

FOURTH TIER FOR THE LIMITED ENTRY SABLEFISH DAILY-TRIP-LIMIT FISHERY

Situation: The Council has received a Fishing Vessel Owner Association (FVOA) proposal to take the sablefish allocated to the limited entry sablefish daily-trip-limit (DTL) fishery and allocate it to the primary fishery (Exhibit E.4, Public Comment). All vessels with fixed gear limited entry permits can fish in the limited entry DTL fishery, but only vessels with sablefish endorsed fixed gear limited entry permits can fish in the primary fishery. Sablefish endorsed permits are divided into three tiers that determine the level of harvest authorized under the permit. To accommodate those fixed gear limited entry vessels that have fished the sablefish DTL fishery but do not have sablefish endorsed permits, a fourth tier sablefish endorsement would be created. This proposal would not affect the open access sablefish DTL fishery nor would it affect the allocation between limited entry and open access vessels.

The sablefish DTL fishery is a year-round fishery adopted to accommodate sablefish bycatch and small volume trips targeted on sablefish. Sablefish DTL fisheries are maintained for both the open access and the fixed gear limited entry fleets. The sablefish for the limited entry fixed gear fishery is allocated 15% to the year-round DTL fishery and 85% to a primary fishery. The primary fishery lasts 7 months (April through October).

FVOA has put forward two versions of their proposal. Under both versions, the limited entry DTL fishery would be eliminated. Fixed gear limited entry vessels without sablefish endorsements would be provided a sablefish tier endorsement (an endorsement for a fourth tier). The fourth tier would be allocated a proportion of the harvest equivalent to the portion of the 2000-2001 harvest taken by these unendorsed limited entry vessels. The amount allocated to the fourth tier would be divided equally among all unendorsed limited entry vessels.

The difference between the two FVOA proposals comes in the division of the DTL harvest taken by sablefish endorsed vessels (vessels fishing under the current three tier system). Under the first FVOA proposal, this portion would be divided equally among existing tiers. (A clarification is needed as to whether this means to allocate an equal amount to each sablefish endorsed vessel or to allocate an equal amount to each tier and then divide the allocation to the tier among the permits in the tier.) Under the second FVOA proposal, the proportion of the DTL harvest landed by vessels of each tier would be allocated to that tier. (A clarification is needed as to whether this means to allocate an equal amount of sablefish to every member of the tier or only to those members that participated in the DTL fishery).

With the proposed elimination of the limited entry DTL fishery, it may be appropriate to consider whether adjustments would be made to accommodate the incidental take of sablefish by limited entry fixed gear vessels outside of the seven months of the primary season.

Council Action:

1. Consider Initiating Needed FMP and/or Regulatory Amendments

Reference Materials:

1. Letter from the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association Incorporated to Dr. Donald McIsaac dated February 12, 2002 regarding Proposed Groundfish Amendments (Exhibit E.4, Attachment 1).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Groundfish Advisory Subpanel Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Consider Initiating a FMP Admendment

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Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP calls for the development of a permit stacking program for the limited entry fixed gear fishery. Such a stacking program has been implemented. This proposal would bring more sablefish and vessel harvest capacity under the scope of the current stacking program.

PFMC
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Supplemental Reference Materials

2. Exhibit E.4.b, Supplemental GAP Report.