

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR THE 2009-2010 FISHING SEASON

The Council approved Amendment 17 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan as a means of providing for a biennial management cycle, more opportunity for public input, regulatory efficiencies, and various improvements in the management process. In this process there is a year in which assessments are done to inform decisions for the following biennial management cycle, followed by a year for deciding the new groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be done next year, which will be used to decide the harvest specifications and management measures for 2009 and 2010 groundfish fisheries.

Last year 23 groundfish stock assessments were conducted, peer-reviewed, and ultimately adopted for deciding 2007 and 2008 harvest specifications and management measures. This was an ambitious undertaking, which stressed the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) groundfish assessment process on many levels. The Council therefore sponsored a workshop to critically review the recent groundfish stock assessment process and invited the participants to explore improvements to this process. The summary minutes of the January 13, 2006 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Workshop with recommended assessment process improvements are provided in Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1.

Dr. Elizabeth Clarke, Division Director at the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, will report on proposed stock assessments for the next biennial fishery management cycle and recommended criteria for prioritizing these assessments (Agenda Item F.2.c, Attachment 1).

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) developed a draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2007-2008 (Agenda Item F.2.d, Attachment 1), which specifies how the next assessment process should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process. Dr. Martin Dorn, the SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee chair, will report on this draft Terms of Reference.

The Council is to consider the input from NMFS, the advisory bodies, and the public; as well as the recommendations of the stock assessment review workshop participants before providing a preliminary decision on stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full or update), and assessment review schedule. Additionally, the Council should provide guidance on the draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2007-2008. There will be a public review opportunity between the March and April Council meetings, with the Council scheduled to take final action on the 2007 and 2008 assessment process at the April meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process For 2007-2008.**
- 2. Adopt for Public Review the List of Stocks To Be Assessed in 2007.**
- 3. Adopt for Public Review the 2007 Stock Assessment Review Schedule.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1: Draft Summary Minutes of the January 13, 2006 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Workshop.
2. Agenda Item F.2.c, NWFSC Report: Preliminary Stock Assessment Priorities for 2007.
3. Agenda Item F.2.d, Attachment 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2007-2008.

Agenda Order:

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| a. Agenda Item Overview | John DeVore |
| b. Report from the Stock Assessment Process Review Workshop | Don McIsaac |
| c. Stock Assessment Options | Elizabeth Clarke |
| d. Preliminary Stock Assessment Terms of Reference | Martin Dorn |
| e. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies | |
| f. Public Comment | |
| g. Council Action: Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference, List of Stocks to be Assessed, and Stock Assessment Review Schedule | |

PFMC
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