

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE AD HOC ALLOCATION COMMITTEE MEETING,  
AUGUST 9-10, 2000

A. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jim Lone.

The committee added two discussion items to the agenda: implementation of the strategic plan, and specific management measures for 2001. LB Boydstun told the committee he needed to take any potential new recreational management proposals to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) on August 24-25.

B. Landings Compared to Rebuilding Goals

Dr. Jim Hastie reported lingcod landings by the open access sector will exceed the allocation by 10 to 15 mt. Canary rockfish landings by all sectors appear well below expectations, with only about 19 of the 103 mt optimum yield (OY) taken so far. Likewise, total landings of Pacific ocean perch are about 60 mt (OY is 227 mt). There was a long discussion about recreational catch of lingcod, bocaccio, and canary rockfish, and the possibility the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) system has overestimated catch this year, especially in northern California. It appears bocaccio landings will exceed the 2000 rebuilding harvest level. LB reported California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) did not recommend the Commission to take actions to restrict landings at this time. It appears the only real tool available to reduce harvest will be closures. The committee asked the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to prepare a simple table that portrays the projected catch levels in comparison to expected levels. Committee members expressed concern about canary rockfish discards; it is impossible to tell whether fishers are successfully avoiding canary rockfish, or are merely discarding it all. Committee members recognized this is a problem for other species as well, and supported an observer or other total-catch verification program.

C. GMT Report

Dr. Hastie reported darkblotched rockfish was assessed this year, and is apparently overfished. This slope rockfish is often caught in conjunction with Pacific Ocean perch (POP) and other northern slope species. One major unknown factor in the assessment is the amount of darkblotched rockfish caught in the foreign fishery and recorded as POP. If none of the foreign catch was darkblotched rockfish, the population is currently at 28% of the unfished level and 2001 OY would equal 150 mt. If 10% of the catch was darkblotched rockfish, the population is overfished and OY would be 100 mt. In order to protect this species, it may be necessary to limit the Dover sole, thornyheads and trawl-caught sablefish (DTS) complex fishery north of the Monterey management area. Seasonal availability will need to be considered in constructing management measures for 2001.

D. Review of contents, process and schedule for developing rebuilding plans - Jim Glock summarized the contents of rebuilding plans and said the Council must take final action on the canary and cowcod rebuilding plans at the November 2000 meeting.

E. Canary Rockfish Rebuilding Analysis and Plan Development

Dr. Hastie summarized the preliminary canary rockfish rebuilding analysis (no written report was available). The trawl surveys and samples of landings show an scarcity of older female canary rockfish, and the two possible explanations result in very different conclusions about the health and resilience of the stock. If the older female fish tend to die younger than males, then their breeding opportunities are reduced and the adult population is relatively small. The other possibility is older female canary rockfish are out there, but they avoid capture; perhaps they hide or migrate. In this case, the female fish do not die younger than males, which means their breeding opportunities are not reduced. It also means the population is bigger than estimated by the surveys. If the first scenario is true, there would be a 53% likelihood the stock would rebuild in 45 years with initial (2001) total harvest about 150 mt. Reducing 2001 harvest to 100 mt would increase the likelihood of rebuilding in 45 years to 80%. Under the second scenario, initial landings

of 250 mt would result in a 56% likelihood of rebuilding in 47 years; landings of 150 mt would increase the likelihood of rebuilding in that time. In order to get a 60% to 70% likelihood of rebuilding in time, 2001 landings should not exceed 100 to 150 mt. If the recreational fishery takes 50 to 60 mt, only 50 to 90 mt could be taken by commercial fishers. Targeted commercial fishers would have to be eliminated, and all commercial fishing on the shelf would have to be curtailed. In order to avoid unrecorded discards, committee members discussed requiring vessels to carry observers whenever they fish groundfish on the shelf. The GMT put forward two basic scenarios:

If the canary OY is 200 mt, and recreational catch is 80 mt (40% of OY), commercial catch would be 120 mt (60% of OY). Management could be similar to that currently in effect. If the 2001 OY is 150 mt, and recreational catch is 60 mt, commercial catch could be 90 mt. Commercial management might need to be somewhat tighter. If OY is less, commercial fishing opportunities would be more constrained.

LB said the real challenge in the south is bocaccio, where recreational landings may have already exceeded the expected amount. Shorter seasons and reduced bag limits may be the only tools available to keep catches down next year.

#### F. Cowcod Rebuilding Analysis and Plan Development

The cowcod OY for 2001 will likely be less than 5 mt, as in 2000. LB noted California is considering area closures and prohibiting any retention of this species. OY may be as small as 25 fish next year, and will not exceed 660 fish.

#### G. Review POP and Coastwide Lingcod Assessments

The new POP analysis indicates the stock is likely out of the overfished condition at this time, but will stay in a rebuilding plan until stock abundance reaches the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) biomass level. That would occur within 10 years under several harvest levels. OY may be near 500 mt next year. It may be necessary to revise the current rebuilding plan in light of the new information.

Dr. Hastie and the GMT had questions about the lingcod assessment and needed to consult the authors before they could summarize the results.

#### H. Direction to Council staff, GMT, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and Other Entities

The committee asked Council staff to prepare a summary of the committee meeting as quickly as possible, email the draft to the committee, and distribute it to GAP members as soon as the committee gave the okay.

#### I. Strategic Plan Implementation

LB indicated California will request the Council and NMFS to defer management of nearshore groundfish species to the state, or remove several species from the fishery management plan so the state would have exclusive management authority. He suggested the three coastal states develop a joint proposal, including which species would be included, the management proposed, what the state authority would be, and how to provide access for (in and out-of-state) fishers. He said he would work with Eileen Cooney to develop specific recommendations and would then share the results with the other states. Washington and Oregon indicated they may not have the staff and funding to take over management at this time. Phil stressed that if Washington takes over management, he wants the state to have authority over all fishers, not just Washington residents. Bill Robinson supported the ideas, and noted delegation of authority would not necessarily be coastwide. LB indicated he hoped to have a proposal developed within about 6 months.

#### J. 2001 Management Changes

The committee held a "brainstorming" session and listed a range of management approaches for 2001, including alternative priorities the Council should consider.

Management Priority Options

1. Eliminate regulatory discards.
2. Do not exceed the OY for any overfished species.
3. Maintain year-round deliveries of fresh fish.

Management Options Considered

1. No shelf fishing without observer or other verification; full retention of all or identified species. The shelf could be defined geographically (by depth or latitude/longitude) or by species. Fishing could be delayed until after January 1. There should be stiff penalties for anyone caught discarding fish.
2. Vessels choose which periods they will fish (perhaps 3 of 6 periods); larger trip limits would be available.
3. Single, shorter season with large trip limits. This might be a modified derby with all fishing to close when the first species OY is reached.
4. A series of short seasons with larger trip limits initially; seasons later in the year might be shorter or might have smaller trip limits. If an OY is reached, fishing would be over for the year.
5. Full retention, mandatory observer coverage. When the first OY is reached, the fishery closes.
6. Differential trip limits for different fishing strategies, or for vessels carrying observers.
7. One or two landings per period, no limits (or larger limits). Periods might be several months long.
8. Seasons for specific species or complexes.
9. For the open access fishery, establish a summer season with only minimal catch allowances outside the season.

The committee concluded an observer/verification probably could not be in place before July 2001 at the earliest. The committee discussed alternative definitions of full retention (all species, or designated species), what catch allowances could be provided outside designated seasons, potential seasons to consider (e.g., the whiting season, winter Dover season).

These were compiled into the following:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
LE			Open Access, Whiting						LE		
Open access: no shelf species			LE			LE			Open access: no shelf species		
vessels pick 2 or 3 months, continuous						vessels pick 2 or 3 months, continuous OR, full retention with verification; no fishing without verification					

SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL FISHERY OPTIONS AFFECTING SHELF  
ROCKFISH AND LINGCOD (pertinent sections in **bold** )

**The rockfish and lingcod management line should be moved from Lopez Point to Point Conception.** This would place Avila Beach and Morro Bay in the northern California management area and be consistent with the statistical area boundary used by the MRFSS. The Council will be asked for the same regulation.

**Rockfish and lingcod closure periods south of Cape Mendocino should be extended to November-February in the south and January-April or March-June in the north.** These additional

closure periods may be needed to reduce the bocaccio catch to under 100 mt in the combined commercial and recreational fisheries. The catch of lingcod in the combined fisheries would be projected to be at or under 130 mt. The Council will be asked for the same regulation, in addition to closing the commercial fisheries (trawl and fixed gear) for nearshore and shelf rockfish and lingcod during these same periods.

**Fishing for and retention of cabezon, greenlings, scorpionfish, sanddabs, sheephead, and ocean whitefish, should be prohibited during the rockfish and lingcod closures south of Cape Mendocino.** These closures would be intended to minimize bycatch of rockfish and lingcod when fishing for these species. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulation for cabezon, greenlings, scorpionfish, and sanddabs, both recreational and commercial.

**Reduce the bag limit for bocaccio from three to two or one fish.** This would be done to further reduce targeting on the species, but could increase discard of dead fish. The Council would be asked to adopt the same regulation.

**Reduce the number of hooks that anglers may use when fishing for rockfish or lingcod from three to two or one.** This would be done to reduce the chances of catching more than a limit of bocaccio on a single drop. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulation.

**Close the season or part of the season for lingcod, cabezon, and greenlings south of Cape Mendocino during September-April.** This would apply to fishing for and possession of any of these species. These closures would be intended to meet biological and allocation objectives for the individual species and at the same time protect nesting fish. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulations, both recreational and commercial (fixed gear and trawl).

**Reduce the lingcod bag limit from two to one fish.** This would be done to meet biological and allocation objectives for the species. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulation.

**Increase the minimum size limit for cabezon from 14 to 15-18 inches.** Increasing the size limit will save immature fish and contribute to meeting biological and allocation objectives for the species. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulation, both recreational and commercial.

Provide for the transport of recreational fin fish through restricted areas under terms and conditions specified on an annual permit that may be issued by the Manager of the Marine Region. We suggest a \$20 fee for issuing the permit. This provision is in response to a request from Mr. Robert Fletcher, Sportfishing Association of California and others. The Council will be asked to recognize this provision.

Require that operators of commercial permit fishing vessels (CPFVs) carry and cooperate with department and federal fishery observers on trips when space is available and at no charge to the sponsoring agency. Also, the department may require an explanation be submitted to the Manager of the Marine Region, on a form provided by the department, whenever observer coverage is denied. At-sea fishery observations are required in the CPFV fishery to verify logbook entries and to differentiate the species of fish in the catch. CPFV operators have increasingly denied fishery observers access to their fishing trips in recent years.

**Prohibit fishing for and retention of cowcod.** This option is intended to eliminate targeting on cowcod, but could increase discard of dead fish. The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulation, both recreational and commercial.

**Prohibit recreational fishing year round for federal groundfish (Option 1), sheephead, California halibut, and ocean whitefish as follows:** Area 1: The area bound by 118°50' W longitude, 33°50' N latitude, 120° W longitude, and 32°20' N latitude. Area 2: The area bound by 117°50' W longitude, 32°50' N latitude, 118° W longitude, and 32°30' N latitude (see attached map). **Option 2: Is the same as Option 1, but excludes federal nearshore rockfish, cabezon, scorpionfish, sanddabs, greenlings, and sheephead.** The Council will be asked to adopt the same regulations for federal groundfish, both recreational and commercial.

COMMERCIAL FISHERY OPTIONS

**Prohibit commercial prawn trawling in Areas 1 and 2 described above.** This would be done to ensure cowcod are not taken incidentally to fishing for prawns in these areas.

PFMC  
08/29/00

