



New England Fishery Management Council

April 27, 2012

Statement by Acting NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Samuel Rauch, and New England Fishery Management Council Chairman, C.M. "Rip" Cunningham

NOAA Fisheries Service and the New England Fishery Management Council have formed a joint agency Working Group, modeled after our successful Gulf of Maine Cod Working Group, to explore measures to help fishermen facing a reduction in the Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder quota in 2012.

The U.S. and Canada coordinate management of three fish stocks that overlap the boundary between the two countries on Georges Bank. In the late summer of 2011, the two countries, through the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee, which includes representation from state and federal agencies and the fishing community, recommended shared total allowable catches for fishing year 2012 for cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder stocks.

The New England Fishery Management Council adopted these total allowable catches at its September 2011 Council meeting and incorporated them into its latest revision to the groundfish fishery management plan (Framework 47).

NOAA Fisheries Service has proposed to implement these quota recommendations which will result in a 61 percent decrease in the Georges Bank yellowtail quota.

Through the new working group, we will reach out to the broader fishing community and other stakeholders to advance selective fishing gear and practices and explore other ideas and management alternatives that will minimize the impacts on commercial fishermen. This working group will also provide a constructive platform for continued open and public planning and discussions about the challenges facing the industry in 2013. We hope to build off the successful model we employed with Gulf of Maine cod.

We will establish in the next few weeks a Yellowtail Flounder Working Group webpage to provide one-stop information on all working group meetings and activities.

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