

## **Gulf Of Maine Cod Mortality Reduction**

**PROBLEM:** A 35% reduction in GOM cod fishing mortality must be achieved in FY2006. PDT analysis indicates that 3.7 million pounds or 48 % of the total 2004 GOM landings were made by approximately 10 percent (55 vessels) of the total number of vessels (526) that landed cod in 2004. (see Tables 12 & 13, page 25, “FY 2004 Multispecies Fishery Background Information” <http://www.nefmc.org/nemulti/codinfo.pdf> )

The current regulations coupled with the traditional day boat fishery has apparently created a loophole that is being utilized by a small percentage of vessels to produce **ANNUAL cod landings that exceed a daily average of 800 lbs per ALLOCATED “A” DAS.**

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTION:**

Add to Framework 42, Section 1.2, Measures to meet mortality targets.

Option ( ): Beginning in fishing year 2006, no federally permitted multi-species vessel may fish in blocks 124, 125, 132, 133, 139 or 140 using a groundfish DAS unless such vessel declares its intent to fish in these blocks prior to the fishing year and thereby accepts an annual cap on all cod landings equal to the vessel’s permit baseline number of A DAS multiplied by 800 lbs. Participating vessels are prohibited from discarding legal-sized cod up until the daily or trip landing limit is reached.

### **SUGGESTED ADMINISTRATION:**

#### **What happens when a participating vessel reaches its annual landings cap of cod?**

- The vessel must cease fishing for the remainder of the fishing year.

#### **Can a participating vessel fish outside of the specified blocks?**

- Yes, but all cod landed inside and outside of the specified blocks by a participating vessel counts against the vessel’s landings cap.

#### **Can a non-participating vessel fish inside of the specified blocks?**

- No, not on a groundfish DAS. A vessel must declare its intent to fish in the specified blocks prior to the fishing year and submit to the landings cap.

#### **Does this preclude a participating vessel from requesting a GOM cod exemption letter and being able to fish on GB under the GB cod landing limits?**

- No. It does not modify the current exemption letter program. A vessel could still request and secure a GOM cod exemption letter and be subject to the 1000 lb daily / 10000 lb trip limit. However, all cod landed by a participating vessel, whether under an exemption letter or not would count against the vessel’s annual cod landing cap.

### **What if a participating vessel has 2005 carry-over DAS?**

- DAS carried over from FY2005 into FY2006 can be applied to a vessel's annual landings cap at a rate of 400lbs per day. This would have to be considered in a separate motion under a different section of FW42.

### **Can a vessel increase its annual landings cap by using leased A DAS?**

- Yes, the DAS lessee's cap could be increased by 400lbs per leased DAS in 2006 and 800 lbs per leased DAS in 2007 and thereafter. The DAS lessor's annual landings cap will be reduced by 800lbs per A DAS leased to another vessel. This measure should be addressed in a separate motion under the leasing section of FW42.

### **Who is responsible for keeping track of a participating vessel's annual landings cap?**

- The vessel operator/owner/permit holder is responsible for tracking the vessel's cumulative cod landings through the fishing year. At all times a participating vessel must be able to provide an up to date total of cod landings to law enforcement if requested.

### **What happens if a vessel exceeds its annual landing cap?**

- One A DAS plus 800lbs shall be deducted from a vessel's annual landing cap for each 400lbs the vessel exceeded its annual landings cap in the previous fishing year.

### **How much impact could the Cod Cap provision have reducing GOM cod mortality?**

- Had a Cod Cap been in place for FY 2004, it may have reduced GOM cod landings substantially. A rough estimate is between 1 million and 1.5 million pounds depending upon how the DAS leasing program is handled. If the leasing program continues and the suggested increase of only 400lbs per leased DAS for a vessels Cod Cap is implemented, the mortality benefits may be substantial.