

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 16, ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) in 2007 established new requirements to end and prevent overfishing through the use of annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs). The reauthorization also contained new requirements for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to recommend acceptable biological catch (ABC) levels to the Council that account for scientific uncertainty. Federal fishery management plans (FMPs) must establish mechanisms for ACLs and AMs by 2010 for stocks subject to overfishing and by 2011 for all others, with the exception of stocks managed under an international agreement or stocks with a life cycle of approximately one year. On January 16, 2009, National Marine Fisheries Service published amended guidelines for National Standard 1 (NS1Gs) to provide guidance on how to comply with new provisions of the MSA (Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1).

The Council is tentatively scheduled to adopt alternatives for public review at the September 2010 meeting and take final action at the November 2010 meeting. Final action in November would allow the Council to implement the amendment during the preseason planning process, and should provide adequate time to complete the administrative process prior to the beginning of the next salmon regulation cycle on May 1, 2011.

At its September 2009 meeting, the Council identified several issues to be considered in the amendment process including: stock classification, status determination criteria, overfishing limit (OFL)/ acceptable biological catch (ABC)/annual catch limit (ACL) reference point framework, AMs, and *de minimis* fishery provisions. Since that time, the ad hoc salmon amendment committee (SAC) has met several times to develop alternatives for these issues and draft a report for Council consideration (Agenda Item C.2.b, SAC Report).

The SAC Report contains proposed alternatives and analyses for consideration by the Council. The alternatives are organized around five topics:

- 1) Classifying stocks in the FMP as in the fishery, out of the fishery, or ecosystem component (EC) stocks.
- 2) Applying the MSA international exception to specifying ABC, ACLs, and AMs for stocks managed under the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST).
- 3) Establishing objective and measurable status determination criteria (SDC) for all relevant stocks in the FMP.
- 4) Establishing a framework for application of OFL/ABC/ACL reference points.
- 5) Determining appropriate accountability measures necessary to prevent ACLs from being exceeded, and to mitigate any overages that may occur.
- 6) Establishing *de minimis* fishing provisions for stocks that don't have existing mechanisms absent an emergency rule when a conservation alert is triggered.

The SAC Report is a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the alternatives and providing a record for the FMP amendment process. The analyses of some issues are still incomplete; however, alternatives for stock classification, status determination criteria, ACLs, AMs, and *de minimis* fisheries are sufficiently complete for the Council to adopt a range of alternatives, and if appropriate, to identify preliminary preferred alternatives, to release for public review.

Council Task:

- 1. Adopt alternatives for public review.**
- 2. As appropriate, identify preliminary preferred alternatives**
- 3. Provide additional guidance on development and analysis of alternatives.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1: National Standard 1 Guidelines.
2. Agenda Item C.2.b, SAC Report: Draft Environmental Assessment for Pacific Coast Salmon Plan Amendment 16: Classifying Stocks, Revising Status Determination Criteria, Establishing Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, and *De Minimis* Fishing Provisions.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Proposed Alternatives for Public Review

Chuck Tracy

PFMC
08/23/10