Title: The Northeast United States Tilefish Fishery: Recent Lessons from Catch Shares

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Abstract: Amendment 1 to the Golden Tilefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which implemented the most recent catch share program in the Northeast United States, became effective on November 1, 2009. It replaced a program that allocated a fixed percentage of annual quota to three groups of vessel owners with a program of individual allocations. Reliable catch history information and recent experience with group allocations led to wide acceptance and therefore little disruption in administering the amendment. Catch share management has altered the infrastructure necessary for compliance monitoring, and data collection in fisheries. New data requirements provide for more transparent relationships between harvesters, dealers, and processors. The tilefish fishery provides the first opportunity to explore the benefits of this increased transparency. There was some initial consolidation within the fishery after implementation of the catch share program. Changes in responsibility are also noted due to the fish stocks allocation shifting from a group to individual level. These changes are examined together with other indicators of performance. An examination of the early consequences of the catch share system in this fishery provides useful insight on how similar programs might affect other fisheries.