

STATUS OF FISHERIES AND INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

Situation: In the current groundfish management program, the Council sets annual harvest targets (optimum yield [OY] levels) and individual vessel landing limits for specified periods, with the understanding these vessel landing limits will likely need to be adjusted periodically through the year in order to reach, but not exceed, the OYs. The initial vessel landing limits are based on predicted participation rates, estimates of how successful participants will be at achieving their limits for each period, and comparisons with previous years. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) tracks landings data throughout the year and periodically makes projections based on all the information available. The GMT presents these landings data and projections to the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and they discuss adjustments that may be necessary to achieve, but not exceed, the annual limits. The Council considers GMT and GAP recommendations, along with public comment, before making recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for inseason adjustments. At the June 2000 meeting, several adjustments were recommended, and NMFS implemented the changes July 17 (Attachment 1). The Council's task at this meeting is to review the available information and projections and recommend further adjustments as appropriate. In addition, the Council recommended tier limits and season duration for the primary nontrawl sablefish fishery (Attachment 2). Preliminary landings information should be available in time for the Council to develop recommendations for a "mop-up" fishery.

The next cumulative period begins October 1, and reductions would take effect at that time. Some increases to cumulative vessel landing limits may be appropriate, and these might be implemented prior to October 1 in order to provide more opportunity for fishers to take the increased limits. Vessels will have to wait until the regulations change before they have access to the larger limits.

At the June meeting, the GMT reported recreational catch of bocaccio and lingcod in California appeared to be far ahead of expectations. The Council directed staff to send a letter to the California Fish and Game Commission, requesting recreational catch be held to preseason expectations (Attachment 3).

Council Action:

1. Adopt inseason adjustments, if necessary.

Reference Materials:

1. NMFS Public Notice: Changes to Groundfish Landings Limits off Washington, Oregon, and California, Effective July 17, 2000 (Exhibit G.11, Attachment 1).
2. NMFS Public Notice: Limited Entry, Three-Tier Sablefish Cumulative Limit Season off Washington, Oregon, and California Announced; All Groundfish Fixed Gear out of Water 48 Hours Before (Exhibit G.11, Attachment 2).
3. Letter from D. O. McIsaac to Robert Treanor and California Fish and Game Commission responses (Exhibit G.11, Attachment 3).

PFMC
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