

FINAL HARVEST LEVELS FOR 2004

Situation: Each year the Council recommends groundfish harvest specifications for the upcoming year. The fishery management plan (FMP) requires the Council to establish reference points for each major species or species complex: an acceptable biological catch (ABC), a total catch optimum yield (OY), and an overfishing threshold. Additionally, OYs for some species are allocated between the open access, limited entry, tribal, and recreational fisheries. The Council adopted a preliminary range of groundfish harvest levels (OYs) for consideration and analysis at the June meeting (Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1). The *Draft Proposed Acceptable Biological Catch and Optimum Yield Specifications and Management Measures For The 2004 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery* (Annual Specifications EIS; Exhibit C.6, Attachment 1) provides analyses of the potential consequences of management measures estimated to conform to this range of harvest levels. These harvest levels will determine the types of management measures available for Council consideration in 2004. The Council is tasked with adopting final recommendations for 2004 groundfish harvest levels at this September meeting.

The Council reviewed and adopted new stock assessments for Pacific ocean perch, widow rockfish, bocaccio, black rockfish, cowcod (rebuilding review), darkblotched rockfish, and yellowtail rockfish; and rebuilding analyses for Pacific ocean perch, widow rockfish, bocaccio, and darkblotched rockfish at the June 2003 meeting. These analyses provided the scientific basis for the range of harvest levels considered for these species and adopted in June.

A range of sablefish harvest levels has been proposed by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) because of the importance of that stock in the West Coast groundfish fishery. However, an error was recently discovered in the range of sablefish harvest levels adopted by the Council in June. The magnitude of the error amounts to about a 5% reduction from the values adopted at the June Council meeting. The basis of the error is as follows:

Past sablefish assessments assessed only the portion of the stock occurring north of Pt. Conception at 34°27' N latitude. A separate sablefish allocation was made for Conception area fishers since the trawl/non-trawl/tribal sablefish allocation is specified in the FMP only for the Monterey area north (north of 36° N latitude). Therefore, the GMT had made an adjustment to sablefish specifications in the past to calculate the OY for the portion of the stock in the assessed area between 34°27' N latitude and 36° N latitude (the "Conception wedge"). This amount of available harvest was then added to the rest of the Conception area (south of Pt. Conception) ABC and OY, which was based on the proportion of recent coastwide landings made south of Pt. Conception. The north of Conception OY was reduced accordingly to represent the OY for the Monterey, Eureka, Columbia, and U.S.-Vancouver International North Pacific Fishery Commission areas. This adjustment was made to the 2003 sablefish specifications without realizing that the most recent assessment (Schirripa 2002) determined coastwide stock status and ABCs/OYs.

The 2003 and 2004 coastwide ABCs and OYs depicted in Table 2.1.1-1 are the correct specifications projected in the most recent assessment. As per the normal protocol, the 2004 specifications were stratified for the Conception and north of Conception areas by apportioning the coastwide ABCs and OYs based on average sablefish landings north and south of 36° N latitude during 1998-2002.

Another noteworthy update regarding the harvest levels adopted at the June Council meeting involves darkblotched rockfish. At the June meeting, only alternative 2004 OYs were shown for consideration. Subsequent calculations of the ABCs shows that the darkblotched rockfish OY is greater than the ABC under the *Medium OY* and *High OY* alternatives. Rebuilding results were sensitive to the high 2000 and 2001 recruitment estimates and including them allowed much greater 2004 OYs, because those recruits enter the fishery and help rebuild the stock before the maximum allowable year (2028). The ABCs, on the other hand, were calculated by applying the proxy $F_{50\%}$ harvest rate to the estimated exploitable biomass which is not yet affected by the strong 2000 and 2001 recruitments. This led to 2004 OY estimates which were higher than the ABC. This effectively limits the available darkblotched rockfish harvest to the ABC for these two alternatives since the ABC cannot be exceeded in federal regulations.

The canary rockfish OY varies dependent on commercial and recreational catch sharing due to differences in size selectivity in these fisheries. The Council may want to defer choosing a final canary rockfish OY until initial adoption of management measures, including the commercial:recreational catch shares, occurs under agendum C.6, scheduled for Wednesday afternoon..

Council Action:

1. Adopt final 2004 groundfish harvest specifications.

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1, TABLE 2.1.1-1. Pacific Fishery Management Council-recommended alternatives for ABCs and total catch OYs (mt) for 2004.
2. Exhibit C.6, Attachment 1, The Draft Proposed ABC and OY Specifications and Management Measures For The 2004 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Groundfish Management Team (GMT) Report on Estimates of Acceptable Biological Catch and Optimum Yield
- c. Recommendations of the States, Tribes, and Federal Agencies
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Harvest Levels for 2004 Management

John DeVore

Michele Robinson

PFMC
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