

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON  
INSEASON MANAGEMENT RESPONSE POLICY

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) looks forward to clarification by the Council regarding their preferred option for the development of an inseason management policy. In anticipation of this clarification, the GMT interprets the Council's intent to be that management measures should not be liberalized based on new information until the June Council meeting, unless such measures are necessary to rectify technical mistakes or non-trivial errors in data, model, or model results that may have resulted in overly constraining management measures. This intent was based, in part, on the GMT's recommendations to the Council in November 2004, and the Ad Hoc Groundfish Information Policy Committee (GIPC) also concluded that this would be a sound policy for the Council to consider. The motion adopted by the Council was that "Management measures should not be liberalized until the June Council meeting at the earliest, unless data errors or model errors warrant earlier consideration" (Council motion, March 2005).

Inseason actions that are proposed based on new or updated data or analysis would require an exception to this policy, and the GMT recognizes that in limited, specific circumstances such exceptions could be warranted. For example, at the March meeting the Council suggested that inseason adjustments could be made to the California recreational groundfish fisheries in April 2005, in response to the release of the California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS) dataset. The GMT believes that the introduction of CRFS, a new recreational catch accounting methodology, in the middle of a management cycle is a unique situation. Therefore, potential inseason adjustments to California recreational fishery management measures have been deliberated by the GMT in anticipation of allowances being made for such exceptions.

Although the GMT continues to support a policy that would not liberalize management measures prior to the June Council meeting, the GMT also recognizes that the Council may wish to maintain some level of flexibility to make adjustments throughout various phases of the management cycle. The complex nature of groundfish management in recent years continues to result in unpredictable results and ongoing tuning of seasonal and area closures, trip limits, and other routine management measures continue to be necessary to balance both conservation and economic objectives. Any such adjustments are intended to adjust the trajectories of landings towards the optimum yield set in the management specifications. The GMT looks forward to receiving final clarification on the inseason management policy from the Council.

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