

GMT Report on Species Groupings for Future Management of the *Sebastes* Complex

The GMT has reported at previous meetings on its interest in developing management sub-groups for species currently managed under the generic *Sebastes* limits. At the April meeting, the Council requested that the GAP provide advice on the composition of these sub-groups at the June meeting. In an effort to facilitate that process, the GMT developed a preliminary distribution of species among three sub-groups, based on information from state biologists and the triennial trawl survey, for the GAP's review at this meeting. This preliminary organization of species is included in this supplemental report.

Upcoming efforts to unify the OY and management lines, are likely to require 1) identifying biomasses of *Sebastes* species in the Eureka area, and 2) recombining those amounts with biomasses in the present northern region. In conjunction with this effort, identification of the appropriate distribution of species biomasses among proposed *Sebastes* sub-groups is expected to require considerable GMT work between now and the September meeting. And, in addition to identifying overall ABCs and OYs for the new *Sebastes* sub-groups, there is the matter of identifying limited-entry and open-access allocations for each of the sub-groups. Because it is not possible to identify landings of individual *Sebastes* species that were landed by vessels that qualified for permits during the 1984-88 window period, we have relied upon using default percentages associated with overall *Sebastes* landings during that period. These percentages are 32.6% in the current southern area and 9.6% in the current northern area. It is important to note that if the *Sebastes* OY dividing line is moved to a location in the vicinity of Cape Mendocino in 2000, we will need to re-calculate default percentages, based on window landings within the new southern and northern areas.

The Council has made some exceptions to the default allocation policy for individual species, as was the case last year when no allocation was provided to open access from the newly specified OY for splitnose, which is a species primarily found at depths of greater than 200 meters. Two approaches are suggested for Council consideration regarding allocation of species in the new sub-groups between limited entry and open access. One approach would be to apply the current (or revised) default LE-OA percentages for each region to each of the species sub-groups in that region. Although this is the easiest approach, it is not likely to reflect recent or historical catch shares by these fleets. For instance, open access would receive roughly one-third of the slope species in the southern region. However, species composition data from the past four years suggest that open-access landings have been consistently less than 5-10% of the total landings of these species. Using the default percentages for each species sub-group would result in limited entry receiving a smaller share of slope species than is reflected by recent landings, while open access would receive a smaller share of near-shore species. Such inconsistency between recent landings and allocations would inevitably result in lower limits for each fleet for the species sub-groups where they have had greatest recent participation, and could be expected to complicate management of these sub-groups.

An alternative approach, which appears to maintain the spirit of the allocation provisions of Amendment 6, would be to maintain the overall default percentages across the three species sub-groups, but also establish individual LE-OA allocations within each sub-group that reflect traditional usage of those species. Because we are not able to identify window-period landings of these species, individually, we would have to rely upon recent landings as a proxy for relative historic participation within each species group. Presumably, this approach would reduce the potential for disruption of existing activities. Although, this approach will require more GMT efforts to document recent fleet landings within each group, it is likely that such efforts will be a necessary step in our attempts to identify suitable trip limits for the 2000 fishery, regardless of the allocation approach adopted. Identification of appropriate limits will not be easy, because recent landings data do not identify species in a way that allows them to be aggregated into the proposed new groupings. Even documenting total fleet landings of specific species will be difficult, due to recent port sampling effort, which has been insufficient to fully distribute rockfish landed in generic market categories to individual species. Additionally, this approach will require that the Council spend additional time this fall evaluating whether the proposed distribution of allocations for each group are reasonable and equitable, given recent landings and public comment. If desired, the GMT will provide a preliminary assessment of allocations using both approaches in September.

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM PRELIMINARY ROCKFISH GROUPINGS

NEAR-SHORE	NEAR/SHELF	SHELF/SLOPE
BLACK ROCKFISH	BOCACCIO	AURORA ROCKFISH
BLACK-AND-YELLOW ROCKFISH	BRONZESPOTTED ROCKFISH	BANK ROCKFISH
BLUE ROCKFISH	CANARY	BLACKGILL ROCKFISH
BROWN ROCKFISH	CHILIPEPPER	DARKBLOTCHED ROCKFISH
CALICO ROCKFISH	COWCOD ROCKFISH	POP
CHAMELEON ROCKFISH	DWARF-RED ROCKFISH	ROUGHEYE ROCKFISH
CHINA ROCKFISH	FLAG ROCKFISH	SHARPCHIN ROCKFISH
COPPER ROCKFISH	FRECKLED ROCKFISH	SHORTRAKER ROCKFISH
GOPHER ROCKFISH	GREENBLOTCHED ROCKFISH	SPLITNOSE ROCKFISH
GRASS ROCKFISH	GREENSPOTTED ROCKFISH	STRIPETAILED ROCKFISH
KELP ROCKFISH	GREENSTRIPED ROCKFISH	YELLOWMOUTH ROCKFISH
OLIVE ROCKFISH	HALFBANDED ROCKFISH	
QUILLBACK ROCKFISH	HONEYCOMB ROCKFISH	
TREEFISH	MEXICAN ROCKFISH	
VERMILION ROCKFISH	PINK ROCKFISH	
	PINKROSE ROCKFISH	
	PYGMY ROCKFISH	
	REDBANDED ROCKFISH	
	REDSTRIPE ROCKFISH	
	ROSETHORN ROCKFISH	
	ROSY ROCKFISH	
	SHORTBELLY ROCKFISH	
	SILVERGREY ROCKFISH	
	SPECKLED ROCKFISH	
	SQUARESPOT ROCKFISH	
	STARRY ROCKFISH	
	SWORDSPINE ROCKFISH	