

CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

Management measures for the 2007 groundfish season were set by the Council with the understanding these measures would likely need to be adjusted throughout the biennial period in order to attain, but not exceed, the optimum yields.

On July 26, the National Marine Fisheries Service closed the primary seasons for the catcher-processor, mothership, and the shore-based sectors of the Pacific whiting fishery because the widow rockfish bycatch limit specified for that fishery had been attained. Subsequent information revealed that the widow rockfish bycatch limit had been exceeded by several tons, and the amount of canary rockfish caught in the Pacific whiting fishery had approached the specified canary bycatch limit.

The Council received a joint letter (Attachment 1) from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on August 1. This letter stated the importance of the whiting fishery to Oregon and Washington coastal communities, the negative repercussions of an early whiting fishery closure, the desire to re-open the fishery if biologically appropriate, and the intention to put forward a motion at the September meeting to reconsider the widow rockfish bycatch limit. In response, Council staff transmitted a letter to Dr. William Hogarth (Attachment 1) indicating the desire for the timely implementation of a potential Council action on adjustments to the whiting fishery. As part of this letter, Council staff included draft regulations and rationale for advance review and requested front loading of the review process. These draft regulations specify a hypothetical change in the widow rockfish bycatch limit and a hypothetical implementation of an existing rockfish conservation area mechanism for protecting canary rockfish.

The ODFW is also asking the Council to adopt conforming action for non-retention of cabezon in the Oregon recreational ocean boat fishery.

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel will begin meeting on Monday, September 10, 2007 to discuss and recommend inseason adjustments to ongoing 2007 groundfish fisheries. Under this agenda item, the Council is to consider advisory body advice and public comment on the status of ongoing fisheries and recommend inseason adjustments. Agenda item G.6 is scheduled for Thursday, September 13, if it is necessary for further analysis of potential inseason adjustment or clarification prior to adopting final changes.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider information on the status of ongoing fisheries.**
- 2. Consider and adopt inseason adjustments as necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.3.a, Attachment 1: Letter from Dr. Donald McIsaac to Dr. William Hogarth; Joint letter from ODFW and WDFW; Hypothetical regulations and rationale for implementing inseason adjustments to the Pacific whiting fishery.
2. Agenda Item G.3.c, ODFW Report.
3. Agenda Item G.3.e, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. Report of the Groundfish Management Team
 - c. Agency and Tribal Comments
 - d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
 - e. Public Comment
 - f. **Council Action:** Adopt Recommendations for Adjustments to 2007 Fisheries
- Merrick Burden
Kelly Ames

PFMC
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