

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 attain, but not exceed, the OYs. The initial vessel landing limits are based on predicted participation rates, estimates of how successful participants will be at attaining 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 and beneficial.

The Council considers GMT and GAP recommendations, along with public testimony, before making recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for inseason adjustments. At the June 2001 meeting, several adjustments were recommended and NMFS implemented the changes effective July 1 (Exhibit C.8, Attachment 1). The Council's task at this meeting is to review the available information and projections and recommend further adjustments as appropriate.

The next cumulative landing period begins October 1 and reductions to landing limits 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.

Council Task:

- 1. Adopt inseason adjustments as necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. NMFS Public Notice: Changes to Groundfish Landings Limits off Washington, Oregon, and California, Effective July 1, 2001 (Exhibit C.8, Attachment 1).

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP supports establishing an allowable level of catch that prevents overfishing while achieving optimum yield 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 inseason adjustments to landing limits is consistent with these GFSP principles.

PFMC
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