

RE: Fishery Management Plan Management Categories

Please find attached the comments of 2,039 Audubon members in support of a new harvest framework for northern anchovy, as well as a prohibition on a directed fishery for shortbelly rockfish. Many people submitted personalized comments, which can be found at the beginning; others, beginning on page 123, sent the comments below:

===== Seabirds are in crisis. Their populations worldwide have declined by 70 percent since 1950 due to climate change, oil spills, overfishing, habitat loss, and accidentally getting hooked on fishing gear. To ensure that seabirds on the West Coast have plenty of food to eat and to feed their chicks, I urge the Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service to take the following actions to protect shortbelly rockfish and northern anchovy: * Add a prohibition on a directed fishery for shortbelly rockfish to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan starting in 2023. With increasing global demand for fishmeal, this prohibition is necessary to prevent a new fishery from targeting shortbelly rockfish while allowing some incidental catch to allow unfettered operations of other fisheries. * Approve the new harvest framework for northern anchovy and add it to the Coastal Pelagic Fishery Management Plan as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and to ensure durability of the management change. Due to climate change, we must carefully consider the larger ecosystem needs of birds and marine wildlife before setting catch levels on forage fish. The new framework updates the harvest control rule for this critical forage fish to ensure the condition of the stock is checked regularly, and that catch levels are set according to the health of the stock. As the base of the food chain for seabirds, marine mammals, and larger fish like salmon, these forage fish support the health of the entire ocean ecosystem, provide coastal jobs, and impact the economy. Please protect these little fish that seabirds rely on.