

BRIEFING ON AND LIMITED ACTIONS FOR EMERGING ISSUES IN THE 2013-2014 BIENNIAL SPECIFICATIONS PROCESS

A preliminary draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which analyzes impacts associated with proposed 2013-2014 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures, was recently prepared. A briefing by Council staff is scheduled under this agenda item to discuss some of the results of the DEIS analyses and answer any questions Council members may have. The briefing is designed to help the Council focus their attention on some of the key issues that will be discussed and decided at the upcoming April and June meetings.

In the course of analyzing alternative harvest specifications, two issues emerged that compelled Council staff to recommend the Council deliberate and decide some limited actions under this agenda item. These issues involve 2013-2014 harvest specifications for lingcod and the Other Fish complex.

In November, the Council heard testimony from representatives of the trawl industry explaining the problem with stratifying lingcod harvest specifications north and south of the Oregon-California border at 42° N. latitude. Trawl quotas are allocated by area according to how annual catch limits (ACLs) are specified. Limited entry trawl fishermen are restricted to fishing one management area per trip. The more management lines that are specified in regulation causes the fishery to be further constrained and the prospect of another management line at 42° N. latitude created problems for fishermen fishing out of ports in northern California and southern Oregon. Therefore, the Council proposed shifting the lingcod management line to the existing 40°10' N. latitude management line, and tasked re-estimation of the appropriate catch values. Subsequent to that November 2011 decision, Dr. Owen Hamel, the author of the 2009 lingcod assessment, analyzed swept area biomass estimates from the NMFS trawl survey and determined that 48 percent of the estimated lingcod biomass south of 42° N. latitude occurred north of 40°10' N. latitude. Therefore, revised lingcod overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and ACLs that correspond to the 40°10' N. latitude are provided in Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1 for Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Council consideration. The Council should review these proposed harvest specifications and the recommendations of the SSC to confirm these specifications.

In September 2011, the Council was advised by the SSC that OFLs and ABCs for the Other Fish complex had to have a scientific basis and should be based on the sum of OFLs and ABCs determined for the component stocks. However, the Other Fish OFLs and ABCs decided at the November 2011 meeting were incomplete since OFL values for seven of the eleven component stocks were missing. Analysis done subsequent to that meeting indicated that these biased harvest specifications would likely cause management problems in the next management cycle. Therefore, Council staff asked scientists at the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers to investigate methods for determining OFLs for these component stocks. The proposed methods and OFLs for six of the seven stocks missing OFL values are provided in Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 2. Pending SSC approval of the proposed methods and OFLs, the revised OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs for the Other Fish complex provided in Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1 should be considered for 2013 and 2014.

The Council should hear the advice of the SSC, other advisory bodies, and the public before considering adoption of revised harvest specifications for lingcod and the Other Fish complex.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt preferred 2013 and 2014 OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs for lingcod and the Other Fish complex.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1: Comparison of harvest specifications decided in November with proposed revised harvest specifications for lingcod and the Other Fish complex.
2. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 2: Deriving estimates of OFL for species in the “Other Fish” complex.
3. Agenda Item F.2.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore and Kelly Ames
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider and Adopt Preferred Alternatives for Emerging Issues, Including Specifications for the Other Fish Stock Complex and Lingcod

PFMC
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