



Additional Recommendations

The Plan also recommends more frequent stock assessments, advancing studies of the underlying reasons why some stocks are only harvested to a small fraction of their overall quota, developing more efficient fishing gear to target abundant species while reducing bycatch of depleted species, and providing funds for fishermen to obtain licenses in other marine industries to expand job opportunities for groundfishermen.

In addition, the Plan examines the port's overall infrastructural functioning, and recommends upgrading and repairing existing port facilities, dredging the port to accommodate larger ships, and improving rail access to expand the port's outreach. The Plan's overall vision is to "support all existing port uses and develop new port industries as opportunities are created," including the fishing, shipping, and off-shore wind industries.

Economic Data

The Port of New Bedford and Fairhaven remains the nation's most valuable commercial fishing port, but that is mostly thanks to the region's successful scallop fishery, responsible for 85% of the port's \$411 million in revenue in 2012. Its once-thriving groundfish fleet is currently a fraction of its former size, with the number of active groundfish vessels landing in New Bedford cut almost in half, from 85 to 44 boats, between 2010 and 2013. Groundfish revenues have similarly plummeted, declining 44 percent from \$31 million in 2011 to \$19 million in 2013.

A smaller fleet and diminished revenues mean fewer available jobs in an area where commercial fishing has long ruled. The Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development estimates a loss of 116 fishing jobs amidst the fleet's consolidation and economic decline. Turbulent times for the groundfish fishery have also rippled out to affect the shoreside businesses that support them. An estimated 50 groundfish-related businesses have closed their doors since 2004, costing approximately 227 jobs between 2010 and 2012 alone. The Revitalization Plan comes in response to these struggles, and seeks to restore the groundfish fishery to its former prominence.