

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

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) considered the most recent information from the stock assessment review process, the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, the status of ongoing fisheries, and requests from industry representatives and offers the following considerations and recommendations.

Potential Petrale Point of Concern

The draft assessment and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel review of petrale sole - indicate that the stock status is worse off than previously believed. In fact, the base case model projects that the stock will drop below any minimum stock size threshold contemplated by the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) at the start of 2011 if the full 2009-10 petrale optimum yields (OYs) are achieved. For this reason, the GMT anticipated that the Council might want to consider reducing petrale catches in 2009 and 2010.

The SSC's recommendation to not adopt the stock assessment at this meeting in favor of more sensitivity analysis and reconsideration at the September meeting changes the circumstances somewhat. If the SSC had recommended adoption of the assessment at this meeting, and the Council thought it prudent to make reductions to the 2009 catch, trip limit changes could have been in place by period 4, or more likely, period 5.¹ Waiting until September would delay the possibility of reductions until period 6. The GMT trawl model estimates that a complete closure of the period 6 petrale fishery could reduce the 2009 annual catch by around 400 mt.

To get some sense of the impact that 2009-10 catch reductions might have on stock status in 2011, we requested two additional base case model runs from the stock assessment authors (Table 1). Scenario I projects stock status in 2011 assuming full achievement of the 2009-10 OYs.² Scenario II then projects stock status in 2011 assuming zero reductions to catch in 2009 combined with a ~50 percent reduction in 2010. Scenario III looks at the same ~50 percent reduction in 2010 but with an additional 400 mt reduction to 2009 catches. These scenarios are, again, based on the base case model. Projections could of course change as a result of the SSC's review.

¹ Trip limit reductions must be in place at the start of a bimonthly period. The Region informed us that reductions for period 4, which starts on July 1, would be difficult because of the few business days remaining in June.

² See Table g in Agenda Item E.6.a, Attachment 1

Table 1. Base case model projections of 2011 petrale stock abundance under three 2009-10 catch scenarios.

	<i>2009/2010 Catch Scenarios (mt)</i>		
	<i>I.</i>	<i>II.</i>	<i>III.</i>
2011 abundance	(2,433/2,433)	(2,433/1,200)	(2,000/1,200)
% of B _{unfished}	9%	12%	13%
% of B _{MSY}	48%	63%	68%

At this time, we bring two points to the Council’s attention. First, there is the possibility that the SSC’s additional consideration of the assessment will not substantially change the perception of stock status. The Council may thus still want to prepare for the possibility of recommending catch reductions at the upcoming September meeting. Second, we understand that this type of action might require additional analysis and Council consideration beyond what is needed for routine adjustments to inseason trip limits. Routine inseason adjustments are intended to prevent catches from exceeding established OYs. Reductions to petrale catches based on this stock assessment, in contrast, would be aimed at lowering catches below current OYs.

We therefore recommend that the Council seek clarification from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and NOAA General Council on the requirements necessary to make such a change (e.g. by identifying a point of concern). It appears that the Council will not have a settled assessment of petrale stock status until at least September. Yet, if it turns out that a two-meeting processes would be necessary, waiting to initiate that process in September would foreclose taking action by period 6.

Research

The GMT received an update from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) at this meeting on their expected research impacts for the year. They originally anticipated 0.9 mt of yelloweye rockfish to conduct an enhanced rockfish survey project in conjunction with the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) survey. Limited project funding prompted ODFW to reduce this estimate by 0.4 mt in the scorecard in March 2009, decreasing the total yelloweye impacts of research from 2.8 to 2.4 mt. Due to a total lack of funding, ODFW will be unable to conduct any research projects that may impact yelloweye rockfish during 2009. Hence, the estimate is reduced another 0.5 mt, decreasing our total estimated yelloweye impacts (research) from 2.4 mt to 1.9 mt.

Recreational Fisheries

New Inseason Tools

A new set of recreational fishery tables containing catch estimates for both target and depleted species, angler effort, and other inseason information have been developed in conjunction with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) RecFIN staff. This information will allow fisheries managers, anglers, and other interested members of the public to track recreational fisheries throughout the season. These tables will be posted and available on the RecFIN website in the coming weeks.

Scorecard Estimates

The GMT notes that during the specifications and management measures setting process, the Council chose to use the respective proportions from the 2005 harvest guidelines by sector to determine the harvest guidelines (HGs) for 2009-2010 given the 105 mt OY. This was done with the understanding that the values used in the scorecard could be revisited or revised inseason. Table 2 lists the difference between the preseason projections for each state and the HG currently listed in the scorecard. These projections are not updated inseason since the majority of the recreational catch is still accruing (i.e. the recreational seasons only recently opened in California and there is a lag between field data collection and estimation of impacts used in catch tracking). Given the large residual catch expected to be available given the preseason projected impacts and the increase in the recreational harvest guidelines, the Council may consider making some fraction of the residual available to other fisheries to allow targeting of species constrained by canary rockfish while maintaining an ample buffer for unanticipated recreational fishery impacts.

Table 2. Difference between 2009-2010 recreational canary harvest guidelines (mt) from the scorecard and projected impacts from the 2009-2010 Regulatory Specifications EIS.

State	2009 Harvest Guideline Specified in Federal Regulation*	2009 Projected Impacts from 2009-2010 Spex EIS	Difference
WA	4.9	1.2	3.7
OR	16	2.3	13.7
CA	22.9	7.8	15.1
Total			32.5

* Value represented in the scorecard, which is based on Council Preferred Alternative from 2009-2010 SPEX EIS. Sharing was based on the 2005 catch sharing agreement.

Commercial Fisheries

Limited Entry Non-Tribal Whiting Trawl Fishery

The GMT received a request for clarification on the new process for automatic actions regarding bycatch limits in the non-tribal whiting fishery that were implemented in the 2009-2010 specifications and management measures. It is the GMT's understanding, based on the Council decision in June 2008 and the groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.373 (a)(ii), that the N MFS Northwest Region (NMFS NWR) may make remaining bycatch limits from a closed whiting sector available to other whiting sectors based on the pro rata distribution that was used to initially allocate both whiting and bycatch species. The Council could consider making a request to the NWR that the Regional Administrator redistribute the remaining bycatch from the mothership sector, which closed on June 1, based on a pro-rata distribution as defined in the regulations.

Limited Entry Non-Whiting Trawl Fishery

Petrale and Sablefish

Available information indicates that absent an inseason adjustment at some time during the year, the catch of petrale sole will exceed the OY. The primary reason for this higher than anticipated catch level appears to have been the three month winter petrale fishery put in place this year.

Available information indicates that at the end of April, approximately 1,150 mt of petrale had been caught, compared to predictions that were slightly above 800 mt. On the other hand, information indicates that the catch of several other target species may come in below the OY – DTS species in particular. Of these species, requests were made to consider increases in sablefish and shortspine thornyhead trip limits, while requests were specifically made not to increase Dover sole, citing market issues. The following tables show trip limits and RCAs scheduled for this year, along with projected impacts should no inseason action be taken. Following the first three tables are three proposals for inseason adjustments. These proposed adjustments are explained in more detail below.

Status Quo Impacts and Trip Limits

Table 3. Status quo cumulative limits.

Subarea	Period	RCA Boundaries		Sable	Longsp	Shortsp	Dover	Otr Flat	Petrale	Arrowth	Slope Rk
		INLINE	OUTLINE								
North 40 10 Large Footrope	1	see attached table		18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	2		18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500	
	3		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500	
	4		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500	
	5		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500	
	6		18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	40,000	150,000	1,500	
North 40 10 Small Footrope	1	see attached table		5,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
	2		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500	
	3		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500	
	4		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500	
	5		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500	
	6		5,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500	
38 - 40 10	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
S 38	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000

Table 4. Status quo RCA schedule north of 40°10' N. lat.

	Jan - Feb	Mar - Apr	May - Jun	Jul - Aug	Sep - Oct	Nov - Dec
North of 48 10	0 - 200*	0 - 200	0 - 150	0 - 150	0 - 200	0 - 200*
48 10 to 45 46	75 - 200*	75 - 200	75 - 150	75 - 150	75 - 200	75 - 200*
45 46 to 40 10			75 - 200	75 - 200		

Table 5. Projected LE non-whiting trawl catch under status quo.

		North	South	Total	OY/HG/ allocation
Rebuilding Species	Canary	12.3	4.3	16.6	
	POP	103.2	0.8	104.0	
	Darkbltch	201.7	34.8	236.5	
	Widow	11.1	9.2	20.3	
	Bocaccio	-	13.1	13.1	
	Yelloweye	0.4	-	0.4	
	Cowcod	-	1.4	1.4	
Target Species	Sablefish	2,515.5	488.4	3,003.9	3,280
	Longspine	721.6	284.8	1,006.4	2,231
	Shortspine	1,046.2	255.2	1,301.5	1,608
	Dover	11,416.4	1,857.3	13,273.7	16,500
	Arrowtooth	3,699.8	175.5	3,875.3	11,267
	Petrале	2,099.7	393.9	2,493.6	2,433
	Other Flat	1,728.8	643.2	2,371.9	4,884
	Slope Rock	97.2	181.4	278.6	1160N/626S

Option 1: Adjust Sablefish and Petrale Limits. Move Shoreward Boundary in the North to 100 fm

The first option proposes increases in sablefish limits in the north for both small and large footrope and a reduction of petrale limits in the north in period 6. Vessels to the south do not see changes in trip limits for two reasons: the higher than expected petrale catch early in the year can be attributed to activity in the north, and sablefish opportunities in the north are far less in the summer months than for vessels in the south. In addition to the proposed trip limit changes, the shoreward portion of the RCA in the north is moved from 75fm to 100fm in period 4. Industry has stated that this period is when sablefish are accessible to vessels fishing shoreward of the RCA, but to a large degree they are only available if a 100 fm line is in place.

Shortspine thornyhead is not increased in this proposal because of the relative degree of uncertainty associated with catch projections under currently scheduled limits. Currently scheduled trip limits are substantially higher than the average trip limit size in place for this species over the past several years, and anecdotal evidence suggests that interest in this species may be growing. Therefore, in order to help ensure that opportunities for DTS species will exist later in the year, trip limits are not increased under this proposal. However, an increase may be available at a subsequent meeting if available information indicates such an increase would be appropriate.

Table 6. Cumulative limits under option 1.

Subarea	Period	RCA Boundaries									
		INLINE	OUTLINE	Sable	Longsp	Shortsp	Dover	Otr Flat	Petrals	Arrowth	Slope Rk
North 40 10 Large Footrope	1			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	2			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	3	see attached		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	4	table		24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	5			24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	6			20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
North 40 10 Small Footrope	1			5,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
	2			7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	3	see attached		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	4	table		11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	5			11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	6			11,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
38 - 40 10	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
S 38	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000

Table 7. RCA schedule north of 40°10' N. lat. under option 1.

	Jan - Feb	Mar - Apr	May - Jun	Jul - Aug	Sep - Oct	Nov - Dec
North of 48 10	0 - 200*	0 - 200	0 - 150	0 - 150	0 - 200	0 - 200*
48 10 to 45 46	75 - 200*	75 - 200	75 - 150	100 - 150	75 - 200	75 - 200*
45 46 to 40 10			75 - 200	100 - 200	75 - 200	

Table 8. Projected LE non-whiting trawl catch under option 1.

		North	South	Total	OY/HG/ allocation
Rebuilding Species	Canary	16.3	4.3	20.6	
	POP	105.3	0.8	106.1	
	Darkbltch	202.7	34.8	237.4	
	Widow	11.5	9.2	20.8	
	Bocaccio	-	13.1	13.1	
	Yelloweye	0.4	-	0.4	
	Cowcod	-	1.4	1.4	
Target Species	Sablefish	2,767.2	488.4	3,255.6	3,280
	Longspine	721.7	284.8	1,006.4	2,231
	Shortspine	1,053.7	255.2	1,309.0	1,608
	Dover	11,573.4	1,857.3	13,430.7	16,500
	Arrowtooth	3,824.3	175.5	3,999.8	11,267
	Petrals	2,025.0	393.9	2,418.8	2,433
	Other Flat	1,736.2	643.2	2,379.3	4,884
	Slope Rock	97.2	181.4	278.6	1160N/626S

Option 2: Same as Option 1, but Open Shoreward Area North of Cape Alava

Option 2 is the same as option 1, but opens the area shoreward of the trawl RCA north of Cape Alava (North of 48° 10') beginning July 1. This is done based on a suggestion that more yelloweye may be available to ongoing fisheries as a result of cancelled research projects.

Table 9. Cumulative limits under option 2.

Subarea	Period	RCA Boundaries		Sable	Longsp	Shortsp	Dover	Otr Flat	Petrale	Arrowth	Slope Rk
		INLINE	OUTLINE								
North 40 10 Large Footrope	1			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	2			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	3	see attached table		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	4			24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	5			24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	6			20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
North 40 10 Small Footrope	1			5,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
	2			7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	3	see attached table		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	4			11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	5			11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	6			11,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
38 - 40 10	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
S 38	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	4	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	5	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	6	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000

Table 10. RCA schedule north of 40°10' N. lat. under option 2.

	Jan - Feb	Mar - Apr	May - Jun	Jul - Aug	Sep - Oct	Nov - Dec
North of 48 10	0 - 200*	0 - 200	0 - 150	100 - 150	75 - 200	75 - 200*
48 10 to 45 46	75 - 200*	75 - 200	75 - 150	100 - 150	75 - 200	75 - 200*
45 46 to 40 10			75 - 200	100 - 200	75 - 200	

Table 11. Projected LE non-whiting trawl catch under option 2.

		North	South	Total	OY/HG/ allocation
Rebuilding Species	Canary	17.3	4.3	21.6	
	POP	105.2	0.8	106.1	
	Darkbltch	202.5	34.8	237.3	
	Widow	11.5	9.2	20.7	
	Bocaccio	3.0	13.1	16.1	
	Yelloweye	0.6	-	0.6	
	Cowcod	-	1.4	1.4	
Target Species	Sablefish	2,764.6	488.4	3,253.0	3,280
	Longspine	721.7	284.8	1,006.4	2,231
	Shortspine	1,053.3	255.2	1,308.5	1,608
	Dover	11,571.5	1,857.3	13,428.8	16,500
	Arrowtooth	3,825.2	175.5	4,000.7	11,267
	Petrале	2,022.3	393.9	2,416.2	2,433
	Other Flat	1,727.5	643.2	2,370.7	4,884
	Slope Rock	97.2	181.4	278.6	1160N/626S

Option 3 same Limits as Options 1 and 2 but no RCA change

Table 12. Cumulative limits under option 3.

Subarea	Period	RCA Boundaries		Sable	Longsp	Shortsp	Dover	Otr Flat	Petrале	Arrowth	Slope Rk
		INLINE	OUTLINE								
North 40 10 Large Footrope	1			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	2			18,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
	3	see attached table		22,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	4			24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	5			24,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	150,000	1,500
	6			20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	25,000	150,000	1,500
North 40 10 Small Footrope	1			5,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
	2			7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	3	see attached table		7,500	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	4			11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	5			11,000	5,000	3,000	45,000	90,000	18,000	90,000	1,500
	6			11,000	3,000	3,000	40,000	90,000	16,000	90,000	1,500
38 - 40 10	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	15,000
	4	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	5	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	10,000
	6	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
S 38	1	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000
	2	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	3	100	150	20,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	4	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	5	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	30,000	10,000	55,000
	6	100	150	21,000	22,000	17,000	110,000	110,000	50,000	10,000	55,000

Table 13. RCA schedule north of 40°10' N. lat. under option 3.

	Jan - Feb	Mar - Apr	May - Jun	Jul - Aug	Sep - Oct	Nov - Dec
North of 48 10	0 - 200*	0 - 200	0 - 150	0 - 150	0 - 200	0 - 200*
48 10 to 45 46	75 - 200*	75 - 200	75 - 150	75 - 150	75 - 200	75 - 200*
45 46 to 40 10			75 - 200	75 - 200	75 - 200	

Table 14. Projected LE non-whiting trawl catch under option 3.

		North	South	Total	OY/HG/ allocation
Rebuilding Species	Canary	12.4	4.3	16.7	
	POP	103.1	0.8	104.0	
	Darkbltch	201.3	34.9	236.2	
	Widow	11.1	9.3	20.4	
	Bocaccio	1.5	13.1	14.5	
	Yelloweye	0.4	-	0.4	
	Cowcod	-	1.4	1.4	
	Target Species	Sablefish	2,722.3	502.2	3,224.4
Longspine		721.6	284.8	1,006.4	2,231
Shortspine		1,046.2	255.2	1,301.5	1,608
Dover		11,416.4	1,857.3	13,273.7	16,500
Arrowtooth		3,699.8	175.5	3,875.3	11,267
Petrals		2,016.2	393.9	2,410.1	2,433
Other Flat		1,728.8	643.2	2,371.9	4,884
Slope Rock		97.2	181.4	278.6	1160N/626S

Finally, the GMT notes that if canary estimates in the scorecard for the recreational fishery are not revised to make some of the residual referenced previously available for other fisheries, options 1 and 2 would both result in total estimates of canary impact exceeding the OY.

Chilipepper South of 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT received a request to increase chilipepper limits south of 40° 10' N. lat. to reduce discards of incidental catch. In 2006 and 2007, the Council established a 12,000 lb/2 month limit for chilipepper rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. (which was an increase) during select periods for vessels using large footrope trawl gear. While it is somewhat difficult to see whether changes in effort occurred as a result of a 12,000 lb limit, existing information seems to indicate that fishing patterns were not substantially different after the implementation of the 12,000 lb chilipepper limit. Moderate increases to the shoreward limits were included as part of the 2009-2010 management measures, but the effect of these trip limits was not known until recently. Discussions with industry and West Coast Groundfish Observers Program (WCGOP) data both indicate a continuing high discard rate, and anecdotal information suggests that incidental encounters with chilipepper have been increasing.

Previous discussions of chilipepper opportunities have raised concerns over the potential impact on overfished species – bocaccio in particular, but also widow, and (to some degree) cowcod and canary. If a chilipepper trip limit change does not induce targeting, then current estimates of

overfished species impacts are appropriate. If changes to cumulative limits do induce some targeting opportunity, then the issue is one of risk. In particular, what is the potential for that targeting opportunity to result in additional impacts on overfished species? Several pieces of information exist for informing this issue. Plots of cowcod and bocaccio bycatch events indicate that much of the observed bycatch of these species have taken place around the Monterey canyon area. However, fish ticket data indicates that the number of trawl vessels operating in that area has declined in recent years. Vessels fishing out of Monterey and Moss Landing frequent the Monterey canyon area and the number of vessels delivering to these ports has declined over the 2003 to 2007 time period, meaning effort in areas where bocaccio and cowcod are relatively common has declined.

Table 15. Effort measured as number of trawl vessels for years 2003-2008 by port in areas of highest bocaccio and cowcod interaction.

	Count of Trawl Vessels by Year and Port					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
FORT BRAGG	14	11	10	9	8	7
MONTEREY	5	2	2	3	2	2
MORRO BAY	10	10	9	5	7	2
MOSS LANDING	16	15	16	11	2	
PRINCETON / HALF MOON BAY	11	12	11	15	10	9

In addition to this information, adult chilipepper tend to be associated with different types of habitat than adult bocaccio and cowcod, meaning that effort focused on chilipepper will tend to occur in areas not preferred by adult cowcod and bocaccio. However, it is important to note that sub-adult cowcod are caught in the trawl fishery. Recent information indicates that a substantial portion of the cowcod catch is comprised of sub-adults, and these sub-adults frequent low relief substrate habitat that is susceptible to trawl gear.

In summary, information suggests that a 12,000 lb chilipepper trip limit is unlikely to change fishing behavior, and therefore is unlikely to increase the bycatch of overfished species. However, should a 12,000 lb trip limit induce changes in fishing behavior, the risk of cowcod and bocaccio catch events appears to be fairly minimal as effort has declined in areas where these species is relatively abundant.

Minor Slope Rockfish

A request was made to the GMT in March and April to analyze an increase in deep water opportunities (i.e. slope rockfish limits, including darkblotched). The Council considered our analysis and chose not to make increases in either March or April. Based those discussions the GMT thought it prudent to wait until we had more inseason fishery data to see how both target and overfished species catches were progressing in June. As existing information indicates

darkblotched impacts are higher than previously projected, but still within the OY, the GMT is not recommending increases to minor slope rockfish limits at this time.

Non-trawl RCA North of 40° 10' N. lat.

Oregon industry representatives requested examination of a change to the seaward RCA boundary along that portion of the coast from the Columbia/Eureka line, 43° N. lat., to Cascade Head (i.e., move the line in from 125 fm to 100 fm). Based on impact modeling for the Limited Entry and OA fixed-gear fisheries, this would result in an estimated increase of 0.3 mt of yelloweye. It should be noted though that the model cannot quantify differences for part of the year, so presumably changes to the line inseason would result in smaller increases in total mortality than the model is projecting. The GMT did not recommend these changes in March due to overfished species concerns, particularly yelloweye; however the Council may wish to consider changes to this portion of the RCA at this meeting given revised overfished species impact estimates (see Attachment 1).

Limited Entry Fixed Gear

Sablefish DTL Limits North of 36° N. lat.

The GMT received requests to examine increasing limits for sablefish in the daily trip limit (DTL) fishery. Participation in this fishery historically fluctuates based on participation in other opportunities rather than changes to trip limits. This presents a challenge in predicting the relative effect of inseason modification of trip limits on effort, and therefore, sablefish catch. The GMT notes that inseason action was taken in April to provide for modest increases to daily, weekly, and bimonthly limits. The effect of these May 1 changes on effort and landings is unknown at this time. Despite the lack of information at this time relative to the effects of that adjustment, the Council may wish to consider another moderate increase to the bimonthly cumulative limit from 5,500 lbs/2months to 6,000 lbs/2months for periods 4 and 5 (July-October) as recent catch levels have been near or below 50 percent of the LE FG DTL allocation and existing catch estimates are approximately 20 percent higher than at this time last year. The GMT cautions however that if inseason information in September shows the fishery projected to exceed their allocation, a closure might not be in place until November 1, after the majority of catch has already been taken.

Open Access Fishery

Sablefish Fishery North of 36° N. lat.

The GMT also received requests to examine an increase in limits for sablefish in the DTL fishery. While the Open Access fishery is expected to fall short of the allocation without any inseason adjustments, a precautionary approach has typically been taken when considering inseason adjustments to this fishery. Because access to this fishery is not limited, large swings in effort have been observed in the fishery with relatively modest changes in regulations. Such increases in effort have led to much higher rates of catch and, at times, have led to an early closure of the fishery. The GMT does not recommend increasing the daily limit as effort increases appear most closely associated with changes in this limit. Catch estimates through May, combined with modeling projections through the end of the year, indicate that the Council could increase to the weekly and bimonthly limit to 950 lbs and 2,750 lbs respectively beginning July 1 through the end of the year. The GMT's OA sablefish model estimates that the fishery will still fall several tons short of the allocation. However, it is important to consider the difficulty in predicting effort in this fishery and the fact that inseason adjustments can be made later if appropriate.

California Scorpionfish Limits South of 40° 10' N. lat.

The Council received public comment requesting an increase in California scorpionfish (sculpin) trip limits to at least 1,000 lb per month and removal of the two month seasonal closure in period 2 (March-April) (Agenda Item E.7.c., Public Comment). Removing the closure in Period 2 was not analyzed during the 2009-2010 specifications and management measures cycle so the effects of this removal are unknown; therefore removing the closure is not available as an inseason action.

California scorpionfish is a healthy stock which primarily occurs and is fished south of Point Conception (34° 27' N. lat.), and is currently underutilized, with less than 25 percent of the harvest guideline being attained each year since 2003. It is also covered under California's nearshore permit and is mainly taken with other California state managed species. Since this fishery primarily occurs in shallower depths, impacts to overfished groundfish species are expected. Therefore the GMT recommends consideration of increasing the trip limits from 600-800 lb/2 months to 1,200 lb/2 months through the end of the year.

Black Rockfish Limits between 42° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat.

The GMT received a request to increase black rockfish limits in the open access fishery in California, between 42° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. An increase in black rockfish trip limits could potentially result in increased take of other nearshore species, including blue rockfish. As of 2009, blue rockfish are managed under a statewide harvest guideline in California. Current trip limits for minor nearshore rockfish in this area are 6,000 lb/2months of which no more than 1,200 lb may be species other than black or blue rockfish. The GMT discussed the possibility of restructuring the trip limit to allow access to the healthy black rockfish stock while restricting blue rockfish harvest to stay within its harvest guideline. The proposed modified trip limit is 7,000 lb /2months of which no more than 1,200 lb may be species other than black rockfish. Under this restructured trip limit, blue rockfish would be managed under the 1,200 lb/2 month sub limit.

Restructuring this trip limit could potentially result in increased discarding of blue rockfish due to the lower trip limit. WCGOP data indicate that black rockfish are generally harvested shallower than blue rockfish. Based on this data, one could infer that these two species are not entirely comingled and could be targeted separately. Industry also indicated blue rockfish occur further offshore than blacks and implementing the 20 fm depth restriction has restricted access to productive blue rockfish fishing grounds. The GMT also notes that under the current trip limit structure, individuals could potentially harvest a maximum of 6,000 lb/2 months, yet PacFIN data indicate the majority of individuals currently harvest 200 lb or less of blue rockfish per 2 months. We will continue to monitor landings relative to trip limit attainment for evidence of increased discarding. The GMT therefore recommends the Council consider modifying the minor nearshore trip limit to 7,000 lb /2months of which no more than 1,200 lb may be species other than black rockfish.

GMT Recommendations:

1. Begin a two-meeting process for identifying a point of concern for petrale sole.
2. Consider reducing scorecard values for canary in recreational fisheries to provide some residual amount for Recommendations 3 and 5.
3. Consider adjustments to petrale and sablefish cumulative limits and RCA boundaries for the non-whiting LE trawl fishery.
4. Consider increasing the limited entry trawl chilipepper cumulative limit to 12,000 lb/2 months both shoreward and seaward of the RCA in areas south of 40°10' for the remainder of the year.
5. Consider changing the seaward non-trawl RCA between the Columbia/Eureka line and Cascade Head from 125 fm to 100 fm for the rest of the year.
6. Consider increasing the bimonthly limit for the LE sablefish DTL fishery north of 36° to 6,000 lb/2 months from July-October.
7. Consider an increase in the OA sablefish DTL weekly and bimonthly limits to 950 lbs and 2,750 lbs respectively beginning July 1 through the end of the year.
8. Consider increasing California scorpionfish trip limits to 1,200 lb/2 months through the end of the year.
9. Consider modifying the minor nearshore rockfish cumulative limit between 42° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. to 7,000 lb/2months of which no more than 1,200 lb may be species other than black rockfish.

PFMC
06/15/09

Attachment 1

Projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species updated with most recent research estimates and fishery projections through June.

Fishery	Bocaccio b/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
Limited Entry Trawl- Non-whiting	13.1	16.6	1.4	236.5	104.0	20.3	0.4
Limited Entry Trawl- Whiting							
At-sea whiting motherships a/		4.3		6.0	0.5	60.0	0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc a/		6.1		8.5	0.5	85.0	0.0
Shoreside whiting a/		7.6		10.5	0.1	105.0	0.0
Tribal whiting		1.4		0.0	0.7	3.7	0.0
Tribal							
Midwater Trawl		3.6		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
Fixed Gear Sablefish	0.2	2.8	0.0	4.2	0.5	0.1	0.9
Fixed Gear Nearshore	0.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.2
Fixed Gear Other	5.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Open Access: Incidental Groundfish	2.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.3
Recreational Groundfish c/							
WA							
OR		20.9				1.0	5.2
CA	67.3	22.9	0.1			6.2	2.8
EFPs	13.7	2.7	0.3	1.3	0.0	5.5	0.3
Research: Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.							
	2.0	8.0	0.2	2.0	2.0	5.7	1.9
TOTAL	103.6	102.7	2.0	278.0	112.0	337.5	15.3
2009 OY d/	288	105	4.0	285	189	522	17
Difference	184.4	2.3	2.0	7.0	77.0	184.5	1.7
Percent of OY	36.0%	97.8%	50.0%	97.5%	59.3%	64.7%	90.0%
Key		= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data sources.					
a/ Non-tribal whiting values for canary, darkblotched, and widow reflect bycatch limits for the non-tribal whiting sectors.							
b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.							
c/ Values in scorecard represent projected impacts for all species except canary and yelloweye rockfish, which are the prescribed harvest guidelines.							
d/ 2009 and 2010 OYs are the same except for darkblotched (291 mt in 2010), POP (200 mt in 2010), and widow (509 mt in 2010).							