

FINAL ACTION ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

Management measures for groundfish fisheries are set by the Council with the general understanding that these measures will likely need to be adjusted within the biennium to attain, but not exceed, the annual catch limits (ACL). This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries, including landings of Pacific halibut in the limited entry fixed gear sablefish primary fishery north of Point Chehalis, as well as routine inseason adjustments to ongoing 2017 fisheries. Potential inseason adjustments include adjustments to commercial and recreational fishery catch limits and adjustments to rockfish conservation area boundaries. Adjustments are, in part, based on catch estimate updates and the latest information from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program.

At the April 2017 meeting, the Council requested that the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) develop alternatives for releasing the ACL buffers for canary, darkblotched rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch. The buffers were established in the 2019-2020 harvest specifications and management measures process to account for unforeseen catch events in any sector. When unforeseen catch events occur that compromise a sector's ability to access target species (e.g., catch is projected to attain a quota prior to target species attainment or catch event results attainment of a quota causing fishery closure), the Council could recommend releasing the buffer thereby increasing the sector allocation and providing greater access to target species. When determining whether to release the buffer, the Council should consider the allocation framework criteria outlined in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the objectives to maintain or extend fishing and marketing opportunities, while taking into account the best available information on sector needs. The Council could recommend full reapportionment, partial reapportionment, or no reapportionment, based the FMP objectives and managing the risk of exceeding an ACL. The buffer approach is similar to the process that is used when groundfish mortality in research, exempted fishing permits, or incidental open access fisheries is lower than the pre-season projections and a sector has realized a need to access the residual yield. The GMT is expected to provide the most recent sector projections as well as policy considerations and process options for releasing the buffers.

Council Action:

Consider projections for the 2017 fisheries and adopt inseason adjustments, as necessary.

Reference Materials:

None.

Agenda Order:

F.10 Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

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- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Inseason Adjustments, as Necessary to Achieve, but Not Exceed, Annual Catch Limits, and Other Management Objectives