

BLACKGILL AND SLOPE ROCKFISH REALLOCATION

The Council scheduled consideration of a process to restructure the Slope Rockfish complex south of 40°10' N. latitude by removing blackgill rockfish from the complex and reallocating the harvestable surplus of both blackgill rockfish and the remaining stocks in the Slope Rockfish South complex as a priority task for this year. The Council tasked staff to develop strawman allocation alternatives for analysis, a task aided by advice from the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) at their February 2015 meeting. A preliminary draft analysis of these strawman alternatives is provided in Attachment 1.

The most recent assessment of blackgill rockfish in 2011 indicated the stock status was in the precautionary zone with a 30 percent depletion rate at the start of 2011. The Council and NMFS responded by specifying very low cumulative landing limits for the non-trawl sectors to reduce any incentive to target blackgill rockfish. Blackgill rockfish landings in the non-trawl sectors have been at a reduced level since 2013, when the regulation was implemented, indicate targeting behavior in those sectors was effectively reduced; however, targeting of blackgill rockfish in the trawl individual fishing quota fishery continues. This is because trawl quotas are managed at the complex level (i.e., the Slope Rockfish South complex) and not the individual stock level.

If blackgill rockfish were removed from the complex and managed separately as a quota species, greater management control could be applied to effectively reduce trawl targeting. If this action is to be considered, the Council should also consider a different trawl:non-trawl allocation of blackgill rockfish and the remaining stocks in the Slope Rockfish South complex. The original Amendment 21 allocation of the Slope Rockfish South complex (63 percent trawl, 37 percent non-trawl) was influenced by the management of blackgill rockfish in the complex. Blackgill rockfish are readily caught by both trawl and non-trawl gears while the other stocks in the complex are more trawl-dominant. An allocation of blackgill rockfish alone based on catch history would likely result in a higher non-trawl allocation than the 37 percent allocation currently specified for the Slope Rockfish South complex. Likewise, an allocation of the Slope Rockfish South complex with blackgill rockfish removed would likely result in a higher trawl allocation than 63 percent if based on catch history.

The Council should consider the advice of its advisors and the public before 1) adopting a Purpose and Need statement for the proposed action (see Section 1.3 in Attachment 1 for the draft Purpose and Need statement); 2) adopting a range of alternatives for detailed analysis; and 3) adopting a preliminary preferred allocation alternative for public review, if possible.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt the Purpose and Need statement for the proposed action.**
2. **Adopt a range of allocation alternatives for detailed analysis.**
3. **Adopt a preliminary preferred allocation alternative if possible.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.7, Attachment 1: Preliminary Draft Analytical Document: Allocation of Harvest Opportunity Between Sectors of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery of Blackgill Rockfish and Other Species Managed in the Slope Rockfish Complex South of 40°10' N. Latitude.

Agenda Order:

- E.7 Blackgill and Slope Rockfish Reallocation John DeVore
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Preliminary Preferred Alternatives for Blackgill and Slope Rockfish Reallocation

PFMC
03/26/15