

# Groundfish Management

## Consideration of Limited Refinements to the 2005/2006 Fishery Management Specifications

The Council made the following changes to groundfish specifications and management measures for the 2005-2006 management period:

Fishing Sector/Area	Species	Old Specification	New Specification
limited entry fixed gear south of 40° 10' N latitude	longspine thornyheads	19,000 lbs/2 months	10,000 lbs/2 months
limited entry fixed gear south of 40° 10' N latitude	shortspine thornyheads	4,200 lbs/2 months	2,000 lbs/2 months
limited entry fixed gear (2006 revision only)	sablefish	Tier 1: 63,000 lbs Tier 2: 28,600 lbs Tier 3: 16,400 lbs	Tier 1: 62,700 lbs Tier 2: 28,500 lbs Tier 3: 16,300 lbs
WA & OR Recreational Fishery	lingcod	2005 HG = 206 mt 2006 HG = 239 mt	2005 HG = 234 mt 2006 HG = 271 mt
limited entry trawl north of 38° N latitude	slope rockfish	seaward boundary of RCA = 150 fm; 8,000 lbs/2 months	seaward boundary of RCA = 200 fm (w/ petrale areas open); 4,000 lbs/2 months
limited entry & open access (w/ CDFG deeper nearshore rockfish permits) south of 40° 10' N latitude	deeper nearshore rockfish	400 lbs/month	400 lbs/2 months

## Red Light/Green Light Threshold for Optimum Yield Adjustments

The Council tasked Council staff with transmitting a letter to NMFS re-affirming the original intent at the time of final Council action on Amendment 17 on the matter of adjusting harvest specifications due to new stock assessments that become available at the mid-point of the biennial process. The Council also requested the deletion of the associated amendment language that was actually approved by Secretarial action. Specifically, the original Council action was to allow consideration of both decreases and increases of optimum yields due to new stock assessments for any species of concern to the Council. The language considered for Secretarial approval was for only decreases and only for overfished species. The Council also tasked Council staff with beginning the process of developing the criteria and thresholds, and mechanisms for such mid-process adjustments, with general direction that adjustments be a

rare event. Council staff will arrange for initial technical analyses and schedule a meeting of the Ad Hoc Groundfish Information Policy Committee after the November Council meeting.

### **Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Preliminary Alternatives**

The Council adopted a range of alternatives to be analyzed in the draft EFH EIS and made available for public review. The adopted alternatives are based on the preliminary alternatives developed by the Ad Hoc EFH EIS Oversight Committee. Four sets of alternatives are identified: EFH designation alternatives, habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) designation alternatives, fishing impact alternatives, and research and monitoring alternatives. The alternatives are not necessarily mutually exclusive within or between sets. Therefore, when the Council chooses a preferred alternative, it will include at least one alternative from each set and could contain more than one alternative from within a set. The Council is scheduled to receive the analysis of alternatives and distribute it for public review by mid-October. A preferred alternative will be selected at the November Council Meeting.

### **Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Plan Review and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panels**

The Council provided guidance on developing the Terms of Reference for groundfish stock assessments and stock assessment reviews (STAR) by instructing the SSC to utilize the recommendations in the SSC and GMT statements under Agendum C.8. The Council will adopt final STAR Terms of Reference at the November 2004 Council Meeting. Guidance was also provided for the schedule for developing the Terms of Reference for groundfish rebuilding plan reviews. The Council instructed the SSC to bring forward draft Terms of Reference for rebuilding plan reviews at the November 2004 Council Meeting with the understanding that final adoption will need to occur at the March 2005 Council Meeting.

### **Consideration of 2004 Inseason Adjustments**

Responding to impacts to darkblotched rockfish and canary rockfish in 2004 groundfish fisheries which exceed preseason expectations and 2004 harvest specifications, the Council recommended the following inseason adjustments to federal regulations:

1. Close limited entry trawl fisheries shoreward of 250 fathoms north of 38° N lat., shoreward of 200 fathoms between 38° N lat. and 36° N lat., and shoreward of 150 fathoms south of 36° N lat.
2. Modify trip limits in the limited entry trawl fishery; close the mothership sector of the Pacific whiting fishery.
3. Close the catcher processor sector of the Pacific whiting fishery upon attainment of bycatch caps or whiting quota, whichever comes first.

The Council requested the Pacific whiting fleet voluntarily fish in areas deeper than 150 fathoms for the remainder of the 2004 fishery. The Council also recommended continuation of modified recreational and commercial fisheries in nearshore and deep water areas where

near zero impacts to species of concern exist. A complete description of Council recommendations will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

### **Expansion of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**

The Council adopted a range of alternatives for expanding the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) beyond the limited entry sectors included in the current pilot program. The alternatives focus on groundfish directed open access vessels for the next phase of the VMS program, but include vessels in other target fisheries that incidentally take groundfish or are subject to groundfish RCA restrictions. Additionally, the Council recommended a delay in Council final action on this matter until the March 2005 Council meeting and an October 1, 2005 implementation date for VMS expansion to allow time for adequate public review for the alternatives. The Council's Ad Hoc VMS Committee will meet in Portland on October 7 to review the range of alternatives and discuss a schedule for public meetings.

### **Trawl Individual Quota (TIQ) EIS**

The Council reviewed the results of the scoping process and (1) added a trawl permit stacking option as well as an option to extend the trawl cumulative limit period up to one year; (2) requested a data report regarding species caught with groundfish trawl gear; (3) instructed the TIQ Committee (TIQC) to review their prior votes on issues directly affecting the processing sector as well as proposals in an August 19, 2004 letter from several TIQC members; and (4) added a six nonvoting advisors to the Ad Hoc Allocation Committee to assist the committee in deliberations pertaining to intersector allocation. The seats will be filled to represent each of the groundfish trawl, groundfish fixed gear, open access, and recreational fisheries, as well as the processor sector, and conservation interests. Nominations will be accepted for these positions through October 12. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Allocation Committee will occur between the November and March Council meetings.

## **Salmon Management**

### **Salmon Methodology Review**

The Council directed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to review results of mark-selective chinook fisheries in the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 2003 and 2004 for consistency with projections from the Chinook Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM).

### **Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Update**

The Council requested state and tribal co-managers discuss with stakeholders issues related to allocating coho north of Cape Falcon when selective fisheries are under consideration.

Issues include:

1. Potential allocation implications of the FMP process and other alternatives.
2. Ability of technical staff to analyze fishery alternatives in a timely manner.
3. Identification of constraining stocks within sector and port allocations.
4. Ability to conduct inseason management, such as quota trades, under alternative allocation processes.

The Council will consider the results of these discussions at the November meeting and could

at that time recommend amending the FMP, if necessary.

## **Marine Protected Areas**

### **Guidelines for Review of Marine Reserves Issues**

The Council adopted Terms of Reference to facilitate Council deliberation of marine reserves. The Terms of Reference were developed by the SSC in the document - *Marine Reserves: Objectives, Rationales, Fishery Management Implications and Regulatory Requirements*, September 2004 (Agendum E.1.b, Attachment 1). The SSC document focuses on review of technical aspects of reserves purposes.

The Council also initiated planning for development of specific policies and procedures for Council consideration of marine reserves.

### **Update on Miscellaneous Marine Protected Areas Activities (MPA)**

The Council was updated on recent MPA-related activities along the West Coast. Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuaries (CBNMS) reported their intention to propose management measures that could affect Council-managed fisheries within the sanctuary. Potential measures proposed to protect benthic invertebrates and submerged lands within CBNMS could potentially affect fishing activities within the 50 fm isobath around CBNMS.

### **Krill Harvest Ban Proposal**

The Council received a report from NMFS about four alternative management approaches for implementing a prohibition on directed krill fisheries off the West Coast. NMFS indicated a preference towards including such a consideration in the Coastal Pelagic Species FMP, and pledged to work with the Council Executive Director to further describe how such an approach may be most efficiently conducted. The Council requested the four alternatives be provided to Council advisory bodies for review and comment. At the November 2004 meeting, the Council will consider selecting an appropriate management process for considering the prohibition of directed krill fisheries and potentially other forage fish species.

## **Pacific Halibut Management**

### **Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations**

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

### **Review of Pacific Halibut Bycatch Estimates for Use by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC)**

The Council recommended NMFS forward the report on Pacific halibut bycatch estimates in 2003 Area 2A trawl fisheries (Agendum F.3.b, Supplemental Attachment 1) to the IPHC for use in management of 2005 fisheries.

## **Habitat Issues**

### **Current Habitat Issues**

The Council directed the Habitat Committee to work with Council staff to prepare a letter to NMFS on its recently released draft biological opinion (BO) on Columbia River hydropower system operations. Due to time constraints, the letter will focus on higher level matters of principle or approach, and request an extension to submit more extensive comments on the details of the BO. Additionally, the letter will be sent in accordance with the "fast track" procedures relative to Council Member approval of content.

## **Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management**

### **FMP Amendment for Limited Entry in the High Seas Pelagic Longline Fishery and Stock Assessments for Albacore and Blue Tuna**

The Council tasked the Executive Director with sending a letter to the appropriate NMFS and Congressional authorities indicating the need for renewal of dedicated funding to complete the various tasks and processes the Council believes are necessary to implement the recently adopted HMS FMP. Such activities include preparing SAFE and other required documents, FMP amendments on turtle protection, longline and drift gillnet fisheries, sport fishery catch limits, commercial and sport fishery specifications, review of EFPs, participation in domestic and international science and policy regulatory and coordination forums, and recommending research priorities. Substantial frustration was expressed by Council members about what appears to be a retraction of funding from the NMFS budgets to support HMS FMP implementation.

## **Coastal Pelagic Species Management**

### **STAR Panel Report**

The Council adopted STAR Panel reports for Pacific mackerel and Pacific sardine. New assessment methodologies will be used for management of the 2005 sardine fishery and the 2005-2006 Pacific mackerel fishery. Council staff was tasked with submitting the STAR panel reports to NMFS and highlighting the need for funding and resources for proper management of Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) resources, especially critical research and data needs.

### **FMP Amendment – Sardine Allocation**

The Council considered two issue groups separately under this agendum. The first issue is development of management alternatives to allocate sardine. The Council supports the

CPSAS work to date and directed the CPSAS to narrow the current broad range of alternatives for Council consideration at the November 2004 meeting.

Secondly, the Council received information from the CPSMT about their consideration of several FMP-related issues raised by NMFS. The Council directed staff to communicate to NMFS the Council review and plans for further review of CPS EFH.

## **Administrative and Other Matters**

### **National Marine Fisheries Service Revision of National Standard 1**

The Council tasked Council staff to work with the SSC Chair to coordinate advisory body comments and provide written comments to NMFS in response to their proposed revision of National Standard 1 Guidelines. The response will contain the full range of matters discussed during this agendum and is expected to be sent prior to the next Council meeting.

### **Update of Council Operating Procedures (COP) and Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures (SOPP) Documents**

The Council adopted amendments to the Council Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures as detailed in Agendum B.3.a, Attachment 2 and deferred consideration of the Council Operating Procedures until the November 2004 meeting.

### **Council Communication Plan**

The Council accepted the Council Communications Action Plan without changes and directed the Communication Enhancement Team to continue with Phases II and III of the plan.

### **Interim Appointments to Advisory Bodies**

The Council appointed Dr. Stephen Barrager to the Conservation Group seat on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel. Council staff will solicit nominations for the following vacancies:

Groundfish Advisory Subpanel – Sport Fisheries At-Large (2 vacancies);

Salmon Advisory Subpanel – Oregon Charter Boat Operator (1 vacancy);

Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel – Conservation Group (1 vacancy);

Groundfish Allocation Committee – Non-voting advisors on individual quota allocation issues (6 vacancies).

## **Draft September 2004 Council Meeting Agenda**

The Council adopted the draft agenda for the November Council meeting to be held November 1-5, 2004 in Portland, Oregon. The draft agenda will be available on the Council website [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org) in the near future.