

3. *GROUND FISH* (Sept. 24 - 27, 2018)

#2

Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish)

Framework Adjustment 58 and Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring

Council Meeting
September 26, 2018





Framework Adjustment 58- Specifications and Management Measures

Scope

- 1) To revise or establish rebuilding plans for several stocks (Georges Bank (GB) winter flounder, Southern New England (SNE)/Mid-Atlantic (MA) yellowtail flounder, witch flounder, Gulf of Maine (GOM)/GB (Northern) windowpane flounder, and ocean pout),
- 2) To set specifications for fishing year 2019 for U.S./Canada stocks (Eastern GB cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder), and
- 3) To exempt vessels fishing in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) waters from Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes, and
- 4) ~~To provide additional guidance on sector overages.~~

By consensus, the Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council discontinuing work on guidance on sector overages in Framework Adjustment 58.
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Objectives

To meet regulatory requirements to prevent overfishing, ensure rebuilding, and help achieve optimum yield in the commercial and recreational groundfish fishery.

Timeline - May 1, 2019 Implementation

2018	
MAR-JUN	Committee/AP/PDT preliminary discussion and analysis
JUN 12-14	NEFMC – Council initiates framework
JUL 10-12	TRAC assessments for US/CA stocks including EGB Cod, EGB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder
JUL-AUG	PDT develops options for the SSC to consider for OFLs/ABCs for GB yellowtail flounder and rebuilding plan options for SSC feedback
AUG 15	SSC recommends ABC for GB yellowtail flounder and provides feedback on rebuilding plan options
SEP 11-13	TMGC/SC recommends TACs for US/CA stocks
JUL-SEP	Committee/AP/PDT develop alternatives and analysis
SEP 24-27	NEFMC – Receives an update on the development of the action, approve range of alternatives, including TACs for US/CA stocks
OCT-DEC	Committee/AP/PDT refine alternatives and complete impact analysis
DEC 4-6	NEFMC – Council takes final action/approves framework
DEC-JAN	PDT completes submission document
2019	
JAN	Preliminary submission
FEB	Final submission of framework document to NMFS
MAY 1	Implementation

4.0 Draft Alternatives Under Consideration

4.1 Updates to Formal Rebuilding Programs and Annual Catch Limits

4.1.1 Formal Rebuilding Plans

4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits

4.2 Fishery Program Administration

4.2.1 Minimum Fish Size Exemptions for Vessels Fishing in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization Regulated Waters

Inadequate Rebuilding Progress for Several Stocks

NMFS letter, August 31, 2017

- Ocean Pout
- Georges Bank winter flounder
- Witch flounder
- Northern windowpane flounder
- Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder

Stocks with Projections

- Georges Bank winter flounder and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder
- Overview of approach
 - T_{\min} is 3 years at $F=0$ with a 50% probability of achieving B_{MSY}
 - T_{\max} is 10 years.
 - T_{target} options developed across a range of fishing mortality rates. Also, options were developed considering the factors in the NS1 guidelines.

Stocks without Projections

- Witch flounder, Northern windowpane flounder, and Ocean Pout
- Overview of approach
 - T_{\min} is undefined, could be less than or greater than 10 years
 - T_{\max} is assumed to be 10 years, but could be undefined.
 - Factors in the NS1 Guidelines would need to be considered.

Rebuilding Plans

The Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council that revised rebuilding plans follow guidance and flexibility as prescribed by National Standard 1, specifically, to focus attention on fishing mortality rates. To develop options for:

- Stocks with projections (Georges Bank winter flounder and Southern New England/Mid -Atlantic yellowtail flounder) at 50%FMSY and 75%FMSY, up to 10 years.
- Stocks without projections (witch flounder, Northern windowpane flounder, and ocean pout) at 50%FMSY and 75%FMSY, consider undefined.

Carried 6/1/1

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Annual Catch Limits

For the stocks examined by the Plan Development Team (PDT), the Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council that the state waters sub-component percentages remain at status quo and recommends the PDT further refine the other sub-components.

Carried 5/0/3

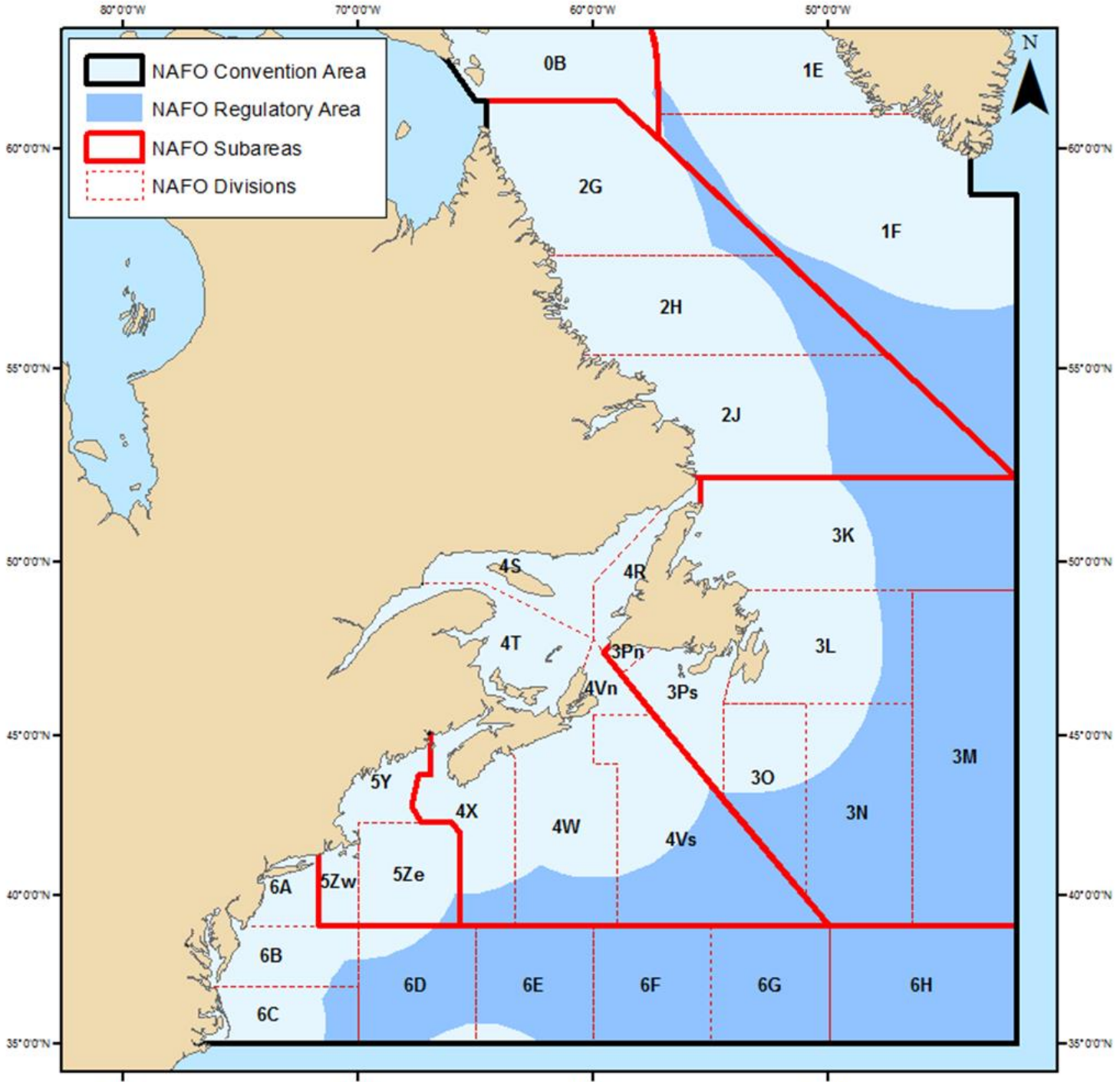
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Increase
Decrease
No change

Annual Catch Limits

Stock	Other Sub-Component (%)		
	FY18-20	Recommendation FY19-20	Justification
GB cod	9% 143mt	8.5% 155mt	Decrease by 0.5% to cover the 2015-2017 average catch of 149.5mt, as modified for the recreational catch target
GOM cod <i>(Percentage of commercial ABC)</i>	2% 9mt	No change 9mt	The 2015-2017 average catch is 15.1mt. The 2017 catch in the other sub-component included 22.3mt of research catch. The PDT is uncertain if this magnitude of research catches will continue in the future. By comparison in 2015 and 2016, research catch was 5.5mt and 5.6mt, respectively. Therefore, increasing the other sub-component may not be necessary in the short-term.
Witch flounder	6% 60mt	5.5% 55mt	Decrease by 0.5% to cover the 2015-2017 average catch of 54.8mt.
GB winter flounder	7% 57mt	1.5% 12mt	Decrease by 5.5% to cover the 2015-2017 average catch of 11.8mt. Scallop fishery catches of this stock are a source of uncertainty.
GOM winter flounder	1% 4mt	1.5% 7mt	Increase by 0.5% to cover the 2015-2017 average catch of 6.4mt
Atlantic halibut	2% 2mt	4% 4mt	Increase by 2% to cover the 2015-2017 average catch of 4.2mt. The PDT did not consider the change to discards mortality rates for trawl, gillnet, and long line when evaluating this component, as changes to discard mortality rates will not be applied until the catch accounting is completed for FY2018.

NAFO Regulatory Area



Minimum Fish Sizes

Species	NAFO Minimum Sizes*: Gilled and gutted fish whether or not skinned, fresh or chilled, frozen, or salted.				Domestic Minimum Sizes
	Whole	Head Off	Head and Tail Off	Head Off and Split	Whole
Atlantic cod	41 cm	27 cm	22 cm	27/25 cm**	19 in (48.3 cm)
Greenland halibut	30 cm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
American plaice	25 cm	19 cm	15 cm	N/A	12 in (30.5 cm)
Yellowtail flounder	25 cm	19 cm	15 cm	N/A	12 in (30.5 cm)

* Fish size refers to fork length for Atlantic cod, whole length for other species

** Lower size for green salted fish.

NAFO Regulatory Area

The Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council to add in Section 4.2.1.2 Option 2: Exempt vessels fishing in NAFO waters from Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes. It would be clarified under Option 2 that the minimum fish sizes would be as specified in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures (CEM) – which may change on an annual basis. NAFO regulations would still apply.

Carried 8/0/0

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Additional Measure to Consider

Does the Council wish to extend the temporary change for another year(s) to the scallop fishery accountability measure implementation policy for the GB yellowtail flounder stock, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder stock, and Northern windowpane flounder stock?

- This would mean the scallop fishery AMs would be triggered only if their sub-ACL and the total ACL were exceeded.
- The temporary measure expires after fishing year 2018.

For Today's Meeting

- Discuss the range of alternatives and consider the Committee's recommendations, and
- Approve the range of alternatives for analysis in the draft Environmental Assessment.



Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring

Purpose and Need Statement

To implement measures to improve reliability and accountability of catch reporting and to ensure a precise and accurate representation of catch (landings and discards).

To improve the accuracy of collected catch data. Accurate catch data are necessary to ensure that catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing and to determine when catch limits are exceeded. To create fair and equitable catch reporting requirements for all commercial groundfish fishermen, while maximizing the value of collected catch data and minimizing costs for the fishing industry and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring – Timeline

2018	
JUN 12-14	NEFMC – Receives progress report
JUN-SEP	PDT develops alternatives and analyses
JUN-SEP	Fishery Data Working Group develops report to address objectives
SEP	Committee/AP review progress on developing alternatives, recommend additional alternatives for development
SEP 24-27	NEFMC – Receives progress report
OCT-NOV	Fishery Data Working Group forms recommendations, completes draft report
OCT-NOV	Committee/AP/PDT continue to develop alternatives and analyses
NOV	SSC review of Fishery Data Working Group report, select PDT analyses (tentative)
DEC 4-6	NEFMC - Receives initial range of alternatives; final report from Fishery Data Working Group; SSC provides report on review of Fishery Data Working Group and PDT analyses
DEC	Committee/AP/PDT continue to develop alternatives and analyses
2019	
JAN 29-31	NEFMC - Approves range of alternatives

4.0 **Draft** Alternatives Under Consideration

4.1 Fishery Program Administration

4.1.1 Sector Administration Provisions

4.1.1.1 Sector Reporting Requirements

4.1.1.2 Knowing Total Monitoring Coverage Level at a Time Certain

4.1.1.3 Funding for the Groundfish Monitoring Program

4.2 Commercial Fishery Measures

4.2.1 Groundfish Monitoring Program Revisions

4.2.1.1 Monitoring Coverage Levels

4.2.1.1.2 Option 2: Fixed Total Monitoring Coverage Level

4.2.1.1.3 Option 3: Alternative Methodologies to Using a CV Standard to Determine an Annual Coverage Level Target

4.2.1.2 Dockside Monitoring Program

4.2.1.2.2 Option 2: Dockside Monitoring Program

Plan Development Team Memo – September 10, 2018

- Summarizes updates to the draft Amendment 23 alternatives, following input from the Committee meeting June 1.
- Summarizes progress on analyses for Amendment 23.
- Identifies questions the PDT has for the Committee to help with developing the alternatives (mainly on DSM).
- Addresses Committee motions related to draft alternatives and analyses.
- Summarizes the draft glossary of A23 key terms the PDT developed.

Draft Alternatives: 4.2.1.1 Monitoring Coverage Levels

Move to have the Plan Development Team develop alternative methodologies to the coefficient of variation (CV) standard for determining the target monitoring coverage level. This could include fixed target coverage levels (e.g., an annual target coverage level 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% of sector trips).

Carried 10/0/0. Committee meeting June 1, 2018.

- The PDT is working on analysis to analyze fixed target coverage levels, with an approach that accounts for bias (Attachment #2).
- The PDT will develop ideas for alternative methodologies to the CV standard for determining annual total monitoring coverage levels.

Draft Alternatives: 4.2.1.2 Dockside Monitoring Program

To task the Plan Development Team to develop an alternative for a dockside monitoring program (at e.g., 50% and 100% coverage levels) for the commercial groundfish fishery with two options: 1) a mandatory option or 2) an option for sectors to use as part of their sector monitoring plans.

Carried 9/0/1. Committee meeting June 1, 2018.

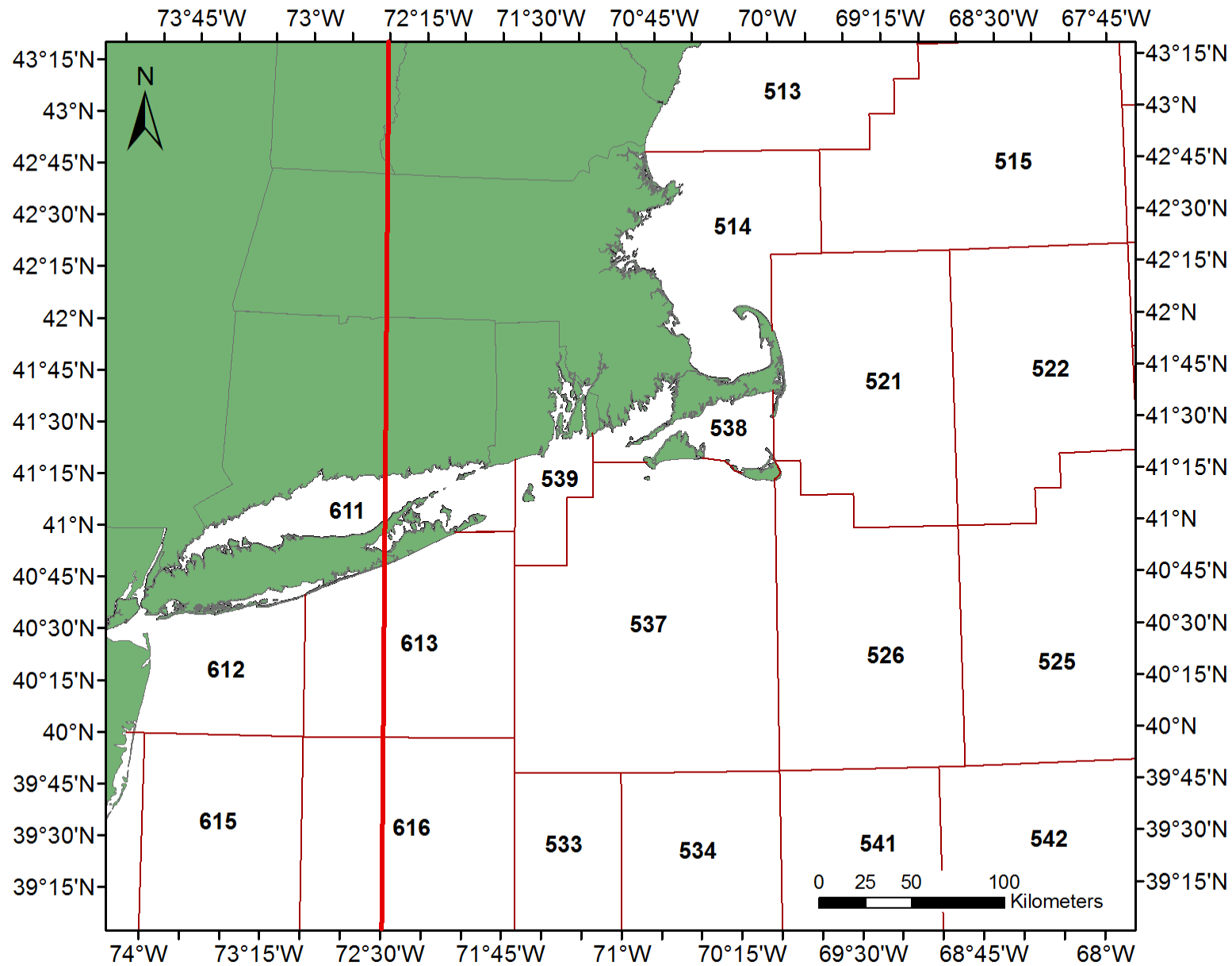
- The PDT developed ideas for dockside monitoring (DSM) program designs (Attachment #3).
- The PDT has questions for the Committee to help with development of these alternatives.

Additional A23 analysis

To task the Plan Development Team to analyze groundfish fishing activity west of 72 degrees 30 minutes west longitude to see if it would be appropriate to exempt vessels from at-sea monitoring and dockside monitoring (if implemented).

Carried 9/0/1. Committee meeting June 1, 2018.

- The PDT analyzed groundfish catch (landings and discards) west of 72 degrees 30 minutes west longitude (Attachment #4).



A23 Draft Glossary of Key Terms

- The PDT developed definitions for key terms used throughout discussions of monitoring.
- Definitions for commonly used terms (e.g. accuracy, precision, accountability, reliability).
- Definitions for monitoring tools (e.g. dockside monitoring, electronic monitoring) and descriptions of the current groundfish fishery monitoring system.
- Purpose: to provide clarification to managers and the public on key terms commonly used in discussions of monitoring, and to insure the PDT is using these terms consistently across its work.

Fishery Data for Stock Assessment Working Group

- Meeting summaries available on WG webpage
- WG drafting report to address four main deliverables
 1. Explain how fishery data (dependent and independent) is currently used in age-based analytical stock assessments.
 2. Summarize the utility and limitations of using a CPUE and LPUE as indexes of abundance for Northeast multispecies stocks, including recent efforts.
 3. Identify the fishery dependent data needed to develop a CPUE – without regard to existing fishing practices, regulations, or monitoring systems.
 4. Perform a gap analysis to compare the desired fishery dependent data identified with existing conditions and data for the fishery, to create a CPUE.
- Anticipate SSC review of WG report in November
- **WG report to Committee/Council in December**

Establishing Standards

The Groundfish Committee reaffirms to the Council that improving catch accounting should be the primary goal of this action. The Committee does not know at this time what level to which to improve catch accounting as a standard for this action. The Committee recommends to the Council convening a joint Plan Development Team, Groundfish Advisory Panel, and Committee meeting to establish standards for improving catch accounting and monitoring.

Carried 8/0/0. Committee meeting 9/18/18.

For Today's Meeting

- Receive progress report and consider the Committee's recommendation.