

## NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### Groundfish Committee

#### I. STATUS

- A. Meetings: The Groundfish Oversight Committee met October 30, 2008. The Groundfish Plan Development Team held conference calls October 15 2008 and October 22, 2008. Reports 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 to 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 facilitated 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. At the January, 2008 Council meeting, the Council discussed sector policies and selected four alternatives for calculating the potential sector contribution for each permit. 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. The plan was for the Council to approve those measures in October for development into a DEIS, with the goal of approving the DEIS at the November Council meeting. 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. The Committee directed the PDT to develop two additional alternatives which will be provided at the Council meeting.

- C. NAFO Area: NMFS has announced that quotas are available for redfish, squid, and shrimp in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area. In addition, quota may be available for yellowtail flounder. Expressions of interest in harvesting the quota should be sent to the NMFS Office of International Affairs by November 18, 2008. Further details can be found in 73 FR 65296.

#### II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. Approval of management measures that will be analyzed in the Amendment 16 DEIS.

#### III. INFORMATION

1. Draft Amendment 16 management measures
2. Groundfish Committee meeting summary, October 30, 2008
3. October 15 and October 22, 2008 PDT conference call summary, dated October 24, 2008
4. November 6, 2008 PDT memo
5. Correspondence
6. US/CA Resources Sharing Understanding catch reports