



# NEWS FROM NOAA

## NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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### NOAA ISSUES REPORT ON THE STATUS OF NEW ENGLAND GROUND FISH STOCKS

NOAA Fisheries Service has issued [a new report](#) on the status of 19 northeastern groundfish stocks. The report concludes that fishing pressure was reduced on most of the stocks between 2001 and 2004, and overfishing is not occurring for 10 of them. Population sizes increased for at least 6 of the 19 stocks over the same period.

“Eliminating overfishing is an important prerequisite to rebuilding stocks to sustainable levels, as seen in several species such as George’s Bank haddock,” said John Boreman, director of NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center, which released the report. “Clearly we have much more work to do in rebuilding the entire complex, but I am encouraged by these analyses, which show that overfishing has been significantly reduced for many species.”

The analyses released today update the 2001 groundfish stock assessment with data gathered between 2002-2004. During the last eight months of that period, fishing rules were significantly tightened to end overfishing and to promote rebuilding. Today’s results do not yet reflect stock improvements that should occur under those revisions.

Today’s report is the result of a peer-review groundfish stock assessment meeting, held during the week of August 15. The full results will be presented on Thursday to the New England Fishery Management Council, which develops fishery management strategies for New England groundfish. The Council will use these results to craft the next revisions to the plan’s measures, which will go into effect in May of 2006.

The 19 groundfish stocks are managed under the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Since the 2001 assessment, fishing rates have been lowered on 13 stocks by an average of 50 percent. Stock biomasses increased by an average of 50 percent in six stocks since 2001.

All stocks are classified with regard to whether they are overfished, and if overfishing is occurring. Compared to 2001, there was no change in the status of 14 stocks, while two stocks showed improvement and three lost ground.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation’s living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety

through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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