

## NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### Skate Committee

#### I. STATUS

- A. Amendment 3: Amendment 3 regulations are intended to become effective on May 1, 2010.
- B. ABC update: At the request of the SSC, the Skate PDT met on March 8, 2010 and reviewed the Fall 2008 skate survey indices, finding “no scientific justification for excluding the fall 2008 index from the Skate ABC calculation” despite the large rise in the mean biomass indices, particularly for winter skate (see document 1). Including the fall indices would raise the skate ABC from 30,643 mt to 41,080 mt.
- C. Skate wing possession limit review: Following the SSC’s approval of a new Skate ABC, the Skate PDT updated the possession limit model with 2009 trip profile data, updated the discard estimates through 2008, and evaluated skate wing possession limit options (see documents 2 and 3). The ACL framework (with a 25% buffer for uncertainty and a 2005-2007 discard rate) would have allowed an increase of the TAL from 9,427 mt to 12,638 mt. Updating the discard rate to 2006-2008 allows the TAL to increase to 14,277 mt.

Based on the updated possession limit analysis, the PDT evaluated and recommended possession limit options ranging from 2,200 to 5,000 lbs. of skate wings, choices that depend on how much emphasis is placed on using possession limits as a mortality control vs. achieving the TAL. Using the procedure applied in Amendment 3, the skate wing possession limit could be raised from 1,900 lbs. to 3,100 lbs. with the new TAL, but the possession limit may be higher depending on how new discards are taken into account.

#### II. COUNCIL ACTION

- A. The Council should consider requesting Emergency Action to revise the 2010 ABC, ACT, and TALs, as well as adjusting the skate wing possession limit.
- B. The Council should consider initiating action to adjust specifications and/or make other changes for the 2011 and 2012 fishing years.

#### III. INFORMATION

1. Notification of approval of Amendment 3, letter from Patricia Kurkul to John Pappalardo dated March 23, 2010.
2. Review of fall 2008 survey indices and effect on skate catch limits, PDT memo to the SSC dated March 8, 2010.
3. Skate wing possession limit model update status, memo from Andrew Applegate to the Skate PDT dated April 6, 2010.
4. Revised skate wing possession limit options, memo from Skate PDT dated April 14, 2010.