

Ad hoc Pink Shrimp Bycatch Working Group
Meeting Summary
February 8, 2002

The second meeting of the ad hoc Pink Shrimp Bycatch working group was held on February 8, 2002 at the offices of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) in Gledstone, Oregon. The agenda included a review of the performance of the 2001 pink shrimp fishery relative to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) canary rockfish bycatch allocation of 5.5 metric tons (mt), and a discussion of future plans. Representatives of state and federal fishery management agencies and several commercial fishing companies were in attendance (Table 1).

2001 Season Review

Washington and Oregon elected to recommend use of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) at the beginning of the 2001 season, and to make their use mandatory after August 1 for the remainder of the season. In Washington, fishers responding to a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) survey on excluder usage reported using Soft-Panel or Fisheye devices exclusively. The catch of canary rockfish and of all rockfish species generally was low before August 1 and went down even more after imposition of the BRD requirement (Attachment 1). Some fishers may have been using BRDs before the use was required. A total of 0.3 mt of canary rockfish were landed during 2001 (Table 2). WDFW focused its on monitoring on the ratios of species in the landed catch (e.g., yellowtail vs. shrimp, canary vs. yellowtail, widow vs. yellowtail). Sablefish catch was not reduced as much as expected by the BRD requirement; fish behavior and timing of the rule implementation were suggested as possible explanations.

Oregon set a 3.9 mt as a goal for the maximum allowable take (including estimated discard) of canary rockfish associated with Oregon landings of pink shrimp during 2001. A total of 2.2 mt of canary rockfish were landed (Table 2), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) "best guess" of the total take including discard is 3.5 mt. Since 2001 was considered to be a high volume and low price shrimp season, ODFW believes that most Oregon shrimpers did not use BRDs until they were required. Landings of rockfish declined substantially after implementation of the BRD requirement (Attachment 2). Oregon fishers were allowed to use Nordmore Grate, Soft-Panel Excluder, or Fisheye Excluder devices and all used to some extent. Vessels using Fisheye Excluders appeared to land more rockfish pounds per trip than those using other devices; placement of the Fisheye excluders may have been incorrect in some gear. ODFW believes that the delayed implementation of BRD requirements was accepted better by the Oregon fleet and was helpful in promoting BRD usage later in the season. Monitoring by ODFW is also based on species ratios in logbooks and the landed catch, which are compared to historical averages and refined by port. ODFW believes that mandatory BRD usage is not justifiable at this time because BRD technology is not fully mature. Managers still do not know how factors such as timing and fish behavior affect performance of the new and experimental BRDs, and fishers are still moving toward development and use of gears that work effectively.

California elected to make the BRD requirement mandatory for all trawl nets used in its pink shrimp fishery as a way to reduce catch of all rockfish species. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) did not believe it could adequately monitor and implement a BRD requirement with a flexible date. Due to delays in the Office of Administrative Law, however, final BRD regulations could not be implemented for the 2001 season. There were no reported landings of canary rockfish in the 2001 pink shrimp fishery in California (Table 2). The new regulations that become effective on April 1, 2002 require use of one of three approved devices (Nordmore Grate, Soft-Panel Excluder, or Fisheye Excluder); a revocable experimental BRD permit may be obtained to use and test other devices. Vessels that choose to obtain an experimental permit must carry a Department-approved observer whenever the experimental BRD is used. CDFG notified all pink shrimp permit holders of this requirement via letter on January 24, 2002 (Attachment 3).

2002 Season Plans

In 2002 both Washington and Oregon plan to follow practices similar to those of 2001; the agencies will monitor rockfish landings based on landing receipts collected in-season, estimate total mortality by expanding for bycatch, and will require BRD usage if the canary rockfish take approaches pre-determined target levels. California will begin the season with a mandatory BRD requirement. A fisheries patrol boat is present in northern California, but no special enforcement activities are planned to monitor compliance. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that once legal clarifications have been obtained, the federal Observer Program plans some observer placements on shrimp vessels during 2002 to monitor bycatch of groundfish in the shrimp fishery.

Some of what occurs during the 2002 season may depend on future stock assessments and the PFMC's plans for rockfish rebuilding. Recent stock assessments have been variable, and a new assessment of canary rockfish is expected this spring. If that assessment is down and the PFMC's ad hoc Allocation Committee recommends a reduced allocation to shrimp fishery bycatch, both Washington and Oregon may need to make BRD usage mandatory for the entire season. Several participants believed that the PFMC's policy toward rockfish harvest by the shrimp fishery is also unclear; they believed that the shrimp fishery might provide opportunities to harvest some species of rockfish without impact to others.

All agencies agreed on the importance of education as a component of their efforts in 2002. Oregon fishers were supportive of the direct-mail regulation notifications received by California fishers, and CDFG representatives were interested in the ODFW pre-season newsletter as a technique for communication with the fleet. WDFW plans to continue its survey of BRD usage, both as source of information and as a way to get back in touch with its fleet. The agencies will consult with their enforcement agents to ensure that the requirements for proper Fisheye excluder placement are clear.

Consistency of regulations was mentioned as a potential problem for 2002. California fishers near the CA/OR border are concerned by the potential for competitive disadvantage. While they must use excluders throughout the season, fishers from Oregon who fish in the EEZ off California are burdened with no similar requirement early in the

season. Representatives of ODFW and WDFW will investigate the potential for reciprocal state rules that would require fishers from Oregon or Washington to use BRDs when they fish off California. At this stage, however, it may not be possible to implement such regulations before June. CDFG representatives will verify that the count-per-pound regulations of Oregon and Washington are also enforced in California.

Workgroup members discussed the value of implementing a variety of coastwide measures, including logbooks and an interjurisdictional management plan. While both Oregon and California currently require a mandatory logbook, the California logbook does not solicit information regarding bycatch. The California logbook is not currently in active use by CDFG (the data are neither keypunched or analyzed) and that situation is not likely to change in the coming year. ODFW will share a copy of its logbook with CDFG for reference purposes. WDFW dropped its shrimp logbook requirement in 1993, and that decision is currently under review. The agency may be unable to resurrect that requirement given existing budget and resource concerns. Agency representatives generally could see value in developing a coastwide management plan, but none could commit agency time or resources toward the effort. For the present, participants agreed that meetings of the current working group should be annual at minimum, and more frequently in-season if necessary.

Table 2. Landings by directed shrimp trawl fisheries operating in PFMC areas (in metric tons). †							
State	Year	Pink Shrimp	Canary Rockfish		Other Rockfish		Flatfish
		Misc. Groundfish	Other Species				
CALIFORNIA	1990	3,946.1	0.0	24.1	2.4	4.7	0.1
	2.9						
	1991	4,701.2	0.0	20.8	2.1	3.8	0.0
	0.5						
	1992	8,474.1	0.0	12.7	0.5	2.7	0.1
	1.5						
	1993	3,228.3	0.0	11.8	1.1	1.5	0.1
	0.5						
	1994	5,069.4	0.0	35.4	5.1	7.8	0.1
	7.2						
	1995	2,558.0	1.8	30.7	5.9	4.5	0.1
	4.7						
	1996	4,244.9	1.1	25.5	6.3	4.1	2.6
3.2							
1997	6,325.6	2.7	22.2	6.2	6.1	3.0	
7.4							
1998	830.3	3.3	10.4	1.8	1.8	0.7	
1.5							
1999	1,922.9	2.4	16.0	5.0	3.1	0.9	
1.2							
2000	1,102.3	0.4	2.7	1.4	1.4	0.0	
0.2							
2001	1,638.7	0.0	1.6	0.9	0.2	0.0	
0.6							
OREGON	1990	14,461.8	0.0	486.2	29.6	27.9	0.3
	0.7						
	1991	9,851.9	0.0	393.5	25.3	30.1	0.2
	0.8						
	1992	21,787.5	0.0	395.1	27.9	106.8	0.3
	2.8						
	1993	12,212.1	0.0	673.6	29.0	93.7	0.3
	22.0						
	1994	7,432.6	0.0	203.5	31.0	50.9	0.1
	20.6						
	1995	5,491.1	4.9	158.9	45.5	30.1	0.2
	8.6						
	1996	7,133.5	12.1	286.1	74.9	51.0	1.7
3.4							
1997	8,872.2	7.6	92.7	37.7	35.5	4.5	
38.9							
1998	2,765.0	7.6	115.1	41.2	21.8	1.6	
60.9							
1999	9,276.5	31.2	81.2	119.5	64.4	3.6	
9.9							
2000	11,549.6	9.7	73.0	55.9	56.5	2.5	
48.7							
2001	12,909.1	2.2	46.1	23.3	83.4	0.3	
32.5							
WASHINGTON	1990	6,144.2	0.0	353.9	41.5	25.5	0.1
	0.4						
	1991	4,510.2	0.0	367.3	23.9	9.8	0.0
	0.4						
1992	5,448.5	0.0	332.4	8.9	38.5	0.0	
49.5							
1993	7,010.6	0.0	612.0	32.5	141.0	0.0	

	112.6							
	1994	2,479.1	0.0	243.8	57.9	52.6	0.1	
	7.9							
	1995	3,292.4	2.5	184.8	66.2	61.3	0.1	
	0.2							
	1996	2,410.7	1.9	217.3	37.1	52.1	0.0	
	0.1							
	1997	2,248.2	0.6	60.4	10.8	11.2	0.1	
	18.0							
	1998	743.0	1.1	45.3	8.2	9.2	0.0	
	40.6							
	1999	1,199.5	1.3	24.6	15.2	6.9	0.0	
	35.6							
	2000	1,978.1	1.3	37.3	12.5	13.5	0.0	
	38.7							
	2001	2,989.3	0.3	18.0	2.1	4.9	0.0	
	52.7							
TOTAL	1990	24,552.1	0.0	864.2	73.5	58.0	0.5	
	4.0							
	1991	19,063.3	0.0	781.6	51.3	43.6	0.3	
	1.7							
	1992	35,710.2	0.0	740.2	37.3	148.0	0.3	
	53.9							
	1993	22,451.0	0.0	1,297.4	62.6	236.1	0.3	
	135.2							
	1994	14,981.0	0.0	482.7	93.9	111.3	0.3	
	35.8							
	1995	11,341.5	9.2	374.5	117.6	95.9	0.4	
	13.5							
	1996	13,789.2	15.1	528.9	118.3	107.2	4.4	
	6.7							
	1997	17,445.9	10.9	175.3	54.7	52.9	7.5	
	64.2							
	1998	4,338.2	12.0	170.8	51.1	32.7	2.4	
	103.0							
	1999	12,399.0	34.9	121.8	139.8	74.4	4.5	
	46.7							
	2000	14,630.0	11.3	113.0	69.8	71.4	2.5	
	87.7							
	2001	17,537.2	25.5	65.7	26.4	88.5	0.4	
	85.8							

† Directed fishery landings in California were trawl landings that contained more than 100 pounds of pink shrimp. Directed fishery landings in Washington and Oregon were those made using shrimp trawl gear (either single- or double-rigged).

Source: PacFIN