

BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT SPECIFICATIONS 2015-2016 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

This is the last of several agenda items at this meeting addressing harvest specifications and management measures for 2015-2016 groundfish fisheries. Under Agenda Item H.2, the Council is scheduled to adopt preliminary exempted fishing permits (EFPs) and the associated yield set-asides for public review. Under Agenda Items H.4, H.5, and H.6, the Council is scheduled to adopt final stock complex aggregations remaining, stock assessments and rebuilding plans, overfishing limits, final preferred overfishing probabilities (P*s)/acceptable biological catches and annual catch limits (ACL) for each stock and stock complex. In the event the Council does not complete all tasks under the previous agenda items or if additional analyses are requested, the remainder of the harvest specifications decisions should be made under Agenda Item H.10. Further, under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to discuss management measures including guidance on preliminary set-asides, two-year allocations, season structures for commercial and recreational fisheries, and new management measures for detailed analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Management measures, which are also referred to as accountability measures, are used to meet the goals of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, including attaining but not exceeding the ACL and correcting or mitigating overages of the ACL if they occur. For the 2015-2016 cycle, the first set of management measures are implemented when deductions from the ACL, called set-asides, are made to account for groundfish mortality resulting from Pacific Coast treaty tribal harvest, scientific research, non-groundfish fisheries, and EFPs. Further, set-asides for some species are deducted from the trawl allocation to accommodate bycatch in the at-sea whiting fishery (catcher-processors and motherships). The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) is expected to provide a report at the Council meeting summarizing the recommended set-asides. The Council should adopt or modify the GMT recommendations under this agenda item to facilitate the EIS analysis.

The ACL less the set-asides is called the fishery harvest guideline (HG) or commercial HG (sablefish north of 36° N. latitude and Pacific whiting), which is the amount available for the sector-specific allocations. Sector allocations include formal long-term allocations (e.g., allocations made under Amendments 6 and 21) and short-term allocations implemented for the biennial period. Under this agenda item, the Council should recommend preliminary two-year allocations to facilitate the analysis. Attachment 1 contains information relevant to deciding the allocations.

At the September meeting, the Council adopted a preliminary range of new management measures and adjustments to existing management measures. The GMT has provided the background, relevant factors for the analysis, and an initial workload estimate for Council consideration (Agenda Item H.10.b, GMT Report). The Council should provide guidance on a range of season and area restrictions, trip limits, daily bag limits, and other harvest control measures for key target and constraining bycatch species; a range of geographic or sector-specific harvest guidelines; and a sense of how far fisheries should be restricted in 2015-2016 to rebuild depleted species as quickly as possible given the biological, ecological, social, and economic consequences of doing so.

Under this agenda item, the Council should carefully consider the list of potential management measures proposed by management entities, advisory bodies, and the public when deciding which issues are the highest priorities for more detailed analyses. Results of the detailed analyses will help the Council develop a preliminary preferred suite of 2015-2016 management measures at the April 2014 Council meeting. After a public review period, the Council will take final action at the June 2014 Council meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt any remaining groundfish harvest specifications for 2015-2016.**
- 2. Adopt set-aside deductions from the ACLs and the trawl allocations, as appropriate.**
- 3. Adopt preliminary two-year allocations as necessary.**
- 4. Adopt a range of management measures for more detailed analysis.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.10.a, Attachment 1: Recent Year Catch Estimates Relevant to Deciding a Range of 2015-2016 Allocations.
2. Agenda Item H.10.b, GMT Report: GMT Report on Management Measures for the 2015-2016 Biennial Harvest Specifications.
3. Agenda Item H.10.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kelly Ames, John DeVore
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Any Remaining Harvest Specifications, Preliminary Two-Year Allocations, and Management Measures for More Detailed Analysis.

PFMC
10/10/13