

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) COMMENTS ON STATUS OF FISHERIES AND INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

This report includes two tables. The first summarizes commercial landings through May of 2001. Limited entry and open access are combined in this table, because May totals by fleet are not yet available. The second table contains recommendations for trip limit changes beginning July 1.

The group of species identified as overfished has been grouped at the top of Table 1. Cowcod is not included, because retention was prohibited in the commercial fishery. Amongst these species, widow rockfish is the only one which is currently facing early attainment, with the fishery having landed nearly two-thirds of the Optimum Yield (OY) through May. It does appear at this time that the at-sea whiting fishery will not catch the entire amount set aside for their bycatch, which could make another 100-150 mt available later in the year.

The other species facing early attainment is Dover sole. Landings through May represent about 70% of the OY. For the first four months of the year, the trawl fishery operated with limits of 65,000 lb per 2-months north of 40°10', and 35,000 lb per 2-months south of that line. Under these limits, 1,700 mt were landed in the first period and 2,500 mt in the second period. Beginning in May, the northern 2-month limit was lowered to 20,000 lb per 2-months, however coastwide landings remained above 850 mt in May. Since May is the first month of the 2-month period, it is not clear whether or not this comprises the majority of Dover landings that will occur during the third period.

For several species, the percentage attainments of annual allocations have been shaded in Table 1, indicating that increases in limits are being recommended. Not all species with low percentage attainments are included in this group, due to considerations for depleted stocks. The arrows along the right-hand side of the table highlight some of these relationships that have affected trip-limit recommendations.

Table 2 is divided into sections for the limited-entry trawl fishery, and both fixed-gear fisheries for sablefish. It should be noted that many of the current limits for limited-entry fixed-gear are specified as "same as trawl". Therefore, several of the recommendations made for trawl limit changes would also apply to the limited-entry fixed-gear fleet. Darkblotched rockfish is not a major component of the slope rockfish assemblage south of 40°10', and landings of both southern minor slope and splitnose rockfish are currently below 15% of the OYs. As a result of the very limited participation for these species, the GMT recommends increasing both of these 2-month limits from 14,000 lb to 25,000 lb. Although only 10% of the northern minor slope rockfish has been landed through May, concern over constraining darkblotched mortality has led us to recommend only a minor increase from 1,500 lb to 2,000 lb per 2-months.

Landings of Pacific ocean perch (POP) are less than 25% of the OY adopted from the rebuilding analysis. The original schedule of trip limits for 2001 recognized the higher likelihood of POP bycatch during the summer months, by increasing the limit from 1,500 lb per month (January-April) to 2,500 lb (May-October). The GMT has recommended increasing the summer limit to 3,500 lb per month, in the hope that discard can be reduced without increasing targeting on POP or exceeding the OY adopted by the Council. However, the GMT believes that the Council should clearly articulate either a general or case-by-case policy regarding the intent to allow rebuilding OYs to be fully achieved (through inseason trip-limit adjustment), or to maintain pre-season limits throughout the year for overfished stocks, unless there is a clear risk of exceeding an OY.

Response to the rapid pace of Dover sole landings is complicated by equity concerns arising from the schedule of limits in place for the entire year. The area south of 40°10' was scheduled to maintain a limit of 35,000 lb per 2-months throughout the entire year. North of 40°10', the schedule provided 65,000 lb per 2-months through April, and 20,000 lb per 2-months, thereafter. Following discussion with the Groundfish Advisory Panel (GAP), we recommend reducing the current limits in both areas by 5,000 lb, however it appears unlikely that this change will be sufficient to avoid early attainment. It is also recommended that

these limits be converted to monthly time periods in September to facilitate implementing further changes in October.

In April, the Council adopted an interim change in trip limits for remaining flatfish. This limit allowed up to 50,000 lb per month of non-Dover flatfish caught with small footrope, with caps on petrale sole and arrowtooth flounder of 15,000 lb and 10,000 lb, respectively. The latter sub-limits were intended to restrict targeting on those species, based on concerns over canary bycatch. In order to reduce discard of incidentally caught arrowtooth, without encouraging targeting, the GMT recommends changing the structure of the remaining flatfish limit through October. That recommendation for small-footrope trawls is to allow 7,500 lb of arrowtooth per trip, up to 30,000 lb per month, with a monthly cumulative of 45,000 lb for all remaining non-Dover flatfish, of which no more than 15,000 lb may be petrale.

Due to pace of the widow fishery, the GMT discussed two major options for the remainder of the year with the GAP. One approach would be to continue with the scheduled limits and close the fishery before achieving the OY. The other was to remove the mid-water options for widow and yellowtail rockfish from July through September, with intention to review the status in September and reinstate those options in October, if possible. The GAP expressed a preference for the latter approach, which was incorporated into the GMT recommendations. The GMT recommendation includes placeholder mid-water trawl limits of 10,000 lb and 15,000 lb for widow and yellowtail, respectively, in October. The scheduled small-footrope trawl limits for both species would continue, as planned. Since the shore-based whiting fishery will be continuing throughout the summer, and widow and yellowtail will be encountered in that fishery, the GMT reviewed bycatch in whiting deliveries during the 2000 fishery. We have identified an option which would allow payment to whiting fishers for widow and yellowtail up to cumulative limits that are twice the amounts available under the small footrope limit, but are subject to additional per-trip restrictions. If this option is not adopted, whiting fishers could receive payment for these species up to the small-footrope limit, with higher amounts subject to forfeiture under the terms of the Exempted Fishing Permit.

Due to the slow pace of the Daily-Trip-Limit (DTL) fisheries for sablefish in 2000, the Council implemented an experimental once-per-week landing option from October through December of last year. Data from that experiment were not available for analysis prior to the April Council meeting, but were presented to the GAP at this meeting. Although the 2001 fishery has progressed somewhat faster than the 2000 fishery, landings through May represent only about 25% of the targets for the DTL fisheries. Given the desirability to small boats of access to this fishery during the summer, rather than after September, the GMT recommends re-instating a once-per-week delivery option, beginning July 1. In addition to the existing 300-lb per day option, limited-entry fixed-gear vessels would have the option of making only one delivery per week up 900 lb. These options could be combined over the course of a cumulative period, but not within a single week. A cumulative limit of 3,600 lb per 2-months would apply to all limited-entry participants. Open-access vessels would have the option of 300 lb per day or one delivery per week up to 800 lb, with a 2-month cumulative limit of 4,800 lb. Cumulative limits in both fisheries would be converted to monthly periods beginning in September, in order to allow changes to be implemented October 1. These weekly and cumulative options are more restrictive for both fisheries than the experimental limits provided at the close of 2000.

PFMC
06/14/01

Table 1.--Combined limited-entry/open-access inseason status through May, 2001

	Individual months					State distribution of tonnage thru May				2000 Thru May	Landings thru May		Annual Allocation
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	WA	OR	CA	Total		mnts	% of ann.	
Lingcod	0	0	0	0	29	3	11	15	29	30	29	11.6%	251
Canary Rockfish	0	3	1	2	1		3	4	7	13	7	20.0%	35
Bocaccio (MT&CP)	2	5	0	0	4			11	11	6	11	22.9%	48
POP (V&C&E)	10	12	13	12	13	15	44	1	60	35	60	23.5%	255
Widow Rockfish	164	296	254	254	135	141	614	348	1,103	1,699	1,103	64.9%	1,699
Darkblotched Rockfish	0	13	6	16	4	2	22	15	39	91	39	36.8%	106
Yellowtail (V&C&E)	146	231	302	301	73	417	615	21	1,053	462	1,053	51.0%	2,066
North Near-shore RF	7	15	19	36	26		55	48	103	37	103	25.6%	402
North Shelf rockfish	2	1	4	6	14	7	11	9	27	45	27	3.5%	774
North Slope rockfish	18	14	19	19	30	12	64	24	100	120	100	10.3%	975
Chilipepper (MT&CP)	21	115	2	2	124			264	264	121	264	14.6%	1,808
Splitnose RF (MT&CP)	3	10	16	13	4			46	46	30	46	11.9%	387
South Near-shore RF	3	17	1	5	12			38	38	26	38	35.8%	106
South Shelf rockfish	0	3	0	1	4			8	8	22	8	2.8%	285
South Slope rockfish	15	23	24	16	16			94	94	40	94	17.8%	529
Dover sole	609	1,070	1,278	1,260	867	559	2,622	1,903	5,084	4,489	5,084	69.7%	7,293
Longspine THDS	75	144	197	119	150	8	291	386	685	915	685	33.5%	2,043
Shortspine THDS	42	56	75	42	71	18	114	154	286	366	286	52.4%	546
TWL Sable (V&C&E&M)	111	170	217	158	376	64	464	504	1,032	864	1,032	40.7%	2,534
NTW Sable (V&C&E&M)	27	40	57	26	65	15	36	164	215	74	215	24.5%	877
Sablefish Conception	1	13	2	16	7			39	39	47	39	18.4%	212

Percentages in bold indicate early attainment situations, while those in shaded cells indicate species with recommendations for limit increases. Arrows are intended to highlight relationships which constrain the ability to fully achieve OYs of some species.

Table 2.--GMT recommendations for trip limit changes

Species/groups	MAY-JUNE	JULY-AUGUST	SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER	NOVEMBER-DECEMBER
Limited-Entry Trawl				
Minor slope rockfish				
North of Cape Mend.	1,500 lb / 2 months		2,000 lb / 2 months	
South of Cape Mend.	14,000 lb / 2 months		25,000 lb / 2 months	
Splitnose-South	14,000 lb / 2 months		25,000 lb / 2 months	
POP	2,500 lb / month	3,500 lb / month		1,500 lb / month
DTS north of Cape Mend.				
Dover sole	20,000 lb / 2 months	15,000 lb / 2 months	7,500 lb / month	
DTS south of Cape Mend.				
Dover sole	35,000 lb / 2 months	30,000 lb / 2 months	15,000 lb / month	
Non-dover flatfish (small footrope)	50,000 lb / month, of which no more than 15,000 lb may be petrale sole, and 10,000 lb may be arrowtooth	45,000 lb / month, of which no more than 15,000 lb may be petrale sole. In addition, 7,500 lb of arrowtooth may be landed per trip, up to 30,000 lb / month.		No change from existing schedule
(large footrope)	arrowtooth: 5,000 lb / trip; petrale sole: prohibited; all other: 1,000 lb / trip	arrowtooth: 5,000 lb / trip; petrale sole: 100 lb / trip; all other: 1,000 lb / trip		No change from existing schedule
Widow-Coastwide (mid-water only)	10,000 lb / 2 mo	None, except with whiting	10,000 lb / mo.	10,000 lb / 2 months
Small footrope		1,000 lb / month		1,000 lb / month
Yellowtail-North (mid-water only)	15,000 lb / 2 months	None, except with whiting	15,000 lb / mo.	20,000 lb / 2 months
Small footrope as flatfish bycatch		1,500 lb / month		1,500 lb / month
Widow / Yellowtail in whiting landings > 10,000 lb		No change from existing schedule		
Fixed Gear				
Sablefish: Daily-Trip-Limit (DTL) fishery		500 lb of widow+yellowtail combined per landing, up to 2,000 lb / month of widow and 3,000 lb / month of yellowtail		
Limited entry	300 lb / day: 2,700 lb / 2 months	300 lb / day or 1 landing per week up to 900 lb: cap of 3,600 lb / 2 months	300 lb / day or 1 landing per week up to 900 lb: cap of 1,800 lb / month	
Open access	300 lb / day: 2,700 lb / 2 months	300 lb / day or 1 landing per week up to 800 lb: cap of 4,800 lb / 2 months	300 lb / day or 1 landing per week up to 800 lb: cap of 2,400 lb / month	

Other limited-entry, fixed-gear limits currently specified as "same as trawl" would continue to be so specified.