

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
FINAL ACTION ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to discuss progress of this year's fishery and possible inseason adjustments. The GMT discussion was led by Ms. Jessi Doeringhaus. The GAP offers the following recommendations and comments on proposed inseason adjustments to ongoing groundfish fisheries.

**Sablefish Daily Trip Limit**

Due to poor offshore weather and sea conditions, fixed gear sablefish landings have been tracking quite low to date thus there is an opportunity to increase the daily trip limits for both limited entry and open access fixed gear north. Working from the supplemental GMT Report **Table 2** the GAP recommends the following:

**Open Access Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of 36° N. Latitude**

Currently scheduled 2017 trip limits: 300 lb. daily/1,000 lb. weekly/2,000 lb. bimonthly

The GAP supports GMT **Alternative 1**: 300 lb. daily/1300 lb. weekly/2,600 bimonthly

**Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of 36° N Latitude**

Currently scheduled 2017 trip limits: 1,100 lb. weekly, not to exceed 3,300 lb. bimonthly

The GAP supports GMT **Alternative 1**: 1,500 lb. weekly, not to exceed 4,500 lb. bimonthly

**Recreational Fisheries for Yelloweye rockfish**

The nearshore recreational fisheries in California and Oregon have experienced higher than normal mortality for yelloweye rockfish this year. It is assumed there has been increased effort likely due to better than average nearshore weather and sea conditions. The result of this increased effort and catch has resulted in the projected catch to exceed the allowable harvest limits.

California Recreational Yelloweye rockfish

Yelloweye rockfish (YE) impacts in 2017 have exceeded the harvest guideline (HG) analysis projections. Without additional yelloweye, the California recreational season may be closed or restricted in all areas north of Point Conception for the remainder 2017. However, by shifting of some yelloweye within the overfished groundfish scorecard, the California recreational fishery could potentially maintain a status quo season north of Point Conception.

A concern is that from August to December, projections are uncertain. If August and September catches result in higher landings than projected, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) may be compelled to close recreational bottom fishing north of Point Conception to the Oregon border for the rest of the 2017. With calmer weather in August and September, a season closure is a distinct possibility without some immediate action.

For anglers and the associated infrastructure, sufficient on-the-water time is critical to maintain economic stability. The current season structure allows the commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV) and private boats to prosecute a fall fishery which often includes crab and rockfish combo trips.

The economic impacts are huge. Keeping fishing seasons open the last 3 months of the year, and with the crab season opening in November, could make the difference for many fishery dependent businesses. For illustration, the early season closure in 2007 resulted in the loss of 54,000 angler trips in Northern CA with an estimated economic loss of over six million dollars to the local ports.

With all this in mind, California recreational fishermen on the GAP wish to take a more precautionary measure than maintaining status quo for the rest of the season. The GAP has reviewed the Supplemental GMT inseason report and has the following recommendations.

Working from the **GMT Supplemental Inseason Report Table 4** the GAP supports **CA Alternative 2** which has the recreational bottom fish season from Point Conception to the Oregon border revert to 2016 depths through Dec. 31, to be implemented as soon as is practicable.

### **Oregon Recreational Yelloweye**

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), by state rule, closed their recreational groundfish fishery (except flatfish species) to preclude exceeding the Oregon ACL for black rockfish and cabezon. The economic impacts to the charter boat fleet and the local communities are expected to be substantial as a result of this closure.

ODFW is currently considering re-opening the Oregon recreational fishery seaward of the 40 fathom regulatory line on October 1<sup>st</sup>. This re-opening would be done through state action. The options for this re-opening would allow fishing for all bottomfish, except cabezon and black rockfish; or allowing fishing for all bottomfish, except for cabezon, black rockfish, nearshore rockfish and lingcod. Either of these options would provide additional opportunity for Oregon recreational anglers to target healthy and underutilized deeper water stocks while avoiding the more nearshore species.

To accommodate the re-opening of the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery up to an estimated 0.5 mt of yelloweye rockfish may be needed to prosecute the fishery. Should additional yelloweye become available, the GAP supports the ODFW re-opening of the recreational groundfish fishery outside of 40 fathoms on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

PFMC  
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