

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Agenda Item C- 8
Squid to Ecosystem Component Category
February 5, 2017
Motion

The Council replaces the purpose and need statement, revises Alternative 2, adds Alternative 3, and recommends release to the public after the staff address the SSC's recommendations, as appropriate.

Purpose and Need

Squid are short-lived, highly productive, and an important prey species. No conservation concerns exist for squid populations in the BSAI and GOA. Squid are thought to be substantially more abundant than can be estimated from trawl survey data. Trawl surveys do not employ the proper gear or sample in locations that can provide reliable biomass estimates for most squids. Limited information hinders the development of reliable biological reference points, particularly OFLs and ABCs. As a result, current OFLs for squid are based on average catch calculations that are poorly linked to abundance. OFLs that are not representative of abundance do not achieve management goals for squid and could constrain groundfish fisheries unnecessarily. There are no directed fisheries for squid in either the BSAI or GOA, however squid bycatch is retained in some fisheries and often utilized to prevent waste. **The National Standard 1 guidelines include options to identify non-target species in FMPs (species caught incidentally during the pursuit of target stocks in a fishery) that do not require the establishment of a TAC. These options include identifying species as non-target and in need of conservation and management, or as non-target ecosystem component species, not in need of conservation and management. Identifying squids as a non-target species in the FMPs would more accurately reflect the nature of squid catch while protecting squid from fishing effects and alleviating unnecessary constraints on other groundfish fisheries.**

Alternative 2: Designate squid in both BSAI and GOA FMPs **as non-target** 'Ecosystem Component **Species**'. **Establishment of** OFL, ABC, **and** TAC will no longer be required.

Remove regulations referring to squids as target species and implement regulations for the groundfish fishery that:

- Prohibit directed fishing for squid
- Establish a squid maximum retainable amount (MRA) when directed fishing for **other fisheries** at a level to discourage retention while allowing flexibility to prosecute **other** fisheries
 - Option 1 MRA = 2%
 - Option 2 MRA = 10%
 - Option 3 MRA = 20%
- Require recordkeeping and reporting to monitor and report catch **and discards** of squid species annually.

Encourage the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to continue to explore methods to estimate squid abundance and assess the squid stocks.

Alternative 3: Designate squid in both BSAI and GOA FMPs as non-target species. Establishment of a squid TAC will no longer be required (OFL and ABC would still be specified).

Remove regulations referring to squids as target species and implement regulations for the groundfish fishery that:

- **Prohibit directed fishing for squid**
- **Establish a squid maximum retainable amount (MRA) when directed fishing for other fisheries at a level to discourage retention while allowing flexibility to prosecute other fisheries**
 - **Option 1 MRA = 2%**
 - **Option 2 MRA = 10%**
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- **Require recordkeeping and reporting to monitor and report catch and discards of squid species annually.**

Encourage the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to continue to explore methods to estimate squid abundance and assess the squid stocks.

Direction to staff (All Alternatives): Request that staff explore whether the provisions in the statutory note to the section 303 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (p. 79) that does not require the establishment of OFLs, ABCs, and TACs would apply to squid in the BSAI or GOA... "[section 303(a)(15) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act] shall not apply to a fishery for species that have a life cycle of approximately 1 year unless the Secretary has determined the fishery is subject to overfishing of that species."