

A close-up photograph of an Atlantic Cod fish, showing its textured scales, large eye, and whiskers. The fish is positioned horizontally across the frame, facing right. The background is a dark, slightly blurred blue.

Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Management Workshops Overview

Photo credit: NOAA Fisheries

Setting the Groundwork

August 12

Objectives:

- Review outcomes of the science/assessment June workshops
- Provide an overview of the current cod fisheries management system
- Examine different management tools and approaches available

Discussion Topics:

- Management strategies may be area-specific, not overarching
- Altering boundaries is not strictly two or five management areas.
- How can an ongoing mixed stock analysis be implemented (cost, effectiveness)?
- Is “status quo” a viable option?
- How well can external factors (climate, wind energy) be incorporated into management decisions?

What we heard:

- All options are on the table!

Gathering Regional Perspectives from Southern New England and Georges Bank East & West

August 17

Objectives:

- Discuss and define available and potential management tools that could be used to manage Southern New England and Georges Bank East & West stocks differently to account for new understanding of biological stock structure.
- Share advantages and disadvantages of options.

Selected Discussion Topics:

1. Spawning closures
2. Gear options
3. Additional trip reporting

What we heard:

- Promising research is currently underway
- Lessons learned from spawning closures (theory vs practice)
- There is no universal gear type used across the proposed management areas
- Recreational reporting requires improvements

Gathering Regional Perspectives from Gulf of Maine East & West

August 19

Objectives:

- Discuss and define available and potential management tools that could be used to manage Gulf of Maine East & West stocks differently to account for new understanding of biological stock structure.
- Share advantages and disadvantages of options.

Selected Discussion Topics:

1. Monitoring requirements for fisheries by subpopulation
2. Reference points defined first by subpopulation
3. Additional spawning closures for fisheries—with multiple components

What we heard:

- Mixed fisheries are complex but monitoring tools are available (otoliths, genetics)
- Again, recreational reporting requires improvements

Gathering Recreational Perspectives

September 9

Objectives:

- Examine recreational data needs to inform management under the new Atlantic cod stock structure.
- Discuss and define both available and potential management tools that could be used to manage Atlantic cod differently under a new biological stock structure.
- Share advantages and disadvantages of management options.

Selected Discussion Topics:

1. Monitoring requirements for fisheries by subpopulation
2. Reference points defined first by subpopulation
3. Additional spawning closures for fisheries – with multiple components

What we heard:

- Monitoring is expensive and may require new strategies to better illustrate the recreational fishery
- Annual monitoring for sub populations is realistic and feasible using available tools (otoliths, genetics)

For More Information

Full meeting reports and presentations:

<https://seagrant.unh.edu/2021-atlantic-cod-stock-workshops>