

PACIFIC WHITING MANAGEMENT

The Pacific whiting fishery management process is unlike other federally-managed West Coast groundfish for 2005 fisheries, for which catch specifications and management measures were adopted by the Council at the June 2004 Council meeting for the two-year period 2005-2006. The Council deferred a decision on setting harvest specifications and management measures for the 2005 Pacific whiting fisheries pending the development and review of a new stock assessment to occur during February 2005. An updated Pacific whiting assessment was prepared this winter (Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 1) and reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel during February 2005 (Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 2). The Council should consider the advice of the STAR Panel, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and other advisors before adopting the assessment for use in management decision-making. The assessment, once approved, will be used to set 2005 Pacific whiting harvest specifications and management measures.

In 2004, this transboundary stock was managed jointly with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, in the spirit of a new process described in a treaty that has been signed by both countries and is currently awaiting ratification by the U.S. Senate and passage of implementing legislation by the U.S. Congress (Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 3). The primary tenets of the treaty include a joint U.S.-Canada annual assessment and management process, a research commitment, and a harvest sharing agreement providing 73.88% for U.S. fisheries and 26.12% for Canadian fisheries.

The Council is tasked with setting an acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY) for Pacific whiting that will be used to manage 2005 fisheries. Considerations for this decision include the stock's current and projected status with respect to the overfishing threshold, the international agreement with Canada, and overfished species' bycatch concerns.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt the 2005 Pacific whiting stock assessment.**
- 2. Adopt a 2005 ABC and OY for Pacific whiting.**
- 3. Adopt 2005 management measures for Pacific whiting fisheries.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 1: Stock Assessment of Pacific Hake (Whiting) in U.S. and Canadian Waters in 2004.
2. Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 2: STAR Panel Report on the Stock Assessment of Pacific Hake (Whiting) in U.S. and Canadian Waters in 2004.
3. Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 3: Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting.
4. Agenda Item F.6.d, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Perspectives of the Canadian Government
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Stock Assessment, Final 2005 Acceptable Biological Catch and Optimum Yield, and Management Measures

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02/22/05