



## New England Fishery Management Council

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### MEMORANDUM v.1

**DATE:** November 19, 2021  
**TO:** Groundfish Committee  
**FROM:** Groundfish Plan Development Team  
**SUBJECT:** **Framework Adjustment 63 – Georges Bank cod recreational fishery management**

The Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) discussed the George Bank (GB) recreational fishery catch target and recreational management measures on Nov. 1 and Nov. 10, 2021, by webinar.

*Version 1 (this version) focusses on developing options for the GB cod recreational fishery catch target. Version 2 will include developing measures to stay within the target. Of note, recreational measures will have to be adjusted to stay within the catch target options developed by the PDT or even under the No Action option.*

## SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT RECREATIONAL FISHERY GEORGES BANK CATCH TARGET AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

### RECREATIONAL FISHERY GEORGES BANK COD CATCH TARGET

#### Alternative 1 – No Action

Under No Action, the current recreational fishery GB cod catch target would remain at 138 mt through FY2022. The catch target does not account for the revised MRIP data in the 2019 or 2021 stock assessments of GB cod. As the catch target is not a sub-ACL, the catch target is apportioned into the state waters and other sub-components for FY2022.

**Rationale:** The development of a recreational fishery GB cod catch target in Framework 57 used information from the 2017 stock assessment. The catch target formed the basis for the development of the current GB cod recreational fishery management measures, which have been in place since fishing year 2019. Maintaining the catch target of 138 mt through FY2022 allows a portion of the total ACL to be set aside for recreational catch, while maximizing the quota available to the commercial fishery. If the recreational fishery catch exceeds the amount set aside and contributes to an overage of the ACL, the commercial groundfish fishery would be responsible for paying back the overage, based on evaluating a 3-year average of recreational catch.

Table 1 summarizes recent catches of GB cod by the US commercial groundfish fishery and in-season FY2021 catches.

**Table 1- Summary of recent catches (mt) of Georges Bank cod by the US commercial groundfish fishery, FY2015-FY2020, and in-season FY2021. Sources: FY2015 – FY2020 final year-end multispecies catch reports, GARFO, FY2021 in-season catch report, GARFO, November 4, 2021.**

	<i>Commercial Groundfish Fishery- Georges Bank Cod</i>				
Fishing Year	Sub-ACL	Landings	Discards	Catch	Percentage of sub-ACL
2015	1,787	1,608.5	28.3	1,636.8	92%
2016	608	571.9	24.6	596.6	98%
2017	531	432.8	13.1	446	84%
2018	1,519	833.2	4.7	837.9	62%
2019	1,568	524.5	7.9	532.4	34%
2020	1,072.7	417.4	7.8	425.3	39.6%
<i>In-season 2021</i>	1,093.1	199.6	4.6	204.2	18.7%

## RECREATIONAL FISHERY GEORGES BANK COD MANAGEMENT MEASURES

### Alternative 1 – No Action

No Action would maintain the existing management measures currently in place for GB cod for the recreational fishery.

*Minimum Fish Size-* The minimum size for Georges Bank cod is 21 inches (53.34 cm.), total length for the recreational fishery (private, party, and charter).

*Possession Limit-* Party, charter, and private vessels in the recreational fishery are permitted to land 10 legal sized GB cod per angler, per day.

*Management Measures-* Changes to existing management measures would require a Council action. Currently, the recreational fishery does not have an allocation for GB cod. Amendment 16 outlined the process for determining when and how an allocation of certain regulated groundfish stocks be made to the recreational component of the fishery. The process would require Council action and that certain standards be met (e.g., the fishery components are fully utilizing their ACL, and the recreational harvest, after accounting for state waters catches outside the management plans, is five percent or greater of the removals).

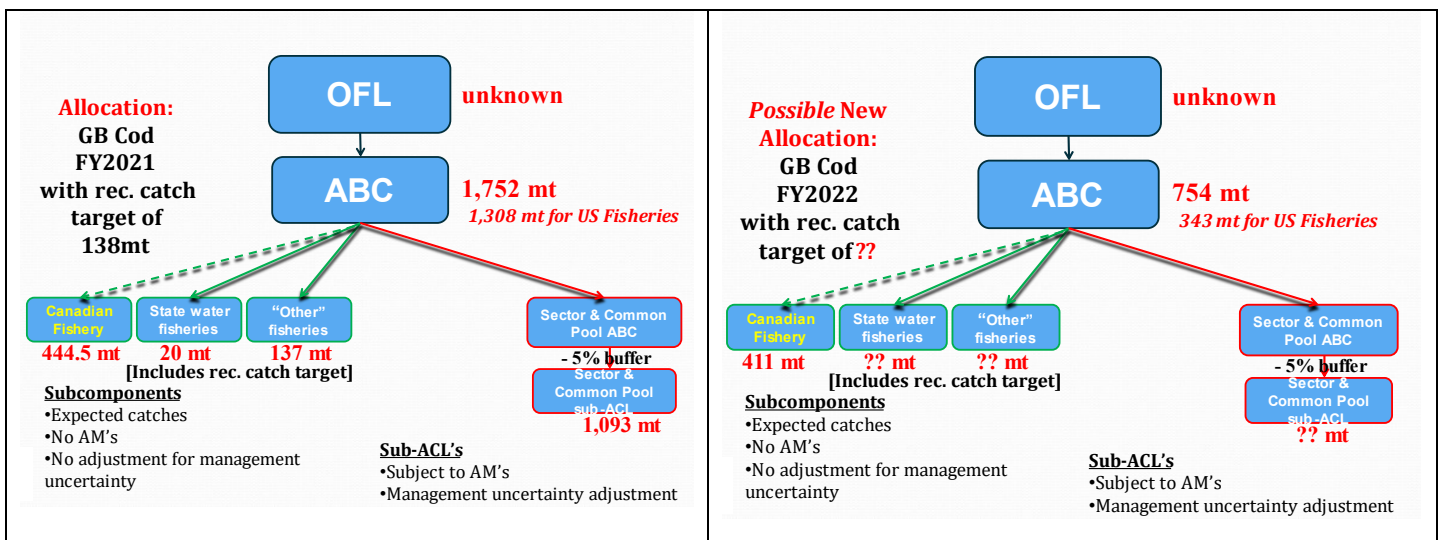
**Rationale:** This approach would maintain the current GB cod recreational measures and continue to allow the Council to adjust these measures through management actions as needed.

## Summary of changes in federal recreational management measures for GB cod:

- Prior to Framework Adjustment 57,
  - 10 fish bag limit for private anglers
  - No bag limit for-hire (party/charter)
  - 22" minimum fish size
- May 1, 2018 - Framework 57
  - Set 138 mt GB cod recreational fishery catch target for FY2018-FY2020, and
  - Granted the Regional Administrator the authority to adjust measures following consultation with the Council for FY2018 and FY2019
- May 1, 2018 - FY2018 Recreational Groundfish Rule
  - 10 fish limit for private angler and for-hire (party/charter), and
  - 23" minimum fish size
- July 9, 2019 - FY2019 Recreational Groundfish Rule
  - 10 fish limit for private angler and for-hire (party/charter),
  - 21" minimum size
- July 30, 2020 - Framework Adjustment 59
  - Extended the 138 mt GB cod recreational fishery catch target for FY2020-FY2022 and made no changes to the management measures from FY2019

## ANALYSIS TO DEVELOP A RECREATIONAL FISHERY GEORGES BANK COD CATCH TARGET

Presently, the Georges Bank catch target is factored into the state waters and other fishery sub-components for GB cod during specifications setting. The catch target is not an allocation to the recreational fishery.



The data to evaluate a possible revised catch target comes from the recent 2021 stock assessment for GB cod and does not rely on information in year-end fishery catch reports. This is in part because the stock assessment includes the new Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data for the entire time series. The PDT examined data from calendar years 2016 to 2020

to develop approaches for the catch target. Recreational catch for calendar years 2016-2019 came directly from the MRIP data used in the 2021 stock assessment for GB cod. Recreational catch for calendar year 2020 was calculated by the PDT and used in the assessment as a catch estimate. This included recent 3-year (2018-2020) and 5-year (2016-2020) averages of recreational catches and the percentage relative to all US fisheries catches. The calculations are summarized in Attachment #1.

Ultimately, the PDT recommends the Groundfish Committee consider 2 options in addition to No Action. The 2 new options (of the 4 options examined) are both based on the 3-year recent average recreational catches. Briefly, the PDT supports using 3-year rather than 5-year average catch approach because of concerns with 2017 data uncertainty and recent improvements in the MRIP data in more recent years including more representative sample sizes than in the past.

The PDT developed one approach based on the expected decline in the US ABC from FY2021 to FY2022 and another based on the recent percentage of catches in the fishery.

**Decline in US ABC from FY2021 to FY2022:**

Total ABC = 754 mt

Canadian TAC = 411 mt

US ABC 2022= 343mt

US ABC 2021 = 1,308 mt

73.8% decline

**PDT-Developed Options for GB Cod Recreational Catch Target**

- *Option 1/No Action* – 138 mt for FY2022
- *Option 2* – 43 mt for FY2022-FY2024  
The 3-year (CY2018-CY2020) average of recreational catch (163mt), reduced by the percent change between FY2021 US ABC to the proposed FY2022 US ABC (73.8%) results in a GB cod recreational catch target of 43 mt.
- *Option 3* – 71 mt for FY2022-FY2024  
The 3-year (CY2018-CY2020) average percentage of recreational catches relative to US fisheries total catches (20.6%) applied to the proposed FY2022 US ABC (343mt) results in a GB cod recreational catch target of 71 mt.

Attachment #2 summarizes the GB cod specifications under Option 1/No Action and Option 2 and Option 3 developed by the PDT.

Attachment #1

Year	com. land	com. disc	rec. land	rec. disc	Ca. land	Ca. disc	total Recreational Catches	US Total Catches	Percentage Rec Catch to US Total Catches	Percentage Rec Catch to Total Catches	3-Year Recent Average (2017-2019)	5-Year Recent Average (2015-2019)	3-Year Recent Average (2018-2020)	5-Year Recent Average (2016-2020)	3-Year Recent Average (2018-2020) * percent decline	5-Year Recent Average (2016-2020) * percent decline	3-Year Recent Average Percentage (2018-2020)	5-Year Recent Average Percentage (2016-2020)
1981	33849	775	1796	3	8508	98	45029	1799	36423	4.9%	4.0%							
1982	39333	739	4790	2	17827	71	62762	4792	44864	10.7%	7.6%							
1983	36756	492	2103	7	12131	64	51554	2110	39358	5.4%	4.1%							
1984	32915	74	2501	2	5761	68	41321	2503	35492	7.1%	6.1%							
1985	26828	262	2220	6	10442	103	39861	2226	29316	7.6%	5.6%							
1986	17490	343	976	2	8504	51	27366	978	18811	5.2%	3.6%							
1987	19035	200	2228	12	11844	76	33395	2240	21475	10.4%	6.7%							
1988	26310	242	6445	12	12741	83	45833	6457	33009	19.6%	14.1%							
1989	25056	628	1634	20	7895	76	35309	1654	27338	6.1%	4.7%							
1990	28110	453	758	19	14364	70	43775	777	29340	2.6%	1.8%							
1991	24219	358	1584	7	13467	65	39700	1591	26168	6.1%	4.0%							
1992	16899	515	1103	17	11667	71	30272	1120	18534	6.0%	3.7%							
1993	14590	163	2098	74	8526	63	25513	2172	16925	12.8%	8.5%							
1994	9737	166	717	33	5277	63	15992	750	10653	7.0%	4.7%							
1995	7026	85	1820	62	1102	38	10133	1882	8993	20.9%	18.6%							
1996	7261	114	388	22	1924	56	9765	410	7785	5.3%	4.2%							
1997	7548	107	2127	40	2919	486	13226	2167	9822	22.1%	16.4%							
1998	7041	113	422	64	1907	365	9912	486	7640	6.4%	4.9%							
1999	8313	81	194	26	1818	338	10770	220	8614	2.6%	2.0%							
2000	7600	134	667	57	1572	69	10099	724	8458	8.6%	7.2%							
2001	10749	308	94	20	2143	143	13457	114	11171	1.0%	0.8%							
2002	9472	167	458	37	1278	94	11506	495	10134	4.9%	4.3%							
2003	6852	229	265	35	1317	200	8898	300	7381	4.1%	3.4%							
2004	3508	130	210	6	1112	145	5112	216	3854	5.6%	4.2%							
2005	2754	394	325	7	630	226	4336	332	3480	9.5%	7.7%							
2006	2700	232	36	2	1097	350	4417	38	2970	1.3%	0.9%							
2007	3699	728	23	9	1107	117	5683	32	4459	0.7%	0.6%							
2008	3255	309	208	1	1390	140	5303	209	3773	5.5%	3.9%							
2009	2999	385	142	3	1003	206	4738	145	3529	4.1%	3.1%							
2010	2688	253	195	8	748	94	3986	203	3144	6.5%	5.1%							
2011	3387	122	142	8	702	43	4404	150	3659	4.1%	3.4%							
2012	2007	120	81	1	395	75	2679	82	2209	3.7%	3.1%							
2013	1312	83	7	1	384	39	1827	8	1403	0.6%	0.4%							
2014	1514	19	257	5	430	28	2253	262	1795	14.6%	11.6%							

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2015	1300	31	486	21	472	20	2330	507	1838	27.6%	21.8%								
2016	1109	33	1075	10	428	12	2667	1085	2227	48.7%	40.7%								
2017	464	20	785	8	474	14	1765	793	1277	62.1%	44.9%								
2018	574	13	66	2	510	7	1183	68	655	10.4%	5.7%								
2019	682	8	251	6	388	8	1344	257	947	27.1%	19.1%	373	542						
2020	497.6	14.2	148.7	15.67	362	15	1053	164	676	24.3%	16%			163	473	43	124	20.6%	34.5%
																		71	118

Attachment #2

<b>Stock</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>OFL</b>	<b>US ABC</b>	<b>State-Waters Sub-Component</b>	<b>Other sub-component</b>	<b>Scallops</b>	<b>Groundfish Sub-ACL</b>	<b>Comm. Ground-fish Sub-ACL</b>	<b>Rec Ground-fish Sub-ACL</b>	<b>Preliminary Sectors Sub-ACL</b>	<b>Preliminary Non-sector Groundfish Sub-ACL</b>	<b>MWT or Small mesh Sub-ACL</b>	<b>Total ACL</b>
GB Cod	2022		343	20	137		177	177		169		8	334
Option 1: 138mt	2023		343	20	137		177	177		169		8	334
	2024		343	20	137		177	177		169		8	334
GB cod	2022		343	10	52		267	267		255		12	329
Option 2: 43mt	2023		343	10	52		267	267		255		12	329
	2024		343	10	52		267	267		255		12	329
GB cod	2022		343	15	75		240	240		230		11	330
Option 3:71mt	2023		343	15	75		240	240		230		11	330
	2024		343	15	75		240	240		230		11	330