



New England Fishery Management Council

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Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2022
TO: Groundfish Committee
FROM: Groundfish Plan Development Team
SUBJECT: **Framework Adjustment 65 – SNE/MA winter flounder other federal fisheries catches**

The Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) met on Wednesday March 23, 2022, via webinar to discuss tasking from the Groundfish Committee related to possible measures to be included in Framework Adjustment 65 (*to be initiated at the April Council meeting*): adopt additional measures to promote stock rebuilding for Gulf of Maine cod and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) winter flounder.

Committee Consensus Statement:

Task the Groundfish Plan Development Team with conducting a preliminary analysis of other federal fisheries catches of Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder and present this at the April 2022 Council meeting.

Amendment 16 provision on setting sub-ACLs

Amendment 16 specified a process for allocating portions of the available groundfish annual catch limits (ACLs) to other fisheries through sub-ACLs, which are subject to accountability measures (AMs) designed for these specific fishery components, and sub-components, which are not considered ACLs and are not subject to a specific AM.¹ Amendment 16 also provided guidance for when the Council may consider establishing AMs for other sub-components.

“For those sub-components that are not ACLs, there are broad categories. This category does not include catches in state waters taken outside the federal management plan (as these are accounted for prior to this step) and does not include regulated groundfish landed by vessels using a federal groundfish permit. First, small amounts of regulated groundfish are caught in a variety of fisheries that occur in federal waters (for example, the fluke fishery, the northern shrimp fishery, etc.). Generally these fisheries are not allowed to land regulated groundfish, though this may change in the future as stocks rebuild. Where individually these elements are too small to reliably monitor, they are aggregated into an “Other non-specified” category. Second, some fisheries are specifically identified. For the category described as “other non-specified”, catches will

¹ The Groundfish FMP does have AMs established for one sub-component: southern windowpane AMs for large-mesh non-groundfish fisheries (e.g., summer flounder and scup trawl fisheries) in the other fisheries sub-component.

be monitored and if the catch rises above five percent accountability measures will be developed to prevent the overall ACL from being exceeded.”

Catch performance

The catch performance figure and table from the most recent stock assessment in 2020 for SNE/MA winter flounder is included below. These will be updated following the management track assessment peer review to occur this spring.

Figure 1- Catch performance for Southern New England Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder including: catches from CY2005- CY2019, historical OFLs and ABCs since FY2010, CY2020 “bridge year” catch assumption, and projections for FY2021 - FY2023 at F40 and 75%F40. Overfishing status in the terminal year of the assessment indicated on the x-axis (“Yes” = overfishing or “No” = not overfishing).

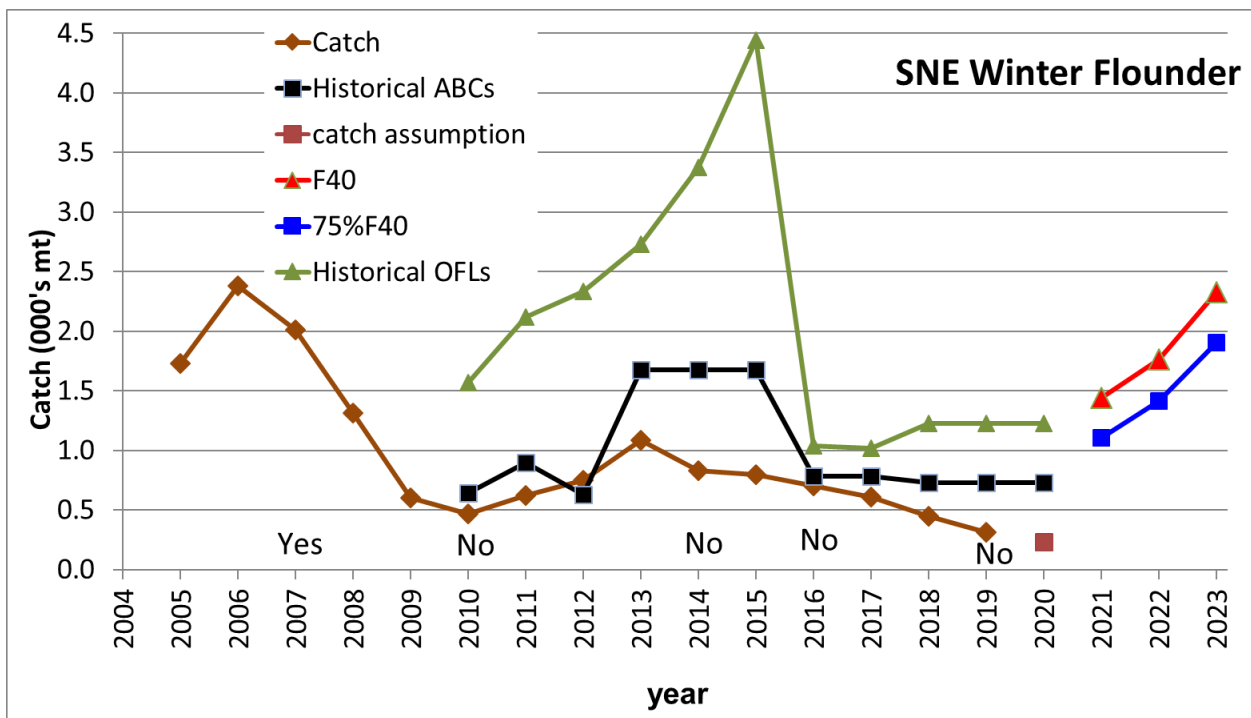


Table 1- Catch performance (CY2010-CY2019), historical OFLs and ABCs (FY2010-FY2020), CY2020 “bridge year” catch assumption, and catch projections for F40 and 75%F40 (FY2021-FY2023) for Southern New England Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder.

Year	Catch	Historical OFLs	Historical ABCs	Catch Assumption	F ₄₀	75%F ₄₀
2010	469	1,568	644			
2011	620	2,117	897			
2012	752	2,336	626			
2013	1,087	2,732	1,676			
2014	827	3,372	1,676			
2015	795	4,439	1,676			
2016	704	1,041	780			
2017	608	1,021	780			
2018	449	1,228	727			
2019	310	1,228	727			
2020		1,228	727	231		
2021					1,438	1,108
2022					1,763	1,412
2023					2,328	1,905

Summary of recent catches – total and other federal fisheries

The PDT provides a summary of SNE/MA winter flounder catches from FY2010-FY2020, including total catches, landings, and discards, and detailed catches for the other federal fisheries sub-component (see Attachment 1).

For the other federal fisheries sub-component, catches are attributed mainly to the scallop, fluke, scup, squid, and squid/whiting fishery groups (Table 2 below). Catches for these sub-components as a percentage of total catch is shown in Table 3. Shown also are catches from the groundfish fishery for comparison.

Table 2- SNE/MA winter flounder other sub-component catch (mt). Total catch and groundfish fishery catch shown for comparison.

	Catch (mt)						
Fishing Year	Total	Groundfish Fishery	SCALLOP ¹	FLUKE	SCUP	SQUID	SQUID/WHITING
2010	370.1	47.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2011	298.7	93.9	60.3	16.4	8.3	19.5	6.8
2012	315.9	106.0	68.9	15.0	10.7	17.3	6.6
2013	1025.9	788.6	78.2	10.8	9.7	14.5	11.2
2014	703.2	545.8	33.3	6.4	5.7	6.6	3.2
2015	886.7	688.0	65.9	7.6	6.5	3.1	2.2
2016	597.2	453.3	40.4	3.6	3.7	19.6	8.5
2017	550.5	409.3	48.6	5.5	5.6	35.2	2.9
2018	398.0	250.7	52.5	3.8	3.5	47.9	3.2
2019	295.4	143.8	39.0	5.4	3.4	66.4	4.8
2020	233.4	103.2	34.6	6.3	3.3	57.2	4.8

¹Based on scallop fishing year; all other columns are based on groundfish fishing year

Table 3- SNE/MA winter flounder other sub-components percentage of total catch (%). Groundfish fishery shown for comparison. Years in which catches exceeded 5% of total catch indicated by yellow cells.

	Percentage of Total Catch (%)					
Fishing Year	Groundfish Fishery	SCALLOP ¹	FLUKE	SCUP	SQUID	SQUID/WHITING
2010	12.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2011	31.4	20.2	5.5	2.8	6.5	2.3
2012	33.5	21.8	4.7	3.4	5.5	2.1
2013	76.9	7.6	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.1
2014	77.6	4.7	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.5
2015	77.6	7.4	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.2
2016	75.9	6.8	0.6	0.6	3.3	1.4
2017	74.3	8.8	1.0	1.0	6.4	0.5
2018	63.0	13.2	0.9	0.9	12.0	0.8
2019	48.7	13.2	1.8	1.1	22.5	1.6
2020	44.2	14.8	2.7	1.4	24.5	2.1

¹Based on scallop fishing year; all other columns are based on groundfish fishing year

Overall, SNE/MA winter flounder catches in the scallop, fluke, and scup fisheries appear to be declining in recent years, while catches appear to be increasing in the squid fishery. The increased percentage of SNE/MA winter flounder catches in non-groundfish fisheries in recent years is most likely explained by the dramatic decline in groundfish fishery catch (landings in particular) since this stock was allocated to the fishery in 2013.

Catches from the scallop fishery sub-component have exceeded 5% of total catches in all but one year from FY2011-2020, though catches have declined slightly in recent years. The increased percentage of total catch likely reflects the continued decline in overall catches and ACLs. Catches from the squid fishery sub-component have exceeded 5% of total catches in recent years from FY2017-2020, and catches have also increased over this time period.

This preliminary analysis raised several questions by the PDT, mainly on squid fishery catches, that could be explored in future analyses depending on the Committee's direction:

- Bycatch of SNE/MA winter flounder in the squid fishery has been increasing in recent years – is this being driven by an increase in squid catch?
- Is the increase in bycatch of SNE/MA winter flounder in the squid fishery a result of changes in winter flounder habitat due to climatic shifts, changes in effort and the areas where the squid fishery is prosecuted, or some combination?
- Groundfish monitoring reports do not distinguish between longfin squid and *Illex* squid trips. However, there are expected differences in both landings trends and bycatch of SNE/MA winter flounder between the two squid fisheries.² The PDT could explore further to understand differences between the two fisheries and their interactions with winter flounder.
- Understanding the cause of higher SNE/MA winter flounder bycatch in the squid fishery requires further investigation due to differences between the longfin fishery and *Illex* fishery.

² Bycatch analysis referenced in the MAMFC Draft Environmental Assessment for Specifications and Related Management Measures for: Atlantic Mackerel (2021-2022), *Illex* squid (2021), Longfin Squid (2021-2023), and Butterfish (2021-2022)

Table 1- SNE/MA Winter Flounder Total Catch by Fishing Year (mt)

Fishing Year	Total Catch	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery ¹	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2010	370.1	47.4	42.3	5.1	-	-	-	-	181.0	141.8
2011	298.7	93.9	86.9	7.0	-	-	-	-	40.0	164.9
2012	315.9	106.0	104.8	1.1	-	-	-	-	58.9	151.0
2013	1025.9	788.6	670.4	118.3	-	-	-	-	55.7	181.6
2014	703.2	545.8	489.9	55.9	-	-	-	-	71.1	86.3
2015	886.7	688.0	583.4	104.6	-	-	-	-	85.2	113.5
2016	597.2	453.3	396.6	56.7	-	-	-	-	26.1	117.8
2017	550.5	409.3	372.0	37.2	-	-	-	-	23.2	118.0
2018	398.0	250.7	228.7	22.0	-	-	-	-	15.9	131.3
2019	295.4	143.8	135.1	8.7	-	-	-	-	9.1	142.5
2020	233.4	103.2	97.4	5.8	-	-	-	-	10.3	119.9

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, March 21, 2022

Any value for a non-allocated species may include landings of that stock or misreporting of species and/or stock area. These are northern windowpane, southern windowpane, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 2- SNE/MA Winter Flounder Total Landings by Fishing Year (mt)

Fishing Year	Total Catch	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery ¹	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2010	161.9	10.6	7.9	2.6	-	-	-	-	144.2	7.2
2011	61.3	3.6	3.3	0.3	-	-	-	-	32.1	25.5
2012	69.1	0.7	0.6	0.1	-	-	-	-	55.0	13.4
2013	853.8	776.9	663.5	113.4	-	-	-	-	47.7	29.2
2014	631.5	541.6	486.8	54.8	-	-	-	-	70.4	19.5
2015	762.3	679.4	579.1	100.4	-	-	-	-	77.4	5.5
2016	485.7	443.8	388.9	54.9	-	-	-	-	24.4	17.5
2017	428.5	401.6	364.6	37.0	-	-	-	-	22.2	4.7
2018	269.7	247.7	226.5	21.2	-	-	-	-	14.7	7.3
2019	153.4	141.2	132.6	8.6	-	-	-	-	8.8	3.3
2020	115.1	101.0	95.3	5.7	-	-	-	-	9.7	4.4

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, March 21, 2022

Any value for a non-allocated species may include landings of that stock or misreporting of species and/or stock area. These are northern windowpane, southern windowpane, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

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Table 3- SNE/MA Winter Flounder Total Discards by Fishing Year (mt)

Fishing Year	Total Catch	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery ¹	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2010	208.3	36.8	34.3	2.5	-	-	-	-	36.8	134.6
2011	237.5	90.2	83.5	6.7	-	-	-	-	7.9	139.4
2012	246.8	105.3	104.2	1.0	-	-	-	-	4.0	137.6
2013	172.2	11.7	6.8	4.9	-	-	-	-	8.1	152.4
2014	71.6	4.1	3.1	1.1	-	-	-	-	0.6	66.9
2015	124.4	8.6	4.3	4.3	-	-	-	-	7.8	108.0
2016	111.6	9.6	7.7	1.8	-	-	-	-	1.7	100.3
2017	122.0	7.7	7.4	0.3	-	-	-	-	1.1	113.2
2018	128.3	3.0	2.3	0.8	-	-	-	-	1.2	124.0
2019	142.0	2.6	2.5	0.2	-	-	-	-	0.2	139.1
2020	118.3	2.2	2.0	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.6	115.5

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, March 21, 2022

Any value for a non-allocated species may include landings of that stock or misreporting of species and/or stock area. These are northern windowpane, southern windowpane, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 4- SNE/MA Winter Flounder Other Sub-Component Catch Detail by Fishing Year (mt)

Fishing Year	Total	SCALLOP ¹	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB ²	MACKEREL	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	REDCRAB	RESEARCH
2010											
2011	164.9	60.3	16.4	0.0	2.6	0.6	-	0.0	0.2	0.0	3.5
2012	151.0	68.9	15.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-	2.6
2013	181.6	78.2	10.8	-	4.7	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	-	19.9
2014	86.3	33.3	6.4	-	0.9	0.1	-	0.0	0.1	-	3.6
2015	113.5	65.9	7.6	-	1.0	NA	-	0.0	0.2	-	0.1
2016	117.8	40.4	3.6	-	4.8	NA	-	0.1	0.1	-	11.1
2017	118.0	48.6	5.5	-	3.2	0.0	0.0	-	0.5	-	0.0
2018	131.3	52.5	3.8	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
2019	142.5	39.0	5.4	-	1.0	0.0	2.4	-	0.1	-	0.4
2020	119.9	34.6	6.3	-	0.4	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.1	-	0.1

Values in live weight

Discard mortality is 50% for all gears except 15% for recreational component

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, March 21, 2022

Fishery group catch was not estimated during these fishing years

¹Based on scallop fishing year

²2011-2014 include discard estimate. 2017-2020 are landings only

Table 4- SNE/MA Winter Flounder Other Sub-Component Catch Detail by Fishing Year (mt) cont.

Fishing Year	SCUP	SHRIMP	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
2010									
2011	8.3	0.0	19.5	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	34.9	11.7
2012	10.7	0.0	17.3	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.9	0.0
2013	9.7	0.0	14.5	11.2	-	-	0.0	32.4	0.0
2014	5.7	0.2	6.6	3.2	0.6	-	0.0	21.0	4.7
2015	6.5	1.1	3.1	2.2	0.1	-	0.0	25.5	0.1
2016	3.7	3.4	19.6	8.5	0.4	-	0.1	20.3	1.7
2017	5.6	0.8	35.2	2.9	2.7	-	0.0	12.6	0.3
2018	3.5	0.1	47.9	3.2	0.8	0.0	0.1	14.1	4.1
2019	3.4	0.5	66.4	4.8	2.9	-	0.0	16.0	0.2
2020	3.3	0.4	57.2	4.8	2.4	-	0.1	7.0	1.6

Attachment 1 - SNE/MA winter flounder catch estimates

These criteria are used by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to categorize trips to attribute groundfish catch for groundfish ACL accounting. By necessity these rules cannot capture the full complexity of categorizing every trip taken by vessels fishing in the Northeast. Further analysis should be completed to definitively attribute groundfish catch to an FMP for management purposes.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.