JUN | Continue development of metrics and initiate review |
| JUN | Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting |

7. Redfish Sector Exemption Program Review

Scope: Develop and conduct review of redfish sector exemption program.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2025 | |
|---------|--|
| MAR-JUN | PDT, Committee develop review |
| JUN | Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting |

Herring

1. Herring Specifications for 2025-2027

Scope: Set specifications for 2025 through 2027, management uncertainty, annual catch limit (ACL), management area sub-ACLs, river herring and shad catch caps.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jamie Cournane / Emily Bodell

| 2024 | |
|------|--|
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| JUL | SSC recommends OFLs and ABCs |
| SEP | Council takes final action*; Tasks review of 2024 catch and updated projections |
| OCT | Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives projections, requests the SSC reconsider OFLs and ABCs |
| MAR | Peer Review – Research Track Stock Assessment |
| APR | SSC recommends OFLs and ABCs |
| APR | Council takes final action |
| MAY | Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval |
| JUN | NMFS proposed rule published June 25; public comment period closed July 10 |
| TBD | NMFS final rule |
| TBD | Target implementation date |

* The Council recommended an in-season adjustment to reduce 2025 specifications; approved Dec 2024.

2. Amendment 10

Scope: To address spatial and temporal allocation of herring to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield, and support rebuilding; and to enhance river herring and shad avoidance.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jamie Cournane / Emily Bodell

| 2023 | |
|---------|--|
| APR | Council receives update |
| JUN | Council develops problem statement |
| SEP | Council initiates action; development of a public scoping document |
| DEC | Council revises problem statement to include river herring and shad |
| 2024 | |
| JAN | Council approves the public scoping document |
| MAR-APR | Public scoping comment period including six public scoping meetings |
| APR/JUN | Council receives update and summary of public scoping |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| APR | Council pauses work, revisit during 2026 priority setting |

Monkfish

1. Monkfish Framework 17 – Specifications for FY 2026-2028

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2028 based on a data update from NEFSC.

Note: Monkfish and Skate Council staff are coordinating PDT, AP, and Committee activities.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Jenny Couture (NEFMC - lead) / Jason Didden (MAFMC)

| 2025 | |
|---------|--|
| FEB-MAR | PDT prepares background information, joint with Skate PDT |
| MAR | AP and Committee meet, joint with Skate |
| APR | NEFMC/MAFMC receive update, initiate Framework 17 |
| AUG | PDT prepares ABCs based on NEFSC data update |
| AUG | SSC recommends ABCs and OFLs |
| SEP | NEFMC takes final action |
| OCT | MAFMC takes final action |
| NOV | Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review |
| 2026 | |
| JAN-FEB | Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval |
| APR | NMFS publishes rule |
| MAY | Target implementation date |

Skates

2. Skate Specifications for FY 2026-2028

Scope: Specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2028 based on a data update from NEFSC.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Rachel Feeney / Emily Bodell

| 2025 | |
|---------|--|
| FEB-MAR | PDT prepares background information, joint with Monkfish PDT |
| MAR | AP and Committee meet, joint with Monkfish |
| APR | Council receives update |
| AUG | PDT prepares ABCs based on NEFSC data update |
| AUG | SSC recommends ABCs |
| SEP | Council takes final action |
| NOV | Council staff preliminary submission to NMFS for review |
| 2026 | |
| JAN-FEB | Council staff final submission to NMFS for review and approval |
| APR | NMFS publishes rule |
| MAY | Target implementation date |

Spiny Dogfish

1. Accountability Measures and Specifications for 2026 and 2027 Framework Adjustment

Scope: Considers modified/relaxed payback AMs; specifications for 2026-2027 based on updated projections.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Jason Didden (MAFMC- lead) / Jamie Cournane (NEFMC)

| 2025 | |
|---------|--|
| FEB | MAFMC receives update |
| MAY | Monitoring Committee recommendations |
| JUN | MAFMC/NEFMC set range of alternatives |
| AUG | Monitoring Committee recommendations |
| AUG | AP meets and Council staff facilitates creation of AP Fishery Performance Report |
| SEP | MAFMC SSC recommends ABCs for 2026-2027 |
| SEP | Monitoring Committee recommendations |
| SEP | Committee meets |
| OCT | MAFMC final action |
| DEC | NEFMC final action |
| DEC-JAN | Council staff prepares document for submission to GARFO |
| 2026 | |
| JAN | Preliminary submission |
| JAN-FEB | ASMFC receives summary from Council staff |
| FEB-MAR | Final submission |
| TBD | NMFS publishes rule |
| MAY | Target Implementation Date |

Habitat

1. Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Michelle Bachman / Jenny Couture

| 2022 | |
|------|---|
| SEP | Council initiates Atlantic salmon framework action |
| 2023 | |
| APR | Council final action |
| MAY | Council staff preliminary submission |
| 2024 | |
| JAN | NMFS completes review of preliminary submission |
| JAN | Council staff final submission for review and approval |
| 2025 | |
| TBD | NMFS publishes proposed rule |
| TBD | NMFS publishes final rule |

2. Essential Fish Habitat Designation Framework

Scope: Consider updates to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) designations for 10 species across four FMPs: Atlantic herring, monkfish, Atlantic cod (Northeast Multispecies), and skates complex (barndoor, clearnose, little, rosette, smooth, thorny, and winter skate). Adjustments to habitat management area designations or associated restrictions on fishing are not being considered as part of this action.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Michelle Bachman / Julian Garrison

| 2025 | |
|---------|---|
| FEB-MAY | PDT finalizes species distribution models; drafts revised EFH designations (maps and text); and develops draft alternatives |
| APR | Council initiates 2025 EFH Designation Framework |
| MAY-SEP | Review EFH designation alternatives with PDTs, APs and Hab AP, CTE |
| AUG-SEP | Habitat Committee recommends preferred alternatives |
| SEP | Council takes final action |
| OCT | MAFMC receives update |
| NOV | Preliminary submission |
| TBD | Final submission |
| TBD | Implementation of 2025 EFH Designation Framework |

On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group

1. Addressing on-demand gear conflict with Council-managed fisheries

Scope: On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group formed to address Terms of Reference (TORs) to identify strategies for reducing gear interactions between on-demand gear and other fisheries and consider interactions resulting from measures adopted for sink gillnet and other trap/pot fisheries.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Emily Bodell/ David McCarron/ Robin Frede

| 2023 | |
|---------|---|
| JAN | Initial Council discussion of working group |
| APR | Council approves work plan |
| SEP | Council approves terms of reference |
| 2024 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| SEP | ODWG drafts gear marking strawman and report on reducing gear conflict |
| SEP | Council receives report with proposed actions/management measures |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| FEB-APR | ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| JUL-SEP | ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs |
| SEP | Council receives final report on strategies to reduce gear interactions |

2. Joint Alternative Gear Marking Framework

Scope: In conjunction with MAFMC and GARFO, develop alternative surface marking requirements for all fixed-gear fisheries to allow the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Emily Bodell/ David McCarron/ Robin Frede (NEFMC)

Hayden Dubinczki (MAFMC)

Alli Murphy, Caroline Potter (GARFO - lead)

| 2024 | |
|---------|---|
| DEC | Council prioritizes joint gear marking action with MAFMC and GARFO |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| JAN-APR | FMAT/PDT meets |
| APR | Council initiates framework; MAFMC Framework meeting 1 |
| APR-JUN | FMAT/PDT meets |
| JUN | Council receives update |
| SEPT | NEFMC: postpone final action until completion of NOAA Request for Information |
| OCT | MAFMC: postpone final action until completion of NOAA Request for Information |
| TBD | NMFS develops and publishes Request for Information |
| TBD | NEFMC final action |
| TBD | MAFMC final action |

Management Flexibility

1. Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment

Scope: Increase management flexibility across FMPs: changes to specifications frequency, specifications setting process, in-season adjustment authority, and preparation of Council reports/reviews.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: Jamie Cournane / Cate O'Keefe (NEFMC – lead)

| 2025 | |
|------|---|
| APR | Council adds omnibus action to 2025 priorities |
| JUN | Council initiates action |
| SEP | Executive Committee reviews draft |
| SEP | Council final action |
| OCT | MAFMC final action on monkfish aspects |
| NOV | Preliminary submission |
| DEC | Final submission |
| 2026 | |
| TBD | Implementation |

Risk Policy

1. Revisions to Council's Risk Policy

Scope: Alpha phase: use of the Risk Policy statement and scoring of factors using pre-defined guidance Beta Phase: refinement of factors, scoring and weighting process, data flows, connection to harvest control rules.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER: Jonathon Peros

| 2023 | |
|---------|---|
| APR | Council approves work group Terms of Reference (TORs) |
| 2024 | |
| SEP | Council Approves Revised Risk Policy Statement and Concept |
| 2025 | |
| JAN | Council receives update; transition to new Risk Policy |
| APR | Dedicated session for Council weighting of factors |
| MAY-DEC | Alpha Phase: Use of Risk Policy statement and matrices; Beta Phase: Simulation testing of Risk Policy for integration with Groundfish ABC Control Rules |
| DEC | Council receives update |
| 2026 | |
| JAN | Council receives update |
| FEB-APR | RPWG Meetings and presentation of revised Risk Policy to SSC |
| APR | Council receives update on Risk Policy Concept |
| MAY | RPWG Meeting |
| JUN | Council approves Risk Policy; Council weighting of factors (global) |
| JUL-DEC | Quantitative application of Risk Policy in specification actions (PDTs, SSC). |