

OVERVIEW OF THE FISHERIES OF THE SCOTIAN SHELF AND GULF OF MAINE

The Spring 1996 assessment cycle of the DFO Maritimes Region's Regional Advisory Process (RAP) considered a number of resources on the Scotian Shelf and in the Gulf

of Maine Area. Details on the status of each of these resources can be obtained in the relevant Stock Status Report. This document provides an overview of these resources.

Group (1)	Species	1995 Landings t	Recent Recruitment (2)	Decline in Abundance since 1975	1995 Exploitation Rate relative to Target (3)(4)	1995 Abundance	Status 1995 vs 1994
Pelagics	4WX Herring	62500	Low	Yes	Above	Low	Down
	5Z Herring	0	?	No	OK	Med	Up
	4VW Capelin	?	?	No	Undefined	High	Up
	SA 3 - 6 Porbeagle Shark	1305	?	?	Undefined	?	?
	SA 2 - 6 Blue Shark	123	?	?	Undefined	?	?
	SA 2 - 6 Shortfin Mako Shark	107	?	?	Undefined	?	?
Crustacean	4VW Northern Shrimp	3197	?	No	OK	High	Up
	4V Toad Crab	63	?	?	Undefined	?	?
Molluscs	4VW Arctic Surf Clam	11608	?	?	Undefined	?	Stable
	Georges Bank Scallop	2000	Low	?	OK	Med	Stable
	Browns Bank Scallop	2000	Med	?	Undefined	?	?
	Brier/Lurcker Scallop	770	Low	?	Undefined	Low	Down
	German Bank Scallop	400	Med	?	Undefined	?	Down
	Digby Scallop	291	Low	Yes	Undefined	Low	Down
	Eastern Shelf Scallop	150	High	?	Undefined	?	Stable
Groundfish	4Vn Cod	50	Low	?	Below	Low	Stable
	4VsW Cod	276	Low	Yes	Below	Low	Stable
	5Zjm Cod	1100	Low	Yes	OK	Low	Up
	4TVW Haddock	120	Med	Yes	Below	Low	Stable
	4X Haddock	5416	High	Yes	Above	Low	Up
	5Zjm Haddock	2000	Med	No	OK	Low	Up
	4VW Flatfish	2325	Med	Yes	Above	Low	Stable
	4X Flatfish	2538	Med	No	OK	Med	Stable
	5Zjmh Yellowtail	500	Low	Yes	Above	Low	Up
	3NOPs4VWX5 Atlantic Halibut	850	Low	Yes	Above	Low	Down
	4VW Greenland Halibut	50	?	No	Undefined	High	Up
	4VWX Wolffish	237	Med	Yes	Undefined	Low	Stable
	4VWX Cusk	1800	?	Yes	Undefined	Low	Down
	SA 2 - 6 Spiny Dogfish	800	High	No	OK	High	Up
1	Question marks in this table indicate that the information is not available to complete the entry.						
2	Recruitment refers to the strength of new year-classes entering the population						
3	The target will vary with the stock. For groundfish, the target is generally F0.1.						
	The individual SSRs should be consulted for specific targets.						
4	In some stocks, a harvest target has not been defined. These are so indicated.						

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Pelagics

The 4WX herring stock declined to historically low levels during 1995 and 1996. In contrast, Georges Bank herring and Scotian Shelf capelin stocks are increasing. For capelin, it is thought that the recent period of comparatively cool water on the eastern Scotian shelf has positively influenced the stock. Several shark species support fisheries in this area, notably the porbeagle. However, for all three species, there is comparatively little known about resource biology and status.

Crustaceans

The most significant crustacean resource in the area is the American lobster, the assessments of which will be completed during the fall cycle of stock assessments. For remaining crustacean resources, northern shrimp is the most significant, and its status appears good. There is also a developing fishery for toad crab off Cape Breton for which there is only limited knowledge.

Molluscs

The area has several mollusc resources, the most notable being scallops. Among the scallop stocks, recent abundance has been either stable or declining. Medium to high recruitment has been noted for the Browns Bank, German Bank and the Eastern Shelf stocks, with weak recruitment observed for the Georges Bank, Brier/Lurcher and Digby stocks. Interest in the Arctic Surf Clam resource has recently increased, although very little is known about resource status.

Groundfish

Recruitment and abundance for the three cod stocks which were assessed this spring (4Vn, 4VsW and 5Zjm) appears to have been poor in recent years. However, management measures have been successful in reducing exploitation below the target levels. In contrast, the three assessed haddock stocks (4TVW, 4X and 5Zjm) have shown medium to high recruitment during 1992 - 1994. For the southern stocks in particular, prospects for stock rebuilding appear good if exploitation rates do not increase too quickly.

For flatfish resources in general, there is also indication of fair recruitment recently. However, the flatfish resources on the eastern shelf are severely depressed, particularly yellowtail flounder. Further south, the resource picture is somewhat improved, although the resource status of individual stocks comprising the flatfish resource is mixed. On Georges Bank, a directed fishery for yellowtail flounder has recently developed. The resource appears depressed, but exploitation levels are expected to fall to target levels and resource rebuilding can be anticipated. The Atlantic halibut resource also appears depressed, but the available commercial fishery indices are complicated by changes in regulations and their enforcement, while the survey index gives insight into the recruiting portion of the population only.

Wolffish abundance appears low, but surveys indicate some recruitment in recent years. Cusk, however, appear low in abundance with no indication of good recruitment. Spiny dogfish abundance in the area is considered high, although this transboundary stock is considered fully exploited.

Overall, there appears to be an improvement of the stock status for marine fish resources in the Gulf of Maine Area including Browns Bank, whereas stock recovery does not appear to have commenced on the eastern Scotian Shelf.

For More Information

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