

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT 4, NMFS  
NWR SALTWATER RECREATION FISHING ACTION AGENDA

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service Northwest Region (NWR) Saltwater Recreational Fishing Action Agenda (Agenda Item B.1. Supplemental Open Comment 4) under the Open Public Comment agenda item. The GMT supports the all of the items in the Goals, Objectives, and Actions section, but there may need to be some refinement of objectives to fit regional needs. Additionally the GMT notes that cooperation with other management entities will be essential to success, as they are often the main interface with recreational fishermen and conservation groups. The GMT has some specific comments on the below items:

**Goal 1: Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities**

***Objective—Reduce barotrauma-related mortality of recreationally caught rockfish***

The GMT agrees that this should be a priority and appreciates the NWR support of outreach and education. We do encourage the NWR to work with state agencies, as they have projects and outreach already in place, as well as contacts with recreational angler groups. It would be good to build off of and support existing efforts and ensure consistent messaging.

**Goal 2: Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data**

***Objective—Education and Outreach to Improve Fish Identification by Recreational Anglers***

The GMT is supportive of outreach to improve fish identification by recreational anglers. Management of recreational groundfish fisheries relies on landed fish and angler reported discard information collected by state sampling programs. This is particularly important when dealing with the overfished rockfish species, which may have other species with similar appearance. This causes anglers to often throw back species they could have kept (i.e. vermilion rockfish) and/or keep species they should not have (i.e. yelloweye and canary rockfish). Improved identification will not only assist the anglers, it should improve the accuracy of discard data reported to sampling programs, and then incorporated into management.

**Goal 3: Improved Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries**

***Objective—Develop a cooperative human dimensions research proposal which would, if funded, improve data on recreational fisheries***

The GMT is supportive of any projects that can improve data on the recreational fisheries. The GMT does suggest that in addition to collaborating with recreational fishermen, that state management agencies be involved as well. State agency staff should be included, as they are the ones who oversee the marine recreational sampling programs, and would be the ones to implement any changes to sampling programs, based on the outcome of this project.