Learning from the Development of Sector Management in New England’s Groundfish Fishery

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Outline

• Introduction
• Groundfish fishery in New England
• Brief description of sectors
• Lessons
• Lingering Issues
• Discussion
Who is GMRI?

- Marine non-profit based in Portland, ME
- Founded in 1968, rapid growth since opening lab in 2005
- Focus on ocean stewardship and economic growth
- Science: ecosystem-based fisheries science team
- Education: innovated hands-on science education (grades 5-9)
- Community: convening, training, and technical assistance
Federal Fisheries in New England

- Major Fisheries
  - Scallops
  - Groundfish
  - Monkfish
  - Herring
  - Small mesh multispecies
  - Dogfish
  - Red crab
  - Skates
  - (Atlantic salmon)
New England’s Groundfish Fishery

- 13 regulated species - 20 stocks
- 633 active permits in 2009
  - 1,314 in 2001
- $57.5 million total revenue in 2009 (in 1999 dollars)
  - $98.6 million in 2001
- Primary gear
  - Trawl (65% of active vessels)
  - Gillnet (27% of active vessels)
  - Hook (7% of active vessels)

2009 Groundfish Landings by State (millions of pounds)

- RI (3.6)
- NH (1.2)
- NY, NJ, CT (0.2)
- ME (5.3)
- MA (53.1)
- New Bedford (17.8)
- Gloucester (23.0)
- Cape Cod (9.0)
- Boston & South Shore (9.0)
Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan

• Timeline:
  – Initiated Nov., 2006
  – Adopted June, 2009
  – Effective May, 2010

• Primary objectives
  – meet requirements of MSA
    • rebuilding targets
    • ACLs & AMs
  – consider new management options
Management options under consideration

- **IFQs**
  - requires referendum in New England
- **Area-based management**
  - addressed concerns of a subset of industry
- **Modifications to days-at-sea**
  - lingering AM difficulties
- **Point system**
  - innovative approach to allocating catch
- **Sectors (fishing cooperatives)**
  - precedent in Amendment 13
  - ultimately, the only option considered
Sectors - key characteristics

• Self-selecting, voluntary fishing cooperatives
• Established through an amendment or framework adjustment
• Authorized annually by NMFS
• Exempt from most effort-control regulations
• Members agree to operate according to harvesting rules
Sectors - key design components

• Annual allocation (ACE) of stocks made to the sectors (not its individual members)
  – based on members’ collective catch history - 1996~2006
• ACE may be traded among sectors
• Not considered a LAPP
• 17 groundfish sectors
  – ~85% of active fleet
  – ~95% of TACs
New England Groundfish Sectors – 2010
(with primary vessel home ports)

- FGS: GB Cod Fixed Gear Sector (MA)
- NEFS2: II, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS3: III, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS4: IV, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS5: V, Northeast Fishery Sector (CT, RI)
- NEFS6: VI, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS7: VII, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS8: VIII, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS9: IX, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS10: X, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)
- NEFS11: XI, Northeast Fishery Sector (NH)
- NEFS12: XII, Northeast Fishery Sector (NH)
- NEFS13: XIII, Northeast Fishery Sector (MA)

- NCCS: Northeast Coastal Communities Sector (MA, ME)
- PCCS: Port Clyde Community Groundfish Sector (ME)
- SHS: Sustainable Harvest Sector (MA, ME, NH, RI)
- TSS: Tristate Sector (MA, NC, VA)
Sectors - key operational components

• Board of directors
  – oversight and governance
  – handle infractions

• Sector manager
  – tracks catch
  – oversees ACE trading
  – files weekly reports

• Monitoring
  – dockside monitoring to verify landings
  – at-sea monitoring to determine discards

• Reporting
  – weekly sector reports to account for catch and ACE trades
  – annual sector report to demonstrate performance
Lessons

• Overall: *good communication is essential*
• Council: *set measurable goals*
• Industry: *get organized*
• NMFS: *develop data systems*
• NGOs: *support industry leaders*

• *Bear in mind: design v. implementation*
Communication

- Council staff toured region
- NMFS hosted data & monitoring workshops
- Sector organizers engaged sector leadership

- Few fishermen participated in process or outreach meetings
- Fishermen did not receive their potential sector contributions early enough
- Difficult to communicate scale and detail of change to entire industry
Lessons - Council sets measurable goals

- Council set objectives for allocation
- Rebuilding objectives clearly articulated
- Adoption of market-based accountability measures
- Council lacked common vision for the fishery
- Some objectives were conflicting
- Difficult to measure impact due to lack of baseline data
Lessons - Industry gets organized

- Strong regional and local organizations
- Collaborated well on key design issues
- Participated consistently in process
- Residual mistrust from previous disagreements
- Rank and file did not participate
- Implementation challenges took time & effort away from sound communication and training
Lessons - NMFS prepares data systems

- NMFS engaged industry in 7 workshops to develop data flow standards
- NMFS instituted new web-based systems for data support
- NMFS launched eVTR pilot project

- Catch history not always accurate
- Heavy reliance on sectors for tracking landings and for ACE reporting
- Unable to audit sector weekly reports
Lessons - NGOs support industry leaders

✓ Several national, regional, and local NGOs engaged in process
✓ NGOs provided financial, technical, and administrative support to industry leaders

✗ Policy positions of some NGOs hindered some collaborations
✗ NGOs not always attuned to industry needs
Lingering Issues

- Allocation
- Lack of socio-economic impact analysis
- Rush to implement
- Stock assessments and TAC-setting relatively slow
- Legal challenges
  - different time periods for determining history
  - sector exclusion from referendum requirement
- Long-term cost to industry of sector management
  - cost of sectors themselves
  - cost of monitoring