

Revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2006 require that by 2010, Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for fisheries determined by the Secretary to be subject to overfishing must establish a mechanism for specifying Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) at a level that prevents overfishing and does not exceed the recommendations of the respective Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) or other established peer review processes. These FMPs also are required to establish within this time frame measures to ensure accountability. Accountability measures (AM) are management controls that ensure that the ACLs are not exceeded; examples include corrective measures if overages occur and implementation of an in-season monitoring program. By 2011, FMPs for all other fisheries, except fisheries for species with annual life cycles, must meet these requirements. The Council will meet the requirements outlined above for ten species undergoing overfishing through Amendment 17 to the Snapper Grouper FMP. The requirements for the remaining species will be met through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment.

This document provides a draft list of actions that will be included in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment and the amendment timeline. The Snapper Grouper Committee and Council should review the list of actions and provide guidance to staff.

Draft List of Items to Be Including In the ACL Comprehensive Amendment

The following list of items, as they apply to species not undergoing overfishing, will be in the ACL Comprehensive Amendment. Annual crops that are not in an overfished state are exempt from these requirements.

1. Annual Catch Limits
2. Annual Catch Targets
3. Accountability Measures
4. Allocations between the commercial, for-hire, and recreational sectors

5. Regulations to limit total mortality (landings and discards) to the Annual Catch Target. Management regulations may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Commercial quotas and recreational allocations
 - b) Trip limits
 - c) Vessel limits
 - d) Size limits
 - e) Bag limits
 - f) Closed areas
 - g) Closed seasons
 - h) Permit endorsements

Amendment Timeline

The following is the timeline specified in Version 3 of the SAFMC/NMFS SERO Regional Operations Schedules/Deliverables:

1. Staff/Team prepare analyses of ecosystem species designation by May 12, 2009.
2. Committee/Council review and provide guidance – June 2009 meeting
3. Staff/Team continue to work on draft amendment document during 2009.
4. Committee/Council review and provide guidance during 2009.
5. SSC provides OFL/ABC recommendations by April 2010.
6. Committee/Council review and provide guidance – June 2010 meeting.
7. Approve document for public hearings – September 2010.
8. Public hearings & DEIS review – October/November 2010.
9. Committee/Council review and approve final document – December 2010.
10. SAFMC submits Amendment 17 for formal Secretarial review – December 2010.
11. NMFS implements during 2011 fishing year.