May 27, 2003

Dr. Hans Radtke
Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place
Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220

Dear Dr. Radtke:

Please accept for consideration by the Pacific Fishery Management Council at its June 2003 meeting the enclosed proposal to institute hard bycatch caps in the west coast groundfish fisheries for the 2004 fishing season.

As you know, bycatch of groundfish contributes to the overfishing of many species and results in waste and destruction of marine resources. Establishing a system of caps whereby each sector of the fishery is held accountable for the bycatch it creates would be an important first step in our efforts to count, cap and control bycatch on the west coast. We hope that the enclosed proposal will begin the discussion of how we can reach our bycatch reduction goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal for the Council’s consideration, and we look forward to participating in the upcoming meeting.

Very truly yours,

Phil Kline
Fisheries Policy and Programs
Oceana

Karen Garrison
Senior Policy Analyst
Natural Resources Defense Council

cc: Dr. Donald McIsaac, Executive Director

Chris Dorsett
Pacific Fish Conservation Manager
The Ocean Conservancy

Peter Huhtala
Acting Executive Director
Pacific Marine Conservation Council
Summary

Beginning in the 2004 fishing season, the PFMC should establish a system of hard bycatch caps, using the sector bycatch allocations from the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (PFMC) “bycatch scorecard.”

The scorecard was developed by the PFMC to allocate bycatch amounts to all fishing gear sectors for the year. The bycatch scorecard contains estimates of the bycatch mortality of various species in the different West coast groundfish fisheries.

This proposal expands upon the current use of the bycatch scorecard by using the projected bycatch mortality as a hard cap (limit). Fishing would stop in an individual sector when these limits or “hard caps” are reached. The Federal observer program would be responsible for monitoring bycatch mortality through the season.

In this proposal, the total bycatch for the year would be allocated to each fishing gear sector and the projected bycatch mortality for these different sectors would become their bycatch cap. The bycatch caps should only be adjusted annually, based on new scientific information, with no reallocation from one sector to another during the fishing year. When any sector reaches its allotted bycatch level, that sector would be closed to any further fishing even if the target optimum yield had not been reached.

Additionally, the PFMC needs to continue its push for real time data collection and full accountability in our fisheries. The creation of hard bycatch caps, by fishing sector, will insure that no overfishing occurs and excessive mortalities caused by one fishing sector would not cause the closure of other sector’s fishing opportunities.

Purpose/Benefits

Helps ensure fairness between sectors by preventing any one sector from “using up” the total year’s catch for a species.

Provides greater incentives for clean-fishing, since as bycatch is “counted” against the specific sector and can result in shutting down a fishery.

Builds upon existing management practices by simply extending the current application of the scorecard.

Insures that the total mortality for a species does not exceed the annual limit set by the PFMC.
RE: CCA / RCA boundaries; groundfish allocation; restricted access; LE fleet trip limits

It has come to my attention that the Council may consider easing restrictions on shelf rockfish fishing in the second half of 2003 in light of new information concerning the status of the bocaccio resource. First, I'd like to take the opportunity to commend those involved in making revisions to some of the fundamental variables in the scientific population model this year by their use of the most up-to-date biological information. These modifications have produced a much-more realistic estimate of the current population size.

That being said, I would like you to know that I have been commercially fishing various shelf rockfish species off the coast of southern California for nearly 30 years, am a 'federal A fixed gear permittee', and serve on the PFMC's Habitat Technical Review Committee.

The PFMC and GMT now have some difficult decisions ahead on how best to handle the need to ease these restrictions, respecting the need to maintain existing protection for other overfished rockfish species. Furthermore, the situation now prompts the question of how to allocate 'the shelf' between fishery sectors. I would like to make a few recommendations on these matters.

1. For offshore southern California waters, the Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA) goals, objectives, and boundaries need immediate re-examination relative to the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). When we were first faced with the giant swath of closed area in the CCA, we were told that this much area needed to be placed off-limits to ensure adequate protection for 50 percent of the cowcod population. While cowcod have specific depth ranges, it was decided, for enforcement purposes, that only big square or rectangular dimensions would be enforceable, causing the loss of many hundreds of square miles of deeper fishable habitat for minor slope rockfish, blackcod and thornyheads. Yet in 2001, the PFMC moved to the use of closure areas defined by depth contours, and has continued with this strategy ever since. No management action has been taken to reduce the CCA boundaries to compensate for this additional protection which came on-line with the RCA. Clearly, it is arbitrary, redundant, and not in the spirit of sound scientific management to leave the current boundaries of the CCA status quo while enforcing the current RCA boundaries. Without question, the current CCA boundaries are antiquated. Now, with requirements looming for VMS to address enforcement concerns, the limited entry commercial fishery should be given additional access to deeper waters needlessly closed in the CCA. Moving the 'outward line' in to 180 fathoms would be a good start.
2. On the matter of allocation of the bocaccio OY between sectors, it seems most sensible, fair, and equitable to return to the 56/44 percent split between recreational and commercial resources that was in place in 2002. Loss of access to shelf resources was imposed equally between sectors for 2003, and thus the return of access should be dealt with in the same manner.

3. However, in the case of the commercial allocation of bocaccio, it is imperative that the PFMC and GMT be cautious in how this catch is subdivided between the limited entry and open-access fleet. Percentages and splits aside, management MUST take into account that we need to do everything possible to PROHIBIT NEW FISHING EFFORT ON THE SHELF by establishing shelf trip limits for open-access that allow for incidental landings, but serve to deter new involvement. The West Coast groundfish crisis is not over, and we need to remember that there is still a substantial open-access component to this fishery. It does not need to increase in size. Inexplicably, to this day, if the shelf were opened, vessel owners who have never landed a rockfish can still register their vessel commercially, buy a commercial license and go out on the shelf and fish for rockfish. Given California’s recent actions restricting access to the nearshore, we need to prevent effort shift onto the shelf. If the PFMC believes in their policies regarding the value of the use of restricted access as a mechanism to reduce effort in a fishery, setting these trip limits for open access should be of utmost importance.

4. Set appropriate trip limits that allow us to more fully utilize the minor shelf OY. Efforts to protect bocaccio have resulted in a loss of access for everybody to this OY. As you are aware, the level at which our minor shelf trip limits are set is far more important than the volume of bocaccio we will be authorized to take, as other shelf species are more important to our markets. In the past, the PFMC has provided a 200-pound monthly trip limit, which was paired with a 1,000 pound per-month shelf trip limit. Given our ability to more purely target species such as vermillion, and chilipepper rockfish etc. I’d suggest, for the COMMERCIAL LIMITED ENTRY FLEET ONLY, that ratio perhaps be loosened so that we can target the shelf species which are not overfished by implementing higher shelf limits. Such a strategy would still accomplish the goal of prohibiting discard of bocaccio, yet would authorize the take of this resource by the component of the commercial fishery that the PFMC has identified as having priority.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tim Athens

CC: PFMC GMT F&G Commission Voikovich Wolf Barnes
Sandy, forward to JDD–JC

PFMC Comments wrote:

Please consider this as my public comments at the next council meeting. This fishing council is controlled by fishermen who set quotas too high so that the fish can never recover. They also seek to avoid setting any refuges, which should be set, to allow fish stocks to recover. It is time that the fishermen forget about their deep pockets filled with money at the expense of all of us in this world who want our children and grandchildren to have some fish in the ocean. It is clear that research shows the predatory fishing that has taken place courtesy of the fishing industry, b. suhav
15 em1 at
florham park nj 07932

--- Yahoo! News <referofriend@reply.yahoo.com> wrote:
> Date: Sat, 17 May 2003 14:50:26 PDT
> From: Yahoo! News <referofriend@reply.yahoo.com>
> To: mtrollan@malmc.org
> CC: jeanpublic@yahoo.com
> Subject: Yahoo! News Story - Study Finds Large Drop
> in Predatory Fish
>
> ------------------------------
>
> (jeanpublic@yahoo.com) has sent you a news article.
> (Email address has not been verified.)
> Personal message:
> it is interesting what scientists who are not under
> the thumb of commercial fishermen can find. Of course,
> when commercial fishermen control scientists and tell
> them what to say and find, they can catch all the fish
> they want - and that is what is going on with our fish
> councils right now. It is a shame.
> Study Finds Large Drop in Predatory Fish
> http://story.news.yahoo.com/news/?tmpl=story&g=ap/20030514/ap_on_se/fewer_fish
>
> ------------------------------
>
> Yahoo! News - Study Finds Large Drop
> in Predatory FishNews Home - Yahoo! - Help
delayed 20 mins - disclaimer

Quote Data provided by Reuters #160;

Analyzing nearly 50 years of data, two marine scientists at Dalhousie University in Canada say in
Thursday's issue of Nature that commercial fishing
killed off all but 10 percent of populations of large
prized tuna, swordfish, marlin and other fish species.

Average weights of those remaining also have declined
sharply, they say.

"Although it is now widely accepted that single
populations can be fished to low levels, this is the
first analysis to show general, pronounced declines of
entire communities across widely varying ecosystems,"
scientists Ransom A. Myers and Boris Worm report in
Thursday's issue of Nature magazine.

Nelson Beideman, who directs the Blue Water
Fishermen's Association in Barnegat Light, N.J., said
the report seemed aimed at developing "Chicken
Little-type scenarios" to please the Pew Charitable
Trusts, which helped finance the study. Pew backs a
number of environmental groups.

"Fishermen are not seeing the whole ocean down at 10
percent," said Beideman, whose trade group represents
Atlantic longline fishermen.

Myers, a marine biology professor, and Worm, a
research fellow, also found giant commercial fishing
operations generally take less than 15 years to kill
off 80 percent of a new fishing ground's abundance.
But they said marine life can recover if smaller,
fast-growing species are given a chance to fill in for
the large, overfished predators.

Myers began work on the report a decade ago,
collecting data only for commercial fish that could be
canned. He covered Japanese longline fishing between
1952 and 1999. Longlines, the most widespread fishing
gear used on open oceans, catch tuna, marlin and
swordfish by floating for miles with baited hooks
dangling vertically below.

No marine fish stocks were known to be overfished
when large-scale fishing fleets began spreading
globally just after World War II and the Japanese were
catching 10 fish per 100 hooks.

Now, they are lucky to catch one per 100, Myers said.
The report uses other research to verify the results
and expand them to other species.

The trends outlined in the report echo a 1994
estimate by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization
(news - web site) that almost 70 percent of marine
fish stocks were overfished or fully exploited. A
U.N.-sponsored world summit in South Africa called for
restoration of global fisheries by 2015.

Myers and Worm hope their work helps guide those
efforts.

David Burney, who directs the U.S. Tuna Foundation in
San Diego, said the report raises legitimate concerns
about overfishing but probably overstates the problem.

"It just highlights what we've been saying for the
last five years #151; there's way too much fishing
capacity out on the open seas. It's a combination of
more, bigger boats and technology advances that are
allowing you to find the fish so much easier than
before," he said.

Michael Sissenwine, head of fisheries science at the
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
agreed with the report that fishing can cause big
reductions in populations quickly but cautioned
against drawing larger conclusions.

"There's nothing that assures us that the data they
are using is representative of all populations in the
world," he said, adding that fishing typically reduces
a species' population by at least 50 percent.

Barbara Block, a Stanford University marine biologist and one of the world's leading tunu researchers, said the report's findings are solid.

"What the paper is doing is bringing to the public the reality of what's happening in our seas," she said. "We're systematically removing the large carnivores from the seas."

Block said "some of the most magnificent creatures on Earth" are being eliminated before researchers fully understand them.

"Do we want a world without white sharks and giant tunas?" she asked. "Do we want a world without mako sharks? Industrial large-scale fishing is making that choice for all of humankind."

Daniel Pauly, a leading fisheries expert based in Canada, also praised the report for its unusually comprehensive data illustrating the shortcomings of fisheries management.

"We always regulate the closing of barns after the horses have already left," he said. "What it means is that the high seas fisheries that are opened up in the deep seas, they are a completely law-free environment like the Old West."

On the Net:
Nature: http://www.nature.com/nature

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PFMC Comments <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council

PFMC Comments
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7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200 Fax: 503-820-2299
Portland Work: 503-820-2280
OR 97220-1384
USA
Additional Information:
Last Name Comments
First Name PFMC
Version 2.1
Subject: Tougher Groundfish Regulations Needed
From: (Branden Leach) branden@leach.net
Date: Sat, 1 Mar 2003 08:09:08 -0800
To: right@dfg.ca.gov
Cc: rtreanor@dfg.ca.gov, mvojkovic@dfg2.ca.gov, governor@governor.ca.gov, Assemblymember.Wayne@assembly.ca.gov,
Assemblymember.Hollingsworth@assembly.ca.gov, carel.walisch@sea.ca.gov, Senator.Ollett@sen.ca.gov, pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 0000000
From: Mon Mar 03 08:08:21:13 2003
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 0000000
Return-Path: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov
Received: from mercury.akcr.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id
HB6KJ100.555F; Mon, 3 Mar 2003 08:03:19 -0800
Message-ID:<c8339a8b2e23e88b2e23e8c39a9f@mercury.akcr.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
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Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--1da05337687a6c75"

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Phone: 503-820-2280
Fax: 503-820-2299
On the web at: http://www.pccouncil.org

Subject: Tougher Groundfish Regulations Needed
From: (Branden Leach) branden@leach.net
Date: Sat, 1 Mar 2003 08:09:08 -0800
To: right@dfg.ca.gov
Cc: rtreanor@dfg.ca.gov, mvojkovic@dfg2.ca.gov, governor@governor.ca.gov, Assemblymember.Wayne@assembly.ca.gov,
Assemblymember.Hollingsworth@assembly.ca.gov, carel.walisch@sea.ca.gov, Senator.Ollett@sen.ca.gov, pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 0000000
From: Mon Mar 03 08:08:21:13 2003
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 0000000
Return-Path: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov
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HB6KJ100.555F; Mon, 3 Mar 2003 08:03:19 -0800
Message-ID:<c8339a8b2e23e88b2e23e8c39a9f@mercury.akcr.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
X-Accept-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--1da05337687a6c75"

I have been fishing the California coast for more than 30 years. In the last ten years I have seen the average size
of rockfish decline steadily. At the same time I have seen the size and frequency of lingcod decline as well. I
strongly support the draconian measures described above to preserve and restore these fish stocks. I believe the
burden of a fishing moratorium should fall on all of us, sport and commercial anglers as well, though primarily on
commercial fishermen since there are fewer of them and they take a greater number of fish. Furthermore, if
enforcement required raising taxes I would support this provided the burden was progressive and the funds went
directly to the DFG instead of into the State's general fund. Thank you.

I, as a California recreational angler, find the increasing body of evidence indicating the severe depletion of
California's groundfish stocks alarming. I believe the interim CDFG regulations will prove inadequate to stop
further deterioration of the stocks and urge the department to implement the following measures.

Immediately end the use of traps for catching fish.

Restrict commercial fishing to the use of rod-and-reel gear in waters less than 60 fathoms, and limit the number of
fish caught per day per vessel. We are in agreement with, and support the United Anglers proposed limit of 20 fish
per day per commercial fishing vessel.

Require all rockfish catches be landed at designated landing sites where DFG employees are present to monitor and
sample the catch. Documentation of the catch by CDFG would be provided. Charging commercial vessels would fund the program.

Require all merchants to document purchases and sales of rockfish so they could be tracked back to the fisherman.

Seasonal closures should be timed when the majority of species in an area are spawning, such as banning ling cod
fishing in water less than 20 fathoms in December and January.

Begin recruitment and training of an enforcement staff large enough to make the regulations effective.

Dramatically increase penalties for any violation of Fish & Game regulations associated with groundfish; including
poaching and possession of undocumented catch, to include seizure of assets.

1 of 3

5/29/2003 10:17 AM
Begin moving to a computer based licensing system such as in use by the State of Oregon. This would allow limiting the amount of days the recreational anglers could target rockfish through the use of stamps affixed to the license. These emergency measures, if enacted and enforced, may allow us to save this valuable public resource while the long-term solutions and regulations required to create a sustainable fishery are established.

Sincerely,
Branden Leach
Ocean

ARTICLE:
Tougher Interim Regulations Needed to Protect Rockfish Stocks
By: Richard Alvess 2-12-01
FishSniffer.com

"The West Coast groundfish fishery cannot ever reach sustainable levels, either biologically or economically, if it continues as is," wrote the Pacific Marine Conservation Council in their newsletter last summer. The PMCC is a non-profit group based in Astoria, Oregon.

Government agencies, commercial fishermen and sport anglers agree the California groundfish fishery is in trouble. After years of inaction, and many species of rockfish being on the verge of collapse, the California Department of Fish and Game, at the insistence of the Pacific Fishery Management Council Commission have enacted interim regulations aimed at protecting the fishery while the long-term solutions are to be determined over the course of the year.

The caveat being, the regulations have been formulated without any accurate data regarding the fishery or the fishery harvest. I can't tell you how hard it has been to find any data on the fishery, and the information published by DFG. [http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlm/reports/](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlm/reports/) (Only the Acrobat Piles have the numbers), is unbelievable if given more than a cursory reading.

The problem with the Interim Regulations, [http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/020201rockfishregs.html](http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/020201rockfishregs.html), is they fail to address the most serious threats to the fishery. Highly efficient commercial gear, blanket harvest ([http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/021201brockfish.html#fishtrap](http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/021201brockfish.html#fishtrap)), and illegal catch, while at the same time create economic havoc for the sportfishing and coastal tourism industry.

Regulations enacted without effective enforcement and severe penalties will prove futile. Unfortunately the history of DFG enforcement is not encouraging. They are simply understaffed for the challenges they are facing. Unless manpower is increased and the agency is better organized, whatever regulations are adopted, are doomed to failure.

For Example:
An interim rockfish species quota has been adopted by the California Fish And Game Commission, however, the DFG has yet to establish verification methods or obtain the funding to pay for them.

Meanwhile, the commercial livefish boats are systematically cleaning out the nearshore fishery. "On Friday, October 27, 2000, five commercial livefish boats were working 50 traps in a kelp bed the size of a football field inside Noyo Cove. The traps were set five or ten yards apart," a Fish Sniffer Reader reported.

A 1996 NMFS study showed that most of the live fish sold in their sample of San Francisco fish markets and restaurants were sub legal and/or undocumented.

At this moment we are head into another season where the documentation of the commercial catch will be spotty at best, while the unreported illegal catch goes completely undocumented. Current lack of enforcing reporting statute for commercial passenger fishing vessels, party boats, also brings into question the validity of that source of data, [http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/021201brockfish.html#available](http://www.fishsniffer.com/steelhead/021201brockfish.html#available).

But rest assured, the fishery will be hammered for another year while we attend endless hearings to develop another set of temporary regulations, which the State can't enforce. Unless California can find the courage and determination to make meaningful change stick, the future of the groundfish species in California is bleak.

Where do we go from here?

Immediately end the use of traps for catching fish.

Restrict commercial fishing to the use of rod-and-reel gear in waters less than 60 fathoms, and limit the number of fish caught per day per vessel. We are in agreement with, and support the United Anglers proposed limit of 20 fish per day per commercial fishing vessel.

Require all rockfish catches be landed at designated landing sites where DFG employees are present to monitor and sample the catch. Documentation of the catch by DFG would be provided. Charging commercial vessels would fund the program.

Require all merchants to document purchases and sales of rockfish so they could be tracked back to the fisherman.

Seasonal closures should be timed when the majority of species in an area are spawning, such as banning ling cod fishing in water less than 20 fathoms in December and January.

Begin recruitment and training of an enforcement staff large enough to make the regulations effective.

Dramatically increase penalties for any violation of Fish & Game regulations associated with groundfish; including poaching and possession of undocumented catch, to include seizure of assets.
Begin moving to a computer based licensing system such as in use by the State of Oregon. This would allow limiting the amount of days the recreational anglers could target rockfish through the use of stamps affixed to the license.

These emergency measures, if enacted and enforced, may allow us to save this valuable public resource while the long-term solutions and regulations required to create a sustainable fishery are established.

PIMC Comments
<pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Subject: comment on fixed gear for Sablefish
From: "Larry Dennert" <larrynbrenda@earthlink.net>
Date: Sat, 18 Jan 2003 18:39:01 -0800
To: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

I believe that the fixed gear permits should be allowed to do either pot or longline regardless of the endorsement, as they are both fixed gears. With the current groundfish bycatch problems, I think it only makes sense that pot fishing should be encouraged because of the lower by-catch rates and less Sperm whale interaction. Off of the Ninat this year we were stripped of most of our Sablefish and whales were waiting by our buoys before we even hauled. There also would be zero sea-bird problems.

Thank you
Larry Dennert
206-484-4749

PFMC Comments
<pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Subject: Fwd: Permit Stacking
From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Mon, 12 May 2003 15:20:14 -0700
To: John.DeVore@noaa.gov
CC: Mike.Burner@noaa.gov

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Subject: Permit Stacking
From: "Sharon Demmert" <demmsha@aptalaska.net>
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 19:52:58 -0800
To: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Dear Council,
I would like to see an increase in the number of permits allowed on a vessel to 6 permits so that 2 permit owners with a full license limit of three each may consolidate on one boat to cut expenses i.e. insurance, fuel and gear costs. It is far cheaper to insure 1 boat and change crews than to insure 2 different boats crews etc. My Insurance rates have increased nearly 50% over last year and is the Council aware of the insurance crisis, that many boats are unable to get coverage at all. I was dropped by my insurer of 8 years for a small claim(13,000) and have too pay considerably more. Please seriously consider this!!!!

Larry Demmert
PFMC Comments <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Subject: Pineapple Trawl
From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 16:47:10 -0700
To: "PFMC" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
From: - Fri May 02 09:41:52 2003
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
Return-Path: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Received: from mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov ([127.0.0.1]) by mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id HES9Q20011SB; Fri, 2 May 2003 09:43:31 -0700
Message-ID: <374041962.419623740@mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
X-Quote-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--763a3995668433f0"

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Subject: Pineapple Trawl
From: "al" <altrawl@newport.net>
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 16:47:10 -0700
To: "PFMC" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
From: - Fri May 02 09:41:52 2003
X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
Return-Path: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Received: from mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov ([127.0.0.1]) by mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id HES9Q20011SB; Fri, 2 May 2003 09:43:31 -0700
Message-ID: <374041962.419623740@mercury.aktr.nos.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
X-Quote-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--763a3995668433f0"

Dear council members,

My name is Sara Skamsner. My husband John and myself own Foulweather Trawl here in Newport, Oregon. We are the last surviving net shop in Oregon that has a crew (8 to 14 people) to build, manufacture and repair commercial fishing trawls.

We designed and built the original Pineapple trawl for an ODFW study started in 2001 to study the concept of a cut back "topsense" bottom trawl for use on the shelf fishery here in Oregon. The concept was theirs, but the actual design was ours, and the two years of their study with this trawl was a great collaborative success. Steve Parker, Bob Hannah and Keith Matteoson were excellent to work with as they knew what they were looking for in a design, and they knew how to run the research and quantity results. Our company was thrilled to have won that contract and to have been a part of something so groundbreaking.

After the depth closures in the fall of 2002, we were contacted by four vessels here in Newport and one brave soldier in Coos Bay to either build the original Pineapple trawl for them, or to redesign the net for the smaller horsepowered vessels. We did both, and four vessels ordered the nets and started fishing them about three weeks ago on the shelf.

We received phone calls from all the skippers of these vessels while they were still at sea (a rare occurrence for us) on their first trips with these nets to tell us how absolutely unbelievable it was. They were plowing through all kinds of sign (a lot of whiting) of fish and bringing up just flats and some true cod. Virtually no canaries, yellow eye or halibut or any other "bad" fish. The nets also tow easier and it looks like fuel savings will prove to be significant in the long run, even in the short run. The crew members even love us because the time for picking fish and putting them down in the hold is much less of a chore.

I have been hired by ODF&W on a small contract to trouble shoot some of the net designs submitted by fishermen from all ports in Oregon for the upcoming Exempted Fishing program hopefully starting soon, to allow 8 vessels to fish in the closed zone with Pineapple trawls to start quantifying performance of these trawls on the ground. Unlike my usual extremely territorial self, I have signed off any intellectual property rights to the work I do for ODF&W and that includes design work. At this point I don't care where the Pineapple's come from, as long as everybody is trying. It could very well be that some other design or innovation proves to be an even better way to go, but from looking at the designs that were submitted there may be some mixed results. We are hoping that everyone keeps an open mind when this program begins. John and I also plead the case here for expanding some fishing grounds or quota's to the draggers deploying this gear, as the value of the fish the quota's allow right now, would force our net shop out of business, much less a drag boat. A year from now, if these quota's and closed zones stay in effect, we will be having to turn fishermen away for fears of not being paid. Inventories at shore-side services are dwindling and the entire market infrastructure seems ready to collapse. We hear rumors that the "buy-back" program is slowly falling off the table because it is obvious that these fishermen can just be choked to death instead. We hope that is a rumor, but when we see what happened at the April Council meeting we think the worst.

I know your job as council members is thankless and long suffering, but we think this net brings a ray of hope and might encourage the will to continue to fight for good management of the Pacific Ocean commercial fisheries. We also know that the drag fishermen have been slow in changing their fishing practices, but again, this net might encourage the fleet to do the right thing.

Sincerely, Sara Skamsner
Subject: Fwd: The experimental "Pineapple Trawl"

From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2003 08:50:49 -0700
To: John.DeVore@noaa.gov
CC: Mike.Barnes@noaa.gov

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Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Phone: 503-820-2280
Fax: 503-820-2299
On the web at: http://www.pcouncil.org

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Subject: The experimental "Pineapple Trawl"

From: "Ken Yad" <kenyad@actionnet.net>
Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2003 11:02:16 -0700
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

---

Hopefully to someone that cares,

We made our first trip with the experimental net, and I am really impressed. We delivered approximately twenty-six thousand pounds of an assortment of petrels, skates, and other fish caught between seventy-five and eighty-five fatfoms. In five days I saw two Canary Rockfish and maybe one hundred pounds of some juvenile rockfish. At times there was such heavy hake sign that I would have expected to be chased out of the area, but we never had more than a basket of hake in any of our tows. Our tows ranged from fifteen hundred to seven thousand pounds. Other boats with conventional nets reported big tows of hake.

I have been trawling for twenty-seven years and from what I observed last trip I have no doubts that the new trawl has the potential to solve our rockfish dilemma. I believe it is worth concentrating most of your time and energy to find a workable solution to the problem of by-catch. I am pleading that you look into this trawl and it's potential in a manner that will take a minimum amount of time. If we do not get back some grounds or quotas in the next couple of catch periods, I am sure there will be some fisherman dangerously close to losing their ability to survive. Look at the value of the fish that you have let us and go through the economics of running a trawler. It does not add up to viable business.

Sincerely, Ken Yad

F/V AJA
Subject: an amendment
From: "Ken Yada" <kenyada@actionnet.net>
Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2003 06:29:30 -0700
To: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
Return-Path: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Received: from mercury.akcr.noaa.gov (1127.0.0.1) by mercury.akcr.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id
HDHTS100.LHN; Thu, 17 Apr 2003 08:02:25 -0700
Message-ID: <de920da429.d3a429de392a@mercury.akcr.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--4e8a41a221f4be8"

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Phone: 503-820-2280
Fax: 503-820-2299
On the web at: http://www.pccouncil.org

Dear Sirs,

I was going over my first letter to you and thought the word 'highliner' was inappropriate. I think that fisherman who have spent decades learning the whereabouts of certain fish and looking at the types of grounds where they live, should be used in stock assessments. If the use of some 'grid' type sampling is done on species of fish that live in tight schools over a very specific type bottom...I would think there would be a high risk of large errors in the data. The time of day and the time of year that the samples a taken are so critical for fish that have life histories like many of the rock fish. Why not try to assess the stocks when and where the fish congregate? Isn't salmon managed that way?

Well I hope I hear from somebody who can help me understand why you can't work harder trying to improve your methods of stock assessment, especially when so much is at stake.

Well I need to go fishing so that's all for now.

Ken Yada

Pfmc Comments
<pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Subject: Fwd: Please enlighten me!
From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2003 08:01:52 -0700
To: John.DeVore@noaa.gov
CC: Mike.Burner@noaa.gov

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
Return-Path: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Received: from mercury.akctr.noaa.gov (1127.0.0.1) by mercury.akctr.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id 
DHTR400.7KC Thu, 17 Apr 2003 08:01:52 -0700
Message-ID: <dd4ddd495f494f5448dded4c@mercury.akctr.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--f35480ce8672e7"

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Phone: 503-820-2280
Fax: 503-820-2299
On the web at: http://www.pcouncil.org

Subject: Please enlighten me!
From: "Ken Yada" <kenyada@actionnet.net>
Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2003 03:16:13 -0700
To: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

X-Mozilla-Status: 0001
X-Mozilla-Status2: 00000000
Return-Path: <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Received: from mercury.akctr.noaa.gov (1127.0.0.1) by mercury.akctr.noaa.gov (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15 mercury Jun 21 2001 23:53:48) with ESMTP id 
DHTR400.7KC Thu, 17 Apr 2003 08:01:52 -0700
Message-ID: <dd4ddd495f494f5448dded4c@mercury.akctr.noaa.gov>
X-Mailer: Netscape Webmail
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Language: en
Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="--f35480ce8672e7"

Anybody and everybody,
I am requesting somebody to convince that the methods of stock assements are the best that are available. I've been fishing since I was thirteen. I started trawling with Barry Fisher. I wish he was still alive because I believed in him so much that if I had any questions about anything I would just ask him and take his answer as the absolute truth. (I am very biased though, because I loved him)
My biggest problem in understanding the assessment technique, aside from not even knowing what it is, is how the method that is used can account for the dispersion of some of the species of fish we are concerned with.
I really believe there is a way to make stock assements of rock fish species that are dispersed in "clumped clumps" with the help of some of the "tighteners" by direct observation. The technology is there.
I always wonder if the people who determine the methods of stock assements are so sure of themselves that they would risk their livelihood on their conclusions. This is the first time I've ever voiced my opinion about the management plan, despite Barry's encouragement to do so thirty years ago.
I realize that I am totally ignorant on this subject, so would someone try and explain to a dummy how the assements work.
I've got one other question. How long has present method been used?

Sincerely,
Ken Yada

PFMC Comments
<pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council

5/29/2003 10:17 AM
Subject: Re: Reply from PFMC Regarding Directed Sablefish Fishery
From: "Larry Demmert" <larrynbrenda@earthlink.net>
Date: Tue, 25 Feb 2003 16:52:27 -0800
To: "Jim Seger" <Jim.Seger@noaa.gov>

Jim,
Since my original comment something more pressing has come to light, I would like to see a longer season more than anything so that we can defend our place in the market against farmed sablefish. I recently read a story on it on how it came up at the IPHC meeting and I was alarmed that NMFS is promoting this. With all the disasterous things that have happend to the salmon Industry (tremendous devaluation, runs that are wiped out by disease, displacement in spawning habitat on Vancouver Isl, all the streams in Norway sterilized because of farmed fish disease and infestations, Pollution, diseased fish carcasses dumped irresponsibly by Canadien gov. etc.) I believe that a longer season would combat any farmed fish. Biologically there is no reason not to and enforcement wise it shouldn't add any cost either. Please consider this proposal thank you

Larry Demmert
----- Original Message ----- 
From: "Jim Seger" <Jim.Seger@noaa.gov>
To: <larrynbrenda@earthlink.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2003 2:04 PM
Subject: Reply from PFMC Regarding Directed Sablefish Fishery

Dear Mr. Demmert:

We received your email comment requesting a plan amendment to allow vessels participating in the directed sablefish fishery the option of using pot or longline gear, regardless of the fixed gear endorsement on their limited entry permit. We also apologize for our delayed response to your comment. You mention you are both a longline and pot fisherman, and you have stacked permits. Current regulations allow a vessel to catch all of its sablefish with any fixed gear for which it holds at least one limited entry permit. Thus, if at least one of your stacked permits is endorsed for pot gear, you may use pot gear for all of your fixed gear limited entry directed sablefish harvest. If none of your stacked permits is endorsed for pot gear, then you are correct; a plan amendment would be required to allow longline vessels to use pot gear. If you wish to pursue a plan amendment, please let us know, and we will circulate your email to Council members.

Please be aware that the Council is currently addressing a number of issues for groundfish and other fisheries off the West Coast. Progress on many of these issues is currently stalled, because of the need to address the highest priority items first. If the Council decides to pursue development of the plan amendment option you are suggesting, it will need to be prioritized along with other items under consideration by the Council.

Regards,
Jim Seger
Southern California Trawlers Association

February 11, 2003

Mr. Hans Radke, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384
June 20, 2002

RE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COWCOD CONSERVATION CLOSURE AREAS

Dear Mr. Radke:

The Southern California Trawler’s Association is a group of eighteen small trawlers (80% from 32 feet to 45 feet, largest is 60 feet in length) fishing out of the ports of Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Pedro, principally in the Santa Barbara Channel. We fish for ridgeback shrimp, spot prawns, sea cucumbers and (mostly live) halibut. A few of our members also fish for pink shrimp.

A proposal is now being circulated among Council Committees that may make changes to the Southern California Cowcod Conservation Area established over the last couple of years to rebuild cowcod stocks. Our Association members are concerned that these proposed changed to the boundary lines of the Cowcod Conservation Area will significantly impact our members without adding measurable conservation benefits to cowcod stocks.

After the closure was initiated, Association members who used to trawl for spot prawns in the area started fishing deeper, outside the closed area, and found a few areas that hold spot prawns enough, at least, to keep the boats working. The current boundaries approximate the 150 fathom depth contours. The proposed boundaries in most places would close fishing to our members out to 200 fathoms, a depth beyond which spot prawns do not inhabit in commercial quantities. Further, our small boats don’t carry enough cable or horsepower to fish the net in that deep of water.

We feel that by staying outside of 150 fathoms, we have complied with both the spirit and the letter of the PFMC Groundfish Amendments to conserve cowcod. To our knowledge, none of our members have caught a cowcod while trawling for spot prawns outside 150 fathoms since the closure of the Cowcod Conservation Area. From our perspective, we have done everything asked of us to conserve cowcod. The Council set 150 fathoms as the maximum depth at which cowcod are normally found, and our spot prawn fishing outside the Conservation Area is bearing out this wisdom.
We urge the Council not to adopt this change to the Cowcod Conservation Area boundaries in light of the questionable additional conservation benefits it provides cowcod, especially when the effects of this kind of change under the Magnuson Act must be looked at in a balanced view considering also the social and economic impacts to members of our Association, all of whom are individual family fishermen.

This proposed regulation must also be viewed in context of the other Groundfish Plan amendments that have essentially closed most of the Continental Shelf south of Point Conception to trawling between 100 and 150 fathoms. These depth zones are predominantly where we traditionally have fished for spot prawns. Therefore, most of our spot prawn grounds have already been prohibited. We have been eking out market orders by adhering to all of the groundfish conservation measures, but barely. Now, with the proposed changes to the Cowcod Conservation Area, our last few spot prawn areas would be halved again, since the Island side of the Santa Barbara Channel was also restricted for our exempted trawl fisheries south of Point Conception.

For these reasons, we urge the Council not to make further changes to the boundaries of the Cowcod Conservation Area. The idea that improved enforcement will result from these proposed changes isn’t consistent with modern navigational technology. Our members have been able to avoid entering the existing CCA without difficulty using modern GPS and fathometers. The new Department of Fish and Game enforcement vessels are even better equipped than ours. They, too, should have no problem detecting the existing boundary and water depths.

Our Association members support Council measures that promote long-term sustainability of our fisheries. The proposed changes, however, offer no demonstrable conservation benefits to cowcod while significantly impacting what little spot prawn trawl grounds that remain to us, given all the other conservation measures we are now in compliance with.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed changes to the Southern California Cowcod Conservation Area. If you have any questions or comments for our members, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 566-1400 or fish4u1@msn.com.

Sincerely, Mike McCorkle, President Southern California Trawler’s Association

Cc: Dr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director, PFMC
    Mr. John DeVore, Groundfish Staff Officer, PFMC
    Mr. Jim Seger, Fisheries Economics Staff Officer, PFMC
    Mr. Rod Moore, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel
    Dr. Alec McCall, Scientific and Statistical Committee
    Dr. Steve Ralston, Scientific and Statistical Committee
    Dr. Cindy Thompson, Scientific and Statistical Committee
    Mr. L.B. Boydston, Ad-Hoc Allocation Committee
    Ms. Marija Vojkovich, Department of Fish and Game
    Mr. Brian Culver, Groundfish Management Team
    Dr. James Hastie, Groundfish Management Team
    Mr. Zeke Grader, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations
Subject: Sportfishing
From: <JimTinto@aol.com>
Date: Thu, 20 Feb 2003 15:22:50 EST
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Please read the following concerning the frustrations of the Sportfishing of near shore groundfish.
jimtinto@aol.com

Editorial
Rockfish? No we don't have no stinking rockfish reports. Cal Fish and Game shut the sport season down last November and aside from commercial boats no one has been fishing the past few months. Yes! That's right! Sport anglers have been forced off the water while commercial boats continue to fish. What's wrong with this picture? Plenty! Pound for pound sportfishing pumps billions into the California economy while commercial fishing supports far fewer jobs and generates far fewer dollars for the same fish landed. (in a 1990s study the average sport caught salmon generated $85 while that same commercial caught fish was worth an average of a $1.50 per pound or about $15). In turn we are already seeing several party boat operations being sold or forced out of business after losing the past November though next June's rockfish & Ling cod fishery. Many boats and supporting businesses (tackle shops, fuel docks, hotels ect.) depend on rockfish for winter their income. It's not a large part of their annual total but enough to pay their employees, insurance and berthing fees until the more lucrative salmon season opens.

We are literally one bad salmon season away from losing most of the party boat operations along the Central coast in. In a good salmon season these small businesses can scratch out a living but if the salmon don't show the cost of running a boat and paying it's crew becomes impossible. Most at risk are boats and businesses in the smaller ports. Two of the largest party boat operations in Bodega Bay are currently selling out or closing down and more are sure to follow from Ft Bragg to Morro Bay. While boats out of Monterey and the Golden Gate have their respective albacore and striped bass and halibut fisheries to keep them going during a slow salmon year most other ports don't have this luxury. A blown motor or other major break down can cost upwards of $40,000 and quickly force the owner to sell out or into bankruptcy.

Sold out is exactly what Cal Fish and Game did to California sport anglers. Relying on incomplete data they followed the Feds lead and closed the cod fishery. Now granted, many rockfish species are in decline but most of these live in the deeper waters where their decline was due to commercial fishing, (drag boats, long liners and gillnets) NOT sportfishing. There are solutions but Fish and Game management just doesn't seem to see the big picture. Keep the nearshore complex in state waters (where few of the threatened rockfish species live) open longer and open the deep water complex when the salmon season is closed. Under the current regulations the rockfish season reopens in July, the peak of the salmon
season and a time of year that rockfishing doesn't garner much interest. A fall and winter rock cod fishery would make much more sense. This would not only keep a sustainable rockfish management plan in place but would help the many small businesses that rely on our fisheries open and generate millions of tax dollars the state so desperately needs. After all, our fisheries should be managed with the fish, the fisher's and the jobs they create in mind.

Mike Aughney
Subject: Fwd: current injustice  
From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>  
Date: Thu, 06 Feb 2003 10:35:32 -0800  
To: John.DeVore@noaa.gov  
CC: Mike.Burner@noaa.gov

Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384  
Phone: 503-820-2280  
Fax: 503-820-2299  
On the web at: http://www.p council.org

Subject: current injustice  
From: <HITCHFISH@aol.com>  
Date: Wed, 5 Feb 2003 12:20:14 EST  
To: TOMBARNES@NOAA.gov, WILL_daspit@psmfc.org, pfmc.comments@NOAA.gov, JDUFFY@dfg.ca.gov, AVEJAR@dfg.ca.gov

DEAR SIR: PLEASE READ AND DISTRIBUTE TO CONCERNED PARTIES:  
YOUR HONOR: OR TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN; PLEASE READ THE  
ENCLOSED LETTER TO FISH AND GAME. IT IS MY LATEST. FROM: MARK  
HITCHCOCK / OPEN ACCESS FISHERIES PARTICIPANT  
TO: ALL  
FISH AND GAME CONCERNS: CHINEESE NEW YEAR IS THE  
APEX OF THE MARKET PRICE FOR LIVE FISH. THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT IS DERIVED BY ATTAINING  
THE HIGHEST PRICE AND THE HIGHEST DEMAND OF THE YEAR IS REALIZED. ALL HOOK AND  
LINE OPEN ACCESS FISHERMEN ARE WONDERING HOW WE CAN BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST  
SO AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. THIS YEAR IN PARTICULAR, WITH RECORD NUMBERS OF SCULPIN  
AND LINGCOD FOR THE SPORTFISHERMEN- (COMMERCIALY LICENSED SPORTFISHERMEN) NO  
COMMERCIAL HOOK AND LINE FISHERMAN COULD POSSIBLY COMPREHEND THE BIAS OF THE  
FISH AND GAME CURRENT REGULATIONS. I AND OTHERS HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN A  
SUSTAINABLE FISHERY AS WELL AS KEEP A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS- WITH EMPLOYEES! THAT  
WAS WHEN WE WERE ALLOWED TO FISH ALL YEAR(WITH QUOTAS) AND TARGET MORE THAN  
ONE SPECIES. NOW, WE HAVE BEEN REGULATED TO FISH ONLY FOUR(4) MONTHS OF THE  
YEAR! AND THE LICENSE FEES ARE GOING UP! WITH MORE LICENSES! (DEEPER NEARSHORE  
ROCKFISH- A CRUEL SLAP IN THE FACE TO NEARSHORE FISHERMEN NOT LEVIED ON THE  
SPORTFISHING FLEET)  
THIS SITUATION IS UNACCEPTABLE TO  
THIS OPEN ACCESS PARTICIPANT. THE TERM OPEN ACCESS IS ANTIQUATED. BARELY OPEN  
ACCESS IS MORE LIKE IT. HOW CAN HIGHER FEES BE JUSTIFIED? ISN'T THE FISH AND GAME  
FUNDED BY LAW? YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY EXPECT 200 TO 400 COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN PAY  
THE SALARY OF THE ENTIRE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT, AND PAY FOR EQUIPMENT TOO! I  
AM WRITING TO YOU ON MY OWN, BUT MY VOICE SPEAKS FOR ALL WHO WOULD SEE FAIR AND  
EQUAL TREATMENT OF OUR NATION'S FISHERMEN, ONE OF THE RESOURCES THAT FOUND  
THIS GREATEST COUNTRY OF ALL CONTRIES. PLEASE  
CONSIDER EMERGENCY ACTION TO ALLOW THE TAKE OF SCULPIN AND LINGCOD IN THE  
SOUTHERN REGION BY ROD AND REEL GEAR. QUOTAS ARE A GIVEN, BUT THE  
SPORTBOATS ARE AVERAGING 400 TO A THOUSAND(400 LB.S- 1,000 LB.S) POUNDS A  
WEEK(80% SCULPIN/20% LINGCOD) AND, I WOULD ASSUME THAT A QUOTA IS A QUOTA, NO  
MATTER HOW FAST IT'S REACHED. I WOULD BE AGHAST TO HEAR THAT THE
SPORTFISHERMEN OVER-FISHED THEIR QUOTA AND NOW THE COMMERCIAL QUOTA WOULD BE MADE TO BEAR THE DIFFERENCE. PLEASE MAINTAIN YOU DILLIGENCE IN THIS MATTER. AGAIN, I WOULD ASK YOU TO CONSIDER AN EMERGENCY OPENING ON THE COMMERCIAL TAKE OF SCULPIN AND LINGCOD. JUST ROD AND REEL WOULD BE GREAT (ELIMINATES TRAPS AND SET LINES, AS THEY HAVE TARGETS ALREADY IN SHEEPHEAD, CABELSON, ETC.). I AM POSITIVE THE LOGBOOKS OF THE COMMERCIALY LICENSED SPORTFISHERS WILL SHOW SUFFICIENT DATA TO EFFECT THIS RECOMENDATION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST IN FISH AND GAME MATTERS. SINCERELY, MARK HITCHCOCK

OWNER/OPERATOR F/V "NEXT SHOT" 1677 QUIVIRA WAY S.D., CA. 92109 PH- 619.222.6275

THE REGULATIONS ARE PUTTING ME OUT OF BUSINESS, BY A CONSPIRACY OF ANTI-FISHING MANAGEMENT STAFFING. WHILE I SUFFER THE EXTINCTION OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN IN THE GREATEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, IMPORTS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES ARE ALLOWED TO RISE FROM COUNTRIES WITH NO REGULATIONS AT ALL! SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO PUT THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY BACK TO A COMMON SENSE, PROFITABLE STATE. HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF MUCH NEEDED DOLLARS ARE LEFT UNTAPPED ON GROSSLY EXAGGERATED FEARS AND CLAIMS OF DECLINING FISH STOCKS. PLEASE TAKE AN INTEREST IN FISH AND GAME MATTERS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR INTEREST IN FISH AND GAME MATTERS. SINCERELY, MARK HITCHCOCK
May 20, 2003

Dr. William Hogarth
Director, National Marine Fisheries
1315 E. West Highway
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Hogarth:

Thank you for the time you've afforded me to briefly discuss the situation the Sportfishing fleet is experiencing in southern California pertaining to seasonal and geographic closures of various groundfish species.

As I indicated, these current species, area and seasonal limitations will, in a relatively short time, cause the ultimate demise of the Sportfishing industry. We have already realized a significant decline in our passenger loads and revenue since the most current and stringent closure went into effect, i.e. Sculpin closure (March 1). This closure, in conjunction with the on-going Whitefish restriction, the "non-opening" for any species of Rockfish and the 20 fathom (120 feet) depth limitation have all contributed to what can only be described as a catastrophic situation for the sportfishing industry in southern California. A lack of catchable species is now being recognized by our attending and prospective customers and their interest and participation is at an all-time low for this time of the year.

It is our understanding that the severe limitations that have been imposed are part of an effort to protect, primarily, Boccaccio, a species of rockfish (groundfish). The closures, it seems, were implemented as a "panic reaction" with very little, if any, meaningful stock assessments as to the Boccaccio’s abundance in southern California. Now, subsequent to the declaration of the closures, surveys of various types have been conducted with the preliminary results indicating that the closures were premature, unwarranted and certainly not scientifically based. These preliminary results show significantly more available stock of Boccaccio than anyone imagined. So the net result, consequently, of the closures has been that the sportfishing industry is now crippled by the limitations of allowable catch which has had a devastating effect on our potential customers' participation in the fishing activity. In other words, PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING FISHING BECAUSE THEY CAN KEEP NEXT TO NOTHING THAT THEY CATCH! To pay to go fishing is not money well spent since the trips result in something more akin to simply a "boat ride".
The major fallacy of the closures is that anyone who fishes in southern California with any regularity (notwithstanding sportboat Captains and crews) knows that there are innumerable areas that can be fished for Whitefish and/or Sculpin without any possibility of catching a Bocaccio. This is true in most areas of less than 120 feet (20 fathoms). Another fallacy is that these closures are in effect to protect Bocaccio, a species that doesn't appear to require the level of protection that has been instituted.

Over the past 50 years of recreational sportfishing, we have been able to offer our customers a variety of species in the winter and spring months. Since migratory species, such as Tuna, Yellowtail, Barracuda, etc. are not in our area during these months we have relied on Whitefish, Sculpin and Rockfish (Groundfish) as the mainstay of our trips. Needless to say both the Winter and Spring seasons have been disastrous in terms of participation and "catch" due to the fact that we are unable to fish for any type of groundfish other than Sheephead.

Additionally, the proposal by the State Department of Fish and Game to eliminate 1-day fishing licenses and replace with a 2-day license is yet another fatal situation for sportfishing. This change will increase the price of fishing excursion for our casual fisherpersons (40-50 percent of our passengers) by as much as 19%, which will decrease participation even further, when coupled with the closures.

The demise of recreational sportfishing will also have a severe economic impact on those who derive their livelihood from sportfishing. Those who will be affected directly include boat and landing owners, captains, crewmembers, bait haulers, landing office personnel, etc. The businesses indirectly impacted would be tackle providers, fuel docks, boat maintenance and repair facilities (shipyards), manufacturers of fishing electronic equipment, vessel food and beverage vendors, and the list goes on.

We are asking that any and all of the personnel and regulatory organizations involved with the study, evaluation, and decision-making process pertaining to groundfish issues work with maximum expediency to affect the relaxation of the current regulations. If the restrictions for Whitefish, Sculpin and Nearshore Groundfish are not changed, recreational sportfishing will not survive another year here in southern California.

We are pleading that a more scientific, defined and reasonable approach be taken in determining and implementing any closures. We are also demanding, for the sake of the future of this industry, the present closures be re-evaluated and reversed as soon as possible.
Mr. Hogarth, any assistance that you could provide by recommending to or contributing input for the regional or state regulatory organizations that make these closure (or reopening) decisions would be appreciated. So far, the voices of the sportfishing industry have been fully ignored by the majority of the individuals who occupy positions in the organizations.

Both the future of the sportfishing industry and the recreational opportunity enjoyed by millions of participants in California are in jeopardy without someone’s positive intervention.

Respectfully submitted,

Norris Tapp
Manager, Davey’s Locker Sportfishing
Coast Guard Licensed Captain

COPY: Mr. Robert C. Hight, Director - California Department of Fish and Game
Mr. Randy Fisher, Executive Director – Pac States Marine Fisheries Comm.
Dr. Hans Radtke, Chairman Pacific Fishery Management Council
Mr. Mike Flores, President - California Fish and Game Commission
Gov. Gray Davis, Governor – State of California
Subject: Fwd: Rockfish
From: "PFMC Comments" <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Date: Sat, 22 Feb 2003 07:58:51 -0800
To: John.DeVore@noaa.gov
CC: Mike.Burner@noaa.gov

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Subject: Rockfish
From: Rob Domrese <rmdomrese@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, 07 Mar 1904 01:19:00 -0600
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

I feel disheartened with the response that your organization has taken regarding the decline in numbers of groundfish of the west coast. If we are truly facing stock decline of less than 10% of original biomass, why is your organization allowing commercial fishing on ANY scale? If your organization were truly interested in saving the resource, why not shut down all fishing, both recreational and commercial. After the stocks rebound, then re-open recreational ONLY. If stocks later abound, then, and only then, open commercial. I wonder how long ANY of our lakes in CA would fare if the DFG decided to open them up to commercial fishing? Probably not good. The ocean is just a larger body of water.

Rob Domrese
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PFMC Comments <pfmc.comments@noaa.gov>
Pacific Fishery Management Council