



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 9, 2011
TO: Groundfish Oversight Committee
FROM: Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT)
SUBJECT: **PDT Conference Call, March 7, 2011**

1. A PDT conference call was held to refine the draft management measures text for FW 46. PDT members participating in the call were Tom Nies, Lori Steele, Anne Hawkins, and Jess Melgey (NEFMC), Tom Warren, Melissa Vasquez, Jay Hermsen (NERO), Paul Nitschke and Chad Demarest (NEFSC), Steve Correia (Mass DMF), Kohl Kanwit (Maine DMR). The PDT referred to draft management measures dated March 3, 2011.

Option 2

2. Development of Option 2 is proceeding more slowly than expected. It is proving difficult to develop a method that can be used to adjust the size of the cap based on expected levels of observer coverage. The PDT is still collecting data which might be used to address this issue.

3. While working on this issue, PDT members noted the following issues with this option.

- a. There is uncertainty over the number of sea days that will actually be observed and the total number of trips that will actually be taken in any period (the groundfish fishing year is used for monitoring the haddock catch cap). When the cap is set prior to the start of the year these quantities will need to be estimated or assumed. Under this option, these uncertainties lead to questions over whether the haddock cap catch can be appropriately set prior to the start of the fishing year.
- b. Changes in herring fishery regulations appear to strongly influence the number of actual VTR trips and the number of observed trips. For example, the requirement to request an observer for trips to CAI appears to have resulted in nearly all trips on GB carrying an observer in FY 2010, a level of coverage not seen in earlier years. Changes

in herring ACLs also influence the number of VTR trips. While these regulatory changes will be known prior to the start of the groundfish fishing year, their impacts on number of trips and percent of observed trips may be difficult to predict.

Option 3

4. This option expands observed catches of haddock based on total kept catch, and compares these catch estimates to the cap. The PDT considered using the existing herring reports to provide information on kept catch to use in the expansion. Herring vessels report kept herring by herring management area in order to monitor the herring fishery ACLs. The PDT determined that additional information was needed to monitor the haddock catch cap because (a) herring fishery catches in herring management area 1b can come from either the GOM or GB haddock stock area, and (b) in some years the total kept catch includes a substantial part that is mackerel, so herring kept catch alone would not provide the correct expansion factor. For this reason, the PDT draft text adds the requirement that herring vessels should report total kept catch by haddock stock area in order to monitor the haddock kept catch, as well as reporting herring by herring management area.

Option 4

5. The PDT recommends that this option include provisions for monitoring haddock catches in-season so that any increase in haddock catches will be detected prior to the end of the year reconciliation of ACLs.

Other issues

6. The PDT is exploring the impacts on haddock catch estimates of catches that are not brought on board. It was noted that recent regulatory changes may have drastically reduced the number of times this occurs.