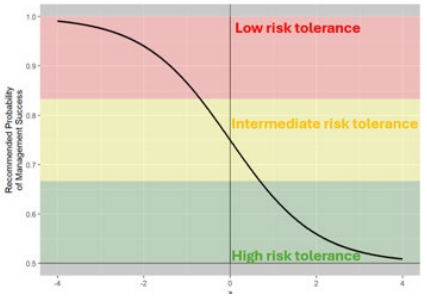
NEFMC Updates

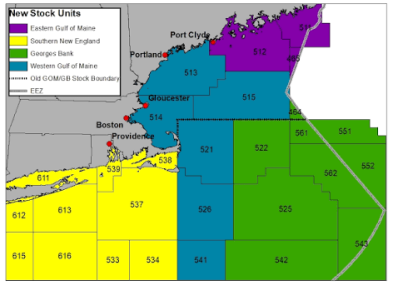
Northeast Region Coordinating Council

November 19-20, 2026

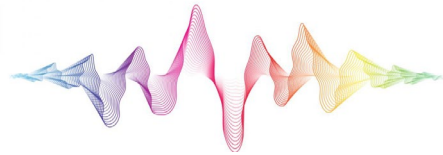
Providence, RI

NEFMC IRA Project Updates



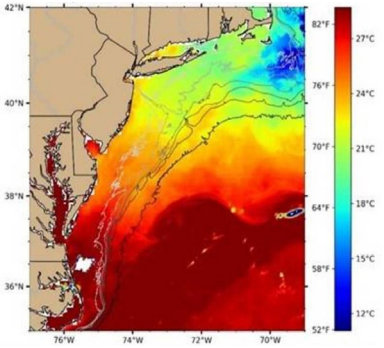


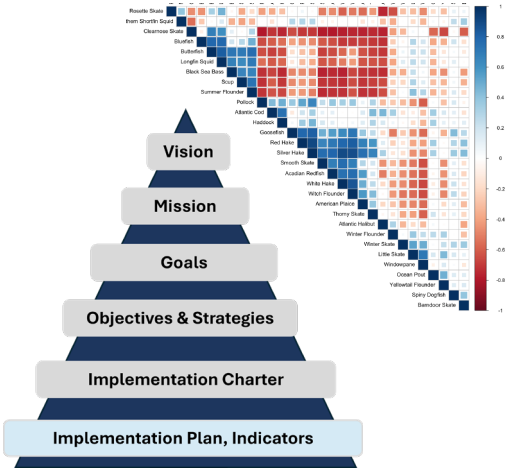
- Risk Policy- Integrated ABC Control Rule (IRA 1)
  - Risk Policy approved June 2026
  - Groundfish ABC Control Rule final action April 2027
- Groundfish Management Transition (IRA 2)
  - Listening sessions May/June 2027
- Dynamic Reference Points Workshop (IRA 3)
  - June 2026 Workshop
  - Completed; transition to operationalize with SSC/NEFSC sub-group
- Ecosystem Component Species Guidance (IRA 3)
  - Completed; transition to operationalize
  - 2027 ECS screening with potential to develop Amendments (groundfish, skates)





NEFMC IRA Project Updates

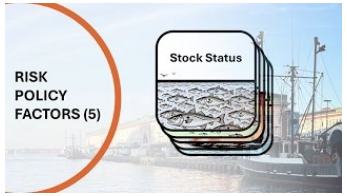




- East Coast Governance Workshop (IRA 4)
  - February 2027 in Boston; agenda development in progress with ECCG
- Permit Portfolio Analysis (IRA 4)
  - Cooperative Research Summit – March 2027
  - Council report June 2027
- Holistic Strategic Plan (IRA 5)
  - Completed; transition to tracking metrics and performance indicators
- Enhancing Participatory Process (IRA 6)
  - New webpages, social media, branding
  - Staff training and additional work to standardize and automate Council products in 2027

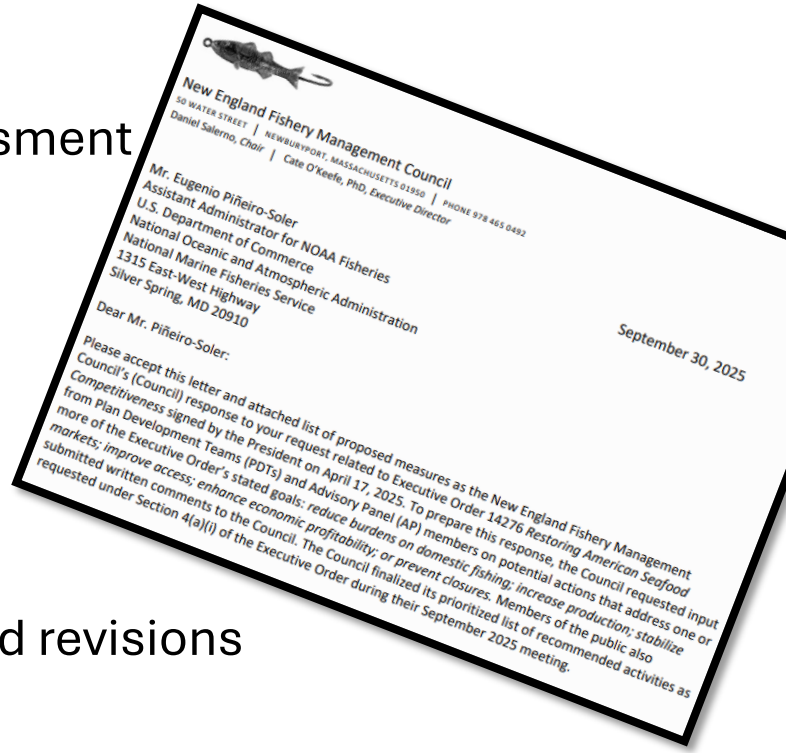
Climate Resilience

NEFMC



NEFMC Executive Order 14276 – Council Sept 2025

- Modifications to Vessel Baseline Restrictions
  - Review complete; December 2026 priority decision; NOAA priority
- Atlantic Herring Slippage Measures
  - Added to scope of Atlantic Herring Amendment 12 – April 2027 final action
- Monkfish Management Modifications
  - 2026 Listening Sessions; proposed Monkfish Research Track assessment
- Revisions to Reactive Accountability Measures
  - December 2026 priority decision
- Fishery Management Plan Revisions
  - Ongoing with new actions; Management Flexibility Omnibus
- Dogfish Gillnet Exemption Area Modifications
  - December 2026 priority decision; holistic exemption area review and revisions



New England Fishery Management Council
50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492
Daniel Salerno, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler
Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

September 30, 2025

Dear Mr. Piñeiro-Soler:

Please accept this letter and attached list of proposed measures as the New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) response to your request related to Executive Order 14276 *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness* signed by the President on April 17, 2025. To prepare this response, the Council requested input from Plan Development Teams (PDTs) and Advisory Panel (AP) members on potential actions that address one or more of the Executive Order's stated goals: *reduce burdens on domestic fishing; increase production; stabilize markets; improve access; enhance economic profitability; or prevent closures.* Members of the public also submitted written comments to the Council. The Council finalized its prioritized list of recommended activities as requested under Section 4(a)(i) of the Executive Order during their September 2025 meeting.

NEFMC Executive Order 14276 – NOAA July 2026

- Northern Edge Rotational Access for Scallop Fishery
  - December 2026 priority decision
- Scallop Permit Stacking
  - Secretarial Action – scoping hearings through 12/14/26, comments through 1/4/27
- Herring Industry Funded Monitoring – Rescind Program
  - Added to scope of Atlantic Herring Amendment 12 – April 2027 final action
- Ropeless Gear – Deprioritize
  - Paused activities
- Vessel Baseline Restrictions
  - Evaluation with MAFMC/GARFO; December 2026 priority decision
- Great South Channel – Reopen to Surfclam Fishery
  - December 2026 priority decision



New England Fishery Management Council
50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492
Daniel Salerno, Chair | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler
Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

September 30, 2026

Dear Mr. Piñeiro-Soler:

Please accept this letter as the New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) response to your July 2, 2026, letter related to Executive Order 14276 *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. The Council appreciates your acknowledgement of the work plan we developed in response to the Executive Order in September 2025 and confirmed in April 2026. As you noted, the Council conducted extensive public outreach and facilitated stakeholder engagement opportunities to develop the work plan to meet the objectives of the Executive Order, which mirror the Council's long-standing mission, including reducing burdens on domestic fishing, increasing production, stabilizing markets, improving access, and enhancing economic profitability.

NEFMC Management Flexibility Amendment

	Spring 2025	Fall 2025 Winter 2026	Spring 2026 Summer 2026	Fall 2026
Council				
Initiate	4/17/2025			
NEFMC Final Action		9/23/2025		
MAFMC Final Action		10/8/2026		
Preliminary Submission		11/6/2025		
Final Submission		2/4/2026		
Withdrawal			4/6/2026	
Resubmission			4/6/2026	
GARFO				
Final Review		1/9/2026		
Notice of Transmittal		2/4/2026		
Reg Deeming		2/13/2026		
Revised Notice of Transmittal			5/7/2026	
NOAA				
NOA			5/14/2026	
Comment Ends			7/13/2026	
Proposed Rule			7/8/2026	
Comment Ends			8/7/2026	
Approval			8/4/2026	
Final Rule				?

- Identified in Council's 9/30/25 EO response
- NOAA HQ requested revisions (remove table)
- Rapid staff response (Council and GARFO)
- NOAA Approval letter
- Current status unclear
- Challenges with NOAA HQ review, communications, rationale
- NEFMC applying measures
  - 5-year specs
  - Report requirements

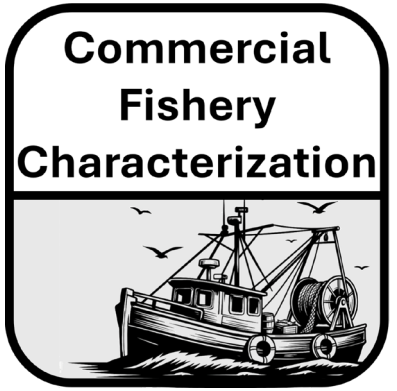
NEFMC Artificial Intelligence

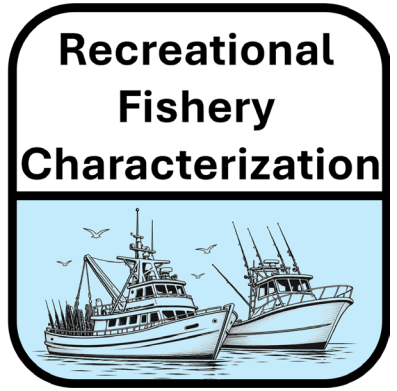
- Areas of focus:
  - Explore AI / automation tools to streamline workflows
  - Develop guidance on AI and automation
  - Identify training opportunities
- Understanding AI for productivity - benefits, caveats, risks, best practices:
  - Literature review
  - Training and webinars
  - Sample AI and automated workflows
- Drafting NEFMC AI Acceptable Use Policy

NEFMC Current AI Uses

- Current uses of AI by staff are mainly internal, but expanding

- Example use-cases:
  - Meeting scheduling, notetaking, summary generation
  - Literature and news discovery and summary
  - Data-integrated documents and presentations
  - Assistance with simple coding tasks
  - Graphic and flowchart creation
  - NRCC Stock Assessment Evaluation Report







Example AI-generated icons from Risk Policy materials

“TRACE” Framework - Implementation Guide

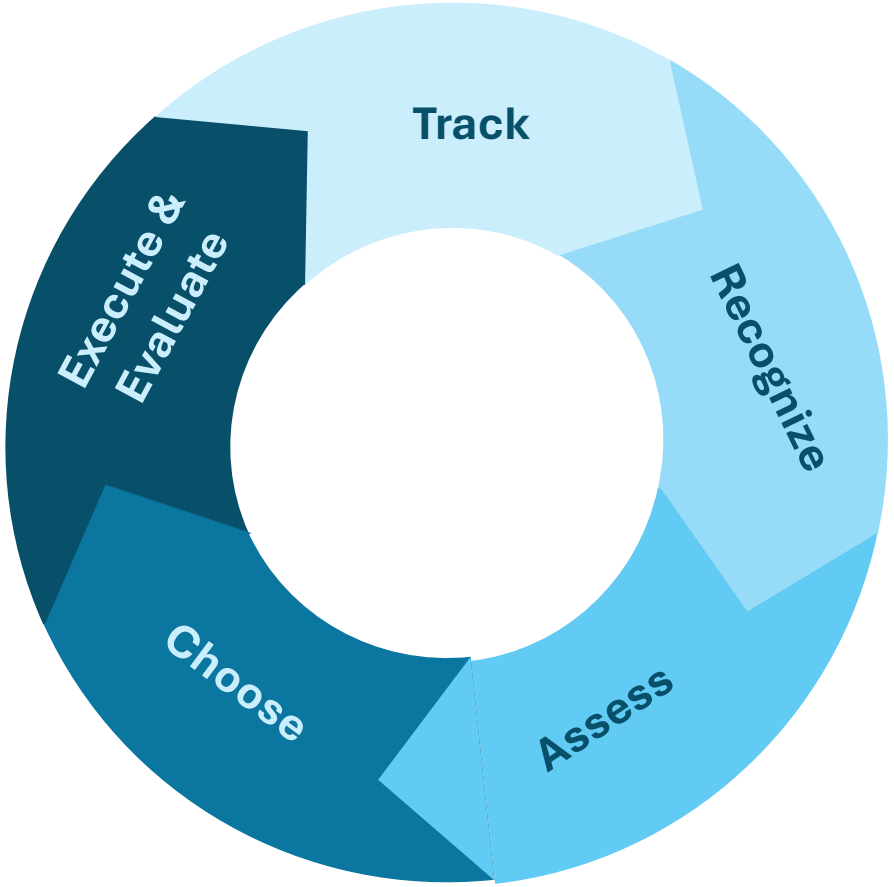
Track processes

Recognize repetitive tasks

Assess impact and feasibility

Choose and prioritize

Execute and evaluate



Adapted from North Light AI’s TRACE Framework (Aug 9, 2025)

Draft Guiding Principles for NEFMC AI Use

- **Accuracy of Information**
  - AI-generated outputs may contain inaccuracies or implicit biases
  - Independently verify all information and sources from AI-assisted workflows
- **Protection of Privacy and Non-Public Information**
  - Ensure confidentially of sensitive, confidential, or identifiable information
- **Transparency, Public Trust, and FOIA Compliance**
  - Document when and how AI has contributed to public-facing materials
  - Council may also be subject to FOIA requests or judicial review challenges
- **Scientific Integrity and Data Standards**
  - Ensure data are discoverable, machine-readable, and well-documented

Potential Next Steps for Effective Implementation

- Coordinate with NRCC Partners on use and development of AI policy
- Finalize draft AI Acceptable Use Policy
- Identify specific needs, bottlenecks, and workflows
- Arrange for and coordinate staff trainings, as needed
- Continue to develop guidance for specific tools and workflows
- Ongoing and long-term review and updates