

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Groundfish Committee

I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Groundfish Oversight Committee met March 29, 2012; a meeting summary is attached. The Committee also met April 18, 2012; a meeting summary will be provided. The Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) held meetings on February 27, 2012 and March 13, 2012, and a conference call on April 10, 2012; reports of those discussions are attached.
- B. Amendment 17/State-Operated Permit Banks: The Council approved Amendment 17 at the June Council meeting. Formal submission and deeming of the regulations was completed September 7, 2011. The comment period on the proposed rule closed January 23, 2012. NMFS approved the amendment on March 9, 2012. This is the final update on this action.
- C. Amendment 18 - Accumulation Limits/Fleet Diversity: Scoping hearings for this amendment were held in January and a report will be provided to the Council at the June Council meeting. The comment period for scoping on this action will close on April 30, 2012.
- D. Framework 47: This framework will set ABCs for 2012-2014, address Accountability Measure (AM) issues, and will consider removing the current cap on yellowtail flounder that the scallop fishery can harvest from the GB access areas. The Council approved the framework in November 2011. The framework document was submitted February 6, 2012, the proposed rule was published March 27, 2012, and the comment period ended April 11, 2012. A decision on the framework action may be published before the Council meeting.
- E. GOM Cod Assessment and Working Group: GOM cod was assessed as part of SARC 53 in December, 2012. This stock is overfished, overfishing is occurring, and it cannot rebuild by 2014. Because this change in the stock's status was unexpected, NOAA Fisheries convened a GOM cod working group to explore possible responses to the assessment. The Council also asked its Science and Statistical Committee to discuss the assessment. The Council requested emergency action for FY 2012 in order to provide time to prepare a more comprehensive management response. An interim rule was published April 3, 2012. The Council may discuss follow on actions to address this situation, including the timing of future GOM cod assessments.
- F. 2012 Groundfish Assessment Updates: In February, the assessments for twelve stocks were updated. The Council will receive a report on the results of those assessments.
- G. Sector framework: The Committee has begun work on the sector framework and will report on developments to date.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. Approval of future actions for GOM cod

III. MOTIONS

TBD - after the Committee Meeting

III. INFORMATION

1. Groundfish Oversight Committee Meeting Summary, March 29, 2012
2. Groundfish Oversight Committee Meeting Summary, April 18, 2012 (to be distributed)
3. Groundfish Plan Development Team meeting report dated March 23, 2012 (PDT meetings held February 27, 2012 and March 13, 2012)
4. Groundfish Plan Development Team conference call report dated April 13, 2012
- 4a. White Paper: Developing Effective Monitoring for the NE Multispecies Fishery
5. Groundfish Plan Development Team memo to the SSC re: FY 2013-2014 ABCs
6. Executive Summary, 2012 Groundfish Assessment Updates
7. Groundfish Catch Reports
8. Correspondence