

COUNCIL DECISIONS AT THE JUNE 2002 MEETING

Released June 24, 2002

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums

Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) – Regarding Salmon Advisory Subpanel tribal seats, the Council will (1) request the Klamath tribes submit a plan for rotation in the Klamath tribal seat of the SAS by September 2002; if no plan is received, the seat will be eliminated; (2) eliminate the Columbia River tribal seat; and (3) request nominations by September 2002, for the Washington coastal tribal seat of a participant in the treaty Indian commercial troll salmon fishery. This appointment would be effective January 1, 2003 for the duration of the current term (through December 31, 2003).

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) – The Council selected Dr. Han-Lin Lai to fill a new NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center Seat on the SSC.

Groundfish Management Team (GMT) – The Council created a new seat on the GMT to be filled by a tribal scientist. The Council selected Mr. Rob Jones from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to fill that seat.

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT

Rebuilding Analyses for Bocaccio, Canary Rockfish, Yelloweye Rockfish, Widow Rockfish, and Whiting

The Council accepted the rebuilding analyses presented for bocaccio, canary rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, widow rockfish, and Pacific whiting for the initial purpose of guidance on preparing rebuilding plans and setting acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY) for 2003. However, the yelloweye rebuilding analysis will be reviewed relative to an independent dataset over the course of the summer, and the Pacific whiting rebuilding analysis results were not used in selecting ABC and OY for 2003.

Preliminary Harvest Levels and Other Specifications for 2003

The Council adopted the ABC and OY levels shown in Exhibit C.4.b, Supplemental GMT Report "Table 2-1 revised," with the following exceptions:

- Pacific Whiting Errata - The ABC of 235,000 mt revised to 188,000 mt; the Alternative 2 OY of 185,300 mt revised to 148,200 mt; the Alternative 3 OY of 217,000 mt revised to 173,600 mt.
- Bocaccio - The listed Alternative 3 (5.8 mt) becomes Alternative 2; Alternative 3 yet to be calculated according to the SSC statement recommendation.
- Darkblotched Rockfish - Alternative 1 OY replaced with the yet-to-be calculated number associated with the mid-point of the range of possible rebuilding times; adding 2 alternatives with OY levels of 100 mt and 130 mt.

The Council indicated that the preferred alternative (noting the regulatory definition of preferred as opposed to the common definition of preferred) is Alternative 2 for species not designated as overfished, as well as Alternative 2 for lingcod and Pacific ocean perch.

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Adoption of Draft Rebuilding Plans for Public Review for Pacific Ocean Perch, Lingcod, Cowcod, Widow Rockfish, and Darkblotched Rockfish

The Council suggested several modifications to rebuilding plan alternatives (now known as Amendment 16) before they are released for public review. The Groundfish Subcommittee of the SSC was asked to review the Amendment 16 package and provide further guidance to rebuilding plan authors. Amendment 16 is not expected to be released for public review prior to the September Council meeting.

Fishery Management Plan Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (PSEIS)

The Council deferred adoption of draft alternatives for the PSEIS.

Draft Amendment 17 (Multi-Year) Management

The Council adopted Amendment 17 for public review, identified a preferred alternative, and provided guidance on additional analysis to be provided for all alternatives. The preferred alternative is a modification of Option 3 (biennial management with a three-meeting process and a January 1 fishing year start), whereby a flexible determination of either the March or April meeting replaces the April meeting as the second meeting in a three-meeting process. The Council also directed that additional analysis be provided prior to final action on the amendment, including comprehensive socioeconomic impact modeling, annual and biennial OY setting, inseason management options, and flexibility of statistical fishing year designations.

Proposed Management Measures for 2003

The Council adopted a broad range of alternative management measures for groundfish commercial and sport fisheries in 2003, to be analyzed over the course of the summer for final decision making at the September Council meeting. All alternatives represent substantial restructuring or closing of fishing opportunity on the continental shelf to protect bocaccio, yelloweye rockfish, and canary rockfish. Details on the various alternatives will be available on the Council website in the near future.

Status of Fisheries and Inseason Adjustments

The Council adopted a variety of inseason restrictions and closures to protect bocaccio and darkblotched rockfish in sport and commercial fisheries for the balance of 2002. Particularly affected are (1) sport fisheries outside 20 fathoms south of Cape Mendocino in northern California beginning July 1, (2) commercial trawl fisheries between 125 and 250 fathoms north of a boundary line near Cape Mendocino beginning September 1, and (3) commercial trawl, fixed gear, and vertical line fisheries south of the boundary line near Cape Mendocino beginning July 1. Details on the specific restrictions and closures will be available on the Council website in the near future.

Groundfish Stock Assessment Priorities for 2003

The Council discussed possible priorities for eleven species that are candidates for stock assessment in 2003. These species are Pacific whiting, lingcod, yelloweye rockfish, bocaccio, Pacific ocean perch, darkblotched rockfish, widow rockfish, cabezon, cowcod, black rockfish, and yellowtail rockfish. The Council will finalize a priority listing at the

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September Council meeting.

Scoping for Delegation of Nearshore Management Authority

The Council heard from California, Oregon, and Washington about their views on the need for transfer of management authority over certain nearshore species from Federal to state management.

California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) provided information on California's nearshore FMP. Transfer of management authority is seen by CDFG as critical to the effectiveness of its nearshore FMP. Hence, CDFG also presented a scoping summary of the species involved, transfer of authority options, and schedule for completion. At this time, the Council has not taken action on this matter.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) reported interest in developing a nearshore FMP, notably to manage the live fish fishery in Oregon waters. ODFW's development of a nearshore FMP is at the initial stage and dependent on staff and funding resources.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) described current management of nearshore fisheries in waters adjacent to Washington. WDFW has actively managed nearshore fisheries since the early 1980s. WDFW is satisfied these measures provide for effective management and noted that transfer of authority would provide no additional benefit at this time.

Transfer of management authority will be further discussed at the September 2002 meeting.

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT

NMFS Report on Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management

The Council directed staff to provide comments to NMFS regarding a Magnuson-Stevenson Act Section 204(d) permit application for a foreign vessel to transport live blue fin tuna caught by United States purse-seine vessels, by June 26, 2002. The comments will include the topics of disease potential in bait feed, California landing laws, catch recording, and applicability of catch towards any future limited entry program.

HMS Draft FMP Development

The Council received a presentation on the status of HMS FMP development. The Council noted a preferred alternative for the HMS management cycle; clarified that commercial passenger fishing vessels are included in the requirement for commercial permits; and requested language be added to the FMP for reviewing EFP applications, including goals and objectives for the exempted fishery. The Council discussed selecting a preferred alternative for drift gillnet mesh size, but deferred this decision pending ongoing analyses.

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HABITAT ISSUES

Essential Fish Habitat Issues

The Council directed the Habitat Committee (HC) to develop a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding Columbia River dredging and to follow up on a similar letter sent to the Corps by the Council in 1999. The Council also directed the HC to develop a letter to NMFS on the impact of the recent Klamath flows biological opinion on Council-managed species. Finally, the Council requested that staff follow up on the letter to FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) sent on May 13, 2002.

MARINE RESERVES

Review of Proposal for Marine Reserves in State Waters of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS)

The Council tasked the Executive Director with forwarding Advisory Body comments on adequacy of the California Environmental Quality Act analysis documents to the California Department of Fish and Game. The Council established an ad hoc policy committee of Council members to meet in late July or early August to develop draft comments on CINMS alternatives for full Council consideration at its September meeting. These comments would be forwarded to the California Fish and Game Commission in the fall. Committee members include the Chair, Vice-Chair, one Council member to be selected by and within each coastal state delegation, and the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Region Council member. Additionally, Ms. Eileen Cooney, Ms. Cindy Thompson, and the chair or chair's designee from the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Habitat Committee, Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel, Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, and Salmon Advisory Subpanel are appointed as non-voting contributing participants.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Amendment 10 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) FMP

Amendment 10 to the CPS FMP establishes a capacity goal and permit transferability provisions in the limited entry fishery and estimates a maximum sustainable yield proxy for market squid. The Council adopted Amendment 10. After editorial revisions to the Environmental Assessment and other documents, Amendment 10 will be transmitted to NMFS for review and, if approved, implementation. It is anticipated that the provisions in Amendment 10 could be implemented by early 2003.

Pacific Mackerel Stock Assessments and Adopt Harvest Guideline

The Council reviewed the most recent assessment of Pacific mackerel abundance. Based on a biomass of approximately 78,000 mt, a harvest guideline of 12,535 mt was adopted for the 2002-2003 season. The directed fishery will begin July 1, 2002 with a 9,500 mt allowance. After this amount is harvested, the directed fishery will be closed and an incidental allowance will be established with a 40% incidental catch rate when Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species. 3,035 mt will be allotted to

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accommodate this incidental harvest. Incidental landings will be closely monitored. In March 2003, the Council will review fishery information and could opt to re-open the directed fishery to ensure attainment of the harvest guideline.

Pending funding arrangements, the Council requested a stock assessment review for CPS stock assessments be conducted in 2003.