

OVERVIEW

The 36th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop

The Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) is a process for preparing, peer reviewing and presenting stock assessment information. A SAW cycle is six months; thus, twice a year, a number of fishery stock assessments are prepared and presented to a panel of assessment experts. The panel, the Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC), prepares two reports. The first is the SAW Advisory Report; a brief summary of the stock status, management advice, short term stock forecasts, and other relevant assessment information for each stock assessed and reviewed.. The second report, the SARC Consensus Summary of Assessments, is more detailed, containing specific assessment data, results and SARC discussion and research recommendations.

The Advisory report is presented to the public in a series of Public Review Workshops, described below. Subsequent to the Workshops, the draft Advisory Report is finalized and folded into a larger document known as the Public Review Workshop Report. The Public Review Workshop (PRW) Report also includes a summary of decisions made by the Northeast Coordinating Council (consisting of the Region's executives and responsible for establishing SAW policy and scheduling assessments for review) that may have occurred during the SAW cycle.

This is the Public Review Workshop Report for SAW 36 and the 36th SARC and includes the final version of the Advisory Report.

The 36th SARC reviewed stock structure issues for yellowtail flounder, and, given decisions on stock separation for that species, reviewed assessments for southern New England / Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder (a newly defined stock combining the Mid-Atlantic and southern New England stock units), Cape Cod / Gulf of Maine yellowtail flounder (a redefined stock unit which extends the spatial coverage of the

Cape Cod/Massachusetts Bay stock into the Gulf of Maine), southern New England-Mid-Atlantic winter flounder, Gulf of Maine winter flounder, and northern shrimp. The panel also provided review and comment on a number of methodological aspects of the current striped bass assessment approach.

Assessments, working papers and research reports were peer reviewed by the SARC panel at its December 2 - 6, 2002 meeting in Woods Hole, MA. Presentations of the results of the SARC were presented to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on January 23, 2003 in Atlantic City NJ; to the New England Fishery Management Council on January 28, 2003 in Portsmouth NH; and to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on February 24, 2003 in Crystal City VA.

Copies of the 36th SAW Draft Advisory Report on Stock Status had been distributed to members of the Commission and the New England and Mid-Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Councils prior to the public presentations.