

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 21: INTERSECTOR ALLOCATION

The Council has decided to pursue a Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment (Amendment 21) in consideration of formal allocations of groundfish species and species' complexes for sectors of the groundfish fishery. Intersector allocations are needed to support rationalization of the limited entry trawl fishery (Amendment 20), implementation of FMP Amendment 18 bycatch mitigation policies, and development of biennial groundfish specifications and management measures.

After considerations at four Council meetings and six Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC) meetings since January 2005, the Council had greatly simplified the intersector allocation alternatives by removing the non-trawl-dominant overfished species (i.e., bocaccio, canary rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish), species in the minor shelf rockfish complexes, and species in the Other Fish complex (except for spiny dogfish) from the list of species under consideration for formal long term allocations. The species remaining for intersector allocation consideration are largely trawl-dominant, with a few exceptions, and the intersector allocation alternatives do not specify sector catch percentages that vary much from those observed in the recent past. The complexity and potential significance of possible impacts of the intersector allocation alternatives adopted by the Council for analysis at the November 2007 meeting are significantly less than the full suite of possibilities originally considered. Therefore, Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff discussions in January, 2008 concluded an Environmental Assessment (EA) rather than an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was the appropriate document for analyzing intersector allocation alternatives.

A draft EA is provided as Agenda Item H.3.a, Attachment 1. The alternatives and analysis in this draft EA are informed by a mix of historical landings (1995-2005) and total catch (2003-2005) data (see Chapter 5 in the March 2008 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Volume 1 document).

The GAC convened their seventh intersector allocation meeting in February 2008 to develop their recommendations (Agenda Item H.3.b, GAC Report on Intersector Allocation). The GAC confirmed their previous recommendation to only pursue trawl allocations in this phase of deciding intersector allocations. They also recommended preliminary preferred alternative total catch percentages for allocating future available harvest yields to the limited entry trawl sectors. The intersector allocation alternatives and the preliminary preferred GAC alternative are analyzed in the draft EA. The GAC also recommended altering the existing schedule such that a preferred alternative be identified at the April Council meeting and there be a delay of final action to a subsequent Council meeting.

The noticed Council task at this meeting is to adopt a final preferred intersector allocation alternative for analysis. In the event final action is delayed to a subsequent meeting, the delay could be until a 2009 Council meeting given Council staff workload on the Groundfish Biennial Specifications and Trawl Rationalization schedules. The Council should consider the GAC recommendations, advisory body advice, and public comments before taking action.

Council Action:

Adopt a final preferred intersector allocation alternative.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.3.a, Attachment 1: Allocation of Harvest Opportunity Between Sectors of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Draft Environmental Assessment Including Regulatory Impact Review and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis.
2. Agenda Item H.3.b, GAC Report: Groundfish Allocation Report on Intersector Allocation from Their February 2008 Meeting.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative for Implementation
- John DeVore

PFMC
03/24/08