

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON APPROVE STOCK ASSESSMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was briefed by Mr. John DeVore on the latest stock assessments for petrale sole, darkblotched rockfish, bocaccio rockfish, as well as those stocks that were assessed using data moderate methods. The GAP also reviewed the stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reports documenting the review of these assessments and the catch reports provided for canary rockfish, Pacific ocean perch and yelloweye rockfish. The GAP offers the following comments and recommendations.

The GAP supports the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommendations to adopt the new data-moderate assessments for brown rockfish, China rockfish, copper rockfish, English sole, sharpchin rockfish, striptail rockfish, rex sole, and yellowtail rockfish in the north; the new full assessments for darkblotched rockfish and petrale sole; and the new update assessment for bocaccio.

The GAP was also informed by Mr. John Budrick from the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) that there is consideration for re-doing the China rockfish assessment and reviewing it at the September mop-up panel. The GAP's understanding is that a revised assessment would evaluate a change in the nearshore rockfish management line from 40°10' N lat. to the California-Oregon border at 42° N lat. The GAP does not support re-doing this assessment this cycle due to the disruption this might cause in this year's stock assessment process. The GAP's biggest concern is that the same stock assessment team that did the China rockfish assessment will also be conducting the cowcod assessment scheduled for a STAR Panel review in August. The GAP does not recommend a change in this year's process since it may affect the quality of the cowcod assessment. However, the GAP does recommend a full assessment (if possible) for China rockfish in 2015 that would explore a change in the nearshore rockfish management line.

The GAP supports the use of these new assessments to inform management in 2015 and beyond; however, we note the B_{MSY} value for petrale sole, darkblotched rockfish, and bocaccio rockfish are much lower than the proxy target harvest levels. The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) mandates a management limit of maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The National Standard 1 (NS1) guidelines expand upon this, suggesting that when MSY cannot be calculated, the use of a proxy is appropriate. Years ago, the calculation of MSY was not a standard output of the assessment model and the use of a proxy harvest target was the only option. In the case of these three species, the Stock Synthesis model used to calculate the current biomass now also estimates MSY. Further, the fishery management plan (FMP) allows the use of deterministic (i.e., model-based) MSY estimates from an approved stock assessment model. The deterministic B_{MSY} for petrale sole from the new assessment is 22% compared to its proxy target of 25%. Petrale stock depletion is currently estimated to be a 22.3% and therefore is actually rebuilt using the deterministic MSY estimate. Similarly, the deterministic B_{MSY} for darkblotched rockfish is 24% compared to the proxy target of 40%. Since the stock depletion is currently estimated to be 36% of initial biomass, it is now rebuilt using a deterministic MSY. Lastly, the deterministic B_{MSY} for bocaccio is 32% compared to the proxy target of 40% and is very near the deterministic target with a depletion of 31.4%. The GAP urges the Council to move to the use of a deterministic MSY as the harvest target for these species as allowed under the MSA and the groundfish FMP.