

## OBSERVER DATA FLOW FOR FISHERY YEARS 2004-2006

Situation: While there have been many positive aspects about the new, highly anticipated data from the West Coast Observer Program, there have also been concerns about the orderly use of this new information for active fishery management decision making. At the April Council meeting, despite concern expressed about adequate notice to the public, the Council reviewed and adopted observer-based bycatch rates for overfished species for use in April formulating inseason adjustments to commercial trawl fisheries. At the September Council meeting, observer-based discard rates for trawl non-overfished, target species were presented to the Council. However, in response to concerns about the limited opportunity to fully analyze all implications about the use of this new information, the Council elected to not use this new information for inseason management. Nevertheless, these target species discard rates, as well as the bycatch rates for overfished species that were adopted in April, were incorporated for modeling preliminary trawl management measures for the 2004 annual specifications.

To help gain a higher degree of order and stability in the use of new observer information, the Council requested a presentation, at the November Council Meeting, of a proposed long-term schedule showing when new observer data will be available for decision-making during the first multi-year management cycle. Further, in response to concerns about a proliferation of new information presented at Council meetings, the Council requested an ad hoc committee prepare a report for the March 2004 Council meeting on policy regarding the use of new information from the observer program (and other sources) for fisheries management.

Under this agendum, Dr. Elizabeth Clarke will present current thinking about a proposed schedule of when new observer data will be available for modeling and management decision making over the next several Council meetings (Exhibit D.4.b, NMFS Report).

The Council should consider the timing of new data releases from the observer program in synchrony with inseason fisheries management in 2004, the preseason 2005-2006 multi-year management schedule, and the expected 2007-2008 management schedule. (Exhibit D.8, Supplemental Attachment 3, shows a draft preseason multi-year management schedule and process.)

### **Council Task:**

- 1. Review proposed schedule of new information from the Groundfish Observer Program and provide guidance regarding implementation for multi-year management.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Exhibit D.4.b, NMFS Report: Proposed Observer Data Flow for Fishery Years 2004-2006.
2. Exhibit D.8, Supplemental Attachment 3: Proposed Preseason Management Schedule for Setting 2005-2006 Groundfish Fishery Specifications and Management Measures.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion: Provide Guidance for Integrating New Data into the Management Process

Jim Seger  
Elizabeth Clarke

PFMC  
10/22/03