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NOAA announces control date for New England Groundfish fishery

Clears the way for potential council measures to prevent fishing fleet consolidation

At the request of the New England Fishery Management Council, NOAA today established a control date of April 7, 2011 for the groundfish fishery. The council can use a control date to develop management measures that limit excessive accumulation of fishing privileges in this fishery.

Establishing the control date itself does not impose limits or restrictions on the groundfish fishery. However, fishermen are encouraged to preserve any documents relating to their ownership or control of fishing privileges in the event that the council does decide to take a future action.

“NOAA, along with fishermen and members of Congress, is concerned about the need to maintain fleet diversity, fishery infrastructure and fishing ports throughout the Northeast,” said Patricia Kurkul, administrator, Northeast Region, NOAA Fisheries Service. “Establishing this date, as requested by the council, is crucial for developing any future actions that address excessive control or ownership of fishing allocation in the Northeast Multispecies Fishery.”

Fishing privileges acquired after the control date may be restricted or treated differently than those acquired before this date. The council could also impose limits on permits acquired prior to the control date. Setting the control date is also intended to discourage speculative behavior in the market for fishing privileges, until the council decides whether and how to develop limitations on accumulation of fishing privileges.

The setting of the control date does not mean the council, which is made up of representatives from state and federal agencies, the fishing industry, and the environmental community, will necessarily take additional management measures.

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