

**NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**Groundfish Committee**

**I. STATUS**

- A. Meetings: The Groundfish Oversight Committee met November 5, 2009; the Chair will provide a report at the Council meeting. The Groundfish PDT held a conference call October 1 and met October 29, 2009; a PDT report is attached.
  
- B. Framework 44: At the September Council meeting the Council initiated an action to adopt OFLs/ABCs/ACLs for FY 2010 – 2012, U.S./Canada TACs for FY 2010, and to modify common-pool management measures for FY 2010. This action is identified as FW 44. The Council will review the Committee's recommendations for FW 44 and make a final decision at this meeting. A draft document will be distributed at the Council meeting. Included in the ACL decision will be a decision on the allocation of yellowtail flounder to the scallop and groundfish fisheries. It is expected that this discussion will be conducted during the Scallop Committee report.
  
- C. U.S./Canada Area: NMFS has asked the Council to consider recommendations for U.S./Canada area measures for FY 2010. The Committee will present recommendations for Council discussion.
  
- D. 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 reviewed scoping comments at the February 2007 and June 2007 Council meetings. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute and the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute hosted meetings to help proponents of alternative management systems develop detailed proposals. In June 2007 the Council decided that Amendment 16 will modify the effort control system to in order to continue stock rebuilding, and will modify existing sectors and adopt new sectors. The Committee focused on resolving the policy issues necessary to facilitated adoption of seventeen additional sectors and modifications to two existing sectors until the September Council meeting. At that meeting, the Council directed the Committee to work on other measures and postpone further sector development until that work was completed. In November, the Council directed the Committee to resume working on sector policies for inclusion in Amendment 16. The full range of alternatives for this amendment were originally approved by the Council at the February, 2008 Council meeting. After that meeting the Committee and Council continued to develop the management measures and have since added additional measures. In June 2008 the Council was scheduled to approve the DEIS for public hearings to be held in the summer, but this was delayed when it appeared from preliminary assessment information that the management measures were targeting mortality reductions on the wrong stocks.

At the September 2008 Council meeting, the Council received the report of the Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM III). The Council approved the measures for development in November, and authorized the Committee to continue to develop the measures as necessary. The Committee and PDT continued their work over the next two months.

The Council approved the draft Amendment 16 and its DEIS at its February meeting. The document was submitted to NMFS at the end of March. Public hearings were held at the end of May/beginning of June, 2009. The comment period for the draft document ended June 8, 2009. The Council made final decisions at the June 22 – 25, 2009 Council meeting. Amendment 16 was formally submitted to NMFS on October 16, 2009. The FR notice for the Notice of Availability published Friday, October 23, 2009 (74

FR 54773). The comment period for the amendment ends December 22, 2009. The proposed rule will be published in the near future.

## **II. COUNCIL ACTION**

- A. Final approval of FW 44 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP.
- B. Recommendations for U.S./Canada area common-pool measures for FY 2010.

## **III. INFORMATION**

- 1. Groundfish Oversight Committee Meeting, November 5, 2009 (*to be distributed*)
- 2. Groundfish Plan Development Team Report, November 3, 2009
- 3. Draft Framework Adjustment 44 (to be distributed)
- 4. Groundfish Plan Development Team meeting report, August 24, 2009 (report dated September 14, 2009)
- 5. Joint scallop/groundfish PDT report dated September 17, 2009
- 6. Groundfish PDT report dated June 12, 2009
- 7. U.S./Canada area catch reports
- 8. Correspondence