

MULTI-YEAR MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Situation: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) appointed the Ad Hoc Groundfish Multi-year Management Committee (GMMC) to scope multi-year management approaches for the West Coast groundfish fishery and asked the approaches developed by the GMMC be synchronized with a multi-year groundfish stock assessment schedule, as well as full accommodation of federal notice and comment requirements. Two public meetings of the GMMC were held – December 13-14, 2001 and January 31-February 1, 2002. At these meetings the committee discussed issues related to revising the groundfish management process.

At the March 2002 Council meeting, the Council reviewed the findings and recommendations of the GMMC (Exhibit E.9, Attachment 1). The GMMC report outlines the suite of issues discussed by the GMMC, and provides specific recommendations for Council consideration. The Council requested this information be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the groundfish advisory bodies for review and comment at the April meeting.

The primary GMMC recommendation is for an amendment to the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) to incorporate multi-year management potentially involving significant changes such as a change to the fishing season start date, a change in the stock assessment schedule, and increased capabilities for other Council consideration. The Council is seeking the advice of the SSC and groundfish advisors on the issues and alternative management cycles presented in the GMMC report. If the Council initiates an amendment to the groundfish FMP, scoping sessions will be required to develop and analyze a complete range of alternative management schedules. It is anticipated that a preliminary draft of the FMP amendment would be reviewed by the Council at the June 2002 meeting.

In addition, to accommodate the August 2001 Ninth Circuit Court decision on required federal notice and comment rulemaking procedures after a final Council decision, the GMMC also recommended shortening the adopted three-Council-meeting process for 2002 (June-September-November Council meetings) and accelerating the timing to a June-September Council meeting process. This issue is covered under agenda E.10 – Transitional Management Cycle (see Exhibit E.10).

Council Action:

1. Consider initiating a FMP amendment.

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit E.9, Attachment 1, GMMC report.
- ✓ 2. Exhibit E.9.b, Supplemental SSC Report, *received 4-11-02*
3. Exhibit E.9.b, Supplemental GMT Report
- ✓ 4. Exhibit E.9.b, Supplemental GAP Report *received 4-10-02*

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider Initiating a FMP Amendment

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03/26/02