

## MID-TERM OPTIMUM YIELD (OY) ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

The Council adopted Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 17 in November 2002 which put in place a new biennial groundfish management process. As part of this action, the Council adopted the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) advice to include a mid-term “best available science” check of harvest specifications. The mid-term check would be responsive to new stock assessments and other scientific information that might compel the Council to consider adjusting optimum yields (OYs) before the second year of the biennial management cycle. For instance, new groundfish stock assessments adopted by the Council in November 2005 might compel the Council to change OYs before the start of the 2006 fishing year.

In September 2004, the Council clarified their original intent during final Council action on Amendment 17 to develop a mid-term OY adjustments policy that enabled consideration of both increases and decreases of an OY for any FMP species of concern, regardless of whether the species was in an overfished condition or not. This was different than the FMP amendatory language approved by the Secretary of Commerce when Amendment 17 was approved, since that language only considered downward adjustments to OYs and only for overfished stocks (Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 1). The Council tasked the Groundfish Information Policy Committee (GIPC) to initiate development of a mid-term OY adjustment policy that comports with the Council’s original intent.

The GIPC met on January 25 and 26, 2005 to discuss, among other matters, a mid-term OY adjustments policy. NOAA General Counsel and NMFS described a process by which the current FMP language could be corrected without a formal amendment (page 2 in the draft summary minutes of the January 2005 GIPC meeting, Agenda Item F.1.b, GIPC Minutes). After a lengthy discussion detailed in the GIPC meeting minutes, the GIPC recommended a policy to consider only downward mid-term OY adjustments for overfished groundfish species if, absent an OY adjustment, there would be a significant impact to the rebuilding plan. The GIPC rationale centered around a concern that allowing a more flexible policy that considered increases and decreases of OY for any species of concern would subvert the intended stability of the multi-year management process.

The Council action under this agenda item is to consider the advice of the GIPC and other advisors before adopting a mid-term OY adjustments policy for public review. The Council should also determine the next steps in developing a mid-term OY adjustment policy.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Adopt a Mid-Term Optimum Yield Adjustment Policy For Public Review.**
- 2. Determine the Next Steps in Developing a Mid-Term OY Adjustment Policy.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 1: FMP Amendment 17 amendatory language (Section 5.7.1 as amended).
2. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 2: Tables summarizing the recent history of West Coast groundfish stock assessments, rebuilding analyses, and management responses.
3. Agenda Item F.1.b, GIPC Minutes: Draft Summary Minutes of the January 25-26, 2005 Groundfish Information Policy Committee Meeting.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore
- b. GIPC Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt a Mid-Term Optimum Yield Adjustment Policy For Public Review

PFMC  
02/08/05