

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR 2013-2014 FISHERY GUIDANCE

The Council approved Amendment 17 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) as a means of providing for a biennial management cycle, more opportunity for public input, regulatory efficiencies, and various improvements in the management process, such as a clear expectation of when new stock assessment information would be considered and when not. In this process there is a year in which assessments are done to inform decisions for the following biennial management cycle, followed by a year for deciding the new groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be done in 2011 and adopted in late 2011 for use in 2012 to decide the harvest specifications and management measures for 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries.

In March, the Council adopted for public review a preferred list of groundfish species for assessment next year to inform management in 2013 and beyond. Besides Pacific whiting, which is assessed annually, the following species were recommended for a full assessment: widow rockfish, petrale sole, Pacific ocean perch, blackgill rockfish, sablefish, Dover sole, spiny dogfish, rex sole, and greenspotted rockfish. Further, the Council requested the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) explore the data available for possible assessments of China rockfish, quillback rockfish, and copper rockfish; nearshore species considered to have a high relative vulnerability to overexploitation. The list of species recommended for an updated assessment next year include bocaccio, canary, darkblotched, and yelloweye rockfish. A status report for cowcod is also expected to be prepared since the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) has judged there is not enough data to justify a full or updated assessment. The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center has taken this guidance and provided their feedback to the Council in Agenda Item B.4.b, NMFS Report.

The Council also adopted for public review a revised terms of reference for the groundfish stock assessment and review process for 2011-2012 with the incorporation of SSC and Groundfish Management Team (GMT) modifications, as well as a definition of a status report. This revised terms of reference is provided in Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 1. Likewise, a draft terms of reference for groundfish rebuilding analyses is provided in Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 2. Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 3 provides a list of issues Council staff recommends be considered when deciding the final stock assessment terms of reference.

The Council is tasked at this meeting with final adoption of a list of full and updated stock assessments to be done in 2011; final adoption of a terms of reference for the groundfish stock assessment and review process for 2011-2012; final adoption of a groundfish rebuilding analysis terms of reference; and providing guidance on a schedule of Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panels to review new full assessments (the SSC will review updated assessments). The Council should consider advice from the NMFS science centers, advisory bodies, and the public before making these decisions.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt a Final List of Full and Updated Groundfish Stock Assessments to be Done in 2011.**
2. **Adopt a Final Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2011-2012.**
2. **Adopt a Final Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.**
3. **Provide guidance on a schedule of STAR panel meetings for next year.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2011-2012.
2. Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 2: Draft Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.
3. Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 3: Considerations for a New Stock Assessment Terms of Reference.
4. Agenda Item B.4.b, NMFS Report: Possible Schedule for West Coast Groundfish Assessments in 2011.
5. Agenda Item B.4.d, Public Comments.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Stock Assessment Options
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Terms of Reference, Stock Assessments, and Assessment Schedule for 2011

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