

June 2008 Meeting Action Summary on Trawl Rationalization

Council Adopts Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Trawl Rationalization

Final Council Action Scheduled for November 2008

The Council adopted a preliminary preferred alternative that it will consider at its November 2008 Council meeting, when it will adopt its final preferred alternative. A preliminary draft environmental impact statement (EIS) will be released in September. That document will cover both the preliminary preferred alternative and other alternatives that the Council could consider as part of its final action. Hearings will be held in late October just prior to the Council's final action.

The following is a summary of some of the central elements of the Council's preliminary preferred alternative. A complete description of the Council's action will be available on the Council's website at:

http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa20/TRat_CAction_Complete_080619.pdf

By sector, the main trawl rationalization management tools would be:

- Shoreside Whiting and Nonwhiting Fisheries: manage under an individual fishing quota (IFQ) system, as a single combined sector.
- Whiting Mothership Sector: manage as a co-op fishery.
- Catcher-processor Sector: modify the limited entry system to facilitate continuation of the current voluntary co-op system and put in place individual quota provisions that would be triggered if the voluntary co-op system fails.

If Congress provides the needed legislation, the shoreside whiting fishery may be managed as a co-op with processor linkages rather than with IFQs.

IFQ would be issued as quota shares. Each year, the holder of quota shares would be issued quota pounds to be used during that fishing year. As part of its preliminary preferred alternative, the Council specified that 20% of the initial allocation of quota shares would go to processors with one possible exception: a sub-option was included that would allocate 20% of the whiting QS to processors but not allocate QS associated with whiting bycatch to processors.

There would be a geographic component to the IFQ program structured around catch areas or landing areas. If structured solely around catch areas, the QS for any target species for which there is not already a geographic division would be divided north and south of 40° 10' north latitude. If the geographic component is structured around landing areas every recipient would receive QS that is specifically for use in a particular landing

area (zone-specific QS) and zone-free QS for which there would not be a landing area restriction. Over time, the Council could vary the amount of zone-specific QS and zone-free QS. While the initial QS allocation would still be determined based on a person's 1994-2003 harvest history, the zone for which a person receives an allocation will be based on 2005-2007 harvest history. There would be a maximum of 10 zones for the coast.

The QS allocation formula for permit owners would include the equal allocation of QS associated with buyback permits and the allocation of overfished species based on permit catch areas as recorded in vessel logbooks, and area-specific bycatch rates. However, for whiting trips, all bycatch species would be allocated pro-rata based on whiting. There would be no grandfather clause for permit owners or processors; no one would be allowed to receive an initial allocation of QS in excess of the accumulation limits.

The tracking and monitoring provisions of the preferred alternative include 100% observer coverage on vessels (in addition to or as a replacement for camera monitoring) and 100% monitoring of all offloading. Discards would be allowed but would still count against a vessel's QP.

The preferred alternative also includes individual bycatch quota (IBQ) for Pacific halibut and the use of up to 10% of the trawl allocation to provide incentives as part of an adaptive management program covering all trawl sectors. The preferred alternative does not include the fixed term QS and auction option. This option would limit QS duration to 15 years (renewing after 15 years) and after 15 years require the auction of 20% of the QS every two years.

For the mothership co-op program, the Council preferred alternatives specifies that catch history be allocated to catcher vessel permits based on the permit's highest 8 out of 10 years catch history 1994-2003. Additionally, 90% of the allocations to co-ops would be tied to a particular mothership (10% could be delivered to any mothership) and no mothership would be allowed to process more than 40% of the total mothership sector allocation. The catcher vessel ties to motherships would be determined based on the licensed mothership to which the permit made a majority of its whiting deliveries in 2009.

For the catcher-processor co-op alternative, the Council's preferred alternative specifies that in the event the current voluntary co-op system fails, quota would be allocated equally among the catcher-processor permits.

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