

2.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Goals and Objectives for Managing the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

[Section 2.1, page 2-4; Section 9.3.1. page 9-12 of FMP]

The Council is committed to developing long-range plans for managing the Washington, Oregon, and California groundfish fisheries that will promote a stable planning environment for the seafood industry, including marine recreation interests, and will maintain the health of the resource and environment. In developing allocation and harvesting systems, the Council will give consideration to maximizing economic benefits to the United States, consistent with resource stewardship responsibilities for the continuing welfare of the living marine resources. Thus, management must be flexible enough to meet changing social and economic needs of the fishery as well as to address fluctuations in the marine resources supporting the fishery. The following goals have been established in order of priority for managing the west coast groundfish fisheries, to be considered in conjunction with the national standards of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA).

Management Goals.

Goal 1 - Conservation. Prevent overfishing by managing for appropriate harvest levels, and prevent any net loss of the habitat of living marine resources.

Goal 2 - Economics. Maximize the value of the groundfish resource as a whole.

Goal 3 - Utilization. Achieve the maximum biological yield of the overall groundfish fishery, promote year round availability of quality seafood to the consumer, and promote recreational fishing opportunities.

Objectives. To accomplish these management goals, a number of objectives will be considered and followed as closely as practicable:

Conservation.

Objective 1. Maintain an information flow on the status of the fishery and the fishery resource which allows for informed management decisions as the fishery occurs.

Objective 2. Adopt harvest specifications and management measures consistent with resource stewardship responsibilities, for each groundfish species or species group.

Objective 3. For species or species groups which are below the level necessary to produce MSY, consider rebuilding the stock to the MSY level and, if necessary, develop a plan to rebuild the stock.

Economics.

Objective 4. Attempt to achieve the greatest possible net economic benefit to the nation from the managed fisheries.

Objective 5. Identify those sectors of the groundfish fishery for which it is beneficial to promote year round marketing opportunities and establish management policies that extend those sectors fishing and marketing opportunities as long as practicable during the fishing year.

Objective 6. Gear restrictions to minimize the necessity for other management measures will be used whenever practicable.

Utilization.

Objective 7. Develop management measures and policies that foster and encourage full utilization (harvesting and processing) of the Pacific coast groundfish resources by domestic fisheries.

Objective 8. Recognizing the multispecies nature of the fishery, establish a concept of managing by species and gear, or by groups of interrelated species.

Objective 9. Strive to reduce the economic incentives and regulatory measures that lead to wastage of fish.

Objective 10. Provide for foreign participation in the fishery, consistent with the other goals to take that portion of the OY not utilized by domestic fisheries while minimizing conflict with domestic fisheries.

Social Factors.

Objective 11. When conservation actions are necessary to protect a stock or stock assemblage, attempt to develop management measures that will affect users equitably.

Objective 12. Minimize gear conflicts among resource users.

Objective 13. When considering alternative management measures to resolve an issue, choose the measure that best accomplishes the change with the least disruption of current domestic fishing practices, marketing procedures and environment.

2.2 Operational Definition of Terms

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) is a biologically based estimate of the amount of fish that may be harvested from the fishery each year without jeopardizing the resource. It is a seasonally determined catch that may differ from MSY for biological reasons. It may be lower or higher than MSY in some years for species with fluctuating recruitment. The ABC may be modified to incorporate biological safety factors and risk assessment due to uncertainty. Lacking other biological justification, the ABC is defined as the MSY exploitation rate multiplied by the exploitable biomass for the relevant time period.

Closure, when referring to closure of a fishery, means that taking and retaining, possessing, or landing the particular species or species complex is prohibited.

Council means the Pacific Fishery Management Council, including its Groundfish Management Team (GMT), Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and any other committee established by the Council.

Commercial Fishing is (a) fishing by a person who possesses a commercial fishing license or is required by law to possess such license issued by one of the states or the federal government as a prerequisite to taking, landing and/or sale; OR (b) fishing which results in or can be reasonably expected to result in sale, barter, trade or other disposition of fish for other than personal consumption.

Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH) is the estimated total harvest of groundfish by U.S. fishermen. It includes the portion expected to be utilized by domestic processors (DAP) and the estimated portion, if any, that will be delivered to foreign processors (JVP) which are permitted to receive U.S. harvested groundfish in the EEZ.

Domestic Annual Processing (DAP) is the estimated annual amount of U.S. harvest that domestic processors are expected to process and the amount of fish that will be harvested but not processed (e.g., marketed as fresh whole fish, used for private consumption, or used for bait).

Fishing means (a) the catching, taking or harvesting of fish; (b) the attempted catching, taking or harvesting of fish; (c) any other activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the catching, taking or harvesting of fish; or (d) any operations at sea in support of, or in preparation for, any activity described above. This term does not include any activity by a vessel conducting authorized scientific research.

Fishing Year is defined as January 1 through December 31.

Harvest Guideline is an specified numerical harvest objective which is not a quota. Attainment of a harvest guideline does not require closure of a fishery.

Incidental Catch or Incidental Species means groundfish species caught when fishing for the primary purpose of catching a different species.

Joint Venture Processing (JVP) is the estimated portion of DAH that exceeds the capacity and intent of U.S. processors to utilize, or for which domestic markets are not available, that is expected to be harvested by U.S. fishermen and delivered to foreign processors in the EEZ. (JVP = DAH - DAP.)

Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) is an estimate of the largest average annual catch or yield that can be taken over a significant period of time from each stock under prevailing ecological and environmental conditions. It may be presented as a range of values. One MSY may be specified for a group of species in a mixed-species fishery. Since MSY is a long-term average, it need not be specified annually, but may be reassessed periodically based on the best scientific information available.

Optimum Yield (OY) means the amount of fish which will provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation, with particular reference to food production and recreational opportunities; and which is prescribed as such on the basis of the MSY from each fishery, as modified by any relevant economic, social, or ecological factor. It may be expressed in terms of a quantified harvest level,

formula, or non-numerical fishery characteristic appropriate to the species or species complex, based on the ABC and on the best economic, social, and ecological information available. For the purposes of this FMP, OY is defined as all the fish that can be taken under regulations and/or notices authorized by the FMP and promulgated by the Secretary.

Overfishing is a level or rate of fishing mortality that jeopardizes the long-term capacity of a stock or stock complex to produce MSY on a continuing basis.

Prohibited Species are those species and species groups which must be returned to the sea as soon as is practicable with a minimum of injury when caught and brought aboard except when their retention is authorized by other applicable law. Exception may be made in the implementing regulations for tagged fish, which must be returned to the tagging agency, or for examination by an authorized observer.

Quota means a specified numerical harvest objective, the attainment (or expected attainment) of which causes closure of the fishery for that species or species group. Groundfish species or species groups under this FMP for which quotas have been achieved shall be treated in the same manner as prohibited species.

Reserve is a portion of the harvest guideline or quota set aside at the beginning of the year to allow for uncertainties in pre-season estimates of DAP and JVP.

Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Document is a document prepared by the Council that provides a summary of the most recent biological condition of species in the fishery management unit, and the social and economic condition of the recreational and commercial fishing industries and the fish processing industry. It summarizes, on a periodic basis, the best available information concerning the past, present, and possible future condition of the stocks and fisheries managed by the FMP.

Target fishing means fishing for the primary purpose of catching a particular species or species group (the target species).

Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing (TALFF) is the amount of fish surplus to domestic needs and available for foreign harvest. It is a quota determined by deducting the DAH and reserve, if any, from a species harvest guideline or quota.