



## New England Fishery Management Council

January 17, 2012

### **NOAA Fisheries Service and New England Fishery Management Council Seek Additional Input on Cross-Agency Efforts to Explore Gulf of Maine Cod Management Options**

#### **Statement by Acting NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Samuel Rauch and New England Fishery Management Council Chairman, C.W. "Rip" Cunningham**

We want to alert fishermen and other stakeholders of the upcoming opportunities for providing additional public input on Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod management options including:

- The Council's Groundfish Oversight Committee will meet tomorrow, January 18, in Portland, ME. The Committee will receive an overview of the assessment and may also develop a recommendation to the Council on how to incorporate the results into management.
- The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet next Wednesday, January 25, in Providence, RI. The SSC will review the cod assessment and identify information that may influence the interpretation of the assessment results. The SSC will also review a range of catch levels for GOM cod.
- The Council will meet next on January 31-February 2, in Portsmouth, NH. On Wednesday Feb 1st it will discuss a course of action for GOM cod and possibly request that NOAA Fisheries take emergency action for the 2012 fishing year.
- NOAA Fisheries and the Council also plan to hold another public meeting in February. This meeting will be an opportunity for the public to learn and comment on any action the Council has taken before agency action. Further details about the meeting date and agenda will be available shortly.

A joint agency working group met with fishing industry and environmental representatives, scientists, and other stakeholders on December 9, 2011, to discuss the GOM cod assessment, which indicated that the stock was overfished and overfishing was occurring. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit ideas for potential management responses. Since this meeting, the working group has continued to explore the feasibility of these options under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in the hope of identifying ways to help alleviate impacts on the fishing industry while also protecting the long-term health of the GOM cod stock.

For additional information on these upcoming meetings, please visit the Council's website at: <http://www.nefmc.org/index.html>. Updated information about our progress and all of these upcoming meetings can be found at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/gomcod>.