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ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Regional Fishery Management Council Training
November 2023

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the ACL and AM requirements
2. Describe the main steps in setting ACLs
3. Demonstrate skills in a test fishery



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Road Map

- Guidelines and Requirements
- Reference Points
- Performance Standards
- Exercise



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Why do We Have ACLs?

National Standard 1

- Prevent Overfishing
- Achieve Optimum Yield

MSA Requirement

- Annual Catch Limits (ACL)
- Accountability Measures (AM)



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Stocks with ACLs

MSA: ACLs for “each of its managed fisheries”
(304(h)(6))

National Standard Guidelines: Stocks in need of
conservation and management (50 CFR 600.305(c))



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Exceptions to ACLs

- Species with annual life cycles, unless subject to overfishing
- Stocks managed under an international agreement to which the U.S. is party



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Let's Review!

True or False:

A small commercial fishery with
no other component or sector
does not require an ACL



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Measures To Ensure Accountability

Management Controls

- Prevent ACLs from being exceeded
- Correct or mitigate any ACL overages

Address & minimize

- Frequency/magnitude of overage

Correct problems that caused overage

- In as short a time as possible



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Types of Accountability Measures

Inseason

- Monitoring
- Management measures
- Use when possible

Post-Season

- Operational issues
- Biological consequences



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Let's Review!

True or False:

Accountability measures must deduct ACL overages the following year



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National Standard 1 Guidelines – ACL Framework

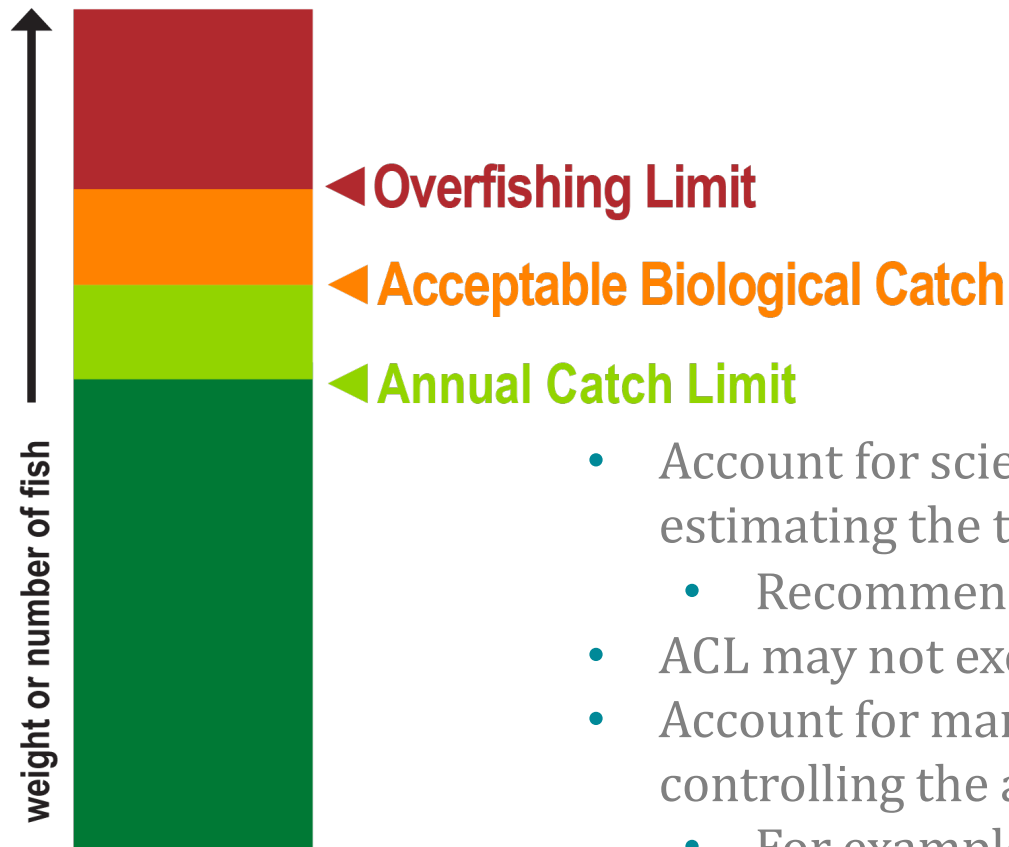
“Conservation and management measures shall **prevent overfishing** while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.”



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Know Your Reference Points

OFL, ABC, ACL, and ACT



- Account for scientific uncertainty in estimating the true OFL
 - Recommend: $OFL > ABC$
- ACL may not exceed the ABC
- Account for management uncertainty in controlling the actual catch to the target.
 - For example: $ACL > ACT$

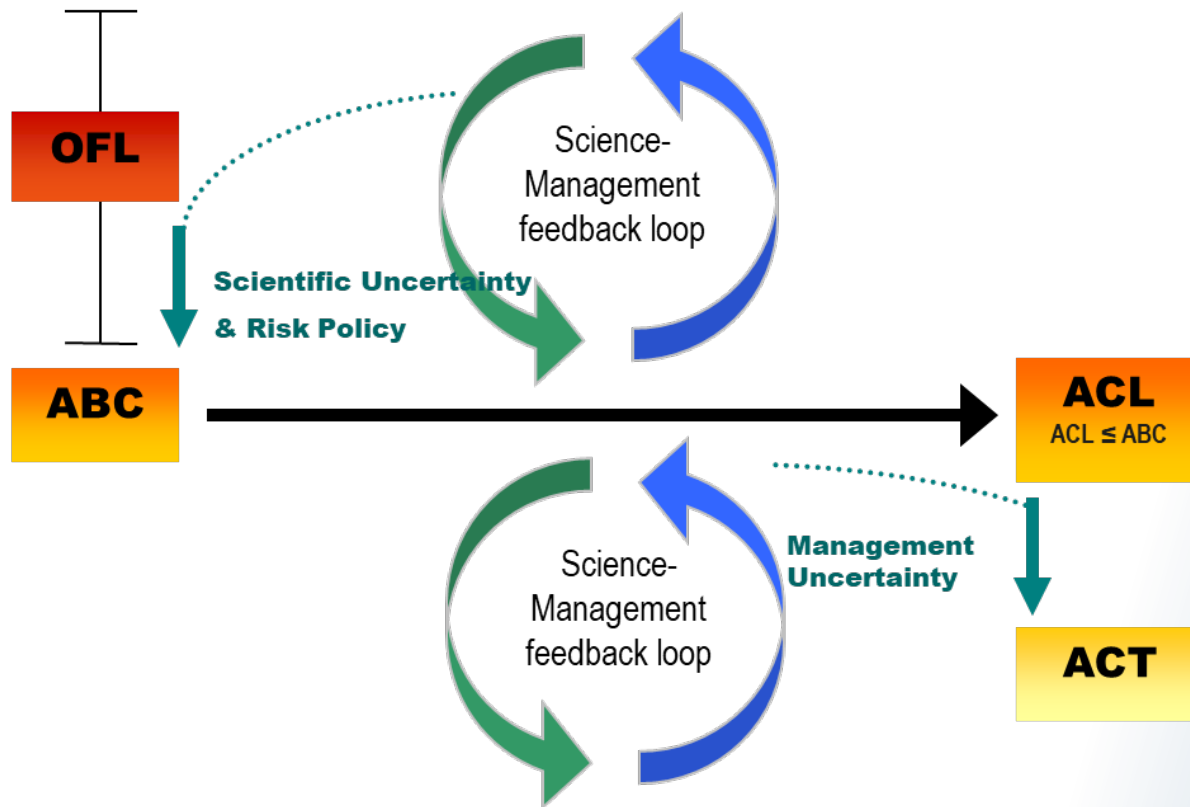


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Roles in Setting ACLs

SSC Role

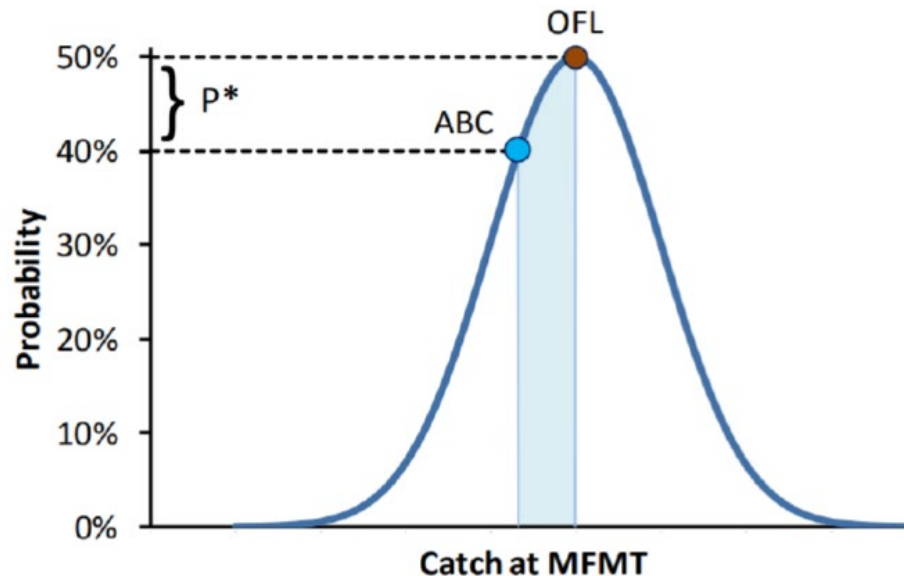
Council Role



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Addressing Scientific Uncertainty

- ABC Control Rule
 - Accounts for scientific uncertainty in the OFL
 - Council's risk policy



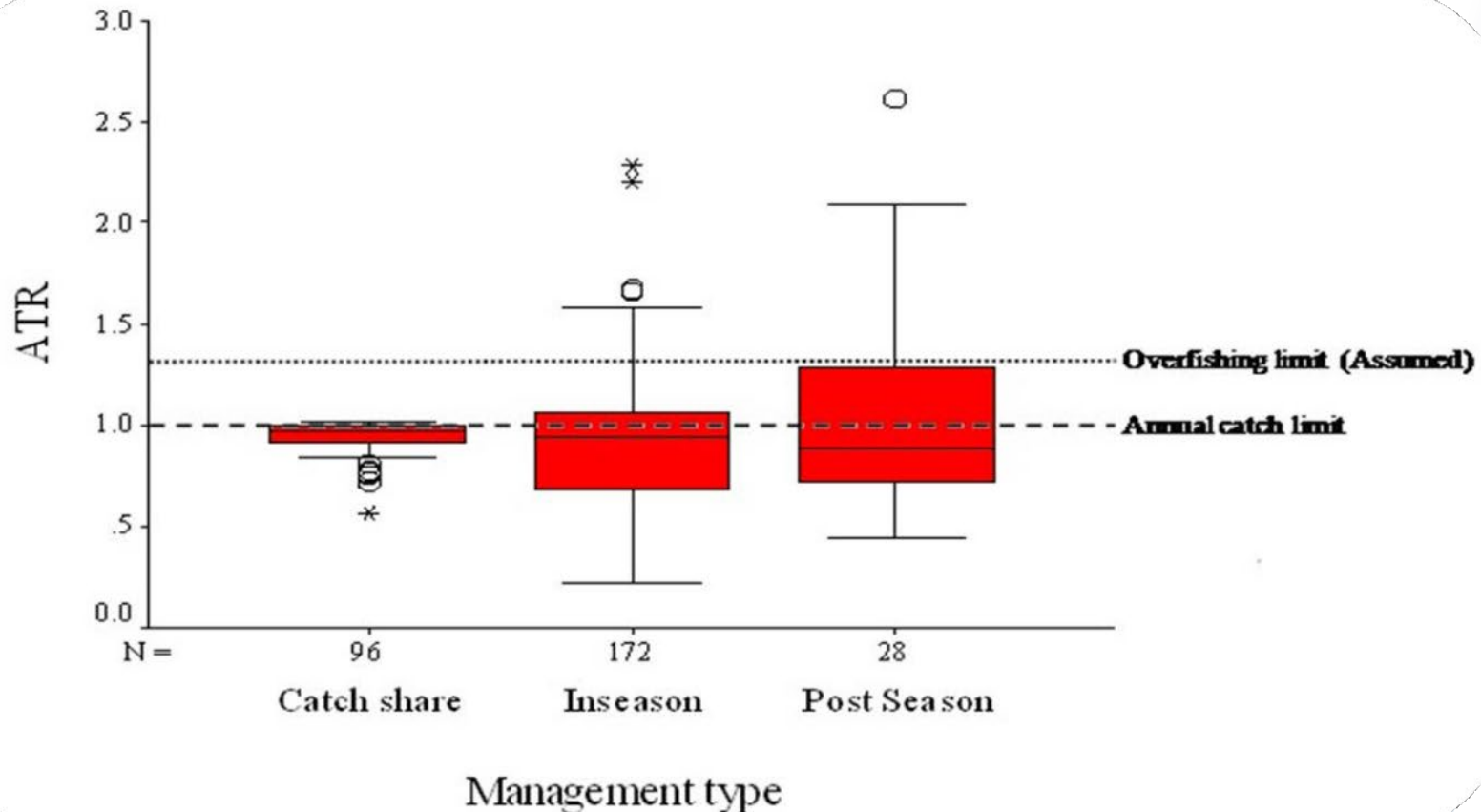
Addressing Management Uncertainty

- The ability of managers to constrain catch so that the ACL is not exceeded and
- The uncertainty in quantifying the true catch amounts (i.e., estimation errors)



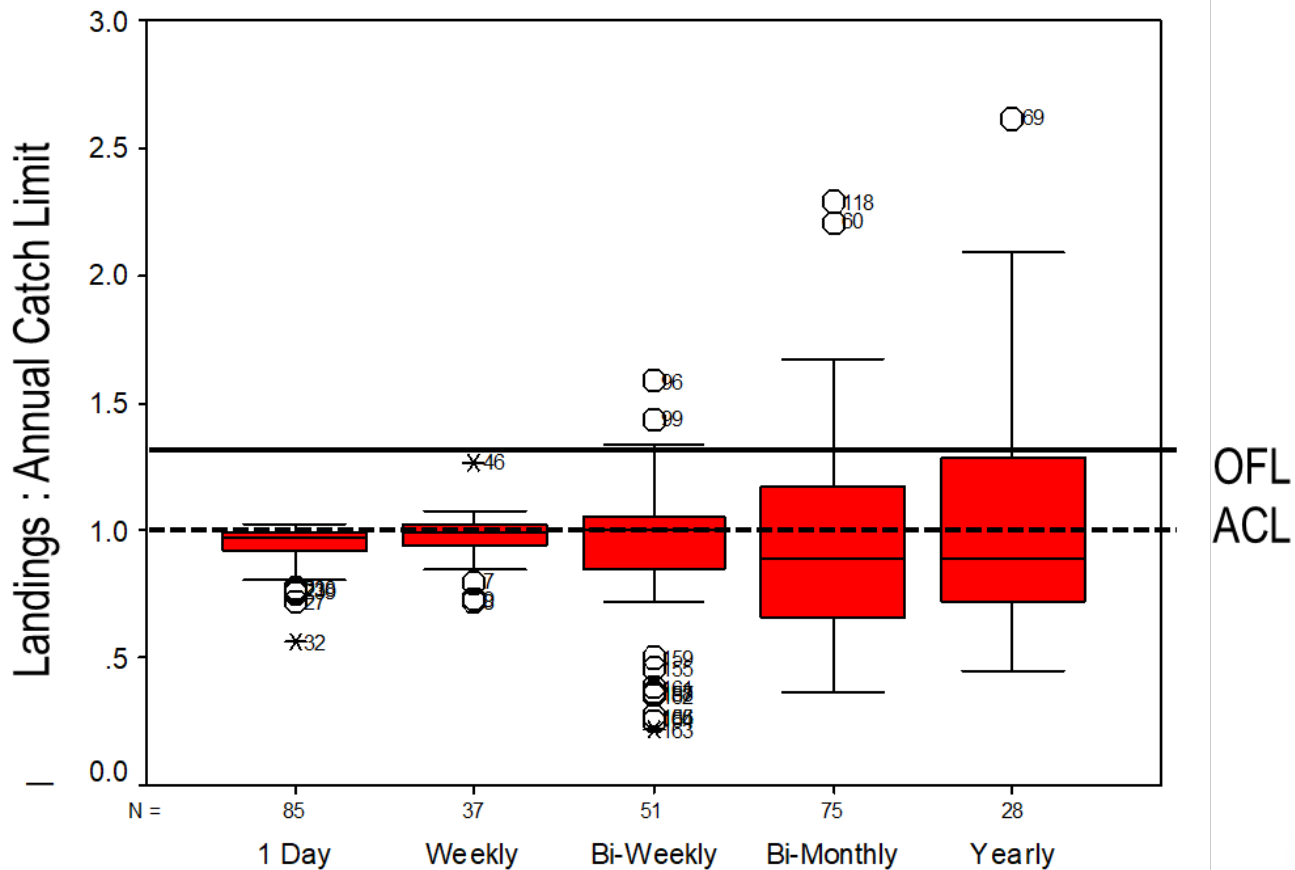
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Management Uncertainty - By management type



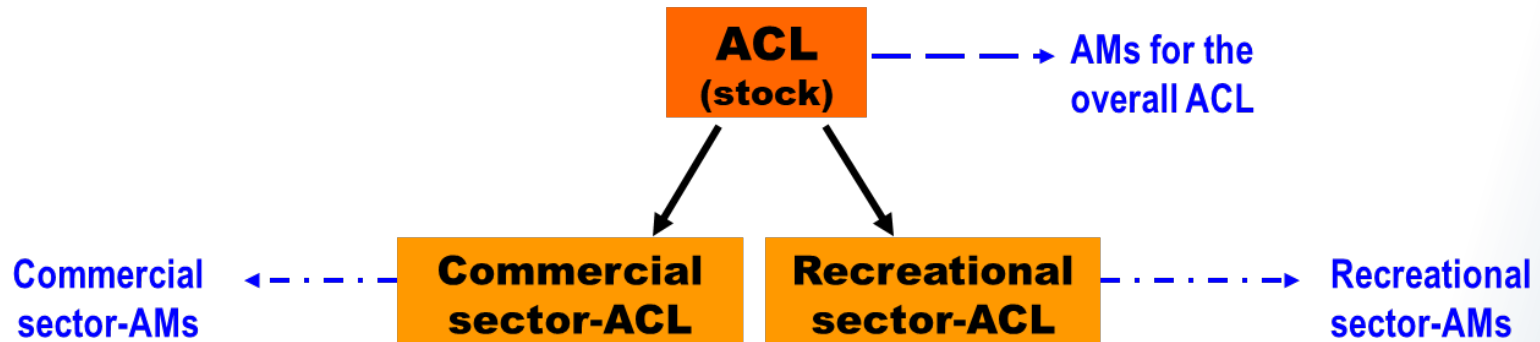
Source: W.S. Patrick et al. / Factors affecting management uncertainty in U.S. fisheries and methodological solutions. *Ocean & Coastal Management* 71 (2013) 64-72.

Management Uncertainty - By reporting frequency



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Sectors



- Sub-divide a stock's ACL into “sector-ACLs”
 - Optional
 - Sum must not exceed overall ACL
 - AMs for overall ACL
 - Sector-AMs for each sector-ACL
 - Fair and equitable



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What happens if a stock is found to be subject to overfishing?

Overfishing

- Ensure ABC is set appropriately.
- Reevaluate ACLs and AMs.

- NMFS notifies Councils when a stock is subject to overfishing.
- NS1 Guidelines advise that the Council should:
 - Work with its SSC to ensure that the ABC is set appropriately.
 - Evaluate the cause of overfishing and reevaluate ACLs and AMs to ensure they are adequate.



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Performance Standards

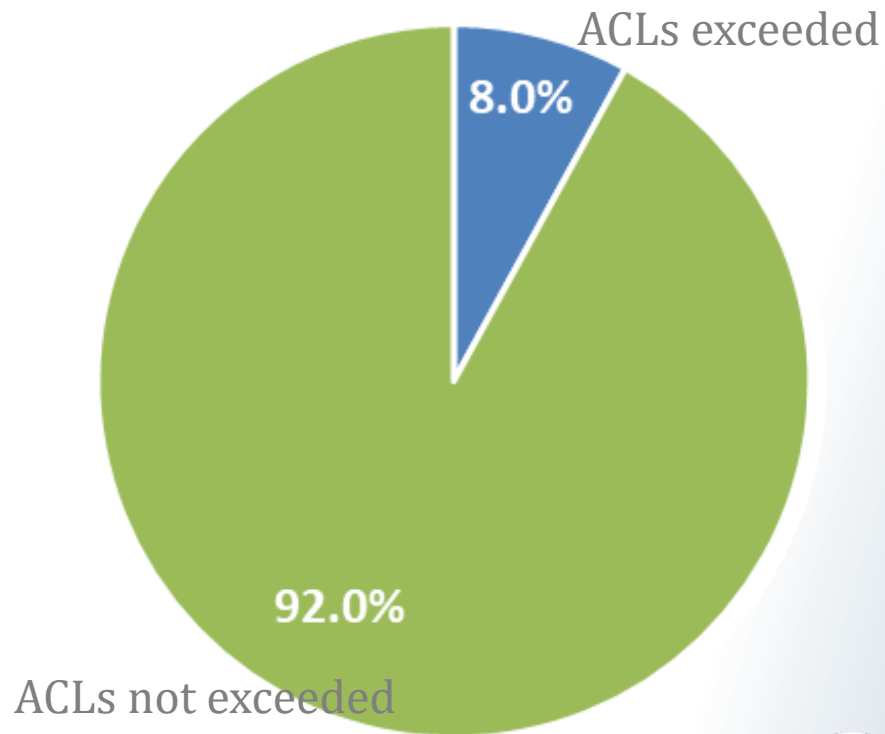
- Uncertainty = chance of overfishing
- To prevent overfishing:
 - Re-evaluate and modify
 - ACLs and AM systems
 - If ACL is exceeded more than once in 4 years
 - Use a higher performance standard
 - If stock is particularly vulnerable to effects of overfishing



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Tracking Performance

- % ACLs not exceeded
- Ongoing reporting to NOAA
- National



As of June 30, 2023



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Let's Review!

Q: Which of these is NOT a source of management uncertainty?

- a. Management program type
- b. Estimated discard mortality
- c. Reporting frequency



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Let's Review!

True or False:

Where scientific uncertainty exists, ACLs may be set at the same level as the OFL



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Let's Review!

True or False:

Performance standards are intended to keep overfishing from becoming a chronic condition.



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Objectives Review 1

Describe ACL requirements

- MSA Requires:
 - ACLs and AMs
 - To end and prevent overfishing;
 - In all managed fisheries;
 - Unless exempted – 2 exceptions
 - Councils may not exceed SSC's ABC recommendations
 - AMs
 - Prevent ACL overages and address any overages



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Objectives Review 2

Describe Main Steps in Setting ACLs

- ABC Control Rules
 - Account for scientific uncertainty
 - Incorporate Council's risk policy
- Clearly account for uncertainty
 - Scientific and management
- Performance Standard
 - Re-evaluate ACL/AM setting to improve performance and effectiveness

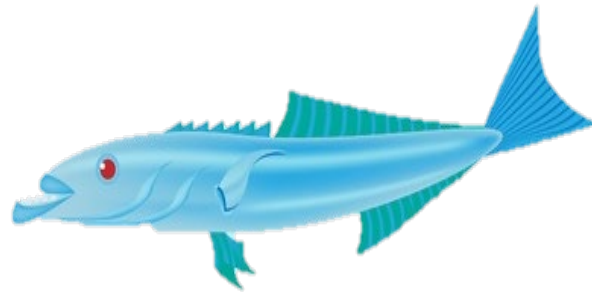
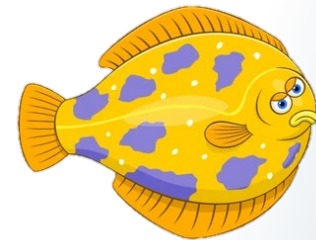


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Objectives Review 3

Demonstrate skills in a test fishery

- Prepare to use this information in your test fishery
- Exercise A: Meyer Sole
- Exercise B: Whitebelly Lemonfish



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