CORRESPONDENCE

Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association
P.O.BOX 1230
Marshfield, MA 02050

Dr. John Quinn
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Nov, 22, 2017

"Framework 57 Recreational Measures for Gulf of Maine Cod"

Dear Dr. Quinn,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association with over one hundred and fifty members consisting of both charter boat captains and recreational anglers. After attending the Recreational Advisory Panel Meeting on November 14th, we are very concerned with what the future looks like for the charter head boat sector. Dr. Jamie Cournane explained to the audience the estimates of Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod landings, discards and number of angler trips for the past two years. Once again these estimates are based on the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data which is highly questionable with high PSEs. During haddock trips boats are finding large numbers of cod including many to twenty pounds on Jeffries Ledge, Stellwagen Bank and in Massachusetts Bay. Boats fishing for haddock and tuna in Maine are seeing large numbers of cod on tuna grounds such as Platts Bank and the surrounding ledges and west to the inshore ledges indicating cod are being located easily from the Maine Mid Coast Region all the way down through Massachusetts Bay.

In Green Harbor, MA which was known for a destination to go cod fishing, we have seen the charter boat fleet consisting of fifteen to twenty boats going out on weekends dwindle to less than three. The long time customer has now decided to fish other areas of the country or southern New England. Customers who want to fish and retain cod only have to travel to Rhode Island, Connecticut and Long Island to go on a charter where there is currently no bag limit and multiple head boats and charter boats running on weekends.

We are respectfully requesting the NEFMC to please take a hard look and try to understand the situation charter boats are in due to being able to retain virtually zero cod during the past four years. Please find a way to allow customers to have a bag limit of GOM cod even if it means separate bag limits for charter/party boats and private recreational anglers. In the GOM there is no large biomass of black sea bass, fluke, tautog, squid or porgy to support the charter industry, like the boats south of Cape Cod have. Pollock are over 30 miles offshore in Mass Bay, usually in late fall or winter being too distant for small boats to safely transit. GOM haddock has seasonal closures and giant tuna is now closed. Boats are shut down and if the recreational sector was allowed maybe four or five cod the additional bump in trips would be a boost to the charter boat industry. Thank you for your time, and appreciate any consideration with this request.

David Waldrip
Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association

JC 11/27/17

91 FAIRVIEW AVE
PORSTMOUTH NH 03801

NORTHEAST HOOK FISHERMAN'S ASSOCIATION

November 20, 2017

New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

Subject: **Framework Adjustment 57 Common Pool Trimester Total Allowable Catches (TACs)**

Dear Executive Director Tom Nies & Council Chairman Dr. John Quinn:

We represent a small group of Commercial Fishermen with the Limited Access Handgear HA Permits, employing the use rod and reel, handlines or tub trawls to catch Cod, Haddock and Pollock along with small quantities of other regulated and non-regulated marine fish.

We agree with the Groundfish Committee Consensus Statement #2 from the November 9th meeting that states:

By consensus, the Groundfish Committee recommends striking #2 and #3 from 4.2.1.2 Option 2: Broaden NMFS Authority to Modify Common Pool Trimester TACs and/or AM Closures.

"Under Option 2, the Regional Administrator would have broader authority to modify common pool trimester TACs or AM closures. The scope for this authority would include:

1. Adjusting trimester TACs for stocks that have experienced early closures (e.g., trimester 1 or 2 closures),
2. ~~Adding new or expanding existing TAC closure areas as needed (e.g, expanding the GB cod TAC AM area to cover Southern New England waters where catch of cod has increased), and~~
3. ~~Creating common pool trimester TAC apportionments and AMs for stocks which are allocated but not managed under the Trimester TAC system (e.g. SNE/MA winter flounder). The apportionment would follow the process outlined in Amendment 16 or other Council approved method."~~

Comment/Question concerning 1. "*Adjusting trimester TACs for stocks that have experienced early closures (e.g., trimester 1 or 2 closures)*"

Would this measure allow the Regional Administrator to adjust a trimester before the start of a fishing year or can the Regional Administrator shift a percentage of a quota within a fishing year? For example if GOM cod was close to reaching 90% for trimester one could the Regional Administrator shift quota from trimester three to prevent the closure of trimester one? Or would the Regional Administrator use the catch info from the previous fishing year to better set trimesters the next fishing year? This needs clarification.

Respectfully,

Marc Stettner

NEHFA MEMBERS: Marc Stettner, Timothy Rider, AJ Orlando, Hilary Dombrowski, Paul Hoffman, Christopher DiPilato, Ed Snell, Scott Rice, Roger Bryson, Brian McDevitt, Anthony Gross, Doug Amorello

JC 11/24/17

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

OCT 3 1 2017

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Tom:

We recently completed groundfish year-end accounting for the 2016 fishing year and the final report is attached to this letter.

In fishing year 2016, catch exceeded the total annual catch limits (ACLs) and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) for Georges Bank (GB) cod, Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, and witch flounder. The overfishing limit (OFL) was not exceeded for any of these stocks. The GB cod ACL was exceeded by 54 percent (396 mt), and the U.S. ABC was exceeded by 48 percent (364 mt). The GOM cod ACL was exceeded by 37 percent (173 mt), and the ABC was exceeded by 29 percent (146 mt). The witch flounder ACL was exceeded by 37 percent (20 mt), and the ABC was exceeded by less than 1 percent (0.8 mt). Table 1 summarizes these ACL overages.

Table 1: Fishing Year 2016 Catch Limits and Catch for GB cod, GOM cod, and Witch Flounder.

Stock	OFL (mt)	U.S. ABC (mt)	Total ACL (mt)	Catch (mt and percent of ACL or sub-ACL)							
				Total Catch (mt and percent of ACL)		Groundfish Fishery				State Waters	Other
						Total	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational		
GB Cod	1,665	762	730	1,125.5	154.2%	98.1%	97.6%	124.8%	N/A	308.3%	462.6%
GOM Cod	667	500	473	646.2	136.6%	125.3%	96.0%	68.8%	178.9%	332.7%	89.9%
Witch Flounder	521	460	441	460.8	104.5%	97.0%	97.0%	94.2%	N/A	389.6%	93.6%

Georges Bank Cod

A combination of catch from the state waters sub-component and the other sub-component contributed to the substantial overage for GB cod. The common pool fishery exceeded its sub-ACL; however, this overage was only 2.8 mt, and overall catch by the commercial groundfish fishery was below the commercial fishery sub-ACL. The majority of state waters catch (82 percent) is from the recreational fishery, and the other sub-component catch was primarily from the Federal waters recreational fishery (97 percent). There is no allocation of GB cod for the recreational fishery, and all recreational catch is attributed to the state and other sub-components. As you know, there are no accountability measures (AMs) for the state and other sub-

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components. AMs triggered by an overage of this ACL affect only the Federal fisheries that have an allocation of the stock.

Recreational catch of GB cod has increased dramatically in recent years. Amendment 16 specified that recreational catch would be monitored to determine if recreational catch exceeds 5 percent of the total catch. In the most recent 3 years, recreational catch is greater than 5 percent of total catch (Table 2). Preliminary recreational catch data for fishing year 2017 (through August 2017) collected by the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) suggests that recreational catch of GB cod is lower than 2016 catch in the same time period. However, preliminary MRIP data are often incomplete, and recreational catch of GB cod is typically greatest in the fall and early winter. For these reasons, we are not confident that final 2017 catch will be lower.

Table 2: Georges Bank cod recreational catch.

Year	Federal Waters Recreational Catch (mt)	State Waters Recreational Catch (mt)	All Recreational Catch (mt)	Total Catch (mt)	Recreational Portion of Total Catch (Percent)
2011	54.6	0.0	54.6	3,405.9	1.6
2012	62.7	4.4	67.1	1,724.1	3.9
2013	8.0	0.0	8.0	1,616.3	0.5
2014	75.9	15.5	91.4	1,514.4	6.0
2015	132.1	33.0	165.1	1,835.4	9.0
2016	419.7	57.8	477.5	1,125.5	42.4

We encourage the Council and the Groundfish Plan Development Team to carefully consider recreational catch of GB cod during the development of Framework Adjustment 57 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan as part of setting catch limits for fishing years 2018-2020, and as part of the 2018 priorities setting process.

Gulf of Maine Cod

A combination of catch from the Federal recreational fishery and the state waters sub-component contributed to the GOM cod overage. In 2016, the state waters catch was 66.8 mt greater than anticipated, and was entirely from Massachusetts' waters. The recreational fishery exceeded its sub-ACL by 124 mt despite adjusting measures for the 2016 fishing year. As you know, we already addressed this overage by adjusting recreational measures for fishing year 2017 to achieve, but not exceed, the 2017 recreational sub-ACL. A contributing factor to the recreational overage was that the average weight of cod caught was approximately 30 percent greater than expected when developing the 2016 measures. The increased average weight of cod was incorporated into the development of 2017 recreational measures. However, preliminary MRIP recreational catch data for fishing year 2017 (through August 2017) suggests that the recreational fishery has already exceeded its 2017 sub-ACL. As noted above, preliminary MRIP data are often incomplete and we expect additional bycatch of GOM cod during the open haddock season in September.

We expect the Groundfish Plan Development Team can further explore any trends and/or driving factors for state waters catch of GOM cod. As noted above, there are no AMs for sub-components, and AMs triggered by an overage of this ACL affect only the Federal fisheries that

have an allocation for the stock. We encourage the Council and the Groundfish Plan Development Team to carefully consider state waters commercial catch of GOM cod in Framework 57 when setting catch limits for fishing years 2018-2020.

Witch Flounder

Catch from the state waters sub-component contributed to the witch flounder overage, and nearly all of this catch came from commercial fisheries in the state waters of Massachusetts (99.8 percent). During the development of Framework 55, the Groundfish Plan Development Team recommended that the Council increase the state waters sub-component from 3 percent to 7 percent of the ABC, due to increasing catch. The Council chose to make no change to the state sub-component in order to conserve quota for the groundfish fishery in light of a decrease in the witch flounder ABC. Even if the Council had selected the higher sub-component value recommended by the Plan Development Team (28 mt), an overage of the ACL would have occurred, although the overage would have only been 4 mt. As noted above, there are no AMs for sub-components, and if sub-component catch causes an ACL overage, any AMs triggered affect only the Federal commercial fleet. State waters commercial catch of witch flounder should also be carefully considered in Framework 57 as part of setting catch limits for fishing years 2018-2020.

We only recently completed the 2016 year-end accounting and wanted to provide the final catch report to you as quickly as possible to support and inform development of Framework 57. We will provide additional information about AMs and possible actions in response to the 2016 ACL overages. If you have any questions on the report, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator

cc: Terry Stockwell, Chair, NEFMC Groundfish Committee
Dr. Jamie Cournane, NEFMC Groundfish Plan Coordinator
Dr. Jonathan Hare, Science and Research Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Enclosure

Northeast Multispecies Fishery

Final Year-End Results for Fishing Year 2016

- Tables 1 through 5: Total groundfish caught, landed, and discard estimates
- Table 6: Estimated state water catch
- Tables 7-9: Other sub-component catch detail
- Table 10: FY 2014 through FY 2016 GOM cod and haddock recreational catch evaluation
- Table 11: Sector carryover
- Tables 12 through 17: U.S./Canada stocks catch evaluation

In this report: a table cell value of "0" or "0.0" indicates a non-zero value in the cell. "-" is displayed for values exactly equal to zero. Blanks are shown when there are no values. "NA" is displayed when no value is applicable.

10/17/2017

Table 1: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Percent of Annual Catch Limit Caught (%)

Stock	Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)								Sub-components: No AMs	
	Total	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	154.2	98.1	97.6	124.8					308.3	462.6
GOM Cod	136.6	125.3	96.0	68.8	178.9				332.7	89.9
GB Haddock	9.0	8.5	8.6	0.3		23.2			2.5	47.5
GOM Haddock	75.3	74.0	65.9	40.4	95.6	5.7			34.2	379.0
GB Yellowtail Flounder	11.8	9.5	9.7	-			93.8	95.2	NA	0.0
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	33.3	30.6	26.3	51.3			63.9		23.6	37.3
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	88.9	76.5	76.2	83.7					125.2	187.3
Plaice	98.1	96.3	96.5	86.6					147.8	129.5
Witch Flounder	104.5	97.0	97.0	94.2					389.6	93.6
GB Winter Flounder	65.7	71.6	72.2	-					NA	7.2
GOM Winter Flounder	28.1	17.5	18.0	8.4					82.7	32.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	84.9	77.5	75.8	91.6					92.5	125.3
Redfish	41.6	42.8	43.0	0.9					4.6	4.3
White Hake	41.5	42.6	42.9	2.7					3.2	13.4
Pollock	19.6	16.8	16.7	20.9					49.4	29.8
Northern Windowpane	47.3	68.2	NA	NA					36.6	34.8
Southern Windowpane	69.8	121.9	NA	NA			40.4		77.6	71.5
Ocean Pout	27.9	12.5	NA	NA					21.6	151.7
Halibut	90.8	62.5	NA	NA					191.5	83.4
Wolffish	1.0	0.8	NA	NA					1.9	5.8

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 2: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Annual Catch Limits (mt)

Stock	Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)								Sub-components: No AMs	
	Total ACL	Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery[1]	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	730	608	597	11					23	99
GOM Cod	473	437	271	9	157				27	10
GB Haddock	53,309	51,667	51,328	339		512			561	561
GOM Haddock	3,430	3,344	2,390	26	928	34			26	26
GB Yellowtail Flounder	261.0	250.8	247.1	3.7			2.2	5.0	NA	3.0
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	256	204	169	35			17		5	29
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	409	341	327	14					43	26
Plaice	1,235	1,183	1,163	20					26	26
Witch Flounder	441	370	362	8					12	59
GB Winter Flounder	650	590	585	5					NA	60
GOM Winter Flounder	776	639	607	32					122	16
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	749	585	523	62					70	94
Redfish	9,837	9,526	9,474	52					103	207
White Hake	3,572	3,459	3,433	26					38	75
Pollock	20,374	17,817	17,704	113					1,279	1,279
Northern Windowpane	177	66	NA	66					2	109
Southern Windowpane	599	104	NA	104			209		37	249
Ocean Pout	155	137	NA	137					2	17
Halibut	119	91	NA	91					25	4
Wolffish	77	72	NA	72					1	3

[1]The midwater trawl herring fishery GB haddock sub-ACL was reduced mid-year to account for an overage of the 2015 sub-ACL.

Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017

Table 3: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Total Catch (mt)

Stock	**Total Catch**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery[1]	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	1,125.5	596.6	582.3	14.3					70.9	458.0
GOM Cod	646.2	547.4	260.4	6.1	280.9				89.8	9.0
GB Haddock	4,790.8	4,391.3	4,390.3	1.0		118.9			14.2	266.4
GOM Haddock	2,582.9	2,473.5	1,576.1	10.4	887.0	1.9			8.9	98.5
GB Yellowtail Flounder	30.7	23.9	23.9	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	85.2	62.5	44.5	18.0			10.7		1.2	10.8
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	363.5	261.0	248.8	12.1					53.8	48.7
Plaice	1,211.4	1,139.3	1,121.9	17.4					38.4	33.7
Witch Flounder	460.8	358.8	351.4	7.4					46.8	55.2
GB Winter Flounder	426.9	422.6	422.6	-					-	4.3
GOM Winter Flounder	217.8	111.9	109.2	2.7					100.9	5.1
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	635.8	453.3	396.6	56.7					64.7	117.8
Redfish	4,091.6	4,078.1	4,077.6	0.4					4.8	8.8
White Hake	1,483.5	1,472.2	1,471.5	0.7					1.2	10.0
Pollock	3,998.7	2,985.1	2,961.5	23.6					631.8	381.8
Northern Windowpane	83.6	45.0	45.0	0.0					0.7	37.9
Southern Windowpane	417.9	126.7	108.3	18.4			84.4		28.7	178.1
Ocean Pout	43.3	17.1	16.3	0.8					0.4	25.8
Halibut	108.1	56.9	56.7	0.2					47.9	3.3
Wolffish	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.0					0.0	0.2

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2016 through February 2017

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Any value for a non-allocated species may include landings of that stock or misreporting of species and/or stock area. These are northern windowpane, southern windowpane, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 4: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Landings (mt)

Stock	**Total Landings**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	1,058.6	571.9	557.7	14.2					61.4	425.2
GOM Cod	446.0	350.8	250.5	5.9	94.5				89.4	5.7
GB Haddock	3,580.5	3,445.7	3,444.8	1.0		115.3			0.2	19.2
GOM Haddock	2,072.2	2,062.5	1,492.5	9.7	560.2	1.9			5.1	2.7
GB Yellowtail Flounder	23.4	23.4	23.4	-			-	-	-	-
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	63.2	59.5	43.1	16.5			-		0.9	2.8
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	301.3	245.3	234.5	10.8					53.4	2.6
Plaice	1,088.9	1,044.7	1,028.9	15.9					35.3	8.8
Witch Flounder	343.2	294.4	287.5	6.9					44.7	4.1
GB Winter Flounder	421.8	421.3	421.3	-					-	0.5
GOM Winter Flounder	200.5	106.9	104.2	2.7					93.5	0.1
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	524.3	443.8	388.9	54.9					63.0	17.5
Redfish	4,035.7	4,026.4	4,026.0	0.4					3.1	6.2
White Hake	1,439.9	1,436.8	1,436.1	0.7					0.4	2.7
Pollock	3,305.4	2,910.5	2,886.9	23.6					284.3	110.6
Northern Windowpane	0.0	0.0	0.0	-					0.0	-
Southern Windowpane	13.2	-	-	-			-		13.2	0.0
Ocean Pout	0.0	-	-	-					0.0	0.0
Halibut	69.1	20.3	20.1	0.2					46.5	2.3
Wolffish	0.0	-	-	-					-	0.0

Values in metric tons of live weight
Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Any value for a non-allocated species may include landings of that stock or misreporting of species and/or stock area. These are northern windowpane, southern windowpane, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017

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Table 5: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Estimated Discards (mt)

Stock	Total Discards	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	66.9	24.6	24.6	0.1					9.5	32.8
GOM Cod	200.3	196.6	9.9	0.3	186.4				0.4	3.3
GB Haddock	1,210.3	945.6	945.6	0.0		3.6			14.0	247.2
GOM Haddock	510.6	411.0	83.6	0.6	326.8	-			3.8	95.8
GB Yellowtail Flounder	7.3	0.5	0.5	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	22.1	3.0	1.4	1.5			10.7		0.3	8.0
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	62.2	15.7	14.3	1.3					0.4	46.1
Plaice	122.5	94.6	93.0	1.5					3.1	24.9
Witch Flounder	117.5	64.4	63.9	0.5					2.0	51.1
GB Winter Flounder	5.0	1.2	1.2	-					-	3.8
GOM Winter Flounder	17.3	5.0	5.0	0.0					7.3	5.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	111.6	9.6	7.7	1.8					1.7	100.3
Redfish	55.9	51.7	51.7	0.0					1.6	2.7
White Hake	43.6	35.4	35.4	-					0.9	7.4
Pollock	693.3	74.7	74.7	0.0					347.5	271.1
Northern Windowpane	83.6	45.0	45.0	0.0					0.7	37.9
Southern Windowpane	404.7	126.7	108.3	18.4			84.4		15.5	178.1
Ocean Pout	43.3	17.1	16.3	0.8					0.4	25.8
Halibut	39.0	36.6	36.6	0.0					1.3	1.1
Wolffish	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.0					0.0	0.1

Values in metric tons of live weight
Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 6: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Estimated State Water Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total			Commercial			Recreational		
	Catch	Landings	Discard	Total Catch	Landings[1]	Discard[1]	Total Catch	Landings	Discard
	A+B+C+D	A+C	B+D	A+B	A	B	C+D	C	D
GB Cod	70.9	61.4	9.5	13.1	12.8	0.4	57.8	48.7	9.1
GOM Cod	89.8	89.4	0.4	89.8	89.4	0.4	-*	-*	-*
GB Haddock	14.2	0.2	14.0	14.2	0.2	14.0			
GOM Haddock	8.9	5.1	3.8	8.9	5.1	3.8	-*	-*	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	1.2	0.9	0.3	1.2	0.9	0.3			
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	53.8	53.4	0.4	53.8	53.4	0.4			
Plaice	38.4	35.3	3.1	38.4	35.3	3.1			
Witch Flounder	46.8	44.7	2.0	46.8	44.7	2.0			
GB Winter Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
GOM Winter Flounder	100.9	93.5	7.3	72.5	72.4	0.1	28.3	21.1	7.2
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	64.7	63.0	1.7	50.4	50.0	0.4	14.3	13.0	1.3
Redfish	4.8	3.1	1.6	4.8	3.1	1.6			
White Hake	1.2	0.4	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.9			
Pollock	631.8	284.3	347.5	5.8	2.9	2.9	626.0	281.4	344.6
Northern Windowpane	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.7			
Southern Windowpane	28.7	13.2	15.5	28.7	13.2	15.5			
Ocean Pout	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4			
Halibut	47.9	46.5	1.3	47.9	46.5	1.3			
Wolffish	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-	0.0			

*Recreational catch of GOM cod and haddock in state waters is attributed to the recreational sub-ACL (see Tables 1 - 5), and so is not included above.

[1]January through April 2017 commercial catches are estimated.

State discard rate estimates based on discard rates on federal trips

Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 13, 2017

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Table 7: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total Catch	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB[2]	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP	SHRIMP
GB Cod	458.0	5.7	0.2	-	0.1	NA	0.0	0.9	26.8	0.0	0.0
GOM Cod	9.0	1.2	-	-	0.2	NA	-	0.1	5.6	-	0.0
GB Haddock	266.4	7.7	0.0	-	22.3*	NA	0.2	0.1	19.1	0.0	15.6
GOM Haddock	98.5	0.8	-	-	8.2*	NA	-	0.1	1.3	-	0.7
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-	-	-*	NA	-	-	-	-	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	10.8	-*	1.1	-	0.7	NA	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.2	0.5
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	48.7	40.5	-	-	0.3	NA	-	0.1	2.6	-	0.0
American Plaice	33.7	15.5	0.1	-	0.8	NA	0.0	0.1	8.7	0.2	0.6
Witch Flounder	55.2	20.6	1.6	0.0	2.3	NA	0.0	0.2	3.4	1.4	1.6
GB Winter Flounder	4.3	3.0	-	-	0.0	NA	-	-	-	-	-
GOM Winter Flounder	5.1	4.8	-	-	0.0	NA	-	-	0.1	-	0.0
SNE Winter Flounder	117.8	40.4	3.6	-	4.8	NA	0.1	0.1	11.1	3.7	3.4
Redfish	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	NA	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.2
White Hake	10.0	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.3	NA	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.3	0.2
Pollock	381.8	0.0	-	-	0.1	NA	0.0	0.1	0.5	-	0.0
Northern Windowpane	37.9	31.8	-	-	0.2	NA	-	0.0	0.0	-	0.0
Southern Windowpane	178.1	-*	23.0	-	6.1	NA	0.1	0.9	0.1	27.6	4.3
Ocean Pout	25.8	1.9	1.2	-	1.6	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.1
Halibut	3.3	0.5	0.0	-	0.0	NA	-	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Wolffish	0.2	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	NA	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2016 through February 2017

[2]Estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab bycatch was not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

These criteria are used by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to categorize trips to attribute groundfish catch for groundfish ACL accounting. By necessity these rules cannot capture the full complexity of categorizing every trip taken by vessels fishing in the Northeast. Further analysis should be completed to definitively attribute groundfish catch to an FMP for management purposes.

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Table 7: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total Catch	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	458.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	-	0.0	4.0	419.7
GOM Cod	9.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	-	0.6	0.6	-*
GB Haddock	266.4	88.7	54.5	1.6	-	0.5	56.1	-
GOM Haddock	98.5	1.3	30.9	1.3	-	30.1	23.9	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-*	-	-	-	0.0*	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	10.8	2.9	1.1	0.1	-	-	2.6	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	48.7	0.1	2.5	0.0	-	1.4	1.0	
American Plaice	33.7	3.1	2.2	0.0	-	0.1	2.2	
Witch Flounder	55.2	9.0	6.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	8.4	
GB Winter Flounder	4.3	0.0	1.3	-	-	0.0	0.0	
GOM Winter Flounder	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
SNE Winter Flounder	117.8	19.6	8.5	0.4	-	0.1	20.3	1.7
Redfish	8.8	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	
White Hake	10.0	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	4.6	
Pollock	381.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	0.7	380.2
Northern Windowpane	37.9	0.2	4.8	0.0	-	0.7	0.3	
Southern Windowpane	178.1	28.1	17.0	1.7	-	-	69.3	
Ocean Pout	25.8	6.4	4.5	0.1	-	0.3	7.1	
Halibut	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	1.7	
Wolffish	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.0	

Values in metric tons of live weight

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

These criteria are used by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to categorize trips to attribute groundfish catch for groundfish ACL accounting. By necessity these rules cannot capture the full complexity of categorizing every trip taken by vessels fishing in the Northeast. Further analysis should be completed to definitively attribute groundfish catch to an FMP for management purposes.

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Table 8: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Landings Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB[2]	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP	SHRIMP
GB Cod	425.2	0.4	0.2	-	0.0	NA	-	0.6	26.8	0.0	-
GOM Cod	5.7	-	-	-	-	NA	-	0.0	5.6	-	-
GB Haddock	19.2	-	-	-	-*	NA	-	-	19.0	-	-
GOM Haddock	2.7	-	-	-	-*	NA	-	-	1.3	-	-
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-*	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	2.8	-*	0.9	-	-	NA	-	0.0	1.5	-	-
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2.6	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	2.6	-	-
American Plaice	8.8	0.0	-	-	-	NA	-	0.0	8.7	0.1	-
Witch Flounder	4.1	0.3	0.4	-	-	NA	-	-	3.4	-	-
GB Winter Flounder	0.5	0.5	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-
GOM Winter Flounder	0.1	0.0	-	-	-	NA	-	-	0.1	-	-
SNE Winter Flounder	17.5	1.3	0.8	-	-	NA	-	0.0	11.1	0.4	-
Redfish	6.2	-	-	-	0.2	NA	-	-	5.5	0.0	-
White Hake	2.7	-	0.1	-	0.1	NA	-	0.0	1.9	0.0	-
Pollock	110.6	-	-	-	-	NA	-	0.0	0.5	-	-
Northern Windowpane	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-
Southern Windowpane	0.0	-*	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	0.0	-
Ocean Pout	0.0	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-
Halibut	2.3	0.1	-	-	-	NA	-	0.7	0.1	-	-
Wolffish	0.0	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	-

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2016 through February 2017

[2]Estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab bycatch was not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

These criteria are used by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to categorize trips to attribute groundfish catch for groundfish ACL accounting. By necessity these rules cannot capture the full complexity of categorizing every trip taken by vessels fishing in the Northeast. Further analysis should be completed to definitively attribute groundfish catch to an FMP for management purposes.

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Table 8: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Landings Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	425.2	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	3.4	393.8
GOM Cod	5.7	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	-*
GB Haddock	19.2	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	
GOM Haddock	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	1.4	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	2.8	0.0	-	-	-	-	0.3	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	
American Plaice	8.8	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	
Witch Flounder	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	
GB Winter Flounder	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	
GOM Winter Flounder	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SNE Winter Flounder	17.5	0.2	0.0	-	-	-	2.0	1.6
Redfish	6.2	0.0	0.2	-	-	-	0.1	
White Hake	2.7	-	0.0	-	-	0.1	0.6	
Pollock	110.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	109.5
Northern Windowpane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Southern Windowpane	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	
Ocean Pout	0.0	-	0.0	-	-	-	-	
Halibut	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	1.3	
Wolffish	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	

Values in metric tons of live weight

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

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Table 9: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Estimated Discards Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB[2]	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP	SHRIMP
GB Cod	32.8	5.3	0.0	-	0.1	NA	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
GOM Cod	3.3	1.2	-	-	0.2	NA	-	0.1	0.0	-	0.0
GB Haddock	247.2	7.7	0.0	-	22.3*	NA	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	15.6
GOM Haddock	95.8	0.8	-	-	8.2*	NA	-	0.1	0.0	-	0.7
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-	-	-*	NA	-	-	-	-	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	8.0	-*	0.2	-	0.7	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	46.1	40.5	-	-	0.3	NA	-	0.1	0.0	-	0.0
American Plaice	24.9	15.5	0.1	-	0.8	NA	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.6
Witch Flounder	51.1	20.3	1.2	0.0	2.3	NA	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.4	1.6
GB Winter Flounder	3.8	2.5	-	-	0.0	NA	-	-	-	-	-
GOM Winter Flounder	5.0	4.8	-	-	0.0	NA	-	-	0.0	-	0.0
SNE Winter Flounder	100.3	39.1	2.8	-	4.8	NA	0.1	0.1	0.0	3.3	3.4
Redfish	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
White Hake	7.4	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.3	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2
Pollock	271.1	0.0	-	-	0.1	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0
Northern Windowpane	37.9	31.8	-	-	0.2	NA	-	0.0	0.0	-	0.0
Southern Windowpane	178.1	-*	23.0	-	6.1	NA	0.1	0.9	0.1	27.6	4.3
Ocean Pout	25.8	1.9	1.2	-	1.6	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.1
Halibut	1.1	0.4	0.0	-	0.0	NA	-	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wolffish	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	NA	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2016 through February 2017

[2]Estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab bycatch was not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

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Table 9: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Estimated Discards Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	32.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	-	0.0	0.6	25.9
GOM Cod	3.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	-	0.6	0.5	-*
GB Haddock	247.2	88.7	54.5	1.6	-	0.5	55.9	
GOM Haddock	95.8	1.3	30.9	1.3	-	30.1	22.5	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-*	-	-	-	0.0*	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	8.0	2.9	1.1	0.1	-	-	2.3	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	46.1	0.1	2.5	0.0	-	1.4	1.0	
American Plaice	24.9	3.1	2.2	0.0	-	0.1	2.2	
Witch Flounder	51.1	9.0	6.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	8.4	
GB Winter Flounder	3.8	0.0	1.3	-	-	0.0	0.0	
GOM Winter Flounder	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
SNE Winter Flounder	100.3	19.4	8.5	0.4	-	0.1	18.3	0.1
Redfish	2.7	0.9	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	
White Hake	7.4	1.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	
Pollock	271.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	0.1	270.7
Northern Windowpane	37.9	0.2	4.8	0.0	-	0.7	0.3	
Southern Windowpane	178.1	28.1	17.0	1.7	-	-	69.3	
Ocean Pout	25.8	6.4	4.5	0.1	-	0.3	7.1	
Halibut	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.4	
Wolffish	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.0	

Values in metric tons of live weight

*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run date of Sept. 19, 2017

These criteria are used by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office to categorize trips to attribute groundfish catch for groundfish ACL accounting. By necessity these rules cannot capture the full complexity of categorizing every trip taken by vessels fishing in the Northeast. Further analysis should be completed to definitively attribute groundfish catch to an FMP for management purposes.

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Table 10: FY 2014 - 2016 GOM Cod and Haddock Recreational Catch Evaluation (mt)

Stock	Fishing Year	Recreational Catch				
		Catch	Landings	Discard	Recreational sub-ACL	Percent of Catch Limit Taken
		A + B	A	B		
GOM Cod	2014	623.3	468.2	155.1	486	128.3
	2015	84.5	4.5	80.0	121	69.8
	2016	280.9	94.5	186.4	157	178.9
	Average	**329.6**	**189.1**	**140.5**	**255**	**129.5**
GOM Haddock	2014	658.6	293.1	365.5	173	380.7
	2015	381.9	238.3	143.6	372	102.7
	2016	887.0	560.2	326.8	928	95.6
	Average	**642.5**	**363.9**	**278.6**	**491**	**130.9**

Recreational estimates based on Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data.
Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Table 11: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Sector Carryover (mt)

Stock †	FY 2016 Available Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE)				Available Carryover from FY 2016 to FY 2017	
	FY 2016 Initial ACE	FY 2015 Carryover	FY 2016 Total ACE	Total ACE as a Percent of Initial ACE	*de minimis*	Maximum
	A	B	C = A + B	C / A	D	E
GB Cod	597	32	629	105.4	5	28
GOM Cod	271	20	291	107.2	3	23
GB Haddock	51,328	2,156	53,483	104.2	518	2,830
GOM Haddock	2,390	93	2,483	103.9	29	236
GB Yellowtail Flounder	247.1	NA*	247.1	100.0	NA*	NA*
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	169	12	181	107.1	2	11
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	326	18	344	105.5	3	18
Plaice	1,163	62	1,225	105.3	11	64
Witch Flounder	362	19	381	105.2	6	27
GB Winter Flounder	585	18	603	103.1	6	19
GOM Winter Flounder	607	34	641	105.6	6	34
SNE Winter Flounder	523	31	554	105.9	5	31
Redfish	9,474	501	9,975	105.3	93	536
White Hake	3,433	182	3,615	105.3	33	177
Pollock	17,704	938	18,642	105.3	174	938

* Carryover of GB yellowtail flounder is not allowed because this stock is jointly managed with Canada.

† There is no carryover for non-allocated stocks: Northern windowpane flounder, southern windowpane flounder, ocean pout, halibut, and wolffish.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting; (4) Observers and at-sea monitors via the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Run Date: August 16, 2017

Table 12: FY 2016 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - Percentage of U.S. TACs Caught (%)

Stock	% of U.S. TAC	Percent of Each Fishery Component U.S. TAC Caught								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	59.5	59.4	60.6	0.0					NA	NA
Eastern GB Haddock	3.9	3.6	3.6	0.0		NA			NA	NA
GB Yellowtail Flounder	11.4	9.5	9.7	0.0			93.8	95.2	NA	0.0

Values in percent live weight (%)
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 27, 2017

Any value for a non-allocated species may be due to landings of that stock; misreporting of species and/or stock area; and/or estimated landings (in lieu of missing reports) based on vessel histories.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 13: FY 2016 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. TACs (mt)

Stock	U.S. TAC	Fishery Component TAC								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small-Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	138	138	135	3						
Eastern GB Haddock	15,170	15,170	15,070	100						
GB Yellowtail Flounder	269.0	250.8	247.1	3.7			2.2	5.0		3.0

Values in live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 15, 2017

Any value for a non-allocated species may be due to landings of that stock; misreporting of species and/or stock area; and/or estimated landings (in lieu of missing reports) based on vessel histories.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 14: FY 2016 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Catch (mt)

Stock	U.S. Catch	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery*	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	82.1	82.0	82.0	-					-	0.0
Eastern GB Haddock	588.0	549.0	549.0	-		29.2			-	9.8
GB Yellowtail Flounder	30.7	23.9	23.9	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0

*Estimated. Worst case haddock catch should not exceed 119 mt.
Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
September 27, 2017

Table 15: FY 2016 End of Year Transboundary U.S./Canada Vessels, Trips, DAS Used, and Observers

Area[1]	Number of Vessels		Number of Trips		DAS Used		Number of Observed Trips	
	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool
Eastern U.S./Canada Area	47	0	299	0	2,015	0	44	0
Western U.S./Canada Area	58	0	642	0	3,745	0	102	0
Total	59	0	689	0	3,996	0	107	0

[1]Area based on area fished. Totals don't sum due to multi-area trips
Data display "NA" due to data confidentiality.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 27, 2017

Any value for a non-allocated species may be due to landings of that stock; misreporting of species and/or stock area; and/or estimated landings (in lieu of missing reports) based on vessel histories.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 16: FY 2016 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Landings (mt)

Stock	U.S. Landings	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery*	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	76.7	76.7	76.7	-					-	0.0
Eastern GB Haddock	463.8	435.7	435.7	-		28.1			-	-
GB Yellowtail Flounder	23.4	23.4	23.4	-			-	-	-	-

Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 27, 2017

Any value for a non-allocated species may be due to landings of that stock; misreporting of species and/or stock area; and/or estimated landings (in lieu of missing reports) based on vessel histories.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

Table 17: FY 2016 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Discards (mt)

Stock	U.S. Discards	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	5.4	5.4	5.4	-					-	0.0
Eastern GB Haddock	124.2	113.3	113.3	-		1.1			-	9.8
GB Yellowtail Flounder	7.3	0.5	0.5	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0

Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 27, 2017

Any value for a non-allocated species may be due to landings of that stock; misreporting of species and/or stock area; and/or estimated landings (in lieu of missing reports) based on vessel histories.

These data are the best available to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Data sources for this report include: (1) Vessels via VMS; (2) Vessels via vessel logbook reports; (3) Dealers via Dealer Electronic reporting. Differences with previous reports are due to corrections made to the database.

NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION

October 19, 2017

Dr. John Quinn
Chairman
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear John,

The Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) submits the following comments for consideration and review by members of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) prior to their deliberations on the 2017 Groundfish Operational Assessment updates and Council's Plan Development Team's (PDT) report to the SSC containing OFL / ABC recommendations for the 2018-2020 fishing years.

In general, NSC wants to again reiterate that the erosion of industry's trust in the assessment process directly relates to fishermen's firsthand experience on the water. For many years now, fishermen have been experiencing a far greater scale of abundance for many groundfish stocks than that which is reported by assessments. Subsequently, the commercial fishery spends more time on the water avoiding fish than catching fish. The latest 2017 Operational Assessment updates does not attempt to unravel the underlying issue of fishermen continuing to experience high levels of availability for stocks throughout their range that assessments report are at historically low levels.

Even though the 2017 Groundfish Operational Assessment and OFL / ABC setting process for 2018-2020 neither addresses nor attempts to fix this disconnect, the problem should not be worsened.

For instance, the perpetual and continued use of adjustments (e.g. rho adjustments) to fix retrospective patterns that appear in assessment models does not necessarily improve the accuracy of stock abundance estimates. In fact, in nearly all cases, the adjustments generate significantly lower estimates of SSB and consequently, higher estimates of fishing mortality on some of the very stocks where the greatest divide in perceptions of stock status already exists.

Also, NSC understands that revised estimates of catchability generated by the catch efficiency research (*Northeast Fisheries Science Center bottom trawl catch efficiency and biomass estimates for 2009-2017 for 8 flatfish stocks included in the 2017 Northeast Groundfish Operational Assessments*) may have been outside of the established guidelines for permissible modifications to an integrated model. But clear guidance was provided by the Assessment Oversight Review Panel (AOP) that new Qs generated by this peer reviewed research should be

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JC 10/20/17

"provided along-side the assessment, with relevant context to enable the review panel to appropriately interpret the (or not) the Q information."

NSC is perplexed by the fact that this new and important information appears to have been set aside. Although the new values for Q could not be used inside the models the updated values for swept area biomass estimates should be seen as useful references external to the model results. This type of "external to the models" information can and should guide the subjective decisions surrounding the applications of retrospective adjustments and PDT recommendations for 3 year constant ABCs.

Unfortunately, NSC has witnessed many decisions made over the years that have been based upon information provided during an assessment that were external to a model, information that was premature, not peer reviewed or vetted. Yet, a NEFSC catchability study and associated values of swept area biomass did not merit mention. The SSC should know that to NSC leadership who sincerely engages in the process we continue to witness a selective use of negative information that is external to the models and a selective dismissal of positive information that is also external to the model.

NSC Recommendations:

As the SSC deliberates on the OFL / ABC recommendations as set forth by the PDT, NSC is hopeful the discussion will take into account some of the glaring issues as noted above.

NSC also advises the SSC to not further compound the biomass estimate disconnect by supporting the PDT option to implement a constant ABC approach as put forth for the majority of flatfish stocks. Although the PDT has noted their concern with projections, applying a constant ABC approach, which holds the lowest value constant for three years, to a stock that already undergone a retrospective adjustment and has not taken into account additional datasets like the catchability research, should not be considered for management advice.

Lastly, NSC hopes to call special attention to American Plaice ("dabs").

American Plaice ("dabs") is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Even with retrospective adjustments applied, the stock is essentially rebuilt in 2016 – far earlier than its scheduled rebuilding deadline of 2024. Until biomass estimates that take into account the catchability research are underway, catch recommendations *at the very least* for this stock should be based on the 75% Fmsy option as set forth by the PDT. Adopting either an F rebuild or a constant ABC option that holds the lowest value on a rebuilt stock are not viable options.

Sincerely,

Jackie Odell, Executive Director Vito Giacalone, Policy Advisor

Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact:
Sustainable Fisheries Division
(978) 281 – 9315

www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov
Date Issued: 10/12/2017

Limited Access Northeast Multispecies Vessels

Changes to Vessel Monitoring System Catch Reporting Requirements for Groundfish Vessels

Unless otherwise required below, limited access Northeast multispecies (groundfish) vessels declared into a single broad stock area (BSA) no longer need to submit a vessel monitoring system (VMS) trip-level catch report on the return to port prior to crossing the demarcation line. We are implementing this change to remove reporting redundancies and streamline requirements.

Vessels on a groundfish trip (sector or common pool) must still submit daily or trip-level VMS catch reports if the vessel has declared into: 1) Multiple BSAs; 2) the Eastern US/Canada area; or 3) sector exemption(s) or option(s) with catch reporting requirements. See the flowchart on the reverse side for more information.

All other VMS reporting requirements still apply, including the requirement to send:

1) An activity Declaration prior to leaving port on every trip;
2) A Trip Start Hail prior to leaving port if declaring a sector exemption or option; and
3) A Trip End Hail at least 6 hours prior to arrival or, if fishing ends less than 6 hours before arrival, immediately after the last tow or hauling of gear.

If you have questions about VMS reporting requirements, please refer to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region's VMS webpage at: www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/vms/ or contact the Northeast VMS Team at (978) 281-9213.

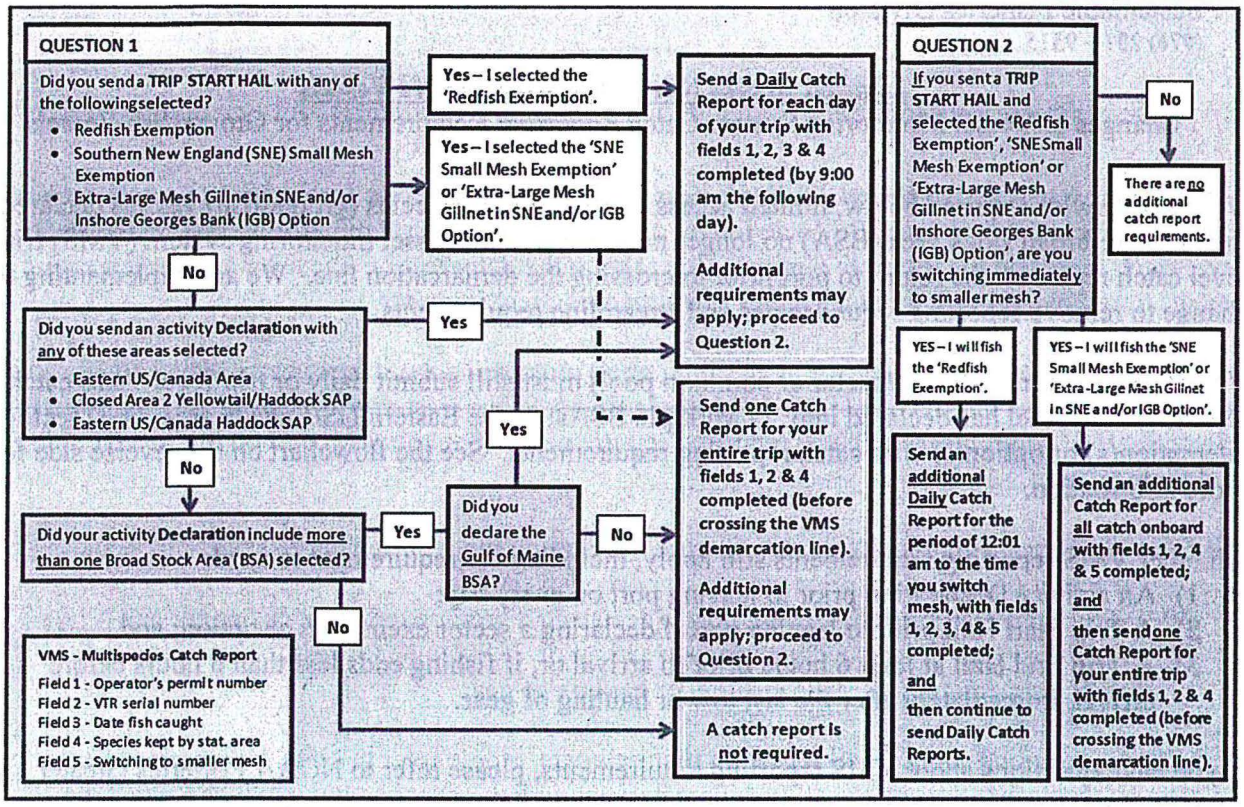
Frequently Asked Questions	
Why is this changing?	Limited access groundfish vessels fishing in a single BSA currently submit a VMS catch report containing only the VTR number and operator number. Because these vessels are also submitting the VTR number and operator number in the trip-end hail, the VMS reporting requirement for single BSA trips is redundant and unnecessary.
When does this apply?	This change **ONLY** applies to vessels that have declared their intent to fish in a single BSA. This change does **NOT** apply to vessels declared into multiple BSAs or the Eastern US/Canada area, or fishing under sector exemption(s)/option(s) with catch reporting requirements; these vessels are still required to submit VMS catch reports as required by regulation.
Where can I find more information?	Additional information can be found by visiting the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region VMS website at www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/vms/ or by contacting the Northeast VMS Team at (978) 281-9213.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

Groundfish VMS Catch Reporting Requirements

Revised - October 4, 2017

Northeast VMS Team
(978) 281-9213
nmfs.ole.ne@noaa.gov



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Sustainable Fisheries Division
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Northeast Multispecies Common Pool Vessels

Possession and Trip Limit Decrease
for Georges Bank Cod

Effective Date: September 28, 2017, through April 30, 2018

Effective at 1615 hours on September 28, 2017, the possession and trip limits for Georges Bank (GB) cod is decreased for all common pool vessels to **25 pounds per day**, and up to **50 pounds per trip** for the remainder of the 2017 fishing year.

Recent catch data reported through September 19, 2017, indicates that the common pool fishery has already caught 2.4 metric tons, or 65.7 percent, of the Trimester 2 GB cod Total Allowable Catch (TAC) since the second trimester began on September 1, 2017. The current GB cod possession and trip limit for GB cod is 250 pounds per DAS, and up to 500 pounds per trip. Under these possession limits, the common pool fishery caught its Trimester 1 TAC and triggered an area closure for GB cod on July 27, 2017. We project that, at its current trajectory, the common pool will catch its Trimester 2 TAC well before the end of the second trimester, and is also at risk of exceeding its annual 2017 quota.

An adjustment decreasing the common pool possession and trip limits is necessary to prevent the common pool from exceeding its GB cod allocation for fishing year 2017.

Table 1. New Possession and Trip Limits for GB Cod

Permit Type	Current Possession/Trip Limits	New Possession/Trip Limits
Days-At-Sea (A DAS)	250 lb (113.4 kg) per DAS, up to 500 lb (226.8 kg) per trip	25 lb (11.3 kg) per DAS, up to 50 lb (22.6 kg) per trip
Handgear A	250 lb (113.4 kg) per trip	25 lb (11.3 kg) per trip
Handgear B	25 lb (11.3 kg) per trip	Unchanged
Small Vessel Category	25 lb (11.3 kg) per trip, within combined 300 lb (136.1 kg) trip limit for cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder	Unchanged

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

If you have declared your trip through the vessel monitoring system (VMS) or interactive voice response system, and crossed the VMS demarcation line prior to 1615 hours on September 28, 2017, you are not subject to the new trip limits for that trip.

Frequently Asked Questions	
Why is this action being taken?	We are adjusting the possession and trip limits to help prevent an overage of the common pool's annual quota allocation for GB cod.
How much of the quota has been caught?	As of September 19, 2017, 65.7 percent of the Trimester 2 GB cod TAC has been caught. Quota monitoring reports are updated on the internet..
What happens if the Trimester TAC is exceeded? Underharvested?	If the Trimester 1 or Trimester 2 TAC for a stock is exceeded, the overage is deducted from the Trimester 3 TAC. Any unused portion of the Trimester 1 or Trimester 2 TAC for the stock is carried forward to the following trimester. No unused portion of the total annual quota may be carried over to the following fishing year.
What happens if the annual quota is exceeded?	If the 2017 fishing year quota is exceeded, the amount of the overage will be deducted from the common pool's quota for fishing year 2018.

Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Date Issued:10/11/2017

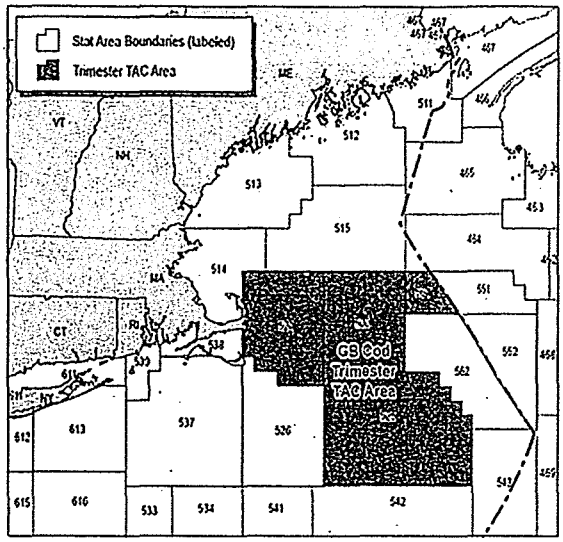
Northeast Multispecies Common Pool Vessels

Closure of the Trimester Total Allowable Catch Area and Possession Prohibition for Georges Bank Cod

Effective Date: October 11, 2017

Effective at 1615 hours on October 11, 2017, statistical areas 521, 522, 525, and 561 are closed for the remainder of Trimester 2, through December 31, 2017, to all common pool vessels fishing on a groundfish trip with trawl, sink gillnet, or longline/hook gear, including handgear vessels. This closure is required because 90 percent of the Trimester 2 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Georges Bank cod has been caught. This area will reopen at the beginning of Trimester 3, at 0001 hours, January 1, 2018.

If you have crossed the vessel monitoring system demarcation line and are currently at sea on a groundfish trip, you may complete your trip in all or part of the closed areas. If you have set gillnet gear prior to October 11, 2017, you may complete your trip to retrieve that gear.



Effective October 11, 2017, all common pool vessels are prohibited from possessing GB cod. This includes inshore and offshore Georges Bank as well as Southern New England:

Frequently Asked Questions	
Why is the TAC area being closed?	To avoid quota overages, we are required to close the Trimester TAC Area for a stock when 90 percent of the Trimester TAC is caught.
How much of the quota has been caught?	As of October 3, we project that 123 percent of the Trimester 2 quota for GB cod has been caught. See the latest quota monitoring reports.
What happens if the Trimester TAC is exceeded? Underharvested?	If the Trimester 1 or Trimester 2 TAC for a stock is exceeded, the overage is deducted from the Trimester 3 TAC. Any unused portion of the Trimester 1 or Trimester 2 TAC for the stock is carried forward to the following trimester. No unused portion of the total annual quota may be carried over to the following fishing year.
What happens if the annual quota is exceeded?	If the 2017 fishing year quota is exceeded, the amount of the overage will be deducted from the common pool's quota for fishing year 2018. In fishing year 2016, the common pool exceeded its Georges Bank cod quota by 2.8 metric tons. As a result, we were required to reduce the 2017 common pool GB cod quota by the amount of the overage.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

New England Fishery Management Council
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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

September 29, 2017

Mr. John Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear John:

On behalf of the New England Fishery Management Council I am formally conveying the Council request, passed as a motion at its September 26-28 meeting, that GARFO immediately enforce sector regulations and the Sector 9 operations plan.

In approving the groundfish sector program, with the strong support of NOAA/NMFS, both the Council and NMFS understood that a critical element of the program was the accurate reporting by the sectors of all catch. Mr. Carlos Rafael was recently convicted for crimes related to the misreporting of the catch of vessels he owned. These vessels were members of Sector 9, and Mr. Rafael was president of the sector. When charges of falsely reporting landings were brought against Mr. Rafael in early 2016, NMFS informed the Council that it would be premature to consider action against Sector 9 until the criminal case against Mr. Rafael was completed. Now that the US District Court of Massachusetts has found Mr. Rafael guilty, the Council believes that GARFO should enforce the sector regulations and the provisions of the Sector 9 Operations Plan. To that end, the following motion was passed on September 27, 2017:

> Mr. Keliher moved and Dr. McKenzie seconded:
> *that the Council requests that GARFO immediately enforce sector regulations and the Sector 9 operations plan.*
> The motion carried on a show of hands (13/1/2).

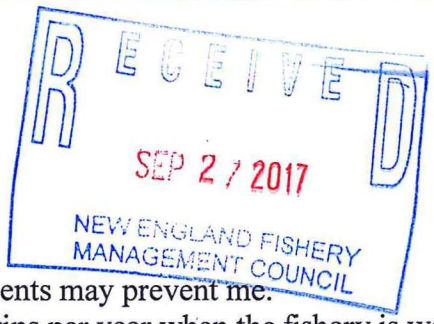
For the future success of the sector system, fishermen and the public must be confident that sectors will adhere to management provisions. Please let us know at your earliest opportunity what action will be taken.

Sincerely,

Dr. John F. Quinn
Chairman

Sherie Goutier

From: Nick Novello <nnovello@conres.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 9:50 AM
To: comments
Subject: Recreational Cod Fish



Greetings,
I was hoping to make the meeting today in Gloucester but work commitments may prevent me.
I am a recreational ground fisherman out of Gloucester. I average 10-15 trips per year when the fishery is worth making the run 25 +/- miles from Gloucester. This means Fuel,
bait, tackle, food etc. It is by no means an inexpensive passion. For the love the ocean and the cherished memories it provides with family and friends however it's priceless. The last 2-3 years with the restrictions on Cod we have only targeted Haddock using all the old Haddock spots we have. On the 5 trips this year the ratio has been 6 keeper Cod(clean released 99.9%) to 1 Keeper Haddock. I am talking beautiful 28-32" white belly market Cod. Personally we prefer haddock over Cod for consumption but my point is there is more Cod than I have seen in 20 years. I am urging the board and or council to allow us 6 cod fish per person per trip. This would also greatly encourage charter and head boats to grow and expand thier local presence. This also means more revenue for the local economy's. There is a trickle down effect that should be highlighted.
Your consideration on the above is greatly appreciated.

Best,

Nick Novello
10 Lloyd St
Gloucester, MA
978-815-0699

JC 10/2/17

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September 26, 2017

John Quinn
Chairman, New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Re: Development of Multispecies Amendment 23

Dear Chairman Quinn:

Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation, with thousands of members and supporters, including thousands of members in New England. For more than a decade, Oceana has worked to improve the management of the historic New England groundfish fishery through the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Oceana's long-standing goal for this fishery is recovery to a sustainable level that will support the participants in the fishery as well as the ocean ecosystem. This is a goal that is rooted in the tenets of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is shared by the NEFMC and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

To achieve this goal, the Council needs to improve its stewardship of this fishery, and address weaknesses in the fundamental management tools and principles that guide the FMP, including habitat conservation, effective use of quotas and measures to limit bycatch. Collectively, these three pillars of management can revive this fishery.

As you know, Oceana has serious concerns about the state of the Omnibus Habitat Amendment and the effects that the Council-approved measures will have on recovering groundfish stocks. However, that action has been completed by the Council and is in review by the Agency. What is in front of the Council is Multispecies Amendment 23, which provides the Council with an opportunity to make significant improvements to both quota and bycatch management for the groundfish fishery. If the Council makes improvements to these critical elements of the FMP, these changes may finally end overfishing of the full suite of groundfish stocks and keep the fishery on the path to rebuild these stocks on schedule.

To do this, the Council should take the time at its September 2017 meeting to provide guidance on the development of Amendment 23 to ensure that the technical experts on the groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) develop analyses and management alternatives that respond to the

jc 10/2/17

range of scoping comments submitted, and address the purpose and need of Amendment 23 that was included in the scoping document.[1] The September 14, 2017 memorandum provided to the Council as the "Draft Outline of the Likely Range of Alternatives" (PDT Outline) must be modified and clarified to keep Amendment 23 true to its purpose and need, and responsive to scoping comments. This document will guide the development of Amendment 23, and the Council should be clear in its instructions and guidance. The Council should make the following changes to the PDT Outline:

Amendment 23 must include a full review of the performance of the existing catch and bycatch monitoring program

The PDT Outline clearly states in its discussion of monitoring coverage levels that "(t)he goal is to achieve a monitoring coverage level that ensures precise and accurate catch (landings and discards) estimation." This is a strong and clear statement, and is consistent with the purpose and need of the Amendment.

It is puzzling then to see that the PDT Outline only includes a passing reference to any evaluation of the past performance of the groundfish catch monitoring program in the context of a "(r)e-evaluation of the 30 percent CV precision standard and how the standard is applied to determine the target monitoring coverage level.[2]" While this re-evaluation may be useful, it continues to assess the performance of the monitoring program through the narrow lens of precision.

Amendment 23 and its analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) must go much further. Amendment 23 must provide a full evaluation of the performance of the catch monitoring program using a variety of metrics of accuracy and precision, must evaluate the effect of the catch monitoring program on assessment and management of the fishery, and evaluate the effect of monitoring on the FMP's achievement of the requirements of the MSA, including ending overfishing, rebuilding overfished stocks and achieving optimum yield. It must also explore bias at the vessel, sector and fishery levels, since bias may not be apparent at the sector or fishery levels but may be present at the vessel level.

The discussion of these important issues is underdeveloped in the PDT memo. The Council guidance to the PDT must be expanded and clarified before the Council approves or endorses the PDT Outline.

Alternatives Related to Electronic Monitoring

Electronic Monitoring (EM) is emerging as a tool for portions of the fishery to supplement or replace human at-sea monitors and observers. To avoid unintended consequences, the Council

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[1] New England Fishery Management Council, Scoping Document for Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan 3, http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/170217_GF_A23_Scoping-Document.pdf (last visited September 19, 2017).

[2] 9/14/2017 PDT Memo, page 1

should be deliberate in its consideration of the proposed range of alternatives for EM. to avoid unintended outcomes. Oceana encourages the Council to include two important changes to the PDT Outline.

First, the application and use of EM in fisheries around the world has been on a fishery-by-fishery — and often boat-by-boat — basis, with considerable discretion in its use to encourage adoption of the new technology. Before Amendment 23 moves forward with EM options for the wide range of vessels and gears that are part of the groundfish fishery, the Amendment should explore and establish performance standards for EM use in the fishery. Completing this analysis and creating standards will avoid manipulation of EM or the uneven use of the technology. More importantly, these standards will ensure that the information collected with EM is useful, compatible with existing systems, and both accurate and precise.

Second, the Council should remove from consideration the proposed alternative that will allow EM to be used in place of ASM on selected trips, where EM only runs on trips for which the vessel is selected for coverage and is used to directly estimate discards. This approach is similar to that employed in a series of recent Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) led by the Nature Conservancy that were designed to demonstrate the use of EM in this fishery and troubleshoot the technology on a small subset of vessels. However, when these EFPs were approved, it was the understanding that this sampling design was not intended to be a precedent for the fishery or a model for future use of EM. Oceana strenuously objected to the approval of this EFP, citing among other issues, the risk that this sampling design will be applied in other vessels or in the fishery as a whole[3].

It appears that this is exactly what is happening with the first alternative in the PDT Outline and the Council should take action to remove this from development. Allowing this unproven use of EM to be further developed is a waste of PDT resources on an alternative that cannot meet the requirement to be based on the Best Scientific Information Available, as required under National Standard 2.

Instead, Oceana fully supports the Council and the PDT focusing their resources on fully developing the accepted "audit model" and "maximized retention model" that are also included in the PDT Outline.

Funding Alternatives

Regardless of what strategies, tools and sampling design are approved for monitoring catch in the groundfish fishery, the cost of the program will always be a driving factor in the policy decisions made by the Council, and the decisions by individual vessels and operators. In the current political and fiscal climate, the fishery cannot and should not rely on continued government subsidies to fund monitoring of the fishery. Amendment 23 should recognize these facts and include a range of alternatives to fund necessary monitoring. Oceana discussed some possible options for funding

[3] Oceana comments on The Nature Conservancy Exempted Fishing Permit application, April 26, 2016

alternatives in its scoping comments, but Oceana also recognizes that this is not an exhaustive list of the many funding options that the Council can and should explore in Amendment 23.

Moving forward without a plan to fund necessary monitoring for the fishery will continue an error that has plagued this fishery since the approval of the catch share program in Amendment 16. Funding, data quality and the effective administration of the FMP are all directly linked. Amendment 23 should recognize these facts and plan for the future of this fishery accordingly.

National Marine Fisheries Service SBRM guidelines.

Oceana encourages the Council to include clear guidance to the groundfish PDT to use Amendment 23 as the vehicle to bring the Multispecies FMP into compliance with the 2017 NMFS guidance regarding the development, documentation and review of Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodologies (SBRM). This important guidance requires each FMP to "explain how the SBRM meets the purpose described under 50 CFR §600.1600, based on an analysis of (1) the characteristics of the bycatch occurring in the fishery, (2) the feasibility of the methodology from cost, technical and operational perspectives, (3) the uncertainty of the data resulting from the methodology, and (4) how the data resulting from the methodology are used to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery."[4]

Oceana understands that the Multispecies FMP is included in the suite of plans amended by the Omnibus SBRM Amendment. However, considering the requirement that all FMPs comply with the 2017 guidance by February 2022, Oceana encourages the Council to use Amendment 23 to review and amend the Multispecies FMP to comply with agency guidance.

In sum, Amendment 23 presents the Council with a rare opportunity to develop a focused groundfish management action without a deadline or the need to attach other unrelated items to a must-pass action. The Council and the PDT should seize this opportunity, and ensure that the outline guiding the development of Amendment 23 directs the PDT to take a hard look at the fishery, its needs and deficiencies, and to develop alternatives that respond to these needs, and the stated purpose and need of the amendment. Moving forward without this overarching vision and clear guidance is shortsighted, and will miss an opportunity to bring this fishery back on a course for success.

Another weak monitoring revision is unacceptable and contrary to the clear requirements of the MSA and agency guidance. Failing to make fundamental improvements to improve catch monitoring will inhibit the Council's ability to limit annual catch, ensure accountability and rebuild these stocks.

[4] National Marine Fisheries Service Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology Final Rule, 82 Fed. Reg. 6317. January 19, 2017

Oceana thanks you for your time and consideration of these important issues at this critical early stage of the development of Amendment 23. Oceana looks to you, as Chair of the Council, for leadership to prevent another ineffective groundfish management action that continues the recent failures of this fishery.

Oceana will continue to participate in the management of this fishery, and looks forward to finding solutions that work for the fish and the fishery.

Sincerely,

Gilbert A Brogan

Gib Brogan
Oceana
Wayland, MA

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196
401-222-2080

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

September 22, 2017

The Honorable William G. Young
United States District Court, District of Massachusetts
John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse
1 Courthouse Way, Suite 2300
Boston, Massachusetts 02210

Re: USA v. Rafael, et al
Case No. 1:16-mj-04138-DHH

Dear Judge Young:

As Governor of the Ocean State, I share a deep concern for the heritage and future of fishing in New England. I am writing to provide my recommendations and perspective on Rhode Island interests in the outcome of the case, **United States v. Carlos Rafael**, particularly regarding groundfish permits currently held by Mr. Rafael. This case is being closely scrutinized and may set a new precedent for how National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will handle violators who try to circumvent the regulatory framework for fisheries management under the law.

Rhode Island has a long and proud history of harvesting the abundance of fish from Narragansett Bay and our marine waters, providing food and jobs for our residents. Mr. Rafael's blatant disregard for the law degrades the marine ecosystem, imposes financial harm on Rhode Island commercial fisherman, and shakes the legal foundation of fisheries management. Law-abiding commercial fishermen have been forced to compete with Mr. Rafael's illegal activities, losing opportunity over the years and now facing the potential repercussions on future stock assessments. It should be noted that in addition to harming the interests of commercial fishermen, these illegal actions also diminish recreational fisheries; citizen anglers feel the consequences of Mr. Rafael's illegal activities through reductions in quota resulting from depleted fish populations and stock assessments based on incorrect data.

As you are aware, Mr. Rafael has already plead guilty to criminal conspiracy, false labeling and fish identification, falsifying federal records, tax evasion and bulk cash smuggling. As a result of this guilty plea, I understand you are considering the appropriate sentence. As part of that process, Mr. Rafael may be required to forfeit thirteen of his groundfish permits and the fishing vessels associated with those permits. In accordance with the Federal law governing fisheries, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery

jc 10/2/17

Conservation and Management Act (MSA), I believe that the NOAA should be directed to redistribute the forfeited permits.

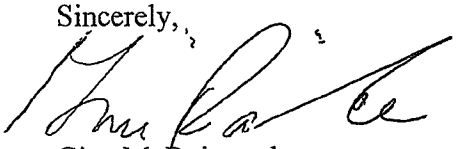
We request you cancel each of Mr. Rafael's groundfish permits and direct NOAA to redistribute the fishing privileges to all eligible commercial permit holders in the greater New England groundfish fleet. Some of the permits in question originated from Rhode Island and, therefore, have not always been New Bedford permits. Thus, permit holders in Rhode Island who have been adversely impacted by the admitted illegal practices should be allowed an opportunity to attain some of the fishing privileges that accrue to those permit holders.

In addition, the appropriate resolution of the case should include restitution to repair the damage done to the fishery. Responsible management of the groundfish fishery remains an ongoing issue, with accountability – and who pays for it – remaining a major challenge. I recommend that Mr. Rafael's fines and any financial resources associated with the settlement of his case or funds acquired from the sale of these permits should be dedicated to a fund to alleviate groundfish fishermen's monitoring cost burden and invest in alternative monitoring options, such as electronic monitoring. The MSA provides NOAA with this authority under 16 U.S.C 1861(f), which specifically identifies that "fines and penalties imposed for violations of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan shall be used by the Secretary pursuant to this section to enforce that Plan."

I respectfully submit these recommendations, all of which are aimed at providing an equitable resolution to the collective harm caused by Mr. Rafael's criminal actions. I look forward to working with NOAA and fishery stakeholders throughout the region to salvage from this unfortunate situation a positive, enduring investment for the fishery.

Thank you for considering my views as you make your sentencing decision on this important case.

Sincerely,



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

cc: Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA
John Bullard, NOAA Fisheries
Sara E. Silva, Esq.
William H. Kettlewell, Esq.
Charles W. Rankin, Esq.
Daniel W. Cronin, Esq.
Kreg R. Espinola, Esq.
William W. Fick, Esq.
Donald N. Marx, Esq.
Pamela F. Lafreniere, Esq.
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Doreen M. Rachal, Esq.
David G. Tobin, Esq.

MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

September 22, 2017

Mr. Tom Nies
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Tom:

Please extend our appreciation to the New England Fishery Management Council for their ongoing work to consider modifications to the windowpane large mesh/non-groundfish accountability measures (AMs). Based on previous discussion at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, staff supports inclusion of the measures approved by the committee for consideration in Framework 57, as well as possible future consideration of additional approaches to address windowpane issues. Our staff will be available to perform additional analysis of options that would modify the AM areas east of Montauk.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jason T. Rutledge for

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, J. Didden

jc 10/2/17

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Robert E. Beal, Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Bob,

My June 17, 2017 letter to you regarding the Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Northern Shrimp noted that some of the alternatives in the draft amendment that address changes to the finfish excluder device requirements may conflict with the current excluder device specifications in the Federal Northeast multispecies regulations. I stress that because the shrimp fishery deploys fishing gear capable of catching groundfish, the shrimp fishery may only occur as an exemption to the Federal Northeast multispecies regulations. My previous letter may have been interpreted to suggest that the exemption applies only to Federal groundfish permit holders. The exemption applies to all vessels fishing in Federal waters with trawl gear capable of catching groundfish, allowing such vessels to participate in the northern shrimp fishery using mesh smaller than what would otherwise be required in the Northeast multispecies regulations.

Specifically, 50 CFR 648.80 states, "Except as provided in § 648.17, ***all vessels*** must comply with the following minimum mesh size, gear and methods of fishing requirements, unless otherwise exempted or prohibited." This text specifies that the gear requirements apply to all vessels fishing in Federal waters with gear capable of catching groundfish, not just Federal groundfish permit holders. Therefore, the northern shrimp exemption applies to all such vessels as well. This point was brought to my attention by Tom Nies, Executive Director of the New England Fisheries Management Council, in response to my initial letter on the matter.

I note that in Draft Amendment 3, Section 4.8 "Recommendations to the Secretary for Complementary Action in Federal Jurisdictions", contains a similar mis-statement. The paragraph says that the northern shrimp exemption applies to Federal groundfish vessels. As previously stated, the exemptions apply to any vessel fishing in Federal waters with gear capable of catching groundfish. I recommend that this and any other such references in the draft amendment be corrected to ensure that the issue is clear.

As the Commission moves forward to consider adopting Amendment 3, I again encourage the Commission and the Northern Shrimp Section to continue to consult with the Council as the amendment is finalized to address this matter and any future concerns.

jc 9/28/17

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this important fishery resource.

Sincerely,

for John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator

cc: Thomas Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council