



Pacific Council News

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Council Adopts Open Access License Limitation Alternative

At its September 2008 Meeting in Boise, Idaho, the Council adopted a preliminary preferred alternative for limiting access to the directed open access portion of the west coast groundfish fishery.

Final action on this issue is scheduled for the Council's March, 2009 meeting in Seattle, Washington.

When the limited entry program was implemented in 1994, not all historical groundfish landings were reserved for use by the limited entry (A permit) portion of the west coast groundfish fishery.

The unused or "open access" portion was reserved for incidental landings by commercial vessels fishing for non-groundfish species, or directed fishery landings by vessels using recognized open access fishing gear. Limiting or registering

access by open access fishery vessels has been under Council consideration since April 1998, and was a priority recommendation of the 2000 Groundfish Strategic Plan.

permits would be available to all Washington, Oregon and California commercial fishing vessels, while B permits would be limited to qualifying vessels. The groundfish species



The preferred alternative would establish a limited entry, or B permit, program for directed fishery participants, and a registration only, or C permit, program for incidental fishery participants. The C

covered under B and C permits include all Federal groundfish species, but do not include nearshore rockfish, cabezon, kelp greenling, and California

Continued on page 2

Council Updated on Salmon Decline Work Group Efforts

In September, the Council heard an update from the NMFS Northwest and Southwest Science Centers on the failure of the 2007 and 2008 salmon fishery. The Science Centers convened a work group made up of scientists from Federal, State, and Tribal agencies and universities, which met in July for an organizational

meeting, and again in August to solicit information from other agencies and the public on potential factors affecting the failure. Agencies or public with additional relevant data or analyses are encouraged to submit their information to the work group at salmon.decline.data@noaa.gov.

The work group will

continue its investigation over the fall and early winter, and expects to have a draft report for public review in January 2009, and a final report to the Council in April 2009. A report on the group's process and schedule is available in the Council's September Briefing Book: <http://www.pccouncil.org/bb/2008/bb0908.html>.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council

Toll-free (866) 806-7204
www.pcouncil.org

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Halibut News

NMFS Reports on Pacific Halibut Bycatch Estimate

The Council received a report from the NMFS Northwest Science Center on Pacific halibut bycatch estimates in 2007 Area 2A groundfish trawl fisheries. The report included, for the first time, the observer-based halibut viability estimates. These estimates assign a mortality rate to halibut bycatch by condition of release (dead, damaged, excellent). Previously, a 50 percent release mortality was assumed. The Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the

viability methodology, and while they felt it was an improvement over previous methodology, they recommended additional analyses of the time, area, and depth stratifications for use in the future.

The Council recommended the National Marine Fisheries Service adopt the halibut viability methodology and forward the report to the International Pacific Halibut Commission for use in management of 2009 fisheries. While the overall

halibut release mortality rate using the viability methodology was greater than 50 percent, the 2007 estimates show a 23 percent decrease in total bycatch mortality and a four percent decrease in legal-size halibut bycatch mortality, compared to the estimates used for 2006 trawl bycatch. Using the viability methodology for both 2006 and 2007, the reduction in 2007 was 26 percent in total bycatch mortality and 19 percent in legal-size halibut bycatch mortality. 

Pacific Halibut Catch Apportionment Methodology

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) is considering methods to apportion catch to the various regulatory areas within the coastwide assessment area (Alaska to California). The IPHC held a September 4 workshop to present issues and alternatives for catch apportionment. Staff from the various

Area 2A agencies, tribes, and fishing interests attended the workshop, which was chaired by an independent scientist. The workshop was informative and covered a range of alternatives, but the Council believed that additional information was necessary before they could recommend any particular apportionment methodology.

The Council recommended a letter be sent to IPHC requesting a meeting between IPHC staff and Area 2A halibut managers to discuss issues associated with catch area apportionment specific to Area 2A. The Council postponed final action on developing a Council position until the November 2008 Council meeting. 

Open access limitation, continued from page 1


scorpionfish, which are protected under state management programs.

Vessels that made cumulative landings during the 1998-2006 window period of >100 lbs of B species groundfish, and that made at least one B species directed fishery landing during 2004-2006, would qualify for a B species permit under the preferred alternative. The permit would allow directed fishing for, and landing of, all B spe-

cies groundfish, not including sablefish and lingcod, for which species-specific landing endorsements would be required. The Council is considering three landing thresholds in any one year during the 1998-2006 window period for issuance of sablefish and lingcod landing endorsements: a) >1 lb, b) >100 lbs and c) >500 lbs.

Other provisions under the preferred alternative include a) allowance for B permit transfers

after the first program year and b) allowance for A and B permits use from the same vessel in the same year. The program is expected to be implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service to be effective January 1, 2011.

For more information, please contact Mr. LB Boydston (916) 844-4358 or email lboydstun@comcast.net, or see www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa22.html. 

Halibut News

Proposed Changes to Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and 2008 Annual Regulations

At its September 2008 meeting, the Council adopted several proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific halibut catch sharing plan for public review. The proposals affect Washington and Oregon sport fisheries. Final adoption of the proposed changes will take place at the Council's November 2008 meeting in San Diego. Comments on the proposals should be received by October 15, 2008, and can be emailed to pfmc.comments@noaa.gov, faxed (503-820-2299), or mailed to the Council office (address on back). Comments will also be taken at the Council meeting in San Diego. Additional details on the following proposals, including state sponsored public hearings, are available on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife web site (<http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife web site (<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/management/index.asp>).

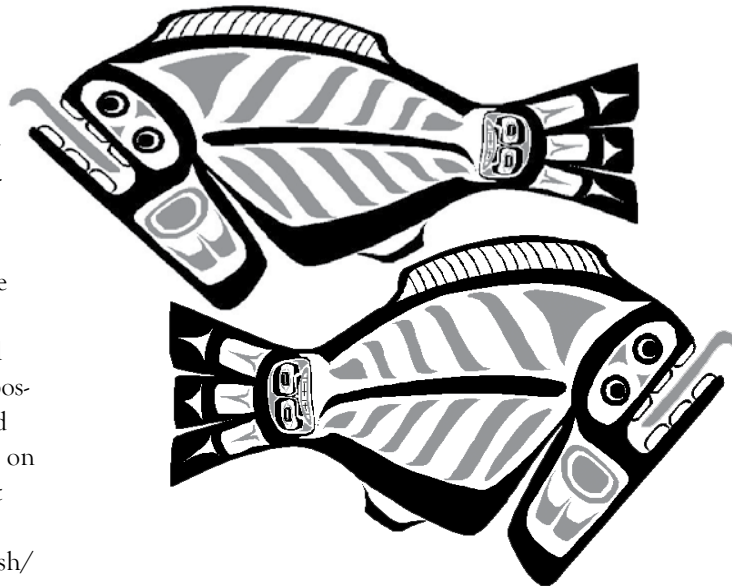
Washington North

Coast Subarea: a) remove the provision to divide the subarea quota between May and June; b) restructure the season from three staggered days per week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) to two staggered days per week (Thursday and Saturday); and c) change the re-opening date in June from the first Tuesday after June 16 to the first Thursday in June.

Washington South Coast

Subarea: a) as an option,

specify that the nearshore set-aside would be 10 percent of the subquota, or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less; b) starting the third week in May, the primary fishery will only be open on Sundays until the quota for the offshore season is reached; c) specify that the season will be open in the nearshore areas



on Thursday through Saturday during the primary season and Thursday through Sunday after the primary season; and d) specify that, in addition to the South Coast Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA), recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited in the Westport Offshore YRCA.

Columbia River Subarea:

a) change the structuring of the spring fishery from seven days per week to every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The purpose of the change is to extend the duration of the spring season. Open days on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

were suggested by the public as salmon seasons are often closed on Fridays and Saturdays; and b) open the area south of the Columbia River inside 40-fathoms to halibut retention when the inside 40-fathom fishery is open off central Oregon. See item b under the Central Coast Subarea for more details.


Oregon Central Coast

Subarea: a) in the spring all-depth fishery, allow fishing on every Thursday, Friday and Saturday if quota remains after the "fixed days." Presently the Central Coast Subarea allows fishing only on every other Thursday, Friday, and Saturday after the "fixed days." The spring quota has not been taken in the last two years and poundage was rolled into the summer fishery. Opening the fishery every weekend allows more opportunity to harvest the spring quota and would also simplify the regulations. b) Extend the open area of

the inside 40-fathom fishery north from Cape Falcon to the Columbia River. Under existing regulations, halibut caught incidentally in the nearshore groundfish fishery north of Cape Falcon must be released.

Oregon Coast North of Humbug Mountain (Columbia River and Central Coast Subareas):

Allow retention of lingcod and Pacific cod with a halibut onboard the vessel during all-depth openings. Current language specifies that all groundfish, except sablefish (and Pacific cod north of Cape Falcon), cannot be retained with a halibut on the vessel during all-depth openings. This regulation has resulted in anglers discarding lingcod, which are often caught incidentally while targeting halibut. Allowing the retention of lingcod would not be a lingcod conservation issue as their status is considered healthy. Although Pacific cod are rarely encountered south of Cape Falcon, allowing retention in the central coast fishery helps to simplify regulations as the groundfish species allowed in the halibut fishery north and south of Cape Falcon would be the same.

The Council also directed that an informational report be developed in 2009 to investigate the issue of halibut bycatch in fixed gear sablefish fisheries for the purposes of bycatch accounting and the possibility of allowing incidental halibut retention south of Point Chehalis. 

Salmon News

Salmon Methodology Review To Take Place in October

The Council directed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Salmon Subcommittee and the Salmon Technical Team to review the following proposed methodological changes to the Council's salmon management process:


1) Sensitivity analysis of Chinook and Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Models to major assumptions, including sensitivity to parameters related to mark-selective fisheries.

2) Development of a new stock abundance index for Sac-

ramento River fall Chinook.

3) Development of the Sacramento Harvest Model, a new harvest model for Sacramento River fall Chinook.

The initial review will take place October 15, 2008 at the Marriott Courtyard Portland

Airport Hotel in Portland, Oregon. The SSC salmon subcommittee will then present the results of the review to the full SSC at the November 2008 Council meeting, when the Council will consider the proposed methodologies. 

Council, Advisory Bodies Develop and Forward Comments on Central Valley Recovery Plan


The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requested that the Council and its advisory bodies provide comments on the Co-Manager Review Draft Recovery Plan for Endangered Species Act Listed Sacramento Winter Chinook, Central Valley Spring Chinook, and Central Valley Steelhead Central Valley Recovery Plan (CVRP). The Council approved comments for submis-

sion to NMFS that were drafted by the Salmon Technical Team, Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Habitat Committee, and Council staff.

The advisory body and staff comments generally reflected the view that the CVRP appropriately focused on human caused threats in the freshwater and estuarine environment, and that the CVRP did a good job of linking recovery

measures to identified threats. However, it appeared that the CVRP ranked ocean harvest effects as a greater threat to recovery of winter Chinook than could be supported by the available data or the identified recovery actions, yet omitted consideration of any effects in the ocean life phase other than harvest. Comments also noted a need for more specificity in how recovery actions would be

carried out. Specific comments are available online at <http://www.pcouncil.org/bb/2008/bb0908.html>.

The Council comments were submitted to NMFS for consideration under the public review draft of the CVRP scheduled for release sometime this fall. For further information on the CVRP process, email Howard.Brown@noaa.gov or call 916-930-3608. 

Salmon Disaster Relief Program Underway

Information on submitting claims under the 2008 Salmon Disaster Relief Program is available on the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission web site (www.PSMFC.org), and at the Oregon Ocean Salmon Federal Disaster Relief Information Line (877-695-3456), the California Ocean Salmon Federal Disaster Relief Information Line (877-695-3457) and the Washington Ocean Salmon Federal Disaster Relief Info Line (877-695-3458).

Council Adopts Final 2008 Research and Data Needs


The Council approved a final version of its Research and Data Needs document at its September 2008 meeting. The Research and Data Needs document records and communicates the Council's research and data needs through 2013 to ensure continued well-informed Council decision-making into

the future and to fulfill the Council's responsibilities under the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The Council directed staff to incorporate the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Salmon Technical Team, and Salmon Advisory Subpanel, including a

prioritization of items listed for groundfish management, and a reorganization of the chapter on salmon management to separate priorities and needs for data issues and research needs. The Council also approved the SSC recommendations on incorporation of the comments submitted by the West Coast Region of the

National Marine Sanctuary Program.

Council staff is working to complete the final 2008 Research and Data Needs document by mid-October, when it will be posted to the Council web site and distributed to organizations that may be able to support additional research. 

Groundfish News

Inseason Adjustments

The Council adopted the following inseason adjustments to 2008 groundfish fisheries. Note that these adjustments are not considered final until published in the *Federal Register*.

California Recreational Fishery

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) closed the California recreational groundfish fishery in the Northern Management Area and the North-Central Management Area north of Point Arena at 38°57.5' N latitude to recreational fishing for rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, greenlings, and other associated groundfish, effective September 2, 2008, to keep the catch of yelloweye rockfish within the specified 2.1 metric ton (mt) yelloweye rockfish harvest guideline. The Council therefore recommended a conforming Federal action to close the California recreational fishery in the North and North-Central management areas north of Point Arena as requested by the CDFG.

Limited Entry Pacific Whiting Trawl

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closed the limited entry non-tribal Pacific whiting trawl fishery on August 19, 2008 when the canary rockfish bycatch limit of 4.7 mt was attained. At that time, approximately 56.2% of the total non-tribal whiting allocation of 232,545 mt had

been attained, which represents a significant loss of economic activity to west coast fishing communities. The Council's Groundfish Management Team (GMT), in collaboration with the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, updated their projections of this year's catches of canary rockfish to determine whether there was available yield of canary rockfish under this year's optimum yield (OY) of 44 mt that could be allocated to the non-tribal whiting fleets to allow them to resume fishing. The GMT reported that projected total catches of canary rockfish for all directed fishing efforts were on track or below earlier projections, but the research catch projection of 5.5 mt of canary rockfish would likely be less. The GMT's updated catch projection of 2.9 mt of canary rockfish in research fisheries enabled the Council to consider allocating more canary rockfish to this year's bycatch limit for the non-tribal whiting fishery. In order to provide fishing opportunity while staying within OYs, the Council recommended an increase in the Pacific whiting fishery canary rockfish bycatch limit of 2 mt (to 6.7 mt) as soon as possible, but establish a split release of the limit where 1.7 mt is released initially and 0.3 mt is released two weeks after the initial release, but no later than November 1. If the 1.7 mt cap is not reached, any remaining canary would roll over to be added to the 0.3 mt.

In all cases, the canary rockfish bycatch in the whiting fishery would not exceed an additional 2.0 mt. The Council recommended the split release of the canary rockfish bycatch limit to reduce risk of exceeding the overall canary bycatch limit.

The Council also considered an increase in the widow rockfish bycatch limit since about 71 percent of the 275 mt bycatch limit had been caught by August 19, leading to concern that the fishery could attain its widow rockfish bycatch limit prior to attaining the whiting allocation. The GMT projection of total catch through the end of the year indicated that the catch of widow rockfish would be 26 mt under the OY, even if the 275 mt bycatch limit was attained. The Council therefore recommended an increase in the widow rockfish bycatch limit in the non-tribal Pacific whiting trawl fishery of 12 mt to 287 mt as early as possible. This increase is recommended as insurance against early closure of the whiting fishery by attaining the widow rockfish bycatch limit.

The Council requested inseason adjustments to both the canary and widow rockfish bycatch limits as early as possible since bad weather in Period 6 could compromise the ability of catcher vessels to safely prosecute this fishery.

Limited Entry Non-Whiting Trawl

The Council also consid-

ered adjustments to cumulative landing limits for the limited entry non-whiting trawl fishery since coastwide catches of target shelf species, some target slope species, and rebuilding species are tracking behind projections. Therefore, in order to provide fishing opportunity while staying within OYs, the Council recommended the following adjustments to this year's limited entry non-whiting trawl cumulative landing limits and the shoreward boundary of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area:

- Shift the shoreward boundary of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area to 75 fm in areas north of 40°10' N latitude as early as possible, but leave the area north of Cape Alava and between Cape Arago and Humbug mountain closed.
- Increase petrale sole in the north to 45,000 lbs per two months in period 6 for vessels using large footrope trawl gear.
- Increase Dover sole in the north to 90,000 lbs per two months in period 6 for vessels using large footrope trawl gear.
- Increase petrale sole in the south to 65,000 lbs per two months in period 6.
- Increase Dover sole in the south to 90,000 lbs per two months in period 6.
- Increase chilipepper rock-

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Groundfish News

Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review Process

In September, the Council considered a revised version of Council Operating Procedure 22, which governs review of groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH), as proposed by the newly-appointed ad hoc EFH Review Committee (EFHRC).

After clarifying the original intent in the EFH review process, the Council revised the timetable for the five-year review process, which will begin in 2011. The EFHRC will meet December 9-10 at the Council office to develop terms of refer-

ence to guide the submission and form of proposals for the initial interim review process set to begin in June 2009. This process consists of reviewing proposals for changes to areas closed to fishing with bottom contact gear, which would be

incorporated in the groundfish biennial specification process. The five-year review process will include broader issues associated with proposed changes to EFH and the identification and description of Habitat Areas of Particular Concern. 

Inseason adjustments, continued from page 5

fish in the south to 5,000 lbs per two months in period 6 for vessels using small footrope gear.

Limited Entry Sablefish Daily-Trip-Limit Fishery North of 36° N latitude

Representatives of the limited entry fixed gear fleet requested higher limits in the limited entry daily-trip-limit (DTL) sablefish fishery north of 36° N latitude since catches in this fishery are less than this year's allocation, and catches have been consistently less than the allocation in recent years. The GMT noted that the daily limit for this fishery was increased from 300 lbs to 500 lbs effective August 1 and limited data exists to evaluate the effect of that limit increase. The GMT did evaluate potential increases in the weekly and bimonthly limits for Period 6 using historic catches and participation in the limited entry DTL fishery. Assuming 43 vessels participate in the fishery and attain their bimonthly limit, the GMT estimated that the bimonthly limit could be raised from 5,000 lbs to 6,500 lbs in Period 6 and catches would remain within

the limited entry DTL allocation. Therefore, the Council recommended a 6,500 lbs per two month limit for Period 6 as it would increase opportunities in the fishery without exceeding the allocation.

The weekly limit, while less critical to the control of overall catch in the fishery, can influence effort in the fishery even though this portion of the fishery is limited. In order to align the weekly limit increase with the recent increase in the daily limit and remain consistent with the recommended increase in the bimonthly limit, the GMT and Council recommended that the weekly limit be raised from 1,000 lbs per week to 1,500 lbs per week in Period 6.

Similar increases in the limited entry DTL fishery south of 36° N latitude and in the coastwide open access DTL fisheries were not recommended since this year's catches have been tracking close to projections.

Open Access Shelf Rockfish South of 34°27' N

latitude

Representatives of the open access fleet requested an increase in the shelf rockfish cumulative landing limits south of Point Conception at 34°27'


N latitude from 750 lbs/2 months to 1,000 lbs/2 months due to lower-than-anticipated effort in this area.

Landings of shelf rockfish are currently tracking approximately 25 percent lower than in previous years. This decrease may be attributed to the requirement for VMS on open access vessels and higher fuel costs. Historically, shelf rockfish trip limits have been set at a low level to decrease interactions with overfished species.

Observer data south of Point Conception indicate low bycatch of overfished species, but these rates are based on a limited number of observations (less than 70). It is unclear whether encounter rates for bocaccio and widow would increase with increased effort. If the encounter rate remains constant, even if effort increases, then any increase in overfished species' interactions as a result

of increased opportunities would already be accounted for in the bycatch scorecard. A CDFG analysis indicated that the proposed change to trip limits may result in a 6.1 percent increase above the originally projected catch of shelf rockfish. This small increase may result in little, if any, increase above projected overfished species' impacts. The GMT noted that the scorecard is not fully prescribed for bocaccio or widow rockfish; therefore, any small increase in impacts could be accommodated.

The GMT also examined potential effort shifts from the north as a result of higher cumulative landing limits south of Point Conception. Input from industry indicates this amount of an increase in landing limits would not provide an economic impetus for an effort shift from the north.

Current data indicates shelf rockfish catches south of 34°27' N latitude are well within the OY. Therefore, the GMT and Council recommended that the open access shelf rockfish limit south of Point Conception be increased from 750 lbs/2 months to 1,000 lbs/2 months for Period 6. 



Groundfish News

Four Groundfish Exempted Fishing Permits Recommended for Next Year

In September, the Council adopted four groundfish exempted fishing permits (EFPs) proposed for 2009. EFPs provide a process for testing innovative fishing gears and strategies to substantiate methods for prosecuting sustainable and risk-averse fishing opportunities. The four EFPs adopted by the Council and recommended to NMFS for 2009 implementation are as follows. The EFP applications themselves can be viewed in the Council's September 2008 Briefing Book (<http://www.pcouncil.org/bb/2008/bb0908.html>).

Trolled Longline to Target Chilipepper Rockfish

The Council approved an EFP designed to test a trolled longline strategy to selectively harvest abundant chilipepper rockfish off central California that was proposed by Steve Fosmark. This is a repeat of an approved 2008 EFP that was not implemented. The Council recommends full retention of all rockfish species, retention of groundfish other than

rockfish up to the applicable open access limits, and release of those species thereafter once the catch has been documented by the observer.

Recreational Targeting of Chilipepper Rockfish

The Council approved an EFP designed to test the use of recreational hook-and-line gear to catch underutilized chilipepper rockfish on commercial passenger fishing vessels seaward of the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area in waters off California between Pt. Conception and 40° 10' N latitude. This EFP was proposed by the Recreational Fishing Alliance and the Golden Gate Fishermen's Association, and was also a repeat of an approved 2008 EFP, which was implemented in September. The Council imposed a three metric ton cap on slope rockfish, required full retention of all rockfish, release of all non-rockfish species, and limited each participating angler to two hooks.

Recreational Targeting of Yellowtail Rockfish

The Council approved a new EFP designed to test floated, long leader gear to selectively harvest yellowtail rockfish by Oregon charter boats in waters deeper than 40 fm off Oregon. The EFP was proposed by the Oregon chapter of the Recreational Fishing Alliance. The Council required full retention of all rockfish, release of all non-rockfish species, no annual cap on yellowtail rockfish, and inclusion of a detailed spatial analysis in the study design to understand how effectively the gear works in different habitats. The Council also recommended that anglers participating in the EFP be permitted to take home any prohibited rockfish species they catch, such as canary and yelloweye rockfish, if enforcement concerns can be worked out between the EFP proponents and Oregon State Patrol.

Testing the Effectiveness of Management by a Regional Fishing Association in the Conception Area

The Council approved an

EFP designed to test the effectiveness of a regional fishing association in Morro Bay and Port San Luis. The association would be used to manage a hook-and-line and trap groundfish fishery in central California between 34°27' and 36° N latitude, using limited entry trawl permits purchased by The Nature Conservancy. This EFP, sponsored by the California Department of Fish and Game, the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association, the Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association, the Environmental Defense Fund, the City of Morro Bay, the Port San Luis Harbor District, and The Nature Conservancy, is a repeat of an approved 2008 EFP. The Council heard a report of 2008 fishing activities under this EFP, which, at the time of the Council meeting, was limited to a few efforts that targeted and caught only sablefish. The Council encouraged participants to target other ground-

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EFP	Bocaccio	Canary	Cowcod	Darkblotched	Pacific ocean perch	Widow	Yelloweye
Trolled longline for chilipepper in California	3.3	0.027 (20 fish)	0.015 (3 fish)	0.4	*	0.7	0.005 (3 fish)
Morro Bay/Port San Luis regional fishing association	5.0	0.023 (50 lbs)	0.2	0.454 (1,000 lbs)	0.136 (300 lbs)	2.0	0.068 (150 lbs)
Recreational chilipepper in California	2.7	0.023 (50 lbs)	0.023 (50 lbs)	0.1	*	1.7	0.023 (50 lbs)
Recreational yellowtail in Oregon	*	2.6	*	*	*	3.0	0.2
Total	11.0	2.673	0.238	0.954	0.136	7.4	0.295

Groundfish News

Trawl Rationalization Hearings Scheduled; Final Decision Slated for November Meeting

The Council has been deliberating on the development of a rationalization program for the west coast groundfish trawl fishery (Amendment 20 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan) since November 2003. At its June 2008 meeting the Council selected a preliminary preferred alternative and announced that it would schedule a series of public hearings for late October, just prior to its final action scheduled for November 2008.

The Council has released the analytical package that it will use to make its decisions. The analysis is available on the Council's web site <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa20/gfa20decdoc.html>. This document will become a draft Environmental Impact Statement when it is submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service with the Council's final recommendations.

Public hearings will be held to receive comments on draft Amendment 20 at the following dates, times and locations:

Newport, Oregon

Monday, October 27, 2008,

2:00 PM
Best Western Agate Beach Inn
3019 N. Coast Highway
Newport, OR
541-265-9411

Eureka, California

Tuesday, October 28, 2008,
2:00 PM
Red Lion, Evergreen Ballroom
1929 Fourth Street
Eureka, CA
707-441-4711

Olympia, Washington

Tuesday, October 28, 2008,
3:00 PM
Washington Department of
Fish and Wildlife
Natural Resources Building, 1st
Floor, Room 172
1111 Washington Street SE
Olympia, WA
360-249-1211

Astoria, Oregon

Wednesday, October 29, 2008,
3:00 PM
Holiday Inn Express
Riverview 1 and 2 Rooms
205 West Marine Drive
503-325-6222

Santa Cruz, California

Wednesday, October 29, 2008,
3:00 PM
University Inn and Conference

Center
Sierra Room
611 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA
831-466-1252

Final Council Decision

The Council will be making its final decision at their meeting November 1-7, 2008 in San Diego, California. Advisory bodies will begin their consideration of the issue on November 1st, presentations to the full Council will begin on the afternoon of November 4th, and a public testimony session is scheduled to begin on November 5th following which the Council is scheduled make its final recommendation. A detailed preliminary agenda for the Council meeting can be found on <http://www.pcouncil.org/events/2008/pfmc1108.html>.

Submitting Written Comments

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384, by fax to (503) 820-2299, or by email to comments@noaa.gov.


Written comments re-

ceived by 11:59 pm October 15, 2008, will be mailed to Council members prior to the November Council meeting.

Comments or materials received at the Council office after October 15 but by 11:59 pm on October 29 will be included in the supplemental materials distributed to the Council on the first day of the meeting. Written comments received at the Council office on October 30, 2008, or later will not be distributed to Council Members nor will they be part of the administrative record of this Council meeting.

Contact information

The hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ms. Carolyn Porter at (503) 820-2280 at least five days prior to the meeting date.

For more information on the October 27-29, 2008, public hearings on draft Amendment 20 (Trawl Rationalization) to the groundfish fishery management plan or the Trawl Rationalization Decision Document, please contact Mr. Jim Seger at (503) 820-2280 ext. 416 or toll free 1-866-806-7204. 


EFPs, continued from page 8

fish species and welcomed the additional task of exploring electronic monitoring mechanisms on vessels deploying

fixed gears. The Council adopted a 165 mt sablefish cap for this EFP next year.

Bycatch caps (mt) of

overfished groundfish species for each of the recommended EFPs are shown in the table above.

All EFP participants will be required to provide a report of progress to date at the June 2009 Council meeting. 

Groundfish News

Groundfish Stocks to be Assessed, New Assessment Process Adopted for Next Year

The Council adopted a list of groundfish stocks for full and updated assessments for next year (see accompanying table), which will inform management decisions for the 2011 and 2012 fishing seasons. The assessments were proposed in a preliminary decision made at the June Council meeting. Additionally, a full assessment for spiny dogfish, and the potential for a greenspotted or bronzespotted rockfish assessment, were identified in June. The Council considered adopting these stocks for assessment, but dropped them from the list citing lack of data for spiny dogfish and workload issues for greenspotted rockfish.


The Council also adopted a new Stock Assessment

Panel	Dates	Location	Species 1	Species 2
Whiting	Feb. 3-6	Seattle	Pacific whiting	NA
1	May 4-8	Seattle	Petrale sole	Splitnose
Updates	June 10-11	June Council meeting	POP, Darkblotched	Canary, Cowcod
2	July 13-17	Santa Cruz	Bocaccio	Widow
3	July 27-31	Santa Cruz	Lingcod	Cabazon
4	Aug 3-7	Seattle	Yelloweye	Greenstriped
Mop-Up	Sept 28-Oct 1	Seattle	TBD	TBD

List of groundfish stocks scheduled for full and updated assessments next year with the tentative dates and locations of Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panels.

Terms of Reference to guide assessment authors and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reviewers. The Terms of Reference features an increased Council staff role in the process, stringent deadlines to facilitate more effective peer

reviews of draft assessments, and defines the content and use of data reports. While full assessments will be reviewed by STAR panels comprised of representatives of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Groundfish Man-

agement Team, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and at least two independent reviewers, updated assessments will only be reviewed by the SSC. The new Terms of Reference will be posted at <http://www.pcouncil.org>. 

Acronyms

CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game	MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
CPFV	commercial passenger fishing vessel (charterboat)	mt	metric ton
CVRP	Central Valley Recovery Plan	NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
DTL	daily-trip-limit groundfish fishery	NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
EFH	essential fish habitat	OY	optimum yield
EFHRC	Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee	POP	Pacific Ocean perch
EFP	exempted fishing permit	SSC	Scientific and Statistical Committee
GAC	Groundfish Allocation Committee	STAR	Stock Assessment Review (Panel)
GMT	Groundfish Management Team	STT	Salmon Technical Team
HMS	highly migratory species. Species managed under the HMS Fishery Management Plan: tunas, sharks, billfish/swordfish, and dorado or dolphinfish.	VMS	Vessel monitoring system(s)
HMSMT	Highly Migratory Species Management Team	WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission	WPFMC	Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
MPA	marine protected area	YRCA	Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area(s)

Highly Migratory Species News

Council Adopts Alternatives to Reduce Thresher Shark Catches

At its September 2008 meeting, the Council adopted a range of alternatives, including two preferred alternatives, to reduce recreational and commercial catches of thresher sharks and other pelagic shark species managed under the HMS FMP. In June, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) expressed concern about the expanding recreational fishery for thresher sharks in the Southern California Bight, and recommended that the Council consider new management measures for the fishery. The Council's action includes measures for commercial fisheries that may take HMS sharks. The Council will select a preferred alternative at its November meeting in San Diego, California.

The preliminary preferred alternatives are: a) a seasonal closure for all HMS commercial shark fisheries south of 34° 27' N latitude that is generally the same as the current drift gillnet fishery closure (the drift gillnet fishery is closed 0-200 nm February 1 to April 30 and 0-75 nm May 1 to August 14 from the U.S.-Mexico border to the U.S.-Canada border); and b) a seasonal closure for the recreational HMS shark fishery for the entire state (U.S.-Mexico border to California-Oregon border) during that same time period, February 1-August 14, 0-200 miles.

Other alternatives recommended by the HMSMT were adopted by the Council for analysis:

No Action: No new management measures.

Spring Recreational Thresher Shark Fishing Closure: No fishing for or possession of thresher sharks south of Point Conception (out to 200 nm), April 1-June 30.

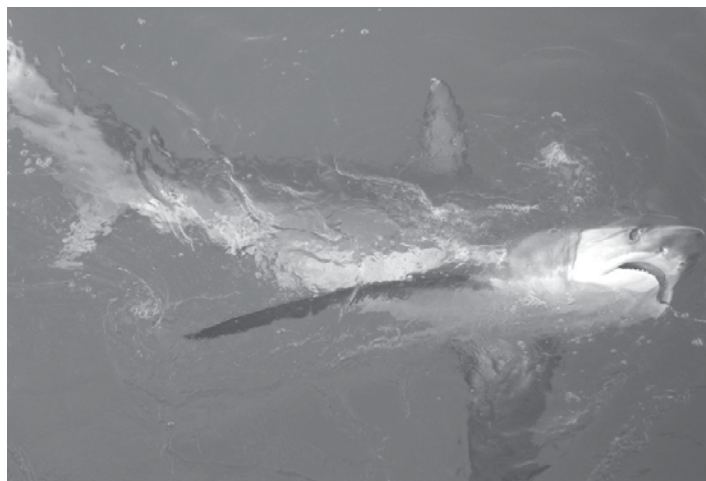
Daily Bag Limit: The current California daily bag limit would be reduced according to one of the following options: a) one shark per angler per day (one shortfin mako, one common thresher, one pelagic thresher, one bigeye thresher, or one blue shark); b) one shark of each HMS shark species per angler per day (no more than one shortfin mako, one common thresher, one pelagic thresher, one bigeye thresher, and one blue shark); or c) one thresher shark per boat per day.

Seasonal Limit: This alternative includes a range of one to five thresher sharks per angler per calendar year as options. A season limit could require anglers to use a punch card that would be marked for each shark landed, in order to collect data on catch and effort for thresher shark fishing. Another possibility is big game-type tags that would be affixed to any shark that is retained. This allows tracking of catches while also limiting harvest, since the tags would have to be obtained from the management agency (presumably the California Department of Fish and Game, if the program is administered at the state level.) A season limit could be combined with a daily bag limit so, for example, an angler could only land one shark per day and a maximum of five sharks per year.

5. Gear Modifications:

Require anglers to use circle hooks when targeting HMS sharks. Currently, anglers commonly use J-hooks and a strategy that results in tail-hooking. Because the shark can be

could confirm their preliminary choice of preferred alternatives, or based on public comment, modify those alternatives or choose one or more of the other alternatives recommended by




dragged backwards through the water for a long time before it reaches the boat, this method is thought to result in a high mortality rate. According to Bob Osborne, Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel member and United Anglers of Southern California representative, several innovative anglers use circle hooks, teaser lures, and alternative weighting systems to reduce the incidence of tail-hooked sharks.

Mandatory Data Reporting Requirement for all West Coast HMS Shark Fishing Tournaments: In addition to enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the California Recreational Fisheries Survey estimates, tournament data would be separately reported in the annual HMS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports.

When taking final action in November, the Council

the HMSMT and adopted for public review by the Council.

The Council also responded to a request from NMFS for a recommendation on modifying vessel marking requirements described in Federal regulations. The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission adopted a measure that would require commercial fishing vessels to be marked only with the international radio call sign when fishing west of 150° W longitude. Current regulations (50 CFR 660.704) require commercial vessels (but not commercial passenger fishing vessels) to display their official number, which is usually the U.S. Coast Guard vessel number. The Council recommended that the regulations be changed so they allow, but not necessarily require, a vessel to be marked with the international radio call sign. 

Highly Migratory Species News

Council Refines Alternatives for High Seas Shallow-Set Longline Fishery Amendment

In September, the Council refined a suite of alternatives adopted in March to establish a shallow-set longline fishery in waters west of the west coast Exclusive Economic Zone. Shallow-set gear is used to target swordfish, as opposed to deep-set longline gear, which is used to target tunas. The fishery is currently closed due to potential takes of threatened loggerhead sea turtles and endangered leatherback sea turtles. However, in the last few years, new fishing methods have been shown to substantially reduce the incidental take of these turtles. The longline fishery operating out of Hawaii reopened in 2004 using these methods.

The Council has been considering mitigation measures that would allow such a fishery to open. In March, the

Council adopted three alternatives: no action, a limited access fishery, and an open access fishery. Both the action alternatives include measures to limit sea turtle takes, including gear requirements and other rules like those imposed on the Hawaii fishery. In addition, take caps would be established for loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles. If the turtle takes reach the cap, the fishery closes.


The Council clarified various aspects of the limited entry alternative. Under this alternative, no more than 20 permits would be issued for the fishery. The alternative includes four different methods for determining who would qualify for a permit, based on fishing history in the west coast pelagic longline fishery and/or the drift gillnet fishery. The

methods consider the number and amount of landings by gear type and other indicators of historical participation.

The Council also added three options for analysis: a limited entry option under which anyone who made a swordfish landing on the west coast from 2005 through 2007 would qualify for a permit; a prohibition on using a west coast shallow-set limited entry permit on one vessel while at the same time using a Hawaii longline permit to target swordfish with another vessel; and a prohibition on transferring permits in the first one or two years after they are received. In order to transfer the permit an individual would have to demonstrate some number of landings.

The Council also discussed current action by the

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC) to expand their shallow-set longline fishery. The WPFMC proposes to increase the take caps imposed on their fishery because sea turtle mortality rates are demonstrably lower than anticipated when the fishery originally opened. The current limit on total fishing effort in the fishery would also be lifted. A draft supplemental environmental impact statement evaluating this proposed action is available at <http://tinyurl.com/longline>. The Pacific Council discussed the need for NMFS to jointly consider both the WPFMC and PFMC actions.

Currently, the Council is scheduled to take final action to adopt a preferred alternative at its April 4-9, 2009, meeting in Millbrae, California. 

Recipe: Teriyaki Albacore

1 to 1½ pounds troll-caught albacore loin cuts
 1 can (20 ounces) pineapple chunks
 3 tablespoons salt-reduced soy sauce
 2 tablespoons sherry
 1 tablespoon grated ginger root
 1½ teaspoon dry mustard
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 teaspoon brown sugar
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 1-2 large green peppers, cut into large pieces
 skewers

Rinse albacore loins with cold water; pat dry with paper towels. Set aside. Drain pineapple, reserving 3 tablespoons of juice; set pineapple chunks aside. Make marinade by combining reserved juice, soy sauce, sherry, ginger, mustard, garlic, brown sugar, and oil. Stir well and pour over albacore. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for 1 hour, turning once. Using bamboo or metal skewers, make kabobs by alternating pineapple and green pepper; set aside. Drain albacore, reserving marinade. Place on well-greased grate 4-5 inches from hot coals and cook 4-5 minutes. Baste with marinade and turn. Cook an additional 4-5 minutes, or until albacore flakes when tested with a fork. Baste fruit and vegetable kabobs and place on grill. Cook 15-30 seconds on each side or until just browned.

Enforcement Corner

Oregon Man Fined \$116,000 for Fishing Without Vessel Monitoring System

NOAA, the Federal fisheries agency, has charged Warrenton, Oregon fisherman Denniss Sturgell with allegedly making three fishing trips without a functioning vessel monitoring system (VMS), and with failure to declare what type of fishing gear he was using on those trips.

In its charging document, NOAA alleges Sturgell, who operates under a

federal fishing permit issued by NOAA, made the trips September 2007 and that he is the owner and operator of the fishing vessel *Sea Sick II*.

An operating vessel monitoring system unit is required on board all vessels holding federal fishing permits for the Pacific groundfish fishery when fishing in state or federal waters.

The VMS program uses global positioning system

tracking technology to monitor fishing vessel location for enforcement of offshore areas where commercial fishing is restricted.

NOAA's Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement initiated an investigation of the *Sea Sick II* after they noted the vessel was not operating its onboard VMS unit during September 2007. The investigation determined that the vessel landed 35,000 pounds of

groundfish from those trips, worth nearly \$75,000.

Based on the investigation, NOAA issued a four-count Notice of Violation and Assessment, and is seeking to impose a \$116,000 fine for the alleged illegal fishing. Sturgell has 30 days to request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge in regard to these civil penalties.

Enforcement Consultants Lose a Friend and Partner

On September 20, the enforcement community learned that a long-time friend and fellow law enforcement officer with the U.S. Forest Service had been shot and killed during a contact in the Dungeness Recreation Area in Clallam County, Washington.

Officer Kristine Fairbanks was the wife of Washington State Fish and Wildlife Officer Brian Fairbanks. A 20-year veteran, Kris and her K-9 dog Radar had a large patrol beat that included Clallam, Grays Harbor and Jefferson Counties. Local law enforcement agencies relied on Kris's help on many occasions. Mike Cenci, a member of the Council's Enforcement Consultants for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, said that "Given



the similarities of the job and all of the poachers she apprehended, she was one of us, only in a different uniform. I can't even begin to describe the pain we all felt while responding to her aid."

Kris had been working alone and miles from back-up, when she contacted Sean Roe, a convicted felon under active supervision by Department of Corrections. At some point a struggle ensued and she was shot and killed. Roe later shot and killed a citizen in order to steal his truck and evade authorities. The citizen, Mr.

Richard Ziegler, was a retired Corrections Officer from California. Roe was identified at the 7-Cedars Casino hours after the shooting. Two Clallam County Deputies arrived to investigate when Roe opened fire and was shot and killed.

During the memorial service, friend and Forest Service colleague Tom Lyons said, "we have lost one of our best, and that leaves a void that we will never fill. With her death, we all died a little."

Over 3,000 people attended Kris's memorial service, including the PFMC Enforcement Consultant family from NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, Northwest Region; California Fish and Game Enforcement; and the United States Coast Guard.

Mike Cenci writes, "It would drive Kris crazy when someone failed to appreciate

that her job was commensurate with the title. Kris was not, as some may have misunderstood our jobs to be, a natural historian who takes people on forest tours and scolds those who pick the flowers. She was well-versed in natural history and understood forest, fisheries and wildlife ecology and management, but she was a police officer and was engaged in the business of policing."

Fish and Wildlife Officers enforce regulations that ensure the wise use of public lands and natural resources. But while much of this work involves bringing generally decent people back into the fold when tempted by opportunities they did not have the strength to pass up, there is another, sometimes unknown side to the

Continued on page 13

NMFS Proposes Guidelines to End Overfishing and Implement Reauthorized Magnuson Act

At its September 2008 meeting, the Council reviewed proposed revisions to guidance for National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), including ways to comply with annual

Committee. These reports and Council guidance formed the basis for the formal Council staff response submitted to NMFS.

Overall, the Council believes its good record of avoiding overfishing events while

system can operate effectively to manage our diverse fisheries. The Council also strongly recommended that NMFS consider the concerns expressed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding the complexity of the pro-

National Standard 1 guidelines are to be implemented by the MSA-mandated deadlines of 2010 for fisheries experiencing overfishing, and by 2011 for all other fisheries. As a planning exercise, the Pacific Council reviewed the following schedules for final implementation of the National Standard 1 guidelines, amendment of fishery management plans, and adoption of fishing regulations.

The “most aggressive” schedule could have fishery regulations in place by 2010, but it is unlikely to be achieved. The “high priority” schedule is perhaps more realistic, but is still an aggressive schedule, and would probably require re-prioritizing Council activities.

Under any scenario, the Council and NMFS are facing a lot of work within a relatively short time period. The Council recommends that NMFS obtain funding for efforts by the regional fishery management councils and the affected States to meet the deadlines imposed by Congress.

Stage	Most Aggressive Schedule Conceivable	High Priority Schedule
Proposed Rule Comment Period Ends	September 2008	September 2008
Final Rule	January 2009	March 2009
Council Announces Scoping - EIS or EA Determination - Initiate FMP Amendments	March 2009	June 2009
First FMP Amendment Drafts, Including Alternatives	June 2009	November 2009
Adopt Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Public Review	September 2009	March-April 2010
Final Council Action	November 2009	June 2010
Secretarial Approval	April 2010	January 2011
Changes in Existing Fishing Regulations	Second Half of 2010	During 2011

catch limit and accountability measure requirements. Due to the broad implications of these new provisions for management of west coast fisheries, the Council received reports from all eight of its fishery management plan advisory bodies and its Scientific and Statistical

rebuilding, and protecting critical stocks, reflects the strength of our current management mechanisms. Therefore, the Council recommended that the final National Standard 1 guidance include a simplified and flexible framework under which the Council’s current

posed guidelines, and agreed that there is opportunity to use existing fishery management terms and concepts to meet the intent of the reauthorized MSA to end and prevent overfishing.

The Council notes that time is running short if these new MSA provisions and

Enforcement Report, continued from page 12

business. Kris spent many long days and nights catching cedar poachers who were cutting down ancient old growth trees to perpetuate a methamphetamine addiction, eradicating marijuana from public land, arresting felons in possession of firearms, serving arrest warrants, dealing with protesters, intervening in domestic violence

situations at camps, discovering meth labs, helping to coordinate search and rescue for the lost, arresting drunks, backing up other law enforcement, and providing the range of services you would expect from the police, but in an outdoor setting. The value of natural resources to poachers, and their remoteness from law enforcement or public attention, provides an at-

tractive environment for people to engage in criminal activity. While many officers dedicate their lives to this endeavor, sometimes they also give it.

By the conclusion of the services, Officer Kristine Fairbanks signed out of service for the last time. Cenci writes, “when the USCG helicopters flew overhead and broke into a ‘Lost Officer Formation’ we all

thought: ‘yes, she is lost... but she will never be forgotten as a friend, a partner, and a steadfast guardian of our public lands and natural resources. Please keep Mr. Ziegler’s family, and Kris’s husband Brian and his young daughter in your thoughts and prayers. They will need all of our support during this difficult time.’”

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council approved the following changes in advisory body membership at the September meeting:

- Ms. Lisa Veneroso to fill the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (replacing Ms. Carol Henry).
- Ms. Sarah McAvinchey to fill the vacant NMFS Northwest Region position on the Groundfish Management Team (GMT).
- Ms. Lynn Mattes to fill the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife vacancy


on the GMT.

- Dr. Michael O'Farrell to fill the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center position on the Salmon Technical Team (replacing Mr. Michael Mohr).

The Council Chair made an interim appointment of Ms. Dorothy Lowman to fill the vacant non-voting conservation position on the Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC), replacing Mr. Steve Barrager. This was necessary to fill the position for the October GAC meeting. Council staff has solicited nominations for a permanent replacement for the position for Council consider-

ation at the November Council meeting. Council staff is also soliciting for nominations to the Scientific and Statistical Committee to fill an at-large vacancy resulting from the recent resignation of Dr. Thomas Helzer. Information on the nomination process can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.pccouncil.org/operations/advisory.html#vacancies>.

The Enforcement Consultants have selected a new Chair, Deputy Chief Mike Cenci with the WDFW. He replaces Mr. Tony Warrington, California Department of Fish and Game.

In related action, the Council also adopted an amendment to its operating procedures. The amendment clarifies the Council's role in the implementation of federal regulations that result from final Council recommendations to adopt a fishery management plan, plan amendment, or revise regulations implementing a fishery management plan. This action springs from language in the Magnuson-Stevens Act requiring a Council to deem that the resulting regulations are necessary or appropriate, and also includes a process for ensuring they are consistent with Council action. 

Upcoming Briefing Book Deadlines

The next Council meeting will be held November 1-7, 2008, in San Diego, California. Comments received by 11:59 p.m. on **October 15, 2008** will be included in the briefing books mailed to Council members prior to the November meeting. Comments received by 11:59 p.m. on **October 28, 2008** will be distributed to Council members at the onset of the November meeting. For more information on the briefing book, see www.pccouncil.org/bb/bb.html.

Coming Up at the November 2008 Council Meeting

The next Council meeting will be held in San Diego, California on November 1-7, 2008. This meeting will focus mainly on trawl rationalization. The advance Briefing Book will be posted on the Council website in late October.

Groundfish

- ⊗ Inseason adjustments
- ⊗ Trawl rationalization (Amendment 20)

Salmon

- ⊗ Methodology review

Pacific Halibut

- ⊗ Final changes to catch sharing plan
- ⊗ Pacific halibut catch apportionment methodology

Highly Migratory Species

- ⊗ Recommendations to the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
- ⊗ Changes to routine management measures for the 2009-2010 season

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

- ⊗ Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel terms of reference for 2009
- ⊗ Pacific Sardine stock assessment and management measures

Status of Council-Managed Fish Stocks

Salmon

Salmon stocks fluctuate naturally from year to year. Stocks that are normally healthy can have low return years, and depressed stocks can have high return years.

Natural stocks that are generally considered healthy include Washington Coastal fall Chinook, Columbia River Upriver Bright fall Chinook, Columbia River summer Chinook, Lewis River wild fall Chinook, Oregon Coastal Chinook, Washington Coastal coho, and Puget Sound coho. Klamath River fall Chinook are generally healthy, but highly variable, and contain a substantial hatchery component.

Stocks that have shown recent upward trends include Snake River spring Chinook, Snake River fall Chinook, Sacramento Winter Chinook, Central Valley spring Chinook, and Oregon Coastal Natural coho.

Natural stocks that continue to be depressed include Puget Sound Chinook, Lower Columbia River natural tule Chinook, Columbia River upriver spring Chinook, California coastal Chinook, Lower Columbia River natural coho, and California Central Coastal coho.

Sacramento River fall Chinook are largely hatchery origin, but they can fluctuate widely, as occurred in 2008. Because fisheries depend heavily on hatchery stocks, their status is often the most visible indicator of overall abundance from year to year. However, the status of natural stocks allows access to surplus hatchery fish in most years, and their status determines the long-term viability of the fisheries.

Highly Migratory Species

The Council manages tunas (north Pacific albacore, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, and northern bluefin); sharks (common thresher, pelagic thresher, bigeye thresher, shortfin mako, and blue); billfish/swordfish (striped marlin and Pacific swordfish); and dorado (also known as dolphinfish and mahi-mahi). Most highly migratory species are targeted by international fisheries and managed through international agreements.

Albacore tuna

U.S. west coast vessels catch 17% of the north Pacific albacore tuna catch. They are also caught by Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Taiwan. Albacore tuna are not considered overfished. They are a very productive stock, and their spawning stock biomass is growing. However, there is some concern that albacore may be too aggressively fished; the International Scientific Committee, which assesses albacore, has called for a precautionary approach to harvest.

U.S. west coast vessels catch less than 1% of the following species, for which conservation concerns exist:

Bigeye tuna: biomass is in decline; overfishing may be taking place.

Skipjack tuna: difficult to assess; little known; but appears to be no conservation concern.

Yellowfin tuna: overfishing is occurring.

Striped marlin: appears to be much reduced. Difficult to assess. Current levels of international fishing are considered unsustainable.

Coastal Pelagic Species

No coastal pelagic species (CPS) fisheries are experiencing overfishing, and none are overfished. Pacific mackerel and Pacific sardine are actively managed stocks, and are assessed every three years, with updates done annually. Jack mackerel, anchovy, and market squid are monitored stocks. Monitored stocks are generally state-managed species. No international agreements exist on the management of west coast CPS stocks, and information on harvest and biomass trends outside U.S. waters is limited.

Pacific mackerel was last assessed in 2007. It is considered healthy, with increasing biomass.

Pacific sardine stocks were last assessed in 2007. They are considered healthy, but their biomass has been decreasing.


Anchovy have not been assessed in recent years. Generally, anchovy and sardine populations have opposite trends, as they prefer different marine regimes (anchovy prefer cold water regimes and sardine prefer warm water regimes).

The **market squid** fishery in California is the highest volume and value CPS fishery. The population is monitored to ensure adequate egg escape-ment by limiting the annual take, restricting allowable gear, and by weekend closures for uninterrupted spawning periods. Market squid populations are tied directly to ecological conditions and their numbers can drop significantly during El Niño events.

Groundfish

The Council manages about 92 groundfish species (the number is approximate because the taxonomy of some of the rockfish species has not been resolved). Of these, 30 species have been assessed; more assessments of new species are planned. Of these 30 species:

- **19 are at healthy levels of abundance.** (These include arrowtooth flounder, bank rockfish, black rockfish, blackgill rockfish, California scorpionfish, chilipepper rockfish, Dover sole, English sole, gopher rockfish, kelp greenling, lingcod, longnose skate, longspine thornyhead, Pacific whiting, shortbelly rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, vermilion rockfish, and yellowtail rockfish).
- **Four are at a precautionary level of abundance** (Petrale sole, sablefish, and, in California only, cabezon and blue rockfish).
- **Seven are overfished** (cowcod, bocaccio, yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, and widow rockfish.) All are under rebuilding plans; the latter two are expected to be rebuilt shortly.

Many groundfish stocks, including about 12 rockfish, are unexploited or subject to low exploitation rates due to their small size. In addition, many shelf species have been subject to lower exploitation rates since the inception of Rockfish Conservation Areas in 2003. 

Schedule of Events

For more information on these meetings, please see our website (www.pcouncil.org/events/csevents.html) or call toll-free (866) 806-7204.

SSC Salmon Subcommittee, Salmon Technical Team, and Model Evaluation Workgroup

Dates: October 15, 2008

Purpose: To brief the STT and SSC Salmon Subcommittee on modeling changes and improvements.

Location: Marriott Courtyard Portland Airport, Portland, OR

Contact: Chuck Tracy (chuck.tracy@noaa.gov, 503-820-2280)

Trawl Rationalization Amendment Hearings

Dates: October 27-29, 2008

Purpose: To hear public comment on trawl rationalization

Location: Newport, Olympia, Eureka, Astoria, and Santa Cruz

For more information, see page 8.

Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting

Dates: November 1-7, 2008

Location: Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, CA

Contact: Don McIsaac (donald.mcisaac@noaa.gov)

Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee

Dates: December 9-10, 2008

Purpose: To develop Terms of Reference for proposed changes to areas closed to bottom trawl gear

Location: Pacific Fishery Management Council, Portland, OR

Contact: Chuck Tracy (chuck.tracy@noaa.gov)

Advisory Body Vacancies

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is seeking qualified candidates to serve on the

Scientific and Statistical Committee

One At-Large Position

(Deadline: October 14, 2008)

Groundfish Allocation Committee

Conservation Community, One Nonvoting Position

(Deadline: October 14, 2008)

The public comment deadline for the November Council meeting is October 15! (See p. 11)



Pacific Council News
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

