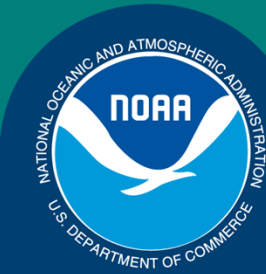


Science, Service, Stewardship



*Fishing Year 2012 Gulf of Maine Atlantic Cod
Potential Interim Catch Information*

*Gulf of Maine Cod Working Group Meeting
Portsmouth Harbor Events & Conference Center
Portsmouth, NH*

Presented by Mike Ruccio, Northeast Regional Office

February 10, 2012

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Background

- Benchmark Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod assessment completed January 2012
- Assessment indicates stock cannot be rebuilt by 2014, even in the absence of all fishing
- Stock is overfished and subject to overfishing



Background

- Fishing Year (FY) 2012 catch level that would end overfishing was calculated as approximately 1,500 mt by the Plan Development Team (PDT)
- The FY2011 GOM cod Annual Catch Limit (ACL) is 8,545 mt
 - Sector sub-ACL is 4,825 mt; Common pool sub-ACL is 104 mt
 - Recreational sub-ACL is 2,824 mt
- NMFS has taken unprecedented approaches in working with the New England Council and stakeholders to examine an alternative approach for reducing negative economic impact

Prior working group meeting materials at Northeast Regional Office web site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/gomcod/>



Section 304(e)(6) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

- Agency may take interim action to reduce but not end overfishing under very limited, specific circumstances
 - Secretary of Commerce determines that the rebuilding plan has not resulted in adequate progress towards rebuilding
 - New England Council must revise its rebuilding program
 - Interim action--limited to one year in duration (FY2012)--must reduce overfishing and maintain or build stock biomass



New England Council Actions, February 1 Meeting

- Requested NMFS take interim action for FY2012 to reduce overfishing while the Council responds to the new assessment
- Recommended a fishery ACL of 6,700 to 7,500 mt for the interim action
- Recommended NMFS implement additional recreational measures to keep recreational catches below the recreational sub-ACL
- Requested opening several existing closed areas



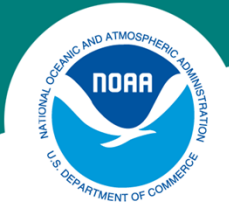
Fishery ACL range of 6,700-7,500 mt

- An ACL higher than 6,700 mt in FY2012 increases fishing mortality
- An ACL \leq 6,700 mt in FY2012 would reduce fishing mortality and maintain/increase biomass
- Substantial reductions will be necessary to end overfishing in FY2013.
 - For example, fishing at 6,700 mt in FY2012 would require a FY2013 catch level around 2,000 mt



Reference Points and FY2011 Estimates Comparison

- Overfishing threshold; fishing mortality (F) = 0.20
- Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) rebuilding target = 61,218 mt
- FY2011:
 - Plan Development Team (PDT) projected fishing mortality (F) = 0.92
 - Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) = 9,478 mt
 - PDT Projected total catch = 7,750 mt



*Fishery ACL range of 6,700-7,500 mt
comparison to reference points*

FY 2012 (May 1-April 30)

FY 2013 (May 1-April 30)

FY 2012 (May 1-April 30)				FY 2013 (May 1-April 30)			
SSB	F	Catch	Probability that SSB > 7,300 MT	SSB	F	Catch	Probability that SSB > 7,300 MT
8,382	1.031	7,500	64%	9,564	0.20	1,825	74%
8,618	0.879	6,700	66%	10,235	0.20	1,961	78%



*Comparison of FY2011 and FY2012
ACLs using 6,700 mt in FY2012*

Fishing Year	Total ACL	Sub-ACLs					
		Commercial Fishery			Recreational	State Waters	Other Sub- component
		Total Com.	Sectors	Common Pool			
2012	6,700	3,783	3,701	81	2,215	468	234
2011	8,545	4,825	4,721	104	2,824	597	299

*6,700 mt is a 21.6-percent reduction from FY2011
1,500 mt would have been an 82.4-percent reduction.*



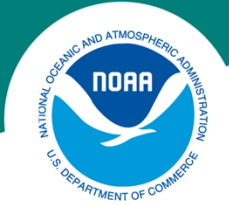
*Comparison of Potential FY2012 sub-ACLs
if 6,700 mt fishery ACL is implemented to
FY2010 and FY2011 Catch (mt)*

	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>Potential FY2012 ACL</u>
Total Catch:	5,745.2	N/A	6,700
Sectors:	3,617	3,701	3,701
Common Pool:	226	83	81 ^b
Recreational:	2,600 ^a	N/A	2,215
State waters:	190.3	N/A	468
Other sub-component:	57.8	N/A	234

Note: 2011 Catch through February 4, 2011

^a As estimated using MRIP data, 100% discard mortality for discarded fish.

^b Large change attributable to vessels leaving common pool to join sectors



Sector Carry Over from FY2011 to FY2012

- Issue:
 - How should FY2011 commercial sector carryover be handled?
 - Amount of carryover up to 471 mt (based on last year)
 - Effect on FY 2012 fishing mortality
 - Management Alternatives



Interim measure next steps?

- Discussion, including highlights of morning meeting with Recreational Advisory Panel and recreational stakeholders



Science next steps

- Dr. Bill Karp, Acting Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center will be discussing this topic later in the agenda.



Closed Area Request from Council

- Areas Requested for Opening in FY2012 interim action:
 1. Open the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area year round
 2. Open Closed Area 1 May 1-February 15
 3. Open Closed Area 2 south of 41°50' from May 1 through February 15 for the use of selective fishing gear
 4. Open the Western GOM closed area, except for the area within the western GOM closed area referred to as 'Jeffrey's Ledge' on page 5 of the habitat PDT memo dated 8/15/11
 5. Open the Cashes Ledge closed area year round, except for the areas around Amen Rock, consistent with the habitat PDT recommendation #4 on page 3 of the habitat PDT memo dated 8/15/11

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Questions