

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREA
UPDATES, ALLOCATIONS, AND HARVEST GUIDELINES

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The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has reviewed the documents under this agenda item and received an overview from Ms. Kelly Ames of Council staff. We have organized and numbered our comments in the order that is presented in [Agenda Item F.6. Supplemental REVISED Attachment 1](#); and have divided them into three statements, based on the divisions in that attachment. This report covers items 1-8 on rockfish conservation area updates, allocations, and harvest guidelines.

1. Updates to selected rockfish conservation area (RCA) coordinates in California

The GMT reviewed the management measure that proposes to modify latitude and longitude coordinates that define some of the rockfish conservation area (RCA) boundaries in California to better align regulatory fathom lines with their corresponding fathom isobaths. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) conducted public meetings throughout the state in December 2015 and January 2016, and it was from those public meetings that these RCA modification recommendations were developed. Stocks that will be affected would be those included in the nearshore, shelf, and slope rockfish complexes, as well as some other bottom fish (flatfish). These RCA coordinate changes are proposed for areas that extend from the Northern Management Area to the Central Management Area. Detailed analysis of these coordinate changes are contained in Appendix B ([F.6. Attachment 3, April 2016](#)).

The latitude and longitude coordinates specified in regulation at 50 CFR 660.71–660.73 are intended to approximate the fathom isobaths. To allow better access to target species while maintaining the intent of the fathom lines and to improve alignment of these lines with the bathymetry, revisions to coordinates are necessary for waters off California for 2017-2018. **The GMT recommends the proposed RCA coordinate changes contained in Appendix B ([F.6. Attachment 3, April 2016](#)).**

2. Off the top deductions

The GMT reviewed the off-the-top deductions from the annual catch limits (ACLs) for tribal, non-groundfish fisheries, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), and scientific research presented in [Agenda Item F.3 Supplemental Attachment 4](#). The GMT notes that the canary rockfish values in Attachment 4 did not incorporate the revised harvest specification in [Agenda Item F.3, Supplemental REVISED Attachment 2](#).

Under Agenda Item F.3, the Council adopted the remaining final ACLs for selected species and tentatively adopted the canary rockfish ACL. An updated table with the final preferred ACLs, tentative canary ACL, and the off the top deductions used in the analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

Exempted Fishing Permits

In March, the Council forwarded the San Francisco Community Fishing Association (SFCFA) EFP for public review. This is the continuation of an EFP that has been approved the previous two cycles, and there was some confusion about the need for another cycle. This led to the EFP

being taken up in March rather than in November. Appendix 1 shows the updated EFP set-aside based on the preliminary approval of that EFP.

Scientific Research

The Council cannot prohibit scientific research activities from occurring. If scientific research activities harvest more than its set-aside during the biennial harvest specifications and management measures, fisheries must be restricted inseason to keep catch within the ACL. This can mean, and has meant in the past, that end of the year fishing opportunities are preempted by unexpectedly high scientific research harvest. Therefore, the Council attempts to set the research set-asides high enough to accommodate anticipated research, but not too high so as to strand fish that could be available for fisheries. For most species and for the last five biennial cycles, the research deduction from the ACL has been set at the highest harvest level seen in recent years (i.e. set high to reduce the chances of research catch exceeding the off-the-top deduction). Yelloweye rockfish has been the most prominent exception. In recent years the Council has set-aside 3.3 mt for research: 1.1 mt for the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) annual survey; 1.0 mt for research conducted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); 1.0 mt for research conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW); and 0.2 mt for other research activities that may arise.

The IPHC survey annually takes 0.4 to 0.7 mt of their 1.1 mt of yelloweye rockfish set-aside. The GMT notes that this survey is the main source of fishery independent data for yelloweye rockfish, even though the main purpose of the survey is the annual assessment of Pacific halibut. In recent years, WDFW has had one or more projects in place and has utilized the majority of their 1.0 mt. In the last several years, ODFW has not been able to secure funding for expanded yelloweye research in conjunction with the IPHC stock assessment survey, and therefore has not utilized most of the 1.0 mt set-aside. This situation is not unique, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Science Centers plan for research that sometimes never gets on the water. ODFW has had some smaller projects on tagging, tracking, and barotrauma that have had minor impacts to yelloweye rockfish (~0.1-0.2 mt). ODFW has notified the Council by the September Council meeting each year how much of the research set-aside would be unused and thus available to the fishery sectors. It is the GMT's understanding that ODFW has met internally to discuss anticipated research activities in 2017 and 2018 and will be providing additional information on anticipated take of yelloweye rockfish.

The GMT notes that the tribes may refine their off-the-top deduction requests, prior to the June 2016 meeting. The GMT also notes that further changes to the off-the-top deductions after the April meeting will result in additional work for preparing supporting documentation for the June meeting when the Council recommends its final preferred alternatives (FPAs).

The values in Appendix 1 are the best available data on set-asides for use in calculating preliminary preferred fishery harvest guidelines (HG) available at this time.

Table 1. Annual impacts from the IPHC, WDFW, and ODFW research projects for 2011-2014.

Year	Project	Amount Set Aside (mt)	Actual Mortality (mt)	Difference
2011	IPHC	1.1	0.37	0.73
	WDFW	1	0.38	0.62
	ODFW	1	N/A	1.00
	Other	0.2	0.09	0.12
	TOTAL	3.3	0.84	2.47
2012	IPHC	1.1	0.35	0.75
	WDFW	1	0.62	0.38
	ODFW	1	0.16	0.84
	Other	0.2	0.13	0.07
	TOTAL	3.3	1.26	2.04
2013	IPHC	1.1	0.44	0.66
	WDFW	1	0.36	0.64
	ODFW	1	0.02	0.98
	Other	0.2	0.12	0.08
	TOTAL	3.3	0.938	2.36
2014	IPHC	1.1	0.79	0.31
	WDFW	1	0.83	0.17
	ODFW	1	0.03	0.97
	Other	0.2	0.27	-0.07
	TOTAL	3.3	1.92	1.38

3. Adopt a preliminary annual catch target (ACT) for cowcod, California scorpionfish, and any other species as necessary

California Scorpionfish

Under Agenda Item F.3 the Council adopted a FPA ACL of 150 mt and signaled its intent to recommend an ACT of 111 mt. California scorpionfish is primarily a recreational target with the sector accounting for more than 97 percent of the harvest in recent years. This species is mainly targeted during the summer months, when there is a relatively high catch per unit effort as vessels typically target spawning aggregations, and catch can rapidly accrue. Given the one month time lag in the availability of the recreational estimates and the possibility of catch accruing quickly, **the GMT recommends the Council adopt an ACT.** In 2014, mortality of California scorpionfish exceeded allowable limits, setting an ACT will help ensure mortality remains within the ACL and give CDFW the ability to take management action, if necessary.

The GMT discussed whether an ACT of 111 mt could reasonably accommodate anticipated mortality in 2017 and 2018. In 2015, CDFW reduced the recreational fishery from year round to open from January 1 through August 31 and preliminary data suggest the shortened season was

successful in keeping mortality within allowable limits (96.7 mt). The recreational season for 2017-2018 will remain closed September through December. Further, the GMT was made aware that during 2015, industry worked closely with one another and communicated with CDFW to keep within allowable limits. In 2014, combined mortality of California scorpionfish was 122 mt, but the action taken to reduce the recreational season in 2015 was successful in keeping within allowable limits with the combined commercial and recreational mortality 99.3 mt. It should be noted that while CDFW is considering an increase to the commercial trip limit, mortality in the commercial nearshore sector is comparatively minimal. **Therefore, the GMT believes 111 mt to be an appropriate ACT.**

Cowcod

During the past several biennial cycles the Council has used an ACT to keep mortality of cowcod within allowable limits while also providing research opportunities. Cowcod are primarily encountered south of Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.) in the non-trawl sectors. Given the time lag of data availability in these sectors, the majority of the primary cowcod habitat is protected by the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs), and that mortality has been kept within the ACT in recent years, **the GMT feels the 4 mt ACT for cowcod is appropriate.**

4. Adopt preliminary harvest guidelines (HGs) for select species managed within a complex

Blackgill Rockfish South of 40°10' N. Lat.

Blackgill rockfish harvest guidelines (HG) for south of 40°10' N. lat. were set at 114 mt in 2015 and 117 mt in 2016. In 2017, the HG will be 120.2 mt, if the same policies are applied as in 2015-2016. The HGs through 2017 would be subject to the trawl/non-trawl allocation ratio of 63/37 percent. However, starting in 2018, an HG amount (123 mt) is not anticipated to be necessary because the Council has recommended that the stock be managed by stock specific specifications.

At the November 2015 Council meeting, the Council recommended removing blackgill rockfish from the Southern Slope Rockfish complex, and manage it using stock specific ACLs and quotas. This action was facilitated, in part, because of industry concerns that blackgill rockfish could potentially be subjected to increasing mortality from the IFQ fleet, especially those IFQ vessels exercising the gear switching option (i.e. fishing with non-trawl gear). Since this stock is in the precautionary zone with a depletion estimated to be approximately 30 percent, as of the 2011 stock assessment, better management can be achieved by using stock specific ACLs and quotas. Also in this action, the Council chose to change the trawl and non-trawl sector allocations for blackgill rockfish from the Amendment 21 established ratio of 63/37 percent to 41/59 percent for the trawl and non-trawl sectors, respectively. The Council will also consider changing the existing limited entry (LE) open access (OA) ratio of 60/40 percent to 70/30 percent. However, these management measures (addressed in Amendment 26) are not yet implemented (estimated 2018).

For 2017, blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. will continue to be managed as a contributing stock to the Southern Slope Rockfish complex, with a Southern Slope Rockfish ACL

contribution of 120.2 mt. Of that amount, the trawl allocation will be 63 percent, with 37 percent for the non-trawl allocation, as per Amendment 21 specifications. The non-trawl sector is further allocated blackgill rockfish at 60 percent for the LE sector and 40 percent for the OA fixed gear sectors. Additionally, the non-trawl sector is shared by both the commercial and recreational fishery sectors. However, since blackgill rockfish is a very deep dwelling species, rarely encountered by recreational anglers, it is essentially considered a commercial sector stock only.

The GMT recommends that the Council adopt a 2017 blackgill rockfish HG of 120.2 mt for 2017. For 2018, the Council has recommended that blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. be managed with species-specific harvest specifications. The GMT also recommends that an HG amount of 123 mt for 2018 be selected, in the event that changes to blackgill management described above are not in place by January 1, 2018.

Blue Rockfish South of 42° N. lat.

Blue rockfish had been managed with a HG since 2009 to prevent overfishing since the stock status is in the precautionary zone. The HG is set equal to the 40-10 adjusted acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the assessed area of the stock, between 42° and 34°27' N. lat., plus the stock's contribution from the non-assessed area which is then summed to arrive at the HG. The trawl and non-trawl fisheries are managed within that HG.

The last assessment for blue rockfish in this area was completed in 2007, which indicated the stock was below target (29.9 percent), and the ten-year forecast under the base case suggested that the stock would remain in the precautionary zone. Further, the HG has been successful to ensure mortality remains within allowable limits. Should the Council wish to continue managing blue rockfish south of 42° N. lat. with an HG, the values would be 305 mt and 311 mt in 2017 and 2018, respectively. **The GMT recommends continuing to manage blue rockfish south of 42° N. lat. with HGs of 305 mt and 311 mt in 2017 and 2018, respectively.**

5. Adopt preliminary 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations

Council action under Agenda Item F.6 is to adopt PPA allocations for these stocks for public review. Final action is scheduled for June 2016.

Overfished Species

In November, the Council gave guidance to use the September 2015 scorecard for overfished species (bocaccio, cowcod, Pacific ocean perch, and yelloweye rockfish) to facilitate the integrated alternatives analysis (Table 4-6 in [Agenda Item F.3., Attachment 1](#)). Below, there is some information on the non-nearshore fishery exceeding the anticipated allocation of yelloweye rockfish by 0.1 mt. All other sectors appear to be accommodated under the proposed sector-specific allocations in that table. Adjustments to these sector-specific allocations could then be adjusted by the Council to achieve sector specific management objectives.

Canary Rockfish

Based on the results of the 2015 assessment, canary rockfish is rebuilt. As with past cycles decisions on two-year allocations will be made under the biennial harvest specifications and management measures. Advice in November 2015 was to use the September 2015 scorecard to

facilitate the integrated alternatives analysis. Since that time, GMT members and Council staff developed [Agenda Item F.6., Attachment 2](#) based on Council guidance for additional allocation alternatives. Table 2 used historical mortality data from the 2015 canary rockfish assessment to develop three additional alternatives (per Council guidance) based on specific time periods: (1) Targeting (1990-1999), (2) Bycatch/Overfished Status (2000-2014), and (3) Using the 2009/2010 scorecard (pre-IFQ).

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW; [Agenda Item F.6.a., Supplemental ODFW Report](#)) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW; [Agenda Item F.6.a., Supplemental WDFW Report](#)) submitted reports with methods to address the sector-specific two-year allocations of canary rockfish. These reports were similar in that they tried to assess how much the non-trawl sectors may need in the 2017-2018 biennium, and provide the remainder to the trawl sectors, with the understanding that these are only two year allocations. In other words, the allocation to trawl and non-trawl can be reevaluated for 2019-2020 once we have seen what happens in all of the fisheries, and how much targeting is actually occurring. However, it should be noted that we will not yet have the 2017 groundfish mortality reports when we begin the 2019-2020 analysis in 2018. We will have near real time available from the trawl IFQ fishery and the recreational fisheries. Under Agenda Item F.3., there was additional Council guidance to:

1. Consider setting a sector-specific ACT for trawl of 1,226 mt, from which the at-sea Pacific whiting at-sea set-asides would be subtracted, with the balance of the trawl ACT issued to the shorebased IFQ fishery.
2. Consider setting a sector-specific ACT for non-trawl sector or simply having non-trawl catches count against the ACL.

Alternatives

The GMT discussed the Council motion and developed four Alternatives for Council consideration. We describe the concepts of the alternatives below.

Alternative 1. Trawl/Non-trawl allocation/ Status quo

Under status quo management, trawl and non-trawl allocation percentages are applied to the fishery HG (i.e., there is no “buffer”). The GMT proposed using the Council trawl value of 1,226 mt to set the percentages for the trawl-non trawl. Applied to the 2017 ACL, this resulted in 73.5 percent to trawl and 26.5 percent to non-trawl. These percentages were applied to both 2017 and 2018. However, the Council may choose the appropriate percentage split between trawl/non-trawl. Management action must be considered to keep fisheries within their allocations. The only fish that could be moved to either the trawl or non-trawl fisheries inseason during 2017-2018 would be unfished amounts from the “off-the-top” deductions.

Alternative 2. Trawl ACT/Non-trawl HGs

Set a trawl ACT and potentially a non-trawl ACT or sector shares/HGs. The remainder of the fishery HG not assigned to either trawl or non-trawl would become a buffer available to either sector.

Alternative 3. Standard ACT Approach (Top Down)

Take a 10 percent buffer off the fishery HG to create an ACT, then set trawl and non-trawl allocation.

Alternative 4. Modified ACT Approach (Bottom Up)

Set the trawl and non-trawl allocation values, and the remainder would serve as the buffer between the fishery HG and the trawl and non-trawl allocations.

Table 2 provides proposed values for each sector under each allocation alternative. Under Alternatives 2 and 4, the trawl and non-trawl values are presented as static under Option A (i.e. fixed values of 1,226 mt for trawl and 250 mt for non-trawl) and Option B, which reduces both the trawl and non-trawl allocations by the same percentage as the ACL is reduced from 2017 to 2018 (11 percent). Furthermore, the at-sea sectors are assumed to have the GMT recommended values in Item #6 (see below).

Alternative Analysis

The GMT discussed the merits and issues associated with each alternative.

Alternative 1 (i.e. status quo) would allocate the entire fishery HG to both the trawl and non-trawl sectors in formal allocations. However, by fully allocating the fishery HG, this may not address any of the management uncertainty that Council members and advisory bodies, including the GMT, have discussed under [Agenda Item F.3](#), and in continuing discussions for F.6. As the GMT discussed in their supplemental GMT report ([Agenda Item F.3](#)), there are several uncertainties associated with the amount of canary rockfish catch that may happen in the sectors in 2017-2018, as this is the first time in almost two decades canary rockfish will be targeted.

Under the Council's motion, they wished to look at the use of a trawl ACT with the non-trawl sector managed under an ACT or against the ACL. The intent of the motion we believe is captured by Alternative 2. For the non-trawl sector, there could be shares or HGs. The GMT recommends the continued use of these measures in any alternative as they provide accountability to the fisheries and important landing targets for modeling purposes to create trip limits and other management measures under any alternative. While the ACT would provide flexibility for both fisheries, the GMT discussed some concerns in relation to the Shorebased IFQ program.

The Shorebased IFQ Program issues quota pounds (QP) to quota share (QS) holders based the shorebased IFQ allocation. If the trawl amount, the amount upon which the Shorebased IFQ Program gets QPs is anything other than an "allocation", then there may be issues with respect to QP use limits. QP use limits set the maximum amount of QPs for an IFQ species that can be caught by a vessel in a year. These limits are based on the trawl allocation and are "hard limits," meaning they cannot legally be exceeded. If the Council chooses to set the trawl amount as an ACT, the initial vessel use limits for the year should be based on the ACT. However, this approach will effectively base the QP use limits off a "soft number," which may add administrative burden to defining and enforcing the QP use limits.

Typically, ACTs are set by assuming a buffer between the ACT and the fishery HG, then allocating the remainder to trawl or non-trawl (Alternative 3). However, the GMT also explored the possibility of a "bottom up" approach that allocated to each sector's perceived needs and the remainder between those allocations and the fishery HG was developed as a buffer.

Table 2. Trawl and non-trawl shares of canary rockfish by the GMT proposed sharing alternatives.

Description	Alternative 1		Alternative 2a		Alternative 2b		Alternative 3		Alternative 4a		Alternative 4b	
	Trawl-NonTrawl Allocation, Based on Percentages		Trawl ACT with Non-Trawl HGs		Trawl ACT with Non-Trawl HGs		Typical ACT		Top Down ACT		Bottom Up ACT	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
ACL	1,714.0	1,526.0	1,714.0	1,526.0	1,714.0	1,526.0	1,714.0	1,526.0	1,714.0	1,526.0	1,714.0	1,526.0
Fishery HG	1,670.6	1,482.6	1,670.6	1,482.6	1,670.6	1,482.6	1,670.6	1,482.6	1,670.6	1,482.6	1,670.6	1,482.6
Buffer	0.0	0.0	194.6	6.6	194.6	168.5	167.1	148.3	194.6	6.6	194.6	168.5
ACT	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,503.5	1,334.3	1,476.0	1,476.0	1,476.0	1,314.1
Trawl	1,226.0	1,091.5	1,226.0	1,226.0	1,226.0	1,091.5	1,226.0	1,091.5	1,226.0	1,226.0	1,226.0	1,091.5
CP	38.7	34.1	38.7	34.1	38.7	34.1	38.7	34.1	38.7	34.1	38.7	34.1
MS	27.6	24.3	27.6	24.3	27.6	24.3	27.6	24.3	27.6	24.3	27.6	24.3
Shorebased IFQ	1,159.7	1,033.1	1,159.7	1,167.6	1,159.7	1,033.1	1,159.7	1,033.1	1,159.7	1,167.6	1,159.7	1,033.1
Non-Trawl	444.6	391.1	250	250	250	223	278	243	250	250	250	223
Non-Nearshore	58	51	30	30	30	27	36	32	30	30	30	27
Nearshore	36	31	50	50	50	45	22	19	50	50	50	45
WA Recreational	31	27	20	20	20	18	19	17	20	20	20	18
OR Recreational	102	90	50	50	50	45	64	56	50	50	50	45
CA Recreational	218	192	100	100	100	89	136	119	100	100	100	89

	Allocation	a=trawl amount set at 1,226
	ACT	b=trawl amount changes
	Based on GMT projections/buffered amounts	
	Based on Sept 15 percentages	

Under Alternative 4, the GMT first projected the trawl amount (using the Council's motion of 1,226 mt for 2017) and the non-trawl amount that would be needed to accommodate non-trawl sectors, set those as the trawl and non-trawl allocations, and then left the resulting amount as a buffer between the fishery HG and the trawl/non-trawl allocations. The Council could choose to keep the trawl and non-trawl allocation values fixed from 2017 to 2018, as shown in Alternative 4a, or proportionally reduce those values along with the ACL for 2018, maintaining a buffer as shown under Alternative 4b. As seen in Table 2, by leaving the trawl and non-trawl allocations with the same values in 2017 and 2018 (Alternative 4a), the buffer in 2018 is negligible.

The GMT recommends the Council consider the approach described in Alternative 4, sub-option B, as it provides a buffer and straight forward trawl/non-trawl allocations.

Big Skate

In November 2015, the GMT proposed a 95 percent trawl-5 percent non-trawl allocation for big skate based on historical landings ([Agenda Item I.9.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3](#)). **The GMT reviewed updated data through 2015, and continues to recommend the Council consider the 95/5 allocation for big skate for 2017-2018.**

Longnose Skate

Currently, longnose skate is managed with a 90 percent trawl-10 percent non-trawl allocation. As in our November 2015 statement ([Agenda Item I.9.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3](#)), **the GMT recommends the Council consider continuing the 90/10 allocation for the 2017-2018 management cycle.**

Shelf Rockfish Complexes

Council guidance from November 2015 was to use a trawl allocation for Minor Shelf Rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat. of 60.2 percent and non-trawl 39.8 percent. For the Minor Shelf Rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. a trawl allocation of 12.2 percent and non-trawl allocation of 87.8 percent was analyzed. These percentages were derived from data from 2005-2008 and have been implemented since the 2011-2012 cycle. Table 3 below contain historical data for the Minor Shelf Rockfish complexes from 2005-2014.

Figure 1 below (Table B-16) shows the 2011-2012 EIS percentages that were the basis for the allocations used from 2011 to the present. These amounts are different than recently calculated percentages from updated data summarized from the 2016 WCGOP GEMM report (Table 3), and as such, the Council may want to consider a change based on these differences.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
Shelf rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat					
trawl	59.8%	66.1%	70.5%	44.4%	60.2%
<i>non-whiting</i>	74.0%	96.8%	89.5%	70.0%	82.6%
<i>whiting</i>	26.0%	3.2%	10.5%	30.0%	17.4%
non-trawl	40.2%	33.9%	29.5%	55.6%	39.8%
Shelf rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat					
trawl	20.6%	6.6%	9.9%	11.8%	12.2%
non-trawl	79.4%	93.4%	90.1%	88.2%	87.8%

Figure 1. Table B-16 from the 2011-2012 EIS.

Table 3. Minor Shelf Rockfish percentages for the trawl and non-trawl sectors, north and south of 40°10' N. lat., 2005-2014.

Shelf rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat.											
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Average
trawl	92.0%	88.2%	87.2%	61.1%	82.7%	91.2%	73.8%	86.8%	82.5%	88.2%	83.4%
<i>non-whiting</i>	72.8%	73.0%	89.8%	70.7%	91.4%	40.0%	92.1%	95.7%	91.1%	95.4%	81.2%
<i>whiting</i>	27.2%	27.0%	10.2%	29.3%	8.6%	60.0%	7.9%	4.3%	8.9%	4.6%	18.8%
non-trawl	8.0%	11.8%	12.8%	38.9%	17.3%	8.8%	26.2%	13.2%	17.5%	11.8%	16.6%

Shelf rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat.											
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Average
% trawl	26.4%	50.7%	42.0%	59.6%	46.8%	57.1%	12.9%	36.7%	36.6%	31.8%	40.0%
% non-trawl	73.6%	49.3%	58.0%	40.4%	53.2%	42.9%	87.1%	63.3%	63.4%	68.2%	60.0%

Data source: West Coast Groundfish Observer Program GEMM, 2016.

6. Adopt preliminary canary rockfish allocations within the trawl sectors

The GMT believes the FMP specifies that canary is allocated to the at-sea sectors. Since 2011, canary allocations have been implemented in regulations. However, the Council has leeway to adjust within trawl allocations every two years, as canary rockfish is not an Amendment 21 species. Current allocations from within trawl sector allocation are 43.4 mt (76 percent) to shorebased IFQ, 5.7 mt (10 percent) to mothership, 8.0 mt (14 percent) to catcher-processor.

If these same percentages are applied to tentative FPA-canary rockfish ACL for 2017 (resulting in 123.8 mt for CP and 88.5 mt for MS) or 2018 (109.9 mt for CP, 78.5 mt for MS), none of the simulated seasons for the at-sea sectors have canary rockfish constraining access to Pacific whiting. As explained in ([Agenda Item F.3, Attachment 1, April 2016](#)), these projections are based on the assumption that fishing behavior will be the similar to the past. Further, they do not account for bycatch avoidance costs the at-sea sectors have to endure as to not exceed their hard cap allocations and risk underutilization of their whiting quotas. For instance, the GAP has mentioned that whiting occasionally migrate shallower into the shelf canary rockfish primary habitat, and the at-sea sectors were unable to pursue due to canary rockfish bycatch concerns.

On the other hand, the shorebased IFQ fisheries have indicated that canary rockfish will be a bycatch constraining species (even with higher ACLs). Their canary rockfish allocation will dictate landings potential of other co-occurring target shelf species (e.g., widow rockfish, yellowtail rockfish, lingcod, and flatfish.)

As such, the Council should consider allocations that reduce bycatch constraints for all the trawl sectors. Although the Council motion has tentatively set the canary rockfish ACL = ABC (No Action Alternative), **the GMT proposes the Council consider setting the following allocations for 2017 and 2018, respectively: 38.7 mt and 34.1 mt for catcher-processor, 27.6 mt and 24.3 mt for motherships, with the remainder to shoreside IFQ, which cannot be defined until the Council sets the final trawl allocation.** These values resulted from the Alternative 2 ACL (33 percent of the No Action) with September 2015 scorecard percentages applied ([Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 2](#)). This increases the at-sea allocations by approximately fivefold from 2015 and results in a very low probability of the at-sea sectors exceeding their canary allocation (less than 0.01 percent), resulting in a shutdown of the fishery, while not stranding fish in either sector that will not be used.

In the Supplemental WDFW Report ([Agenda Item F.6., Supplemental WDFW Report](#)), WDFW proposed separate values for the at-sea sectors (10 mt for CP and 16 mt for MS for both 2017 and 2018). Further discussion on the implementation of these set-asides will be discussed in Supplemental GMT Report 3 under this agenda item.

7. Adopt preliminary set-asides for the Pacific whiting at-sea sectors

In November, the GMT provided preliminary set-asides for the Pacific whiting at-sea sectors ([Agenda Item I.9.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3](#)). The values were the same for 2015-2016, except for a proposed increase for arrowtooth flounder from 64.8 to 70 mt for 2017-2018. **The GMT still recommends these values.**

8. Adopt preliminary 2-year within non-trawl HGs for select species and complexes

Council action under Agenda Item F.6 is to adopt PPA allocations for these stocks for public review. Final action is scheduled for June 2016.

Overfished Species

In November, the Council gave guidance to use the September 2015 scorecard for overfished species (bocaccio, cowcod, Pacific ocean perch, and yelloweye rockfish) to facilitate the integrated alternatives analysis (Table 4-6 in [Agenda Item F.3., Attachment 1](#)). Adjustments to sector-specific allocations could then be adjusted by the Council to achieve sector specific management objectives.

Canary Rockfish

Canary rockfish is allocated through the biennial harvest specifications and management measures. As canary rockfish is now rebuilt, additional considerations may be needed when making this two-year allocation decision. Advice in November 2015 was to use the September 2015 scorecard to facilitate the integrated alternatives analysis. Since that time, GMT members and Council staff developed [Agenda Item F.6., Attachment 2](#) based on Council guidance for additional allocation alternatives. Additionally under Action Item Checklist #5, the GMT proposed within non-trawl HGs for canary rockfish based on projected impacts with management uncertainty added in.

Sablefish

Under No Action, there are two short-term sablefish allocations for the non-trawl sector (limited entry, LE, and open access, OA) south of 36° N. lat.: No Action- 55 percent LE: 45 percent OA, and Alternative 1: 75 percent LE: 25 percent OA. Table 4 below shows updated landings history for both LE and OA from 2011-2015 (data complete through November in California).

Table 4. Sablefish Landings (mt) South of 36° N. Lat.

Year	Limited Entry		Open Access	
	Landings	Percentage	Landings	Percentage
2011	733.4	78%	205.9	22%
2012	478.7	80%	122.9	20%
2013	542.4	87%	79.3	13%
2014	537.4	93%	42.2	7%
2015	486.2	91%	48.0	9%
Average		86%		14%

The GMT recommends that the Council consider recommending Alternative 1, 75 percent LE - 25 percent OA for sablefish south of 36° N. lat.

Blackgill Rockfish South of 40°10' N. Lat.

As per the above, the Council chose to remove blackgill rockfish from the Minor Slope Rockfish complex (south of 40°10' N. lat.) and manage the stock using specific ACLs and quotas. As part of that process, the Council did not recommend a split between LE and OA for blackgill when it is pulled from the complex. Until that rule is approved and implemented by NMFS, the stock will continue to be managed as part of the Minor Slope Rockfish south complex.

Until blackgill rockfish is removed from the complex, per the Council's November 2015 recommendations, the complex will be allocated with 37 percent to the non-trawl fishery. While blackgill rockfish is still in the complex, it will continue to be managed using an HG with the status quo LE/OA ratio of 60/40 percent, respectively.

For 2018, the Council has two alternatives to choose from that apply only to blackgill rockfish, as it is anticipated to be have been pulled from the complex for species-specific management;

either continue using the LE/OA status quo ratio (60/40 percent) or chose the alternate 70/30 percent ratio. This option applies only for blackgill rockfish and not the Minor Slope Rockfish complex after blackgill rockfish is removed.

From 2011 to 2014, the total blackgill rockfish landings south of 40°10' N. lat. by the LE and OA fixed-gear sectors was approximately 58 percent and 42 percent, respectively. Because this landing ratio is so close to the status quo 60/40 percent ratio, **the GMT recommends the Council consider choosing the status quo ratio of 60/40 percent for blackgill rockfish (once it is pulled out of the complex and subject to species-specific management, e.g. 2018) for LE and OA.**

Nearshore Rockfish Complex North of 40°10' N. Lat.

During the 2015-2016 management cycle, issues were raised surrounding the relatively new data moderate assessments that, in the case of nearshore rockfish species, relied on recreational fishery dependent indices of abundance. Based on these data moderate stock assessments, the 2015-2016 ACLs for the Nearshore Rockfish complex north 40°10' N. lat. was reduced to levels below projected impacts from status quo management of the three states. In addition, there was some difficulty in setting harvest guidelines (HG) based solely on historical catch that doesn't consider different approaches to state management of nearshore rockfish. As a result, the states had to determine a mechanism for lowering their overall catch in an equitable and biologically sound manner to prevent exceeding the lesser ACL, and agreed to an arrangement ([Agenda Item F.7.b. Supplemental WDFW/ODFW Report, June 2014](#)), which include a state-to-state consultation trigger if a state were to attain 75 percent attainment of status quo harvests. California elected to make the allocation (based on projected mortality under the No Action alternative in the [EIS for 2015-2016](#)) and specified an HG in Federal regulation to facilitate the ability to take action to reduce take or close the fishery inseason. At the time, it was the hope that future full stock assessments would provide coastwide and state-specific information useful to management.

Starting in 2017, the ACL for the complex will increase from 69 mt to ~104 mt due to increases in the ACL contributions for California blue rockfish (updated assessment) and China rockfish (full assessment), which had a separate models and thus also separate ACLs contributions for Washington-only and Oregon/California combined. China rockfish previously had a single ACL contribution for all three states combined.

In November, the Council requested two sharing options (in addition to status quo) for setting the Nearshore Rockfish Complex North of 40°10' N. lat. HGs that includes new stock assessment information. Under the status quo sharing option, the states retain their current shares of the complex ACL (i.e., 13 percent for WA, 59 percent for OR, and 29 percent for CA). The GMT believes there are biological and equity concerns with the status quo because state-specific ACL contributions are distributed to the other states (e.g., 59 percent of the increase in the CA blue rockfish ACL contribution would be assigned to Oregon and 13 percent to WA). Furthermore, the new Washington-only China rockfish ACL contribution from the assessment would result in 59 percent going to Oregon and 29 percent to California.

The GMT also has concerns with sharing option 1, which allows states to keep their entire state-specific ACL contributions (which the GMT supports) but evenly divides (1/3 to each state)

ACL contributions for stocks that are not broken down by state (i.e. all but China rockfish and CA blue rockfish). As described above, increases to the overall complex ACL for 2017 were mainly driven by California blue rockfish and China rockfish, which had increased ACL contributions for Washington and Oregon/California combined. With sharing option 1, the combined Oregon HG decreases from current levels, which means that increases in the ACL contribution from Oregon/California China rockfish ACL contribution would not be reflected in Oregon (the same biological concern with the status quo sharing option).

Sharing under option 2 allows states to keep their state-specific ACL contributions, and follows status quo sharing (i.e., 13 percent for WA, 59 percent for OR, and 29 percent for CA) for the remainder of stocks. Sharing option 2 retains the biological advantages of sharing option 1, but better biologically balances the increased China rockfish ACL contribution to each of the states than option 1.

The GMT recommends that the Council consider sharing option 2 for the Nearshore Rockfish complex north of 40°10' N. lat.

Deacon Rockfish

In their state report ([Agenda Item F.3.a, Supplemental CDFW Report](#), April 2016), CDFW identified difficulties which would be created if deacon rockfish were added to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and regulations without being explicitly linked to blue rockfish. The GMT sees this as a housekeeping matter to better allow CDFW to manage the nearshore fishery, and therefore supports the CDFW proposal. **The GMT recommends linking deacon rockfish to blue rockfish (e.g. blue/deacon rockfish) so that current and future regulations applying to blue rockfish would now apply to both blue and deacon rockfish.**

Recommendations

Action Item Checklist Number	Recommendation(s)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the proposed RCA coordinate changes contained in Appendix B (F.6. Attachment 3, April 2016).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the set-aside values in Appendix 1 to calculate preliminary preferred fishery harvest guidelines (HG)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt an ACT of 111 mt for 2017 and 2018 for California scorpionfish • adopt an ACT of 4 mt for 2017 and 2018 for cowcod
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a blackgill rockfish HG of 120.2 mt for 2017. For 2018, the Council has recommended that blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. be managed with species-specific harvest specifications. The GMT also recommends that an HG amount of 123 mt for 2018 be selected, in the event that changes to blackgill rockfish management described above are not in place by January 1, 2018. • continue to manage blue rockfish south of 42° N. lat. with HGs of 305 mt and 311 mt in 2017 and 2018, respectively
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council consider the approach described in Alternative 4, sub-option B, for the canary rockfish trawl/non-trawl sharing • the Council consider the 95/5 trawl and non-trawl allocation for big skate for 2017-2018 • the Council consider continuing the 90/10 trawl and non-trawl allocation for longnose skate for the 2017-2018 • the Council may want to consider a change to trawl and non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish Complexes north and south of 40° 10' N. lat.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council consider setting the allocations for 2017 and 2018, respectively: 38.7 mt and 34.1 mt for catcher-processor, 27.6 mt and 24.3 mt for motherships, with the remainder to shoreside IFQ, which cannot be defined until the Council sets the final trawl allocation.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council chose the preliminary set-asides for the Pacific whiting at-sea sectors as shown in (Agenda Item I.9.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3). The values were the same for 2015-2016, except for a proposed increased for arrowtooth flounder from 64.8 to 70 mt for 2017-2018
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council consider choosing Alternative 1, 75 percent LE - 25 percent OA for sablefish south of 36° N. lat. • the Council consider choosing the status quo ratio of 60/40 percent for blackgill rockfish (once it is pulled out of the complex and subject to species-specific management, e.g. 2018) for the LE and OA. • the Council consider sharing option 2 for the Nearshore Rockfish complex north of 40°10' N. lat. • linking deacon rockfish to blue rockfish (e.g. blue/deacon rockfish) so that current and future regulations applying to blue rockfish would now apply to both blue and deacon rockfish.

Appendix 1. Fishery Harvest Guidelines for 2017 and 2018 with EFP and Council Decisions on F.3

2017								
Species	Area	ACL	Tribal	EFP	Research	OA	Set-aside Total	Fishery HG
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	13,804	2,041.0		16.4	40.75	2,098	11,705.9
Big skate	Coastwide	494	15.0		4.0	38.4	57	436.6
Black	N of 46°16' N.	305	18.0				18	287.0
Black	46°16' N. lat.	527	0.0			0.6	1	526.4
Black	S of 42° N. la	334	0.0	1			1	333.0
BOCACCIO	S of 40°10' N.	790	0.0	3	4.6	0.8	8	781.6
Cabezon	46°16' to 42°	47	0.0				0	47.0
Cabezon	S of 42° N. la	150	0.0			0.3	0	149.7
California scorpionfi	S of 34°27' N.	150	0.0		0.2	2	2	147.8
Canary rockfish	Coastwide	1,714	35.0	1	7.2	1.2	44	1,669.6
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N.	2,607	0.0	10	10.9	5	26	2,581.1
COWCOD	S of 40°10' N.	10	0.0	0.015	2.0	0	2	8.0
DARKBLOTCHED ROCKFISH	Coastwide	490	0.2	0.1	2.5	24.5	27	462.8
Dover sole	Coastwide	50,000	1,497.0		41.9	54.8	1,594	48,406.3
English sole	Coastwide	9,964	200.0		5.8	7	213	9,751.2
Lingcod	N of 40°10° N.	3,333	250.0	0.5	11.7	16	278	3,054.8
Lingcod	S of 40°10° N.	1,251	0.0	1	1.1	6.9	9	1,242.0
Longnose skate	Coastwide	2,000	130.0		13.2	3.8	147	1,853.0
Longspine thornyhead	N of 34°27' N.	2,894	30.0		13.5	3.3	47	2,847.2
Longspine thornyhead	S of 34°27' N.	914	0.0		1.4	1.8	3	910.8
Nearshore rockfish no	N of 40°10' N.	105	1.5			0.3	2	103.2
Nearshore rockfish so	S of 40°10' N.	1,163	0.0		2.7	1.4	4	1,158.9
Shelf rockfish north	N of 40°10' N.	2,049	30.0	3	24.8	26	84	1,965.2
Shelf rockfish south	S of 40°10' N.	1,623	0.0	30	8.6	8.6	47	1,575.8
Slope rockfish north	N of 40°10' N.	1,755	36.0	1	9.5	18.6	65	1,689.9
Slope rockfish south	S of 40°10' N.	707	0.0	1	2.0	17.2	20	686.8
Other fish	Coastwide	474	0.0				0	474.0
Other flatfish	Coastwide	8,510	60.0		19.0	125	204	8,306.0
Pacific cod	Coastwide	1,600	500.0		7.0	2	509	1,091.0
Pacific whiting	Coastwide	325,072	56,888.0	1		1,500	58,389	266,683.0
Petrале sole	Coastwide	3,136	220.0		17.7	3.2	241	2,895.1
PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH	Coastwide	171	9.2		5.2	10.0	24	146.6
Sablefish	N of 36° N. la	6,041	624.0		25.7	6.1	656	5,385.2
Sablefish	S of 36° N. la	1,075	0.0		3.0	2	5	1,070.0
Shortbelly	Coastwide	500	0.0		2.0	8.9	11	489.1
Shortspine thornyhead	N of 34°27' N.	1,713	50.0		7.2	1.8	59	1,654.0
Shortspine thornyhead	S of 34°27' N.	906	0.0		1.0	41.3	42	863.7
Spiny dogfish	Coastwide	2,094	275.0	1	12.5	49.5	338	1,756.0
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N.	1,760	0.0	1.5	9.0	0.2	11	1,749.3
Starry flounder	Coastwide	1,282	2.0			8.34	10	1,271.7
Widow	Coastwide	13,508	200.0	9	8.2	0.5	218	13,290.3
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	Coastwide	20	2.3	0.03	3.3	0.4	6	14.0
Yellowtail	N of 40°10' N.	6,196	1,000.0	10	16.6	3.4	1,030	5,166.0

2018								
Species	Area	ACL	Tribal	EFP	Research	OA	Set-aside	Fishery HG
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	13,743	2,041.0		16.4	40.75	2098.14	11,644.9
Big skate	Coastwide	494	15.0		4.0	38.4	57.4	436.6
Black	N of 46°16' N. lat.	301	18.0				18	283.0
Black	46°16' N. lat. To 42° N. lat.	520	0.0			0.6	0.6	519.4
Black	S of 42° N. lat.	332	0.0	1.0			1.0	331.0
Blackgill	S of 40°10' N. lat.	123.0			0.5	0.1	0.6	122.4
BOCACCIO	S of 40°10' N. lat.	741	0.0	3.0	4.6	0.8	8.4	732.6
Cabezon	46°16' to 42° N. lat.	47	0.0				0	47.0
Cabezon	S of 42° N. lat.	149	0.0			0.3	0.3	148.7
California scorpionfish	S of 34°27' N. lat.	150	0.0		0.2	2	2.18	147.8
Canary rockfish	Coastwide	1,526	35.0	1.0	7.2	1.2	44.4	1,481.6
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N. lat.	2,507	0.0	10.0	10.9	5	25.86	2,481.1
COWCOD	S of 40°10' N. lat.	10	0.0	0.015	2.0	0.03	2.045	8.0
DARKBLOTCHED ROCKFISH	Coastwide	490	0.2		2.5	24.53	27.18	462.8
Dover sole	Coastwide	50,000	1,497.0		41.9	54.8	1593.7	48,406.3
English sole	Coastwide	7,537	200.0		5.8	7	212.8	7,324.2
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N. lat.	3,110	250.0	0.5	11.7	16	278.17	2,831.8
Lingcod	S of 40°10' N. lat.	1,144	0.0	1.0	1.1	6.9	9	1,135.0
Longnose skate	Coastwide	2,000	130.0		13.2	3.8	146.98	1,853.0
Longspine thornyhead	N of 34°27' N. lat.	2,747	30.0		13.5	3.3	46.81	2,700.2
Longspine thornyhead	S of 34°27' N. lat.	867	0.0		1.4	1.8	3.21	863.8
Nearshore rockfish north	N of 40°10' N. lat.	105	1.5			0.3	1.8	103.2
Nearshore rockfish south	S of 40°10' N. lat.	1,179	0.0		2.7	1.4	4.08	1,174.9
Shelf rockfish north	N of 40°10' N. lat.	2,047	30.0	3.0	24.8	26	83.81	1,963.2
Shelf rockfish south	S of 40°10' N. lat.	1,624	0.0	30.0	8.6	8.6	47.2	1,576.8
Slope rockfish north	N of 40°10' N. lat.	1,754	36.0	1.0	9.5	18.6	65.12	1,688.9
Slope rockfish south	S of 40°10' N. lat.	586	0.0	1.0	2.0	17.2	20.2	565.8
Other fish	Coastwide	441	0.0				0	441.0
Other flatfish	Coastwide	7,281	60.0		19.0	125	204	7,077.0
Pacific cod	Coastwide	1,600	500.0		7.0	2	509.04	1,091.0
Pacific whiting	Coastwide	325,072	56,888.0	1.0		1,500	58389	266,683.0
Petrals sole	Coastwide	3,013	220.0		17.7	3.2	240.87	2,772.1
PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH	Coastwide	176	9.2		5.2	10.0	24.37	151.6
Sablefish	N of 36° N. lat.	6,299	646.0		25.7	6.1	677.8	5,621.2
Sablefish	S of 36° N. lat.	1,120	0.0		3.0	2	5	1,115.0
Shortbelly	Coastwide	500	0.0		2.0	8.9	10.9	489.1
Shortspine thornyhead	N of 34°27' N. lat.	1,698	50.0		7.2	1.8	59.02	1,639.0
Shortspine thornyhead	S of 34°27' N. lat.	898	0.0		1.0	41.3	42.3	855.7
Spiny dogfish	Coastwide	2,083	275.0	1.0	12.5	49.5	338.0	1,745.0
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N. lat.	1,761	0.0	1.5	9.0	0.2	10.7	1,750.3
Starry flounder	Coastwide	1,282	2.0			8.3	10.3	1,271.7
Widow	Coastwide	12,655	200.0	9.0	8.2	0.5	217.7	12,437.3
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	Coastwide	20	2.3	0.0	3.3	0.4	6	14.0
Yellowtail	N of 40°10' N. lat.	6,002	1,000.0	10.0	16.6	3.4	1030	4,972.0