

Northeast Multispecies Groundfish Framework Adjustment 63 Groundfish Plan Development Team Report

Groundfish Committee

August 18, 2021

Council Milestones

- **June** – *initiated the action*
- **September** – receive and approve TMGC's TAC recommendations for U.S./Canada stocks, update on draft alternatives development
- **December** – receive specifications alternatives and take final action on specifications and other measures
- **May** – Implementation by **May 1, 2022**, NMFS

Scope

2022-2024 Specifications/Management Measures, to include:

- Set 2022 total allowable catches for US/Canada management units of Eastern Georges Bank (GB) cod and Eastern GB haddock, and 2022-2023 specifications for the GB yellowtail flounder stock,
- Set 2022-2024 specifications for GB cod and Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, and possibly adjust 2022 specifications for GB haddock and GOM haddock,
- Adjust 2022 specifications for white hake based on the rebuilding plan,
- Adopt additional measures to promote stock rebuilding, and
- Develop alternatives to the current default system.

Objectives

To meet regulatory requirements to prevent overfishing, ensure rebuilding, and help achieve optimum yield in the commercial and recreational groundfish fishery.

Range of Alternatives

1. Updates to annual catch limits

- Specifications for six groundfish stocks (GB cod, GOM cod, GB haddock, GOM haddock, GB yellowtail flounder, and white hake)
- Total allowable catches for transboundary stocks
- Sub-annual catch limits for Atlantic Sea scallop, small-mesh multispecies, and herring fisheries
- Review and possibly adjust sub-components (other fisheries and state)
- Changes to default specification process

2. Commercial and Recreational Management

- Additional measures to promote stock rebuilding

Committee Motions from 8/6/21

The Groundfish Committee tasks the Groundfish Plan Development Team to develop an analysis to support developing alternatives to the current default specifications process that:

- a. Explore a duration of 3, 4, 5, or 6 months.
- b. Explore a percentage of ACLs of 50%, 75%, or 100%.
- c. Analyze maintaining the no holdback provision.
- d. Establish two-year TACs for cod and haddock in the US/CA area. [Carried 14/0/2]

The Groundfish Committee tasks the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) to focus on Gulf of Maine cod and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder when developing additional measures to promote stock rebuilding. Initially, the PDT should summarize the factors impacting rebuilding and report back to the Committee. [Carried 12/0/4]

Draft Alternatives Outline

4.0 DRAFT ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

4.1 Action 1 – Revised Specifications

Alternative 1 – No Action

Alternative 2 – Revised Specifications

Alternative 3 – Changes to the Default Specifications Process

4.2 Action 2 – Commercial and Recreational Management – Gulf of Maine Cod

Alternative 1 – No Action

Alternative 2 – Additional Measures to Promote Gulf of Maine Cod Stock Rebuilding

4.3 Action 3 – Commercial and Recreational Management – Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder

Alternative 1 – No Action

Alternative 2 – Additional Measures to Promote Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder stock rebuilding

GF PDT Meeting Highlights 8/10/21 – FW63

Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder

- Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) Status Report (TSR) was not available for review in time for the PDT's meeting.
- PDT compiled information and analysis for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to consider when developing catch advice.
- PDT Discussed the Scallop PDT's memo on yellowtail flounder bycatch.
- SSC meets on August 24 to discuss GB yellowtail flounder OFLs/ABCs for FY2022-FY2023

Bridge year catch estimates for GB cod, Gulf of Maine cod, and white hake

- Reviewed catch estimates for CY2020
- Reviewing catch estimates for CY2021 as a follow-up to the meeting by correspondence

Committee tasking from 8/6/21

- Discussed the motions and plan to address in the coming weeks

For Today

- Discuss and make recommendations on draft measures for the PDT to develop, as appropriate.