

NEW STOCK ASSESSMENTS FOR LINGCOD AND PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH

Situation: Draft stock assessment documents and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel summaries were distributed to Council members and advisory entities on August 1. **Please bring your copies.** A briefing on the stock assessments will be conducted on Monday, September 11, at 2:30 p.m. in the Sierra A Room. That will be the only opportunity to ask detailed questions of the authors and STAR Panel representatives about technical details of the assessments.

Lingcod and Pacific ocean perch have been separated out for discussion because each is currently managed under an existing rebuilding plan. This is the first time new assessments have been prepared for species already designated as overfished, and the Council will have to consider whether the new information is consistent with previous assessments and rebuilding plans or whether revisions to the plans might be necessary. Until rebuilding plans are revised, the Council is committed to developing management recommendations consistent with the plans.

The 1997 assessment of the lingcod stock in the Columbia and Vancouver areas (including the Canadian portion of the Vancouver management area) estimated egg production had dropped to about 9% of the unfished level. The 1999 assessment of lingcod in the Eureka, Monterey, and Conception areas reached similar conclusions: egg production was estimated to be about 7.5% of the unfished level. In March of 1999, NMFS notified the Council the lingcod stock is overfished, and the Council prepared a rebuilding plan. In 2000, a coastwide assessment has been prepared to update the two previous assessments and to provide a better basis for comparing the northern and southern regions. The new assessment confirms the overfished status in each region, but indicates the situation may be marginally better than portrayed in the earlier assessments. The Groundfish Management Team has tentatively recommended larger acceptable biological catch (ABC) levels for next year (see Exhibit G.6, Attachment 1). A range of optimum yield (OY) levels is presented.

Pacific ocean perch (POP) has been under a rebuilding policy since 1982. In 1999, the stock was declared overfished under the revised definition by Amendment 11 to the fishery management plan (FMP). The new (2000) POP assessment indicates the current population is larger than previous estimates and may no longer be overfished according to the FMP definition. However, the rebuilding plan will remain in effect until the stock has been rebuilt to its B_{MSY} level. According to the new rebuilding analysis (Exhibit G.5, Attachment 1), rebuilding may be achieved by 2011, in part because the estimate of the maximum sustainable yield biomass is smaller than $B_{40\%}$. The other main contributing factor is that harvest restrictions in recent years have apparently allowed the stock to grow, whereas harvest rates during the 1980s did not.

The Council may wish to take preliminary action on ABC and OY at this time for these species or action could be taken under the following agenda topic (Exhibit G.6). However, any initial action regarding rebuilding plans should be taken at this time.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider tentative adoption of preliminary ABCs and OYs.**
- 2. Consider initiating revisions to current rebuilding plans.**

Reference Materials:

1. Rebuilding Analyses of West Coast Pacific Ocean Perch (Exhibit G.5, Attachment 1).

2. Exhibit G.5.b, Supplemental @ap Report.

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3. Exhibit G.5.b, Supplemental SSC Report.