



New England Fishery Management Council

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 12, 2013  
**TO:** Groundfish Oversight Committee (OSC)  
**FROM:** Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT)  
**SUBJECT:** **Progress on Framework Adjustment 51**

**Activity**

The PDT held several recent meetings to discuss the continued development of Framework 51 (FW51), and Amendment 18 (A18). Since the September Council meeting, the PDT held several conference calls on October 22, November 5 and November 13, 2013. The PDT also met in person on October 28, 2013 at the Northeast Regional Office (NERO), Gloucester, MA.

**Purpose**

PDT progress on FW 51 is summarized in this memo, including questions from the PDT for the OSC to consider. PDT progress on A18 is summarized in a separate memo from the PDT to OSC, dated November 7, 2013. In addition, the PDT revisited the Gulf of Maine haddock FY 2013-2015 ABCs/OFLs, which was reviewed by the SSC on November 15, 2013 (see memo PDT memo to the SSC cc OSC, dated November 7, 2013).

**Overview**

At the September Council meeting, the Council decided which measures to include in FW51 for analysis. Over the past few months, the PDT has been working to revise the alternatives (as appropriate) and conduct the impacts analysis of the alternatives. Due to time constraints, PDT work to date has primarily focused on the impacts analysis of alternatives in Section 4.1, regulatory requirements, (pp.5) and secondarily on the alternatives in Section 4.2, management measures (pp.18). The impacts analysis is not provide in this memo, but will be provided to the OSC at the December 9<sup>th</sup> OSC meeting. The PDT expects to have the draft impacts analysis for FW 51 completed for final decision on FW 51 at the December Council meeting.

## **Final 2012 Year-End Groundfish Fishery Results**

The PDT has not had an opportunity to review the 2012 year-end groundfish fishery results in order to make recommendations on changes to state and other sub-components. The PDT expects to provide the OSC with this information at the December 9<sup>th</sup> OSC meeting.

### **Framework 51**

#### ***Regulatory Requirements (Alternatives in Section 4.1)***

PDT work in this section has focused on clarifying the alternatives and associated rationale, including drafting No Action alternatives. In addition, the PDT has completed much of the impacts analysis for this section.

With regards to new alternatives included in this section at the September Council meeting, the PDT has drafted alternatives for the Rebuilding Plan Analysis for the Gulf of Maine cod rebuilding plan (pp.6) and American plaice rebuilding plan (pp.8). The PDT interprets these alternatives to be administrative.

#### **For OSC consideration:**

- The PDT suggests that the OSC clarify the intent of how the Rebuilding Plan Analysis is different from the current process (No Action).
- The PDT also suggests that the OSC consider whether or not these alternatives create a redundant, augmented, and/or more explicit review process.

#### ***Management Measures (Alternatives in Section 4.2)***

PDT work in this section has focused on clarifying the alternatives and associated rationale, including drafting No Action alternatives. With regards to new alternatives included in this section at the September Council meeting, the PDT has drafted alternatives in these sections: small-mesh fishery accountability measures for the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder sub-ACL (pp.19), Regional Administrator's authority for US/CA quota trading (pp.19), discard strata for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder (pp.21), and zero-retention of yellowtail flounder in the scallop fishery (pp.24).

#### **For OSC consideration:**

- *Small-mesh fishery accountability measures for the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder sub-ACL:* The PDT met with other Council staff and NMFS staff to discuss the small-mesh fishery management measures. The PDT has developed several accountability measures for the small-mesh fishery. The PDT clarified how the current management measure in the US/CA Resource Understanding and the AM alternatives interact. The PDT also notes that NMFS would likely not consider proactive gear modifications, by themselves, a sufficient suite of AMs for this fishery. In addition, the PDT notes that NMFS is typically not able to make final determinations of ACL overages until August/September of Year 2 due to data availability. If there is an overage of the U.S. TAC for GB yellowtail flounder in Year 1 due to the small-mesh fisheries, the pound-for-pound payback would not occur until the middle of Year 2. If the overage payback reduces the small-mesh sub-ACL to zero in Year 2, the AM to prevent fishing in the GB yellowtail flounder stock area (Sup-Option A) would not be implemented until the beginning of Year 3. If this AM were implemented in the middle of Year 2, there could

be disproportionate impacts on the small-mesh fleets because of seasonality of these fisheries (e.g., the Cultivator Shoals whiting fishery typically operates in the summer months). The PDT also recognizes that additional gear studies may be needed in order for the Council, and NMFS, to approve additional selective gears for use by the small-mesh fisheries to reduce GB yellowtail flounder bycatch. The PDT assumed that the call-in system might be the Pre-trip Notification System, and notes there may be concerns about the capacity of the system to add additional FMPs. The PDT also requests that the OSC clarify the intent of the call-in requirement alternative. Call-in requirements for observers are often linked to establishing a level of observer coverage or improving the randomness of sea-sampling of the fleet. Likewise, the PDT is concerned that the current alternative may not be linked to any measurable benefit since requiring vessels to make a pre-trip notification would not necessarily increase observer coverage for the fleet.

- *Regional Administrator's authority for US/CA quota trading:* The PDT has been advised by General Counsel that alternatives that allocate quota to various components of the fishery differently than the normal ABC distribution (e.g., additional GB yellowtail flounder quota distributed only to sectors) are likely beyond the scope of a framework adjustment action, and would best be considered in a future amendment. This would leave two options in this section for consideration, the No Action (Option 1) alternative and Option 2, but Options 3 and 4 might be best considered in a future amendment. Option 5 was also added to the document.
- *Discard strata for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder:* The PDT revisited the discard strata for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. This measure was considered in Framework Adjustment 48 (FW 48), but was disapproved by NMFS due to industry opposition that the measure would not provide them with any measurable benefits. The PDT reviewed public comments received on this measure in FW 48, along with NMFS' rationale for disapproval, and has been unable to alter the measure to address the concerns raised during FW 48 rule-making. Therefore, the measure that appears in FW 51 is identical to the one proposed in FW 48. The PDT has not completed a new analysis on this alternative since FW 48. The PDT noted potential implications of this alternative that would result from creating finer scale stratification. This measure could potentially result in higher observer coverage rates (within 522 or the other areas), increase the discard rate of GB yellowtail flounder in other areas as a result of removing "clean trips" from 522 (which could have unintended consequences for sectors fishing in those areas), and increase the uncertainty around the discard estimate unless the rates were statistically significantly different from each other.
- *Zero-retention of yellowtail flounder in the scallop fishery:* The PDT met with members of the Scallop PDT on a conference call to discuss, among other topics, zero-retention of yellowtail flounder in the scallop fishery. The PDT discussed the rationale and history of this measure and also discussed the possibility of adding a trip limit option. However, an alternative for a yellowtail flounder trip limit for scallop vessels has not been added to the draft FW 51 due to time constraints. The Scallop PDT also raised several important issues regarding how zero-possession may change the current monitoring system.

**DRAFT**

Framework Adjustment 51  
To the Northeast Multispecies FMP  
Draft Management Measures

*This document is under development and will be modified  
November 14, 2013*

Prepared by the  
New England Fishery Management Council  
In consultation with the  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
National Marine Fisheries Service

Initial Framework Meeting:  
Final Framework Meeting:  
Date Submitted:

## 1.0 Executive Summary

## 2.0 Contents

## 3.0 Introduction and Background

## 4.0 Alternatives Under Consideration

### 4.1 Updates to Status Determination Criteria, Formal Rebuilding Programs and Annual Catch Limits

#### 4.1.1 Gulf of Maine Cod Rebuilding Strategy

##### 4.1.1.1 Option 1: No Action

The current rebuilding strategy for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, adopted in Amendment 13, uses a fishing mortality target that is calculated to rebuild the stock by 2014 with a 50 percent (median) probability of success. The stock is unlikely to rebuild by that date in the absence of all fishing mortality and in 2012, the Council was notified that the current rebuilding strategy had not resulted in adequate progress towards rebuilding. As a result, section 304(e)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that a revised rebuilding program be implemented within 2 years for GOM cod. This No Action alternative would not address this Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement. If this option is adopted fishing mortality (set at 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ) as implemented in FW 50 would be maintained in 2014. However because the stock is not projected to be rebuilt by 2014, fishing mortality would be based on incidental bycatch (i.e., set as close to zero as possible) starting in 2015.

##### 4.1.1.2 Option 2: Revised Rebuilding Strategy for Gulf of Maine Cod

Two options are being considered for a revised rebuilding strategy for GOM cod. Both rebuilding options assume no changes to the FY 2014-2015 ABC (1,550 mt) that was previously recommended by the SSC, and adopted by FW 50.

Sub-Option A: This strategy would rebuild the stock in 8 years with a 50 percent (median) probability of success by 2022. This strategy is developed to be more conservative compared to sub-Option B. It is based on a fishing mortality that is above 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ;  $F_{rebuild}$  is not allowed to be initially limiting.

Sub-Option B: This strategy would rebuild the stock in 10 years with a 50 percent (median) probability of success by 2024. This strategy is based on a fishing mortality that is above 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ;  $F_{rebuild}$  is not allowed to be initially limiting.

*Rationale:* Long-term projections have often proven to be unreliable and tend to be optimistic. There is also considerable uncertainty surrounding  $F_{rebuild}$  (and other reference points such as 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ) estimates due to the estimate's dependence on future recruitment, which is difficult to predict. As a result, basing an ABC on  $F_{rebuild}$  is not desirable since it can quickly lead to dramatic reductions in the ABCs. As  $F_{rebuild}$  approaches zero, it is less likely to be used for ABC determinations. To avoid the uncertainties associated with  $F_{rebuild}$ -based ABCs, the rebuilding strategies were designed to prevent  $F_{rebuild}$  from being initially limiting (i.e.,  $F_{rebuild}$  is greater than 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ). During the rebuilding time period, catch advice would continue to be set consistent with the ABC Control Rule adopted in A16. GOM cod requires at least eight years for  $F_{rebuild}$  to remain above 75%  $F_{msy}$ .  $F_{rebuild}$  was estimated to be below  $F_{MSY}$  with the maximum 10

year rebuilding plan. This program is designed to use  $75\%F_{MSY}$  initially; however, if progress is not made, it is possible that  $F_{rebuild}$  may become necessary. There is little difference in the rebuilding time needed under the accepted base case or M-ramp model ( $M=0.2$  in projections) for GOM cod; no reference points are available for the M-ramp model. However the catches estimated in the out years and the  $SSB_{MSY}$  are different between the models. The M-ramp projection assumes a change in  $M$  back to  $0.2$ . The SARC 55 Panel concluded that if  $M$  is currently  $0.4$  then it seemed more reasonable to assume that in the short-term  $M$  would remain at  $0.4$  rather than reduce to  $0.2$ . However, a change back to  $0.2$  is required to rebuild the stock. It is not known when  $M$  will change back to  $0.2$  in the future for the M-ramp formulation so interpretation and development of rebuilding plans using the M-ramp model is more difficult. For informational purposes if  $F=0$ , it would take 6 years to rebuild Gulf of Maine cod.

#### 4.1.1.3 Option 3: Rebuilding Plan Review Analysis for Gulf of Maine Cod

If this option is selected it must be selected in conjunction with an above option under 4.1.1.2 Option 2.

Sub-Option A: No Action: Under the current biennial review process, the PDT would use the most recent scientific information available to develop ABC recommendations based on the ABC control rule, the fishing mortality rate necessary to rebuild the stock, guidance from the SSC, and any other available information. In addition to developing ACLs for the upcoming fishing years, the PDT would also recommend other management options necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the FMP

Sub-Option B: If this option is adopted, it would establish a rebuilding plan review analysis for use during the new rebuilding period for Gulf of Maine cod. This option is an administrative measure. The review analysis would occur only if three conditions were met: 1) the total ACL for the Gulf of Maine cod stock has not been exceeded during the new rebuilding plan, 2) new information indicates the Gulf of Maine cod stock is below its rebuilding trajectory, and subsequently 3)  $F_{rebuild}$  falls below  $75\% F_{MSY}$ .

Under these conditions, the Council would task its appropriate body (e.g., Groundfish PDT, SSC) with providing new catch advice options for Gulf of Maine cod to aid decision-making, in priority order, that:

- 1) Consider extending the rebuilding program to the maximum 10 years if a shorter time frame was initially adopted;
- 2) Review biomass reference points; and
- 3) Provide F-rebuild ACLs under 1 and 2 (directly above), in addition to those based on the rebuilding plan adopted in FW51. However since biomass reference points would be reviewed but not necessarily changed, F-rebuild ACLs under 2 (directly above) may also remain unchanged.

*Rationale*: This measure outlines the administrative steps that would be taken to review the GOM cod rebuilding plan, should the specified conditions be met, in order to investigate why rebuilding has not occurred as expected. These types of analyses would likely already be completed under the current biennial review process, and not necessarily only when the above conditions are met. However, the administrative steps are not explicitly identified in the current biennial review process.

## 4.1.2 American Plaice Rebuilding Strategy

### 4.1.2.1 Option 1: No Action

The current rebuilding strategy for American plaice, adopted in Amendment 13, uses a fishing mortality target that is calculated to rebuild the stock by 2014 with a 50 percent probability of success. The stock is unlikely to rebuild by that date in the absence of all fishing mortality, and in 2012, the Council was notified that the current rebuilding strategy had not resulted in adequate progress towards rebuilding. As a result, section 304(e)(3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that a revised rebuilding program be implemented within 2 years for American plaice. This No Action alternative would not address this Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement. If this option is adopted fishing mortality (set at 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ) as implemented in FW 50 would be maintained in 2014. However because the stock is not projected to be rebuilt by 2014, fishing mortality would be based on incidental bycatch (i.e., set as close to zero as possible) starting in 2015.

### 4.1.2.2 Option 2: Revised Rebuilding Strategy for American Plaice

Three options are being considered for a revised rebuilding strategy for American plaice. All three rebuilding options assume no changes to the FY 2014-2015 ABCs that were previously recommended by the SSC, and adopted by FW 50.

Sub-Option A: The rebuilding strategy would be to rebuild the stock in 7 years with a 50 percent (median) probability of success by 2021. This strategy is the most conservative compared to sub-Options B and C. It is based on a fishing mortality that is above 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ;  $F_{rebuild}$  is not allowed to be initially limiting.

Sub-Option B: The rebuilding strategy would be to rebuild the stock in 8 years with a 50 percent (median) probability of success by 2022. This strategy is based on a fishing mortality that is above 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ;  $F_{rebuild}$  is not allowed to be initially limiting.

Sub-Option C: The rebuilding strategy would be to rebuild the stock in 10 years with a 50 percent (median) probability of success by 2024. This strategy is based on a fishing mortality that is above 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ;  $F_{rebuild}$  is not allowed to be initially limiting.

*Rationale*: Long-term projections have often proven to be unreliable and tend to be optimistic. There is also considerable uncertainty surrounding  $F_{rebuild}$  (and other reference points such as 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ) estimates due to the estimate's dependence on future recruitment, which is difficult to predict. As a result, basing an ABC on  $F_{rebuild}$  is not desirable since it can quickly lead to dramatic reductions in the ABCs. As  $F_{rebuild}$  approaches zero, it is less likely to be used for ABC determinations. To avoid the uncertainties associated with  $F_{rebuild}$ -based ABCs, the rebuilding strategies were designed to prevent  $F_{rebuild}$  from being initially limiting (i.e.,  $F_{rebuild}$  is greater than 75%  $F_{MSY}$ ). During the rebuilding time period, catch advice would continue to be set consistent with the ABC Control Rule adopted in A16. American plaice requires at least seven years for  $F_{rebuild}$  to remain above 75%  $F_{msy}$ .  $F_{rebuild}$  was estimated to be below  $F_{MSY}$  with the maximum 10 year rebuilding plan. This program is designed to use 75%  $F_{MSY}$  initially; however, if progress is not made, it is possible that  $F_{rebuild}$  may become necessary. For informational purposes if  $F=0$ , it would take 4 years to rebuild American plaice.

#### 4.1.2.3 Option 3: Rebuilding Plan Review Analysis for American Plaice

If this option is selected it must be selected in conjunction with an above option under 4.1.1.2 Option 2.

Sub-Option A: No Action: Under the current biennial review process, the PDT would use the most recent scientific information available to develop ABC recommendations based on the ABC control rule, the fishing mortality rate necessary to rebuild the stock, guidance from the SSC, and any other available information. In addition to developing ACLs for the upcoming fishing years, the PDT would also recommend other management options necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the FMP

Sub-Option B: If this option is adopted, it would establish a rebuilding plan review analysis for use during the new rebuilding period for American plaice. This option is an administrative measure. The review analysis would occur only if three conditions were met: 1) the total ACL for the American plaice stock has not been exceeded during the new rebuilding plan, 2) new information indicates the American plaice stock is below its rebuilding trajectory, and subsequently 3)  $F_{\text{rebuild}}$  falls below 75%  $F_{\text{MSY}}$ .

Under these conditions, the Council would task its appropriate body (e.g., Groundfish PDT, SSC) with providing new catch advice options for American plaice to aid decision-making, in priority order, that:

- 1) Consider extending the rebuilding program to the maximum 10 years if a shorter time frame was initially adopted;
- 2) Review biomass reference points; and
- 3) Provide F-rebuild ACLs under 1 and 2 (directly above), in addition to those based on the rebuilding plan adopted in FW51. However since biomass reference points would be reviewed but not necessarily changed, F-rebuild ACLs under 2 (directly above) may also remain unchanged.

*Rationale*: This measure outlines the administrative steps that would be taken to review the American plaice rebuilding plan, should the specified conditions be met, in order to investigate why rebuilding has not occurred as expected. These types of analyses would likely already be completed under the current biennial review process, and not necessarily only when the above conditions are met. However, the administrative steps are not explicitly identified in the current biennial review process.

### 4.1.3 Annual Catch Limits

#### 4.1.3.1 Option 1: No Action

If the No Action is selected, the specifications for FY 2014-FY 2015 would remain as adopted by FW 50. For white hake, there would not be any specifications for these years. The FY 2014 - FY 2015 ABCs would be as specified in Table 1.

If this option is selected, there would be no FY 2014 quotas specified for the transboundary Georges Bank stocks, which are managed through the US/CA Resource Sharing Understanding. These quotas are specified annually.

*Rationale*: Because there would not be any specifications for some stocks under this action, it would not address M-S Act requirements to achieve OY and consider the needs of fishing communities.



**Table 1 – No Action/Option 1 Northeast Multispecies OFLs, ABCs, ACLs, and other ACL sub-components for FY 2012 (metric tons, live weight). Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton.**

(1) Grayed out values may be adjusted as a result of future recommendations of the TMGC. Values shown for GB haddock and cod are preliminary estimates subject to change.

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components (4)	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non-Sector Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
GB Cod	2014	3,570	1,960	20	78	0	1,769		0	1,738	31	0	1,867
	2015	4,191	2,506	25	100	0	2,262		0	2,223	39	0	2,387
	2016												
GOM Cod	2014	1,917	1,550	103	51	0		830	486	812	18	0	1,470
	2015	2,639	1,550	103	51	0		830	486	812	18	0	1,470
	2016												
GB Haddock	2014	46,268	19,229	192	769	0	17,171		0	17,116	56	179	18,312
	2015	56,293	43,606	436	1,744	0	38,940		0	38,814	126	406	41,526
	2016												
GOM Haddock	2014	440	341	5	7	0		220	87	218	2	3	323
	2015	561	435	6	9	0		280	111	278	2	4	412
	2016												
GB Yellowtail Flounder	2014												
	2015												
	2016												

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non_Sector Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	2014	1,042	700	7	28	66	564		0	469	95	0	665
	2015	1,056	700	7	28	64	566		0	471	95	0	665
	2016												
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2014	936	548	33	11	0	479		0	466	13	0	523
	2015	1,194	548	33	11	0	479		0	466	13	0	523
	2016												
American Plaice	2014	1,981	1,515	30	30	0	1,382		0	1,382	24	0	1,442
	2015	2,021	1,544	31	31	0	1,408		0	1,408	25	0	1,470
	2016												
Witch Flounder	2014	1,512	783	23	117	0	610		0	599	11	0	751
	2015	1,846	783	23	117	0	610		0	599	11	0	751
	2016												
GB Winter Flounder	2014	4,626	3,598	0	108	0	3,385		0	3,364	21	0	3,493
	2015												
	2016												
GOM Winter Flounder	2014	1,458	1,078	272	54	0	714.7		0	688.3	26.4	0	1,040
	2015												
	2016												
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	2014	3,372	1,676	235	168	0	1,210		0	1,074	136	0	1,612
	2015	4,439	1,676	235	168	0	1,210		0	1,074	136	0	1,612
	2016												
Redfish	2014	16,130	11,465	115	229	0	10,565		0	10,523	42	0	10,909
	2015	16,845	11,974	120	239	0	11,034		0	10,990	44	0	11,393
	2016												

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non-Sector Ground fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
White Hake	2014												
	2015												
	2016												
Pollock	2014	20,554	16,000	960	1,120	0	13,224		0	13,131	93	0	15,304
	2015												
	2016												
N. Window-pane Flounder	2014	202	151	2	44	0	98		0	0	98	0	144
	2015	202	151	2	44	0	98		0	0	98	0	144
	2016												
S. Window-pane Flounder	2014	730	548	55	186	183	102		0	0	102	0	527
	2015	730	548	55	186	183	102		0	0	102	0	527
	2016												
Ocean Pout	2014	313	235	2	21	0	197		0	0	197	0	220
	2015	313	235	2	21	0	197		0	0	197	0	220
	2016												
Atlantic Halibut	2014	180	109	44	5	0	57		0	0	57	0	106
	2015	198	119	48	6	0	62		0	0	62	0	116
	2016												
Atlantic Wolffish	2014	94	70	1	3	0	62		0	0	62	0	65
	2015	94	70	1	3	0	62		0	0	62	0	65
	2016												

#### 4.1.3.2 Option 2: Revised Annual Catch Limit Specifications

If Option 2 is selected, the annual specifications for FY2014 through FY2015, and FY 2014 through FY 2016 for white hake would be as specified in Table 4. For all stocks, except white hake, (GOM haddock?), and the transboundary Georges Bank stocks, the specifications included in Table 4 are the values previously adopted in FW 50 and would be the same as those included in the No Action Alternative. Table 5 provides the preliminary common pool incidental catch TACs for Special Management Programs, based on the ACLs provided in Table 4, and Table 6 provides the Closed Area I Hook Gear Haddock SAP.

##### U.S./Canada TACs

This alternative would specify TACs for the U.S./Canada Management Area for FY 2014 as indicated in Table 2 below. If NMFS determines that FY 2013 catch of GB cod, haddock, or yellowtail flounder from the U.S./Canada Management Area exceeded the respective 2013 TAC, the U.S./Canada Resource Sharing Understanding and the regulations require that the 2014 TAC is reduced by the amount of the overage. Any overage reduction would be applied to the components of the fishery that caused the overage of the U.S. TAC in 2013. In order to minimize any disruption to the fishing industry, NMFS would attempt to make any necessary TAC adjustment in the first quarter of the fishing year.

**Table 2 – Proposed FY 2014 U.S./Canada TACs (mt) and Country Shares**

TAC	Eastern GB Cod	Eastern GB Haddock	GB Yellowtail Flounder
Total Shared TAC	700 mt	27,000 mt	400 mt (Total ABC)
U.S. TAC	546 mt	10,530 mt	328 mt (US ABC)
Canada TAC	154 mt	16,470 mt	72 mt

A comparison of the proposed FY 2014 U.S. TACs and the FY 2013 U.S. TACs is shown in Table 3. Changes to the U.S. TACs reflect changes to the percentage shares, stock status, and the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC) recommendations.

**Table 3 – Comparison of the Proposed FY 2014 U.S. TACs and the FY 2013 U.S. TACs (mt)**

Stock	U.S. TAC		Percent Change
	FY 2014	FY 2013	
Eastern GB cod	154 mt	96 mt	+ 60%
Eastern GB haddock	10,530 mt	3,952 mt	+166%
GB yellowtail	328 mt	215 mt	+53%

*Rationale:* This measure would adopt new specifications for groundfish stocks that are consistent with the most recent assessment information. For all stocks, only one alternative to No Action is shown. This is because these catches represent the best scientific information, as determined by the Council's Science and Statistical Committee, and the M-S Act requires that catches not be set higher than these levels.

The U.S. and Canada coordinate management of three stocks that overlap the boundary between the two countries on Georges Bank. Agreement on the amount to be caught is reached each year by the TMGC. This measure considers the recommendations of the TMGC that are consistent with the most recent assessments of those stocks.

**Table 4 – Option 2 Northeast Multispecies OFLs, ABCs, ACLs and other ACL sub-components for FY 2014 – FY 2015 (metric tons, live weight). Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Sector shares based on 2013 PSCs. Only stocks that are underlined are proposed to be adjusted. Other stocks are provided for informational purposes. Grayed out values will be adjusted as a result of future recommendations of the TMGC.**

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components (4)	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non-Sector Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
<u>GB Cod</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>3,570</u>	<u>1,960</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,769</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>1,738</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,867</u>
	2015	4,191	2,506	25	100	0	2,262		0	2,223	39	0	2,387
	2016												
GOM Cod	2014	1,917	1,550	103	51	0		830	486	812	18	0	1,470
	2015	2,639	1,550	103	51	0		830	486	812	18	0	1,470
	2016												
<u>GB Haddock</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>46,268</u>	<u>19,229</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>769</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>17,171</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>17,116</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>179</u>	<u>18,312</u>
	2015	56,293	43,606	436	1,744	0	38,940		0	38,814	126	406	41,526
	2016												
GOM Haddock	2014	440	341	5	7	0		220	87	218	2	3	323
	2015	561	435	6	9	0		280	111	278	2	4	412
	2016												
<u>GB Yellowtail Flounder</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>unknown</u>	<u>328</u>		<u>6.6</u>	<u>50.9</u>	<u>254.5</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>251.5</u>	<u>3.1</u>	<u>6.1</u>	<u>318.1</u>
	2015												
	2016												

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non-Sector Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	2014	1,042	700	7	28	66	564		0	469	95	0	665
	2015	1,056	700	7	28	64	566		0	471	95	0	665
	2016												
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2014	936	548	33	11	0	479		0	466	13	0	523
	2015	1,194	548	33	11	0	479		0	466	13	0	523
	2016												
American Plaice	2014	1,981	1,515	30	30	0	1,382		0	1,357	24	0	1,442
	2015	2,021	1,544	31	31	0	1,408		0	1,383	25	0	1,470
	2016												
Witch Flounder	2014	1,512	783	23	117	0	610		0	599	11	0	751
	2015	1,846	783	23	117	0	610		0	599	11	0	751
	2016												
GB Winter Flounder	2014	4,626	3,598	0	108	0	3,385		0	3,364	21	0	3,493
	2015												
	2016												
GOM Winter Flounder	2014	1,458	1,078	272	54	0	714.7		0	688.3	26.4	0	1,040
	2015												
	2016												
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	2014	3,372	1,676	235	168	0	1,210		0	1,074	136	0	1,612
	2015	4,439	1,676	235	168	0	1,210		0	1,074	136	0	1,612
	2016												
Redfish	2014	16,130	11,465	115	229	0	10,565		0	10,523	42	0	10,909
	2015	16,845	11,974	120	239	0	11,034		0	10,990	44	0	11,393
	2016												

Stock	Year	OFL	U.S. ABC	State Waters Sub-component	Other Sub-Components	Scallops	Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Comm Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL	Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL	Preliminary Non-Sector Ground fish Sub-ACL	Small Mesh/MWT Sub-ACL	Total ACL
<u>White Hake</u>	2014	<u>6,082</u>	<u>4,642</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,278</u>	-	<u>0</u>	<u>4,247</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,417</u>
	2015	<u>6,237</u>	<u>4,713</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,343</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>4,312</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,484</u>
	2016	<u>6,314</u>	<u>4,645</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,280</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>4,250</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,420</u>
Pollock	2014	20,554	16,000	960	1,120	0	13,224		0	13,131	93	0	15,304
	2015												
	2016												
N. Window-pane Flounder	2014	202	151	2	44	0	98		0	0	98	0	144
	2015	202	151	2	44	0	98		0	0	98	0	144
	2016												
S. Window-pane Flounder	2014	730	548	55	186	183	102		0	0	102	0	527
	2015	730	548	55	186	183	102		0	0	102	0	527
	2016												
Ocean Pout	2014	313	235	2	21	0	197		0	0	197	0	220
	2015	313	235	2	21	0	197		0	0	197	0	220
	2016												
Atlantic Halibut	2014	180	109	44	5	0	57		0	0	57	0	106
	2015	198	119	48	6	0	62		0	0	62	0	116
	2016												
Atlantic Wolffish	2014	94	70	1	3	0	62		0	0	62	0	65
	2015	94	70	1	3	0	62		0	0	62	0	65
	2016												



Table 5 – Option 2 Preliminary Common Pool Incidental Catch TACs for Special Management Programs (metric tons, live weight). These values may change as a result of changes in sector membership. White hake is no longer a stock of concern and has been removed.

Stock	Regular B DAS Program		Closed Area I Hook Gear Haddock SAP		Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
GB cod	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
GOM cod	0.2	0.2				
GB yellowtail flounder	0.03	-			0.03	-
CC/GOM yellowtail flounder	0.1	0.1				
American Plaice	1.2	1.2				
Witch Flounder	0.5	0.5				
SNE/MA winter flounder	1.4	1.4				

Table 6 – FY 2014-2015 CAI Hook Gear Haddock SAP TACs

Year	Exploitable Biomass (thousand mt)	WGB Exploitable Biomass	B(year)/B2004	TAC (mt, live weight)
2014	136,753	47,864	1.752	1,980
2015	169,027	59,159	2.166	2,448

## 4.2 Commercial and Recreational Fishery Measures

### 4.2.1 Small-Mesh Fishery Accountability Measures

#### 4.2.1.1 Option 1: No Action

This option would not establish additional accountability measures (AMs) for the small-mesh fishery for Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder under the Multispecies FMP. FW 48 adopted a sub-ACL of GB yellowtail flounder beginning in FY 2013. If the U.S. TAC (equal to the U.S. ABC) for GB yellowtail flounder is exceeded, the U.S./Canada Resource Sharing Understanding requires that the U.S. TAC for the following fishing year be reduced by the amount of the overage. The current regulations specify that this overage deduction would be applied to the component of the fishery that caused the overage. Under this option, if the small-mesh fisheries exceeded their allocation of GB yellowtail flounder, which caused an overage of the U.S. TAC, the small-mesh fishery sub-ACL would be reduced by the amount of the overage the following fishing year. However, because the small-mesh fisheries are prohibited from landing GB yellowtail flounder (discards only), a pound-for-pound reduction of the small-mesh fishery sub-ACL, by itself, may not appropriately correct an overage, or prevent future overages from occurring. Under this option, no corresponding measures would be triggered along with the pound-for-pound payback to constrain GB yellowtail flounder catches by the small-mesh fisheries. If the small-mesh fishery allocation was reduced to zero as a result of an overage payback, or if a quota was not specified for GB yellowtail flounder, there are no restrictions in place under this option that would prevent the small-mesh fisheries from fishing in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area (statistical areas 522, 525, 561, and 562). Under this option, there would also be no gear modification requirements for the small-mesh fishery in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area.

#### 4.2.1.2 Option 2: Accountability Measure for the Small-Mesh Fishery Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Sub-ACL

Two options (one with two sub-options) are being considered for the small-mesh fishery AM.

Sub-Option A: If the sub-ACL is zero for the small-mesh fishery, or a sub-ACL is not specified, then vessels fishing with bottom otter trawl gear with a codend mesh size of less than 5 inches would be prohibited from fishing in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area (Statistical Areas 522, 525, 561 and 562). Because of the timing of availability of data for this fishery, the AM would be implemented in the fishing year following the notification of the overage.

Sub-Option B1: The AM would be implemented if both the total ACL and the small-mesh fishery sub-ACL for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder are exceeded. The AM would require that vessels fishing with bottom otter trawl gear with a codend mesh size of less than 5 inches to use approved selective trawl gear that reduces the catch of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. Approved gears include the raised footrope trawl, separator trawl, rope trawl, or any other gear authorized by the Council in a management action, or approved for use consistent with the process defined in 50 CFR 648.85 (b)(6). If the AM is implemented, selective trawl gear would be required in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area (Statistical Areas 522, 525, 561 and 562), The AM would not be implemented in the middle of a fishing year. Should reliable information be available that the total ACL and small-mesh fishery sub-ACL has been exceeded during a fishing year, this AM would be implemented at the start of the next fishing year (Fishing Year 2). However, if the information on an overage for Fishing Year 1 is not available until after the start of Fishing Year 2, then the AM would be implemented at the start of Fishing Year 3. This would be a reactive AM.

Sub-Option B2: The AM would be implemented if the small-mesh fishery sub-ACL of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder is exceeded. The AM would require that vessels fishing with bottom otter trawl gear with a codened mesh size of less than 5 inches to use approved selective trawl gear that reduces the catch of Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. Approved gears include the raised footrope trawl, separator trawl, rope trawl, or any other gear authorized by the Council in a management action, or approved by the Regional Administrator through the gear-approval process defined in 50 CFR 648.85 (b)(6). If the AM is implemented, selective trawl gear would be required in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area (Statistical Areas 522, 525, 561 and 562). The AM would not be implemented in the middle of a fishing year. Should reliable information be available that the total ACL and small-mesh fishery sub-ACL has been exceeded during a fishing year, this AM would be implemented at the start of the next fishing year (Fishing Year 2). However, if the information on an overage for Fishing Year 1 is not available until after the start of Fishing Year 2, then the AM would be implemented at the start of Fishing Year 3. This would be a reactive AM.

#### 4.2.2 Small-Mesh Fishery Measures

##### 4.2.2.1 Option 1: No Action

This option would not change existing pre-trip call-in requirements for small-mesh fisheries. Currently, the long-fin squid fishery (on trips landing more than 2,500 lbs) is required to use the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS). Beginning in January 2014, the mackerel fishery (through Amendment 14 to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan) would also be required to make a 48-hr pre-trip notification for all trips landing more than 20,000 lbs of mackerel). However, under this option, no other small-mesh fisheries (e.g., whiting) have any pre-trip notification requirements. Trips that target a mix of stocks (e.g., a mixed trip for whiting and greater than 2,500 lbs of long-fin squid) would be subject to a pre-trip notification requirement.

##### 4.2.2.2 Option 2: Call-in Requirement for Small-Mesh Fisheries

This option would require small-mesh fisheries in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area (522, 525, 561, or 562) to request an observer prior to leaving the dock for a trip.

*Rationale*: Small-mesh bottom trawl vessels fishing in the Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stock area would be subject to similar requirements of other fisheries being prosecuted in the same area. Requesting an observer prior to the start of a trip could be accomplished through PTNS. The vessel could not leave the dock until the vessel notified of intent to fish in the GB yellowtail flounder stock area, and received a response as to whether or not an observer would potentially be assigned to the trip.

#### 4.2.3 Management Measures for US/CA TACs

This section considers changing fishery management measures as necessary to adjust catches of US/CA stocks. More than one option can be selected.

#### 4.2.3.1 Option 1: No Action

If this option is adopted, the U.S./Canada TACs would be specified at the beginning of the fishing year, and there would be no in-season adjustments to the U.S./Canada TACs. This option would not consider the quota trading mechanism established by the TMGC and U.S./Canada Steering Committee, and would not allow additional quota to be distributed to the U.S. at the end of the Canadian fishing year (December). Under this option, there would also be no adjustment to the amount of the U.S. TAC for eastern GB haddock that is allocated to the Eastern U.S./Canada Management Area.. Eastern GB haddock is a sub-unit of the total GB haddock stock. The amount of the shared U.S./Canada TAC for eastern GB haddock is deducted from the total ABC for GB haddock. Under the current regulations, the U.S. share of eastern GB haddock can only be caught in the eastern U.S./Canada Management Area, and the remaining portion of the total ABC is only available outside of the eastern U.S./Canada Management Area.

#### 4.2.3.2 Option 2: Revised in-season adjustment for US/CA TACs

If this option is adopted, the Regional Administrator would be allowed to adjust the US/CA quotas during the FY, i.e. after allocations were made. Additional quota would be allocated consistent with the current ABC distribution, which would include both groundfish and non-groundfish vessels (i.e., scallops and small-mesh fisheries). The RA would not have the authority to change the allocations to the sub-ACLs during the FY.

Prior to changing measures, the NMFS would consult with the Council and would advise the Council what measures were under consideration.

*Rationale:* The difference in fishing years between the two countries would require adjustments to occur in adjacent years. This measure would allow an adjustment to occur as soon as possible to the end of the Canadian fishing year, potentially providing additional quota for limiting US/CA stocks.

#### 4.2.3.3 Option 3: Revised in-season adjustment for US/CA TACs

If this option is adopted, the Regional Administrator would be allowed to adjust the US/CA quotas during the FY, i.e. after allocations were made. Additional quota would be distributed consistent with the sector sub-ACL distribution.

Prior to changing measures, the NMFS would consult with the Council and would advise the Council what measures were under consideration.

*Rationale:* The difference in fishing years between the two countries would require adjustments to occur in adjacent years. This measure would allow an adjustment to occur as soon as possible to the end of the Canadian fishing year, potentially providing additional quota for limiting US/CA stocks. This distribution scheme would consider traded quota as additional groundfish quota that contributes to solely to sector ACE.

#### 4.2.3.4 Option 4: Revised in-season adjustment for US/CA TACs

If this option is adopted, the Regional Administrator would be allowed to make transboundary quota trades of groundfish quota only with components of the fishery trading away their quota. Any groundfish quota resulting from a trade with Canada would go only to the groundfish fishery.

*Rationale:* This option would ensure that individuals trading quota would directly receive quota in return. Both common pool and sector vessels could be affected by this trade.

#### 4.2.3.5 Option 5: Distribution of US TACs for Eastern/Western Georges Bank Haddock

If this option is adopted, the Regional Administrator, in consultation with the Council, would be allowed to adjust the portion of the U.S. TAC for Eastern GB haddock that is available in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area. To the extent possible, changes to the amount of GB haddock available in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area would be made prior to the start of the fishing year, and the Council would provide any recommendation concurrent with its recommendations for U.S./Canada TACs for the upcoming fishing year. Any changes would be adopted consistent with the Administrative Procedures Act. This option does not change how Eastern GB haddock stocks is allocated to sectors, or the requirement that vessels can only harvest Eastern GB haddock allocation from the Eastern U.S./Canada Area, while the remaining allocation may only be harvested outside of the Eastern U.S./Canada Area.

*Rationale:* GB haddock is a subset of the overall GB haddock stock. The total ABC for GB haddock includes the shared U.S./Canada TAC for the Eastern U.S./Canada Area. Under the current approach, only the amount of the GB haddock ABC remaining after deducting the shared TAC for Eastern GB haddock is available to be caught outside of the Eastern U.S./Canada Area. This reduces operational flexibility for commercial groundfish vessels, and could potentially limit fishing outside of the Eastern U.S./Canada Area even if the total GB haddock ACL has not been fully caught. This measure would help increase the utilization of the GB haddock ACL and improve flexibility for commercial groundfish vessels .

### 4.2.4 Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Management Measures

#### 4.2.4.1 Option 1: No Action

If this option would be adopted, there would be no changes to the management measures for GB yellowtail flounder for estimating discards. When estimating discards of GB yellowtail flounder for the purposes of groundfish quota monitoring, if this option is adopted there would be one area used as the basis for discard monitoring. This area would match the existing stock boundaries for the stock. Further stratification would only be for sector, gear and mesh.

*Rationale:* This No Action option would not make any changes to existing measures that address GB yellowtail flounder. The area stratification scheme used for monitoring discards would be consistent with that used in the assessment of this stock.

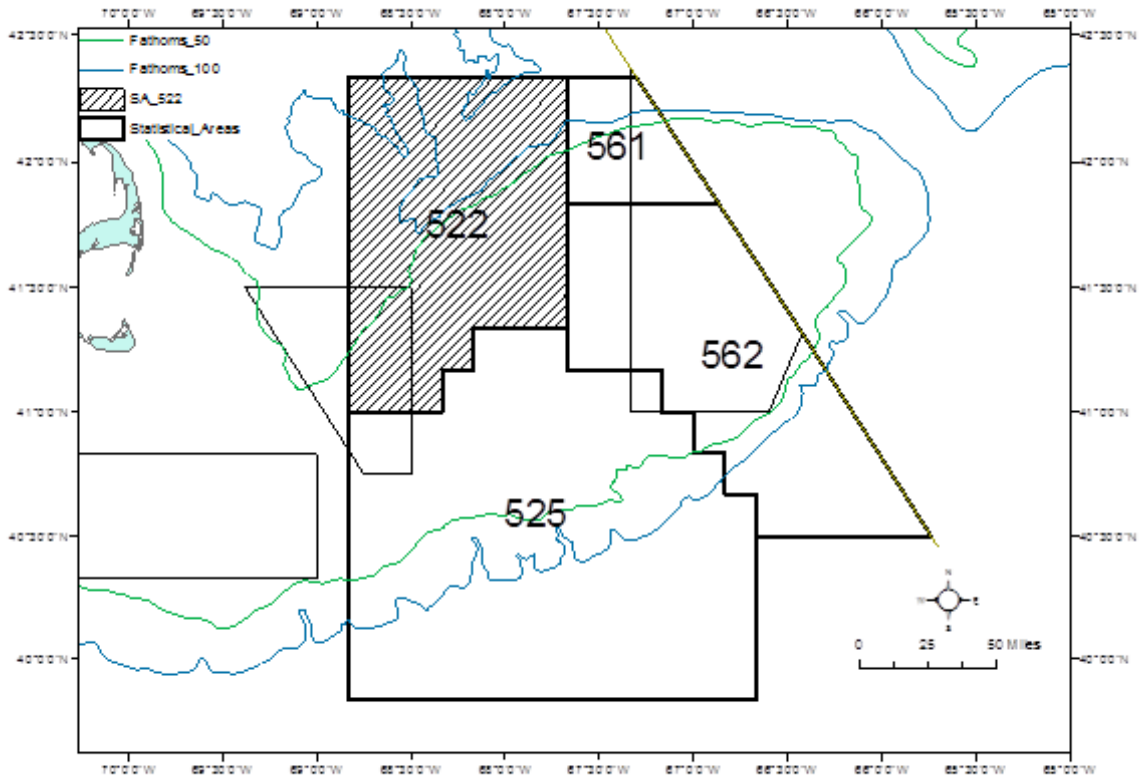
#### 4.2.4.2 Option 2: Revised Discard Strata for GB Yellowtail Flounder

This option would modify the stratification used for estimating discards of GB yellowtail flounder for in-season quota monitoring of sector catches. It would not change the stratification used in assessments, nor would it change the stratification used to monitor common pool fishing trips. If adopted, yellowtail flounder discards on groundfish trips would be calculated for two different areas: statistical area 522 and all other GB yellowtail flounder statistical areas. The areas are shown in Figure 1.

This approach would be used for all groundfish gear. It would not change the stratification method for other groundfish stocks. Yellowtail flounder is primarily caught by trawl gear. If the Regional Administrator determines that this additional stratification is not needed for other, non-trawl gears, then the stratification method can be modified to exclude those gears using procedures consistent with the APA.

*Rationale:* Yellowtail flounder are primarily caught in the shallower waters of GB. SA 522 includes a large area of deeper water where groundfish vessels target haddock and other species. Catch rates of yellowtail flounder are lower in this area than in the other statistical areas. By treating this as a different discard stratum for yellowtail flounder, the discard rate of GB yellowtail flounder that is applied to unobserved trips will more accurately reflect what occurs in this area, and will not be influenced by fishing activity in the other areas. This should allow more fishing in this area without exceeding allocations of GB yellowtail flounder. This is primarily an issue for trawl vessels, and the Regional Administrator can choose not to apply this approach to other gears if deemed unnecessary. This stratification scheme would not be adopted for common pool fishing trips because the small number of these trips would lead to inadequate trips to estimate an in-season discard rate.

Figure 1 – Proposed Change in Discard Strata for GB Yellowtail Flounder



#### 4.2.5 Prohibition on Possession of Yellowtail Flounder by the Limited Access Scallop Fishery

##### 4.2.5.1 Option A: No Action

For limited access scallop fishery vessels, there would be no trip limit for yellowtail flounder stocks (GB and SNE/MA) and limited access scallop vessels will be required to land all legal-sized yellowtail flounder that is caught, as established in FW44 to the Groundfish FMP. Note that the retention does not apply to General Category/IFQ vessels.

*Rationale:* Due to concerns about discarding yellowtail flounder, this option would maintain accountability for catches of this stock.

##### 4.2.5.2 Option B: Prohibition on possession of yellowtail flounder

For limited access scallop fishery vessels, there would be zero possession of yellowtail flounder stocks (GB and SNE/MA). Under this option, yellowtail flounder could not be landed or sold by the limited access scallop fishery. This option would not change existing regulations for the General Category/IFQ vessels.

*Rationale:* Because of expected low quotas for GB yellowtail flounder, creating a prohibition on the possession of yellowtail flounder by the limited access scallop fishery would remove the incentive to target flounders since they could not be retained and sold.



## 5.0 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

### 5.1 XXX

#### 5.1.1 Commercial Fishery Restrictions

##### 5.1.1.1 Option 1: No Action

If this action is adopted, there will be no revision to the regulations regarding landings of the allocated regulated groundfish currently managed. The following minimum fish size regulations would apply unless changed in this or a future action.

**Table 7 - No Action Minimum Fish Sizes (TL) for Commercial Vessels**

Species	Size (inches)
Cod	19 in. (48.3 cm)
Haddock	16 in. (40.6 cm)
Pollock	19 in. (48.3 cm)
Witch Flounder (gray sole)	13 in. (33 cm)
Yellowtail Flounder	12 in. (30.5 cm)
American Plaice (dab)	12 in. (30.5 cm)
Atlantic Halibut	41 in. (104.1 cm)
Winter Flounder (blackback)	12 in. (30.5 cm)
Redfish	7 in. (17.8 cm)

*Rationale:* Since implementation in 1986, the Northeast Multispecies FMP has used minimum size limits in conjunction with gear requirements to reduce catches of sub-adult fish. When adopted the purpose of this measure was to provide opportunities for fish to spawn before harvest, as well as to reduce the incentive to use illegal mesh to increase catches.

##### 5.1.1.2 Option 2: Full Retention

If this action is adopted all allocated, currently regulated groundfish of all sizes, including cod, haddock, white hake, pollock, Acadian redfish, yellowtail flounder, Georges Bank and Gulf of Maine winter flounder, witch flounder, and American plaice, must be retained by sector vessels, i.e. no discarding of non-prohibited fish. Discarding of non-allocated groundfish species, including those that require no-retention as part of a rebuilding program would continue. Allocated regulated groundfish that are physically damaged, e.g. by predation, must be retained. This action would not alter regulated mesh areas or restrictions on gear and methods of fishing. This measure would not change possession requirements for other species that are regulated by other Fishery Management Plans.

This option would facilitate a reduction in the dependence on the assumed discard rate applied to sector vessels before a calculated discard rate is available. To ensure this option would convert discards to landings, catch accountability should be maximized. This could include one hundred percent dockside monitoring and one hundred percent at-sea monitoring in the form of at-sea monitors and/or electronic monitoring, if electronic monitoring is deemed sufficient.

It should be noted that this change would be made to reduce regulatory discards, not to facilitate targeting of smaller fish. As a result, while sectors would not be prohibited from requesting exemptions from minimum mesh requirements, the expectation is that before such a request would be approved a sector would have to explain why such an exemption would not lead to increased targeting of juvenile groundfish.

Sub-Option A: If this sub-option is adopted it would establish full retention as outlined above on a subset of fishing vessels based on gear type. This program would require one hundred percent dockside monitoring and one hundred percent at-sea monitoring in the form of electronic monitoring and/or at-sea monitors.

*Rationale*: Electronic monitoring is considered an economical tool to monitor fishing activities but requires testing before broad scale application across gear types. This program would help to evaluate electronic monitoring as a primary tool for observing on a smaller portion of the fleet.