

## SABLEFISH THREE-TIER FISHERY SEASON AND LIMITS

Situation: At the April 2000 meeting, the Council reviewed preliminary information on tier limits and season length for the 2000 fishery. Revised limits were included in the newsletter for public review. At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to make final recommendations for the fixed gear sablefish primary fishery season. This fishery (including both the main opening and mop-up segments) is open only to limited entry vessels with sablefish endorsements operating north of 36° N latitude.

The Groundfish Management Team's preliminary estimates at the April Council meeting indicated the fishery would be in the range of eight days to ten days with Tier 1 limits of 76,000 pounds to 85,000 pounds (all limits are in round weight). The revised calculations, using the most recent data from the 1999 season, indicate an eight-day season or nine-day season is likely.

Predicting the number of participants and their actual performance is difficult, so a range of assumptions must be considered. The more conservative modeling approach suggests that an eight-day fishery with the following limits would be expected to achieve a 38% overhead. (Overhead is calculated as the percentage difference between what is actually caught and the amount that would be caught if every permit reached its limit.)

Tier 1: 85,000 pounds  
Tier 2: 38,000 pounds  
Tier 3: 22,000 pounds

Under a less conservative set of assumptions, a nine-day fishery with the smaller limits would be expected to achieve a 28% overhead:

Tier 1: 81,000 pounds  
Tier 2: 37,000 pounds  
Tier 3: 21,000 pounds

In April, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel recommended August 6 as the opening date for this year's fishery, based primarily on tides.

The 1999 main opening ran nine days, with cumulative limits of 84,800 pounds for Tier 1, 38,300 pounds for Tier 2, and 22,000 pounds for Tier 3. The fishery opened at noon on August 16 and ended at noon on August 25. As in years past, the fishery was preceded by a 48-hour closure, closed at sea, and was followed by a 30-hour closure. These closures applied to all fixed gear groundfish vessels (both limited entry and open access). The mop-up fishery ran September 20-25 with a cumulative vessel limit of 1,100 pounds.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Adopt recommendations for season length, opening date, tier limits and other measures relating to the 2000 limited entry fixed gear sablefish season.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Recommendations for the Duration and Cumulative Limits for the 2000 Primary Season of the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery, and Overview of the 1999 Fishery (Attachment D.6.a.).
2. Public Comment D.6.

PFMC  
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