

# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **Winter Flounder Advisory Panel**

### **Conference Call Summary**

*April 15, 2009*

**Present:** Chris Vonderweidt (ASMFC), Bud Brown (ME, Chair), Charles Witick (NY), Art DeFrancisco (CT), Don Swanson (NH), and Gary Libby (ME).

The Winter Flounder Advisory Panel (AP) convened via phone conference on April 15, 2009, to review Draft Addendum I to Amendment 1 and make recommendations to the Winter Flounder Management Board (Board). Recommendations were given for Issues 1 through 4 as follows.

#### **Issue 1. Gulf of Maine (GOM) Recreational Measures**

The AP unanimously recommends that the Board select Option C (a reduction different than 11%) and uses a 100% fishing mortality reduction (moratorium) on recreational fishing in the GOM. AP members noted that most recreational fishermen are not catching winter flounder and a moratorium would give this stock a chance to rebuild. The moratorium should be revisited after the next GARM assessment in 3 years and adjusted appropriately.

#### **Issue 2. GOM Commercial Possession Limits**

The AP unanimously recommends that the Board select Option J, no possession of winter flounder for both state and federal fishermen. The AP prefers this option for the same reasons as those listed under 'Issue 1' above.

#### **Issue 3. SNE/MA Recreational Management Measures**

The AP unanimously recommends that the Board select Option D, which closes the recreational fishery. This stock is severely depleted and the only way you have a chance of achieving Frebuild or rebuilding the stock to the target biomass is by closing the fishery. This option is also preferred because it complements NMFS Temporary Final Interim Rule.

#### **Issue 4. SNE/MA Commercial Possession Limits**

The AP unanimously recommends that the Board select Option H, which prohibits possession of winter flounder for both state and federal commercial fishermen. The AP prefers this option for the same reasons as those listed under 'Issue 3' above.

#### **General Comments**

Non fishing-related mortality is likely a significant cause of the depletion of winter flounder stocks. Research should focus on habitat restoration, predation, and stock enhancement. With new information, protected areas could be established that are more effective than existing management measures.