

**REVISED SUPPLEMENTAL GMT REPORT FROM  
THE NOVEMBER 2002 COUNCIL MEETING**



**GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM STATEMENT  
ON AMENDMENT 17 - MULTI-YEAR MANAGEMENT**

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received an update on Amendment 17 at its October meeting from Yvonne deReynier, National Marine Fisheries Service. With regard to the multi-year management cycle, the GMT prefers Alternative 3, a three-meeting biennial process with a January 1 start date for the fishing year and statistical year. This alternative does not use the most current science for the development of management measures, but it does provide for consistency with historic management practices as it reflects the status quo fishing period. This consistency allows fishery managers to compare current statistics with historical data.

Table 1. Multi-year Management Timeline (Alternative 3, Amendment 17)							
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Survey	A	B	C	D	E		
Assessment		A		A-C*		A-E	
Management			A		A-C		A-E
Fishing				A	A	A-C	A-C
* Assessments for fishing in Years 6-7 would be complete by October of Year 4. November Council meeting of Year 4 could allow checkpoint for Year 5 harvest levels to ensure that those harvest levels set in earlier management process are adequately conservative to meet overfished species protection and conservation requirements.							

The GMT is aware of the desire of industry to maintain a January 1 start date to accommodate established marketing practices. Starting the fishery later in the year (e.g., March or May) could cause additional problems as those start dates could result in inseason adjustments having to be made outside of regularly scheduled Council meetings. It is for those reasons that the GMT is proposing a mid-process "best available science" check on harvest levels.

The GMT also believes that a three-meeting process would serve best to provide adequate time for stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process, as well as time needed to review stock assessment and/or rebuilding results, develop management measures, prepare necessary NEPA documents, and make necessary changes to documents prior to the Council taking final action.

The GMT also discussed the trade-offs associated with having a two-year optimum yield (OY) vs. two one-year OYs. The GMT recommends two one-year OYs (status quo) because of the fishing and management implications associated with overharvest in the first year of a two-year OY. If this would occur, not only could it severely constrain fisheries in the second year, ~~it may also result in overfished species not meeting rebuilding targets.~~ Further, the GMT does not believe that overages should be transferred as this could result in severe fishing and management problems the following year. The GMT also recognizes that transferring underages only could increase the likelihood that cumulative OYs over the long-term will be exceeded. The GMT notes that, under the status quo, overages are accounted for when stock assessment or rebuilding analyses are updated.

The GMT recognizes there are trade-offs in transition year (2004) management process alternatives. Table 2 provides the Status Quo two-meeting process used this year to develop 2003 management measures and an alternative three-meeting process consistent with the Council-preferred Alternative 3 multi-year management alternative. While a three-meeting process is preferred by the GMT for the reasons stated above, there are potential difficulties associated with a three-meeting transition year process. Perhaps the greatest potential problem is the confusion that may be associated with the Council deciding final 2004 management measures at the same meeting in which preliminary harvest levels and management measures for 2005-2006 are being decided. Further GMT modeling of 2004 management measures following the September meeting would also reduce the resources available for preparing the preliminary 2005-2006

package for the November meeting. Finally, the GMT notes that NMFS Regional staff will have to publish some form of Federal regulations by January 1. Delaying the final decision on 2004 management measures until November will significantly increase the end-of-year workload associated with meeting that deadline.

The notice and comment period constraints for a supporting NEPA analysis for 2004 management measures could be sustained under this alternative if emergency measures are adopted for the first four months of 2004 or a roll-over of 2003 OYs and management measures is adopted for the first four months of 2004. The extent to which a rollover from 2003 might meet Council needs during the first four months of 2004 will depend on finding that observer data do not indicate higher bycatch rates of overfished species than were used in modeling the 2003 fishery. The GMT also notes that decisions resolving how the first 2 or 4 months of 2004 ~~will be handled~~ will need to be made by the September Council meeting in order to ensure implementation by January 1.

If staff workload associated with developing the 2004 regulatory and analysis package between the September and November Council meetings is a major consideration in evaluating the desirability of a 3-meeting process in 2003, the GMT recommends that the Council also consider an option of maintaining the status quo decision-making schedule, but delaying delivery of the final 2004 NEPA analysis until after the November meeting, and making the necessary emergency rule/rollover provisions for the first 4 months of 2004.

PFMC  
10/31/02

\* Verbiage in ~~strikeout~~ was orally deleted by Dr. Jim Hastie on the Council floor when the GMT statement was presented.