

REBUILDING REVISION RULES

A groundfish stock is declared overfished and a rebuilding plan is established according to the policies codified in the Council's Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) when an approved assessment indicates spawning biomass has fallen below the Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST). Subsequent stock assessments and rebuilding analyses, which provide probabilistic rebuilding projections under varying harvest control rules, of an overfished stock are periodically done to evaluate rebuilding progress. Rebuilding plans are routinely amended when rebuilding progress falls behind expectations and predicted to take longer than specified in the plan. Rebuilding plan amendments can impact management and fishery stability. An effective rebuilding management strategy should consider the uncertainty characterized in stock assessments and rebuilding analyses to avoid reacting to the "noise" (i.e., statistically insignificant changes) rather than "signal" in a new assessment or rebuilding analysis when contemplating a rebuilding plan amendment. Rebuilding revision rules are default policies for maintaining (or amending) rebuilding plans given a Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommendation that the results of any new assessment and/or rebuilding analysis represent a statistically insignificant (or significant) change in stock rebuilding expectations and do not necessarily compel a revision of the rebuilding plan.

Any rebuilding revision rule should consider any long-term trade-offs between the conservation objectives, such as shorter rebuilding times, and management objectives, such as fishery stability, specified in the FMP and rebuilding plan. It is therefore important to be able to predict the long-term rate of stock rebuilding as well as the socioeconomic impacts associated with any management strategy that is part of a rebuilding plan. A Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) has been prepared that simulates long term outlooks for four different groundfish taxa with different life histories under alternative rebuilding revision strategies or rules and varied levels of observation error and assessment uncertainty (Agenda Item D.10, Attachment 1). The goal of the MSE is to identify alternative rebuilding strategies that: 1) are robust to statistical uncertainty, 2) rebuild the stock in the shortest time possible while limiting economic impact across fisheries, and 3) implement a rebuilding strategy that results in limited changes in harvest rates during rebuilding (predictability). Ms. Chantel Wetzel (NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center and the University of Washington) conducted the MSE and will provide an overview of the operating model and initial results of MSE simulations. The MSE has been reviewed by the SSC and their recommendations on the use of the MSE to inform Council rebuilding revision rules will be forthcoming in their supplemental report under this agenda item.

The Council task at this meeting is to adopt a range of alternative rebuilding revision rules for further analysis. A range of strawman rebuilding rules (Agenda Item D.10, Attachment 2) is offered based on initial review of MSE results. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) have also reviewed MSE results and are expected to offer their recommendations on alternative rebuilding revision rules in supplemental reports at this meeting. The Council should consider the advice of these advisory bodies as well as the public before deciding a range of alternative rebuilding revision rules for analysis. It is recommended the Council adopt a final preferred alternative for rebuilding revision rules by the November meeting to minimize complications to the 2017-18 specifications decision-making process.

Council Action:

Adopt a range of alternatives for stock rebuilding revision rules.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.10, Attachment 1: Evaluating alternative rebuilding strategies to meet management goals for rebuilding overfished U.S. West Coast groundfish stocks.
2. Agenda Item D.10, Attachment 2: Rebuilding Revision Rules Range of Alternatives.

Agenda Order:

D.10 Rebuilding Revision Rules

- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Range of Alternatives for Stock Rebuilding Revision Rules

PFMC
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