



New England Fishery Management Council

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June Council Meeting Recap

The New England Fishery Management Council met in [Freeport, ME, from June 24-26, 2025](#). Notable outcomes are summarized below.

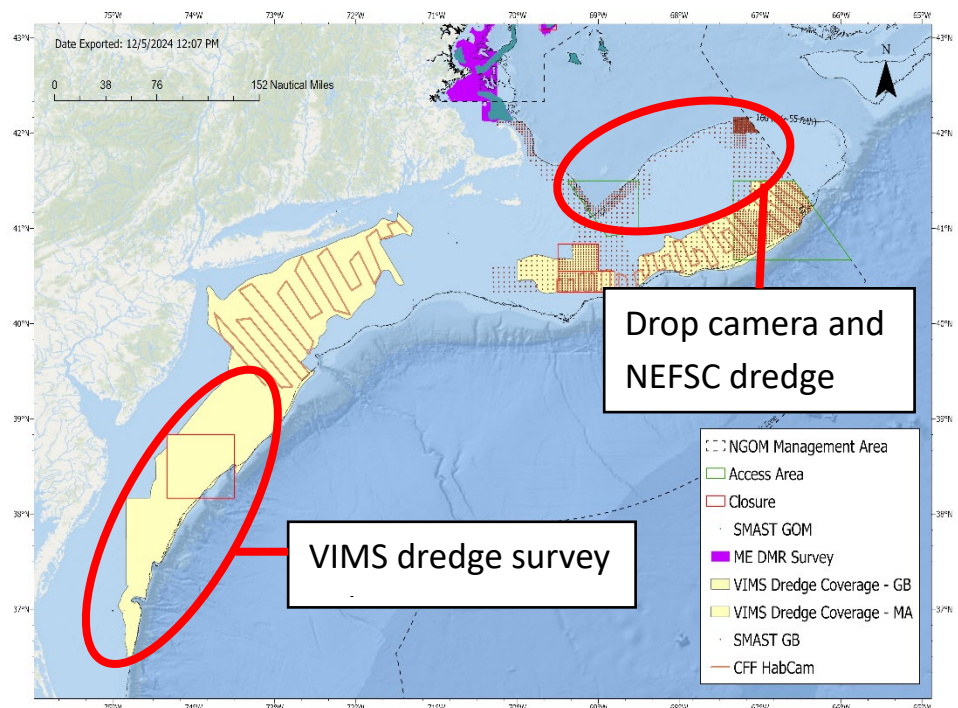
SEA SCALLOP

Research Track Stock Assessment: The Council received a presentation on the [Scallop Research Track Stock Assessment](#), which underwent [peer review in April 2025](#). Several Council members voiced concerns with the assessment's findings, specifically around the fishing mortality reference points (FMSY). The Scallop Plan Development Team will be developing methods to determine catch advice considering a range of options that will be reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in August.

2025 Scallop Surveys:

Council staff provided a summary of coverage areas and progress of the 2025 Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) survey efforts. The 2025 survey methods included towed camera, drop camera, dredge, and AUV gears and covered all scallop resource areas from the Gulf of Maine to the Delmarva region of the Mid-Atlantic Bight.

The Council also received an update on the status of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's HabCam survey, which was interrupted on June 9th. The HabCam survey was conducted aboard the NOAA Ship *Henry B. Bigelow* and was surveying transit lines on Georges Bank when it contacted an uncharted shipwreck. Recovery efforts were hampered due to potential hazards surrounding the wreck and strong currents in the area. A private salvage company has been contracted to attempt to recover the HabCam unit. NEFSC's HabCam operations are suspended for the remainder of the 2025 survey season. The NEFSC's long-range AUV survey completed partial coverage of the planned survey area, and RSA survey partners are collaborating to provide coverage of areas missed by the NEFSC HabCam.



2025 RSA survey coverage areas. Note: Drop Camera stations and HabCam tracks are approximate.

Framework (FW) 40: The Council initiated FW 40, which will set specifications for fishing year (FY) 2026 and default measures for FY 2027. Final action on the Framework is scheduled for December.

Limited Access General Category IFQ Review: The Council received an update on the LAGC IFQ program review, which covers the period 2016 to 2023. The review includes analyses on fleet characteristics, quotas and leasing, fishing effort, economic performance, crew income, and other metrics. The draft report is in progress with additional analyses to be conducted over the summer and Council approval of the final report in September.

MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY ACTION

The Council initiated an omnibus amendment to increase flexibility across all fishery management plans. The proposed amendment includes adjusting specification frequency, adding rollover provisions, and allowing in-season changes. If implemented, the amendment would enhance the Council's ability to adjust to regional resource availability and changes in regulatory needs. Final action is scheduled for September.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 14276 "RESTORING AMERICAN SEAFOOD COMPETITIVENESS"

President Trump issued [Executive Order 14276](#) on April 17th, requesting that each Regional Fishery Management Council develop recommendations that identify actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing, increase seafood production, stabilize markets, improve fishery access, enhance economic profitability, and prevent fishery closures. The New England Council is soliciting input from Plan Development Teams, Advisory Panels, and Council members to meet this request. The Council, in coordination with NOAA's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), will be reviewing these recommendations at their September meeting, which are due by September 30, 2025.

COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CCC) MEETING

The CCC met [May 13-15, 2025](#), in New Bedford, MA, bringing together leadership from all eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. The CCC discussed shared challenges such as funding and staffing shortfalls, the need for regulatory reform and efficiency, data and science gaps, environmental change, and ways to strengthen public engagement and trust.

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro Soler, the new Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, attended the meeting along with other members of NOAA Fisheries leadership. The CCC and NOAA collectively discussed strategies to better align priorities and adapt science and management approaches under reduced NOAA capacity.

NORTHEAST REGION COORDINATING COUNCIL (NRCC) MEETING

A recap of the [May NRCC meeting](#) included updates to the [2025 stock assessment schedule](#). Due to reductions in NOAA resources, several planned Management Track stock assessments will be replaced with streamlined "Data Updates" including the skate complex, northern and southern monkfish, northern and southern windowpane flounder, ocean pout, and wolffish. The NRCC will hold a follow-up [intersessional meeting](#) on August 20, 2025, to develop the stock assessment schedule for 2026.

HOLISTIC STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE

The Council received its first formal briefing on the [Holistic Strategic Plan](#) from The Parnin Group. This IRA initiative includes a 10-month effort that will unfold in three phases, including Discovery, Analysis, and Recommendations, and will result in new mission and vision statements, strategic goals, and improvements to the process for developing federal fisheries management actions. The Council will receive another update at the September Council meeting.

SPINY DOGFISH

Following the lead of the Mid-Atlantic Council, the New England Council initiated a joint framework adjustment to the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan that includes modifications to accountability measures (AMs) and specifications for FY2026-2027. The current AMs require pound-for-pound paybacks of any Annual Catch Limit (ACL) overage. This action will consider modified AMs to avoid unnecessary paybacks of ACL overages and minimize associated fishery disruptions. Final action by both Councils is expected later in 2025 with target implementation in May 2026.

ON-DEMAND FISHING GEAR CONFLICT WORKING GROUP (ODWG)

The Council received an update from GARFO staff about the Alternative Gear-Marking Framework. The Council will take final action on the framework in September, which would allow for the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line and would reconcile recent and future regulatory changes to the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Throughout this work, the ODWG will engage with a wide range of fishery stakeholders, including coordination with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Please visit the On-Demand [webpage](#) for additional information and details of upcoming meetings.

SOCIAL SCIENCES SUBCOMMITTEE

The Council initiated the SSC's Social Science Subcommittee (SSS) in January 2025. The primary goal of the SSS is to improve management decisions by explicitly considering social and economic information sources, including industry-generated information and local ecological knowledge. The Council received a summary presentation of the SSS kickoff meeting and expressed support for integration of SSS recommendations in future risk policy implementation and SSC development of catch recommendations.

NEFSC COST SURVEY EFFORT

NOAA's Northeast Fishery Science Center updated the Council on the [Cost Survey](#) effort happening in the region. The data collected from industry is available to managers and the public as [metadata](#) or via a [Cost Data Visualization Tool](#).

OFFSHORE ENERGY

The NEFSC [presented](#) draft monitoring standards for wind energy projects and made a call for Council input. The team outlined specific standards for fisheries, protected species, and socioeconomic impacts. A draft document will be released in mid-July, with feedback due by fall 2025.

COUNCIL TRIBUTES

The Council paid tribute to outgoing Chair Rick Bellavance, members Alan Tracey and Cheri Patterson, Mid-Atlantic Council Liaison Peter Hughes, and SSC Chair Lisa Kerr.