

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON SURPLUS CARRYOVER

The Council requested the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) provide a report on 2014 fishery performance and projections for 2015 to inform decision-making regarding issuance of eligible surplus carryover from the 2014 individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery to 2015. We were provided guidance and final information from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR) regarding eligible surplus carryover quota pounds (QP) from the 2014 fishery. The 2014 data have been finalized, so the projected 2015 catch estimates (both with and without surplus carryover) will remain unchanged unless new information regarding projected 2015 catch develops.

In this report, the GMT provides best available estimates for catch of all IFQ groundfish species in 2014, and projections for sablefish north of 36° N. latitude (sablefish N.) catch in 2015, with varying amounts of carryover issued. These analyses indicate that eligible surplus carryover could be allowed for sablefish N. in addition to all other non-whiting IFQ species for 2015 where the annual catch limit (ACL) is less than the acceptable biological catch (ABC), noting that surplus carryover cannot be issued over the ABC. Eligible surplus carryover for these species could be allowed while maintaining catches below ACLs and overfishing limits (OFLs). The GMT estimates that sablefish N. will attain 91 percent of its 2015 ACL without issuance of surplus carryover, and 93 percent of the ACL with full issuance of the surplus carryover. The GMT estimates that sablefish coastwide will attain 71 percent of the coastwide OFL without issuance of surplus carryover, and 72 percent of the OFL with full issuance. Therefore, **the GMT recommends all non-whiting IFQ species where the ACL is less than the ABC, including sablefish N., be eligible for the issuance of surplus carryover from 2014 to 2015. The GMT also recommends the Council consider issuing eligible carryover pounds up to the point where the ACL plus surplus carryover equals the ABC.** The Council can recommend that NMFS: a) issue carryover up to 10 percent, b) issue carryover at some level lower than ten percent (i.e., reduce the eligible carryover percent), or c) forego carryover.

Surplus Carryover (from 2014 to 2015)

Consistent with NMFS' policies and case law, the GMT conducted quantitative analysis to inform decision-making on the question of whether to issue carryover for sablefish N. since attainment in 2014 was greater than 95 percent (Attachment 1). The probability is low that the remaining non-whiting IFQ species (which all have attainment rates substantially lower than 80 percent and which have ACLs < ABCs) will reach their respective trawl allocations or ACLs in 2015, based on performance in 2011 through 2014.

The GMT previously discussed the larger issue of carryover in June 2012 (Agenda Item D.8.b, Supplemental GMT Report) and September 2012 (Agenda Item H.5.b, Supplemental GMT Report). These discussions included the basis for allowing eligible sablefish surplus carryover from 2011 to 2012 (September 2012 statement), and discussions regarding long-term solutions to carryover provisions (September and June 2012 statements) and meaning (or consequences) of exceeding ACLs relative to exceeding OFLs (June statement). The GMT notes that this annual

evaluation of carryover does not meet the biological rationale and management incentives around which the carryover program was originally designed. A long-term, simplified solution, which also meets the legal obligations, should be pursued.

Sablefish Catch in 2014

Table 1 shows the GMT's best estimates of sablefish mortality north of 36° N. lat. for 2014, compared to each of the sector allocations, set-asides, and the ACL. Attainment of the 2014 ACL (4,349 mt) for sablefish N. is currently estimated at 88 percent (3,833 mt).

In order to make sablefish catch estimates for 2014 (Table 1), final catch data for the shorebased IFQ program were pulled from the vessel account (VA) database. Discard data were finalized in the VA database at the end of March, so these estimates are not anticipated to change. Preliminary research estimates and exempted fishing permit (EFP) catch estimates were provided from the NMFS WCR. Tribal catch of sablefish was reported from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC). Recreational estimates were taken from RecFIN. Catch in the at-sea fisheries was taken from the 2014 at-sea whiting summary (NORPAC via PacFIN).

Limited entry (LE) and open access (OA) sablefish daily trip limit (DTL) fishery landings, as well as the LE primary sablefish landings were taken from the Quota Species Monitoring (QSM) Best Estimate Report dated December 31, 2014. Catch of sablefish in the incidental open access (IOA) estimate was queried from PacFIN. The 2013 West Coast Groundfish Observer Program mortality rates (Somers 2014) were applied to Incidental Open Access, LE DTL, LE Primary, and OA DTL fisheries.

Table 1. The GMT's best estimates for sablefish mortality north of 36° N. lat. in 2014, sector allocations, set-asides, and comparison to the ACL (all in mt). Data sources described above.

Sector	2014 Catch Estimate a/	2014 Allocations b/	2014 Attainment (%)
EFP c/	4	4	100%
Incidental OA	7.0	35	20%
Tribal	415.6	435	95.5%
Research d/	26	26	100%
Recreational e/	1.1	6.1	18%
LE DTL	140.0	221	63.3%
LE Primary	1,070.4	1,254	85.4%
OA DTL	288.9	330	87.5%
Shorebased IFQ	1,884	1,988	95%
At-Sea whiting	16.14	50	32.3%
Totals	3,833	4,349	88%

a/ Commercial fishery catch estimates include landings and discard mortality.

b/ Commercial fishery allocations, shares, deductions and set-asides, as shown here include landings and discard mortality. Incidental open access and the directed open access fishery have a single allocation (365 mt in 2014), 35 mt of which is anticipated to be taken in IOA fisheries. The sum of these values is equal to the ACL.

c/ These values represent the set-asides for Platt/Emily and the Nature Conservancy EFPs. The preliminary estimate from the applicants, however is 0 mt.

d/ Not all 2014 scientific research projects have reported final catch data at this time.

e/ Recreational catch estimates include landings and discard mortality.

Projected Catch of Sablefish North of 36° N. lat. for 2014 and Eligible Surplus Carryover for 2015

Table 2 shows 2014 total catch estimates, allocations, total available metric tons including eligible surplus, and corresponding attainment rates used to inform 2015 IFQ projections for sablefish N. Attainment of the 2014 IFQ allocation (not including surplus carryover from 2013 to 2014) for sablefish N. is currently estimated at 92 percent. Note that 64 mt surplus carryover was allowed for sablefish from 2013 to 2014, and catch did not exceed the total available pounds for IFQ in 2014. Total attainment of total available pounds was 92 percent (including surplus carryover). For coastwide projections to be compared against the coastwide OFL, sablefish south of 36° N. lat. is also be included.

Table 2. Shorebased IFQ Program total catch, allocations, total available including eligible surplus, and corresponding attainment rates (2014) used to inform projections for catch in 2015 with and without issuance of surplus carryover for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. (all in mt).

Species/ Area Category	Before 2013 to 2014 carryover			Eligible Surplus 2013 to 2014	After 2013 to 2014 carryover			Eligible Surplus 2014 to 2015 c/
	2014 Catch a/	2014 Alloc- ation	2014 Attain- ment		2014 Total Catch b/	2014 Total Avail.	2014 Attain. Total Avail.	
Sablefish North of 36° N. lat.	1,823	1,988	92%	64	1,884	2,052	92%	90
Sablefish South of 36° N. lat.	192	653	29%	58	206	711	29%	62

a/ Excluding catch of the eligible surplus carryover pounds issued from 2013 to 2014. They are tracked separately.

b/ Including catch of the eligible surplus carryover pounds issued from 2013 to 2014.

c/ Eligible surplus carryover for the Shorebased IFQ Program is calculated per regulations at 660.140(e)(5), and is calculated based on the quota pounds that remain in vessel accounts at the end of the year, minus transfers and carryover from the previous year. NMFS provide their final carryover calculation to the GMT on 3/30/2015.

Projected Catch of Sablefish North for 2015

Table 3 shows a summary of GMT projections for all-sectors' attainment of the sablefish N. ACL and the coastwide sablefish OFL in 2015 under two scenarios: full issuance of eligible surplus carryover, and zero carryover from 2014 to 2015. Sablefish S. is assumed to have full eligible carryover issued, since attainment was low in 2014. **With issuance of carryover, the GMT's best estimate for attainment of the 2015 sablefish N. ACL is 93 percent; without issuance of eligible surplus carryover for sablefish N. the projection decreases to 91 percent of the ACL. Additionally, the GMT's best estimate for harvest relative to the coastwide OFL is 72 percent and 71 percent with and without carryover, respectively.**

The GMT acknowledges there are many variables that could influence projected attainment of the shorebased IFQ allocations and the ACLs (for example market conditions, weather, etc.), and that there is uncertainty in the estimates. Our projections for 2015 make a few assumptions: the shorebased IFQ fishery has the same attainment level of the total available pounds (including surplus carryover) as in 2014 (i.e. 92 percent); all the other fisheries besides the shorebased IFQ Program will have the same projected impacts as described in the 2015-2016 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Final Environmental Impact Statement (e.g. Table 4-136).

Table 3. Summary of GMT projections for all-sector attainment of the sablefish N. ACL in 2015 under two scenarios: full issuance of eligible surplus carryover, and zero carryover from 2014 to 2015. Sablefish S. is assumed to have full eligible carryover issued, since attainment was low (32 percent) in 2014. All values reported in mt.

Species	Amount Carryover Issued	2015 IFQ Total Avail.	2014 IFQ Attain. Total Avail.	2015 IFQ Proj.	2015 All Sectors Projection	2015 ACL	% 2015 ACL
Sablefish N.	All eligible	2,290	92%	2,107	4,456	4,793	93%
	Zero	2,199		2,023	4,372		91%
Sablefish S.	All eligible	782	29%	227	1,178	1,719	69%

Table 4. Summary of GMT projections for all-sector attainment of the coastwide sablefish OFL in 2015 under two scenarios: full issuance of eligible surplus carryover for sablefish N. and S., and zero carryover from 2014 to 2015 for sablefish N. and full issuance for sablefish S. Sablefish S. is assumed to have full eligible carryover issued, since attainment was low (32 percent) in 2014. All values reported in mt.

Amount Carryover Issued	2015 Sum/Coastwide Projected Mortality	2015 OFL	% 2015 OFL
All eligible for Sablefish N.; all eligible for Sablefish S.	5,634	7,857	72%
Zero for Sablefish N.; all eligible for Sablefish S.	5,550		71%

The NMFS report from June 2012 indicated that issuance of surplus carryover would be consistent with the conservation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as long as projected catches were not expected to exceed the ACL (Agenda Item D.8.b, NMFS Report, June 2012). The GMT notes that the preliminary projected impacts with full issuance of eligible surplus carryover are not expected to exceed sablefish N. ACL, nor sablefish coastwide OFL.

NMFS must also consider whether issuance of the full 10 percent of surplus carryover, when added to the ACL, will meet or exceed the ABC. For some IFQ species, even though the $ACL < ABC$, they only have a small margin (e.g. a few metric tons) between the ACL and the ABC. For those species, less than 10 percent of surplus carryover may be issued, because the total cannot exceed the ABC (e.g. $ACL + \text{surplus carryover}$ must be less than or equal to the ABC). This problem has been identified for Minor Shelf Rockfish south of $40^{\circ} 10' N$ lat. and Minor Slope Rockfish south of $40^{\circ} 10' N$. lat. Therefore, it is prudent to note that surplus carryover may be issued up to 10 percent for most species where the $ACL < ABC$, but the sum total for each species cannot exceed the ABC. NMFS must take this into consideration before surplus carryover is released into vessel accounts.

GMT Recommendations:

The GMT recommends all non-whiting IFQ species where the ACL is less than the ABC, including sablefish N., be eligible for the issuance of surplus carryover from 2014 to 2015. The GMT also recommends the Council consider issuing eligible carryover pounds up to the point where the ACL plus surplus carryover equals the ABC.

Attachment 1. Shorebased IFQ fishery attainment for 2014 and eligible surplus carryover by species/area categories for all IFQ Species. Source: NMFS Shorebased IFQ Program, Vessel Accounts Database, March 30, 2015. All values reported in metric tons.

IFQ Species	ABC ACL Note (Lawsuit)	Catch to Date (mt)	Attainment (%)	Eligible Surplus Carryover (mt) a/
Bocaccio rockfish South of 40°10' N.	ABC>ACL	9	11%	8
Canary rockfish	ABC>ACL	11	26%	4
Cowcod South of 40°10' N.	ABC>ACL	0	20%	0
Darkblotched rockfish	ABC>ACL	98	35%	27
Dover sole	ABC>ACL	6,495	29%	2,172
Longspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N.	ABC>ACL	899	50%	174
Minor shelf rockfish South of 40°10' N.	ABC>ACL	10	12%	8
Minor slope rockfish South of 40°10' N.	ABC>ACL	99	26%	33
Pacific cod	ABC>ACL	166	15%	101
Pacific ocean perch North of 40°10' N.	ABC>ACL	41	36%	11
Sablefish North of 36° N.	ABC>ACL	1,884	95%	90
Sablefish South of 36° N.	ABC>ACL	206	32%	62
Shortspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N.	NA	683	50%	134
Shortspine thornyheads South of 34°27' N.	NA	3	5%	5
Widow rockfish	ABC>ACL	654	66%	76
Yelloweye rockfish	ABC>ACL	0	6%	0
Pacific halibut (IBQ) North of 40°10' N.	NA	27	26%	9
Arrowtooth flounder b/	ABC=ACL	1,735	50%	252
Chilipepper rockfish South of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	312	29%	105
English sole	ABC=ACL	237	5%	513
Lingcod North of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	239	21%	108
Lingcod South of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	19	4%	43
Minor shelf rockfish North of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	34	7%	48
Minor slope rockfish North of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	184	23%	76
Other flatfish	ABC=ACL	840	20%	411
Petrable sole	ABC=ACL	2,314	97%	31
Splitnose rockfish South of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	67	4%	156
Starry flounder	ABC=ACL	15	2%	75
Pacific whiting	NA	98,714	83%	6,660
Yellowtail rockfish North of 40°10' N.	ABC=ACL	1,164	40%	238

a/ Total fleet-level 2014 surplus carryover subtotals (based on final catch and account balance data, and individual account calculations assuming 10 percent of surplus quota pounds or individual bycatch quota pounds in a vessel account may be carried over) that would be credited to 2015 vessel accounts if NMFS credited 10 percent surplus carryover for all species.

b/ Lightened values indicate species where the ACL = ABC so no carryover will be issued, or is not an eligible species for carryover (i.e. Pacific whiting).