

AMENDMENT 17
TO THE PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
(MULTI-YEAR MANAGEMENT AND THE SPECIFICATIONS
AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES PROCESS)

INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, REGULATORY IMPACT REVIEW,
AND INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This Environmental Assessment analyzes the effects of converting the Pacific Fishery Management Council's current annual specifications and management measures process to a biennial management process. The federal action consists of specifying that the West Coast groundfish harvest specifications and management measures process will be conducted on a biennial basis. Three notices will be published in the *Federal Register* to make this rulemaking final, including a Notice of Availability for the Fishery Management Plan amendment, a Proposed Rule, and a Final Rule. Environmental effects considered within this document are to: target and non-target species, the age of the resource surveys and assessments used in setting harvest specifications, harvest availability and processing opportunity, safety of fishery participants, social and cultural needs of fishery participants, and public participation in and management and science time devoted to the specifications and management process. The preferred alternative is to have the Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings develop the specifications and management measures at three meetings held in the November, April, and June meetings prior to the start of the biennial fishing period. The biennial fishing period will start on January 1, with the first biennial fishing period being from January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2006.

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