



New England Fishery Management Council

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DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY (version 1)

Groundfish Plan Development Team

By webinar

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

The Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) met to discuss recreational measures for fishing year 2019, Council priorities for 2019, and Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring

Meeting Attendance: Jamie M. Cournane PhD (Chair), Chad Demarest, Dan Caless, Dan Linden PhD, Greg DeCelles PhD, Julia Beaty, Katherine McArdle, Kevin Sullivan, Liz Sullivan, Mark Grant, Matt Cieri PhD, Matt Cutler PhD, Melissa Errend, Paul Nitschke, Robin Frede, and Tim Cardiasmenos, Terry Stockwell (Groundfish Committee Chair); Libby Etrie, Melanie Griffin, and Rick Bellavance (Groundfish Committee members); Frank Blount (Recreational Advisory Panel Chair); Scott Steinback and Emily Keiley; and the audience included Maggie Raymond, William Tower III, Tom Orrell, Georges Lapointe, Jessica Joyce, Matt Ayer, Gib Brogan and one additional person.

The meeting began at 12:30pm.

Key Outcomes:

- The PDT discussed possible recreational measures for 2019 for Gulf of Maine cod, Gulf of Maine haddock, and Georges Bank cod.
- The PDT reviewed the Council's 2019 priorities for groundfish.
- The PDT discussed planning for review by the Scientific and Statistical Committee of PDT analyses on Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring.

Recreational Measures for 2019

Mr. Steinback provided an overview of fishing year 2017 and preliminary fishing year 2018 recreational fishery catch and effort data for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, GOM haddock, and Georges Bank (GB) cod. He also described possible options for management measures for GOM cod and haddock in 2019 – adjusting seasons, bag limits, and minimum fish sizes. In general, the model predicts more liberal measures are possible in fishing year 2019, including more access for haddock and the possibility of one cod under certain conditions (i.e., seasons, minimum fish size). Data on GB cod suggests a decrease in the minimum fish size is possible to reach the catch target in fishing year 2019.

The PDT focused on understanding the options for the stocks, then expanded to a discussion of uncertainties. Mr. Steinback explained that this is the 7th year using the bioeconomic model to help develop management measures for GOM cod and GOM haddock. Over the past six years, the model over-estimated mortality twice and under-estimated mortality four times for cod and haddock. The model results are less certain when several years removed from the terminal year of the stock assessment, as is the case this year. The bioeconomic model relies on recruitment projections from the assessment to predict catches for some ages, and projected recruitment may be optimistic.

The PDT also offered suggestions including 1) adding figures on GOM cod and GOM haddock catch size frequencies and 2) characterizing the uncertainty around the catch projections (e.g., using three-year averages of effort data to initiate the model or modifying the recruitment assumptions in the model).

The PDT discussed the possible minimum fish size options for haddock (as small as 15 in.) including the possibility to convert discards to landings. The PDT noted that reducing the minimum landing size could change fisheries selectivity, which would need to be accounted for in an assessment, especially in the evaluation of reference points. The PDT also noted that the commercial minimum fish sizes are 16 in. for haddock and 19 in. for cod.

Council Priorities for 2019

Dr. Cournane provided an overview of Council priorities for 2019¹.

Annual priorities include:

- Set ABCs/ACLs for all groundfish stocks for FY2020-2022 and US/CA stocks for FY2020
- Staff: TRAC/TMGC
- Groundfish Operational Assessments
- Address commercial/recreational allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data
- Staff: Sector five-year review
- Specify allocation review triggers
- Modify Council policy on gear standards to facilitate use of gear in AMs

Multi-year priorities include:

- Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring (including Fishery Data for Stock Assessment Working Group and possible workshops)
- Consider results of public listening sessions for possible initiation of an amendment to develop a limited access program for the party/charter fishery
- Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop

¹ Available on the Council webpage, here: <https://www.nefmc.org/council-meetings> under “Quick Documents” then select “2019 Council Priorities”.

Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring

[To be provided.]

Other Business

No other business.

The Groundfish PDT meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Table 1- Follow-up items from February 13, 2019 Groundfish PDT meeting.

Task	Name(s)	Due Date
Draft meeting summary	Jamie/Robin	2/20/2019
Review draft meeting summary	PDT	2/25/2019