

Friday Nov. 13, 2009 - 1pm
Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee (MC)/Technical Committee (TC) Follow-Up
Conference Call

******DRAFT version for NEFMC Council meeting - Any changes will be distributed and highlighted at the Council Meeting.******

Individuals on Call:

Jason Didden	MAFMC Staff	Emily Bryant	NMFS NERO
Dan Furlong	MAFMC Staff	Clark Gray	NC
John Boreman	MAFMC SSC	Matt Gates	CT
Tom Miller	MAFMC SSC	Russ Babb	NJ
Chris Vonderweidt	ASMFC Staff	Scott Newlin	DE
Paul Rago	NMFS NEFSC	Chris Hickman	Fisherman
Kathy Sosebee	NMFS NEFSC	Greg DiDomenico	GSSA
Angel Bolinger	MD	Kristen Cevoli	PEW
Erik Schneider	RI	Eric Brazer	CCHFA
Dan McKiernan	MA		

MC/TC Consensus Statements:

1. The MC/TC acknowledges that the MAFMC has a limit set on it by the SSC. This limit equates to 9.1 million pounds for a commercial quota (see 11/13 MC briefing document Table 1 for calculation). This is a function of the ABC given by the SSC, accounts for all known sources of mortality, and constituted the best available scientific information when the MC met. The MC is constrained by the SSC recommendation, and both are constrained by the management gap of there being no rebuilding target, which forces use of the $F = 0.11$ rebuilding fishing mortality rate.
2. The MC/TC has strong concerns that there is no/limited provision for making in-season adjustments on the federal side if the best available science significantly changes after the SSC and/or MC makes recommendations.
3. The MC/TC recommends maintaining the status quo 3,000 lb trip limit.
4. The MC/TC recommends that the Northeast Fisheries Science Center conduct additional outreach to the MC and/or other state contacts to minimize any data gaps in the upcoming TRAC assessment.

Nov 13 Call Summary:

C. Vonderweidt presented a summary of the current situation: The SSC's ABC recommendation was down this year - related to application of the status quo F_{rebuild} (0.11) to a smaller estimated stock size in the stock update from NMFS NEFSC.

At the last meeting the focus was $F = 0.11$, i.e. status quo F , especially with a new assessment upcoming. The thinking at the last meeting was that since Canadian landings had not been deducted but the fishery had still met F_{rebuild} that maybe we could do this again - i.e. keep the same commercial quota. But there was uncertainty about exactly how Canadian landings had been treated.

Staff examined how Canadian landings were handled in the past. They were in fact accounted for last year and in past cycles. Thus if we want to keep consistent with same methodology have to deduct Canadian landings. The reason why the quota is lower is not the Canadian landings but because of the lower ABC (which was caused by the ~20% lower stock size estimate). Initially the impact of the lower ABC was not apparent - once the Canadian landings were accounted for as usual the impacts of the lower ABC became apparent.

E. Bryant Clarified what can be done mid-year from the Federal perspective: There are no provisions to roll over any quota or make in-season adjustments. The quota that is set will remain the same for the entire fishing season unless there is a framework process to change the existing regs. The SSC would also have to review any change. TRAC results will not be available in time for the upcoming fishing year (will likely be available in April). While Framework 2 has provisions to automatically incorporate new reference points, still have to make changes within a rulemaking process, which means annual specs or a framework. Emergency rules are only for conservation purposes (i.e. avoiding overfishing).

Post-meeting notes on Dogfish framework procedures from J. Didden- my understanding of the procedure is as follows: *The Councils can initiate frameworks at any time for management actions that the Dogfish FMP specifies are authorized to be executed via frameworks. After initiation, the Councils develop and analyze management measures over the span of at least two Council meetings (two for each Council). The public is given advance notice of the availability of both the proposed measures and the analysis for comment prior to, and at, the second Council meeting. Both Councils must approve identical motions as framework recommendations to the NMFS NE Regional Administrator. Depending on the circumstances, the NMFS NE Regional Administrator can issue a proposed rule, issue a final rule, or reject the measures by not concurring.*

J. Didden summarizes SSC ABC implications: The SSC recommendation is biologically based and included US and Canadian landings. When you deduct Canadian landings and the recreational landings, it is difficult to arrive at any conclusion other than 9.1 million pounds for the commercial quota within the operational constraints of the Council (use of the SSC's ABC).

C. Vonderweidt: The ASMFC can make an in-season adjustment if the best available scientific information changes. At last MC-TC meeting the consensus was to go with $F = .11$. MC-TC was polled on this issue. Points raised included:

- Next assessment should incorporate expectations of less fishing in 2010 due to DAS cuts / sectors. Saw decline in otter trawl discards recently. Other discard assumptions could impact quota - high uncertainty
- Very difficult to justify cut in catch based on single year data point given stock status and fishermen's observations out on the water
- Stock estimates use 3-year average - in last cycle 2006 was included which was a very high number. 2006 is not in the average this year which brings the point estimate down.
- The discard proportion uses the most recent year which was one of the lowest in the time series.
- The current calculation uses a relatively low number for Canadian catch (most recent year - 1572 mt) and an assumption of zero discards for Canadian fishery.
- Not many options for working within SSC's ABC.
- Whether could use an F_{target} versus $F_{rebuild}$? D. Furlong notes NMFS has made it clear that Council has to respect advice of SSC. J. Boreman pointed out that it was made clear to SSC that they had to use F_{target} , i.e. limited to $F=0.11$ until stock is declared rebuilt. Monitoring committee is bound by this ABC. The TC/ASMFC is not bound by this - ASMFC does have a target so it is not locked into $F_{rebuild}$. The lack of a rebuilding target really causes a problem for management on the federal side within the current cycle - the new numbers from the TRAC can be incorporated in next year's specs or via a framework but not otherwise. Best available science is what is available today.
- Discard magnitude assumptions could be changed and could allow additional landings. But would have to be done based on some concrete objective information and no such new information has come to light. Could revisit but without any new information making significant changes seems unjustifiable. Could also be something that SSC would need to revisit since it changes the character of the ABC (potential for higher overall mortality if reduction was unwarranted).
- To what degree do Canadian fish interact with U.S. fish? Currently assume full interaction - TRAC will be evaluating this. Issue of U.S. fishermen bearing brunt of reductions vs. Canada.
- Could there be no number? NERO commented that it must set specs every year. Council under same obligation.

J.D. Proposal for a consensus statement from the MC on quota: Acknowledge that the MAFMC has a limit set on it by the SSC that equates to 9.1 million pounds. This is a function of the ABC given by the SSC and constitutes the best available scientific information when the Monitoring Committee met.

- Couch within the management gap of no rebuilding target - MC limited by rebuilding plan/rebuilding $F = 0.11$.
- MC also has strong concerns that there is no/limited provisions for making in-season adjustments on the federal side if the best available science changes.
- ASMFC can make in-season adjustments if best available science changes.

Trip limit: There has been some discussion of the utility of increasing the trip limit to 4,000 lb because of how dogfish is caught (esp. NC). But given lower quota status quo may make sense.

There was a consensus on the call to maintain the status quo 3,000 lb trip limit.

Other issues:

- There was consensus to recommend to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center that they conduct additional outreach to the MC and/or other state contacts to minimize any data gaps in the upcoming TRAC assessment.
- Get feedback from NMFS on potential ways to facilitate in-season adjustments in the future.
- No objections to revised summary from 10/28 MC meeting.