

COVER SHEET
2005-2006 GROUND FISH SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Proposed Action: Specify harvest levels (acceptable biological catch and optimum yield values) for species and species complexes in the fishery management unit and establish management measures to constrain total fishing mortality to these specifications for the calendar years 2005-2006.

Type of Statement: Final Environmental Impact Statement

For Further Information
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Abstract:

The *Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan* establishes a framework authorizing the range and type of measures that may be used to manage groundfish fisheries, enumerates 18 objectives that management measures must satisfy (organized under three broad goals), and describes more specific criteria for determining the level of harvest that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation, or optimum yield. Fisheries subject to management measures include limited entry trawl fisheries, limited entry fixed gear (pot and longline) fisheries, and a variety of other fisheries catching groundfish, either as target species or incidentally, but not license limited under the management framework established in the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. Allocations to tribal fisheries off Washington State are also identified. Eight groundfish species are considered overfished and measures to prevent overfishing and rebuild these overfished stocks are a central element of this action. The proposed action establishes harvest guidelines for groundfish species, species groups, and geographic subunits. In order to constrain fisheries to these harvest guidelines, management measures for commercial and recreational fisheries are identified. Management measures considered for commercial fisheries include two-month cumulative landing limits for species, species groups, and geographic subunits for limited entry trawl and fixed gear sectors, and fisheries not license limited under the *Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan*, and gear restrictions to reduce bycatch of overfished species and reduce habitat impacts. Management measures considered for recreational fisheries include bag limits, size limits, and fishing seasons; which vary by state. In addition, area closures based on depth and intended to reduce bycatch of species apply to both commercial and recreational fisheries that are likely to catch these species. These closures vary by geographic area and time of year.

Comments due by: December 13, 2004.

