

ADOPTION OF DRAFT REBUILDING PLANS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW FOR PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH,  
LINGCOD, COWCOD, WIDOW ROCKFISH, AND DARKBLOTCHED ROCKFISH

Situation: There are nine overfished groundfish species on the West Coast, eight of which have been managed under Council interim rebuilding measures adopted at previous meetings as either rebuilding plans or rebuilding strategies for yet-to-be completed rebuilding plans (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 1). As a result of litigation, the Federal District Court for the Northern District of California ruled in August 2001 that rebuilding plans for all nine species are required to be formally adopted as either fishery management plan (FMP) amendments or regulatory amendments, not as the policy documents the Council had adopted; additionally, the court ruled that the process of adopting the framework for rebuilding plans was inadequate under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This effectively means there are no approved rebuilding plans in place at this time.

At the April 2002 Council meeting, the Council indicated the intent to incorporate rebuilding plans for overfished groundfish species in at least two amendments, separated on the basis of availability of information. The expectation was that the first phase would include the process and standards for adopting rebuilding plans (dealing with such matters as status as either FMP amendments or regulatory amendments), as well as the species specific rebuilding plans for Pacific ocean perch (POP), lingcod, cowcod, and depending on staff workload capabilities, widow rockfish, and darkblotched rockfish. The proposed schedule was Council adoption of this first phase in a two meeting process, approval of a draft for public review in June, and final Council adoption in September as Amendment 16 to the Groundfish FMP. The second phase would include rebuilding plans for bocaccio, canary rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and Pacific whiting, which would occur on a later schedule; the Council will consider rebuilding analyses and strategies for these species at this meeting (Exhibit C.3, Attachments 1-3 and 5, respectively).

The first phase (Amendment 16) will be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Part A of the amendment package analyzes alternative processes and standards for specifying rebuilding plans (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 2). The Council is asked at this time to provide guidance on the rebuilding process and standards alternatives. The Council may also want to identify preferred process and standards alternatives before released for public review. Pending Council guidance on element changes Part A of the amendment package, the process and standards analysis could be available for formal Council consideration and adoption at the September Council meeting.

Draft rebuilding plans for darkblotched rockfish, POP, cowcod, and lingcod are presented to the Council in Attachments 3-6 in this exhibit and would be considered Parts B, C, D, and E of Amendment 16. These draft rebuilding plans are not currently ready for formal public review since they have incomplete or missing elements (e.g., minimal or missing socioeconomic analyses). The Council is asked to consider whether the rebuilding plan analyses and other content are appropriate and provide guidance on when they should be completed and released for public review. The Council may also want to identify preferred rebuilding alternatives for these species.

The widow rockfish rebuilding plan was deferred from the Amendment 16 phase pending Council adoption of a revised rebuilding analysis for this species (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 4).

Council Action:

1. Provide guidance on the structure and content of Part A: Draft Process and Standards for Rebuilding Plans. *done Motion 2*
2. Consider adopting preferred Process and Standards alternatives.
3. Provide guidance on the structure and content of the species specific draft rebuilding plans.
4. Consider adopting preferred rebuilding alternatives for POP, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, and lingcod.
5. Determine the schedule for completion of Amendment 16.

Reference Materials:

1. Current rebuilding parameter/target estimates specified for overfished west coast groundfish: shelf species (Table 1a); and slope and midwater species (Table 1b) (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 1).
2. Draft process and standards for rebuilding plans: Part A of the rebuilding plan EIS, Amendment 16 of the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 2).
3. Draft rebuilding plan for darkblotched rockfish: Part B of the rebuilding plan EIS, Amendment 16 of the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 3).
4. Draft rebuilding plan for POP: Part C of the rebuilding plan EIS, Amendment 16 of the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 4).
5. Draft rebuilding plan for cowcod: Part D of the rebuilding plan EIS, Amendment 16 of the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 5).
6. Draft rebuilding plan for lingcod: Part E of the rebuilding plan EIS, Amendment 16 of the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP (Exhibit C.5, Attachment 6).
7. Public comment (Exhibit C.5.c).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Draft Rebuilding Plans for Public Review

John DeVore

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

Rebuilding overfished species, as mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, was a primary motive for developing and implementing the GFSP. Many sections of the GFSP describe how rebuilding plans factor into short- and long-term Council priorities for conducting groundfish conservation and management. GFSP objectives such as developing sustainable and effective harvest policies (Sec. II.A.2), achieving fleet capacity reduction (Sec. II.A.3.(b)), allocating groundfish resources (Sec. II.A.4), developing an effective Observer Program (Sec. II.A.5), and development of marine reserves as a groundfish management tool (Sec. II.A.6) are grounded by the need to accomplish the goal of rebuilding overfished groundfish stocks.

PFMC  
06/05/02

Supplemental Reference Materials

8. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental GAP Report.
9. Exhibit C.5, Supplemental Revised Attachment 1.
10. Exhibit C.5, Supplemental Attachment 2 (2).
11. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental SSC Report.
12. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental HC Report.
13. Exhibit C.5.c, Supplemental Public Comment 2.