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Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils Take Joint Action on Spiny Dogfish Framework

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and New England Fishery Management Council took final action at their respective [December 2025](#) meetings on a framework adjustment to the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The framework sets specifications for the 2026-2027 fishing years and proposes several changes to accountability measures. The framework will be submitted to NOAA Fisheries for review and rulemaking.

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Currently, the Spiny Dogfish FMP requires pound-for-pound payback of any Annual Catch Limit (ACL) overages as an accountability measure. Under the revised measures adopted through this framework, ACL overages would be calculated using a 3-year average of total catch from all sources compared to a 3-year average of ACLs. In addition, payback amounts would depend on biomass levels as follows:

- **At or above target biomass:** No payback would be required for ACL overages. However, the Councils would still consider management adjustments during the next specifications cycle to prevent future overages.
- **At or below 75% of target biomass:** Full, pound-for-pound paybacks would be required and deducted from the next available single-year ACL. If the stock becomes overfished, full paybacks would be required until the stock is completely rebuilt.
- **Between 75% and 100% of target biomass:** The payback amount would be calculated on a sliding, linear scale based on biomass level (for example, a 50% payback would be required when the stock is at 87.5% of the target biomass).

These changes are intended to better align accountability measures with stock status and reduce unnecessary economic impacts from variable landing limits and discards when the stock is healthy.

2026-2027 SPECIFICATIONS

The [2023 Management Track Assessment](#) indicated that the spiny dogfish stock was neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing in 2022. Although the stock is experiencing lower annual productivity, stock levels were slightly above the biomass target in 2022. Projections suggest the stock could be around 113% of its target biomass in the 2026 calendar year.

The Councils voted to maintain the current Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) limit of 7,626 metric tons (16.8 million pounds) for the 2026 and 2027 fishing years. This ABC is slightly below the overfishing limits (OFLs) for 2026 and 2027 and is aligned with advice from the Mid-Atlantic Council's Scientific and

Statistical Committee (SSC). After accounting for expected discards, the commercial quota for both years would be 9.2 million pounds, a slight reduction from the 2025 quota of 9.3 million pounds. No changes were recommended to other management measures, including the federal trip limit of 7,500 pounds.

Spiny Dogfish Specifications for FY 2026-2027

Specifications	2026-27 (pounds)	2026-27 (mt)
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	17,822,148	8,084
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	16,812,432	7,626
Canadian Landings	8,818	4
Domestic ABC	16,803,614	7,622
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	16,803,614	7,622
Management Uncertainty Buffer	0.0%	0.0%
Amount of Buffer	0	0
Annual Catch Target (ACT)	16,803,614	7,622
U.S. Discards	7,359,022	3,338
Total Allowable Landings (TAL)	9,444,592	4,284
U.S. Recreational Landings	246,917	112
Commercial Quota	9,197,675	4,172

Additional information about this action can be found [here](#).