

STATUS OF FISHERIES AND INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

Situation: In the current groundfish management program, the Council sets annual harvest targets (optimum yield [OY] levels) and individual vessel landing limits for specified periods, with the understanding these vessel landing limits will likely need to be adjusted periodically through the year in order to attain, but not exceed, the OYs. The initial vessel landing limits are based on predicted participation rates, estimates of how successful participants will be at attaining their limits for each period, and comparisons with previous years. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) tracks landings data throughout the year and periodically makes projections based on all the information available. The GMT presents these landings data and projections to the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and they discuss adjustments that may be necessary and beneficial.

Significant challenges have been posed this year by early attainment of the bocaccio OY in California and projected early attainment of the coastwide darkblotched rockfish OY. The Council recommended widespread fishery closures and no groundfish retention regulations for many of the California fisheries at the June meeting to protect bocaccio. The Council also recommended an emergency rule to adopt depth based restrictions in this year's limited entry trawl fishery north of Cape Mendocino to allow the fishery to continue after August and avoid exceeding the darkblotched OY. At the September meeting, the Council established a Darkblotched Conservation Area (DBCA) north of Cape Mendocino between management lines specified at 100 and 250 fathoms where all bottom trawling with groundfish gear is prohibited. Groundfish bottom trawling remains closed south of Cape Mendocino. Protections afforded by these management actions allowed the Council to approve additional fishing opportunities for several stocks including Dover sole, thornyheads, sablefish, certain flatfish, widow, yellowtail, and minor slope rockfish.

The Council is to consider advice from the GMT, the GAP, and the public on additional recommended inseason adjustments to the groundfish fishery and adopt changes as necessary.

Council Action:

1. **Consider and adopt inseason adjustments if necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. None at time of briefing book distribution.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider Adjustments in 2002 Management Measures

Mike Burner

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP supports establishing an allowable level of catch that prevents overfishing while achieving OY based on best available science (Sec. II.A.2). The GFSP also supports establishing and maintaining a management process that is transparent, participatory, understandable, accessible, consistent, effective, and adaptable (Sec. II.C). The Council process of adopting inseason adjustments to landing limits is consistent with these GFSP principles.

PFMC
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