

**NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**Groundfish Committee**

**I. STATUS**

- A. Meetings: The Science and Statistical Committee met April 30 – May 1, 2009 to consider groundfish ABC guidance; the SSC chair will provide a report. The Groundfish Advisory Panel met May 26, 2009. The Recreational Advisory Panel met May 27, 2009. The Groundfish Plan Development Team met June 4, 2009. Meeting summaries for these meetings are attached. The Groundfish Oversight Committee met June 17, 2009; the Chair will provide a report at this meeting. Public hearings on the draft amendment were held in Wakefield, MA (May 26, 2009), Portsmouth, NH (May 27, 2009), Portland, ME (May 29, 2009), New London CT, and South Kingstown, RI (June 1, 2009); summaries of these hearings are attached.
- B. Amendment 16: The Amendment 16 scoping period ended December 31, 2006. Scoping hearings were held in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. The Committee and Council reviewed scoping comments at the February 2007 and June 2007 Council meetings. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute and the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute hosted meetings to help proponents of alternative management systems develop detailed proposals. In June 2007 the Council decided that Amendment 16 will modify the effort control system in order to continue stock rebuilding, and will modify existing sectors and adopt new sectors. The Committee focused on resolving the policy issues necessary to facilitate adoption of seventeen additional sectors and modifications to two existing sectors until the September Council meeting. At that meeting, the Council directed the Committee to work on other measures and postpone further sector development until that work was completed. In November, the Council directed the Committee to resume working on sector policies for inclusion in Amendment 16. The full range of alternatives for this amendment were originally approved by the Council at the February, 2008 Council meeting. After that meeting the Committee and Council continued to develop the management measures and have since added additional measures. In June 2008 the Council was scheduled to approve the DEIS for public hearings to be held in the summer, but this was delayed when it appeared from preliminary assessment information that the management measures were targeting mortality reductions on the wrong stocks.

At the September Council meeting, the Council received the report of the Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM III). The Groundfish Oversight Committee planned to meet September 26, 2008 to develop effort control alternatives based on that report. Unfortunately, during the PDT conference call on September 11, 2008, it was learned that critical PDT members were unable to work on Amendment 16 alternatives because they were busy working on a groundfish interim action being developed by NMFS. As a result, the Committee did not have effort control alternatives for review at that meeting. The PDT resumed development of effort controls in mid-October and presented several alternatives to the Committee at the end of the month. These were reviewed by the Committee, modifications made, and revised alternatives presented to the Council in November. The Council approved the measures for development in November, and authorized the Committee to continue to develop the measures as necessary. The Committee and PDT continued their work over the next two months.

The Council approved the draft Amendment 16 and its DEIS at its February meeting. The document was submitted to NMFS at the end of March. Public hearings were held at the end of May/beginning of June, 2009. The comment period for the draft document ended June 8, 2009. At this meeting the Council will select proposed measures for the final amendment.

B. Trans-Boundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC): The TMGC met March 12, 2009 to discuss the impacts of U.S. legal requirements on TMGC deliberations. TMGC members are concerned that U.S. rebuilding requirements and the SSC role in setting ABC may make TMGC deliberations moot.

## **II. COUNCIL ACTION**

A. Final action on Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan.

## **III. INFORMATION**

1. Decision document for Draft Amendment 16
2. Amendment 16 Public Hearing Summaries
3. Groundfish Advisory Panel Meeting Summary, May 26, 2009
4. Recreational Advisory Panel Meeting Summary, May 27, 2009
5. Groundfish Plan Development Team meeting report, June 4, 2009 (report dated June 11, 2009)
6. Public comments on Draft Amendment 16
7. Draft Amendment 16 and its DEIS
8. US/CA Resources Sharing Understanding catch reports
9. Correspondence