

New England Fishery Management Council
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New England Fishery Management Council ABC Risk Policy Workshop

Dates: March 20 - 21, 2013
Location: Hawthorne Hotel, Salem, MA | <http://www.hawthornehotel.com/>
Invitees: NEFMC members, staff and Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel representatives, NOAA Fisheries and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council representatives

WHAT The New England Fishery Management Council is holding a workshop to advance the development of a comprehensive acceptable biological catch (ABC) risk policy for New England fisheries through structured and participatory discussions. The workshop is an important early step in what will be a multi-step process to develop the policy. Your participation in this workshop and engagement in this process is critical to the Council's development of a successful risk policy.

WHY Setting ABCs is a fundamental step in all fishery management plans. It determines overall limits to catches and landings and therefore has a major impact on both the health of fish stocks and the fishing industry.

A Council ABC risk policy would determine an acceptable level of risk of overfishing when that risk is associated with uncertainty. Once developed, the Council would use the policy to advise its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) about the acceptable probability of overfishing when setting ABCs. This acceptable probability would be based on an evaluation of the biological, ecological, economic, and social consequences of different risk levels. The SSC will use the Council's guidance when it determines the buffers between an overfishing level and the ABC it recommends.

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen working relationships and communication channels among members of the New England Council community
- Establish a clear understanding of the concept of risk, the relationship between risk and uncertainty, and a common language with which to frame discussions about risk and risk policy
- Illustrate the experiences of other regions in developing risk policies and articulating risk tolerances, with a focus on process, outcomes and lessons learned
- Identify the attributes, structural framework and procedural components of a successful risk policy for New England fisheries
- Facilitate a critical examination of the factors that should be incorporated in a risk policy
- Generate ideas on how the Council might move forward to develop and adopt a formal risk policy

The workshop will include speakers outside of the Council and its SSC who have experience with approaches that address risk and could be applied to fisheries management. It will provide Council members and others with a common understanding of the concepts needed to develop a risk policy. It also will provide an opportunity for communications between the invitees and others on management and science issues that relate to the ABC setting process.