



## New England Fishery Management Council

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 C. M. "Rip" Cunningham, Jr., *Acting Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 2, 2011  
**TO:** Science and Statistical Committee  
**FROM:** Rip Cunningham, Acting Chairman  
**SUBJECT:** **SSC Meeting September 14, 2011 – Terms of Reference for Northeast Multispecies Acceptable Biological Catches, FY 2012 – 2014**

1. The SSC is asked to develop Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations for Northeast Multispecies stocks as specified below. Since the SSC met in August 2011, plans have been made to update analytic assessments for twelve groundfish stocks that have not been assessed since GARM III (2008). The assessments will be completed this winter but will not be finished in time for the Council to include the results in Framework 47 for implementation on May 1, 2012. As a result ABCs are still needed for FY 2012 for those stocks and the ABCs for FY 2013 - 2014 will be developed after the assessment results are received. In addition, changes to the FY 2012 ABCs may be considered if warranted by the assessment results.

2. In all cases, ABC recommendations are to be based on the fishing mortality strategies approved by the Council in Amendments 13 and 16 and related management actions. Status determination criteria should be used that are specified in Amendment 16 or subsequent actions, or that will be implemented through FW 47 consistent with the recommendations of recent SARCs. The general control rule for groundfish stocks that has been adopted is:

“These ABC control rules will be used in the absence of better information that may allow a more explicit determination of scientific uncertainty for a stock or stocks. If such information is available – that is, if scientific uncertainty can be characterized in a more accurate fashion -- it can be used by the SSC to determine ABCs, These ABC control rules can be modified in a future Council action (an amendment, framework, or specification package):

- a. ABC should be determined as the catch associated with 75% of  $F_{MSY}$ .
- b. If fishing at 75% of  $F_{MSY}$  does not achieve the mandated rebuilding requirements for overfished stocks, ABC should be determined as the catch associated with the fishing mortality that meets rebuilding requirements ( $F_{rebuild}$ ).
- c. For stocks that cannot rebuild to  $B_{MSY}$  in the specified rebuilding period, even with no fishing, the ABC should be based on incidental bycatch, including a reduction in bycatch rate (i.e., the proportion of the stock caught as bycatch).
- d. Interim ABCs should be determined for stocks with unknown status according to case-by-case recommendations from the SSC.”

3. Provide ABC recommendations for Northeast Multispecies stocks for FY 2012 – 2014.

- a. For the following stocks that have not been assessed since GARM III, provide an ABC recommendation for FY 2012. All of these stocks use an analytic assessment.

GOM cod	GB cod
GOM haddock	GB haddock
CC/GOM yellowtail flounder	SNE/MA yellowtail flounder
Witch flounder	American plaice
White Hake	Acadian redfish
Atlantic halibut	Atlantic wolffish

- b. For the following stocks that have not been assessed since GARM III, and that are assessed with index assessments, provide an ABC recommendation for FY 2012 - 2014.

Northern windowpane flounder	Southern windowpane flounder
Ocean pout	

- c. For the following stocks that have been assessed since GARM III, provide an ABC recommendation for the period FY 2012 – 2014. ABCs should be based on either the default ABC control rule or the rebuilding fishing mortality, as appropriate. In the case of SNE/MA winter flounder, the ABC should be based on achieving as low a fishing mortality as possible.

GB winter flounder	SNE/MA winter flounder
GOM winter flounder	<u>Pollock (ABCs set and do not need to be updated)</u>

- d. For the following stock, provide an ABC recommendation for FY 2012 – FY 2013 for the two alternative rebuilding strategies that are being considered by the Council. Consider the recommendations of the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee when developing this ABC.

GB yellowtail flounder

## Supporting Documents

- (1) Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) memo dated September 2, 2011, with enclosure
- (2) Northeast Fisheries Science Center. 2008. Assessment of 19 Northeast Groundfish Stocks through 2007: Report of the 3rd Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM III). NEFSC Ref. Doc. 08-15. Available for download at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/publications/crd/crd0815/> . Because of the size of this document paper copies will not be provided.
- (3) Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC). Eastern Georges Bank Cod Flounder Status Report. TSR 2011/02. Available at: [http://www2.mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/trac/TSRs/TSR\\_2011\\_02\\_E.pdf](http://www2.mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/trac/TSRs/TSR_2011_02_E.pdf)
- (4) Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC). Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Status Report. TSR 2011/01. Available at: [http://www2.mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/trac/TSRs/TSR\\_2011\\_01\\_E.pdf](http://www2.mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/trac/TSRs/TSR_2011_01_E.pdf)
- (5) Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC). Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder 2011 Assessment reference document. *Advance copy*.
- (6) Northeast Fisheries Science Center (2011). 52<sup>nd</sup> Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (52<sup>nd</sup> SAW) Assessment Summary Report. NEFSC Ref. Doc. 11-11. <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/saw/saw52/crd1111.pdf>
- (7) Northeast Fisheries Science Center (2011). 52<sup>nd</sup> Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (52<sup>nd</sup> SAW) Assessment Report. *Internet link to be provided when available*. Because of the size of this document paper copies will not be provided.