



New England Fishery Management Council

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C. M. "Rip" Cunningham, Jr., *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 16, 2013
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee
FROM: Paul J. Howard, Director
SUBJECT: **January 23, 2013 Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting Terms of Reference**

I. Meeting Terms of Reference (TORs)

1. The SSC is asked to develop Overfishing Limit (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations for Northeast Multispecies stocks as specified below.
2. ABC recommendations are to be based on the fishing mortality strategies approved by the Council in Amendments 13 and 16 and related management actions. Status determination criteria should be used that are specified in Amendment 16 or subsequent actions, or that will be implemented through FW 48 consistent with the recommendations of recent SARCs. The general control rule for groundfish stocks that has been adopted is:

“These ABC control rules will be used in the absence of better information that may allow a more explicit determination of scientific uncertainty for a stock or stocks. If such information is available – that is, if scientific uncertainty can be characterized in a more accurate fashion -- it can be used by the SSC to determine ABCs, These ABC control rules can be modified in a future Council action (an amendment, framework, or specification package):

- a. ABC should be determined as the catch associated with 75% of F_{MSY} .
 - b. If fishing at 75% of F_{MSY} does not achieve the mandated rebuilding requirements for overfished stocks, ABC should be determined as the catch associated with the fishing mortality that meets rebuilding requirements ($F_{rebuild}$).
 - c. For stocks that cannot rebuild to B_{MSY} in the specified rebuilding period, even with no fishing, the ABC should be based on incidental bycatch, including a reduction in bycatch rate (i.e., the proportion of the stock caught as bycatch).
 - d. Interim ABCs should be determined for stocks with unknown status according to case-by-case recommendations from the SSC.”
3. GOM cod: Provide an OFL and ABC for 2013-2015 that will prevent overfishing and that is consistent with the default ABC control rule. This stock is currently subject to a formal rebuilding program and the ABC should be based the default ABC control rule.

Should SARC 55 determine that this stock is overfished and cannot rebuild by 2014, a revised rebuilding plan will be implemented at the beginning of FY 2014.

4. GB cod: Provide an OFL and ABC for 2013-2015 that will prevent overfishing and that is consistent with the default ABC control rule. This stock is currently subject to a formal rebuilding program and the ABC should be based on the default ABC control rule.
5. SNE/MA winter flounder: Provide an OFL and ABC for 2013-2015 that will prevent overfishing and that is consistent with alternative management strategies that will be considered by the Council.
6. The following documents are provided for the SSC's review:
 - a) Groundfish Plan Development Team memo to the SSC dated January 16, 2013
 - b) 55th Northeast Regional SAW Assessment Summary Report
<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1301/>
 - c) 55th Northeast Regional SAW and Reviewer Reports from Cadigan, Casey and Holmes (4 reports total) <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/saw55/>
 - d) 55th Northeast Regional SAW Assessment Reports for GOM Cod and GB Cod
<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/SAW-Public/>
 - e) 52nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop Assessment Summary Report
<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1111/index.html> (includes SNE/MA Winter Flounder)
 - f) 52nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop Report
<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/saw52/crd1117.pdf> (includes SNE/MA Winter Flounder)