



New England Fishery Management Council

**Joint Statement by  
Eric Schwaab, assistant administrator, NOAA Fisheries and  
C.W. Cunningham, chair, New England Fishery Management Council**

December 9, 2011

“NOAA in cooperation with the New England Fishery Management Council today met with representatives from the fishing industry, environmental community, scientists and other members of the public at the Sheraton Hotel in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. We discussed the preliminary findings of the recent Gulf of Maine cod stock assessment, which indicate a dramatic decline in the stock size for Gulf of Maine cod. If the preliminary scientific findings are unchanged after the scientific peer review is completed, the results would have management implications that could undermine significant progress in management of regional groundfish fisheries.

Given these emerging circumstances, NOAA and the New England Fishery Management Council conducted this meeting to focus on identifying options for maintaining recent progress in the fishery while mitigating impacts for fishermen and fishing communities. A number of important ideas, questions and concerns were raised. The results of the meeting will be considered further by NOAA and the Council as we move forward with developing management measures for the 2012 fishing year. These emerging data present an unusual set of circumstances, which may require out of the ordinary solutions, which we are committed to exploring.”

Eric C. Schwaab  
NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

C.W. Cunningham  
New England Fishery Management Council Chair