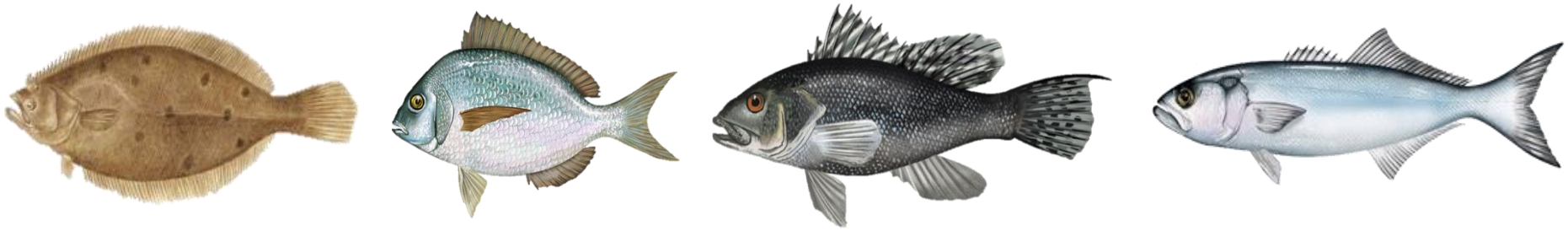
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish

Recreational Measures Setting Process Framework/Addenda



ISFMP Policy Board and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

October 24, 2024

Objectives

- **Review**
  - Background
  - Options under consideration
  - Other topics
  - Next steps
- **Policy Board: Approve document for public comment**
- **Council: Approve range of options**

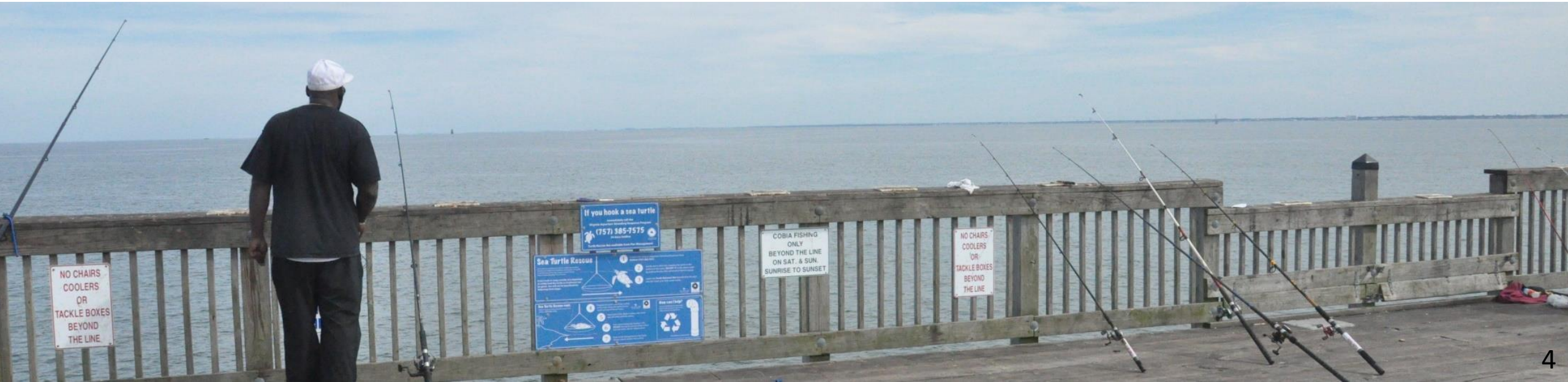
Statement of the Problem

- Many challenges when setting rec. measures:
  - Uncertainty and variability in the rec. catch estimates.
  - Need to change measures frequently based on those estimates, often in a direction perceived as contrary to stock status.

- Interim approach to address these challenges (Percent Change Approach) will expire at the end of 2025.

Goal of Framework/Addenda

- Consider the appropriate process for setting recreational measures for 2026 and beyond.
  - The Percent Change Approach will sunset at the end of 2025.



Changes Since Last Meeting

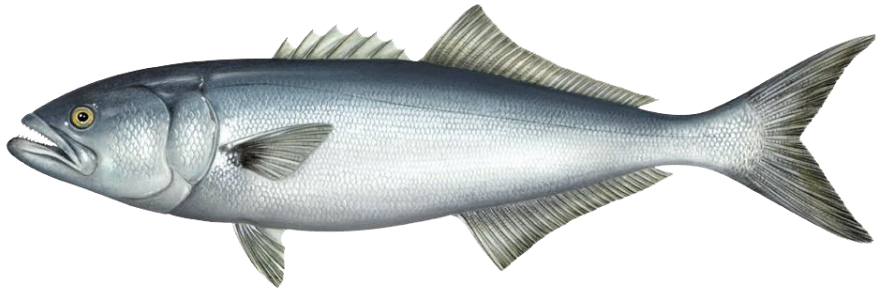
- Addition of Option D (Modified Percent Change Approach Using Rec. ACT and Catch)
- Revisions to Option E (Biomass and Fishing Mortality Matrix Approach – previously Biomass Based Matrix Approach)
- Additional language on management uncertainty
- Clarification of accountability measures (AMs) under all options
- Further FMAT/PDT discussion of impacts to the commercial sector

OPTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Overfished Stocks and Rebuilding Plans

- None of the options in the document replace rebuilding measures.

- Bluefish is currently under a rebuilding plan. Any measures for bluefish must continue to comply with the rebuilding plan.



Option A: No Action

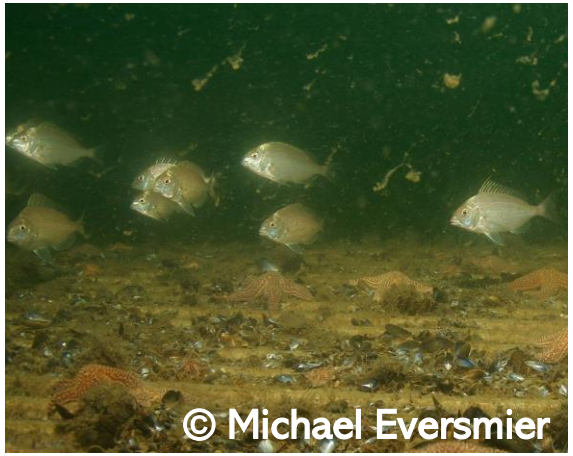
- If no action taken, the Percent Change Approach will sunset and the previous FMP requirements will be used for setting 2026 measures.
  - **Measures must aim to achieve, but not exceed the RHL.**
  - **Measures are set for one year at a time.**

Option B: Percent Change Approach

Future RHL vs estimated harvest	Biomass vs target level (SSB/SSB_{MSY})	Change in Harvest
2-yr avg RHL is **greater than** the upper bound of the harvest estimate CI (harvest expected to be lower than the RHL)	**Very high** (> 150%)	**Liberalization** % = difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 40%**
	High (>=100% & <=150%)	**Liberalization** % = difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 20%**
	Low (<100%)	**Liberalization: 10%**
2-yr avg RHL is **within** harvest estimate CI (harvest expected to be close to the RHL)	**Very high** (> 150%)	**Liberalization: 10%**
	High (>=100% & <=150%)	**No liberalization or reduction:** 0%
	Low (<100%)	**Reduction: 10%**
2-yr avg RHL is **less than** the lower bound of the harvest estimate CI (harvest expected to exceed the RHL)	**Very high** (> 150%)	**Reduction: 10%**
	High (>=100% & <=150%)	**Reduction** % = difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 20%**
	Low (<100%)	**Reduction** % = difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 40%**

AMs under Options A-D

- Reactive accountability measures (AMs) triggered when:
  - Most recent 3 yr avg. rec. catch exceeds avg. rec. ACL for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass
  - Most recent single year rec. catch exceeds rec. ACL for bluefish



AMs under Options A and B

Biomass Level	AM Response
Overfished, under rebuilding plan, or unknown stock status	• **Payback exact overage amount**
At least 50% of the target, but less than 100%, and not in a rebuilding plan	• If only ACL exceeded: **Adjust rec. measures** • If $F>F_{MSY}$: **Scaled payback** Payback amount = (overage amount) * ($B_{MSY} - B$) / ½ B_{MSY}
Above the biomass target	• **Adjustments to rec. measures will be made**

Modified Percent Change Approaches

Option C: Modified Percent Change Approach Using RHL and Harvest

Option D: Modified Percent Change Approach Using the Recreational ACT and Catch

Modified Percent Change Approaches

1. Add “around the target" biomass category
2. More status quo outcomes
3. Treat overfished stocks separately

Option C: Modified Percent Change Approach Using RHL and Harvest

Future RHL vs estimated harvest	Biomass vs. target level	Change in harvest
2-yr avg RHL is **greater than** the upper bound of harvest estimate CI (harvest expected to be lower than the RHL)	**Very High** (≥ 150%)	**Liberalization** %= difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 40%**
	High (≥ 110% & < 150%)	**Liberalization** %= difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 20%**
	Around the Target (≥ 90% & < 110%)	**Liberalization: 10%**
	Low (≥ 50% & < 90%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0%
2-yr avg RHL is **within** harvest estimate CI (harvest expected to be close to the RHL)	**Very High to Low** (< 50%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0%
2-yr avg RHL is **less than** the lower bound of harvest estimate CI (harvest is expected to exceed the RHL)	**Very High** (≥ 150%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0% (unless AM triggered)
	High (≥ 110% & < 150%)	**Reduction: 10%**
	Around the Target (≥ 90% & < 110%)	**Reduction** %= difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 20%**
	Low (≥ 50% & < 90%)	**Reduction** %= difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL, **not to exceed 40%**

Overfished (<50% of target)	No liberalizations allowed. Reduction %= difference between harvest estimate and 2-yr avg. RHL. To be replaced with rebuilding plan measures as soon as possible

Option D: Modified Percent Change Approach Using ACT and Catch

Future ACT vs estimated catch	Biomass vs. target level	Change in catch
2-yr avg ACT is **greater than** the upper bound of catch estimate CI (catch expected to be lower than the ACT)	**Very High** (≥ 150%)	**Liberalization** %= difference between catch estimate and 2-yr avg. ACT, **not to exceed 40%**
	High (≥ 110% & < 150%)	**Liberalization** %= difference between catch estimate and 2-yr avg. ACT, **not to exceed 20%**
	Around the Target (≥ 90% & < 110%)	**Liberalization: 10%**
	Low (≥ 50% & < 90%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0%
2-yr avg ACT is **within** catch estimate CI (catch expected to be close to the ACT)	**Very High to Low** (< 50%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0%
2-yr avg ACT is **less than** the lower bound of catch estimate CI (catch is expected to exceed the ACT)	**Very High** (≥ 150%)	**No liberalization or reduction**: 0% (unless AM triggered)
	High (≥ 110% & < 150%)	**Reduction: 10%**
	Around the Target (≥ 90% & < 110%)	**Reduction** %= difference between catch estimate and 2-yr avg. ACT, **not to exceed 20%**
	Low (≥ 50% & < 90%)	**Reduction** %= difference between catch estimate and 2-yr avg. ACT, **not to exceed 40%**

Overfished (<50% of target)	No liberalizations allowed. Reduction %= difference between catch estimate and 2-yr avg. ACT. To be replaced with rebuilding plan measures as soon as possible

Accountability Measures Under Options C+D

Sub-Options C-1 and D-1: Same as current AMs but with modifications to align biomass categories and a clarification.

Biomass Level	AM Response
Overfished, under rebuilding plan, or unknown stock status	• Payback exact overage amount
At least 50% of the target, but less than **90%** ~~100%~~, and not in a rebuilding plan	• If only ACL exceeded: Adjust rec. measures • If $F>F_{MSY}$: Scaled payback Payback amount = (overage amount) * (B_{MSY} – B) / ½ B_{MSY}
~~Above~~ **At least 90% of** the biomass target	• Adjustments to rec. measures ~~will~~ **may** be made • **If liberalization allowed, the scale of the liberalization may be reduced to account for the AM.**

Accountability Measures Under Options C+D

Sub-Options C-2 and D-2: Same as C-1 and D-1 but with additional consideration of if overfishing is occurring.

Biomass Level	AM Response
Overfished, under rebuilding plan, or unknown stock status	• Payback exact overage amount
At least 50% of the target, but less than **90%** ~~100%~~, and not in a rebuilding plan	• If only ACL exceeded: ~~Adjust rec. measures~~ **No AM response needed** • If $F>F_{MSY}$: Scaled payback Payback amount = (overage amount) * (B_{MSY} – B) / ½ B_{MSY}
~~Above~~ **At least 90% of** the biomass target	~~• Adjustments to rec. measures will be made~~ • **If only ACL exceeded: No AM response needed** • **If $F>F_{MSY}$: Adjustments to measures may be made. If liberalization allowed, the scale of the liberalization may be reduced to account for the AM.**

Option E: Biomass and Fishing Mortality Matrix Approach

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Option E:
Biomass and Fishing Mortality Matrix Approach

- Fishing mortality compared to the threshold that defines overfishing, as defined by the most recent stock assessment
  - *Overfishing is NOT occurring*
  - *Overfishing is occurring*
- Additional consideration given to:
  - Degree of overfishing if stock's biomass is around or above the target (5% threshold)
  - Whether the recreational annual catch limit (ACL) was exceeded in the previous year

Option E: Biomass and Fishing Mortality Matrix Approach

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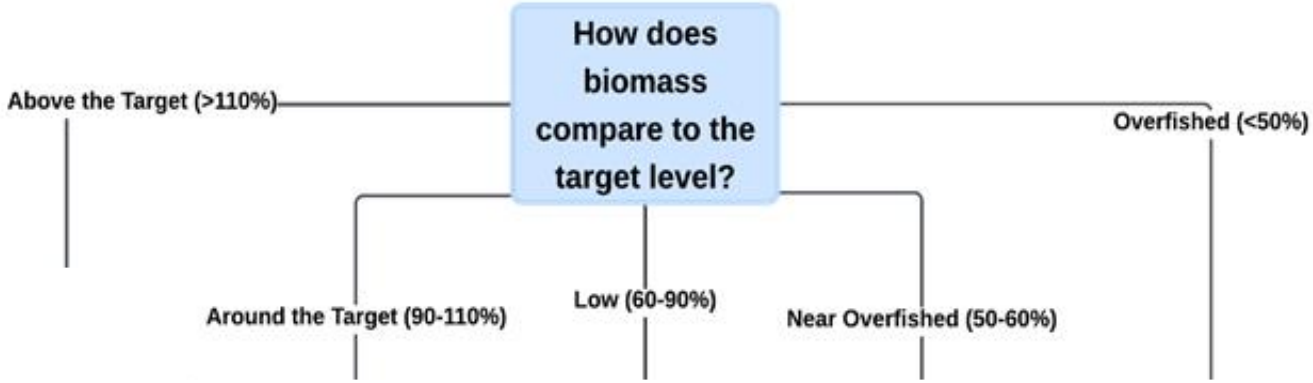

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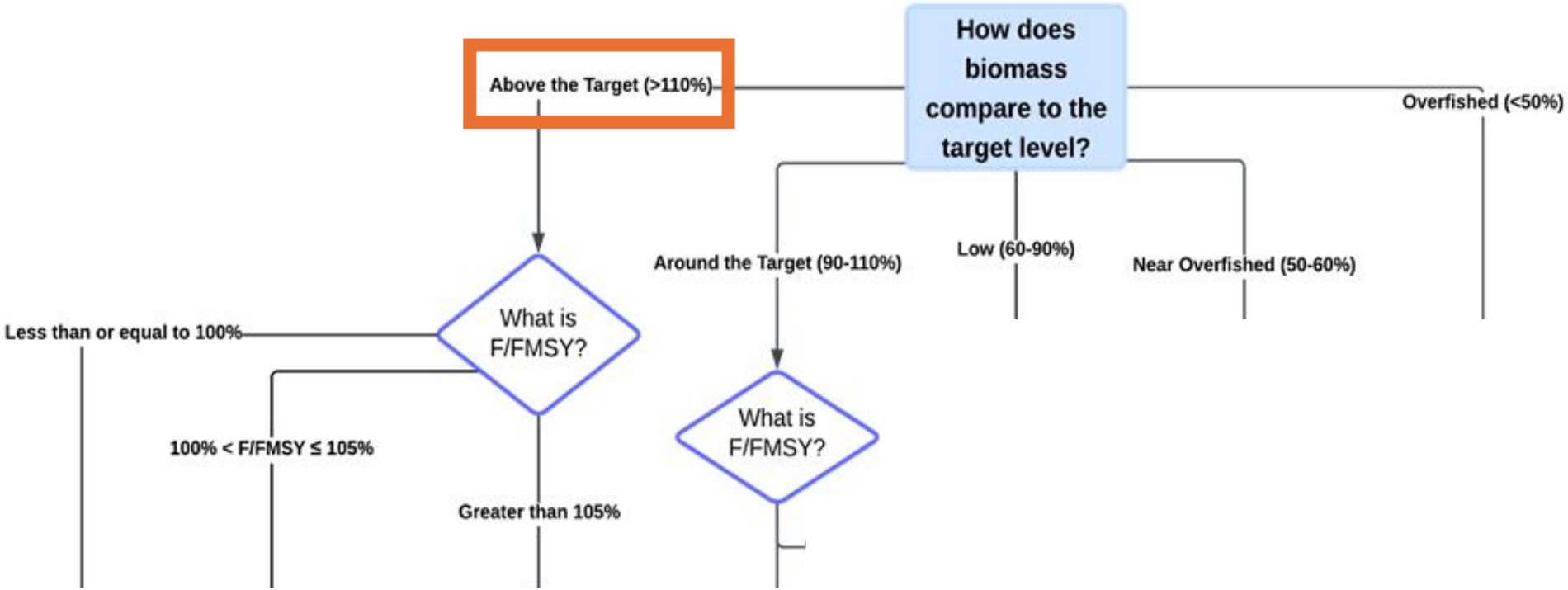

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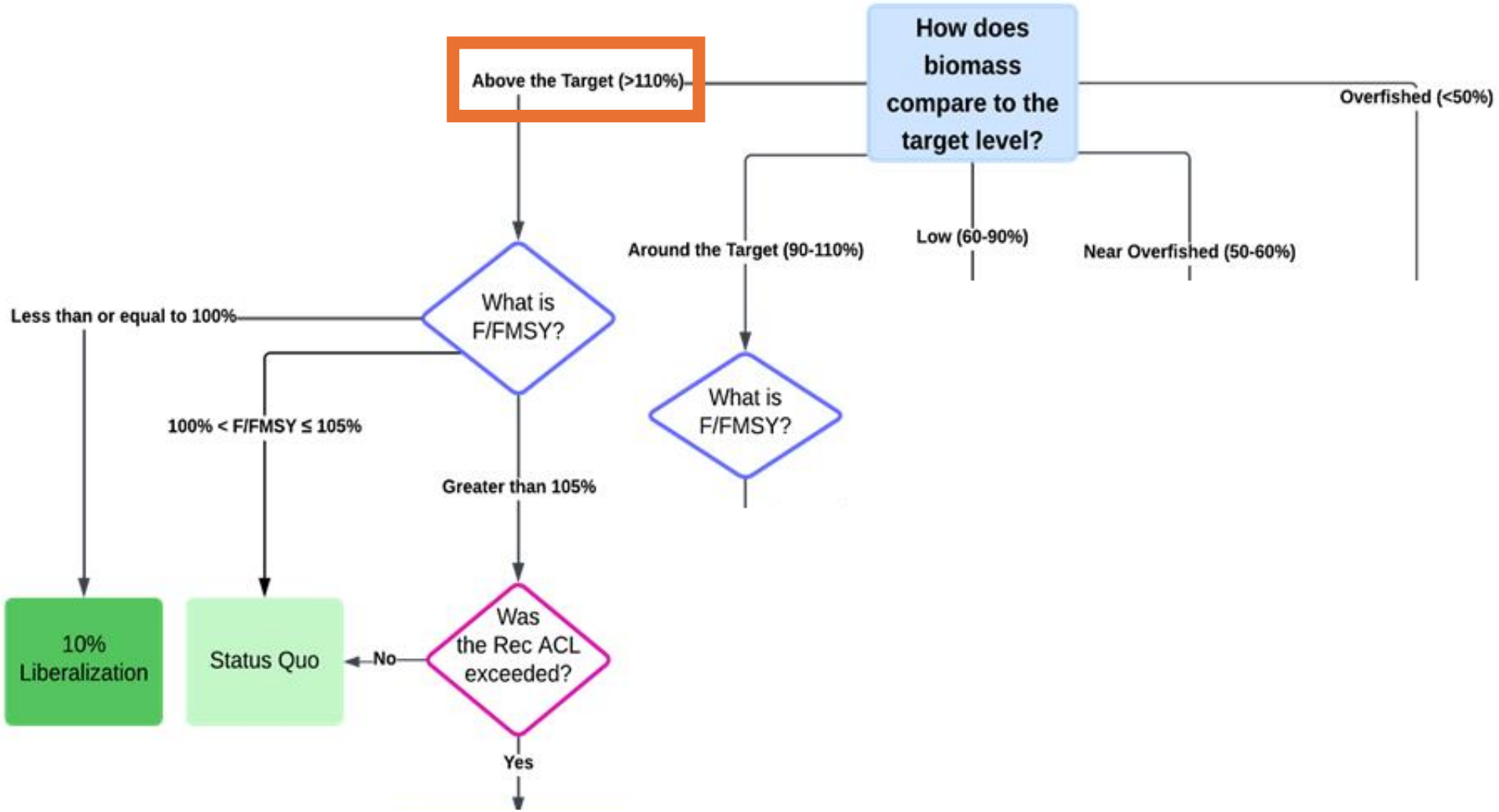

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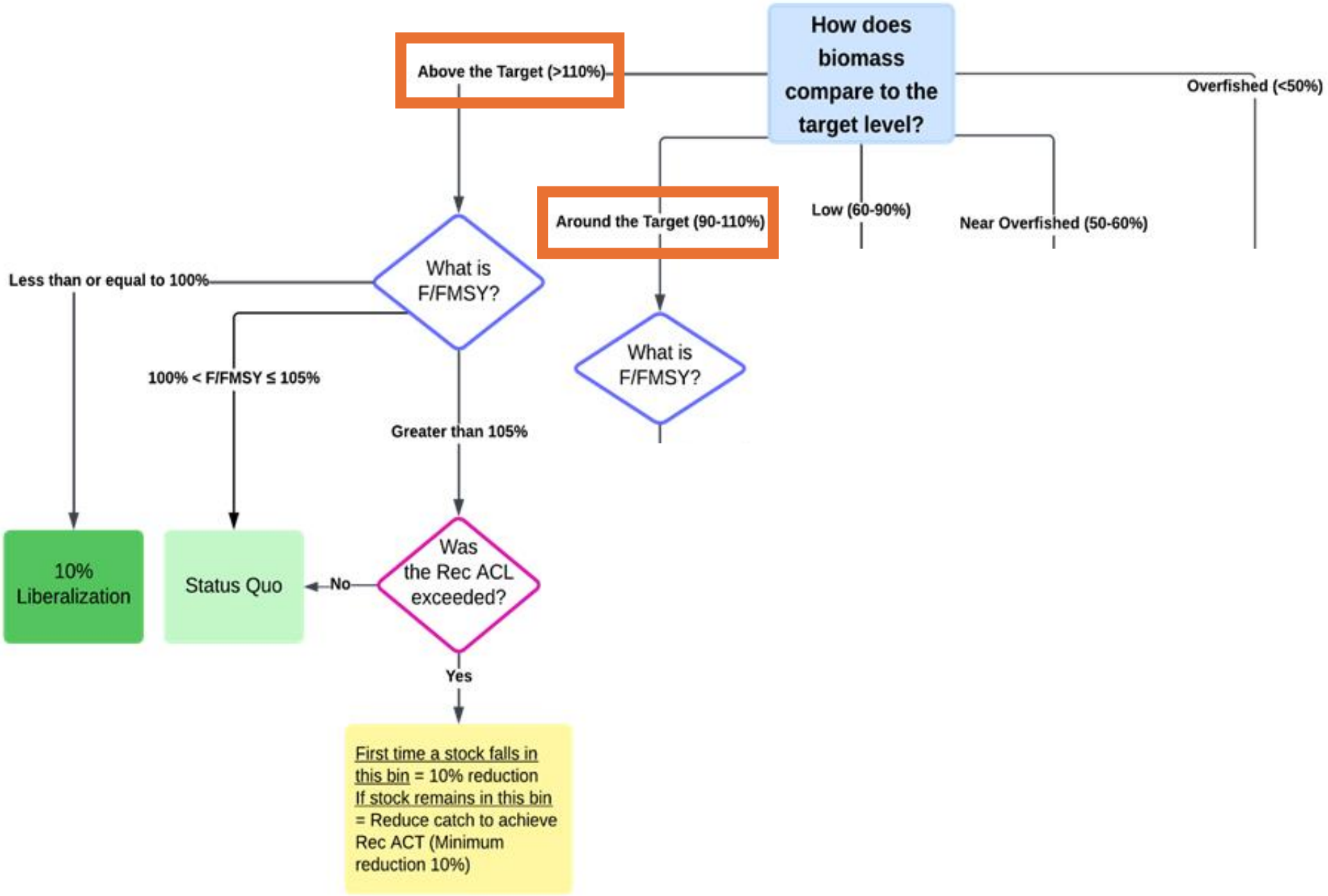

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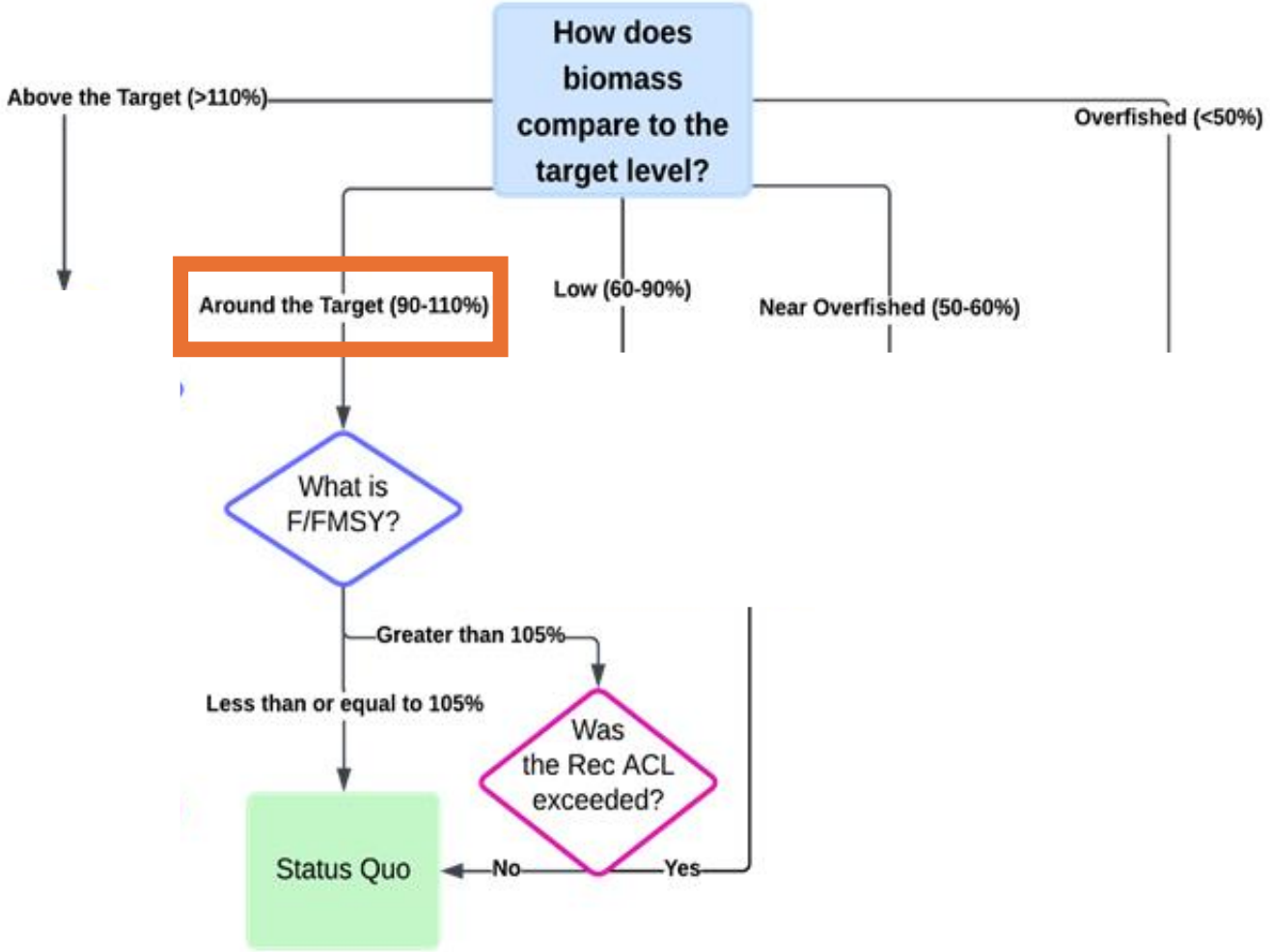

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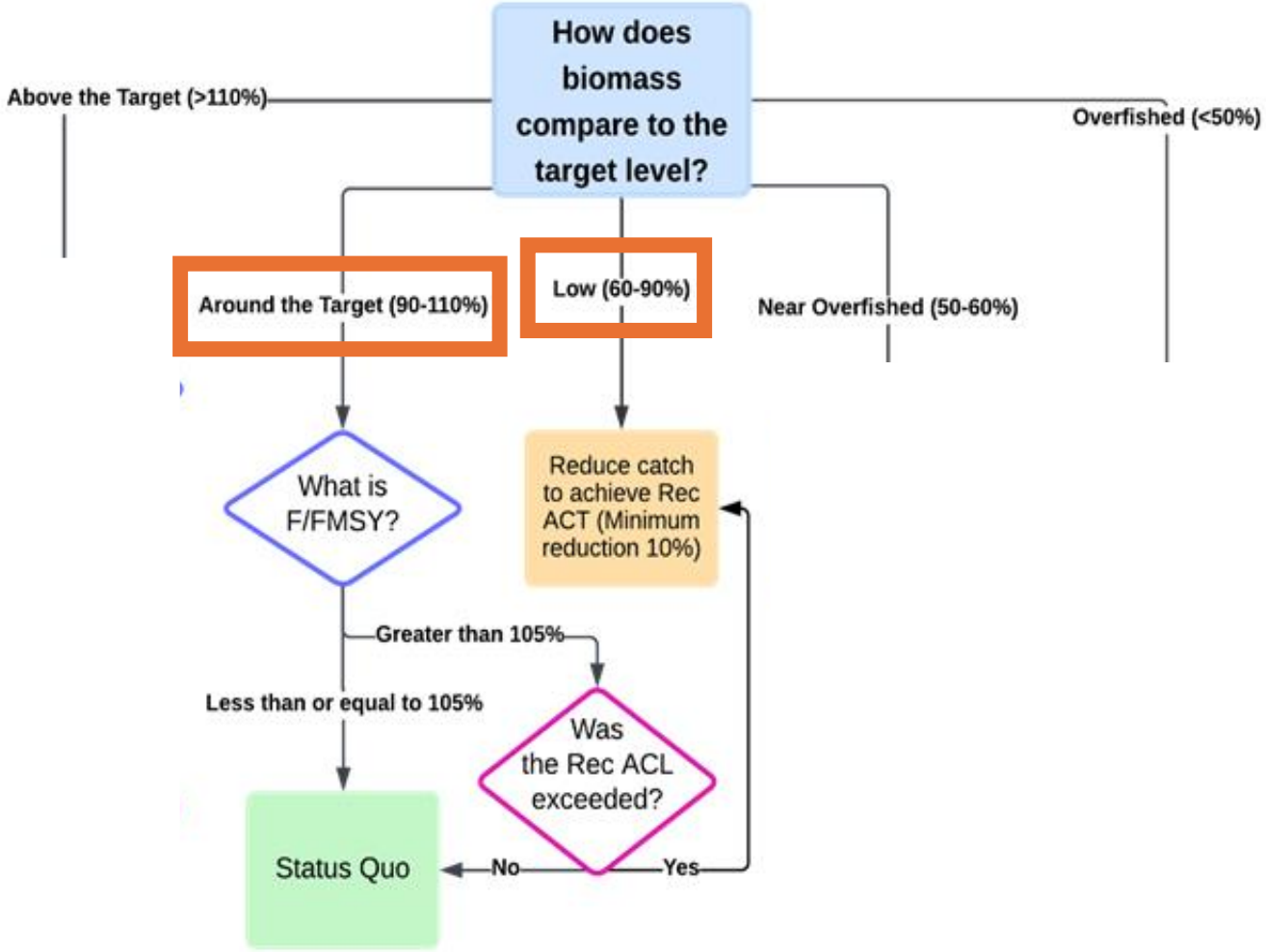

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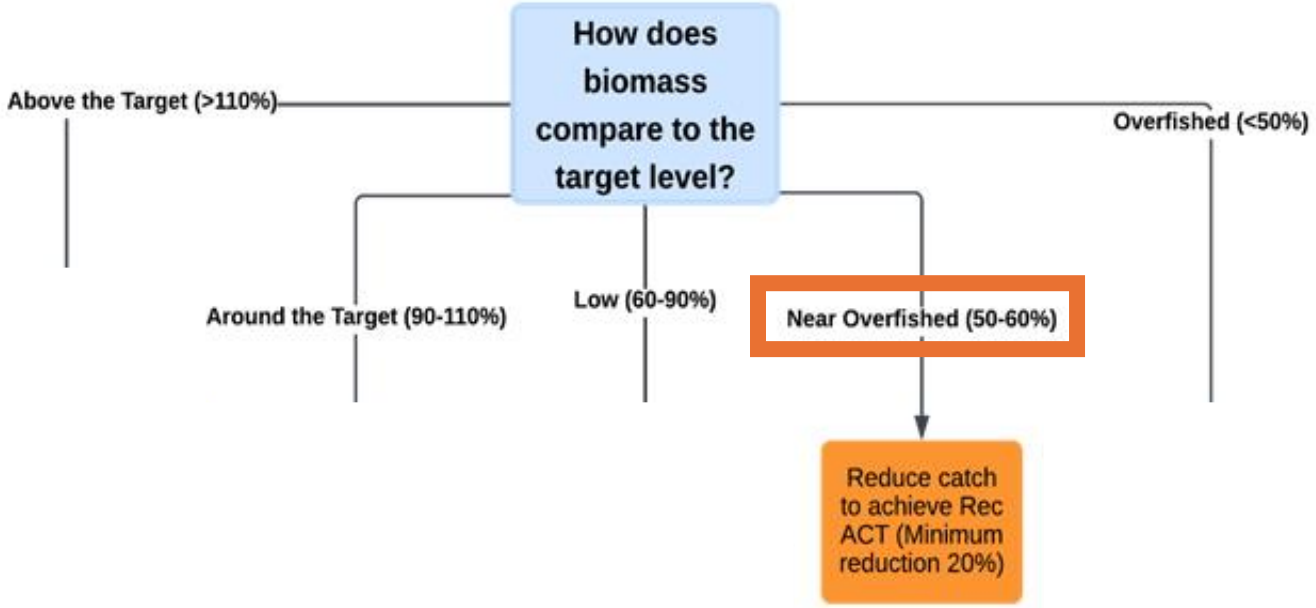

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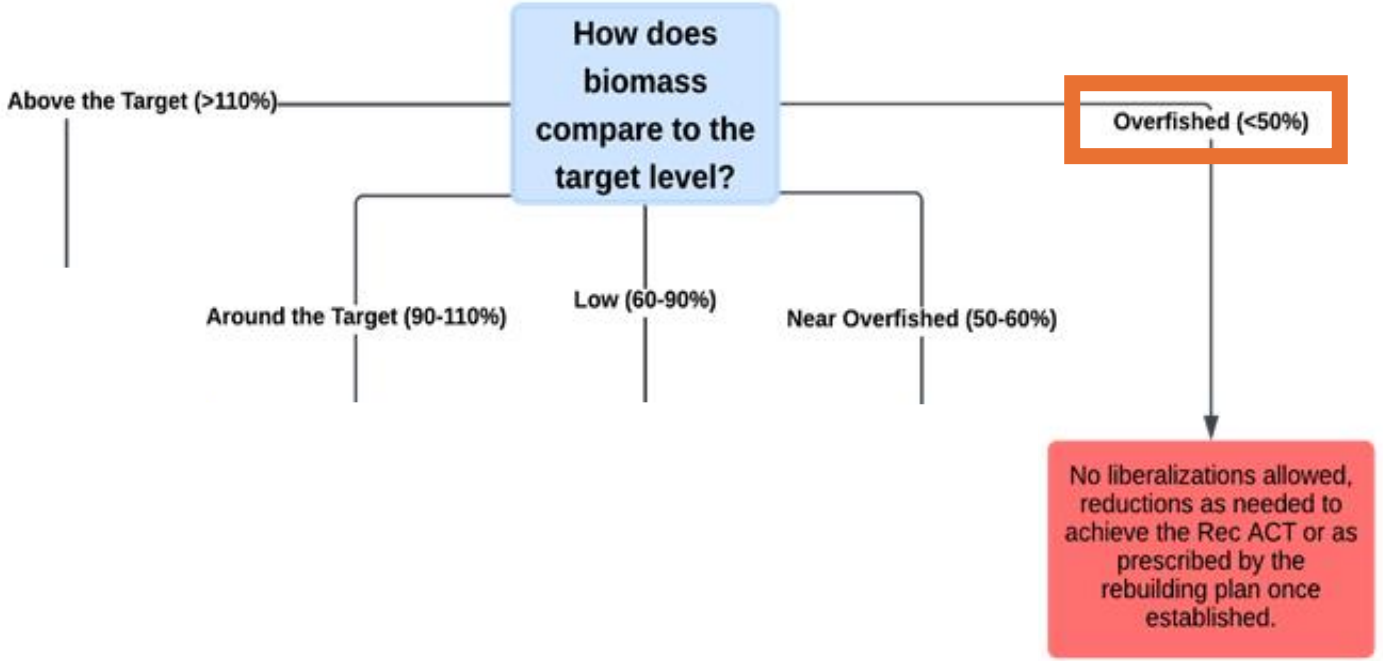

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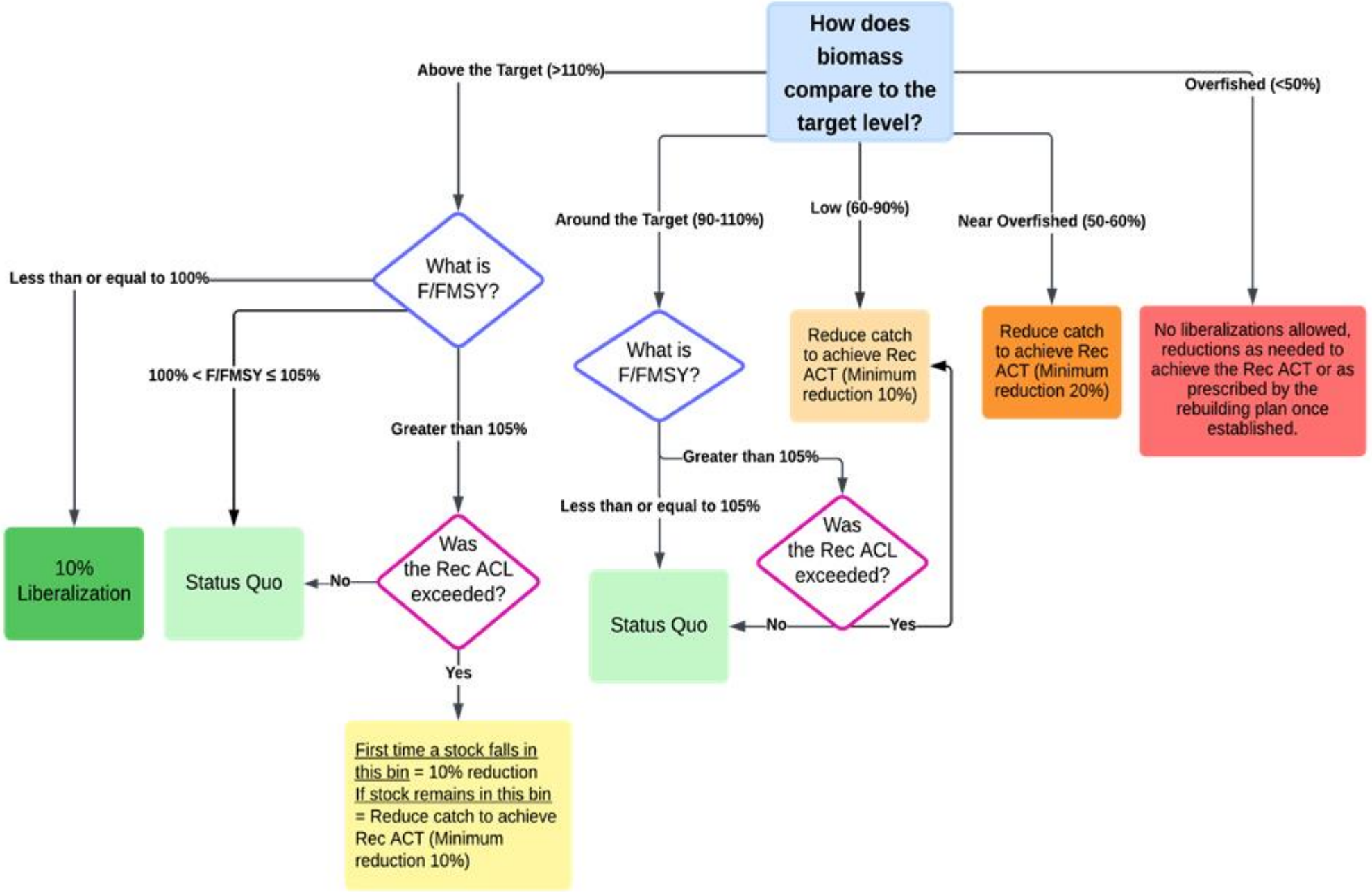
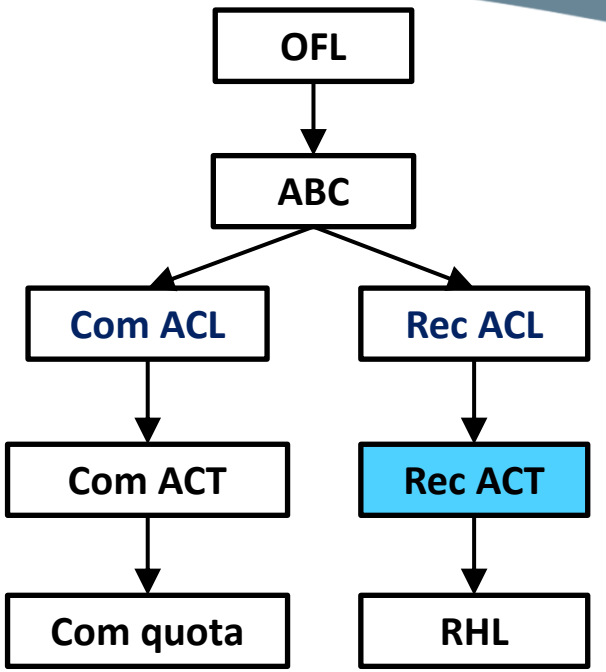


OTHER TOPICS

Management Uncertainty

- ACT is set less than or equal to the ACL to account for mgmt uncertainty.
- None of the options change process for setting the ACT.



- Under all options, Policy Board and Council may set more restrictive rec. measures than would otherwise be required to address mgmt. uncertainty or concerns about long-term sustainability of the stock.

Impacts to the Commercial Sector

- This action:
  - Does **not** consider changes to commercial management
  - Does **not** consider transferring quota between commercial and recreational sectors or modify allocations
  - Is **not** intended to lead to future revisions to the commercial/recreational allocations
  - Does **not** change process for setting commercial/recreational ACLs, ACTs, and landings limits

Impacts to the Commercial Sector

- SSC review considered potential indirect impacts to the commercial sector.
  - Setting of rec measures **does not** directly impact ABC recommendations.
  - If the frequency of ABC overages increases, SSC ***may*** assume ABC overages in the projections that inform future ABCs.
  - An assumption of ABC overages may lead to a reduction in the ABCs, catch and landing limits for both sectors.
  - SSC did not consider AMs as AMs were not fully developed at time of review.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

Oct 2024	• **Council/Policy Board approve final range of alternatives and draft addenda for public comment/hearings**
Nov 2024 - Feb 2025	• Public comment period and public hearings
March 2025	• FMAT/PDT and AP meetings to review public comments and provide input prior to final action
April 2025	• **Council/Policy Board review public comments and approve Framework/Addenda for implementation**
April - late 2025	• Finalize framework/addenda documents • Federal rulemaking
Late 2025 or early 2026	• Effective date of implemented changes

Discussion

Policy Board: Consider approval of Draft Addenda for public comment.

Council: Approve range of options.

Options Under Consideration:

Option A: No Action

Option B: Percent Change Approach (as implemented)

Option C: Modified Percent Change Approach Using RHL and Harvest

Option D: Modified Percent Change Approach Using Rec. ACT and Catch

Option E: Biomass and Fishing Mortality Matrix Approach