

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL (GAP) REPORT ON
CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the current quota species monitoring (QSM) report and the latest scorecard presented by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and has the following comments and recommendations with regard to inseason management.

The GAP recognizes that based on the QSM report several species are tracking behind at nearly half way through the year. Based on conflicting schedules and a very full agenda, the GAP has not been able to work closely with the GMT on these requests. While the GMT provides their best scientific estimates, the GAP provides practical information and recommendations that directly affect the industry. While it is always helpful when the GAP concurs with the GMT and visa-versa – many times we are in respectful disagreement. Some of the following recommendations have not been formally blessed by the GMT, but we believe they deserve your full consideration.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear South of 34°27' N Lat. (Point Conception)

Shortspine Thornyheads

For shortspine thornyheads, the June 1st QSM estimates that less than 15% of the 421 metric ton harvest guideline has been caught. Therefore, the GAP recommends increasing the current trip limit for period 4 only from 2,000 lbs to 3,000 lbs for the 2 month cumulative limit. Opportunity for short spine thornyhead is available due to the significant portion of the OY currently unharvested. However, due to possible effort shifts from the north, the proposal is for period 4 only and will be evaluated at the September Council meeting with regards to behavioral changes.

Limited-Entry Fixed Gear Between 36° and 40°10' N Lat.

Chilipepper

Chilipepper stocks are healthy and the QSM reports that less than 1% of the 2,000 mt harvest guideline has been caught. Discards of bocaccio and widow rockfish have prevented higher catches of abundant chilipepper. The GAP recommends a modification to the current trip limit which is 2,000 lbs of chilipepper and 300 lbs of shelf/widow rockfish and 300 lbs of bocaccio to 2,000 lbs of chilipepper and a combined widow/bocaccio/shelf rockfish limit of 500 lbs per cumulative period beginning August 1st through the remainder of the year.

Open Access Daily Trip Limit (DTL) South of 36° N Lat. (Conception Area)

The June 1st QSM indicates that while we are nearly half-way through the season, only 13% of the 211 metric ton harvest guideline has been harvested. The GAP recommends increasing the current trip limit (300lbs per day or 1 landing of 700 lbs per week) to 350 lbs per day or 1 landing of 1,050 lbs per week. While the GMT believes there may be effort shifts, the GAP does not anticipate this effort shift because additional commercial fishing opportunities for salmon and other species are available which were not last year.

Non-Whiting Trawl

Chilipepper Rockfish South of 40°10 N Lat.

The GMT is recommending an increase in the chilipepper fishery from 500 lbs to 800 lbs per month. This recommendation does not adequately address the chilipepper discard problem the fleet is having fishing shoreward of the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). As noted above, the catch of chilipepper rockfish is at less than 1% of the 2,000 mt harvest guideline. Therefore, the GAP recommends a more meaningful increase to at least 2,500 lbs per month. This equates to real dollars and does not encourage direct targeting on this stock. The chilipepper trip limits are constrained by potential bycatch of bocaccio and canary rockfish. The June 1st QSM indicates that we are at less than 34% of the projected canary catch and less than 22% of the projected bocaccio catch through June.

Lingcod coastwide shoreward of the RCA

Vessels fishing shoreward of the RCA are discarding lingcod and are looking to the Council for relief. An increase in the trip limit for lingcod could help reduce these discards without encouraging a targeted fishery. The GAP questions the bycatch model impacts associated with lingcod within 100-75 fathoms and shallower. This stock is rebuilding at a rate that is causing unnecessary discards. The GAP is recommending an increase to 2,500 lbs per cumulative limit period.

PFMC
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