

Skate Framework Adjustment 6

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New England
Fishery Management Council

Priorities

- ▶ **Prolong the wing fishery as long as possible**
 - ▶ Analyze modifying the uncertainty buffer
 - ▶ Analyze potential for intermediate possession limits

- ▶ **Pending**
 - ▶ Prepare an amendment to consider limited access in the skate fishery



Uncertainty Buffer

- ▶ Covers both management and scientific uncertainty
- ▶ Analyzed 10 – 20%
 - ▶ 4 alternatives
 - ▶ Option 1: No Action
 - ▶ Option 2: 20% buffer
 - ▶ Option 3: 15% buffer
 - ▶ Option 4: 10% buffer



Sources of uncertainty

Issue	Starting point (2003 – 2009)	Improvements	Impacts on Uncertainty
-Fishery dependent data	-Landings reported largely as unclassified	-Unclassified reporting reduced in VTR codes; Outreach to aid in identifying skate species	Positive impact
-Observer data	-Somewhat unreliable in terms of ID -Variance/coverage	-Improved identification data -Improved since 2008	-Positive impact
Discard estimation - Overall observed discards overlaid with survey - Discard mortality rate estimates	-Observed total discards are speciated with survey data -Assumed 50% across gear types	-No change -Improvements for some species and gear types: Trawl: little, smooth, thorny, winter Dredge: little, winter Gillnet: winter	-No change but contributes to uncertainty -Improvement in species specific info with positive impact
Stock assessment	Data-poor Relationship between catch and survey biomass	Data-poor	- No improvements in available models/methodology but recent issues with survey vessel reliability, and therefore coverage (& different vessel Pisces), may introduce uncertainty



Sources of uncertainty

Catch accounting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FW2 – Fishing vessels and dealers no longer allowed to report “unclassified” skates. The number of “Unclassified skates” have been reduced in VTR data, but still exist. - Annual monitoring reports 	Neutral
Management controls		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FW4 allows in season closure of bait fishery once TAL reached - 500 lb incidental limit in wing fishery once trigger has been reached - Open permit fishery can contribute to unexpected increases in effort - Seasonal management for wing fishery introduced by FW3 - Fishery specific trigger points for implementing adjustments to possession limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most points positive for uncertainty - Open permit fishery makes it uncertain how much effort will be experienced in any one year adding uncertainty
OFL	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific uncertainty - Should be accounted for in buffer since no buffer between ABC and OFL exists

Impacts

- ▶ **Biological**

- ▶ Reducing the buffer could result in low negative impacts

- ▶ **Protected Resources**

- ▶ Could result in low negative to negative impacts

- ▶ **Essential Fish Habitat**

- ▶ Low negative impacts



Economic Impacts

- ▶ 2015 was the last fishing year when incidental limits not triggered
 - ▶ After 500 lb limit implemented, potential trip landings are unknown
- ▶ Allows for increased potential landings and revenues as buffer decreases



Impacts - Wings

Buffer between ACL and ACT	Percent Wing TAL achieved	Lb landed	Season 1 (May 1 – August 31) incidental limit implemented	Season 2 (September 1 – April 30) incidental limit implemented
25% buffer	91.7	7,787,658	17-Aug	2-Feb
20% buffer	90.1	8,166,524	27-Aug	23-Feb
15% buffer	88.3	8,503,880	NA	18-Mar
10% buffer	86	8,764,425	NA	21-Apr

Impacts - Bait

Buffer between ACL and ACT	Percent Bait TAL achieved	Lb landed	Season 1	Season 2	Season 3
25% buffer	100	9,716,620	NA	19-Oct	11-Dec
20% buffer	98.2	10,180,503	NA	24-Oct	2-Jan
15% buffer	94	10,356,303	NA	30-Oct	28-Jan
10% buffer	90	10,497,183	NA	NA	1-Mar

Intermediate Possession Limit

▶ PDT Discussion

- ▶ Looked at cutting seasonal possession limits in half
- ▶ Feedback from enforcement was not in favor of potential for 6 possession limits in any one year
- ▶ PDT would need more time to analyze this if this is moved forward



Intermediate Possession Limit

Trigger	Percent Wing TAL achieved	Lb landed	Season 1	Season 2
60% trigger	88.1	7,481,865	10-Jul	31-Oct
75% trigger	94.1	7,991,790	30-Jul	15-Dec
80% trigger 90% 500 lb	92.3	7,839,666	7-Aug	6-Jan 500 lb 2-Mar



Questions

