

## NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### Skate Committee

#### I. STATUS

- A. Amendment 3: The final rule for Amendment 3 was published on July 14, 2010, which implemented wing and bait fishery ACLs for 2010 and 2011, a reduction in the skate wing possession limit from 20,000 to 5,000 lbs., a new 20,000 lbs. skate bait possession limit, and accountability measures (AM) that reduced the possession limit when the landings reached 80-90% of the annual limit, and accountability measures that take effect in future years if the ABC is exceeded. The in-season AM is intended to curtail targeting of skates for the wing market while allowing for continuing landings of some incidental catch.

Effective September 3, 2010, NMFS reduced the skate wing possession limit from 5,000 to 500 lbs. (1135 lbs. whole weight equivalent) for the remainder of the fishing year, because the landings reached the 80% AM trigger and it appeared that without such an adjustment the landings would exceed the 2010 skate wing landings limit (TAL) (See document 1).

- B. Other action: The Council requested the Skate PDT to re-examine discard estimates, particularly with respect to groundfish sector management in the 2010 fishing year. Changes in discarding might enable more of the TAC to be allocated to landings in the 2010 fishing year and re-open the directed skate wing fishery. The Skate PDT report is included under this tab.

#### II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. No action is needed.

#### III. INFORMATION

1. Letter from Senator John Kerry, Senator Scott Brown, Congressman Barney Frank, and Congressman John Tierney, dated October 12, 2010, requesting Mr. Eric Schwaab initiate Emergency Action to restore the 5,000 pound skate wing possession limit to allow the fishery to land the remaining allocation.
2. Skate PDT re-evaluation of skate discards and Skate ACL adjustment, November 2, 2010.
3. Skate wing and bait fishery weekly report, NMFS Northeast Regional Office, Fisheries Statistics Office, <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/skate.html>.