



DECISIONS AT THE MARCH 2007 MEETING www.pcouncil.org

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Stock Assessment Review Panel Terms of Reference for 2007

The Council approved the final Terms of Reference for the 2007 coastal pelagic species stock assessment process. The final document will be posted on the Council website and distributed for use during the review of full assessments for Pacific mackerel and Pacific sardine scheduled for May 1-3 and September 19-21 respectively.

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

Groundfish Harvest Policy Evaluation Workshop Report

The Council agreed with several recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to move forward with results of the Groundfish Harvest Policy Workshop held in LaJolla, California, including:

1. Assigning the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee to calculate a rockfish species prior assumption for reproductive rate steepness, and to provide it to stock assessment authorities for active consideration in the upcoming stock assessments;
2. Planning for a sequential workshop in early 2008 to
 - a) further analysis of harvest policy alternatives such as defining a dynamic B_0 concept, 40-10 and 60-20 control rules, and defining data poor control rules, and
 - b) broaden the review of harvest policy alternatives to coastal pelagic species.

Pacific Whiting Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2007

The Council adopted a new acceptable biological catch (ABC) and coastwide (U.S. and Canada) and U.S. optimum yields (OY) for the 2007 whiting fisheries as follows:

1. Coastwide (U.S. and Canada) ABC of 612,068 mt based on the more conservative $q=1$ assessment model,
2. Coastwide (U.S. and Canada) OY of 328,358 mt, and
3. U.S. OY of 242,591 mt.
4. The tribal allocation will be 32,500 mt.

Trawl Rationalization (Trawl Individual Quota (TIQ) Program)

The Council combined the three individual fishing quota (IFQ) alternatives into a single alternative, eliminated the permit stacking alternative, and specified an alternative that would provide for management via cooperatives for the three whiting sectors. This action was taken as part of the adoption of an amended Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC) report which also included recommendations to further refine the alternatives and directions to the SSC to address area management issues. With respect to the possibility that an IFQ program may result in stranded processor capital, the Council directed that the

GAC consider alternative processor compensation measures and, depending on the GAC discussions, a white paper be developed on this issue. The Council also modified TIQ program goals and objectives, and requested that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) collect additional ownership information on trawl permits as part of the renewal process for 2008 permits. More detailed information on these actions will be provided in the next edition of the Pacific Council Newsletter and made available on the Council website, www.pcouncil.org.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

The Council adopted the following inseason adjustments to ongoing 2007 groundfish fisheries:

1. Washington recreational groundfish adjustments:
 - area closures were adjusted north of the Queets River to prohibit groundfish retention seaward of 20 fm from May 21-September 30, except on days when the Pacific halibut fishery is open in this area,
 - retention of groundfish to be prohibited seaward of 30 fm between the Queets River and Leadbetter Point from March 17-June 15, except retention of sablefish and Pacific cod is allowed from May 1-June 15.
2. Limited entry trawl fishery adjustments to reduce canary bycatch and slow catch of petrale sole and darkblotched rockfish:
 - closed starting April 1 shoreward of the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) in areas north of Cape Alava and between Cape Arago and Humbug Mountain,
 - restrict the shoreward area of the RCA between Leadbetter Point and the Oregon-Washington border to 60 fm from April 1 through period 5,
 - reduce cumulative limits beginning in period 3 for selective flatfish trawls north of 40°10' N latitude for sablefish (5,000 pounds/2 months), Dover sole (38,000 pounds/2 months through period 5 and 25,000 pounds/2 months in period 6), petrale sole (20,000 pounds/2 months through period 4; 15,000 pounds/2 months in period 5, and 8,000 pounds/2 months in period 6); and combine limits for Other Flatfish and arrowtooth flounder at 70,000 pounds/2 months through period 5 and 30,000 pounds/2 months in period 6,
 - combine cumulative limits for Other Flatfish and arrowtooth flounder using large and small footrope gears north of 40°10' N latitude to 110,000 pounds/2 months in periods 3 through 6,
 - reduce cumulative limits for petrale sole using large and small footrope gears north of 40°10' N latitude to 20,000 pounds/2 months in periods 3 through 5 and 30,000 pounds/2 months in period 6,
 - reduce cumulative limits for petrale sole using large and small footrope gears between 38° N latitude and 40°10' N latitude to 25,000 pounds/2 months in periods 3 through 5,
 - reduce cumulative limits for petrale sole using large and small footrope gears south of 40°10' N latitude to 25,000 pounds/2 months in periods 3 through 5,
 - establish a 150 fm RCA seaward boundary north of Cascade Head and a 200 fm seaward RCA boundary from Cascade Head to 40°10' N latitude from April 1

- through period 4,
 - increase cumulative limits for lingcod (4,000 pounds/2 months) and shortspine thornyhead (10,000 pounds/2 months) using small and large footrope gears seaward of the RCA to shift effort from nearshore areas,
 - reduce slope rockfish limits for all trawl gears north of 40°10' N latitude to 1,500 pounds/2 months in periods 3 through 6.
3. Adjustments to whiting trawl bycatch caps:
- canary rockfish: a 4.7 mt cap,
 - darkblotched rockfish: a 25 mt cap,
 - widow rockfish: a 220 mt cap.

Emergency Rule Limiting 2007 Whiting Vessel Participation

The Council revisited its 2006 request that NMFS enact an emergency rule to be implemented for the 2007 season. The Council heard additional testimony from NMFS, its advisory bodies, and the public, and voted to broaden its original recommendation to prohibit participation by all vessels without sector-specific history in the fishery prior to January 1, 2007. The Council based their decision on concerns of adverse conservation, economic, and safety effects on the 2007 Pacific whiting fishery that could result from an unrestricted derby style fishery. Regarding a long term solution, the Council intends to revise and simplify Amendment 15 action alternatives at its April 2007 meeting and to move forward expeditiously to complete Amendment 15 for first use in the 2008 fishery.

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

Report on the International Pacific Halibut Commission Meeting

The Council tasked the Executive Director with sending a letter to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) requesting a workshop at some point over the next three months for southern U.S. interests to further understanding of possible revisions to the Coastwide Pacific Halibut Stock Assessment Model. Further, the Council expressed the intent for subsequent SSC review of model revisions and scheduling Council consideration of formal comments to the IPHC no later than the September Council meeting.

Incidental Catch Regulations in the Salmon Troll and Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries

The Council adopted public review options for the 2007 incidental halibut catch in both the salmon troll fishery and the fixed gear sablefish fishery, in addition to status quo. These options are:

Salmon Troll Fishery

- 1a Status quo - no more than one halibut per three Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:3 ratio, and no more than 35 halibut per trip.
- 1b No more than one halibut per two Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:2 ratio, and no more than 30 halibut per trip.

- 2 Designate the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area in the North Coast subarea (Washington Marine Areas 3 and 4) as an area to be voluntarily avoided for salmon troll fishing to protect yelloweye rockfish.

NOTE: Option 2 may be combined with either option 1a or 1b.

The Council also noted permanent salmon regulations have been modified to designate a mandatory yelloweye rockfish conservation area (YRCA) in the North Coast subarea (Washington Marine Area 3) as closed to commercial salmon fishing. The coordinates of the mandatory YRCA are: from 48°00.00' N latitude; 125°14.00' W longitude to 48°02.00' N latitude; 125°14.00' W longitude to 48°02.00' N latitude; 125°16.50' W longitude to 48°00.00' N latitude; 125°16.50' W longitude and connecting back to 48°00.00' N latitude; 125°14.00' W longitude.

Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

- 1 Restrict landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.
- 2 Status quo - restrict landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.
- 3 Restrict landings to 120 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 120 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

Identification of Stocks Not Meeting Conservation Objectives

The Council confirmed the Klamath River fall Chinook stock has triggered an Overfishing Concern according to terms of the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Consequently, the Council directed the Salmon Technical Team (STT) to work with the Habitat Committee, California Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and Yurok Tribe to complete an assessment of the cause(s) for the stock not meeting its conservation objective in 2004, 2005, and 2006, and to develop recommendations for stock recovery. The assessment is to be completed no later than March 2008.

The Council noted Queets River and Quillayute River spring/summer Chinook have not met their conservation objective in the last three years, but confirmed the STT evaluation that both stocks are exceptions to the FMP Overfishing Criteria because Council area fisheries impacts are less than 5%. However, the Council noted the offer of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate, and the Quinault Indian Nation and the Quileute Tribe to provide assessments of the cause of the shortfalls in those systems.

Adoption of 2007 Management Options for Public Review

Three options for ocean salmon fisheries were adopted for public review. Detailed information on these fisheries will be available on the Council website,

www.pcouncil.org, early in the week of March 12, 2007. The Council will reach a singular decision for all ocean salmon fisheries for the May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2008 season at its April 2-6, 2007 meeting in Seattle, Washington.

Salmon Hearings Officers

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on 2007 salmon season options. All hearings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

March 26

The Chateau Westport, Westport, WA – Mark Cedergreen and Phil Anderson representing the Council, and Peter Dygert representing NMFS;

Coos Bay Red Lion Hotel, Coos Bay, OR – Rod Moore representing the Council, and Sarah McAvinchey representing NMFS;

March 27

Hilton Sonoma Wine Country, Santa Rosa, CA – Roger Thomas representing the Council, and Mark Helvey representing NMFS.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Review and Planning for Implementation of New Requirements Resulting from Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

The Council reviewed the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) as amended by the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006*. Implementation of the provisions in the new MSA will involve considerable coordination between NMFS, the eight regional councils, and the public. The Council directed Council staff to continue working to meet time lines for implementing the new provisions and scheduled three specific items for Council action at the April 2007 Council meeting: (1) the process for establishing annual catch limits and ensuring accountability; (2) consideration of proposals for a new environmental review process for fishery management actions; and (3) implementation of Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission provisions. The topic of Council recommendations for seats on the new U.S.-Canada whiting management forum was tentatively scheduled for the June 2007 Council meeting.

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums, and Changes to Council Operation Procedures as Needed

The Council appointed the following persons to advisory bodies:

- Heather Reed to a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife position on the Groundfish Management Team, replacing Michele Culver;
- Lyle Enriquez to a NMFS Southwest Region position on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT), replacing Elizabeth Petras;
- Brian Hallman of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission to the Regional Fishery Management Organization position on the HMSMT;
- Stephen Barrager, PhD to the conservation position on the Groundfish Allocation

Committee Advisory Members; and

- Steve Foltz to the processor-south-of-Cape-Mendocino position on the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel.

The Council also directed staff to solicit for a community representative to serve on the Trawl Individual Quota Committee to replace Ginny Goblirsch who has resigned from that position.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game position on the SSC remains vacant.

Council Three-Meeting Outlook and April 2007 Council Meeting Agenda

The Council adopted the draft agenda for the April 2007 Council meeting to be held April 2-6, 2007 in Seattle, Washington. The draft agenda will be available on the Council website www.pcouncil.org during the month of March 2007.

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