

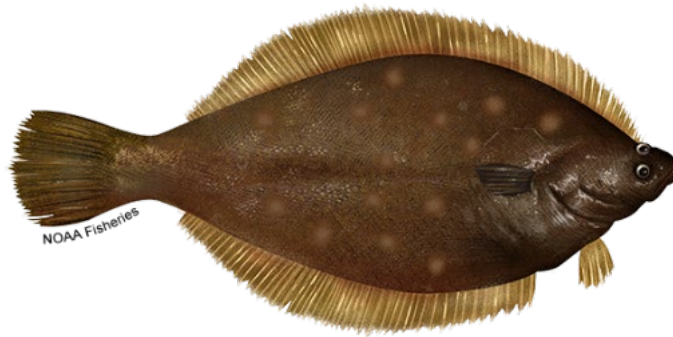
DECISION DOCUMENT

For

Framework Adjustment 72 to the

Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish)

Fishery Management Plan



This document was developed to help the Council
select final preferred alternatives for Framework Adjustment 72.

For December 3, 2025

Version - Council

Anticipated Council Action:

Prior to selecting final preferred alternatives, Council staff will present the measures under consideration in Framework Adjustment 72 (FW72). Council staff will also answer questions, as needed, about the document including measures under consideration in FW72 and their draft analyzed impacts on target species and non-target species – biological impacts and human communities - economic impacts.

1. Select the *preferred alternatives and options* for Action 1 – Status Determination Criteria (Section 4.1)
2. Select the *preferred alternative* for Action 3 – Recreational Fishery Management Measures – (Section 4.3)
3. Select the *preferred alternative* for Action 2 – Revised Specifications (Section 4.2)
4. Motion to submit FW72 to NOAA Fisheries.

Action 1 – Status Determination Criteria

Section 4.1 – Action 1 – Status Determination Criteria <i>The Council may select one alternative under Action 1.</i>		Preferred by	
		AP	Committee
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.1.1)	No Action Status determination criteria (SDCs) would not be adopted for Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder		
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.1.2)	Updated Status Determination Criteria for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder SCDs would be adopted for GB yellowtail flounder	GAP: Recommends (11/17/2025)	CMTE: Recommends (11/18/2025)
Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider			
<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document - Draft Alternatives <p>GAP Discussion Statement (11/17/2025): Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support Action 1, Alternative 2 – Updated Status Determination Criteria for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder.</p> <p>Committee Motion (11/18/2025): Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative in Section 4.1 Action 1 – Status Determination Criteria: Section 4.1.2 Alternative 2 – Updated Status Determination Criteria for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder.</p>			
Other important Considerations/Draft EA References			
<p>Refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document Council version 2 - Draft impacts analysis (biological and economic) 			

Action 3 – Recreational Fishery Management Measures

Section 4.3 – Action 3 – Recreational Fishery Management <i>The Council may select one alternative under Action 3.</i>		Preferred by	
		AP	Committee
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.3.1)	No Action Maintains the process for RA to adjust recreational measures for stocks with recreational sub-ACLs only		
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.3.2)	Establish a Regulatory Process for the Regional Administrator to Adjust Recreational Measures for Cod and Haddock Establishes a regulatory process for the RA to adjust recreational measures for all stocks of cod and haddock	RAP: Recommends (11/17/2025)	CMTE: Recommends (11/18/2025)
Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider			
Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document - Draft Alternatives RAP Consensus Statement (11/17/2025): The RAP recommends to the Groundfish Committee support for Action 3/ Alternative 2 – Establish a regulatory process for the Regional Administrator to adjust recreational measures for all stocks of cod and haddock. Committee Motion (11/18:2025): Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative in Section 4.3 Action 3 – Recreational Fishery Management Measures: Section 4.3.2 Alternative 2 – Establish a regulatory process for Regional Administrator to adjust recreational measures for cod and haddock.			
Other important Considerations/Draft EA References			
Refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document Council version 2 - Draft impacts analysis (biological and economic) 			

Action 2 – Revised Specifications

The Committee recommended a preliminary preferred alternative to the Council including specifications for all stocks except for white hake.

Section 4.2 – Action 2 – Revised Specifications <i>The Council may select one alternative under Action 2.</i> <i>Under Alternative 2, the Council may select Option A.</i>		Preferred by	
		AP	Committee
Alternative 1 (Sec. 4.2.1)	No Action There would be default specifications for several stocks.		
Alternative 2 (Sec. 4.2.2)	Revised Specifications Revise the annual specifications for FY2026 - FY2030 for CC/GOM yellowtail flounder, SNE/MA yellowtail flounder, GB winter flounder, GOM winter flounder, SNE/MA winter flounder, redfish, white hake, ocean pout, and Atlantic wolffish. Revise the annual specifications for FY2026 for GB cod, GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder. Specify total allowable catches (TACs) for the U.S./Canada management units for FY2026 of Eastern GB cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder. Includes updated sub-component analysis for several stocks.	GAP: Recommends (except white hake and redfish) (11/17/2025)	CMTE: Recommends (except white hake) (11/18/2025)
	Option A - Remove the management uncertainty buffer for sectors for white hake if the ASM target coverage rate is set at 90% or greater for FY2026-2030		CMTE: Recommends (11/18/2025)

Decisions/Questions/Information to Consider

Refer to:

- Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document - Draft Alternatives
- Document #4B - Combined Risk Policy Matrices for 2025
- Document #4D – Supplemental PDT analyses: white hake projections

GAP Discussion Statements (11/17/2025):

- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support the PDT's sub-component recommendations.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support the PDT's recommendation for the SNE/MA yellowtail flounder scallop fishery sub-ACL.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support the proposed 2026 U.S./Canada TACs.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support consideration for setting white hake catch advice at a higher risk level for FY2026 through the next assessment.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support consideration for setting redfish catch advice at a higher level of risk level for FY2026 through the next assessment. Groundfish advisors also support consideration for examining the redfish sector exemption program and impacts of a potential suspension of the redfish sector exemption program on catches and quotas.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support under Action 2/Alternative 2 - Revised Specifications, the FY2026 specifications for GB cod, GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder.
- Some of the Groundfish Advisors in the meeting support under Action 2/ Alternative 2 – Revised Specifications, the FY2026-2030 specifications for all stocks listed except those noted earlier (white hake and redfish).

Committee Motions (11/18/2025):

- Move to accept the PDT's recommendations for sub-components (as referenced in Table 8 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document).
- Move to recommend setting the SNE/MA yellowtail flounder scallop fishery sub-ACL at the FY2025 sub-ACL (2.7 mt). This would be set for FY2026-2030 with plans for the PDT to re-evaluate in 2026 with updated data.
- Recommend to the Council to select as preferred the FY2026 U.S./Canada total allowable catches (TACs) for Eastern GB cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder (referenced in Table 10 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document).
- Move to set the 2026-2030 ABC for GOM/Cape Cod yellowtail Flounder at 1,736mt within Framework 72.
- Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative FY2026 specifications for GB cod, GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder, and FY2026-FY2030 specifications for SNE/MA yellowtail flounder, GB winter flounder, GOM winter flounder, SNE/MA winter flounder, ocean pout, and Atlantic wolffish (all stocks except white hake and redfish), as referenced in Table 12 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document. FY2026-2030 specifications for CC/GOM yellowtail flounder, as modified today.
- Move to recommend to the Council as preferred alternative FY2026-FY2030 specifications for redfish (referenced in Table 12 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document.)
- For white hake, the GF Committee tasks the PDT to produce the following information in time for the Council meeting:
 - Provide OFL/ABC projections associated with F(MSY)75% for FY2026-2030, and provide updated rebuilding projections comparing 70% F(MSY) and 75% F(MSY) under both the long-term (1963-2022) and more-recent recruitment timeframes (1995-2022).
 - Include draft specifications based on projections at 75% F(MSY) for FY2026-2030
- Move to remove the sector mgmt. uncertainty buffer for white hake in FW72 for FY2026-2030 if the ASM target coverage rate is at least 90% or higher.

Other Important Considerations/Draft EA References

Refer to:

- Document #4A – Framework Discussion Document Council version 2 - Draft impacts analysis (biological and economic)
- Document #4E – Quota Change Model results