

## OBSERVER DATA IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Situation: At the April Meeting, the Council considered the use of new information becoming available from the Observer Program. In general, the preliminary observer-based bycatch rate information showed significantly higher estimated bycatch of certain overfished species than had been previously assumed. The Council adopted the following motion:

For the remainder of the 2003 season, as soon as feasible, replace the bycatch rate estimates used in the model with the rates from information from the observer program; these rates are to be used for GMT modeling purposes towards preliminary indicators of the magnitude of adjustments needed for 2003 inseason management.

Application of the observer-based bycatch rates in April led the Council to adopt extensive inseason changes to commercial trawl fisheries, including modifying the configuration of Rockfish Conservation Areas, limiting nearshore open periods, and altering trip limits.

At the June Council meeting, the preliminary observer-based trawl bycatch rates adopted in April were confirmed, but no new data was presented for inseason management. The Council requested, for discussion at the November Council Meeting, presentation of a long-term schedule showing when new observer data will be processed and presented to the Council for decision-making during the multi-year management cycle.

Today, Dr. Elizabeth Clarke will summarize findings from analysis of the observer data and any resulting changes made to the trawl bycatch model since June. New information to be presented includes the status of incorporating observer-based discard rates for trawl target species in modeling capabilities (in April only information on non-target, overfished species was presented to the Council), as well as preliminary thoughts on when additional observer data will be available for modeling and management decision making over course of the next several Council Meetings. The preliminary observer-based discard rates for trawl target species are being used in modeling and analysis of the 2004 annual specifications alternatives.

A status report as of the Briefing Book deadline is provided as Exhibit C.2, Attachment 1.

### **Council Task:**

- 1. Review status of new information from the Groundfish Observer Program and provide guidance regarding implementation.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Exhibit C.2, Attachment 1 (Observer Data Analysis and Bycatch Modeling Status Report, September 2003, NWFSC).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Provide guidance on the use of observer data for in-season and long-term fisheries management.

Ed Waters  
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PFMC  
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