

GROUND FISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Situation: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) on federal management of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. This is a comprehensive EIS that will review the current status of the federal groundfish management program, condition of the groundfish resource, and the socioeconomic conditions of the fishery. The EIS will discuss a range of future policy alternatives and implementation options, including provisions in the Council's Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP). Status updates on progress of the EIS have been provided status updates at the June and September Council meetings. At the September meeting, the Council has established an ad hoc oversight committee with technical support from the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Groundfish Management Team, and Habitat Steering Group to provide focused participation in the EIS process.

Mr. Jim Glock, the NMFS Groundfish EIS project manager, will discuss the relationship of the EIS process to the existing Groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) and summarize progress to date in EIS development. The update will inform the Council of any recent decisions made relative to structure, content, and schedule of the EIS.

NMFS has requested Council involvement in developing and analyzing the alternatives analyzed in the EIS. The Council needs to plan a process and schedule for doing this.

Council Task:

- 1. Provide guidance to the Ad Hoc Groundfish FMP EIS Committee as appropriate on involvement in the EIS process between the November and March Council meetings.**

Reference Materials:

None.

GFSP Consistency Analysis

The GFSP broadly supports effective public involvement during and beyond the transition to sustainable groundfish fishery management. The GFSP also specifically seeks to update the goals and objectives in the current groundfish FMP to incorporate GFSP visions and goals (Sec. II.C.(d)3). The EIS will provide a public forum vehicle for assessing and incorporating GFSP visions and goals into the Groundfish FMP.

PFMC
10/12/01