

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM STATEMENT
ON FURTHER REFINEMENT OF AMENDMENT 16 - REBUILDING PLANS

Dr. Dahl and Mr. Seger briefed the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) on the process and standards for incorporating rebuilding plans into the Pacific Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) or into regulations. The GMT identified Issue 1, the form and required elements of rebuilding plans, as the most substantive issue under consideration. Consistent with its advice at the June Council meeting, the Team recommends rebuilding plan specifications that are incorporated in FMPs or regulations remain as flexible as possible. Rebuilding specifications, such as T_{MIN} (the minimum time to rebuild), T_{MAX} (the maximum allowable time to rebuild), P_{MAX} (the probability to rebuild within the maximum allowable time), B_0 (estimated unfished biomass), the minimum stock size threshold for declaring a stock overfished (typically 25% of B_0), and the rebuilding target B_{MSY} (typically 40% of B_0) all change every time a stock is assessed. The specified rebuilding parameter of T_{TARGET} (the specified rebuilding period) or P_{MAX} are considered the most logical choices for fixed rebuilding parameters. However, the GMT does not advise specifying both parameters since rebuilding plans would have to be amended with every stock assessment. The Team notes that the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) requires a specified duration for rebuilding overfished stocks leaving T_{TARGET} as the logical choice for a fixed specification. All other rebuilding parameters should be frameworked in the FMP as algorithms derived consistently with the SSC Terms of Reference for groundfish rebuilding analyses. The Team recommends that T_{TARGET} be specified in regulatory amendments (Option 1c). Specifically, the FMP should have flexible formulaic rebuilding parameters with specific parameters incorporated into regulations.

Under Issue 2, the process for periodically reviewing rebuilding plans, the GMT recommends Option 2b.

Consistent with the Team's recommendation for Issue 1, options under Issue 3, defining events or standards that would trigger revision of a rebuilding plan, should have alternatives that specify T_{TARGET} given the MSA mandate to specify a rebuilding duration. T_{TARGET} can direct a rebuilding strategy. The Team recommends Option 3e where the SSC and GMT decide what changes in rebuilding parameters are significant for amending the FMP.

Additionally, rebuilding plans need to include a statement explaining the rationale for determining that the species is overfished (e.g., calculation using 25% of B_0 vs. $\frac{1}{2} B_{MSY}$, etc.), but specification of value of B_0 should not be hardwired into the rebuilding plan.