

2023 Terms of Reference

Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) Assessment of Eastern Georges Bank Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder

July 11-13, 2023

St Andrews, New Brunswick

and MS Teams – [Click Here to Join Meeting](#)

Meeting Chair: Paul Rago

TRAC Co-chairs: Tara McIntyre (Canada) and Tara Trinko Lake (United States of America)

Objectives

The Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) annually obtains requests for harvest advice on transboundary resources from the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee (TMGC). For the following resources: Eastern Georges Bank Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder:

Cod:

- Update the following biological and fishery indicators of the state of Cod in the Eastern Georges Bank management area with previously missing Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) 2022 spring survey data, as well as available 2022-2023 data: condition factor, swept area survey biomass indices, fishery and survey catch at length and age, relative fishery mortality (F), total mortality (Z), and catch.
- Provide an update on any recent assessments for bordering or overlapping stocks
- Compare the length-weight, growth and maturity assumptions in the Data Limited Methods tool (DLMtool) against the available survey data.
- Evaluate the assumptions and comment on the validity of the DLMtool.
- Comment on changes in survey and fishery indicators and provide advice identified by the Management Procedure selected by TMGC.

Haddock:

- Update the following biological and fishery indicators of the state of Haddock in the Eastern Georges Bank management area with previously missing 2022 DFO spring survey data, as well as available 2022-23 data: condition factor, swept area survey biomass indices, fishery and survey catch at length and age, relative F, total mortality (Z), and catch.
- Identify and comment on changes in survey and fishery indicators (relative to the 2022 TRAC).

- Update the eastern Georges Bank assessment model with the latest data and provide catch advice for 2024 (one year of projections) for Eastern Georges Bank management area
- Provide catch advice for 2024 using:
 - the Fref recommended in 2022 by TRAC and TMGC (F40% spr=0.367; calculated based on natural mortality (M)=0.2 and 2017-2021 for data inputs from the 2022 assessment model run); and,
 - a new Fref calculated with the most recent five years of data inputs from the updated assessment model (F40% spr based on M=0.2 and 2018-2022 for data inputs from the model)
- Provide an update on any recent assessments for bordering or overlapping stocks.

Yellowtail Flounder:

- Update results for the latest information from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and DFO research surveys and fisheries information, including discard estimates, and characterize the uncertainty of estimates.
- Provide catch advice for 2024 based on the limiter approach and exploitation rate (i.e., ratio of 2024 quota/2023 survey biomass). Describe any adjustments to the limiter, including impacts on the advice given to TMGC.
- Update and comment on trends in realized exploitation, relative F, and total mortality (Z).
- Examine available survey results funded by the research set aside program that could provide context to the TRAC catch advice.

Allocation Shares:

- Review the biomass distribution relative to the U.S./Canada boundary, and update results with the 2022 survey information. Incorporate the swept area biomass conversions when data is available.

Other:

- Report on any changes to the surveys that might impact the assessments such as changes to vessels, timing, area coverage, etc. Describe any potential impacts of these changes.
- Discuss, as appropriate, the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions in each country on achieving or completing work on any ToRs, including any alternatives to address data shortfalls.
- Update on the DFO EGB Cod Framework, Atlantic Cod Research Track Working Group, and Yellowtail Flounder Research Track Working Group.
- Draft terms of reference for the 2024 TRAC assessment of Eastern Georges Bank Atlantic Cod, Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder.

Expected Publications

- **TRAC Transboundary Status Reports** for the Eastern Georges Bank Haddock, Eastern Georges Bank Cod and Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder management

units.

- **TRAC Reference Documents** for Allocation Shares

Participation

- DFO Maritimes scientists and managers
- NMFS Greater Atlantic and Northeast Region scientists and managers
- Canadian and U.S. fishing industry
- New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) representatives
- U.S. State and Canadian Provincial (NB and NS) representatives
- Public and stakeholders/rightsholders