



## ***CERT***

**Comité d'évaluation des  
ressources transfrontalières**

**Document de travail 2014/48**

Ne pas citer sans  
autorisation des auteurs

## ***TRAC***

**Transboundary Resources  
Assessment Committee**

**Working Paper 2014/48**

Not to be cited without  
permission of the authors

# **Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Management Overview**

Dr. Jamie Cournane, Dr. Fiona Hogan, and Tom Nies

New England Fishery Management Council





## Management Overview

Georges Bank yellowtail flounder is a trans-boundary fishery resource that is shared by the U.S. and Canada. The two countries have established an informal understanding that coordinates management of the stock (U.S./Canada Resource Sharing Understanding). A process has been established for a joint annual assessment of the stock (by the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee, TRAC), followed by a negotiation on the amount of total removals (by the Transboundary Management Guidance Committee, TMGC). Removals are limited to a quota that results from a negotiated joint harvest strategy which is based on an agreed-upon fishing mortality,  $F_{ref}$ . In addition to the harvest strategy of the understanding, U.S. law requires that catches meet statutory requirements to end overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks. A share of the available quota is allocated to each country, primarily based on resource distribution as determined by three seasonal bottom-trawl surveys but also taking into account historic catches.

### Canada

Yellowtail flounder are caught by trawl vessels in the groundfish fishery and as bycatch in the scallop dredge fishery. The available Canadian quota is allocated to the two fisheries. Within the groundfish fishery, yellowtail flounder are managed through enterprise allocations that are similar to individual transferable quotas (ITQs). Technical measures for the groundfish fishery include minimum mesh sizes, seasonal closures, and measures to discourage harvesting small fish. The scallop fishery does not use a similar ITQ system. In recent years, quotas have been relatively low and most of the Canadian allocation is reserved for scallop fishery bycatch. As a result, there has been little directed fishing by the Canadian groundfish fishery.

### United States

Yellowtail flounder are primarily caught by trawl vessels in the groundfish fishery and by scallop dredge vessels, with small amounts caught by small-mesh fisheries for squid and whiting. Specific amounts of the US quota are allocated to each of these fisheries. The groundfish fishery is managed through catch shares in which the groundfish fishery sub-allocation is distributed to cooperative groups of vessels called sectors. This management approach was adopted in 2010; prior to then the fishery was managed through effort controls. The scallop fishery sub-allocation is not similarly distributed and is used to account for scallop fishery bycatch. Technical measures for the groundfish fishery include minimum mesh sizes, minimum fish sizes, and year round and seasonal closed areas. Quota allocated to the US fishery has also been low relative to previous years.