

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver *CO*
Executive Director
DATE: September 24, 2010
SUBJECT: 2011/2012 BSAI and GOA Proposed Groundfish Specifications

ESTIMATED TIME
2 HOURS

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Receive BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Team reports
- (b) Adopt proposed groundfish specifications for 2011/2012

BACKGROUND

Plan Team reports

During their meetings on September 20-23, 2010, the BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams recommended proposed groundfish specifications for 2011 and 2012 (Item D-2(b)) and took numerous informational reports. The teams recommended: 1) models for the stock assessments for BSAI and GOA Pacific cod and GOA flatfish; 2) approaches for estimating non-target groundfish harvests in halibut setline fisheries; 3) alternative Tier 6 methods for determining OFL and ABC; 4) a stock structure policy for spatial and species management; 5) a working group to develop methods for total catch accounting; and 6) a HAPC proposal for protecting skate nurseries. The teams also received reports on EBS pollock and BSAI/GOA sablefish CIE reviews; draft Ecosystem SAFE Report; and draft Economic SAFE Report. The reports from the meetings of the Joint BSAI/GOA Groundfish Plan Team, GOA Groundfish Plan Team, and BSAI Groundfish Plan Team are attached under Item D-2(a).

Proposed Groundfish Specifications

The Council is scheduled to recommend proposed BSAI and GOA groundfish specifications for a two-year period each October for the sole purpose of notifying the public of likely outcomes for Council action to set final specifications each December. The teams' recommendations are based on rollovers of the established 2011 final specifications for both fishing years, with some exceptions. The rollover approach was adopted by the Council in 2007. Following this practice, 2011 specifications, which were adopted in December 2009, were published in the *Federal Register* in March 2010 and will start the groundfish fisheries in January 2011. Proposed specifications for 2012 will be adopted at this meeting. *Any proposed specifications for 2011/2012, including Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments, should be adopted by the Council at this meeting so that the final rule, based on final specifications from December 2010, are a logical outgrowth of the proposed rule.*

Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands The BSAI Plan Team recommendations for proposed 2011/2012 BSAI groundfish specifications are attached as Item D-2(b)(1). Several changes from last year's specifications for 2011 were adopted. Proposed specifications: 1) for Kamchatka flounder were separated from the Arrowtooth flounder complex; 2) for blackspotted/rougheye rockfish complex were separated for BS and AI for ABC only; and 3) were adopted for sharks, skates, sculpins, and octopus.

Final BSAI groundfish specifications for 2010/2011 including: 1) Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits for halibut, red king crab, Tanner crab, opilio crab, and herring and their gear type and target fishery apportionments are attached as Item D-2(b)(2) to assist the Council in setting proposed PSC limits and seasonal apportionments for 2011/2012 at this meeting. NMFS staff will be available to assist in setting PSC amounts using Table 8 for 2010 Item D-2(b)(3).

Gulf of Alaska The GOA Plan Team recommendations for proposed 2011/2012 GOA groundfish specifications are attached as Item D-2(b)(4). Changes from last year's specifications for 2011 were adopted for sharks, squid, octopus and sculpin by setting separate specifications for each based upon their contribution to the aggregate other species specifications for 2011. Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limits are established for halibut in the GOA. Since 1995, total halibut PSC limits for all fisheries and gear types have totaled 2,300 t. This cap was reduced from 2,750 t after the sablefish IFQ fishery was exempted from the halibut PSC requirements in 1995. The halibut PSC apportionments recommended based upon the 2010 apportionments for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries are shown below.

GOA Pacific halibut PSC Limits

2011-2012 Trawl		2011-2012 Hook and Line		
Jan 20 - Apr 1	550 t	1st trimester	Jan 1 - Jun 10	250 t
Apr 1 - Jul 1	400 t	2nd trimester	Jun 10 - Sep 1	5 t
Jul 1 - Sep 1	600 t	3rd trimester	Sept 1 - Dec 31	35 t
Sept 1 - Oct 1	150 t			
Oct 1 - Dec 31	300 t	DSR	Jan 1 - Dec 31	10 t
TOTAL	2,000 t			300 t

Trawl fishery categories			
Season	Shallow Water	Deep Water	Total
Jan 1 - Apr 1	450 t	100 t	550 t
Apr 1 - Jul 1	100 t	300 t	400 t
Jul 1 - Sep 1	200 t	400 t	600 t
Sep 1 - Oct 1	150 t	any rollover	150 t
Oct 1 - Dec 31	<i>no apportionment</i>		300 t
TOTAL	900 t	800 t	2,000 t

GOA TAC Considerations for State Pacific Cod Fishery Since 1997, the Council has reduced the GOA Pacific cod TAC to account for removals of not more than 25 percent of the Federal P. cod TAC from the State parallel fisheries. Using the area apportionments of the proposed 2011 P. cod ABC that was recommended by the Plan Team, the 2011/2012 federal TACs for P. cod would be adjusted as listed below.

Proposed 2011 and 2012 Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod ABCs, TACs and state Guideline Harvest Levels (GHLs) (mt).

Specifications	Western	Central	Eastern	Total
ABC	34,265	60,698	2,937	97,900
State GHL	8,566	15,174	294	24,032
(%)	25	25	10	24.4
Federal TAC	25,699	45,524	2,643	73,866