

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Situation: Two draft exempted fishing permit (EFP) proposals addressing gear selectivity were presented to the Council at the March 2001 meeting. The primary purpose of the first application is to quantify the capacity for vertical hook-and-line gear to selectively catch yellowtail rockfish without incidental catch of canary rockfish. Observers would be onboard participating vessels. The goals of the second EFP, proposed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, are to measure bycatch rates of canary and other rockfish associated with the arrowtooth flounder fishery through an at-sea observer program. As an incentive to participate in the observer program, fishers would be offered the opportunity to land arrowtooth flounder in excess of the current monthly trip limit, as long as they stay within acceptable bycatch limits of other species.

In April, NMFS asked the Council to consider whether proposals such as these are an appropriate use for EFPs. There was concern about providing a financial advantage to participants, which could be at the expense of non-participants. An additional concern was the need for canary rockfish incidental catch limits.

Council Action:

1. Consider permit recommendations to NMFS.

Reference Materials:

1. Application for issuance of an EFP for vertical hook-and-line gear (Exhibit C.6, Attachment 1).
2. Application for issuance of an EFP for arrowtooth flounder fishery (Exhibit C.6, Attachment 2).

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Consistency Analysis

The Plan supports bycatch reduction efforts and development of selective fishing techniques. The two proposed EFPs are intended to gather information on methods to selectively harvest abundant species and determine bycatch rates of canary rockfish and other species.

PFMC
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