



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 4, 2023

PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

Council to Hold August 17, 2023 Facilitated Meeting to Discuss Groundfish Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules

The New England Fishery Management Council's Groundfish Committee will be hosting a facilitated meeting on [August 17, 2023](#) to discuss draft goals and objectives for modifying or replacing the existing acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rules for groundfish. ABC control rules are used in setting annual catch limits. They define how catch and/or fishing mortality change with stock size.

The Council is inviting members of the Groundfish Committee, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Groundfish Plan Development Team, the Groundfish Advisory Panel, the Recreational Advisory Panel, the Risk Policy Working Group, and the public to participate in the discussion.

This will be a hybrid meeting conducted at the [Four Points by Sheraton in Wakefield, MA](#), coupled with a [webinar option](#). The start time is 9:30 a.m.

PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE? The Council is encouraging all groundfish stakeholders to engage in the conversation either in person or online. For planning purposes and to ensure a proper meeting room setup, the Council is asking everyone who intends to participate to [fill out this Google form](#) to indicate whether you plan to attend in person or tune in via the webinar. **Your response is not binding!** The form is merely intended to help the Council make appropriate meeting room and webinar accommodations.

Highest Groundfish Priority

Revising the ABC control rules is the Council's [highest groundfish priority for 2023](#). The Council and SSC have been discussing the issue, and on June 28, 2023, the Council initiated [Framework Adjustment 68](#) to consider alternatives for adjusting the ABC control rules.

During this meeting, the Council clarified that the framework should consider, among other factors, the challenges identified



A groundfish haul on a research trip in the Gulf of Maine. – SMAST photo



New England Fishery Management Council

in this [discussion document](#). The Council also clarified that the August 17, 2023 facilitated meeting should be designed to discuss draft goals and objectives for the ABC Control Rules that are consistent with National Standard 1, the [National Standard 1 guidelines](#), and the Council's [Risk Policy](#), which is [being revised](#).

MEETING MATERIALS: The Groundfish Plan Development Team will be preparing background materials for the facilitated meeting, including:

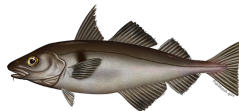
- An overview presentation;
- A draft discussion document for Framework 68;
- An [overview](#) of National Standard 1 and the National Standard 1 guidelines;
- An overview of the Council's Risk Policy and ongoing work of the Risk Policy Working Group;
- A list of current Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan goals and objectives;
- The report from the SSC's [May 5, 2023 meeting](#); and
- As a starting point, a list of draft goals and objectives for discussion during the August 17 facilitated meeting.

These documents will be posted on the [meeting webpage](#) as they become available.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT: The facilitated discussion is expected to result in a draft list of possible goals and objectives for the ABC control rules framework.

The Groundfish Committee will discuss the resulting list in the afternoon on the same day, August 17, following the morning's discussion by all parties.

The Groundfish Committee may decide to make recommendations to the Council at the [September 25-28, 2023](#) meeting in Plymouth, MA.



QUESTIONS? Contact Dr. Jamie Cournane, the Council's groundfish plan coordinator, at jcournane@nefmc.org. Visit the Council's [groundfish webpage](#) for more information.

National Standard 1

"Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry."



Acadian redfish, one of the stocks in the groundfish complex. – SMAST photo

FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 66: During its June 2023 meeting, the Council also initiated [Framework Adjustment 66](#) to the groundfish plan. This framework will set fishery specifications for several stocks for fishing years 2024-2025, including for shared U.S./Canada resources on Georges Bank, and for 2024-2026 for other stocks. It also will include a revised building plan for white hake, alternatives to address large swings in Canadian halibut catch for U.S. halibut management, and more. The Groundfish Committee will discuss the framework at a [September 22, 2023](#) meeting.