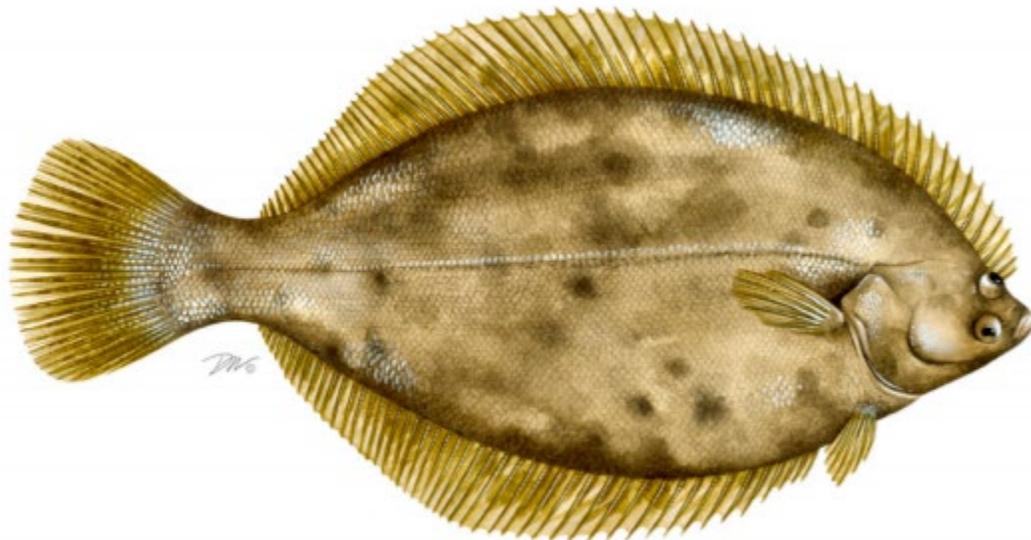


ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR WINTER FLOUNDER
(*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*)

2013-2016 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

Approved by the Winter Flounder Management
Board February 2018

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I. Status of Fishery Management Plan

<u>Date of FMP Approval</u>	Original FMP (October 1988)
<u>Amendments</u>	Amendment 1 (November 2005)
<u>Addenda</u>	Addendum I (May 1992) Addendum II (February 1998) Addendum I to Amendment 1 (May 2009) Addendum II to Amendment 1 (October 2012) Addendum III to Amendment 1 (May 2013)
<u>Management Units</u>	Three stocks units: Gulf of Maine (GOM), Southern New England/ Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA), and Georges Bank (GBK). Commission participates in management of GOM and SNE/MA stocks.
<u>States with Declared Interest</u>	Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey
<u>Active Boards/Committees</u>	Winter Flounder Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, Plan Review Team

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) manage winter flounder in state and federal waters. The Commission participates in the management of two inshore winter flounder stocks: 1) the Gulf of Maine (GOM) stock, which consists of waters north of Cape Cod; and 2) the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock, which consists of waters south of Cape Cod to the Delaware-Maryland border. The decision to consider only inshore stocks of winter flounder was based upon the Commission's focus on fisheries in state waters, and the differences in biological characteristics from the offshore stock in Georges Bank. Although a large percentage of landings are taken from federal waters, this species migrates inshore every winter to spawn. As a result, fishing mortality on spawning populations in state waters has a direct impact on the entire GOM and SNE/MA stock complexes.

Interstate Fishery Management Plan (1988)

The Commission authorized development of the first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Winter Flounder (*Pleuronectes americanus*) in October 1988. The purpose of the plan was to: 1) address management of inshore stocks of winter flounder; and 2) prominently consider habitat and environmental quality as factors affecting the condition of the resource. The original FMP and Addendum I called for reductions in fishing mortality on winter flounder. It allowed states the flexibility to achieve those reductions based on the life history characteristics of the particular stocks inhabiting each region. Implementation of the plan required cooperation between state fishery management agencies, National Marine Fisheries Service, the Council, and the Commission.

Although all states submitted plans that were approved by the Winter Flounder Management Board (Board), results from a 1995 stock assessment concluded that none of the states achieved a fishing mortality rate corresponding to F_{30} . Subsequent analyses in early January 1997 indicated that fishing mortality on a coastwide basis was slightly higher than the F_{30} target for the SNE/MA stock complex. Fishing mortality in the GOM stock was presumed to be higher and the spawning stock biomass at a low level, indicating that the GOM unit might be in greater need of rebuilding than the SNE/MA unit.

In February 1998, the Board approved Addendum II to the FMP. Addendum II adjusted the implementation schedule for management measures by the participating states and called for plans to reach the target fishing mortality goal for rebuilding (F_{40}).

Amendment 1 (2005)

In May 1999, the Board acknowledged that it was necessary to update the Interstate FMP for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder through an amendment. The original plan and addenda did not prove successful in rebuilding inshore winter flounder populations. In addition, the FMP did not reflect the goals and objectives of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA), which was established in 1993 after the original FMP was approved. The Board further noted that an upcoming stock assessment would likely provide new information on the status of winter flounder stock complexes. After the assessment was completed in late 2002, the Commission began development of Amendment 1 in February 2003.

Amendment 1 to the Interstate FMP for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder, approved in November 2005, replaced all previous Commission management plans. It focused on joint management of winter flounder between the Commission and Council, and was designed to rebuild and maintain spawning stock biomass at or near target biomass levels. In addition, Amendment 1 prioritized restoration and maintenance of essential winter flounder habitat.

Amendment I required a minimum size limit of 12 inches for commercial and recreational fisheries for both GOM and SNE/MA stock units. Recreational creel limits were ten (10) fish in the SNE/MA stock area and eight (8) fish in the GOM. There were no required closed recreational seasons in the GOM, while a closed season of 20 days during March and April was required in SNE/MA. The 60-day open season for recreational winter flounder fishing could be split into no more than 2 blocks. States were required to implement a minimum size of 6.5 inches square or diamond mesh for the cod-end in both GOM and SNE/MA inshore waters. Additionally, a 100-pound trip limit was required if smaller mesh is being used in the SNE/MA. This “mesh trigger” was intended for the landing of a small amount of winter flounder as bycatch in small-mesh fisheries.

Addendum I to Amendment 1 (2009)

Addendum I was approved in May 2009, following the 2008 GARM III stock assessment which indicated that the SNE/MA spawning stock biomass was only 9% of the target and the GOM stock was likely to be overfished and experiencing overfishing. For the GOM commercial

fishery, Addendum I established a maximum possession limit of 250 pounds per vessel. This limit was estimated to reduce 2006-2007 harvest levels by 31% for state water fishing vessels. For the GOM recreational fishery, Addendum I required states to implement regulations to reduce fishing mortality by 11% from the average of 2006-2007 levels. This 11% reduction was estimated to reach F_{MSY} . States were allowed to achieve reductions through possession limits, seasons, or a combination of both, and also had the option to submit conservation equivalency proposals to achieve the necessary reductions through alternative management measures, subject to approval by the Board.

For SNE/MA, Addendum I's management measures were designed to reach the lowest F rate possible with minimal economic and social impacts and dead discards, and to prevent an influx of effort into state waters. Non-federally permitted commercial vessels were permitted to possess a maximum of 50 pounds of winter flounder. This level was estimated to reduce harvest by 65%, and was intended solely to allow for bycatch. Recreational fishermen were permitted to possess a maximum of two (2) winter flounder from inshore waters of the SNE/MA stock area. This bag limit was estimated to reduce harvest by 46%.

Addendum II to Amendment 1 (2012)

In response to updated stock status information and federal action to substantially increase the GOM winter flounder state waters annual catch limit subcomponent, the Board initiated Addendum II to Amendment 1 of the Winter Flounder Interstate FMP. This Addendum changed commercial and recreational management measures for the state waters component of the GOM stock only. Specifically, it increased the maximum possession limit for non-federally permitted commercial vessels to 500 pounds. It also removed the 11% reduction in F for the recreational fishery and allowed states the option to open their recreational fishing season year-round.

Addendum III to Amendment 1 (2013)

Addendum III established an annual specification process to set commercial and recreational management measures for the GOM and SNE/MA fisheries. Each year, with advice from the Winter Flounder Technical Committee, the Board can adjust trip limits, size limits, and seasons for the commercial fishery; and size limits, bag limits, and seasons for the recreational fishery. The Addendum enables the Commission to quickly respond to federal actions and changes in the winter flounder fishery.

II. Status of Stocks

The most recent peer reviewed stock assessment for all three winter flounder stocks was conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in 2017. These operational stock assessments included data through 2016.

Gulf of Maine

The 2017 operational stock assessment determined that GOM winter flounder stock biomass status is unknown and overfishing is not occurring. 2016 biomass (30+ cm) was estimated to be

2,585 metric tons (mt) and the exploitation rate was estimated to be 0.086, below the exploitation threshold of 0.23. The assessment noted that there have been significant declines in commercial and recreational removals since the 1980's; however, this has not resulted in a contraction of the stock's size structure within the catch. Significant sources of uncertainty include gear catchability and deriving stock biomass from area-swept survey estimates. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic

The 2017 operational stock assessment concluded that the SNE/MA winter flounder stock is overfished but overfishing is not occurring. Specifically, the 2016 spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated to be 4,360 mt, well below the biomass threshold of 12,343.5 mt. In addition, fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.21 in 2016, below the threshold of $F_{MSY}=0.34$. The assessment noted that there is an overall declining trend in SSB throughout the time series; however, recruitment has increased from a historic low in 2013. Notable sources of uncertainty include the estimate of natural mortality and the length distribution of recreational discards, given they represent a small portion of catch. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

III. Status of the Fishery

Stockwide

Across all stocks (GOM, SNE/MA, and GBK), the winter flounder fisheries are a fraction of their historic productivity. Specifically, commercial and recreational landings have declined since the early 1980s (Table 1, Figure 3).

Commercial landings peaked at 18,279 mt (40.3 million lbs) in 1981, the highest since 1950, but have generally declined throughout the 1990's and 2000's. In 2013 commercial landings were 2,745 mt (6.1 million lbs), in 2014 were 1,980 mt (4.4 million lbs), in 2015 were 1,701 mt (3.7 million lbs), and in 2016 were 1,162 mt (2.6 million lbs). A majority of the landings were taken in Massachusetts (Table 2). It is important to note that management action has impacted yearly landings as annual catch limits increased in 2011 and 2012, and a moratorium was in place for the SNE/MA stock between May 2009 and April 2013. (Landings source: NMFS)

The primary commercial gear used to harvest winter flounder in 2016 was the otter trawl, followed by gill nets and dredge. Landings of winter flounder primarily occurred in May and June.

Recreational harvest was 33.7 mt (74,291 lbs) in 2013, 85.0 mt (187,292 lbs) in 2014, 40.0 mt (88,264 lbs) in 2015, and 48.8 mt (107,458 lbs) in 2016 (Table 3). These recent recreational catch values represent a significant decrease from the 7,446.8 mt (16,417,409 lbs) caught in 1982. Between 2013 and 2016, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York comprised the majority of coastwide recreational winter flounder landings, at 67%, 9%, and 15%, respectively. (Landings source: MRIP)

Gulf of Maine

Commercial landings of Gulf of Maine winter flounder have substantially declined since the early 1980s, with recent landings being roughly 7% of harvest levels in the 1980s. From 1964 through the mid-1970s, commercial landings were near 1,000 mt. Productivity peaked at nearly 2,793 mt in 1982, and steadily decreased to a record low of 139 mt in 2010. In 2016, landings in the GOM winter flounder stock were 200.5 mt (does not include discards), of which 93.5 mt were landed in state waters (Source: NMFS)

Recreational landings also peaked in 1982, at 3,024 mt. Landings have generally declined, and in 2016 were 24 mt. Recreational releases make up a small portion of catch. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic

Commercial landings of SNE/MA winter flounder generally declined throughout the time series from 1964 to 2010, with periodic peaks and dips. After reaching a historical peak of 11,977 mt in 1966 and then declining through the 1970s, total U.S. commercial landings again peaked at 11,176 mt in 1981. After 1981, SNE/MA commercial landings declined to 2,159 mt in 1994 and then increased to 4,672 mt in 2001. Commercial landings have generally decreased since the 2001 peak, and were just 134 mt in 2012 (in part due to the zero possession limit in federal waters). Landings in the SNE/MA winter flounder stock in 2016 was 524.3 mt (does not include discards), of which 63.0 mt were landed in state waters. (Source: NMFS)

Recreational landings of SNE/MA winter flounder peaked in 1984 with 5,510 mt and substantially declined until reaching an all-time low of 7 mt in 2013. In 2016, 33 mt were recreationally landed. The principal mode of fishing is private/rental boats, with most recreational landings occurring during May to June. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

IV. Status of Research and Monitoring

Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Winter Flounder requires the following research and monitoring activities by certain states (Table 5):

- Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York are required to conduct annual surveys of juvenile recruitment to develop an annual juvenile abundance index.
- Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey are required to conduct annual surveys to develop an index of spawning stock biomass.

In 2016 (and early 2017), states with interest in the winter flounder FMP conducted the fisheries-independent surveys summarized below.

Maine

The Maine Department of Marine Resources conducts spring and fall bottom trawl surveys in cooperation with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Division. The Maine-New Hampshire (MENH) Inshore Trawl Survey collects length, weight, maturity stage, and age samples for winter flounder. Winter flounder biomass in the spring survey increased in 2014 (>5 kg/tow) but was slightly lower in 2015 and 2016 at 4 kg/tow. Biomass in the fall survey has been fairly steady since 2011 at roughly 3 kg/tow.

New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG) conducts an annual seine survey of juvenile fish in its estuaries from June through November. The survey produces an index of relative abundance for each species encountered using a geometric mean catch per seine haul. The 2016 index value (1.48) increased from 2015 (0.64) and is above the average (1.23) since 1997. In addition, NHFG has worked with Maine Department of Marine Resources (MEDMR) since the fall of 2000 to conduct an inshore trawl survey off of Maine and New Hampshire.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF) completed spring and fall bottom trawl surveys covering its state waters. During the 2016 fall trawl survey, winter flounder were present in nearly all of the survey tows in the GOM and the percent occurrence observed was greater than the time series median. The index of exploitable biomass (winter flounder ≥ 30 cm) for GOM winter flounder increased slightly in 2016. For the SNE stock, winter flounder exhibited a limited distribution during the fall 2016 survey and were only present in approximately 25% of the survey tows, which is well below the time series average for this region. The abundance index declined slightly from 2015 to 2016, while the biomass index was nearly identical over the last two years.

During the spring survey, winter flounder were broadly distributed throughout the GOM region; however, the abundance index declined markedly in 2017, and was slightly below the time series mean. Similarly, a decline in the biomass index was also observed in 2017, with recent biomass levels being slightly below the time series average. Winter flounder exhibited a patchy distribution in the SNE stock and were captured at approximately 80% of the stations in the 2017 survey. Declines in the abundance and biomass indices of winter flounder have been observed in SNE over the past two decades and that trend continued in 2017 as both indices remained at low levels.

DMF completed its annual seine survey for young-of-the-year (YOY) winter flounder in June. This survey has been conducted annually since 1976, and it provides an index of recruitment for the SNE/MA winter flounder stock. The YOY index increased in 2017 and was slightly above the time series median; however, the relatively large confidence intervals around the YOY index suggest that the catch rates were variable across the six estuaries that were sampled.

Rhode Island

Except for the ichthyoplankton survey, which was discontinued in July of 2008, Rhode Island's Division of Fish & Wildlife conducted five studies to monitor juvenile and adult winter flounder in its state waters. The seasonal trawl survey samples 42 fixed and random stations in the spring and fall. The monthly survey samples 13 fixed stations each month. The Narragansett Bay Juvenile Finfish Survey samples 18 stations once a month from June through October. The Coastal Pond Seine Survey samples 24 stations in 8 coastal ponds from May through October. The Coastal Pond Spawning Stock Survey samples 6 stations with fyke nets from January to May in Point Judith.

Connecticut

Winter flounder have been monitored through the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS) since 1984. Spring (April, May and June) and Fall surveys (September and October) are conducted each year. The 2016 LISTS spring (April-May) index (geometric mean fish/tow) for all ages of winter flounder was 3.98, the second lowest value in the 33 year time series (lowest value = 3.94 in 2015). Similarly, the 2016 spring index for age-4+ winter flounder was 1.32, the second lowest value in the time series. CT DEEP also conducts a fall estuarine seine survey that provides an index of abundance for young-of-year winter flounder. The geometric mean fish/tow in 2016 was 0.63, the fourth-lowest index value in the 29-year time series.

New York

The NYSDEC has been conducting a small mesh trawl survey targeting juvenile finfish since 1987. The weekly survey runs from May through October in Peconic Bay using a small mesh sixteen foot semi-balloon shrimp trawl. A total of 127 randomly chosen stations were sampled during June and July. The YOY CPUE for winter flounder in 2017 was 0.055, the lowest ever recorded in the survey time series. CPUE for this species continues to be well below the time series average of 9.4.

The Department also conducts a seine survey in western Long Island bays, which has been ongoing since 1986, using a 200 foot $\frac{1}{4}$ inch mesh seine. Sampling is conducted at multiple stations twice a month within each bay from May through October. On average, 40 tows occur in Jamaica Bay each year during this period, and 24 tows each in Manhasset Bay and Little Neck Bay. The YOY CPUE for Jamaica Bay in 2017 was 8.21, lower than 2016 (12.3). The YOY CPUE for Little Neck Bay in 2017 was 2.33, an increase from 2016's low of 0.22. The YOY CPUE for Manhasset Bay in 2017 was 0.58, the second lowest CPUE in the time series.

New Jersey

The Bureau of Marine Fisheries has conducted an Ocean Trawl program in nearshore ocean waters since 1988. Winter flounder are most abundant in New Jersey during April, and data from this cruise have been used to develop an index of abundance for winter flounder in New Jersey waters. For each tow, information is collected on total number, total weight, and individual lengths. Stratified catch per tow (numbers) in 2017 yielded a time-series low

geometric mean of 0.89, an 80.5% decline from the 2016 mean of 2.25. The biomass indices for 2017 resulted in a geometric mean of 0.45 kg/tow (also a time-series low), a decrease of 54.4% from the 2016 index of 0.98. For the ninth year in a row, these indices remained significantly below the time series means of 5.43 fish and 2.11 kilograms per tow

V. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements and De Minimis

De Minimis

Amendment I allows a state to be granted *de minimis* status if their fishery constitutes less than 1% of the coastwide commercial or recreational landings for the preceding three years for which data are available. A state that qualifies for *de minimis* status based on their commercial landings will qualify for exemptions in the commercial fishery only, and a state that qualifies for *de minimis* based on their recreational landings will qualify for exemptions in their recreational fishery only. States that apply for and are granted *de minimis* status are exempted from biological monitoring/sub-sampling activities for the sector for which *de minimis* has been granted.

Request for De minimis Status

There were no requests for de minimis status in the winter flounder fishery.

State Compliance

All of the states with a declared interest in the management of winter flounder have implemented commercial and recreational regulations that are consistent with ASMFC's Winter Flounder FMP (Tables 4 and 5).

VI. Research and Monitoring Recommendations

The 2017 Operational Stock Assessments noted several data needs that would improve future population estimates.

Gulf of Maine

- Additional studies on federal and state survey gear efficiency and catchability
- Quantifying the degree of herding between the doors and escapement under the footrope and/or above the headrope
- Studies quantifying winter flounder abundance and distribution among habitat types

Southern New England - Mid-Atlantic

- Additional studies on maximum age
- Additional studies on recreational discard lengths
- Investigation of localized structure/genetics of the stock

VII. References

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Commercial Fisheries Statistics Tool.
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VIII. Figures and Tables

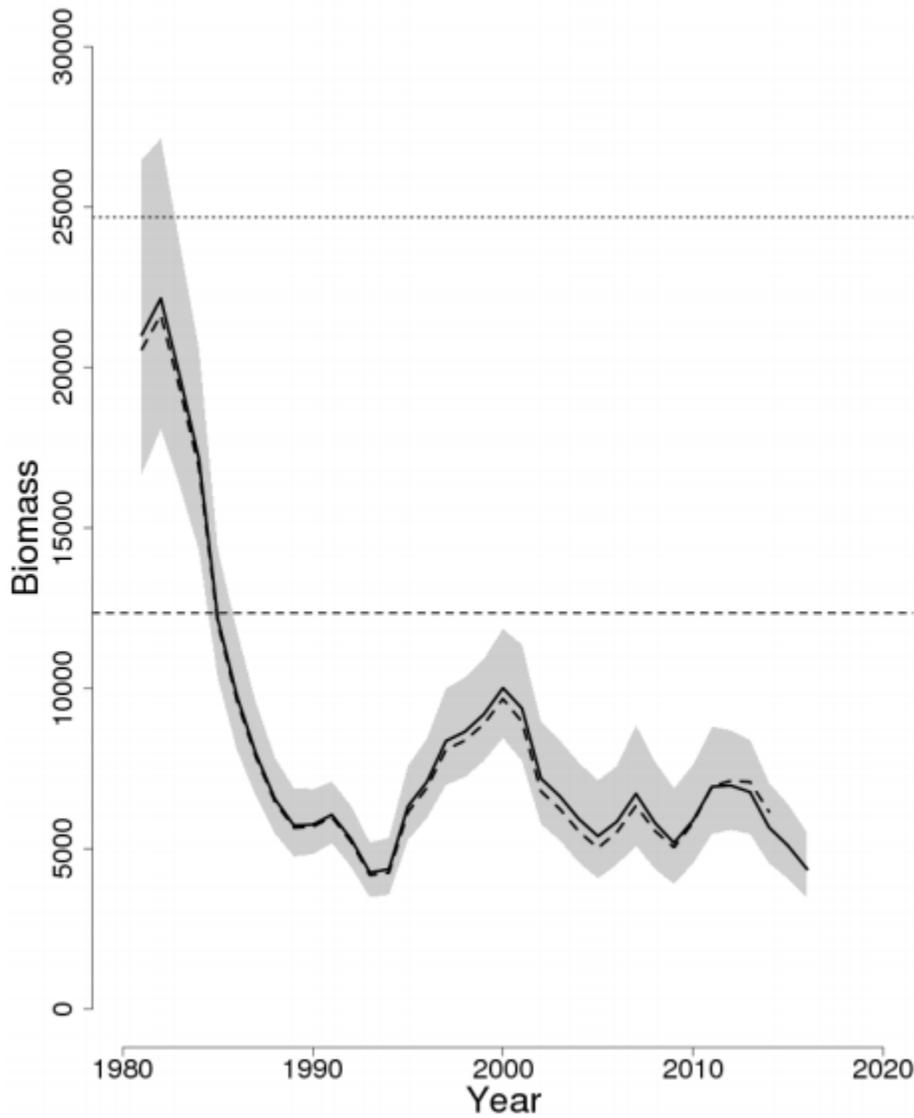


Figure 1. Southern New England/ Mid-Atlantic winter flounder spawning stock biomass between 1981 and 2016. The solid line represents results of the current assessment and the dotted line represents results from the previous assessment. The horizontal dotted line is the SSB-target and the horizontal dashed line is the SSB-threshold based on the 2017 assessment. The 90% confidence intervals are shown in grey. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

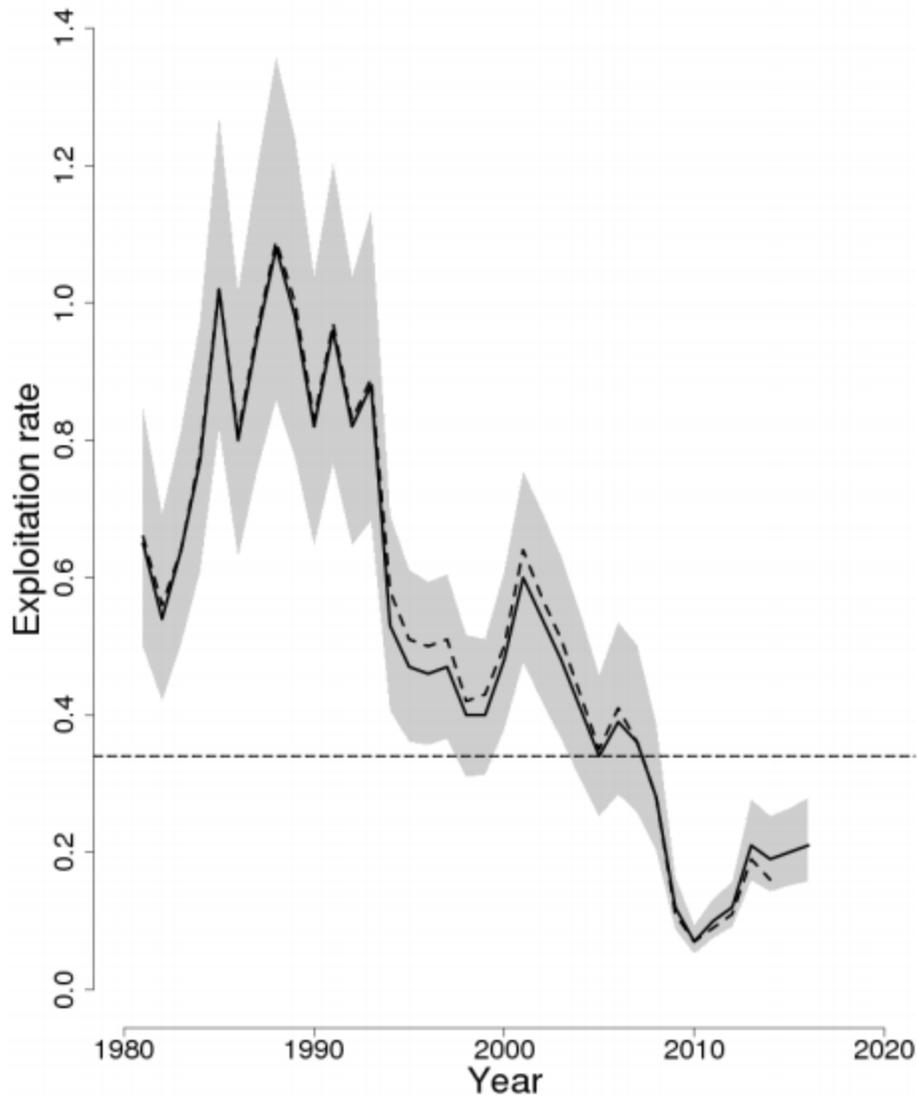


Figure 2. Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder fishing mortality between 1981 and 2016. The solid line represents results of the current assessment and the dotted line represents results from the previous assessment. The horizontal dashed line is the F-threshold based on the 2017 assessment. The 90% confidence intervals are shown in grey. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

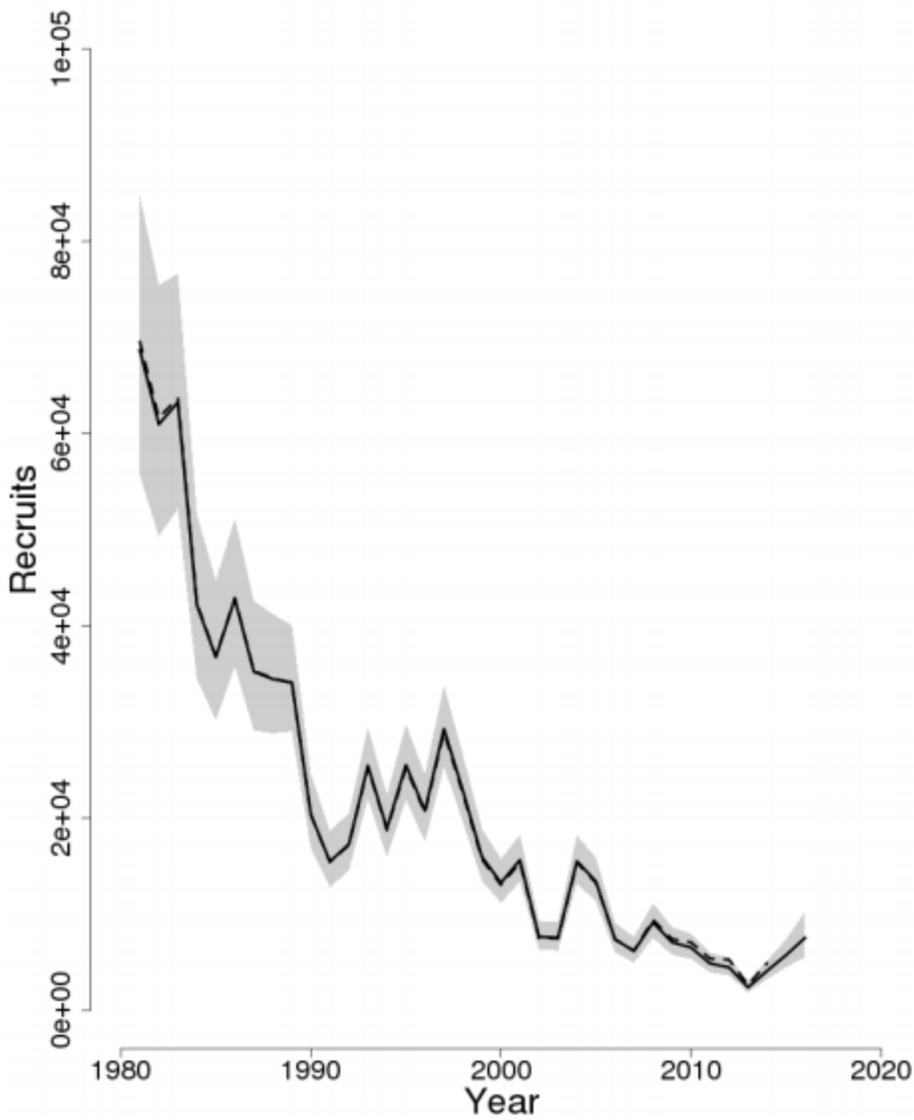


Figure 3. Southern New England/ Mid-Atlantic winter flounder trends in recruits between 1981 and 2016. The solid line represents results of the current assessment and the dotted line represents results from the previous assessment. The 90% confidence intervals are shown in grey. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

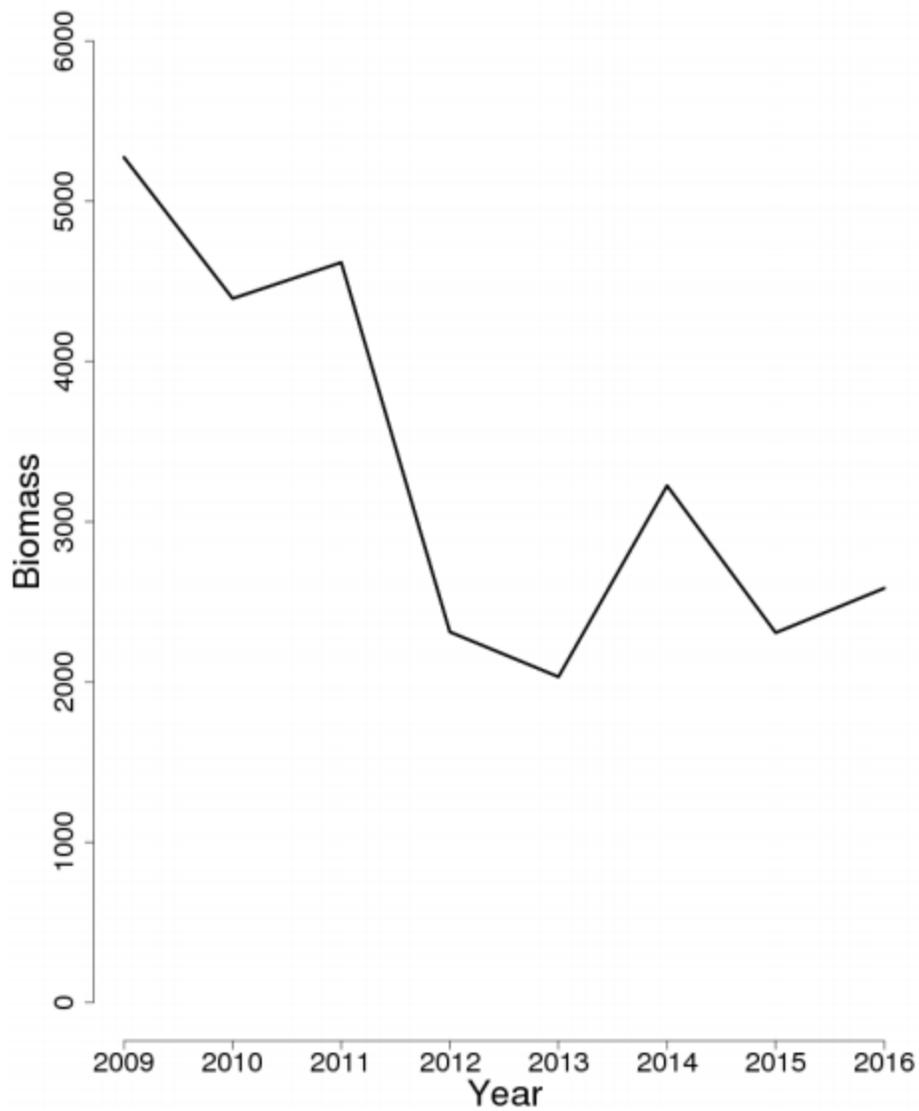


Figure 4. Gulf of Maine winter flounder spawning stock biomass between 2009 and 2016. Trends are based on 30+ cm area-swept biomass from the fall MENH, MDMF, and NEFSC surveys. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

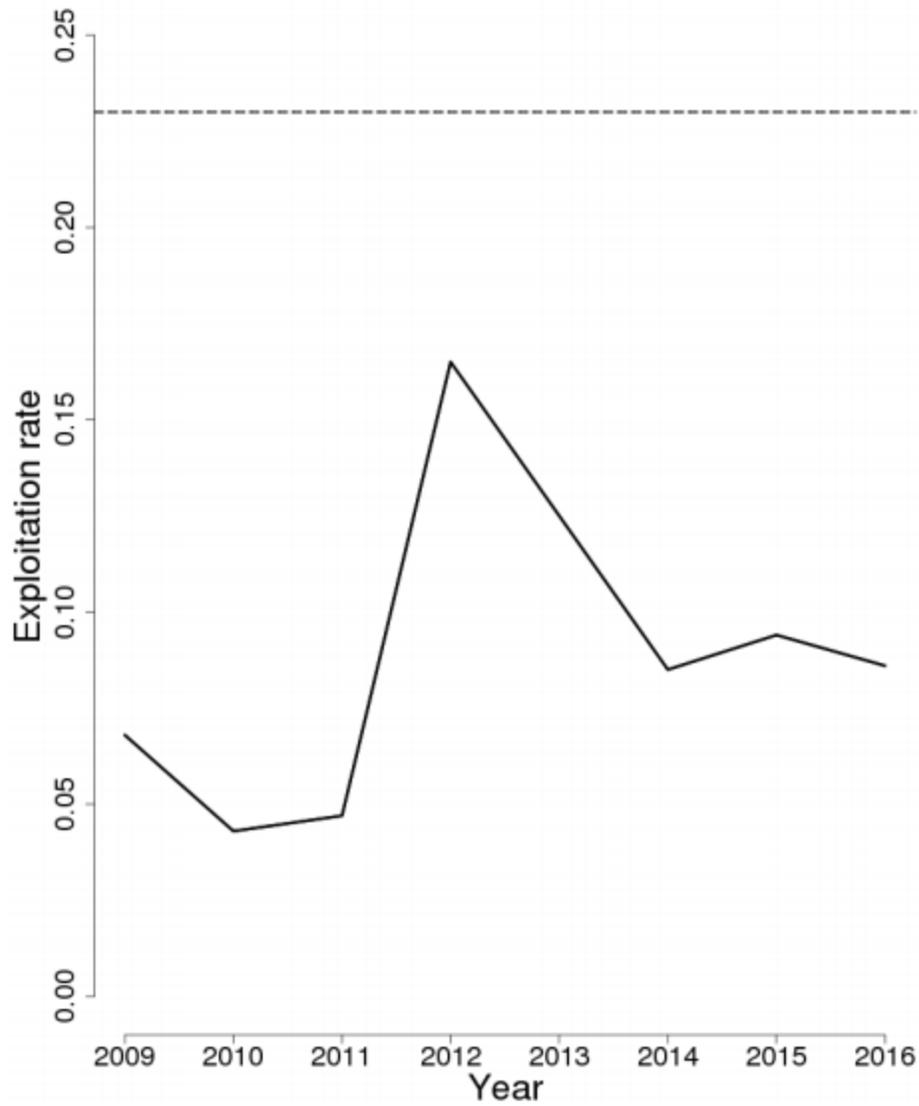


Figure 5. Gulf of Maine winter flounder exploitation rate between 2009 and 2016. The dashed line represents the corresponding F-Threshold from the 2017 assessment. (Source: Groundfish Operational Assessments 2017)

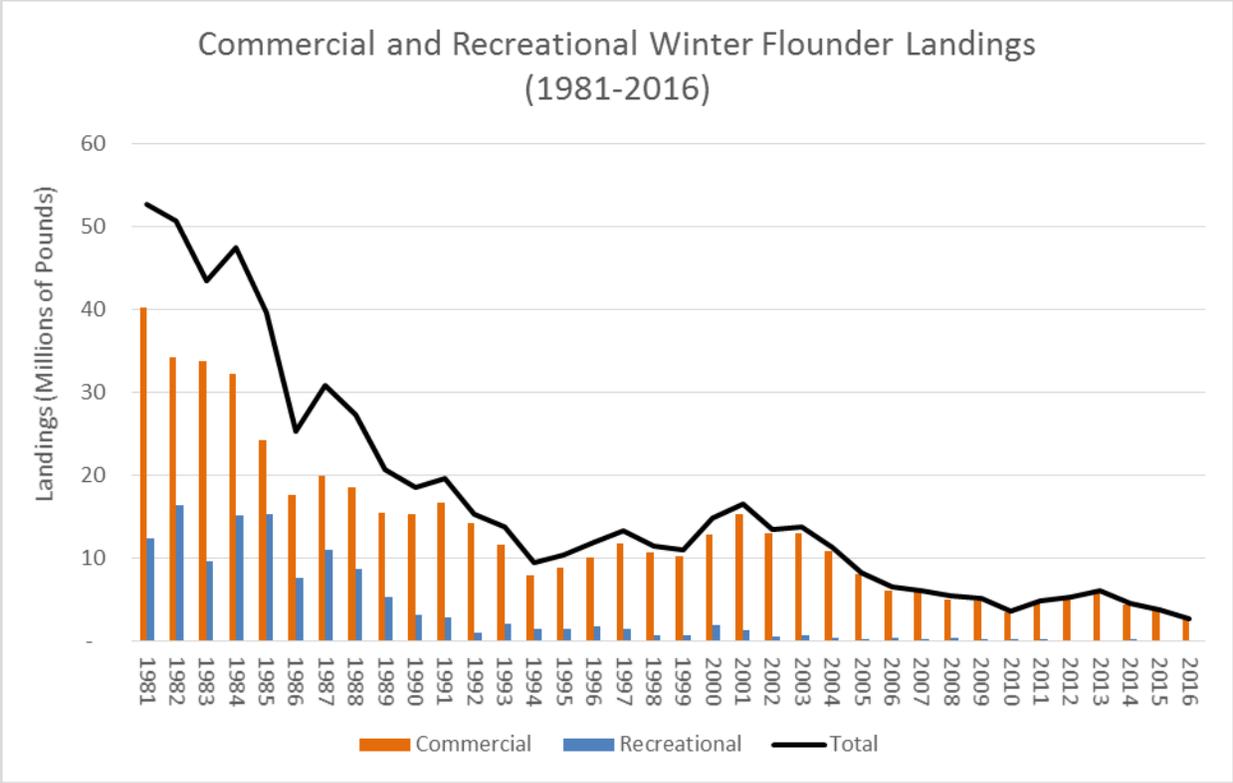


Figure 6. Total landings of winter flounder, commercial and recreational landings. (Source: NOAA and MRIP)

Table 1. Coastwide commercial and recreational landings of winter flounder.

Source: NMFS, MRIP.

Year	Commercial Landings (lbs)	Recreational Landings (lbs)	Total Harvest (lbs)
1981	40,328,004	12,424,306	52,752,310
1982	34,299,800	16,417,409	50,717,209
1983	33,817,000	9,640,481	43,457,481
1984	32,310,416	15,156,822	47,467,238
1985	24,222,895	15,372,730	39,595,625
1986	17,643,994	7,634,912	25,278,906
1987	19,926,128	10,967,183	30,893,311
1988	18,593,695	8,779,904	27,373,599
1989	15,421,400	5,363,355	20,784,755
1990	15,385,073	3,156,378	18,541,451
1991	16,776,460	2,899,482	19,675,942
1992	14,245,420	1,071,535	15,316,955
1993	11,648,778	2,129,667	13,778,445
1994	7,944,331	1,496,956	9,441,287
1995	8,882,929	1,529,595	10,412,524
1996	10,129,515	1,757,069	11,886,584
1997	11,777,821	1,514,640	13,292,461
1998	10,762,583	717,765	11,480,348
1999	10,222,856	768,056	10,990,912
2000	12,880,614	2,020,880	14,901,494
2001	15,278,708	1,304,052	16,582,760
2002	12,955,714	583,547	13,539,261
2003	12,986,593	773,793	13,760,386
2004	10,833,480	451,387	11,284,867
2005	8,084,062	233,717	8,317,779
2006	6,050,949	464,499	6,515,448
2007	5,879,052	205,645	6,084,697
2008	5,095,612	366,261	5,461,873
2009	4,870,667	285,613	5,156,280
2010	3,498,442	195,333	3,693,775
2011	4,682,379	209,318	4,891,697
2012	5,280,066	107,987	5,388,053
2013	6,050,669	74,291	6,124,960
2014	4,365,086	187,292	4,552,378
2015	3,749,153	88,223	3,837,376
2016	2,561,018	107,458	2,668,476

Table 2. Winter flounder commercial landings by state from 2013-2016. "C" denotes confidential landings.

State	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
Massachusetts	5,376,720	3,818,405	3,198,835	2,057,335
Rhode Island	407,272	461,905	369,168	299,895
New York	99,606	57,410	131,105	107,860
New Jersey	46,760	10,984	4,349	3,669
Connecticut	103,847	15,039	40,672	85,982
New Hampshire	C	C	C	C
Delaware	C	C	C	C
Maine	C	C	C	C

Table 3. Recreational total catch (A + B1 + B2) by weight (lbs) by state 2013-2016. (Source: MRIP)

	2013		2014		2015		2016	
	lbs	%	lbs	%	lbs	%	lbs	%
Massachusetts	64,733	87.1	115,380	61.6	55,889	63.3	45,028	41.9
New Jersey	7944	10.7	23,398	12.5	582	0.7	16,638	15.5
New York	1614	2.2	41,618	22.2	8,828	10.0	36,694	34.1
Connecticut	0	0.0	1,468	0.8	19,319	21.9	41	0.0
New Hampshire	0	0.0	4,797	2.6	3,539	4.0	8,224	7.7
Rhode Island	0	0.0	631	0.3	65	0.1	833	0.8
Maine	0		0	0.0	41	0.0	0	0.0
Total	74,291		187,292		88,263		107,458	

Table 4. Commercial winter flounder regulations.

State	Stock Unit	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Seasonal Closure (dates inclusive)	Recruitment Assessment	SSB Assessment	Min. Mesh Size	<i>De minimis Request</i>
Maine	GOM	12"	500 lbs	May 1 – June 30	N/A	N/A	6.5"	No
New Hampshire	GOM	12"	500 lbs	April 1 – June 30	N/A	N/A	6.5"	No
Massachusetts	GOM	12"	500 lbs	Open all year	YOY Seine Survey (June)	Bottom Trawl Survey (May, Sept)	6.5"	No
	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	Open all year	YOY Seine Survey (June)	Bottom Trawl Survey (May, Sept)	6.5"	No
Rhode Island	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	Open all year	Narragansett Bay Juvenile Finfish Survey	Trawl Surveys	6.5"	No
Connecticut	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs or 38 fish	March 1 – April 14	N/A	Long Island Sound Trawl Survey	6.5"	No
New York	SNE/MA	12"	50 lbs	June 14 – Nov 30 (for all gear besides fyke nets, pound and trap nets)	Small Mesh Trawl Survey, Seine Survey	N/A	6.5"	No
New Jersey	SNE/MA	12"	38 fish	June 1 – Nov 30. Fyke net closed Feb 20 – Oct 31	N/A	Ocean Trawl Survey	6.5"	No

Table 5. Recreational winter flounder regulations.

State	Stock Unit	Creel Limit	Size Limit	Seasonal Closure (dates inclusive)
Maine	GOM	8	12"	October 1 – June 30
New Hampshire	GOM	8	12"	Open all year
Massachusetts	GOM	8	12"	Open all year
	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1- February 28
Rhode Island	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – February 28
Connecticut	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – March 31
New York	SNE/MA	2	12"	May 31 – March 31
New Jersey	SNE/MA	2	12"	January 1 – February 28