

LIST OF DECISIONS AT THE SEPTEMBER 2003 COUNCIL MEETING

Administrative and Other Matters

Election of Council Chair and Vice Chair

The Council elected Mr. Donald Hansen as Council Chair and Mr. David Ortmann as Vice Chair for the duration of the 2003 term and for the next term, which runs from January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004.

Council Input into NOAA Fisheries Constituent Survey

The Council tasked the Executive Director with providing written comments to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in response to their request for ideas to improve the effectiveness of marine fishery management. The letter will contain the full range of matters discussed during this agenda and is expected to be sent prior to the next Council meeting.

Legislative Matters

The Council adopted the Legislative Committee report and directed staff to include the committee's recommendations in the Council newsletter.

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums

Tribal Advisory Subpanel and Habitat Committee Seats

- The Council modified the Council Operating Procedures (COPS) to limit the terms of tribal seats on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and the Habitat Committee to three years.

Advisory Panel Composition

- The Council eliminated one Charter/Sport Fisher seat on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel and the At-Large seat on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel.
- The Council added a Sport Fisher seat and a Northern California (north of Point Conception) Charter Boat Operator seat to the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP).
- The Council added another seat on the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center.

2004-2006 Advisory Body Terms

- The Council directed staff to solicit nominations for advisory body vacancies for the 2004-2006 term. Vacancies include all seats on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel, and the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel; the Tribal, Fishing Industry, Conservation, and At-Large seats on the Habitat Committee; and the At-Large seats on the SSC.

Groundfish Management

Observer Data Implementation Status

The Council considered using new information from the observer program, presented for the first time at this meeting, on the discard rates for species other than overfished species. The Council acted to use these preliminary observer-based discard rates for development of 2004 management measures, but not for purposes of inseason management this year. Further, in response to concerns about a proliferation of new information presented at Council meetings, the Council requested scheduling a discussion for a report at the March 2004 Council meeting regarding policy on the use of new information, from the observer program or other sources, for fisheries management decision making. (Note: Observer-based information on overfished species bycatch rates, provided in April 2003 as the highest priority need, is being used to formulate 2004 management measures and has been used for 2003 inseason management purposes).

Final Harvest Levels for 2004

The Council adopted acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY) levels for groundfish stocks as described in Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1 with the following changes or additions:

- (1) The “medium OY” specifications for sablefish,
- (2) bocaccio - ABC of 400 mt and OY of 250 mt with specific guidance to design fisheries to an OY of 199 mt,
- (3) darkblotched rockfish - ABC and OY both set at 240 mt, and
- (4) black rockfish - “medium OY” specifications.

The Council deferred adoption of the Pacific whiting ABC and OY until the March 2004 meeting. The Council approved a U.S. share ABC of 325,000 mt and OY of 250,000 mt for analysis of Pacific whiting under the “high OY” alternative. The Council deferred adoption of an ABC and OY for canary rockfish until final adoption of groundfish management measures for 2004 under agenda item C.6.

Status of Groundfish Fisheries and Inseason Adjustments

Responding to the current fishery status and updated estimates of total fishing-related mortality, the Council made inseason recommendations to adjust West Coast groundfish fisheries. Limited entry trawl landing limits for the November and December cumulative period were reduced for Dover sole, thornyheads, and sablefish (DTS) as described in Exhibit C.4.b, Supplemental GMT Report.

Final Criteria for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) and Consideration of Proposals for the 2004 Season

The Council adopted COPs for considering EFPs under multi-year management as revised by the GMT following Council input in June. The Council incorporated several GAP and GMT comments on EFP application content, submission, and review

into the revised COPs. Additionally, the Council considered the value of the information obtained in the proposed EFPs and weighed the costs and benefits of allocating harvest between EFPs and directed fisheries. The Council approved the GMT statement on EFPs (Exhibit C.5.d, Supplemental GMT Report) which prioritized six of the seven EFPs proposed for 2004. The California commercial passenger fishing vessels EFP was recommended for deferral until 2005, pending the outcome of SSC review. Final approval of EFPs and their associated harvest set asides for 2004 occurred under the adoption of groundfish management measures for 2004 under agenda item C.6.

Groundfish Management Measures for 2004

The Council adopted significant reductions in groundfish harvest levels and conservative management measures for the 2004 groundfish fishery to protect overfished rockfish species. The Council decided to continue depth-based restrictions that seasonally move recreational and commercial fisheries that catch these overfished stocks out of the depth zones they inhabit. While some fishery restrictions in California were liberalized due to the more optimistic outlook for bocaccio, significant fishery constraints were imposed to reduce mortality of canary rockfish and other overfished groundfish species. Detailed information on the OYs and management measures will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

Proposed Monitoring Program for the Shore-based Pacific Whiting Fishery

The Council delayed adoption of a public review draft of the preliminary range of alternatives for a monitoring program for the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery until the November 2004 Council meeting.

Stock Assessment of Canary Rockfish

The Council elected to not initiate a new stock assessment schedule for canary rockfish for use in the development of management measures for the 2005 fishing year. The Council intent is to explore at a later meeting whether to initiate a stock assessment for the 2006 fishing year or wait for the normally scheduled effort to be used for the 2007-2008 fishing years.

Groundfish Bycatch Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Because the impact analysis section of the document is incomplete, the Council delayed adopting a preliminary draft of the EIS for public review until their next meeting.

Consideration of Individual Quota (IQ) Programs

The Council authorized the Chair to appoint a committee to work on development of IQs for trawl landings. The committee will include diverse representatives from the

trawl industry as well as processors, the Northwest Indian tribes, environmentalist interests, and enforcement. A progress report will be provided at the November 2003 Council meeting, at which time the Council will also address possible control dates.

Habitat Issues

Current Habitat Issues

The Council directed the Habitat Committee to inventory aspects of private salmon marine aquaculture currently in place on the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington (such as number of net pens, amount of production, number of escapees, etc.) and report back to the Council at the November meeting.

Marine Reserves

Update on Marine Reserves Issues

The Council heard updates on the Scientific and Statistical Committee Marine Reserves white paper, the California sanctuaries' Joint Management Plan Review, and the Marine Protected Area Joint Demonstration Project proposal. The Council decided to change the name of the Marine Reserves agenda item category to "Marine Protected Areas" (MPA) in order to include non-marine reserve MPA-related issues under future agendas and provide terminology consistency with other forums. As defined by the Council, an MPA can include a variety of measures to protect ecosystems and fish, while marine reserves are more narrowly focused on controlling fishing effort. Therefore, an MPA may include marine reserves as well as other types of management measures.

Marine Reserves in the Federal Waters Portion of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS)

The Council received a report from CINMS staff on a change in the schedule for consideration of marine reserves in federal waters of the CINMS. Due to a delay in the development of analytical documents, the two-meeting Council process on this matter will occur at the March 2004 Council meeting, as opposed to the September 2003 Council meeting.

Salmon Management

Salmon Methodology Review: Final Prioritization of Modeling Issues for the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The Council directed the SSC to review modifications to the Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) to accommodate analysis of Canadian fisheries and coho stocks, as well as a draft of the Chinook and Coho FRAM overview document. The Council will consider authorizing any proposed model changes at the November Council meeting.

Mitchell Act Program Update

The Council directed staff to schedule an update on Mitchell Act funding issues for the March 2004 Council meeting in Tacoma, Washington and to coordinate any contributing activities by the Salmon Technical Team or the SSC with ongoing state and tribal technical assessments of the impacts of funding shortfalls in 2004, 2005, and beyond.

Pacific Halibut Management

Status of Pacific Halibut Bycatch Estimates for Use by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)

The Council recommended the National Marine Fisheries Service forward the report on Pacific halibut bycatch estimates in 2002 Area 2A trawl fisheries (Exhibit G.2, Supplemental Replacement Attachment 1) to the IPHC for use in management of 2004 fisheries and to include in the transmittal letter the expectation of, and basis for, a much lower estimated value for the next year.

Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations

The Council adopted for public review ten proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) in Oregon and Washington waters, dealing with changes in dates, areas, quota transfers, and public workshop requirements for recreational fisheries. Detailed descriptions of the ten proposed changes will be posted on the Council website at www.pcouncil.org in the near future.