REPORT OF THE AD-HOC ALLOCATION COMMITTEE
June 2-3, 1999

The Chairman of the Committee, Jerry Mallet, called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Committee members in attendance were:

Mr. Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Mr. LB Boydstun, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
Mr. Neal Coenen, Oregon Department Fish Wildlife (ODFW)
Mr. Jerry Mallet, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Committee Chairman)
Mr. Bill Robinson, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Dr. Dave Hanson, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

The Committee was assisted by Ms. Julie Walker (Council Staff) and Ms. Eileen Cooney (NOAA Counsel). Groundfish Management Team (GMT) members Mr. Brian Culver and Dr. Jim Hastie were also present and assisted the committee as needed. Council staff members Mr. Larry Six, Mr. Jim Seger, and Mr. Jim Glock were also in attendance for varying lengths of time. Members of the public in attendance were:

Ms. Yvonne DeReynnier	Mr. Rod Moore	Ms. Karen Lewis
Ms. Karen Reyna	Dr. Joshua Sladek-Nowlis	Ms. Jennifer Bloeser

Other Rockfish Allocations
Dr. Jim Hastie responded on behalf of the Groundfish Management Team to the committee's previous requests relating to other rockfish allocations (see Attachment A). Mr. Russell Porter reported to the committee on the RecFIN system. He reported that MRFSS, the survey on which the RecFIN data are based, was not designed to support inseason monitoring of recreational catch. Efforts are underway to revise RecFIN to make it more compatible with Council management needs, but MRFSS national managers are concerned with keeping the integrity of the nationwide survey .

Committee members agreed that how the Council proceeds with rockfish allocations needs to be linked with the strategic planning process. The committee's priority at this meeting was to focus on rebuilding plans and allocations for lingcod, bocaccio, and Pacific ocean perch.

Schedule for Rebuilding Plans
The statutory deadline for rebuilding plans to be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce is March of 2000. To meet this deadline, the Council must take final action at its November meeting. After the November meeting, staff would need a few months to finalize the package and submit it to NMFS. Rebuilding regulations may not be officially in place until sometime after January 1, 2000.

Rebuilding Plan Format
NMFS has specified that the rebuilding plans must be in the form of an FMP amendment. To avoid unnecessary addition and future revision to the FMP, Mr. Glock and Mr. Robinson presented the idea of including the basics of a rebuilding plan in the FMP amendment, and including source documents (such as the assessments), by reference.

Mr. Robinson suggested the rebuilding plan amendment contain for each overfished stock: stock status, species distribution, life history characteristics, environmental factors, fishery impacts, existing allocations, rebuilding goals, and potential management measures that may be used to achieve the rebuilding goals. The EA/RIR would contain an assessment of time frames considered in rebuilding, alternatives of management measures used to achieve rebuilding, including any necessary allocations, check points for progress towards rebuilding, and a thorough discussion of biological, economic and social trade-offs.

Staff has developed suggestions on how to structure rebuilding plans based on this guidance (see June briefing book, Supplemental Attachment G.9.a.).

Committee members recognized that some management measures (such as marine reserves) may have to be developed and implemented on a slower time frame, and that the rebuilding plans should build in flexibility for future management measures. Because of the limited data available to predict the changes in mortality of rebuilding species that may be associated with area closures or reductions in opportunities for other species, it will be important for the Council to utilize an adaptive management approach over the rebuilding periods.

Lingcod Rebuilding

The Committee reviewed rebuilding projections presented by Tom Jagielo, and had the following comments.

Uncertainty of Canadian management

The committee expressed concern that U.S. efforts to rebuild would be fruitless and unrealistic unless Canadian catches were also constrained. The committee urges National Marine Fisheries Service to consult with the Canadians on transboundary lingcod issues. Obtaining agreement from Canada to adopt harvests in Area 3C that are consistent with the U.S. rebuilding plan may prove difficult, if Canadian scientists do not 1) share the view that the area contained in the assessment represents a single stock, or 2) believe the portion of the stock in Area 3C is as depressed as the portion in U.S. waters. Until the issue of Canadian cooperation is resolved, the committee recommends that harvests within the U.S. portion of the assessment area be constrained to the U.S. share of the total assessment-area yields identified in the rebuilding plan, since the Council cannot control Canadian harvests. If cooperation is not forthcoming, it may be desirable to constrain the coastwide lingcod assessment in 2000 to U.S. waters only, so that the Council and NMFS may implement a rebuilding plan and evaluate its progress, based on management decisions over which we have control.

Southern and northern assessment areas

The rebuilding projections for lingcod are based on the 1997 assessment of the northern range of the lingcod stock. In July of this year, an assessment for the southern portion of the stock is expected to be completed and reviewed. In 2000, a coastwide lingcod assessment is planned. The overfished determination was made based on the northern stock assessment. There is no evidence to suggest there are two separate lingcod stocks, and the Council is mandated to manage a stock throughout its range. However, the southern stock assessment could show the southern portion of the stock to be in a different condition than the northern portion. The committee recommends proceeding under the assumption that lingcod rebuilding will be a coastwide effort and that management measures will apply coastwide unless the southern assessment suggests there is reason to do otherwise.

Rebuilding Harvest Levels

The committee asked that the SSC review the question of what the appropriate stock level is for rebuilding. The NMFS guidelines state that the rebuilding target is Bmsy. Jagielo's analysis shows projections based on a target of B35% or B40%. Preliminary analysis shows that the lingcod stock is likely to rebuild within ten years in the absence of fishing mortality. This means the Council may adjust the rebuilding period up to ten years based on the criteria as specified in the guidelines.

The committee requested that the Groundfish Management Team work with Jagielo to produce estimates of catch based on a range of general probabilities that the stock would rebuild in 10 years. These "probabilities" reflect the percentage of the time the modeling showed lingcod rebuilding under different harvest levels (see Tables 1 and 2 in Attachment G.9.c.). The committee asked that options for harvest levels be presented at 80%, 90%, 95% and 100% certainty of rebuilding, under both the B35 and B40 target biomass levels. The GMT expects to present an analysis showing the trade-offs of rebuilding certainty in terms of foregone harvest. This analysis will be available to the Allocation Committee at its next meeting in August.

Management/ Allocation Measures to Achieve Rebuilding

Judging from the rebuilding projections that the OY in the coming years would be below current levels, the Committee refined the management options presented in its January 1999 report.

Option A: A winter closure for recreational, commercial hook and line, and open access gears ("closure" meaning no retention of lingcod). This closure may include any length of time within the November through March time frame. The committee asked the GMT to look at how this might be implemented, including what length closure for each sector might be necessary to retain historical sharing percentages and what savings might accrue from different lengths of time.

Option B: Option B specifies that the Council may make allocations based the following guiding principles:

1. Promote species conservation and rebuilding.
2. Minimize wastage of target and nontarget fish
3. Promote utilization of fish
4. Minimize disruption in processing sector
5. Consider economic impacts
6. Distribute reductions equitably among fishery sectors
7. Consider local community impacts
8. Stability in regulations from year to year
9. Recognize importance of lingcod to respective fishery sectors.
10. Goals and objectives of the Groundfish FMP and considerations in the plan relating to allocation.

The committee retained this option to allow flexibility in designing management measures that could achieve rebuilding. This option may be used to craft an intermediate option that is not included in the other options. While it allows flexibility, this option could also result in widely fluctuating management measures from year to year, and considerable uncertainty for the industry.

Option C: A winter closure for all fisheries (for trawl this means no groundfish fishing, and for other gears, this means no retention of lingcod) for some period between November and March. It may be possible to have an option for continued slope (dts) fishery during this winter closure.

A difficulty in crafting the options is that they may unintentionally result in a change in the open access/ limited entry allocations that are currently in the FMP. Since this rebuilding plan is in the form of a plan amendment, it would be possible for the Council to suspend the allocations, or change them for the period of rebuilding.

The committee requested the GMT analyze co-occurrence of lingcod catch from the trawl survey information to determine if restrictions on harvest of associated species would be an effective tool for reducing lingcod fishing mortality.

Pacific Ocean Perch Rebuilding

The committee reviewed the rebuilding projections prepared by Dr. Jim Ianelli (See Attachment G.9.d. in the June 1999 briefing book).

Rebuilding Harvest Levels

The committee requested the GMT work with Jim Ianelli to present rebuilding projections similar to the lingcod projections, focusing on the probability of rebuilding within ten years. POP has been subject to relatively low fishing mortalities under a rebuilding plan in place the past 18 years. Rebuilding of POP likely depends wholly on a significant recruitment event. Projections show that even in the absence of fishing mortality, the stock may not be rebuilt in 10 years. For this reason, the committee recommended the GMT look at a range of "probabilities" the stock will rebuild that is a lower range than for lingcod. The GMT intends to present this analysis to the Allocation Committee in August. The committee requested an explanation of what factors make rebuilding a possibility in 10 years, if no rebuilding appears to have taken place in the previous 20 years.

Management/ Allocation Measures to Achieve Rebuilding

Allocation measures will most likely be unnecessary given that over 90% of historical landings of POP are in the trawl fleet. Restrictions will mostly affect the trawl fishery. The committee asked the GMT to examine co-occurrence to determine if restrictions on associated species would be an effective way to limit fishing mortality.

Bocaccio Rebuilding

The committee reviewed the rebuilding projections prepared by Dr. Alec MacCall (see Attachment G.9.e. in the June 1999 briefing book). These projections are preliminary and will likely change as the new bocaccio assessment is completed and reviewed this summer.

Rebuilding Harvest Levels

There is evidence that suggests there are two genetically distinct stocks, one off Northern Oregon and Washington, and one off southern and central California. Dr. MacCall, who did the rebuilding projections and is the current assessment author, suggests rebuilding is only necessary for the southern stock, occurring almost wholly in the Monterey and Conception management areas. Dr. MacCall noted that the rebuilding target he chose is somewhat arbitrary and should be reviewed. Dr. MacCall's rebuilding projections indicate that in the absence of fishing mortality, the bocaccio stock at the time of the last assessment could have rebuilt to the chosen target in approximately 15 years. The maximum rebuilding time period under the national standard guidelines is this time plus one mean generation time. This means the maximum rebuilding time frame for bocaccio rockfish, based on the previous stock assessment, would be 30 years. If the current assessment indicates a further decline in biomass since the last assessment, the length of time needed to rebuild the stock in the absence of fishing mortality, and therefore the maximum rebuilding time, would increase. How quickly the stock rebuilds depends on when and if a strong recruitment occurs.

Management/ Allocation Measures to Achieve Rebuilding

The committee noted that measures to rebuild any one of the overfished species may contribute to rebuilding for other species, and that cumulative impacts of rebuilding measures should be considered. The challenge with bocaccio may be to reduce mortality by somewhere around 50% of current levels. The current OY of 230 mt is based on unavoidable discard in the current trawl fishery and existing allocations.

Areas closed to fishing would likely reduce interception and mortality of bocaccio in the course of pursuing other fisheries. The committee emphasized that the Council should work closely with the industry in choosing options for closed areas for bocaccio rebuilding. They also recognized the difficulty of estimating mortality savings from closed area management, given the limited availability of data identifying where bocaccio are caught in the commercial and recreational fisheries. The committee wants the Council to send a message to the public that it is considering large area closures for all groundfish fishing. This may exclude slope fisheries outside 100 fathoms. The committee wants the GMT and GAP to offer suggestions of ways to achieve lower bocaccio mortality levels. The Habitat Steering Group intends to develop bocaccio habitat information, and the GMT has analyzed trawl survey information for patterns of species caught with bocaccio.

Dr. MacCall noted that when/if rebuilding occurs, the juvenile bocaccio will likely show up first in the recreational fishery, and noted the Council may need to come up with ideas to deal with an increasing bocaccio stock level. Since this is a California fishery, the state has agreed to take the lead in working with industry and interested public to identify potential management actions.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 3, 1999.

PFMC
06/17/99