

INITIAL SCOPING OF BIENNIAL SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT REFERENCE POINTS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Chapter 5 in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) describes the biennial management cycle. Under this process, Council decision-making occurs at the June, September, and November Council meetings to establish or adjust harvest specifications and management measures for a two-year period beginning on April 1 of the following year—the start of the next fishing year. This agenda item commences the sixth biennial management cycle since FMP implementation, with any regulations proposed by the Council becoming effective on or after April 1, 2017. Such regulations continue in effect for at least two years unless subsequently modified through the Council process. The FMP also authorizes the use of the biennial process to identify, adopt, and review revised estimates of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), and any related status determination criteria (SDC), based on the best scientific information.

As of the advanced briefing book deadline no regulatory adjustment proposals had been identified. However, the Council may wish to consider whether the estimates of MSY and OY in the HMS FMP should be updated. Section 303(a)(3) in the Magnuson-Steven Act states that a required provision of an FMP is “to assess and specify the present and probable future condition of, and the maximum sustainable yield and optimum yield from, the fishery, and include a summary of the information utilized in making such specification.” In response to this requirement Table 4-3 in the HMS FMP lists estimates of MSY and OY based on information available prior to 2004 when the FMP was first published. Table 4-3 has also caused confusion because it describes management unit species at the stock level and the definitions for some stocks have changed since that time. A pertinent example is Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) swordfish. As discussed under Agenda Item D.2, the EPO swordfish stock has been declared subject to overfishing and Table 4-2 lists MSY and OY proxies for an EPO stock. However, the [most recent stock assessment](#) (completed by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean in 2014) defines a Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock (WCNPO) stock and an EPO stock occurring only within the range of catch in West Coast swordfish fisheries most likely coming from the WCNPO stock. This has led the Council to question the need for it to respond to the overfishing declaration. The Council should discuss and clarify the relationship between the specification of management unit species and the stocks that are actually vulnerable to fisheries managed under the HMS FMP. The Council also may wish to discuss whether numerical specifications are actually required in the FMP document itself, given that none of the Council’s other FMPs contain such numerical specifications.

In March 2016 the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) noted that need for “FMP housekeeping” to address various largely descriptive sections of the FMP that are out of date ([Agenda Item I.3.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report, March 2016](#)). The HMSMT assumes that making these changes will require Secretarial approval per Magnuson-Stevens Act Section 304(a). Although this task extends beyond the scope of activities considered during the biennial process, the Council should discuss whether the three meeting process used for the biennial process should be used to address the MSY and OY specifications, identification of the specified stocks, or an expanded scope encompassing these two tasks and correction to other dated portions of the FMP. In its report the HMSMT states “In June or a subsequent meeting, the

HMSMT would provide a list of potential housekeeping measures for Council consideration and guidance on any that may not meet the standards for a housekeeping change.”

Council Action:

Identify Issues for Consideration in the Biennial Process.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.4.b, Public Comment: EcoCast Real-Time Data Tools for Dynamic Fisheries Management Progress Report June 2016.

Agenda Order:

- D.4 Initial Scoping of Biennial Specifications Including Management Reference Points and Management Measures Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Identify Issues for the Biennial Management Process

PFMC
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