

PACIFIC COAST GROUNDFISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) requested background information on the goals and objectives relative to Pacific Coast groundfish, to help guide the development of alternatives for modifying essential fish habitat (EFH) and trawl rockfish conservation areas (RCA). The following are the current fishery management plan (FMP) Goals and Objectives, noting changes from the Amendment 19 Goals and Objectives to present. The italicized text indicates additions, and strikethrough text indicates deletions. Also included are the objectives listed in the Amendment 19 Record of Decision.

Conservation Goal

Prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks by managing for appropriate harvest levels and prevent, to the extent practicable, any net loss of the habitat of living marine resources.

Conservation Objectives

Objective 1. Maintain an information flow on the status of the fishery and the fishery resource which allows for informed management decisions as the fishery occurs.

Objective 2. Adopt harvest specifications and management measures consistent with resource stewardship responsibilities for each groundfish species or species group. Achieve a level of harvest capacity in the fishery that is appropriate for a sustainable harvest and low discard rates, and which results in a fishery that is diverse, stable, and profitable. This reduced capacity should lead to more effective management for many other fishery problems.

Objective 3. For species or species groups that are overfished, develop a plan to rebuild the stock as required by the MSA. {*as soon as possible, taking into account the status and biology of the stock, the needs of fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the United States participates, and the interaction of the overfished stock within the marine ecosystem.*}

Objective 4. Where conservation problems have been identified for non-groundfish species and the best scientific information shows that the groundfish fishery has a direct impact on the ability of that species to maintain its long-term reproductive health, the Council may consider establishing management measures to control the impacts of groundfish fishing on those species. Management measures may be imposed on the groundfish fishery to reduce fishing mortality of a non-groundfish species for documented conservation reasons. The action will be designed to minimize disruption of the groundfish fishery, in so far as consistent with the goal to minimize the bycatch of non-groundfish species, and will not preclude achievement of a quota, harvest guideline of groundfish, or allocation of groundfish, if any, unless such action is required by other applicable law.

Objective 5. Describe and identify EFH, adverse impacts on EFH, and other actions to conserve and enhance EFH, and adopt management measures that minimize, to the extent practicable,

adverse impacts from fishing on EFH.

From Amendment 19 Record of Decision:

- Protect a diversity of habitat types across latitude ranges and within the two known biogeographic zones that occur in the project area
- Protect the full range of benthic habitat to account for each managed species
- Prioritize pristine or sensitive habitats and the gear types most likely to have the highest impact
- Distribute socioeconomic costs that would result from implementation of the alternative, and
- Implement area closures for different gear types within different habitat types to foster comparative scientific research.

The FMP also contains Goals and Objectives for economics, utilization, and social factors:

Economics Goal: Maximize the value of the groundfish resource as a whole.

Economics Objectives

Objective 6. { *Within the constraints of the conservation goals and objectives of the FMP*}, attempt to achieve the greatest possible net economic benefit to the nation from the managed fisheries.

Objective 7. Identify those sectors of the groundfish fishery for which it is beneficial to promote year-round marketing opportunities and establish management policies that extend those sectors fishing and marketing opportunities as long as practicable during the fishing year.

Objective 8. Gear restrictions to minimize the necessity for other management measures will be used whenever practicable. Encourage development of practicable gear restrictions intended to reduce regulatory and/or economic discards through gear research regulated by EFP.

Utilization Goal: Within the constraints of overfished species rebuilding requirements, achieve the maximum biological yield of the overall groundfish fishery, promote year-round availability of quality seafood to the consumer, and promote recreational fishing opportunities.

Utilization Objectives

Objective 9. Develop management measures and policies that foster and encourage full utilization (harvesting and processing), in accordance with conservation goals, of the Pacific Coast groundfish resources by domestic fisheries.

Objective 10. Recognize the multispecies nature of the fishery and establish a concept of managing by species and gear or by groups of interrelated species.

Objective 11. Develop management programs that reduce regulations-induced discard and/or which reduce economic incentives to discard fish. Develop management measures that minimize bycatch to the extent practicable and, to the extent that bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch. Promote and support monitoring programs to improve estimates of total fishing-related mortality and bycatch, as well as those to improve other information

necessary to determine the extent to which it is practicable to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality.

Social Objectives

Objective 12. When conservation actions are necessary to protect a stock or stock assemblage, attempt to develop management measures that will affect users equitably.

Objective 13. Minimize gear conflicts among resource users.

Objective 14. When considering alternative management measures to resolve an issue, choose the measure that best accomplishes the change with the least disruption of current domestic fishing practices, marketing procedures, and the environment.

Objective 15. Avoid unnecessary adverse impacts on small entities.

Objective 16. Consider the importance of groundfish resources to fishing communities, provide for the sustained participation of fishing communities, and minimize adverse economic impacts on fishing communities to the extent practicable.

Objective 17. Promote the safety of human life at sea.