

THE GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT ON
CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) considered the status of ongoing fisheries and provides the following considerations and recommendations.

Open Access Nearshore Commercial Fisheries North and South of 40°10' N. lat.

At the March 2008 meeting, the GMT updated the nearshore open access model with the latest bycatch rates from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. Impacts to canary rockfish increased from 1.7 mt to 2.6 mt and impacts to yelloweye rockfish increased from 1.5 to 1.7 mt. The GMT analyzed reductions to trip limits and depth closures to reduce impacts. The increases in canary rates primarily occurred south of 40°10' N. lat., while increases to yelloweye impacts occurred in the north. However, reductions both north and south of 40°10' N. lat. would be necessary to reduce the total canary impacts to 1.7 mt. At first glance, severe reductions to trip limits and a depth closure of 20 fm would be necessary to reduce canary impacts. Based on feedback from the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, such restrictions would present a serious hardship to participants in this fishery. The Team recognized that the inseason proposal would benefit from the inclusion of more refined spatial data on canary and yelloweye catches and thus recommended further analysis. Management measures adopted at the March 2008 Council meeting resulted in a balanced scorecard without action to the nearshore fishery.

The GMT submitted a request to the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program for the refined spatial data, which was provided to the Team in a very timely fashion. The Team has started to analyze how potential area closures or restrictions could be incorporated into the model. These spatial management measures are intended to reduce the amount of trip limit reductions necessary to reduce canary impacts to 1.7 mt.

The California open access fishery is currently closed (March/April) but re-opens May 1. So, no canary impacts are occurring in California at this time. The Oregon open access fishery opened on January 1 and is ongoing. Any reductions in two month cumulative trip limits must occur at the beginning of a two month period, which, if acted on at this meeting, would correspond to July 1. Lingcod is managed with monthly limits; adjustments could be implemented June 1 if acted upon at this meeting. Depth restrictions recommended at this meeting could be incorporated by approximately May 15, however the GMT notes that limited canary savings occur as a result of the 20 fm depth restrictions (savings come primarily from trip limit reductions).

The GMT recommends a thorough analysis of the spatial observer data be completed prior to the June Council meeting. Delaying inseason action until June could provide for a more holistic approach, further discussions with industry, and potentially less disruption to the fleet. Changes to trip limits in June would be in effect approximately July 1; however given increased implementation requirements at the Region, there is a risk that the reductions may not be in place until September 1. Lingcod adjustments could be implemented approximately August 1 (depending on Region implementation requirements). Depth restrictions could be implemented approximately July 15. Additionally, the states monitor landings as part of their limited entry

program. If the states see increased effort in the open access fishery, they can institute smaller trip limits through state processes to slow the catch and provide for a year round opportunity. Additionally, once the analysis of the observer data is complete, areas of high canary bycatch within state waters could be closed outside of the Council process.

The bycatch model for the nearshore fishery is a catch based (not effort based) model and the total allowable catch of target species is specified in regulation. However, if landings are greater than what is predicted in the model, impacts greater than 2.6 mt could occur. The Team will monitor landings relative to historical levels and recommend inseason changes in June, if necessary.

Limited Entry Non-Whiting Trawl

Cowcod

The GMT considered the projected impacts to cowcod in the limited entry non-whiting trawl fishery. The most recently available bycatch rates from the observer program indicate zero cowcod bycatch, however the total mortality reports through 2006 indicate cowcod bycatch has consistently occurred in the non-whiting trawl fishery to some degree. Therefore, the GMT elected to use estimated cowcod bycatch rates from the 2007 model as an interim method for predicting cowcod bycatch in the non-whiting trawl fishery (which results in some estimated cowcod bycatch). The GMT will explore appropriate cowcod bycatch rates in more detail and resolve the issue prior to the June Council meeting. In the meantime, the GMT has provided an updated scorecard with the revised cowcod impacts (Table 1).

The GMT recommendation

1. Delay inseason action in the nearshore open access fishery until the June Council meeting.

PFMC
4/09/08

Table 1. 2008 Projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species after inseason actions taken at the April 2008 Council meeting.

4/9/2008

Fishery	Bocaccio b/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
Limited Entry Trawl- Non-whiting	11.7	9.1	1.2	258.6	81.5	7.1	0.6
Limited Entry Trawl- Whiting							
At-sea whiting motherships a/					1.9		0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc a/		4.7		40.0		275.0	0.0
Shoreside whiting a/					0.0		0.0
Tribal whiting		0.7		0.0	0.6	6.1	0.0
Tribal							
Midwater Trawl		1.8		0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0
Bottom Trawl		0.8		0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0
Troll		0.5		0.0	0.0		0.0
Fixed gear		0.3		0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Limited Entry Fixed Gear		1.1					2.2
Sablefish			0.0	0.6	0.3	0.9	
Non-Sablefish	13.4		0.1	0.4		0.5	
Open Access: Directed Groundfish							
Sablefish DTL	0.0	0.2		0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3
Nearshore (North of 40°10' N. lat.)	0.0			0.0	0.0		
Nearshore (South of 40°10' N. lat.)	0.1	2.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.6
Other	10.6	1.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Open Access: Incidental Groundfish							
CA Halibut	0.1	0.0		0.0	0.0		
CA Gillnet c/	0.5			0.0	0.0	0.0	
CA Sheephead c/				0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CPS- wetfish c/	0.3						
CPS- squid d/							
Dungeness crab c/	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0		
HMS b/		0.0	0.0	0.0			
Pacific Halibut c/	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pink shrimp	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Ridgeback prawn	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Salmon troll	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2
Sea Cucumber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spot Prawn (trap)							
Recreational Groundfish e/							
WA							
OR		5.7				1.4	6.2
CA	66.3	9.0	0.3			8.0	2.1
EFPs	11.0	0.1	0.2	1.0		3.4	0.1
Research: Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs. f/							
	2.0	5.5	0.2	2.0	2.0	1.1	3.0
TOTAL	116.4	44.0	2.1	302.9	90.1	344.4	18.9
2008 OY	218	44.0	4.0	330	150	368	20
Difference	101.6	0.0	1.9	27.1	59.9	23.6	1.1
Percent of OY	53.4%	99.9%	52.5%	91.8%	60.1%	93.6%	94.3%
Key		= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data					

a/ Non-tribal whiting numbers reflect bycatch limits for the non-tribal whiting sectors.

b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.

c/ Mortality estimates are not hard numbers; based on the GMT's best professional judgment.

d/ Bycatch amounts by species unavailable, but bocaccio occurred in 0.1% of all port samples and other rockfish in another 0.1% of all port samples (and squid fisheries usually land their whole catch).

e/ Values in scorecard represent projected impacts for WA and OR. However, harvest guidelines for 2008 are as follows: canary in WA and OR combined = 8.2 mt; yelloweye in WA and OR combined = 6.8 mt. For California, harvest guidelines are represented.

f/ Research projections updated November 2007.