

REBUILDING PLAN STATUS REPORT

Situation: This agenda item deals with terms of reference for rebuilding analyses and schedules for all seven rebuilding plans. Exhibit F.7, Attachment 1, provides a draft schedule for completion of the tasks.

In March 2001, the groundfish subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) prepared draft "Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses." (The rebuilding analysis is the technical evaluation that provides the length of the rebuilding period, biomass growth projections, harvest projections, and other information). The terms of reference identify what information should be included, the analytical methods to be used, and provide other directions to guide assessment scientists in preparing the rebuilding analyses. Dr. Steve Ralston presented a summary and explanation of the draft at the March 2001 Council meeting. The SSC approved a second draft (Exhibit F.7, Attachment 2) for circulation and review by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and other Council entities. The SSC has also solicited comments from members of the West Coast groundfish stock assessment community. Based on comments received, the SSC intends to provide a final set of guidelines at the April meeting.

On December 8, 2000, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) approved Amendment 12 (rebuilding plans) to the groundfish fishery management plan (Exhibit F.7, Attachment 3: letter from Ms. Donna Darm to Chair Jim Lone). In her letter to Jim Lone, Acting Regional Director Donna Darm revoked her prior approval of the Council's rebuilding plans for lingcod, bocaccio, and Pacific Ocean perch (POP), stating those plans do not meet the guidelines and requirements of Amendment 12. New guidelines and requirements were detailed in the December 8 letter. When Council staff reviewed the letter, it was apparent the essentially completed rebuilding plans for canary rockfish and cowcod suffered some of the same deficiencies as the revoked plans for lingcod, bocaccio, and POP. To avoid certain disapproval, the Council informed NMFS it would revise the canary and cowcod plans before submitting them, even though the statutory deadline would not be met. After consulting with the regional office, it was decided the revised canary and cowcod plans should be completed first, followed by the three revoked plans. The revised canary rockfish plan was assigned highest priority and will serve as the model for revisions to the other plans as well as future rebuilding plans. The revised canary rockfish and cowcod rebuilding plans will be available in supplemental material provided at the Council meeting.

The first draft rebuilding analysis for widow rockfish, which was declared overfished in January 2001, was presented to the SSC at its March meeting. This is the first analysis prepared specifically in accordance with the draft terms of reference. The second draft of the analysis (Exhibit F.7, Attachment 4) was circulated to GMT and GAP members for review and comment. The Council will have its first review of this document at the April meeting, with final adoption of the rebuilding analysis scheduled for June 2001. The Council will begin developing a widow rockfish rebuilding strategy not later than the June meeting so it can be incorporated into the rebuilding plan. Initial review of the rebuilding plan is scheduled for the September 2001 meeting, with final adoption in November.

An initial rebuilding analysis for the darkblotched rockfish stock is also being prepared and may be available for distribution at the April meeting. As with widow rockfish, a rebuilding plan must be prepared and approved not later than the November 2001 Council meeting. In addition, the rebuilding analysis for Pacific Ocean perch will be redrafted in response to concerns expressed by the GMT and SSC. The revised analysis will ultimately be incorporated into the revised rebuilding plan.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt 2001 schedule for preparation and adoption of rebuilding plans.**
- 2. Adopt Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.**
- 3. Review and approve revised canary rockfish and cowcod rebuilding plans.**
- 4. Review preliminary rebuilding analyses for widow and darkblotched rockfish (if available); initial consideration of "sideboards" for 2002 management.**
- 5. Review revised POP rebuilding analysis (if available); direction to drafters.**

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit F.7, Attachment 1, Draft Schedule for Completion of Rebuilding Plans and Associated Support Documents.
2. Exhibit F.7, Attachment 2, Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.
3. Exhibit F.7, Attachment 3, letter of December 7, 2000 from Ms. Donna Darm to Chair Jim Lone.
4. Exhibit F.7, Supplemental Attachment 4, revised canary rockfish rebuilding plan.
5. Exhibit F.7, Supplemental Attachment 5, revised cowcod rebuilding plan.
6. Exhibit F.7, Attachment 6, draft rebuilding analysis for widow rockfish.

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Consistency Analysis

Council advisory bodies are encouraged to comment on whether the many important matters within this agenda item are consistent with the Groundfish Strategic Plan.

The "Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses" document appears consistent with the plan's Goal Statement for Science, Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis. The canary rockfish and cowcod rebuilding plan elements appear to be consistent with relevant plan recommendation for fishery management and harvest policies, but neutral with regard to capacity reduction. While the cowcod rebuilding plan appears to implement at least components of the marine reserves goal, it was not adopted as a marine reserve by the strategic process described in the plan and appears to lack consistency with the marine reserves goal for measurable effects and the recommendation for evaluation mechanisms. The essential management measure in the cowcod rebuilding plan is a species closure throughout the primary ecological range.

The Council will need to consider strategic plan consistency when providing guidance and direction on initial fishery management options for widow and darkblotched rockfish and revised POP measures.