

Framework Adjustment 61: Specifications and Management Measures

Groundfish Committee meeting

September 22, 2020



New England
Fishery Management Council

Draft Alternatives Under Consideration

- 2021 total allowable catches (TACs) for U.S./Canada stocks of Eastern Georges Bank (GB) cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder;
- 2021-2023 specifications for roughly half of the groundfish stocks:
 - Winter flounders (GB, GOM, and SNE/MA), redfish, halibut, windowpane flounders (northern and southern), ocean pout, and wolffish.
- White hake rebuilding plan
- Other measures:
 - address commercial/recreational allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data, and
 - investigate ways to increase GB haddock utilization, including modification of gear requirements

Council Milestones

- **June** – initiated the action
- **September** – receive and approve TMGC's TAC recommendations for U.S./Canada stocks, SSC report on GB yellowtail flounder, update on any draft alternatives under other measures
- **December** – SSC report on groundfish stocks, receive specifications alternatives and take final action on entire action - specifications and other measures
- Implementation by **May 1, 2021**, NMFS

Recent Meetings

- **July** – TRAC made recommendations for GB yellowtail flounder, EGB cod, and EGB haddock
- **August** –SSC recommendation for OFLs and ABCs for GB yellowtail flounder and review of PDT’s plan for white hake rebuilding plan options
- **September** – TMGC’s TAC recommendations and
Peer Review of Management Track Assessments

Council Staff Suggestions: Possible Considerations for FW61

- ADD: Update Biological Reference Points for GB winter flounder (FMSY to F40%)
- EVALUATION: Based on low recreational catches (relative to total catches) in the wolffish, SNE/MA winter flounder and GOM winter flounder assessments Council staff suggests removing this item “address commercial/recreational allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data” from further consideration under the draft alternatives and instead adding a discussion of the changes in MRIP data to the Affected Environment – similar to that completed for FW59.
- CONSIDER ADDING: Modifying the Accountability Measures for GB yellowtail flounder and send back to the Groundfish PDT for additional evaluation on possible measures to include for the commercial groundfish fishery, small-mesh fisheries, and scallop fishery (e.g., changing the AM trigger, no possession, and other measures).

Council Staff Suggestions: Possible Considerations for Future Actions

- Updating Northern Windowpane flounder AMs to reflect the empirical approach and modifying the AM trigger for the scallop fishery (*or possibly in FW61*)
- Updating the time/area closures AMs for wolffish

Upcoming Meetings

- **Oct** – PDT to discuss options for catch advice for several groundfish stocks, following peer review results and direct delivery reports (ocean pout and Atlantic halibut) and follow-up on white hake rebuilding plan options.
- **Oct** – SSC to discuss OFLs and ABCs for several groundfish stocks and follow-up on white hake rebuilding plan options, *tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 13 (subject to change)*
- **Oct/Nov** – PDT to complete sub-component analysis, discuss draft alternatives

Questions for Today

- 1. Do you have any recommendations on the range of options provided for the white hake rebuilding plan, specifically any additions?**
F0, F25, F50, F70, F75, and FMSY
- 2. Do you recommend for approval the TMGC's recommendations on US/CA TACs for 2021?**
 1. GB yellowtail flounder 125mt
 2. EGB haddock 14,100 mt
 3. EGB cod 635 mt
- 3. Do you have any recommendations regarding the Council staff suggestions on the development of the draft alternatives presented today?**

Possible 2021 Council Priorities

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Catch Share Review Update

- Since May, two correspondence reviews were completed by the GF PDT and a sub-panel of the SSC.
- The SSC determined that the analysis was complete, met requirements for reviewing CS programs, and commented on recommendations.

SSC Sub-Panel Recommendations

- Clear goals and objectives by which to evaluate progress specific to the program and develop expectations for impacts
- Identification of data needed for evaluation to avoid analytical barriers
- Improved linkages across data and analysis to improve understanding of effects
- Early and regular engagement with all types of stakeholders to define research questions
- Improved information on intra-sector ACE lease market transactions

Final Draft Report Recommendations

- Next review should be conducted sooner to better align with management
- Stakeholder engagement should be designated early on
- Convening a stakeholder workshop to focus on the effects of the catch share system
- Further investigation into variation in responses between the common pool and sectors
- Improve catch accounting/ data streams with respect to monitoring and enforcement
- Data Gaps:
 - Community vulnerability indicators not specific to fishing
 - Cost data is lacking on fixed costs
 - Mandatory and systematic sector participation cost data is lacking (sector fees, lease costs, ASM costs)
 - Crew wages/share data lacking
 - Shoreside infrastructure: limited information available about changes
 - Habitat impacts: data on fine-scale geographic changes in fishing effort

PDT Recommendations

- Improved understanding of entrance/exit of the fishery
- Sector manager interviews on participation changes
- Comprehensive review of sector reporting requirements and data needs for conducting catch share reviews

Council hosting public meeting focusing on the recreational groundfish party/charter fishery **Monday, October 5, 2020, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. By Webinar**

OVERVIEW: The Council contracted with Tidal Bay Consulting to develop a strawman proposal for a limited entry program for party/charter vessels participating in the recreational Northeast multispecies (groundfish) fishery. The purpose of this initial public meeting is to: announce the development of the strawman; solicit feedback from stakeholders on a draft limited entry template; and provide information on how stakeholders can offer additional comments. The limited entry template is based on public comments received at recreational listening sessions held by the Council in April and May 2019 and input from the Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) and Groundfish Committee.

OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT: The October 5 public meeting is one of several opportunities for the public to ask questions and offer feedback on the draft limited entry template. Information on how to provide input will be posted on Tidal Bay Consulting's website as details become available. Visit Recreational Groundfish Party/Charter Limited Entry Feedback.

- Feedback will be accepted beginning on October 5 during the public meeting.
- The deadline for providing input is 5:00 p.m. on October 19, 2020.

NEXT STEPS: Feedback on the limited entry template will be summarized in a report that will accompany a strawman. Council staff and Tidal Bay Consulting will present a summary of this process and provide the report to the RAP and Groundfish Committee this fall for further consideration. Ultimately, the Council will decide whether or not to initiate a regulatory action to develop a limited entry program in 2021.

List of 2021 Possible Priorities

1. Set ABCs/ACLs for half of groundfish stocks for FY2022-2024 and US/CA stocks for FY2022
2. Begin adjustments to management measures needed as a result of revised understanding of cod stock structure
3. In consultation with the SSC, revise ABC control rules for Northeast Multispecies stocks
4. Amendment to adopt limited access for the party/charter fishery
5. Possible recreational sub-ACL for GB cod
6. Consider sub-ACL of haddock for the small-mesh multispecies fishery
7. Adopt additional measures to promote stock rebuilding
8. Consider adjustments to sector program suggested by sector catch share review
9. White paper on splitting multispecies permits from other limited access permits
10. Consider programs to facilitate access to the groundfish fishery for new entrants/young fishermen
11. Explore Atlantic halibut industry-based resource survey and potentially RSA
12. Review sub-ACL allocations for GB YTF (scallops), GB YTF (small mesh), SNE/MA WINP (scallops), SNE/MA WINP (large mesh)
13. Groundfish management track assessments
14. TRAC/TMGC

For Today

Make recommendations on possible 2021 Council priorities.



Additional Slides

Georges Bank Haddock Utilization

Groundfish AP Meeting – January 21:

The Groundfish Advisory Panel requests that the Groundfish Committee include in the next available action a provision to allow US fishermen fishing in the eastern US/CA area to use the same trawl gear used by Canadian fishermen and to explore using smaller mesh gillnets such as 5.5 in - 6 in mesh.

Rationale: The Georges Bank haddock resource is grossly underutilized. US fishermen are disadvantaged in catch by using less efficient/effective gear and economically be Canadian catch of haddock shipped into US markets.

Motion *carried* 7/2/0.

Georges Bank Haddock Utilization

Groundfish AP Meeting - June 9:

The Groundfish Advisory Panel recommends the Groundfish Committee request the Council to request the Regional Administrator to allow trawl fishermen, along with a requirement to fish with a Ruhle trawl, or a haddock separator trawl, or a rope trawl or other gear approved by the Regional Administrator for use in the Regular B DAS Program, to use the same mesh size as Canadian fishermen within the eastern US/CA area. Enforcement of this small mesh exemption would be administered in a similar way to the redfish exemption.

- Declare on trip start hail you might go small mesh haddock fishing in eastern US/CA area.
- Once you steam in the area you send a notice to NMFS then switch cod ends
- You must stay there for the rest of your trip (you could actually switch back to a larger mesh, but have to stay in the zone)
- Threshold limit of at least 50% haddock catch

(Carried 7/2/0)

Canadian Gear Requirements

While fishing in Subarea 5z (Georges Bank) for haddock:

- Cod end mesh size of 125mm square (4.9" square)
- Cod end + lengthening piece must be a minimum of 8.5m – to ensure meshes remain square
- Strengthening ropes must be fitted in a way to not obstruct meshes, length cannot be less than total circumference of cod end with ropes a minimum of 1m apart
- Horizontal separator panel made of diamond mesh
- Gear stowage requirement when transiting