

NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Nick Brancaleone

Tel: (978) 283-9992

E-mail: nsc.communications@gmail.com

NSC STATEMENT ON FINDING WORKABLE SOLUTIONS FOR FISHING YEAR 2013

The Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) is committed to evaluating and pursuing every possible option to mitigate impacts of the dire forecast for 2013 fishing opportunities on our membership and the groundfish fishing industry.

At this point in time, everything has to be on the table—science, management and the law. Year after year, industry has complied with everything the science and management have asked for; but ultimately, the status of several core stocks continues to decline. There are much larger forces at work in the Gulf of Maine and on Georges Bank than just controlling fishing mortality or preventing overfishing on an instantaneous basis. It's time for NOAA, Managers and Congress to openly acknowledge that low productivity of fish stocks is outside the control of the law or fisheries management and we can no longer continue to destroy fishing communities in an effort to control the uncontrollable. It is not only unfair to hold fishermen fully and exclusively accountable to the natural cycles of complex natural ecosystems, but it is irresponsible to continue in this manner. It is now time to review and understand the larger picture of this ecosystem and develop management strategies that are more reflective of this stark actuality. An overhaul is required, or else there will be no groundfish fishery.

NSC—the largest membership organization in the northeast groundfish fishery, which represents a majority of the active fishermen in the region—looks forward to working with our members, Northeast Fishery Sectors, NOAA, the Council, and our champions in Congress in the coming weeks to find workable solutions that will be the least impactful to this historic industry.

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Background Information:

This week, the New England Fishery Management Council's Executive Committee then the Groundfish Oversight Committee met to discuss several issues, including challenges facing the groundfish fishery for 2013 and beyond. Several important stocks including Georges Bank (GB) cod, Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod, GOM haddock, GB yellowtail flounder, CC/GOM yellowtail flounder, and American Plaice (dabs) are in poor condition. As a result, it appears some catch limits will be significantly reduced from the current fishing year. These reductions will have serious impacts across the groundfish fleet.

About the Northeast Seafood Coalition:

The Northeast Seafood Coalition is a non-profit organization representing over 250 commercial fishing entities and over 500 groundfish permits in the northeast United States on political and policy issues affecting their interests as participants in the groundfish fishery and the Sector program in the Northeast multispecies groundfish fishery. NSC members are small, independent, entrepreneurial businesses that fish for—and support fishing for—cod, haddock, flounders, and other groundfish species along the northeast coast. NSC's fishing business members fish from small and large ports all along the northeast coast. They fish small, medium, and large vessels, and they employ all groundfish gear types.

NSC works for rules that embody real solutions to complex fishery problems.

4 Parker Street Gloucester, MA 01930 Tel: (978) 283-9992
62 Hassey Street New Bedford, MA 02740
www.northeastseafoodcoalition.org