

UNMANAGED FORAGE FISH REGULATIONS

At the March 2015 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) took final action on the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1 (CEBA 1), which would amend all four of the Council's Fishery Management Plans and prohibit the future development of directed commercial fisheries for certain forage fish species in Federal marine waters until the Council can assess potential impacts to existing fisheries, fishing communities, and the greater marine ecosystem. The action is intended to recognize the importance of forage fish to the marine ecosystem off the West Coast, and to provide adequate protection for forage fish by prohibiting directed commercial fishing for certain forage fish species while continuing to allow incidental catch of those species.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was asked to develop draft regulations that set appropriate incidental take limits that would not hinder current fisheries for other species (Agenda Item D.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Report). Section 303(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act stipulates that proposed regulations the Council "deems necessary or appropriate for the purposes of implementing a fishery management plan or plan amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary [of Commerce]." The Council is scheduled to review the proposed regulations at the September Council meeting.

The Council will also revisit draft Council Operating Procedure (COP) 24, which describes procedures the Council would employ when reviewing proposed fisheries for unmanaged forage fish (Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1). Draft COP 24 was last revised by the Council at the March 2015 Council meeting, largely in response to public comment at that time. The Council will consider final adoption of COP 24 at this meeting. The Council's ad hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) met via webinar on August 10 and discussed the proposed COP 24 and provides recommendations in Agenda Item D.2.a, EWG Report.

Council Action:

- 1. Deem regulations implementing unmanaged forage fish regulations.**
- 2. Finalize Council Operating Procedure 24 outlining a process for authorizing new forage fish fisheries.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1; Draft Council Operation Procedure 24.
2. Agenda Item D.2.a, EWG Report.
3. Agenda Item D.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Report.

Agenda Order:

D.2 Unmanaged Forage Fish Regulations

Mike Burner

- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Deem Regulations Implementing Unmanaged Forage Fish Regulations in Four Fishery Management Plans and Finalize Council Operating Procedure 24 Outlining Process for Authorizing New Forage Fish Fisheries

PFMC
8/19/15