

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS (EFPs)

Situation: Four exempted fishing permits (EFPs) were approved at the November 2002 Council meeting. The goal of the first EFP, sponsored by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), is to measure bycatch rates of canary and other rockfish associated with targeted arrowtooth flounder fishing through an at-sea observer program. A second EFP, also sponsored by the WDFW, will test the ability of midwater trawls in Washington waters to selectively harvest yellowtail rockfish while minimizing the incidental catch of widow rockfish. The third EFP, sponsored by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), seeks to test the ability of trawls to selectively harvest chillipepper rockfish while minimizing the incidental catch of bocaccio rockfish in California waters. The primary purpose of the fourth EFP, sponsored by CDFG, Pacific Marine Conservation Council, and Mr. Kenyon Hensel, is to quantify the capacity for vertical hook-and-line gear to selectively catch yellowtail rockfish while minimizing the incidental catch of canary rockfish. Sponsors of these approved EFPs will report on their progress in implementing their respective EFP fisheries. The Council will receive update briefings on these ongoing EFPs.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will conduct its annual survey of the continental slope groundfish resources this summer using private commercial vessels as research platforms. NMFS may compensate these vessels for their participation in research activities by setting aside amounts of groundfish for them to harvest after their research activities have been completed. These amounts are in addition to any trip limits that may be in effect. An EFP is necessary to allow these vessels to take these compensation fish. The EFP specifies the amount of fish and conditions for compensation fishing. NMFS will present its estimates of the quantities and species of fish to be made available for compensating the vessels. The amounts of fish actually caught will be deducted from the 2003 acceptable biological catch levels when the Council addresses this issue in September 2002. NMFS may also discuss an EFP to allow vessels that carry state or federal biologists to take small amounts of fish that will be used for specific research and data collection projects, such as depth-specific size and distribution studies.

Additional EFP applications may be considered at this time if any are submitted for Council consideration.

Council Action:

1. Consider recommendations on existing EFPs.
2. Consider newly submitted EFP applications.

Reference Materials: None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Status of Ongoing EFPs
 - i. Arrowtooth Flounder and Rockfish EFP
 - ii. Chilipepper Rockfish and Bocaccio EFP
 - iii. Vertical Line Gear Selectivity EFP
- c. New EFP Applications
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. **Council Action:** Recommendations to NMFS on EFPs

John DeVore

Phil Anderson
LB Boydston
LB Boydston

Supplemental Reference Materials

1. Exhibit E.11.c, Supplemental NMFS Report.
2. Exhibit E.11.d, Supplemental NMFS Report 2.
3. Exhibit E.11.b.i, Supplemental WDFW Report.

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP supports bycatch reduction efforts and development of selective fishing techniques. The approved EFPs are designed to gather information on methods to selectively harvest abundant species and determine bycatch rates of canary rockfish, bocaccio rockfish, and other groundfish species of concern. The proposed EFP from NMFS is consistent with GFSP objectives related to science, data collection, monitoring and analysis (Sec. II.B). Any additional EFP applications will need to be reviewed for consistency with overall GFSP objectives.

PFMC
03/26/02