

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) REPORT ON
BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2017-2018

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) met with recreational groundfish representatives and anglers on September 25, 2015, to develop a range of management measures to be analyzed for Washington recreational fisheries in 2017 and 2018. Alternatives were developed based on new stock assessments and the potential range of harvest specifications that will be considered for 2017 and 2018 and new information on closed areas that will continue to protect yelloweye rockfish while providing access to healthy lingcod stocks off the Columbia River management area.

WDFW recommends the following management measure alternatives as described for each category below, be approved for public review. Alternatives across categories may be combined; however, alternatives within each category are mutually exclusive. Across all alternatives, WDFW intends to continue to monitor recreational catches and take inseason action, as appropriate.

Recreational Groundfish Bag Limits and Sub-limits

Status quo: Aggregate bag limit of 12 groundfish which includes a sub-limit of 10 rockfish, 2 lingcod, and 2 cabezon in Marine Areas 1-3, and 1 cabezon in Marine Area 4.

Alt. 1: 8 rockfish with status quo lingcod and cabezon sub-limits

Alt. 2: 8 rockfish including up to 2 canary rockfish with status quo lingcod and cabezon sub-limits

Alt. 3: 10 rockfish including up to 2 canary rockfish with status quo lingcod and cabezon sub-limits

Alt. 4: 9 rockfish, and 3 lingcod with status quo cabezon sub-limits

Recreational Season Dates

Status quo: Open recreational groundfish fishing year round

Alt. 1: Open recreational groundfish in Marine Areas 1 – 4 (excluding Marine Area 4B) March 15 through October 15 (Note: Even though the groundfish fishery dates would be modified, the status quo lingcod season dates would remain in effect for each Marine Area.)

Modify Recreational Deepwater Lingcod Closure

Status quo: Fishing for, retention, or possession of lingcod is prohibited seaward of a line connecting the following coordinates: 47°31.70' N. lat., 124°45.00' W. lon. (Queets River) to 47°38.17' N. lat., 124°30.00' W. lon. to 47°38.17' N. lat., 124°21.00' W. lon. to 46°28.00' N. lat., 124°21.00' W. lon. year round except as allowed in Washington Marine Area 2 on days open to the primary Pacific halibut fishery.

Alt. 1: Consider revisions to the lingcod closure. WDFW intends to work with stakeholders over the winter to develop specific changes to the coordinates and will have a more detailed alternative specified for April 2016.