

CORRESPONDENCE

PRESS RELEASE

GULF OF MAINE AND GEORGES BANK

HADDOCK, POLLOCK AND REDFISH TRAWL FISHERY CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE

May 7, 2018

For more information contact:

Jim Odlin, Atlantic Trawlers Fishing, Inc. NICK Giacalone, Fisherman's Wharf

207-871-8050

978-790-6230

(Portland, ME) The New England haddock, pollock and redfish trawl fishery has been certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

Atlantic Trawlers Fishing in Portland, ME and Fishermen's Wharf in Gloucester, MA spearheaded the effort to achieve the blue MSC label.

The professional assessment of the fishery concluded that:

- The fishery management system is robust and contains requirements that lead to the fulfilment of MSC principles.
- The science supporting management is strong and has provided the foundation for rebuilding and maintaining abundant stocks of haddock and redfish, which were previously overfished.
- The catch accountability and traceability systems are extensive.

Jim Odlin of Atlantic Trawlers said, "The MSC label is the gold star standard of certification and will assure our customers that these fish stocks are healthy and well managed. Our vessels - the Nobska, Morue, Harmony, Teresa Marie III and Teresa Marie IV – also use modified fishing gear to minimize the catch of other stocks, like cod, so we can maximize the catch of haddock, pollock and redfish."

Atlantic Trawlers Fishing is a family owned harvesting business operating out of Portland, ME, Gloucester and New Bedford, MA since...1980...

Fisherman's Wharf located in Gloucester, MA has been owned and operated by the Giacalone family since 2008.

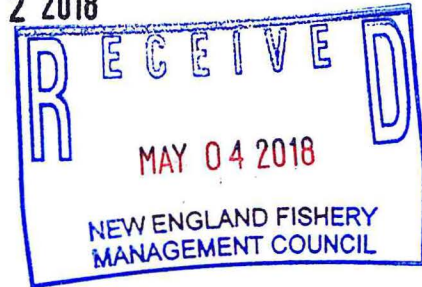
Marine Stewardship Council is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to use a fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognizing and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

jc 5/8/18



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

MAY 02 2018



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

Dear John:

On behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, I have approved Framework Adjustment 57 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). We have also finalized recreational management measures for the 2018 fishing year, allocated quota to 17 of 19 groundfish sectors (excluding NEFS 7 and 9), and approved a new exemption for sector vessels. The final rules implementing the approved measures were placed on file at the Office of the Federal Register on April 30, 2018, and became effective on May 1, 2018. A more detailed discussion of the approved measures, can be found in the final rules for these actions.

2018-2020 Catch Limits

We approved all of the catch limits that the Council recommended in Framework 57. In the rule implementing Framework 57, we also adjusted the Gulf of Maine cod, Georges Bank cod, and witch flounder catch limits for the groundfish fishery to account for total annual catch limit overages in 2016. Following the release of the initial fishing year 2016 groundfish year-end report, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided us with updated state catch information. As stated in my March 20, 2018, letter to the Council, we plan to collaborate with the states to develop a new process for incorporating state data into future catch accounting reports to improve year-end accounting.

New Sector Exemption

We have also approved a new sector exemption that allows vessels to fish up to 150 gillnets in the Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area if at least 50 nets are 10-inch or larger mesh and those nets are fished east of 70 degrees West longitude. The intent of the exemption is to increase opportunities for sector vessels to harvest monkfish, a healthy non-groundfish stock, while fishing on a groundfish trip.

This new exemption is a variation of an exemption we previously approved for day gillnet vessels fishing in the Gulf of Maine, which allowed the use of 150 gillnets. This exemption is more restrictive than the previously approved exemption and requires the use of larger mesh nets in a smaller geographic area. These restrictions are intended to reduce additional catch and discards of Gulf of Maine cod.



We will grant this exemption to any sectors that modify their operations plans to include this exemption. Any sector may submit a written request to amend its approved operations plan to the Regional Administrator.

Recreational Management Measures

Framework 57 provided me with the authority to adjust recreational management measures for Georges Bank cod for the 2018 and 2019 fishing years. The Council also identified a recreational catch target of 138 mt for 2018-2020 to use when setting measures.

We consulted with the Council, including its Recreational Advisory Panel and Groundfish Oversight Committee, in January to develop recreational management measures for 2018. For Georges Bank cod, we determined that changes to the management measures are necessary to achieve the 138-mt catch target. Incorporating the updated 2017 catch estimate results in a 3-year average catch of 196 mt, which is greater than the catch target. To reduce recreational catch of Georges Bank cod, we are increasing the minimum size from 22 inches to 23 inches. We are also implementing a 10-fish possession limit for per person for charter/party vessels. Private recreational anglers already have a possession limit of 10 fish, which will remain unchanged. These measures are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Fishing Measures for Georges Bank Cod

Year	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season
2018	10	23 inches	All Year

Bag limits are per person per day and size limits are minimum total length.

We are maintaining status quo measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock for fishing year 2018 (Table 2) consistent with the Council's recommendation. We are able to retain status quo measures because the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has implemented new management measures for anglers in state waters, which prohibit the retention of Gulf of Maine cod.

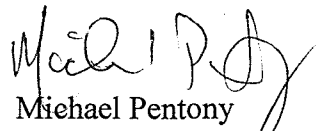
Table 2. Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Fishing Measures for GOM cod and haddock

Year	GOM Haddock			GOM Cod		
	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season
2018	12	17 inches	May 1 – September 16 November 1 – February 28 and April 15 – April 30	GOM Cod Possession Prohibited		

Bag limits are per person per day and size limits are minimum total length.

If you have questions about our approval of Framework 57, the new sector exemption, or recreational measures for 2018, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor for Sustainable Fisheries, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,


Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

cc: Tom Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council
Dr. Jon Hare, Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

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



May 2, 2018

Dear John,

Enclosed please find recent correspondence submitted to the Agency by Northeast Seafood Coalition and Northeast Sector Service Network. Specifically, we asked questions during the Northeast Fishery Sector 9 Interim Final Rule and having received no response we raised these questions again during the 2018 Sector Allocation Proposed Rule. We feel the sector system at large would benefit from knowing the answers to these questions, and are forwarding to the Council for your future consideration and discussion.

Sincerely,

Jackie Odell, Executive Director
Northeast Seafood Coalition

Elizabeth Etrie, Program Director
Northeast Sector Service Network

1 Blackburn Center Second Floor
Gloucester MA 01930

jc 5/8/18

Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

April 9, 2018

Re: NOAA-NMFS-2018-0039, 2018 Allocation of Northeast Multispecies Annual Catch Entitlements and Proposed Regulatory Exemption for Sectors

Dear Mike,

Please accept the following comments to the 2018 Allocation of Northeast Multispecies Annual Catch Entitlements and Regulatory Exemption for Sectors Proposed Rule.

We support the Agency's approval of the new sector exemption *Limit on the Number of Gillnets for Day Gillnet Vessels Fishing in the Gulf of Maine*. As the proposed rule clearly captures the day gillnet fishery has been drastically reduced in recent years. This exemption will create additional flexibility, and increase opportunities for the day gillnet vessels fishing in the Gulf of Maine for monkfish, while on a sector trip. We agree with the Agency that the geographic nature, tagging and mesh size requirements address Agency concerns with interaction with Gulf of Maine cod. Furthermore, while we acknowledge that there has been an increase in monkfish landings in FY 2017, it should be noted that the Northern monkfish allocation has not been fully utilized in recent years. We believe that in light of the limited number of vessels that may utilize this exemption there should be limited impact to the monkfish fishery, and we believe overall the Northern monkfish TAC will not be exceeded.

The Northeast Seafood Coalition and Northeast Sector Service Network are submitting comments jointly because questions we raised during the Interim Rule to suspend NEFS 9 Operations for FY 2017 are critical to ensure successful sector management in the northeast groundfish fishery. Since our questions have not been answered, we are re-submitting them during this rulemaking. Please see original letter attached.

Sincerely,



Jackie Odell, Executive Director
Northeast Seafood Coalition



Elizabeth Etrie, Program Director
Northeast Sector Service Network

Enclosures: December 20, 2017 Letter: Comments on the Interim Final Rule to Withdraw Approval of Northeast Fishery Sector IX

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

December 20, 2017

Re: Comments on the Interim Final Rule to Withdraw Approval of Northeast Fishery Sector IX

Dear John,

The Agency's withdrawal of the Northeast Fishery Sector IX (NEFS 9) operations plan establishes a precedent that may have far reaching implications going forward for all northeast multispecies sectors. With this in mind, we hope to receive answers to the following questions that relate to rationale used by the Agency in this action.

1. Under the Disapproval of NEFS 9 Operations Plan on page 55524 the Agency states:

"The sector has not provided sufficient background information about new board members that would help us assess their independence or ability to govern the sector differently to ensure compliance."

Amendment 16 does not include language pertaining to the governance of the entity associated with a northeast multispecies sector. Is the Agency now making a subjective decision on the individuals it feels are sufficiently independent to govern the entities for all northeast multispecies sectors? If yes, what criteria will serve as the basis for such an evaluation for all sectors in the future?

2. Under the Disapproval of NEFS 9 Operations Plan on page 55524 the Agency states:

"Without further information or revisions to its operations plan, we are not confident that the operations plan contains measures that would provide us with current accurate information or ensure compliance with the operations plan to prevent and address future misreporting or ACE overages."

Amendment 16 includes operations plan requirements for northeast multispecies sectors. The Sector 9 operation plan follows requirements contained under Amendment 16. What specifically does the Agency see as being deficient in the operation plan *itself* and how does this apply to other northeast multispecies sectors and their operations plans that also follow Amendment 16 requirements?

3. Under NEFS 9 Overages on page 55523 the Agency states:

"If a sector exceeds its ACE in any fishing year, the regulations require that the overages be deducted from the sector's ACE in the following fishing year."

Amendment 16 measures contemplate overages that are deemed to have occurred during "the previous fishing year". Amendment 16 does not appear to contemplate a situation in which an activity may go undetected over the course of multiple fishing years. The situation at hand is unprecedented and requires a deliberate and transparent process to establish clear guidance on how this situation, and future circumstances of this nature, will be handled by the Agency.

1 Blackburn Center Second Floor
Gloucester MA 01930

What authority is the Agency asserting to reach back beyond "the previous fishing year" as contemplated by Amendment 16? How does the Agency intend to account for the activities that have occurred beyond "the previous fishing year"? Has the Agency thoroughly considered the implications its approach may have on other sectors in the future, notably when considering the variability of sector enrollment from year to year? For example, if a fishing business is found to have misreported during the 2010 fishing year but is no longer enrolled in the same sector it was enrolled in during that fishing year but another sector, or the common pool, years later when the issue was detected, how would the overage be accounted for? Furthermore, sectors go through rigorous year end reconciliation with the Agency at the start of the subsequent fishing year. During this period the sector is afforded the opportunity to reconcile any overages determined after the end of the fishing year through trading within the post season trading deadline. If the Agency goes back beyond "the previous fishing year" does this imply that sectors are not fully reconciled at year end?

4. Agency's expectation in regards to the role and responsibilities of a Sector Manager:

Language contained under the Interim Final Rule seems to imply the Agency's interpretation and expectation in regards to the role of a Sector Manager is different from our general understanding. It is our opinion there is a clear distinction between the activities of a member and the role of a sector manager.

Is it the Agency's assertion that a Sector Manager is responsible for ensuring that the data submitted by a captain and/or a dealer is accurate? It is our opinion that a sector manager is a handler of data and reporter of data. A Sector Manager is responsible for using that data provided in order to fulfill sector internal and external reporting requirements. While situations may occur during the reconciliation process with the Agency where manager may assist in resolving data discrepancy issues, it is the Agency's responsibility to ensure all data submitted by dealers and captains is accurate. A Sector Manager should not be held more liable than any other fisheries manager and/or fisheries staff that are handling and reconciling data on an ongoing basis.

In conclusion, the Agency has the authority to interact directly with sectors to resolve complex sector specific issues. This level of collective problem-solving is a vital component of the sector management system.

We strongly encourage and support a diligent and sincere effort by the Agency to work with the new Board of Directors and President of NEFS 9 to resolve the operational and ACE overage issues cooperatively. This could be achieved immediately following this comment period.

Again, this rulemaking has serious and far reaching implications on how sectors may operate moving forward. We urge the Agency to carefully consider the questions and comments we offered above and provide detailed responses that take into account the operational realities of the sector management system and its need for definitive guidance.

Sincerely,



Jackie Odell, Executive Director
Northeast Seafood Coalition



Elizabeth Etrie, Program Director
Northeast Sector Service Network



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

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/>

Date Issued: 5/1/2018

NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES (GROUND FISH) **FISHING YEAR 2018 RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS** MAY - 3 2018

Effective Date: May 1, 2018



We are implementing new management measures for the Georges Bank cod recreational fishery. These changes take effect on May 1, 2018. Recreational management measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock will remain the same as 2017 measures.

Georges Bank Cod

We are increasing the minimum size of Georges Bank cod from 22 to 23 inches. We are also implementing a 10-fish, per person, per day, possession limit for the for-hire fishery. The 10-fish possession limit for private recreational anglers will remain in place.

Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Fishing Measures for Georges Bank Cod

Year	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season
2018	10	23 inches	All Year

Bag limits are per person per day and size limits are minimum total length.

Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock

We are maintaining status quo (2017) management measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock.

Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Fishing Measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock

Year	Gulf of Maine Haddock			Gulf of Maine Cod		
	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit	Open Season
2018	12	17 inches	May 1 – September 16 November 1 – February 28 and April 15 – April 30	Gulf of Maine Cod Possession Prohibited		

Bag limits are per person per day and size limits are minimum total length.

Additional information on the fishing year 2018 recreational measures can be found at:
<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/regs/index.html>

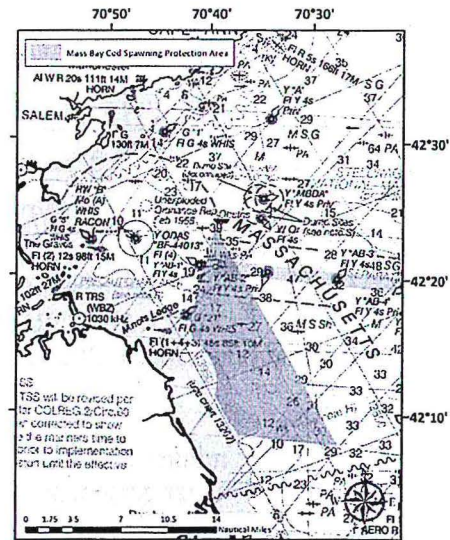
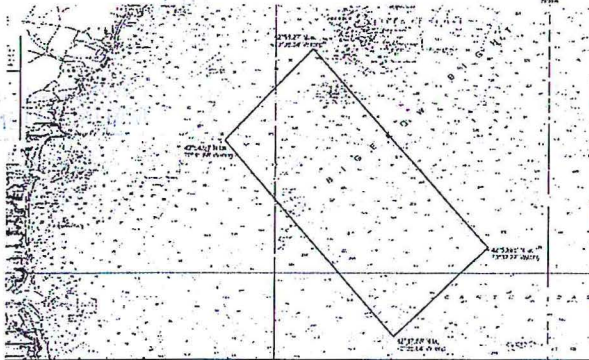
JC 5/8/18

Cod Spawning Protection Areas

Recreational vessels remain subject to the Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area. Recreational vessels are also now subject to the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area.

Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Areas

Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Area (Whaleback)



Gear Restrictions

Gulf of Maine (Whaleback) Cod Spawning Protection Area:

From **April 1 through June 30** of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area.

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
CSPA1	42° 50.95'	70° 32.22'
CSPA2	42° 47.65'	70° 35.64'
CSPA3	42° 54.91'	70° 41.88'
CSPA4	42° 58.27'	70° 38.64'

Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area:

From **November 1 through January 31** of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area.

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
WSPA1	42° 23.61'	70° 39.21'
WSPA2	42° 07.68'	70° 26.79'

Pelagic hook-and-line gear is defined as handline or rod and reel gear that is designed to fish for, or that is being used to fish for, pelagic species. No portion of this gear may be operated in contact with the bottom at any time.

Possession Restrictions

Any vessel fishing in the Gulf of Maine Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area, or the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area, including pelagic hook-and-line gear by recreational vessels, is prohibited from possessing or retaining regulated species or ocean pout from April 1 through June 30 of each year.

Transiting

Recreational vessels are allowed to transit the Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area, and Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area provided all gear is stowed in accordance with the regulations.



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: 4/26/2018

Northeast Multispecies Common Pool Vessels **Closure of the Trimester Total Allowable Catch Area** **for Gulf of Maine Cod** *Effective Date: April 26, 2018, through April 30, 2018*

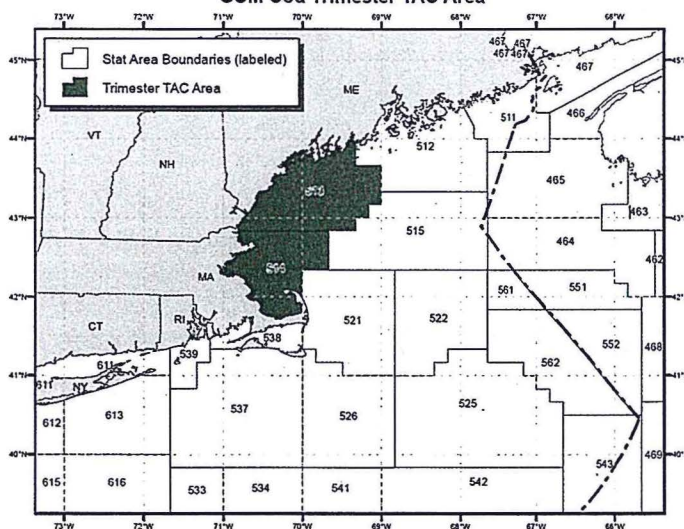
Effective at 1615 hours on April 26, 2018, statistical areas 513 and 514 are closed for the remainder of Trimester 3, through April 30, 2018. This closure applies to all common pool vessels fishing on a groundfish trip with trawl, sink gillnet, or longline/hook gear, including handgear vessels.

The closure is required because 90 percent of the Trimester 3 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod has been caught. This area will reopen at the beginning of Trimester 1 of fishing year 2018, at 0001 hours, May 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 April 26, 2018, you may complete your trip to retrieve that gear.



GOM Cod Trimester TAC Area



Frequently Asked Questions	
Why is this action being taken?	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?	Based on data through April 23, it is projected that 90 percent of the Trimester 3 quota for GOM cod has been caught. 100 percent of the annual quota is projected to have been caught by April 26. Quota monitoring reports are updated on the internet at: http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ .
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.

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.

jc 5/8/18



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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

For Information Contact:

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/>

Sustainable Fisheries Division

(978) 281-9315

Date Issued: 4/30/2018

NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES (GROUNDFISH) **FISHING YEAR 2018 REGULATIONS**

Effective Date: May 1, 2018

We approved Framework Adjustment 57 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and are announcing fishing year 2018 management measures for the groundfish fishery. To see which regulations apply to you, this Bulletin is divided into three sections:

Framework 57 Measures – page 1

Common Pool Measures for 2018 – page 8

Sector Measures for 2018 – page 12.

Framework Adjustment 57

This letter briefly summarizes the Framework 57 measures that become effective on May 1, 2018. More detailed information can be found in the Framework 57 final rule at:

www.regulations.gov and

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/multispecies/>.

Fishing Year 2018 Catch Limits

We set fishing year 2018 annual catch limits (ACL) for all 20 groundfish stocks based on 2017 operational groundfish assessments. The 2018 catch limits are listed in **Table 1**. Framework 57 increases quotas for 11 stocks compared to 2017, including: Georges Bank cod (139%), Gulf of Maine cod (41%), and Gulf of Maine haddock (190%). Quotas are decreasing for 9 stocks, including Southern New England yellowtail flounder (-75%) and Gulf of Maine winter flounder (-45%). The U.S./Canada quotas are shown in **Table 2**.

Because vessels may drop from sector rosters and join the common pool through April 30, 2018, the sector and common pool allocations included in this Bulletin may change. Also, after we finalize fishing year 2017 catch information, we will subtract any sector or common pool overages. Potential adjustments to the 2018 catch limits will be made in a future management action as close to May 1 as possible.

Table 1. Fishing Year 2018 Catch Limits (mt, live weight)

Stock	Total ACL	Groundfish sub-ACL	Preliminary Sector sub-ACL ¹	Preliminary Common Pool sub-ACL ¹	Recreational sub-ACL	Midwater Trawl Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small-Mesh Fisheries	State Waters sub-component	Other sub-component
GB Cod	1,519	1,360	1,335	25					16	143
GOM Cod	666	610	377	13	220				47	9
GB Haddock	46,312	44,659	44,348	311		680			487	487
GOM Haddock	12,409	12,097	8,643	95	3,358	122			95	95
GB Yellowtail Flounder	206	169	167	3			33.1	4.0	0	0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	66	42	34	8			4		2	17
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	490	398	381	18					51	41
American Plaice	1,649	1,580	1,550	29					35	35
Witch Flounder	948	849	830	19					40	60
GB Winter Flounder	787	731	725	6					0	57
GOM Winter Flounder	428	357	339	18					67	4
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	700	518	456	62					73	109
Redfish	10,986	10,755	10,696	59					116	116
White Hake	2,794	2,735	2,713	22					29	29
Pollock	38,204	37,400	37,163	237					402	402
N. Windowpane Flounder	86	63	na	63			18		2	3
S. Windowpane Flounder	457	53	na	53			158		28	218
Ocean Pout	120	94	na	94					3	23
Atlantic Halibut	100	77	na	77					21	2
Atlantic Wolffish	84	82	na	82					1	1

¹Updated catch limits based on final sector rosters and 2017 catch information will be announced as soon as possible in the 2018 fishing year.

GB = Georges Bank, GOM = Gulf of Maine, SNE/MA = southern New England/mid-Atlantic, CC/GOM = Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine, N = northern, S = southern.

Table 2. 2018 Fishing Year U.S./Canada Quotas (mt, live weight) and Percent of Quota Allocated to Each Country

Quota	Eastern GB Cod	Eastern GB Haddock	GB Yellowtail Flounder
Total Shared	951	40,000	300
U.S.	257 (27%)	15,600 (39%)	213 (71%)
Canada	694 (73%)	24,400 (61%)	87 (29%)

Adjustments Due to Fishing Year 2016 Overages

In fishing year 2016, the ACLs were exceeded for witch flounder, Georges Bank cod, and Gulf of Maine cod. A combination of catch from recreational vessels and state commercial vessels contributed to the overages for Georges Bank cod and Gulf of Maine cod. Catch from state commercial vessels contributed to the overage of witch flounder. The overage amounts for these stocks are shown in **Table 3**. The recreational fishery does not payback overages on a pound-for-pound basis, but recreational management measures were revised to address the overage. Revised 2018 commercial allocations, incorporating these payback amounts, are shown in **Table 4**. These revised allocations are the quotas set for 2018 as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 3. 2016 Overage Amounts (mt, live weight)

Stock	Total	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational
GB Cod	402.1	162.57	3.40	n/a
GOM Cod	160.7	21.05	0.00	16.61
Witch Flounder	19.3	19.15	0.05	n/a

Note: "n/a" indicates that the stock is not allocated to that sub-component of the fishery. A value of 0.00 indicates that no payback is required.

Table 4. Revised 2018 Allocations (mt, live weight)

Stock	Initial Preliminary Sector sub-ACL	Revised Preliminary Sector sub-ACL	Initial Preliminary Common Pool sub-ACL	Revised Preliminary Common Pool sub-ACL
GB Cod	1,335.17	1,172.61	25.13	21.73
GOM Cod	376.92	355.87	12.73	<i>unchanged</i>
Witch Flounder	830.09	810.94	18.93	18.88

Revisions to Common Pool Trimester Allocations

Framework 57 adjusts the way common pool quotas are split among the trimesters for stocks that have had early closures in either Trimester 1 or Trimester 2. The Trimester 1 portion of the quota for each of these stocks is increased, with the exception of southern New England/mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder, which remains unchanged. The Trimester 2 portion of the quota for each of these stocks is reduced. The Trimester 3 portion of the quota is unchanged for Georges Bank cod; increased for southern New England yellowtail flounder; and decreased for Gulf of Maine cod, Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine yellowtail flounder, American plaice, and witch flounder. The new trimester quota percentages for these stocks are shown in **Table 5** and were used to calculate the trimester quotas for 2018 (see **Table 8** on page 9).

Table 5. Revised Trimester Quota Percentages

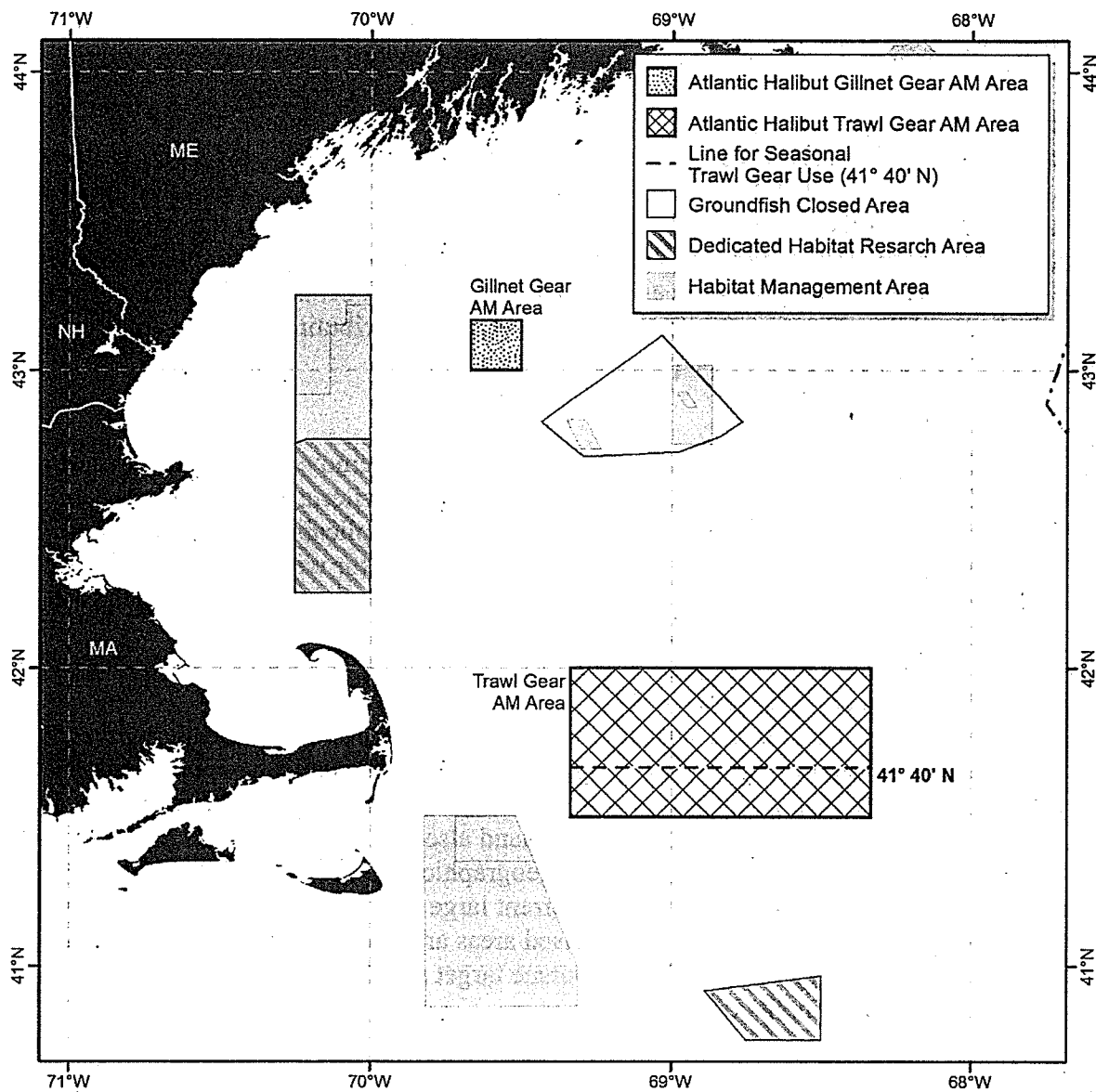
Stock	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
GB Cod	28%	34%	38%
GOM Cod	49%	33%	18%
SNE/MA Yellowtail	21%	28%	51%
CC/GOM Yellowtail	57%	26%	17%
American Plaice	74%	8%	18%
Witch Flounder	55%	20%	25%

Revisions to Atlantic Halibut Accountability Measures

No Atlantic halibut accountability measures (AM) are in effect for 2018. However, Framework 57 revises the AMs that would be in place if they are triggered in the future. First, the zero-possession AM will apply to all Federal permit holders (including federally-permitted scallop, lobster, and highly migratory species general category vessels). Vessels issued only a charter/party permit for any species, an Atlantic highly migratory species angling permit, and/or an Atlantic highly migratory species charter/headboat permit are exempt from the zero-possession AM. For example, a vessel issued a northeast multispecies charter/party permit and a bluefish charter/party permit would be exempt from the AM, but a vessel issued a northeast multispecies charter/party permit and a commercial bluefish permit would not be exempt from the AM. The intent of expanding the AM is to facilitate enforcement of Federal fishery limits and reduce the catch of halibut by federally permitted vessels not currently subject to the AM.

Second, Framework 57 also modifies the gear-restricted AM areas for Federal groundfish vessels. Based on an updated evaluation of Atlantic halibut encounter rates, the existing AM areas have been changed to allow groundfish trawl and fixed gear vessels additional flexibility while continuing to reduce catch of halibut when the AMs are triggered (see Figure 1). This action eliminates the Fixed Gear AM Area 1 on Stellwagen Bank; exempts longline gear from Fixed Gear AM Area 2 (renamed Gillnet Gear AM Area) on Platts Bank; allows gillnet gear in Fixed Gear AM Area 2 from November through February; and allows standard trawl gear in the Trawl Gear AM Area between 41 degrees 40 minutes N. latitude and 42 degrees N. latitude from April through July (see dashed line in Figure 1). These modifications are expected to continue to protect the Atlantic halibut stock due to the low encounter rates and low catch rates in the seasons and areas accessible for fishing, and will preserve fishing opportunities for vessels targeting other species.

Figure 1. Revised Atlantic Halibut AM Areas.



*Note: For information on the groundfish closed areas, dedicated habitat research areas, and habitat management areas above please visit:
https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/nr/2018/April/180405_oa2_final_rule_phl_corrected.pdf.*

Revisions to Southern Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measures for Non-Groundfish Trawl Vessels

No southern windowpane flounder AMs are in effect for 2018. However, Framework 57 revises the AMs that would be in place, if they are triggered in the future, for non-groundfish vessels fishing with trawl gear with codend mesh size of 5 inches or greater.

Reducing the Size of the AM

Similar to the reduction in AM size allowed for groundfish vessels, Framework 57 will scale the size of the AM areas based on the condition of the stock and catch in the year after the overage. Similar to the AM for the groundfish fishery, when the stock is rebuilt and the specified biomass criterion is greater than the fishing year catch, the small AM areas may be implemented in place of the large AM areas. This change is expected to minimize the economic impacts of the AM for a rebuilt stock, while still correcting for operational issues contributing to the overage and mitigating potential biological consequences.

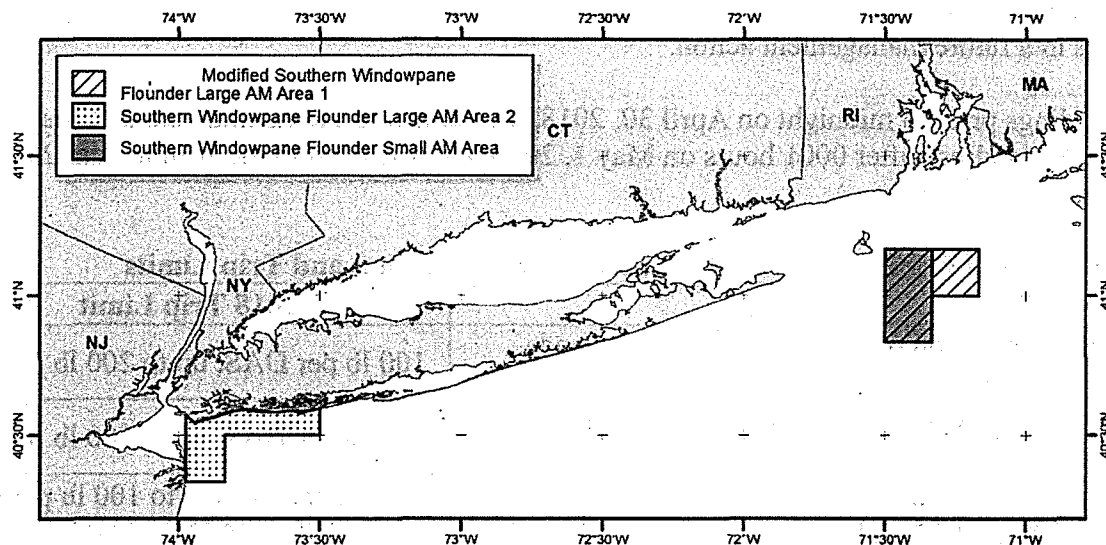
Reducing the Duration of the AM

Framework 57 grants the Regional Administrator authority to remove the southern windowpane flounder AM early for non-groundfish trawl vessels if certain criteria are met. If an overage in year 1 triggers the AM for year 3, and we determine that the applicable windowpane flounder ACL was not exceeded in year 2, then the Regional Administrator would be authorized to remove the AM on or after September 1. This provision is already in place for groundfish vessels, Framework 57 extends it to non-groundfish vessels.

Modification of the Gear-Restricted Areas

Framework 57 revises the area and season of the AM areas for non-groundfish trawl vessels based on recent data (see Figure 2). The geographic area of the small AM area remains unchanged, but the AM will be in effect from September through April, rather than the entire fishing year. The large AM area south of Long Island also remains unchanged, but the large AM area east of Long Island is reduced to a smaller geographic area made up of the small AM area and the eastern most 10-minute square of the current large AM area. Both large AM areas will be closed year-round when triggered. The revised areas are intended to provide additional opportunities for the non-groundfish fleet to pursue target stocks, while still maintaining the necessary conservation benefits of the AMs.

Figure 2. Revised Southern Windowpane AM Areas for Large Mesh Non-Groundfish Fisheries



Revisions to the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Yellowtail Flounder Accountability Measures for Scallop Vessels

No groundfish AMs for the scallop fishery are in effect for 2018. The scallop fishery is allocated quotas for four stocks: Georges Bank yellowtail flounder; southern New England/mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder; northern windowpane flounder; and southern windowpane flounder. If the scallop fishery exceeds its quotas for these stocks, it is subject to AMs that restrict the scallop fishery. In 2017, Framework 56 changed the AM triggers for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder and northern windowpane flounder for the 2017 and 2018 fishing years. This action expands that change to apply to the southern New England/mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder stock for the 2018 fishing year. For fishing year 2018, the AM for the scallop fishery's quota will be triggered only if the scallop fishery's quota *and* the overall ACL for the stock is exceeded. This change is intended to provide flexibility for the scallop fishery to better achieve optimal yield, despite a reduction in the ACL, while continuing to prevent overfishing.

Authority to Adjust Recreational Measures for Georges Bank Cod

In response to increasing recreational catch in recent years, and an unusually high recreational catch estimate in 2016 that contributed to an ACL overage, the New England Fishery Management Council set an annual recreational catch target for Georges Bank cod of 138 mt for 2018-2020. To facilitate preventing future overages of the Georges Bank cod ACL, Framework 57 gives the Regional Administrator authority to set recreational measures for fishing years 2018 and 2019 to prevent the recreational catch target from being exceeded.

New recreational measures for 2018 are discussed in a separate bulletin. For information about recreational measures for 2018 please see our website:

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/regs/index.html>.

Common Pool Measures and Trip Limits

Tables 6 and 7 show the trip limits that will apply to common pool vessels beginning on May 1, 2018. We may increase or decrease these limits during the fishing year to ensure that the common pool catch limits are fully used, but not exceeded. We will announce any necessary changes in a future management action.

Any landings prior to midnight on April 30, 2018, are subject to the fishing year 2017 landing limits. All landings after 0001 hours on May 1, 2018, are restricted to the fishing year 2018 limits in this Bulletin.

Table 6. Initial Fishing Year 2018 Common Pool Possession and Trip Limits

Stock	2018 Trip Limit
Georges Bank Cod (outside Eastern U.S./Canada Area)	100 lb per DAS, up to 200 lb per trip
Georges Bank Cod (inside Eastern U.S./Canada Area)	100 lb per DAS, up to 500 lb per trip
Gulf of Maine Cod	50 lb per DAS, up to 100 lb per trip
Georges Bank Haddock	100,000 lb per trip
Gulf of Maine Haddock	1,000 lb per DAS, up to 2,000 lb per trip
Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder	100 lb per trip
Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Yellowtail Flounder	100 lb per DAS, up to 200 lb per trip
Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine Yellowtail Flounder	750 lb per DAS, up to 1,500 lb per trip
American plaice	750 lb per DAS, up to 1,500 lb per trip
Witch Flounder	400 lb per trip
Georges Bank Winter Flounder	250 lb per trip
Gulf of Maine Winter Flounder	1,000 lb per trip
Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder	2,000 lb per DAS, up to 4,000 lb per trip
Redfish	Unlimited
White hake	1,500 lb per trip
Pollock	Unlimited
Atlantic Halibut	1 fish per trip
Windowpane Flounder	Possession Prohibited
Ocean Pout	Possession Prohibited
Atlantic Wolffish	Possession Prohibited

DAS = day-at-sea

Common Pool Trimester Total Allowable Catches

The common pool catch limit for each stock is divided into trimester total allowable catches (TACs): Trimester 1 (May 1-August 31); Trimester 2 (September 1-December 31); and Trimester 3 (January 1-April 30). Fishing Year 2018 trimester TACs, as revised by Framework 57, are listed in **Table 8** below.

Table 8. FY 2016 Trimester TACs (mt)

Stock	2018		
	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
GB Cod	7.0	8.5	9.6
GOM Cod	6.2	4.2	2.3
GB Haddock	84.0	102.6	124.4
GOM Haddock	25.6	24.7	44.6
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.5	0.8	1.3
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	1.7	2.3	4.2
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	10.0	4.6	3.0
American Plaice	21.8	2.4	5.3
Witch Flounder	10.4	3.8	4.7
GB Winter Flounder	0.5	1.4	4.1
GOM Winter Flounder	6.5	6.7	4.4
Redfish	14.8	18.4	26.1
White Hake	8.3	6.8	6.8
Pollock	66.4	83.0	87.7

* SNE Winter Flounder is not managed under a trimester quota

Area Closures

Once we project that 90 percent of a trimester TAC for a stock is caught, we will close that Trimester TAC Area to common pool vessels fishing with gears capable of catching that stock. The area will remain closed until the end of that trimester and will re-open at the start of the next trimester. The areas that will close for each stock, and the gears that the closure will apply to, are listed in **Table 9** on page 10.

During the fishing year, we will post weekly quota monitoring reports here:

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/nemultispecies.html>.

Table 7. Initial Fishing Year 2018 Trip Limits for Handgear and Small Vessel Category Permits

Permit	2018 Trip Limit
Handgear A Gulf of Maine Cod	50 lb per trip
Handgear A Georges Bank Cod	100 lb per trip
Handgear B Gulf of Maine Cod	25 lb per trip
Handgear B Georges Bank Cod	25 lb per trip
Small Vessel Category	300 lb of cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder combined; additionally, vessels may not possess more than the common pool possession limit for one DAS.

Table 9. Common Pool Trimester TAC Area Closures

Stock	Statistical Area	Gear
GOM cod	513, 514	Trawl, gillnet, longline/hook
GB cod	521, 522, 525, 561	Trawl, gillnet, longline/hook
GOM haddock	513, 514, 515	Trawl, gillnet, longline/hook
GB haddock	521, 522, 525, 561, 562	Trawl, gillnet, longline/hook
CC/GOM yellowtail flounder	514, 521	Trawl, gillnet
GB yellowtail flounder	522, 525, 561, 562	Trawl, gillnet
SNE/MA yellowtail flounder	537, 539, 538, 613	Trawl, gillnet
GOM winter flounder	514	Trawl, gillnet
GB winter flounder	522, 525, 561, 562	Trawl
Witch flounder	512, 513, 514, 515, 521, 522, 525	Trawl
American plaice	512, 513, 514, 515, 521, 522, 525	Trawl
Pollock	513, 514, 515, 521, 522	Gillnet, trawl, longline/hook
Redfish	513, 514, 515, 521, 522	Trawl
White hake	513, 514, 515, 521, 522	Gillnet, trawl

Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program

Common pool vessels may not target yellowtail flounder within the Closed Area II Yellowtail Flounder/Haddock Special Access Program (SAP) in fishing year 2018. Vessels are not allowed to fish in this SAP using flounder trawl nets.

Common pool vessels may fish in this SAP in 2018 to target haddock, but they must fish with a haddock separator trawl, a Ruhle trawl, or hook gear. This SAP is open from August 1, 2018, through January 31, 2019.

Eastern U.S./Canada Area

Starting on May 1, 2018, common pool vessels using trawl gear may fish in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area. Common pool vessels must use a haddock separator trawl, a Ruhle trawl, or a flounder trawl in this area.

Sector Measures

Approved Sectors

All approved sectors receive “universal” exemptions from trip limits for allocated stocks, the Georges Bank Seasonal Closure Area, and the requirement to use groundfish DAS to land groundfish. All sector vessels may use a 6-inch mesh codend on haddock separator trawls, rope trawls, and Ruhle trawls when fishing on Georges Bank. We previously approved 20 additional exemptions for fishing years 2017 and 2018. Additional information on these previously approved sector exemptions can be found in the sector operations plan final rule at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-04-28/pdf/2017-08617.pdf>

New Sector Exemption

We have also approved a new sector exemption that allows vessels to fish up to 150 gillnets in the Gulf of Maine regulated mesh area if at least 50 nets are 10-inch or larger mesh and those nets are fished east of 70 degrees West longitude. The intent of the exemption is to increase opportunities for sector vessels to harvest monkfish, a healthy non-groundfish stock, while fishing on a groundfish trip.

This new exemption is a variation of an exemption we formerly approved for day gillnet vessels fishing in the Gulf of Maine, which allowed the use of 150 gillnets. This exemption is more restrictive than previously approved and requires the use of larger mesh nets in a smaller geographic area. These restrictions of this exemption are intended to reduce additional catch and discards of Gulf of Maine cod.

We will grant this exemption to any sectors that modify their operations plans to include this exemption. Any sector may submit a written request to amend its approved operations plan to the Regional Administrator.