



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for  
Oceans and Atmosphere  
Washington, D.C. 20230

JAN 10 2003

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Dear Reviewer:

**PFMC**

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), we enclose for your review the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 2003 Annual Specifications for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries Off the Coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. The FEIS provides background information about, and analysis of, harvest specifications and management measures for fisheries covered under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

The proposed action establishes harvest guidelines for groundfish species, species groups and geographic subunits. In order to constrain fisheries to these harvest guidelines, management measures for commercial and recreational fisheries are identified. Management measures considered for commercial fisheries include 2-month cumulative landing limits for species, species groups and geographic subunits for limited entry trawl and fixed gear sectors, and the open access fisheries. Management measures considered for the recreational fisheries include bag limits, size limits, and fishing seasons, which vary by State. In addition, area closures based on depth and intended to reduce bycatch of species apply to both commercial and recreational fisheries. These closures vary by geographic area and time of year.

This document reflects the work of many people in the Pacific Fishery Management Council, NOAA Fisheries, the states of Washington, Oregon, and California, and the West Coast groundfish treaty tribes (Makah, Quileute, Hoh, and Quinault.) It also reflects the comments we received from the public on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I especially want to thank those who spoke at public hearings and those who submitted comments for helping us make the FEIS as factual and inclusive as possible. By presenting your views, knowledge, and insights, you have added much to the final product.

Any written comments or questions you have should be submitted to D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, NOAA, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0070, or faxed to 206-526-6736, by the end of the 30 day "cooling off" period on February 18, 2003. Also, one copy of your comments should be sent to me at the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA/SP, Room 6121, 14<sup>th</sup> and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

Sincerely,

James P. Burgess III  
NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure



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