

Purpose of GARM-III Meetings in 2007-2008

The Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM) brings together stock assessment experts to peer review work on the status of 19 important fish stocks that are managed by the New England Fishery Management Council. GARM-III takes place in 2007-2008, and it will consist of four meetings that are cumulative in nature (i.e., successive meetings incorporate methods and results that were accepted at previous GARM-III meetings). Each meeting will have a chair as well as external panelists. A brief description and dates of the four GARM-III meetings are given below:

1. “Data” Meeting (October 29 – November 2, 2007)

Review the commercial and survey data that will be used in the stock assessments. Identify appropriate statistical methods for analyzing those data (including bycatch and discard issues, changes in growth rates and other life history traits, issues related to merging databases, etc.). Other sources of data to be considered are tagging programs for cod and yellowtail flounder, and Industry-Based Surveys. Candidate sources of data relevant to ecological and ecosystem considerations will also be described.

2. “Modeling” Meeting (February 25 – 29, 2008)

Determine the most appropriate stock assessment methods and models for each of the 19 stocks. Perform runs of those models to obtain results (historical and current estimates of F and B) based on commercial and survey data, probably through calendar year (CY) 2006. The runs of the models will be used to evaluate diagnostics of model fit and appropriateness, including retrospective analyses.

3. “Biological Reference Point (BRP)” Meeting (April 28 – May 2, 2008)

Update or redefine BRPs for each of the 19 stocks. Use data available through CY2006. Consider whether the BRPs are reasonable in light of results from the “Modeling” Meeting. Define the appropriate initial conditions for forecasting and rebuilding strategies, particularly with respect to trends in biological attributes, recruitment and survival rates. Comment on relevant ecosystem considerations as they relate to rebuilding strategies.

4. GARM-III “Final” Meeting (August 4 - 8, 2008)

Use all of the methods proposed from the previous three meetings, along with survey and catch information through CY2007, to estimate historical and current fishing mortality rates and biomass for each stock. Based on procedures from the BRP Meeting, finalize the BRPs, appropriate initial conditions, and biological assumptions related to forecasts. Determine the status of each stock.