

# **PDT Report:**

# **Northern Windowpane Flounder**

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**Groundfish Committee**  
**Meeting**  
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## Groundfish Committee tasking on April 7 to the Plan Development Team regarding northern windowpane flounder

To task the PDT with developing approaches to establish sub-ACLs for northern windowpane flounder for other fisheries such as scallops.

To task the PDT with developing approaches to allocating northern windowpane flounder to sectors using other allocated groundfish stocks as proxies.



*Credit: NH Fish and Game*



# **Q1: Does the Committee wish to adopt this draft problem statement for the action, with respect to the development of a northern windowpane flounder sub-ACL for the scallop fishery?**

*Draft problem statement:* Gulf of Maine (GOM)/Georges Bank (GB) (northern) windowpane flounder total catches exceeded catch limits and management uncertainty buffers in recent fishing years, triggering accountability measures (AMs). Besides the groundfish fishery, the scallop fishery is the major contributor to northern windowpane flounder catches. The scallop fishery catches of northern windowpane flounder are not subject to limits, and the groundfish fishery is therefore accountable for any overages. When triggered, AMs restrict the ability of the groundfish fishery to target and catch marketable species – mainly other flatfish such as winter flounder, resulting in adverse economic impacts to the groundfish fishing fleet on Georges Bank.



**Q2: Does the Committee wish to develop an alternative that would allow for an in-season transfer of northern windowpane flounder allocation from the scallop fishery to the groundfish fishery, should the stock be allocated to groundfish sectors?**



<http://southshorefishing.net/fish/windowpane.jpg>



### Q3: What range of options for scallop fishery sub-ACLs of northern windowpane flounder does the Committee wish to pursue?

- A. Fixed percentage based on the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of a 10 year average – *approach used for Southern windowpane flounder*
- B. Select a fixed percentage from a range (of recent scallop catches) – *approach used for GB yellowtail flounder*
- C. Estimated expected catch, and select a % of that value – *approach used for SNE/MA yellowtail flounder*
- D. Alternatives to past approaches:
  - i. Adjust the range of years (EX: FW53 used 2001-2010, could use 2005-2014)
  - ii. Focus on more recent catch history (EX: most recent 5 years of data)



# **The Groundfish Plan Development Team recommends that if the Committee pursues:**

## **Fixed Percentage Approach:**

- Use scallop fishery calendar year catch data from the most recent ten year period (2005-2014) for both Limited Access and General Category IFQ components.
- Consider using the most recent five years of data (2010-2014), or weighting the most recent five years of data if a longer time period is used.

## **Fixed Percentage or Projected Catch Approaches:**

- Consider an in-season transfer of northern windowpane flounder allocation from the scallop fishery to the groundfish fishery, should the northern windowpane flounder stock be allocated to groundfish sectors.





## Potential approaches for allocating northern windowpane flounder to groundfish fishery sectors and the common pool

- Initial findings indicate a lack of correlation between catches of windowpane flounder and other specific groundfish stocks to use as a basis for allocation.
- The PDT plans to examine catches in more detail at the haul level before making its final determination on the matter.
- Perhaps there is a better overall relationship between total groundfish caught or total flatfish caught with windowpane flounder caught.
- For example, a basket of stocks or perhaps the total flatfish ACE may be a better predictor of total windowpane flounder caught for a sector.



**Any questions?**

