

## STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR 2013-2014 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

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. 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, which will be used to decide the harvest specifications and management measures for 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries.

In the past, the Council has focused on overfished species and stocks experiencing directed fishing as priority candidates for stock assessment, and has shown interest in at least one new species as a stock assessment target. As an additional consideration, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has developed relative vulnerability scores for all Groundfish FMP species (Agenda Item E.2.b, GMT Report). Using the Productivity and Susceptibility Assessment methodology that has been developed for national use, the GMT ranked the relative vulnerability of FMP species to overexploitation. These vulnerability scores, in conjunction with other metrics such as the amount of available data to inform an assessment, how out of date an assessment might be, and recommendations for improving assessments from past Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panels and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) may be useful in developing stock assessment priorities.

The decision on which stocks to assess next year entails whether the assessment should be a full assessment that requires peer review by a STAR Panel or an update assessment that requires only a review by the Council's SSC. Council policy on this subject is to schedule no more than ten full assessments in a given year with no more than two full assessments reviewed at each STAR Panel. Therefore, a maximum of five STAR panels should be considered for next year. Dr. Elizabeth Clarke, Division Director at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), will report on proposed stock assessments and a proposed 2011 stock assessment review schedule for the next biennial fishery management cycle (Agenda Item E.2.b, Attachment 1).

There are two terms of reference that guide the stock assessment process; one which specifies how the next assessment process should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process and one which guides the development of rebuilding analyses that are used to develop harvest specifications and rebuilding plans for overfished species. Both terms of reference used last year are included as Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. The Council may want to modify these terms of reference for the next assessment cycle.

The Council is to consider the input from NMFS, the advisory bodies, and the public before providing a preliminary decision on 2011-2012 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full or update), and language for the draft Terms of Reference for both the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process and Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses. The Council is scheduled to make final decisions on stock assessment planning at their June meeting.

**Council Action:**

1. **Adopt for Public Review the List of Stocks To Be Assessed in 2011.**
2. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process For 2011-2012.**
3. **Adopt for Public Review the 2011 Stock Assessment Review Schedule.**
4. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1: Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2009-2010.
2. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 2: Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses.
3. Agenda Item E.2.b, NMFS Report: Possible Schedule for West Coast Groundfish Assessments in 2011 and Beyond.
4. Agenda Item E.2.b, GMT Report: GMT Report on Assigning Vulnerability Scores to All Species in the Groundfish FMP.

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
  - b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - c. Public Comment
  - d. **Council Action:** Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference, List of Stocks to be Assessed, and Stock Assessment Review Schedule
- John DeVore

PFMC  
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