

Groundfish Advisory Panel Meeting

Portland, Maine

November 12, 2015

Meeting Motions

Framework Adjustment 55

Motion 1: Soule/Canastra

The GAP votes to express no confidence (i.e., volatility in highs and lows, lack of stability) in the latest round of groundfish stock assessments.

Rationale: The results of the latest round of stock assessments are not only divorced from the reality of what fishermen are seeing on the water, they are now increasingly at odds with prior assessments and show decreasing predictive ability.

Motion 1 **carried** 7/0/1.

Motion 2: Soule/Raymond

The GAP requests that the Groundfish Committee recommend that the current assessment process be modified to enhance the GAP's role in the assessment process.

Rationale: For example, the GAP would convene prior to the SSC meeting to provide information for the SSC to consider when recommending OFLs/ABCs. The example of the SSC's discussion in 2014 of the GOM cod ABC was identified as a time when the GAP was asked for additional input.

Motion 2 **carried** 8/0/0.

Motion 3: Odell/Soule

The GAP strongly emphasizes the need for improved assessments rather than more assessments, which is being followed under the Operational Assessment ("turning of the crank") process.

Rationale: The GAP provided examples of what improved assessments means to them: better model diagnostics, improved model residuals, less retrospective concerns, using improved data such as industry-based information (CPUE, surveys, industry observations and experience), and incorporating ecosystem dynamics.

Motion 3 **carried** 8/0/0.

Motion 4: Raymond/Odell

The GAP recommends to the Groundfish Committee that the Council delay final decision on the witch flounder ABC until the SSC can take input from the industry on the impacts of the ABC that is currently recommended.

Rationale: The GAP does not want to the delay final action on FW 55, but the GAP wants further discussion on the witch flounder ABC. One suggestion was that the witch flounder ABC might be adjusted through an Emergency Action during the 2016 fishing year.

Motion 4 **carried** 8/0/0.

Motion 5: Raymond/Parker

The GAP recommends that the Groundfish Committee develop Scallop fishery sub-ACLs (and associated AMs to be developed by the Scallop Committee) for Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder and Northern Windowpane for inclusion in FW 55.

Rationale: The current PDT recommendation is that 60% of the Northern windowpane flounder ABC would go to the other-component catch, which is mostly scallop fishery catches.. Recent SNE/MA winter flounder catches by the Scallop fishery are also high. During the development of FW 53, work for the sub-ACL for Northern windowpane flounder was started. This information/approach could be used to develop the sub-ACLs.

Motion 5 **carried** 8/0/0.

Motion 6: Raymond/Odell

In Section 4.1.2 (Annual Catch Limits) under 4.1.2.2 (Option 2: Revised Annual Catch Limit Specifications – Scallop Fishery sub-ACL for SNE/MA yellowtail flounder), the GAP recommends to the Groundfish Committee that the SNE/MA yellowtail flounder sub-ACL for the Scallop fishery be set at 90% or less of the scallop fishery's estimated catch.

Rationale: The GAP feels that a reduction in the projected catch to specify the sub-ACL is needed to incentivize the Scallop fishery to reduce catches of SNE/MA yellowtail flounder. An allocation of 90% of estimated catch is consistent with the Council's approach in recent years.

Motion 6 **carried** 7/0/1.

Motion 7: Raymond/Parker:

The GAP supports Option 2 in each of these sections: 4.2.1 (Implementation of an Additional Sector), 4.2.2 (Sector Approval Process), 4.2.3 (Modification to the definition of a haddock separator trawl), and 4.3.2 (Management Measures for US/CA TACs).

Motion 8 to split (Martens/Smith):

Motion 8 **failed** 2/5/1.

Motion 9: Back to Motion 7:

The GAP supports Option 2 in each of these sections: 4.2.1 (Implementation of an Additional Sector), 4.2.2 (Sector Approval Process), 4.2.3 (Modification to the definition of a haddock separator trawl), and 4.3.2 (Management Measures for US/CA TACs)

Rationale:

The GAP noted that creating sectors through a Council action is cumbersome, and that GARFO approval of sectors after consultation with the Council would streamline the sector approval process. The ability to move EGB cod to the western fishery would afford fishermen greater flexibility to harvest and manage their quotas.

Motion 9 **carried** 8/0/0.

Motion 10: Parker/Soule

To modify Option 2 in section 4.3.1 so that vessels on a sector trip would be exempt from ASM coverage when using a) 10 in mesh or greater and b) for when fishing in the dogfish exemption area (Nantucket Lightship only) on the same trip.

Rationale: This modification would provide relief from ASM coverage on sector trips that are targeting skates and dogfish.

Motion 10 **carried** 7/0/1.

Motion 11: Raymond/Odell:

The GAP requests that the Committee recommend development of an ASM alternative that would set a fixed total (NEFOP+ASM) coverage rate (in a range of %) at a level lower than 20%.

Rationale: Fixing the ASM coverage rate at a level that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the groundfish monitoring program is a more effective way to achieve monitoring goals and objectives than the current approach setting ASM coverage annually using CVs achieved two years ago.

Motion 11 **carried** 7/1/0.

Priorities

Motion 12: Raymond/Odell

The GAP recommends that the Committee recommend the following as a top groundfish priority for 2016: development of a new rebuilding schedule for SNE yellowtail, and any other stocks that may not meet the current rebuilding schedule (e.g. witch flounder, GB winter flounder, Northern Windowpane).

Rationale: These stocks will likely need new rebuilding plans, and there is some uncertainty as to how NMFS plans to handle the outcomes of the most recent assessments. Establishing new rebuilding plans needs to be a top priority for the Council.

Motion 12 **carried** 7/0/0.

Motion 13:

The GAP prioritized the list of possible annual and multi-year priorities for 2016.

Annual Year

1. Set specifications for US/CA stocks for 2017
2. Rebuilding plans
3. ASM Action – Amendment or Framework
4. Adjust exemption areas as necessary due to OHA2 changes (GenCat sea scallop, whiting, etc.; may be better addressed by other Committees)
5. Windowpane flounder management alternatives
6. Modifications to common pool regulations: trimester quota changes, HA exemptions from broad stock area provisions
7. Recreational management measures process
8. Recreational management measures and possible sub-ACL for GB cod
9. Staff: Work with ASMFC Lobster TC on groundfish bycatch in lobster traps

Staff: Five Year Sector Review

Staff: TMGC/TRAC

Multi-Year

1. Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in ACLs
2. Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries
3. Develop limited access program for the party/charter fishery
4. Staff: Cod Stock Structure Working Group

Motion 13 **carried** 7/0/0.