

COUNCIL DECISIONS AT THE SEPTEMBER 2001 MEETING

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

Status of Bycatch Estimate

The Council passed a motion to forward estimates to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) of Pacific halibut bycatch and mortality in IPHC Area 2A in 2000, as described in Exhibit B.2, Supplemental Attachment 1 NMFS Report.

Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations

The Council approved collecting public comment on proposed changes to the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for 2002 for five subjects addressing recreational fisheries: (1) separating the Puget Sound sub-area into two regions and providing different opening and closing dates of the season for the two regions; (2) changing the on-land possession limit from one to two halibut in Oregon; (3) changing the open date to June 15 for Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point; (4) reallocating the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain quota to 65% in May/June for vessels with IPHC licenses and 35% in August/September for vessels without IPHC licenses; and (5) splitting the Columbia River area quota into separate Washington and Oregon subquotas.

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

Preliminary Harvest Levels and Other Specifications for 2002

The Council adopted preferred preliminary acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY) harvest levels for key groundfish stocks for use in preparing preliminary management measures for 2002. The Council also adopted preliminary allocations for tribal groundfish fisheries and allocation measures for different sectors of the non-tribal groundfish fishery.

- The ABCs and OYs adopted were consistent with Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recommendations tabled in Exhibit C.3, Attachment 1, with the following adjustments or specifications: Sablefish: adopted OY range of 3,200 mt-4,500 mt with a preferred option of 4,000 mt for 2002
- Dover Sole: adopted OY range of 5,520 mt-7,440 mt with a preferred option of 6,410 mt for 2002
- Shortspine Rockfish: adopted OY range of 751 mt (2001 OY)-955 mt with no preferred option identified
- Widow Rockfish: adopted OY range of 726 mt-856 mt for 2002 with a preferred option of 856 mt

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- Pacific Ocean Perch: adopted OY range of 290 mt-410 mt with a preferred option of 350 mt
- Darkblotched Rockfish: adopted OY range of 157 mt-181 mt with a preferred option of 168 mt
- Yelloweye Rockfish: adopted an OY of 11 mt coastwide

Allocation decisions are shown in the Ad Hoc Allocation Committee minutes (page 12 of Exhibit C.7, Supplemental Attachment 1) and a tribal allocation consistent with Exhibit C.3.c, Supplemental Treaty Indian Harvest Levels.

Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation

The Council tasked the Executive Director with providing recommendations at the November Council Meeting regarding membership to an Ad Hoc Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation Oversight Committee (SPOC) subcommittee charged to investigate a multi-year management process for the groundfish fishery and a schedule of events for such a committee between the November and March Council Meetings.

Rebuilding Plans

The Council adopted the revised rebuilding analyses for Pacific ocean perch, lingcod, and darkblotched rockfish. The Council also noted that, in response to litigation, none of the three rebuilding plans scheduled for adoption consideration at this meeting would be adopted at this meeting, and the rebuilding plans for all seven species under consideration would be reformatted as *Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan* (FMP) amendments and scheduled for adoption at the same point in the future.

Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Applications

No action was taken on any existing EFP and no new EFP applications were received for consideration.

Proposed Management Measures for 2002

The Council adopted a range of management options for 2002 groundfish fisheries. Commercial fishery options include a year-round fishery with trip limits adjusted to the range of projected abundance of key groundfish stocks; a seasonal option with little commercial fishing other than for whiting during the summer months; and seasonal options for the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Pt. Conception. Sport fishery options include additional protection for yelloweye rockfish, bag limit changes, and area-specific closures in Oregon. Detailed descriptions of groundfish fishery management options will be mailed to interested parties and posted on the Council website (www.pcouncil.org) in the near future.

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Status of Fisheries and Inseason Adjustments

The Council passed a motion to close trawl fishery opportunities for Dover sole, thornyhead rockfish, and shortspine rockfish; most commercial line fisheries in shelf areas; and to reduce trip limits or close retention of certain species in other sectors of the West Coast groundfish fishery starting October 1 due to early attainment of annual OYs for key stocks. Other commercial fishery trip limits were left unchanged, and a few were increased to meet annual OYs for target stocks. For sport groundfish fisheries, the Council will urge the California Fish and Game Commission to institute further restrictions or closures in some fishery areas later this fall. Detailed descriptions of inseason fishery adjustments adopted by the Council will be mailed to interested parties and posted on the Council website (www.pcouncil.org) in the near future.

Full Retention Measures

The Council directed staff to continue development of full retention measures with the GMT, beginning after information becomes available from the Washington EFP that involves full retention for rockfish. Scheduled work on this matter would occur between the November and March Council meetings.

Amendment 15 to the Groundfish FMP – American Fisheries Act

The Council directed staff to prepare a public review draft of Amendment 15 – American Fisheries Act protective management measures. The analysis documents provided under Exhibit C.9 will provide the basis for the public review draft, with the addition of the analysis requested by the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) under Exhibit C.9.b, Supplemental GAP Report, Question 3:

“The GAP requests that a simple analysis be done for vessels that qualify for non-whiting groundfish using the 50 ton criterion. The analysis should list: the length of the vessels qualified; the years that those vessels delivered non-whiting groundfish; the number of trips by each vessel per year during the qualifying period; and the poundage of non-whiting groundfish delivered per vessel per year. This will help determine if the 50-ton limit is sufficient to provide the protections required under the American Fisheries Act.”

Additionally, the Council adopted as preferred the alternatives detailed in the Supplemental GAP Report:

Catcher Vessels – Qualification by sector (at-sea whiting, shoreside whiting, non-whiting groundfish); qualifying period of January 1, 1994 through September 16, 1999; no permit-held-by-date requirement; restrictions on vessel via a medallion, which indicates to the sectors a vessel qualifies for and is transferable.

Catcher Processors – Restrictions as outlined under Option 3.a.

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Motherships – Restrictions a outlined under Option 4.a.

Duration – As outlined under Option 5.b.

Appeals and Technical Amendments – Adopt changes recommended by Council staff.

The draft is expected to be available for public comment in the spring of 2002.

MARINE RESERVES

Marine Reserves Proposals for Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary

The Council took no action on options for marine reserves in the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary area. The Council placed this on the November agenda, anticipating more specificity in proposals at that time, as well as advice from Council advisory bodies.

HABITAT ISSUES

Essential Fish Habitat Issues

The Council received no recommendations for action at this meeting and took no action.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

Update on Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Methodology Review

The Council heard the report of the SSC and took no action.

Queets River Coho Status Review

The Council postponed this agenda item to the November Council Meeting.

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Update on FMP Development

NMFS committed to work with the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) and Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) to address issues and concerns raised in their respective reports. The Council expects the current FMP development schedule to be met (i.e., adoption of a public review draft in November). The Council believes the current management options represent a full and reasonable range of alternatives, including the legal gear options. The Council implored the HMSPDT to thoroughly explain the rationale supporting each management alternative.

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COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Final Report on Market Squid Maximum Sustainable Yield Methodology Workshop

Because the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) was unable to meet, review of the squid workshop panel was delayed to the November meeting. The Council directed the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team and CPSAS to continue development of Amendment 10, including both limited entry and squid maximum sustainable yield provisions. The Council asked the committees to report back in November on the readiness of the FMP amendment as a whole and each major component.

Pacific Sardine Fishery Update

After review of the 2001 Pacific sardine fishery, the Council recommended NMFS execute the reallocation provisions contained in the coastal pelagic species FMP. That is, on October 1, 2001, the uncaught portion of the sardine harvest quota will be totaled and reallocated 50% to the northern sub-area and 50% to the southern sub-area.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER MATTERS

Appointments to Advisory Bodies

The Council appointed the following persons to fill recent vacancies in various existing Advisory Bodies:

- Ms. Kathleen A. Fosmark to the southern open access position on the GAP;
- Ms. Heather Munro to the northern processor position on the HMSAS; and
- Mr. Robert Osborn to the private recreational position on the HMSAS.

The Council did not fill the public-at-large vacancy on the HMSAS, but will re-issue a call for nominations for that position along with suggested criteria to help determine appropriate candidates. All persons previously nominated for this position will remain under consideration when the Council again considers nominees at the November Council meeting. The Council will also issue requests for nominations to the northern California charter/sport position on the CPSAS and the recreational fisher position on the Habitat Steering Group (HSG).

The Council also appointed an Ad Hoc Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Oversight Committee to help coordinate development of the EIS. The appointed members are Mssrs. Phil Anderson; Burnie Bohn; Ralph Brown; LB Boydston; Robert Eaton; Jim Lone; Paul Heikkila; and Rod Moore. The SSC, GMT, and HSG will support this committee. In view of current workload priorities, the Council delayed action to appoint an Ad Hoc Marine Reserves Steering Group.