

West Coast Sanddab EFP

A. Date of application

September 3, 2010

B. Applicant

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C. Statement of purpose and goals

This EFP will test the possibility of minimizing the Trawl RCA to target underutilized species, such as Pacific Sanddabs, between the months of November through April. Trips will be 100% observed, as the trawl fishery will be fully rationalized on January 1, 2011.

D. Justification for EFP

Since the advent of the RCA in the early 2000's, the harvest of many healthy stocks of groundfish, such as Sanddabs, has been severely restricted. The structure of the current management system and its inability to monitor and control catch of certain overfished species precipitated the under harvest of these healthy stocks. With the Groundfish trawl fishery scheduled to be rationalized in 2011 with 100% observer coverage, the case can now be made that the RCA can be modified further to enable the harvest of these healthy stocks, while maintaining the catch of overfished species within their harvest guidelines. Additional pounds of quota will not have to be set aside, as the trawl vessels will utilize the quota pounds allocated to them and they will be able to additional pounds through the trawl rationalization program.

E. Broader significance and fleetwide applicability

While the Council has been very conservative managing the RCA to reduce the catch of overfished species, this EFP will allow the Council a glimpse into how the trawl RCA's may be modified in the future under a rationalized fishery.

There is support for this type of proposed RCA changes during periods 1, 2, and 6 as shown by the GMT Supplemental Report B7b, (Page 37, 2nd paragraph under Shoreward RCA Considerations):

For canary rockfish north of 40o 10' N. latitude, bycatch rates increase when the shoreward RCA is specified at 100 fm relative to the 75 fm line and shallower depths (Figure 6), especially during the summer and fall months (Periods 3, 4, and 5) in the north. As such, if the Council desires to implement a 100 fm RCA boundary for the rationalized trawl fishery in the north to provide more fishing opportunities while reducing the risk of encounters with canary rockfish, it might consider doing so during Periods 1, 2, and 6 when canary-bycatch rates are lowest (Figure 6).....We note that industry feedback indicates potential target species (e.g., Sanddabs) could be accessed between 75 and 100 fm with low bycatch interactions (e.g., Sanddabs). Note that north of Cape Alava, RCAs would need to be set at the 75 fm line to minimize canary rockfish interactions as bycatch rates increase dramatically deeper than 75 fm (Figure 7).

F. Duration of EFP

One year (periods 1, 2, and 6) with a possible renewal application in 2011 if necessary.

G. Vessels covered under this EFP

All trawl permitted vessels operating under the Groundfish rationalization program, who agree with the required protocols of this EFP, that are yet to be determined,

H. Description of species and amounts.

As mentioned earlier, no set asides need to occur for this EFP. All fish caught will be accounted for under the normal operation of the rationalized groundfish trawl fishery.

I. Monitoring

All trips will be 100% monitored by on-board observers under the trawl rationalization.

J. Data collection and Analysis Methodology

Monitoring and Data Collection

This EFP will be conducted under normal IFQ fishing operations for each EFP participant. Each EFP trip will be declared and approval from enforcement will be received before trips begin (i.e., enforcement will be notified prior to each trip). As described above, vessel participants will apply their personal Quota Pounds (QP) and Individual Bycatch Quota (IBQ) to all catches; no additional allowances are sought. These trips will also be observed as normal by monitors under the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP). As such, all data collected for these EFP trips by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) will be requested by participating vessel owners. The applicants will work with the WCGOP to develop queries that will provide needed data. These data will then be forwarded by the vessel owners to the EFP

applicants. Hence, data such as fishing location, depth, gear, tow duration, catch and discard (on a tow-by-tow basis) will be made available to the EFP applicants by the EFP participants for each trip conducted under this EFP.

Additional data that may be required for the successful conduct of this EFP but not collected by the WCGOP will be recorded by each EFP participant during these trips. For example, it will be imperative to record target species or species groups for each tow. Other information may include “bottom type”. If data such as this are not recorded by the WCGOP, then a supplemental log will be developed the additional data will be recorded by the skippers. The EFP participants will consult with each other and with researchers (e.g., Mr. Robert Hannah, ODFW) to determine whether a simple supplemental logbook will be required.

During a single trip, participating vessels will conduct tows (a) shoreward of the 75 fm RCA (the regulated shoreward RCA) and (b) between 75 fm and 100 fm (for which we seek exemption) while targeting similar species (e.g., mixed flatfish and Sanddabs) near similar latitudes. Towing within both of these depth strata during a single trip will be necessary to perform comparative analyses both between and within EFP trips. It must be pointed out that this does not prohibit these vessels from targeting other species during these declared EFP trips. For example, a portion of these EFP trips could be made seaward of the 200 fm RCA to catch Dover sole, Sablefish, and Thornyheads.

Analysis

A preliminary design and analytical plan is described herein. However, the applicants will seek additional direction from experts in this field to apply necessary adjustments to this preliminary design (e.g., Mr. Robert Hannah, ODFW Marine Resources Program). We also seek advice from the Council and its advisory bodies to improve upon this preliminary design.

Catch rates resulting from the prosecution of this EFP will be analyzed within the EFP project as well as between EFP project and data from other fisheries (e.g., bycatch rates provided by the WCGOP total mortality reports, the ODFW long leader research results, etc.).

Analyses within the EFP Project: Catch of target species and catch of overfished species (i.e., yelloweye and canary rockfish) will be analyzed for all EFP trips. The response variable will be catch (kg) per towing hour (CPUE) for each species or species groups. Response variables will be log transformed as $\log_e(\text{CPUE} + a)$, where a is the minimum nonzero value. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be used to identify significance of potential explanatory variables. Potential explanatory variables that will be included in the model are expected to be Depth strata (< 75 fm vs 75 – 100 fm), latitude strata (to be determined later), period, and vessel. In addition, nonparametric statistics will be used to verify significance of potential explanatory variables. Examples of nonparametric statistics that we anticipate applying include Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel row mean score statistics and Fishers protected least-significant-difference.

Comparison of EFP Results with other Data: Catch rates of overfished species calculated under this EFP will be compared to catch rates provided by the WCGOP for the trawl

fleet as well as catch rates provided by other sources (e.g., the ODFW long-leader research). Catch rates using the EFP data will be provided for (a) tows < 75 fm and (b) tows > 75 fm and < 100 fm). Catch rates obtained from other sources will be constrained by area and depth (e.g., < 75 fm) to best emulate areas and depths fished by vessels participating in this EFP. In addition, for these comparisons, catch rates will be calculated using the methods shown by the other data sources (e.g., we will calculate catch rates using the same methods as shown by the WCGOP for direct comparisons).

K. Criteria for vessel selection

Vessels have been chosen based on the individual owner/ captain history of successful participation with prior fishery management monitoring and special projects and no known fishery violations.

L. Time, place and gear.

Time

Fishing will take place during Periods 1, 2, and 6.

Location Lat/Long

Fishing will be conducted offshore between 40° 10.00' N lat. and 46° 18.00' N lat. Where possible, trips will be evenly distributed between the ports. Some port bias may be necessary due to availability of participating resources.

All tows between 75 and 100 fm will target mixed flat fish, primarily Pacific Sanddabs. Sanddab-directed tows shoreward of 75 fm will be identified before sets are made to assist with direct comparison of catch rates

Depth

The project will be conducted shoreward of the 100 fathom line.

Gear

The gear to be used will be selective flatfish trawls, which is consistent with current regulations