

BIENNIAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2015-2016 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

In June, the Council adopted a process and schedule for deciding harvest specifications and management measures for 2015 and beyond groundfish fisheries (see [Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 3, June 2013](#)). Based on this schedule, the Council will continue deciding groundfish harvest specifications and new management measures for 2015-2016 (and beyond) groundfish fisheries at this meeting. Specifically, the Council is tasked with adopting final preferred overfishing limits (OFLs) for those remaining stocks and complexes in which OFLs were not decided at the September 2013 meeting; final preferred acceptable biological catches (ABCs); and a range of annual catch limits (ACLs), including preliminary preferred ACLs for each stock and complex. Further, the Council will discuss modifications to Council Operating Procedure (COP) 9 (adoption of COP 9 is scheduled for later in the week under Agenda Item I.5) and any relevant miscellaneous issues other than new management measures for 2015-2016 fisheries, which will be considered under Agenda Item H.10.

Proposed 2015-2016 OFLs, with those OFLs not previously decided in September highlighted, the range of potential 2015 and 2016 ABCs based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC's) estimated sigmas for each stock/stock category and a range of overfishing probabilities (P*s), and presumptive ACLs based on the default harvest control rules decided for 2013-2014 are provided in tables in Attachment 1. The SSC will review these proposed harvest specifications, stock categories, and sigma values and make their recommendations to the Council. The Council should review these proposed harvest specifications and adopt those OFLs, stock categories, and stock/stock category sigma values recommended by the SSC. Additionally, the Council should adopt final preferred ABCs based on their P* choice and a range of ACLs, including preliminary preferred ACLs, for more detailed analysis.

The Council discussed proposed changes to COP 9 (Attachment 2), the Council Operating Procedure outlining the biennial specifications decision-making process, at their September meeting. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) provides their recommendations on modifications to COP 9 in Agenda Item H.6.b, GMT Report.

The Council decided in June to proceed with a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) where 2015-2016 harvest specifications and management measures will be analyzed, as well as an analysis of longer term (i.e., 10 years) projections of potential harvest levels to provide efficiency and workload relief in future National Environmental Policy Act analyses. The GMT recommended a centerpiece of the Tier 1 EIS analysis should be done using ecosystem modeling. The SSC's Ecosystem-Based Management Subcommittee is scheduled to meet with ecosystem modeling experts on October 30 to discuss the current capabilities of ecosystem models to inform such analyses. Agenda Item H.6.a, Attachment 3 was prepared by staff to outline the issues and to raise questions to be discussed at the subcommittee meeting. Additional materials provided for this meeting are available on the November 2013 briefing book CD and website (electronic only). The SSC's recommendations on the use of ecosystem models for this analysis will be forthcoming in their statement to the Council under this agenda item.

The Council should consider the advice of the SSC, other advisory bodies, and the public before deciding final preferred OFLs, final preferred ABCs, and preliminary preferred ACLs for 2015 and 2016 groundfish fisheries. If there are outstanding questions that need further analysis, Council decision making may be delayed to Agenda Item H.10

Council Action:

1. **Adopt those remaining 2015-2016 OFLs, stock categories, and sigma values recommended by the SSC.**
2. **Adopt final preferred 2015-2016 P*s/ABCs for more detailed analysis.**
3. **Adopt a range of 2015-2016 ACLs, including preliminary preferred ACLs for more detailed analysis.**
4. **Discuss modifications to COP 9.**
5. **Provide other guidance as appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.6.a, Attachment 1: Proposed Overfishing Limits, Acceptable Biological Catches, and Presumptive Annual Catch Limits for 2015 and 2016 Groundfish Fisheries.
2. Agenda Item H.6.a, Attachment 2: Proposed Revisions to COP 9.
3. Agenda Item H.6.a, Attachment 3: SSC Ecosystem-Based Management Subcommittee on Ecosystem Consideration in the Groundfish Harvest Specifications EIS Analysis.
4. Agenda Item H.6.b, GMT Report: Groundfish Management Team Report on Revising Council Operating Procedure 9.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore, Kelly Ames
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Overfishing Limits, Final P*/Allowable Biological Catches, Preliminary Preferred Annual Catch Limits for Each Stock and Stock Complex, Consider Modifications to Council Operating Procedure 9, and Consider Issues other than Management Measures

PFMC
10/10/13