



C7 Classification of sculpins in the BSAI & GOA

October 2019 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Steve MacLean
 Other Presenters: Megan Mackey, NMFS (Presenter)
 Action Required: 1. Review the Public Review Draft of the analysis
 2. Recommend a preferred alternative

BACKGROUND

This document analyzes alternatives regarding appropriate classification and management of sculpin species in the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for Groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). At this meeting the Council will review the Public Review Draft of the Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review and choose their preferred alternative. Alternatives for review include the No-Action Alternative which will retain sculpins in the target species category in the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs, and the action alternative (with options) that would move sculpins to the non-target ecosystem component (EC) category. Two alternatives are considered in this analysis:

Alternative 1 would continue to manage sculpins in both the BSAI and GOA FMPs as target species. OFL, ABC, and TAC would continue to be set for sculpins in both FMP areas. Stock assessments for sculpins would continue to be done annually. Directed fishing for sculpins would be allowed.

Alternative 2, the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA), would manage sculpins in both the BSAI and GOA FMPs as ecosystem component species. Ecosystem Component species are non-target species that are determined not in need of conservation and management. OFL, ABC, and TAC would no longer be required. Regulations would prohibit directed fishing for sculpins, recordkeeping and reporting would be required. Maximum Retainable Amount (MRA) would be set at 2%, 10%, or (PPA) 20%.

Management Measure	Alt 1- No Action	Alt 2 - Ecosystem Component (PPA)
Prohibit a Directed Fishery	No	Yes Prohibit directed fishing in regulations at 679.20(i)
Retention and Sale	Yes Retention and sale allowed.	Yes Retention and personal use allowed, subject to MRA limits. Sale allowed if processed into fishmeal.
Annual Harvest Specifications	Yes - Stock assessments continue - TAC assessed in optimum yield	No - Periodic reports on biomass information from current surveys will be included in the SAFE (similar to squids) - Catch does not accrue to optimum yield cap
Incidental Catch Management	Yes - MRA as incidental catch species = 20% for most basis species	Yes - MRA as incidental catch species = options for 20% (Preliminary Preferred Option) , 10%, 2%
Recordkeeping and Reporting	Yes - Require catch reporting	Yes - Require catch reporting