

## INSEASON ADJUSTMENT OF BLACK ROCKFISH TRIP LIMITS

Situation: In November 1999, the Council divided the minor rockfish species in the *Sebastes* complex into nearshore, shelf, and slope categories, and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) calculated the allocations for open access and limited entry fisheries. Allocations between limited entry and open access are based, in principle, on the distribution of landings of a species during the limited-entry qualifying window. In previous years, the GMT and Council utilized the shares of all *Sebastes* landed during the qualifying window as representative shares for most individual or species-group allocations of *Sebastes* species. While this approach was adequate for dealing with the single generic *Sebastes* complex, it would not work well for the individual rockfish sub-groups in 2000. The GMT proposed maintaining the window-period *Sebastes* shares for the combined minor rockfish categories, but adjusting the percentages of the individual rockfish categories to better reflect traditional target species of the recreational, limited entry and open access sectors. Recreational and open access fishers generally operate in nearshore and shelf areas and target species that reside in those areas, while limited entry fishers (especially trawlers) tend to operate further off shore. In establishing limited entry and open access allocations, the anticipated recreational harvest is first deducted and then the allocation percentages are applied. Once the allocations are calculated, trip limits are developed with the intention of achieving the allocations while maintaining year-round fishing.

Black rockfish are included in the nearshore subgroup in both the northern and southern areas. The 1999 stock assessment, which looked at the portion of the stock north of Tillamook Head, Oregon, concluded the stock appears healthy relative to the 40-10 harvest policy and the full 700 mt acceptable biological catch was applied to the nearshore rockfish optimum yield (OY). The portion of the stock south of Tillamook Head has never been assessed; recent catch in the southern area has been about 500 mt. In accordance with the precautionary policy for unassessed stocks, only 50% of the recent catch amount (i.e., 250 mt) contributed to the nearshore rockfish OY. Thus, black rockfish contribute 950 mt to the nearshore rockfish OY in 2000.

The stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) document indicates the 1998 recreational harvest of black rockfish in Washington and Oregon was 807 mt, and California fishers took an additional 114 mt. It is unclear whether the bag limit reductions will reduce the recreational catch of black rockfish, but it is clear most of the available harvest will be taken by recreational fishers.

Several fishers protested about the open access trip limit (1,000 pounds per two months) when the Council proposed it in November 1999, because they recognized the economic impact on them would be substantial. The issue was raised again in public comment at the March meeting and in written comments (Public Comment B.8.). The Council agreed to revisit open access trip limits at this meeting.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Consider revisions to open access trip limits for black rockfish and other species.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Correspondence from Kenyon Hensel (Public Comment B.8.).

PFMC  
03/21/00