



## New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 4, 2021  
**TO:** Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)  
**FROM:** Tom Nies, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** **Initial discussion of candidate ABC control rules the Council could consider in the Multispecies (Groundfish) FMP**

#### Background

The Council identified a 2021 work priority to revise the ABC control rule used in the Multispecies (Groundfish) FMP. Several investigations have been completed in recent years that help inform this topic, and the SSC has provided valuable input on various catch strategies used in this region over the years. Most of the recent effort focused on stocks with analytic assessments. As the Council prepares to possibly revise the ABC control rule in the Multispecies FMP it would be very useful to get initial guidance on ABC control rules that would be good candidates for consideration.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Which ABC control rules does the SSC recommend the Council consider for the Multispecies FMP?
  - a. Should the rule apply to all stocks, or should different rules be considered for stocks with various life histories?
  - b. Should the rule be proscriptive, or is flexibility needed?
  - c. Should the rule be different for stocks under a rebuilding plan, or for stocks experiencing overfishing?
  - d. Should the rule vary based on the level stock assessment uncertainty, i.e., retrospective patterns, uncertainty in fishery independent or dependent data, uncertainty caused by environmental trends or predation, uncertainty in estimating fishing mortality or spawning stock biomass?
  - e. Are there control rules that could better account for environmental trends and ecosystems considerations?
  - f. Are there control rules that could address the multispecies nature of this plan? Catch limits for some stocks are more constraining than others and this can be challenging.

## **Information**

- 1.1 Presentation: Council Staff – Review current ABC control rule, SSC input to date, and issues to consider (Dr. Jamie Cournane).
- 1.2 Memo from Council Staff to SSC re Groundfish ABC control rule and issues to consider (June 4, 2021)
- 1.3 The Council’s Risk Policy Road Map (2016), that includes the Risk Policy Statement and Implementation Plan, see pp. 4-5 and 10-12. Available at:  
[https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/2\\_Risk-Policy-Road-Map\\_No\\_Implementation.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/2_Risk-Policy-Road-Map_No_Implementation.pdf)
- 1.4 National Standard 1 Guidelines – Optimum Yield (Section 600.310 (j) Council actions to address overfishing and rebuilding for stocks and stock complexes). Available at:  
[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=71b8c6026001cb90e4b0925328dce685&mc=true&node=se50.12.600\\_1310&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=71b8c6026001cb90e4b0925328dce685&mc=true&node=se50.12.600_1310&rgn=div8)