



New England Fishery Management Council News Release

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For Immediate Release*

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Fishery Council Approves Severe Cuts for Regional Cod Stocks

Portsmouth, NH Following a review of the available scientific information, advice from its Scientific and Statistical Committee and testimony by fishermen, the New England Fishery Management Council approved major cuts to the region's cod stocks yesterday. Despite that catches of Gulf of Maine cod and Georges Bank cod are already restrictive, the Council took the action out of concern over the poor condition of both stocks and worry that the situation could worsen without additional protection.

The Council's 18 voting members approved the cuts by wide margins. For fishing years 2013 through 2015, the Council agreed to decrease the overall quota for Gulf of Maine cod by 77 percent. Fishermen's allocation will be reduced from 6,700 metric tons in 2012 to 1,550 metric tons, beginning on May 1 this year. Georges Bank cod is shared with the Canadians and that quota is set annually under an agreement between the two countries. In 2013, the U.S. share will be set at 2,002 metric tons, a 61 percent drop from the 2012 quota of 5,013 metric tons.

Wednesday's day-long deliberations were well-attended by New England fishermen who were unequivocal about their concerns over the cuts. In turn, many Council members expressed their awareness about the serious negative economic impacts that will undoubtedly occur and affect the small inshore boat fleet in New England most significantly. Many fishermen in this group have been historically dependent on cod and have already seen the impacts of decreased catches.

The Council's sentiments were clearly pointed out by Chairman Rip Cunningham. "The Council was faced with very difficult decisions concerning Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank cod. In the final analysis there were no goods choices," he said.

The New England Council develops rules for both large and small-scale commercial and recreational fisheries that operate between three and 200 miles off the coastlines of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

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