

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2004

Situation: Management measures adopted during the Council process are designed to implement new and existing rebuilding programs, achieve bycatch reduction mandates, keep total catch within the proposed harvest levels, and achieve optimum benefits to the various user groups and fishing communities. In the last four years the Council has implemented a substantial restructuring of the groundfish fishery that includes seasonal depth-based area closures, gear restrictions, and dramatically lower harvest levels consistent with previously-approved rebuilding programs for overfished species.

The Council is scheduled to adopt a preferred suite of harvest levels for groundfish species and complexes to recommend for 2004 management in agenda C.3. The *Draft Proposed Acceptable Biological Catch and Optimum Yield Specifications and Management Measures For The 2004 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery* documents (Exhibit C.6, Attachments 1, 2, and 3) provide analyses of the potential consequences of management measures estimated to conform to the considered range of harvest levels. Exhibit C.6, Attachment 1 contains Chapters 1 and 2 of what will eventually be incorporated in the Draft Annual Specifications Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Important text and tables describing key aspects of the affected environment and analyses of the potential consequences of management measures are presented in Attachment 2, and further analysis prepared subsequent to the briefing book deadline are provided in Attachment 3. These components of the Draft Annual Specifications EIS will eventually be incorporated in the DEIS; however, they are segregated in this attachment due to the expected focus the Council will need to bring to bear on this decision. Further analyses by the Council's advisory bodies will also be presented in supplemental reports prior to the Council's final decision and eventually incorporated as well in the DEIS. All of the adopted management measures and specifications for next year's fishery will be noted as the preferred alternative in the DEIS.

The referenced analyses indicate that rebuilding overfished groundfish species (especially canary, widow, and yelloweye rockfish) will significantly impact West Coast groundfish fisheries. Allocation of these species to the various states, regions, and sectors of the West Coast groundfish fishery to allow time and area access to healthy marine stocks may be the most contentious of actions contemplated under this agenda.

The Council task is to adopt final management measures for the 2004 West Coast groundfish fishery by the end of the week. This agenda is spread throughout the week to facilitate continuous narrowing of alternatives to a single set of management measures. Council deliberations of 2004 management measures are scheduled to begin on Wednesday, with a checkpoint on Thursday, before a final decision on Friday. This strategy is designed to allow the Council opportunities to assign analyses to the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) in order to evaluate tentatively adopted measures relative to harvest level limits, impacts to various sectors, and other Council goals and objectives, or to consider potential permutations of management alternatives. Allocation specifications consistent with adopted management measures should also be approved by the Council at this time.

While the deliberations on this matter begin on Wednesday, substantial progress should occur at that time in order to avoid deliberations on final action continuing late into the evening on Friday. The goal of the Wednesday agenda is to adopt a tentative set of final management measures, including such matters as the allocation decision on canary rockfish, area closure boundaries, commercial trip limits, and recreational bag limits.

Council Action:

1. Adopt final proposed 2004 management measures.

Reference Materials:

1. The Draft Proposed Acceptable Biological Catch and Optimum Yield Specifications and Management Measures For The 2004 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery (Exhibit C.6, Attachment 1).
2. Annual Specifications Data and Analyses (Exhibit C.6, Attachment 2).
3. Written public comments (Exhibit C.6.c, Public Comment).
4. Supplemental Annual Specifications Analyses (Exhibit C.6, Supplemental Attachment 3).

Agenda Order:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2003:

- a. Agendum Overview John DeVore
- b. Summary of State Hearings Phil Anderson/Neal Coenen/Marija Vojkovich
- c. Summary of Written Public Comments John DeVore
- d. Report of the GMT Michele Robinson
- e. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- f. Tribal Comments and Recommendations Jim Harp
- g. Agency Comments and Recommendations Agency Representatives
- h. Public Comment
- i. **Council Action:** Tentatively Adopt 2004 Groundfish Management Measures for Analysis

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2003:

- j. Agendum Overview John DeVore
- k. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- l. Public Comment
- m. **Council Action:** Guidance and Direction as Needed

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2003:

- n. Agendum Overview John DeVore
- o. GMT Analysis of Impacts Michele Robinson
- p. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- q. Agency and Tribal Comments Jim Harp/Agency Representatives
- r. Public Comment
- s. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Proposed 2004 Management Measures

PFMC
08/25/03