

GROUND FISH INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Situation: Several informational reports will be presented to keep the Council apprized of five ongoing issues.

In November, the Council spent considerable time discussing incidental catch rates of canary rockfish in groundfish trawl fisheries and appropriate trip limits. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) was directed to evaluate the proposed trip limits with particular attention to summer flatfish fisheries. The GMT will provide an update on work in progress. The GMT had no new information to review at its February 2001 meeting; however, both the Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife are analyzing logbook data to determine if fishing locations have changed over time for various key species associated with canary rockfish. The GMT developed guidelines for these analyses at the team meeting. In April, it is likely the GMT will advise the Council to exclude arrowtooth flounder and petrale sole from the current 30,000 lb cumulative monthly limit for flatfish. Available data suggest if vessels focused entirely on either of these species, their incidental canary rockfish catches would exceed the monthly allowance.

The Council also asked the states to consider requiring the use of finfish excluders in the pink shrimp fishery as a way to minimize the incidental catch of canary rockfish to the extent practicable. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission convened a meeting January 9, 2001 to discuss alternatives. Dr. Dave Hanson will provide a status report. Related to this issue, Exhibit D.5.c, Attachment 1 is a memo from Bob Hannah to Dr. Hanson regarding definitions of fish excluders. A workshop announcement and related email from the Coos Bay Trawlers Association are also attached (Exhibit D.5.c, Attachment 2).

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is preparing a status report on development of the groundfish observer program, but the report was not received in time for the briefing book; it will be distributed at the meeting as Exhibit D.5.d, Supplemental NMFS Report. Dr. Richard Methot, NMFS, will present the report.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee has begun preparing recommendations regarding contents, analytical methods, etc, for technical rebuilding analyses for overfished groundfish stocks. Dr. Steve Ralston, NMFS, will discuss the initial draft SSC report on guidelines and terms of reference for these analyses. This will be on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel and GMT agendas in April. Council adoption is scheduled for April.

Council Action: Discussion only

Reference Materials:

1. Memo from Bob Hannah to Dave Hanson dated January 24, 2001 (Exhibit D.5.c, Attachment 1)
2. Announcement of finfish excluder workshops (Exhibit D.5.c, Attachment 2)
3. Observer Program Planning (Exhibit D.5.d, Supplemental NMFS Report)

PFMC
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