

Framework Adjustment 61: Specifications and Management Measures

Recreational Advisory Panel, Groundfish Advisory Panel
and Groundfish Committee meetings

August 17-19, 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

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

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