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NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FINAL Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) Report

December 13, 2012

Holiday Inn, Mansfield MA

The Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) met on December 13, 2012 to continue development of the 2013-2015 Atlantic herring fishery specifications and Framework Adjustment 2 (to allow seasonal splitting of sub-ACLs and carryovers). The Herring PDT also continued development of alternatives for accountability measures (AMs) and analysis of sub-ACL options.

Meeting Attendance: Lori Steele (Herring PDT Chairman), Rachel Neild, Rachel Feeney NEFMC Staff; Matt Cieri (Herring TC Chairman), Jon Deroba, Micah Dean, Renee Zobel, Sara Weeks, Carrie Nordeen, Rob Vincent (NMFS) (Herring PDT Members); Erika Fuller (EarthJustice), Chris Weiner (CHOIR) (interested parties in audience); GoToMeeting (webinar): Madeleine Hall-Arber, Steve Correia, Min-Yang Lee, Dave Ellenton, and other interested parties

After some general announcements, Ms. Steele provided a brief update to the Herring PDT regarding the development of the 2013-2015 herring fishery specifications. She identified the primary issues to address at this meeting regarding the Atlantic Herring Fishery Specifications for FY 2013-2015, which include the options for Framework Adjustment 2 and the accountability measures. Ms. Nordeen provided information regarding the alternatives allowing carryover for unutilized sub-ACL. At this time, Draft Framework 2 includes two options.

Option 1: If there is a carryover, the sub-ACL(s) in the corresponding management area(s) would increase for the following fishing year, but the stockwide ACL would remain unchanged.

Option 2: If there is a carryover, both the sub-ACL(s) in the corresponding management area(s) and the stockwide ACL would increase for the following fishing year, but the stockwide ACL cannot exceed ABC in any fishing year. The specification of management uncertainty would address the potential for sub-ACL carryovers during the upcoming three fishing years, and the impacts of any carryovers that would increase the stockwide ACL would be analyzed as part of the specifications package.

The PDT noted that Option 1 appeared more flexible than Option 2 at this time and that Option 2 may not be applicable during the 2013-2015 herring specifications because under the “constant catch” option (*preferred*), ABC = OFL in 2015. Ms. Nordeen will provide language for an additional option, which would give the RA authority to authorize carryovers under certain conditions.

Other Elements of Sub-ACL Analysis

Catch at Age Assessment

Dr. Cieri briefly discussed updating the catch at age (CAA) matrix for the specifications document. He stated that there are some signs of the 2008 year class, especially for age 3, in both the inshore and offshore areas. This suggests that size of the 2008 year class is not just an offshore phenomenon. A more detailed description will be provided in the 2013-2015 herring specifications.

Overview of Alternatives for AMs

Ms. Steele provided an overview of the range of AMs provided in the specifications document. There are four AM alternatives that may create management concerns if chosen together. It was suggested that the AMs could be bundled into alternatives that would allow the Council to look at how the suite of AMs apply across the fishery and interact with one another.

Another brief discussion ensued regarding the total ACL overage and how that would affect the sub-ACLs. It was mentioned that the deductions from the total ACL overage in 2012 would account for the sub-ACLs that were considered in an overage status. A continued discussion will be provided in the 2013-2015 herring specifications as details progress and are finalized.

ACL/Sub-ACL Management

Mr. Vincent discussed the quota management methodology that NOAA/NMFS is using presently. He noted that much of the difficulties are with late reports and missing reports, which can delay the process to finalize year ending quota numbers. He agreed to provide data comparing the preliminary (in-season) quota numbers to the final (year-ending) quota numbers along with a description of how the quota data gets from the vessel to the final (year-ending) quota numbers. This will be made available in the analysis of the 2013-2015 herring specifications.

Sub-ACL Splits

The sub-ACL splits proposed in the 2013-2015 herring fishery specifications package are:

- Area 1A: 0% January-May; 100% June-December (authorized under Framework 1);
- Area 1B: 0% January-April; 100% May-December
- Area 2: 67% January-February; 33% March-December

Mr. Correia provided additional information regarding the analysis of the sub-ACL options, which utilizes landings data by month and for Area 1A, Area 1B, and Area 2 from 2000-2011. Mr. Correia also presented tables showing observed proportions and synthetic proportions, which distributed the sub-ACL splits that are under consideration. It was recognized that Area 2 is the most complex herring sub-ACL and that fishing patterns in the early months of the year can vary. The Herring PDT also agreed draw the “pop mixing” rate from a uniform distribution instead of the triangular distribution utilized in the 2010-2012 specifications. Tables and other data points will be provided with detailed analysis in the herring 2013-2015 specifications document.

Overall, the Herring PDT discussed the analysis on the sub-ACL splits and how to address the AMs more effectively. The PDT agreed to continue analysis on these items discussed above to be provided in the 2013-2015 herring specifications.

The Herring PDT's next meeting is TBD.

