

BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2017-2018 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

This is the last of several agenda items at this meeting addressing harvest specifications and management measures for 2017-2018 groundfish fisheries. Under Agenda Item I.2, the Council is scheduled to adopt preliminary exempted fishing permits (EFPs). Under Agenda Items I.3 and I.4 the Council is scheduled to adopt stock assessments and harvest specifications, respectively, for each stock and stock complex. In the event the Council does not complete all tasks under the previous agenda items, the remainder of the harvest specifications decisions should be made under Agenda Item I.9.

Additionally, the Council is scheduled to take final action under Agenda Item I.9 to reclassify big skate from an ecosystem component (EC) species to “in the fishery” and adopt a preferred alternative for managing big skate. The Council is also scheduled to adopt preliminary off the top deductions from the annual catch limits (ACLs), set-asides from the trawl allocation, and two-year allocations to facilitate the analysis. Lastly, the Council should adopt a final range of new management measures for more detailed analysis and provide guidance on routine adjustments to management measures.

Ecosystem Component Species

In September 2015, the Council recommended consideration for reclassifying the big skate designation in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) from an EC species to a species actively managed in the fishery and adopted a range of alternatives for managing big skate including whether big skate should be managed with stock-specific harvest specifications or in a complex with longnose skate (Agenda Item I.9, Attachment 1). The Council is scheduled to adopt the final FMP designation for big skate and final preferred alternative for managing big skate under Agenda Item I.9 to provide sufficient time for the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to analyze management measures (e.g., cumulative landings limits or individual fishing quota) over the winter.

Management Measures

Management measures are used to meet the goals of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and FMP, including attaining but not exceeding the ACL and correcting or mitigating overages of the ACL if they occur. The first set of management measures are implemented when deductions from the ACL, called off the top deductions from the ACL, are made to account for groundfish mortality resulting from Pacific Coast treaty tribal harvest, scientific research, non-groundfish fisheries, and EFPs. Further, set-asides for some species are deducted from the trawl allocation to accommodate bycatch in the at-sea whiting fishery. The GMT is expected to provide a supplemental report recommending the values to be used in the analysis, which should be adopted or modified by the Council under Agenda Item I.9.

The ACL less the deductions is called the fishery harvest guideline (HG) or commercial HG (sablefish north of 36° N. latitude and Pacific whiting), which is the amount available for the sector-specific allocations. Sector allocations include formal long-term allocations contained in the FMP and short-term allocations implemented for the biennial period. Under this agenda item, the Council should adopt preliminary two-year allocations, including a range of alternatives

if necessary, for overfished species and canary rockfish to facilitate the analysis. Attachment 2 contains information relevant to this decision.

At the September 2015 meeting, the Council adopted a preliminary range of new management measures and discussed adjustments to routine measures. Under this agenda item, the Council should select the final range of new management measures from the range adopted in September and provide guidance on adjustments to routine measures. The GMT has provided the background, relevant factors for the analysis, and an initial workload estimate of the management measures for Council consideration (Agenda Item I.9.a, GMT Report). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has provided a report recommending management measures for the Washington recreational fishery (Agenda Item I.9.a, WDFW Report).

The Council should carefully consider the list of potential management measures proposed by management entities, advisory bodies, and the public when deciding which issues are the highest priorities for more detailed analyses. Results of the detailed analyses will help the Council develop a preliminary preferred suite of management measures at the April 2016 Council meeting. After a public review period, the Council will take final action at the June 2016 Council meeting with implementation scheduled for January 1, 2017.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt any remaining groundfish harvest specifications for 2017-2018.**
- 2. Adopt the final FMP designation and final alternative for managing big skate. Provide guidance on management measures necessary to control catch of big skate.**
- 4. Adopt deductions from the ACLs and the trawl allocations, as appropriate.**
- 5. Adopt preliminary two-year allocations as necessary.**
- 6. Adopt a range of new management measures for more detailed analysis.**
- 7. Provide guidance on routine adjustments to management measures.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.9, Attachment 1: Range of Alternatives for Managing West Coast Skate Species.
2. Agenda Item I.9, Attachment 2: Recent Year Allocations Relevant to Deciding a Range of 2017-2018 Allocations.
3. Agenda Item I.9.a, GMT Report: Groundfish Management Team Report on Management Measures for the 2017-2018 Biennial Harvest Specifications.
4. Agenda Item I.9.a, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Biennial Management Measures for 2017-2018.
5. Agenda Item I.9.b, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- I.9 Biennial Management Measures for 2017-2018 Kelly Ames
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Any Remaining Harvest Specifications, Preliminary Two-Year Allocations, and Management Measures for More Detailed Analysis