

BRINGING BACK THE FISH: Spotlight on the New England Region

The bounty of New England’s fisheries once fed a growing nation, fueled a regional economy, and supported generations of families.

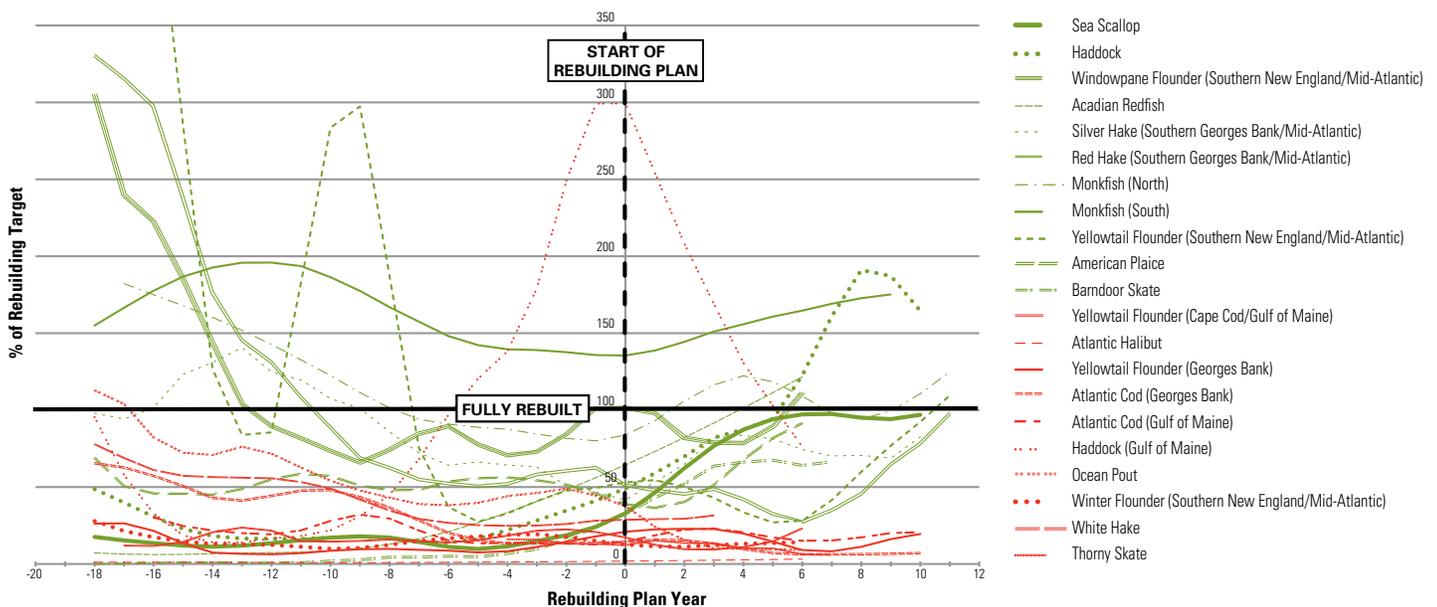
By the early 1990s, most of New England’s iconic groundfish stocks, such as cod, haddock, and flounder had collapsed as a result of excessive catch levels, increasingly efficient fleets, and a historical reluctance to take the necessary steps to sustain and rebuild fish populations.

It was New England’s fisheries crisis that largely motivated Congress in 1996 to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the federal fisheries law, to require that overfished fish stocks be rebuilt in as short of time period as possible, not to exceed ten years (with certain exceptions). These requirements have since been applied in New England more than any other region, and more than half of the region’s once-overfished stocks have been rebuilt or are making significant progress under rebuilding plans implemented to meet the requirements.

FISHERIES RECOVERY PROGRESS IN THE NEW ENGLAND REGION: MIXED

Nine stocks, including sea scallops and Georges Bank haddock, have been rebuilt under the 1996 amendments. Two more have made significant progress since rebuilding began, reaching at least 50 percent of the rebuilding target and a 25 percent increase in abundance. On the other hand, three stocks, including the Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank yellowtail flounder stocks, have made only limited rebuilding progress (reaching at least 50 percent of

the rebuilding target or a 25 percent increase in abundance). The Gulf of Maine haddock stock was rebuilt but has since declined significantly. Six stocks, including both of the region’s cod stocks, have shown a lack of rebuilding progress. With continued overfishing the likely culprit of rebuilding shortfalls in most instances, it is hoped that recently implemented annual catch limits in the region will turn the corner for these stocks.



Population trends (3-year moving average). For rebuilt stocks, time series is extended to date of last assessment.

Source: NRDC, *Bringing Back the Fish: An Evaluation of U.S. Fisheries Rebuilding Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act* (February 2013). www.nrdc.org/oceans/rebuilding-fisheries.asp.



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In *Bringing Back the Fish: An Evaluation of U.S. Fisheries Rebuilding Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act*, NRDC evaluated all U.S. ocean fish stocks put in rebuilding plans under Section 304(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act with sufficient information to evaluate progress (44 stocks). For results from all regions and a national perspective on the rebuilding of all 44 evaluated stocks, please see the full report at www.nrdc.org/oceans/rebuilding-fisheries.asp.



A FISHERMAN'S PERSPECTIVE:

As a former chair of the New England Fishery Management Council, John Pappalardo heard many times how someone needed to catch more fish to cover a mortgage or pay college tuition. These are real problems brought on by depleted fish populations.

But simply forestalling quota cuts is not going to rectify the situation, and given the fact that fishermen can't find fish to catch, the economic damage is already being done.

"I think we'll be lucky this year to catch 50 percent of the cod quota we're allowed to catch," said Pappalardo, CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association. "We are at a point right now where there are some pretty deep concerns that those fish are gone."

Many fishermen, always resourceful, feel that the groundfish crisis is recoverable. In 1994, we were in a similar circumstance with sea scallops. There were few scallops left and scallop businesses were scarcely profitable.

And now, the scallop fishery is one of the most valuable in the nation. If we could turn around the scallop fishery, then we can do the same for groundfish.

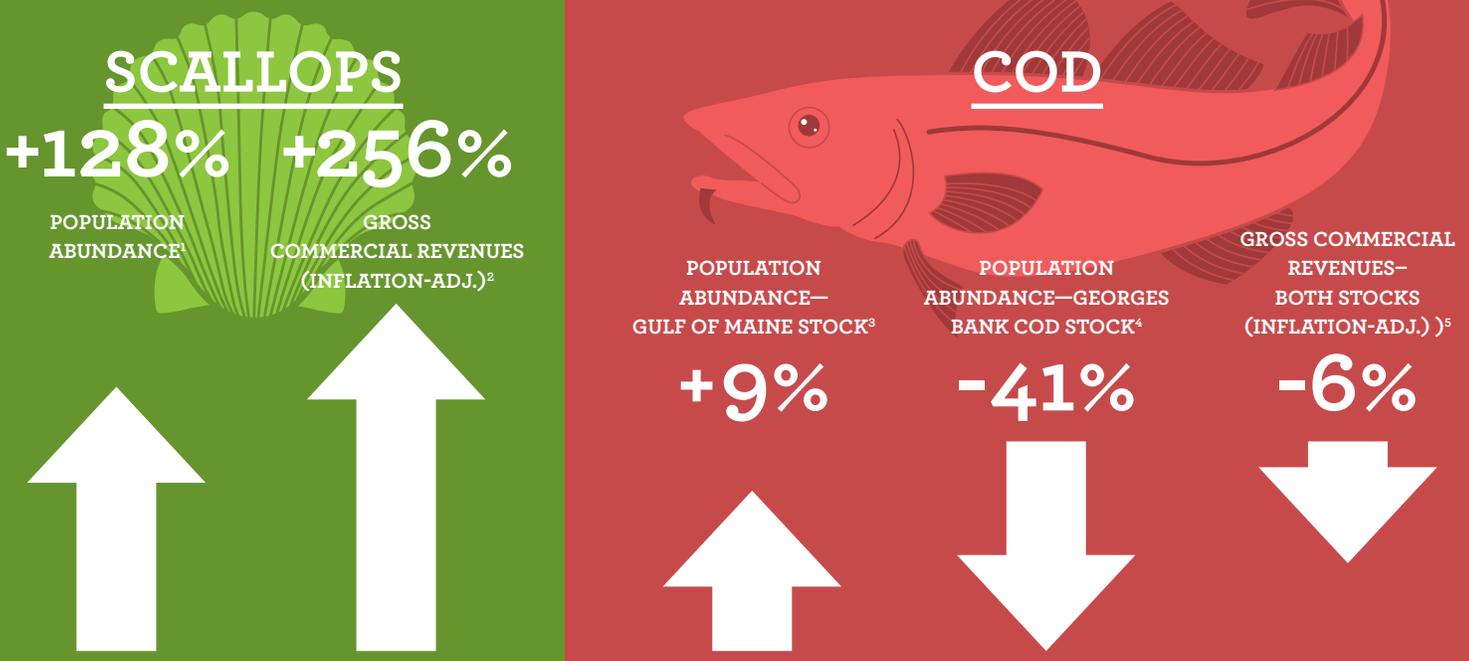
"There's a long history here of taking a lot of fish and kicking the can down the road," he said. "The evidence is in, and we need to maintain a framework for setting goals and measuring success in rebuilding our stocks with the full participation of fishermen."



Gulf of Maine

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FISHERIES REBUILDING IN NEW ENGLAND



1 Showing comparison between population abundance at rebuilding plan start in 1999 (56,852 metric tons (mt) meats) and 2009 (129,803 mt meats); 2009 is most recent assessment year available. Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center, *50th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (50th SAW) Assessment Report*, CRD 10-17 (Aug. 2010).
 2 Showing comparison between revenues in 1999 (\$121 million/\$72.5 inflation-adj.) and 2011 (\$580.9 million; \$258.2 million inflation-adj.). Source: NOAA Fisheries, *Annual Commercial Landing Statistics*, available at http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULTS.
 3 Showing comparison between population abundance in 2000 (start date of 1st rebuilding plan for this stock) (9070 mt) and 2011 (9903 mt). Source: NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Center, *Gulf of Maine Atlantic Cod (Gadus Morhua) Stock Assessment for 2012, updated through 2011, SAW/SARC 55* (December 3-7, 2012) (base case model (M=0.2)).
 4 Showing comparison between population abundance (spawning stock biomass) in 2000 (start date of 1st rebuilding plan for this stock) (22256 mt) and 2011 (13200 mt). Source: NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, *Stock Assessment of Georges Bank Atlantic Cod (Gadus morhua) for 2012, SAW/SARC 55* (December 3-7, 2012) (2011 corrected for retrospective pattern per assessment).
 5 Showing comparison of revenues for COMBINED cod stocks between 2000 (\$26.4 million/\$15.4 million inflation-adj.) and 2011 (\$32.6 million/\$14.5 million inflation-adj.). Source: NOAA Fisheries, *Annual Commercial Landing Statistics*, available at http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULTS.