



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

July 14, 2008

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Dear Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

The minimum commercial fish size for both Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Georges Bank (GB) haddock will be 19 inches (total length) as of August 11, 2008. In addition, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of Georges Bank (GB) yellowtail flounder for fishing year (FY) 2008 is being adjusted to account for overharvest of the FY 2007 yellowtail flounder TAC. There also will be additional fishing opportunities in the U.S./Canada Management Area as of August 1.

The emergency regulation that implemented the current 18-inch commercial minimum size limit for GOM and GB haddock is effective through August 10, 2008. Therefore, beginning August 11, 2008, the haddock commercial minimum size limit will revert to 19 inches. The average size of the 2003 year class of haddock is currently estimated to be 19 inches, and thus the situation of excessive regulatory discarding of haddock is no longer expected.

Vessels that begin a fishing trip prior to August 11, 2008, but return to port on or after August 11, 2008, may possess haddock that are less than 19 inches (and at least 18 inches) total length for that trip.

A March 28, 2008, letter to permit holders announced the FY 2008 U.S./Canada Management Area TACs for Eastern GB cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder at 667 mt, 8,050 mt, and 1,950 mt, respectively. The letter noted that the yellowtail flounder TAC might be reduced if NMFS determines that the 2007 TAC was overharvested. Based upon information available as of June 6, 2008, the total estimated catch of GB yellowtail flounder in the U.S./Canada Management Area during FY 2007 was 981.3 mt. This exceeded the FY 2007 GB yellowtail flounder TAC of 900 mt by 81.3 mt. Therefore, an overage of 81.3 mt of GB yellowtail flounder is being deducted from the FY 2008 U.S./Canada GB yellowtail flounder TAC. This results in an adjusted GB yellowtail flounder TAC of 1,868.7 mt for FY 2008. Notification of this adjustment was published in the Federal Register on July 10, 2008. The TACs for Eastern GB cod and haddock will not be affected.

Also, please note that the Eastern U.S./Canada Management Area will open to all vessels, and the Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock Special Access Program will open on August 1, 2008. Please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315 if you have any questions about the regulations.

This notice is authorized by the Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.

