

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON NATIONAL STANDARDS 1 CARRYOVER PROVISIONS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the information on the National Standards 1 (NS1) carryover provisions and offer the following thoughts.

Approaches

The GMT believes that both approaches under consideration offer positive benefits. Approach 1 (Utilizing the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Buffer) offers a potentially less process-intensive way to access unharvested poundage from Year 1 in Year 2 of the biennium, while Approach 2 (Increasing the acceptable biological catch (ABC) in Year 2 by the Unharvested Yield from the Previous Year) could provide the greatest benefit. However, Approach 2 would require stock assessors to recalculate the harvest specifications (e.g., ABC or ACL) mid-cycle from the most recent stock assessment for Year 2, which could be an intensive process.

Catch Uncertainty

Regardless of which approach is taken, there will be some uncertainty in the catch and discards (total impacts) from Year 1 due to the delay in reporting for some sectors. Table 1 contains information on the time lag in catch and discard data by sector. Delays would mainly be attributed to discard mortality estimates from some sectors (e.g., nearshore) but not all (e.g., at-sea).

Table 1. Information on timing of data availability on landings and discards by sector.

Sector	Landings	Discards
At-sea	24 hours	24 hours
IFQ	24 hours	24 hours (with reconciliation possible from observers by end of year)
Recreational	Monthly, with 1 month lag	Monthly, with 1 month lag
Nearshore	1 week (OR) to 2-3 mo. (CA)	8 months (Groundfish Mortality Report)
Non-Nearshore	24 hours (sablefish) to 2-3 mo. for non-sablefish (CA)	8 months (Groundfish Mortality Report)
Incidental state fisheries	Variable lag, but within 2-3 mo.	8 months (Groundfish Mortality Report)
Research	Some inseason (e.g., IPHC), Others delayed 8 months (e.g., trawl survey)	Same as landings
Tribal	Weekly	Monthly

To account for delays in the finalization of total mortality estimates, the Council could consider three options: (1) wait until final West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) estimates are completed eight months into the following year, (2) use preliminary data and/or projections to

reassess the ABC for Year 2, or (3) set the Year 2 ABC so that it includes potential unharvested catch (i.e. year 2 ABC = Year 1 unharvested catch + Year 2 preliminary ABC).

Since the current eight month delay with WCGOP estimates would compromise the ability to utilize carryover in the following year in a timely manner, using preliminary data and projections would seem the better option (Option 2 or 3). While Option 1 would likely provide the greatest carryover since actual mortality would be used instead of conservative projections, the likelihood of being able to access the unused allocation before the end of the year is low. The third option would require predictions of potentially unharvested catch from the first year of the biennium be used to calculate the ABC for Year 2. Therefore, a larger ABC, in Year 2, could be set based on the average of unharvested catch for a stock in previous years. The Year 2 ABC would then be equal to an average of unharvested catch plus the ABC for Year 2. Option 3 would require predictions and estimates based on the unharvested catch in from the first year of the biennium during the preceding harvest specifications analysis. Therefore, Option 2 or 3 would be the only viable approaches to have access to carryover in a timely manner.

Economic benefits vs conservation concerns

This carryover proposal allows unharvested fish from one year to be used in the next. Total mortality from both years would not be allowed to exceed the sum of the combined ABCs (original for Year 1 and Year 2 adjusted). Since ACLs are established to optimize yield for healthy stocks and accomplish rebuilding objectives for overfished stocks, carryover would not jeopardize conservation objectives.

Economic benefits would be expected to vary by stock. Benefits would be expected to be relatively low for healthy, low attainment stocks (e.g., starry flounder); that is because if they are not using much quota in Year 1, then adding more in Year 2 would lead to an even lower attainment rate.

Economic benefits would be expected to be greater for high attainment stocks (e.g., sablefish, black rockfish) since the extra yield in Year 2 would be desirable, resulting in a greater probability of being utilized. Economic benefits could also be greater for stocks that have relatively low attainment rates overall (i.e., compared to ACL), but which constrain other sectors. For example, yelloweye rockfish impacts are relatively low compared to the ACL but the take of yelloweye constrains many fisheries (e.g., recreational, fixed gear, IFQ). As such, carrying over unused ACL would increase the individual sector allocations in year two, and thus reduce bycatch constraints.

Workload Considerations

As with the “green light” approach (i.e., mid-biennium ACL change) discussed last fall, the GMT has concerns about the combined workload associated with both the required fishery management plan (FMP) amendment to implement carryover, and the annual estimation and implementation of the carryover, compared to its “reward.” If carryover were only available for approximately six months, as was the estimate for the “green light”, it is questionable whether it would be worth taking resources, effort, and workload capacity away from other priorities.

Recommendations

Given the above considerations, the GMT recommends bringing forth this item for scoping in June to describe the timeline for implementation, and the associated workload with implementing this feature after it has been frameworked into the FMP and regulations.