



New England Fishery Management Council

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 John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 4, 2011
TO: Groundfish Oversight Committee
FROM: Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT)
SUBJECT: **PDT Conference Call, February 17, 2011**

1. The PDT held a conference call to develop details of the management measures for Framework Adjustment 46 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FW 46). This framework considers adjusting the haddock catch cap that applies to the herring fishery. Call participants included Tom Nies, Lori Steele, Anne Hawkins, Jess Melgey, and Talia Bigelow (NEFMC), Tom Warren, Dan Caless, Melissa Vasquez, and Tim Cardiasmenos (NMFS NERO), Paul Nitschke (NMFS NEFSC), Steve Correia (Mass. DMF), Kohl Kanwit (Maine DMR), and Rip Cunningham (Groundfish Oversight Committee Chair). Steve Wiener listened to the call.

2. PDT members reviewed a straw man version of management measures prepared by Council staff dated February 16, 2011. For reference, the options in the document are:

Option 1: No Action; existing cap of 0.2 pct

Option 2: Adjust existing cap based on observer coverage levels, apply to stock area

Option 3: Stock specific cap of 1 percent of the GB and GOM haddock ABC; applies to MWT gear only; monitored by expanding observed catches to entire fishery

Option 4: Incorporate herring fishery haddock catches into the "other sub-component" part of the ACL and monitor for changes

The issues identified below will be investigated further and additional advice will be provided in a subsequent PDT report.

Option 2

3. The biggest challenge for this option is determining what the cap should be. The PDT is assuming the baseline is 0.2 percent of the ABC at 20 percent observer coverage (or 1 percent of the ABC at 100 percent observer coverage). This assumption is based on the origin of this

option, building as it does on the measure adopted in FW 43. But the original cap level adopted in that action were not well justified so it is unclear whether a different level might be more appropriate – for example, could the cap be 2 percent at 100 percent coverage or 0.5 percent at 100 percent coverage? As discussed in a previous report, the PDT does not believe there is sufficient information to base the cap on historic catch levels nor does the PDT have confidence that a cap can be based on the expected catches of haddock by the herring fishery. PDT members discussed whether it was feasible to make the cap adjustment on realized observer coverage rates over the course of the year, as opposed to determining the cap based on expected coverage levels for the year. Generally, the latter approach seems preferable. Adjusting the cap mid-year would make it difficult to manage a possibly moving cap, and would complicate fishing business decisions. With the preferred approach it is possible that realized coverage rates may differ from the expected rates and so the cap might not match the realized rates.

4. Determining the cap adjustment may prove more difficult than previously thought. The PDT will further explore several ways to calculate the cap:

- a) Assume the percent of coverage (trips) changes proportional to the changes in predicted observer sea days.
- b) Base cap on previous year's observed sea days divided by the total sea days in the herring fishery
- c) Assume the number and average length of trips remains the same from year to year; use predicted observer days to get the number of observed trips and compare to the total trips expected to get the expected percentage of observer coverage; adjust cap accordingly.

5. The draft measures assumed that the only changes from No Action that are included in this option are changing the cap to a stock specific cap, adjusting the cap for the level of expected observer coverage, and closing a specified part of a stock area if the cap is reached. All other provisions are assumed to remain the same. For example, only catches by Category A and B permits count against the cap, but if the cap is reached all limited access herring permits (Category A through D) are affected by accountability measures (AMs).

Option 3

6. This option proposes a stock specific haddock cap set at 1 percent of the ABC, with an AM designed for the appropriate area. Observed catches are expanded based on total kept catch to estimate the progress towards the cap. The cap is only based on MWT catches and the AM would only affect MWT vessels.

7. The PDT discussed various ways to acquire in-season estimates of kept catch. Herring vessels currently report catches by herring management area via an IVR system on a weekly basis. The PDT discussed whether this could be used as the basis for expanding observed catches of haddock to the total fleet. The herring management areas, however, do not align with haddock stock areas, the reports do not currently include gear type, and only herring catch is reported (not

total kept catch). Changes to the reporting system may also be adopted by a pending herring amendment, including a possible shift to VMS reporting. The PDT will investigate two options:

- a) Use the IVR system as currently implemented, using reports from Area 1B as part of the expansion to estimate GB haddock catches in statistical areas 521/522/525/526/561/562. The PDT will examine whether this approach will bias haddock catch estimates.
- b) Modify reporting requirements to report haddock catches by statistical area (or haddock stock area) and by gear.

8. The PDT will also examine MWT trips in the GOM and GB areas to determine what proportion of total landings are herring to determine if the reporting requirement needs to be modified to include all kept catch.

Option 4

9. This option would incorporate the herring fishery into the other sub-components part of the ACL. While NERO will evaluate the other sub-component part of the catch on a routine basis as part of the annual monitoring of ACLs, it may be worthwhile to monitor the catches of the haddock fishery during the course of the fishing year. The same reporting issues identified in Option 3 would need to be addressed.

10. This option could be adopted for one stock area (likely the GOM) while another option could be adopted for GB.

