

Framework Adjustment 55

Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan

Jamie M. Cournane, PhD
Groundfish PDT Chair

Groundfish Committee
Meeting
September 3, 2015



Goals for Committee Meeting Today

- To discuss any recommendations to the Council on the development of the alternatives.
- To consider whether to recommend to the Council to include alternative(s) in FW 55 to address ASM, enforcement concerns, and other issues



Scope and Objectives

| Scope | Objectives |
|---|---|
| To incorporate any status changes for groundfish stocks and set specifications for all groundfish stocks. | To meet regulatory requirements to prevent overfishing, ensure rebuilding, and help achieve optimum yield in the fishery . |
| To adopt an additional sector. | To provide for flexibility within the sector system to adapt to changing regulatory and legal circumstances . |
| To make changes to the groundfish monitoring program. | To make the groundfish monitoring program more efficient and cost effective while achieving the stated goals of the program in Amendment 16 (A16) and Framework Adjustment 48 (FW48). |



Likely Range of Alternatives

4.1 Updates to status determination criteria and annual catch limits

4.1.1 Status Determination Criteria

4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits

4.2 Fishery Program Administration

4.2.1 Implementation of an Additional Sector

4.3 Commercial Fishery Management Measures

*4.3.1 Groundfish Monitoring Program**

**The number and complexity of alternatives may impact the timeline for this action.*



Timeline- in time for FY 2016

| | | |
|------|---------|------------------------------------|
| 2015 | June | Council initiates FW55 |
| | Jul-Oct | Develop specifications |
| | Sep | Council receives update on FW55 |
| | Oct-Nov | Develop NEPA analysis |
| | Dec | Council takes final action on FW55 |



Likely Range of Alternatives

4.1 Updates to status determination criteria and annual catch limits

4.1.1 Status Determination Criteria

4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits

4.2 Fishery Program Administration

4.2.1 Implementation of an Additional Sector

4.3 Commercial Fishery Management Measures

4.3.1 Groundfish Monitoring Program



2015 Groundfish Assessments

- 2015 TRAC Assessments (July 2015)
 - GB yellowtail flounder,
 - EGB cod,
 - EGB haddock
- 2015 Groundfish Operational Assessments (September 2015)



2015 TRAC Assessments Summary

- EGB cod
 - Productivity is low
 - Continued poor recruitment
 - High natural mortality assumed on age 6+ fish since 1995
 - Rebuilding will not occur without recruitment
 - Fishing mortality declining since 2007; $F_{2014}=0.04$
 - Fish condition declining in recent years
 - Advice: management aim to rebuild SSB



2015 TRAC Assessments Summary

● EGB haddock

- Several recent very strong year classes – in past 13 years: 3 exceptionally (2003, 2010, and 2013) and 2 strong (2000 and 2011)
- Fishing mortality has fluctuated in recent years ; $F_{2014} = 0.23$
- Weights at age has declined since the late 1990s and fish condition has also declined since 2004
- Retrospective bias noted for second year in the assessment – decrease in adult biomass and increase in F compared to results of previous assessment
- Advice: Standard and sensitivity projections provided for consideration of catch advice.



2015 TRAC Assessments Summary

- GB yellowtail flounder
 - Stock biomass is low
 - Productivity is poor
 - Catches lowest in time series (since 1935)
 - Discards greater > landings for the first time
 - Recent catch low relative to quota and biomass estimated by surveys
 - Catch curve analysis indicates total mortality is high ($Z > 1$)



TRAC Catch Advice

Select **one** approach for the **next three years** to see if the stock responds:

1. Constant exploitation rate of 2% - 16% per year

2016 catch advice of 45 mt – 359 mt

-OR-

2. Constant quota of 354 mt or less per year

Not increasing the quota relative to

the 2015 quota (354 mt),

due to concerns about stock declines



SSC Discussion Summary* 9/1

Status quo catch advice at 354 mt for FY 2016 and FY 2017

- No reason to deviate from last years advice
- Plan to revisit catch advice next year

**This is a Council staff summary. The SSC report is not final.*



Likely Range of Alternatives

4.1 Updates to status determination criteria and annual catch limits

4.1.1 Status Determination Criteria

4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits

4.2 Fishery Program Administration

4.2.1 Implementation of an Additional Sector

4.3 Commercial Fishery Management Measures

4.3.1 Groundfish Monitoring Program



Implementation of an Additional Sector

- The PDT reviewed the letter from the Sustainable Harvest Sector, found it to be similar to the existing Sustainable Harvest Sector I, with proposed operations within the range of sectors already in operation.
- Preliminarily, it seems these operations are within the existing programmatic EA for sector operations and would not require an additional NEPA document to analyze the impacts.



Implementation of Sectors

- The PDT recommends that the Committee consider adding an alternative to FW 55 that would allow NMFS to approve operations plans for, and allocate ACE to, new sectors without a previous Council action to implement the sector.
- The PDT recognizes that the Council may still wish to have input on new sectors. In that case, the alternative could include a consultation with the Council before NMFS approves a new sector.



Likely Range of Alternatives

4.1 Updates to status determination criteria and annual catch limits

4.1.1 Status Determination Criteria

4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits

4.2 Fishery Program Administration

4.2.1 Implementation of an Additional Sector

4.3 Commercial Fishery Management Measures

4.3.1 Groundfish Monitoring Program

