



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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Part of Georges Bank Closed to Groundfish Vessels *Agency Moves Keep Catch Within Quota*

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service will close the Eastern U.S./Canada Management Area on Georges Bank to groundfish vessels beginning Friday, to ensure that they do not exceed the cod quota for the area.

The U.S./Canada Management Area is governed in part by quotas on cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder. When any one of the quotas is reached, groundfishing in the Eastern U.S./Canada Area can be closed down or restricted. Vessels may still retain cod, haddock, or yellowtail caught outside of the area. Based on catch and landings reports, and estimates of discard, NMFS is projecting [<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/usc/cod.pdf>] that 90% of the 2005 cod quota has been caught.

As additional data become available, the current cod catch projection may be revised and the Eastern Area reopened if the remaining allowable catch can be taken without exceeding the quota. Otherwise, the area will reopen in May 2006.

Both kept and discarded fish (total catch) are counted toward the quota, which is calculated annually through an understanding with Canada. Total Georges Bank cod catch in the U.S. Canada Area is reported daily by vessels, and by fishery observers when they accompany the trip. Dealers who buy the fish also report purchases for each trip landed. NMFS uses all of this information to estimate how much of each quota species has been taken. If the U.S. or Canada exceed their quota, then the overage is deducted from the next fishing year's quota.

In comparison to last fishing year for the same period, preliminary estimates indicate that the industry has taken about the same number of trips into the area, and has harvested twice as much cod, one-third as much yellowtail, and about half as much haddock. For more information on this action, visit the NMFS Northeast Regional Office's "Hot News" site <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/index.html>

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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On the Web:

NMFS Northeast Region: www.nero.noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

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