

NMFS Update
to
Council Executive Directors
January 2026

Framework for Narrowing the Scope of NMFS Management and Science



NOAA
FISHERIES

Goals

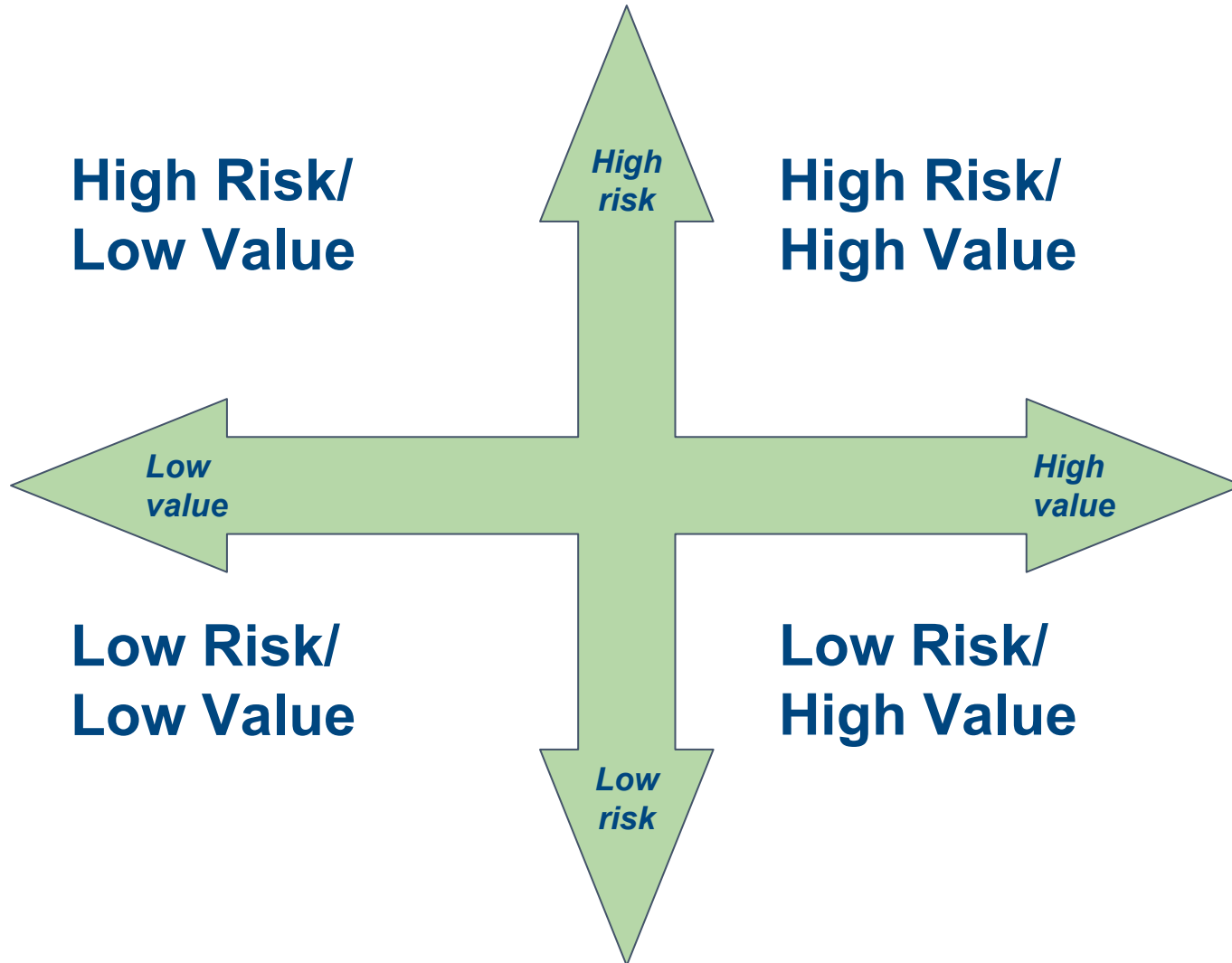
- Provide overview of finalized **Risk/Value Matrix Process** for narrowing the scope of fisheries management and science
 - Highlight importance of co-development across science and management



Baseline Assumptions

- We cannot continue to manage the 500+ stocks/stock complexes currently in FMPs
- There will be impacts to NMFS staff, Councils, fisheries, and fishing communities to changing how we manage our fisheries
- We want to balance national consistency and interoperability with regional flexibility while maintaining accountability
- Creation and application of regional R/V matrices must be co-developed with Science Center, Regional Office and Councils (i.e., *Scientists are involved in the discussions regarding management changes. Managers are involved in the discussions regarding science changes*)

May 2025 Prioritization of Stocks /Complexes for Science and Management



Value Categories

- Commercial
- Recreational
- Social

Risk Categories

- Ratio of Catch:ACL
- Biomass/ Rebuilding Status
- Ecosystem Role
- Current / Forecast Ecosystem & Socio-economic conditions

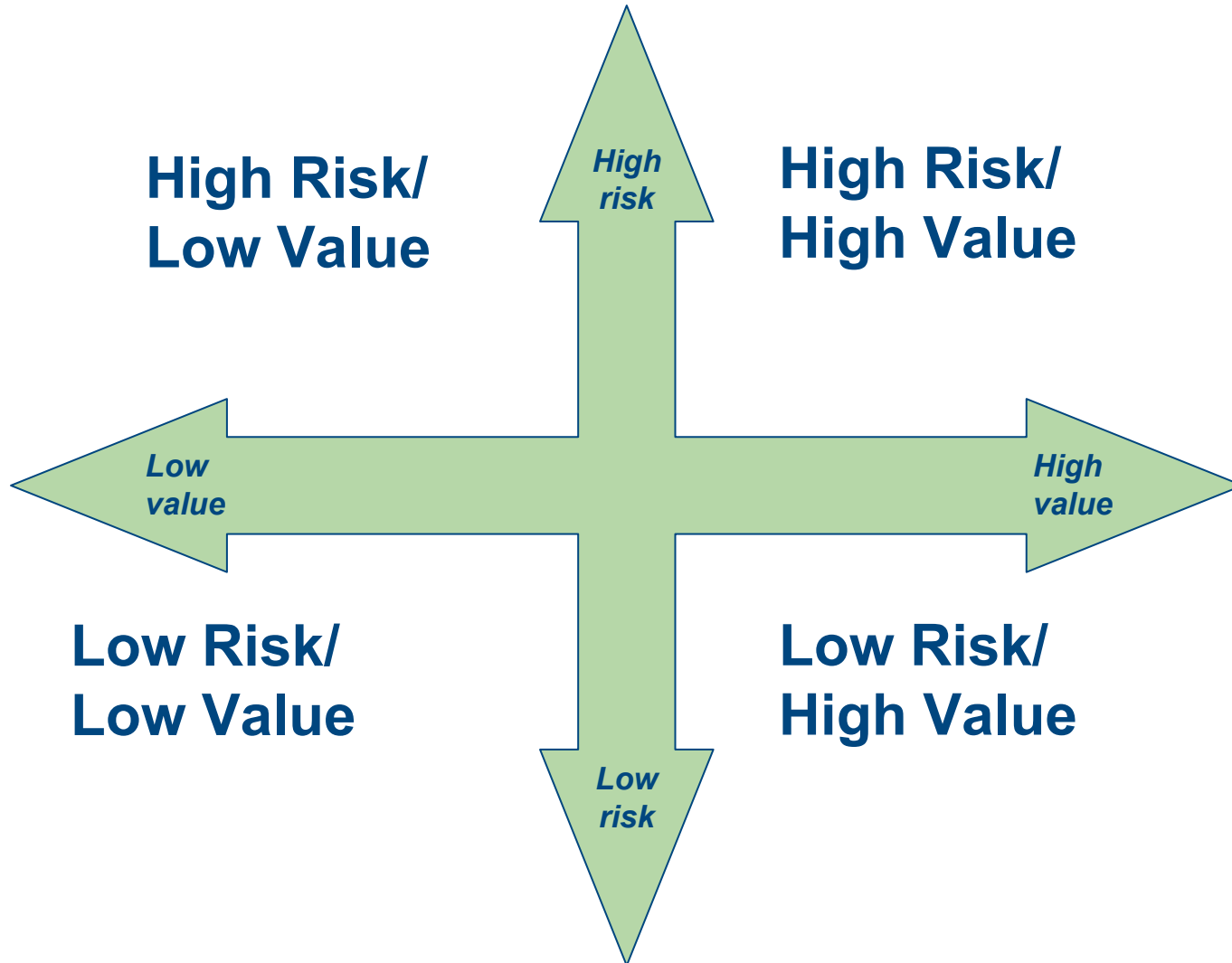
*These proposed categories are revised from SAIP importance factors and may need to be refined.

WC Pilot – Lessons Learned

- The pilot process was useful.
- Beginning the process with a discussion and clear statement of objectives and management options to consider could improve outcomes.
- Existing data used to calculate risk and value was imperfect, but the simplistic matrix provided a visual presentation of the results that spurred a deeper discussion.
 - It was hard to not focus on perfecting data. It was helpful to clarify that the data is for initial matrix but species/fisheries can be moved around with justification.
- The pilot process demonstrated it can build a community with good, open, honest discussions about how NMFS and the Councils can move forward to execute its mission in a realistic manner.



Current Prioritization of Stocks/Complexes for Management



Value Categories

- Commercial
- Recreational
- Social

Risk Categories

- Relative stock status - B/Btarget
- Susceptibility to env. phenomenon (CVA & PSA)
- Proven impact on ecosystem
- Effectiveness of management - considered at end

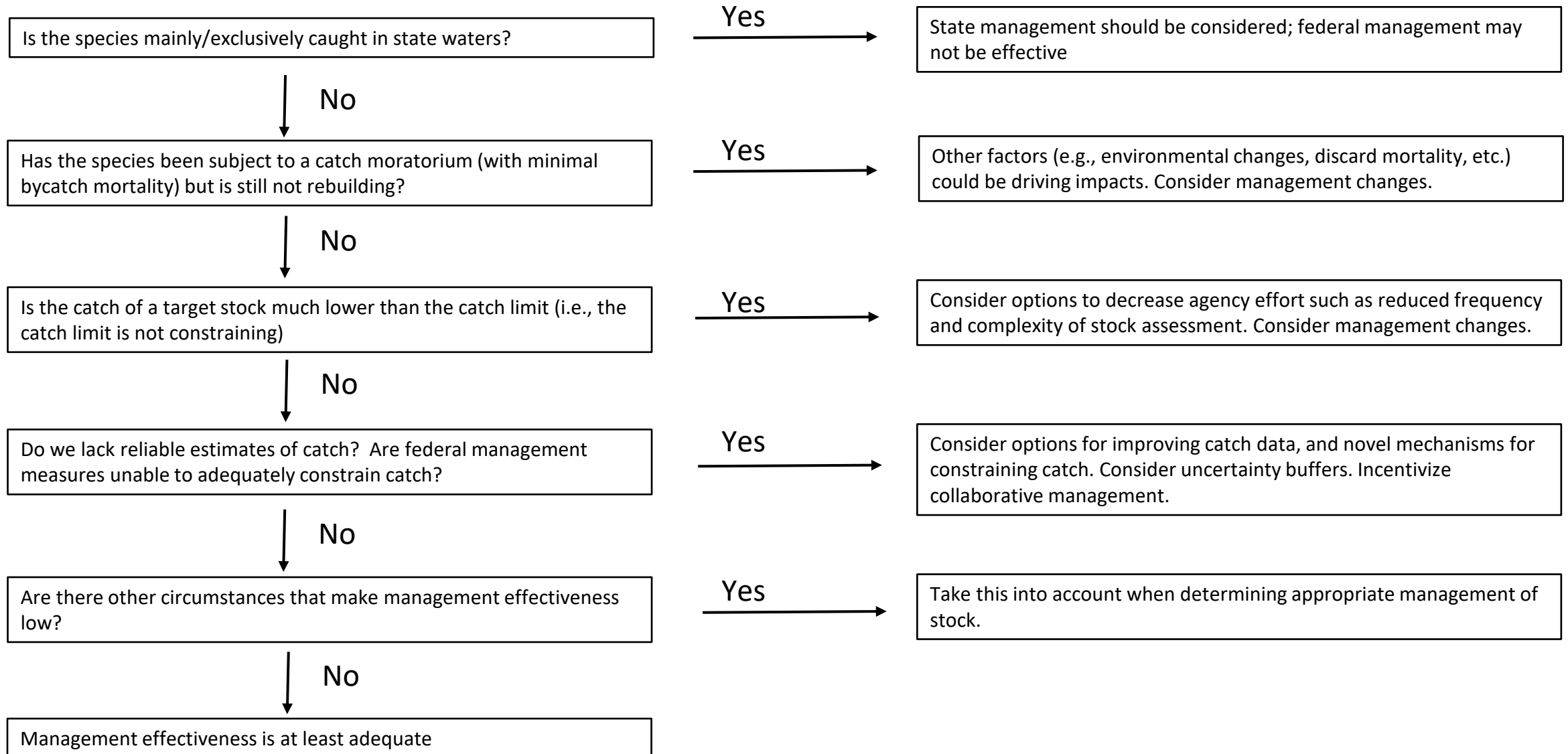
9 Steps in applying the matrix (steps 1-4)

1. Articulate objectives:
 - a. Narrow scope of management and science to align with existing human and fiscal resources
 - b. Reproducible and consistent across country
 - c. Co-develop with science and managers
2. Using matrix regional WGs (RO, SC, and Council staff) acquire data, quantify risk and value where possible, qualitative evaluation where needed
 - a. Do review on fishery or stock basis (whatever makes most sense -with a default of by stock)
 - b. Value will encompass commercial and recreational; cultural/subsistence value will be included later in process
3. Place stocks/fishery in R/V matrix. ID potential changes to species management (e.g., remove from FMP, change to EC species, put into complex, etc)
 - a. Incorporate already completed triage, where appropriate
4. Once stocks/fisheries distributed on matrix, review and adjust for:
 - a. Does the subsistence or cultural value of a stock or fishery indicate it should be in a different quadrat? If yes, provide explanation and move
 - b. Does the international management of a stock or fishery indicate it should be in a different quadrat? If yes, provide explanation and move
 - c. If stock or fishery is moved from one quadrat to another (e.g., more recent information is available), provide explanation and move
 - d. Management effectiveness (apply decision tree)

9 Steps in applying the matrix (steps 5-9)

5. WGs run stock assessment prioritization on results for those single spp stocks needing individual ACLs and identify analytical approach for stock complexes
6. Calculate data requirements for proposed analytical approaches, e.g., EBFM cap, target data levels for each stock/complex (consider objective level and threshold level)
7. Run a data collection prioritization process to identify how best to meet objectives and thresholds
8. Submit results to HQ
9. 2 concurrent actions:
 - a. Combine regional matrices into national matrix
 - b. Councils and RO identify FMP/database/etc changes needed to meet suggested management changes via Council process.
 - i. Where relevant, consider other changes to simplify management to include with process.
 - ii. Discuss plans for calculating/monitoring/implementing total ecosystem removals.
 - iii. ID priorities and assign staff for making management changes

Draft Decision Tree to Consider the Effectiveness of Stock Management



Timeline and High Level Next Steps

- Process has been initiated
- RO, SC, and Council WGs apply matrix to stocks under their jurisdiction; concurrently develop national prioritization process
- Results of matrix provided back to NMFS and finalize national process by **April 3, 2026** **REVISED TO JUNE 30**
- Spring 2026—regional outputs of matrix consolidated into one national matrix
- Summer 2026—national matrix used to assess resource priorities and alignment to inform FY27 planning