

## REBUILDING PLAN REVISION POLICY

The Council is expected to evaluate rebuilding plan progress for each of the eight overfished groundfish stocks this November, when new rebuilding analyses will be available, and modify management measures, if needed. At the June meeting, the Council decided to explore alternative rebuilding revision rules that would trigger automatic actions based on whether the probability of recovery by the maximum allowable time ( $T_{MAX}$ ) corresponding to the current level of fishing mortality ( $P_{CURRENT}$ ) is less than or greater than  $P_0$  (the probability of recovery selected when the rebuilding plan was originally established). Such automatic actions could include revisions to the specified harvest rate to achieve the target rebuilding probability (with all else being equal, harvest rates are reduced to increase rebuilding probabilities), or re-specifying the target rebuilding year if a new assessment and rebuilding analysis indicates rebuilding objectives cannot be attained by  $T_{MAX}$ . The latter course of action requires an amendment to the rebuilding plan (and hence the fishery management plan [FMP]).

In June, the Council adopted eight alternative rebuilding revision rules recommended by the Groundfish Management Team, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and The Ocean Conservancy for analysis and further consideration. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) identified a process they termed a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to evaluate the implications of each alternative in terms of the expected frequency of rebuilding plan revisions, which contributes to future fishery stability, vs. the specified optimum yields (OYs) during the course of rebuilding.

All of the alternatives established by the Council were based on the probability of recovery by  $T_{MAX}$ . In contrast, the FMP is based on the "target" year for rebuilding ( $T_{TARGET}$ ); i.e. the year in which the probability of recovery is 50%. None of the alternatives established by the Council are framed in terms of  $T_{TARGET}$  and there is no guarantee that a set of rules based on  $T_{MAX}$  will lead to exactly the same policy trade-offs as rules based on  $T_{TARGET}$ . Therefore, it was decided not to continue the analyses of the current options. Some generic results of the initial work presented to the SSC indicate that modifying rebuilding plans is needed as additional information is received. However, modifying management measures each time a rebuilding plan is reviewed so that the probability of recovery by  $T_{MAX}$  is  $P_0$  (or  $T_{TARGET}$  has a 50% rebuilding probability) will lead to very frequent changes in OYs but little benefit in terms of the overall probability of recovery. The proposed rule for modifying the National Standard 1 Guidelines ([http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/docs/NSG1\\_Proposed\\_Rule.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/docs/NSG1_Proposed_Rule.pdf)) recommends if the rate of rebuilding is proceeding faster than projected, then the F target rates should be maintained in order to rebuild the stock in as short a time as possible. Conversely, if the existing rebuilding  $F_{TARGETS}$  have been exceeded, the proposed rule recommends, future  $F_{TARGETS}$  must be reduced to the extent necessary to compensate for previous overruns (years when  $F_{TARGET}$  was exceeded), before the former  $T_{TARGET}$  can be altered.

In order to ensure upcoming rebuilding analyses contain sufficient results to evaluate the adequacy of rebuilding, the NMFS Northwest Fishery Science Center sent assessment authors a memorandum requesting specific runs in their analyses (Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 1).

These runs, which can be conducted using the rebuilding software endorsed by the SSC, should allow the evaluation of rebuilding progress anticipated by the Council.

The Council task at this meeting is to consider the advice of its advisory bodies, the public, and the proposed rule for modifying the National Standard 1 Guidelines before adopting final rebuilding revision rules or policy.

**Council Action: Adopt a Final Policy for Revising An Adopted Rebuilding Plan.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 1: Rebuilding Runs Requested for Species Currently Managed Under Rebuilding Plans.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Policy

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