

FINAL ACTION ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

Management measures for groundfish are set by the Council with the general understanding that these measures will likely need to be adjusted within the biennium to attain, but not exceed, the annual catch limits (ACL). This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries, including landings of Pacific halibut in the limited entry fixed gear sablefish primary fishery north of Point Chehalis, as well as routine inseason adjustments to ongoing 2017 fisheries. Potential inseason adjustments include adjustments to Rockfish Conservation Area boundaries and adjustments to commercial and recreational fishery catch limits. Adjustments are, in part, based on catch estimate updates and the latest information from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program.

At the June 2017 meeting, the Council requested that the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) develop alternatives for releasing the 188 mt ACL buffer for canary rockfish. The buffer was established in the 2017-2018 harvest specifications and management measures process to account for unforeseen catch events in any sector. When unforeseen catch events occur that compromise a sector's ability to access target species (e.g., catch is projected to attain a quota prior to target species attainment or catch event results in attainment of a quota causing fishery closure), the Council could recommend releasing the buffer thereby increasing the sector allocation and providing greater access to target species. When determining whether to release the buffer, the Council should consider the allocation framework criteria outlined in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the objectives to maintain or extend fishing and marketing opportunities, while taking into account the best available information on sector needs. The Council could recommend full reapportionment, partial reapportionment, or no reapportionment, based on the FMP objectives and managing the risk of exceeding an ACL. The buffer approach is similar to the process used when groundfish mortality in research, exempted fishing permits, or incidental open access fisheries is lower than the pre-season projections, and a sector has realized a need to access the residual yield. The GMT has provided the most recent sector projections, as well as policy considerations and process options for releasing the buffer (Agenda Item E.10.a, GMT Report 1).

Council Action:

Consider projections for the 2017 fisheries and adopt inseason adjustments, as necessary.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.10.a, GMT Report 1: Groundfish Management Team Report on Inseason Adjustments: Canary Rockfish Buffer.
2. Agenda Item E.10.b, Public Comment 1.

Agenda Order:

E.10 Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

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- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Inseason Adjustments as Necessary, to Achieve, but Not Exceed, Annual Catch Limits and Other Management Objectives

PFMC

08/15/17