

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTH PACIFIC: AN EXAMPLE OF TAC-BASED MANAGEMENT

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The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 mandated the use of a new and radical management approach for fisheries in the United States. Seven fishery management councils were created, one being the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). Each of these Councils was given the responsibility for ensuring the conservation of fishery resources under their jurisdiction. Early years of the NPFMC existence were devoted to the development of an management system for a groundfish fishery that was dominated by foreign fishing fleets. Ten years after the Council's formation saw the shift of the fishery from one dominated by foreign fishing fleets to one that was fully domestic. Currently, the fishery is valued at in excess of one billion dollars annually. Critical to the success of this fishery is a management system that is based on the establishment of an annual fish harvest (TAC - Total Allowable Catch) that does not endanger the productive potential of groundfish populations. This presentation will focus on describing how the Council process works and the role TAC plays in the system. Discussed also are issues that the Council faces in the management of this valuable fishery.