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MRAG Americas, Inc.

US Acadian Redfish, Pollock and Haddock Otter Trawl Fishery

MSC Fishery Announcement

March 31, 2021

Table 1 – Fishery announcement

1	Fishery name
	US Acadian redfish, pollock and haddock otter trawl fishery
2	Assessment number
	First reassessment
3	Reduced reassessment (Yes/No)
	No
4	Statement that the fishery is within scope
	MRAG Americas confirms that this fishery is within scope for MSC assessment.
5	Unit(s) of Assessment - UoA(s)
UoA 1	Description
Species	Acadian redfish (<i>Sebastes fasciatus</i>)
Stock	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank)
Fishing gear type(s)	Otter trawl

and, if relevant, vessel type(s)	
Client group	Sustainable Groundfish Association, Inc.
Other eligible fishers	All the vessels holding the license to fish in the NE Atlantic groundfish fishery
Geographical area	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank)
UoA 2	Description
Species	Pollock (<i>Pollachius virens</i>)
Stock	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank)
Fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s)	Otter trawl
Client group	Sustainable Groundfish Association, Inc.
Other eligible fishers	All the vessels holding the license to fish in the NE Atlantic groundfish fishery
Geographical area	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank)
UoA 3	Description
Species	Haddock (<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>)
Stock	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine)
Fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s)	Otter trawl
Client group	Sustainable Groundfish Association, Inc.
Other eligible fishers	All the vessels holding the license to fish in the NE Atlantic groundfish fishery
Geographical area	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Gulf of Maine)

UoA 4	Description
Species	Haddock (<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>)
Stock	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Georges Bank)
Fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s)	Otter trawl
Client group	Sustainable Groundfish Association, Inc.
Other eligible fishers	All the vessels holding the license to fish in the NE Atlantic groundfish fishery
Geographical area	NW Atlantic, US EEZ (Georges Bank)
6	Certificate sharing statement
	There is no certificate sharing in place at this time.
7	Name of proposed team leader
	<p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot (Team leader and Principle 2). Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Pirlot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team leader as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than three years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • She has passed the MSC team leader training; • She has the required competencies described in Table PC1, section 2; • She has passed the MSC Traceability training module; • She meets ISO 19011 training requirements; • She has undertaken two fishery assessments as a team member in the last five years, and • She has experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques and is able to effectively communicate with clients and other stakeholders.

	<p>In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 2 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Stern-Pirlot has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p>
8	Name(s) of proposed team members
	<p>Ms. Erin Wilson (Principle 3). Ms. Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Fisheries Consultant and Program Manager. She has collaborated as a team member on several MSC assessments and is team leader for all the Alaska Groundfish fisheries and the West Coast Groundfish limited entry trawl fishery. She provides routine audit services for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and is the MRAG Project Manager for the ISSF ProActive Vessel Registry (PVR). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she spent 2 years working at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor. Ms. Wilson has passed MSC v1.3, v2.0, v2.1 and ISO 19011 training and has no Conflict of Interest in relation to this fishery.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Wilson meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • She has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last five years; • She is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored; • She has passed the MSC Traceability training module. <p>In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 3 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms she has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>Dr. Giuseppe Scarcella (Principle 1). Giuseppe Scarcella is an experienced fishery scientist and population analyst and modeller, with wide knowledge and experience in the assessment of demersal stocks. He holds a first degree in Marine Biology and Oceanography (110/110) from the Università Politecnica delle Marche, and a Ph.D. in marine Ecology and Biology from the same university, based on a thesis "Age and growth of two rockfish in the Adriatic Sea". After his degree he was offered a job as project scientist in several research programs about the structure and composition of fish assemblage in artificial reefs, off-shore platform and other artificial habitats in the Italian Research Council – Institute of Marine Science of Ancona (CNR-ISMAR, now CNR-IRBIM). During the years of employment at CNR-ISMAR he has gained experience in benthic ecology, statistical analyses of fish assemblage evolution in artificial habitats, fisheries ecology and impacts of fishing activities, stock assessment, otholith analysis, population dynamic and fisheries management. During the same years he attended courses of uni- multivariate statistics and stock assessment. He is also actively participating in the scientific advice process of FAO GFCM in the Mediterranean Sea. At the moment he is member of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries for the European Commission (STECF).</p> <p>He is author and co-author of more than 50 scientific paper peer reviewed journals and more than 150 national and international technical reports, most of them focused on the evolution of fish assemblages in artificial habitats and stock assessment of demersal species. For some years now, Dr Scarcella has been working in fisheries certification applying the Marine Stewardship Council standard for sustainable fisheries, currently concentrating on Principle 1 of the Standard. Dr Scarcella holds the credential as Fishery team leader (MSC v2.0) and he completed the MSC procedure training 2.1. He also holds the credential as certifier of Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM).</p>

	<p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Scarcella meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • He has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last five years; • He is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored. <p>In addition, he has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 1 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms he has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>Ms. Blanka Lederer (assisting with Principle 2). Ms. Lederer's graduate degree and some professional experiences are in aquaculture, but most background focuses on fisheries. Before becoming an MSC assessor, she was a fisheries biologist for North Pacific Groundfish and At-Sea Hake Observer Programs. During six years, she worked on the catcher trawlers, catcher-processors, and longline vessels collecting data that provided the best scientific information to manage the fisheries and develop measures to minimize bycatch in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, and West Coast. She was also working as a Setline Survey Specialist collecting, independent from commercial fishing, halibut data for the International Pacific Halibut Commission in Southeast Alaska and Canada. She designed a commercial fishing apprenticeship program for California Sea Grant. She collected data on fisheries and bycatch reduction strategies in Mexico, Australia, and Costa Rica. She participated in multiple Scripps Institution of Oceanography research projects, including water studies, exploring deep-sea chemosynthetic environments, and the San Diego Coastal Expedition research cruise.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Lederer meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree in professional science; • She has passed MSC Team Member training, including relevant updates; • She is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored. <p>MRAG Americas confirms Ms. Lederer has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>The whole assessment team collectively meets the requirements as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p>
9	Stakeholder opportunities
	<p>Provide input or comments on the Announcement Comment Draft Report (ACDR). We ask stakeholders to provide input or comments on the ACDR by 5pm UTC on April 30, 2021.</p> <p>Stakeholders must use the MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments v4.0 (Ctrl+click to follow link). Interested parties are invited to comment on the factual content of the reports; comments should be clearly related to specific scoring indicators or report sections and supported with evidence for the assessment team to evaluate.</p> <p>Participate in the site visit: all team members are available to meet remotely (FCP v2.2 7.12.2.e.i).</p>
10	Assessment tree to be used
	The default assessment tree contained within MSC Fisheries Certification Process version 2.2 will be used for this assessment.

11	Estimated timeline										
	Activity	Month									
		2021 - 2022									
		M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	MSC Announcement, ACDR, team and assessment visit notification										
	Stakeholder consultation (ongoing)										
	Assessment visit, stakeholder meetings										
	Examination of evidence and scoring										
	Consultation and confirmation of peer reviewers										
	Client review of draft report										
	Peer review of draft report										
	Stakeholder review of draft report										
	Final report/certification determination/objections period										
	Certification decision (if no objection)										
12	Site visit										
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A key purpose of the site visit is to collect information and to speak to stakeholders with an interest in the fishery. We encourage any stakeholders with experience or knowledge of the fishery to participate in these meetings. - (FCP v2.2 7.12.3 and Annex PF2.3.2) 										
	<p>We invite interested stakeholders to participate in the remote site visit the week of May 17-21, 2021 and will be held in conjunction with the 4th surveillance audit.</p> <p>The MSC's Derogation 3: Covid-19 Fishery and Chain of Custody Remote Auditing enables CABs to conduct reassessments and surveillance audits remotely when "International, national, or local travel restrictions that impact the assessment team or auditor or certificate holder."</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html</p>										
13	Assessment tree modifications										
	No modifications were made to the assessment tree.										
14	Announcement Comment Draft Report stakeholder input deadline										
	We ask stakeholders to provide input or comments on the ACDR by 5pm UTC on April 30, 2021 .										

MRAG Americas, Inc. is pleased to announce that a Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) assessment of US Acadian redfish, pollock and haddock otter trawl fishery has begun. The assessment will evaluate the fishery for compliance with the MSC's Standard for well-managed and sustainable fisheries. MRAG Americas has determined that the fishery is in scope.

As part of the assessment, MRAG Americas announces that stakeholder meetings and assessment of relevant documentation will be undertaken with a remote visit to the fishery in May. **The assessment team will meet remotely the week of May 17-21, 2021.** The purpose of these meetings is for a fishery assessment and stakeholder consultation to receive information from fishery representatives, government management agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

MRAG invites stakeholders to provide input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report or any other information considered relevant, including knowledge and concerns about the fishery and to the assessments of the fishery. Stakeholders must provide objective evidence and references in support of any claims or claimed errors of fact. Unless covered by FCP 4.3.3 any information that cannot be shared with other stakeholders even under a confidentiality agreement shall not be: referenced in the assessment, used to determine the assessment outcome or used as the basis for an objection to a certification. MRAG will schedule meetings with stakeholders if requested. To schedule a meeting please provide:

- your name and contact details
- your association with the fishery
- the issues you would like to discuss
- where and when you would like to meet

Stakeholders may provide input at any time. Stakeholders are encouraged not to withhold information, including their concerns and knowledge about the fishery. We ask stakeholders who wish to meet with the team to make the request for a meeting by 5pm UTC on May 10, 2021.

Stakeholders wishing to comment on the Announcement Comment Draft Report must do so by 5pm UTC April 30, 2021.

The MSC has developed a guide for stakeholder input, available at <https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/engage-with-a-fishery-assessment> and a template (MSC template for stakeholder input into fishery assessments v4.0) for stakeholder response can be found at <https://www.msc.org/for-business/certification-bodies/supporting-documents>. You must use the template to provide your response.

More information on the fishery is available at <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/us-acadian-redfish-haddock-and-pollock-otter-trawl-fishery/@@view>.

Please send any documentation, requests for meetings, or inquiries to:

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Submitted by: Michealene Corlett

Date: March 29, 2021

Appendix 1: Summaries of CVs of team leader and team members

Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot (Team leader and Principle 2). Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Pirlot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.

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- She holds a Master's Degree in Professional Science
- She has passed MSC Team Member training, including relevant updates
- She has more than three years' experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of, the impact of fisheries on aquatic ecosystems