

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES
Groundfish Multi-Year Management Committee

Ad Hoc Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation Oversight Committee
Pacific Fishery Management Council
West Conference Room
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
December 13-14, 2001

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Donald McIsaac. After introductions and approval of the agenda, Dr. McIsaac was selected as chairman of the Groundfish Multi-Year Management Committee (GMMC). It was noted that under the first agenda topic (Initial Scoping of Alternatives) the committee would discuss the federal notice and comment period. Synchronization of the management process with the science process (Stock Assessment Review process) will also be discussed.

Members in Attendance

Mr. Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Burnell Bohn, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. LB Boydston, California Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Ralph Brown, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Ms. Eileen Cooney, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - General Counsel
Dr. Jim Hastie, National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. Jim Lone, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Dr. Richard Methot, National Marine Fisheries Service
Dr. Donald McIsaac, Executive Director, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mr. Rod Moore, West Coast Seafood Processors Association
Dr. Steve Ralston, National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. Bill Robinson, National Marine Fisheries Service

Others in Attendance

Mr. Brian Culver, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ms. Yvonne de Reynier, National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. John DeVore, staff, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mr. Joe Easley, Oregon Trawl Commission
Mr. Jim Glock
Mr. Herb Hoover
Mr. Tom Jagielo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dr. Kevin Piner, National Marine Fisheries Service
Dr. Hans Radtke, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mr. Mark Saelens, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mr. Jim Seger, staff, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mr. Chuck Tracy, staff, Pacific Fishery Management Council
Ms. Marija Vojkovich, California Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Dan Waldeck, staff, Pacific Fishery Management Council

Meeting Summary

Purpose of the GMMC and Scope of Meeting

The GMMC will provide recommendations to the Council at the March 2002 meeting. The recommendations will relate to multi-year management approaches, accommodation of federal notice and comment requirements and the stock assessment process. The GMMC will also recommend alternatives for getting through the transition period, i.e., how to handle the 2003 specification setting process and move toward implementation of multi-year management.

The composition and purpose of the Council's Allocation Committee and its relationship to the Strategic Plan was discussed. A concern was noted that attendance at, and general participation in, Allocation Committee business is somewhat limited relative to the broader participation under the Strategic Plan Implementation Oversight Committee (SPOC) process. The Allocation Committee has evolved into a committee focused on emerging issues and development of management alternatives for species of concern. For example, lingcod and bocaccio in 1999; canary rockfish in 2000; several rockfish species, sablefish, and Dover sole in 2001. Their role has evolved into addressing emerging issues, providing a forum for public input, and developing management alternatives for Council consideration prior to the annual specification process. The Allocation Committee is distinct from the Strategic Plan process in that the SPOC is charged with overseeing implementation of the Strategic Plan and the formation of development teams to target implementation of specific initiatives.

It was suggested a separate committee is necessary to scope the principles for allocation decisions and address long-term allocation decisions. There is a strong need to resolve the allocation question. The GMMC agreed that, for the long-term, one committee to address emerging issues (i.e., the role of the current Allocation Committee) and another to scope and initiate long-term allocative decisions are needed. The Allocation Committee may need a new name, to minimize confusion.

The GMMC briefly discussed the stock assessment schedule for 2002. It was noted an update to the assessment for sablefish is planned, and STAR coordinators are working on how to fit the update into the STAR process. Full assessments and STAR panels are scheduled for Pacific whiting, bocaccio, and canary rockfish. Relative to sablefish, new survey data will be run through the existing model, and a "STAR-light" will be used to review the results. This will include involvement from: SSC (lead), chair from previous STAR, GAP, and GMT representatives. It was also noted that NWFSC is revamping the survey design and schedule. Into the future, this could draw energy away from stock assessments and STAR panels. These items were discussed more thoroughly on Day 2.

Relative to the management schedule and notice/comment requirements, rebuilding plans (in the form of FMP amendments) will also have to be accommodated. That is, time will need to be included for development, Council action, and federal notice and comment.

Federal Notice and Comment

Relative to the question of when notice and comment is required, the GMMC discussed what requires notice and comment rulemaking. In the past, annual specifications and management measures were set through what has been known as a "notice" action, in which there is no proposed rule published in the Federal Register, just a final notice. This was established with Amendment 4 to the FMP in 1990, with the underlying theory being that because of the timing of the receipt of the science used in the process and the time it takes for development of specifications through the Council process, there was "good cause" under the Administrative Procedures Act to publish the action without a proposed rule. Additionally, the Council process provides notice to the public and opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process, and provides much of the same opportunity as a proposed rule. The recent court decision found this process unlawful. Therefore, following the Council recommendation to NMFS, NMFS is required to publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register, provide opportunity for public comment, and respond to public comment and publish the a final rule that implements the specifications and management measures. Moreover, the Council is required to document the decision process and complete an environmental analysis (EA) package prior to final decision making.

Rulemaking requires several steps:

- conceiving purpose and need;
- scoping alternatives;
- analyzing alternatives;
- publishing proposed rule in FR;
- providing notice and opportunity for comment; and
- publishing final rule in FR (with response to comments received).

This entails, in essence, describing the intended purpose, action to be taken to meet the purpose, alternatives considered, analysis of the action and alternatives, and rationale for proposed action. It also includes analysis required for other laws/mandates (notably, NEPA and the Regulatory Flexibility Act). A 30-60 day comment period is required, 30 days is most common. Finally, NMFS must respond to comments and publish the final implementing regulations.

This may change if the court decision is appealed, but at least for the 2003 specifications setting process, the notice and comment requirements (as described above) will be necessary. It will not be acceptable for 2003 to adopt emergency regulations because of the extended regulatory timeline. This is because there is sufficient time to follow the normal rulemaking process in adopting the 2003 regulations. Thus, for 2003, it will be necessary to either advance the rulemaking schedule or delay the start of the 2003 fishing year.

Relative to the fishing year, two approaches were suggested. Move final adoption of management specifications to the September Council meeting, which could provide sufficient time for notice and comment prior to start of the fishery on January 1. Conversely, the fishery start could be later in the year, which could accommodate notice and comment following final Council action in November.

The GMMC discussed how it would work if final Council action was targeted for the September meeting. This assumes that the EA is completed prior to Council final action, NMFS needs 30 days (minimum) to develop proposed rule, 30 days for internal review prior to publication, and 30 day comment period prior to start of fishery. For example:

September	final Council action;
October	develop proposed rule;
November	internal review;
December	notice and comment;
January	fishery start.

Thus, for the fishery to start on January 1, the Council might need to take final action on the proposed management specifications in early September. A final Council decision in September could provide 90-120 days to complete the proposed/final rule (including notice/comment requirements).

If public comment raises an issue that leads to a change, NMFS would need to revise the proposed action.

Ways to accomplish notice/comment (under either multi-year or annual management) were discussed:

- 1 (for 2002) two-meeting process, June-September, proposed rule in November.
- 2 three-meeting process, April-June-September, proposed rule in November.
- 3 three-meeting process, June September-November, proposed rule January, fishery start March or April. Changing the fishing year could negatively affect the scientific data series. Thus, up-front work would be needed to accommodate change in data series.

Other considerations:

FMP amendment is required to do multi-year management. But, notice and comment is an absolute requirement for setting 2003 specifications. Therefore, GMMC needs to develop specific recommendations for Council action for this year.

The notice and comment options for this year may not be the same as for the long-term. That is, options are needed to address short-term and long-term management.

Changing Council Schedule – The committee discussed changing the April through November Council meeting schedule. It may be that, in future years, the meeting schedule could be revised to provide more flexibility to accommodate science and management needs, as well as necessary public comment period. If the schedule were changed, what kind of lead time does Council staff need to change hotel arrangements?

Delaying Start of Season

The GMMC discussed the option of delaying the start of the fishing season. Moving the start of the season (e.g., March, April, or May) could provide more time for the federal notice and comment process, while allowing the Council to take final action on management specifications in November. However, this delay could have significant impacts both on the fishery and the scientific data underlying management. As it would be controversial and requires analysis of trade-offs, implementing a delayed season in 2003 might not be possible. It was also noted that delaying the start of the fishery would build in time for notice and comment regardless of annual or multi-year management.

The discussion raised several issues:

Delay could cause disruption of fishery-dependent data series.

January-March are best groundfish markets. It is important to have fish available to meet demand, otherwise markets could go elsewhere.

Fishing year would have to be synchronized with RecFIN ("wave structure"). Could use same waves, but under a different fishing year. For example, wave 1 (January-February) would be part of 2003-2004 fishing year. The start of wave 2 would coincide with the start of the 2004-2005 season.

Current lag in data is already a problem, creating a larger time lag could be even worse. Should try to synchronize as best as possible.

Requires FMP amendment.

Heightens importance of inseason management.

Timing of NMFS survey could pose a problem, time series of fishery independent data could be compromised.

If stock assessment cycle is not adjusted, a delayed season complicates availability of fishery dependent data, which could be out of phase with fishery independent (survey) information.

The bottom line is that delaying the season might be possible and provide the benefit of more time, but not without problems.

Multi-Year Management

Several key themes arose that influence development of multi-year management:

- time required for rulemaking and federal notice/comment requirements;
- workload, e.g., on-year/off-year scheme might provide some relief from the current burden and allow time to deal with issues other than annual management; and
- data comparability/compromises from changes in fishery start and/or survey schedule/design.

One reason suggested in support of multi-year management is that uncertainty and imprecision are quite large in regard to our knowledge of the West Coast environment, and groundfish are long-lived and slow-growing. Incremental, year-to-year changes might not have too great an effect on stock status (relative to the influence of the environment and their life history characteristics). Thus, annual management may not be necessary. Moreover, the length of time required to rebuild several overfished stocks might lend additional credence to multi-year management.

However, under the current oceanographic regime (i.e., generally unproductive), stock declines and newly discovered overfished species drive management. Multi-year management would still need to be able to react to overfished species.

Given this conflict, the rationale for multi-year management needs to be clearly specified. Is the motivation for multi-year management a reaction to workload, or because it is a more appropriate management structure because the system is not affected by year-to-year management, or both?

The GMMC discussed whether assessments would be necessary every year under multi-year management. It is critical that the scientific cycle meshes with the management cycle. Assessments could be done every other year, but it is unclear if resources are available to assess a greater number of stocks, but less frequently.

Currently, assessments are done every year. However, no species is assessed every year. That is, most assessed species are assessed every three years. If we moved to a multi-year process, one proposal is that in the year the specifications and management measures are developed, assessment updates are done for all assessed species. In the other year, new assessment methodologies are developed and reviewed, and other longer term issues are dealt with.

Currently, Rebuilding Plan-analysis is used to craft management specifications well ahead of adoption of formal Rebuilding Plan. Most assessments include basic rebuilding analyses, which could be used to craft interim measures. These could be incorporated into management well in advance of adoption of the Rebuilding Plan.

If assessments are not done every year, the question of use of “best available science” arises. Rationale for (and ramifications of) increasing the lag between data collection and use in management would need to be thoroughly articulated, reviewed, and analyzed.

The committee discussed which elements in the management and science processes are open to change. It was stressed that the previous change (i.e., moving the STAR process earlier in the year) used up much of the flexibility on the science side. The speaker stressed that the science process should not be compromised to meet management needs.

The committee discussed how to ensure best science is used and whether a problem is caused from not acting. That is, if the year-to-year influence of management over stock status is minor, then there might be less cause for alarm in holding off on using the latest information.

Under multi-year management, an off-science year could provide time to revise current methodologies and to develop methods for un-assessed species. This could provide long-term improvements to assessment techniques.

Multi-year management, where science is collected annually and species are not assessed annually, could be workable. However, if species are assessed annually, it will be harder to justify not using most current assessment in management, especially, when an assessment shows a species is in decline.

Scientists thoughts on multi-year management –

- It is still undecided how to handle mandated two-year Rebuilding Plan review. The number of assessments has not kept pace with the species needing assessment. A two-year assessment schedule for every overfished species could cause further delay.
- A possible multi-year assessment scenario –
 - On-year – full assessment, full STAR.
 - Off-year – assessment updates, less-formal review, ensure no problems requiring management action.
- Surveys are an ongoing data collection process used by, but independent from, the management process. The stock assessment process will need to be re-tooled to mesh with the revised management process. Multi-year management will require a streamlined assessment process, especially for updates to assessed species. Buy-off on assessment models will be necessary to streamline the process. This could be facilitated by off-year review of assessment methods.

- However, “stocks of concern” need to be identified and should be the focus of formal assessments and reviews during the on-year.
- For the benefits of on-year/off-year to be realized, care would be needed to ensure that assessment “updates” or research survey results in off-years are not used to set ABC/OY or management specifications unless there is a clear and compelling need.
- The goal would be to increase and improve capacity to do assessments during the on-year. This improvement would be critical to ameliorate problems from the lag between data collections and its use in management.
- Methodology review during off years would provide for ground-truthing the models and building capacity to do more and better assessments in the on-year.
- Multi-year assessment would be facilitated by more surveys to provide more data for more in-depth assessments in on-year.
- The stock assessment schedule would need to be synchronized with Rebuilding Plan two-year review.

The GMMC discussed the need to clarify when information indicating a stock is overfished would trigger a management response. For example – during on-year, assessment indicates stock is overfished; rebuilding parameters are included in the assessment; rebuilding analysis is developed; the analysis is used to develop management alternatives for multi-year specifications. During off-year, Rebuilding Plan is developed, adopted by Council, and approved by NMFS. This scenario hinges on Rebuilding Plan-analysis being unchanged in the final Rebuilding Plan, otherwise management specifications might need to be revised.

If assessments are not conducted during off-year, no new overfished species would be detected. This could necessitate political will to dampen pressure to do new assessments or change management specifications during the off year.

Mr. Rod Moore reviewed his handout (attachment 2). He noted that – because flexibility in how to alter the management process is limited – the choices are to either change the start of the fishery or begin the science process earlier in the year.

He suggests an on-year/off-year approach, but with management and science in separate years. For example, management on/science off; management off/science on.

By providing more time for assessments and review, better information could be developed that would plug into management in the following year and be used in a June-September specification setting process. Final Council action in September provides the time necessary for notice and comment prior to fishery start on January 1.

It will be critical to coordinate data collection, assessments, review, and specification setting to ensure appropriate and timely management is used.

After discussing (1) the reasons for multi-year management, (2) the need to coordinate science and management, and (3) Mr. Moore’s proposal two tentative options were put forward for further discussion.

- On-year/off-year approach:
 - On-year – assessments, review, specifications; and
 - Off-year – methodology review, Rebuilding Plan developed/reviewed as necessary.
- Mr. Moore’s proposal:
 - On-year – assessments, Off-year – management; and
 - Off-year – assessments, On-year – management.

In addition, two suboptions are to be included – (a) if fishing year starts January 1, Council adopts specifications June-September; and (b) if fishing year starts April 1, Council adopts specifications September-November.

Transition Year

As time will be needed to develop and implement multi-year management, the GMMC discussed options for transition, notably in 2002.

One way could be to rollover 2002 specifications as interim regulations. For example, 2002 management specifications could be extended into April 2003, with the new fishing year starting May 1, 2003.

A second way could be to not do assessments in 2002 and not change specifications for the duration of 2003. This would treat 2002 as an off-year. 2003 would be on-year, with full assessments and reviews, and management specifications set for 2004-2005.

However, a Pacific whiting assessment will occur in 2002. This information would need to be accounted for in 2003 specifications. Additionally, the two other species scheduled for full assessment are of special concern (canary rockfish and bocaccio). If the rockfish assessments showed the stocks are stable, not change 2002 specifications could be justified. However, if the assessments indicate significant change in stock status, new management specifications would need to be developed.

Moreover, assessments for bocaccio and canary rockfish should not be cancelled solely to accommodate rollover of 2002 specifications.

Another option could be to set interim specifications for the fishery starting January 1, 2003. This would require developing a bases for the interim regulations.

A possible transition year schedule was discussed:

- April 2002 – Highlight that: (1) the only new science will be whiting, canary rockfish, bocaccio assessments and sablefish update; (2) this information will be received at the June meeting; (3) final action will occur at the September meeting. Thus, in June good preliminary numbers need to be developed along with management alternatives for analysis prior to September.
- June 2002 – Receive canary rockfish and bocaccio updates, adopt proposed ABC/OY and develop preliminary management measures.

(June through September EA/RIR/IRFA is developed. States conduct public meetings to narrow the range and scope of management measures.)

- September 2002 – adopt final specifications and management measures.

(September through December proposed rule is developed, reviewed, and published; final rule and response to comments is published.)

- January 2003 – fishery starts.

This schedule would require:

In April, the Council would need some indication of canary rockfish and bocaccio status to initiate consideration of ABC/OY ranges for these stocks.

By June, must have reasonable range of ABC/OY and management alternatives.

Must also consider bycatch and discard analysis, which was fairly raw in 2001. The analysis could use refinement and documentation.

Accomplishing the science and management components in a shorter time period will be difficult, but changing the fishing start date requires an FMP amendment. Thus, options for transition are limited.

Both multi-year management and delayed season will require public input, a clear rationale, and range of alternatives. It cannot simply be for the convenience of the management process.

If final Council action occurs in November 2002, interim regulations would be needed for January-March (or April) 2003 to provide time for rulemaking/notice/comment. If final Council action occurred in September, rulemaking/notice/comment could be done prior to January 1, 2003 fishery start.

Summing up

Multi-year Alternatives – (assumes January 1 fishery start date and full rulemaking/notice/comment process)

1. *alternating on and off years, management and science during the same year –*
 - 1.a. *management process – June, September, November (w/ interim regulations Jan-Mar/Apr)*
 - 1.b. *management process – April, June, September*
2. *alternating on and off years, management and science in separate (i.e., alternate) years –*
 - 2.a. *management process – April, June, September*
 - 2.b. *management process – November, April, June*

The committee requested these options be drawn up within the matrix format for an extended period (2002-2005) to illustrate time structure and where FMP amendment fits.

New management process will start in 2004 (DOES THIS MEAN THAT MANAGEMENT SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2004-2005 WOULD BE SET DURING 2003???) . During 2002-2003, FMP amendment developed.

The GMMC should also discuss why a three year multi-year alternative is not practical (e.g., lack of fit with mandated two-year Rebuilding Plan review). The committee should also consider whether multi-year process would set an OY for each year or a two-year OY.

Also need to consider forming an oversight committee, charged with monitoring the fishery and determining when management intervention is required during an off year. For example, inseason management (trip limit changes) could be accomplished within multi-year framework. Significant change to management measures would likely require a more formal process that should be specified in advance.

A major benefit of multi-year management is that off years would provide time for implementation of strategic plan initiatives.

Build in a mechanism for year-to-year change to occur when necessary, but only in special cases.

Council and NWR staff will coordinate on putting the options together and developing the matrices. After the matrices are complete, advice from the scientific staff will be sought to see how/where the science fits, with the aim to keep the management based on the science as current as possible.

The rationale for multi-year management should also discuss potential impacts on groundfish stocks if greater delays are built into the management process (i.e., science sits on the shelf for a year). Need credible rationale and analysis of potential impacts. It was also noted that, depending on the timing of the STAR process, science would not necessarily sit on the shelf for a year. For example, if STAR panels are held later in the year (e.g., October/November) and the management process is started in April, the lag time would be much shorter.

Need analysis of potential fishery impacts.

Need analysis of fishery start date options – (1) January 1, (2) April 1.

Need transition strategy recommendations for the March Council meeting.

Additional considerations:

- Noted that multi-species fishery complicates multi-year management.
- Need to add “trigger point” that compels review and provides for mid-cycle adjustments.
- To be in compliance with NEPA, the multi-year options should encompass the full range of reasonable alternatives, rather than focused on one or two preferred options. Careful and complete articulation of the rationale and implications for both science and management needs to be developed.
- It may be necessary into the future to also consider how to meet the requirements imposed on the groundfish fishery if they were imposed on other managed species/fisheries (salmon, CPS, HMS). That is, it would be wise to get out front of problems before they arise.

PFMC
02/27/02

FINAL AGENDA
Ad Hoc Groundfish Multi-Year Management Committee

Pacific Fishery Management Council
West Conference Room
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
(503) 326-6352
December 13-14, 2001

Public comment will be accepted each day at a time determined by the chair.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2001 - 1 P.M.

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Introductions**
- C. Approve Agenda**
- D. Select Committee Chair**
- E. Review Committee Purpose and General Schedule**
- F. Review Council Adopted 3-Meeting Process**
 - 1. Components and timing
 - 2. Current stock assessment schedule
- G. Review Federal Notice and Comment Requirements**
- H. Review Most Recently Considered Multi-Year Management Framework**
 - 1. Synchrony (or lack of) with stock assessments and rebuilding plan development
 - 2. Synchrony (or lack of) with mandated 2-year rebuilding plan review

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001 - 8 A.M.

- H. Review Most Recently Considered Multi-Year Management Framework, continued if necessary**
 - 1. Synchrony (or lack of) with stock assessments and rebuilding plan development
 - 2. Synchrony (or lack of) with mandated 2-year rebuilding plan review
- I. Initial Scoping of Alternatives**
- J. Post-Meeting Work Assignments – flesh out/analyze alternatives**
- K. Next Meeting Topics**
- L. February Meeting Date, Time, Location**

ADJOURN

PFMC
12/13/01

ATTACHMENT 2

ROD'S MULTI YEAR MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

(Based on Table 2 handed out on 12/13)

2002 (Transition year)

Surveys, data collection continue as planned

Stock assessments continue as planned, with whiting assessment providing an ABC projection for 2002 through 2004 (NOTE: Can Tom Helser do this?)

Overfishing - preliminary indication, rebuilding analysis as planned

Management - April, June, September, November Council meetings

April - approve for public comment an FMP amendment providing for multi-year management

June - preliminary OY/ABC, final approval on FMP amendment

September - FINAL ABC/OY, preliminary management measures for 2003 and 2004

November - final management measures for 2003 and 2004, including whiting based on projection (see above - may result in low OY for 2003, slightly higher for 2004) (NOTE: dependent on Secretarial approval of FMP amendment; if approval not final, see "fallback")

Management actions in November, 2002, would take effect March 1 / April 1 2003. For January 1st through beginning of new management measures, 2002 cumulative limits and management measures would remain in effect per existing FMP, except that cumulative limits would be adjusted (if necessary) via in-season action (NOTE: Legal ramifications of making in-season adjustments for Jan - April 2003 in November 2002?)

2003 (Year 1 of new schedule)

Surveys, data collection under normal schedule

Stock assessments - schedule what is needed, including any 2 year reviews of overfished species; can be spread out over the year and start later in the year than in 2002

Overfishing - NMFS designation of overfished species (if any), prepare / approve rebuilding plans

Management - in-season adjustments only; other non-specification management issues

2004 (Year 2 of new schedule)

Surveys, data collection as normal

Stock assessments - none unless 2 year review of overfished species needed (NOTE: possibly do any STAR-lite reviews?)

Overfishing - preliminary indications based on stock assessments done in 2003, rebuilding analysis

Management - 3 meeting process to do preliminary/final ABC/OY (first 2 meetings), preliminary/final management measures (last 2 meetings), shift meeting schedule to May, July, September (NOTE: should provide sufficient time for Federal Register process to be completed by January 1, 2005; can remain as April/June/September if Council willing to do both preliminary ABC/OY and salmon in April). Management measures will be for 2 years. Include in-season adjustments as appropriate.

2005 and beyond

Repeat pattern of 2003 / 2004

FALLBACK

In the event that we cannot get a multi-year management FMP amendment approved in time for the November, 2002, meeting, then 2003 will be a second "Transition Year", 2004 will be "Year 1", and 2005 will be "Year 2".

RATIONALE

Obviously, there are some legal and procedural questions that need to be answered as noted, and there may be others that will arise. But, assuming that this proposal is legally and technically sufficient, what will it do for us after we get past the difficult transition year?

Data collection will continue as normal. There will be no interruption in obtaining fisheries dependent and independent data. However, the time allowed to analyze that data for use in stock assessments will increase, since stock assessments are scheduled only once every 2 years instead of every year.

Stock assessments will start falling on a different schedule and more time will be available to complete and review them, since management actions based on those stock assessments will not occur until the succeeding year. This gives assessment authors some time off to pursue other scientific inquiries. Stock assessments will still use the most recent data, which in many cases means using the analysis of the prior year survey results. This is really no different than what occurs now, since surveys (especially triennial surveys) and assessments are getting more and more out of sync. Assessments on key species that are now done every 3 years will be done every 4 years, although an opportunity exists to have them done every 2 years if there are crucial questions raised (or even in back-to-back years if a turn-the-crank / STAR-lite process can be used).

Overfishing / rebuilding actions will occur as shown in Table 2 and in practice as occurs now using preliminary estimates and management actions.

The management crunch of setting ABCs / OYs / annual management specifications will only occur every other year. That will give the Council opportunity to consider other management issues during the off-years, relieving burdens on Council, staff, advisory bodies, and the public.

Setting 2 year management levels will provide some stability to the commercial and recreational communities instead of trying to change things every year.

The public process will be protected by allowing ample time for administrative procedures following final Council action in September.