



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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GROUND FISH FISHERMEN

NOAA Fisheries Approves Framework 52 to the Groundfish Plan Southern Windowpane Flounder Restricted Gear Area Reduced in Size *Effective Date: January 14, 2015, through April 30, 2015*

NOAA Fisheries has approved Framework Adjustment 52 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. Framework 52 contains two new measures allowing fishery managers to adjust accountability measures (AMs) for southern and northern windowpane flounder. Now, we can reduce the size of the AM restricted gear use area if the windowpane flounder stock is determined to be healthier than expected under certain criteria. We can also shorten the duration of the restricted gear use area if the fishery is able to reduce its harvest so that an underage of the windowpane flounder annual catch limit occurs the year following an overage.

Because of this approved Framework 52 criteria, the Large AM Area currently in place in southern New England is being reduced to the Small AM Area for the rest of fishing year 2014 (through April 30, 2015). We are not modifying the current gear restricted areas for northern windowpane flounder because none of the qualifying criteria included in Framework 52 were met. A map and coordinates of the windowpane flounder AM areas are included below.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find additional information?	Information on Framework 52 can be found at www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/multispecies under the “Federal Register Actions” tab. Additional information can be found on the New England Fishery Management Council’s website at www.nefmc.org/management-plans/detail/northeast-multispecies .
How is it you can reduce the size of the Southern Windowpane Flounder AM?	AMs are management controls to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded and to correct or mitigate catch overages. The first measure reduces the size of the AM area restriction from large to small if two criteria are met: 1) The stock is considered rebuilt; and 2) the “biomass criterion” is greater than the fishing year catch. If the biomass criterion is greater than the fishing year catch, it suggests the Large AM Area is unnecessary because the impacts of the overage on the stock may not be as substantial as originally expected. In other words, we can reduce the AM from the Large to the Small AM Area to mitigate the overage in a way that takes into account a greater biomass in relation to fishing effort. Southern windowpane flounder meets both of these requirements, while northern windowpane flounder does not.
What is the “biomass criterion?”	“Biomass criterion” is defined as the 3-year average of the catch per tow from the three most recent fall surveys multiplied by 75 percent of F_{msy} (fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield) of the most recent stock assessment.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

Southern and Northern Windowpane Flounder AM Areas Through April 30, 2015.

Northern Windowpane Flounder Large AM Area

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
1	42°10'	67°40'
2	42°10'	67°20'
3	41°00'	67°20'
4	41°00'	67°00'
5	40°50'	67°00'
6	40°50'	67°40'
1	42°10'	67°40'

Southern Windowpane Flounder Small AM Area

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
1	41°10'	71°30'
2	41°10'	71°20'
3	40°50'	71°20'
4	40°50'	71°30'
1	41°10'	71°30'

Gear Restricted Areas for Windowpane Flounder Through April 30, 2015

