



Transboundary Management Guidance Committee

Guidance Document 2010/01 Addendum

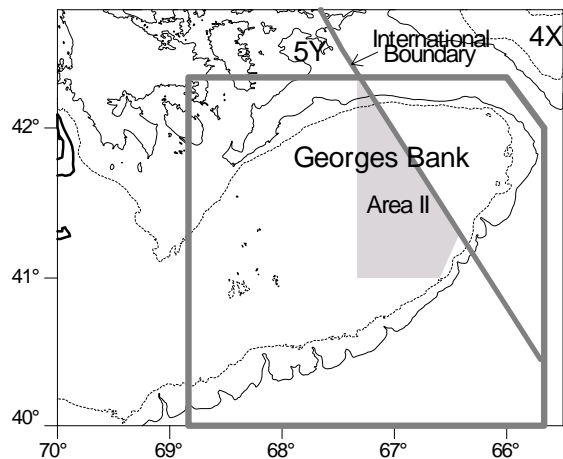
The Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC), established in 2000, is a government – industry committee comprised of representatives from Canada and the United States. The Committee’s purpose is to develop guidance in the form of harvest strategies, resource sharing and management processes for Canadian and US management authorities for the cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder transboundary resources on Georges Bank. In August of 2010 the TMGC’s guidance for the 2011 fishing year was conveyed to both countries. In January of 2011, the International Fisheries Clarification Act (Act) was signed into law in the U.S. The Act recognizes the U.S./Canada Transboundary Resources Sharing Understanding, and provides flexibility in the rebuilding period and catch level requirements for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that are implemented through the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan.

In light of the passage of the Act, and the fact that the U.S. statutory and management plan requirements have constrained the ability of the TMGC to negotiate a shared catch level for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, U.S. managers requested the TMGC to reconsider their guidance for a 2011 TAC. Both discussions relied upon the Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) Status Report, 2010/05, and the mutually-agreed upon TMGC harvest strategy for the stock. This addendum documents the guidance resulting from further consideration by the TMGC on February 9, 2011.

Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder [5Zhjmn; 522,525, 551, 552, 561, 562]

Original Guidance:

The TMGC concluded that the most appropriate combined Canada/USA TAC for Georges Bank yellowtail for the 2011 fishing year is 1,900 mt. A 2011 TAC of 1,900 mt corresponds to a low probability of exceeding F_{ref} (< 25 %) and an expected 10% increase in median biomass from 2011 to 2012. The TMGC noted that the biomass is increasing and is at its highest level since 1974. Despite the recent re-emergence of a retrospective pattern, which is of concern, the fishing mortality in 2008 and 2009 was 0.15, below the F_{ref} value of 0.25. The annual allocation shares between countries for 2010 are based on a combination of historical catches (10% weighting) and resource distribution based on trawl surveys (90% weighting). Combining these factors entitles the USA to 55% and Canada to 45% of the TAC, resulting in a national quota of 1,045 mt for the USA and 855 mt for Canada.



Basis for Reconsideration:

The passage of the Clarification Act made it possible for the TMGC to consider a greater catch level for fishing year 2011, provided the conservation objectives of the Understanding were not compromised. The previous constraints had resulted in a substantial risk that the TMGC process would become ineffective and the benefits of cooperation lost.

Revised Guidance:

The TMGC concluded that the most appropriate combined Canada/USA TAC for Georges Bank yellowtail for the 2011 fishing year is 2,650 mt. A 2011 TAC of 2,650 mt corresponds to a low probability of exceeding F_{ref} (< 25 %) and an expected 5% increase in median biomass from 2011 to 2012 (Figure 1). Despite the recent re-emergence of a retrospective pattern, which is cause for uncertainty, the fishing mortality in 2008 and 2009 was 0.15, below the F_{ref} value of 0.25, and the age 3+ biomass is increasing and is at its highest level since 1974. The annual allocation shares between countries for 2011 are based on a combination of historical catches (10% weighting) and resource distribution based on trawl surveys (90% weighting). Combining these factors entitles the USA to 55% and Canada to 45% of the TAC, resulting in a national quota of 1,458 mt for the USA and 1,192 mt for Canada.

During discussions, it was noted that an assumed catch of 1,956 mt of yellowtail flounder for the 2010 calendar year was used for the risk projections for exceeding F_{ref} . Preliminary information indicates that Canada recorded a catch of approximately 220 mt against their quota of 756 mt for the fishing year ending December 31, 2010. The TMGC concluded that this level of Canadian catch is likely to result in both a lower fishing mortality in 2010 and a higher biomass at the beginning of 2011 than the original risk analysis forecast.

Despite the uncertainties in the stock assessment, the revised catch level represents a very low risk of exceeding F_{ref} using the recommended VPA model (Split Series) used by TRAC to assess the stock.

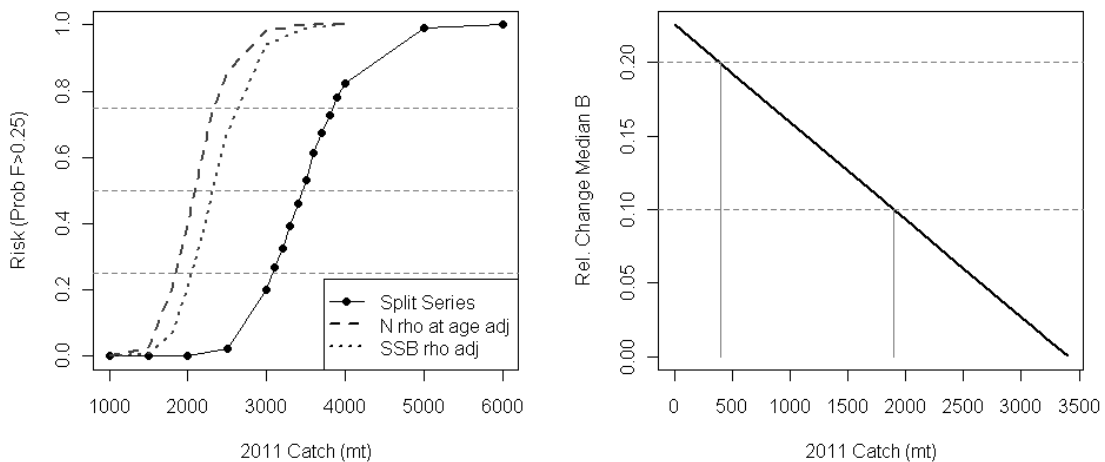


Figure 1. Risk of exceeding $F_{ref}=0.25$ and relative change in median biomass (TRAC Status Report 2010/05).