

CONSIDER BAROTRAUMA DEVICE MORTALITY RATES

Rockfish that are brought up quickly from deeper depths suffer barotrauma caused by expansion of gasses, which causes tissue damage and a high rate of mortality. In June 2012, the Council discussed methods that can be employed to increase survival of rockfish released in recreational fisheries. The Council was briefed on improved survival of released rockfish by the use of descending devices that enable fish to be released at deeper depths. This allows recompression of expanded gasses that cause barotrauma in fish species that cannot quickly acclimate to the change in depth. Studies have shown there is both short and long-term survival of some of these fish when they are released at deeper depths using descending devices.

In June 2012, the Council tasked the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) with examining information and proposals on the use of descending devices when releasing cowcod and yelloweye rockfish to mitigate barotrauma. The GMT's progress report was provided in November 2012. The Council and its advisors agreed that the use of descending devices was a "best practices" release method. The Council further tasked the GMT to develop depth-dependent mortality rates for canary rockfish released using descending devices and to work with the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on the analysis of mortality rates for canary, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish released using these devices. The GMT and members of the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee met on January 17 to discuss the analysis. The refined GMT report with the requested analysis is provided in Agenda Item D.5.b, GMT Report. The GMT recommends the Council approve a change in the current mortality rate used for rockfish released in recreational fisheries.

The Council task at this meeting is to provide guidance on the application of bycatch mortality rates associated with barotrauma reduction devices in recreational groundfish fisheries. The Council should consider the advice of the SSC on the science that informs this issue and GMT, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and public advice on issues associated with refining recreational fishery discard mortality rates for these three species.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide guidance on application of bycatch mortality rates associated with barotrauma reduction devices in recreational groundfish fisheries.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.5.b, GMT Report: Groundfish Management Team Report on Proposed Discard Mortality for Cowcod, Canary Rockfish, and Yelloweye Rockfish Released Using Descending Devices in the Recreational Fishery.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Discussion and Guidance on Application of Bycatch Mortality Rates
Associated with Barotrauma Reduction Devices in Groundfish Fisheries

PFMC
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