

Terms of Reference

Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) Assessment of Eastern Georges Bank Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder

July 10-12, 2018
Woods Hole, MA
US

Meeting Chair: John Neilson

TRAC Co-chairs: Jason McNamee (United States of America) and David Keith (Canada)

Objectives

The Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) annually obtains requests for harvest advice on transboundary resources from the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC). For the following resources: Eastern Georges Bank Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder:

Cod:

- Update the following biological and fishery indicators of the state of cod in the eastern GB management area with 2017-2018 data: mean weight at age, condition, total biomass indices, age 1 and age 2 abundance indices, relative F, and total mortality (Z).
- Update projection performance for VPA [dome and flat PR] and ASAP since the benchmark meeting in 2013 using 2017-2018 information.
- Update the benchmark VPA and ASAP models and the consequence analysis table.
- Apply the empirical approach developed in 2016.
- Provide catch advice in consideration of all scientific analytical results that have been presented and discussed. Describe the rationale for how the catch advice was chosen, recognizing that it may depart from the approach outlined in the 2013 Benchmark Proceedings. Similar to the catch advice approach used for other stocks, to the extent possible, the catch advice should cover a range from a low to neutral (higher) risk of exceeding the fishing mortality reference and/or from a higher probability of a stock increase to a lower probability of a stock increase.
- Report on any factors and risks that should be considered in interpreting the catch advice provided.

Haddock:

- Update the latest information from fisheries, including discard estimates and research surveys.
- Describe appropriateness of the projection from the previous assessment based on recent survey data.
- Advise on whether the stochastic projections from the 2017 assessment continue to adequately characterize the risks and uncertainties of the catch advice that was provided.
- Advise on whether a TAC in 2019 of 40,000 mt remains appropriate or should be reduced.

Yellowtail Flounder:

- Apply the benchmark assessment (i.e., empirical approach) for yellowtail flounder, update results for the latest information from fisheries, including discard estimates and research surveys, and characterize the uncertainty of estimates.
- Provide catch advice for 2019 based on the empirical approach for a range of exploitation rates for 2019.
- Describe any adjustments to benchmark assessment model applied during the TRAC, including impacts on the advice given to TMGC.
- Describe the rationale for the range of exploitation rates provided by the TRAC as catch advice compared to previous guidance.

Allocation Shares:

- Review the biomass distribution relative to the U.S./Canada boundary, update results with the 2017 survey information, and apply the allocation shares formula.

Other:

- Discuss targeted research that would help identify mechanisms contributing to apparent increases in unaccounted mortality [resulting from US/Canada Ecosystem stuff and ICES WGNAR]
- Report on progress with cod stock structure research
- Draft terms of reference for the 2019 TRAC assessment of Eastern Georges Bank Atlantic Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder.

Expected Publications

- **TRAC Transboundary Status Reports** for the Eastern Georges Bank Atlantic Cod and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder management units.
- **TRAC Transboundary Status Update** for the Eastern Georges Bank Haddock management unit.
- **TRAC Reference Documents** for Allocation Shares, and Eastern Georges Bank Atlantic Cod and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder management units.
- **TRAC Proceedings** of meeting discussion.

Participation

- DFO Maritimes scientists and managers
- NMFS Northeast Region scientists and managers
- Canadian and U.S. fishing industry
- U.S. State and Canadian Provincial (NB and NS) representatives
- NEFMC representatives
- Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) representatives
- Public and stakeholders