#7

CORRESPONDENCE

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

OCT 16 2018

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

Dear Tom:

We recently completed groundfish year-end accounting for the 2017 fishing year, and the final report is attached to this letter. The report is unchanged from the version we posted prior to the September Council meeting.

Gulf of Maine Cod

In fishing year 2017, catch exceeded the total annual catch limit (ACL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for Gulf of Maine cod. The overfishing limit (OFL) was not exceeded. Total catch of Gulf of Maine cod was 612.6 mt; the 2017 OFL was 667 mt. The Gulf of Maine cod ACL was exceeded by 140 mt (29 percent) and the ABC was exceeded by 113 mt (20 percent). Table 1 summarizes the overage and provides a breakdown of catch by fishery component.

Table 1: Fishing year 2017 Gulf of Maine cod catch, sub-ACLs, and sub-component values (amounts presented in mt).

Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)						Sub-components: No AMs	
	ACL	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	State Water	Other
	A to E	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E
2017 Catch Limit	473	437	271	9	157	27	10
2017 Catch	612.6	514.3	260.6	8.2	245.4	69.5	28.9

A combination of excess catch from the recreational fishery, the state waters sub-component, and the other sub-component contributed to the Gulf of Maine cod overage. In 2017, the state waters catch was 69.5 mt, and only 27 mt was set-aside for the state sub-component. At the September 18, 2018, Groundfish Committee meeting, the Massachusetts representative announced that the state is considering additional management measures to reduce state waters catch of Gulf of Maine cod.

The recreational fishery exceeded its sub-ACL by 88 mt despite adjusting measures for the 2017-fishing year. As you know, we already addressed this overage by adjusting recreational measures for fishing year 2018 to achieve, but not exceed, the 2018 recreational sub-ACL. We have also started the process of evaluating recreational measures for the 2019 fishing year.

Excess catch attributed to the other sub-component also contributed to the overage. The other sub-component includes catch from fisheries that do not have a sub-ACL, including landings associated with scientific research. Seventy-eight percent (22.3 mt) of the 28.9 mt 2017 other sub-component catch was categorized as research landings. These landings are associated with projects issued a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) or Scientific Research Permit (SRP). Research catch in 2017 was unusually higher than the most recent 5-year average (2.4 mt). We are actively monitoring research catch, and 2018 cod catch through August is less than 3 mt. Based on current catch levels, we do not expect research catch in 2018 to reach the levels observed in 2017.

Amendment 16 prescribes a process for addressing overages from vessels fishing outside of the allocated fishery. If the overall ACL for a stock is exceeded, then the amount of the overage due to catch from vessels fishing outside of the allocated fishery shall be distributed among allocated components of the Northeast multispecies fishery based on each allocated component's share of that stock's ACL. For example, in 2017, the sector component was allocated 57 percent of the groundfish ACL and will be responsible for 57 percent of the state water and other sub-components overage. Each component's share of the overage is then added to that component's catch to determine the net overage amount. If the sum exceeds the component's sub-ACL, the respective AMs for that component of the fishery will be triggered.

The AM for sectors and the common pool is a pound-for-pound payback. The AM for the recreational fishery is the adjustment of management measures in the next fishing year. Application of this AM will result in a net reduction of the 2019 sector sub-ACL by 28.8 mt and a 0.4-mt reduction of the common pool sub-ACL. These amounts are not expected to change, but finalized values and the adjusted ACLs will be provided in the Framework 58 proposed rule.

Scallop Sub-Annual Catch Limits

The scallop fishery exceeded three of its groundfish sub-ACLs: Georges Bank yellowtail; Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail, and; Northern windowpane flounder. These overages are shown in Table 2 below. The total ACL was not exceeded for any of these stocks, and therefore no AMs have been triggered.

Table 2: Groundfish catch as a percentage of the sub-ACL for each groundfish stock allocated to the scallop fishery.

Stock	Scallop Fishery Sub-ACL (mt)	Catch (mt)	Catch as a Percent of the Scallop Fishery sub-ACL
GB Yellowtail Flounder	32	52.6	164.3%
Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Yellowtail Flounder	4	4.3	104.1%
Northern Windowpane Flounder	36	44.1	122.4%
Southern Windowpane Flounder	209	143.9	68.8%

The scallop fishery exceeded its sub-ACL of Georges Bank yellowtail by 64 percent. This overage would normally trigger an accountability measure for the scallop fishery. However, there is currently a temporary regulatory provision (in effect for fishing years 2017 and 2018) that exempts the scallop fishery from this AM as long as the total ACL is not exceeded. No

scallop accountability measures will be triggered as a result of 2017 groundfish catch because the total ACL for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder was not exceeded.

The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder overage is minor and occurred only after the scallop sub-ACL was reduced during the fishing year. During the fishing year, we projected that the scallop fishery would catch less than 90 percent of its sub-ACL. In such cases, the regulations allow us to reduce the scallop sub-ACL by an amount we expect to remain uncaught by the scallop fishery and increase the groundfish sub-ACL by the same amount. Based on our projections, we reduced the scallop sub-ACL by 29.9 mt, leaving a sub-ACL of 4.1 mt. The scallop fishery caught 4.3 mt, exceeding the sub-ACL by 0.2 mt. This minor overage normally would not require an AM because it does not exceed 50 percent of the sub-ACL, and the overall 256 mt ACL was not exceeded (overall catch totaled only 14.3 mt). The temporary 2018 threshold was also not met.

Recreational Catch

Recreational catch of Georges Bank cod, Gulf of Maine winter flounder, and pollock was greater than 5 percent of the total catch in fishing year 2017 (see Table 3). Recreational catch of these stocks is significant and may warrant further consideration by the Council. Amendment 16 specified that additional sub-ACLs may be considered when recreational catch is greater than 5 percent of total catch.

Table 3: Fishing year 2017 recreational catch, total catch, and recreational catch as a percentage of total catch.

Stock	Total Catch (mt)	Recreational Catch (mt)	Recreational Catch as a Percentage of Total Catch
Georges Bank Cod	522.5	52.9	10%
Gulf of Maine Winter Flounder	308.1	57.6	19%
Pollock	4,421.4	1,404.8	32%

We only recently completed the 2017 year-end accounting and wanted to provide the final catch report to you as quickly as possible to support and inform development of Framework 58. My staff will continue to work through the Groundfish Plan Development Team to review the final 2017 report. If you have any questions on the report, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,

for Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Jon Hare, Science and Research Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Enclosure

Northeast Multispecies Fishery

Final Year-End Results for Fishing Year 2017

- Tables 1 through 5: Total groundfish caught, landed, and discard estimates
- Table 6: Estimated state water catch
- Tables 7-9: Other sub-component catch detail
- Table 10: FY 2015 through FY 2017 GOM cod and haddock recreational catch evaluation
- Table 11: Sector carryover TBD
- Tables 12 through 17: U.S./Canada stocks catch evaluation

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

9/19/2018

Table 1: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Percent of Annual Catch Limit Caught (%)

Stock	Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)								Sub-components: No AMs	
	Total	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	82.0	84.0	84.4	92.5					48.6	77.6
GOM Cod	129.5	117.6	96.1	89.9	156.3				257.2	289.1
GB Haddock	7.9	7.8	7.8	0.1		6.0			2.1	31.4
GOM Haddock	73.4	73.3	75.4	43.0	68.5	-			89.1	170.3
GB Yellowtail Flounder	41.8	19.1	19.4	-			164.3	9.7	NA	0.1
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	9.6	6.7	6.0	9.5			104.1		22.3	15.9
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	76.2	60.4	60.3	62.6					167.2	130.4
Plaice	89.1	88.5	89.4	41.1					135.5	66.5
Witch Flounder	70.5	67.4	67.8	49.9					142.1	66.8
GB Winter Flounder	57.2	60.9	61.4	-					NA	21.1
GOM Winter Flounder	39.7	17.8	18.3	8.9					151.9	56.3
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	73.5	69.9	72.2	53.0					33.2	125.5
Redfish	44.3	45.6	45.9	1.9					3.7	4.5
White Hake	58.7	60.3	60.7	2.0					3.4	15.1
Pollock	21.7	16.9	16.9	16.3					49.7	60.8
Northern Windowpane	51.4	27.2	NA	NA			122.4		27.4	192.9
Southern Windowpane	73.6	68.7	NA	NA			68.8		66.3	80.7
Ocean Pout	18.2	8.6	NA	NA					16.3	72.8
Halibut	90.3	75.1	NA	NA					126.6	186.3
Wolffish	2.2	2.2	NA	NA					5.2	1.0

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 12, 2018, run date of July 31, 2018

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

Table 2: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Annual Catch Limits (mt)

Stock	Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)								Sub-components: No AMs	
	Total ACL	Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool[1]	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	637	531	521	7					20	86
GOM Cod	473	437	271	9	157				27	10
GB Haddock	54,568	52,620	52,253	367		801			574	574
GOM Haddock	4,285	4,177	2,985	33	1,160	42			33	33
GB Yellowtail Flounder	201	163	160	2			32	4	NA	2.1
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	256	217	176	42			4		5	29
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	409	341	326	15					43	26
Plaice	1,272	1,218	1,196	23					27	27
Witch Flounder	839	734	718	16					35	70
GB Winter Flounder	683	620	615	5					NA	63
GOM Winter Flounder	776	639	607	32					122	16
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	749	585	515	70					70	94
Redfish	10,514	10,183	10,126	56					111	221
White Hake	3,467	3,358	3,331	27					36	73
Pollock	20,374	17,817	17,704	113					1,279	1,279
Northern Windowpane	170	129	NA	129			36		2	4
Southern Windowpane	599	104	NA	104			209		37	249
Ocean Pout	155	130	NA	130					2	23
Halibut	119	91	NA	91					25	4
Wolffish	77	72	NA	72					1	3

[1]The GB cod common pool sub-ACL was reduced mid-year to account for an overage of the 2016 GB cod common pool sub-ACL.

Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 12, 2018

Table 3: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Total Catch (mt)

Stock	**Total Catch**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery[1]	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	522.5	446.0	439.5	6.4					9.7	66.8
GOM Cod	612.6	514.3	260.6	8.2	245.4				69.5	28.9
GB Haddock	4,330.7	4,090.5	4,090.2	0.3		47.9			12.3	180.0
GOM Haddock	3,145.6	3,060.0	2,250.9	14.1	795.0	-			29.4	56.2
GB Yellowtail Flounder	84.0	31.0	31.0	-			52.6	0.4	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	24.4	14.5	10.5	4.0			4.3		1.1	4.6
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	311.5	205.7	196.3	9.4					71.9	33.9
Plaice	1,132.8	1,078.3	1,068.9	9.3					36.6	18.0
Witch Flounder	591.2	494.7	486.5	8.2					49.7	46.8
GB Winter Flounder	390.9	377.6	377.6	-					-	13.3
GOM Winter Flounder	308.1	113.8	111.0	2.8					185.3	9.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	550.5	409.3	372.0	37.2					23.2	118.0
Redfish	4,661.5	4,647.5	4,646.5	1.0					4.1	9.9
White Hake	2,035.6	2,023.4	2,022.9	0.5					1.2	11.0
Pollock	4,421.4	3,008.5	2,990.0	18.4					635.5	777.4
Northern Windowpane	87.4	35.1	33.9	1.2			44.1		0.5	7.7
Southern Windowpane	440.9	71.5	66.3	5.2			143.9		24.5	201.0
Ocean Pout	28.2	11.1	10.7	0.4					0.3	16.8
Halibut	107.4	68.3	68.2	0.1					31.7	7.5
Wolffish	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.0					0.1	0.0

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2017 through March 2018

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

September 12, 2018, run date of July 31, 2018

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

Table 4: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Landings (mt)

Stock	**Total Landings**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector[1]	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	499.6	432.8	426.7	6.1					9.2	57.6
GOM Cod	368.3	276.8	246.5	3.8	26.6				68.7	22.7
GB Haddock	3,581.0	3,526.3	3,526.1	0.3		47.9			0.3	6.4
GOM Haddock	2,740.5	2,700.7	2,153.5	13.6	533.7	-			25.6	14.2
GB Yellowtail Flounder	30.9	30.9	30.9	-			-	-	-	-
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	14.3	13.3	9.4	3.9			-		1.0	0.0
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	261.7	187.4	179.9	7.5					71.5	2.8
Plaice	1,045.3	1,007.6	998.7	9.0					34.1	3.6
Witch Flounder	497.3	447.5	439.8	7.7					48.0	1.8
GB Winter Flounder	377.0	376.9	376.9	-					-	0.1
GOM Winter Flounder	296.3	110.7	107.9	2.8					183.2	2.4
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	428.5	401.6	364.6	37.0					22.2	4.7
Redfish	4,628.7	4,618.5	4,618.4	0.1					3.0	7.2
White Hake	2,020.1	2,015.7	2,015.1	0.5					1.0	3.5
Pollock	3,554.8	2,970.4	2,951.9	18.4					287.4	297.0
Northern Windowpane	0.0	0.0	0.0	-			-		0.0	-
Southern Windowpane	13.5	0.1	0.0	0.1			-		13.3	0.1
Ocean Pout	0.1	-	-	-					-	0.1
Halibut	60.8	25.7	25.6	0.1					30.0	5.1
Wolffish	0.0	0.0	0.0	-					-	-

[1]Landings do not include 0.85 mt of halibut corrected after data were finalized.

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

September 12, 2018, run date of July 31, 2018

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Table 5: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Estimated Discards (mt)

Stock	Total Discards	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	22.8	13.1	12.8	0.3					0.6	9.2
GOM Cod	244.4	237.4	14.1	4.5	218.8				0.7	6.2
GB Haddock	749.8	564.2	564.2	-		-			12.0	173.5
GOM Haddock	405.1	359.3	97.5	0.5	261.3	-			3.8	42.0
GB Yellowtail Flounder	53.0	0.1	0.1	-			52.6	0.4	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	10.1	1.1	1.1	0.0			4.3		0.2	4.6
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	49.9	18.3	16.4	1.9					0.4	31.1
Plaice	87.6	70.7	70.3	0.4					2.5	14.4
Witch Flounder	93.9	47.2	46.7	0.5					1.7	45.0
GB Winter Flounder	13.9	0.7	0.7	-					-	13.2
GOM Winter Flounder	11.7	3.1	3.1	0.0					2.1	6.6
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	122.0	7.7	7.4	0.3					1.1	113.2
Redfish	32.9	29.0	28.1	0.9					1.2	2.7
White Hake	15.5	7.7	7.7	-					0.3	7.5
Pollock	866.6	38.1	38.1	0.0					348.2	480.4
Northern Windowpane	87.4	35.1	33.9	1.2			44.1		0.5	7.7
Southern Windowpane	427.4	71.3	66.3	5.0			143.9		11.3	200.9
Ocean Pout	28.1	11.1	10.7	0.4					0.3	16.6
Halibut	46.6	42.6	42.6	-					1.6	2.4
Wolffish	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.0					0.1	0.0

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 12, 2018, run date of July 31, 2018

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Table 6: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Estimated State Water Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total			Commercial			Recreational		
	Catch	Landings	Discard	Total Catch	Landings[1]	Discard[1]	Total Catch	Landings	Discard
	A+B+C+D	A+C	B+D	A+B	A	B	C+D	C	D
GB Cod	9.7	9.2	0.6	7.0	6.6	0.4	2.8	2.6	0.2
GOM Cod	69.5	68.7	0.7	69.5	68.7	0.7	-*	-*	-*
GB Haddock	12.3	0.3	12.0	12.3	0.3	12.0			
GOM Haddock	29.4	25.6	3.8	29.4	25.6	3.8	-*	-*	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	1.1	1.0	0.2	1.1	1.0	0.2			
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	71.9	71.5	0.4	71.9	71.5	0.4			
Plaice	36.6	34.1	2.5	36.6	34.1	2.5			
Witch Flounder	49.7	48.0	1.7	49.7	48.0	1.7			
GB Winter Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
GOM Winter Flounder	185.3	183.2	2.1	127.9	127.8	0.1	57.4	55.4	2.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	23.2	22.2	1.1	20.7	20.4	0.4	2.5	1.8	0.7
Redfish	4.1	3.0	1.2	4.1	3.0	1.2			
White Hake	1.2	1.0	0.3	1.2	1.0	0.3			
Pollock	635.5	287.4	348.2	4.9	3.4	1.6	630.6	284.0	346.6
Northern Windowpane	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5			
Southern Windowpane	24.5	13.3	11.3	24.5	13.3	11.3			
Ocean Pout	0.3	-	0.3	0.3	-	0.3			
Halibut	31.7	30.0	1.6	31.7	30.0	1.6			
Wolffish	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	-	0.1			

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

[1]January through April 2018 commercial catches are estimated.

State discard rate estimates based on discard rates on federal trips

Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

September 10, 2018, run date of August 31, 2018

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

Table 7: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total Catch	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB[2]	MACKEREL	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP
GB Cod	66.8	5.3	0.1	-	0.0	0.1	0.0	-	0.9	8.1	0.1
GOM Cod	28.9	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.0	-	-	1.1	22.3	0.0
GB Haddock	180.0	6.2	1.0	-	11.5*	-	0.0	-	0.1	6.5	1.0
GOM Haddock	56.2	-	-	-	4.5*	0.0	-	-	0.0	13.4	0.0
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-	-	-*	-	-	-	-	0.0	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	4.6	-*	0.7	-	0.1	-	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	0.7
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	33.9	16.8	-	0.2	1.5	0.0	-	-	0.0	2.6	0.0
American Plaice	18.0	6.4	0.1	-	0.5	-	0.0	-	0.0	3.3	0.2
Witch Flounder	46.8	12.7	1.9	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	-	0.1	1.7	1.8
GB Winter Flounder	13.3	8.7	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	-
GOM Winter Flounder	9.0	3.8	-	-	0.3	0.0	-	-	0.0	2.1	-
SNE Winter Flounder	118.0	48.6	5.5	-	3.2	0.0	0.0	-	0.5	0.0	5.6
Redfish	9.9	-	0.1	-	0.2	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	6.6	0.1
White Hake	11.0	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	-	0.1	2.6	0.1
Pollock	777.4	0.1	0.0	-	0.2	-	0.0	-	0.4	0.9	0.0
Northern Windowpane	7.7	-*	0.0	-	0.3	-	-	-	0.0	0.1	0.2
Southern Windowpane	201.0	-*	27.8	-	6.2	-	0.1	-	2.5	0.0	26.0
Ocean Pout	16.8	2.5	1.4	-	0.4	-	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	1.3
Halibut	7.5	0.5	0.0	-	0.0	3.5	0.0	-	1.0	0.1	0.0
Wolffish	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.0	-	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2017 through March 2018

[2]Landings only. Discard estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab discards were not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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

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Table 7: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Catch Detail (mt)

Stock	Total Catch	SHRIMP	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	66.8	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	1.5	50.1
GOM Cod	28.9	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	4.5	-*
GB Haddock	180.0	2.8	113.8	13.1	7.5	-	0.0	16.4	-
GOM Haddock	56.2	0.1	2.5	11.3	5.1	0.0	6.0	13.4	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-	-*	-*	0.0	-	-	-	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	4.6	0.0	1.7	0.1	0.2	-	0.0	0.9	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	33.9	0.0	1.1	6.4	0.7	0.0	1.8	2.9	
American Plaice	18.0	0.1	5.0	0.7	0.3	-	0.0	1.2	
Witch Flounder	46.8	0.4	17.8	2.3	1.4	0.0	0.2	4.7	
GB Winter Flounder	13.3	-	2.6	1.9	0.0	-	-	0.0	
GOM Winter Flounder	9.0	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.2
SNE Winter Flounder	118.0	0.8	35.2	2.9	2.7	-	0.0	12.6	0.3
Redfish	9.9	0.0	2.2	0.2	0.1	-	0.0	0.4	
White Hake	11.0	0.1	3.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.0	
Pollock	777.4	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	1.0	774.2
Northern Windowpane	7.7	0.0	3.1	2.7	0.3	-	0.3	0.8	
Southern Windowpane	201.0	1.5	83.5	6.3	8.3	-	0.0	38.8	
Ocean Pout	16.8	0.1	5.4	0.7	0.5	-	0.0	4.2	
Halibut	7.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	-	0.0	1.9	
Wolffish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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Table 8: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Landings Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB	MACKEREL	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP
GB Cod	57.6	0.3	0.0	-	-	0.1	-	-	0.1	8.1	0.0
GOM Cod	22.7	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	-	0.0	22.2	-
GB Haddock	6.4	-	-	-	-*	-	-	-	-	6.4	-
GOM Haddock	14.2	-	-	-	-*	0.0	-	-	-	13.1	-
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	-
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2.8	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	2.6	-
American Plaice	3.6	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.2	0.1
Witch Flounder	1.8	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.0	-	-	-	1.7	-
GB Winter Flounder	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GOM Winter Flounder	2.4	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	-	0.0	2.1	-
SNE Winter Flounder	4.7	0.5	0.2	-	-	0.0	-	-	0.0	-	0.6
Redfish	7.2	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	-	-	6.6	-
White Hake	3.5	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.1	-	-	0.0	2.6	0.0
Pollock	297.0	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.9	-
Northern Windowpane	-	-*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southern Windowpane	0.1	-*	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	-
Ocean Pout	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Halibut	5.1	-	-	-	-	3.5	-	-	0.4	0.1	-
Wolffish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2017 through March 2018
*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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Table 8: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Landings Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SHRIMP	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	57.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.5	48.5
GOM Cod	22.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.5	-*
GB Haddock	6.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	
GOM Haddock	14.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-	0.0	-	-	-	-	0.0	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	2.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3	
American Plaice	3.6	-	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	0.2	
Witch Flounder	1.8	-	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	0.0	
GB Winter Flounder	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
GOM Winter Flounder	2.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.2
SNE Winter Flounder	4.7	-	0.6	0.1	-	-	-	2.6	0.2
Redfish	7.2	-	0.6	0.0	-	-	-	0.0	
White Hake	3.5	-	0.2	0.0	-	-	-	0.5	
Pollock	297.0	-	0.0	-	-	-	-	0.5	295.6
Northern Windowpane	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Southern Windowpane	0.1	-	0.0	-	-	-	-	0.1	
Ocean Pout	0.1	-	-	0.0	-	-	-	0.1	
Halibut	5.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	
Wolffish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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

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Table 9: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Estimated Discards Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SCALLOP[1]	FLUKE	HAGFISH	HERRING	LOBSTER/ CRAB[2]	MACKEREL	MENHADEN	MONKFISH	RESEARCH	SCUP
GB Cod	9.2	5.0	0.1	-	0.0	NA	0.0	-	0.7	0.0	0.1
GOM Cod	6.2	0.1	-	-	0.1	NA	-	-	1.1	0.2	0.0
GB Haddock	173.5	6.2	1.0	-	11.5*	NA	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	1.0
GOM Haddock	42.0	-	-	-	4.5*	NA	-	-	0.0	0.3	0.0
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-*	-	-	-*	NA	-	-	-	0.0	-
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	4.6	-*	0.7	-	0.1	NA	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	0.7
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	31.1	16.8	-	0.2	1.5	NA	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
American Plaice	14.4	6.4	0.1	-	0.5	NA	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
Witch Flounder	45.0	12.7	1.9	0.0	1.7	NA	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	1.8
GB Winter Flounder	13.2	8.6	0.0	-	-	NA	-	-	-	0.0	-
GOM Winter Flounder	6.6	3.8	-	-	0.3	NA	-	-	-	0.0	-
SNE Winter Flounder	113.2	48.1	5.3	-	3.2	NA	0.0	-	0.5	0.0	5.0
Redfish	2.7	-	0.1	-	0.2	NA	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
White Hake	7.5	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	NA	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	0.1
Pollock	480.4	0.1	0.0	-	0.2	NA	0.0	-	0.4	0.0	0.0
Northern Windowpane	7.7	-*	0.0	-	0.3	NA	-	-	0.0	0.1	0.2
Southern Windowpane	200.9	-*	27.8	-	6.2	NA	0.1	-	2.5	0.0	26.0
Ocean Pout	16.6	2.5	1.4	-	0.4	NA	0.0	-	0.1	0.0	1.3
Halibut	2.4	0.5	0.0	-	0.0	NA	0.0	-	0.7	0.0	0.0
Wolffish	0.0	0.0	-	-	0.0	NA	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2017 through March 2018

[2]Discard estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab discards were not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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Table 9: FY 2017 Northeast Multispecies Other Sub-Component Estimated Discards Detail (mt)

Stock	Total	SHRIMP	SQUID	SQUID/ WHITING	SURFCLAM	WHELK/ CONCH	WHITING	UNCATEGORIZED	RECREATIONAL
GB Cod	9.2	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	1.0	1.6
GOM Cod	6.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	4.0	-*
GB Haddock	173.5	2.8	113.8	13.1	7.5	-	0.0	16.4	
GOM Haddock	42.0	0.1	2.5	11.3	5.1	0.0	6.0	12.4	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	0.0	-	-*	-*	0.0	-	-	-	
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	4.6	0.0	1.7	0.1	0.2	-	0.0	0.9	
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	31.1	0.0	1.1	6.4	0.7	0.0	1.8	2.6	
American Plaice	14.4	0.1	5.0	0.7	0.3	-	0.0	1.0	
Witch Flounder	45.0	0.4	17.8	2.3	1.4	0.0	0.2	4.7	
GB Winter Flounder	13.2	-	2.6	1.9	0.0	-	-	0.0	
GOM Winter Flounder	6.6	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.7	-
SNE Winter Flounder	113.2	0.8	34.7	2.8	2.7	-	0.0	10.0	0.1
Redfish	2.7	0.0	1.6	0.2	0.1	-	0.0	0.4	
White Hake	7.5	0.1	3.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.6	
Pollock	480.4	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	0.5	478.6
Northern Windowpane	7.7	0.0	3.1	2.7	0.3	-	0.3	0.8	
Southern Windowpane	200.9	1.5	83.4	6.3	8.3	-	0.0	38.8	
Ocean Pout	16.6	0.1	5.4	0.7	0.5	-	0.0	4.1	
Halibut	2.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	-	0.0	0.8	
Wolffish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

August 31, 2018, run date of August 21, 2018

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Table 10: FY 2015 - 2017 GOM Cod and Haddock Recreational Catch Evaluation (mt)

Stock	Fishing Year	Recreational Catch				
		Catch	Landings	Discard	Recreational sub-ACL	Percent of Catch Limit Taken
		A + B	A	B		
GOM Cod	2015	84.5	4.5	80.0	121	69.8
	2016	280.9	94.5	186.4	157	178.9
	2017	245.4	26.6	218.8	157	156.3
	Average	**203.6**	**41.9**	**161.7**	**145**	**140.4**
GOM Haddock	2015	381.9	238.3	143.6	372	102.7
	2016	887.0	560.2	326.8	928	95.6
	2017	795.0	533.7	261.3	1,160	68.5
	Average	**688.0**	**444.1**	**243.9**	**820**	**83.9**

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
September 12, 2018

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

Table 12: FY 2017 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - Percentage of U.S. TACs Caught (%)

Stock	% of U.S. TAC	Percent of Each Fishery Component U.S. TAC Caught								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	30.0	30.0	30.5	0.0					NA	NA
Eastern GB Haddock	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.0		NA			NA	NA
GB Yellowtail Flounder	40.6	19.1	19.4	0.0			164.3	9.7	NA	0.1

Values in percent live weight (%)
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 22, 2018

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

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

Table 13: FY 2017 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. TACs (mt)

Stock	U.S. TAC	Fishery Component TAC								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small-Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	146	146	143	3						
Eastern GB Haddock	29,500	29,500	29,295	205						
GB Yellowtail Flounder	207.0	162.6	160.1	2.5			32.0	4.0		2.1

Values in live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 22, 2018

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Table 14: FY 2017 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Catch (mt)

Stock	U.S. Catch	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	43.7	43.7	43.7	-					-	0.0
Eastern GB Haddock	425.1	407.3	407.3	-		15.5			-	2.3
GB Yellowtail Flounder	84.0	31.0	31.0	-			52.6	0.4	-	0.0

Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
August 22, 2018

Table 15: FY 2017 End of Year Transboundary U.S./Canada Vessels, Trips, DAS Used, and Observers

Area[1]	Number of Vessels		Number of Trips		DAS Used		Number of Observed Trips	
	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool	Sector	Common Pool
Eastern U.S./Canada Area	38	0	187	0	1,174	0	24	0
Western U.S./Canada Area	56	0	459	0	2,728	0	83	0
Total	56	0	503	0	2,943	0	86	0

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 22, 2018

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

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Table 16: FY 2017 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Landings (mt)

Stock	U.S. Landings	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery*	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	41.3	41.3	41.3	-					-	-
Eastern GB Haddock	329.1	313.6	313.6	-		15.5			-	-
GB Yellowtail Flounder	30.9	30.9	30.9	-			-	-	-	-

Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 22, 2018

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

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Table 17: FY 2017 End of Year Accounting of Transboundary U.S./Canada Stocks - U.S. Discards (mt)

Stock	U.S. Discards	U.S. Catch by Fishery Component								
		Groundfish	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Eastern GB Cod	2.4	2.4	2.4	-					-	0.0
Eastern GB Haddock	96.0	93.7	93.7	-		-			-	2.3
GB Yellowtail Flounder	53.0	0.1	0.1	-			52.6	0.4	-	0.0

Values in live weight
Includes estimate of missing dealer reports
Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
August 22, 2018

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

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

AUG 15 2018

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

Dear Tom:

On July 20, 2018, we sent you a letter notifying you of changes to the groundfish discard mortality estimates we are using for commercial and recreational catch monitoring. The changes are based on the stock assessments completed in 2017. The tables enclosed in that letter accurately listed the discard mortality estimates we are using, beginning in fishing year 2018. However, our letter incorrectly described the previous discard mortality estimates used through 2017. Below, we correct our explanation of the commercial discard mortality estimates for Atlantic halibut. Enclosed for your reference is the table of all the Northeast multispecies discard mortality estimates we will use for catch accounting for fishing year 2018.

Atlantic Halibut

The previous Atlantic halibut assessment used a commercial discard mortality estimate of 100 percent for all gears. Accordingly, we estimated 100-percent mortality for commercial halibut discards in our catch monitoring through fishing year 2017. In December 2017, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee approved the 2017 Atlantic halibut assessment report as a basis for catch advice. The Atlantic halibut assessment report adopted gear-specific discard mortality estimates based on discard mortality estimates used by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The IPHC uses a range of discard mortality estimates that vary by region, target species, tow depth, and gear type (trawl, pot, and longline). Based on the IPHC information, the 2017 assessment adopted a 76-percent discard mortality estimate for trawl gear, a 30-percent discard mortality estimate for gillnets, and a 10-percent discard mortality estimate for hook gear. Therefore, we are using these gear-specific discard mortality estimates for catch monitoring, beginning in fishing year 2018

If you have any questions on the discard mortality estimates, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,

for Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Jonathan Hare, Science and Research Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Enclosure

Northeast Multispecies Discard Mortality Estimates for Fishing Year 2018 (percent)					
Stock	Commercial Fishery				Recreational Fishery
	Handline	Longline	Otter Trawl	Sink Gillnet	Hook and Line
GB Cod[1]	20	33	75	80	30
GOM Cod[1]					15
GB Haddock	100				
GOM Haddock	100				**
GB Yellowtail Flounder	100				
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	90				
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	100				
American Plaice	100				
Witch Flounder	100				
GB Winter Flounder	100				
GOM Winter Flounder	50				15
SNE Winter Flounder	50				15
Redfish	100				
White Hake	100				
Pollock	100				100
Northern Windowpane	100				
Southern Windowpane	100				
Ocean Pout	100				
Halibut*	10		76	30	
Wolffish	8				

[1] Otter trawl includes all trawl gear. Cod bycatch in pot gear is not included in the most recent assessment (SARC 55), and was not assigned a gear-specific discard mortality rate. For monitoring purposes, 100-percent discard mortality will be assumed for pot gear.

* Atlantic Halibut updated in 2017 Assessment

** GOM Haddock recreational discards updated in 2017 Assessment. Rates vary by season and size class, see GOM Haddock Recreational discard Mortality Table on reverse.

GOM Haddock Recreational Discard Mortality Rates			
Season	**Waves**	**Size Class (cm)**	**Estimated Mortality (percent)**
Spring	1,2,3	<50	32.1
Spring	1,2,3	>/=50	11.3
Fall	4,5,6	<50	74.2
Fall	4,5,6	>/=50	45.9

Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, 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: 8/13/2018

Massachusetts Commercial Summer Flounder Fishery Closure

Effective Date: 0001 hours on August 14, 2018

The 2018 commercial summer flounder quota allocated to Massachusetts has been harvested. Effective 0001 hours August 14, 2018, fishing vessels issued a Federal moratorium permit for the summer flounder fishery may no longer land summer flounder in Massachusetts for the remainder of the 2018 calendar year. This closure is concurrent with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' closure of its commercial summer flounder fishery to state permitted vessels and dealers, effective 0001 hours on August 14, 2018.

Vessel owners issued Federal permits must continue to complete and submit vessel logbooks for all other species landed. Additionally, dealers issued Federal permits for summer flounder may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Massachusetts for the remainder of the calendar year. Federally permitted dealers must also continue to report all fish purchases from any vessel.

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.

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

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

Dear Tom:

As you know, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center published final results of the stock assessment updates for 19 groundfish stocks in October 2017. In December 2017, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee approved the 2017 Atlantic halibut assessment report as a basis for catch advice. Based on the information used in the updated assessments, we have updated the commercial discard mortality estimate for Atlantic halibut and the recreational discard mortality estimate for Gulf of Maine haddock. Enclosed is a table of all the northeast multispecies discard mortality estimates we will use for catch accounting for fishing year 2018.

Atlantic Halibut

The Atlantic halibut assessment report retained the 76-percent discard mortality estimate for trawl gear and the 30-percent discard mortality estimate for gillnets. However, the report adopted a new 10-percent discard mortality estimate for both handline and longline based on discard mortality estimates used by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The IPHC uses a range of discard mortality estimates that vary by region, target species, tow depth, and gear type (trawl, pot, and longline). The average across longline gear was 9.9 percent. Based on that, we have adopted a 10-percent discard mortality estimate for handline and longline gear.

Gulf of Maine Haddock

The Gulf of Maine haddock recreational discard mortality estimate was updated in the 2017 operational assessment using season- and size-specific, post-release, discard mortality estimates from a new study (Mandelman, et al., 2017[1]). This work provides separate discard mortality estimates for Spring and Fall, and for fish less than 50 cm and fish 50 cm or greater in size, as shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Gulf of Maine Haddock Recreational Discard Mortality Rates

Season	Waves	Size Class (cm)	Estimated Mortality (percent)
Spring	1,2,3	<50	32.1
Spring	1,2,3	>/=50	11.3
Fall	4,5,6	<50	74.2
Fall	4,5,6	>/=50	45.9

[1] Mandelman JW, Zemeckis DR, Homan WS, Dean MJ, Cadrin SX, Sulikowski JA. 2017. Addendum to Determining the post-release mortality rate and best capture and handling methods for haddock (Melanogrammus aeglefinus) discarded in the Gulf of Maine recreational fisheries. Final Report to the Northeast Consortium. Grant: FNA10NMF4410008. Award Period: March 1, 2015 February 29, 2016. 30 p.

JC 7/26/18

If you have any questions on the discard mortality estimates, please contact Stephanie Hunt, Acting Groundfish Team Supervisor, at (978) 675-2153.

Sincerely,

for Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

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

Enclosure

Northeast Multispecies Discard Mortality Estimates for Fishing Year 2018 (percent)					
Stock	Commercial Fishery				Recreational Fishery
	Handline	Longline	Otter Trawl	Sink Gillnet	Hook and Line
GB Cod[1]	20	33	75	80	30
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GB Haddock	100				
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SNE Yellowtail Flounder	90				
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	100				
American Plaice	100				
Witch Flounder	100				
GB Winter Flounder	100				
GOM Winter Flounder	50				15
SNE Winter Flounder	50				15
Redfish	100				
White Hake	100				
Pollock	100				100
Northern Windowpane	100				
Southern Windowpane	100				
Ocean Pout	100				
Halibut*	10		76	30	
Wolffish	8				

[1] Otter trawl includes all trawl gear. Cod bycatch in pot gear is not included in the most recent assessment (SARC 55), and was not assigned a gear-specific discard mortality rate. For monitoring purposes, 100-percent discard mortality will be assumed for pot gear.

* Atlantic Halibut updated in 2017 Assessment

** GOM Haddock recreational discards updated in 2017 Assessment. Rates vary by season and size class, see GOM Haddock Recreational discard Mortality Table on reverse.

GOM Haddock Recreational Discard Mortality Rates			
Season	**Waves**	**Size Class (cm)**	**Estimated Mortality (percent)**
Spring	1,2,3	<50	32.1
Spring	1,2,3	>/=50	11.3
Fall	4,5,6	<50	74.2
Fall	4,5,6	>/=50	45.9

From: lawrence@ljbruce.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 24, 2018 12:51 PM
To: Moira Kelly; Earl Meredith; russell.dunn@noaa.gov; Tom Nies; Robin Frede; Rachel Feeney
Subject: GOM Recreational Fishing Lack of Representation

Hello all,

As a "true" recreational fisherman I question the lack of representation on the NEFMC by "true" recreational fisherman- those without a financial interest in recreational fishing. Perhaps I'm wrong now, but the last I checked there were no actual recreational fishing representatives on the board. That charter boats that bring recreational fishermen/fisherwomen to sea are a separate interest than boat owners who visit offshore fishing grounds for recreational fishing.

That charter boats that bring recreational fishermen/fisherwomen to sea should be considered commercial fishing as the proprietors are engaged in a business and prosper from the fishing. This is very different than boat owners who do not prosper from fishing, and as such the opinions, wants and needs are very different that those in the charter boat industry.

As a true recreational fisherman I embrace the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation & Management Act. I'm now watching the Cod get larger under the protection and have no doubt that the science of sustainable fisheries is far better than political oversight. I have seen first hand how the Haddock have benefited from protection.

I ask that the NEFMC actively seek out at least ONE member that is a true recreational fisher and not involved in any present or past commercial ties to the fisheries. I would be please to serve- I'm sure there are many others.

Thank you,

Lawrence Bruce
254 Chandler Road
Andover, MA 01810

JC 7/26/18

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

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 Band 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

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

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 (GROUNDFISH) FISHING YEAR 2018 RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS

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.

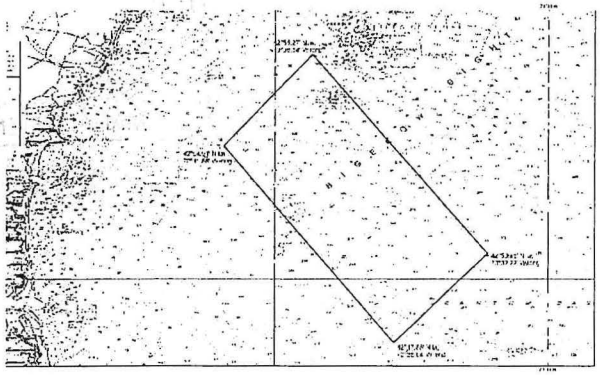
Additional information on the fishing year 2018 recreational measures can be found at:
http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/recfishing/regs/index.html

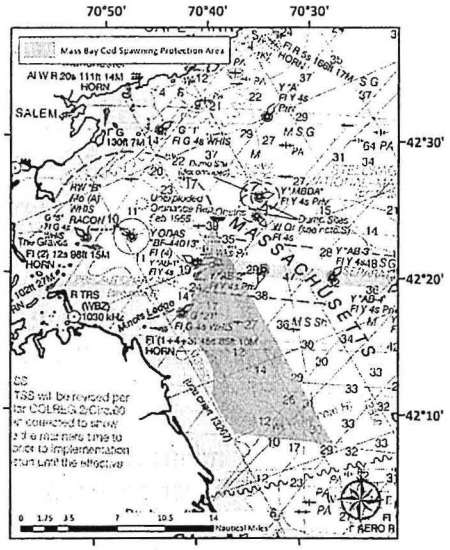
JC 5/8/18

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:
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 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

[1]Updated 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	*unchanged*
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 Band 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

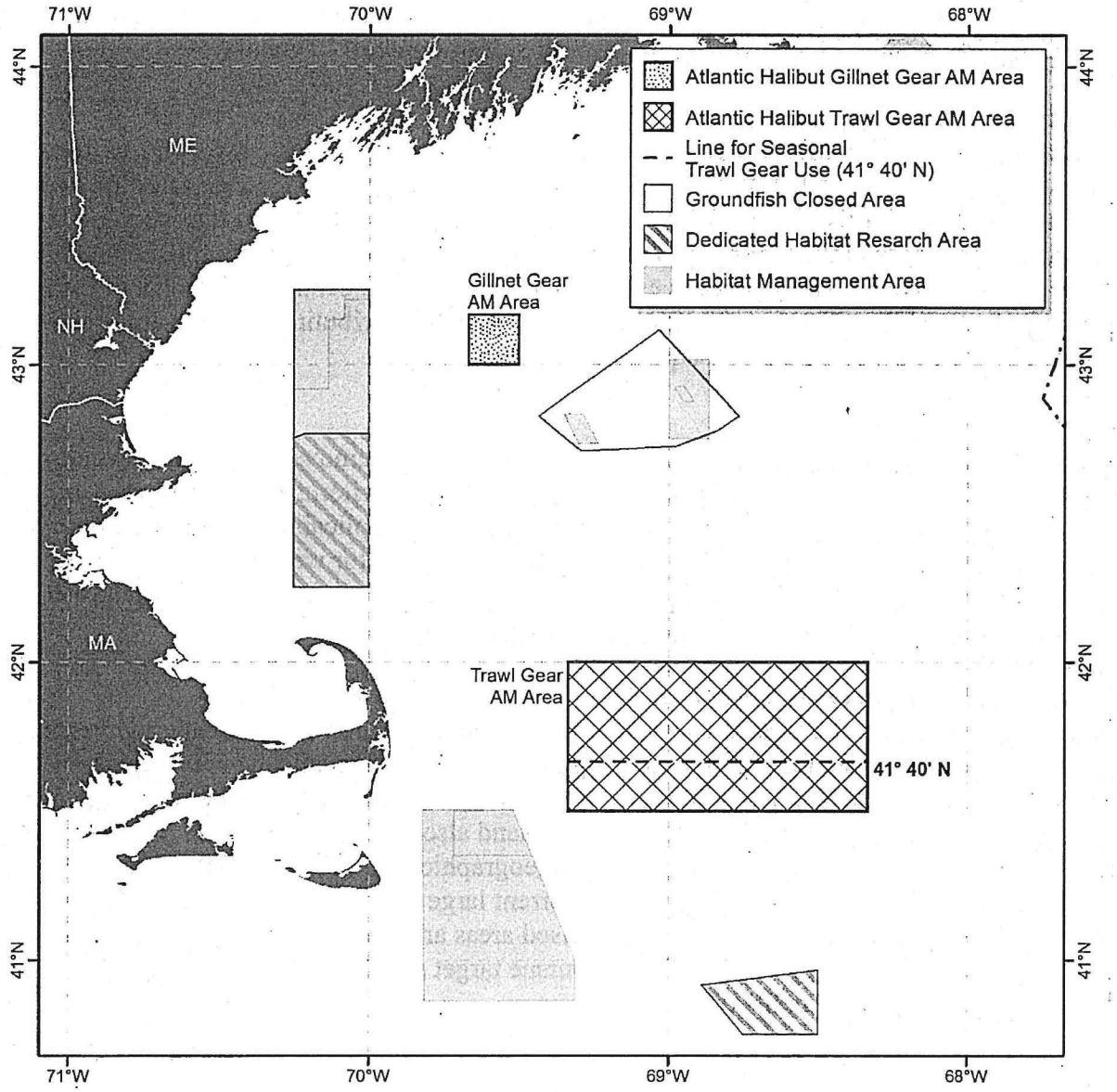
Stock	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
GB Cod	28%	34%	38%
GOM Cod	49%	33%	18%
SNE/MA Yellowtail	21%	28%	51%
CC/GOM Yellowtail	57%	26%	17%
American Plaice	74%	8%	18%
Witch Flounder	55%	20%	25%

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.

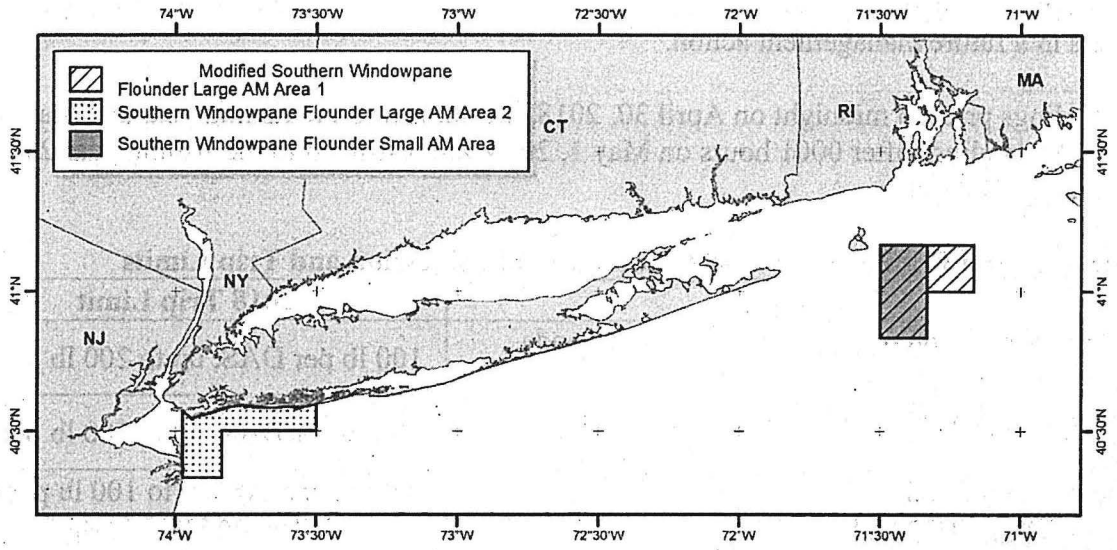
Reducing the Duration of the AM

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 l 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-Decemeber 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.

Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association
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Marshfield, MA 02050
www.stellwagenbank.org

April 23, 2018

Mr. Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930

RE: Comments on EFP Applications for Hook Gear Access to WGOM and Cashes Ledge Closure Areas

Dear Mr. Pentony:

On behalf of the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association ("SBCBA") we strongly oppose the EFP application by the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance for access into the Cashes Ledge and WGOM Closed Areas.

To allow five vessels to make 150 trips into the WGOMCA defies all logic and borders on the reckless. The WGOMCA was created in order to significantly reduce mortality on GOM cod. This area was identified, via 10-minute squares through commercial landings data, as the area of highest concentration of cod in the GOM. It was created in order to produce the largest mortality reduction from the smallest geographical area. Why would you allow commercial vessels back in this area to land 1,000 – 2,000 pounds of groundfish per trip that will obviously result in an unacceptable level of cod bycatch? This area currently holds large numbers of cod, as reported by the recreational and party/charter fleet during the 2017 season.

The FR notice states that "data indicates…that cod represented less than 10 percent of catch overall." What data is this? It can't be commercial data from the WGOMCA, because no commercial vessels have been in this area for years. If it is data from the recreational and for-hire fleets, then it would appear that the bycatch levels from recreational fishermen are much lower than the data that is currently being used to further restrict us would indicate.

The FR notice further states the applicants will use hook gear to "selectively target pollock and haddock while maintaining minimal bycatch." How will they accomplish this? They will be using the same basic gear and bait/jigs that the recreational fleet uses, yet we are told there is no way our sector can avoid cod bycatch in our fishery. They are able to "fish selectively" with hooks, and we are not? Furthermore, what

JC 5/1/18

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is the projected release mortality for juvenile, undersized cod that are "temporarily retained" for measuring purposes?

Based on GARFO's projection of a "less than 10%" bycatch of cod for a hook-and-line commercial fishery, it would only follow that the hook-and-line recreational fishery in this high cod concentration area would have the same low level of cod bycatch. So if that is the case, it would appear that the recreational sector should be able to catch at least 2,200 mt of groundfish without exceeding its cod sub-ACL. In 2017 the recreational sector caught 643 mt of haddock along with lesser amounts of other species, so it would follow that our sector should be granted an additional 1,000 – 1,500 mt of haddock (primarily) and other species that could be caught this year. Instead, GARFO will be cutting our 2018 haddock catch even further which will result in fewer other species landed since haddock is now the only viable target species for the recreational fleet.

Finally, to suggest that this application has some sort of scientific benefit or data collection underpinning is absurd and an affront to the recreational and for-hire sectors. The GOM is one of the most studied areas in the world in regard to benthic fishes, habitat, ecosystems, water quality, and so forth. Nobody buys the suggestion that commercial vessels fishing in the WGOMCA will somehow provide new and useful data. Furthermore, if this data was indeed truly needed, for-hire vessels that currently fish there would be the appropriate platforms to conduct the research without the need to extract 150 mt of cod, haddock and other species from this sensitive area.

It is obvious to many of us that this application is little more than a pilot program by the commercial fishery, designed to eventually open up cod protection areas to industrial-scale removals. There are currently plenty of pollock and haddock in other areas of the GOM that these folks can fish on. **To open up a discrete protection area that has historically held large concentrations of cod is totally counterproductive to sensible conservation and responsible fishery management.**

Sincerely,

Capt. Michael Pierdinock
SBCBA Board of Directors

cc: Mr. Chris Oliver, NMFS
Mr. Wilbur Ross, US DOC
Mr. Earl Comstock, US DOC

April 3, 2018
Mr. Michael Pentony-Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Greater Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Re: Comments on proposed 2018 groundfish recreational regulations in the Gulf of Maine and on George's Bank

Dear Mr. Pentony

I pray that you will take these comments seriously and revise the proposed regulations to a more fair and equitable set of rules.

Recommendations

1. The fishing regulations for cod and haddock should be the same for GOM and GB Recreational anglers.
2. The retention limit for cod should be five(5) per day at 24"and 15 haddock per day at 17" for both GOM and GB recreational anglers for the 2018 fishing year.

Justification

Both for-hire and private recreational anglers fishing in the GOM have been prohibited from retaining any cod for the last three years now because NMFS feels the cod stocks are not high enough in the GOM and that we have exceeded our totally arbitrary sub-ACL without us retaining even one cod among all of us. The NEFMC used totally different criteria to develop GB recreational regulations than was used to develop GOM regulations (see appendix D.-Federal Register dated 03/22/2018). Up to now, GB has not had an ACL or sub ACL. Recreational management measures for this stock have not been modified since 2010. For-hire anglers have enjoyed an unlimited retention limit of cod and haddock with no closed seasons and no closed areas, 22 inch size limit on cod . Private anglers have had a 10 cod limit at 22 inches, no haddock limit, no closed seasons, no closed areas and the estimated cod catch for the past 5 years has been increasing at 300% in recreational catch every year!!!

If the GOM cod population is truly low and in trouble then it is reckless to allow fishermen below the 42 degree line to devastate the cod with such high retention limit as 10 fish especially because we know that these fish in Rhode Island, southern Massachsetts, Connecticut and New York are spawning fish that have migrated there in the winter from GOM and this will further delay the recovery of the cod stocks in the GOM. (see appendix A, B & C, ie; (A.) Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2, dated 10/25/2017; (B).New Habitat Protections for young cod-New England/Mid Atlantic dated 1/3/2018; and (C.) Spatial Ecology of Atlantic Cod in the Gulf of Maine by Jake Kritzer and Steve Cadrin, January 2012)

If the GOM cod population is not critically in trouble and some "softening " of these draconian measures could be allowed , then GOM anglers should be allowed the same retention limit as the GB recreational anglers in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Southern Massachusetts and New York.

Background

I have been an active member of the RAP to the NEFMC for about 20 years now. It is so disappointing every year to complain to the Council and NMFS about the inherent data mistakes of MRIP estimates. Even NMFS and the Council admit to the uncertainty of MRIP data yet all of your catch models and

regulation projections for the GOM are based on this faulty information. (see references in recent "Federal Register-Fishing year 2018 Recreational Management Measures" dated 3/22/2018). Several members of the RAP and the public commented on the disparity and lack of conservation protection between the GOM and GB retention limits at the January 24, 2018 RAP meeting and the full Council meeting on January 31, 2018 to no avail. Many discrepancies were also voiced by RAP members and the public about the flawed MRIP data supporting the NMFS models. Many RAP members and the public feel their input is ignored by the Groundfish Committee and Council and that personal benefit has influenced some Council proposals.

I am founder and a former president of the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association. We have 125 active members and I think I speak for many of the for-hire captains in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine and many of the private recreational fishermen in this area as well. I have had a successful charter boat operation for the last 40 years. Like many of the for-hire operators and private anglers fishing in the GOM, cod has been the most sought after fish by most of our customers and many private recreational anglers. However, since the NMFs has shut down our retention of cod to zero in the GOM and for-hire boats south of the 42 degree latitude line have been allowed to retain 10 or more cod, we have lost most of our customers and they are now fishing in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York for cod. This is especially upsetting to us since studies have been shown that our cod in the GOM migrate back and forth below the 42 degree line and are spawning off Block Island, Coxes Ledge and other areas in the GB region (See Appendix A, B and C).

Because of the large population of juvenile cod in the inshore water of GB area (less than 120 meters) the discard rate will likely exceed 50% of all cod caught (See Appendix D., 2018 George's Bank Recreational Rules in the Federal Register dated 3/22/2018)

"In 2016, approximately 40% of the cod landings in GB were less than 24 inches." If 40% of the cod landed were 22 to 24 inches and many cod below 22 inches must have also been caught, I would conservatively guess that over 50 % of the cod to be caught in 2018 will have to be released dead and alive. What mortality figure is NMFS putting on these discards? GOM anglers supposedly have gone over their quota without even retaining one cod!! Sounds "fishy" to me!!

Over the years 2012-2016, the George's Bank recreational catch has risen 300% per year. If it was 477.5 mt in 2016, what will it be in 2018...1432.5 mt....4297.5 mt? How can NMFS continue to allow GB recreational fishermen to catch all these cod while not giving GOM recreational fishermen any fish. This is totally WRONG.

I have been talking with Dr. Kevin Stokesburg of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth who has been conducting his MCAST open-end trawl surveys using sophisticated cameras to identify and count groundfish on Stellwagen Bank, Jeffery's Ledge and other GOM waters and his data on current cod stocks contradicts the results of the NOAA Trawls in the GOM. This is not a game. This is my livelihood and that of hundreds of other GOM for-hire charter captains and their families and employees and the hundreds of other businesses that rely on these customers that have now gone to competitor for-hire boats below the 42 degree line.

The NEFMC uses different rules to measure the catch of GOM recreational boats vs GB recreational boats. The most obvious difference is that MRIP does not survey GB for-hire or private recreational boats in January and February when GB recreational boats are concentrating on winter cod trips because most other fish are absent during this time. (See Appendix F., articles and advertisements in

the Fisherman Magazine during winter months of December, January, February, March and April) Most of these boats take trips for cod 7 days per week weather permitting. No MRIP data for January and February means estimates of cod catch for GB were grossly underestimated even though their recreational cod catch estimates have increased 300% every year for the last five years. If NMFS is not allowing GOM recreational anglers any cod and a reduced bag limit of 12 haddock and allows GB recreational anglers to take 10 cod per day and unlimited haddock and no closed season on either, the NEFMC and NMFS are not doing their jobs and someone is getting special treatment.

In the announcement of comments on proposed rule framework 57 it claims that increases in the 2018 quotas compared to 2017 will increase by 139% for GB cod and 41% for GOM cod and this will result in $9 million in additional gross revenues for this fishing year compared with last year. Yet in the last 3 years half (1/2) of the GOM for-hire business have gone out and the rest of us are hanging on a cliff with the zero cod retention limit while the GB for-hire boats are prospering for our misfortune.

Director Pentony, please help us survive this disaster. According to the proposed framework 57 announcement you have the authority to now change the proposed recreational measures for 2018 and 2019. Please help us stay in business and support our families.

I am recommending a five (5) cod retention limit per day and 15 haddock retention limit for both the GOM recreational anglers and the GB recreational anglers for the 2018 fishing year.

Since we know cod are spawning in winter months in southern New England waters and there is a high juvenile population and no closed season or closed areas that are enforced in the GB area perhaps some consideration should be made to protect these spawning and juvenile fish.

Please let me know your feelings on these comments.

Thank-you.

Captain Tom DePersia
Bigfish II Sportfishing Charters
PO Box 238
Marshfield Hills, MA 02051

Cc:
John Quinn-NEFMC
Tom Nies-NEFMC
Governor Charlie Baker- MA.
David Pierce-Director DMF-MA
Michael Pierdinock-RFA
Barry Gibson-RFA
Dave Waldrip-SBCBA

APPENDIX A.

FINAL

Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2

Volume 2: EFH and HAPC Designation Alternatives and Environmental Impacts

Amendment 14 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP
Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP
Amendment 4 to the Monkfish FMP
Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Herring FMP
Amendment 2 to the Red Crab FMP Amendment 2 to the Skate FMP Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP

Including a
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared by the
New England Fishery Management Council In cooperation with the
National Marine Fisheries Service

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Updated October 25 2017

2.2.1.3 Atlantic cod

The proposed EFH maps for Atlantic cod eggs and larvae are based on the relative abundance of juvenile cod during 1968-2005 in the fall and spring NMFS trawl surveys at the 90th percentile catch level, and the relative abundance of eggs and larvae during 1978-1987 in the NMFS MARMAP ichthyoplankton surveys at the 90th percentile area level. The proposed maps also include ten minute squares in state waters that met the 10% or more frequency of occurrence criterion for juvenile cod, those bays and estuaries identified by the ELMR program where Atlantic cod eggs or larvae were "common" or "abundant," (see Table 19). These egg and larval designations were referred to as Alternative 2E in the Phase 1 DEIS.[14] The proposed new EFH maps for Atlantic cod eggs and larvae extend further south than the no action maps, which are limited by the distribution of juvenile cod and do not include any area south of southern New England. The new maps also include Nantucket Sound and more areas along the Maine coast than were included in the original maps.

The proposed EFH maps for juvenile and adult Atlantic cod within the NMFS trawl survey area were developed using a GIS depiction of preferred depth and bottom temperature ranges that were determined from graphical 1963-2003 spring and fall NMFS trawl survey data in Lough (2005). They are also based on average catch per tow data in ten minute squares of latitude and longitude in the 1968-2005 spring and fall NMFS trawl surveys mapped at the 90th percentile of catch level and include inshore areas where juveniles or adults were caught in 10% or more of tows made in individual ten minute squares during state trawl surveys, and ELMR information for coastal bays and estuaries. Both maps include ten minute squares along the Maine coast that were either inadequately surveyed (fewer than four tows) or were "filled in" based on input from industry members on the Habitat Committee. The adult map also includes historical cod spawning grounds in coastal Gulf of Maine waters.[15] The juvenile and adult designations were referred to as Alternative 3E in the Phase 1 DEIS.[16]

The proposed new juvenile map extends over a similar geographic area as the no action map, but only includes coastal waters in the Gulf of Maine shallower than 120 meters. Considerably more area in southern New England (e.g., Nantucket Sound) and on the southern portion of Georges Bank has been added. A few scattered ten minute squares have also been added in the Mid-Atlantic. The proposed EFH map for adult cod is also more limited to the shallower portion of the Gulf of Maine (<160 meters) than the no action map. It excludes coastal waters off New Jersey and Delaware that were added to the original maps because of their historical importance

[14] The 2E map for cod eggs in the DEIS is not accurate: a number of ten minute squares that were not in either of the input data sets were inadvertently filled in.

[15] Ten minute squares along the Maine and New Hampshire coasts that overlap with historically important spawning grounds, as reported by Ames (2002), were added to the proposed adult EFH map; they were also added to the status quo map in 1998.

[16] In both of the maps that were approved for the DEIS in 2007 areas of historical importance that were not represented by the survey data were "filled in" by the Council's Habitat Committee. Also, the adult designation that was approved in 2007 was based on the 75th percentile of the NMFS survey data and did not include continental shelf waters in the Mid-Atlantic that are included in the new 90th percentile map that was approved by the Habitat Committee in 2011.

for adult cod that migrate (or used to) that far south in the winter. Compared with the maps in the DEIS, a few ten minute squares in the outer Gulf of Maine that do not conform to the maximum depth identified as EFH for juvenile and adult cod have been removed. The most significant change in the proposed adult map is the extension of EFH on to the southern portion of Georges Bank and westward on the continental shelf into the Mid-Atlantic region.

The proposed new text descriptions include more detailed information on the wide variety of substrates utilized by juvenile and adult cod than are in the no action descriptions. The no action descriptions refer only to cobble or gravel, for juveniles, and rocks, pebbles, or gravel for adults; the new designations also identify biogenic features of benthic habitats (e.g., submerged aquatic vegetation and attached epifauna) that are essential for recently settled young-of-the-year juvenile cod.[17] Another important component of the proposed new EFH designation for juvenile cod is a depth range that specifically includes the intertidal zone and extends into deeper water (120 meters vs. 75 meters in the no action description). As is true for the other managed species included in this amendment, the proposed new EFH text descriptions are much more consistent with the maps.

Text descriptions:

Essential fish habitat for Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) is designated anywhere within the geographic areas that are shown in Table 19 and the following maps which exhibit the environmental conditions defined in the text descriptions.

Eggs: Pelagic habitats in the Gulf of Maine, on Georges Bank, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, as shown on Map 38, and in the high salinity zones of the bays and estuaries listed in Table 19.

Larvae: Pelagic habitats in the Gulf of Maine, on Georges Bank, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, as shown on Map 39, and in the high salinity zones of the bays and estuaries listed in Table 19.

Juveniles: Intertidal and sub-tidal benthic habitats in the Gulf of Maine, southern New England, and on Georges Bank, to a maximum depth of 120 meters (see Map 40), including high salinity zones in the bays and estuaries listed in Table 19. Structurally-complex habitats, including eelgrass, mixed sand and gravel, and rocky habitats (gravel pavements, cobble, and boulder) with and without attached macroalgae and emergent epifauna, are essential habitats for juvenile cod. In inshore waters, young-of-the-year juveniles prefer gravel and cobble habitats and eelgrass beds after settlement, but in the absence of predators also utilize adjacent un-vegetated sandy habitats for feeding. Survival rates for young-of-the-year cod are higher in more structured rocky habitats than in flat sand or eelgrass; growth rates are higher in eelgrass. Older juveniles move into deeper water and are associated with gravel, cobble, and boulder habitats, particularly those with attached organisms. Gravel is a preferred substrate for young-of-the-year juveniles on Georges Bank and they have also been observed along the small boulders and cobble margins of rocky reefs in the Gulf of Maine.

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[17] The proposed juvenile cod text description is the only one that includes some level 3 information describing habitats where growth and survival are high for the young-of-the-year.

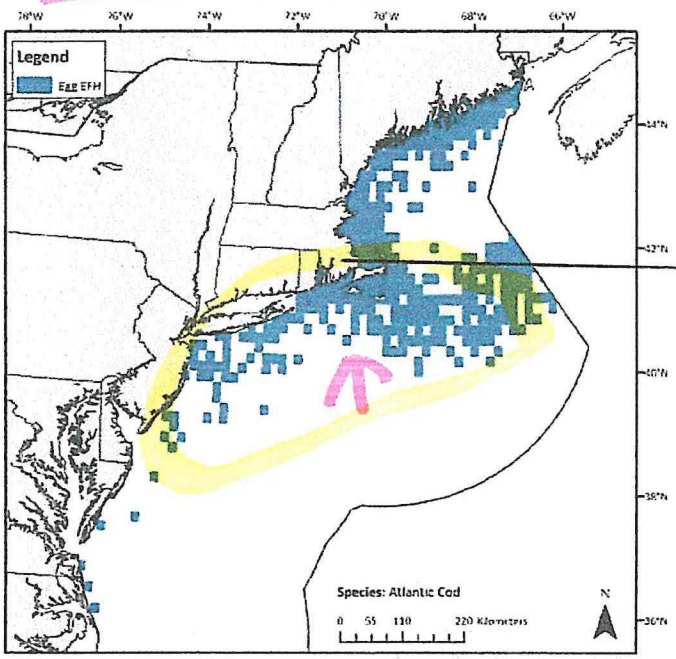
Adults: Sub-tidal benthic habitats in the Gulf of Maine, south of Cape Cod, and on Georges Bank, between 30 and 160 meters (see Map 41), including high salinity zones in the bays and estuaries listed in Table 19. Structurally complex hard bottom habitats composed of gravel, cobble, and boulder substrates with and without emergent epifauna and macroalgae are essential habitats for adult cod. Adult cod are also found on sandy substrates and frequent deeper slopes of ledges along shore. South of Cape Cod, spawning occurs in nearshore areas and on the continental shelf, usually in depths less than 70 meters.

Table 19 – Atlantic cod EFH designation for estuaries and embayments.

Estuaries and Embayments	Eggs	Larvae	Juveniles	Adults
Passamaquoddy Bay		S	S	S
Englishman/Machias Bay	S	S	S	S
Narraguagus Bay	S	S	S	S
Blue Hill Bay	S	S	S	S
Penobscot Bay		S	S	S
Muscongus Bay			S	S
Damariscotta River			S	S
Sheepscot River	S	S	S	S
Kennebec / Androscoggin			S	S
Casco Bay	S	S	S	S
Saco Bay	S	S	S	S
Great Bay	S	S		
Hampton Harbor*	S	S		
Plum Island Sound*	S	S		
Massachusetts Bay	S	S	S	S
Boston Harbor	S	S	S,M	S,M
Cape Cod Bay	S	S	S	S
Buzzards Bay	S	S	S	S

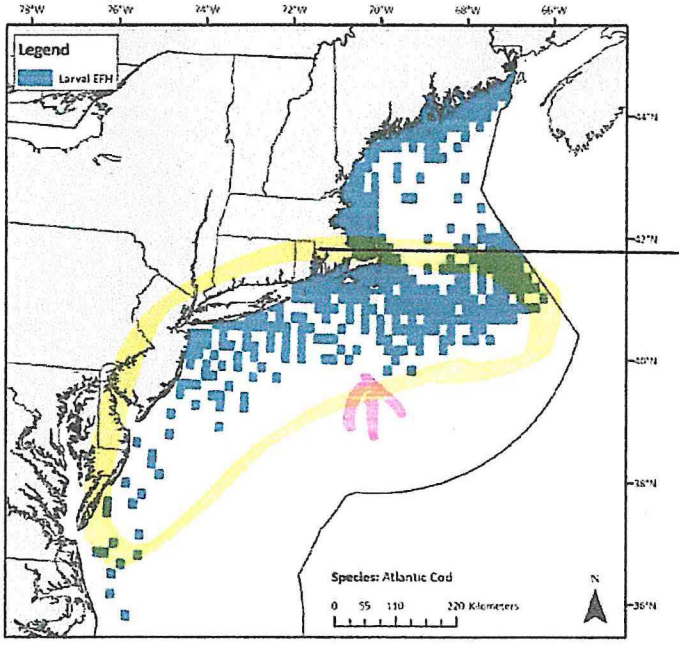
S ≡ The EFH designation for this species includes the seawater salinity zone of this bay or estuary (salinity > 25.0‰).
M ≡ The EFH designation for this species includes the mixing water / brackish salinity zone of this bay or estuary (0.5 < salinity < 25.0‰).
** = This water body was not included in the original ELMR reports, but it was included in the salinity zone maps that were appended to all the relevant fishery management plans and amendments which implemented the no action EFH designations; EFH designations were inferred in these locations if there were ELMR-based designations in the adjacent north and south locations.*

Map 38 – Atlantic cod egg EFH.



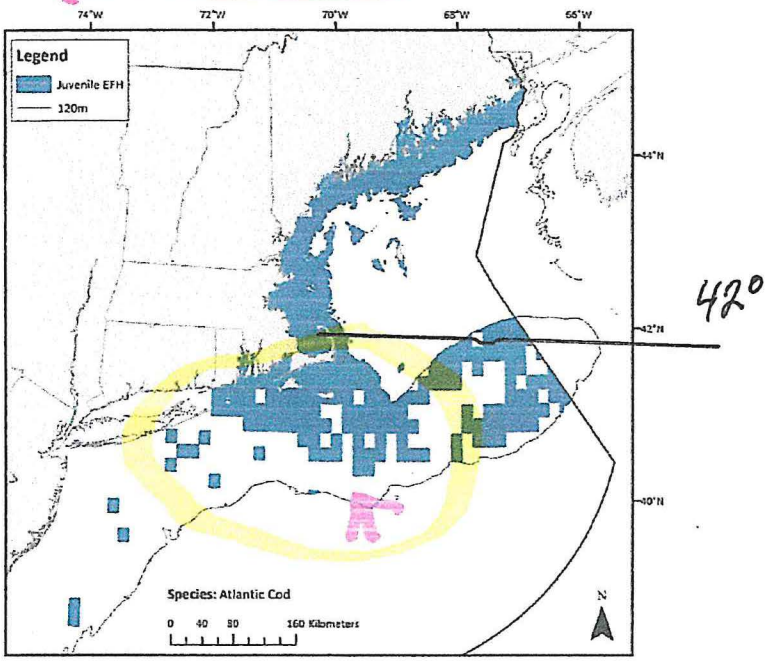
42°

Map 39 – Atlantic cod larval EFH.



42°

Map 40 – Atlantic cod juvenile EFH.



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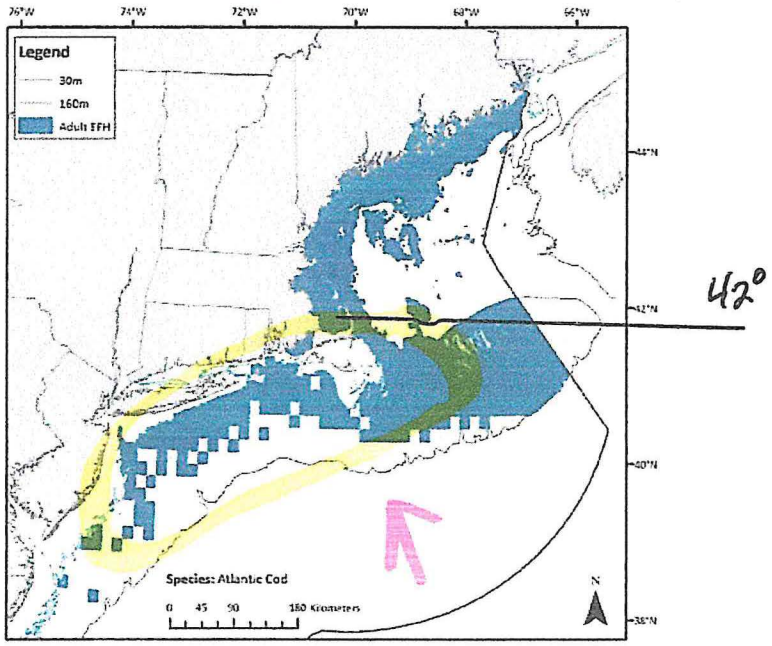
Map 41 – Atlantic cod adult EFH.



42°

From: NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region <garfo.noaafisheries@public.govdelivery.com>
To: hugetuna <hugetuna@aol.com>
Subject: New Habitat Protections for Young Cod
Date: Wed, Mar 21, 2018 2:37 pm

APPENDIX B.

NOAA FISHERIES

New England/Mid-Atlantic

Habitat Conservation March 21, 2018

New Habitat Protections for Young Cod

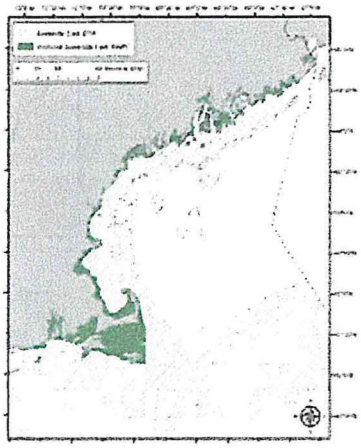
A small cod shelters near a boulder on the seafloor. Credit: Long Island Sound Resource Center

By Alison Verkade, Habitat Conservation Division

For New Englanders, Atlantic cod is not just a fish. The nearly five-foot carved Sacred Cod that hangs in the Massachusetts State House is testament to the cod's place in our culture and history. But, in recent years, Atlantic cod stocks in our region have declined dramatically. In order to bring them back, we have to protect not only the fish, but their habitats as well.

NOAA Fisheries works with regional fishery management councils to identify "Essential Fish Habitat" for all the species of fish that we manage. These areas are necessary for fish to breed, grow, feed, and develop and get special attention under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. As part of the Omnibus Habitat amendment developed by the New England Fishery Management Council, we recently designated a new Habitat Areas of Particular Concern for juvenile cod that went into effect January 3, 2018.

Protecting Important Habitat for the Sacred Cod



At first glance, the new "Habitat Areas of Particular Concern" (HAPC) for cod appears to cover all coastal waters from Maine to Rhode Island, out to 20 meters in depth. But, the juvenile cod Essential Fish Habitat text description limits the HAPC application to areas of rocky or vegetated habitats, and sandy areas for feeding next to these habitats.

While these habitats are not rare in the Gulf of Maine, they need special protection for three reasons:

- They provide young-of-the-year and year-old cod shelter from predators and important feeding habitat.
- They are particularly sensitive to human activities.
- They are also important habitats for many other fish.

Read the rest of the story on our website.

Questions? Contact Jennifer Goebel, Regional Office, at 978-281-9175

APPENDIX C.

Spatial Ecology of Atlantic Cod in the Gulf of Maine

Discussion paper

Jake Kritzer and Steve Cadrin

New England Fishery Management Council, Scientific and Statistical Committee

January 2012

Introduction

The New England groundfish fishery faces a socio-economic, political and, potentially, environmental crisis in response to the most recent Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod stock assessment (NEFSC 2011). The previous assessment in 2008 concluded that overfishing was not taking place, and the stock was on a trajectory to be fully rebuilt by 2014 (NEFSC 2008). The most recent assessment concludes that the stock is severely overfished (approx. 20% of B_{MSY}), experiencing overfishing (approx. 5 times F_{MSY}; NEFSC 2011), and cannot rebuild by 2014 even if F=0. Fishermen, on the other hand, report abundant cod, many large cod, and high catch rates, none of which seems to be consistent with a severely depleted stock.

In order to ensure that the outcomes are accurately predictable before catch limits are substantially reduced, many questions have been raised about decisions made during the assessment process. By most accounts, the assessment process was thorough and the review panel approved the approaches taken. However, given the gravity of the situation, a closer look at each decision and their cumulative effects is warranted. The investment of time, expertise and other resources into our scientific basis for management should be commensurate with the status of the stock, its value (socio-economic and ecological), and therefore the implications of either overfishing or drastic cuts in quotas. Compared to many, the 2011 benchmark assessment for GOM cod was data-rich, but the investment of time and other resources was typical for the SAW/SARC process. In light of the outcomes, not to mention their stark contrast from the previous assessment, stepping back for a deeper examination of the assessment process, as well as other key issues seems warranted.

Perhaps chief among the scientific issues not addressed during the assessment process are a series of questions about the spatial structure and dynamics of cod, questions which warrant a sharper focus as soon as possible. The benefits of sharper scientific focus will not always outweigh the costs, depending upon the attributes of both the stock and fishery. However, the value of GOM cod and the imminent crisis justifies further investigation. Therefore, this paper considers data and theory on the spatial ecology of GOM cod, and implications of alternative hypotheses to our status quo assumptions. This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive review, nor does it aim to reach conclusions on the issues addressed. Rather, the goal is to highlight key issues worthy of greater consideration and to help chart a path forward. The discussion herein is restricted primarily to the realms of population biology and population ecology. Aspects of behavioral ecology and ecosystem ecology (e.g., habitat, oceanographic and trophic effects) are alluded to briefly, but these and other disciplines also represent areas for deeper examination and understanding of cod stock dynamics.

Spatial assumptions underlying assessment models

Pertinent spatial questions fall within one of two overarching categories. The first are those related to our working definitions of cod stocks and spatial management units. A fundamental assumption of most assessment models is that the model describes a 'closed' population, with negligible immigration into and emigration from the stock area, either by movement of post-settlement individuals or dispersal of larvae (i.e., the "unit stock" assumption; Hilborn and Walters 1992). Several lines of evidence suggest that cod stock boundaries need to be reconsidered.

Even if the stock boundaries are defined appropriately, it is also important to understand the internal spatial structure of the stock. Methot and Punt (2004) highlight the following key assumptions regarding spatial pattern and process that underlie most stock assessment models:

> "Most fisheries stock assessments are based on the assumption that the fishery or the fish population is distributed homogeneously or freely mixes across the region being assessed. Any local patterns in density, age structure, or mortality are assumed to be ephemeral and to diffuse quickly throughout the population."

The authors raise this important point in the context of violations of the assumptions introduced by implementation of marine protected areas (MPAs) within the stock area, and use simulation modeling to illustrate the biases in assessment outcomes that can result. Possible effects of MPAs on assessment outcomes are relevant to GOM cod as well, given the presence of the Western Gulf of Maine (WGOM) and Cache's Ledge closed areas within the stock area, and quantifying those effects might change our perception of the stock. Or, perhaps more significantly, accounting for natural spatial variation and structure might result in a very different picture.

Concerns about stock structure assumptions that underlying New England fisheries are not new. In April 2009, a workshop brought together researchers and stakeholders to review the most recent findings and chart a path forward in terms of both science and management (Mendelson 2009), and a follow-up workshop in June 2011 built on the goals, themes and conclusions of the first (Feeney and La Valley 2011). At both workshops, Atlantic cod was the focus of more research and discussion than any other species, and is the species for which we probably have the richest understanding of spatial structure in the Northwest Atlantic. In fact, the New England Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended investigation of cod stock structure in two recent reports.

In November 2010, the SSC identified a research priority that included, "Improve knowledge on stock definition, stock movements, mixing, and migration through tagging studies, DNA markers, morphological characteristics and other means, focusing on: (a) short- and long-term movements, and (b) habitat use in relation to broad scale movements, with priority for monkfish, cod, pollock, silver hake and herring."

When asked for its advice on terms of reference for the GOM cod assessment (SSC 2011), the SSC recommended:

1. If time permits, SAW53 on Gulf of Maine cod should consider information on the small scale distribution of cod in the Gulf of Maine and advise on its management implications,
2. The Plan Development Team should take account of information on the small scale distribution of cod for both the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank Management Units for future implementation or amendments of the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan,
3. There should be a comprehensive evaluation of scientific information on cod population structure and its management implications, including the possibility of revising management units. This evaluation should occur in time to be taken into account in the next management cycle, beginning with the 2014 fishing year.

Only the first recommendation was directed at the SAW 53 process itself, and it was proposed to be optional in light of the enormity of a benchmark assessment, and the limited time and competing demands of the assessment team. Consequently, and perhaps not surprisingly, the issue received little consideration. Indeed, very few assessments reconsider stock boundaries once they are drawn, incorporate sub-structure, or consider the implications of either omission or both. The implicit

assumption is that the assessment is robust to violations of those assumptions, or that the uncertainty introduced is absorbed into the ABC buffer.

Some degree of spatial structure is the norm rather than the exception for most marine fish populations, but simplifications are perhaps warranted in many cases due to the complications that revising boundaries or incorporating sub-structure introduces for data collection, modeling and management. However, when the socio-economic or ecological significance of a given stock, and therefore the consequences of overfishing or drastic reductions in quotas, is sufficiently high, a more thorough examination and a greater investment of resources are warranted. Specifically, a more detailed scientific evaluation is in order to achieve the highest level of accuracy possible and guard against severe socio-economic and ecological impacts.

Spatial patterns in cod distribution and abundance

In some ways, science and industry are not reporting fundamentally different perceptions of GOM cod abundance. The vast majority of GOM cod harvest comes from the WGOM, and patterns of abundance in that area primarily shape fishermen's perceptions. There, cod consistently exhibit higher density than areas adjacent to the coast of Maine, the Scotian Shelf, or George's Bank (Fig. 1, 2). This pattern is consistent among periods of comparatively high (1970s), low (1990s) and intermediate (1980s, 2000s) abundance.

In periods of low to intermediate abundance in particular, the vast majority of the stock appears to be concentrated within the WGOM region. The assessment acknowledges this spatial pattern briefly, describing it as a "contraction" of the population (NEFSC 2011). Further explanation or a precise definition of contraction are absent, as are possible causal mechanisms. Contraction seems to imply movement of fish from peripheral areas to the WGOM center of mass, presumably in responses to changes in density or other environmental changes. Alternatively, areas outside the WGOM might represent separate stocks or sub-stocks that have been lost and not recovered, rather than areas abandoned by fish for more favorable habitat. These questions are critical because the causal mechanisms should shape our goals, expectations and management strategies, and also because such processes can represent violations of assumptions in the assessment model.

Stock boundaries

Although not evident from distribution and abundance data alone, other data call into question the assumption that our current stock boundaries do in fact capture unit stocks. This potential violation could have important implications for model outcomes and management responses.

Kovach et al. (2010) report genetic evidence for biological stocks of cod in U.S. waters that differ from the current management units (Fig. 3). The authors propose a northern spawning stock inhabiting coastal waters from Casco Bay to Massachusetts Bay, and overlapping with a southern spawning stock extending from Great Bay around Cape Cod into waters of the northern Mid-Atlantic Bight off southern New England. This southern stock includes areas of western George's Bank, and lies adjacent to a third stock covering the majority of George's Bank. Tallack (2009) studied growth of cod across the same area studied by Kovach et al. (2010) and found that parameter estimates were similar between the WGOM and Cape Cod/Southern New England regions, providing life history evidence in support of the proposed genetic stock units. Earlier, Begg et al. (1999) examined long-term growth data and found persistent evidence for a division between Eastern George's Bank and Western George's Bank.

The most recent Gulf of Maine cod stock assessment states that, "Recent reviews of historical and contemporary tagging studies (O'Brien et al. 2005; Tallack 2007; Loehrke and Cadrin 2007) suggest that while there is movement of fish between the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank stocks, the degree of mixing is limited" (NEFSC 2011). However, estimates of movement rates reported in the 2008 Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting suggest extensive movement (Fig. 4; Miller and Tallack 2007). The review of tagging information in GARM III (Loehrke and Cadrin 2007) stated that,

> "Previous tagging literature documents similar pathways of movement between stock areas, but the frequency of residence and movement are different among studies. Most cod tagging was not designed to evaluate movement rates, and the proportional recaptures may not reflect changes in movement rates. Current stock boundaries for cod off New England are primarily based on an operational definition (e.g., demographic patterns) and practical limitations of monitoring fisheries (e.g., mixed-stock fishing trips). However, advancement of methods for exploring spatial population structure (genetics, otolith microstructure and chemistry, electronic tags, spatial analysis) as well as greater spatial resolution in fishery data suggest that investigation of stock structure should continue toward the objective of improving stock definitions for population modeling and stock assessment."

Similarly, in a review of recent tagging information, Tallack et al. (2009), recommend that,

> "Recent and historical cod tagging data (and genetic data) suggest substantial movements across current stock boundaries and considerable heterogeneity within current management units. Best available science indicates the need to re-visit, re-analyze and re-assess the stock management boundaries; this task will be best achieved by an interdisciplinary team."

If, rather than assessing and managing a GOM-wide stock we should be defining multiple stocks, including one that spans the WGOM, waters off Cape Cod and Western George's Bank, and Nantucket Shoals, then the area of higher cod density in the WGOM would no longer be a somewhat anomalous and geographically small portion within an otherwise depleted GOM stock area. Instead, this area would be a significant portion of a stock area with unknown status, but likely of lesser concern than the GOM at large.

The studies of both Kovach et al. (2010) and Tallack (2009) did not include Downeast Maine, the central Gulf of Maine, or the Scotian Shelf. Downeast Maine in particular has seen dramatic declines and almost no recovery of cod through time (Fig. 1, 2). The Downeast Initiative has recognized the fundamentally different state of cod in the region, and Ames (2010) has proposed an ecosystem recovery plan in response. An early examination of cod stock structure in U.S. waters based on rates of parasite infestation documented a sharp break at 44°N latitude, which is the approximate southern extent of the Downeast region (Sherman and Wise 1961; Fig. 5), perhaps supporting the hypothesis that the region represents a separate stock.

More recently, an analysis to identify major ecosystem planning areas also suggested that at least part of the Downeast region is ecologically distinct from rest of the Gulf of Maine and more closely aligned with the Scotian Shelf (SSC 2010; Fig. 6). However, this analysis did not identify the linkage between the WGOM and Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England suggested by the genetic and tagging data. Moreover, the Downeast/Scotian Shelf unit does not reach Casco Bay or even Penobscot Bay, areas

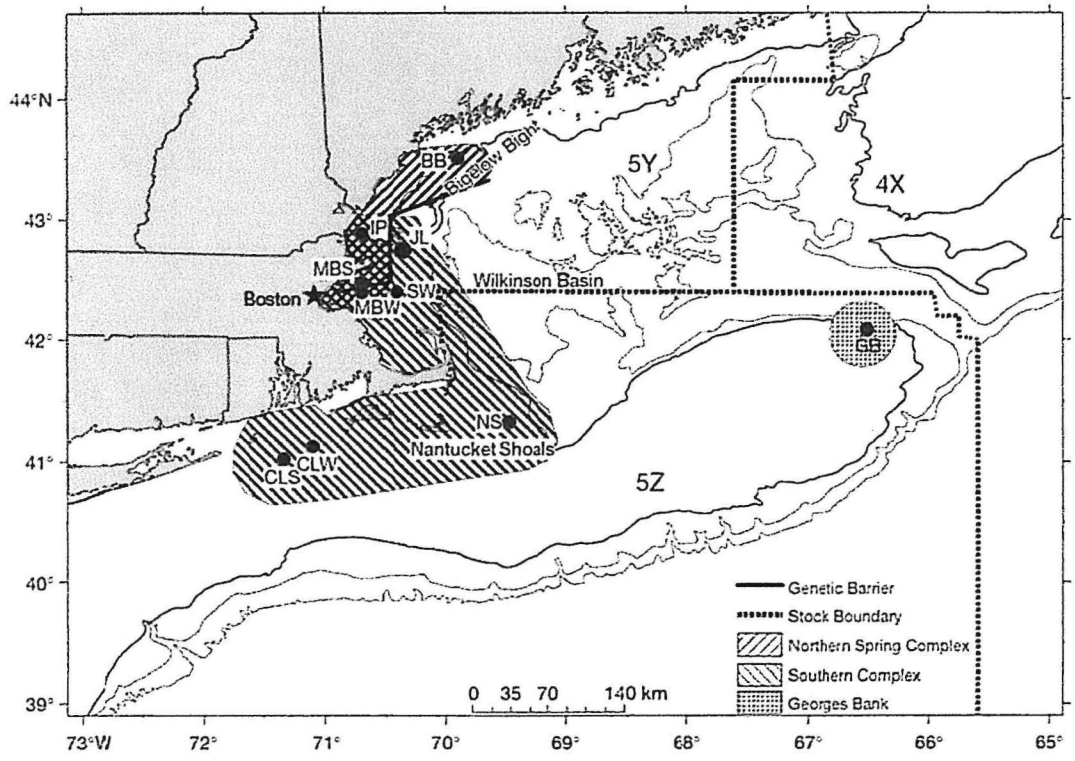


Figure 3. Current boundaries of Atlantic cod stocks in U.S. waters, and proposed biological stock units based on population genetic structure. Sampling locations for the genetic analysis are marked and labeled. (from Kovach et al. 2010)

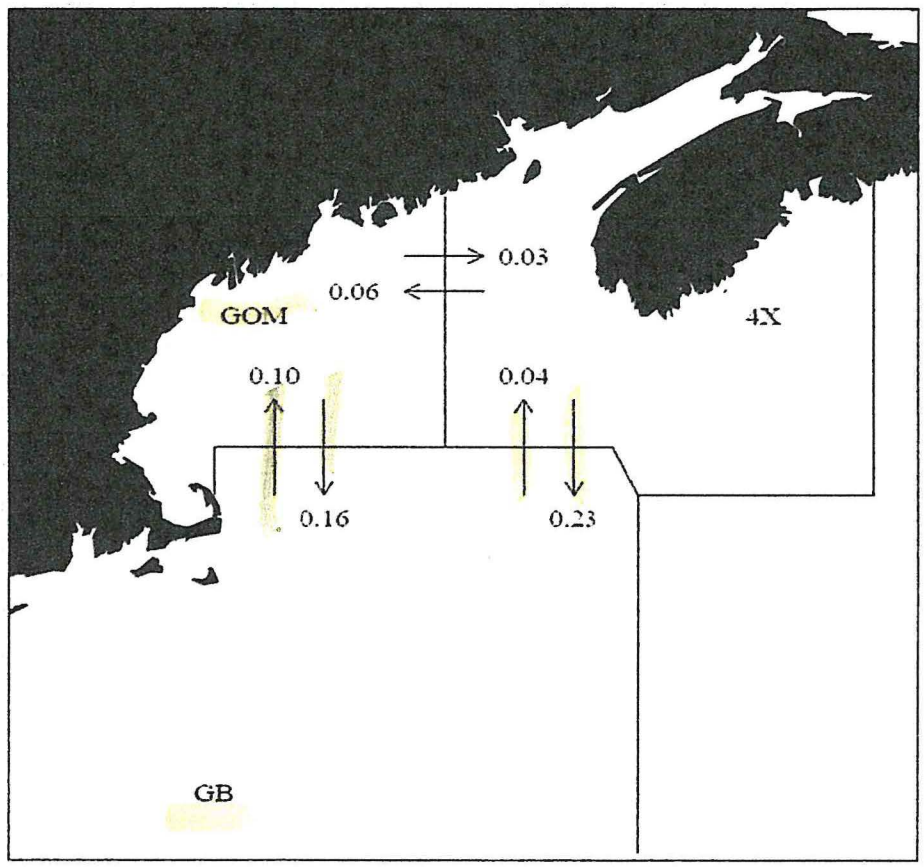


Figure 4. Regional estimates of instantaneous migration rates of Atlantic cod among management units. (from Miller and Tallack 2007)

LEGAL STATUS

APPENDIX D.

LEGAL STATUS

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Management Measures

A Proposed Rule by the on

This document has a comment period that ends in 14 days. (04/06/2018)

Read the

Federal Register 2018 Recreational Measures GOM + GB

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Printed version:
PDF (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-03-22/pdf/2018-05811.pdf)

Publication Date:
03/22/2018 (/documents/2018/03/22)

Agencies:
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/national-oceanic-and-atmospheric-administration)

Dates:
Comments must be received by April 6, 2018.

Comments Close:
04/06/2018

Document Type:
Proposed Rule

Document Citation:
83 FR 12551

Page:
12551-12559 (9 pages)

CFR:
50 CFR 648

Agency/Docket Number:
Docket No. 180201108-8261-01

RIN:
0648-BH55

Document Number:
2018-05811

DOCUMENT DETAILS

PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

AGENCY:

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION:

Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY:

NMFS proposes to set 2018 recreational management measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock and Georges Bank cod. This action is necessary to respond to updated catch and other scientific information. The proposed measures are intended to ensure the recreational fishery achieves, but does not exceed, its fishing year 2018 catch limits.

DATES:

Comments must be received by April 6, 2018.

ADDRESSES:

You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2018-0040, by either of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to *www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0040 (http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0040)*

2. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and

3. Enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Submit written comments to: Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on the Fishing Year 2018 Groundfish Recreational Measures."

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on *www.regulations.gov (http://www.regulations.gov)* without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

Copies of the analyses supporting this rulemaking, including the Framework Adjustment 57 environmental assessment (EA) prepared by the New England Fishery Management Council, and draft supplemental EA to Framework Adjustment 57 prepared by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and Northeast Fisheries Science Center, are available from: Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. The supporting documents are also

accessible via the internet at: *http://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/northeast-multispecies (http://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/northeast-multispecies)* or *http://www.regulations.gov (http://www.regulations.gov)*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Emily Keiley, Fishery Management Specialist, phone: 978-281-9116; email: *Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov (mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov)*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Table of Contents

Background

Proposed Gulf of Maine Recreational Management Measures for Fishing Year 2018

The recreational fishery for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock is managed under the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The FMP sets sub-annual catch limits (sub-ACL) for the recreational fishery for each fishing year for GOM cod and haddock. These sub-ACLs are a portion of the overall catch limit for each stock. The multispecies fishery opens on May 1 each year and runs through April 30 of the following calendar year. The FMP also includes recreational accountability measures (AM) to prevent the recreational sub-ACLs from being exceeded, or to correct the cause of an overage if one occurs.

The proactive AM provision in the FMP requires the Regional Administrator, in consultation with the New England Fishery Management Council, to develop recreational management measures for the upcoming fishing year to ensure that the recreational sub-ACL is achieved, but not exceeded. The provisions authorizing this action can be found in § 648.89(f)(3) of the FMP's implementing regulations.

Start Printed Page 12552

For fishing year 2017, the recreational sub-ACL for GOM cod remained the same as 2016, and the recreational sub-ACL for GOM haddock increased 25 percent. In order to reduce cod catch and prevent subsequent overages, and because haddock management measures affect cod catch, both cod and haddock management measures were more conservative in 2017. This is because in 2016 cod catch increased more than predicted and the recreational sub-ACL was exceeded by 92 percent. Preliminary estimates of 2017 recreational GOM cod catch exceed the sub-ACL by 55 percent despite the more conservative management measures. Estimates of 2017 GOM haddock catch are less than half of the sub-ACL.

According to the 2017 stock assessments, the GOM cod and haddock stocks are increasing, although cod remains overfished and subject to a rebuilding plan. Framework Adjustment 57, a concurrent action, proposes 2018 ACLs based on the updated assessments. For 2018, the proposed haddock sub-ACL increases by 290 percent, from 1,160 mt to 3,358 mt, and the proposed cod sub-ACL increases from 157 to 220 mt. The recreational sub-ACLs are based on a fixed percentage of the total commercial ACLs. This action sets recreational management measures designed to achieve, but not exceed the recreational sub-ACLs.

As specified in Table 1, compared to the 2017 catch, the 2018 sub-ACLs would allow for a 78-percent increase in haddock catch, but would require an 11-percent reduction in cod catch. Status quo measures are projected to result in cod catch above the sub-ACL, and haddock catch below the sub-ACL. Because 2018 catch of cod under the status quo measures is projected to be above the cod sub-ACL, we are required, in consultation with the Council, to revise the GOM recreational measures for fishing year 2018.

Table 1—Fishing Year 2017 Catch Compared to Fishing Year 2017 and 2018 Sub-ACLs

GOM stock	Estimated 2017 catch (mt)	2017 sub-ACL (mt)	Percent of FY 2017 sub-ACL caught	2018 sub-ACL (mt)	Change in 2017 catch to reach 2018 sub-ACL (percent)
Cod	244	157	155	220	−11
Haddock	740	1,160	64	3,358	78

Proposed Measures

We consulted with the Council and its Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) in January 2018. The RAP and Council recommended status quo measures for GOM cod and haddock. Status quo measures are projected to constrain the catch of cod to the sub-ACL only if the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prohibits recreational anglers in state waters from retaining GOM cod. For-hire vessels in Massachusetts are prohibited from fishing for cod. Alternatively, the Council recommended implementing different measures for the private angler and for-hire components of the fishery if the Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not prohibit the possession of cod. Recent catch information suggests the for-hire fleet has been able to avoid cod bycatch when fishing for haddock more effectively than private anglers. As a result, the Council determined separate measures for each fleet would more effectively achieve the necessary cod reductions. The addition of a May closure for private anglers, combined with a reduction of the for-hire haddock possession limit is projected to keep cod catch below the sub-ACL.

A peer-reviewed bioeconomic model, developed by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, was used to estimate 2018 recreational GOM cod and haddock mortality under various combinations of minimum sizes, possession limits, and closed seasons. Even when incorporating zero possession of GOM cod in Federal waters, but without an accompanying prohibition of recreational possession of cod by Massachusetts private anglers, the model estimates that the status quo measures for GOM haddock are not expected to constrain the bycatch of cod to the 2018 catch limit. The model estimates that the status quo haddock measures would result in cod catch of 226 mt and haddock catch of 920 mt (see Table 3), which would be 102 percent of the 220 mt cod sub-ACL and 27 percent of the haddock sub-ACL. If Massachusetts prohibits private angler possession of cod, status quo Federal measures for cod and haddock are expected to constrain cod catch to the sub-ACL. Predicted cod catch, under this scenario, is 193 mt. The Council's recommended, but non-preferred alternative does not rely on modifications to Massachusetts' recreational measures, but implements a new closure for the month of May for private anglers, and reduces the for-hire possession limit from 12 to 10 fish. Under this alternative cod catch is projected to be 198 mt.

Table 2 summarizes the status quo measures and the measures being proposed for comment, along with the model's estimates of catch and the likelihood of catch remaining below the sub-ACLs. At the time the model was run and presented to the Council for consideration, the preliminary GOM cod sub-ACL was estimated to be 200 mt, and the probabilities are based on this amount. We have since determined that the fishing year

2018 GOM cod sub-ACL will be 220 mt. The increased quota does not change the predicted cod catch under the different measures, but the probability that cod catch will be below the sub-ACL increases. Projected catch associated with the status quo measures still exceeds the updated sub-ACL, and the proposed alternatives do not change. We intend to update the model probabilities using the higher, updated sub-ACL and publish those results with the final rule for this action.

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Table 2. Summary of the Status Quo Measures and the Proposed Measures, with Model Estimates of Catch and the Likelihood of Catch Remaining Below the sub-ACLs.

2018 Measures	Fleet	Haddock Possession Limit	Minimum Fish Size	Closed Season	Predicted Haddock Catch (mt)	Probability Haddock Catch Below sub-ACL[2]	Predicted Cod Catch (mt)	Probability Cod Catch Below sub ACL[3]
Status Quo	Private	12 fish per angler	17 inches	3 1 - 4 14 9 17 - 10 31	920	100	226	19
	For-hire							
Council Preferred[1]	Private	12 fish per angler	17 inches	3 1 - 4 14 9 17 - 10 31	916	100	193	57
	For-hire							
Council Not-Preferred Alternative	Private	12 fish per angler	17 inches	3 1 - 4 14 5 1 - 5 31 9 17 - 10 31	839	100	198	51
	For-hire	10 fish per angler		3 1 - 4 14 9 17 - 10 31				

[1]This option requires that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prohibit GOM cod possession by recreational anglers.

[2]The 2018 GOM haddock sub-ACL is 3,358 mt.

[3]The model assumed a GOM cod sub-ACL of 200 mt, the actual GOM cod sub-ACL is 220 mt.

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/images.federalregister.gov/EP22MR18.006/original.png?1521645612)

The bioeconomic model's predicted probabilities that catch will remain at or below the sub-ACLs are informative. The model uses preliminary data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). MRIP data are updated throughout the fishing year as new data arrives in different waves and older data is updated. Incorporation of new waves, or updates, may result in changes. The MRIP data are estimates and highly variable from year to year. This combination of factors makes it difficult to produce consistent predictions and to assess the underlying reasons for the discrepancies between the model's predicted catch and estimates of actual catch. The model has underestimated recreational catch historically, but its predictive power has been increasing in recent years. Recent measures have resulted in catch close to the sub-ACLs; however, a number of overages have still occurred. Increasing the probability of maintaining catch under the sub-ACL provides more confidence that the measures may keep catch within the sub-ACL despite this data uncertainty.

2. Fishing Year 2018 Georges Bank Cod Recreational Management Measures

As part of Framework 57 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP, the Council recommended to give the Regional Administrator authority to adjust the GB cod recreational management measures for fishing years 2018 and 2019. Framework 57 is intended to be implemented for the 2018 fishing year. Concurrent to the Framework 57 rulemaking, which is expected in March 2018, we are considering whether adjustments to GB cod recreational measures are necessary, should the framework be approved. This action was precipitated by an unusually high recreational catch estimate of GB cod in 2016 that contributed to an overage of the total ACL and acceptable biological catch. Unlike GOM cod and haddock, there is no recreational sub-ACL for GB cod and no accountability measures for the recreational fishery when an overage occurs. The Council did not consider a recreational sub-ACL in this action because of a lack of time to consider this issue. However, the Council recommended a catch target for us to use when considering adjustments to GB cod measures. The catch target is based on the most recent 5 year (calendar years 2012-2016) average recreational catch (138 mt). The Council expects that measures designed to achieve this target amount for the recreational fishery

will help the overall fishery attain, but not exceed, its overall ACL. According to the 2017 updated assessment the stock remains in poor condition, but the GB cod stock biomass is increasing and supports an increase in the ACL consistent with this change. Based on the updated assessment the proposed 2018 overall ACL is increasing 139 percent compared to 2017.

← GB cod stock in poor condition

With the exception of 2013, recreational catch of Georges Bank cod has been increasing (see Table 4). Recreational management measures for this stock have not been modified since 2010. For these reasons, we expect the increasing trend in recreational catch to continue.

Table 4: Georges Bank Cod Recreational Catch, Fishing Years 2012-2016

Georges Bank Cod (mt)	Fishing Year				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Catch	67.1	8	91.4	165	477.5

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The trend is increasing at over 300% per year. Estimated 2017 catch would be 1432.5 mt and 2018 would be 4297.5 mt instead of 138 mt

Since the Council meeting in December 2018, preliminary 2017 wave 6 MRIP data were released. Wave 6 (November-December) encompass the season for which GB recreational cod catches are historically the highest. The updated projection for fishing year 2017 recreational catch of GB cod is 120 percent lower than what was previously estimated and presented to the RAP and Council. The updated fishing year 2017 estimate is 51 mt. This reduction is not consistent with the increasing trend in catch that has been observed since 2013. Given the inherent variability in the MRIP data, many recreational fisheries use a moving average when considering measures for subsequent years. Incorporating the updated 2017 catch estimate, the 3-year average (fishing years 2015-2017) recreational catch is 196 mt. This average is greater than the catch target, and recreational catch in 2015 and 2016 was greater than the catch target.

← Because there is NO MRIP data for JAN. + Feb.

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* inherent variability in MRIP data

Proposed Measures

Due to the potential increase in cod encounters by recreational anglers, and the poor stock condition, the Council is recommending measures to limit the potential for extreme catch amounts of cod and facilitate enforcement of the measures. To meet this goal, the Council recommended setting a possession limit for the for-hire fleet. Currently private anglers have a 10-fish possession limit, and for-hire vessels have no limit. The proposed change would harmonize the private and for-hire restrictions while meeting capping potential cod interactions on a trip-by-trip basis. The Council also proposed an increase in the minimum size limit from 22 to 24 inches (55.88 to 60.96 cm). The proposed minimum size is consistent with the minimum size for recreationally caught cod in the GOM when that fishery is open. Also, a uniform size limit can help avoid confusion and aid enforcement. In 2016, approximately 40 percent of the cod landings were less than 24 inches. Thus, an increase to the minimum size we expect would reduce cod mortality relative to 2016 catch.

* increase in cod encounters
* poor stock condition

* If 40% of cod were between 22-24" and many cod below 22" must have been released dead or alive, I would guess that over 50% of cod will be released.

What mortality is NMFS putting on these added fish released dead and alive?

Unlike for the GOM recreational fishery, there is no model available to evaluate the probability of catch amounts for the Georges Bank management changes. However, past data shows that setting a possession limit and increasing the minimum size are effective techniques for reducing recreational catch. A possession limit will cap the amount of catch per trip and help meet the goal of limiting extreme events. Uniform size limits also will limit mortality as well as assist enforcement. The proposed fishing year 2018 recreational measures for Georges Bank cod are specified in Table 5, along with information on fishing year 2017 measures for comparison.

Table 5: Proposed Georges Bank Cod Recreational Management Measures for Fishing Year 2018 and Status Quo (Fishing Year 2017) Measures

2018 Options	Fleet	Georges Bank Cod Possession Limit	Minimum Fish Size	Open Season
Status Quo	Private	10	22 inches	5/1 - 4/30
	For-hire	Unlimited		
Council Recommended	Private	10	24 inches	5/1 - 4/30
	For-hire			

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/images.federalregister.gov/EP22MR18.008/original.png?1521645613)

NMFS is *seeking comments to avoid negative impacts

We are seeking comments on the Council's trip and size limits in relation to preventing extreme recreational catches of GB cod, assisting enforcement, and avoiding the potential negative impacts on the commercial groundfish fishery from recreational catch that contributes to overall ACL overages. In particular, we are interested in the measures in relation to achieving the catch target and avoiding overages of the overall ACL in light of the new MRIP data and estimated 2017 recreational GB cod catch. Because of the variability in MRIP data, and the lack of a model to evaluate the effect of the proposed measures, it is difficult to determine the probability that measures may constrain harvest to the catch target. Additionally, because the recreational fishery does not receive an allocation for GB cod, there are no AMs for recreational vessels in the event the catch target or the overall ACL is exceeded. For 2018, the commercial groundfish fishery is required to payback the 2016 fishing year ACL overage.

3. Regulatory Corrections

This action also proposes several corrections to the regulatory text to improve clarity and consistency of the recreational regulations. The corrections in this action are proposed under the authority of section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), which states that the Secretary of Commerce may promulgate regulations necessary to ensure that FMPs are implemented in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

In § 648.89(c), we have adopted a new approach to present recreational possession limits to simplify and improve clarity of the regulations. Rather than stating possession limits and seasons exclusively through text, a table would be used. Explanatory information (*e.g.,* filleting exemption from minimum size) would still be in text form.

In § 648.14(k)(16), we propose to add the possession prohibitions for ocean pout and windowpane flounder by the recreational fishery. Possession, by the recreational fishery, of ocean pout and windowpane flounder is already prohibited. We are adding text to the prohibitions section to improve consistency and clarity of the regulations.

Classification

Let's see how much Further Consideration

Pursuant to section 304(b)(1)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the NMFS Assistant Administrator has made a preliminary determination that this proposed rule is consistent with the Northeast Multispecies FMP, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law, subject to further consideration after public comment.

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order (E.O.) 12866. Thus, this rule is not an E.O. 13771 (/executive-order/13771) regulatory action because this rule is not significant under E.O. 12866.

An initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) was prepared, as required by section 603 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA). The IRFA describes the economic impact this proposed rule, if adopted, would have on small entities, and also determines ways to minimize these impacts. The IRFA incorporates sections of the preamble (**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**) and analyses supporting this rulemaking, including the Framework Adjustment 57 EA and the draft supplemental EA to Framework 57. A summary of the analysis follows (see **ADDRESSES**).

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Description of the Reasons Why Action by the Agency Is Being Considered

Because the recreational measures currently in place for GOM cod and haddock are not expected to constrain fishing year 2018 catch to the cod sub-ACL, this action proposes new measures, as required by the FMP, to ensure that the previously established sub-ACL is not exceeded. This action also proposes new recreational measures for Georges Bank cod. These measures have been designed to achieve the catch target set in Framework 57.

Statement of the Objectives of, and Legal Basis for, This Proposed Rule

The FMP allows the Regional Administrator, in consultation with the Council, to modify the GOM recreational management measures for the upcoming fishing year to ensure that the sub-ACL is achieved, but not exceeded. The provisions authorizing this action can be found in § 648.89(f)(3) of the FMP's implementing regulations. One of the intended effects of this action is to reduce recreational catch of GOM cod. This action is necessary to ensure that the fishing year 2018 recreational GOM cod catch limit is not exceeded.

Framework 57, a concurrent action, proposes to give the Regional Administrator authority to change the Georges Bank cod recreational management measures for fishing years 2018 and 2019. Framework 57 also proposed a catch target of 138 mt. Limiting catch to this target amount is expected to help ensure that the overall ACL for this stock is not exceeded. Management measures proposed in this action are designed to achieve, but not exceed this target.

* Regional Administrator has authority to change proposed management measures

Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which This Proposed Rule Would Apply

The Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small commercial finfishing or shellfishing business (NAICS code 11411) as a firm with annual receipts (gross revenue) of up to $11.0 million for Regulatory Flexibility Act compliance purposes only. A small for-hire recreational fishing business is defined as a firm with receipts of up to $7.5 million (NAICS code 487210). Having different size standards for different types of fishing activities creates difficulties in categorizing businesses that participate in multiple fishing related activities. For purposes of this assessment, business entities have been classified into the SBA-defined categories based on which activity produced the highest percentage of average annual gross revenues from 2014-2016. This is the most recent 3-year period for which data are available. Ownership data in the Northeast permit database identify all individuals who own fishing vessels. Using this information, vessels can be grouped together according to common owners. The resulting groupings were treated as a fishing business for purposes of this analysis. Revenues summed across all vessels in a group and the activities that generate those revenues form the basis for determining whether the entity is a large or small business.

The proposed regulations include closed seasons in addition to possession limits and size limits. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that all three types of recreational fishing restrictions may directly affect for-hire businesses. According to the FMP, it is unlawful for the owner or operator of a charter or party boat issued a valid multispecies permit, when the boat is carrying passengers for hire, to:

- Possess cod or haddock in excess of the possession limits.
- Fish with gear in violation of the regulations.
- Fail to comply with the applicable restrictions if transiting the GOM Regulated Mesh Area with cod or haddock on board that was caught outside the GOM Regulated Mesh Area.

As the for-hire owner and operator can be prosecuted under the law for violations of the proposed regulations, for-hire business entities are considered directly affected in this analysis. Private recreational anglers are not considered "entities" under the RFA, and thus economic impacts on anglers are not discussed here.

For-hire fishing businesses are required to obtain a Federal charter/party multispecies fishing permit in order to carry passengers to catch cod or haddock. Thus, the affected businesses entities of concern are businesses that hold Federal multispecies for-hire fishing permits. While all business entities that hold for-hire permits could be affected by changes in recreational fishing restrictions, not all businesses that hold for-hire permits actively participate in a given year. The regulations affect the group of business entities who actively participate, *i.e.*, land fish. Latent fishing power (in the form of unfished permits) has the potential to alter the impacts on a fishery. However, it is not possible to predict how many of these latent business entities will or will not participate in this fishery in fishing year 2018.

In 2016 661 vessels had For-hire multispec. permits

The Northeast Federal landings database (*i.e.*, vessel trip report data) indicates that a total of 661 vessels held a multispecies for-hire fishing permit in 2016. This is the most recent full year of available data. Of the 661 for-hire permitted vessels, only 164 actively participated in the for-hire Atlantic cod and haddock fishery in fishing year 2016 (*i.e.*, reported catch of cod or haddock).

* 164 Active FOR-hire PARTICIPATES in 2016

Using vessel ownership information developed from Northeast Federal permit data and Northeast vessel trip report data, it was determined that the 164 actively participating for-hire vessels are owned by 151 unique fishing business entities. The vast majority of the 151 fishing businesses were solely engaged in for-hire fishing, but some also earned revenue from shellfish and/or finfish fishing. For all but 23 of these fishing businesses, the revenue from for-hire fishing was greater than the revenue from shellfishing and the revenue from finfish fishing.

151 unique businesses

According to the SBA size standards, small for-hire businesses are defined as firms with annual receipts of up to $7.5 million. Small commercial finfishing or shellfishing businesses are defined as firms with annual receipts (gross revenue) of up to $11.0 million. Average annual gross revenue estimates calculated from the most recent 3 years (2014-2016) indicate that none of the 151 fishing business entities had annual receipts of more than $2.8 million from all of their fishing activities (for-hire, shellfish, and finfish). Therefore, all of the affected fishing business entities are considered "small" based on the SBA size standards. As a result, this action would not disproportionately affect small versus large for-hire business entities.

Description of the Projected Reporting, Record-Keeping, and Other Compliance Requirements of This Proposed Rule

There are no proposed reporting, recordkeeping, or other compliance requirements.

Federal Rules Which May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With This Proposed Rule

The proposed action does not duplicate, overlap, or conflict with other Federal rules.

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Description of Significant Alternatives to the Proposed Action Which Accomplish the Stated Objectives of Applicable Statutes and Which Minimize Any Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities

There are three options that were presented to the Council [(Framework 57 EA and draft Supplemental EA, *see* **ADDRESSES**) that would accomplish the objectives, but are not being proposed. Options 5 and 6 were only discussed by the Council, and while they would achieve the objective, were not selected. The options presented, but not proposed, were rejected either because they did not achieve the required cod sub-ACL, or they had significant negative impacts on the for-hire fleet (*e.g.*, Option 2, a May closure). The options proposed in this action minimize, to the extent practical, the impact on small entities.

Table 4—Projected Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Cod and Haddock Catch Under Alternative Measures

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Table 4. Projected Fishing Year 2018 Recreational Cod and Haddock Catch under Alternative Measures

Option	Had Limit	Had Size	Had Closed Season	Total Mortality mt (Median)	Cod Limit	Cod Closed Season	Total Mortality mt (Median)	Angler Trips (Median)	Had ACL (out of 100 (Simulations)	Cod ACL (out of 100 (Simulations)*
0 (Status Quo)	12	17"	Mar-Apr 14, Sep 17 - Oct 31	920	0	May-Apr	226	155,733	100	19
1 (Status Quo, no MA Cod Possession)	12	17"	Mar-Apr 14, Sep 17 - Oct 31	916	0	May-Apr	193	155,160	100	57
2 (Additional May Had Closure)	12	17"	Mar-Apr 14, May, Sep 17 - Oct 31	822	0	May-Apr	194	150,713	100	56
3 (No MA Cod Possession, no Had Minimum Size)	12		Mar-Apr 14, Sep 17 - Oct 31	979	0	May-Apr	213	162,543	100	34
4 (Additional May Had Closure, no Had Minimum Size)	12		Mar-Apr 14, May, Sep 17 - Oct 31	864	0	May-Apr	203	157,731	100	45
5 (Additional May Had Closure, 16" Had Minimum Size)	12	16"	Mar-Apr 14, May, Sep 17 - Oct 31	835	0	May-Apr	198	153,441	100	51
6 (Additional May Had Closure, 15" Had Minimum Size)	12	15"	Mar-Apr 14, May, Sep 17 - Oct 31	854	0	May-Apr	200	157,203	100	50
7 (Split Measures by Mode)	10 FH 12	17"	Mar-Apr 14, Sep 17 - Oct 31 Mar-Apr 14, May, Sep 17 - Oct 31	839	0	May-Apr	198	152,091	100	51

FY 2018 rec sub-ACLs: haddock = 3,358 mt, cod = 220 mt - payback
*Assumes a cod sub-ACL of 200 mt

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/images.federalregister.gov/EP22MR18.009/original.png?1521645613)

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List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 648 (/select-citation/2018/03/22/50-CFR-648)

- Fisheries
- Fishing
- Recordkeeping and reporting requirements

Dated: March 16, 2018

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 648 (/select-citation/2018/03/22/50-CFR-648) is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 648—FISHERIES OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

1. The authority citation for part 648 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 (https://api.fdsys.gov/link?collection=uscode&title=16&year=mostrecent&section=1801&type=usc&link-type=html) *et seq.*

2. In § 648.14, add paragraphs (k)(16)(viii) and (ix) to read as follows:

§ 648.14 Recreational and charter/party vessel restrictions.

(k) * * *

(16) * * *

(viii) *Ocean pout.* If fishing under the recreational or charter/party regulations, possess ocean pout.

(ix) *Windowpane flounder.* If fishing under the recreational or charter/party regulations, possess windowpane flounder.

* * * * *

3. In § 648.89, revise paragraphs (b) and (c) to read as follows:

§ 648.89 Recreational and charter/party vessel restrictions.

(b) *Recreational minimum fish sizes*—(1) *Minimum fish sizes.* Unless further restricted under this section, persons aboard charter or party boats permitted under this part and not fishing under the NE multispecies DAS program or under the restrictions and conditions of an approved sector operations plan, and private recreational fishing vessels in or possessing fish from the EEZ, may not possess fish smaller than the minimum fish sizes, measured in total length, as follows:

Species	Minimum size	
	Inches	cm
Cod:		
Inside GOM Regulated Mesh Area [1]	24	61.0
Outside GOM Regulated Mesh Area [1]	24	61.0
Haddock:		
Inside GOM Regulated Mesh Area [1]	17	43.2
Outside GOM Regulated Mesh Area [1]	18	45.7
Pollock	19	48.3
Witch Flounder (gray sole)	14	35.6
Yellowtail Flounder	13	33.0
American Plaice (dab)	14	35.6
Atlantic Halibut	41	104.1
Winter Flounder (black back)	12	30.5
Redfish	9	22.9

[1] GOM Regulated Mesh Area specified in § 648.80(a).

(2) *Exceptions*—(i) *Fillet size.* Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified, if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish and are not offered or intended for sale, trade or barter.

(ii) *Transiting.* Vessels in possession of cod or haddock caught outside the GOM Regulated Mesh Area specified in § 648.80(a)(1) may transit this area with cod and haddock that meet the minimum size specified for fish caught outside the GOM Regulated Mesh Area specified in § 648.80(b)(1), provided all bait and hooks are removed from fishing rods, and any cod and haddock on board has been gutted and stored.

(3) Fish fillets, or parts of fish, must have at least 2 square inches (5.1 square cm) of skin on while possessed on board a vessel and at the time of landing in order to meet minimum size requirements. The skin must be contiguous and must allow ready identification of the fish species.

(c) *Possession Restrictions*— (1) *Private recreational vessels.* Persons aboard private recreational fishing vessels in or possessing fish from the EEZ, during the open season listed in the column titled "Open Season" in Table 1 to paragraph (c), may not possess more fish than the amount listed in the column titled "Possession Limit" in Table 1 to paragraph (c).

(i) *Closed season.* Persons aboard private recreational fishing vessels may not possess species, as specified in the column titled "Species" in Table 1 to paragraph (c), in or from the EEZ during that species closed season as specified in the column titled "Closed Season" in Table 1 to paragraph (c).

From: NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region <garfo.noaafisheries@public.govdelivery.com>
To: hugetuna <hugetuna@aol.com>
Subject: NOAA Fisheries Seeks Comments on Proposed Rule: Framework 57 to the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan
Date: Thu, Mar 22, 2018 9:29 am

APPENDIX E.

Having trouble viewing this email?

FRAMEWORK 57

NOAA

New England/Mid-Atlantic

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Comments on Proposed Rule: Framework 57 to the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan

We are seeking public comment on an action that would set catch limits for 20 groundfish stocks for the 2018-2020 fishing years (May 1, 2018-April 30, 2020), including the three stocks managed jointly with Canada.

* Framework 57 would increase quotas for 11 stocks compared to 2017, including: Georges Bank cod (139%), Gulf of Maine cod (41%), and Gulf of Maine haddock (190%). Quotas will decrease for nine stocks, including Southern New England yellowtail flounder (-75%) and Gulf of Maine winter flounder (-45%).

* We expect increases in the quotas for Gulf of Maine cod, Gulf of Maine haddock, and Georges Bank cod to provide additional economic revenue and flexibility to the groundfish industry. Overall, we expect the measures in Framework 57 to generate $9 million in additional gross revenues this fishing year compared to last year.

What about GOM FOR-hire boats. We are going out of business 3 years of ZERO Cod. DIRECTOR PENTONY → We Need your help

Framework 57 would also:

- Revise the way common pool quotas are split between trimesters for six stocks. The intent is to prevent early closures during Trimester 1 and 2 in future years.

- Modify the Atlantic halibut accountability measures. When triggered, the zero-possession accountability would apply to all vessels issued a federal permit to reduce catch of halibut when accountability measures are triggered. The gear restricted areas put in place when the accountability measure is triggered would also be revised to provide greater flexibility to groundfish vessels.
- Change the trigger for the scallop fishery's accountability measure for the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder stock to when total catch exceeds the overall catch limit. The adjustment is expected to provide flexibility for the scallop fishery to operate despite a 75-percent reduction in the overall quota for this stock.
- Revise the southern windowpane flounder accountability measure for the summer flounder, scup, and skate fisheries. When triggered, smaller gear-restricted areas and shorter seasons would be implemented to allow additional flexibility for affected vessels while continuing to reduce impacts on the southern windowpane stock.
- Set a Georges Bank cod catch target of 138 mt for the recreational fishery and add a provision to give the Regional Administrator authority to set recreational measures for 2018 and 2019 to prevent the catch target from being exceeded. A separate rule is also publishing today seeking comment on GB cod recreational measures.

GB *NO *

Read the as published in the Federal Register, and submit your comments through the . You may also submit comments through regular mail to: Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

The comment period is open through April 6.

There was none ✓

Questions? Contact , Regional Office, at 978-281-9175

Call to see what the quota is NOW. What is it for GOM Cod recreationally?

NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region

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Fisherman Magazine
JAN. 2017

APPENDIX F.

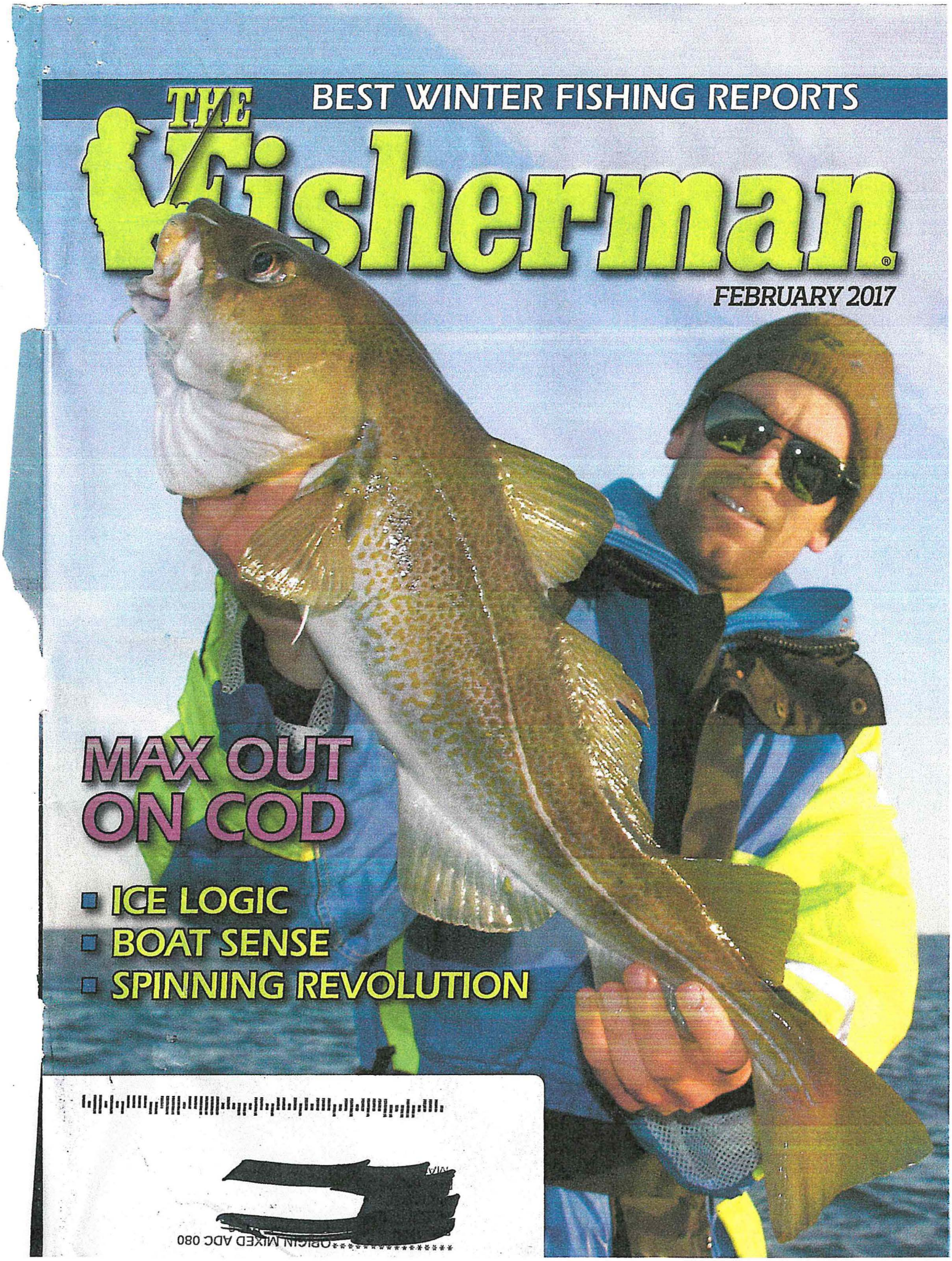
THESE COD FISHING TACTICS HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AND ARE AS EFFECTIVE TODAY AS THEY WERE IN THE "GOOD OLD DAYS."

Well-presented clam baits turned the tables on this brace of hefty cod.

BEST WINTER FISHING REPORTS

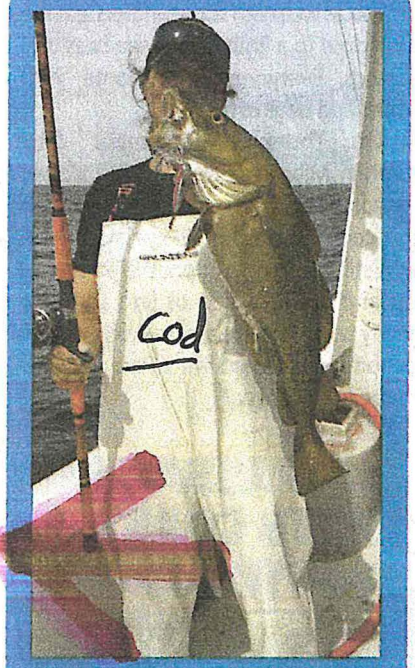
THE Fisherman®

FEBRUARY 2017



MAX OUT ON COD

- ICE LOGIC
- BOAT SENSE
- SPINNING REVOLUTION



A nice knucklehead black sea bass landed off Montauk aboard the Black Hawk.

they are perch fishing. Maybe this would be the year to give the white perch a shot, and any stripers would not only be a bonus but bring back fond memories of the Assonet Bay striper fishery that prompted me to write Snowball Stripers for *Salt Water Sportsman* magazine.

If you're not excited about the New Year you might just as well buy yourself a new snow blower or tractor rather than a new reel or fish finder. There is not a single day after the New Year's celebration that I am not thinking or working on fishing. My boat and all my fishing gear and electronics are accessible, and I have numerous projects in the works that I can't wait to get into. Happy New Year.

WESTPORT HARBOR

Captain Jason Colby of **Little Sister Charters** has been making plans to add a new boat to what was once a small fleet during the fall of 2017. He had a good tautog fishing season, but the local fluke fishing left much to be desired for everyone in our area. He is taking reservations for winter flounder in Quincy so give him a call and get on board to jump start your 2018 fishing season. We

Fisherman Magazine Feb. 2018

to provide additional financial support for state biologists to conduct and manage various stock assessments.

The New England states use licensing funds to provide increased staffing to enhance state-funded marine fisheries initiatives. Funds provide supplemental financial support for habitat restoration projects, including the construction of artificial reefs. Public educational outreach programs have also received funding support including the publication and distribution of educational material. In Massachusetts and Rhode Island, funds help to supplement and provide small grants to municipalities for local infrastructure improvements.

FINAL THOUGHTS

With all of the accounts of government waste and fraud reported by the press, a lot of anglers still don't trust the state to keep the saltwater license money separate from general funds. I do not want to start a political debate or an argument, but my time on the Massachusetts Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel taught me not to confuse fisheries management with traditional government and politicians. Money does not come easy to Marine Fisheries. They fight for every dollar they get and safeguard their funding very carefully. The bottom line is that Marine Fisheries truly try to do the right things.

Also don't forget, if you live in one of the New England coastal states, they did you a favor by taking on the saltwater licensing responsibilities. If the states didn't introduce a local license, anglers would be paying the much more expensive National Registry fee. The feds would also have kept this money, and states would never have seen any recreational fishing funds. Then opponents to licensing would really have something to complain about!

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Being well prepared and heeding the advice from a collection of veteran skippers should go a long way toward making you a better cod fisherman.

Gearing up for Winter Cod

BY TONY SALERNO

A cheer can be heard along the coastlines of New England, New York and New Jersey as the ever popular and tasty winter king continues to flourish in the chilly waters of the Northeast. The apparent abundance of cod through late fall and early winter has generated excitement among "dye in the wool" cod fanatics, and also for a new generation of beginners looking to master the skills necessary to put their share of cod into the cooler.

While some anglers prefer to hop aboard their own vessels and do their own thing when it comes to cod, undoubtedly jumping aboard one of the party and charter boats sailing throughout the winter up and down the Northeast Coast is not only fun, it's safe. Mother Nature is notorious for throwing us a curve here and there, and the unpredictability of the weather makes hopping aboard a party or charter boat with an experienced skipper a prudent choice. Sure there are picture perfect days of mild weather and calm seas, but there are times when those calm seas can change at a moment's notice, despite what the forecast says. Even on fair weather days, it can get uncomfortable out on the ocean if you are not properly equipped for the occasion. And while this cold weather fishing may not be for everyone, choosing the right day can make for a pleasurable and fun experience that can go a

long way toward breaking up the monotony of winter, not to mention providing a supply of tasty cod fillets.

With all of the above in mind, I spoke with some of the best party and charter boat captains in the Northeast, skippers with decades of experience when it comes to winter codfishing. I picked their brains and got their take on the best jigs, rigs, baits, methods, tactics, and best of all, some of the best tips and pointers that will certainly benefit any cod fisherman, whether a beginner or a veteran sharpie. We also put together a "Think outside the Box" for items we may forget to bring along that will make the day more pleasant and comfortable.

NEW YORK

Sea Wife IV	Capt. Tom Cusimano, Viking Landing, Montauk	**631-680-1025**
My Joyce III	Capt. Ken Hejducek, Viking Landing, Montauk	**516-641-2138**
Fin Chaser III	Capt. Keith Williams, Liar's Saloon, Montauk	**516-643-0940**
Viking Fleet	Capt. Paul Forsberg, Viking Dock Montauk	**631-668-5700**
Jenglo	Capt. Mike Boccio, Orient by the Sea, Orient Point	**631-323-2618**
Captree Princess	Capt. Rob Andresen, Captree State Park	**631-404-6817**
Capt. Al	Captain Tom Weiss, Point Lookout	**516-623-2248**
Super Hawk	Capt. Steve Kearney, Point Lookout	**516-607-3004**
Starstream VIII	Capt. Mike Wasserman, Freeport	**516-623-5823**
No Time	Capt. Nick Savene, Oceanside	**516-889-1968**
Capt. Dave III	Capt. Dave Paris, Sheepshead Bay	**917-251-2628**

Cory Blount, son of the legendary Frank Blount of the Francis Fleet, Point Judith, Rhode Island: Block Island and south of Block Island is where the Francis Fleet spends most of the winter fishing for cod, targeting the 40- to 160-foot depths, all depending where the baitfish are stacked up. Anglers who choose to fish clam baits on a basic double hook cod rig do so using 5/0 to 7/0 octopus hooks, sending them to the bottom with bank sinkers between 8 and 12 ounces. During moon tides, sinkers to 24 ounces may be needed to hold bottom. While these rigs seem to be standard, the main attraction that has been out fishing the basic rig at a 5 to 1 ratio is simply adding a Mann's 9-inch Jelly Worm right to the hook to mingle with the clam bait. Strawberry, grape, white and motor oil green are all hot colors and are a must if you want a limit of cod and a shot at the pool. For those who prefer to jig, breakout AVA chrome or gold plated jigs with a hammer finish between 8 and 10 ounces (up to 16 ounces on the moon tides), and a Jelly Worm teaser on a dropper loop about 2 feet above the diamond jig. Fishing the jigs can be productive throughout the entire season. Savvy anglers employing this tactic who add a blue or green plastic skirt on the hook of the diamond jig are catching more and bigger cod on the jigs. While most of the terminal tackle is available on the boat, Cory recommends bringing along your own in case they are out of stock on some of the hottest gear.

Capt. Russ Benn of the Seven B's Fishing Fleet Point Judith, Rhode Island: Capt. Russ fishes cod year round but from January through April, surgical tube teasers above a diamond jig, and as trailers on the jigs, provide a distinct advantage when it comes to catching fish. Red or green tubes are favored over all else by Capt. Russ. While many customers opt for the jigs and others choose to fish clam baits, the outright deadliest tactic to keep you knee deep in cod is the use of Shimano Butterfly Flat Side Jigs between 280 and 325 grams (10 to 11-1/2 ounces) in green/silver or blue sardine. Capt. Russ likes tying these jigs directly to the leader and working them right off the bottom. The only drawback to the jigs is fishermen who don't know how to read and fish the bottom can lose more than their share of them and at $18 a pop, things can get pretty expensive rather quickly. However if loot is not an issue or you have that knack to feel a rocky bottom, then you can expect to fill a cooler in no time, providing the fish are there.

Capt. Tom (Cod father) Cusimano of the charter boat Sea Wife IV from Viking Landing Montauk, New York: Here is a skipper with several decades of fishing experience under his belt and has quietly been filling the fish box for his charters with everything from porgies and sea bass to sharks, tuna and cod, with an emphasis on cod during the winter months. Capt. Tom is one of only a few charter captains who sail throughout the winter in search of the winter king. He noted that first and foremost, the way you bait the hook makes all the difference in the world. Globbing two or three whole clams onto a hook at one time is wasting bait and will make cod wary since that much bait on the hook will cause your rig to spin and tangle. Instead, Captain Tom prefers to take a fresh or lightly salted whole clam (stay away from the heavily salted clams) cut it in half with belly connected to both pieces. Thread half the clam up the hook and into the leader with the belly facing down, then take the other half of the clam and impale it on the hook only once with the belly dangling from the hook. Tom likes to use this on a two hook cod rig with a pair of snelled 5/0 bait saver hooks extending away from the leader about 6 inches. He does this by using stiff 60-pound nylon to snell the hooks. The captain will also separate the main line of 40- to 60-pound test to the 80-pound mono leader with a barrel swivel to help keep the rig from spinning. Tom uses this set up for both drifting and when anchored. If you decide to charter the Sea Wife IV, just bring your lunch, Capt. Tom and his crew will have all the goodies you need to fill the box with tasty fillets.

Capt. Ken Higgins of the Captree Pride sailing from Captree State Park, Babylon, NY: With nearly 50 years of fishing experience strapped to his name, Capt. Ken likes to start with a 40-pound fluorocarbon leader approximately 8 feet in length tied to the main line of 40-pound braid using an Albright Knot. An 8- to 10-ounce bank sinker con-

NEW ENGLAND

The Francis Fleet	Capt. Frank Blount, Point Judith Rhode Island	**800-662-2824**
Seven B's Fleet	Capt. Russ Benn, Narragansett, Rhode Island	**401-789-9250**
Booked Off Charters	Capt. Tony and Capt. Wade Point View Marina	**401-741-2580**

nected to a sinker loop on the bottom, with a dropper loop waist high connecting a 5/0 octopus hook directly on the loop. This works well when the current is moving at a moderate pace. When the tide slows, use a 5/0 octopus baited with half skimmer clam attached to a 12-inch leader and a standoff with six wraps. Cast your rig as far as you can away from the boat, lock the reel and get ready. Another option that can be very effective in place of clam bait is a 6-inch Gulp! Alive Swimming Mullet in either pink or nuclear chicken works well at times. You may want to bring along some glow, pearl white and new penny Gulp! as standbys. The advantages of using this set up is that you don't have to contend with dogfish nearly as much as with a clam baited hook, and you don't have to keep taking your gloves off to re-bait on those really cold days, and the cod find the Gulp! quite appealing.

NEW JERSEY		
Big Jamaica	Capt. Howard Bogan, Bogan's Deep Sea Fishing, Brielle	**732-528-5014**
Jamaica II	Capt. Joe, Bogan's Deep Sea Fishing Center, Brielle	**732-458-3188**
Paramount	Capt. Mike Bogan, Brielle	**732-528-2117**
Gambler	Capt. Bob Bogan, Point Pleasant Beach	**732-295-7569**
Dauntless	Capt. Willy Egerter, Point Pleasant Beach	**732-892-4298**
Big Mohawk	Capt. Chris Hueth, Belmar	**732-974-9606**

Capt. Howard Bogan, of the open boat Big Jamaica in Brielle, New Jersey: The Bogan family has been a staple to the New Jersey fishery for more years than I have been alive. If there is one thing they surely know, it is how to fish deep water wrecks and how to pluck lots of monster fish off them with codfish being one of them. For those deep water drops, hi/lo rigs with 5/0 to 7/0 hooks with clams are simple and get the job done. If you would like to get fancy, pink, red and blue skirts with silver specks seem to have an edge. You'll need 16 ounces of lead to get to the bottom. Should you want to jig, Capt. Howard strongly suggests that you know what you are doing. It sounds simple enough but diamond jigging on the deep water wrecks is not that simple and requires lots of experience and skill. You'll fare much better if you stick with clams and rigs. However, if you are adamant about using jigs, the captain suggests bringing along 12- to 16-ounce hammer finish diamond jigs and adding one of those blue skirts with silver specks to the hook as anglers have been scoring exceptionally well with the add on. Lastly, Captain Howard recommends bringing coolers with ice. Although the air temperature may be cold, it doesn't do much good for the fish in the coolers. Nothing beats a slush bath of ice and seawater when bringing those fish to the fillet table especially if you bleed your catch before placing them in the slush. Your fillets will be like night and day.

DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION

Staying warm is critical to maintaining concentration when fishing in cold or inclement weather. If you dress properly and utilize the gear modified in today's market, you won't notice the weather, instead you'll feel the telltale tug of the cod that are waiting for your bait down in the deep. Your base layer is your first level of clothing, which serves two purposes; the first is to insulate your body's natural heat and keep it from escaping; the second is to wick moisture away from your skin to the outside of the fabric so it can evaporate. The moisture wicking process is very important because if you begin to sweat and it dries on your skin or saturates your clothing, your ability to stay warm will be severely hindered. Under Armour thermal underwear comes in varying thicknesses. The undies and a good pair of insulated socks make for a good base layer. Speaking of socks, since your feet do not move much while fishing, it is very easy for them to get cold. As with the base layer, the moisture wicking capability of your socks is essential to staying warm. A good option is to have a thin liner sock that wicks moisture away and then a thicker sock to insulate your feet.

The mid layer is meant to keep your natural body warmth in while keeping the cold out. For me, the mid layer is usually a hooded sweatshirt and jeans. I prefer polyester sweatshirts rather than cotton because polyester has much better water resistance than cotton. Under Armour makes many good options for more water resistant sweatshirts. The outer layer's main purpose is to keep the wind and cold out. That is where Grundens All Weather gear comes to play with waterproof PVC raingear, outer layer water resistant breathable tops and everything you need to keep your head, hands and feet warm and toasty. Their full line of products is just a click away at www.shop.grundens.com.

KEEP YOUR TUMMY HAPPY

While probably not what you would expect on this list, having a full belly is more important than you might think during a cold day on the water. Your body produces more heat when digesting food, especially foods that are high in proteins, fats, or complex carbohydrates. Obviously, if your body is producing more heat, you are warmer, it's as simple as that. Also, be sure to keep yourself hydrated with plenty of water, some juices and a hot cup of coffee never hurts. Keep the hard stuff and spirits at home for the proper occasion. A long day of fishing on the Big Pond is not the place to celebrate for all the obvious reasons. If medications are part of your day's routine, by all means bring it along. If you are prone to seasickness, my suggestion is to pay your doctor a visit, and ask if he/she could prescribe Scopace patches. The patch is placed behind the ear the night before sailing. I have been told that this patch works great without the drowsiness effect suffered by the over the counter products, which I'm told is not always effective.

Well the next time you set foot on one of the fine open or charter boats listed below, be sure to follow their advice. The tutelage they gave us for 15 minutes of reading, took them years to master. Look at it as a good head start, and I'm sure limits and pool winners like the pro's will come a lot easier than if you just turned the page.

From: Michael Pierdinock [mailto:cpfcharters@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 03, 2018 8:57 AM
To: Michael Pentony
Cc: Tom Nies; Chris Moore
Subject: Fw: Limited Access

Comments submitted to the Feds this am, see below. We need to resurrect the 72 degree line, see below!

Capt. Mike Pierdinock
CPF Charters "Perseverance" - New Bedford
Recreational Fishing Alliance - Massachusetts Chairman
Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association - Board of Directors
Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission - Vice Chairman
ICCAT Advisory Committee, Recreational Adviser and U.S. Delegate
NMFS - Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel, Recreational Adviser
New England Fishery Management Council - Recreational Advisory Panel
(617) 291-8914

I reluctantly support the implementation of the revised control date of March 19th, 2018 for the party/charter ("P/C") sector in the Northeast Multispecies fishery. The status of our cod stock is not a result of overfishing by the P/C sector resulting in the need to limit access to the P/C sector that has reduced in numbers significantly since early 2000. The control date may prove to be a useful tool in the future in the event that the cod resource improves to the point where the groundfish P/C sector returns to profitability and vessels from various other sectors (which may not be doing as well) that elect to enter the P/C sector. This could result in reduced bag limits, which may constrain further profitability for historic P/C participants.

I don't support any more than a limited access control date and cannot support a catch share type system or any other draconian measures associated with the limited access P/C sector. Such measures could inhibit future participation of younger captains that lack the financial means to enter the P/C sector.

The cod stock north of the 42 latitude line will return to sustainable levels in the foreseeable future that at such time would require the implementation of a demarcation line limiting commercial harvest of cod west of such a demarcation line (ex 72 degree line) otherwise we will repeat the collapse of our cod fishery once again in our waters.

So ultimately if the purpose of P/C limited access is to limit P/C access to reduce the harvest of cod there is more to this matter than just a limited control date.

Capt. Mike Pierdinock
CPF Charters "Perseverance" - New Bedford
cpfcharters@yahoo.com

JC 4/5/18

Kevin M. Scola
P.O. Box 1392
Marshfield, MA 02050

March 27, 2018

Mr. Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930.

Re: Comment on control date for the charter boat for hirer fishery.

Dear Mr. Pentony

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed control date for the Charter Boat for hirer fishery & hope that you will take this recommendation into serious consideration.

I am all in favor of a control date but think it is imperative that it be set at a more realistic date. The date would be back to March 28, 2014 .

Having been involved with my other boat in the commercial sector and have first-hand experience with control dates and limited access. I am worried about the future qualifying criteria that would be drawn up If the charter boat fishery ever turned out to be a limited access fishery, which I believe it will be.

The reason for this date is that 2014 was the last year that we were allowed to land codfish in the charter boat fishery for the Gulf of Maine Cod stocks.

JC 3/30/18

I don't think it would be fair to be put in the same position that the commercial sector was put in and hopefully we can learn from our past mistakes. The commercial sector's that fished in the Gulf of Maine cod stock area were put at a 50 lbs per day limit of Cod in Gulf of Maine Cod stock region while the user is in the fishery in the Georges Banks region south of 42° were allowed. 2000 lbs. per day. The qualifying criteria was such that we in the Gulf of Maine area ended up with very small quota because we were not allowed to land Cod in any significant numbers while the users in the Georges Banks area ended up with huge quotas. Even though the Georges Bank stocks are in far worse shape than the Gulf of Maine stocks.

Considering that the for hire fishery fishing on the Georges Banks cod stock down south of the 42° line have been unlimited in Cod landings it is even more troublesome & concerning. Especially when you take into consideration that the Georges Bank stock is in far worse shape than the Gulf of Maine stock where we have had 0 (zero) Cod landings for the past three years.

So I will again reiterate that I think is imperative that the control date for the Charter boat / Head boat for hire fishery be set at March 28, 2014.

Sincerely

Capt. Kevin M. Scola

F / V Ashley Martha
F / V Survival

Cc. New England fisheries management Council

Kevin M. Scola
P.O. Box 1392
Marshfield, MA 02050

March 27, 2018

Mr. Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930.

Re: Comment on recreational groundfish limits for the charter boat for hirer fishery.

Dear Mr. Pentony

I appreciate you allowing us the opportunity to comment on this very serious subject.

At the present time, I think that the current regulations and restrictions that are being imposed on the two recreational user groups of Gulf of Maine cod stocks and the Georges Banks cod stocks are very disproportionate and not healthy for the fishery, specifically the for hirer sectors.

1.

How we ever got to here from there is beyond me. I have been around a long time and been to a lot of meetings. There is such a flip-flop and mismanagement going on, that it leads to a strong suspicion of coercion & unethical practices, not to mention conflict of interest.

As evidence to this. Considered that in the Gulf of Maine recreational fishery involving charter boats and head boats we have, seasonal closed areas, year-round closed areas, closed seasons, a small landing limit on Haddock (which is fully recovered) & last but not least a year round 0 (zero) bag limit on codfish!! All this while the Georges Banks, recreational fishery involving charter boats and head boats has, NO closed areas , NO year-round closed areas, NO closed seasons & last but not least an unlimited codfish & Haddock limit. !!

jc 3/30/18

When you consider that the Georges Banks stock is in far worse shape than the Gulf of Maine stock (by N.M.F.S. own numbers) it almost sounds so ridiculous that it can't be true. But as we all know it is! This is not good conservation or management when you also consider that evidence proves these two stocks to intermix (again by your own surveys) at a very significant level. You are adversely burdening & affecting one area, while rewarding another area with the codfish population paying a heavy price, At the very least both areas should be under the same conservation effort in order for the stocks to recover to a sustainable level more rapidly!

Don't you think that it is about time that we change this mismanagement in a positive way? It is long overdue. I think the fish stocks deserve it.
How is the population of Cod going to rebound to a sustainable level that allows fair and equitable access to the fisheries by all user groups when you have different landing limits in both areas that are essentially using the same Cod stock..

I would like to reiterate again just to be clear that I think it is very important & imperative that both user groups be placed under the same management regime and catch limits in order for the stocks to rebound in a more timely manner. I think the cod stocks & the user groups deserve it, don't you !

Sincerely

Kevin M. Scola

F / V Ashley Martha
F / V Survival

Cc. New England fisheries management Council
Stellwagen Bank charter boat Association

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: 3/19/2018

Northeast Multispecies Permit Holders

Establishment of a Control Date for the Charter/Party Fishery

Effective Date: March 19, 2018

The new control date for the Northeast (NE) multispecies charter/party fishery is March 19, 2018. The New England Fishery Management Council set this new control date because it may consider a future management action to limit the number of or otherwise affect participants in the charter/party fishery. The control date is intended to discourage speculative entry or fishing activity while the Council considers if, and how, participation in the fishery may be affected.

The control date, by itself, does not affect you at this time. The Council could use the control date as qualification criteria for any limited access program or other management measure, but may also use additional or different criteria. The control date does not commit the Council to develop any particular management program or criteria for participation in the fishery. The Council may also choose to take no further action.

Frequently Asked Questions	
What do I need to do?	Find and keep all documents associated with your Federal groundfish charter/party permit including landing or other fishing or ownership records. The Council may use any range of fishing years in a future action, so you should preserve all groundfish charter/party related documents that you have.
Will this affect my permit?	This control date, by itself, does not affect your permit or fishing privileges. Any action to develop a limited access program for the charter/party fishery would require a change to the Fishery Management Plan. Future effects of this control date will depend on the measures that the Council develops by the Council and your permit's landings history. We encourage you to participate in the development of such actions by the Council to better understand how such measures may affect you in the future.
How will this control date be used?	The Council may use this control date for entry or participation qualification, along with additional criteria, or may use qualification criteria different from the new control date. The Council may also choose to take no further action
When will this control date be used?	The Council has not yet initiated an action to control access to or participation in the NE multispecies charter/party fishery, but it may choose to do so in the future.

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.

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

MAR 2 0 2018

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

Dear Tom:

On October 31, 2017, we sent you the groundfish year-end report for the 2016 fishing year. In that letter, we also explained that three annual catch limit (ACL) overages occurred. Fishing year 2016 was the first time since the implementation of ACLs and accountability measures (AM) that the total ACL for any groundfish stock was exceeded mainly from vessels in fisheries outside of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that do not receive an allocation (i.e., other sub-components and state catch). We are writing to provide an updated 2016 year-end report and details of the ACL overages and AMs that the FMP requires.

Updated 2016 Catch Accounting Report
Following the release of the initial fishing year 2016 groundfish year-end report, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided us with updated state catch information. We worked with the State to update the state catch information, and attached is a revised fishing year 2016 ACL report. 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.

In fishing year 2016, catch exceeded the total ACLs and U.S. acceptable biological catches (ABC) for Georges Bank (GB) cod, Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, and witch flounder (Table 1). The overfishing limit (OFL) was not exceeded for any of these stocks. Incorporating the revised state catch information changed the magnitude of the overages minimally (GB cod catch increased, GOM cod and witch catch decreased). We also revised the method for calculating the recreational GB cod catch. A 3-year average was used to estimate recreational GB cod catch in the state and other sub-components to better account for the variability and uncertainty associated with the recreational catch estimates.

The GB cod overage was caused by a minmial overage of the common pool sub-ACL and higher than expected catches by the state and other sub-components. The GOM cod overage was caused by an overage of the recreational fishery's sub-ACL and higher than expected catch by the state sub-component. Higher than expected catch from vessels fishing in state waters caused the witch flounder overage.

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

Stock	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)	Total ACL (mt)	Catch (mt and percent of ACL or sub-ACL)							
				Total Catch (mt and percent of ACL)		Groundfish Fishery				State Waters	Other
						Total	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational		
GB Cod*	1,665	762	730	1,132.1	**155.1%**	98.1%	97.6%	**124.8%**	N/A	**337.1%**	**462.6%**
GOM Cod	667	500	473	633.7	**134.0%**	**125.3%**	96.0%	68.8%	**178.9%**	**286.3%**	89.9%
Witch Flounder	521	460	441	460.3	**104.4%**	97.0%	97.0%	94.2%	N/A	**385.4%**	93.6%

*The GB cod U.S. ABC was exceeded, not the overall ABC.

Accountability Measures

Amendment 16 prescribes a process for addressing overages from vessels fishing outside of the allocated fishery. If the overall ACL for a stock is exceeded, then the amount of the overage due to catch from vessels fishing outside of the allocated fishery shall be distributed among allocated components of the Northeast multispecies fishery based on each component's share of that stock's ACL. Each component's share of the overage is then added to that component's catch to determine the net overage amount. If the sum exceeds the component's sub-ACL, the respective AMs for that component of the fishery will be triggered. The AM for sectors and the common pool is a pound-for-pound payback. The AM for the recreational fishery is the adjustment of management measures in the next fishing year.

Any 2016 overages for allocated components of the fishery were previously addressed with AMs. In consultation with the Council, we adjusted the recreational fishery management measures for fishing year 2017 to address the fishery's 2016 overage for GOM cod (82 FR 35457; July 31, 2017). As required, we also reduced the 2017 common pool sub-ACL for GB cod to account for the fishery's small overage of its 2016 sub-ACL (82 FR 51778; November 8, 2017).

We proportionally applied the remaining overages that resulted from the state and other sub-component catch to the components of the fishery that receive an allocation. A summary of the net overage amounts is provided in Table 2. These net overages will be deducted from the 2018 fishing year sub-ACLs in the rulemaking for Framework Adjustment 57 to the FMP. Table 3 summarizes the adjustments for the 2018 fishing year based on the ACLs that the Council recommended in Framework 57.

Sectors are required to pay back, pound-for-pound, a portion of the GB, GOM cod, and witch flounder overages. The common pool will pay back, pound-for-pound, overages of GB cod and witch flounder. The 2018 common pool GOM cod sub-ACL will not be reduced because the common pool's portion of the 2016 overage and its 2016 catch did not exceed the 2016 sub-ACL. The GOM recreational fishery is allocated a portion of the stock; therefore, the recreational fishery is held accountable for the overage. The recreational fishery's AM is not a

pound-for pound payback, thus their sub-ACL is not being reduced, but management measures are being proactively adjusted to prevent future overages.

Table 2: Net overages, in metric tons, due to 2016 other and state catch.

Stock	Net Overages (mt)		
	Sectors	Common Pool	Recreational
GB cod	162.57	3.40	n/a
GOM cod	21.05	0.00	16.61
Witch flounder	19.15	0.05	n/a

"n/a" indicates that the stock is not allocated to that sub-component of the fishery
A value of 0.00 indicates that the balance was zero and no payback is required

Table 3: Initial and revised ACLs and sub-ACLs for fishing year 2018 based on payback.

Stock	Total ACL	Groundfish sub-ACL	Initial Preliminary Sector sub-ACL	Revised Preliminary Sector sub-ACL	Initial Preliminary Common Pool sub-ACL	Revised Preliminary Common Pool sub-ACL
GB Cod	1,519	1,360	1,335.17	1,172.61	25.13	21.73
GOM Cod	666	610	376.92	355.87	12.73	*unchanged*
Witch Flounder	948	849	830.09	810.94	18.93	18.88

If you have any questions on the 2016 ACL report, or the AMs triggered because of the 2016 ACL overages, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,

for Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

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

Enclosure

Northeast Multispecies Fishery

Final Year-End Results for Fishing Year 2016

- Tables 1 through 5: Total groundfish caught, landed, and discard estimates
- Table 6: Estimated state water catch (updated February 8, 2018)*
- Tables 7-9: Other sub-component catch detail
- Table 10: FY 2014 through FY 2016 GOM cod and haddock recreational catch evaluation
- Table 11: Sector carryover
- Tables 12 through 17: U.S./Canada stocks catch evaluation

*Estimated state water catch was updated to include Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (Mass DMF) data for the January through April 2017 time period, and to include Mass DMF harvester data used to apportion groundfish species to stock areas.

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

2/9/2018

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

Stock	Components with ACLs and sub-ACLs: With Accountability Measures (AMs)								Sub-components: No AMs	
	Total	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	155.1	98.1	97.6	124.8					337.1	462.6
GOM Cod	134.0	125.3	96.0	68.8	178.9				286.3	89.9
GB Haddock	9.0	8.5	8.6	0.3		23.2			2.5	47.5
GOM Haddock	75.3	74.0	65.9	40.4	95.6	5.7			35.5	379.0
GB Yellowtail Flounder	11.8	9.5	9.7	-			93.8	95.2	NA	0.0
SNE Yellowtail Flounder	33.1	30.6	26.3	51.3			63.9		13.2	37.3
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	88.1	76.5	76.2	83.7					118.0	187.3
Plaice	97.9	96.3	96.5	86.6					138.3	129.5
Witch Flounder	104.4	97.0	97.0	94.2					385.4	93.6
GB Winter Flounder	65.7	71.6	72.2	-					NA	7.2
GOM Winter Flounder	31.9	17.5	18.0	8.4					107.1	32.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	79.7	77.5	75.8	91.6					37.4	125.3
Redfish	41.6	42.8	43.0	0.9					4.6	4.3
White Hake	41.5	42.6	42.9	2.7					3.2	13.4
Pollock	19.6	16.8	16.7	20.9					49.4	29.8
Northern Windowpane	47.3	68.2	NA	NA					37.3	34.8
Southern Windowpane	69.7	121.9	NA	NA			40.4		75.7	71.5
Ocean Pout	27.9	12.5	NA	NA					21.4	151.7
Halibut	90.8	62.5	NA	NA					191.1	83.4
Wolffish	1.0	0.8	NA	NA					1.9	5.8

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017. State waters catch updated February 8, 2018

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

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

Stock	**Total Catch**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery[1]	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	1,132.1	596.6	582.3	14.3					77.5	458.0
GOM Cod	633.7	547.4	260.4	6.1	280.9				77.3	9.0
GB Haddock	4,790.7	4,391.3	4,390.3	1.0		118.9			14.1	266.4
GOM Haddock	2,583.2	2,473.5	1,576.1	10.4	887.0	1.9			9.2	98.5
GB Yellowtail Flounder	30.7	23.9	23.9	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	84.7	62.5	44.5	18.0			10.7		0.7	10.8
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	360.4	261.0	248.8	12.1					50.8	48.7
Plaice	1,208.9	1,139.3	1,121.9	17.4					36.0	33.7
Witch Flounder	460.3	358.8	351.4	7.4					46.2	55.2
GB Winter Flounder	426.9	422.6	422.6	-					-	4.3
GOM Winter Flounder	247.7	111.9	109.2	2.7					130.7	5.1
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	597.2	453.3	396.6	56.7					26.1	117.8
Redfish	4,091.6	4,078.1	4,077.6	0.4					4.7	8.8
White Hake	1,483.5	1,472.2	1,471.5	0.7					1.2	10.0
Pollock	3,998.8	2,985.1	2,961.5	23.6					631.9	381.8
Northern Windowpane	83.7	45.0	45.0	0.0					0.7	37.9
Southern Windowpane	417.2	126.7	108.3	18.4			84.4		28.0	178.1
Ocean Pout	43.3	17.1	16.3	0.8					0.4	25.8
Halibut	108.0	56.9	56.7	0.2					47.8	3.3
Wolffish	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.0					0.0	0.2

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017. State waters catch updated February 8, 2018

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

Table 4: FY 2016 Northeast Multispecies Landings (mt)

Stock	**Total Landings**	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	1,065.2	571.9	557.7	14.2					68.1	425.2
GOM Cod	433.4	350.8	250.5	5.9	94.5				76.9	5.7
GB Haddock	3,580.4	3,445.7	3,444.8	1.0		115.3			0.1	19.2
GOM Haddock	2,072.7	2,062.5	1,492.5	9.7	560.2	1.9			5.6	2.7
GB Yellowtail Flounder	23.4	23.4	23.4	-			-	-	-	-
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	62.7	59.5	43.1	16.5			-		0.3	2.8
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	298.2	245.3	234.5	10.8					50.3	2.6
Plaice	1,086.4	1,044.7	1,028.9	15.9					32.9	8.8
Witch Flounder	342.8	294.4	287.5	6.9					44.3	4.1
GB Winter Flounder	421.8	421.3	421.3	-					-	0.5
GOM Winter Flounder	230.4	106.9	104.2	2.7					123.4	0.1
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	485.7	443.8	388.9	54.9					24.4	17.5
Redfish	4,035.7	4,026.4	4,026.0	0.4					3.1	6.2
White Hake	1,439.9	1,436.8	1,436.1	0.7					0.4	2.7
Pollock	3,305.6	2,910.5	2,886.9	23.6					284.5	110.6
Northern Windowpane	0.0	0.0	0.0	-					0.0	-
Southern Windowpane	13.2	-	-	-			-		13.2	0.0
Ocean Pout	0.0	-	-	-					0.0	0.0
Halibut	69.0	20.3	20.1	0.2					46.5	2.3
Wolffish	0.0	-	-	-					-	0.0

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

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017. State waters catch updated February 8, 2018

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

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

Stock	Total Discards	Groundfish Fishery	Sector	Common Pool	Recreational	Midwater Trawl Herring Fishery	Scallop Fishery	Small Mesh Fisheries	State Water	Other
	A to H	A+B+C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
GB Cod	66.9	24.6	24.6	0.1					9.5	32.8
GOM Cod	200.2	196.6	9.9	0.3	186.4				0.4	3.3
GB Haddock	1,210.4	945.6	945.6	0.0		3.6			14.0	247.2
GOM Haddock	510.5	411.0	83.6	0.6	326.8	-			3.6	95.8
GB Yellowtail Flounder	7.3	0.5	0.5	-			2.1	4.8	-	0.0
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	22.0	3.0	1.4	1.5			10.7		0.3	8.0
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	62.2	15.7	14.3	1.3					0.5	46.1
Plaice	122.5	94.6	93.0	1.5					3.1	24.9
Witch Flounder	117.4	64.4	63.9	0.5					1.9	51.1
GB Winter Flounder	5.0	1.2	1.2	-					-	3.8
GOM Winter Flounder	17.3	5.0	5.0	0.0					7.3	5.0
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	111.6	9.6	7.7	1.8					1.7	100.3
Redfish	55.9	51.7	51.7	0.0					1.6	2.7
White Hake	43.6	35.4	35.4	-					0.9	7.4
Pollock	693.3	74.7	74.7	0.0					347.4	271.1
Northern Windowpane	83.7	45.0	45.0	0.0					0.7	37.9
Southern Windowpane	404.0	126.7	108.3	18.4			84.4		14.8	178.1
Ocean Pout	43.3	17.1	16.3	0.8					0.4	25.8
Halibut	39.0	36.6	36.6	0.0					1.3	1.1
Wolffish	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.0					0.0	0.1

Values in metric tons of live weight

Sector and common pool include estimate of missing dealer reports

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

October 17, 2017, run dates of June 25, 2017 and September 19, 2017. State waters catch updated February 8, 2018

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

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

Stock	Total			Commercial			Recreational		
	Catch	Landings	Discard	Total Catch	Landings[1]	Discard[1]	Total Catch	Landings	Discard
	A+B+C+D	A+C	B+D	A+B	A	B	C+D	C	D
GB Cod	77.5	68.1	9.5	19.8	19.4	0.4	57.8	48.7	9.1
GOM Cod	77.3	76.9	0.4	77.3	76.9	0.4	-*	-*	-*
GB Haddock	14.1	0.1	14.0	14.1	0.1	14.0			
GOM Haddock	9.2	5.6	3.6	9.2	5.6	3.6	-*	-*	-*
GB Yellowtail Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3			
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder	50.8	50.3	0.5	50.8	50.3	0.5			
Plaice	36.0	32.9	3.1	36.0	32.9	3.1			
Witch Flounder	46.2	44.3	1.9	46.2	44.3	1.9			
GB Winter Flounder	-	-	-	-	-	-			
GOM Winter Flounder	130.7	123.4	7.3	102.4	102.3	0.1	28.3	21.1	7.2
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	26.1	24.4	1.7	11.8	11.4	0.4	14.3	13.0	1.3
Redfish	4.7	3.1	1.6	4.7	3.1	1.6			
White Hake	1.2	0.4	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.9			
Pollock	631.9	284.5	347.4	5.9	3.1	2.8	626.0	281.4	344.6
Northern Windowpane	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.7			
Southern Windowpane	28.0	13.2	14.8	28.0	13.2	14.8			
Ocean Pout	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4			
Halibut	47.8	46.5	1.3	47.8	46.5	1.3			
Wolffish	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-	0.0			

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

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

State discard rate estimates based on discard rates on federal trips

Values in metric tons of live weight

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Updated February 8, 2018, run date of January 23, 2018

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

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

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

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

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

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

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

[1]Based on scallop fishing year March 2016 through February 2017
[2]Estimates not applicable. Lobster/crab bycatch was not attributed to the ACL, consistent with the most recent assessments for these stocks used to set the respective quotas.
*Some or all catch attributed to separate sub-ACL as shown in Tables 1 through 5, and so is not included above.

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

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

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

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

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

Values in metric tons of live weight

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Run Date: August 16, 2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Values in live weight

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

March 19, 2018

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

Dear Tom:

We published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) establishing March 19, 2018, as the new control date for the Northeast multispecies charter/party fishery (83 FR 11952). Attached is a copy of the ANPR for your reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Sarah Heil, Groundfish Team Supervisor, at 978-281-9257.

Sincerely,

For Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

Attachment

will be met via emission reductions already in place.

III. Proposed Action

The EPA is proposing to approve South Dakota's January 27, 2016, Regional Haze Progress Report as meeting the applicable regional haze requirements set forth in 40 CFR 51.308(g) and 51.308(h).

IV. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

Under the CAA, the Administrator is required to approve a SIP submission that complies with the provisions of the Act and applicable federal regulations. *See* 42 U.S.C. 7410(k); 40 CFR 52.02(a). Thus, in reviewing SIP submissions, the EPA's role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the CAA. Accordingly, this proposed action merely proposes to approve state law as meeting federal requirements and does not impose additional requirements beyond those imposed by state law. For that reason, this proposed action:

- Is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Orders 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993) and 13563 (76 FR 3821, January 21, 2011);
- Is not expected to be an Executive Order 13771 regulatory action because this action is not significant under Executive Order 12866;
- Does not impose an information collection burden under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*);
- Is certified as not having a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*);
- Does not contain any unfunded mandate or significantly or uniquely affect small governments, as described in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–4);
- Does not have federalism implications as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999);
- Is not an economically significant regulatory action based on health or safety risks subject to Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997);
- Is not a significant regulatory action subject to Executive Order 13211 (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001);
- Is not subject to requirements of Section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 note) because this action does not involve technical standards; and
- Does not provide the EPA with the discretionary authority to address, as appropriate, disproportionate human health or environmental effects, using practicable and legally permissible methods, under Executive Order 12898 (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994).

The SIP is not approved to apply on any Indian reservation land or in any other area where the EPA or an Indian tribe has demonstrated that a tribe has jurisdiction. In those areas of Indian country, the rule does not have tribal implications as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000), nor will it impose substantial direct costs on tribal governments or preempt tribal law.

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Incorporation by reference, Intergovernmental relations, Nitrogen oxides, Particulate matter, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Sulfur dioxide, Volatile organic compounds.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*

Dated: March 13, 2018.

Douglas H. Benevento,

Regional Administrator, Region 8.

[FR Doc. 2018–05398 Filed 3–16–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 180205126–8126–01]

RIN 0648–BH66

Control Date for the Northeast Multispecies Charter/Party Fishery; Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR); request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a new control date that may be used to determine future participation in the Northeast multispecies charter/party fishery. This notice is necessary to inform interested parties that the New England Fishery Management Council is considering a future action that may affect or limit the number of participants in this fishery and that participants should locate and preserve all fishing related documents. The control date is intended to discourage speculative entry or fishing activity in the Northeast multispecies charter/party fishery while the Council considers how participation in the fishery may be affected.

DATES: March 19, 2018, shall be known as the "control date" for the Northeast multispecies charter/party fishery. Written comments must be received on or before April 18, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2018–0042 by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to *www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=[NOAA-NMFS-2018-0042],* click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on Northeast Multispecies Charter/Party Control Date."
- *Fax:* (978) 281–9135; Attn: Spencer Talmage.

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on *www.regulations.gov* without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.,* name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Spencer Talmage, Fishery Management Specialist, 978–281–9232.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notification establishes March 19, 2018, as the new control date for potential use in determining historical or traditional participation in the charter/party groundfish fishery. Interested participants should locate and preserve all records that substantiate and verify their participation in the charter/party groundfish fishery. Consideration of a

control date does not commit the Council to develop any particular management regime or criteria for participation in the fishery. Any action to develop a limited access program for the charter/party fishery would require a change to the FMP and would be considered through the normal Council process, including rulemaking, that would allow additional opportunities for public comment.

The New England Fishery Management Council first established a control date of March 30, 2006, for the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) charter/party fishery (71 FR 16111). At the time, members of the charter/party industry and the Council's Recreational Advisory Panel recommended that the Council restrict new entrants to the fishery to reduce the need for further restrictions on the recreational catch of groundfish. In 2010, the Council requested that we publish a subsequent Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) to reaffirm the original control date (75 FR 57249; September 20, 2010). Participants in the recreational fishery were concerned that the number of charter/party operators would increase substantially due to the implementation of Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 16 implemented large-scale changes for the fishery, including annual catch limits and accountability measures and an expanded the sector management program. The charter/party fishery includes vessels with open access charter/party permits as well as vessels issued a limited access groundfish permit, while not on a groundfish day-at-sea or fishing under the sector management program. The Council has not yet taken action to restrict entrants or participants in the charter/party fishery.

For 2018, the Council included a multi-year priority to scope for the development of a limited entry program for the charter/party fishery. In light of this priority, the Council voted on January 31, 2018, to revise the control date. The Council requested that we establish a new control date as the date of publication of this Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Because conditions and issues in the recreational groundfish fishery have changed considerably over the past 10 years, the Council determined this new control date is a more useful indicator of recent activity in the fishery. This action notifies the public and fishery participants of possible rulemaking, and that the Council is considering future action that may limit the number of or otherwise affect participants in the fishery.

The control date is intended to discourage speculative entry, investment, or fishing activity in the charter/party fishery while the Council considers if and how participation in the fishery may be affected. The Council may use this control date for entry or participation qualification, along with additional criteria. Performance or fishing effort after the date of publication may not be treated the same as performance or effort before the control date. The Council may choose to use different qualification criteria that do not incorporate the new control date. The Council may also choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the charter/party groundfish fishery.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 14, 2018.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018–05505 Filed 3–16–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

EDF
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND
Finding the ways that work

March 15, 2018

Mr. Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mr. Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, GARFO
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Dear Mr. Oliver and Mr. Pentony:

We know you share our concern about the harm done to the New England groundfish fishery by Carlos Rafael's criminal wrongdoing. The individuals, businesses and communities, New Bedford in particular, that depend on the fishery continue to face hardship as a result of Mr. Rafael's actions. NOAA now has an unprecedented opportunity to help stabilize and ultimately revitalize this critical fishery. Thank you for the work you have been doing to address this challenge, and for the opportunity to share our perspectives with you on ways to move forward.

As you continue to resolve civil violations in this case and review potential buyers for Mr. Rafael's business, we write today to re-emphasize two specific priorities that we believe are critical in securing a more stable and equitable future for all who depend on this fishery. In fact, we believe that these remedies can play a profound role in delivering the long-sought recovery of the fishery.

1. Require Multiple Buyers of Mr. Rafael's Assets

First, we encourage NOAA Fisheries to require that Mr. Rafael's assets (both vessels and permits) are not sold to a single entity or multiple entities controlled by a common owner. A recent agency report estimates that Mr. Rafael's holdings account for up to 25 percent of the value of the groundfish fishery. As an example of his disproportionate ownership, he is thought to control approximately 25 percent and 35 percent respectively of two important Georges Bank stocks – yellowtail and winter flounders. Mr. Rafael's criminal behavior, exacerbated by his vast holdings, has negatively affected the recovery of these and many other stocks, and arguably subjected other fishermen to lower quotas and fewer fish to catch in the long run.

The consolidation of vessels and permits in this fishery under Mr. Rafael's control has done real and lasting damage to the social fabric of coastal New England. Despite long-standing calls by EDF and many others for

jc 3/19/18

the adoption of meaningful accumulation limits, there have been repeated failures to emulate the kinds of provisions that have been incorporated successfully into management programs in other fisheries.

The modest accumulation limits that were adopted by Amendment 18 to the groundfish management plan are ineffective: a five percent permit cap, which makes no distinction between active and inactive permits, allows a single owner to control approximately 67 permits. Rather than instituting reasonable limits that would help fleet diversity and prevent excessive concentration of market power, the amendment ultimately allowed for further consolidation, even by an owner who possessed as much as Mr. Rafael does.

Recognizing the ineffective nature of consolidation limits in Amendment 18, we urge NOAA to seek multiple buyers for Mr. Rafael's assets. Requiring that the sale of his assets be distributed among multiple buyers would address many of the circumstances that allowed Rafael's unlawful actions to do serious damage and start to mitigate the other consequences of such acute consolidation.

2. Require Monitoring of Mr. Rafael's Vessels, and Establish Funding to Assist the Fleet in a Transition to Monitoring

A clear lesson from Carlos Rafael's crimes is that effective accountability in this fishery requires changes to how at-sea and dockside monitoring are conducted. A related lesson from other multispecies fisheries – notably the Pacific groundfish fishery, which has made a rapid recovery since adopting 100 percent monitoring coverage as part of a change in management – is that full accountability has the potential to unlock enormous long-term benefits for all fishery participants.

The existing New England groundfish monitoring program, in contrast, requires that only 10-14 percent of fishing trips carry an observer, and no dockside monitors receive fishermen when they land. The management system does not work to ensure compliance with catch limits if there is such low accountability. Fishermen have no confidence that others in the fishery are following the rules, and there is little incentive for fishermen to conserve low-quota stocks. Moreover, recent NOAA Fisheries studies indicate that fishing behavior changes when observers are on board with low observer coverage levels, and that vessel trip reports often don't align with real-time vessel monitoring system data.

In contrast, fishermen operating under full accountability, including in pilot programs in New England using cameras to provide at-sea monitoring, have reported multiple benefits to their business operations such as greater efficiency and incentives for innovating. Some of these fishermen have articulated their belief that monitoring is important to help close the trust gap between fishermen and managers over the status of fish stocks.

As stakeholders in New England grapple with how to improve monitoring – including through the Council's Amendment 23 – any disposition of Carlos Rafael's assets presents an opportunity to achieve progress. We therefore urge NOAA Fisheries to require that Rafael's vessels be fully monitored, including under any future owner.

This has the potential to deliver multiple benefits which, taken together, could be transformative. First, it would provide other participants in the fishery with certainty that the misdeeds of the past are not repeated. Second, it would deliver valuable and reliable data about the fishery that could inform science and management to the long-term benefit of stakeholders. Third, it could serve to test and refine monitoring systems that in turn could contribute to future decisions about monitoring in the fishery as a whole. Having served as instruments of Mr. Rafael's criminality, it is appropriate that these vessels or permits be subject to such additional requirements as a condition of any future sale – and it would be fitting if such a step delivered benefits to those who have suffered the most as a consequence of his actions.

Finally, we request that any outstanding fines from the civil penalty phase be directed to assist fishermen in the transition to higher monitoring levels, including adopting electronic monitoring systems on their vessels. Again, directing fines associated with Mr. Rafael's actions towards increased accountability is an appropriate measure that provides assistance to the fishermen harmed by his actions.

We view this civil proceeding, in the scope of the offenses and impacts of those offenses, as an unprecedented opportunity to catalyze change for the better for the fishery. We have been advocating for effective monitoring above all else because it is the critical element that the fishery needs for stability and ultimately recovery.

* * * * *

Although there is no way for us to turn back the clock, and the damage done by Rafael will continue to reverberate in New England for years to come, his criminal conviction followed by NOAA Fisheries' strong civil and administrative assessment does provide a critical opportunity to learn from our mistakes and begin to make amends. The fishery is at such an important juncture, and your actions in this matter could make all the difference. Thank you for the work you are doing to seize this critical moment.

Sincerely,

Matt Tinning
Senior Director, US Oceans Program

Johanna Thomas
New England Regional Director, Oceans Program

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: 2/23/2018

Mid-Atlantic Species Charter and Party Vessels

Electronic Vessel Trip Reports Required for all Mid-Atlantic Charter and Party Trips

Effective Date: March 12, 2018

New Reporting Requirements for the Charter and Party Fleet Fishing for Species Managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council

Starting March 12, 2018, vessels issued a Greater Atlantic Region charter/party permit for the species listed below will be required to submit electronic vessel trip reports within 48 hours for all trips carrying passengers for hire. These new requirements stem from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Omnibus Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting (eVTR) Framework. All other current reporting requirements remain in effect.

A vessel issued a federal charter or party permit for the species listed below, on trips with passengers for hire, **must** submit vessel trip reports:

- Electronically, using NOAA-approved application (see below for more information), and
- Within 48 hours of completing a fishing trip.

This change applies to **all** vessels with Federal Greater Atlantic Regional charter or party permits for any of the following species:

- Atlantic mackerel
- Squid
- Butterfish
- Summer Flounder
- Scup
- Black sea bass
- Bluefish
- Tilefish

Electronic reporting has several advantages:

- More efficient, convenient, and timely collection of important data on fishing vessel activity for fishery managers and other data users
- Easier reporting when fishing in multiple areas or creating duplicate reports
- Easier to archive VTRs for three years as required
- Reduction in human errors on paper reports

JC 3/5/18

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When will this regulation take effect?

A. This action will take effect on March 12, 2018. All vessels must submit eVTRs in compliance with these regulations for any trips with passengers for hire taken on or after this date. We delayed implementation to give vessel owners and operators more time to obtain the necessary software, training, and device if needed.

Q. Do eVTRs need to be completed prior to entering port?

A. Yes. The requirement to complete VTRs before returning to port does not change with this action.

Q. What if I don't own a SmartPhone or tablet? How can I submit my reports?

A. If you don't have access to a SmartPhone or tablet, you can use an online webportal on a computer to submit your reports. If you use this portal, you must complete a paper VTR on your vessel prior to the completion of each trip and then enter and submit it through the webportal within 48 hours.

Q. What if I don't have an electronic device onboard my vessel that enables me to fill out an eVTR at sea?

A: You must submit your VTR electronically, but if you do not have a suitable device onboard your vessel, you may record the information on a paper VTR prior to entering port. Then you may transcribe it onto an eVTR when you are in port. You must submit the eVTR no more than 48 hours after entering port at the conclusion of each trip when you have carried passengers for hire.

Q. I don't know how to complete and submit eVTRs. How can I get training?

A. There are several ways to learn about eVTRs:

- The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is holding an online webinar to help for-hire vessel operators prepare for upcoming electronic reporting requirements:
    - **Webinar: Friday, March 2, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**
      Webinar link: http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/evtr2018/ (audio connection instructions will pop up when you join the webinar).
- The Council's eVTR webpage (http://www.mafmc.org/actions/evtr-framework) also provides a schedule of meetings and trainings, as well as background documents that you may find helpful.
- Our eVTR page (https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/electronic/index.html) lists eVTR contractors who can provide training for their approved software packages. You may contact each vendor directly as well.
- Contact your local NOAA port agent. You can find contact info for the nearest port agent at: https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sed/portagents/portagents.html

Q. How will these changes benefit fishermen?

A. While there may be a minor and temporary increase in reporting burden as permit holders learn how to submit an electronic report, long-term benefits of eVTRS include pre-populated data fields, the ability to create multiple reports, easy storage, and the elimination of mailing costs.

Q. Are fishermen in other regions, such as New England, affected by this regulation?

A. Yes, if they possess a charter or party permit for one of the species mentioned above that is managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and are taking a trip with passengers for hire. This regulation applies regardless of where they are fishing.

Q. If I have a Federal charter or party permit for a Mid-Atlantic species, but I am fishing on a commercial trip without taking passengers for hire, do I still have to submit an eVTR?

A: When you are not carrying paying passengers, you may submit your VTR ***either*** electronically or by mailing in the paper VTR. This applies to commercial trips as well as to recreational trips with no paying passengers.

Q. Where can I find out about NOAA-approved eVTR software applications?

A. You can find information on these apps for handheld electronic devices or personal computers at the links on our webpage. Some apps are free and some require payment.

Tablet or Phone

- Free: (1) eTrips, (2) NOAA Fish Online
- Pay: (1) eLog, (2) Olrac/Dynamic Data Logger, (3) FACTS

Personal Computer

- Free: (1) eTrips, (2) FLDRS
- Pay: (1) eLog, (2) Olrac/Dynamic Data Logger, (3) FACTS

App Compatibility Summary

App	Web-based	Windows-based Computer	iPhone	iPad	Windows – based Tablet	Android Tablet
NOAA/GARFO Fish Online (Free)			x	x		
NOAA/NEFSC Fisheries Logbook and Data Recording Software (FLDRS) (Free)		x				
ACCSP SAFIS (e-Trips) (Free)	x			x		x
Electric Edge (FACTS)		x				
Olrac DDL	x	x			x	
Ecotrust Canada (Elog)		x	x		x	

The GARFO website provides more information about these NOAA-approved eVTR software applications and contacts/support for eVTR problems.

For questions about eVTR, contact Daniel Luers, Sustainable Fisheries Division, at 978-282-8457 or email at Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov

New England Fishery Management Council
50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

February 2, 2018

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

Dear Mike:

Consistent with the consultation requirements of 50 CFR 648.89(f)(3), the Council developed recommendations for proactive accountability measures (AMs) for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and GOM haddock for FY2018 at its January 2018 Council meeting. These AMs require development by the Regional Administrator (RA) in consultation with the Council, because the appropriate suite of measures (e.g., bag limit, minimum fish size, season) depends on the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) specified for the upcoming fishing year. The RA may adjust measures to ensure the recreational fishery will achieve, but not exceed, its sub-ACLs.

The Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) met on Jan. 24, 2018 to discuss potential AMs. The Groundfish Committee discussed the RAP's recommendation on Jan. 25, 2018. The Council then reviewed the RAP and Committee recommendations, several AM scenarios, and the expected impacts of those scenarios. Based on these discussions, the Council passed the following motion on Jan. 31, 2018:

> ***Motion 1:*** that the Council recommends to NMFS Option 1 (Status Quo with no MA GOM Cod Possession) unless the retention of 1 GOM cod by private recreational anglers in Massachusetts waters is retained for FY 2018, in which case the Council recommends Option 7 (Split Measures by Mode).
>
> Option 1: Status quo recreational measures:
> 1) Cod: no possession year-round
> 2) Haddock: 12 fish, 17 in minimum size, and closed March-April 14 and September 17-October 31.
>
> Option 7: Split Measures by Mode:
> 1) Cod: no possession year-round
> 2) Haddock:
>
> For-Hire: 10 fish, 17 in minimum size, and closed March-April 14 and September 17-October 31
> Private: 12 fish, 17 in minimum size, and closed March-April 14, May, and September 17-October 31.
>
> *The motion carried on a show of hands (14/0/2).*

When examining the options, the Council felt that updated information and potential changes in regulations may result in lower catches of Gulf of Maine cod than projected in the bioeconomic model. These issues include: 1) if the State of Massachusetts decides to change their Gulf of Maine cod possession limit from 1 to 0 fish in state waters Gulf of Maine cod, 2) addressing enforcement and outreach concerns in federal waters of the no possession limit for Gulf of Maine cod, and 3) using updated 2017 data when available in the model (rather than 2016 as a proxy for some waves– since 2016 data is expected to be higher). In addition, wave 6 (November - December) 2016 MRIP data was higher than expected for several stocks (e.g., black sea bass, and Georges Bank cod) in New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Further, once implemented, the Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area may result in reduced recreational catches of Gulf of Maine cod from November 1 to January 31.

In addition, as part of the consultation process proposed and outlined in Framework Adjustment 57, the Council made the following motion for recreational measures for Georges Bank cod for FY2018 to achieve the target catch of 138mt:

> **Motion 2**: to recommend that the Agency consider adopting the following Georges Bank Cod recreational management measures for Fishing Year 2018: a 10 fish bag limit for all modes (private, charter and party) and increase the minimum fish size from 22 inches up to 24 inches.
>
> *The motion carried on a show of hands (10/5/1).*

The Council appreciates the continue support from NMFS staff to address information needs in advance of the RAP and Committee meetings and for holding AM consultations with the RAP and Committee prior to the January Council meeting so that Council input could be provided.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Nies

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Jon Hare, NEFSC

New England Fishery Management Council
50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

February 2, 2018

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

Dear Mike:

On January 31, 2018, the New England Fishery Management Council passed (by a 15-0 margin with one abstention) the following motion:

> *"that the Council recommends a revised control date for the charter/party groundfish fishery as the date of publication of the notice in the Federal Register."*

One of the Council's priorities for 2018 is to explore limited entry in the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) charter/party fishery. The Council felt that revising the control date from March 30, 2006 was appropriate, as conditions and issues in the recreational fishery have changed over the past 10 years. The Council agreed that it was important to "refresh" the control date, which will make it a more useful marker in determining activity in the fishery.

The Council therefore requests that NMFS prepare and publish the appropriate Federal Register notice to revise the control date for the charter/party groundfish fishery. Council staff is available, if needed, to assist in drafting the notice language.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Nies

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

2/1/2018

To: Dr. John Quinn and NEFMC board members,

I attended the NEFMC Groundfish meeting this past week and I had hoped to speak but the opportunity to do so was not obvious to me during the meeting proceedings.

Gulf of Maine Haddock ACL for 2017 was 1.160 metric tons and 2018 set at 3,358, nice to have an increase of 2,119 metric tons for the recreational sector but not being able to catch another single haddock and leaving almost 2,200 metric tons in the water because we might catch and release some cod is astonishing.

We understand regulations pertaining cod now are based on catch estimates from last year and the MIRP data is so bad NMFS keeps stating they need to find a way to count the recreational catch better. But in the mean time charter and party boats are getting crushed.

There was a long time party and charter boat fishery here that is dying, long time businesses are going out due to regulations where customers feel the cost of coming on board is not worth it for no cod. I speak to potential and past customers routinely and know this to be case and have lost customers to other fisheries as a result, not to mention the impact to other local business. Most of my customers come from out of state.

Look at your numbers

Year	Cod Haddock Bag Limits	Charter Party Vessels Taking Trips
2010		168
2012	Nine Cod PP	133
2014	Nine Cod and Three Haddock	119
2015	Zero Cod and Three Haddock	92
2016	One Cod (Sept and Oct) and Fifteen Haddock	87
2017	Zero Cod and Twelve Haddock	

As the regulations get worse going from nine cod in 2012 to zero this year, we went from 169 boats taking trips in 2010 down to 87 in 2016 and sure it is even less now. That is a 51% decrease in charter and party boats taking out customers with a loss of millions to the local region all because of zero cod.

There are plenty of cod and haddock out there we see it each trip but for some reason NOAA keeps denying it. I would also ask for some haddock even if a reduced bag limit in

Sept and Oct so we can get some trips in with the high ACL. The way the season is set up now NMFS has basically given us a four and a half month groundfish season after having year round at one time. Some allocation of fish in these months, would allow us to run combo Tuna/shark trips and let customers take home something in those months instead of the all or nothing tuna game.

The owners of these vessels have expenses just like commercial vessels but a very short season primarily spring to fall to fish, Please take into consideration giving us a few cod and some haddock in September and October.

Back to the MRIP data, referring to the data in table 2 on Angler Trips for Cod and Haddock. 2 things I would like to point out.

Table 2. Gulf of Maine Angler Trips by Mode

	FY2016				FY2017			
	Cod & Haddock Angler Trips[1]	(PSE)	All Angler Trips[2]	(PSE)	Cod & Haddock Angler Trips[1]	(PSE)	All Angler Trips[2]	(PSE)
Head	31,356	(17.2)	49,665	(9.5)	27,510	(21.8)	50,583	(14.6)
Charter	12,380	(14.2)	46,395	(10.4)	15,529	(20.8)	78,871	(12.9)
Private	118,631	(15.8)	1,341,314	(8.0)	107,761	(17.3)	1,144,513	(6.9)
Shore	229	(100.0)	832,339	(16.4)	-		669,190	(14.1)
	162,596	(12.1)	2,269,713	(7.7)	150,799	(13.1)	1,943,156	(6.4)

[1]Number of angler trips that targeted and/or caught cod or haddock

[2]All angler trips in the Gulf of Maine

1. **The chart shows that Charter trips increased by 25% in 2017 which does not match the trend line from above and certainly is not consistent with my and other captain's bookings that I have spoke to.**
2. **The chart shows private angler trips of roughly 108K for 2017. Given the current restrictions and practical weather considerations that gives private anglers a 120-day season of May, June, July and August. At a generous assumption of 4 anglers per boat, that is 225 private boats fishing 7 days a week regardless of weather and the fact most people work 5 days a week. My experience is that on the very nice days in May when fishing is good and easy on the north end of Stellwagon bank you might see 30 boats and half of those are charter/head boats. Even allowing the same number of boats on the south end of the bank, the two most heavily fished areas, they do not come close to those numbers. Further, when the fish move into the deep water and the game is on Tillies or east of the bank in mid June, July and August you are lucky to come across a handful of boats over the course of a day. These numbers do not pass the sniff test and way over state the effort.**

Please use some common sense and allow us the full allocation of haddock ACL and some cod given the recovering stocks and assuming a practical fishing effort.

Respectfully,

Captain Bruce Sweet
Sweet Dream Sport Fishing
Gloucester MA
captbruce@sportfishingma.com

Sherie Goutier

From: donald campbell <labradorcharters@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 4:02 PM
To: info info
Subject: Haddock and Cod fishery

Captain Don Campbell of Labrador fishing charters In regards of the haddock fishery for 2018 keep it open there is no need to shut it down the stock is out standing for both cod and haddock. North of the 42 line . You guys have done a out standing job with the fishery keep it open and maybe adding the cod would be out standing for our charter trips. Cod fishing was crazy good out there last seasons ,but we had to release I hope we can keep one cod per person this season. Alongside 15 haddock per persons ..

Thanks Captain Don Campbell
Labrador fishing charters
Sent from my iPad

Sherie Goutier

From: darren remillard <drem312@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 2:31 PM
To: comments; Tom Nies; John Quinn; Doug Grout
Subject: Recreational Gulf of Maine Fishing
Attachments: Fish.docx

To whom it may concern,
My name is Darren and I have been fishing the Gulf of Maine recreationally since the eighties. I have seen all our ground fish stocks go up and down throughout the years. Few years back when I witnessed party boat after party boat pulling up large female cod from the now Cod Protection Area I wrote letters to NMFS and NH Fish and Game telling them measures needed to be taken to stop what was happening. Two years later the protection area was created. I own a small 25ft vessel and fish recreationally for groundfish maybe once or twice a week from May through the summer. I mostly target Haddock and Pollock. What I can't understand is why I have the same regulations as a party boat that has 60 people on board sometimes 7 days week. The cod has finally started to come back no doubt from the zero-possession limit. Last year I released several hundred pounds back to the ocean alive but one out of ten would not make it and it made me sick to see a 15lb cod being eating floating on the surface by seagulls. I'm proposing a different category for the average recreational saltwater fisherman like myself. This separate license and fee would be called,
Part time Recreational Fisherman; (Saltwater)
Defined as a Vessel no larger than 30 feet
Having no more than 4 fishermen on board
Fish no more than 3 days per week.

This category would allow the retention of one cod per person between the length of 24" to 36"
All other groundfish regulations will apply

I very much enjoy fishing the Gulf Of Maine and keeping a cod after all the money it takes to get out there would be nice

Respectfully Submitted
Darren Remillard
603-782-1453
RYE NH

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

Mr. Michael Pentony,
Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Jan, 22, 2018

"Clarification of Charter Headboat EVTR Requirements"

Dear Mr. Petoney,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association which represents dozens of charter and party permit holders who hold permits for Atlantic Bluefish, Black Sea Bass, Scup, Summer Flounder, Tilefish, Squid, Mackerel, and or Butterfish. September 2017 the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved these permit holders to submit by electronic means all vessel trip reports within 48 hours. We understand the purpose of this was to increase the accuracy of recreational landings. When this proposal was proposed permit holders in the northeast had very little knowledge due to it being submitted by the Mid-Atlantic Council.

Now these reporting requirements are mandatory starting March 2018 we have a few concerns. I myself was part of a pilot program beta test by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries this past season. I fish an open 23' center console with no mate and found it impossible to fill out the information underway while trying to bait hooks, land fish, measure for compliance and run back up on the drift. Speaking to other captains about this they had the same concerns even while running party boats.

In the FAQ section of the EVTR's it states ***"You must submit your VTR electronically, but if you do not have a suitable device onboard your vessel, you may record the information on a paper VTR and transcribe it onto an eVTR when you are in port. You must submit the eVTR no more than 48 hrs after entering port at the conclusion of each trip".***

I believe the purpose of this program is to allow NMFS to obtain better landings and discards from these vessels and not to hinder the operation of the vessels underway or create a safety issue. The requirement for a vessel to have a VTR filled out before landing at the dock is easier to comply with if running a large fishing vessel compared to a smaller charter vessel. I am respectfully requesting clarification of when VTRS must be filled out and the forms to use.

Can a vessel fill the required VTR information out when they return to the dock as long as they have recorded the information required? Also instead of carrying the multi form VTR's issued by NMFS can just a single copy be used to record the data prior to entering electronically. To me this makes sense if no colored copies are being sent to either GARFO or the State Division of Marine Fisheries. If we can meet these requirements for HMS species, why not allow it for Mid-Atlantic managed species?

JC 1/24/18

In summary, please clarify the requirements of what information has to be completed prior to entering port taking safety into consideration and please explain the value added if the service would be receiving the information within forty eight hours electronically? Also, please confirm if a blank white copy of a VTR to be filled out will be accepted especially if boarded at the dock by a NOAA agent or a surveyor knowing the information will be submitted electronically. By allowing white paper copies, it will be easier for the vessel owner and operators to comply but also save NMFS funds, not having to print and mail VTR log books to permit holders.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

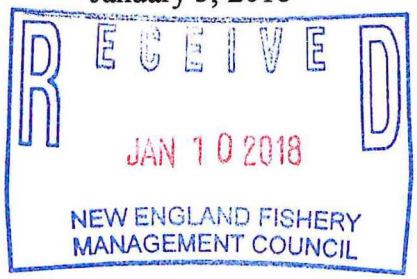
Respectfully,

David Waldrip
Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association

cc: Frank Blount, Chairman, RAP
Moira Kelly, GARFO
Dr. David Pierce, MA DMF
Dr. Jamie Cournane, NEFMC
Mr. Barry Gibson, Vice Chair, RAP
Mr. Michael Pierdinock, MA MFC

Kevin M. Scola
P.O. Box 1392
Marshfield, MA 02050

January 3, 2018



Attn... Dr. John Quinn & Tom Nies
New England fisheries management Council
50 Water St.
Newburyport, MA 01950

Re. Comment & suggested proposal on recreational measures for Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock.

Dear Tom and John

I would like to take this moment to express my concern & opinion about the upcoming (2018) recreational Cod & Haddock season in the Gulf of Maine .

The Gulf of Maine recreational cod fishery was put at 0 catch because of suspicion by N.M.F.S. of high mortality rate (80 – 90%) within the industry and low stock assessment. I know this to be true, because Pat Kurkel told it directly to me at a meeting years ago. I almost fell off my chair when she said that & told her that it was not more than 10 - 15%. She said that was "anecdotal "evidence " and couldn't be considered!

Well you now have scientific evidence by the division of Marine fisheries & N.M.F.S. surveys that is not the case. The scientific evidence and best available science shows that it is between 10 and 15% .

Knowing this I would like to see a daily bag limit of 5 codfish per-person per day with no closed season. Given that the recreational allocation is at 154 metric tons and that the effort has decreased dramatically, would also support this suggestion.

Considering further that the haddock population is healthy and fully recovered I would suggest that the haddock daily bag limit be set at 15 per person as well with no closed season.

JC 1/10/18

I have heard that according to your survey and data that there is an increase in effort. Well, gentlemen, this is absolutely not true. I spent quite a few days on the water & honestly never see a boat most days. I know you view this as anecdotal evidence but it's true.

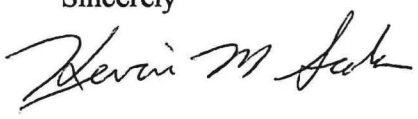
How we ever got to here from there is beyond me.! There is such a flip-flop, and mismanagement going on, that it leads to strong suspicion to coercion & unethical practices, not to mention conflict of interest.

As evidence to this. Considered that in the Gulf of Maine recreational fishery involving charter boats and head boats we have 1. Seasonal closed areas,2. Year-round closed areas, 3. Closed seasons & 4. Last but not least a year round zero bag limit on codfish!! All this while the Georges Banks, recreational fishery involving charter boats and head boats has 1. NO closed areas 2. NO year-round closed areas, 3. NO closed seasons & last but not least an unlimited codfish catch !!

When you consider that the Georges Banks stock is in far worse shape than the Gulf of Maine stock it almost sounds so ridiculous that it can't be true. But as we all know it is ! This is not good conservation or management when you also consider that evidence proves these two stocks to intermix. You are adversely burdening & affecting one area, while rewarding another area with the codfish population paying a heavy price, At the very least both areas should be under the same conservation effort!

Don't you think that it is about time that we change this mismanagement in a positive way? It is long overdue.

Sincerely



Kevin M. Scola
F / V Survival
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C.C Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association

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: 12/22/2017

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass 2018 Commercial Quotas and Recreational Harvest Limits

Effective Date: January 1, 2018

We have published a final rule that implements the following measures:

1. Revised 2018 scup (porgy) commercial and recreational catch limits;
2. A commercial summer flounder (fluke) accountability measure that adjusts the 2018 annual catch target and quota because of a prior year overage;
3. Revised 2018 summer flounder state quotas to account for the adjusted quota; and
4. A continuation of the commercial summer flounder closure in Delaware in 2018.

The 2018 black sea bass catch limits are unchanged from those implemented last year but are repeated here for ease of reference.

Revised Scup Specifications

2018-2019 Scup Specifications, in millions of pounds.

	2018	2019*
Commercial Annual Catch Limit	30.53	28.42
Commercial Annual Catch Target	28.42	28.42
Commercial Quota	23.98	23.98
Recreational Annual Catch Limit	8.61	8.01
Recreational Annual Catch Target	8.01	8.01
Recreational Harvest Limit	7.37	7.37

* Preliminary, final 2019 specifications incorporating any overages will be announced in late 2018.

Scup initial commercial quota allocations for 2018 and Initial Trip Limits, in pounds.

Season	Percent Share	Quota[1]	Possession Limits (per trip)[2]
Winter I	45.11	10,820,000	50,000
Summer	38.95	9,340,986	--
Winter II	15.94	3,822,816	12,000
Total	100.0	23,983,802	

[1]There were no applicable overages through 10/31/17.

[2]The Winter I possession limit will drop to 1,000 lb upon attainment of 80 percent of that period's allocation. The Winter II possession limit may be adjusted (in association with a transfer of unused Winter I quota to the Winter II period) via notification in the *Federal Register*.

Summer Flounder Specifications

Commercial Summer Flounder Quota Adjustment

In 2016, estimated discards were higher than expected, resulting in the annual catch limit being exceeded. The commercial summer flounder accountability measure requires that the amount of the total commercial overage (i.e., discards and landings) be deducted from a subsequent year's catch target. As such, the 2018 annual catch target is reduced by **191,218 lb**. Using the projected discards for 2018, the final 2018 commercial summer flounder quota is **6,436,120 lb**. The revised 2018 quota is still 13.7 percent higher than that in place for 2017.

Commercial Summer Flounder State Quotas

To account for this adjusted 2018 quota, as well as any other overages incurred by individual states, we've outlined updated 2018 flounder state quotas in the table below.

2018 State-By-State Commercial Summer Flounder Quotas, in pounds

	FMP Percent Share	2018 Initial Quota	2018 Adjusted Quota (2016 ACL overage deducted)	2017 Preliminary Overages[1]	Adjusted 2018 Quota, Less Overages[2]
Maine	0.04756	3,152	3,061	0	3,061
New Hampshire	0.00046	30	30	0	30
Massachusetts	6.82046	451,998	438,973	37,816	401,157
Rhode Island	15.68298	1,039,326	1,009,375	13,002	996,373
Connecticut	2.25708	149,579	145,268	0	145,268
New York	7.64699	506,773	492,169	0	492,169
New Jersey	16.72499	1,108,381	1,076,440	0	1,076,440
Delaware	0.01779	1,179	1,145	49,638	-48,493
Maryland	2.0391	135,133	131,239	0	131,239
Virginia	21.31676	1,412,682	1,371,972	0	1,371,972
North Carolina	27.44584	1,818,862	1,766,447	0	1,766,447
Total	100	6,627,096	6,436,120	0	6,384,158

[1]2017 quota overage is determined through comparison of landings for January through October 2017 plus any landings in 2016 in excess of the 2016 quota that were not previously addressed in the 2017 quota specifications.
[2]Total quota is the sum of all states having allocation. A state with a negative number has an allocation of zero (0).

Delaware Commercial Summer Flounder Closure

The amount of overharvest from previous years is again greater than the amount of commercial quota allocated to Delaware for 2018. As a result, there is no quota available for 2018 in Delaware and the commercial fishery is closed. Effective January 1, 2018, landings of summer flounder in Delaware by vessels holding commercial Federal summer flounder permits are prohibited for the 2018 calendar year. If a quota transfer occurs and the commercial fishery in Delaware is opened, we will announce the changes in the *Federal Register* and notify you in another fishery bulletin.

Black Sea Bass Specifications

The current 2018 black sea bass specifications have not changed since they were approved as projected last May 2017.

2018 Black Sea Bass Specifications, in millions of pounds.

	2018
Commercial Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target	4.35
Commercial Quota	3.52
Recreational Annual Catch Limit and Annual Catch Target	4.59
Recreational Harvest Limit	3.66

Recreational Fishing Measures

The management measures for the recreational summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries will be finalized through a separate rulemaking in the spring of 2018. We will notify you with another bulletin when they are complete.