

# New England Fishery Management Council Timelines

June 5, 2025

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# Scallops

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

**Scope:** Update reference points and status determination criteria, set specifications for FY 2026, and FY 2027 default specifications.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Connor Buckley

| 2025       |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council initiates action</b>                                       |
| AUG        | SSC recommends reference points for developing catch advice           |
| <b>SEP</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>  |
| OCT        | SSC recommends OFL/ABC for FY2026-2027                                |
| OCT-NOV    | Committee and PDT complete documents                                  |
| <b>DEC</b> | <b>Council takes final action</b>                                     |
| 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

| 2024       |   |
|------------|---|
| MAY        | Initial meeting of work group                               |
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>                              |
| JUL-DEC    | Work group meetings, assembling data and beginning analysis |
| 2025       |   |
| <b>JAN</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>                              |
| APR-MAY    | Work group completes analyses and drafts report             |
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council reviews preliminary analyses</b>                 |
| <b>SEP</b> | <b>Council approves Final Report</b>                        |

### 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

| 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 in 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 Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede

| 2024       |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>APR</b> | <b>Council defines action</b>  |
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>   |
| JUN-SEP    | Committee/PDT develop alternatives   |
| <b>SEP</b> | <b>Council takes final action</b>  |
| 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   |
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council considers potential change in priorities to initiate revised action</b> |

### 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 / Angelia Miller

| 2024       |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council initiates action</b>  |
| JUL        | SSC OFLs/ABCs for cod stocks and GB yellowtail, review apportionment approach for EGB cod and haddock management units |
| JUL-SEP    | Committee/PDT develop draft alternatives   |
| SEP        | Peer review – Management Track Assessments for other groundfish  |
| <b>SEP</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>   |
| OCT        | TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary stocks; SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks   |
| <b>DEC</b> | <b>Council takes final action</b>  |
| 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 2026-2028 Specifications and Management Measures

**Scope:** Update status determination criteria (as needed); FY2026-FY2027 specifications for groundfish stocks; measures to address recreational management as part of Phase 1 of cod management transition.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede / Angelia Miller

| 2025       |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>JUN</b> | <b>Council initiates action</b>  |
| JUL-NOV    | Committee/PDT develop draft alternatives   |
| SEP-OCT    | TMGC/SC TACs for transboundary management units of Eastern GB cod and Eastern GB haddock, GB yellowtail flounder; Peer review – Management Track Assessments for groundfish stocks |
| <b>SEP</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>   |
| OCT        | SSC OFLs/ABCs for groundfish stocks  |
| <b>DEC</b> | <b>Council takes final action</b>  |
| 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 / Angelia Miller

| 2023               |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>APR</b>         | <b>Council provides feedback on work plan</b>                                   |
| APR-NOV            | RAP, GAP, Committee discuss topics at each meeting                              |
| <b>JUN/SEP/DEC</b> | <b>Council receives update</b>  |
| 2024               |   |
| <b>APR</b>         | <b>Council decides initial transition plan</b>                                  |
| MAY                | Focused public workshops  |
| <b>SEP</b>         | <b>Council receives update</b>  |
| <b>DEC</b>         | <b>Council approves transition plan Phase 1</b>                                 |
| 2025               |   |
| JAN-MAR            | Council staff final submission for NMFS review and approval for Phase 1 actions |
| MAY 1              | Target implementation for Phase 1 actions*                                      |
| JAN-DEC            | Council planning for work on Phase 2 actions/management measures                |

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

## 5. Framework 68 – Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules

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

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede / Angelia Miller

| 2023    |  |
|---------|--|
| JUN     | Council initiates action   |
| AUG     | Facilitated Session and Groundfish Committee input to goals/objectives   |
| SEP     | Council discusses goals and objectives, timeline and overlap with Risk Policy  |
| DEC     | Council receives update  |
| 2024    |  |
| JAN-DEC | PDT, Committee tracking Risk Policy development  |
| SEP     | Council action on Risk Policy  |
| 2025    |  |
| JAN-DEC | Develop plan for integration of revised Risk Policy, simulation testing of Risk Policy with Groundfish ABC Control Rules; IRA contracted project |

## 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     | Council receives update  |
| MAR     | SSC input on list of potential metrics and indicators            |
| APR     | Council receives update  |
| MAY-DEC | Continue developing metrics and indicators, preliminary analyses |
| 2024    |  |
| JAN     | Council receives update  |
| JAN-DEC | Continue developing metrics and indicators                       |
| 2025    |  |
| JAN-DEC | Complete development of metrics and conduct review               |
| 2026    |  |
| JAN-JUN | Complete monitoring program review                               |

## 7. Redfish Sector Exemption Program Review

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

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS:

Robin Frede / Angelia Miller

| 2025    |  |
|---------|--|
| MAR-JUN | PDT, Committee develop review                |
| JUN     | Council receives update                      |
| JUL-NOV | PDT conducts review, report out to Committee |
| DEC     | Council receives final report                |

## 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 updated projections and requests the SSC reconsider OFLs and ABCs with new information (2024 catch and Research Track products) |
| MAR  | Peer Review of 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   |
| TBD  | NMFS publishes 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 at the management unit level to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield, and support rebuilding of the resource; and to enhance river herring and shad avoidance and other catch reduction measures.

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     | Council receives update   |
| JUN     | Council receives summary of public scoping                          |
| 2025    |   |
| JAN     | Council receives update   |
| APR     | Council pauses work, revisit during priorities                      |



# Monkfish

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

**Scope:** Set specifications for fishing years 2026 through 2028 based on a data update provided by the NEFSC for monkfish, including the overfishing limit (OFL; unknown) and acceptable biological catch (ABC), annual catch limit (ACL), total allowable landings (TAL) for northern and southern fishery management area, possession limits, and days-at-sea.

*Note: Monkfish and skate Council staff are coordinating PDT, AP, and Committee activities for this year's specifications actions to take a more holistic approach to effort controls in both fisheries. This is based on feedback received from industry regarding concerns over one fishery constraining the other and the desire to improve the efficiency in both fisheries.*

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Jenny Couture (NEFMC) / Jason Didden (MAFMC)

| 2025        |  |
|-------------|--|
| FEB-MAR     | PDT prepares background information, joint with Skate PDT      |
| MAR         | AP and Committee meet, joint with Skate                        |
| <b>APR</b>  | <b>NEFMC/MAFMC receive update, initiate Framework 17</b>       |
| AUG         | PDT prepares ABCs based on NEFSC data update                   |
| AUG         | SSC recommends ABCs  |
| AUG-SEPT    | PDT, AP, Committee meet  |
| <b>SEPT</b> | <b>NEFMC takes final action</b>                                |
| <b>OCT</b>  | <b>MAFMC takes final action</b>                                |
| 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

### 1. Skate Specifications for 2026-2027

**Scope:** Set specifications for 2026 through 2027, including the overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) using the ABC control rule, annual catch limit (ACL), total allowable landings (TAL), skate wing and bait fishery TALs and possession limits.

*Note: Monkfish and skate Council staff are coordinating PDT, AP, and Committee activities for this year's specifications actions to take a more holistic approach to effort controls in both fisheries. This is based on feedback received from industry regarding concerns over one fishery constraining the other and the desire to improve the efficiency in both fisheries.*

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  |
| AUG-SEPT | PDT, AP, Committee meet  |
| SEPT     | Council takes final action                                     |
| OCT-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. Spiny Dogfish Specifications for 2026-2027 (Joint MAFMC/NEFMC action)

**Scope:** Set spiny dogfish specifications for 2026 and 2027 based on the 2023 stock assessment, updated projections.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: Jason Didden (MAFMC- lead) / Jamie Cournane (NEFMC)

| 2025      |  |
|-----------|--|
| JUN       | AP meets and Council staff facilitates creation of AP Fishery Performance Report |
| SEP       | MAFMC's SSC recommends ABCs for 2026-2027  |
| SEP       | Monitoring Committee recommendations   |
| SEP       | Committee meets  |
| OCT       | MAFMC takes final action   |
| DEC       | NEFMC final action   |
| DEC/JAN   | Council staff prepares document for submission to GARFO (SIR)                    |
| 2026      |  |
| JAN       | Preliminary submission   |
| JAN/FEB   | ASMFC receives summary from Council staff  |
| FEB / MAR | Final submission   |
| MAY       | Implementation (target of May 1)   |

### 2. Accountability Measures Framework Adjustment (Joint MAFMC/NEFMC action)

**Scope:** The Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) currently requires pound for pound paybacks of any Annual Catch Limit (ACL) overages as an accountability measure (AM). This action considers if there are some circumstances where the current strict paybacks may be excessive, and if modified/relaxed payback AMs may be sufficient.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: Jason Didden (MAFMC- lead) / Jamie Cournane (NEFMC)

| 2025 |   |
|------|---|
| FEB  | MAFMC receives update                             |
| MAY  | Monitoring Committee recommendations              |
| JUN  | MAFMC/NEFMC meetings to set range of alternatives |
| DEC  | MAFMC/NEFMC final action                          |
| 2026 |   |
| TBD  | Preliminary submission                            |
| TBD  | Final submission                                  |
| TBD  | Implementation                                    |

\*Actions 1 and 2 may be combined into single action; MAFMC recommended combining in June.

## Habitat

### 1. Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Framework

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Michelle Bachman / Jenny Couture

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>2022</b> |   |
| <b>SEP</b>  | <b>Council initiates Atlantic salmon framework action</b> |
| <b>2023</b> |   |
| <b>APR</b>  | <b>Council final action</b>                               |
| MAY         | Council staff preliminary submission                      |
| <b>2024</b> |   |
| JAN         | NMFS completes review of preliminary submission           |
| JAN         | Council staff final submission for review and approval    |
| <b>2025</b> |   |
| 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

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

## Risk Policy

### 1. Revisions to Council's Risk Policy

**Scope:** Risk Policy Working Group formed to address Terms of Reference (TORs) to guide the review, and potential revisions to the current Risk Policy.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGER:

Jonathon Peros

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>2022</b> |   |
| <b>DEC</b>  | <b>Council prioritizes action</b>   |
| <b>2023</b> |   |
| <b>JAN</b>  | Council receives overview of current Risk Policy  |
| MAR-APR     | Draft TORs, SOPPs, solicit for the Risk Policy Working Group  |
| <b>APR</b>  | <b>Council approves work group Terms of Reference (TORs)</b>  |
| JUN-AUG     | Work group meetings to discuss priority, potential improvements   |
| <b>SEP</b>  | Council receives update   |
| <b>DEC</b>  | Council receives update   |
| <b>2024</b> |   |
| <b>JAN</b>  | Council receives update on progress and revised concept   |
| FEB-APR     | RPWG develops revised risk policy concept   |
| <b>APR</b>  | Council receives update   |
| MAY-JUN     | RPWG Meetings and presentation of Risk Policy to SSC  |
| <b>JUN</b>  | Council receives update   |
| SEP         | Informational Session for NEFMC AP members  |
| <b>SEP</b>  | <b>Council Approves Revised Risk Policy Statement and Concept</b>   |
| <b>2025</b> |   |
| <b>JAN</b>  | Transition to new Risk Policy, RPWG meeting   |
| <b>JAN</b>  | Council receives update   |
| <b>APR</b>  | <b>Dedicated session for Council weighting of factors</b>   |
| MAY-DEC     | Use of Risk Policy with continued development for integration with harvest control rules, simulation testing of Risk Policy with Groundfish ABC Control Rules |

## 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  |
| JUL         | ODWG meets, refines objectives/terms of reference   |
| SEPT        | Council approves terms of reference   |
| 2024        |   |
| JAN         | Council receives update   |
| JUN         | Council receives update   |
| SEPT        | ODWG meets to discuss draft gear marking strawman and report on reducing gear conflict with gillnet/OTP fisheries         |
| SEPT        | Council receives report with proposed actions/management measures   |
| DEC         | Council prioritizes development of joint action with MAFMC and GARFO in 2025  |
| 2025        |   |
| JAN         | Council receives update   |
| FEB-APR     | ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs  |
| JUN         | Council receives update   |
| JULY – SEPT | ODWG meets and continues working to address TORs  |
| SEPT        | Council receives final report on strategies to reduce gear interactions between on-demand and other types of fishing gear |

### 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

Hayden Dubinczki – MAFMC

Alli Murphey, Caroline Potter - GARFO

| 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 final action   |
| OCT       | MAFMC final action   |
| TBD       | NMFS publishes proposed rule                                       |
| TBD       | NMFS publishes final rule  |

## Management Flexibility

### 1. Omnibus Management Flexibility Action

**Scope:** The Council identified the need to increase management flexibility in light of the changing regional resources and capacity to support scientific updates and regulatory processes. The likely range of alternatives for this omnibus action includes measures to address management flexibility across the Council's FMPs, including consideration of specification frequency, rollover provisions, in-season adjustment authority, and other measures.

STAFF PROJECT MANAGERS: **Jamie Cournane/Cate O'Keefe (NEFMC) / Travis Ford - GARFO**

| 2025 |  |
|------|--|
| APR  | Council adds omnibus action to 2025 priorities   |
| JUN  | Council initiates omnibus action, receives an update on alternatives to include, and reviews the action timeline |
| SEP  | Council takes final action   |
| NOV  | Preliminary submission   |
| DEC  | Final submission   |
| 2026 |  |
| TBD  | Implementation   |