

## FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 13: ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (MSRA) established several new fishery management provisions pertaining to National Standard 1 (NS1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), which states “Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.” On January 16, 2009, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule to implement the new MSRA requirements and amend the guidelines for NS1. The MSRA and amended NMFS guidelines introduce new fishery management concepts including overfishing levels (OFLs), annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and accountability measures (AMs) that are designed to better account for scientific and management uncertainty and to prevent overfishing. These important aspects of the MSRA are required to be implemented by 2011 for most species and by 2010 for those species subject to overfishing.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council’s) Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) include harvest control rules for actively managed species (Pacific sardine and Pacific mackerel) that are intended to prevent overfishing while maintaining relatively high and consistent catch levels over the long-term and provide a solid foundation for new fishery management provisions such as OFLs, ACLs, and ACTs. The CPS FMP’s monitored stocks are either exempt from the new requirements because of their short life cycle (market squid) or are currently harvested at relatively low levels (anchovy, jack mackerel). ACLs for monitored stocks may be implemented with greater flexibility, but also greater precaution, than for actively managed species because they are assessed with less frequency.

In November 2009, the Council supported alternatives proposed by Council staff regarding stock status determination criteria and alternative management frameworks. Specifically, the Council supported analyses of sector- specific ACLs and requested an analysis of ACTs to address management uncertainty and to buffer against overfishing. As additional guidance, the Council placed a higher priority on time-sensitive MSA requirements such as ACLs and ABC control rules and put a lower priority on the consideration of optional provisions such as including additional forage species in the CPS FMP and the development of mechanisms to streamline inseason management.

Determining the degree to which the provisions in the existing harvest control rules adequately buffer CPS stocks from overfishing will be a critical step in insuring the amended CPS FMP meets the new NS1 requirements. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Groundfish and CPS Subcommittees met with members of the CPS and Groundfish Management Teams January 26-28, 2010 to refine the development of a framework for factoring scientific uncertainty into harvest control rules. Much of the work is focused on quantifying assessment variability for CPS and groundfish stocks with a history of multiple assessments as a basis for evaluating the size of a scientific uncertainty buffer (i.e., the difference in yield between the OFL and the ABC) and the risk of overfishing the stock. SSC Subcommittee recommendations will be brought forward at this meeting to the full SSC and the Council under this Agenda Item as well as Agenda Item E.4, *Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Amendment 23--Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures*.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to review a preliminary range of amendment alternatives and analysis and adopt a preliminary preferred alternative for public review. Final Council action is schedule for the June 2010 Council meeting to allow for the Secretarial approval process and full implementation by 2011.

**Council Action:**

**Adopt Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Public Review.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item H.2.a, Attachment 1, *Preliminary Alternatives and Analyses for Amendment 13 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan.*
2. Agenda Item H.2.b, Supplemental SSC Report.
3. Agenda Item H.2.b, Supplemental CPSMT Report.
4. Agenda Item H.2.b, Supplemental CPSAS Report.

**Agenda Order:**

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

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