

PRESEASON MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE AND PROCESS, ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL
CATCH, PRELIMINARY OPTIMUM YIELD, AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES
FOR 2005-2006 FISHERIES

Situation:

Preseason Management Schedule

Amendment 17 of the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) established a new process to set biennial groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. The Council selected a three-meeting process in recognition of many inadequacies of the prior two-meeting process, including the considerable analytical workload associated with the high degree of complexity of current groundfish fishery management issues, the extensive NEPA documentation requirements, and the need for improvements to the public input process during the latter stages of the process. Adding a third meeting to the end of the prior two-meeting process allows the opportunity for solutions to most problems associated with these inadequacies. However, beyond selecting a process that included the November, March/April, and June Council meetings, the adoption of Amendment 17 provided relatively little guidance and, therefore, allowed meaningful flexibility in scheduling a detailed process (Exhibit D.8, Attachment 1 shows the amendatory language adopted in Amendment 17).

The Council should adopt a detailed schedule and process for the development of 2005-2006 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. The salmon management schedule and process typically contains considerable detail in terms of dates for key meetings, such as Salmon Technical Team meetings and constituent meetings, as well as deadlines for the production of necessary documents; this structured approach has proven quite successful for the salmon management process in recent years (see Exhibit E.3, Attachment 1: Pacific Fishery Management Council Schedule and Process for Developing 2004 Ocean Salmon Fishery Management Measures for the current proposed process). A schedule and process with similar detail for the development of 2005-2006 groundfish fishery specifications and management measures would include the following sequential key features:

- Formal adoption of a range of acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY) levels and associated preliminary management measures.
- An ending date for the introduction of new, large data sets (such as observer program summaries) and analytical methodologies to be used in analyses throughout the process.
- An initial analysis of preliminary management measures.
- Constituent meetings.
- Formal adoption of ABC and OY levels and a range of refined management measures.
- Analysis of the refined range of management measures.
- Formal adoption of a range of management measures for public review.
- Preparation and distribution of a draft of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) document for public review.
- Constituent meetings.

- Formal adoption of a final recommendation to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce on complete

fishery specifications and management measures.

- After the final Council meeting, preparation and transmittal of the final DEIS document.

A detailed proposed schedule and process for setting 2005-2006 groundfish fishery specifications and management measures will be shown in Exhibit D.8, Supplemental Attachment 3.

ABCs, OYs, and Management Measures

The FMP requires the Council to establish reference points for each major species or species complex: an ABC, OY, and an overfishing threshold. The Council must also ultimately adopt management measures that are designed to attain, but not exceed, OYs. The tasks at this meeting are to adopt a range of ABC and OY levels for public review and analysis, as well as a preliminary range of 2005-2006 management measures or guidance in developing management measures. ABC and OY levels are to be adopted as two, single-year sets: one for the 2005 fishing year and one for the 2006 fishing year.

The new stock assessments and lingcod rebuilding analysis contemplated under agendum D.6 were considered by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) at their October 2003 meeting to develop a recommended preliminary range of 2005-2006 harvest levels (Exhibit D.8, Attachment 2). Based on new model runs, Scientific and Statistical Committee advice, and Council action under agendum D.6, the GMT is expected to refine the range of recommended harvest levels in a supplemental statement.

The complexity of the groundfish fishery and the potentially significant impacts associated with 2005-2006 management decision-making appears to require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A preliminary draft EIS with fully analyzed alternatives needs to be prepared in time for the June 2004 Council meeting. The EIS process begins with a scoping session on Sunday November 2, 2003 (1 p.m. at the Council meeting in Del Mar, California).

Council Tasks:

- 1. Adopt a preseason management schedule for 2005-2006.**
- 2. Adopt a range of harvest levels for 2005-2006.**
- 3. Adopt a preliminary range of management measures for 2005-2006.**

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit D.8, Attachment 1: Amendatory Language for Amendment 17 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan.
2. Exhibit D.8, Attachment 2: Tables 2.1.1-1 & -2. Groundfish Management Team-recommended alternatives for acceptable biological catches (ABCs) and total catch optimum yields (OYs) (mt) for 2005 and 2006, respectively.
3. Exhibit D.8, Supplemental Attachment 3: Proposed Pacific Fishery Management Council Schedule and Process For Developing 2005-2006 Groundfish Fishery Specifications and Management Measures.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. GMT Report on Estimates of ABC and OY
- c. Recommendations of the States, Tribes, and Federal Agencies
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. **Council Action:** Adopt Preliminary Harvest Levels, Management Measures, and Preseason Management Schedule for 2005-2006

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