

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
REVISING REBUILDING PLANS AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) met in early February and discussed revisions to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fish Management Plan (FMP) to incorporate rebuilding plans for eight overfished West Coast groundfish species. The GMT was also advised of potential management and rebuilding implications of new stock assessments for bocaccio and canary rockfish. The GMT discussions focused on the content and development schedule of rebuilding plans and amendments. The following points and recommendations are offered by the GMT relative to rebuilding plans.

The GMT expects that some, but not all of the rebuilding parameters, such as the rebuilding time frame (T_{target}), maximum rebuilding time frame (T_{MAX}), biomass target ($B_{40\%}$), biomass overfishing threshold ($B_{25\%}$), and biomass trajectory, will be fixed in rebuilding plans. A significant difficulty is that "fixed" rebuilding targets such as the biomass trajectory and T_{MAX} are relative, not fixed. They represent probability distributions based on significant scientific uncertainty. The GMT recognizes the tradeoff in establishing "fixed" rebuilding targets to ground rebuilding plans with some certainty versus having the flexibility to change rebuilding strategies and targets, if compelled by future assessments, without having to go through a formal amendment process.

The GMT discussed the required periodic two year Council review process. Options include the Council reviewing how well management measures are meeting rebuilding objectives and checkpoints, a set "STAR-light" assessment for all overfished species every two years, and/or new "STAR-bright" (full reparameterization of assessment models) for overfished species on a periodic basis (every four years?).

The GMT was advised by the relevant stock assessment authors (Dr. MacCall for bocaccio and Dr. Piner for canary rockfish) that the new assessments for these two species would likely change rebuilding plans and recommended management measures designed to achieve rebuilding. On that basis, the GMT recommends the bocaccio and canary rockfish rebuilding plans be incorporated in the second amendment tentatively scheduled for adoption in November. The Council is expected to adopt new management measures for bocaccio and canary rockfish in September. There could be a problem adopting management measures based on new stock assessments that are inconsistent with rebuilding plans that are incorporated in the first amendment scheduled for Council adoption in June. Therefore, the GMT recommends the second rebuilding amendment incorporate bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish and be scheduled for final Council adoption at the November meeting.