

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Multispecies (Groundfish) Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Groundfish Advisory Panel met April 19, 2007, and May 29, 2007. The Multispecies Oversight Committee met April 20, 2007, and May 31, 2007. Meeting summaries are attached.
- B. Amendment 16: The Amendment 16 scoping period ended December 31, 2006. Scoping hearings were held in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. The Committee and Council are reviewing scoping comments, with an initial Council discussion held at the February 2007 Council meeting. A second Council discussion on alternatives is expected to occur at the June 2007 Council meeting. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute and the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute hosted meetings to help proponents of alternative management systems develop detailed proposals. The Multispecies Committee has developed recommendations for Amendment 16 development: (1) Focus on changes to the effort control system in Amendment 16 in order to continue stock rebuilding, and (2) address allocation, alternative management systems, new or revised sectors, and GOM party/charter limited access in a subsequent action.
- C. Gear Standards: Gear that can be used in the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP, and trawl gear used in the Category B (regular) DAS Program, are identified in the regulations. Framework 42 allows the Regional Administrator to approve additional gear for these programs once a performance standard is provided by the Council and approved by NMFS. The Council will consider a Committee recommendation for such a standard.
- D. GB Haddock Minimum Size: The Committee has received reports of large discards of haddock that are just under the nineteen inch minimum fish size. The Council will consider a Committee recommendation that the Regional Administrator authorize the retention of seventeen inch haddock in order to reduce waste.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. Review and approval of Committee recommendations for the development of Amendment 16 and a subsequent management action.
- B. Review and approval of a Committee recommendation for a standard to be used by the Regional Administrator when authorizing gear for the Eastern US/CA Haddock SAP and the Category B (regular) DAS Program (trawl gear only).
- C. Review and approval of a Committee recommendation to ask NMFS to revise the minimum size for haddock to seventeen inches in order to reduce haddock discards.

III. MOTIONS

- A. That the Council utilize Amendment 16 for the sole purpose of meeting the required groundfish mid-term rebuilding targets for 2009 through modifications of the existing DAS program, consistent with the M-S Act and that Amendment 17 (or the next available groundfish amendment) be

designated as the mechanism to further develop all other management options including but not limited to area management, das performance plan, point system, ITQ management, party/charter limited entry, and approval of any new sector proposals or adjustments or modifications to existing sectors. Amendment 17 should also develop and establish a complete allocation system for the groundfish fishery.

B. To move forward for consideration in A16 the following measures:

- Count DAS as a minimum of 24 hours
- Remove 20-day spawning block requirement
- Require use of diamond mesh codend in CAII YTF SAP
- Allow use of 6 inch square mesh with separator trawl in the US/CA area
- Reduce/eliminate the conservation tax on DAS transfers
- Provide more flexibility in the length/horsepower restrictions in the DAS leasing and transfer programs
- Remove the tonnage restriction on replacement vessels
- Consider 6 inch mesh for gillnets
- Consider 17 inch GB haddock minimum size
- Reduce 72 hour observer notification requirement
- Consider adjustments in differential das program (areas and rates)
- Reconsideration of cod cap proposal
- Adjustments in DAS allocations
- Running clock
- Trip limit triggers on stocks with trip limits
- Re-examine rolling/seasonal closures
- Reexamine exempted fisheries
- Consider reducing minimum size of GOM haddock
- Allow GC scallop vessels fishing in the RMA to retain the same monkfish as allowed by general category permits in other areas
vessels

C. To recommend the Regional Administrator adopt the following performance standard when considering gear for the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP, or trawl gear for the Category B (regular) DAS Program:

“A. The Regional Administrator can authorize additional gear for use in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area Haddock SAP, or additional trawl gear for use in the Category B (regular) DAS Program, consistent with the Administrative Procedures Act. The new gear must demonstrate a statistically significant reduction in each regulated groundfish stock of concern of at least fifty percent (by weight, on a trip-by-trip basis), or the catch of each regulated groundfish stock of concern in the new gear must be less than five percent of the total catch of regulated groundfish (by weight, on a trip-by-trip basis). Comparisons will be made to an appropriately selected control gear.

B. These standards must be met in a completed experiment that has been reviewed according to the standards established by the Council’s Research Policy before the gear can be considered and approved by the Regional Administrator.

C. Requests for the approval of additional gear may be made by either the New England Fishery Management Council or its Committee responsible for developing the multispecies FMP.”

D. To ask the RA to lower the minimum size of haddock to 17 inch under either emergency action authority or her authority to adjust rules to allow the TAC to be harvested.

IV. INFORMATION

- A. Scoping comments on DAS, including the DAS performance plan
- B. Extracts from sector applications received
- C. GOM Party/Charter Limited Entry Proposal
- D. Groundfish Advisory Panel Meeting Summary, April 19, 2007
- E. Multispecies (Groundfish) Committee Meeting Summary, April 20, 2007
- F. Groundfish Advisory Panel Meeting Summary, May 29, 2007
- G. Multispecies (Groundfish) Meeting Summary, May 31, 2007
- H. PDT conference call and meeting summaries
- I. PDT memo on gear standards dates April 18, 2007
- J. US/CA quota monitoring
- K. Correspondence
- L. Council Memo dated June 5, 2007 to Request to NMFS a Reduction in the Minimum Size Limit for Georges Bank Haddock