



New England Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 31, 2007
TO: Multispecies Oversight Committee
FROM: Joint Skate Advisory Panel and Plan Development Team
SUBJECT: Recommendations for Amendment 3 alternatives

The joint meeting of the Skate Advisors and the Plan Development Team developed the following measures and grouped them into sensible alternatives to address the overfished condition of winter and thorny skates, as well as address the danger that smooth and little skates might become overfished.

Mortality/catch reduction options	Measures
<p>Cap at present level</p> <p>10%</p> <p>25%</p> <p>50%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce possession limit by x% on winter skate – dockside identification problem 2. Reduce possession limit by x% for the wing fishery and institute a possession limit for the whole skate (bait) fishery. May be specified as a daily/trip limit or as a weekly maximum for each vessel, similar to the state summer flounder regulations or the federal scup fishery regulations (e.g. “aggregate landings program” enrollment) 3. Minimum size restriction during peak egg laying cycles (~44-48 cm for little skate; ~90 cm for winter skate). Jun-Aug for winter skate. Implementation issues 4. Larger minimum mesh for skate fishery targeting large (winter) skate – need to analyze selectivity data from sea sampling. 5. Hard TACs (possibly by season/quarter, regional or triggers) and AMs for the wing and bait fisheries. Catch, including discards, no possession of skates for the remainder of the fishing year, in small amount for incidental catch. Overages would be deducted from the next year’s TAC. A trigger might cause an adjustment to a possession limit which applies to the fishery approaching a quota or catch limit. 6. A target TAC which would trigger a change in annual specifications (e.g. possession limit) as the monitored catch approaches the annual TAC. The PDT should be asked to develop an annual adjustment mechanism that does not jeopardize rebuilding.
<p>Other measures that apply across alternatives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Replace baseline review process with monitoring and skate management adjustment program 8. Explore and encourage bycatch reduction through gear modifications and other means, possibly via a TAC set aside research initiative. 9. Consolidate skate management into the Multispecies FMP

Table 1 Alternatives

Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Measures 1,2,3,5,7,8,9	Measures 2,3,6,7,8,9	Measures 1,4	Measures 6
Reduce possession limit by x% on winter skate		Reduce possession limit by x% on winter skate	A target TAC with triggers a change in specifications
Reduce possession limit by x% for the wing fishery and institute a possession limit for the whole skate (bait) fishery.	Reduce possession limit by x% for the wing fishery and institute a possession limit for the whole skate (bait) fishery.	Larger minimum mesh for vessels targeting large (winter) skate	
Minimum size limit	Minimum size limit		
Hard TACs (possibly by season/quarter, regional or triggers) and AMs for the wing and bait fisheries.	A target TAC with triggers a change in specifications		
Replace baseline review process with monitoring and management adjustment program	Replace baseline review process with monitoring and management adjustment program		
TAC set-aside for research	TAC set-aside for research		
Consolidate skate management into the Multispecies FMP	Consolidate skate management into the Multispecies FMP		