



## New England Fishery Management Council

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## MEETING SUMMARY

### Groundfish Committee

DoubleTree by Hilton, Danvers, MA

November 8, 2018

The Groundfish Committee (Committee) met on November 8, 2018 in Danvers, MA to discuss and make recommendations on: 1) draft alternatives and analysis in Framework Adjustment 58: Specifications/Management Measures; 2) possible groundfish priorities for 2019 for the Council; and 3) other business as necessary.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Terry Stockwell (Chair), Terry Alexander (Vice Chair), Rick Bellavance, Libby Etrie, Mark Godfroy, Sarah Heil (GARFO), Steve Heins (MAFMC), Meredith Mendelson (proxy for Patrick Keliher), Laurie Nolan (MAFMC), John Pappalardo, Melanie Griffin (proxy for David Pierce) and Mitch MacDonald (NOAA General Counsel); Dr. Jamie Cournane and Robin Frede (NEFMC staff); and Ben Martens (GAP Chair). In addition, approximately 12 members of the public attended, including Mark Grant, Emily Keiley, Liz Sullivan (GARFO), Chad Demarest (NEFSC), David Goethel, Maggie Raymond (GAP members), and Captain Kevin King (U.S. Coast Guard).

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:** Discussions were aided by the following documents and presentations: (1) Meeting memorandum and agenda dated October 31, 2018; (2) Presentation: Council staff; (3a) Framework Adjustment 58: Specifications and Management Measures - Draft alternatives; (3b) Memo from Groundfish PDT to Committee re analysis for Framework Adjustment 58; (4a) Background for 2019 Priorities Discussion - Memo from Groundfish PDT Chair to Committee on peer review of PDT analysis for Amendment 23; (4b) Memo from Groundfish PDT to Committee on joint PDT/AP/Committee meeting planning for Amendment 23; (4c) Memo from Council Staff to Committee on progress on the Council's 2018 priorities for the recreational groundfish fishery; (5a) Groundfish Advisory Panel meeting summary, Sept. 18, 2018; (5b) Groundfish Committee meeting summary, Sept. 18, 2018; (5c) Recreational Advisory Panel meetings motions or DRAFT summary, Oct. 29, 2018; and (6) Correspondence.

The meeting began at approximately 1:35 p.m.

**KEY OUTCOMES:**

- In the Rebuilding Plans section, the Committee recommends for each stock adding Sub-Option B's from Attachment # 1 from the Groundfish PDT memo (dated November 7, 2018) with the following refinements to the rebuilding options under Sub-Option B's:
  - Georges Bank winter flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{rebuild} = 70\% F_{MSY}$  and  $T_{target} = 10$  years)
  - Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{rebuild} = 70\% F_{MSY}$  and  $T_{target} = 10$  years)
  - Witch flounder – Sub-Option B ( $F_{rebuild} = 6.9\%$  and 7% exploitation rate and  $T_{target} =$  undefined)
  - Northern windowpane – Sub-Option B ( $F_{rebuild} = 70\% F_{MSY}$  and  $T_{target} =$  undefined)
  - Ocean pout – Sub-Option B ( $F_{rebuild} = 70\% F_{MSY}$  and  $T_{target} =$  undefined)
- The Committee recommends to the Council to select as preferred:
  - In Section 4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits: 4.1.2.2, Option 2: Revised Annual Catch Limit Specifications
  - In Section 4.2.1 Minimum Fish Size Exemptions for Vessels Fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area, Option 2 Exempt vessels fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area from Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes, and
  - In Section 4.3.1 Atlantic Sea Scallop AM Implementation Policy, Option 2 Temporary change to the Atlantic sea scallop fishery AM implementation policy for the GB yellowtail flounder stock
- The Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council to prioritize for 2019 Groundfish Priorities:
  1. Any regulatory requirements,
  2. Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring for 2019, and
  3. Review the allocations for Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock using the most recent information from the 2019 assessments, and if determined necessary, make changes through the next appropriate action.

**AGENDA ITEM #1: FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 58**

**PRESENTATION: FW58, DR. COURNANE**

Staff provided a brief overview of Framework Adjustment 58 (FW58), which includes the following measures: specifications for FY2019 for US/Canada stocks (Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder, Eastern GB cod, and Eastern GB haddock); revised/new rebuilding plans for several stocks (GB winter flounder, Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) yellowtail flounder, witch flounder, Gulf of Maine (GOM)/GB windowpane flounder, and ocean pout); exemptions to Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes for vessels fishing exclusively in Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) waters; and a temporary change to the scallop fishery AM policy for GB yellowtail flounder. Staff walked through the draft alternatives to date as drafted by the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) from the GAP and Committee's recommendations at their last meetings, and explained that the PDT will revise these based off GAP and Committee recommendations today. Staff explained that the PDT needs guidance from the GAP in particular on which of the rebuilding plan options they recommend for further analysis. Staff walked through the different rebuilding plan options and explained the rationale behind each of these for each stock. Staff also provided an overview of the impacts analysis on the draft alternatives available to date, which includes analysis for biological impacts, protected resources impact, and partial social and economic impacts. Staff explained that the PDT will continue to develop impacts analysis for all sections and will

provide those for the December Council meeting. Additionally, staff explained that Chad Demarest (NEFSC) would be presenting the initial results for the Quota Change Model (discussed in economic impacts analysis) today. Staff also explained that this year the GAP and Committee are only meeting once before final action instead of twice as is typically done, due to scheduling difficulties, and said it is not anticipated that this would impede recommendation of preferred alternatives in time for the December Council meeting. The goals of the Committee's discussion were to provide guidance on development of the draft alternatives and draft impacts analysis and possibly make recommendations to the Council on the draft alternatives.

Questions and Comments on the Presentation:

One Committee member brought up how the PDT has recognized that some of the rebuilding plan alternatives currently include some options that may not be approvable or the best choice ( $75\%F_{msy}$ , since this is what the current rate is) and asked whether this PDT discussion is captured in the document. Staff explained that the PDT had discussed whether to include some of these options and that this discussion is included in the No Action section in the rationale. The Committee member also said that at the last Committee meeting the Committee had asked for guidance on what would be needed to make a meaningful change in the rebuilding plans, given that rebuilding plans in the past were determined to be inadequate, and noted that the Committee had also asked for guidance on the idea of undefined timelines. Staff explained that the PDT discussion on this is captured in the rationale and clarified that the PDT discussed the idea of an undefined option for stocks without projections and included these points in the rationale. Another Committee member asked how the rebuilding plans would implement new quotas mid-year. Staff clarified that while the rebuilding plans start January 1<sup>st</sup>, the quotas would be changed on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

There was discussion about concerns that the witch flounder quota is highly reliant on the NMFS survey and given that this year the fall survey sampling was reduced due to vessel issues, and a question of how this would be addressed in the assessments. Staff explained that the Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) had received an update on the survey issues, including what stations were missed for GB yellowtail flounder (another stock reliant on the survey) and said they could look at including something similar in the analysis for witch flounder, but noted that the exploitation rate used for witch flounder is more hard wired into the method for setting catch advice. The Chair added that the fall survey issues will be discussed at the upcoming Northeast Regional Coordinating Committee (NRCC) meeting and the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP) meeting. One Committee member said the exploitation rate used for witch flounder seems conservative and wondered if that would be considered when setting the rebuilding plan. Staff clarified the basis for the 7 percent<sup>1</sup> exploitation rate and explained that the exploitation rate is calculated as catch over survey biomass and came from a time period that the benchmark assessment peer review determined to be from period of stability in catch, and explained the reason for setting this was to serve as a Plan B in the event the analytical assessment failed review. One Committee member said she was unsure as to how progress towards rebuilding for witch flounder can be evaluated when there are not any reference points, and said she would like to see no action on the witch flounder rebuilding plan but recognized that this doesn't sound possible. Staff acknowledged that the PDT has struggled with this stock, and said the only thing the PDT can do is take a fraction of the exploitation rate lower than 7 percent and set a timer certain for rebuilding. Staff also said that there needs to be a discussion of status determination criteria for witch flounder, perhaps initially using qualitative indicators, and said that one approach might be to come up with a rebuilding plan now and adjust once there is more information on the status determination criteria for witch flounder. Ms. Heil added that as a part of

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<sup>1</sup> The PDT later discovered an error in the draft options presented to the GAP and Groundfish Committee on November 8, 2018. The current exploitation rate for witch flounder is 6 percent (rather than 7 percent). The draft alternatives were updated accordingly to reflect the correct rate and range of options under consideration.

evaluating the success of rebuilding plan, they could revisit the plan and adjust as necessary once updated guidance on the status determination criteria is available.

***PRESENTATION: QUOTA CHANGE MODEL RESULTS, MR. DEMAREST***

Mr. Demarest provided an overview of the Quota Change Model (QCM) results for FW58, which are included in the economics impacts analysis. He explained how the QCM works and that it predicts how changes in quota for each stock affect the groundfish fishery from year to year. Mr. Demarest walked through the assumptions of the model, results of the QCM, and performance of the model. He also explained that this year he ran the QCM with an additional methodology to try to examine the economic impacts from the unavailable quota due to the shutdown of Sector IX.

*Questions and Comments on the Presentation:*

One Committee member asked about the model's prediction of vessel size which shows a shift to larger vessels, and whether this could be due to the higher quota prices and smaller vessels not being able to afford these, or because the less constraining stocks are offshore and smaller vessels cannot access these as easily. Mr. Demarest replied that this could be both and that one could be a function of the other, since the inshore stocks have higher quota value and so these higher quota value stocks may make up a large proportion of smaller vessels' revenues share. Several Committee members asked whether the Sector IX boats were removed from the potential trips when the model was run. Mr. Demarest said that in the projections for FW58 these vessels were not removed because even though they were not available to fish, these same types of trips the vessels took could still be available for selection, as he thinks these types of trips and fishing behavior would be repeated elsewhere. He also explained that when Carlos was fishing illegally the quota efficiency for these trips was false due to the mislabeled stocks and said he has never gone back to correct for this as this would be very difficult to do. One Committee member asked whether the model accounts for transfer of GB cod and haddock quota from East GB to West GB. Mr. Demarest explained that the model doesn't currently include this as he is not sure how to incorporate this into the model, and said he is curious as to why the fishery doesn't fully utilize GB East cod quota when there is a high utilization rate of GB West cod. Another Committee member offered an explanation of why the fishery doesn't fully utilize the GB East cod quota, and said this is because fishermen need to have enough saved up for a trip in order to fish there and if they end up not having enough by the end of the year then this quota is not used. He also advised being careful about using the new lease prices later in the year since some fishermen lease all their quota at beginning of the year. Mr. Demarest clarified that the assumption is that when new quota is purchased at the beginning of next year that it would be closer to the current prices, although he recognized that these assumptions could turn out to be incorrect. One Committee member asked if the model includes consideration of the rebuilding plan alternatives when predicting the revenues for next year with the FW58 alternatives. Mr. Demarest said he is not planning on including these since the projections used for the rebuilding plans are not very accurate past one year.

Mr. Martens asked if there is the ability to incorporate lease price flexibility into the model, for example, since part of the fishery only operates during certain times of year, and whether this would explain some of the stagnant lease prices. Mr. Demarest clarified that the model uses a single price of quota for the year, although it could use quarter-level prices, and explained that the biggest challenge to coming up with an accurate predictive quota price model has to do with Amendment 23 and monitoring. He explained that other economists at the Social Sciences Branch are working on a model to predict the "shadow value" of quota, which is all of the additional value associated with the gain of other stocks one gets with the quota of a constraining stock, minus all of the costs associated with that quota. Mr. Martens also asked if there is an efficiency lacking in the lease market and what additional value could be had if there is more transparency in leasing fish. Mr. Demarest explained that on one hand the leasing market is doing well because of the high utilization on constraining stocks, meaning that quota is able to move to

where it needs to go, and that while there may be some issues overall it is working. But he explained that on other hand there is a monitoring and enforcement aspect of the market and the issue with illegal discarding, and that these illegal discards of high quota value stocks reduce the value of quota for those selling it. Mr. Demarest said that in this respect the quota market is not 100% efficient, and that this mostly hurts those who lease quota, pointing out that in this instance those inactive quota holders who lease quota may have incentives that are more aligned to the long term value of the fishery as opposed to those who actively fish quota.

Several Committee members asked what changes were done for the definition of non-groundfish trips in the model. Mr. Demarest explained that the model defines these trips using a minimum amount for the ratio of non-groundfish to groundfish catch, and explained that these trips are those that are categorized as groundfish trips but catch very little groundfish, like extra-large mesh gillnet trips. Staff asked if there are plans to incorporate monitoring costs in the model. Mr. Demarest explained that the model does factor ASM costs in, but he will have to correct in previous years for the fact that industry did not pay as high a portion of the costs as was anticipated, with this year being zero costs of monitoring paid for by industry. Mr. Goethel asked if the model factors in the loss of vessels from the fishery over time. Mr. Demarest explained that this doesn't affect the model as it tends to underestimate the number of days fished (catches quota with fewer days) and that the model is more efficient than the fishery really is, and said while the model does predict that some trips will fall out due to having to fish differently given quota allocations, it does not predict consolidation, but noted that perhaps there is enough data to look at this going forward. Mr. Goethel suggested that this sort of prediction of loss of vessels in the fleet could be factored in when looking at rebuilding plans, to see whether longer timelines would help keep more fishermen in the fishery.

### ***GAP REPORT, MR. MARTENS***

Mr. Martens provided an overview of the GAP's discussion and motions. The Committee took up each of the GAP's motions and decided whether to recommend or modify them.

#### ***Discussion:***

The Committee discussed the GAP's motion to recommend that the Whiting Committee explore whiting fishery bycatch of haddock and explain the large difference in the estimates between the SAFE report and GARFO catch accounting. Ms. Heil recommended as a starting place to have Council staff work with GARFO staff to explore the reasons for the differences and explain the different methodologies, rather than tasking the Whiting Committee to look into this. One Committee member said he was advised by the Executive Director to list this as a 2019 Council priority for both FMPs. The Chair and the Committee agreed with this approach.

#### **Motion #1: Alexander/Heil**

The Groundfish Committee recommends that the Council to select the following rebuilding options as preferred (see Groundfish PDT memo, dated November 7, 2018):

- Georges Bank winter flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = 10$  years)
- Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = 10$  years)
- Witch flounder – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 7\%$  exploitation rate and  $T_{\text{target}} =$  undefined)

- Northern windowpane – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = \text{undefined}$ )
- Ocean pout – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = \text{undefined}$ )

*Discussion on the Motion:* One Committee member asked if the GAP had more explanation of the rationale for recommending  $70\%F_{\text{msy}}$  for most stocks. Ms. Raymond said the GAP felt that 10 years was appropriate for all stocks and felt that  $F_{\text{msy}}$  should be lower than  $75\% F_{\text{msy}}$  (the current rate) but shouldn't be a huge reduction based on the uncertainty of the projections and stock status determinations.

Ms. Heil asked about previous rebuilding plan alternatives the PDT had examined which had multiple projections to help show the differences between long term options and said it would be helpful to include these in the document. Another Committee member said she had been thinking of rebuilding plan options in terms of probability of achieving rebuilding and then calculating an F rate (fishing mortality). Staff said the PDT did talk about tradeoffs between longer timelines and higher probabilities of achieving rebuilding, and explained that the SSC recommended moving away from timelines to an F rate. Mr. Macdonald asked whether undefined  $T_{\text{target}}$  would be considered for some stocks, as was discussed at the last meeting. Staff clarified that this is considered within the PDT and GAP recommendations. Staff asked to clarify if the Committee would like to see all options in the alternatives document and then select preferred, or just include the recommended options here, as the PDT needs to know which options to analyze. Staff noted that if all options are added into the document for analysis, it will be difficult to analyze all of them by the December Council meeting. Additionally, staff explained that the Committee can select the preferred alternatives today in addition to recommending others for analysis.

**Motion #1a to substitute:** Etrie/Griffin

In the Rebuilding Plans section, the Groundfish Committee recommends for each stock adding Sub-Option B's from Attachment # 1 from the Groundfish PDT memo (dated November 7, 2018) with the following refinements to the rebuilding options under Sub-Option B's:

- Georges Bank winter flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = 10$  years)
- Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder – Sub-Option B2 ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = 10$  years)
- Witch flounder – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 6.9\%$  and  $7\%$  exploitation rate and  $T_{\text{target}} = \text{undefined}$ )
- Northern windowpane – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = \text{undefined}$ )
- Ocean pout – Sub-Option B ( $F_{\text{rebuild}} = 70\% F_{\text{MSY}}$  and  $T_{\text{target}} = \text{undefined}$ )

*Discussion on the Motion:* Mr. Macdonald asked whether this recommendation means that for the stocks with potential undefined timelines that there would not be another option for a defined timeline. Ms. Heil said the PDT should make sure this is discussed in the analysis, since the projections for some stocks show they can rebuild in less than 10 years, and the PDT should make sure the Council can consider this.

*Motion #1a to substitute **carried** on a show of hands (9/0/2).*

*Motion #1a as the main motion **carried** on a show of hands (9/0/2).*

**Motion #2:** Alexander/Bellavance

The Committee recommends to the Council to select as preferred:

- In Section 4.1.2 Annual Catch Limits: 4.1.2.2, Option 2: Revised Annual Catch Limit Specifications
- In Section 4.2.1 Minimum Fish Size Exemptions for Vessels Fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area, Option 2 Exempt vessels fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area from Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes, and
- In Section 4.3.1 Atlantic Sea Scallop AM Implementation Policy, Option 2 Temporary change to the Atlantic sea scallop fishery AM implementation policy for the GB yellowtail flounder stock

*Discussion on the Motion:* One Committee member asked if the GAP discussed the change in scallop fishery flatfish AMs. Staff said this was not discussed in depth. The Committee member said she is concerned about the scallop fishery not doing enough to adhere to yellowtail flounder sub-ACLs, especially given the exceptionally low sub-ACLs that are not expected to increase any time soon. Staff clarified that the scallop fishery still has an AM for yellowtail flounder, and explained that the scallop bycatch projections will be available at the Council meeting. Staff also noted that the Council had discussed the idea of putting the temporary measure in place for just one year but decided to recommend it for two years.

*Motion #2 carried on a show of hands (8/0/3).*

**Motion #3:** Etrie/Mendelsohn

To modify in Option 2: Exempt vessels fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area from Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) commercial minimum fish sizes the rationale in paragraph 2 to read:

“Landing the dressed fish, even at sizes less than the domestic minimum size, is not intended to put the NAFO participants at a competitive advantage over domestic fishermen that rely upon the fresh fish market nor is it intended to negatively impact the fresh fish market. Instead, because the NAFO catch is mainly intended for the frozen market currently dominated by foreign interests, the intent is to allow U.S. fishing businesses to compete on an equal playing field in the frozen market. Option 2 applies to all NAFO stocks to proactively facilitate development of U.S. participation in NAFO, as well as addressing the stocks (yellowtail flounder and American plaice) already being landed in the U.S.”

*Motion #3 carried on a show of hands (11/0/0).*

*Discussion:*

Ms. Heil brought up concerns with using exploitation rates to set catch advice and issues that have come up with this when new information is available to determine a more appropriate exploitation rate for GB yellowtail flounder, and asked whether the PDT has thought about this for witch flounder, as she points out concerns with locking in an exploitation rate into the rebuilding plan. Staff said the PDT

acknowledges these concerns but that this discussion is best suited for the assessment scientists and assessment peer review. One Committee member suggested the PDT include more of an explanation in the alternatives document or in the analysis of how using an exploitation rate as an  $F_{\text{rebuild}}$  in a rebuilding plan would work, to help provide clarification and education on this for Committee/Council members. She also wanted to reiterate a request to NMFS if they would be willing to allow the witch flounder rebuilding plan to be removed from FW58, so the Council can develop a plan later with more guidance for this stock. Staff brought up the letter from GARFO to the Council on the GB winter flounder rebuilding plan, and said that the GAP discussed this topic this morning and that perhaps the Committee should too. Ms. Heil provided an overview of the letter, and explained that NMFS is advising the Council not to discontinue the rebuilding plan as the stock is approaching overfished status.

## ***AGENDA ITEM #2: POSSIBLE 2019 PRIORITIES***

### ***PRESENTATION: 2019 COUNCIL PRIORITIES, DR. COURNANE***

Staff provided an overview of upcoming groundfish items, including an update on the Fishery Data for Stock Assessment Working Group. Staff explained that there will be an SSC sub-panel peer review of the Working Group report Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> in Providence, that the draft report will be available soon, and that there will be a brief presentation at the December Council meeting with a full presentation of the report and SSC review at the January Council meeting. Staff also explained that the GAP and Committee will have an opportunity to weigh in on the Working Group recommendations.

Staff also provided an overview of upcoming items related to Amendment 23 (A23), including a planned SSC peer review of PDT analyses for A23, which is planned for sometime in mid-January before the Council meeting but has not yet been scheduled. Staff explained the reason for the peer review is that the PDT feels these are novel analyses that need outside review. Additionally, staff provided an update on planning for a joint PDT/GAP/Committee meeting on A23, and explained that the proposed plan is for a two-day meeting with the following structure: on the first day the PDT would present analyses and there would be an opportunity for questions, and the PDT would also present a strawman for how to address the problems and uncertainties with monitoring in the groundfish fishery, and on the second day the GAP and Committee would deliberate and make recommendations on the PDT's proposal. Staff explained this would likely occur after the January Council meeting and so the Council would likely be approving the range of alternatives for A23 in April.

Staff then presented the list of 2018 Council priorities as well as the initial list of 2019 priorities for the Council that the GAP had recommended at its last meeting, which include examining leasing issues and US/CA trading. Staff also provided an overview of the Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) priorities and explained that the RAP provided these as a ranked list. Additionally, staff presented the master list of Council priorities and noted any that pertained to the groundfish FMP. The goals of the Committee's discussion were to possibly make recommendations to the Council on the 2019 Council priorities.

### ***Questions and Comments on the Presentation:***

Mr. Martens provided an overview of the GAP's discussion on priorities at its meeting today and walked through the changes and additions to the initial list. He explained that the GAP removed discussion of leasing issues from the priorities but recommended that the catch share review consider this, that the number one priority for the GAP is to create permit separability across all fisheries, and that the GAP recommended moving the allocation review to low priority.

One Committee member elaborated on the RAP's discussion, explaining that the RAP had a variety of opinions on limited access for the party/charter fishery and as a result listed this item last, and also felt that the Recreational Committee idea needs more development.

Another Committee member suggested that instead of adding all these to the master list or priorities that these could be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting and they could decide which to add based on staff time. The Chair said the Committee should discuss these more today to decide what to add. One Committee member asked for clarification on the multiple recreational issues on the master list that the RAP did not discuss and whether the Committee should discuss these today. The Chair clarified that these are on the master list but that the Committee needs to rank them. The Committee member added that for the priority of considering eVTR (electronic Vessel Trip Reporting) for the party/charter fishery, that if they had some information from GARFO on the past year with the Mid-Atlantic requirement for eVTR and how this went, then perhaps they could drop this item.

#### **Motion #4:** Etrie/Pappalardo

The Groundfish Committee recommends to the Council to prioritize for 2019 Groundfish Priorities:

1. Any regulatory requirements,
2. Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring for 2019, and
3. Review the allocations for Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock using the most recent information from the 2019 assessments, and if determined necessary, make changes through the next appropriate action.

*Discussion on the Motion:* One Committee member expressed concern that with the large Framework action next year with specification updates for all stocks that it might be difficult to include review of allocation issues within this. The Chair said he did not think a Framework is the right vehicle for this discussion since it will be controversial. Staff clarified that A16 guidance on allocation review does allow including this in a Framework and lists the advantages to doing this in a Framework, but said that the Council could choose to do this in an amendment, and suggested another option is to separate review of allocation from implementation of any changes. One Committee member wondered if the language should be more general than just GOM cod and haddock. Ms. Raymond asked to clarify that the RAP is asking for changes in allocation percentages that reflect changes from MRIP, and said this has been very controversial in the past. She said the Council should also consider how the catch is split up and consider that the recreational component is taken off the top of the ACL, while the commercial fishery has other components taken out from it, and asked whether this process should be revisited. The Chair said he thinks there would have to be discussion on components as a part of allocation review. One Committee said he thinks this should be included as a priority and that they can work out the format for this later.

*Motion #4 carried on a show of hands (9/0/2).*

#### **AGENDA ITEM #3: OTHER BUSINESS**

One Committee member asked about the planning for the two-day meeting on A23 and whether there is an opportunity for Committee input. The Chair said to send any suggestions to him and staff. Another Committee member expressed concerned with the timing of the planned SSC peer review of PDT A23 analyses, as she would prefer to have some discussion between the PDT and Committee before the SSC peer review so there is an opportunity for refinement of the analysis and the Committee is not stuck with

the analyses that are reviewed by the SSC, noting that they also might find some analyses don't need review.

Staff noted an additional GAP motion in which the GAP said it doesn't think the fishery can afford monitoring at this time and recommends that the Committee recommend that the Council take more consideration of National Standard 8 on economic impacts in its actions. Staff described additional discussion at the RAP meeting and said the RAP is considering of separate measures by for 2019 measures. One Committee member commented on the GAP's motion on permit separability, and said he is planning to pursue a motion to ask for a report from GARFO on this issue and why it is so difficult to do.

The Groundfish Committee meeting adjourned at approximately 5:25 p.m.