



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

February 4, 2020

Mr. Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Mike:

Consistent with the consultation requirements of 50 CFR 648.89(f)(3), the Council developed recommendations for proactive Accountability Measures (AMs) for Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock for fishing year 2020. These AMs require development by the Regional Administrator (RA) in consultation with the Council, because the appropriate suite of measures (e.g., bag limit, minimum fish size, season) depends on the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) specified for the upcoming fishing year. The RA may adjust measures to ensure the recreational fishery will achieve, but not exceed, its sub-ACLs. The Council's proposal in Framework Adjustment 59 would set recreational fishery sub-ACLs at 193 mt for Gulf of Maine cod and 6,210 mt for Gulf of Maine haddock.

The Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) met on Jan. 21, 2020 to discuss potential AMs. The Groundfish Committee discussed the RAP's recommendation, making the same recommendation on Jan. 23, 2020. The Council then reviewed the RAP and Committee recommendation and impact of the scenario. The Council noted that a limited early April open season would provide spring recreational fishing opportunities but is not expected to substantially change catches of GOM cod. The timing of the spring opening is intended to minimize interactions with cod spawning. Based on these discussions, the Council passed the following motion, which is identical to the recommendation from the RAP and Groundfish Committee, on Jan. 29, 2020:

That the Council recommends to GARFO for fishing year 2020 recreational measures:

Gulf of Maine cod

- Open Season: September 15-30 and April 1-14
- Bag Limit: 1 fish
- Minimum Size: 21 inches

Gulf of Maine haddock

- Open Season: May 1 – February 28 and April 1-30
- Bag Limit: 15 fish
- Minimum Size: 17 inches

The motion *carried* on a show of hands (15/1/1).

The Council appreciates the continued support from NMFS staff to address information needs in advance of the RAP, Groundfish Committee, and Council meetings.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas A. Nies".

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Jon Hare, NEFSC