



DECISIONS AT THE JUNE 2007 COUNCIL MEETING

Groundfish Management

Proposed Process and Schedule for Developing Biennial (2009-2010) Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

The Council adopted the process and schedule for deciding 2009-2010 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures as described in Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1.

Shore-Based Pacific Whiting Monitoring Program

The Council took final action to adopt a monitoring program for the Pacific Whiting Shoreside Fishery with the features in Alternative 4 (or 4B where there are suboptions) as presented in the draft environmental assessment (Agenda Item E.3.b, Attachment 3), with three modifications. The program relies on camera and electronic on-board monitoring at sea and further monitoring and sampling of the catch when landed. The three modifications include specifics of the shoreside monitors, the initial intensity of shoreside sampling, and the reporting and disposition of overages and prohibited species. Further details will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

Amendment 22: Limiting Entry in the Open Access Groundfish Fishery

The Council adopted the range of alternatives for analyzing limiting entry in the open access groundfish fishery contained in Agenda Item E.4.a, Attachment 2 with the following changes:

- 1) add an alternative without “use it or lose it” provisions; 2) add Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) alternative 4 contained in Agenda Item E.4.c, Supplemental GAP report; 3) use landings from April 1998- September 2006 to analyze qualifying criteria for a new B permit; 4) nearshore species’ landings shall not count in qualifying for a B permit; 5) include alternatives 1 and 2 in Agenda Item E.4.c, Supplemental WDFW Report; and 6) include an alternative that allows full transferability of B permits.

The current schedule calls for analysis of these alternatives to be considered by the Council at the November Council meeting, where a preferred alternative may be identified for intensified analysis over the winter.

Preliminary Review of Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) for 2008

The Council forwarded all four candidate EFP applications for final consideration in November; with the recommendation the applicants make significant refinements in each of the applications. Details on the requested EFP refinements will be posted on the Council web site in the near future and included in the summer edition of the Pacific Council News.

Stock Assessments for 2009-2010 Groundfish Fisheries

The Council adopted new full assessments for sablefish and longnose skate, as well as updated assessments for English sole, Pacific ocean perch, and yelloweye rockfish, for use in fishery management decision-making for the 2009-2010 biennial harvest specifications. The Council scheduled the updated cowcod assessment for further review at the July 16-20 Stock Assessment Review Panel as a full assessment and further review of the updated widow rockfish assessment by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) at the September 2007 Council meeting.

Amendment 21: Intersector Allocation

Referring to the preliminary alternatives decided in November 2006 (Agenda Item E.8.a, Attachment 2), the Council adopted the following alternatives for analysis of intersector allocations of groundfish species and complexes:

- Status quo allocations;
- Alternative 1 using 2003-05 total catch percentages for LE trawl sectors and all other sectors combined;
- Alternative 2 using 2003-05 total catch percentages for LE trawl sectors, LE fixed gear; directed OA, and recreational sectors;
- Alternative 3 using 1995-2005 landed catch percentages for LE trawl sectors and all other sectors combined;
- Eliminate alternative 4;
- Alternative 5 using 2003-05 total catch percentages for LE trawl sectors and all other sectors combined;
- Eliminate alternative 6;
- Alternative 7 using 1995-2005 landed catch percentages for LE trawl sectors and all other sectors combined;
- Eliminate alternative 8.

Additionally, the Council requested the analysis incorporate set asides for projected research catches, EFPs, and buffers of 5%, 15%, and 25%. Tribal fishery catches should be analyzed using current allocations for sablefish and whiting and the most recent year tribal catches for other species (further government to government discussions will occur to determine tribal allocations for species other than sablefish and whiting). The Council requested development of a framework process for allocating trawl-dominant overfished species that are projected to be rebuilt soon (i.e., widow rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch). A preliminary draft environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared this summer to enable the Council to consider and adopt a preferred intersector allocation alternative at the November Council meeting. Further analysis would occur over the winter preparatory to final Council action at the April 2008 Council meeting.

Amendment 20: Trawl Rationalization (Trawl Individual Quotas and Cooperatives)

The Council refined the trawl rationalization alternatives for analysis, adopting most of Agenda Item E.9.a, Attachment 2. The following are some of the major modifications:

Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ) Alternative

1. Add an option for the whiting sectors under which IFQ would be used for whiting but bycatch species would be managed using bycatch caps (bycatch pools) (Section A-1.1).
2. Add an option that would allocate quota shares (QS) to permits based entirely on permit landing history (the option for equal sharing of the QS pool associated with buyback permits will be maintained) (Section A-2.1.3).
3. Add options pertaining to QS allocation for processing history
Option: Specify that such shares will expire after a certain number of years.
Option: Specify that such shares will not be allocated to entities if the result would be that the recipient would receive shares in excess of the accumulation limits.
(Section A-2.4 Items 1 and 2. Item 3 of this section was rejected.)
4. Add an Adaptive Management option that would allow up to 10% of the trawl allocation to be used to create incentives to adjust for program impacts and unanticipated consequences. Such quota pounds could also be auctioned off to generate funds to compensate processing companies that demonstrate they have been harmed by the IFQ program. (Section A-2.4 Item 4 and Section A-3)

5. Add Individual Halibut Bycatch Quota (IBQ) as an option. Retention will not be allowed. (Section A-4)

Co-op Alternative

Shoreside and Mothership Program. Allow the permit whiting endorsements and the associated catch history to be transferred as a whole from one limited entry trawl permit to another.

Details on this Council action will be posted on the Council website at www.pcouncil.org in the near future and included in the Council newsletter.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

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

- Increase the open access sablefish daily-trip-limit fishery limits south of 36° N latitude to 350 lbs per day or 1 landing of 1,050 lbs per week beginning August 1 for the remainder of the year;
- Increase the shortspine thornyhead limit in the limited entry fixed gear fishery south of 34°27' N latitude to 3,000 lbs in August;
- Implement a combined widow-bocaccio-shelf rockfish limit of 500 lbs per month for the limited entry fixed gear fishery between 34°27' N latitude and 40°10' N latitude beginning September 1 for the remainder of the year;
- Move the seaward boundary of the trawl rockfish conservation area between Cascade Head and the Columbia River to 200 fm beginning August 1;
- Increase the longspine thornyhead limits for large footrope trawls north of 40°10' N latitude to 25,000 lbs per two months beginning August 1 for the remainder of the year;
- Increase the Dover sole limits for limited entry groundfish trawls south of 40°10' N latitude to 80,000 lbs per two months beginning August 1 for the remainder of the year;
- Increase the chilipepper rockfish cumulative limit for small footrope trawls south of 40°10' N latitude to 800 lbs per month beginning August 1.

Amendment 15: American Fisheries Act

The Council recommends broadening the scope of the propose action to address conservation and socioeconomic problems in the Pacific whiting fishery by prohibiting sector specific participation in the Pacific whiting fishery by all vessels without historic participation in these sectors as follows:

Alternative 1: Status quo.

Alternative 2: Prohibit sector-specific participation in the shoreside, catcher/processor, and mothership sectors of the Pacific whiting fishery by vessels that do not have significant historic participation record in those sectors between January 1, 1994 and January 1, 2006.

Alternative 3: Same as Alternative 2, but with a qualifying period between January 1, 1994 and January 1, 2007.

Alternative 4: Same as Alternative 2, but with a qualifying period between December 31, 1996 and January 1, 2006.

Alternative 5: Same as Alternative 2, but with a qualifying period between December 31, 1996 and January 1, 2007.

For the action alternatives, “significant historic participation” is defined by sector as follows:

Catcher/processors having caught and processed at least 1,000 metric tons (mt) of whiting in any one qualifying year,

Motherships having received at least 1,000 mt of whiting in any one qualifying year, and

Catcher vessels in the shore-based or mothership fishery having participated in the directed Pacific whiting fishery (as defined by federal regulations) in any one qualifying year.

The Council is scheduled to take final action on comprehensive limitation of fishing capacity and effort in the Pacific whiting fishery by adopting a preferred alternative at the September 2007 Council meeting in Portland, Oregon.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Pacific Mackerel Stock Assessment and Harvest Guideline for 2007-2008

The Council adopted the new assessment model and the following management measures for the July 2007-June 2008 Pacific mackerel fishery:

- Allowable Biological Catch for U.S. fisheries is 71,629 mt
- Directed fishery harvest guideline of 40,000 mt,
- In the event the directed fishery reaches 40,000 mt, the directed fishery will revert to an incidental-catch-only fishery with a 45% incidental catch allowance when

Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species (CPS), except that up to 1 mt of Pacific mackerel could be landed without landing any other CPS.

The Council and NMFS will track the 2007-08 Pacific mackerel fishery and will recommend an in-season review of the mackerel season for the March 2008 Council meeting, if needed, with the possibility of re-opening the directed fishery as a routine action. Additionally, the Council directed Council staff to send a letter to the U.S. State Department requesting increased coordination with Mexico on the exchange of data for the improvement of international management of CPS.

Administrative Matters

Council Operating Procedure (COP) for Providing Highly Migratory Species Management Recommendations to Regional Fishery Management Organizations

The Council adopted the Highly Migratory Species COP as presented in Agenda Item B.2.a, Attachment 1 with a few modest editorial changes.

Recreational Fishery Information Network (RecFIN) Data and Sampling Refinements

The Council endorsed the use of a standard average weight computation methodology, with state-specific pooling rules, that result in an average weight that would be used on an annual or biennial basis in recreational catch management. Average weights used in the latest assessments will be used in recreational catch management during a management cycle and will not change until a new assessment is done or new and better average weight information is brought forward during analysis of new biennial management measures.

The Council endorsed recommendations to have a standardized discard estimation reporting format on the RecFIN web site for recreational groundfish catches in Washington, Oregon, and California.

The Council tasked the SSC, in consultation with the RecFIN Technical Committee and other entities as needed, (1) with describing current instances where the catch estimates for the same year for a coastal state area strata is different between what is posted on the RecFIN website and brought to the Council by states for use in fishery management, (2) reviewing the methodologies for each differing estimate, and (3) evaluating which estimate is superior. Further the Council tasked the SSC with recommending improvements in the RecFIN website.

The Council also tasked the Groundfish Management Team and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Team to do further analysis of managing recreational catches of groundfish and HMS species by numbers, rather than weight.

COP for Reviewing and Incorporating Proposed Changes to Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

Based on the proposed draft Council Operating Procedure (COP) in Agenda Item B.4.b, Attachment 1, the Council adopted a final version of the COP for Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review with some clarifying edits. The COP establishes an ad hoc review committee structure and describes the process the Council is to follow in considering proposed changes to areas closed to bottom gear to protect essential fish habitat (EFH) as well as an overall five year EFH review process. The edits were aimed at clarifying the purpose of the review, ensuring the composition of the ad hoc committee created by the COP would include adequate technical expertise to review any proposed changes, include a representative from the Enforcement Consultants, and, in making appointments, the Council Chair would consider the need for consistency in committee membership in light of its ad hoc nature.

To date, the Council has not considered any proposed changes in areas closed to bottom gear to protect EFH for forwarding to the review committee. Proposed changes coming before the Council between now and the September 2008 Council meeting could be included in the comprehensive five year review process.

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization Implementation

Considerations appropriate to this agenda item were postponed until the September 2007 Council meeting to be held in Portland, Oregon.

Fiscal Matters

The Council adopted the report and recommendations of the Budget Committee, Agenda Item B.7.b, Supplemental Budget Committee Report.

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums, and Changes to COP as Needed

The Council appointed the following persons to its advisory bodies:

Ms. Leeanne Laughlin to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) position on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team, replacing Mr. Stephen Wertz;

Ms. Briana Brady to a CDFG position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team, replacing Ms. Leeanne Laughlin;

Mr. Bruce Buckmaster to the community position on the ad hoc Groundfish Trawl Individual Quota Committee.

The Council also tasked the Executive Director with transmitting via letter to the Secretary of Commerce the recommendation that Mr. Phil Anderson be appointed to the PFMC representative seat on the U.S.-Canada Pacific Whiting Commission.

The Council accepted the resignation of Dr. Lyman McDonald from the SSC and directed Council staff to request nominations to fill the vacant at-large position, targeting candidates with expertise in salmon management matters.

Council Three-Meeting Outlook, September 2007 Council Meeting Agenda, and Workload Priorities

The Council provided guidance for the three-meeting agenda outlook and the proposed agenda for the September Council meeting to be held September 9-14, 2007 in Portland, Oregon. In comparison to documents in Agenda Item B.10 describing draft September and November Council meeting agendas, the Council deleted HMS EFPs from the September agenda, moved the Mitchell Act EIS matter from the November to the September agenda, deleted Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission issues from the November agenda, and added Groundfish Open Access Limitation to the November agenda. The detailed proposed September agenda will be available on the Council website www.pcouncil.org during the month of August 2007.

6/18/2007

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