

New England Fishery Management Council

Groundfish Committee

Wakefield, MA and by Webinar

November 18, 2025

Meeting Motions

Attendance

Groundfish Committee

Present: John Pappalardo (Chair), Terry Alexander (Vice Chair), Pete Christopher (GARFO), Jim Gilmore (MAFMC), Melanie Griffin, Jackie Odell, Paul Risi (MAFMC), Geoff Smith, Megan Ware, Peter Whelan, Andy Dangelo

Absent: Mike Pierdinock

The meeting started at approximately 9:02 am.

Framework 72 / Specification and Management Measures

Motion 1 (Odell/Griffin):

Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative in *Section 4.1* Action 1 – Status Determination Criteria: *Section 4.1.2* Alternative 2 – Updated Status Determination Criteria for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder.

Motion 1 *passed by consensus and without objection.*

Motion 2 (Griffin/Whelan):

Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative in *Section 4.3* Action 3 – Recreational Fishery Management Measures: *Section 4.3.2* Alternative 2 – Establish a regulatory process for Regional Administrator to adjust recreational measures for cod and haddock.

Motion 2 *passed by consensus and without objection.*

Motion 3 (Odell/Alexander):

Move to accept the PDT's recommendations for sub-components (as referenced in Table 8 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document).

Motion 3 passed by consensus and without objection.

Motion 4 (Griffin/Ware):

Move to recommend setting the SNE/MA yellowtail flounder scallop fishery sub-ACL at the FY2025 sub-ACL (2.7 mt). This would be set for FY2026-2030 with plans for the PDT to re-evaluate in 2026 with updated data.

Motion 4 passed by consensus and without objection.

Motion 5 (Odell/Alexander):

Recommend to the Council to select as preferred the FY2026 U.S./Canada total allowable catches (TACs) for Eastern GB cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder (referenced in Table 10 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document).

Motion 5 passed by consensus and without objection.

Motion 6 (Ware/Alexander):

Move to set the 2026-2030 ABC for GOM/Cape Cod yellowtail Flounder at 1736mt within Framework 72.

Rational: There are significant questions about the biological plausibility of the assessment results and projections. The 2025 stock assessment finds Cape Cod/GOM Yellowtail to be overfished, noting that the stock remains below the new SSBMSY proxy even though fishing pressure has been at historically low levels and that recruitment has been generally weak to moderate over the past decade. Despite these results, scaling changes in the model suggest catch could increase 10-fold. Further, the projections suggest biomass will nearly double between 2024 and 2025. Maintaining the ABC at the 2026 value tries to account for the seemingly implausible results while also allowing for significant increase in catches, which have been under 400mt over the last decade.

Roll Call:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Jackie Odell		x	
Melanie Griffin	x		
Megan Ware	x		
Geoff Smith	x		
Peter Whelan	x		
Pete Christopher			x
Terry Alexander	x		
Andy Dangelo	x		
Paul Risi			x
Jim Gilmore			x

Motion 6 *carried* (6/1/3).

Motion 7 (Griffin/Odell):

Move to recommend the Council select as preferred alternative FY2026 specifications for GB cod, GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder, and FY2026-FY2030 specifications for SNE/MA yellowtail flounder, GB winter flounder, GOM winter flounder, SNE/MA winter flounder, ocean pout, and Atlantic wolffish (all stocks except white hake and redfish), as referenced in Table 12 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document. FY2026-2030 specifications for CC/GOM yellowtail flounder, as modified today.

Motion 7 *passed by consensus and without objection*.

Motion 8 (Odell/Alexander):

For white hake, the GF Committee tasks the PDT to produce the following information in time for the Council meeting:

1. Compile the numerical catches associated with a range of confidence intervals at the Frebuild of 70% F(MSY). The committee seeks to understand the range of catches around the 70% F(MSY) for fishing years 2026-2030.
2. Provide OFL/ABC projections associated with F(MSY)75% for FY2026-2030, and provide updated rebuilding projections comparing 70% F(MSY) and 75% F(MSY) under both the long-term (1963-2022) and more-recent recruitment timeframes (1995-2022).

Motion 9 (Smith/Griffin):

Motion to amend:

For white hake, the GF Committee tasks the PDT to produce the following information in time for the Council meeting:

1. Provide OFL/ABC projections associated with F(MSY)75% for FY2026-2030, and provide updated rebuilding projections comparing 70% F(MSY) and 75% F(MSY) under both the long-term (1963-2022) and more-recent recruitment timeframes (1995-2022).
2. Include draft specifications based on projections at 75% F(MSY) for FY2026-2030

Roll call:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Jackie Odell		x	
Melanie Griffin	x		
Megan Ware	x		
Geoff Smith	x		
Peter Whelan	x		
Pete Christopher	x		
Terry Alexander		x	
Andy Dangelo		x	
Paul Risi		x	
Jim Gilmore	x		

Motion 9 *carried* (6/4/0).

Motion 10:

Main motion as amended:

For white hake, the GF Committee tasks the PDT to produce the following information in time for the Council meeting:

1. Provide OFL/ABC projections associated with F(MSY)75% for FY2026-2030, and provide updated rebuilding projections comparing 70% F(MSY) and 75% F(MSY) under both the long-term (1963-2022) and more-recent recruitment timeframes (1995-2022).
2. Include draft specifications based on projections at 75% F(MSY) for FY2026-2030

Motion 10 *passed by consensus and without objection*.

Motion 11 (Ware/Griffin):

Move to remove the sector mgmt. uncertainty buffer for white hake in FW72 for FY2026-2030 if the ASM target coverage rate is at least 90% or higher.

Motion 11 *passed by consensus and without objection.*

Motion 12 (Griffin/Smith):

Move to recommend to the Council as preferred alternative FY2026-FY2030 specifications for redfish (referenced in Table 12 in the draft Framework 72 discussion document.)

Motion 12 *carried* on a show of hands (8/2/0).

The meeting ended at approximately 3:20 pm.