

## AMENDMENT 21 AT-SEA SECTOR SET-ASIDES FINAL ACTION

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is considering within-trawl allocations of darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch (POP) specified under Amendment 21 to be managed as set-asides rather than hard bycatch caps. This action is intended to address the increasing difficulty the at-sea whiting fleets are experiencing in their efforts to avoid bycatch of these species. Beyond the socioeconomic impact of decreased fleet efficiency in current efforts to target whiting while avoiding bycatch of darkblotched and POP, there is a risk of early closure of the fishery. Managing the at-sea whiting fishery by specifying set-asides to account for the bycatch of these species rather than managing impacts with hard bycatch caps was considered the most expedient way to mitigate impacts these sectors are currently experiencing. Managing with set-asides does not risk early closure or disruption of the at-sea whiting fishery when the set-aside amount is exceeded unless there is a risk of exceeding an annual catch limit. Specifying the set-aside amounts based on the Amendment 21 allocation scheme is intended to avoid a controversial reallocation of these species since no other sectors are directly affected by this proposed action. This is the Council's preliminary preferred alternative for managing impacts of darkblotched and POP for this fishery. The Council is scheduled to take final action on this initiative under this agenda item.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff analyzed the impacts associated with this proposed action and presents their assessment in Agenda Item F.7.a, WDFW Report. The Council should consider this assessment and comments and recommendations received from Council advisors and the public before deciding their final preferred alternative.

### **Council Action:**

**Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative in Consideration of Specifying Set-Asides of Darkblotched Rockfish and Pacific Ocean Perch for At-Sea Sectors.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.7.a, WDFW Report: Assessment of Managing Darkblotched Rockfish and Pacific Ocean Perch as Set Asides in the At-Sea Sectors.

### **Agenda Order:**

- F.7 Amendment 21 At-Sea Sector Set-Asides Final Action John DeVore
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Set-Asides of Darkblotched Rockfish and Pacific Ocean Perch for At-Sea Sectors