

Dedicated Access Privileges

Sectors

NEFMC Meeting
June 13-15, 2006
Newport, RI

Background

- Although we have experienced significant growth in our fish stocks, some of them are at low levels of abundance, overfishing is still occurring in some, rebuilding plans will be developed for Groundfish which may result in additional restrictions.
- Our successes are fragile because of excess capacity in many fisheries and some of our current measures and controls may not ensure that our conservation mandates will be achieved. Safety continues to be a concern.
- Sectors can improve safety, address excess capacity problems, address fairness and equity issues, and improve conservation efforts.

Background

- Fishery conservation and management is about to evolve to include the application of ecosystem-based fishery management principles. Holistic approach with trade-offs.
- Current administration is promoting share based programs. NMFS goal to double existing limited access privilege programs by 2010.
- We have started allocating quota: Scallop access program with YT allocation, SAPs with cod bycatch allocation, CCCHFA sector with cod allocation, US/CA sharing of cod, haddock and YT, & potential haddock allocations in herring, whiting fisheries; proposed CC Gillnet sector, Amend 13 allows self-defining harvest sectors.
- “When the tide comes in, we all go up. And when the tide goes out, we all go down”. Is a one size fits all approach to management best satisfy all the National Standards?

Conservation and Management Policy

The New England Fishery Management Council recognizes that allocation is an integral part of its management responsibilities, and that measures which have allocative effects should be open and transparent. The Council will develop conservation measures and controls that have a high level of certainty that insures they will prevent overfishing, end overfishing and rebuild stocks. The Council also recognizes that we manage fishermen, not fish, and that allocation measures and controls must have a high level of certainty that insures our conservation requirements are met in a fair and equitable manner. As stewards of New England's valuable fishery resources, we will be judged by both the biological health of our fisheries and by how fair and equitable we are in our allocation decisions.

Self-Selecting Sectors

- Adopted in Amendment 13.
- Membership voluntary. Hard TACs.
- Limited to 20% of target TAC for species.
- Must submit draft EA.
- Council must approve. NMFS implements.
- Sectors not adopted in recent Herring Amendment 1, pending further development.

Advantages

- Sectors control catch in ways to fit their members practices/patterns. For ex. no/higher trip limits, exempt seasonal closures, etc..
- If Sector TAC not exceeded, some protection that future measures will not further restrict catch.
- Provides opportunity for communities to preserve access to groundfish.
- Safety
- One solution to overcapacity problems

Advantages (cont.)

- Minimizes bycatch
- Better business planning/flexibility/market timing and opportunities
- Better accountability
- Enhanced Stewardship
- Fairness issues better resolved (one time effort/not continually raised)
- More effective management tool

Disadvantages

- Sector formation complex and time consuming.
- Requires well-developed organization and adequate funding to support.
- Difficult to form if landings history is low or does not exist.
- Depending on your perspective, may lead to some consolidation.
- One bad apple spoils the bunch! Requires self enforcement.
- Landing history is complicated by continued dependence on input controls which may disproportionately reduce catch among permit holders.

Issues

- Clarity needed...TACS for one species, some or all species? Long term consequences of combinations TACS and DAS needs to be examined.
- How is fishing mortality apportioned between sector and non-sector participants if neither group operates within their harvesting limits?
- Additional conservation and allocation policy development needed to ensure allocations fair. (haddock history in SAPs)
- Transition with hybrid systems is very difficult.

Recommendation

- For 2007 priority setting consider new committee to develop “Sector” policy. How should history be determined? Should there be TACS for all species? Are there any long term consequences to combination TACS and DAS hybrid systems? What are the costs/benefits of sectors?