

- The Council voted to advance the concept of the running clock to the Enforcement Committee to see if enforcement problems cited in the past still exist.

### **3.4 Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of this amendment remain as described in Amendment 13:

**Goal 1:** Consistent with the National Standards and other required provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and other applicable law, manage the northeast multispecies complex at sustainable levels.

**Goal 2:** Create a management system so that fleet capacity will be commensurate with resource status so as to achieve goals of economic efficiency and biological conservation and that encourages diversity within the fishery.

**Goal 3:** Maintain a directed commercial and recreational fishery for northeast multispecies.

**Goal 4:** Minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on fishing communities and shoreside infrastructure.

**Goal 5:** Provide reasonable and regulated access to the groundfish species covered in this plan to all members of the public of the United States for seafood consumption and recreational purposes during the stock rebuilding period without compromising the Amendment 13 objectives or timetable. If necessary, management measures could be modified in the future to insure that the overall plan objectives are met.

**Goal 6:** To promote stewardship within the fishery.

**Objective 1:** Achieve, on a continuing basis, optimum yield (OY) for the U.S. fishing industry.

**Objective 2:** Clarify the status determination criteria (biological reference points and control rules) for groundfish stocks so they are consistent with the National Standard guidelines and applicable law.

**Objective 3:** Adopt fishery management measures that constrain fishing mortality to levels that are compliant with the Sustainable Fisheries Act.

**Objective 4:** Implement rebuilding schedules for overfished stocks, and prevent overfishing.

**Objective 5:** Adopt measures as appropriate to support international transboundary management of resources.

**Objective 6:** Promote research and improve the collection of information to better understand groundfish population dynamics, biology and ecology, and to improve assessment procedures in cooperation with the industry.

**Objective 7:** To the extent possible, maintain a diverse groundfish fishery, including different gear types, vessel sizes, geographic locations, and levels of participation.

**Objective 8:** Develop biological, economic and social measures of success for the groundfish fishery and resource that insure accountability in achieving fishery management objectives.

**Objective 9:** Adopt measures consistent with the habitat provisions of the M-S Act, including identification of EFH and minimizing impacts on habitat to the extent practicable.

**Objective 10:** Identify and minimize bycatch, which include regulatory discards, to the extent practicable, and to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.

### 3.5 Context of Existing Management System

Because of the complexity of groundfish management, this section will describe in general terms the existing management program. This provides the public and reviewers an overview to place the proposed changes in context. The NEPA requires that the No Action alternative be included when considering changes to the management program. Subsequent sections will specifically identify the elements of the No Action alternative as an option so that the choices considered by the Council are explicit. This section briefly identifies key elements of No Action alternatives to provide context to this discussion.

The current management system for the Northeast Multispecies Fishery includes a wide range of measures that have been adopted since the mid-1980s. In 1994, Amendment 5 adopted a moratorium on groundfish permits and an effort control system that is the underpinning of the current measures (see section 3.1 for additional details on past actions). The existing management measures for the Northeast Multispecies Fishery were most recently altered by Amendment 13, FW 40A, FW 40B, FW 41 and FW 42. Regulations that may be implemented as part of an interim action, emergency action, or court order are not considered part of the existing system and are not considered elements of any No Action alternatives. Current implementing regulations can be found at 50 CFR 648 Subpart F.

The most recent amendment to the Northeast Multispecies FMP that is focused on groundfish fishing activities was Amendment 13, implemented May 1, 2004. The Amendment 13 measures can be sorted into the following broad categories:

- Clarification of status determination criteria: overfishing definitions
- Rebuilding programs: fishing mortality trajectories designed to rebuild overfished stocks. These trajectories serve as the fundamental basis for management measures.
- Fishery administration measures: reporting requirements, provisions for sector allocation and special access programs (SAPs), the U.S./Canada Resource Sharing Understanding, permit requirements, DAS leasing, etc.
- Measures to control capacity: a DAS transfer program that allows the permanent transfer of DAS, and the categorization of DAS based on vessel fishing history during the period FY 1996 through FY 2001.
- Measures to minimize, to the extent practicable, the adverse effects of fishing on essential fish habitat (EFH).
- Measures to meet fishing mortality targets: measures for the commercial and recreational fishery designed to control fishing mortality.