



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEETING SUMMARY

Skate Plan Development Team

The PDT held a conference call on January 18, 2018. The PDT discussed the status of ongoing management actions and 2018 priorities.

Framework Adjustment 4

1. Formal submission was completed in December 2017. The final rule is expected to publish in early 2018.

Framework Adjustment 5

1. The PDT is still finalizing sections of Framework 5 and should complete the preliminary submission in early February 2018.

2018 Priorities

1. The PDT focused their discussion on the priority to consider skate wing possession limits. The PDT discussed the original rationale for seasonal wing possession limits as outlined in Framework 1. It was thought that adjusting the possession limits would primarily affect vessels that target skate wings, as opposed to the large number of trips landing incidental amounts of skate wings (Figure 1).
2. The PDT would benefit from input from the AP and Committee regarding appropriate scenarios of possession limits to analyze. The PDT discussed lowering the possession limit in season 1 as a larger number of trips appeared to consistently occur during May and June (Table 1). Without running an analysis, it was unclear what modifications, e.g. lower limits in one or both seasons or one year-round limit, would be most effective at prolonging the fishing season. The PDT may be able to complete some preliminary analysis to provide the AP and Committee as a starting point. The PDT also was interested in estimating the price per lb of skate wing in each season to provide the AP and Committee.
3. The PDT also discussed correspondence received by the Council that proposed reducing the management uncertainty buffer, which is currently set at 25%. The buffer, as established in Amendment 3, also includes scientific uncertainty. The PDT thought adjusting the buffer could be analyzed, provided the Committee tasked it to do so. Between fishing years (FYs) 2014 and 2016, the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) was not exceeded, even though the Annual Catch Target (ACT) was exceeded by approximately

4-6%. The ACT was not exceeded in FY2013 when the ACL and ACT were set at a higher amount than in more recent years.

4. The PDT will work to compile relevant background information and conduct any possible possession limit analysis projections while AP and Committee meetings are being scheduled.

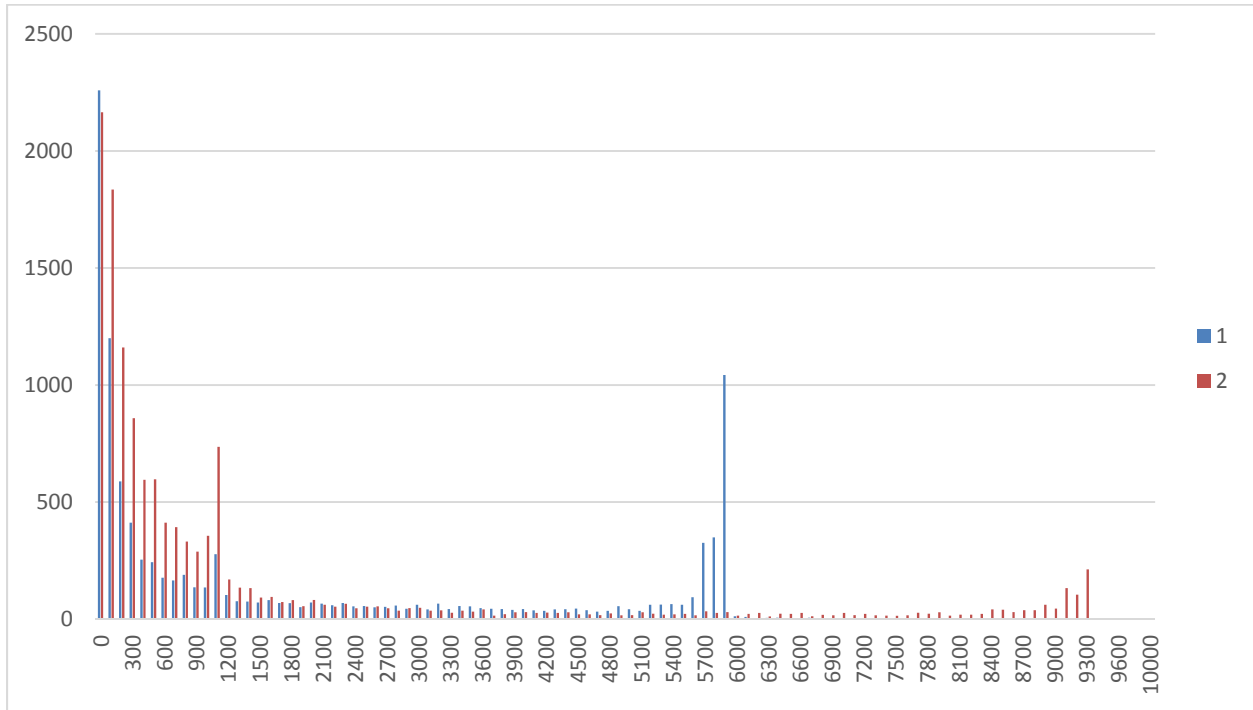


Figure 1 - Frequency of trips landing skate wings for Season 1 (shown in blue) and Season 2 (shown in red). The x-axis indicates the number of pounds of skate wings (live weight) landed; the y-axis indicates the number of trips.

Table 1 - Number of trips landing skate wings in Fishing years 2015 and 2016

Fishing Year	Year	Month	Number of trips
2015	2015	5	2,032
2015		6	1,559
2015		7	1,149
2015		8	810
2015		9	744
2015		10	930
2015		11	1,102
2015		12	1,023
2015	2016	1	778
2015		2	585
2015		3	736
2015		4	1,046
2015 Total			12,494
2016	2016	5	1,843
2016		6	1,483
2016		7	897
2016		8	646
2016		9	654
2016		10	829
2016		11	958
2016		12	908
2016	2017	1	756
2016		2	529
2016		3	658
2016		4	979
2016 Total			11,140