

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Panel (GAP) heard a presentation from the Groundfish Management Team on the need to consider inseason adjustments for the Daily Trip Limit (DTL) fishery, the California Recreational Fishery, the LE Trawl fishery and Whiting fishery with regards to Dark Blotched Rockfish. The GAP also heard a discussion from the whiting industry regarding the widow bycatch in the early part of At-Sea whiting fishery.

For Open Access the GAP recommends:

Deeper Nearshore Rockfish: Increase the deeper nearshore rockfish limits during period 5 from 400 lbs to 500 lbs from 34°27' N. lat. to 40°10' N. lat.

DTL: At the current rate, sablefish in the open access DTL fishery will come in short of full attainment. The GAP recommends increasing the DTL to 4,000 lbs, 1000 lbs per week or 300 lbs per day for the 2-month cumulative limit beginning on July 1. The GAP also recommends that we revisit this issue in September.

For the California Recreational Fishery the GAP is supportive of the CDFG proposal.

That is :

North Region:	Open inside of 30 fm from May to December
North Central:	Open inside of 30 fm from July to December
South Central, Monterey	Open inside of 30 fm from July to December
South Central, Morro Bay	Open inside of 40 fm from May to October
South Region	Open inside of 60 fm from March to December

LE Trawl Fishery with respect to darkblotched rockfish:

Beginning July 1, move the seaward boundary of the RCA between 38° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. to 200 fm until the end of August, and then at the beginning of the period 5 move the seaward boundary of the RCA between 38° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. to 250 fm until the end of the year [with petrale sole modifications for period 6]. Moving out the line out to 250 fm in period 4 would preclude summer access to the DTS opportunity due to the limited bottom contours.

For the area north of 40°10' N. lat., the GAP recommends moving the line out to 250 fm until the end of the year with the petrale areas open in period 6.

Whiting Industry With Regards To Darkblotched Rockfish:

The whiting industry has been resisting yet another hard cap on the whiting industry. However, the industry does understand the difficult position that has been created by the high catches of dark blotched rockfish. The GAP did not have a consensus regarding the size of the hard cap in the whiting industry, oscillating between 25 to 30 mt. The LE Trawl Industry would like to see 25 mt hard cap on the whiting industry. The Whiting industry would like a 30 mt hard cap of

dark blotched rockfish for 2006. The whiting industry would like the council to consider this as a hard cap for 2006 only.

LE Trawl: The GAP agrees with the GMT and recommends an increase for shortspines to 7500 lbs beginning July 1 north of 36° N. lat.

The GAP notes lingcod harvest is lagging far behind projected landings. Through June 6, 2006, QSM reports trawl landings to be on track under the harvest guideline allotted them. QSM reports coastwide catch through June 6th of 102 mt out of a 2006 OY of 2414 mt. 50% of this catch represents discard.

The GAP notes the very high discard rate and believes we should attempt to reduce discard by turning it into landed catch.

During the summer months, in particular during period 4, lingcod are intercepted as incidental catch in all shelf fisheries. Targeting by the trawl fishery is near non-existent. It is truly 100% incidental catch. Any increase in cumulative limits will be caught in directed fishing for other shelf species. Therefore, the GAP believes increasing lingcod landings by the trawl fishery will not increase or result in canary or yelloweye mortality.

The GMT reports that we have lingcod to burn north of 40°10' N. lat. The GAP recommends increasing the lingcod trip limits to 2000 lbs in the north to turn projected discards into landed catch. This action may require the Council revisiting and adjusting the scorecard harvest guideline as a result of this proposed action. This action is warranted. It will help relieve the economic cost imposed by high fuel cost. Any opportunity, which is justified, is needed to maintain viability in the trawl fleet. This measure will help!

The GAP strongly urges the Council to manage for maximum allowed harvest under OY limits to ensure lingcod, the most voracious predator feeding on juvenile overfished species such as canary and yelloweye. To do otherwise is irresponsible as we attempt to rebuild these stocks.

The GAP recommends that north of 40°10' N. lat. for period 4, that we leave the shoreward RCA line at status quo and utilize the August 31st trigger of 7.25 mt for canary rockfish impacts to move the line into 60 fm if that level of catch is reached. The canary rockfish impacts can then be re-evaluated at the September Council meeting.

Widow in the Whiting Industry:

The GAP heard a report from the whiting industry regarding the unusually high numbers of widow rockfish taken early in the season by the catcher-processor and mothership sectors. During the first ten days of the season, several tows with high widow rockfish occurred.

In response, the entire whiting industry began talks to determine what and if anything could be done to avoid encounters with widow rockfish for the rest of the season. These talks were productive and avoidance behaviors were adjusted.

Since May 26th, the encounters of widows in the at-sea whiting sectors have declined. In addition, effort in the at-sea whiting sectors has been greatly reduced. Therefore, the GAP is not recommending any sector split of widows for the 2006 whiting season.

PFMC

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