

**Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee  
Eastern Georges Bank Cod Benchmark Assessment**

**St. Andrews – Jan 13-14, 2009 (DATA)**

**Woods Hole Mar 30- Apr 3, 2009 (MODEL)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Context**

The TRAC was established in 1998 to peer review assessments of transboundary resources in the Georges Bank area and thus to ensure that the management efforts of both Canada and USA, pursued either independently or cooperatively, are founded on a common understanding of resource status. While stock assessment results are needed routinely to serve the management system, it is not practical to evaluate the assessment approach each time the assessment is conducted. Instead, review of the assessment approach (benchmark assessments) are conducted periodically, generally at a separate meeting. The last TRAC benchmark for cod was conducted in February 2002.

At present, the US assessment for the whole of Georges Bank is conducted independently from the TRAC assessment of eastern Georges Bank. There is some concern that differing assessment approaches may make reconciliation of results difficult. A benchmark that reviews the assessment approaches for both areas together would address this issue.

**Objectives**

- 1) To review the assessment frameworks for the two Georges Bank cod management units (5Z+6 for USA and 5Zjm for Canada). The agreed benchmark would be used in the June/July 2009 TRAC for 5Zjm cod.

**Data Inputs**

- Review fishery landings and estimates of discards from all fisheries
- Determine most appropriate methods for calculating fishery landings at age
- Determine most appropriate methods for calculating discards at age from all fisheries
- Determine most appropriate methods for calculating weights at age for the fishery catch
- Determine most appropriate methods for calculating survey indices of abundance at age
- Determine most appropriate methods for calculating weights at age for the population
- Explore fishery catch per unit effort indices for use as tuning indices
- Examine tagging data for application in stock assessment

#### Assessment Methods

- Explore full range of assessment methods for estimating current abundance and exploitation rate such as, but not limited to, catch curves, separable VPA, index based approaches, surplus production, delay-difference, calibrated VPA, statistical catch at age models
- If required, update reference points for harvest strategy based on agreed assessment approach
- Formulate projection procedures for harvest advice based on agreed assessment approach

2) Review if an assessment of eastern Georges Bank can be reconciled with an assessment of Georges Bank as a whole.

- Review the documentation on rationale for the current management unit

#### **Outputs**

TRAC Proceedings, which will document the details of the benchmark

TRAC Reference Documents

#### **Participants**

DFO Maritimes scientists and managers  
NMFS Northeast Region scientists and managers  
Canadian and US fishing industry  
US State and Canadian Provincial representatives  
NEFMC representatives