

MID-WATER RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The Council is considering whether to develop a mid-water recreational fishery to provide increased access to healthy pelagic groundfish while minimizing overfished species bycatch. In recent years exempted fishing permits (EFPs) have been recommended by the Council and issued by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to explore the feasibility of such a fishery. Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to discuss whether the data collected under the EFPs are sufficient to inform the development of regulations and the projected impacts to overfished species.

A proposal to develop a mid-water recreational fishery in Oregon, similar to the Oregon Recreational Fishing Alliance EFPs conducted in 2009 and 2011, was received for Council consideration (Agenda Item F.3.c, Holloway Proposal). The applicant recommends modifying the regulations to provide access to fishing grounds in Oregon seaward of 40 fathoms (fm) from April 1 to September 30, a time when fishing is only permitted shoreward of 30 fm under current regulations. Under the proposal, regulations would also define the gear configuration required in the area, which is intended to keep the terminal gear off the seafloor.

The Council should review the data collected under past EFPs and consider whether it is sufficient for promulgating regulations and understanding the impacts of the action. Additionally, the Council should recommend whether a mid-water recreational fishery is desired coastwide, or only in Oregon.

Council Task:

- 1. Provide guidance on the development of a mid-water recreational fishery including whether regulations should be coastwide or Oregon only.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.3.b, ODFW Letter: ODFW Letter of Support.
2. Agenda Item F.3.c, Holloway Proposal: Recreational Midwater Rockfish Fishery.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Provide Guidance on Further Consideration of a Mid-Water Sport Fishery regulations
- Kelly Ames