

DRAFT REPORT OF THE AD-HOC ALLOCATION COMMITTEE  
October 23-24, 2000

The Chairman of the Committee, Jim Lone, called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Committee members in attendance were:

Mr. Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
Mr. Burnie Bohn, Oregon Department Fish Wildlife (ODFW)  
Mr. LB Boydston, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)  
Dr. Dave Hanson, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Mr. Jim Lone (Committee Chairman)  
Mr. Bill Robinson, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

The Committee was assisted by Jim Glock and Don McIsaac (Council Staff), Eileen Cooney (NOAA Counsel), and Yvonne DeReynier. Groundfish Management Team (GMT) members Brian Culver, Dave Thomas, Mark Saelens, and Jim Hastie assisted the committee as needed, along with Lt. Dave Cleary (OSP). Council staff member Mr. Dan Waldeck was also in attendance, and Council members Ralph Brown and Hans Radtke. Public attendance represented groundfish trawl, shrimp trawl, commercial open access, seafood processing, and the recreational fishery.

**Status of 2000 Catch Levels for Lingcod and Bocaccio**

LB Boydston reported California has decided to close the recreational fishery for lingcod south of Cape Mendocino on November 1 due to higher than anticipated catch levels. The expected total recreational catch of lingcod in the region is 218 mt; the closure will prevent catch of an additional 53 mt. The Washington recreation fishery will also close, as scheduled, on October 31. Oregon will remain open. Mr. Boydston also reported the California Fish and Game Commission decided not to take action to close the recreational rockfish fishery because the total bocaccio catch is expected to be very near the OY. The recreational catch is higher than expected, but the commercial catch low enough to offset the overage.

The GMT also reported the coastwide canary rockfish is expected to reach 120-135 mt in 2000, well below the 200 mt OY but far in excess of the proposed 2001 OY of 60 mt. Jim Hastie also noted that landings of darkblotched rockfish this year comprise a lower percentage of the total slope rockfish landings (about 30% rather than the previous 50%), which means there can be more fishing opportunities for other slope rockfish next year. Mark Saelens reported ODFW has charted locations of year 2000 trawl activity to date, and it appears the fleet is avoiding areas of darkblotched abundance.

**Proposed 2001 Harvest Levels**

Jim Glock summarized the preliminary OY's adopted for public review at its September meeting. The Committee focused on those species where the preliminary OY's represented significant declines from 2000 and OY's that would likely be a controlling stock from a management perspective.

Jim Hastie reported the 1998 whiting assessment is being updated to include recent whiting harvest levels, and the results are similar to the original projections. The 1998 assessment predicted a population decline which will likely require reduction of the OY next year. He indicated the U.S. OY may be near 190,000 mt, down from the current 232,000 mt. He also discussed the recent Pacific ocean perch analysis and rebuilding plan, and said the 2001 OY may be lower than recommended by the GMT if the SSC does not concur. He said there will not be an update on darkblotched rockfish, and the question about historical foreign catch levels is unanswered. The upper OY (130 mt) is based on an assumed foreign catch of about 5%.

**Draft Rebuilding Plans for Canary Rockfish and Cowcod**

Jim Glock briefly summarized the draft rebuilding plans, pointing out the canary plan would set an annual catch limit of 60 mt for the entire rebuilding period, while the cowcod plan would set annual harvest at about 1% of the adult biomass (2.4 mt in 2001). The Committee did not spend time discussing the specific aspects of the draft rebuilding programs relative to the different recruitment assumptions or probabilities of rebuilding. the

### **Management Options for 2001, Preliminary Impact Analysis and Results of Stakeholder Meetings**

Mr. Boydston reported that 3 in-state meetings were held in California following the September Council meeting. More than 200 interested members of the public attended the meetings and there was a thorough discussion of the management challenges facing California's commercial and recreational fisheries. Mr. Boydston indicated that California plans to continue the basic 2000 recreational management approach into 2001, but will allow recreational fishing in the nearshore areas during the rockfish closures. There will be a 4-month closure option in the central California region. He said they have developed different configurations of the proposed cowcod closure areas and will consider allowing nearshore fishing within the area. He noted that bocaccio should also be helped by the closure. He expects a closure will be adopted, but the specific details aren't clear yet. The 2-month closure will likely be extended to 4 months in the southern region, and the bag limits for bocaccio and canary rockfish will be reduced. He hopes the lingcod bag can be retained or increased; the minimum size for cabezon will be increased to 15 inches. He said measures for state-managed species will be coordinated to minimize bycatch of groundfish species.

Burnie Bohn reported that Oregon convened a special meeting last week and will hold another after the allocation committee meeting. The meeting concluded that 2000 management measures were probably too conservative because landings will end up below OY. It may not be necessary to reduce things much next year. He said they discussed the FMA proposal, and included it on the Council's list as "option 5." He said if an observer program can be in place by July 2001, that may open up some additional options later in the year. They did not discuss open access management much, except for the Pacific City provisions; they would like to continue them in 2001. There were no recreational representatives at the meeting, so recreational management was not discussed much. However, they mentioned the possibility of a "less than three" canary rockfish bag sub-limit and the desire to have a lingcod bag limit of 2 fish. With respect to the shrimp fishery, they want to develop a management package before April. They have not been able to identify areas where canary rockfish can clearly be avoided.

Phil Anderson reported Washington held two meetings. He said it may be possible to reduce the recreational canary rockfish catch, but Washington doesn't catch much anyway (about 2 mt this year). Washington wants to increase the lingcod bag limit to two, and will continue the closure period. He said the shrimp fishers who attended one of the meetings seemed willing to consider fish excluders and footrope modifications to reduce canary bycatch. In addition, he reported that WDFW staff had been examining 1999 logbook data for targeting locations and bycatch rates for canary rockfish in different areas and fisheries.

Peter Leipzig presented the FMA proposal to the committee, noting the commercial catch of canary will be about 40 mt this year. The current management has resulted in a reduction in canary rockfish catch of more than 90%. The proposal for 2001 would set different limits north and south of Cape Mendocino and at different times during the year.

### **Recommendations for 2001 Management**

The Committee started the process of developing a management strategy for 2001 with the recognition that Canary rockfish are taken in the majority of commercial and recreational fisheries north of Cape Mendocino, California. The Committee created a "canary scorecard" to keep a running tally of the quantity of canary taken in the commercial and recreational fisheries that were added to a 2001 management proposal. The Committee began with the creation of a suite of recreational fisheries for each of the three states designed to minimize canary catches followed by an effort to build a set of fisheries for the commercial sector. In general, the Committee prioritized fishing opportunities that created the greatest harvest of healthy stocks while minimizing or eliminating the bycatch of canary rockfish.

Information provided by the GMT indicated that canary rockfish generally reside in depths ranging from 50 to 150 fathoms. As a result of the extremely low OY needed to meet the draft rebuilding program, the fishing opportunities recommended by the Committee are largely confined to those waters inside or outside these water depths and include closures of this corridor.

**Recreational** The committee prepared a summary of the recreational proposals (see table) and estimated the canary rockfish catch would fall between 46 and 70 mt. To reduce the coastwide recreational catch of canary to 46 mt, California would have to close the recreational fishery for rockfish for four months, California and Oregon would each be required to reduce the canary bag limit to one fish, and Washington would be required to modify its bag limit to no more than 2 canary or yelloweye in their rockfish bag limit.

**Commercial** The GMT advised the committee that under normal conditions, 3 mt of canary rockfish would be expected to be taken in the at-sea whiting fishery and that 11 mt had been landed in the 1999 pink shrimp trawl fishery down from nearly 30 mt in 1998. With the extremely low quantity of canary available for harvest, the committee looked for commercial fishing strategies that would result in zero or near zero bycatch of canary rockfish. With the exception of the fishery south of Cape Mendocino, the whiting fishery, and a mid-water widow fishery, the strategy developed by the Committee restricts all other commercial fishing on the shelf (50-150 fathoms) where canary rockfish are known to reside. The Committee prioritized consideration of fishing strategies on the slope (>150 fathoms) including fisheries designed to target Dover sole, thornyheads and sablefish commonly referred to as the (DTS) complex fishery. The GMT calculated the harvest quantities of the target species that could be expected in addition to the amount of canary bycatch anticipated, (see table). It was noted that this fishing strategy would be limited by the OY for Shortspine thornyhead and that the Darkblotched rockfish OY would not be exceeded. The GMT will try to further develop this option including trip limit estimates.

Sablefish bycatch apportionment options were presented by Jim Hastie in a revised analysis of sablefish discard/mortality apportionment options. The committee discussed the analysis but did not include a recommendation to the Council in this report regarding the options for apportioning the bycatch mortality between the sectors.

In addition, Phil Anderson noted that trawlers might leave as much as 400 mt of sablefish unharvested due to shortspine thornyhead constraints, and noted that the Strategic Plan proposed allowing a sector access their allocation of a particular species using an alternative gear type. He thought the Council should consider allowing trawlers to use open access gear (e.g., pots, or hook and line) to harvest their allocation. The Committee also discussed the possibility of using an EFP to investigate different strategies to harvest healthy species without impacting canary rockfish. Examples included a summer arrowtooth flounder/sablefish fishery or a mid-water yellowtail fishery.

#### **General Concerns and Considerations**

Bill Robinson expressed concern that the amount of canary landed in the 2000 fishery may not accurately reflect the total fishery related mortalities of canary rockfish in the 2000 fishery. Landing data presented by the GMT indicates the catch has been reduced by over 90% as a result of the management measures adopted last November for this year's fishery. However, if the 2000 management measures increased canary discard rates, the total canary mortalities may be significantly higher than indicated by the total landings. This speaks to the need for the Council to have a means of verifying its management intent through an on-board observer program.

Eileen Cooney stressed the need for a full discussion of why the committee did not choose alternative management approaches, such as prohibiting all landings of canary rockfish or requiring that all canary rockfish be retained so the total amount could be tabulated. She said if there are any fisheries that would be eliminated, the Council needs to explain why. Also, why did the committee not recommend a "no fishing" option, or require that vessels carry observers.

The pink shrimp fishery's bycatch of canary rockfish was discussed. The pink shrimp fishery is managed by

the states however the regulations pertaining to the harvest of groundfish taken in the fishery falls under the jurisdiction of the federal groundfish regulations. The 1999 landed catch of canary rockfish was 11 mt and the Committee discussed means of reducing it by 50% or 5.5 mts. The most effective means of achieving this reduction would be through the use of finfish excluders. The states would necessarily need to take the lead on a such a requirement. If the success of the 2001 management strategy for canary rockfish is partly dependent on constraining the bycatch of canary rockfish in the pink shrimp fishery, the Council and NMFS would need some certainty from the states that the measures intended to accomplish the reductions would be enacted by the states.

Public Comment - Most of the public in attendance represented commercial fishing and processing interests. The majority of the public comment stressed the need for fair and equitable sharing of the conservation burden, and participants noted the impact on the commercial sectors appeared much more severe than on the recreational sector. There was also a call for fleet reduction that would be supported by the entire commercial industry.

FISHERY	Fishery Description	Catches/Impacts	
		<u>Range of Options</u>	
Recreational			
	WA sport	2	2
	OR sport	16	21
	CA sport	26	45
Trawl			
	Shrimp	5.5	11
	Whiting		3
	Slope LS Thornyhead >150 fm only	0	0
	Slope Sablefish >150 fm only	0	0
	Slope Dover >150 fm only	0	0
	Slope Petrale >150 fm only	0	0
	Midwater Widow	1	1.5
	Nearshore Flatfish <50 fm	1	1
	South of Mendocino all depths trawl	1	1
	Midwater Yellowtail	0	0
	Summer Arrowtooth >150 fm only	0	0
Fixed Gear			
	LE except 3-Tier Sablefish	1	1
	LE 3-T Sablefish	1	1
	South of Mendocino reduced Widow, YT targets	1	1
	OA incl salmon troll close 50 - 150 fm	2	2
	OA South of Mendocino	0	0
Listing of other fisheries zeroed out			
Research and Stock Assessment??			
Totals		<u>57.5</u>	<u>90.5</u>

COMMERCIAL FISHERY HARVEST ESTIMATES

Method: Build a commercial management proposal, starting with target species/gear/locations with lowest bycatch first, then layering on target species/gear/locations with higher bycatch.

Assumption: Fishing in water deeper than 150 to 200 fathoms has near zero canary bycatch.

Fisheries that meet that standard: (1) Dover sole, thornyheads and trawl-caught sablefish (DTS) complex [shortspine thornyhead is the constraining factor], and (2) midwater trawl fishery for widow rockfish, especially in winter [canary is constraining factor].

Approach: divide year into quarters (3 months each), and schedule target fisheries where bycatch rates (or expected bycatch amounts) are lowest.

Example (in metric tons per quarter); DTS limited by shortspine thornyhead

target species	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter
longspine thornyhead	target: 400	target: 300	target: 200	target: 400
	total, inc. incidental: 487	total, inc. incidental: 389	total, inc. incidental: 275	total, inc. incidental: 491
sablefish	target: 300	target: 200	--	target: 100
	total, inc. incidental: 602	total, inc. incidental: 535	total, inc. incidental: 492	total, inc. incidental: 654
Dover sole	target: 2,200	target: 1,500	target: 1,300	target: 2,000
	total, inc. incidental: 2,269	total, inc. incidental: 1,551	total, inc. incidental: 1,312	total, inc. incidental: 2,091
Petrale sole	target: 700	--	--	target: 700
Widow rockfish, midwater	900	--	--	900
<OR>	450	450	450	450
<OR>	600	450	450	600

Total expected shortspine thornyhead catch: 545 mt

Total expected canary rockfish catch: zero mt (if no widow targets in 2nd and 3rd quarters); otherwise, 1.5 mt.

PROPOSED RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

	California			Oregon	Washington	expected total
	South	Central	North			
canary	1	1	1	1	2 (canary+yelloweye)	
bocaccio	2	2	--	--	--	
lingcod	2 @ 26"	2 @ 26"	same as Oregon?	2 @24"	2 @ 24"	
	closed Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec	closed Mar-Jun	same season as Oregon	closed Mar-Apr, or no closure	closed Jan- Mar and Nov-Dec	
cowcod	1 per angler 2 per boat	1 per angler 2 per boat	--	--	--	
rockfish	10	10	10	10	10	
total expected catch	40 mt		2	21 mt	2 mt	70 mt
	30 mt		2	16 mt	2 mt	46 mt

Assuming recreational total of 70 mt, plus 3 mt in whiting fishery, plus 11 mt in the pink shrimp trawl fishery, the total canary catch would be 84 mt. Assuming recreational total of 44 mt, plus 3 mt in whiting fishery, plus 11 mt in the pink shrimp trawl fishery, the total canary catch would be 60 mt.