

## **APPENDIX I**

### **REPORT FROM THE SOCIAL IMPACT INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**



## New England Fishery Management Council

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# Report from the Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meetings

## Introduction

In preparation for Amendment 13 to the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan, New England Fishery Management Council staff conducted a series of ten social impact informational meetings throughout the northeast region. Meetings were held in the following locations:

1. Gloucester, MA – November 1, 2000
2. Chatham, MA – November 2, 2000
3. Portsmouth, NH – November 6, 2000
4. New Bedford, MA – November 8, 2000
5. Point Judith, RI – November 9, 2000
6. Portland, ME – November 13, 2000
7. Riverhead, NY – November 21, 2000
8. Boston, MA (impromptu meeting) – December 4, 2000
9. Scituate, MA – December 4, 2000
10. Ellsworth, ME – December 7, 2000

As discussed below, these meetings were intended to provide an opportunity to retrospectively discuss the social impacts of groundfish regulations since Amendment 5 with residents of affected fishing communities. Amendment 5 was implemented by the Council in 1994. At that time, groundfish stocks were at an all-time low and continuing to decline. Corrective action was required to prevent stock collapses and rebuild the fishery to long-term sustainable levels. Since Amendment 5, several additional groundfish measures (Amendment 7, framework adjustments) are ensuring that stocks continue to rebuild. Groundfish stock biomass has doubled since 1994 and continues to increase.

This report summarizes the results of these ten social impact informational meetings.

## Meeting Structure and Agenda

With the exception of the impromptu meeting at the Boston Fish Pier, all of the social impact informational meetings were structured identically<sup>1</sup>. The meetings were two hours long; most were held from 7-9 p.m.. Council staff began each meeting with introductions and a general overview of the purpose for conducting the meetings. Two overhead slides were presented and

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<sup>1</sup> The Boston meeting was informal and structured more like a roundtable discussion. No presentations were given by Council staff.

discussed (Attachment 1). The first slide listed the objectives of the social impact informational meetings. The second slide presented the definition of *fishing community* from the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as well as a working definition of *social impacts*.

As the first slide was presented, Council staff discussed the following objectives for the social impact informational meetings:

- Obtain qualitative social information specific to the primary fishing ports currently involved in the groundfish fishery
- Obtain a better understanding of the cumulative social and community impacts of Amendment 5, Amendment 7, and subsequent framework adjustments
- Obtain information to better predict the potential social and community impacts of the Amendment 13 alternatives
- Identify social issues important to New England's fishing communities
- Identify differences and similarities in social issues important to New England's fishing communities
- Better meet the Council's legal requirements under NEPA and the SFA to address social and community impacts
- Inform fishing communities about social impact assessment and the process through which the Council identifies and considers social impacts

Council staff emphasized the importance of collecting social impact information and characterized its value in the Council's decision-making process. These meetings are opportunities for retrospective discussion of the social and community impacts of previous groundfish management measures and information-sharing leading towards better assessment of future management actions. To conduct a social impact assessment, analysts must rely on the best available scientific information. Unfortunately, unlike biological and economic data, there are no "hard numbers" that can be analyzed to quantify social impacts and/or social changes in fishing communities, especially those that are directly resultant from groundfish regulations. Council staff is therefore taking a proactive approach to collecting some of this information for the Amendment 13 social and community impact assessment by conducting these meetings. The benefits to this approach include involving the greatest number of people and capturing the diversity of the fishing communities in the shortest amount of time. This approach allowed for residents of fishing communities to share their personal knowledge about their community and provide information that is not readily available through other sources. This information is critical to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social impacts of fishing regulations as well as social and cultural issues important to New England's fishing communities.

Council staff discussed the following definition of social impacts for meeting participants to consider:

*Social impacts are the effects of fishing regulations on individuals, families, and communities. More specifically, social impacts are the changes a regulation would create in:*

- *people's way of life (how they live, work, play, and interact)*
- *people's cultural traditions (shared beliefs, customs, values)*

- *people's community (its population structure, cohesion, social networks, stability, and character).*

Most fundamentally, a social impact is the impact of a regulation at the individual and family level. It is the way a regulation changes or affects people's quality of life. Social impacts can change the way that people live, work, play, and interact with one another as well as with the rest of their community. They can change the cultural traditions of a fishing family or community, which are most often expressed through festivals and events like Blessing of the Fleet ceremonies. They can also produce more noticeable changes in the population structure and social cohesion of the community as a whole. This can affect social networks (for example, how a fisherman relates to and interacts with his family, his crew, fish buyers and processors, vessel service suppliers, other fishermen, and everyone else directly and indirectly involved with the fishery).

After presenting the second slide, Council staff distributed one handout entitled, "Social Impact Assessment Issues" (Attachment 2). This handout was intended to provide specific examples of fishery-related social impacts and issues that may generate or cause social impacts (positive or negative) in fishing communities. It was characterized as a "brainstorming sheet" for meeting participants to focus their attention on true *social* impacts (versus *economic* impacts, for example). The sheet aggregated social impact issues into the following nine categories for meeting participants to consider: flexibility, adaptability, opportunity, stability, uncertainty, safety, perceptions, enforceability, and acceptability. Council staff noted that the brainstorming sheet was not intended to be a comprehensive list of social impact issues and encouraged meeting participants to comment about other issues that should be considered.

Following the brief presentation by Council staff, meeting participants were encouraged to comment on and discuss any of the social impact issues listed on the brainstorming sheet or any other social impact issues. They were asked to try to discuss specific groundfish regulations and, when possible, link them to the issues identified on the brainstorming sheet or other social impact issues they felt were important. Discussion was informal and often involved a back-and-forth dialogue between meeting participants and Council staff. In many cases, Council staff asked follow-up questions to those who participated in the discussion. Meeting participants were asked to stay "on topic," that is, to focus their comments on social and community impacts of fishery regulations.

### **Social Impact Information and Comment Sheets**

At the end of each meeting, Council staff distributed social impact information and comment sheets for participants to complete and return at their leisure (Attachment 3)<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of the information and comment sheets is: (1) to provide an opportunity for meeting participants to submit specific written comments concerning the issues discussed at the meeting and (2) to provide an opportunity for those who could not attend the meeting to participate by submitting written comments specific to social impact issues in their communities. Meeting participants

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<sup>2</sup> The comment sheets were distributed during the meeting in Gloucester rather than at the end, which resulted in more sheets being completed by meeting participants. This approach was modified to address time constraints. At the other meetings, most participants took the sheets with them at the end of the meeting, and some mailed them back to the Council office or submitted them electronically.

were encouraged to take extra comment sheets for crew members and other community residents who were not able to attend the meeting. The information and comment sheets also were available on the Council's website and could be submitted electronically from November 1, 2000 – January 7, 2001.

A total of **61 comment sheets and four written letters** were received from November 1, 2000 – January 7, 2001. Of these, 35 were handwritten comment sheets that were submitted either at the end of a meeting or by mail to the Council office. Twenty six comment sheets were submitted electronically through the Council's website.

The social impact comment sheets and written letters have been incorporated into this report to the extent possible. Meeting summaries in this report are intended to reflect not only discussion at the meeting, but also written comments. For example, the report from the social impact meeting in Gloucester summarizes discussion at the meeting itself, information from comment sheets received from meeting participants, and information from comment sheets received from people who did not attend the meeting but live in Gloucester. Also, written comments from residents of nearby ports (Beverly, Manchester) were incorporated into the Gloucester summary. Since many of the written comments reflected the comments made at the meeting, distinctions are made in the report only when necessary (for example, the report notes if a particular subject was only discussed in the comment sheets and not at the meeting).

### **The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act<sup>3</sup>**

One of the objectives of these meetings is to better meet the Council's legal requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the interactions of natural and human environments, and the impacts on both systems of any changes due to governmental activities or policies. This consideration is to be done through the use of "a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences ... in planning and decision-making" [NEPA section 102(2)(a)]. Unquantified environmental amenities and values must be considered and weighed on par with technical and economic considerations. Unquantified amenities and values include such factors as angler satisfaction, job satisfaction and an independent life-style for commercial fishermen, and the opportunity to see species, such as salmon, in the wild for the non-consumptive user of marine fishery resources. Technical considerations include the management of fishing gears and enforceability of regulations.

An environmental assessment (EA) is required to reflect impacts of any Federal planning or rule making on the human environment of a fishery. NEPA specifies that the term "*human environment*" shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment" [40 CFR 1508.14]. When an EA shows that a fishery management action or policy will have a significant effect on the human environment, a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including results of analysis,

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<sup>3</sup> Much of this discussion was extracted from NMFS' *Guidance for Social Impact Assessment*.

must be prepared. The Amendment 13 decision-making process will require the development of an EIS.

The MSFCMA has reflected the NEPA approach in the national standards for fishery management. The "prohibition on overfishing" standard, "use of best available scientific information" standard, and the "fair and equitable allocation" standard are examples of this. Where a "system for limiting access to the fishery in order to achieve optimum yield" [MSFCMA section 303(b)(6)] is deemed necessary, the MSFCMA requires the Secretary of Commerce and the Council to consider in depth the economic and social impacts of the system. In 1990, the MSFCMA was amended further and required that an FMP must assess, specify, and describe the likely effects of conservation and management measures on participants in the affected fishery, and the effects on participants in other fisheries that may be affected directly or indirectly [MSFCMA section 303(a)(9)]. This requirement strengthened the relationship between the MSFCMA and NEPA.

In the 1996 amendments to the MSFCMA, Congress added provisions directly related to social and economic factors for consideration by Councils and NMFS. National Standard 8 of the MSFCMA states that:

*Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to (A) provide for sustained participation of such communities, and (B) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.*

National Standard 8 requires the Council to consider the importance of fishery resources to affected communities and provide those communities with continuing access to fishery resources, but not at the expense of compromising the conservation objectives of management measures. The long-term conservation and rebuilding of stocks often require that limits be placed on particular gears and/or the harvest of specific stocks.

In summary, a full range of impact assessments – ecological, economic, and social – are necessary not only to meet MSFCMA and NEPA requirements, but also to improve the Council's decision-making process.

### **Amendment 13**

This report contains new and additional qualitative information that will be used to develop the social impact assessment for Amendment 13 to the Multispecies FMP and will ultimately be incorporated into the Amendment 13 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The port/community profiles, part of the "Affected Human Environment" section of the EIS, will contain a section that discusses social impact issues from the fishing community's perspective. For the communities in which social impact informational meetings were held, the discussion of community perspectives will be extracted from this report.

Information presented in this report will help to focus the social impact assessment for Amendment 13 and will be combined with additional social and community information. Where possible and appropriate, landings and revenues data will be cross-referenced with the information collected at the social impact informational meetings to characterize impacts and illustrate the relationship between economic impacts in the fishery and social impacts in the communities. Additional information will be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Associations, and other sources to characterize demographic and employment trends in the communities. This information, in combination with port/community profiles developed through the nearly completed Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN) project, should provide a description of the fishing communities, their dependence on fisheries, and the social issues which their residents view as most critical. From this, a social impact assessment for Amendment 13 will be developed.

Please note that this report does *not* represent a social impact assessment. Rather, it is a summation of public testimony and discussion with community residents about social impact issues that are important to them. It is intended to reflect as accurately and objectively as possible the perspective of those who attended the meetings and/or submitted written comments. Therefore, this report may not reflect the perspective of everyone in the fishing community. Most of these meetings, however, were well-attended by longstanding residents of fishing communities with a broad knowledge base of their community's involvement and history in groundfish and other fisheries. This allowed for the collection of information that otherwise would not be available to help managers and scientists understand the social impacts of fishing regulations and focus their analyses on issues most important to these fishing communities. The Amendment 13 social and community impact assessment will provide an objective evaluation of the social impacts of the Amendment 13 alternatives and a comparison of the alternatives to each other as well as to the status quo (i.e., taking no action).

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Gloucester, Massachusetts**

- Date:** November 1, 2000; 7-9 p.m.
- Location:** Gloucester Seafood Display Auction
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 40, including vessel owners, operators, and crew members, fishing industry representatives, public officials and political representatives, seafood dealers, a Catholic pastor, and other community residents
- Comment Sheets:** A total of twelve comment sheets were received. Ten Gloucester residents who attended the meeting submitted comment sheets at the meeting. Two comment sheets were submitted electronically, one from Gloucester and one from Manchester. These written comments have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- The Gloucester fishing fleet is primarily an owner-operator fleet of small and mid-size vessels whose owner-operators are directly connected to the fishing community. In general, commercial vessels in Gloucester range from 35-75 feet, and most use either otter trawls or gillnets to fish for groundfish. According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 295 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Gloucester each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- Historically, the majority of the fishing industry in Gloucester was of Italian descent. Many fishing families migrated from Sicily and established extended kinship and social networks to help develop successful fishing operations. This has changed somewhat over the past decade as both the community and the fishing industry have become more diverse.
- The fishing industry in Gloucester is predominantly a family-based industry. Most fishermen come from families with a longstanding history and heritage in the Gloucester fishing industry. Quite often, all family members are involved in fishing-related matters.
- Most of the Gloucester fishing fleet feels that it has benefited greatly from the support it receives from the community. The city recognizes the importance of fishing to both the economy and the cultural diversity of Gloucester and actively participates in fisheries-related issues.
- The Gloucester Fisheries Commission was established by the City Council and enacted by the legislature of Massachusetts in 1956 to investigate, advocate, and recommend measures for the protection, promotion, and preservation of the Gloucester fishing industry. The Commission includes the mayor of Gloucester, one city councilor, four at-large community residents, and seven people who live in Gloucester and are connected to the fishing industry.
- The Gloucester Seafood Display Auction is a 40,000 square foot facility that opened in December 1997. Its evolution was due, in part, to increasing regulations as well as an effort to expand marketing horizons for vessels that sell their fish in Gloucester. Over the course of one year, the Display Auction services more than 300 vessels. Most vessels are local (from

Gloucester and surrounding areas), although some vessels from ME, NH, and RI land their fish at the auction on a more seasonal basis. The Display Auction has recently been acquired by Global Food Exchange to allow internet access to the auction and potentially open new and additional markets for locally-caught fish.<sup>4</sup>

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Impacts on Children/Younger Generation:** This is perhaps the most complex and important social issue according to those who attended this meeting. Participants feel that the most significant social impacts of the groundfish regulations in Gloucester have been borne by the younger generation, particularly the children of those involved in the fishing industry. The impacts of the regulations on the younger generation are apparent in several ways:

- The structure of the fishing family in Gloucester has changed. In the past, one parent (the father) fished to provide an income for the family. The other parent (the mother) stayed at home to raise and nurture the children, while also taking care of fishing-related matters (bookkeeping, correspondence, etc.). Now, in almost all cases, both parents in fishing families are working. While this change seems consistent with changes occurring in many families, especially due to the healthy status of the national economy, it represents a significant diversion for fishing families in Gloucester. Many of the wives in fishing families did not *choose* to enter the workforce; they often felt *forced* to enter the workforce, either to supplement a decreased fishing income or to obtain health insurance for the family (or both). Children in fishing families rely on the stability and certainty that the stay-at-home parent provides, especially because the fishing parent is often away from home for long periods of time. This change has disrupted the lives of the children and has changed the traditional role of the father and mother in the fishing family.
- Participants at the meeting reported that children from fishing families are exhibiting more behavioral problems now than in the past. In addition to changes in the structure of their family, children in fishing families are “acting out” due, in their view, to increased stress at home. The nature and uncertainty of the regulations has increased stress among the parents, and many children are sensing this stress and/or experiencing some of the consequences of increased stress at the family level. (Family stress also has increased as a result of fishermen traveling farther offshore to fish and often fishing in less safe conditions, as discussed below.) One community representative suggested contacting guidance counselors at local schools to verify increased incidents of misbehavior among children from fishing families.
- The younger generation in Gloucester is not pursuing fishing as a way of life as their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents did. Participants at the meeting estimated that there are no more than five fishermen under the age of 30 fishing out of Gloucester. Because of uncertainty about the future of fishing, many fishermen are discouraging their children from carrying on the family tradition of fishing. The regulations have decreased opportunities for those in the younger generation who want to “break in” to fishing and ensure themselves a future in the business. The healthy state of the economy has increased the appeal of other jobs that offer benefits and health insurance, making it impossible for the fishing industry to

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<sup>4</sup> Gloucester Seafood Display Auction, personal communication.

compete for younger workers. In addition, the general negative public perception of fishermen has exacerbated the problem. Other local children used to admire children of fishermen and wanted to be part of a fishing family. Now, children of fishermen are often scorned because the perception is that fishermen have pillaged the ocean and are destroying the environment. As a result, many children of fishermen have lost the sense of pride about their family heritage. The older generation of fishermen in Gloucester is very concerned about the potential impacts of the loss of the younger generation. They feel as though the benefits of their sacrifices in the fishery will be reaped by others who are not part of the tradition and heritage that has shaped Gloucester's fishing community.

- Fishing families are experiencing more difficulties paying for family necessities. Health insurance is an important social issue; the fishing industry is perhaps the most under-insured sector of working Americans. Unfortunately, fishing is one of the most dangerous and physically demanding occupations. Vessel owners are no longer offering their crew members any benefits including health insurance, and as a result, many fishing families cannot afford a family health plan. While subsidized health care through the fishing Partnership Health Plan (FPHP) has helped many families, some dis-enrolled from the FPHP when the rolling closures prevented them from receiving a year-round income from fishing. Fishing parents also are finding it difficult to pay for their children's daycare, which is becoming more critical as both parents are entering the workforce. An owner of a small gillnetter at the meeting stated that he could no longer afford the school he chose for his children and that the switch to a new school is an added stress for the family. Another fisherman testified that he is suffering anxiety and stress because he fears that he cannot provide for his children like parents in other families are able to do.

**Safety Issues:** The safety of fishermen and fishing operations is an extremely important social issue, as decreased safety often increases stress at the family level, which can exacerbate many other family and societal problems. Participants at this meeting feel that the groundfish regulations have compromised the safety of fishing operations in several ways:

- Most vessels are carrying reduced numbers of crew in order to adapt to decreased income from fishing. In Gloucester, meeting participants reported that larger vessels (>90 feet) used to fish with a nine-man crew; now, in order to offer their crew members an adequate share, these boats are fishing with far fewer crew members. Many owner-operators on smaller vessels fish alone for some or all of the year. This problem is coupled with the fact that the regulations have made it difficult to offer crew members a reliable/consistent source of income from fishing, so even when carrying reduced numbers of crew, vessels are having trouble finding crew members at all.
- In order to conserve money, more vessels are taking chances with regular maintenance and repairs. The philosophy of vessel owners has changed from, "I better fix it before it breaks and I get stuck offshore" to "I'll fix it when it breaks because I can't afford to fix it ahead of time."
- Overall, many fishermen feel as though they must take whatever risk is necessary to fish when they have the opportunity to do so. Instead of staying home when the weather is bad, many fishermen are choosing to fish through the bad weather because of an impending area closure and/or because they fear that they may not be able to fish for some period of time in the future.

**Loss of “Sense of Community”:** Meeting participants feel that many of the groundfish regulations have destroyed the cohesion and sense of community in Gloucester. The following examples were provided:

- Overall, the fishing community is not a happy community anymore. Fishermen no longer get together to tell exciting and colorful tales about fishing at the local bar or restaurant. Some of the social networks that evolved from fishing have all but disappeared.
- Coming home from a fishing trip used to be an exciting and happy occasion for the entire community. When the boats would come home, people would run to the docks to see the fishermen and unload the catch. Those days are gone.
- Some of the regulations have caused conflicts between user groups (recreational/commercial, big boat/small boat, etc.). This has increased tensions and further divided the industry within Gloucester. In some cases, relationships between vessel captains and crew members have deteriorated due, in part, to stress and increased anxiety about the regulations.
- In the past, the community of Gloucester would be buzzing with activity at 3 a.m. because so many residents were involved in fishing. Now, with reduced opportunities and many people exiting the fishery, the town appears more like a ghost town at that time of morning.

**Loss of Connection with Seniors/Older Generation:** Senior citizens in the community used to spend time on the wharves interacting with the fishing industry. When the boats would come home from a fishing trip, the seniors used to greet the fishermen, and fishermen would be happy to provide them with a fish. Now, seniors feel bad asking local fishermen for fish. In some cases, seniors would spend time working on the docks (mending nets, etc.), but this does not occur anymore. The fishing industry in Gloucester has lost this important social connection with the older generation of local residents, many of whom were involved with the fishing industry themselves.

**Financial Difficulties:** Many people claimed to have experienced difficulties obtaining loans from the local bank. An owner of a medium-sized dragger said that he was denied funds to replace an old boat with a newer and safer vessel because banks are very reluctant to provide loans to an industry with such an uncertain future.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**Rolling Closures/Western Gulf of Maine Closure:** The rolling closures have severely reduced the flexibility of the fleet in Gloucester and have precluded fishermen from making a year-round income from fishing. Fishermen feel that they can no longer take advantage of seasonal fluctuations in stocks, markets, and/or fisheries and fish accordingly. In addition, vessels from Gloucester are venturing further from shore to fish outside of the rolling closures, increasing problems with safety (especially when combined with smaller crews and decreased vessel maintenance). Some vessels are even relocating to other ports to fish during some or all of the year. This splits fishing families apart for longer periods of time and contributes to stress at the family level.

While the rolling closures severely limit flexibility and opportunity for the fleet, the western Gulf of Maine closure precludes many vessels from seeking viable alternative fisheries (pollock, some flatfish) and thus further limits their flexibility and ability to adapt to regulations that were implemented primarily to protect Gulf of Maine cod.

**Low Trip Limits/Discards**: Regulatory discarding is not only an ecological problem, but also a social problem. Throwing marketable, valuable, and oftentimes dead fish overboard angers and depresses fishermen. Low cod trip limits have caused many fishermen from Gloucester to discard marketable codfish during some part of the year. Fishermen expressed extreme discontent about having to throw marketable fish overboard as a direct result of the regulations. Those dead fish represent both money that they could have provided for their families and the future of their livelihood. Fishermen view regulatory discarding not as a conservation measure, but as an extreme biological and economic waste that results in significant negative social impacts.

**DAS Reductions**<sup>5</sup>: Some fishermen had the most difficulty adapting to Amendment 5 and 7 DAS reductions and the resultant changes in their fishing patterns. Others cite the implementation of Amendment 5 as the time “when everything started to fall apart” in terms of increased risk taking, decreased vessel maintenance, conflicts between user groups, and overall loss of faith in the government and fisheries management. In addition, some perceive the differential allocation of DAS (individual/fleet) to be unfair.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Gloucester Seafood Display Auction**: The development of the Gloucester Seafood Display Auction was cited by meeting participants as having a positive impact on the community. It opened in December 1997 and has helped local fishermen receive a better price for their fish, which has somewhat mitigated the economic impacts of reduced catches.

**Commercial Waterfront Property/Fuel Costs**: Participants at the meeting cited increased waterfront property values and taxes and the recent doubling of fuel costs as additional issues that are exacerbating the social impacts of the fishing regulations. While many wharves are facing reduced profits, their rents are increasing, and commercial waterfront property is becoming more difficult to secure for the future. In addition, about ½ dozen wharves in Gloucester are thought to be in bad condition, and these are the wharves that have depended on marine industrial and commercial activities for more than 20 years.

**Community Support for Fishing Industry**: Participants feel that they receive a great deal of support from the city of Gloucester for the fishing industry. The city of Gloucester helped to develop the Seafood Display Auction and subsidized the reconstruction of the State Pier. In addition, the community is actively involved in fisheries management issues and has a long-established Fisheries Commission to represent its interests. The mayor of Gloucester, senators,

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<sup>5</sup> This issue was not discussed in detail at the meeting. Most of the DAS comments were received from the comment sheets.

and state representatives have all involved themselves personally in fisheries issues. This illustrates the importance of fishing to the community.

**Tourism** Although the city does not spend much money on tourism, tourists do flock to Gloucester in the summertime, primarily because they want to see a working waterfront. (Tourism has increased since the release of the movie, *The Perfect Storm*.) Meeting participants indicated that it has become difficult to maintain a year-round working waterfront in the current regulatory situation.

V. **Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Constantly Changing Management** : Meeting participants expressed discontent with constantly changing groundfish regulations. It increases uncertainty, decreases enforceability, and makes it more difficult for fishermen to comply with the regulations. Also, many people feel that NMFS and the Council do not allow enough time for the regulations to be successful before changing them and that there is not adequate consideration of the effectiveness of existing regulations before additional regulations are implemented.

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Chatham, Massachusetts**

- Date:** November 2, 2000; 7-9 p.m.
- Location:** Eldredge Public Library
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 50, including fishing vessel owners and crew members, fishing industry representatives, town officials/selectmen, fish pier/dock owners, owners of fishing supply services, and other community residents
- Comment Sheets:** A total of six comment sheets, five from Chatham and one from Harwichport, and one written letter from Chatham were received. Of the seven who submitted written comments, two attended the meeting. Five comment sheets were submitted electronically. These written comments have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- The community of Chatham has evolved to be a popular seasonal tourist community with a much larger summer population. Fishing, however, is part of Chatham's longstanding heritage and history and contributes to the character of the community and its appeal to tourists as a small New England fishing town.
- Chatham and Harwichport contain entirely small boat fleets; the largest full-time commercial vessels are about 50 feet in length. This is due, in part, to the physical characteristics of and tidal fluctuations in the harbors. According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 209 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Chatham and Harwichport (combined) each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- Fishermen in Chatham and Harwichport use a variety of gears. Unlike most other major groundfish ports in New England, however, hook-and-line gear, handlines, gillnets, pots, and traps are more prevalent than otter trawls. There is also one Scottish seine vessel fishing out of Chatham.
- In terms of groundfishing, Chatham and Harwichport rely almost solely on codfishing. The fleet has evolved to be quite diverse and flexible, changing fisheries seasonally and/or as opportunity arises. For example, to maximize his or her opportunities, a groundfish fisherman may target cod in the winter, squid and scup in the spring (trap fishing), and dogfish and tuna in the summer. Shellfishing, striped bass fishing, and chartering recreational trips provide additional opportunities in the spring and summer. While codfish is the staple of the groundfish fishery in Chatham and Harwichport, especially for the hook and line and gillnet sectors, there is also a small fleet of mobile gear vessels that depend on flatfish.
- One of the unique characteristics of Chatham and Harwichport that several meeting participants cited is the ports' proximity to fishing grounds. This has allowed the small boat fleet to further diversify and maximize their opportunities.

- Meeting participants feel that Chatham and Harwichport are generally “educated ports.” Many fishermen attended college and chose fishing as a way of life after school or after working land-based jobs. In addition, most fishermen’s wives work outside of the home in jobs unrelated to fishing.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Frustration/Dislocation from the Management Process:** Meeting participants expressed frustration with the fisheries management process and their ability to participate in the process. They feel that the lack of fisheries management meetings on Cape Cod and in Chatham reflects the government’s lack of concern and support for the small boat fleet and small fishing communities. Many participants resented the late timing of the social impact meetings and felt strongly that such meetings should have occurred more frequently in the past. Also, many meeting participants resented the use of the “Social Impact Issues” sheet, interpreting it as a limited list of allowable discussion topics rather than a brainstorming sheet. Their frustration with their perceived inability to participate in the process was clearly demonstrated through the majority of their comments, which related to a host of fisheries management issues, not just groundfish. In addition, they expressed a great deal of frustration with the Mid-Atlantic Council process and the lack of representation they have as Massachusetts residents in the development of regulations for fisheries they depend on for some or all of their income such as squid, scup, sea bass, and fluke.

**Loss of Flexibility:** Chatham and Harwichport’s small boat fleets have evolved to be flexible and diverse, responding to markets and fishing regulations by changing target species, fishing areas, and/or fishing gear. While they are designed for flexibility and diversity, small boats are limited by their own capacity and the distance they can safely travel offshore, especially in adverse weather. Because of increased regulations in many fisheries, the small vessels have lost much of their flexibility to move from one fishery to another. Meeting participants feel that regulations have “boxed them in” to particular fisheries, making it difficult or impossible for them to maximize their opportunities and/or adjust to changing conditions. When combined with the inherent limitations of small vessels, the regulations have reduced fishing opportunities to the point that many fishermen cannot guarantee a year-round income from fishing for themselves or for their crew. They cited regulations for groundfish, squid, scup, sea bass, tuna, and other species. They discussed the dogfish regulations in particular because, at one time, fishermen were encouraged to pursue dogfish as an alternative to groundfish. Some people said that the dogfish regulations and the resulting elimination of the federal dogfish fishery have forced more fishermen back into the groundfish fishery.

**Uncertainty/Loss of Employment Stability:** Uncertainty about the regulations and the future of the Cape Cod small boat fishery have increased stress at the individual and family level. Fishermen used to worry primarily about planning fishing trips around weather conditions; now, they face an added and more significant stress factor of increased and constantly changing regulations. In addition, some participants feel that uncertainty in the regulatory process (i.e., what new regulations lie ahead) is exacerbated by the Council’s lack of clear biological goals and management objectives (Amendment 13 was cited as an example). In their opinion, this has

further isolated the industry from the management process and made it more difficult for them to participate effectively.

Uncertainty in the fishery has decreased employment stability for fishermen and their crew. As previously discussed, overlapping regulations in many fisheries have precluded some small boat fishermen from making a year-round income from fishing. In addition, it has become difficult to offer crew members a reliable/consistent source of income from fishing, so many vessels have reduced their crew sizes substantially. In Chatham and Harwichport, where most vessels are smaller than 50 feet, many fishermen are now fishing alone.

The loss of employment stability in Cape Cod fishing communities is an important social concern and was noted at the meeting and on several comment sheets. One party/charter vessel operator said that fishing vessels on Cape Cod are “owner-operated day boats. The industry has a trickle-down effect directly on fish buyers, fuel dealers, gear suppliers, and boat yards since most are individually owned and dependent on uninterrupted fishing.”

**Safety Issues:** The safety of fishing operations is an important social impact issue, and many participants feel that the regulations have compromised safety in several ways. First, as previously mentioned, small boat fishermen are no longer carrying crew members year-round. Fishing alone is dangerous and increases stress for both the individual fisherman and his or her family. Second, to conserve money, vessels have minimized regular maintenance and minor vessel repairs. This creates increasingly dangerous situations as these same vessels are traveling farther from shore to fish. Third, because of uncertainty about future regulations, many fishermen are fishing in adverse weather conditions and taking more chances now than they would have in the past. There has been a shift towards maximizing opportunities to fish, regardless of weather and/or other safety conditions.

**Loss of Quality of Life/Sense of Community:** Small boat fishermen in Chatham and Harwichport feel that the regulations have decreased the quality of their lives. Most participants remembered a time when fishing was fun and exciting. In fact, the independence and excitement of fishing is what lured many of them to this way of life in the first place. One jig boat fisherman remarked that by “boxing in” the industry, the regulatory process has turned fishing into a “numbers game.” Now, everything has to be quantified in terms of gains and losses, but what has really been lost is the quality of life for fishermen and the attraction to fishing as a way of life. People feel that fishing for a living has changed from something attractive, exciting, and respectful to merely a matter of survival for those who still can.

In addition, participants at the meeting pointed out that the greatest social impacts of the regulations were borne by those who are no longer part of the fishery or the fishing community. Many fishermen who were unable to adapt to the regulations have left Cape Cod altogether to seek alternative sources of employment that still grant them some of the freedoms that lured them to fishing. Someone who submitted a comment letter said, “lots of Cape Cod fishermen are living up in Maine, farming, logging, or doing some other profession that probably doesn’t pay as well, but lets them maintain a sense of freedom.” Few attractive alternative employment opportunities are available within Chatham and Harwichport, so many of these people leave their

communities as the fishery downsizes. As a result, the “sense of community” among the fishing industry in these ports has decreased.

**New Entrants in the Fishery:** Meeting participants expressed concern about the opportunity for the younger generation to pursue fishing as a way of life. Many vessels have decreased or eliminated their crew for some or all of the year, leaving fewer opportunities for young people to learn from experienced captains and aspire to own their own vessels. With limited access in many fisheries, it is more difficult for new entrants to obtain enough permits to provide them the flexibility and adaptability they require to sustain year-round fishing operations on Cape Cod. It has become more difficult to afford to be a fisherman, and the meeting participants expressed disappointment in what they perceive to be the government’s lack of concern for the future generation of fishermen. In addition, many fishermen are discouraging their children from entering the fishery due to the uncertain nature of both the regulations and the future of the small boat fishery on Cape Cod.

**Increased Tensions Between Gear Sectors:** Several comment sheets reported that tensions have increased between gear sectors on Cape Cod as a result of the regulations. Because regulations are somewhat different for each gear sector, perceptions have developed about those sectors that should be more or less regulated and why. Fishermen from one gear sector point to fishermen from another sector as the ones who “caused the problem.” This is especially true in Chatham, where there are strong sectors of both hook and line fishermen and gillnetters. One comment sheet submitted by a fisherman in Chatham cited the “further separation of fixed and mobile gear fishermen” as the most negative social impact of the groundfish regulations.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**May Closure on Georges Bank:** Some fishermen cited the recent May closure on Georges Bank (Framework 33) as the groundfish regulation that has resulted in the most significant social impacts because of decreased flexibility, opportunity, and income resulting from the closure. For some small boat fishermen on the Cape who are limited by weather and the range of their vessels, May is the most important month of the year in terms of groundfishing. Without other opportunities during this important time, one jig boat fishermen reported that he cannot keep a crew and cannot compensate for lost time by making larger trips once the closure has ended. For him, the one-month closure, in effect, is a 2-3 month closure during what was his busiest time of the fishing year.

**Federal Dogfish Regulations:** Although not part of the Groundfish FMP, federal dogfish regulations have had significant social impacts in Chatham and Harwichport. Many fishermen are very resentful that dogfish were once promoted as an “underutilized species,” since the Dogfish FMP all but eliminated the federal fishery for dogfish. Many fishermen in Chatham and Harwich made substantial investments in the dogfish fishery and pursued it as an alternative to groundfishing. They view the dogfish regulations as another attempt by the government to eliminate small vessels and destroy the fabric of small fishing communities.

**Trip Limits**<sup>6</sup>: A few fishermen cited trip limits and resulting regulatory discards as the most important regulations in terms of social impacts. Throwing marketable, valuable, and oftentimes dead fish overboard angers and depresses fishermen.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Community Support for Fishing Industry:** In general, the meeting participants feel that their communities support the fishing industry. Chatham especially recognizes the tourist attraction to Cape Cod fishing ports and the economic benefits of a working waterfront. (During the summer, the Chatham Fish Pier is loaded with tourists watching the boats offload.) In turn, the town helps maintain the Fish Pier and dredges the harbor to keep boats working in a safe environment.

Additionally, meeting participants noted that Chatham and Harwichport are relatively unified in terms of their perspective on fisheries management issues. One person defined Chatham as a “unified community of like-minded humans within the same economic base.”

**Loss of Commercial Waterfront Property/Increased Cost of Living:** Members of the fishing industry in Chatham and Harwichport are finding it more difficult to afford to live in their own communities. Tourism and the healthy state of the national economy have increased the demand for waterfront property, and as a result, rents and taxes have increased considerably. Additionally, access to the waterfront for the fishing industry is becoming more problematic. Fish houses have become condominiums, and commercial docks are being used for sailboats and yachts. It is becoming more difficult to find adequate places to store gear and maintain/repair vessels. All of these issues are contributing to social changes within these fishing communities and exacerbating problems for fishermen trying to adapt to an increasing regulatory environment.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Georges Bank Closed Areas:** Several meeting participants expressed support for the three, year-round closed areas on Georges Bank and the rebuilding they have provided for Georges Bank groundfish stocks.

**Influx of Vessels from Other Ports:** As a result of the regulations, more vessels from other ports are coming to Chatham and Harwichport to fish for some or all of the year. Vessels from ports in the Gulf of Maine are taking advantage of the proximity of Chatham and Harwichport to important fishing grounds, especially when areas surrounding their ports are closed. Some of the meeting participants stated that this has increased in recent years and that the added competition can have negative effects on their fishery and their markets.

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<sup>6</sup> This issue was mentioned, but not discussed in detail.

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

- Date:** November 6, 2000; 7-9 p.m.
- Location:** Comfort Inn, Portsmouth
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 15, including commercial fishing vessel owners and crew members, recreational anglers, fishing industry representatives, political representatives, and other community residents
- Comment Sheets:** A total of six comment sheets were received, three from Portsmouth, two from Hampton, and one from Seabrook. In addition, the Coastal Conservation Association of NH submitted a social impact comment letter. Of those who submitted comment sheets, four attended the meeting. These written comments have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- Most New Hampshire ports are viewed as centers of tourist development more so than fishing communities. Shops, restaurants, and museums line the Portsmouth waterfront. Coastal towns like Seabrook and Hampton have evolved to attract an ever-increasing influx of tourists and beachgoers during the summer months. In addition, the waterfront (especially in Portsmouth) has developed to serve many marine-related commercial industries including shipbuilding and international trade. However, fishing is part of each town's history and heritage. It is part of the attraction to the NH coastline and contributes to the character of the communities and their appeal to tourists.
- Almost all commercial fishing vessels in NH ports (Portsmouth, Seabrook, Hampton, and Rye) are small to mid-sized, less than 60 feet in length. About half of the vessels from Portsmouth are gillnetters, and the other vessels either fish with otter trawls or switch between dragging and gillnetting on a seasonal basis. The majority of vessels from Seabrook, Hampton, and Rye are draggers, while the rest gillnet for some or all of the year. According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 60 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in either Portsmouth or in another NH port each fishing year from 1995-1999 (Rye, Seabrook, Hampton).
- The Portsmouth Fishermen's Cooperative was established in 1978 and was the first cooperative in the state of New Hampshire. The Co-op serves about 38 small and mid-sized vessels from ports in NH and southern Maine, all less than 60 feet in length. The Co-op property is leased from the state of New Hampshire, and the boats that tie-up at the Co-op pay the state for the berthing space. Other services at the Co-op (for members and non-members) include ice, fuel, and bait. The state pier, including the fishermen's cooperative, draws tourist attention to the community, especially during the summer season.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Portsmouth Co-op, personal communication.

- The Yankee Fishermen’s Cooperative in Seabrook, New Hampshire was established in 1990. It serves numerous boats from NH, MA, and ME and has about 59 members. The Yankee Co-op expanded its business around 1998 due to the shutdown of the Tri-Coastal Seafood Cooperative in Newburyport, MA and also as an adaptive response to increasing groundfish regulations. The Yankee Co-op now handles a substantial amount of tuna, shrimp, and striped bass, among other species (including groundfish). The Co-op property is leased from the town of Seabrook, New Hampshire.<sup>8</sup>

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Safety Issues:** The safety of fishing vessels and fishing operations is an important social impact issue. As a fisherman’s safety is compromised, stress at the individual and family level increases. Recent groundfish regulations have compromised the safety of the small-boat New Hampshire fleet in several ways:

- Vessels are traveling much farther from shore to fish for groundfish. This shift has resulted from both the year-round western Gulf of Maine area closure and the seasonal inshore rolling closures. Most vessels fishing out of NH ports are small boats, less than 60 feet in length, and were not designed to fish far offshore, especially in adverse weather conditions.
- The regulations have led to an inability for most vessels to find reliable crew to whom they can offer a year-round income. For this reason, more fishermen from NH ports are fishing alone for some or all of the year. Since most boats are small, many fishermen have eliminated their crew altogether to adjust to increased regulations and decreased income. Fishing alone is always dangerous, especially given the physical nature of commercial fishing.
- Because boats are traveling farther from shore to fish, the length of the workday has increased considerably for the dayboat fleet. Today, it is common to see day trips lasting 18-24 hours, primarily because of added “steam time” to reach open fishing grounds. Fishermen are more exhausted than ever, and this can lead to more injuries and accidents, especially since many of these fishermen are now working alone.
- To maximize their fishing opportunities, fishermen are now fishing in adverse weather conditions and on days when they traditionally would have stayed in port. When combined with DAS allocations, the rolling closures leave little opportunity to plan fishing operations around market or other considerations. Fishermen must use their DAS when they have the opportunity to do so, and unfortunately, much of this opportunity comes during a time when the weather is less predictable.

**Uncertainty:** Uncertainty about the regulations and the future of the small-boat fishery has increased stress and social impacts in New Hampshire’s fishing communities. Meeting participants emphasized that increasing uncertainty is also costing the fishing industry a significant amount of money. Several examples were cited:

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<sup>8</sup> Yankee Co-op, personal communication.

- Uncertainty has led to a drastic reduction in the number of seafood buyers, and the ability of processors to handle local seafood has decreased. Processors, already limited by the volume they can handle, have sought more consistent and reliable sources of product to sustain their year-round operations. Most processors have contracted to import (mostly frozen) product and cannot handle sporadically increased volumes of fresh fish as fishing grounds open and/or a species trip limit changes. As a result, the ex-vessel price of fresh groundfish has dropped. Fishermen are *not* making more money for catching less fish, which is often predicted when landings are expected to decrease.
- Regulatory uncertainty has affected not only the fishermen, processors, and buyers, but also gear suppliers and other shoreside support services. No longer can gear suppliers predict the amount and/or size of twine needed for net orders in a given year. Business planning for these types of support services has become very difficult, if not impossible. Fishermen cannot buy their nets in advance anymore, which once was a mechanism for saving money during financially difficult times. In addition, uncertainty has led to a reduction in employment for these support services. Many people are seeking alternative employment to what they perceive to be a dying industry, especially recently as the national economy is healthy and more reliable opportunities are presenting themselves.
- Uncertainty in the fishery has contributed to the inability of small vessels to find crew members. The pool of potential crew members in New Hampshire ports continues to decrease as: (1) crew members look for year-round work on boats in ports less affected by groundfish closures and trip limits; (2) the economy increases and more attractive shoreside opportunities become available; and (3) unemployment benefits remain better in Massachusetts, and unemployed crew members move out of NH. It is important to note that the labor market for the fishing industry is different because fishing is more than a job – it’s a way of life that affects a family in its entirety, not just the individual fisherman or crew member. This, combined with its physical nature and dynamics, makes commercial fishing a less attractive employment source for people who have spent much of their lives working in other industries.
- In addition to problems finding crew members, the fishing industry is concerned about the lack of new entrants in the fishery, particularly the loss of the younger generation of fishermen. Uncertainty in the fishery (combined with negative publicity, see below) has led to a general perception that there is no viable future in fishing. Fishermen are discouraging their children from carrying on the family tradition because of the stress and uncertainty they are currently experiencing. Crew opportunities for aspiring fishermen are becoming fewer, reducing opportunities for younger people to learn how to develop a safe and successful fishing operation.

**Loss of Morale:** Recent low trip limits, especially for Gulf of Maine cod, have increased regulatory discarding. Discarding is as much a social issue as it is an ecological issue, and fishermen hate to discard marketable fish. Meeting participants feel that the low trip limits and resulting discards of Gulf of Maine cod have demoralized the fleet. Fishing has always been a way of life in which fishermen take tremendous pride, but no one is proud to throw marketable, valuable, and mostly dead fish overboard. They recognize that discarding these fish do nothing to benefit them or their families, the health of the resource, their disappearing hold on local fresh fish markets, or the seafood consumer. According to those who commented, fishermen have become embarrassed, demoralized, and disgusted with their own way of life because most of

them know before they leave the dock that they will be forced to throw high-quality, marketable fish overboard. Unlike other industries, fishing is often a family business, so these negative impacts are felt throughout the entire family, not just by the individual fisherman.

**Health Insurance:** The lack of affordable health insurance is an important social issue for the primarily self-employed fishing industry in New Hampshire. Meeting participants speculated that more than 50% of the fishing families in NH ports are without any health insurance. Some fishermen's wives have entered the workforce for the sole purpose of providing health care to the family. Yet the majority of fishing families remain uninsured while working in one of the most dangerous and physically demanding industries.

**Social Impacts on Large Vessels**<sup>9</sup>: Most of the social impact comments received at this meeting related to the impacts of recent groundfish regulations (since 1998), which have had more significant impacts on the small boat fleet. In contrast, larger groundfish vessels had the most difficulty adapting to the DAS program and DAS reductions in Amendments 5 and 7 (1994-1996). To adjust for fewer DAS and decreased overall catches, larger vessels reduced their crew sizes. Also, to maximize their returns, larger boats fish most or all of their DAS in the winter, when weather is less predictable and more extreme. These adaptations can compromise the vessels' safety and impact families with large vessels in the same way that families with small vessels have been more recently impacted.

Recent groundfish regulations also have created negative perceptions about allocation (i.e., who's being affected by the regulations and who's not). Many crew members on large vessels feel that they have been demonized because they can continue to work during times when small boat crews do not have the same opportunity. The "big boat/small boat battle" has intensified, and recently, fishermen and crew on large vessels find themselves defending against small boat fishermen who feel that the regulations are only targeting them.

**Constantly Changing Regulations:** Some meeting participants expressed frustration with the management process and the seemingly constant changes to the regulations. One fisherman's wife estimated that her family receives, on average, two notices per day from NMFS announcing new or modified fishery regulations. The management process is overburdening the fishing industry and contributing to the loss of morale for the fishermen and their families. People have a very difficult time keeping up with the changing regulations, and it has become impossible to plan ahead and develop financial and other mechanisms to adapt to new or different regulations. The fear of receiving a violation has increased significantly because the industry's confidence in their knowledge of the correct regulations under which they should be working has decreased. In addition, constant changes to the regulations diminish the industry's faith that there is a "light at the end of the tunnel" and that they will have the opportunity to reap the benefits of their sacrifices. They perceive that no matter what regulations are implemented, they will not be adequate, and they will likely be followed by additional restrictions.

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<sup>9</sup> These comments were made by the co-owner of a large dragger who fishes out of Portland, ME. This individual made similar comments at the meeting in Portland, which are reflected in the Portland summary.

One fisherman's wife expressed frustration not only about the constantly changing regulations, but also about the inability to obtain accurate answers to questions about new or different regulations. It contributes to the distrust between the industry and the government when fishermen receive different answers to the same questions about the regulations. Meeting participants agreed that this occurs on a regular basis when they call NMFS with questions about complicated regulations. They don't understand how the fishermen can be expected to know and abide by all of the regulations when managers and enforcement agents often have differing opinions about what the regulations are and/or how they are enforced.

**Negative Publicity:** Negative press about the commercial fishing industry has contributed to the loss of morale among fishermen and fishing families. Today, more than feeling pride in their work, fishermen feel more ashamed. They find themselves defending their way of life against negative public perceptions about fishing and the effects of fishing on the ocean environment. One comment sheet cited this issue as the most negative social impact of the groundfish regulations, stating that "society looks upon fishermen as rapers of the ocean..."

**Polarization of the Fishing Industry:** Many people blame recent groundfish regulations and their disproportionate impacts for further dividing the groundfish industry. Tensions have increased between the perceived "haves" and "have nots" (those who have been significantly impacted by the regulations, and those who have not). In some cases, divisions based on gear sector, vessel size, area fished, and home port/state have intensified and increased overall social discontent in these fishing communities.

**Social Impacts on the Recreational Sector**<sup>10</sup>: The recreational sector of the fishery has experienced negative impacts of reduced nearshore fisheries and fishing opportunities. Because of stock declines in the 1980s and early 1990s, the recreational sector lost its nearshore fishery for cod, haddock, pollock, and winter flounder. Recreational fishermen must fish 20 or more miles offshore for a reasonable chance at catching these species. For some recreational anglers who do not own boats or cannot afford to fish offshore, their opportunities in the fishery have been eliminated. Other than a small seasonal opportunity for striped bass and bluefish, children are not able to experience recreational angling as part of their lives as their parents and grandparents did. When stocks recover and repopulate nearshore areas, it is expected that revenues from recreational fishing will increase substantially, providing for more employment opportunities and generating more money for fishing communities.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for these communities are:

**Rolling Closures:** The rolling closures in the western Gulf of Maine have severely impacted the small boat fleets in Portsmouth, Hampton, and Seabrook, New Hampshire. Meeting participants feel that increased safety concerns, the inability to keep a year-round crew, loss of employment stability, and increased stress at the individual and family level are a direct result of the inshore Gulf of Maine rolling closures. These closures impact small vessels more so than large vessels,

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<sup>10</sup> These comments were submitted in a letter from the New Hampshire chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association.

and the small boat fleets in NH have experienced significant negative social and economic impacts from the loss of fishing opportunities not only for groundfish, but also for many other species during the time when inshore areas are closed. When combined with limitations on DAS, the negative impacts of these closures become even more significant, as many vessels are now using their DAS during times when they traditionally may not have and are taking more chances with safety and weather to maximize their remaining fishing opportunities.

In addition, the rolling closures were cited as a primary reason for lower and more extreme prices for groundfish, as effort redistributes and more vessels are “boxed in” to smaller areas and shorter seasons. These lower prices for groundfish, particularly flatfish, exacerbate the negative economic and social impacts of the regulations.

**Low Trip Limits/Regulatory Discards:** As previously mentioned, the Gulf of Maine cod trip limit, which varied from 30 pounds – 400 pounds between 1998 and 2000, produced a regulatory discard situation on some small boats in the Gulf of Maine that is adversely affecting the quality of life for fishermen and their families. Fishermen are extremely disheartened and disgusted by the regulatory requirement to throw fish overboard, knowing that their discarding is neither conserving the resource nor providing for their families. The regulatory discard situation in the Gulf of Maine also has increased distrust between the industry and the government; the industry feels as though the government does not listen to or care about their concerns, especially since very little concerted effort has been made to document the magnitude of cod discards or mitigate the situation.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

- Meeting participants discussed the 1998 closure of the Tri-Coastal Seafood Cooperative in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Participants cited the loss of groundfish product as the primary reason for the closure of this cooperative that once served many vessels on the North Shore of Massachusetts and in New Hampshire.

**Loss of Commercial Waterfront Property/Increased Cost of Living:** As in most fishing communities, competition for waterfront property, residential and commercial, has increased and resulted in higher real estate prices and taxes. The fishing industry in these communities is finding it more difficult to afford to live in their communities and to maintain the shoreside infrastructure necessary to support their fisheries.

A lobster fisherman from York, Maine noted that this phenomenon is occurring in many coastal communities, including his. He reported that York has lost almost all of its commercial infrastructure, with one dock remaining for use by commercial vessels. He said that coastal towns are making conscious choices to develop their waterfronts to support tourism and recreational uses (yachting, sailing).

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

N/A.

## Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting New Bedford, Massachusetts

**Date:** November 8, 2000; 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Fishing Family Assistance Center

**Meeting Attendance:** approximately 20, including commercial vessel owners and operators, fishing vessel suppliers (groceries), fishing industry representatives, and other community residents

**Comment Sheets:** Six comment sheets in total were received, five from New Bedford and one from Fairhaven. One sheet was submitted electronically. Of those who submitted comments, five attended the meeting. Comments from these sheets have been incorporated into the following summary.

### I. Background Information<sup>11</sup>

- New Bedford is a deep water industrial port with a well sheltered harbor stretching from the south end of town across to the town of Fairhaven. It houses arguably the largest and oldest commercial fishing fleet on the east coast. It maintains a year-round working waterfront with many support services (fuel, ice, food, vessel maintenance and repair) that are easily accessible for larger vessels. In addition, many large processing facilities are located in New Bedford. Both New Bedford and Fairhaven contain a large number of community residents who are employed by the shoreside fishing industry services.
- New Bedford's fishing history traces back to its days as the center for whaling activity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is now home to the largest scallop fleet and the biggest groundfish fleet (by gross tonnage) on the east coast. While some vessels are owner-operated, there are several people who own multiple vessels (in some cases, up to ten or more). According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 352 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in New Bedford/Fairhaven each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- Fishing vessels in New Bedford range from about 40-100+ fleet, with the majority of groundfish and scallop vessels larger than 65 feet. Most vessels make multiple-day fishing trips for groundfish and scallops, ranging from 3-4 days to 2 weeks or more. In terms of groundfish, New Bedford's fleet lands more flatfish (yellowtail flounder, winter flounder) than roundfish, although cod and haddock are also landed. The vast majority of the New Bedford groundfish fleet consists of otter trawl vessels (draggers) and combination (groundfish/scallops) vessels.
- A significant component of the New Bedford fleet is of either Portuguese or Norwegian descent, with a greater proportion of the Portuguese participating in the groundfish fishery. Both cultures express strong familial and national ties, and those associated with the fishing community in New Bedford and Fairhaven are closely connected.

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<sup>11</sup> Some of this background information was provided by Aguirre International, *An Appraisal of the Social and Cultural Aspects of the Multispecies Groundfish Fishery in New England and the Mid-Atlantic Regions*, October 1996.

- The recent increase in the scallop fishery has revived New Bedford’s fishing economy and working waterfront. In 1999, fishing revenues increased almost 40% to about \$130 million, due primarily to increased landings of large scallops from the Georges Bank closed areas.<sup>12</sup>

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Loss of Family Tradition/No New Entrants in Fishery:** Fishing families in New Bedford are concerned about the loss of fishing as a longstanding family tradition because very few younger people are pursuing fishing as a way of life.

- Due to uncertainty about the future, negative perceptions about commercial fishing, and a healthy national economy, fishermen are now steering their children away from fishing and encouraging them to pursue other industries with more financial opportunities and secure futures. They feel that younger people feel that they still have an opportunity to “turn their lives around” and pursue a more profitable and socially acceptable career.
- To adapt to increased regulations, vessels are taking considerably smaller crews, offering fewer opportunities for younger people to “break in” to the fishery and learn the art of fishing from experienced captains. This is especially true for the groundfish fleet in New Bedford.
- The groundfish fleet in New Bedford is aging, and it is not being replaced by the next generation of fishermen and/or fishing vessels. Meeting participants estimated that the average age of deckhands on otter trawl vessels is 55 years and increasing.

Without any certainty and ability to develop business plans, vessel owners have little to offer young deckhands, who need short-term and long-term incentives to feel comfortable in pursuing fishing as their lifetime occupation. Because of this, there is an increasing concern about whether the fishing community can sustain itself long enough to reap the future benefits of its past sacrifices. The younger generation represents the future of the fishing community, and parents worry about who will benefit from their sacrifices if their children are not carrying on the family tradition of fishing. It is this very tradition that established the large working waterfront, which has evolved into a socially and economically essential part of New Bedford’s landscape.

**Fleet/Industry Downsizing:** Meeting participants worry about the long-term consequences of the loss of vessels and shoreside businesses that have cumulatively resulted in a significant downsizing of the New Bedford fishing industry. To adapt to the regulations, multiple vessel owners have sold some or all of their boats. One industry representative presented a list of fishing vessels that have become inactive (for various reasons) and estimated that New Bedford has lost 95 vessels and 448 crew members since 1994. The most significant social impacts have been experienced by these people who have left the fishery altogether. The fishing community is also feeling the loss of these people; one comment sheet stated that the downsizing of the industry and the lack of new entrants in the fishery have contributed to a loss of identity for New Bedford as a fishing community.

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<sup>12</sup> *Fisheries of the United States, 1999.*

The loss of shoreside support industries creates both short-term problems (unemployment, economic instability) and long-term problems as stocks recover and necessary infrastructure is no longer present to support increases in effort and fresh fish landings. Meeting participants noted the recent losses of one vessel maintenance/repair facility, one ice plant (and another facing possible shut-down in the near future), two fuel companies, and about seven fish dealers in the area. A third-generation grocery supplier indicated that his business has decreased from serving more than 35 commercial vessels to serving about 15 boats. He reduced his number of employees from four (full-time) to just himself. His store, which has been a staple for the fishing industry in New Bedford for more than 75 years, is likely to close its doors well before it celebrates 100 years of service to the industry.

In addition, participants are concerned about the changing face of New Bedford's waterfront. Commercial waterfront property is being replaced by transportation, trade, and recreational and pleasure boat services. For example, Fairhaven Shipyard was reported to have converted to recreational and pleasure boat services, no longer providing tie-up and haul-out services for commercial vessels. As commercial waterfront property is lost to other uses, the future capacity of the fishing community decreases, and future financial opportunities in fisheries become more limited. It is difficult, if not impossible, to restore necessary infrastructure on the commercial waterfront once it disappears.

**Safety Issues:** New Bedford fishing families have become increasingly concerned about the safety of fishermen, fishing vessels, and fishing operations since groundfish and other regulations have increased. To adapt to the regulations, vessels have downsized their crews considerably. Crew sizes are estimated to have decreased by more than 50% on large groundfish vessels in New Bedford. Fatigue levels associated with long trips have consequently increased for remaining crew members who work harder to compensate for fewer hands on deck. Most vessels have eliminated a cook, and one meeting participant added that as a result, crew members are coming home from long trips malnourished and more exhausted than ever. In addition, smaller crews cannot maintain a 24-hour safety watch in the wheelhouse, as all crew members are needed to operate equipment on sets and haulbacks. Meeting participants recalled at least four recent accidents in which vessels ran aground because of reduced crew sizes (crew fatigue and/or autopilot instead of a manned watch).

Meeting participants expressed concern about safety as fishermen try to adapt to increasing regulations by changing their business practices. In addition to reducing their crew size, some vessels try to maximize their economic returns by fishing when prices are higher, which is usually during the winter when weather is less predictable and more extreme. Others are potentially compromising the safety of their vessels by not spending money on regular maintenance and minor vessel repairs. According to those who provided comments, people are taking more chances now with their vessels and their lives than they did in the past.

**Uncertainty:** Uncertainty about the regulations and the future of the groundfish fishery in New Bedford has made both business and family planning difficult, if not impossible. Uncertainty has contributed to the lack of new entrants in the fishery as well as family stresses associated with long-term finances and planning for the future. One fisherman at the meeting stated that he considered having a bigger family, but financial uncertainties associated with the future of

fishing influenced his decision not to have more children. In addition, business planning is difficult as vessels are unsure about DAS allocations (scallop, monkfish, and groundfish), trip limits, and area closures. It has become hard to predict in advance whether fishing operations will provide year-round or seasonal opportunities and whether or not viable alternative fisheries exist to help support year-round operations.

According to meeting participants, regulatory uncertainty led to a recent increase in groundfish effort from vessels in southern ports that fear losing their DAS allocations. Vessels that have not used their DAS in recent years (for many reasons, including stock declines and increased regulations) are becoming more concerned about their future DAS allowances and want to protect their opportunity to fish for groundfish in the future, when the stocks recover. With the recent adoption of a latent effort “control date” in the groundfish fishery, vessels became more uncertain of their future DAS allocation and, in turn, shifted effort back into the groundfish fishery to assure themselves a history fishing for groundfish. This has negatively affected the prices that New Bedford and other fishermen are receiving for their groundfish.

Uncertainty about the magnitude and extent of future regulations is frustrating many people. At the meeting, one large vessel owner asked if and when the increasing groundfish regulations would ever stop. He recalled that in 1994, the DAS reductions in Amendment 5 were considered adequate to rebuild groundfish stocks and that no additional restrictions would be necessary. The industry feels as though there is no end in sight in terms of increasing groundfish regulations.

**Health Insurance:** The lack of affordable health insurance for the fishing industry is a significant social concern in fishing communities like New Bedford. Fishing is one of the most physically demanding, dangerous, and unfortunately, under-insured commercial industries in existence. The lack of health insurance stems, in part, from the employment characteristics of the fishing industry. The majority of fishermen are self-employed or work for very small business enterprises. In the past, fleet owners and vessels with large crews would subsidize health insurance for crew members through group health plans. Unions also assisted in providing affordable health care to the industry. Fleet and crew downsizing, along with the disappearance of unions, have left fishing families under-insured at levels well below state or regional averages. Vessel owners are no longer covering the cost of health insurance for their crew members. Adequate family health insurance can cost up to \$900-\$1,000 per month. As fishing families try to adjust their spending and finances to increased regulations and reduced income, health insurance is usually one of the first expenses that is eliminated from the family budget. Many fishermen’s wives have entered the workforce for the sole purpose of providing health care for the family. Although the Fishing Partnership Health Plan has helped many families in New Bedford, the proportion of the fleet that remains uninsured continues to be a significant social problem.

**Price Effects of Regulations:** The social impacts of the groundfish regulations are directly tied to their economic impacts, and the impact of extreme and variable prices for groundfish has been significant. There are several reasons for these price fluctuations, some of which have already been discussed. Meeting participants focused on the influx of Canadian/imported product to replace the currently inconsistent and unreliable volume of domestic fresh fish landings.

Processors must rely on consistent volumes of product and sought alternative sources for product when local fishery restrictions increased. As a result, buyers and processors no longer pay the premium for higher quality fresh fish when large volumes are landed. The fishermen, therefore, are not getting more money for less fish as was predicted when landings decreased. Meeting participants are very concerned about the New England groundfish fleet's loss of dominance in the fresh fish market. Most fear that these markets cannot be recovered and that the regulations have put the New England fishermen at a long-term economic disadvantage.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**DAS Reductions:** The majority of those who provided comments agree that DAS allocations and DAS reductions from Amendments 5 and 7 have had the most negative social impacts on New Bedford's fleet and the fishing community as a whole. Most vessels in New Bedford are limited by the number of days they can fish for not only groundfish, but also monkfish and scallops. Draggers in New Bedford target primarily groundfish (flatfish) and monkfish. Meeting participants feel that vessels from New Bedford have been affected more by the DAS reductions than vessels in other ports because of both the composition of the New Bedford fleet and the location of the port relative to important fishing grounds. Large vessels like those from New Bedford travel offshore (75 miles or more to fish for groundfish) and generally make trips lasting for at least several days. The ½ day or more "steam time" to and from fishing grounds is deducted from every trip that these vessels take. In addition, because their trips last multiple days, these vessels experienced a 50% or more decrease in the number of trips they take in a given year.

One large vessel crew member claimed that Individual DAS allocations have complicated fishing schedules, eliminated predictability, and significantly limited income potential. As a crew member, he has sought employment on other vessels because his primary vessel is tied up at the dock for 50% of the year. A vessel owner commented that the DAS reductions converted year-round businesses that relied on groundfish in New Bedford to seasonal operations and that this has had significant impacts on the fishing families as well as other support businesses in the community. Another vessel owner's wife characterized the social impacts of the DAS reductions as "twice as much husband, half as much pay."

Meeting participants blamed DAS allocations and reductions for "creating two classes" of groundfish fishermen: those with Individual DAS allocations and those with Fleet DAS allocations. The imbalance in allocation has resulted in differing perceptions about which segments of the fleet have been the most impacted by the regulations.

**Georges Bank Closed Areas:** The year-round Georges Bank closed areas affected New Bedford's groundfish fleet, especially the segment of the fleet that targets codfish. The area closures eliminated some of the most important winter fishing grounds for the offshore fleet in New Bedford. To keep their vessels active and competitive in the groundfish fishery, many fishermen sought new fishing areas with which they were far less familiar and experienced. One meeting participant claimed that some captains quit the fishery out of frustration because the Georges Bank closed areas compromised their competitive edge in the fishery.

**Gear Restrictions:** A few vessel owners cited gear restrictions, particularly mesh size increases, as the regulations with the most significant social impacts. From an economic perspective, mesh size increases negatively affect the vast majority of the New Bedford groundfish fleet, as most large groundfish vessels use otter trawls and are required to invest in a new net every time the mesh regulations change. Combined with reduced income from reduced DAS, mesh size changes and the requirement to purchase a new net exacerbate negative social impacts from the groundfish regulations.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Community Support for Fishing Industry:** When asked about the level and extent of support the fishing industry receives from the city of New Bedford, most meeting participants agreed that New Bedford is very supportive of the fishing industry, but that this support has decreased as uncertainty in the fishery continues to increase. Negative publicity and an uncertain future have made the town wary about investing money in the fishery and the future of New Bedford as a fishing community. As a result, commercial dock space is disappearing, and very few upgrades have been made to the remaining piers. The old fish auction house is now a visitor center for tourists.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Fluke Regulations:** One person at the meeting mentioned that because of the state-by-state quotas implemented through summer flounder (fluke) regulations, many vessels have stopped landing in New Bedford and are now landing in ports where higher volumes of fluke can be landed (Virginia ports, for example). The loss of fluke landings to New Bedford is not as critical as the loss of business to the grocery, ice, gear, and other suppliers as these vessels dock elsewhere and purchase supplies for their next trip. Meeting participants equated the impacts to a “trickle down effect,” estimating that \$1 of landings represents \$5 of income for the community.

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Point Judith, Rhode Island**

**Date:** November 9, 2000; 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Narragansett Town Hall

**Meeting Attendance:** approximately 20, including fishermen, fishing industry representatives, recreational fishermen, seafood dealers, service providers (gear, ice, groceries), and other community residents

**Comment Sheets:** A total of six comment sheets were received from Point Judith residents, two of whom attended the meeting. Two sheets were submitted electronically. Comments from these sheets have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- Point Judith is a diverse fishing community containing a variety of fishing vessels. It is the largest port in Rhode Island and, on average, accounts for well over 50% of Rhode Island's total landings. Point Judith's location and proximity to fishing grounds allows its fleet to participate in both New England and Mid-Atlantic fisheries.
- Point Judith has a large fleet of trawlers, gillnetters, lobster vessels, and recreational and charter vessels. In general, vessels range from 40-90+ feet in length. The otter trawl fleet represents the largest of the vessels; most otter trawl vessels fish offshore for multiple days and target squid, whiting, fluke, scup, and monkfish in addition to groundfish. Gillnetters tend to be medium-sized vessels, and with the exception of some large offshore lobster vessels, the lobster fleet consists of smaller vessels. According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 184 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Point Judith each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- Diversity and adaptability have been trademarks of the Point Judith fishing fleet. The Point Judith otter trawl fleet has developed the ability to switch from one species to another during seasons, or even during the same trip. This "mixed trawl fishery" has evolved over generations and tries to balance a fluctuating resource base with changing market conditions and with the way of life of those who either participate in or depend on it. Over time, the mixed trawl fleet in Point Judith has managed to sustain itself by providing the community with year-round economic activity and by preserving what they view as part of their cultural heritage.
- Unlike vessels in other New England ports, most of Point Judith's vessels have not evolved to rely on groundfish as their primary source of income. Because of the diversity that mixed trawl fishing has provided, groundfishing has historically been considered a "fallback" for the Point Judith fishing fleet. However, groundfishing is an important fallback, and according to meeting participants, has become more important in recent years as restrictions in other fisheries increase.
- There are a few draggers in Point Judith that concentrate on groundfish for some or all of the year, fishing primarily for flatfish (yellowtail and winter flounder) in the southern New

England area. Other larger draggers from Point Judith fish on Georges Bank seasonally, but generally do not land their groundfish in Point Judith anymore. Most of these boats offload in either New Bedford, Boston, or Gloucester to take advantage of groundfish markets (auctions) and proximity to processors and cutting houses.

- Inshore fisheries and lobster fishing are important components of Rhode Island's fishing history. Inshore fisheries prosecute similar species as offshore fisheries, but inshore vessels are generally much smaller than their offshore counterparts. Lobstering has evolved into one of Rhode Island's most valuable fisheries and serves as a profitable alternative to finfishing for some vessels.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Employment Stability:** The opportunity to maintain a year-round income from fishing and fishing related industries is a significant social concern for residents of the Point Judith fishing community. Meeting participants noted that stability in the fishery decreased prior to the implementation of Amendment 5 in 1994 and has worsened since with increasing restrictions in many fisheries. Relative to groundfish, the decline of the cod resource and the loss of the cod fishery are major factors contributing to the loss of employment stability in the community. One rod and reel supplier reported that his season was shortened by 4-6 weeks when cod stocks declined. His business remains open for only half of the year, making it more difficult for him to find reliable and experienced employees. Regulations in other fisheries also play a role in reducing employment stability in Point Judith. On one comment sheet, a seafood dealer noted that the lack of year-round fishing opportunities has dockside effects and leads to poorer quality employees.

At the meeting, a party/charter vessel owner cited the decline of the cod fishery as a primary reason for some significant shifts in the nature and composition of the Point Judith fleet. As an example, he estimated that there used to be about seven party boat operators in Point Judith; now there are two. Other meeting participants noted the decrease in dayboats, increase in trip boats, and shift of many smaller boats from fishing to lobstering as changes that occurred as cod stocks declined and regulations in other fisheries increased.

**Loss of Infrastructure:** Not only has the overall size of the Point Judith fishing fleet decreased, but shoreside infrastructure also has declined substantially, leaving community residents concerned about the future of the fishing industry in Point Judith. Many dealers, processors, suppliers, cutting houses, and other shoreside services in the community have disappeared, and consequently, the amount of commercial waterfront property in Point Judith is shrinking.

Meeting participants are concerned about being able to support the industry as stocks continue to recover and landings increase. Many of the remaining processors have contracted to obtain product from more consistent sources and no longer rely on fresh fish supplied by the local fleet. Some people cited recent low prices for yellowtail flounder as an example of the indirect effects of the regulations on the fresh fish market. With decreased reliance on fresh fish by the processors, dealers are watching the regulations and pulses in fishing and setting lower prices as increased volumes of fresh fish are landed.

The closure of the Point Judith Fishermen's Cooperative in 1996 eliminated much of the stability, organization, and social cohesion on which the fishing fleet relied. At one time, the Co-op was the best of few options for vessels landing in Point Judith to market and sell their fish. In addition, activity at the Co-op contributed to social networks and provided a sense of community for local fishermen and their crew. Now, without a central organization, the fishing community is somewhat "in flux" as individual operations establish new social networks and alliances with buyers. Many vessels are landing and selling their catch at auction ports (New Bedford, Gloucester, Portland, Boston) instead of bringing their catch home to Point Judith. The Co-op facility currently operates as a private buyer, and the processing facilities that were built as part of the Co-op remain inactive.

**Loss of Flexibility:** Quotas, catch restrictions, and limited access have left the majority of the Point Judith fleet feeling "boxed in" to specific fisheries and "locked out" of others during certain times of the year. Some meeting participants feared the loss of further opportunities to participate in the groundfish fishery because most vessels from Point Judith are fishing for other species and not maintaining their history in the groundfish fishery.

**Safety Issues:** With more fishermen working harder and longer to make ends meet, the safety of fishing operations has become a serious concern. With fewer opportunities available to them, fishermen are taking risks and fishing in poor weather when certain fisheries are open. To adapt to quotas and other catch restrictions, many vessels have decreased the size of their crew, leaving the remaining crew to work harder. In some cases, vessel owner-operators are fishing alone, which can create unsafe conditions on the vessel, especially farther offshore and during times of extreme weather. In addition, uncertainty in the fishery has compromised safety because fishermen are reluctant to invest money maintaining and repairing their vessels unless it is absolutely necessary.

**Health Insurance:** The lack of affordable health insurance is a social concern of Point Judith residents. Currently, many of those employed in fishing and related industries in Point Judith obtain health insurance through the Chamber of Commerce. According to meeting participants, this insurance is scheduled to dissolve in early summer 2001, leaving many fishing families in the area uninsured or underinsured. In addition, some vessel owners are sacrificing both health insurance and vessel insurance to adapt to decreased fishing revenues. Meeting participants cited the general nature of health insurance and the strong economy as factors that exacerbate the problems with obtaining affordable health insurance for the fishing industry.

**Negative Publicity:** While most meeting participants feel that fishermen in Point Judith are generally well-respected by the rest of the community, they are discouraged by negative publicity related to the fishing industry. The terms "overfished" and "overfishing" are influencing the public and generating negative perceptions about commercial fishing and those related to the fishing industry. Government press releases, campaigns by environmental organizations, and lobbying by recreational fishing interests were all cited as contributors to negative public perceptions about commercial fishing.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**Gear Restrictions/Mesh Changes:** According to those who provided comments, changes in the minimum mesh size for groundfish have had significant negative impacts on the Point Judith otter trawl fleet. Many otter trawl fishermen in Point Judith resented the recent mesh increase to 6-inch diamond/6.5-inch square mesh, feeling that it was an unnecessary economic cost that was not supported by adequate scientific information. In addition, as one comment sheet noted, the predicted increase in price for flatfish (winter flounder, yellowtail flounder) resulting from the mesh increase was never realized.<sup>13</sup>

A gear supplier testified that gear restrictions and changes to mesh sizes negatively affect the ability to plan a business and ultimately cost everyone affected by the regulation more money. Obtaining twine from overseas can take six months or more, and the necessary “lead time” is not always factored into new regulations as they are approved and implemented. As a result, both gear supply services and fishermen are left with expensive gear that can not be sold or used.

**Days-at-Sea Reductions**<sup>14</sup>: Days-at-Sea restrictions implemented through Amendments 5 and 7 were cited by one state fisheries manager as having the most significant impact on the mixed trawl fleet in Point Judith. In addition, an owner of an 80-foot trawler submitted a comment sheet which indicated that DAS reductions have been the most difficult regulation for him to adapt to. He said, “we lack about 20 more DAS to be more viable...(only 88 DAS) puts altogether too much pressure on other fisheries.”

**Permit Issues/Limited Access:** Limited access provisions and the “use it or lose it” philosophy have created a fear that the fleet may lose future opportunities in the groundfish fishery. This is especially true in Point Judith where the majority of vessels have shifted from groundfish fishing to other fisheries for various reasons. Many vessels fear that they will lose their ability to participate in the fishery in the future because they are not maintaining their historical level of participation.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Newport, RI:** Meeting participants discussed fishing activity in Newport, RI and agreed that while the Newport fleet is much smaller than the Point Judith fleet, it is currently more dependent on groundfishing. One person stated that the Newport fleet, which consists primarily of smaller, family-owned vessels, has been more negatively affected by the groundfish regulations than the Point Judith fleet. He said that only two fish buyers remain in Newport, and while most of the landings are trucked to Boston, some of the smaller fishing operations have been “caught in the middle” and are left with few opportunities in the fishery. In addition, of three large trap companies that used to be located in Newport (scup, squid), only one marginal operation remains.

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<sup>13</sup> Comments in this paragraph are summarized from the comment sheets.

<sup>14</sup> This issue was not discussed in detail at the meeting.

V. **Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Influx of Vessels from Other Ports:** While the Point Judith fleet has historically been relatively receptive to transient vessels, locals are becoming more concerned about the influx of vessels from other ports, especially as commercial waterfront property and available dock space decrease. The local fleet is feeling the effects of a shrinking shoreside infrastructure and has become more reluctant to share the remaining space with transient vessels. At the same time, the number of transient vessels appears to be increasing, at least during some times of the year. Vessels affected by the rolling closures in the Gulf of Maine come to Point Judith during months when the closures affect their home ports. Longline boats from New Jersey and New York are reported to be fishing from Point Judith for some or all of the year. Because of increased fuel prices and the difference in the cost of fuel between New York and Rhode Island, the Montauk fleet comes to Point Judith for fuel and vessel repairs.

**Management Measures in Other (Mid-Atlantic) Fisheries:** Meeting participants agreed that the fishing industry in Point Judith is more negatively affected by regulations in other fisheries, particularly those managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council, than the regulations in the groundfish fishery. Many large otter trawl vessels and mixed trawl boats in Point Judith rely on squid, mackerel, butterfish, fluke, scup, and seabass for the majority of their fishing income. Most of these fisheries are managed through quotas, and those who provided comments cited the “derby style” of fishing that quotas encourage as having significant negative impacts on the fleet and the community. Derby fishing creates situations in which the entire fleet concentrates on one fishery for a period of time, and the resulting pulses in landings often affect the market negatively and reduce the price for the fish. In addition, the unexpected closure of a fishery when a quota is reached creates problems in terms of business planning and further decrease the flexibility of the fishing fleet.

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Portland, Maine**

- Date:** November 13, 2000; 7-9 p.m.
- Location:** Casco Bay Ferry Terminal
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 35, including fishermen, fishing industry representatives, recreational fishermen, seafood dealers, political representatives, and other community residents
- Comment Sheets:** A total of eleven comment sheets were received, seven from Portland, two from Port Clyde, one from Georgetown, and one from South Bristol. Nine of the sheets were submitted electronically, and one person submitted two sheets. Of the ten people who submitted comment sheets, four attended the meeting. Comments from these sheets have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- Portland is a diverse port city with a variety of commercial industries and enterprises. The city is expanding facilities on the waterfront for freight and cargo services. Transportation and ferry services on the waterfront have increased, and Portland is becoming a more popular port of call for large cruise ships. In addition, business in the city is expanding to meet an increasing need for services catering to tourism. Nevertheless, the city continues to recognize the value of the fishing industry for its identity, history, and diversity.
- The city of Portland has contributed to the community's success as a year-round working waterfront. Portland affirmed its support for the fishing industry when it contributed financial support to develop the Portland Fish Exchange in 1986, developed waterfront zoning ordinances in the late 1980s, and secured employment for a fishing industry representative in 1999.
- Portland's groundfish fleet consists primarily of large and medium-sized otter trawl vessels and smaller gillnet vessels. The otter trawl fleet ranges from about 45-100 feet and generally fishes on multiple-day trips. Most gillnet vessels are less than 45 feet in length and fish in the "trip" category on multiple day trips (2-3 days). While many of Portland's groundfish vessels are still owner-operated, there has been a shift in recent years back towards "fleets" of 2-4 vessels owned by the same individual, family, or entity.
- According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 166 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Portland each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- For the most part, Maine's groundfish fishery and industry has concentrated in Portland. Historically, other ports like Rockland, Boothbay Harbor, and Stonington saw considerable amounts of seasonal and year-round groundfish activity. Today, the majority of activity occurs in and around Portland (including nearby ports like Yarmouth and Cape Elizabeth). The concentration of the groundfish fishery around Portland is due, in part, to stock declines,

the loss of shoreside infrastructure and fishing related services in smaller communities, and the advent of the Portland Fish Exchange.

- Portland’s groundfish fleet has evolved to be more dependent on groundfish than it was historically. Cod, plaice (dabs), witch flounder (gray sole), and hake are currently the most important groundfish species to Portland’s fleet. Haddock is becoming increasingly important again, as it was in the past (prior to landings restrictions). Historically, significant amounts of pollock and redfish also were landed in Portland. Other important species include monkfish, shrimp (seasonally), herring, and whiting (seasonally).
- Portland was the first city on the east coast to develop a display auction for the sale of fresh fish. The Portland Fish Exchange (PFE) was founded in 1986 by a coalition of vessel owners, processors, and Portland’s Economic Development Authority. The PFE is an integral part Portland’s working waterfront and services customers worldwide. The facility offers berthing piers, refrigerated cooler space, an auction room, and numerous shipping docks. Approximately 300 commercial fishing vessels are serviced by the PFE, and landings of 20 – 30 million pounds of fish and seafood products are received at the PFE annually.<sup>15</sup>

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Safety Issues:** The safety of fishing vessels and fishing operations is an important social issue to the Portland fishing community, which suffered the loss of five fishermen during 2000. One fisheries representative reported that each fisherman’s life is estimated to be worth \$1,600,000 to the community, resulting in more than \$8,000,000 of lives lost during 2000.<sup>16</sup> Meeting participants testified that there has been a tremendous social impact in their community from the recent loss of lives at sea.

According to the meeting participants, safety can be compromised as the fishing fleet tries to maximize their DAS by fishing when/where they wouldn’t normally fish, oftentimes during more adverse weather conditions. To capitalize on times when prices are traditionally higher, boats in Portland, especially the larger vessels, are using the majority of their DAS during the winter. Since their groundfish opportunities are limited, vessels are more inclined to continue their trip rather than compromise returns from the trip and lose the steam time home from their DAS clock. As one fisherman’s wife stated, “big boat wives are just as concerned about safety as small boat wives.”

**Polarization of Fishing Industry :** Groundfish regulations have divided the fishing industry and increased tensions among user groups. This has had significant social impacts in the fishing communities. As examples, meeting participants cited tensions between “big boats” and “small boats,” Fleet DAS boats and Individual DAS boats, and recreational fishermen and commercial fishermen.

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<sup>15</sup> Portland Fish Exchange website, [www.portlandfishexchange.com](http://www.portlandfishexchange.com)

<sup>16</sup> This estimate was provided to this individual by the US Coast Guard from the Department of Transportation as an estimate of the value of a 35-year old fisherman, including his life earnings and a multiplier for economic impacts on the community.

Two vessel owners testified that their crew members feel as though they must defend themselves because they work on large vessels (<60 feet), which have been less affected by recent groundfish area closures than smaller vessels. However, owners of large vessels feel that they were more significantly impacted by DAS reductions (most large groundfish vessels in Portland have Individual DAS), and now they are being demonized by other fishermen because they can fish during times when smaller vessels may not have the same opportunities. One co-owner of a vessel said that the regulations have pitted fishing communities against each other, noting that “I am the enemy today because I have days-at-sea and I fish for groundfish.” Another large vessel owner said that large vessel owners, in the eyes of the rest of the fishing industry, “went from crazy to evil.”

**Loss of Flexibility:** Some meeting participants discussed the loss of flexibility resulting from the groundfish regulations. They reported that historically, groundfishing used to be a fishery that the Portland fleet would use to “fill in” seasonally and/or with fluctuations in other fisheries. Ironically, groundfish regulations have limited some of these other fishing opportunities and made much of the fleet almost entirely dependent on groundfish (for example, groundfish regulations limit the duration and extent of the shrimp and whiting fisheries). One large vessel owner said that once you lose the parts of the year that you used to fill in with groundfishing, there isn’t much left to do except go groundfishing.

Today, it can require significant financial resources to switch between fisheries. With increasing regulations and uncertainty about the future, fishermen are more reluctant to invest in alternative fisheries. In addition, many fear that switching to other fisheries will result in the loss of history in their primary/traditional fishery (those who switched from groundfishing with the decline of the stocks feel that this worked against them when groundfish DAS were allocated). As a result, the fleet has adapted by relying less on the flexibility to switch between fisheries as they did historically, and more on maximizing their limited opportunities in the groundfish fishery.

**Fleet Downsizing and Loss of Shore side Infrastructure:** Many people expressed concern for the downsizing of the fishing fleet and particularly the loss of shoreside support businesses and infrastructure that has occurred over the past decade. Maine’s groundfish fishery has become concentrated in Portland. Many smaller fishing communities have lost all of their groundfish vessels, cutting houses, processing plants, ice plants, other support services, and all of the related employment on which their residents depended. One meeting participant recalled the loss of three fish plants in Boothbay, three in Bristol, one in Sebasco, one in Georgetown, and one in Cundy’s Harbor. This concerns the communities about the future as stocks continue to recover and support increased catches. As shoreside support services are lost, so is future labor, which is becoming increasingly harder to attract to the fishing industry in today’s economy.

One fishermen from Port Clyde<sup>17</sup> said that his port lost almost all of its infrastructure and began to depend on Rockland. Port Clyde is now landing more groundfish than Rockland, and Rockland’s wharves have become space for yachts and pleasure boats. He estimated that it now costs him an additional \$0.10/pound to transport his fish to the Portland Fish Exchange. He also

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<sup>17</sup> Port Clyde is located on Maine’s mid-coast, closer to Rockland. However, residents from Port Clyde attended the meeting in Portland, so their comments and the comment sheets from Port Clyde have been incorporated into this summary.

mentioned that although a few ports have been able to hold onto a commercial wharf (Cundy's Harbor), all of the groundfish end up on the auction floor at the Portland Fish Exchange. Residents in these communities fear the loss of commercial infrastructure, which they view as irreversible.

Much of the loss of shoreside infrastructure is a result of fleet downsizing and the loss of many vessels from the groundfish fishery. Participants at the meeting cited the loss of smaller groundfish vessels in ports like Boothbay Harbor, Rockland, and Bristol. While some of these boats entered the lobster fishery, many families left fishing altogether. One fisherman's wife noted that the perspective of the people who have experienced the most significant social impacts is going to be difficult to characterize because most of them are not part of the fishing industry anymore.

**New Entrants/Labor and Crew Problems:** Vessel owners are finding it increasingly difficult to employ reliable and experienced crew members on a year-round basis. Eighty eight groundfish days-at-sea alone does not offer enough opportunity to maintain an adequate crew on a large dragger, and some of these boats have few alternatives (some fish for shrimp and/or whiting seasonally). This affects the safety of fishing operations as vessels are taking less crew to compensate for less fishing opportunity; some operators of smaller vessels are even fishing alone for part or all of the year. One fisherman commented that he and his brother, both vessel owners and operators, were experiencing difficulty finding crew, so they took turns crewing on each other's vessels, fished twice as much, and made half as much money.

In addition to difficulty finding and keeping experienced crew, the industry is quickly losing its shoreside labor pool due to a healthy economy and more attractive alternative employment opportunities. As the fleet and industry have downsized, so have shoreside support services; meeting participants reported the loss of cutting houses, processing plants, and ice houses throughout Maine's coastal communities. This has eliminated job opportunities and caused qualified laborers who rely on year-round employment to seek jobs elsewhere. Community residents are concerned about the long-term impacts of this loss, especially as stocks continue to recover. For example, as catches of some groundfish have increased recently, it has become increasingly difficult for the Portland Fish Exchange to handle these volumes of fish because they cannot keep enough employees on a year-round basis. Someone noted that "it used to be you couldn't get the fish there fast enough; now, the PFE is only unloading on 1-2 wharves out of six that are available because they don't have enough employees to use them all." Most meeting participants fear that losses in the industry's labor pool will not be reversed in the future, given the healthy economy and the benefits and stability that many shoreside labor industries are able to offer their employees.

Uncertainty about the future, increasing regulations, and negative publicity have been significant contributors to a lack of new entrants in the fishery and a loss of the next generation of fishermen. Participants at the meeting reported that many fishermen do not want their children to carry on the family tradition of fishing because the future is so uncertain, and fishermen are not as proud of their way of life anymore. Negative publicity about overfishing is creating a bad public perception; it's no longer "politically correct" to be a commercial fisherman. Some

publicity about recent increased groundfish landings in Maine also has created backlash from other fishing communities.

**Retirement Concerns:** Meeting participants feel that the negative social impacts of the groundfish (and other) regulations will be experienced by fishing communities for many years to come. They cited the inability to plan for the future and for retirement as a factor contributing to long-term (more than 30 years) social impacts in these communities. In the past, fishermen were able to sell their vessels and retire from the fishery with enough money to plan for their families' future. Reduced income and uncertainty have discouraged many fishermen from upgrading, maintaining, and repairing their vessels, and very few new groundfish boats are being constructed in Portland. As the fleet ages, the value of older vessels decreases, and fishermen are finding it more difficult to sell their boats for enough money to retire comfortably from fishing. In addition, limited access in some fisheries has decreased the number of permits that some of these vessels possess; today, boats are not worth anything without fishing permits. One meeting participant said that owners of smaller vessels are worried about their future and their retirement because currently, reduced incomes are not allowing them to put any money away for the future. They fear that they will have no means of providing for themselves or their families when they retire.

**Recreational Fishery Impacts:** A recreational fisherman from Georgetown discussed some of the social impacts on the recreational sector. He focused on the recreational sector's "loss of expectations" to catch fish with the decline of inshore stocks of groundfish. On his comment sheet he noted, "I think it's very important for the Council to recognize that the inshore stocks of groundfish are almost nonexistent here in Maine. That excludes most recreational fishermen from participation...we will not be satisfied with the restoration of the 19-inch groundfish way offshore where most of us can't get at them. We want to see stocks restored to historic ranges and to see a normal size distribution similar to what would occur in an unfished population. In other words, (we want to see) the opportunity to catch big fish as well as having a reasonable expectation to even catch fish at all."

**Negative Publicity:** Many people expressed concern about the amount of negative publicity the commercial fishing industry receives. Some comment sheets even cited it as the most significant social impact of the regulations. As discussed above, this is contributing to a loss of morale, and fishermen no longer take pride in their way of life as they used to. They feel defensive and oftentimes ashamed about their livelihood as public perceptions about commercial fishermen and their destructive impact on the environment are fueled by the press, the government, and environmental organizations.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**DAS Reductions:** Reductions in Days-at-Sea from Amendments 5 and 7 have affected the Portland groundfish fleet most significantly, especially larger vessels with Individual DAS permits. DAS restrictions were cited for compromising safety, precluding year-round fishing opportunities, and creating problems keeping crew. One vessel owner remarked that DAS restrictions affected every sector of the Portland fleet: the big boats lost 50% or more of their

groundfish opportunities, and gillnetters and smaller vessels were left with few alternatives except for the hope of a decent shrimp season for smaller draggers. Larger boats are trying to maximize returns from their DAS by fishing most or all of their DAS in the winter when prices are better. This increases concerns about safety, as previously discussed.

In addition, some feel that DAS allocations were unfair and created tensions and inequities between sectors involved in the fishery. Several fishermen felt that DAS had the most significant negative social impacts because the same DAS were not allocated to all vessels. Those who switched from groundfish to other fisheries with the decline of the groundfish stocks feel that they were punished by not receiving their true historical allocation of DAS. One fisherman's wife from Port Clyde noted, "our captains had enough foresight to see the stress the stocks were under, and as a result, they spread their fishing effort over several fisheries. We have been penalized by the DAS allocation we received because we didn't concentrate all our efforts on groundfish stocks. We received fewer days than boats that didn't try to preserve the stocks by diverting their efforts into alternative fisheries." These inequities were cited as a major contributing factor to polarizing the industry and creating conflicts between user groups and fishing communities.

**Low Gulf of Maine Cod Trip Limits**<sup>18</sup>: Some people who submitted comments indicated that regulatory discards of Gulf of Maine cod as a result of the low trip limits have had the most significant negative social impacts. Throwing marketable and oftentimes dead fish overboard angers and depresses fishermen. One groundfish gillnetter estimated that he threw over 54,000 pounds of cod last year. He also felt that enforcement of the trip limit is inadequate and that as a result, honest fishermen are suffering.

**Gulf of Maine Closed Areas and Rolling Closures**: The nature of the seasonal and year-round closures in the Gulf of Maine were cited as a major factor contributing to further polarization of the industry and tensions between user groups, namely between commercial and recreational interests. Meeting participants reported that access to groundfish closed areas by recreational vessels "created the divide between commercial and recreational interests in Maine."

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

- **Loss of Blessing of the Fleet:** A few meeting participants mentioned that the loss of the Portland Blessing of the Fleet ceremony was a direct social impact of the groundfish regulations (this ceremony was eliminated a few years ago).
- A resident described Port Clyde as a "small, close-knit fishing community with draggers and lobstermen working side by side."
- A resident described Georgetown as "an island fishing community which has been transformed from a multispecies and gear fishery to essentially a lobster fishing community only."

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<sup>18</sup> This issue was not discussed in detail at the meeting. This summary of comments comes from the comment sheets.

- A fisherman from Port Clyde said that it is becoming increasingly difficult to afford to live in his community. Waterfront property is being purchased by out-of-towners, and taxes are increasing for the year-round locals.

V. **Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Data Quality**<sup>19</sup>: Some of those who commented expressed frustration with the quality, quantity, and timing of scientific data used to make fisheries management decisions. Most feel that stock assessment data should be more timely and should be analyzed and available to everyone earlier in the process. A fisherman from Port Clyde commented that “fisheries data should be analyzed in a much faster fashion. Data that is two or more years old does not accurately reflect the health of the fish stocks, and fishing families suffer as a result.”

In addition, those who commented feel that the fisheries management process should fully consider the input and experience of fishermen rather than dismiss their input as “anecdotal.” One fisherman’s wife from Port Clyde commented that “it is very frustrating to attend meetings where your thoughts and concerns are ignored, where you are treated like the village idiot when you tell the scientists and panel members what you see on the water, because they are working with old data, and in this case, data rules regardless of whether it’s outdated.”

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<sup>19</sup> This was discussed briefly at the meeting, but most of this discussion is summarized from the comment sheets.

## Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Riverhead, New York

- Date:** November 21, 2000; 7-9 p.m.
- Location:** Ramada Inn, Riverhead
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 25, including fishermen, fishing family members, fishing industry representatives, seafood dealers, and residents from Montauk, Greenport, and Shinnecock (Hampton Bays)
- Comment Sheets:** One social impact comment sheet was received electronically from a resident of Montauk who did not attend the social impact meeting. In addition, a Marine Extension Agent from Cornell Cooperative Extension provided some additional written comments, which have been incorporated into the following summary.

### I. Background Information<sup>20</sup>

- New York is centered ecologically and institutionally between the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions, and most fisheries in the area are therefore quite diverse and seasonal. In addition to groundfish, vessels from New York target squid, whiting, red hake, summer flounder (fluke), tuna, scup, tilefish, herring and mackerel, sea bass, and butterfish, among other species. Many of the trawlers from New York participate in the southern New England “mixed trawl fishery.” The groundfish industry in New York is concentrated on eastern Long Island (Montauk, Greenport, Shinnecock/Hampton Bays) and targets primarily flatfish (winter and yellowtail flounder).
- According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 185 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Montauk, Greenport, and Shinnecock *collectively* each fishing year from 1995-1999.
- Montauk is the largest and perhaps the most diverse fishing port in New York, situated at the tip of the southern fork of Long Island. Its fleet consists primarily of owner-operator otter trawl and longline vessels. Generally, vessels range from 40-95 feet. Longline vessels target tilefish and swordfish (not groundfish). Larger vessels fish multiple-day trips offshore for a mix of species. Smaller vessels fish shorter trips (less than 24 hours) and fish closer to shore; some vessels fish exclusively in state waters. The mix of target species changes seasonally, and Montauk vessels generally take advantage of the diversity and flexibility this offers. There is also a fleet of small lobster and “pinhook” (jig) vessels (<45 feet) and many party/charter operations in Montauk. Very few, if any, vessels fish with gillnets in Montauk. The groundfish fishery is dominated by otter trawl vessels fishing for flatfish (winter and yellowtail flounder). In addition, Montauk is the leading tilefish port in the U.S., although this fishery has declined in recent years, as many boats are now landing tilefish in Rhode Island.

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<sup>20</sup> Some of this section is summarized from McCay, Bonnie J. and Marie Cieri. 2000. *Fishing Ports of the Mid-Atlantic*. Report to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, December 1993, updated April 2000.

- Greenport is an historic fishing community located towards the tip of the north fork of Long Island. It is a deep water port dominated by owner-operated, medium-sized otter trawl vessels. A few smaller vessels gillnet and fish with pound nets, and some vessels from other ports use Greenport's docks. There are also a few party/charter boat operations in Greenport. There are two municipal docks in Greenport that are used by commercial vessels. In general, residents of Greenport feel that their town supports the fishing industry and recognizes the importance of maintaining a working waterfront.
- Shinnecock/Hampton Bays is second only to Montauk in terms of commercial fishing activity in New York. Otter trawl vessels represent the majority of the fleet in Shinnecock, along with a few gillnet and longline vessels. Otter trawlers focus primarily on squid, whiting, and mixed trawl species. These vessels also seasonally target yellowtail and winter flounder. Gillnetters land more monkfish, bluefish, and skates. Most vessels in Shinnecock are medium-sized (50-65 feet), although the otter trawl fleet ranges from 45-90 feet. A couple of the larger vessels concentrate on tilefish and swordfish.
- The Shinnecock Fishermen's Co-operative maintains a packing facility for its 16 owner-operator members. There are ten slips at the Co-op, all used by members. Most of the fish from the Co-op is sold to Fulton Fish Market. The Co-op purchases fuel, ice, and other supplies in bulk for its members to keep costs down.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Loss of Morale:** Regulatory discards from low trip limits and/or quotas have contributed to a loss of morale among members of the fishing industry on Long Island. Throwing marketable and oftentimes dead fish overboard angers and depresses fishermen, and the effects of this are experienced throughout families and communities. One fish dealer described discarding as “numbing and depressing” for fishermen. He sees fishermen as stewards of the resource who hate wasting the resource and resent being forced to do it. He added that “throwing fish overboard doesn't benefit anyone on a social level.” Another fisherman described reporting discards (in logbooks) as a “double-edged sword.” Fishermen fear that the information they report in their logbooks will eventually be used against them.

Meeting participants feel that the loss of morale and pride in work that results from regulatory discarding has affected the sense of community and cohesion in their fishing communities. One person noted that no one gets together anymore to tell fish tales or talk about the fun and excitement of fishing; no one even talks about “the good ole' days.” Today, most of the talk is about the regulations, stress, and uncertainty about the future. Fishermen are no longer able to enjoy their way of life.

**Loss of Flexibility:** Increased regulations in many fisheries have limited the flexibility of the Long Island fishing fleet and made it more difficult to make a year-round income from fishing. Long Island vessels have depended on the diversity and flexibility of switching target species (squid, whiting, scup, and others including groundfish) as stocks fluctuate, the mix of species in an area changes, and/or market conditions change. Seasonal quotas and other management measures have decreased fishing opportunities and limited the flexibility of this fleet, particularly

smaller vessels. One crew member at the meeting emphasized the need to diversify the fleet and provide vessels with different fishing opportunities to distribute effort more evenly rather than force the fleet to “put all of their eggs in one basket.” The impacts of the loss of flexibility are discussed in more detail below (see Section III).

**Crew Problems/Loss of New Entrants in Fishery:** Meeting participants are concerned about the lack of new entrants in the fishing industry and the general lack of interest of the younger generation to pursue fishing as a way of life. To adapt to decreased catches, vessels have decreased the average size of their crew, and some operators of smaller vessels are fishing alone for some or all of the year. In addition to the safety concerns this raises, it decreases opportunities for crew members and increases the difficulty for new entrants to “break in” to the fishery. Negative publicity and public perceptions about the fishing industry also were cited as contributing factors to the loss of the younger generation of fishermen.

Vessel owners at the meeting reported that finding and keeping experienced crew members on a year-round basis is becoming increasingly difficult. This is due to both decreased fishing opportunities (and income) and the healthy state of the overall economy. Commercial fishing has become a less appealing industry for young people to enter; it is physically and mentally demanding, returns are diminishing, and the future is too uncertain. The industry is finding it difficult to compete with technical and shoreside labor industries that can offer consistent income and benefit packages, and the labor pool for the fishing industry is rapidly shrinking.

A Marine Extension Agent from Cornell Cooperative Extension added the following written comments:

*It used to be that commercial fishing attracted new young participants because fishing provided employment opportunities for young less-educated people to earn enough money to support a family and a good lifestyle in an area that has a very high cost of living. It also provided an incentive in that a crewman knew he could work hard, save some money and eventually buy his own boat. This is no longer the case as economic returns from fishing have decreased for both crew members and vessel owners. This decrease in income has been driven by:*

- *A reduction in the amount of fish harvested, and*
- *The failure of the economic corollary of reduced catches to materialize. Fishermen were told that they would catch less and make as much or more than previously because market price would respond to reduced supply. However, prices for most species have actually fallen over the past few years and fishermen are faced with reduced catches and reduced price per pound. We operate in a world marketplace now, and if wholesalers cannot depend on a constant supply of a particular species, they will find a replacement somewhere else, and the market demand for the original species thus diminishes along with its price per pound.*

**Loss of Faith/Trust in Government**: Meeting participants reported that the fishing industry, in general, has lost faith and confidence in the government and the fisheries management process. They cited several examples:

- First, the industry has little confidence in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center’s research trawl survey as one of the primary indicators of stock abundance. They feel strongly that the collective experience of fishermen should be fully incorporated into the data collection process and that fishermen’s information should no longer be dismissed as “anecdotal.” Fishermen are continually frustrated by knowing that the information assessment scientists are using lags behind what they are seeing in real-time on a daily basis.
- Second, a few meeting participants feel that fishermen are sometimes treated like criminals by enforcement agents and the police. They briefly described a few examples of what they considered unfair treatment of the fishing industry by Coast Guard boarding officers and local police officers (Montauk fishermen were recently blamed for a conflict with local police officers). These situations have been coupled with a significant increase in the presence of enforcement agents in the area (Coast Guard, NMFS Enforcement, and state environmental officers).
- Third, meeting participants discussed the development of the Mid-Atlantic Council’s scup Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs). Several GRA alternatives were drafted, and the industry collaborated with managers to develop what was ultimately submitted to NMFS as the “preferred alternative.” NMFS selected and implemented a non-preferred alternative, which the industry perceived to have more significant impacts on other important fisheries including whiting and squid, two fisheries that have become the mainstay of the Long Island trawl fleet. The industry thought that their representatives worked long and hard with managers to develop a GRA format that reached management goals to reduce scup discards while allowing fishermen to continue to harvest whiting and squid in traditional areas. This process was disappointing and frustrating for the fishing industry and ultimately left them feeling more dislocated from the process than ever.

Meeting participants indicated that people feel as though they are never listened to. Many viewed these social impact meetings as more governmental “lip service” and thought that their input wouldn’t be seriously considered.

**Increased Tensions Between User Groups**: Regulations in some fisheries have increased tensions between user groups, particularly commercial and recreational fishermen. The structure of the quota program in some fisheries (fluke and scup, for example) allows overages in the recreational fishery to be deducted from the overall quota for the next fishing year, thereby reducing the commercial quota. This angers commercial fishermen and can further divide a fishing community. In addition, the quota structure can, in some cases, allow for recreational fishermen to land more fish than commercial fishermen. One fisherman’s wife said that sometimes her neighbor can bring home more fish for recreation than her husband can to provide an income for their family.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

Meeting participants agreed that restrictions in other fisheries (squid, scup, fluke, sea bass, whiting) have impacted these communities more than groundfish regulations. In response to declines in groundfish stocks as well as Amendments 5 and 7, the Long Island fleet further diversified and increased effort in squid, whiting, and other small mesh, mixed trawl fisheries. Many of these fisheries (with the exception of whiting) are currently managed through seasonal quotas, which are, from their perspective, having the most significant negative social impacts. Low quotas can create derbies where the fleet races to catch the fish before the quota is met and the fishery closes. This can compromise the safety of fishing operations if vessels fish in adverse or extreme weather. One fisherman said that quotas cause him to fish when he shouldn't because a closure is looking him in the face. In addition, once the quota is reached, fishermen are forced to discard any fish they may catch incidentally in other fisheries. Fishermen cited the regulatory discards of large-sized, valuable fluke and scup that occur when they fish for flounders with 6-inch mesh once the scup and fluke quotas have been reached.

In addition, the Scup GRAs were cited for precluding fishing opportunities and limiting the flexibility of the fishing fleet, especially smaller vessels. According to the meeting participants, regulations in small mesh fisheries are forcing more vessels into the groundfish fishery. Fishing for flounder (primarily yellowtail and winter flounder) has become one of the only opportunities for the Long Island otter trawl fleet during certain times of the year. Some people claimed that the Groundfish DAS program has provided some stability and flexibility because it allows fishermen to plan their fishing year better and spread out their groundfish effort, and it does not create a derby-style fishery.

Meeting participants speculated that groundfish effort from vessels on Long Island has increased in recent years, primarily as a result of restrictions in other fisheries. Some larger draggers that historically fished in small mesh fisheries have temporarily re-located to ports like New Bedford and Point Judith to fish for groundfish, primarily flatfish. Meeting participants reported that this has negatively impacted fishing families who are separated for long periods of time. In addition, the loss of landings from these vessels are diminishing economic activity and impacting the shoreside support services in the Long Island fishing communities.

A Marine Extension Agent from Cornell Cooperative Extension discussed the interconnected nature of Long Island's primary fisheries, which are managed by both the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils as well as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Regulations in one fishery undoubtedly impact other local fisheries. He discussed the impacts of Amendments 5 and 7 as an example. Amendments 5 and 7 were essentially a "turning point" for the Long Island trawl fleet, shifting them primarily to the squid and whiting fisheries as domestic and export markets expanded. In addition, the relative size of the trawl fleet increased as Long Island fishermen purchased vessels from New England and constructed some new boats. Now, restrictions in the squid, scup, and fluke fisheries are shifting these boats back to the groundfish fishery for at least some of the year. More fishermen are using DAS as a fallback as quotas are reached and other fisheries close.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Community Support:** In general, meeting participants feel that their communities have responded more to the demand for recreational and tourist development than the need to maintain the viability of their local commercial fishing fleets. The fishing industry has experienced difficulty maintaining and repairing commercial docks and dredging the harbor for safe navigation. In addition, dock space for commercial vessels has decreased, and the dock rate has apparently doubled.

**Loss of Commercial Waterfront Property/Increased Cost of Living:** Meeting participants are concerned about the long-term impacts of the loss of commercial waterfront property as the fishing industry downsizes. Montauk has experienced the loss of some commercial docks, including one of the deepwater docks, to pleasure boats and marinas (two commercial docks remain that support 10-20 working boats).

As tourism and development increase on Long Island, so does the value of coastal residential property. Many residents of fishing communities are finding it more difficult than ever to afford to live in their own communities. At the meeting, one fishermen submitted the Real Estate section of a local newspaper to illustrate the high cost of local property.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Fuel Prices:** Increased fuel prices have exacerbated the negative social impacts of the fishing regulations and reduced returns from fishing. Fuel prices for boats on Long Island have more than doubled in the past year, which significantly increases trip costs.

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Boston, Massachusetts**

- Date:** December 4, 2000; 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (impromptu)
- Location:** Boston Fish Exchange
- Meeting Attendance:** approximately 20, including vessel owners and operators, fishing industry representatives, seafood dealers and processors, the town auctioneer, and representatives of fishing-related businesses along Fisherman’s Wharf
- Comment Sheets:** Four social impact comment sheets were received from Boston residents, all of whom attended the meeting. One sheet was submitted electronically. Comments from these sheets have been incorporated into the following summary.

### **I. Background Information**

- Boston is a large, historic, diverse port city that offers New England residents an array of services for both marine and shoreside industries. It’s size and depth make it a popular port for transportation, shipping, and other marine-related services. In addition, tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in Boston. The waterfront is lined with restaurants and shops, and the harbor is becoming increasingly filled with recreational/pleasure boats and whale-watching/sight-seeing businesses.
- Boston’s accessibility for large vessels, transportation services, and proximity to markets allowed it to become the historical center of fishing activity in New England. As such, processing, ice, and other shoreside support services developed to serve both transient and home-port vessels. Today, most commercial fishing activity in Boston has concentrated on and around the Fish Pier (this includes the Fish Exchange and the remaining shoreside support services).
- The importance of Boston as a center for commercial fishing activity diminished significantly with the industrialization of the city and expansion into new and larger industries. Today, other economic activity and development in Boston mask the importance of the fishing industry to those who still fish there and view Boston as their home port.
- The Boston commercial fishing fleet consists of large offshore draggers that fish primarily for groundfish. The majority of vessels possess Individual DAS permits and fish multiple-day trips for groundfish. Meeting participants estimate that there are currently about 15 vessels landing fish in Boston on a year-round basis. All of these vessels are draggers (otter trawl vessels), and most are between 80-90 feet in length. There are about three medium-sized vessels fishing out of Boston (~60 feet). These boats, according to the meeting participants, are “single-permit boats” – that is, they fish almost exclusively for groundfish and possess very few, if any, active permits for other fisheries.
- According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 66 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Boston each fishing year from 1995-1999.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Employment Stability:** Employment stability was listed as the most important social impact issue on all of the comment sheets received from Boston residents. Comments referenced the loss of work and employment continuity due to groundfish restrictions. Shoreside support businesses are having difficulty maintaining their businesses and covering their operating costs on a year-round basis. As a result, employment and employment stability in industry-related services are suffering.

The core of Boston's fishing fleet has diminished significantly; in addition, fewer transient vessels are landing in Boston and taking advantage of the convenient services the pier has to offer (proximity to transportation, processing facilities, ice, etc.). Landings are down, and overall activity in the port has decreased. Meeting participants estimated that the number of vessels landing at the Boston Fish Pier fell from more than 30 in 1995 to less than 12 in the past year. Most of the remaining vessels maximize their DAS usage in the winter to capitalize on better prices and then tie-up for several months at a time. This adaptation has exacerbated financial and employment problems for shoreside support services.

An ice supplier reported that his annual business has decreased by more than 40%. He lost six full-time employees in the past two years. He is seeking alternative ice markets but lacks the necessary facilities to secure contracts. Representatives from the Fish Exchange added that they are no longer able to afford a full-time employee because they cannot consistently offer 40 hours/week. An owner of several vessel support services on the Fish Pier stated, "We need to do all we can so that our employees have health and workman's comp. insurance. As you know, insurance is very expensive. We need to keep everyone working...when the boats do come back, we won't have anyone to work." Meeting participants also indicated that more experienced laborers are seeking employment in ports that can provide them with a year-round income. Skilled labor is becoming increasingly difficult to find in Boston.

**Industry Downsizing/Loss of Infrastructure:** The Boston fishing industry is very concerned about the long-term impacts of the loss of shoreside support services and infrastructure on the fishing communities (discussed above in more detail). Meeting participants estimate that the fishing community has lost hundreds of shoreside jobs, which has had a "trickle down effect" on the entire fishing community.

**Loss of Sense of Community:** Downsizing of the industry and the loss of shoreside infrastructure has left the Boston fishing community rather fragmented and without a true "sense of community." Independent from the overall development and expansion that has occurred in Boston, the fishing community has lost some of its social networks and connections. One broker at the Boston Fish Pier remarked that "the fishing industry as a social gathering of boat owners and fishermen is now nonexistent, where it once was common for two, three, or more owners and fishermen to get together each morning to discuss landings and trips and to share information regarding machinery, netting, etc....no more now!"

**Safety Issues:** Meeting participants are concerned about the impacts of the regulations on the safety of fishing operations. They cited two examples. First, DAS reductions have limited fishing opportunities for the Boston offshore dragger fleet. To maximize returns on remaining opportunities in the groundfish fishery, most boats are fishing the majority of their DAS during the winter, when prices are generally better. In some cases, this causes vessels to fish in more dangerous weather conditions. Safety on these vessels is further compromised from the reduction in the size of crew on these boats. Second, state-issued coastal access permits (to fish in state waters) are limited to vessels less than 72 feet in length. Much of the Boston fleet consists of larger vessels that were not granted coastal access permits and were therefore restricted to fishing farther offshore, which is inherently more dangerous than fishing closer to shore.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**DAS Restrictions:** DAS reductions from Amendments 5 and 7 have impacted the Boston fleet most significantly. The larger boats from Boston opted for Individual DAS allocations and were using most or all of their DAS on multi-day groundfish trips. Since Amendment 5, these boats have experienced a 50% decrease in DAS and opportunities to fish for groundfish. These reductions have been difficult for the Boston fleet and the dependent support services in the community to adapt to because the fleet is not highly diversified and historically depended primarily on groundfish. DAS reductions have precluded year-round fishing opportunities; now, most vessels from Boston fish most or all of their DAS during the winter and tie-up their vessels for 3-5 months. This has negative impacts on the economy of the shoreside support services that depend on year-round income to cover the costs of maintaining their businesses.

Some Boston fishermen view DAS allocations as unfair because those who depend most on the fishery were impacted the greatest, while others who never depended on the fishery were allowed to potentially increase their effort eighty-eight fold (88 Fleet DAS were allocated to any vessel that could prove one pound of groundfish landings). Fishermen in Boston feel that they have sacrificed more than their share to rebuild the resource and are concerned about their future ability to realize the benefits of their sacrifices. One large vessel owner claims that “single permit vessels” (dependent almost entirely on the groundfish fishery) like those in Boston are not provided equal protection under the law.

In addition, offshore draggers are frustrated by the inequities they perceive in the way that groundfish DAS are counted. The average 6-8 hour one-way trip to offshore fishing grounds is deducted from their DAS clock even though their nets are not fishing at all during this time. In contrast, gillnet “soak time” (the time the nets spend in the water) is not deducted from the DAS clock.

**Gear Stowage Requirements/Area Closures:** Meeting participants discussed some of the impacts of the western Gulf of Maine area closure and gear stowage requirements for vessels transiting closed areas. They feel that burdens associated with gear stowage requirements have discouraged some vessels from transiting the closed areas to land their fish in Boston. One

comment sheet noted that “the regulation governing the removal of the codend and covering the net reel impacts Boston only, keeping boats formerly landing here from coming back.”

- Some fishermen in Boston use Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) on their vessels to track their location and DAS usage. They are frustrated that they must keep the tracking system operational year-round, even during the months when their vessels are tied-up. There is a significant economic cost to running a generator to keep their VMS functional during the inactive months they spend at the dock.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Relocation of the Boston Fish Pier:** The fishing industry and its support services in Boston are scheduled to relocate to a different fishing pier in 2004. This is a significant social concern for community residents, and meeting participants expressed that they are more unsure than ever about the future of their shoreside infrastructure. Some are reluctant to make significant investments into future processing and other facilities. Others speculated that the new commercial space will be considerably more expensive.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

- Meeting participants feel that the government, particularly the National Marine Fisheries Service, does a poor job communicating with the fishing industry and that this negatively affects the relationship between the industry and managers. Much of the fishing industry views the government as working against them and trying to put them out of business.
- Fishermen noted that the increased cost of fuel has worsened the impacts of reduced fishing opportunities by increasing their trip costs.

## Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Scituate, Massachusetts

**Date:** December 4, 2000; 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** VFW, Scituate

**Meeting Attendance:** approximately 20, including vessel owners, operators, and crew, fishing industry representatives, and other community residents

**Comment Sheets:** Four social impact comment sheets were received from Scituate residents, all of whom attended the meeting. One sheet was submitted electronically. Comments from these sheets have been incorporated into the following summary.

### I. Background Information<sup>21</sup>

- Several fishing communities are located on the South Shore of Massachusetts. The groundfish fleet on the South Shore is concentrated primarily in Plymouth, Scituate, and Green Harbor (Marshfield).
- Plymouth is a coastal community in southeastern Massachusetts, approximately 5 miles north of the Cape Cod Canal. It is the seat of Plymouth County, and has the largest area of any town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For most of its existence, Plymouth was an isolated seacoast area where economic fortunes were linked to the sea and shipping. The site of the original 1620 settlement is now a portion of today's Downtown/Harbor District.
- The South Shore's accessibility to the Boston metropolitan area has greatly influenced the growth rates of its communities. Desirability in terms of land prices, tax rates, and residential amenities further influenced community growth. For example, Plymouth's population exploded from 18,606 in 1970 to 45,608 in 1990, an increase of 145% in just 20 years. Also of significance during the period was the development of a healthy industrial and commercial base. The town of Plymouth is committed to controlling its residential growth while welcoming industrial and commercial expansion.
- Scituate is a small seacoast community located equidistant between Boston and Plymouth. In the 375 years since its incorporation, it has evolved from a summer colony to a residential community but has managed to retain some of the flavor of its past. Ocean-related recreational activities make it a very desirable place in which to live and to raise families.
- Scituate's Town Pier accommodates a working fishing fleet and that, coupled with three business areas, represents commercial interests in the town. Scituate also has a strong sense of its history and commemorates its founding in August each year via the celebration of "Heritage Days."
- The Town of Marshfield (Green Harbor) is located in southeastern Massachusetts in Plymouth County. A coastal community 30 miles from Boston, Marshfield has a yearly population of about 21,000 people which grows to about 40,000 in the summer months. The

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<sup>21</sup> Much of this background information was provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development, [www.state.ma.us/dchd](http://www.state.ma.us/dchd).

town's rich history of over 350 years dates back to the pre-revolutionary war era and is best known as the birthplace and home of Daniel Webster.

- Most commercial groundfish vessels are located in Scituate and Plymouth, while Green Harbor contains more recreational and party/charter groundfish vessels. The commercial groundfish fleet consists mostly of small and medium-sized (<60-70 feet) otter trawl and gillnet vessels. Many of these boats fish close to shore on day trips (<24 hours) and in state waters for some or all of the year. According to the dealer weighout database, an average of 93 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in these three ports *collectively* each fishing year from 1995-1999.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Increased Stress/Uncertainty:** Meeting participants emphasized that the commercial fishing industry is a family-based industry; families are greatly involved in the day-to-day operations of the business. In turn, impacts of the regulations are felt not only by the individual fishermen and his crew, but also by spouses, children, and members of the extended family.

Reduced income and opportunity, uncertainty about future income, loss of employment stability, and uncertainty about the future of the fishing community were cited as significant stress factors for fishing families and communities on the South Shore. One fisherman wrote on his comment sheet that the most significant social impact of the regulations has been “the fear of losing everything I’ve worked for all my life...40 years of fishing...and letting my family down is the hardest part of all of this. This is a third generation fishing family, and I will have lost it all in shame that isn’t my fault.” Another fisherman commented that “the strong alternative employment market provides an opportunity to leave fishing, but many are reluctant due to fear of failure and attachment to fishing. Social pathologies (alcohol, drug abuse, violent behavior) are becoming more common due to anxiety over future economic prospects.”

**Loss of Morale:** Fishermen in South Shore communities are disheartened and depressed about the current state of regulations in the groundfish fishery. This is due to concerns over reduced income and fishing opportunities, regulatory discarding from low trip limits, and increased stress and uncertainty about the future of fishing.

Fishermen are also disheartened about their ability to participate in and influence the fisheries management process. While they want to actively participate in the process, they must fish on days when the opportunity presents itself, regardless of whether or not management meetings are occurring. They do not have the financial resources and organization to send adequate representation to all of the meetings, and as a result, they feel that they cannot participate as effectively as other interest groups. They cited the differences (in terms of financial resources and staff support) between fishermen’s organizations and environmental organizations.

**Safety Issues:** According to those who provided comments, the groundfish regulations, particularly the rolling closures, are compromising the safety of lives at sea as some fishermen travel farther offshore to fish during the six months the inshore areas are closed. Many of these boats are small (<60 feet) and fish for groundfish primarily in the winter, when weather is more

extreme and less predictable. Concerns over safety have increased stress for fishermen and their families. One small-boat fishermen said that his 44-foot vessel is too small and old to travel long distances to fish in other areas (during the rolling closures). His family is afraid that he and his brother will travel offshore and put themselves in greater danger.

In addition, as discussed below, many vessels are decreasing the size of their crew, and some are fishing alone. This increases concerns over the safety of fishermen's lives at sea.

**Crew Problems/Loss of New Entrants in Fishery:** Fishermen at the meeting are concerned about the long-term impacts of the loss of crew and the loss of new entrants in the fishery. To adapt to increased regulations and decreased fishing opportunities, many vessels have decreased the size of their crew. Owner-operators of small vessels are fishing alone for some or all of the year. In turn, crew members are seeking year-round employment in other ports or other industries. Vessel owners reported that finding experienced sternmen is becoming increasingly difficult.

Meeting participants indicated that there are very few new/young people pursuing fishing as a way of life. Much of this, they feel, is due to uncertainty and the inability to plan for the future. Young people need a reliable long-term plan in order to choose fishing as the way to support their families. One fisherman at the meeting used to work with his son and hoped to eventually retire and allow his son to continue the business. Now, his son has left the fishery because it became too difficult to provide for both of their families. Some fishermen are discouraging their children from carrying on the family tradition, noting that it would be crazy to want them to get into the business because the long-term outlook for the industry is bleak.

**Equity Issues:** The small boat fleet on the South Shore feels strongly that recent groundfish regulations have had a disproportionate and unfair impact on them and have left them without access to the fishery on which they have depended. Fishermen are angry and resentful about the extent of closures and the magnitude of recent reductions in the inshore areas versus rest of Gulf of Maine. In addition, some fishermen feel that it is unfair to *always* close the areas where the fish are currently concentrated (for, example, the six-month closure of Blocks 124 and 125) rather than distribute the impacts of closures more equitably by closing some areas where fish no longer concentrate due to declines in abundance and contraction of the stock's range.

Recent regulations and their disproportionate impact on small vessels has increased tensions and conflicts between sectors of the commercial fleet, particularly between "big boats" and "small boats." Fishermen at the meeting admitted that there is a general negative perception and mistrust about large vessels because they are the ones making money while the small boat fleet is losing much of its opportunity in the fishery.

Access to groundfish closed areas for recreational vessels, particularly party/charter vessels, has increased perceptions of inequities and created conflicts between user groups within the same communities. Commercial fishermen resent that party/charter vessels often catch more cod from the closed areas than the commercial vessels can catch from the open areas. On his comment sheet, one small-boat fisherman said that "it is very unfair that the charter boats can fish in the closed areas. They bring in all the fish they want, and someone like me can't feed my family."

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**Rolling Closures:** The Gulf of Maine rolling closures have impacted the commercial groundfish fleet on the South Shore (Plymouth, Scituate, and Green Harbor) in several ways, and most of those who commented agreed that these closures have resulted in the most significant negative social impacts. Recently, the location, duration, and timing of the rolling closures have precluded small boat fishing opportunities for six months of the year.

- An owner of a 45-foot dragger remarked that the six month closure represents a 50% loss in total income, not just groundfish. This loss makes it impossible for him to invest any money into vessel maintenance and safety equipment.
- Several meeting participants agreed that the six-month rolling closures (Blocks 124 and 125 in particular) represent a 100% groundfish closure for them. One 40-foot gillnet vessel owner who is now lobstering said that he was forced to stop groundfishing when the rolling closures precluded his participation in the fishery. October, November, and January – April are closed; in December, 400 pounds of cod cannot cover trip expenses. The other five months (May – September) are historically when most of the fleet would shift their effort from groundfish to dogfish. Without an adequate opportunity to make an income from groundfishing, he’s lost his ability to keep a crew. He and others have now switched to lobstering, but he is concerned about his future in the lobster fishery as more vessels utilize it as an alternative to other fisheries to which they have lost access, namely groundfish and dogfish. Another fisherman stated that “large scale/long duration closures of important fishing grounds have been most difficult to adapt to, due to the limited endurance of our boats and small crew size.”
- Fishermen described the “anticipatory impact” that the rolling closures have had on the price for groundfish. As inshore areas open and provide for short-term opportunities to catch groundfish, derby fisheries emerge, as a large number of vessels fish in concentrated areas and catch large volumes of the same species of fish. In turn, the price falls, primarily because processors and buyers have sought other, more reliable sources of product and can no longer pay premiums for fresh, local seafood. The industry experienced this phenomenon with flounders over the past two years.
- One fisherman noted that another indirect impact of the rolling closures has been the loss of fishing grounds for mobile gear to fixed gear, particularly lobster pots, and the resulting increase in gear conflicts. This increases tension and exacerbates impacts on the mobile gear fleet by compromising their fishing opportunities during the limited time the inshore areas are open.

**Low Gulf of Maine Cod Trip Limits/Regulatory Discards:** Fishermen from the South Shore reported significant amounts of regulatory discards of Gulf of Maine cod due to the 400-pound (and lower) trip limit. As noted above, this has had negative impacts on their job satisfaction, pride, and morale. It has also increased stress at the individual and family level, as fishermen throw overboard marketable and oftentimes dead fish that could have provided for their families.

The industry reported that the low cod trip limit has increased discards of not only cod, but also other species because fishermen have to fish longer and harder when they have the opportunity to fish. This unavoidably increases regulatory discards of other species with low trip limits (dogfish, for example) and economic discards of unmarketable fish. One fisherman remarked that if he were able to land 1000 pounds of cod, he could make a day's pay and go home instead of "fishing through the cod" to make the trip worthwhile.

**Western Gulf of Maine Closure:** Gillnetters cited the loss of important fishing grounds from the western Gulf of Maine closure as one of the most difficult regulations to adapt to, particularly when coupled with the extensive rolling closures. The western Gulf of Maine closure that was implemented primarily to protect cod prevents access to important grounds for pollock, white hake, haddock, and some flatfish species (gray sole and dabs).

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

**Loss of Commercial Waterfront Property and Infrastructure:** The commercial groundfish fleet on the South Shore is downsizing; one fisherman reported the loss of ten vessels in Scituate since 1994. As the fleet size decreases, so does employment in the fishery, both at-sea and shoreside. Reduced employment opportunities and shorter seasons are making it difficult for many shoreside support services to maintain year-round operations and cover their overhead expenses. Fishermen noted the loss of an ice house on the fish pier and year-round transportation for their fish (trucking services supplied by buyers). One fisherman from Scituate indicated that investments in commercial waterfront are no longer paying for themselves, and facilities are falling into a state of disrepair. He worries that in the long-term, and especially as stocks continue to recover, his fishing community will lose too much of its infrastructure to be sustainable. Another fisherman from Scituate stated that the fishing community is concerned about losing the Scituate Fish Pier to commuter vessels (commuting to Boston).

One fisherman and commercial dock owner from Chatham described the loss of commercial dock space in his community as another example of the loss that is occurring in most of New England's fishing communities. Docks and wharf space are becoming increasingly crowded, and the commercial fleet is feeling the squeeze. There are very few, if any, moorings available because of the continuing increase of pleasure boats in the harbor. The commercial industry feels as though it does not have as much persuasion with town committees and councils as other user groups. The influences of pleasure boats and tourism are oftentimes different and more powerful.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Negative Publicity:** Meeting participants mentioned that negative publicity about the fishing industry has led to a negative public perception of commercial fishing as a way of life. One fisherman noted that the use of terms like "overfishing" and "overfished" to describe the overall condition of the resource are unfair and suggest that the fishing industry is entirely responsible for the decline of the fish stocks. This contributes to the loss of morale and pride in their way of life that many fishing families have reported to be experiencing.

**Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting  
Ellsworth, Maine**

**Date:** December 7, 2000; 7-9 p.m.

**Location:** Holiday Inn, Ellsworth

**Meeting Attendance:** approximately 50, including fishermen, fishing industry representatives, public officials, local bankers, a pastor, local merchants, local press, and other community residents

**Comment Sheets:** A total of two comment sheets and one written letter were received from Stonington. All three of those who submitted written comments attended the meeting. These written comments have been incorporated into the following summary.

**I. Background Information<sup>22</sup>**

- This meeting was held in Ellsworth, ME to provide opportunity for residents of several mid-coast and downeast fishing communities to attend. Residents of the following communities were present at the meeting: Stonington/Deer Isle, Beal's Island, Birch Harbor, Ellsworth, Jonesport, and Bar Harbor.
- Most ports in downeast Maine are geographically isolated, located at the end of long roads and often more easily accessible by boat than by car. In general, the smaller ports north and east of Portland are more dependent on fisheries for the overall health of the communities while, at the same time, less dependent on groundfish for fisheries income. Today, most downeast communities are primarily dependent on lobster. Clams, urchins, and other local fisheries supplement the industry in these communities.
- The geographic isolation of these communities contributes to their continued reliance on fishing and the general lack of large-scale industrial/economic development. Simple necessities (water and sewer, for example) are not adequate for large-scale development in some downeast communities.
- Most downeast communities are similar in appearance. They range in year-round population from under 1,000 to about 5,000 residents, although most communities have populations around or near 1,500. Generally, more than 50% of the year-round population is actively engaged in fishing or fishing-related businesses.
- As already mentioned, the majority of fishing vessels in downeast communities currently rely almost exclusively on lobstering. However, the fleet was historically more diverse and used to fish seasonally for groundfish, scallops, and lobsters, among other species. Groundfish boats were small to mid-sized and either fished with otter trawls or gillnets. The core of the downeast gillnet fleet historically fished out of Stonington.

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<sup>22</sup> Some of this background information was provided by Aguirre International, *An Appraisal of the Social and Cultural Aspects of the Multispecies Groundfish Fishery in New England and the Mid-Atlantic Regions*, October 1996.

- According to the dealer weighout database, during each fishing year from 1995-1999:
  - An average of 19 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in downeast Maine communities *collectively* (Jonesport, West Jonesport, Beal's Island, Milbridge, Machias, Eastport, and Dyers Bay)
  - An average of 33 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in the following communities *collectively*: Rockland, Port Clyde, Sprucehead, Owls Head, Friendship, Friendship Harbor, Camden, and Vinalhaven.
  - An average of 13 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in Stonington and Sunshine/Deer Isle *collectively*.
  - An average of 29 vessels with multispecies permits landed fish in the following communities *collectively*: Winter Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, and Northwest Harbor.

**II. Social Impact Issues:** The most important social impact issues from the perspective of those who provided comments are:

**Uncertainty/Stress:** Uncertainty about the future and instability in the fishery were cited as significant stress factors for downeast fishing families and communities. A pastor with the Maine Seacoast Missionary Society said that he's seen the social impacts in the fabric of the lives of fishing families. He can see an increased sense of powerlessness and loss of control for people who pride themselves on their independent nature. He feels that impacts on fishing families are hard to account for through divorces, child abuse, and substance abuse, but they are indirect results of frustration and self-depreciation.

A longtime resident of Stonington reported that there are eight fishermen in her immediate family, which translates into 21 people in her family dependent on fisheries. Stress that has evolved from uncertainty and instability in the fishery has affected each and every person in her family. She said that, "the uncertainty of this regulatory process has been extremely stressful and has led to job dissatisfaction. It is no longer simply a matter of getting up and going fishing...there are logbook reports to be completed, calls into and out of the fishery, calls into the codfish overage people, ever-changing regulations and proposed regulations to try and keep track of. We don't know how long we will be able to retain our groundfish permit because of the latent permit issue."

**Loss of Flexibility:** Historically, downeast fishing fleets have relied on a variety of fisheries and the ability to switch between them seasonally. Vessels would fish for shrimp, groundfish, and scallops, among other species, and communities evolved to support year-round fisheries. Stock declines and increased regulations in many fisheries, especially limited access and permit restrictions, have eliminated this flexibility for the downeast fleet.

One Stonington fisherman commented that "we do not have the ability that we once had to switch between fisheries due to permitting constraints...we've lost squid, scup, and monkfish permits because of lack of landings history. Another reason is the cost associated with keeping multiple fishing gears on-hand. We just entered the lobster fishery and can't afford to also keep groundfish gear, pingers, etc. on hand. The ability to fish in different areas is nearly impossible

because of our distance from open fishing grounds such as the 42-20 line, below which there are no limits on cod retention, unless our entire operation is re-located to the southern part of Maine, New Hampshire, or southern Massachusetts.”

**Loss of Access to Groundfish Fishery/Loss of Groundfish Fleet:** Downeast fishing communities have experienced a significant decrease and, in some cases, total elimination of their groundfish fleets. Vessels that used to fish for groundfish either switched to lobstering full-time or left the fishery altogether. Residents are concerned about the long-term impacts of this loss on their communities, especially as stocks continue to recover and support increased catches. The following examples were provided:

- None of the 50+ people in the room indicated that they were actively fishing for groundfish.
- A resident of Bar Harbor recalled that there were 20 groundfish vessels in his community during the 1980s. There were also groundfish fleets in Southwest Harbor and Stonington. This year (2000), three vessels in these communities landed fresh fish. These three 55-60 foot draggers likely represent the largest sector of the fleet in the downeast groundfish fishery.
- A gillnetter from Stonington remembered 16-20 boats in his community that fished for groundfish three or more years ago; this year (2000), one boat went groundfishing for six weeks. He personally gave up groundfishing when the Gulf of Maine cod trip limit was reduced to 30 pounds.
- A seafood dealer from Jonesport recalled more than a dozen groundfish boats in his community; now, no boats are landing groundfish in Jonesport.
- Another fisherman from Stonington estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 full-time fishermen between Vinalhaven and Canada; of those, only about five fish for groundfish at all, but there are hundreds who historically fished for groundfish seasonally. Most of these fishermen are now lobstering and/or fishing in state waters.
- On his comment sheet, one fisherman from Stonington said that the most negative impact of the regulations has been “the virtual elimination of the groundfish and scallop fisheries from the town; transfer and consolidation of the herring industry and fishery out of town; forcing the town’s fishing economy to become totally dependent on lobster fishing; and all the social and cultural complications that accompany such radical changes.”

**Community Impacts:** Residents of downeast communities worry that downsizing the fishing industry and the loss of fishing-related businesses will have long-term negative impacts on their communities. Some have seen transitions in their towns as local tackle and supply businesses are replaced with art galleries and bookstores. The healthy economy has increased tourism and recreational waterfront usage throughout Maine and into downeast communities during the summer. While this has provided seasonal economic and employment opportunities for community residents, it has eliminated businesses that support the fishing industry on a year-round basis. Many meeting participants reported that they have seen changes in the face and character of their communities over time and are concerned that as this trend continues, it will become increasingly difficult to counteract the shrinking trend in commercial waterfront property and shoreside support businesses. One meeting participant added that saving the resource without saving the fishing communities doesn’t save anything.

- The Stonington Town Clerk described her perspective of the changes that have occurred on the island. She estimated that 65% of the island residents (Stonington/Deer Isle) are entirely dependent on fisheries. She's seen an increase in the amount of people looking for assistance as they lose their alternatives (she cited groundfish as one of the first to be lost). She's seen coastal property values skyrocket and fishermen lose their financial edge on competition for waterfront space.
- A member of a fishing family from Stonington provided the following comment in a letter: "Our community has shown its lack of resilience by letting most year-round Main Street businesses die, to be replaced by summer tourist attractions such as art galleries and gift shops. Deer Isle doesn't have much in the way of alternatives to fishing employment."
- Representatives from Bar Harbor Bank and Trust attended the meeting and expressed their concern about the economic future of their clients and the downeast communities as the fishing industry disappears.
- Several local merchants described the importance of the fishing industry to downeast communities. Restaurant retailers used to obtain their fish locally; now, most fresh fish must be purchased in Portland.

**Loss of New Entrants in Fishery:** Meeting participants are concerned about the long-term impacts of the loss of the younger generation of fishermen in their communities. One fisherman from Stonington commented that "regulations have destroyed most fishermen's ability to shift between fisheries and is destroying the ability of the next generation of young fishermen to become self-employed."

Uncertainty, instability, and loss of opportunity are discouraging the younger generation from pursuing fishing as a way of life. According to the meeting participants, parents are no longer encouraging their children to carry on the family tradition of fishing; instead, they are encouraging them to seek higher education and enter a more promising and stable career. Unfortunately, this usually requires the children to leave the community because employment opportunities outside of fishing and similar industries are scarce in downeast Maine.

Negative public perceptions about commercial fishing were cited as another reason that communities are losing their younger generation of fishermen. Fishermen are becoming disheartened by what they read in the newspapers and hear on the radio about "overfishing" and blame being placed solely on the commercial industry. As a result, rather than introduce their children to fishing early in their lives, they are steering them away from fishing and discouraging them from carrying on the tradition on which their families and communities depended for generations. One Stonington resident said that she was proud of her life and her fishing family when she was a child. Now, she doesn't feel that she can express her pride anymore because the public scorns her and her family. These negative perceptions about the industry are influencing fishing families to re-evaluate the way of life they have chosen and discourage their children from pursuing it.

**Dislocation from Federal Fisheries Management Process:** The downeast fishing industry is frustrated and disappointed with their ability to participate effectively in the federal fisheries management process. Many meeting participants feel that it is almost impossible for downeast fishermen to participate in the Council process. They cited an average travel time (round-trip) of twelve hours to attend most Committee or Council meetings. They also noted the lack of a spokesperson or representative from Maine's mid-coast and downeast communities. One fisherman from Stonington commented that "although Maine has representation on the Council, there is no direct representation of eastern Maine. Eastern Maine fishermen do not have the financial resources to ensure that they are being represented in the Council process." This has contributed to a sense of hopelessness and apathy about the industry's ability to participate effectively in the process. Downeast communities feel that they are "ecologically and culturally on the fringe of the process" and that minority interests cannot "get a fair shake" in the Council process.

Another fishing industry representative and former fishery regulator characterized the will of the downeast Maine fishery to be involved in the management process. She said that downeast fishermen participate very actively in the management process when they think that they can make a difference and that their input will be fully considered. Unfortunately, according to this individual, much of the industry in this area has stopped participating in the federal management process because they don't think that it is worth their while and their sacrifices (lost fishing opportunities, travel expenses) to participate.

**III. Groundfish Regulations:** The groundfish regulations that have resulted in the most significant social impacts for this community are:

**Limited Access/Potential Reduction of Latent Capacity:** Limited access in groundfish and other fisheries has decreased opportunity and flexibility for downeast fishermen. As stocks declined and their ranges contracted in the late 1980s/early 1990s, inshore and seasonal fishing opportunities for downeast vessels were eliminated. In many cases, downeast fishermen adapted by shifting their effort to lobstering and alternative fisheries (clamming, urchins) because other fishing opportunities were no longer profitable, as was the case during the qualifying time period for Amendments 5 and 7. Meeting participants testified that some vessels did not qualify for limited access groundfish permits because they did not have history in the fishery during the qualifying time period. Other vessels did qualify, but have since left the area or left the fishery without being replaced. Some meeting participants feel that because of allocation issues, limited access, and qualifying time periods, groundfish and other federal permitting systems affect downeast communities more significantly and more negatively over the long-term.

One fisherman estimated that there were only about ½ dozen vessels remaining in the Beals/Jonesport area with limited access groundfish permits. He worries about the long-term impacts of the loss of these permits in his community. Another fishermen from Beal's Island speculated that he is the "farthest east groundfisherman" in the state of Maine. He is concerned about his latent DAS because he wants the chance to return to the groundfish fishery as opportunities improve. These individuals are afraid that their communities "will be scratched from the list."

Downeast fishermen who still have groundfish permits fear losing them through a latent effort/capacity reduction program in Amendment 13. One gillnetter testified that he stopped groundfishing when the Gulf of Maine cod trip limit was decreased to 30 pounds because he cannot stand regulatory discarding. He is afraid that his decision not to waste codfish will hurt him in the future if his permit remains inactive and the Council implements a latent capacity reduction program. Another fisherman from Beal's Island said, "It used to be that we couldn't make money groundfishing. Now we gave it up because we don't want to throw fish overboard. We're not fishing purposefully, but we want to keep our licenses. We don't want to be penalized for not landing large volumes of fish."

**Low Trip Limits/Regulatory Discarding:** Regulatory discarding is an important social issue for these communities, whose fishermen have historically taken tremendous pride in their work. Fishermen at the meeting used to view themselves as stewards of the resource and felt a sense of responsibility and commitment to the community and the ecosystem. Regulations that require them to waste the resource and throw marketable and oftentimes dead fish overboard anger and depress fishermen and contribute to a loss of both pride in their work and feelings of responsibility for the resource. One gillnetter said that he stopped groundfishing when the Gulf of Maine cod trip limit was reduced to 30 pounds because he couldn't stand to discard fish. He said that he finds it outrageous that the Council system allows for highgrading and discarding.

**Inshore Area Closures/Marine Mammal Closures:** Some meeting participants discussed the negative impacts of inshore groundfish area closures. Inshore area closures (Gulf of Maine rolling closures and marine mammal closures) have compromised the safety of some smaller boats that try to maintain their participation in the fishery by fishing 95 miles from their home port. Meeting participants also feel that the inshore closures have shifted the allocation of fish from downeast communities to western communities that still have an opportunity to participate in the fishery.

**IV. Community Information:** Meeting participants provided the following information about their community:

Meeting participants provided a great deal of information about their communities. Much of that information is provided in the above sections that discuss the social impact issues most important to those who provided comments.

**V. Other:** Meeting participants also discussed the following issues:

**Increased Effort in the Lobster Fishery:** Historically, the majority of fishermen in Maine used to possess multiple permits and participated seasonally in several fisheries including both the groundfish and lobster fishery. With the decline of groundfish stocks, many fishermen have changed their fishing practices and are now participating in the lobster fishery on a full-time basis. While lobstering provided a much-needed alternative that mitigated many short-term negative impacts of the loss of other fishing opportunities, fishing community residents are concerned about the long-term impacts of the increase in effort in the lobster fishery. One industry representative at the meeting feared the consequences of even a small decline in the

abundance of lobsters. She feels a sense of impending doom about the current state of the lobster fishery; if the lobster fishery goes, she said, so do the downeast fishing communities. Communities won't be able to pay for their social services, including new schools that are currently being built on money from and hope for a healthy future in the lobster fishery.

On his comment sheet, another fisherman from Stonington said that the most significant negative social impact has been that "limiting fishing options has forced an increased reliance on the lobster fishery at high entry levels, i.e., starting at the maximum trap limit, leading to social tensions and concerns for the future." He added that he is "concerned by the seeming inability of the regulatory agencies to formulate comprehensive plans," referring to the lack of coordination between FMPs and consideration of the impacts of one fishery on another fishery.



## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Report**

### **Attachment 1**

#### **Overhead Slides Presented at the Meetings**



## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meetings**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Obtain qualitative social information about the fishing communities involved in the groundfish fishery
- Obtain a better understanding of the cumulative social and community impacts of Amendment 5, Amendment 7, and subsequent framework adjustments
- Obtain information to better predict the potential social and community impacts of the Amendment 13 alternatives
- Identify social and cultural issues important to New England's fishing communities
- Identify differences and similarities in social and cultural issues among fishing communities in the northeast region
- Better meet the Council's legal requirements under NEPA and the SFA to address social and community impacts
- Inform fishing communities about social impact assessment and the process through which the Council identifies and considers social impacts

## WHAT IS A FISHING COMMUNITY?

From MSFCMA:

A community which is substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvest or processing of fishery resources to meet social and economic needs, and includes fishing vessel owners, operators, and crew and United States fish processors that are based in such community.

## WHAT ARE SOCIAL IMPACTS?

The effect of a regulation on individuals, families, and communities;

*More specifically, social impacts are the changes that a regulation would create in:*

- People's way of life (how they live, work, play, and interact)
- People's cultural traditions (shared beliefs, customs, values);
- People's community (its population structure, cohesion, social networks, stability, and character)

## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Report**

### **Attachment 2**

#### **Meeting Handout: Social Impact Issues Brainstorming Sheet**



## SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ISSUES

<u>Flexibility:</u>	short-term and long-term business planning; fishing trip planning; ability to switch between fisheries; ability to fish in different areas; ability to fish with different gears
<u>Adaptability:</u>	individual approaches to adapting to new regulations; resilience of fishing communities; alternative sources of employment; retraining; ability to switch between fisheries; ability to fish in different areas; ability to fish with different gears; family adaptations; financial adaptations
<u>Opportunity:</u>	year-round and seasonal fishing opportunities; short-term and long-term dislocation from the fishery; seasonal and year-round alternative employment opportunities; ability to find reliable and consistent crew
<u>Stability:</u>	of shoreside infrastructure; of individual fishing operations; of fishery as a whole; of the fishing community as a whole; employment and unemployment issues; new entrants in the fishery; ability to find reliable and consistent crew
<u>Uncertainty:</u>	relationship between uncertainty, stress, and job satisfaction; short-term and long-term uncertainty about individual family's involvement in fishery; about future fishing regulations; about the future of fishing to the family; about the future of fishing to the community; ability to find reliable and consistent crew
<u>Safety:</u>	relationship between safety, stress, and job satisfaction; safety of individual fishing vessels at sea; safe versus unsafe regulations; vessel maintenance and repair issues; changes in the average length of time a vessel spends at-sea; changes in the distance traveled to fishing grounds
<u>Enforceability:</u>	enforceability of past regulations; social impacts of unenforceable regulations; perceptions of "lawlessness" in community
<u>Acceptability:</u>	of fishing regulations to the individual; of fishing regulations to the community; social impacts of unacceptable regulations; importance of community involvement in fisheries management
<u>Perceptions:</u>	of effectiveness of past fisheries regulations; of the fisheries management process; of adequacy of scientific information; of job satisfaction; of fishing for a living; public perception of fishing



## **Groundfish Social Impact Informational Meeting Report**

### **Attachment 3**

#### **Social Impact Information and Comment Sheets**



## Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan Social Impact Informational Sheet

Please tell us about yourself.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PORT (CITY AND STATE): \_\_\_\_\_

**ROLE IN FISHERY (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Vessel Owner               | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Vessel Captain/Operator              | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Angler    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Vessel Crew Member         | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Vessel Owner                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fisherman's Spouse     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Party/Charter Vessel Captain/Operator | <input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Processor (owner)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumper/Shoreside Labor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Party/Charter Vessel Crew Member      | <input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Dealer (owner)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Gear Supplier          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Processor (employee)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Fisherman's Family Member (other)               | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Supplier       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seafood Dealer (employee)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Services (retraining, health insurance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel Supplier          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing Industry Representative       | <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel Maintenance (e.g., welding, rigging)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Bait Supplier          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____          |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Supplier           |

**If you own or work on a fishing boat (commercial or recreational), please provide the following information:**

Number of Vessels: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of Vessels:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Fisheries: (please check only those that apply)**

<u>First Vessel</u>	<u>Second Vessel</u>	<u>Third Vessel</u>	<u>Fourth Vessel</u>	<u>Fifth Vessel</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Groundfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Groundfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Groundfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Groundfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Groundfish
<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Scallops	<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Scallops	<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Scallops	<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Scallops	<input type="checkbox"/> Sea Scallops
<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster
<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp
<input type="checkbox"/> Herring	<input type="checkbox"/> Herring	<input type="checkbox"/> Herring	<input type="checkbox"/> Herring	<input type="checkbox"/> Herring
<input type="checkbox"/> Monkfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Monkfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Monkfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Monkfish	<input type="checkbox"/> Monkfish
<input type="checkbox"/> Fluke	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluke	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluke	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluke	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluke
<input type="checkbox"/> Whiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiting
<input type="checkbox"/> Dogfish/Skates	<input type="checkbox"/> Dogfish/Skates	<input type="checkbox"/> Dogfish/Skates	<input type="checkbox"/> Dogfish/Skates	<input type="checkbox"/> Dogfish/Skates
<input type="checkbox"/> Squid/Mackerel	<input type="checkbox"/> Squid/Mackerel	<input type="checkbox"/> Squid/Mackerel	<input type="checkbox"/> Squid/Mackerel	<input type="checkbox"/> Squid/Mackerel
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**Primary Gear Types: (please check only those that apply)**

<u>First Vessel</u>	<u>Second Vessel</u>	<u>Third Vessel</u>	<u>Fourth Vessel</u>	<u>Fifth Vessel</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Otter Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Otter Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Otter Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Otter Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Otter Trawl
<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop Dredge	<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop Dredge	<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop Dredge	<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop Dredge	<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop Dredge
<input type="checkbox"/> Sink Gillnet	<input type="checkbox"/> Sink Gillnet	<input type="checkbox"/> Sink Gillnet	<input type="checkbox"/> Sink Gillnet	<input type="checkbox"/> Sink Gillnet
<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom Longline	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom Longline	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom Longline	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom Longline	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom Longline
<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster Pot/Trap	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster Pot/Trap	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster Pot/Trap	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster Pot/Trap	<input type="checkbox"/> Lobster Pot/Trap
<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Water Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Water Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Water Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Water Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-Water Trawl
<input type="checkbox"/> Purse Seine	<input type="checkbox"/> Purse Seine	<input type="checkbox"/> Purse Seine	<input type="checkbox"/> Purse Seine	<input type="checkbox"/> Purse Seine
<input type="checkbox"/> Pelagic Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelagic Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelagic Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelagic Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelagic Gear
<input type="checkbox"/> Hook & Line	<input type="checkbox"/> Hook & Line	<input type="checkbox"/> Hook & Line	<input type="checkbox"/> Hook & Line	<input type="checkbox"/> Hook & Line
<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp Trawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp Trawl
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**How many years have you been involved in fishing?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are/were any of your immediate family members involved in fishing?** \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g., parents, grandparents, children, brothers, sisters)

**If so, which one(s) and how are/were they involved?** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please list and describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Are you a member of any fishing industry associations?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If so, which one(s)?** \_\_\_\_\_ (please list)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How active do you consider yourself in these associations? (circle one)**

- Very Active      Somewhat Active      Not Very Active      Not Active at All**

**How do you stay involved and/or keep informed of fisheries management issues? (please check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> I don't	<input type="checkbox"/> Association newsletters
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal communications
<input type="checkbox"/> Council / NMFS web pages	<input type="checkbox"/> NMFS letters / notices
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Fisheries News / other publications	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____

**NOTE:** This information sheet is also available on the Council web page at <http://www.nefmc.org/social-impacts.htm>

# Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan

## Social Impact Comment Sheet

Also available at <http://www.nefmc.org/social-impacts.htm>

NAME (OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PORT (CITY AND STATE): \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PROVIDE BRIEF ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

**What are some of the unique characteristics of your fishing community?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think is the most important social issue in your fishing community?**  
*(for example, health care, unemployment, employment stability, cultural diversity, sense of community)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you feel that there have been positive social impacts from the groundfish regulations since 1994?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If so, what has been the most positive social impact?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you feel that there have been negative social impacts from the groundfish regulations since 1994?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If so, what has been the most negative social impact?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Which specific groundfish regulations have been the most difficult for you, your family, and/or your business to adapt to? Why?**

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**What approaches, if any, have you, your family, and your business used to adapt to groundfish regulations since 1994?**

*(for example, sought alternative sources of employment, spouse entered the workforce, decreased family spending, eliminated health insurance, took less crew, cut back on gear/vessel maintenance and purchases)*

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**What are some of the changes you have made in your fishing/business practices as a result of groundfish regulations since 1994?**

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**PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS IN THE SPACE BELOW:**