

## PRELIMINARY HARVEST LEVELS AND OTHER SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2002

Situation: Each year, the Council recommends harvest specifications for the upcoming year. This year, the task remains a two-meeting process that begins with the Council making preliminary recommendations at the September meeting and final recommendations at the November meeting. The fishery management plan (FMP) requires the Council to establish reference points for each major species or species complex: an acceptable biological catch (ABC), an optimum yield (OY), and overfishing threshold. In addition to the OYs, some species are allocated between the open access, limited entry, tribal, and recreational fisheries.

### Process for Developing Preliminary ABC and OY Levels

Draft assessment documents, Stock Assessment (STAT) Team summaries and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reports were mailed to Council family and others in August 2001. (**Please bring your copies to the meeting.**) Oral summaries of each new assessment, including the scientific conclusions, will be presented at a special briefing Monday, September 10, at 3:30 p.m. in the Riverview Ballroom. Assessment authors and other scientists will be available at that time to answer technical questions. **This information will not be presented again during the formal Council session on this topic.** The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) will present its ABC and OY recommendations during the Tuesday Council session. After deciding the preliminary ABC and OY levels, the Council will need to decide any changes to the list of species and species complexes that are allocated between limited entry and open access fisheries. Management measures to achieve the harvest targets will be discussed during the Thursday Council session under agenda item C.7.

### Preliminary Assessment Results and Other Recommendations

Stock assessments were prepared in 2001 for sablefish, Dover sole, shortspine thornyhead, yelloweye rockfish, and black rockfish (the black rockfish assessment was subsequently retracted by the assessment authors upon discovering inaccurate input data). Additionally, updated rebuilding analyses were prepared for lingcod (coastwide), darkblotched rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch (POP). The Council also endorsed, at its June 2001 meeting, a range of rebuilding trajectories and 2002 OYs for widow rockfish. New ABC recommendations will result from these assessments and updated rebuilding analyses. Note that, under agenda item C.5, the Council is requested to specify targets, checkpoints, and strategies for widow and darkblotched rockfish to guide development of those rebuilding plans. These decisions will directly influence the 2002 ABCs and OYs for these two stocks. The preliminary ABCs and OYs recommended by the GMT for 2002 (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1) indicate a Council-adopted range for widow and darkblotched rockfish. The Council is asked to wait for agenda item C.5 to address these specifications.

The GMT met with STAR Panel, STAT Team, and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) members in early August to review the new assessments and scientific advice. The GMT developed several preliminary ABCs and OYs based on those discussions (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1). The GMT also calculated preliminary ABCs using default harvest rates for every stock with enough information. For comparison, the year 2001 ABCs and OYs are provided in Exhibit C.3, Attachment 2.

Limited entry and open access allocation shares are based on landings during the limited entry window period. In the northern area, the open access allocation is based primarily on groundfish harvest in the pink shrimp fishery. In the southern area, the open access allocation share reflects groundfish harvest by setnet gear during that period. The setnet fishery now catches only a small fraction of the open access share, while other gear types expanded substantially during the 1990s. The geographic distribution of open access harvest has undoubtedly changed, along with the species composition of the catch. However, much of the harvest, especially in California, was recorded as generic *Sebastes* rockfish. Division of the rockfish complex into slope, shelf, and nearshore components has made it difficult to establish allocation shares that match both the current and historic harvest patterns. The GMT is attempting to develop options for Council consideration so each sector has access to its representative

share.

### Rationale for Discard Estimates

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has prepared an analysis of discarding, entitled "Overview of Management Actions Taken by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to Account for and Minimize Bycatch of Groundfish" (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 3). In order to establish landed catch targets for various stocks and for various fishing sectors, the Council subtracts anticipated discards from the total catch OY. The NMFS analysis compares current discard assumptions with alternatives and provides a rationale for current discard assumptions. A letter from Dr. Mark Powell, The Ocean Conservancy, also addresses the assessment of bycatch and discards (Exhibit C.3.e).

### Council Action:

- 1. Adopt preliminary ABCs and OYs for 2002.**
- 2. Adopt preliminary tribal allocations.**
- 3. Provide guidance to the GMT regarding species allocations between limited entry and open access sectors and identify options.**

### Reference Materials:

1. Preliminary ABCs and OYs Recommended by the GMT for 2002 (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1).
2. 2001 Specifications of Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Optimum Yields (OYs) and Limited Entry and Open Access Allocations, by International North Pacific Fisheries Commission (INPFC) Areas (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 2).
3. Overview of Management Actions Taken by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to Account for and Minimize Bycatch of Groundfish (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 3).
4. Evaluation of Existing *Sebastes* Discard Assumptions and Possible Alternatives (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 4).
5. Letter from Dr. Mark Powell, The Ocean Conservancy (Exhibit C.3.e, Public Comment).

### Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP supports establishing an allowable level of catch that prevents overfishing while achieving OY based on best available science (Sec. II.A.2). The GFSP also supports establishing and maintaining a management process that is transparent, participatory, understandable, accessible, consistent, effective, and adaptable (Sec. II.C). The Council process of adopting harvest levels and other specifications is consistent with these GFSP principles.

PFMC  
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