

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 at their December 1-5, 2008 meeting and provide guidance to staff in terms of recommendations for items to be scoped. The actions need to be approved by the Committee and Council for scoping.

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 2 of the SAFMC/NMFS SERO Regional Operations Schedules/Deliverables:

1. Scoping – approve for scoping at the December 2008 meeting; scoping January/February 2009
2. Appoint Team Members
3. Committee/Council review scoping comments and options paper at March and June 2009 meetings.
4. Approve document for public hearings – September 2009.
5. Public Hearings – November (1st & 2nd weeks) 2009.
6. Review Public Hearing Input & Approve – December 2009.
7. Final Approval (if necessary) – March 2010.
8. Send for Secretarial Review – March 2010.