

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FINAL STOCK ASSESSMENT
UPDATES AND COWCOD CATCH REPORT FOR 2019-2020 MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was briefed by Mr. John DeVore on the stock assessment updates and cowcod catch report. The GAP offers the following comments and recommendations.

In general, the GAP supports the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) findings and recommendations for the update assessments for blackgill rockfish, arrowtooth flounder, darkblotched rockfish, and bocaccio rockfish. The GAP notes that bocaccio and darkblotched rockfish are rebuilt and should be removed from the overfished list. The GAP agrees with the SSC findings that all four update assessments reflect the best available science and can be used to inform management for 2019-2020.

Specific to blackgill rockfish, the GAP notes the concerns of the SSC regarding the lack of available data within the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs). Substantial amounts of blackgill habitat are closed to fishing and the trawl survey in the CCAs, thus complicating effort to interpret catch and research data. The GAP notes that the CCAs were the primary areas of the directed blackgill fishing effort prior to implementation of the CCAs. The 2011 blackgill assessment determined the stock status to be in the precautionary zone, and drastic catch reductions were implemented in 2013. Alternative means of exploring relative or absolute abundance in the CCAs should be a key research priority.

The GAP also reviewed the cowcod catch report and notes estimates of total mortality for cowcod have not exceeded the annual catch limits specified for 2013-2016.

PFMC
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