

DRAFT

Windowpane Flounder Discussion Paper

NEFMC Staff



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2.0 DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENT

Catches of both Southern New England (SNE)/Mid-Atlantic Bight (MAB) (southern) and Gulf of Maine (GOM)/Georges Bank (GB) (northern) windowpane flounder stocks exceeded catch limits and management uncertainty buffers in recent fishing years, triggering accountability measures (AMs) for both stocks. When triggered, AMs restricts the ability of each impacted fishery to target and catch marketable species, resulting in adverse economic impacts to a range of fleets.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Council Priority – 2015 & 2016

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) has taken several management actions for windowpane flounder since the adoption of Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery management plan (FMP). After considerable work on windowpane flounder management measures throughout 2014, including Framework Adjustment (FW) 52 to the Northeast groundfish FMP and the development of windowpane focused alternatives by the groundfish committee in FW53 and the scallop committee in FW26, the Council identified the development of a discussion paper on windowpane flounder as a priority in 2015. The Council discontinued work on the priority in 2015 to address groundfish fishery monitoring. The Council resumed this priority for 2016.

3.2 Current Stock Status and Management of Windowpane Flounder

Both northern and southern windowpane flounder stocks were not allocated in Amendment 16, and possession is prohibited. This prohibition on possession has functioned as a de facto proactive AM for both stocks since FY 2010. In general, reactive windowpane AMs are implemented if the total ACL is exceeded by more than the management uncertainty buffer. In the case of southern windowpane flounder where the ACL is sub-divided across multiple fisheries, the total ACL and the fishery-specific sub-ACL must be exceeded for an AM to be triggered. The commercial groundfish fishery is fully accountable for overages above the overall ACL for northern windowpane flounder. As both windowpane stocks are not allocated, groundfish AMs apply to the entire commercial groundfish fishery (sector and common pool vessels), and sectors may not request an exemption from AMs. Table 1 provides an overview of the status and management of both windowpane stocks.

Table 1 - Overview of windowpane stock status and management

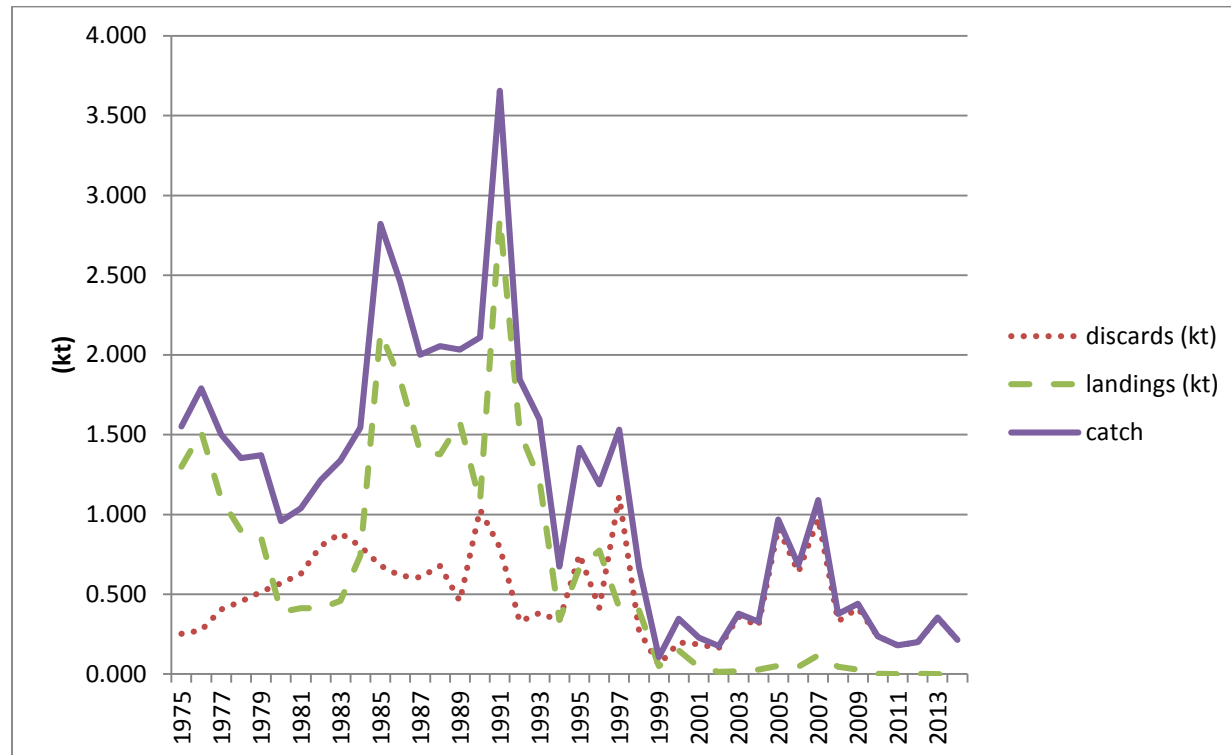
	GOM/GB Windowpane Flounder (Northern)	SNE/MA Windowpane Flounder (Southern)
Stock Status	Overfished, Not overfishing	Not overfished, overfishing not occurring, rebuilt
Assessment Type	Index-Based	Index-Based
Last assessed	2015 Operational Updates	2015 Operational Updates
Next scheduled assessment	Not scheduled	Not scheduled
Reactive AM?	Yes - Restricted Gear Areas	Yes - Restricted Gear Areas
Fisheries with reactive Windowpane AMs	Groundfish only	Scallop, and Groundfish and Other fisheries using 5" mesh or greater (Fluke and Scup)
Can Groundfish sectors request exemptions from AMs?	No	No
Fisheries with >1mt catch of windowpane in a year (FY2012 - FY2014)	Groundfish, Scallop, Lobster/Crab	Groundfish, Scallop, Fluke, Herring, Scup, Squid, Whiting
AM triggered for FY2015?	Yes - Large AM area in FY 2015, triggered by overages in FY 2014 and FY 2013	No

3.3 History of the Fishery and Management Actions for Windowpane Flounder

3.3.1 GOM/GB Windowpane Catch, Landings, and Discards from 1975–2014

Landings of northern windowpane flounder were highest from 1985-1993 when a directed fishery existed for windowpane. Since the mid-1990s, windowpane has been a bycatch in the groundfish bottom trawl fishery, and landings averaged just shy of 400mt. While the vast majority of landings in the time series came from the bottom trawl fleet, from 1987-1994, 2.8-6.0% of GOM/GB windowpane landings came from scallop dredges (NEFSC, 2012). Since 2000, discards have comprised the majority of GOM/GB catches. Beginning FY2009 through an interim action, NOAA fisheries prohibited the possession of GOM/GB windowpane flounder. Zero possession for both windowpane stocks was instituted in Amendment 16.

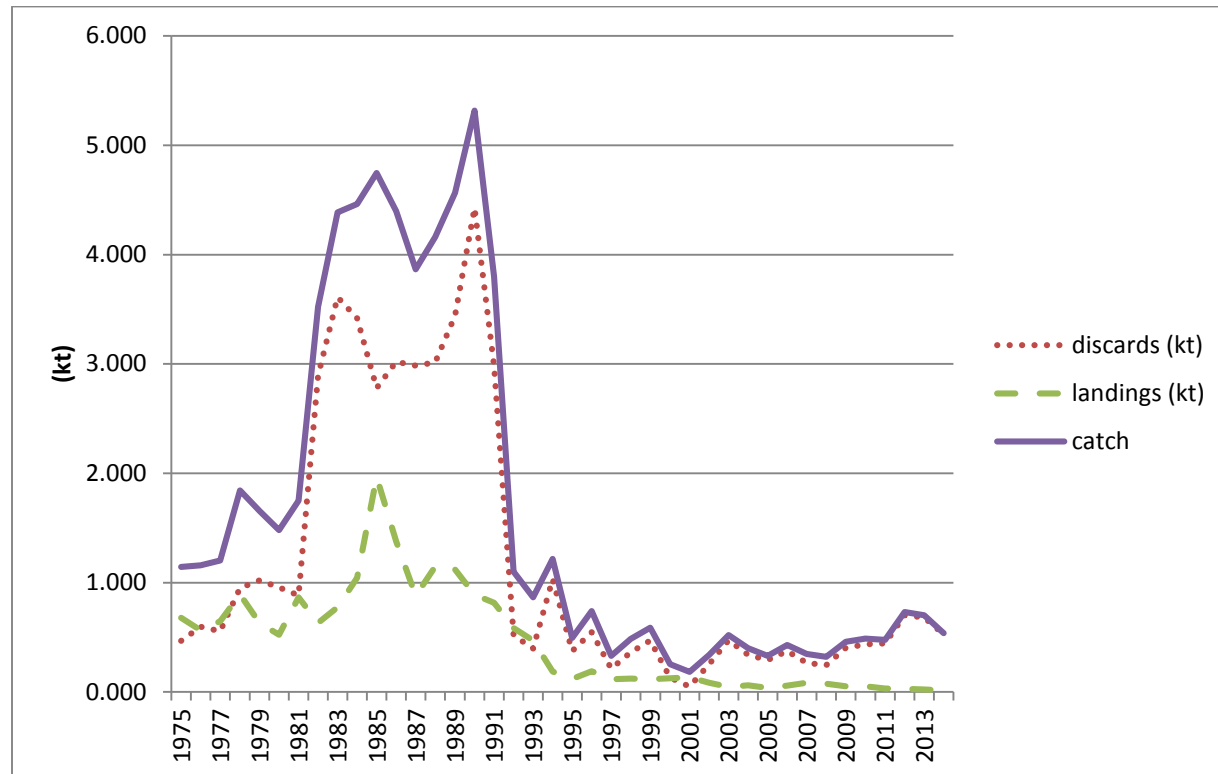
Figure 1 - Calendar year catch, landings, and discards of GOM/GB windowpane flounder in kt, 1975-2014.
Source: NEFSC 2015.



3.3.2 SNE/MA Windowpane Catch, Landings, and Discard from 1975-2014

While landings dominated GOM/GB windowpane catches from the early 1980's through end of the directed fishery in the early 1990's, discards comprised the majority of SNE/MA catches during the same time period (Figure 11 and Figure 22). Overall catch of SNE/MA windowpane flounder has declined dramatically since a time series high in 1990 of 5,318 mt, and total catch has averaged 383 mt from 2001-2010 (NEFSC, 2012). The vast majority of landings over the 35 year period came from the bottom trawl fleet, though between 3.0-12.5% of the landings were taken with scallop dredges during 1987-1994 (NEFSC, 2012). Zero possession for both windowpane stocks was instituted in Amendment 16.

Figure 2 - Calendar year catch, landings, and discards of SNE/MA windowpane flounder in kt, 1975 - 2014.
 Source: NEFSC 2015.

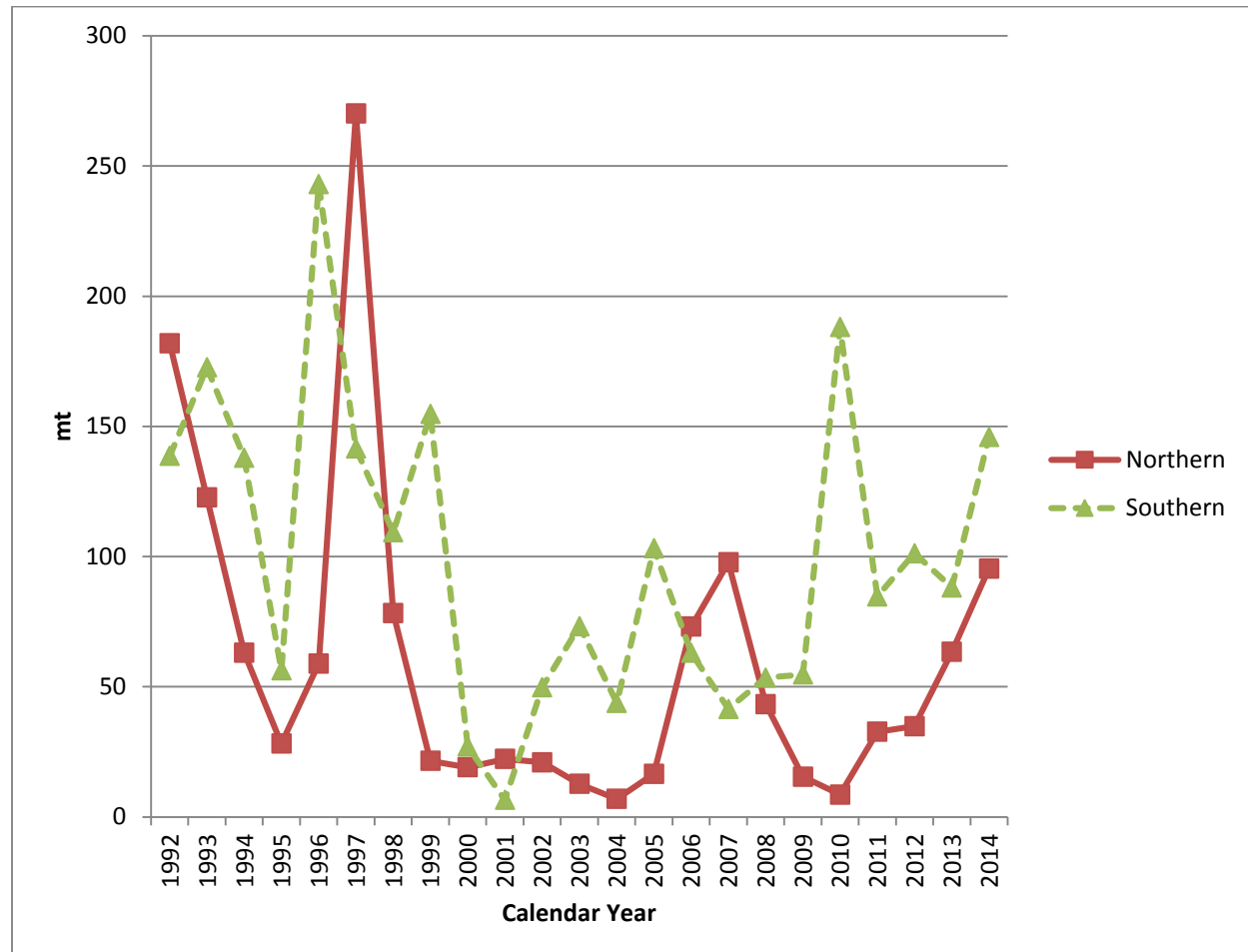


3.3.3 Limited Access Scallop Dredge Catch of Windowpane Flounder

Limited access scallop dredge catches of both windowpane stocks were updated through calendar year 2014 for the most recent windowpane assessments (NEFSC, 2015). The current assessment uses catches from small mesh bottom trawl, large mesh bottom trawl, and limited access scallop dredges. A recommendation of the 2015 groundfish operational assessment peer-review was to include limited access general category (LAGC) IFQ catches into future assessments of both stocks, and Canadian removals of northern windowpane (NEFSC, 2015).¹

¹ See 2015 [Northern](#) and [Southern](#) Windowpane Assessment documents for assessment results and peer review comments.

Figure 3 - Scallop dredge catch (limited access permits only) of northern and southern windowpane flounder, calendar years 1992-2014. Source: NEFSC, 2015.



3.3.4 Windowpane Management Measures Prior to Amendment 16

Prior to the establishment of ABCs and ACLs through Amendment 16, target TACs were used in groundfish management as indicators of whether management measures were successfully controlling fishing mortality. They also served as the basis for establishing incidental catch TACs for Category B DAS programs and for allocating catches to established sectors. Target TACs were determined by projecting future catches from the most recent assessment using the target fishing mortality rate established in the management plan. Target TACs for windowpane flounder from FY2006 – FY2009 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Target TACs for FY2006 - FY 2009 (metric tons, live weight)

Stock	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Action	FW42	FW42	FW42	Interim Action
GOM/GB Windowpane	389	389	389	581
SNE/MA Windowpane	173	166	159	279

3.3.5 Windowpane Management Measures in Recent Council Actions

Amendment 16 brought the Groundfish FMP into compliance with the 2007 reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Act, adopting a system of ACLs and AMs designed to ensure that catches remain below desired catch targets for each stock in the management complex. AMs are management controls that are designed to prevent ACLs from being exceeded and to correct or mitigate overages of the ACL if they occur. The initial windowpane flounder AMs that were adopted by the Council in A16 were subsequently modified in later FW actions. For both windowpane stocks, implementation of AMs are delayed until accurate information becomes available. Table 3 describes Council actions taken since 2010 in the Groundfish and Scallop FMPs that are relevant to windowpane flounder management.

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Table 3 - Brief description of Council actions relevant to windowpane flounder management

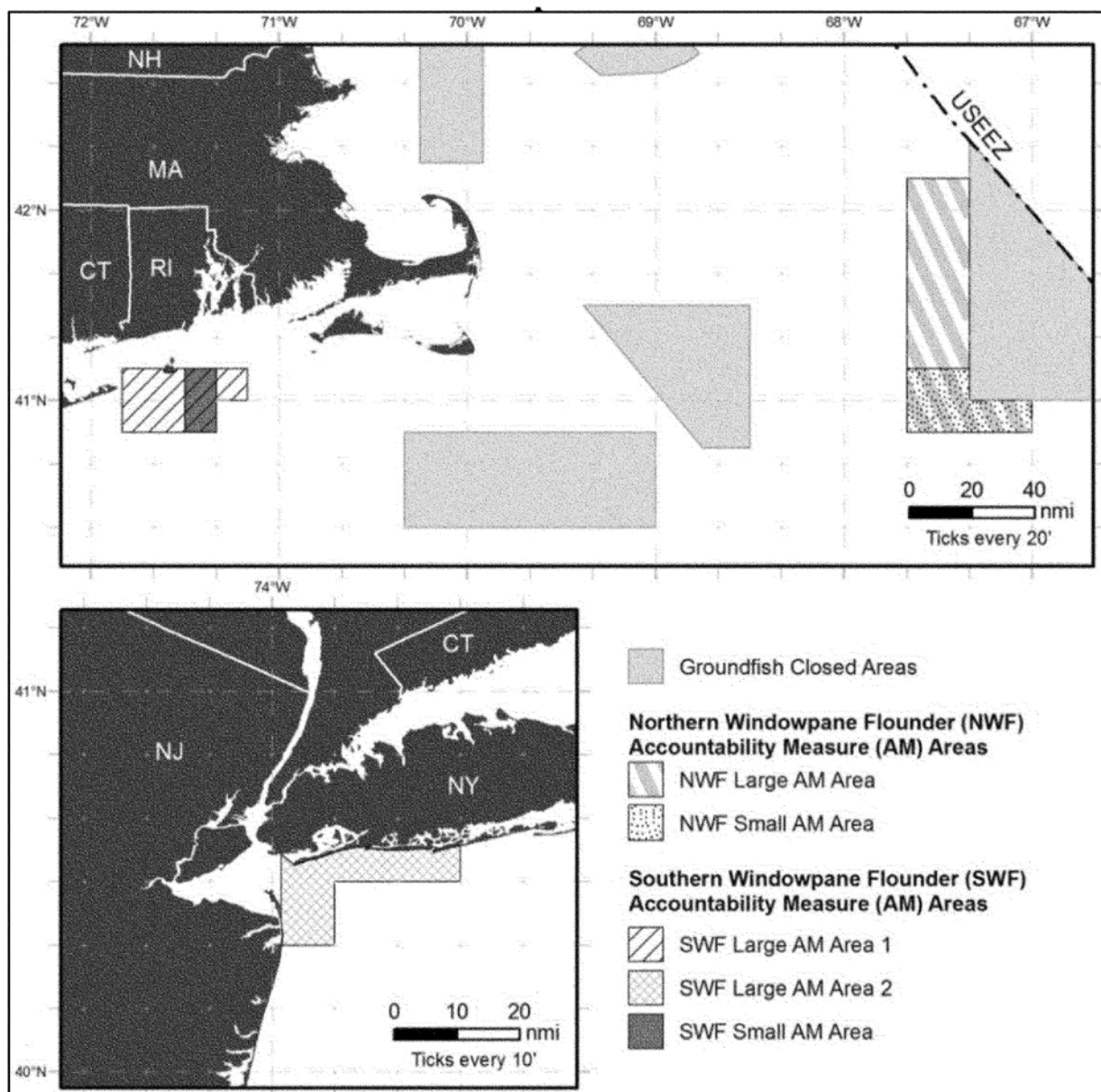
FMP	Action	Description of Action
Groundfish	FW44 (2010)	Framework 44 set three year specifications for both windowpane stocks based on the results of GARM III. In 2007, northern windowpane flounder was overfished and overfishing was occurring, while southern windowpane was not overfished but overfishing was occurring. Framework 44 also established a 7% management uncertainty buffer for both stocks to reflect additional uncertainty of zero retention stocks.
Groundfish	FW47 (2012)	Framework 47 designed AMs to apply to groundfish fishing activity by both common pool and sector groundfish fishing vessels. The design of these AMs was based on constraining all groundfish fishing activity, and sectors are able to request an exemption from the AM provisions. The AM is implemented if the total ACL is exceeded.
Groundfish	FW48 (2013)	A sub-ACL of SNE/MA windowpane flounder was allocated to the scallop fishery. The sub-ACL was based the 90th percentile of the scallop fishery catches (as a percent of the total) for the period calendar year 2001 through 2010. FW48 also modified the existing groundfish AM to apply to the 'other' sub-components portion of the ACL.
Scallop	FW25 (2014)	Framework 25 created AMs for the Atlantic sea scallop fishery. In the event that the scallop fishery exceeds its sub-ACL of SNE/MA windowpane flounder, vessels are required to use a modified dredge in the area west of 71°W, excluding Mid-Atlantic Access Areas.
Groundfish	FW52 (2014)	Framework 52 revised accountability measures (AMs) for the commercial groundfish fishery for southern and northern windowpane flounder stocks. AMs were triggered for FY 2014 due to overages of the overall annual catch limits (ACLs) in FY 2012 for both windowpane stocks. The Council requested that any revision to the current AMs be applied retroactive to FY 2014, or any overages that occurred prior to FY 2014.
Groundfish	FW53 (2015)	The Council considered developing a sub-ACL of GOM/GB windowpane flounder to the scallop fishery. Alternatives were ultimately moved to considered by rejected.
Scallop	FW26 (2015)	Framework 26 extended proactive AMs already in place in open areas (non-Access Areas) west of 71°W to all open areas. This measure requires that no dredge have more than seven (7) rows of rings in the apron on the top side of the dredge.

3.3.5.1 Accountability Measures for Windowpane Flounder

The Council has developed large and small gear restricted areas (GRA) as AMs for both windowpane flounder stocks. AMs are triggered for windowpane flounder when the catches exceed the ACL plus a management uncertainty buffer. The size of the AM is dependent upon the overage. Catches in excess of 20% of the ACL trigger a large AM, while when catches exceed 5% of the ACL but are less than 21% of the ACL the small AM is implemented. If an AM is triggered, bottom-trawl vessels are required to use selective large-mesh trawl gear that is designed to reduce the catch of windowpane (and subsequently other flatfish). Approved gears

include haddock separator trawls or Rhule trawls. Sections 4.2.5 and 4.3.5 describe the timing of recent AMs for each stock.

Figure 4 - Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measure (AM) Areas (Source: FW52 Final Rule)



3.3.5.2 Modification to Accountability Measures through Framework 52

Implemented on January 15, 2015, Framework 52 modified windowpane flounder accountability measures by adding additional criteria for assessing the need/scale of windowpane AM areas. First, the size of the AM may be reduced to the smaller GRA if NMFS determines that stock health has improved even when catch limits have been exceeded. The other modification to AMs allows NMFS to reduce the AM in-season if catch data shows that an overage did not occur in consecutive years.

Provisions in FW52 allow for the size of the AM to be reduced (from large to small) if the stock is rebuilt and a “biomass criterion” is larger than FY catch. The “biomass criterion” is the three-year average of catch per tow from the three most recent fall surveys multiplied by 75% F_{MSY} of the most recent assessment. If this value is larger than fishing year catch, then the large AM may be reduced to the small AM. This criterion was used to reduce the size of the southern windowpane AM area during FY2015.

Reductions to the AM may occur in season if NMFS determines that the overall ACL and management uncertainty was not exceeded. This determination takes place later in the fishing year as final catch data from other sub-components is not available until then. The timing and evaluation of this potential change is as follows: If there is an overage in year 1, during the first part of year 3, NMFS will evaluate if there was an overage in year 2. See Section 6.2.3 for a discussion on catch reporting for the other sub-component.

See [Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measures Information Sheet](#) for additional information.

4.0 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Stock Boundaries

Figure 5 - Northern and Southern Windowpane stock boundaries shown by statistical reporting area.

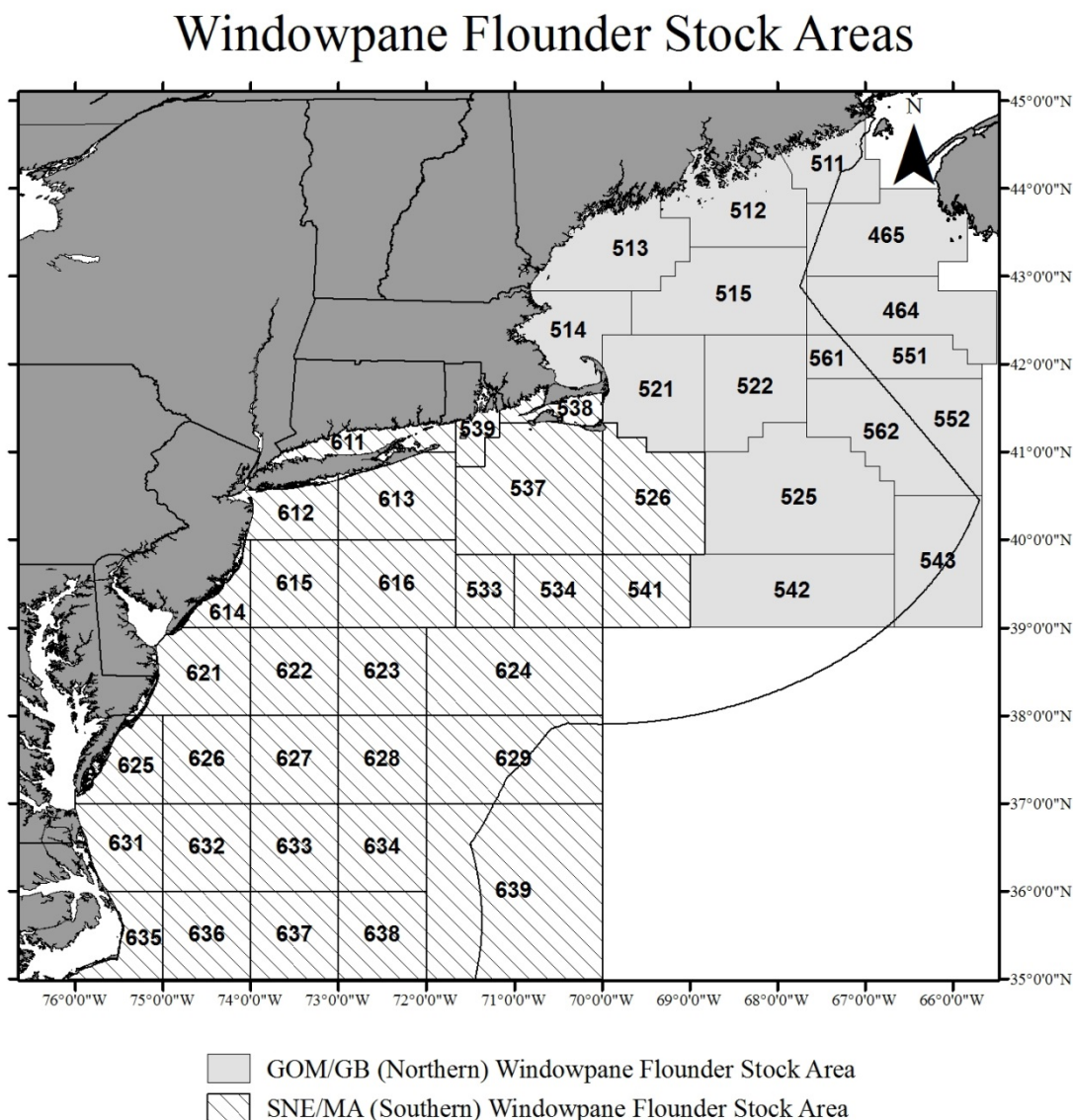


Table 4 - Statistical reporting areas for northern and southern windowpane flounder.

Stock	Statistical Areas
Northern Windowpane	464, 465, 467, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 521, 522, 525, 542, 543, 561, 562
Southern Windowpane	526, 533, 534, 537, 538, 539, 541, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640

4.2 Management of Northern Windowpane Flounder

4.2.1 Specifications of Northern Windowpane Flounder

Table 5 depicts annual fishing year specifications for northern windowpane flounder from FY2010 through FY2018 (FY 2016-FY 2018 specifications are proposed and not final until NMFS approves FW 55). Since FY2010, the groundfish sub-ACL has declined (with the exception of FY2012) from 110 mt to 66 mt in 2016.

Table 5 - Northern windowpane flounder specifications, FY2010 - FY2018.

Stock	FY	OFL	ABC	Total ACL	Groundfish	Scallop	State Waters	Other sub-components	FMP Action
Northern Windowpane	2010	225	169	161	110		2	49	FW44
	2011	225	169	161	110		2	49	
	2012	230	173	163	129		2	33	FW47
	2013	202	151	144	98		2	44	FW50
	2014	202	151	144	98		2	44	FW51
	2015	202	151	144	98		2	44	FW53
	2016	243	182	177	66		2	109	
	2017	243	182	177	66		2	109	FW55
	2018	243	182	177	66		2	109	

4.2.2 ABC Distribution of Northern Windowpane Flounder

A16 provides that the distribution to various sub-components can be modified in a framework or specification action. As such, the PDT has recommended changes to the state waters and other sub-components values through multiple framework actions. Northern windowpane catch estimates for state waters have remained constant over the time series, while the PDT has recommended three changes to the other sub-component distribution since FY2010 (Table 6).

Table 6 - Distribution of ABC to fishery components for northern windowpane flounder, FY2010 - FY2018.

Distribution of ABC to Fishery Components (%)					
FMP Action	FY	Groundfish	Scallop	State Waters	Other
FW44	2010	0.70		0.01	0.29
	2011	0.70		0.01	0.29
FW47	2012	0.80		0.01	0.19
FW50	2013	0.70		0.01	0.29
FW51	2014	0.70		0.01	0.29
FW55	2015	0.70		0.01	0.29
	2016	0.39		0.01	0.60
	2017	0.39		0.01	0.60
	2018	0.39		0.01	0.60

Sources: Framework Adjustments 53 & 55, Appendix III

Note: The management uncertainty buffer for zero possession stocks, such as windowpane, is 7% ($ABC \times 0.93 = ACL$).

4.2.3 Catch of Northern Windowpane Flounder by Fishery Components

The majority of northern windowpane flounder is caught by sector groundfish vessels, though scallop catch estimates reached a five year high in FY2014 at 99.7 mt (Table 7). Common pool catch has been less than 1 mt for the majority of the past five fishing years.

Table 7 - Final year end catch data (mt) for Northern Windowpane Flounder

				Northern Windowpane Flounder Catch (mt)				
				Groundfish Fishery		Sub-Components with No AMs		
FY	ABC	ACL	Total Catch	Sector	Common Pool	Scallop Fishery	State Waters	Other
2010	169	161	162.6	151.7	1.8	8.2	0	9.1
2011	169	161	191.3	156.5	0.3	33.0	0	34.8
2012	173	163	208.9	129.5	0.1	75.7	2.3	77
2013	151	144	280.1	237.3	0.2	40.7	0.9	41.6
2014	151	144	269.3	157.4	0.3	99.7	2.7	108.9

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office, Final Year End Catch Reports for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014. <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>

Note: 'Other' sub-component catch includes scallop catch, in addition to other fisheries. Scallop fishery catches are shown for comparison purposes.

Table 8 - Northern windowpane flounder catch attribution within other sub-component, values in metric tons. Only fisheries with greater than 1 mt in a FY of estimated catch are included.

FY	Other Total	Scallop	Squid/Whiting	Lobster/Crab
2012	77	75.7	0.9	0
2013	41.6	40.7	0.6	0
2014	108.9	99.7	1	7.4

Table 9 - Catch of northern windowpane flounder by fisheries within the other sub-component as a percentage (%) of the overall ACL. Note: Only fisheries with greater than 1 mt of estimated catch in a FY are included.

FY	Total ACL	Scallop	Squid/Whiting	Lobster/Crab
2012	163	46.44%	0.55%	0.00%
2013	144	28.26%	0.42%	0.00%
2014	144	69.24%	0.69%	5.14%

Figure 6 combines data from Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7, with a focus on the groundfish sector catch and scallop fishery catch. The gray bars depict final catch estimates for FY2010 – FY2014. The dotted black line tracks groundfish sector catch over that time period, which the dashed purple line tracks scallop fishery catch. The hatched stacked bars in FY2015 and FY2016 illustrate the sub-ACL, in mt, for the other sub-components and the groundfish component. Note that in FY2016 (as shown in the Table 5 above) that the other sub-component share of the ACL is larger than the groundfish sub-ACL. Preliminary groundfish catch data for FY2015 (Figure 7) indicates that the groundfish fishery is not likely to exceed the groundfish sub-ACL (70% through March 29, 2016).

Figure 6 - Recent catch performance and proposed catch limits for the northern windowpane flounder stock, FY2010 - FY2016.

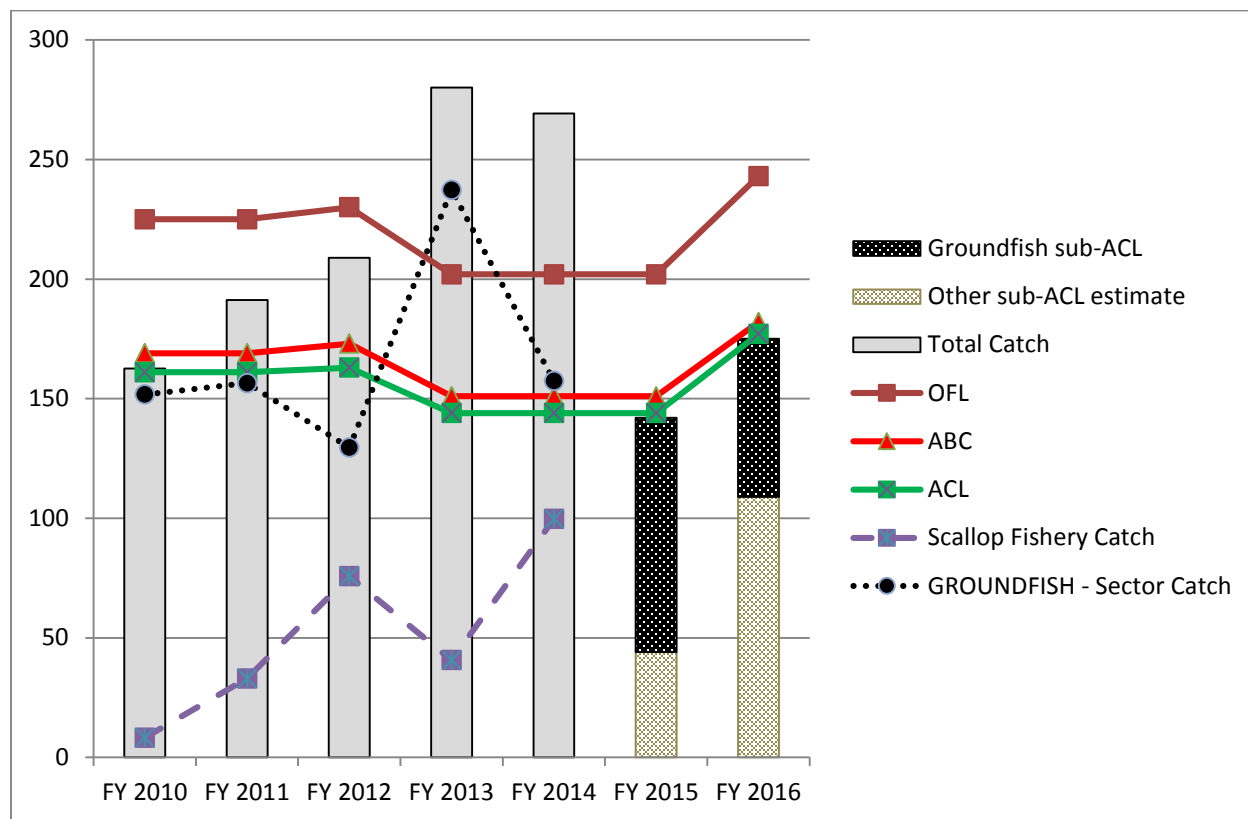
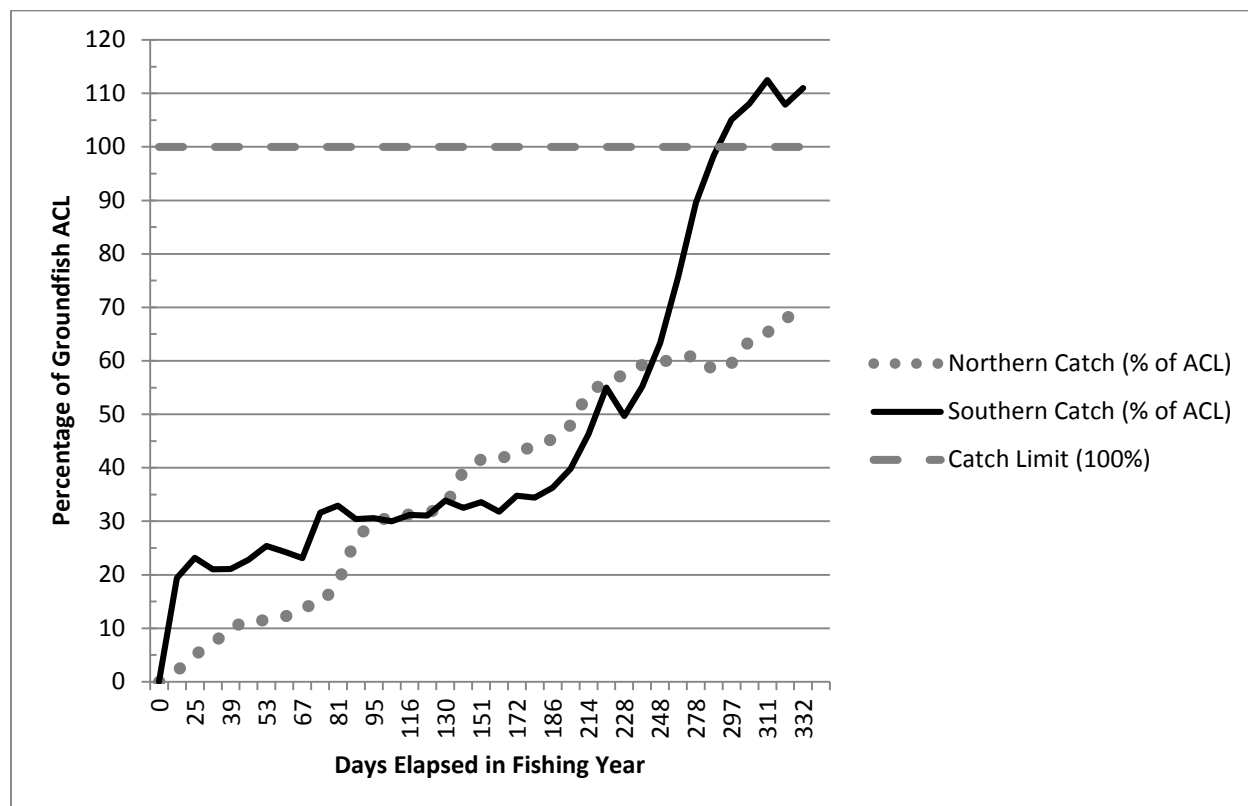


Figure 7 - Preliminary FY2015 groundfish catch of windowpane flounder as a percentage of the groundfish sub-ACL.

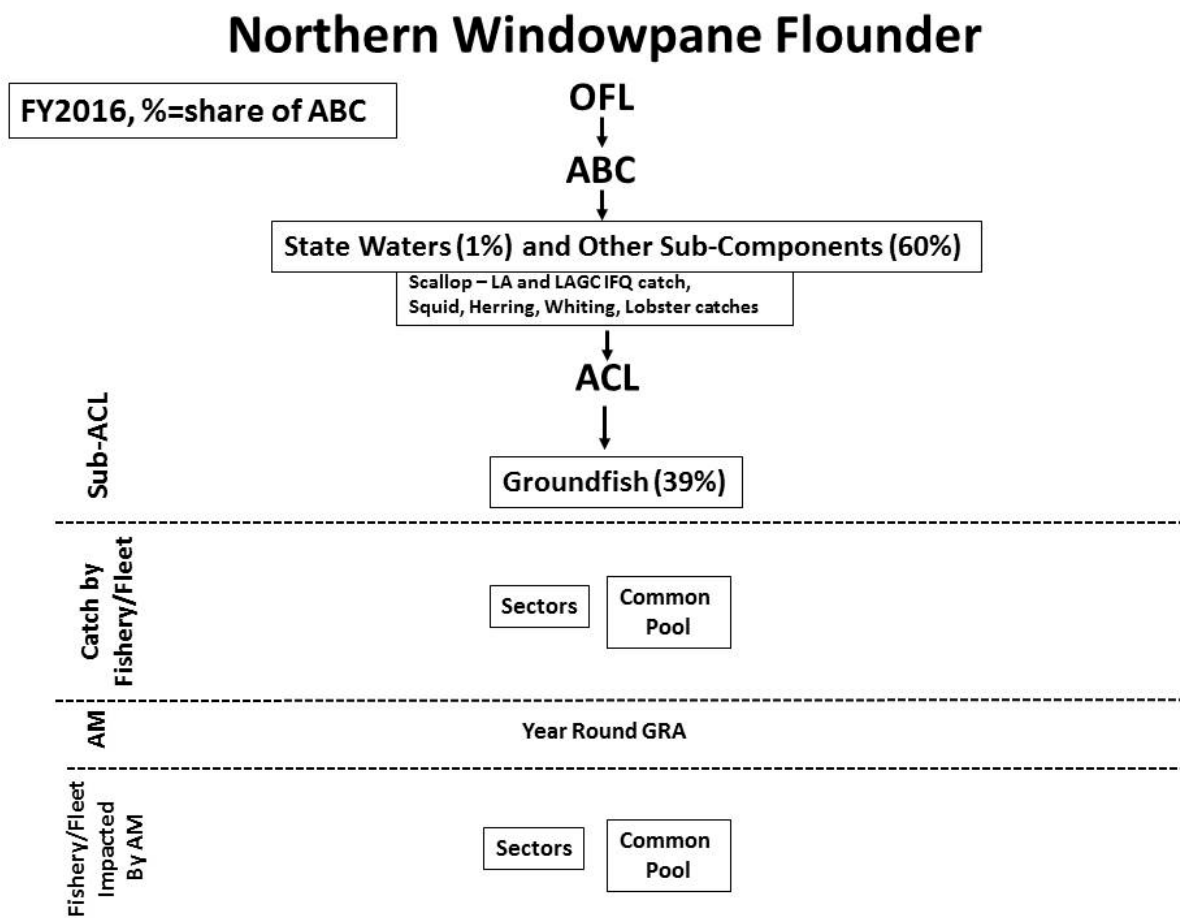


Source: NMFS weekly catch monitoring reports at <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>.

4.2.4 Northern Windowpane Allocation and Accountability Measure Flowchart

Northern windowpane flounder is allocated to the groundfish fishery as a sub-ACL. Catch attributed to state waters and the other sub-component is an estimate of what other fisheries will catch. In the absence of sub-ACLs and AMs for other fisheries, the groundfish fishery is accountable for ACL overages. Figure 8 depicts the breakdown of the allocation to each component, and notes the fisheries/fleets that contribute to the overall catch. Each components share of the FY2016 ABC is provided for context.

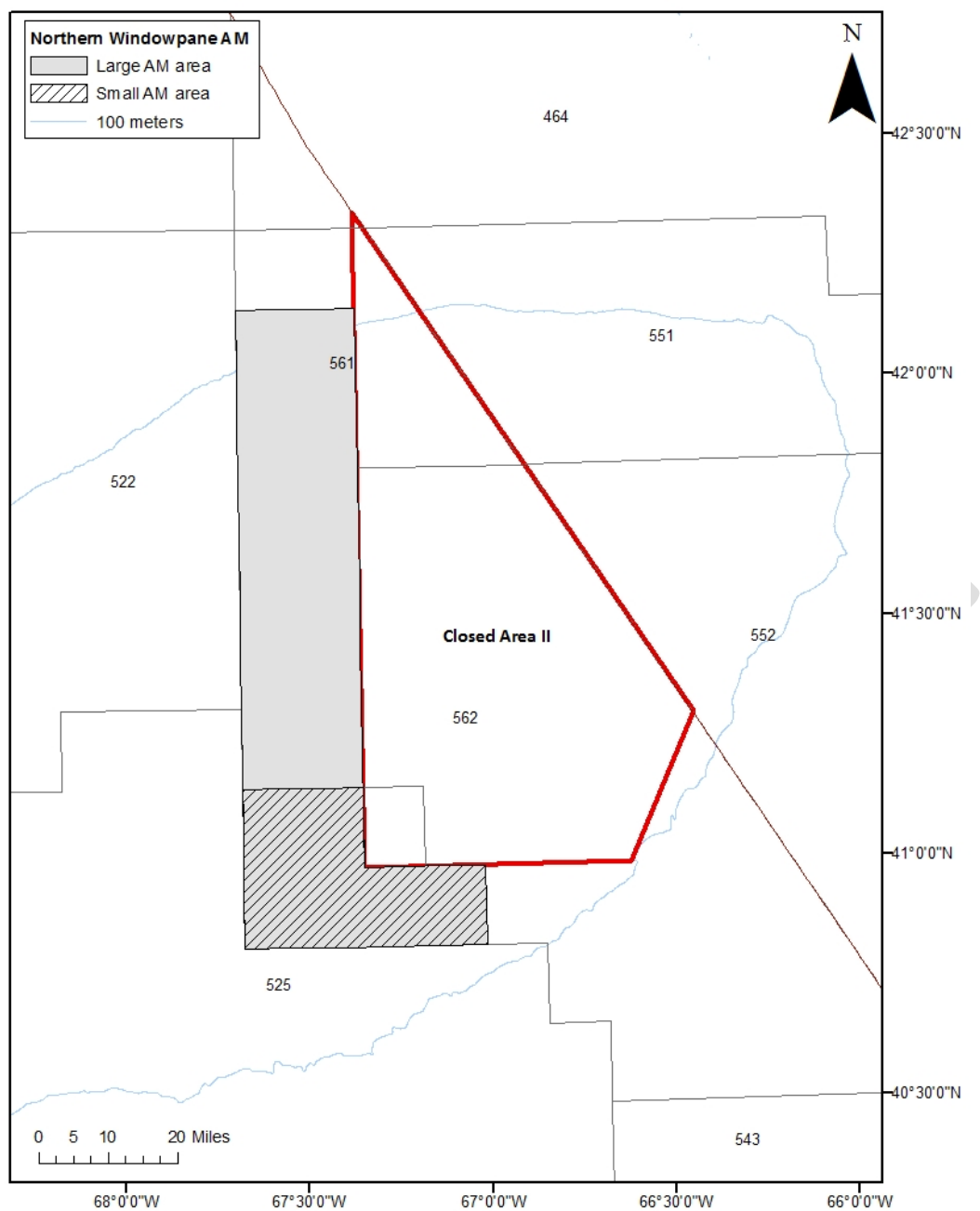
Figure 8 - Flowchart of northern windowpane flounder allocations, including fleets with catch attributed to other sub-components.



4.2.5 Northern Windowpane Accountability Measure Areas (GRAs)

The large AM area was triggered in FY2014 following catch overages in FY2012 and FY2013. The large AM area remained in place for FY2015 after it was determined that windowpane catches had exceeded the ACL by over 20% in FY2014. A breakdown of northern windowpane catch is shown in Table 7. The large AM area for northern windowpane is shown in Figure 9. This GRA overlaps with the U.S./Canada management area, and is located to the west of Closed Area II in statistical reporting areas 561, 562, and 525.

Figure 9 - Northern windowpane flounder accountability measure areas (large and small).



4.3 Management of Southern Windowpane Flounder

4.3.1 Specifications for Southern Windowpane Flounder

Table 10 depicts annual fishing year specifications for southern windowpane flounder from FY2010 through FY2018 (FY 2016-FY 2018 specifications are proposed and not final until NMFS approves FW 55). Groundfish sub-ACLs have ranged from 72mt – 154mt over this time

series. Prior to FY2013, scallop fishery catches were accounted for in the other sub-component catch estimate.

Table 10 - Southern windowpane specifications, FY2010 - FY 2018.

Stock	FY	OFL	ABC	Total ACL	Groundfish	Scallop	State Waters	Other sub-components	FMP Action
Southern Windowpane	2010	317	237	225	154		2	69	FW44
	2011	317	237	225	154		2	69	
	2012	515	386	381	72		39	270	FW47
	2013	730	548	527	102	183	55	186	FW50
	2014	730	548	527	102	183	55	186	FW51
	2015	730	548	527	102	183	55	186	FW53
	2016	833	623	599	104	209	37	249	FW55
	2017	833	623	599	104	209	37	249	
	2018	833	623	599	104	209	37	249	

4.3.2 ABC Distribution of Southern Windowpane Flounder

A16 provides that the distribution to various sub-components can be modified in a framework or specification action. Through FW48 to the Groundfish FMP, the scallop fishery was allocated a fixed percentage of the ABC (36%), and it was clarified that the other sub-component portion of the stock would be renamed “other fisheries sub-ACL.” While the estimate of catch in other fisheries is treated as a sub-ACL with an AM, this value may change based on recent estimates of catch. As such, the PDT has recommended changes to the other sub-components values through multiple framework actions, most recently in FW55 .

Table 11 - ABC distribution of southern windowpane allocations (% share).

FMP Action	FY	Groundfish	Scallop	State Waters	Other
FW44	2010	0.70		0.01	0.29
	2011	0.70		0.01	0.29
FW47	2012	0.20		0.10	0.70
FW50	2013	0.20	0.36	0.10	0.34
FW51	2014	0.20	0.36	0.10	0.34
FW53	2015	0.20	0.36	0.10	0.34
FW55	2016	0.18	0.36	0.06	0.40
	2017	0.18	0.36	0.06	0.40
	2018	0.18	0.36	0.06	0.40

Sources: Framework Adjustment 53 & 55.

Note: The management uncertainty buffer for zero possession stocks, such as windowpane, is 7% ($ABC \times 0.93 = ACL$).

4.3.3 Catch of Southern Windowpane Flounder

Southern windowpane flounder is caught in a broad range of fisheries (Table 12, Table 13, Table 14). From FY2010 – FY 2014, the majority of windowpane catch is estimated to occur in fisheries binned in the other sub-component (before and after scallop fishery sub-ACL was developed). Table 13 describes catch estimates of fisheries binned with the other sub-component estimate from FY2012 – FY2014. Catches in the ‘unknown’ category refer to catch estimates from trips that cannot be definitively attributed to a fishery based on trip records. Fishery catch as a proportion of the overall ACL is shown in Table 14. Preliminary catch data of southern windowpane flounder indicates that the groundfish fishery may exceed its sub-ACL in FY2015 (Figure 7), however as the groundfish sub-ACL is based on roughly 20% of the overall ACL, overall catch may still be below the ACL.

Table 12 - Catch of Southern Windowpane Flounder by fishery component.

					Southern Windowpane Flounder				
					Groundfish Fishery				
FY	OFL	ABC	ACL	Total Catch	Sector	Common Pool	Scallop Fishery	State Waters	Other
2010	317	237	225	534.9	52.7	20.9		31	430.3
2011	317	237	225	504.1	83	28.5		16.6	376
2012	515	386	381	520.9	95.9	10.6		34.4	380
2013	730	548	527	554.7	86	30	129.1	37.3	272.4
2014	730	548	527	478	68.2	28.1	140	23.4	218.2

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office, Final Year End Catch Reports for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>

Table 13 - Southern Windowpane Flounder catch attribution within other sub-component, values in metric tons. Note that a sub-ACL was allocated to the scallop fishery beginning in FY2013. Only fisheries with greater than 1 mt of estimated catch are included.

FY	Other Total	Scallop	Fluke	Scup	Squid	Squid/Whiting	Herring	Surf clam	Unknown
2012	380	125.8	75.9	65.8	17	11	3.6	0	80.4
2013	272.4	*sub-ACL	66.9	69.6	12.3	19	3	0	100.9
2014	218.2	*sub-ACL	47.2	58.1	12.2	10.9	2.3	4.6	82.2

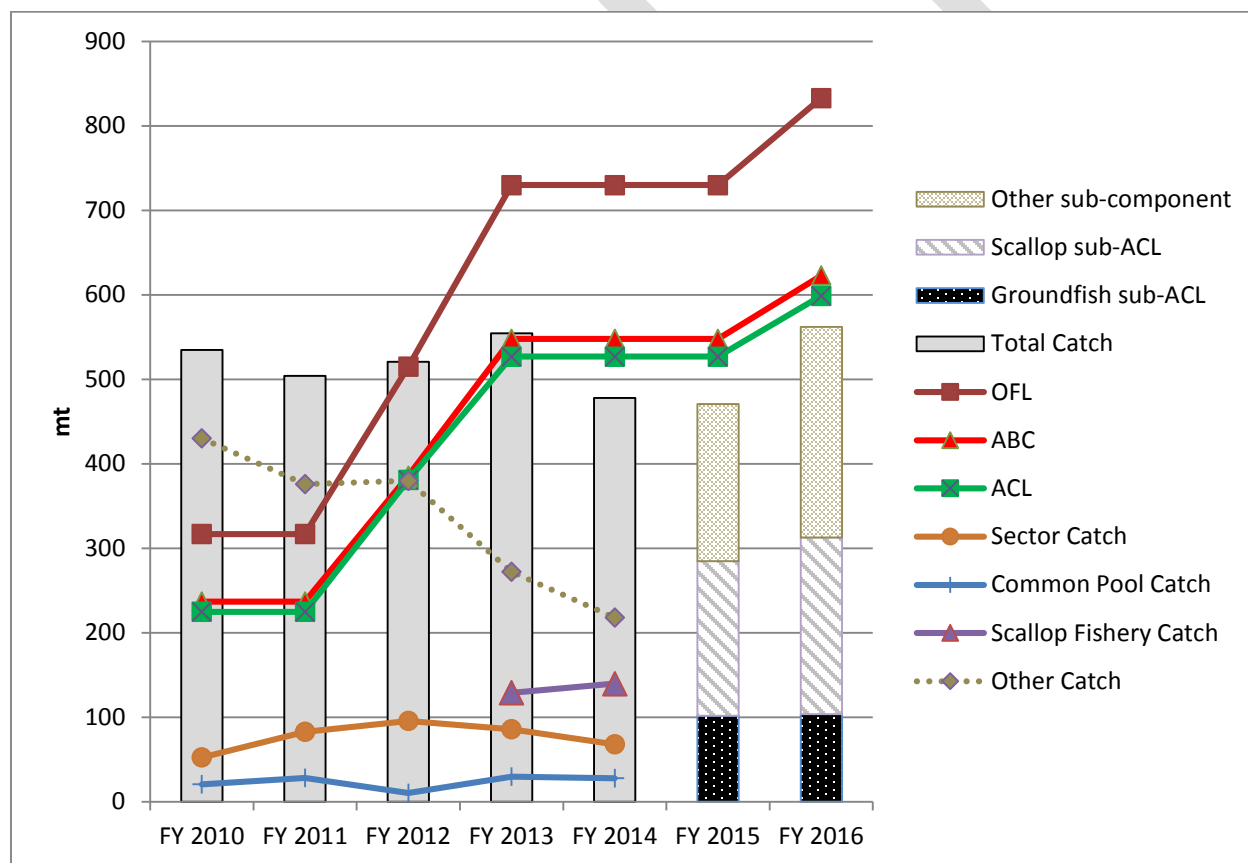
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office, Final Year End Catch Reports for 2012, 2013, 2014.
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>

Table 14 - Catch of southern windowpane flounder by fisheries within the other sub-component as a percentage (%) of the overall ACL. Note: Only fisheries with greater than 1 mt of estimated catch are included.

FY	Total ACL	Scallop	Fluke	Scup	Squid	Squid/Whiting	Herring	Surfclam	Unknown
2012	381	33.02%	19.92%	17.27%	4.46%	2.89%	0.94%	0.00%	21.10%
2013	527	n/a	12.69%	13.21%	2.33%	3.61%	0.57%	0.00%	19.15%
2014	527	n/a	8.96%	11.02%	2.31%	2.07%	0.44%	0.87%	15.60%

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office, Final Year End Catch Reports for 2012, 2013, 2014.
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>

Figure 10 - Recent catch performance and proposed catch limits for the southern windowpane flounder stock, FY2010 - FY2016.

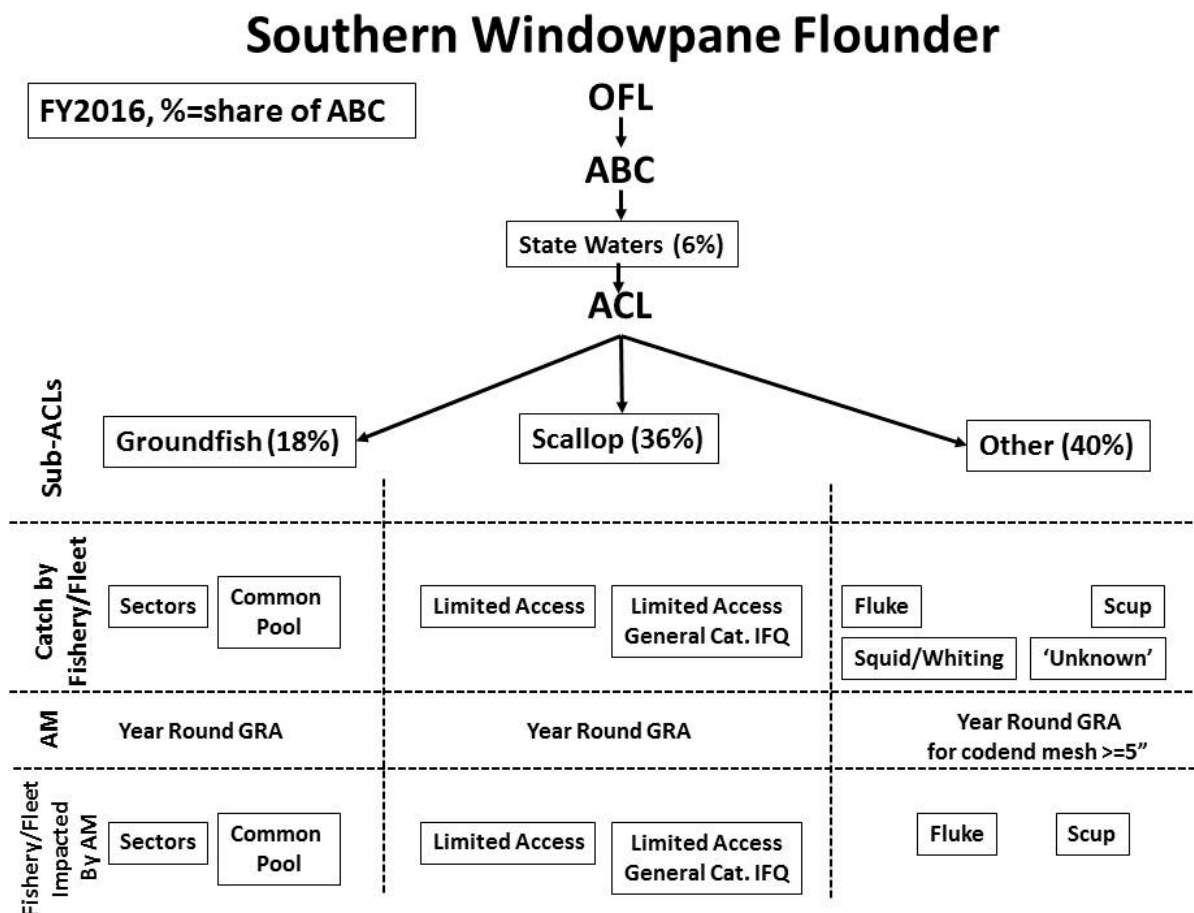


4.3.4 Southern Windowpane Allocation and Accountability Measure Flowchart

Southern windowpane flounder is allocated to three fishery components: groundfish, scallops, and other. Each component has a corresponding AM, which is triggered by both an overall overage, and an overage in that particular component. For example, if the groundfish

component's catch exceeds the sub-ACL, but overall catch is less than 105% of the overall ACL, an AM would not be triggered. Figure 11 depicts the breakdown of the allocation to each component, and notes the fisheries/fleets that contribute to the overall catch. Each components share of the FY2016 ABC is provided for context.

Figure 11 - Southern Windowpane Flounder allocations, including sub-ACLs and AM for groundfish, scallop, and other sub-components.

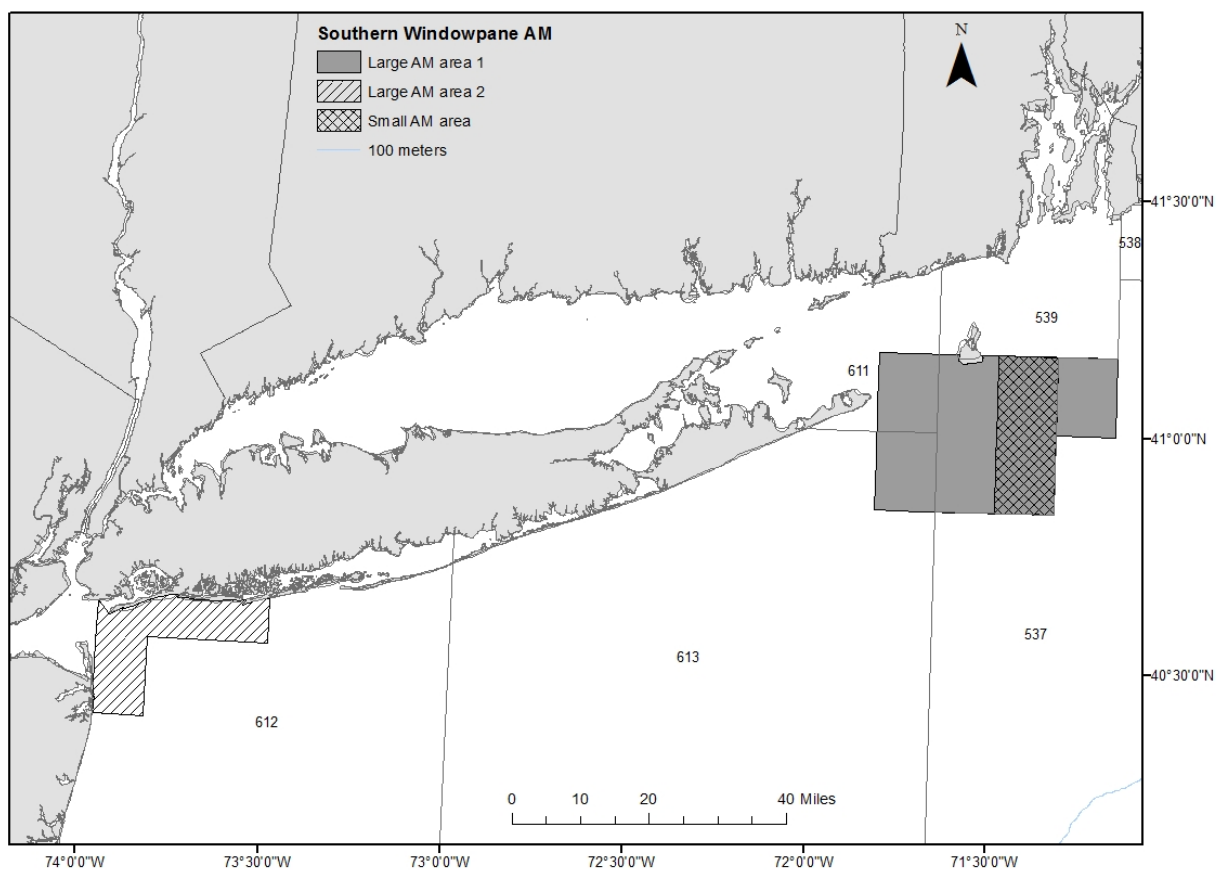


4.3.5 Southern Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measure Areas

4.3.5.1 Accountability measures for Groundfish and Other sub-Component (GRAs)

The large accountability measure area for southern windowpane was triggered in FY2014 following catch overages in FY2012 and FY2013. The large AM area remained in place for FY2015 after it was determined that windowpane catches had exceeded the ACL by over 20% in FY2014. FW52 reduced the size of the AM area (large to small) after it was determined that stock health had improved even when catch limits have been exceeded (NMFS reviewed the biomass criterion and stock status).

Figure 12 - Small and large accountability measures (GRAs) for southern windowpane flounder.



4.3.5.2 Accountability Measures in the Scallop Fishery

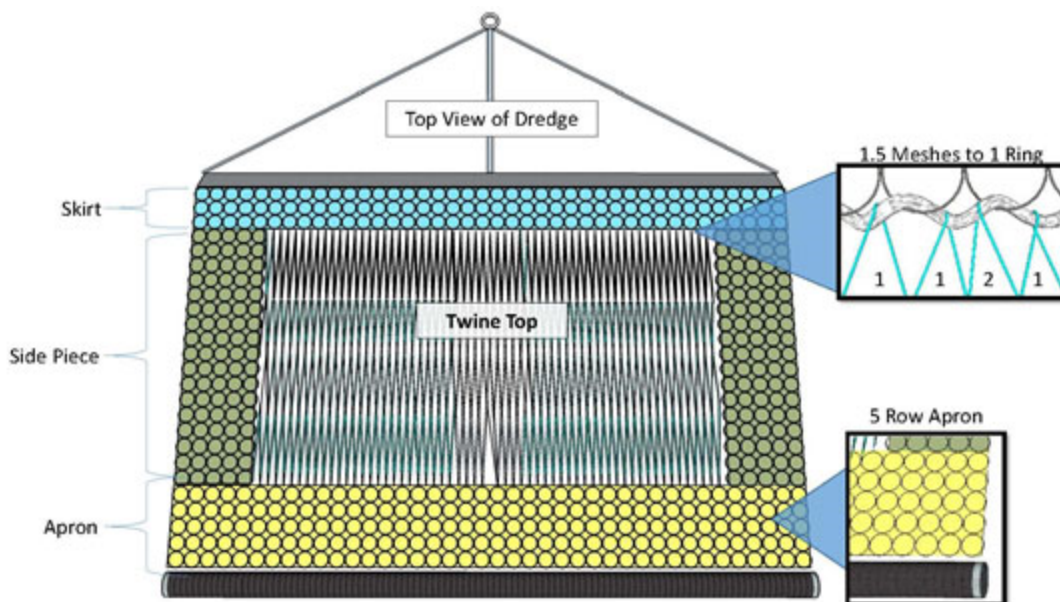
From NOAA's Sustainable Fisheries Atlantic Sea Scallop page:

“If the scallop fishery exceeds its sub-ACL for SNE/MA windowpane flounder, an AM would trigger in the area west of 71° W. long., excluding the Mid-Atlantic scallop access areas, in the year following the overage. This AM, which is a seasonal gear restriction, would require scallop vessels participating in the DAS or LAGC IFQ fisheries to comply with the following dredge gear restrictions:

- The maximum number of rows of rings in the apron of the topside does not exceed five rows; and
- The maximum hanging ratio for a net, net material, or any other material on the top of a scallop dredge (twine top) possessed or used by vessels fishing with scallop dredge gear does not exceed 1.5:1 overall. An overall hanging ratio of 1.5:1 means that the twine top is hung alternative 2 meshes per ring and 1 mesh per ring (counted at the bottom where the twine top connects to the apron), for an overall average of 1.5 meshes per ring for the entire width of the twine top.

If the scallop fishery exceeds its windowpane flounder sub-ACL by 20% or less, this gear restriction would be in place for the month of February only. If the sub-ACL is exceeded by more than 20%, the gear restriction would be in place for March and February.”

Figure 13 - Dredge gear configuration required if southern windowpane AM is in place.



Source: <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/scallop/index.html>

Language on Proactive flatfish AM from Scallop FW26 Final Rule:

“All scallop vessels (i.e., LA and LAGC) fishing for scallops with dredges in open areas west of 71° W. long. are required to have their dredges configured so that no dredge has more than seven rows of rings in the apron (i.e., the area between the terminus of the dredge (clubstick) and the twine top) on the topside of the dredge. The twine top helps finfish (flatfish in particular) escape from the dredge during fishing and the maximum number of rows of rings prevents fishermen from making the twine top small and ineffective in reducing bycatch. Framework 26 extended this proactive accountability measure to all areas where scallop fishing occurs (i.e., all access and open areas). This increased spatial coverage may further reduce flatfish bycatch by preventing dredge configurations using more than seven rows of rings, which is currently required east of 71° W. long. for some scallop vessels fishing in open areas. This is considered to be a proactive AM because it may help the fishery stay below the sub-ACLs for flatfish (yellowtail flounder and windowpane flounder, currently). Additionally, this measure enables vessels to voluntarily fish with an even shorter apron (less than seven rings), to proactively reduce flatfish bycatch in any area or season.”

5.0 DRAFT OBJECTIVES

Windowpane flounder are caught in a variety of fisheries managed in the Greater Atlantic region. As noted in the draft problem statement, overages in recent years have triggered AMs for several fisheries. Several Council, Committee, and Advisory Panel discussions have focused on accountability for windowpane catch. For northern windowpane flounder, catches by fisheries categorized in the other sub-component may contribute to overages but only the groundfish fishery is subject to AMs. Within the sector component of the fishery, catches of northern windowpane vary by sector, with very little catch attributed to the common pool. While sub-ACLs of southern windowpane exist for multiple fisheries, large-mesh AMs impact a sub-set of fisheries under the umbrella of other sub-components.

Both stocks were assessed in 2015, and OFLs and ABCs are proposed to increase for FY2016 – FY2018. The status of northern windowpane also improved (overfishing not occurring) as of the 2015 operational assessments. Southern windowpane remains healthy (not overfished/overfishing not occurring).

Potential objectives of an action:

- Minimize the economic impact of accountability measures (GRAs) triggered by windowpane flounder catch overages.
- Create accountability for fisheries catching relatively large amounts of windowpane flounder.
- Create additional accountability within fisheries catching windowpane flounder.
- Modify management measures to reflect changes in the status, abundance and/or distribution of the resource.
- Others?

6.0 **POTENTIAL APPROACHES THE COUNCIL MAY WISH TO CONSIDER**

As stated above, the status, catch by fishery, and management varies between northern and southern windowpane. Given these differences, a range of potential approaches are offered for discussion purposes.

This list has been provided for discussion purposes only and will not be developed further without Committee/Council recommendations to do so.

6.1 **No Action.**

No change to current management of windowpane flounder.

6.2 **Allocate the stock**

One potential approach that the Council may wish to consider is to allocate windowpane flounder. Allocations could be developed for fisheries, components of fisheries (ex: individual sectors and the common pool), or at the permit level. For example, the Council has opted to allocate southern windowpane flounder to the scallop fishery, and sets a sub-ACL for the other sub-component. Another approach could be to allocate windowpane as PSC to individual permit holders in the groundfish fishery.

6.2.1 Allocation of northern windowpane flounder to the scallop fishery

Scallop catches of northern windowpane flounder are currently accounted as other sub-component catch and have varied over time. In FY2014, scallop fishery catch was estimated to be 99.7 mt. In response to this, the groundfish PDT re-estimated the other sub-component share of northern windowpane for FY2016 as part of FW55. While the overall trigger for the groundfish AM remains at the overall ACL, groundfish catch limits are based on 39% of the ABC (further reduced by 7% for management uncertainty). In the past, the Council has considered sub-ACLs when other fishery catch has exceeded 5% of the total catch. The groundfish fishery is currently the only fishery which has an accountability measure for northern windowpane flounder.

Through the development of FW53, the groundfish PDT developed alternatives which would have based a scallop fishery sub-ACL on the 90th percentile of the scallop fishery catches (as a percent of the total) for the period calendar year 2001 through 2010. This alternative was ultimately moved to considered but rejected.

This approach could be done in a framework action.

6.2.2 Allocate northern and southern windowpane as PSC to individual permit holders or to components of the fleet (individual sectors and common pool)

Windowpane flounder stocks would be allocated like other groundfish stocks. Sectors would hold windowpane ACE, which could be traded. The Council could also consider requiring vessels to land windowpane (and may wish to develop a minimum size). Management measures would also need to be developed for the common pool.

As many vessels did not land windowpane during the groundfish qualification period from 1996-2006, the Council may wish to explore alternate approaches to allocating the stock. These include:

- Allocating PSC shares to permit holders (multiple approaches)
 - Equal shares by permit
 - Active/Inactive
 - Use of other PSC allocations as proxy for allocation
 - EX: winter flounder
 - Use an average of multiple stock PSC shares, such as winter flounder and yellowtail flounder. (winter flounder PSC + yellowtail flounder PSC/200)
- Shares to each sector and the common pool (not at individual level)
 - “Bycatch limits” (*not as allocations*) have also been proposed as a way to allow for a level of sector self-management for northern windowpane flounder.

Based on NOAA GC input during previous discussions, allocating windowpane PSC to permit holders would likely require an amendment. The appropriate vehicle to develop bycatch limits has not been identified.

6.2.2.1 Example for discussion purposes: Winter flounder as a proxy to determine shares for northern windowpane at the sector and common pool level.

At their [September 16, 2014 meeting](#), the Groundfish advisors discussed using winter flounder PSC shares as a proxy for distributing shares of northern windowpane flounder at the sector common pool level (Motion #3).

The stock boundaries of winter flounder stocks and windowpane flounder stocks do not align. In particular, SA 521 (east of Cape Cod) is considered part of the northern windowpane stock area, and the SNE/MA winter flounder stock area. The northern windowpane stock boundaries cover broad stock areas (BSA) 1, 2, 3.

Figure 14 - Stock boundaries of winter flounder stocks and GOM/GB windowpane. Note that the SNE/MA windowpane stock boundary is the area that is outside of the hatched SAs.

GOM/GB Windowpane and Winter Flounder Stock Areas

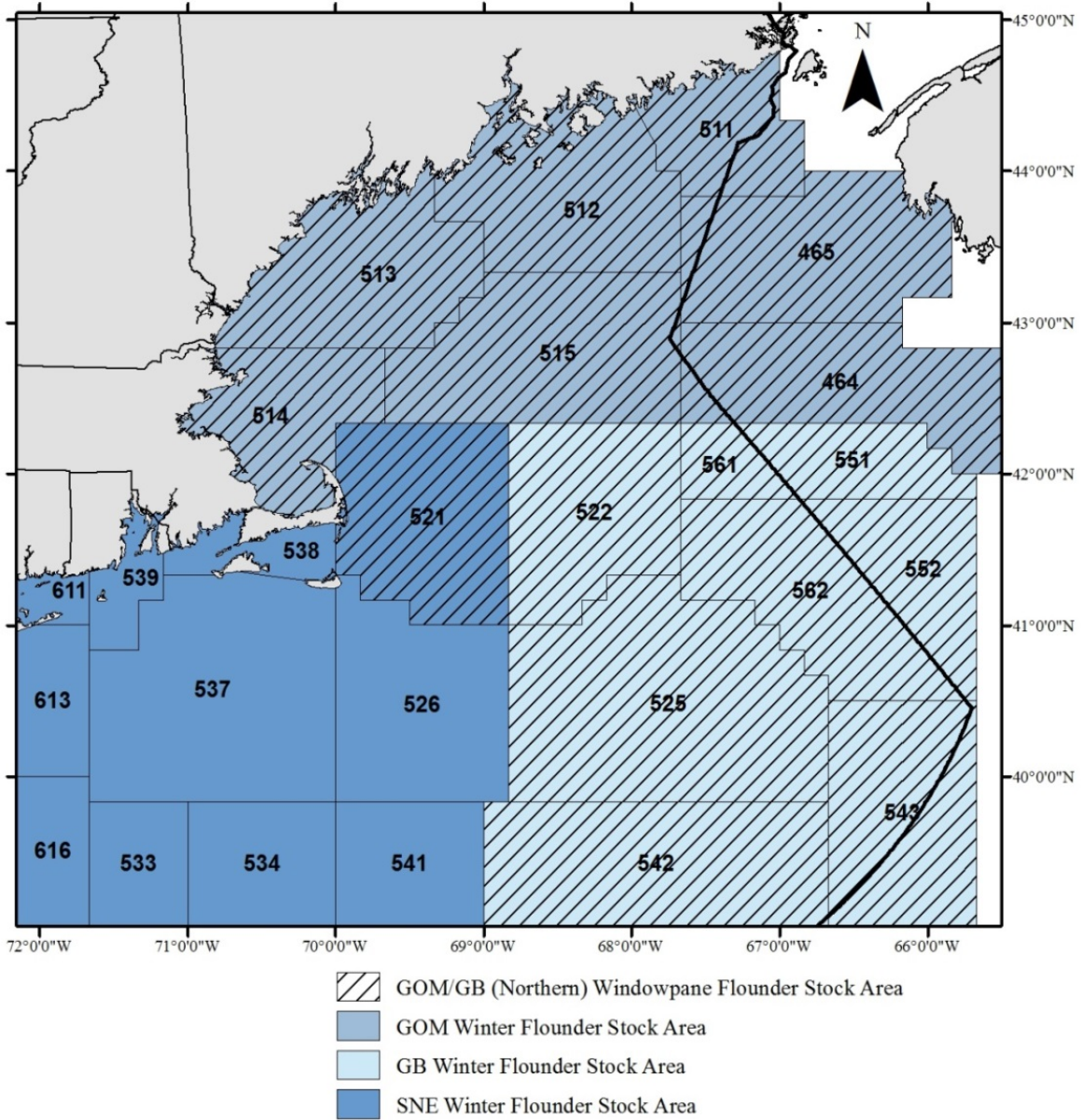


Table 15 - Sector winter flounder PSC based on 2014 rosters. Note that these values may change if sector membership changes.

2014 Winter Flounder PSC				
	GB Winter Flounder	GOM Winter Flounder	SNE/MA Winter Flounder	3 Stock PSC Share
NEFS 9	39.505740	2.434938	18.665507	20.20
SHS1	17.311715	10.375386	19.550243	15.75
NEFS 8	15.547171	3.162194	10.128019	9.61
NEFS 2	3.216849	18.427402	3.265345	8.30
NEFS 13	7.259581	2.339944	10.984692	6.86
NEFS 7	12.972103	0.750856	5.154004	6.29
NEFS 10	0.013853	17.835743	0.733777	6.19
Common Pool	0.858955	4.461937	12.178248	5.83
FGS	0.027743	12.871703	1.669262	4.86
NEFS 5	0.515366	0.065953	12.008923	4.20
NEFS 3	0.026628	9.493555	0.772601	3.43
NEFS 4	0.694261	6.237485	1.293135	2.74
NEFS 6	1.509987	4.550787	1.942066	2.67
SHS3	0.461095	1.315664	1.120611	0.97
NEFS 11	0.003395	2.249078	0.021740	0.76
MCCS	0.006821	1.962256	0.193992	0.72
NCCS	0.068512	0.927856	0.299690	0.43
MPB	0.000218	0.424996	0.018063	0.15
NHPB	0.000006	0.060254	0.000079	0.02
NEFS 1	0.000001	0.052013	0.000003	0.02

Source: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>

6.2.3 Allocate southern windowpane flounder to fishing within the “other” category, such as Mid-Atlantic fisheries (fluke, squid, etc).

At various times the Groundfish Committee and Groundfish Advisors have raised the concept of creating sub-ACLs for Mid-Atlantic fisheries has been raised to allow for specific accountability of fisheries that are currently under the “other” sub-component umbrella. The rationale for this approach could be that catch on windowpane in a single fishery (say squid) could trigger existing AMs (large mesh GRAs) which impact the fluke and scup fisheries.

The “other” sub-ACL for southern windowpane flounder includes all fisheries with the exception of groundfish and scallops (which have their own ACLs). While a range of “other” fisheries catch windowpane flounder in SNE, only fisheries using a 5” or larger cod end (primarily scup, black sea bass, fluke) are subject to the AMs if the sub-ACL is exceeded and the overall ACL is exceeded.

As reporting and monitoring requirements vary between fisheries (VMS and PTNS, IVR, frequency of VTR submission), so does the ability of NMFS to monitor windowpane catch by fishery in-season. In fisheries that do not have a VMS or IVR requirements, attribution of windowpane catch to a specific fishery is done after the trip by examining VTR and dealer records. In some cases, windowpane catch from a trip is not assigned to specific fishery, and the windowpane catch is binned into an unknown sub-category within the “other” sub-ACL. To be clear, catch in the unknown category is derived from fishing activity (VTR reports), but the target fishery remains in question.

AMs linked to cod-end mesh size addresses windowpane catches across the large-mesh bottom-tending mobile gear fleet. Challenges arise with respect to AM enforcement within GRAs for large-mesh fisheries that do not require PTNS or IVR. For example, the same cod-end size may be used to prosecute the fluke and scup fisheries. Further dividing the windowpane sub-ACL may necessitate additional reporting requirements for individual fisheries seeking a sub-ACL to facilitate compliance and catch monitoring.

While multiple fleets and fisheries contribute to the catch by the “other” sub-component, the AM only applies to fisheries using codend mesh greater than or equal to 5”. As noted above, this creates a situation where catches of windowpane in small-mesh fisheries can contribute to the sub-ACL overage, but not be subject to accountability measures. To be clear, catch of windowpane in the small mesh fishery has been small in recent years. However, the current AM for the other sub-ACL applies to a sub-set of the fisheries which contribute to this catch.

As much of the “other” windowpane catch come from fisheries managed by the MAFMC, there are a range of ways to address this issue. The model within the New England Council has been to develop AMs within specific FMPs. For example, sub-ACLs for SNE/MA windowpane flounder were developed through a groundfish framework, but the AM for the scallop fishery was developed through an action to the Scallop FMP. Ostensibly, fishery specific AMs could be developed by the Mid-Atlantic Council to address parity issues across all fisheries contributing to the “other” sub-component catch. This approach retains the spirit of the regional council system, though it creates a situation in which the conservation and management of a stock managed solely by the NEFMC is tied to measures adopted by another regional Council. Another option to address parity for all ‘other’ fisheries would be for the NEFMC to create an AM for small-mesh fisheries in consultation with the MAFMC.

6.3 Evaluate the performance of existing AM areas

Accountability measures in the form of gear restricted areas (GRAs) have been triggered for both northern and southern windowpane flounder in recent years. The Council may wish to revisit the performance of these AMs relative to their impact on fishery catches before and after the AMs were implemented. Changes to AMs could be done in a framework action.

Potential Analyses:

- Review observed haul/trip level data before and after implementation for:
 - Percentage of hauls/trips which caught windowpane flounder
 - (presence/absence before and after)
 - Discard to Kall ratios and CPUE (catch/haul duration) before and after (at gear/stock level)
 - By statistical reporting area
 - Seasonality of catches

6.3.1 Example for discussion purposes: Observed haul level catch data before and after the implementation of northern windowpane AM areas

This is a preliminary examination of observer information – it is not meant to be final. If this approach is recommended by the Council/Committee, additional work would be done by PDT. The Northern windowpane stock area covers the Gulf of Maine (BSA 1), Inshore Georges Bank (BSA 2), and Georges Bank (BSA 3). As shown in Table 16, roughly 1 in 5 observed hauls in 521, 522, 525, and 526 caught windowpane flounder, while the percentage of hauls catching windowpane in SRAs 561 and 562 ranged from a low of 9% in 2015, to a high of 44% in 2012.

Haul level information in Figure 15 and Figure 16 from all groundfish sector hauls (all gear types) catching windowpane flounder suggests that harvesters continued to encounter windowpane at roughly the same levels (including outliers) as they had prior to the AM being implemented (with the exception of May/June 2013). This could be the result of several factors, such as broad scale distribution of the stock, changes in fishing patterns based on the AM implementation, or an ineffective AM, to name a few. Stock area data suggests that finer scale examination of the catch is needed before and after the implementation of the AM to discern potential biological impacts of the AM.

Table 16 - Percentage of observed hauls using bottom otter trawl, Ruhle trawl, and haddock separator trawls that caught windowpane flounder by statistical reporting area, FY2008 - FY2015. Source: Observer database

FY	561 & 562	521, 522, 525, 526
2008	36%	26%
2009	36%	29%
2010	20%	23%
2011	31%	22%
2012	44%	17%
2013	33%	21%
2014	28%	20%
2015	9%	20%

Figure 15 - Northern windowpane flounder bi-monthly haul level catch from observed sector trips (positive hauls only all gears), May 2010 - December 2015. Note the red lime is when the AM was put in place, and that a log scale was used.

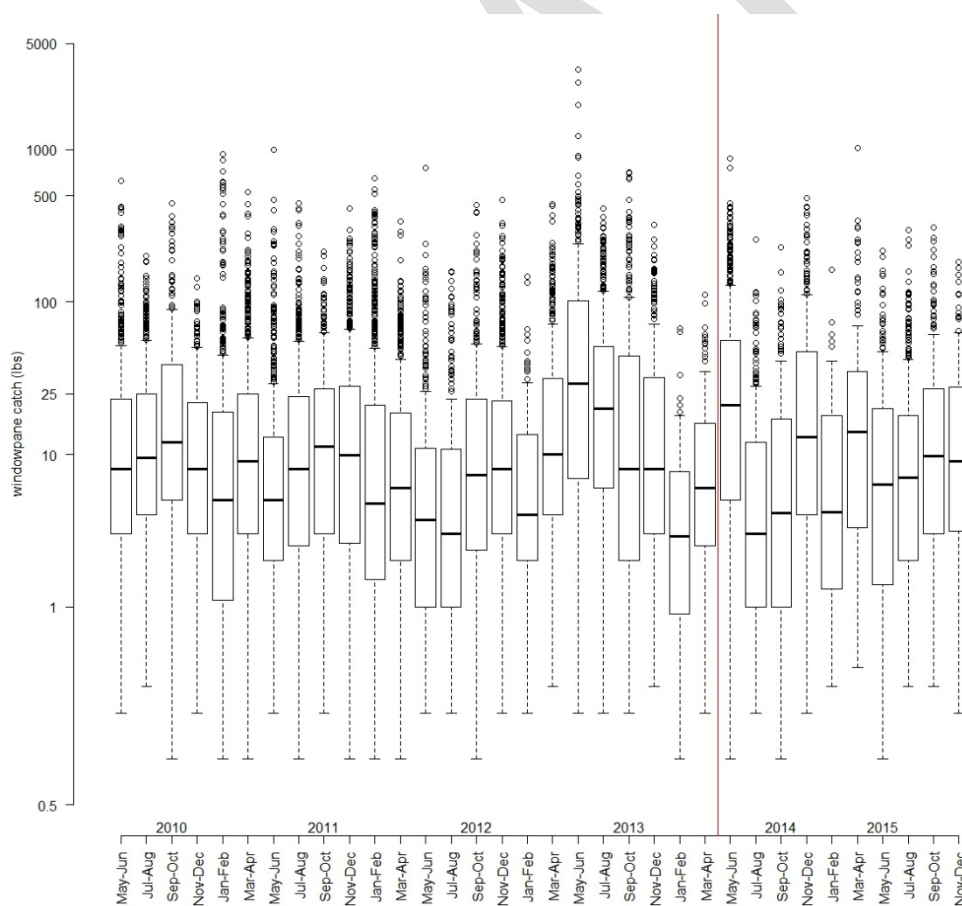
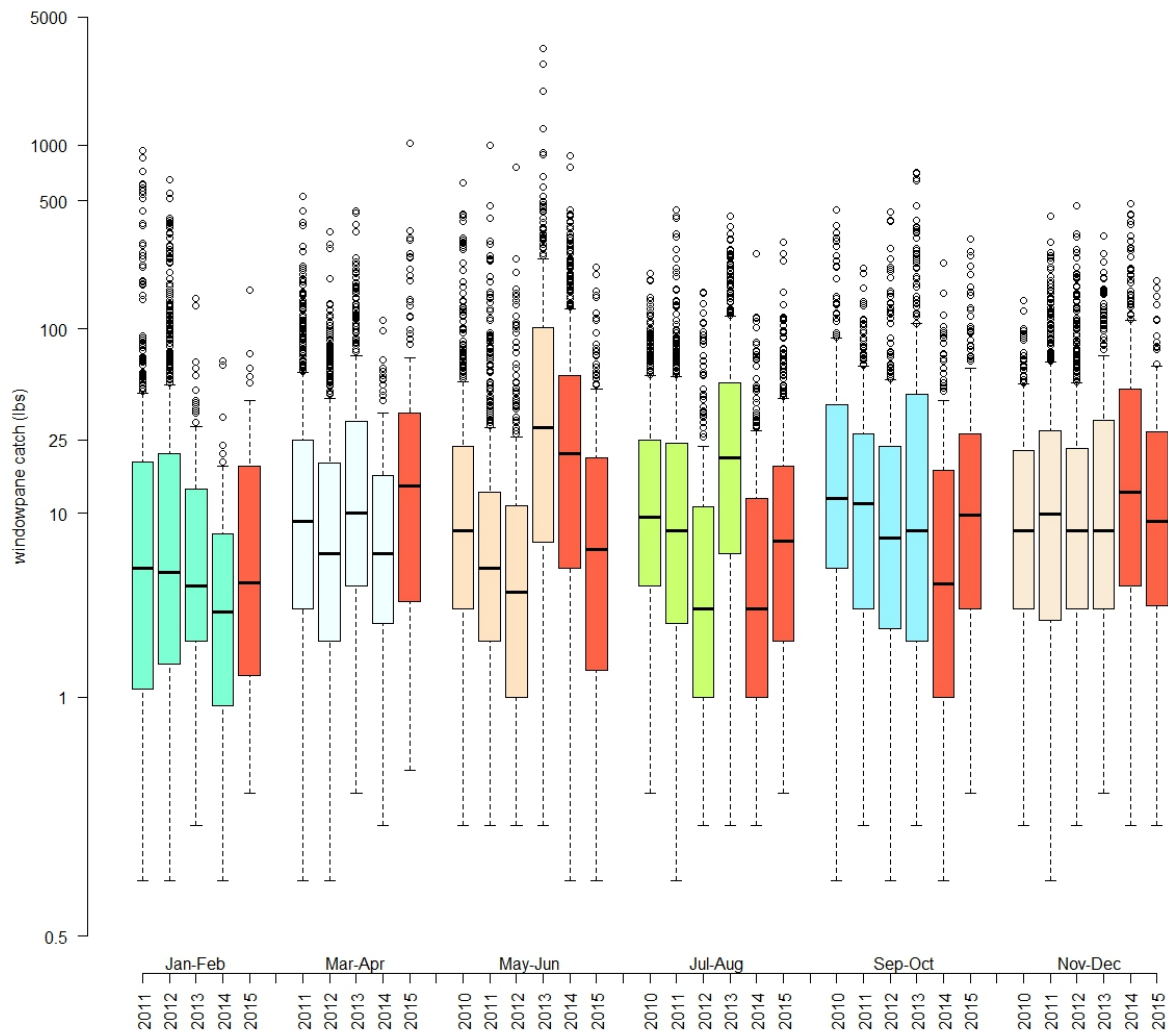


Figure 16 - Northern widowpane flounder observed haul level catch data grouped by month block. Red bars indicate catches on positive hauls after the AM was implemented. Data from May 2010 - December 2015, log scale.



It may be worth noting that as a discard only species, overall catch of windowpane is estimated by applying the catch to total kept (discard/Kall) ratio on observed trips to the Kall on unobserved trips. The sum of the observed catch and the unobserved estimate is the overall catch of each stock.

6.4 Evaluate windowpane as a candidate to be classified as an ecosystem component

Several other regional fishery management councils have classified species as ecosystem components in their FMPs (Table 17). Ecosystem component (EC) species are not considered to be in the fishery and do not require stock assessments, and ABCs and OFLs are not calculated.

Regulations on Ecosystem Components can be found in the CFR at 600.310(d)(5).² NMFS proposed revisions to the guidelines for National Standards 1, 3, and 7 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act in January of 2015.³ The proposed rule would modify the current description of Ecosystem Components. The current criteria used to determine whether or not a species/stock may qualify for classification as an ecosystem component is shown below:

(5) *Ecosystem component (EC) species.* (i) To be considered for possible classification as an EC species, the species should:

- (A) Be a non-target species or non-target stock;
- (B) Not be determined to be subject to overfishing, approaching overfished, or overfished;
- (C) Not be likely to become subject to overfishing or overfished, according to the best available information, in the absence of conservation and management measures; and
- (D) Not generally be retained for sale or personal use.

(ii) Occasional retention of the species would not, in and of itself, preclude consideration of the species under the EC classification. In addition to the general factors noted in paragraphs (d)(5)(i)(A)-(D) of this section, it is important to consider whether use of the EC species classification in a given instance is consistent with MSA conservation and management requirements.

(iii) EC species may be identified at the species or stock level, and may be grouped into complexes. EC species may, but are not required to, be included in an FMP or FMP amendment for any of the following reasons: For data collection purposes; for ecosystem considerations related to specification of OY for the associated fishery; as considerations in the development of conservation and management measures for the associated fishery; and/or to address other ecosystem issues. While EC species are not considered to be “in the fishery,” a Council should consider measures for the fishery to minimize bycatch and bycatch mortality of EC species consistent with National Standard 9, and to protect their associated role in the ecosystem. EC species do not require specification of reference points but should be monitored to the extent that any new pertinent scientific information becomes available (e.g., catch trends, vulnerability, etc.) to determine changes in their status or their vulnerability to the fishery. If necessary, they should be reclassified as “in the fishery.”

² [Regulatory language on Ecosystem Components.](#)

³ EC Proposed Rule:
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/national_standards/documents/ns1_proposed_rule.pdf

As stock status of northern and southern windowpane varies, so does the applicability of an ecosystem component classification. Southern windowpane, which has been declared rebuilt, does meet criteria (B) that the species is not overfished, or subject to overfishing (unlike northern windowpane). The 2015 operational assessment updated reference points and FW55 would update catch limits for the next three years.

Section §648.90 of the CFR does not list ecosystem component designations as measures that may be adjusted through a framework adjustment.

Table 17 - Ecosystem Component Species of other Fishery Management Councils

Ecosystem Component Species			
Jurisdiction	FMP	Stock	Species Contained in the Ecosystem Component Group
PFMC	Coastal Pelagic Species	Ecosystem Component Species	Pacific herring and jacksmelt
PFMC	U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species	Pacific HMS Ecosystem Component Species Complex	Bigeye thresher and pelagic thresher
NPFMC	Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area	Arctic Management Area Ecosystem Component Species	Alaska plaice, Alaska lyre crab, Arctic staghorn sculpin, Bering flounder, blue king crab, Canadian eelpout, capelin, eelpouts, Greenland halibut, marbled eelpout, notched brittlestar, Pacific cod, Pacific herring, pricklebacks, red king crab, sculpins, snailfishes, Walleye pollock, warty sculpin, and yellowfin sole.
NPFMC	Scallop Fishery off Alaska	Alaska Scallop Ecosystem Component Species Complex	Bering scallop, giant rock scallop, reddish scallop, spiny scallop, and white scallop
SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Bank sea bass - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.
SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Cottonwick - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.
SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Longspine porgy - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.
SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Ocean triggerfish - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.
SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Rock sea bass - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.

SAFMC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Schoolmaster - Southern Atlantic Coast	Not applicable; single species.
Source: NOAA Fisheries - Status of U.S. Fisheries - Fish Stock Sustainability Index - 4th Quarter 2014 report, accessed on 4/20/15.			
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/fisheries_eco/status_of_fisheries/archive/2014/fourth/q4_2014_stock_status_tables.pdf			

Table 18 – Discussion of windowpane stocks with respect to ecosystem component status criteria.

Criteria	Northern Windowpane	Southern Windowpane
	Does the stock meet the qualification criteria for ecosystem components?	
Be a non-target species or a non-target stock	Yes	Yes
Not be determined to be subject to overfishing, approaching overfished, or overfished	No	Yes
Not be likely to become subject to overfishing or overfished, according to the best available information, in the absence of conservation and management measures;	Overfished. No.	<p>The stock remained healthy (not overfished, overfishing not occurring) between the 2012 and 2015 assessments.</p> <p>From a catch limit standpoint, GRAs (conservation and management measures) were in place for FY2013 and part of FY2014. As GRAs were not in place for FY2015, final catch data from this FY should indicate whether or not fishery catches are below current catch limits (and the OFL) without specific conservation and management measures in place.</p> <p>Catch has remained around 500mt since FY2010. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, catches were 169% and 159% of the OFL. OFL/ABC values increase in FY2012, FY2013, and FY2016.</p>
Not generally be retained for sale or personal use.	Yes	Yes

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL DOCUMENTS AND MOTIONS

7.1 Links to relevant groundfish Council documents since A16 (to be updated with documents from other FMPs if recommended)

Date	Action	Document
11/20/14	Priorities	Council Meeting Motions – Priorities Discussion, Motion #18a, p.17
11/12/14	FW53	GF CTE Meeting Summary (pp.11-13, pp. 21-26, pp. 42-43)
11/5/14	FW53	GF PDT memo to GF CTE re: FW53 (p.12)
10/17/14	FW53	Correspondence re: Windowpane Flounder Allocation (pp.63-71)
9/26/14	FW53	GF PDT memo to GF CTE re: FW53 (pp.1-2)
9/17/14	FW53	GF CTE Meeting Summary (pp.12-16)
9/16/14	FW53	GAP Meeting Summary (pp.7-10)
9/12/14	FW53	GF PDT memo to GF CTE re: FW53 (pp.2-4)
6/9/14	FW52	GF CTE Meeting Summary (pp.2-4)
6/9/14	FW52	Staff Presentation on FW52 for GF CTE
6/2/14	FW52	FW52 GF CTE Decision Document
4/4/14	FW52	GF CTE Meeting Summary
4/4/14	FW52	Staff Presentation on FW52 development for GF CTE
4/3/14	FW52	GF PDT Memo to GF CTE re: FW52 Version 2
4/1/14	FW52	GAP Meeting Summary
3/28/14	FW52	GF CTE Meeting Summary (p.9)
3/28/14	FW52	Staff Presentation on FW52 development for GF CTE
3/24/14	FW52	GF PDT Memo to GF CTE re: FW52 Version 1
3/21/14	INFO	2014 Windowpane Flounder AM Information Sheet, NMFS
2/26/14	FW52	Council Meeting Motions – Initiate FW52, Motion #11, p.9
3/9/12	FW47	Framework Adjustment 47 Appendices I-V (see Appendices III & IV)

7.2 Council motions on management priorities

From the November 2014 Council meeting, Management Priorities for 2015:

Mr. Blount moved to amend and Ms. Goethel seconded:

To include the following groundfish priorities:

- New sub-ACLs for fluke, squid, etc. for SNE/MA windowpane flounder;
- Develop a limited access program for the party/charter fishery
- Amendment for windowpane flounder

The motion to amend *failed* on a show of hands (0/14/2).

By Consensus: that the staff move forward working on a white paper for windowpane flounder.

8.0 REFERENCES

Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). 2012. Assessment or Data Updates of 13 Northeast Groundfish Stocks through 2010. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 12-06; 789 p. Available from: National Marine Fisheries Service, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026, or online at <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/>

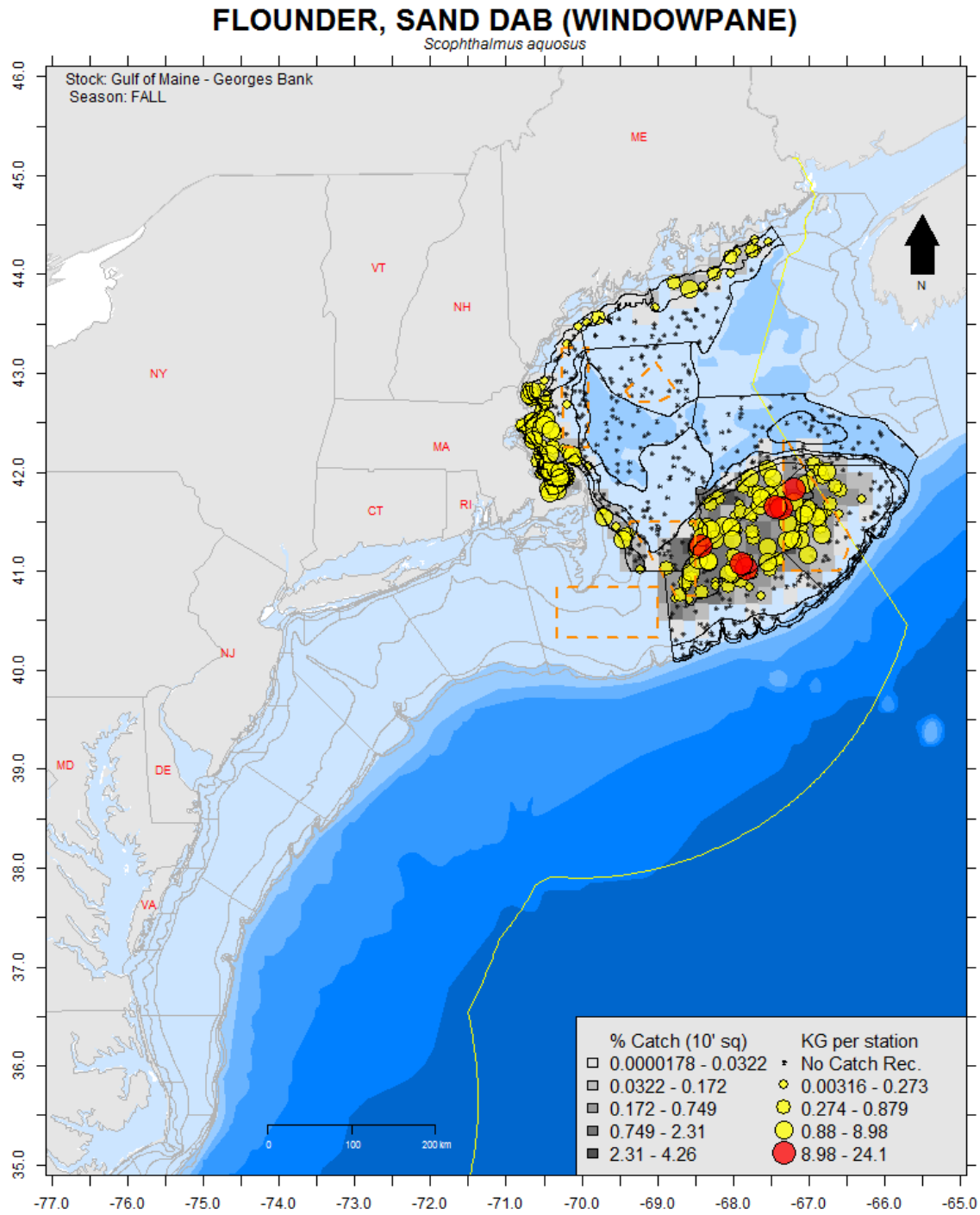
Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). 2015. Operational Assessment of 20 Northeast Groundfish Stocks, Updated Through 2014. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 15-24; 251 p.

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9.0 NEFSC FALL SURVEY DATA

The following NEFSC Fall survey data was obtained at the NEFSC on the Stock Assessment Supporting Information (SASINF) website: http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/sasi/sasi_report.php

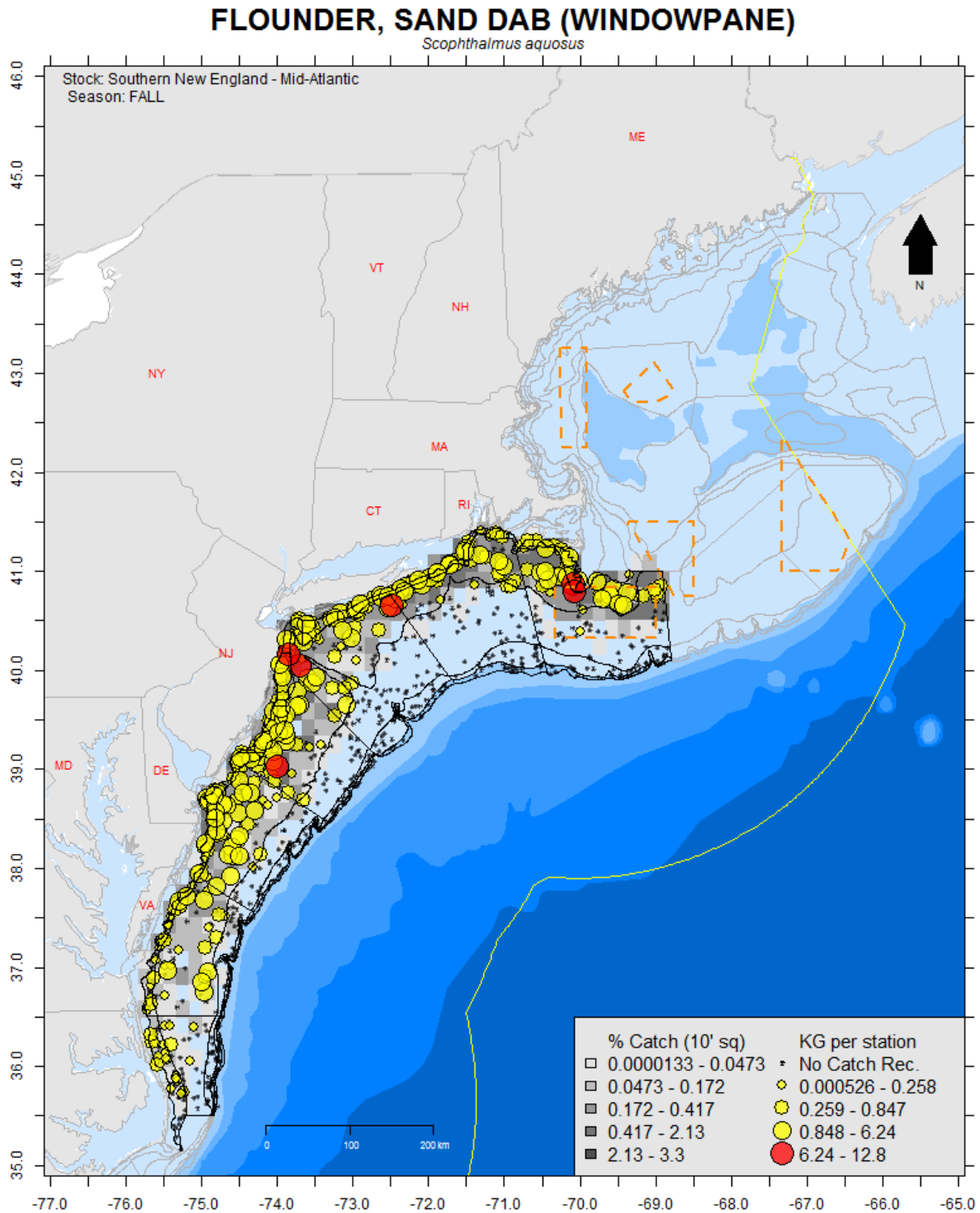
Figure 17 - Northern Windowpane fall survey catch data plot from 2015 operational assessment. Description of the figure is provided below.



This caption for is from the NEFSC Stock Assessment Supporting Information (SASINF) website: “This map represents survey catches for FLOUNDER, SAND DAB (WINDOWPANE), *Scophthalmus aquosus*, Gulf of Maine - Georges Bank stock. The shaded cells represent the percentage of catch per ten minute square for the fall. NMFS NEFSC BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY time series, from 1963 - 2014. The points represent catch weights for the previous 5 years (2010 - 2014) of the fall NMFS NEFSC BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY time series. The red points show the locations of the 6 largest tows in the set. All weights have been calibrated according to the appropriate survey calibration factors for the species and stock.” (NEFSC, 2015 http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/sasi/sasi_report.php)

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Figure 18 - Southern windowpane fall survey catch data plot from 2015 operational assessment. Description of the figure is provided below.



The caption for Figure 18 is from the NEFSC Stock Assessment Supporting Information (SASINF) website: “This map represents survey catches for FLOUNDER, SAND DAB (WINDOWPANE), *Scophthalmus aquosus*, Southern New England - Mid-Atlantic stock. The shaded cells represent the percentage of catch per ten minute square for the fall NMFS NEFSC BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY time series, from 1963 - 2014. The points represent catch weights for the previous 5 years (2010 - 2014) of the fall NMFS NEFSC BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY time series. The RED points show the locations of the 6 largest tows in the set. All weights have been calibrated according to the appropriate survey calibration factors for the species and stock.” (NEFSC, 2015 http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/sasi/sasi_report.php)

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