GMT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ABCs AND OYs

In attached Table 2.1 Revised, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has provided the Council with recommendations for ABCs and OYs for the 2003 fishery. For three of the species, additional explanation of the values is provided below.

Yelloweye

The range of yelloweye harvest recommendations being forwarded by the team is in recognition of the different rebuilding scenarios contained within the rebuilding analysis, one based upon resampling of recruits per spawner and one based upon the resampling of recruits; the latter is also constrained to a more recent time series. Sampling of recruits per spawner is more consistent with density dependent recruitment, while resampling only recruits is consistent with environmentally driven recruitment. Since the SSC had not yet endorsed either scenario, the GMT is forwarding the current OY as the upper end of the range to be considered. The GMT also recognizes the uncertainty in the current assessment upon which the rebuilding is based and strongly endorses the current efforts being made to collect better information to support yelloweye rockfish management.

Whiting

The SSC has recommended carrying forward the STAR/PSARC advice of not increasing the OY until a new assessment is conducted. For purposes of Council consideration, the GMT has specified the 2002 OY as the low end of the range for whiting. It is our understanding that the formal rebuilding analysis for whiting has not been approved by the SSC. Based on this understanding, the GMT is not using the values listed in the rebuilding analysis in its proposed alternatives. The GMT-recommended intermediate value is taken from the $F_{45\%}$ 40-10 projection for 2003 yield from the 2002 stock assessment. The high OY option is taken from the $F_{40\%}$ 40-10 projection for 2003 yield.

Sablefish

The GMT-recommended high OY option for sablefish is derived from the $F_{45\%}$ 40-10 OY in the new stock assessment under the scenario referred to as "regime shift." The intermediate recommendation reflects the $F_{45\%}$ 40-10 OY under the scenario referred to as "density dependent." Under this latter scenario, the current spawning biomass is 31% of unfished and is projected to remain at or near that level over the next ten years. Because this level is close to the overfished threshold, and because of uncertainties in Q in the assessment, the GMT requested in May additional analysis from the assessment author of harvest options that would be more likely to increase the spawning biomass. The low OY option presented by the GMT reflects an $F_{60\%}$ 40-10 policy which is projected to increase the spawning stock to 35% of the unfished level within five years.

TABLE 2-1 **revised**. Acceptable biological catch (ABC) and total catch optimum yield (OY) alternatives for 2003 for the Washington, Oregon, and California region (metric tons) under the GMT-proposed alternatives. (Overfished stocks in CAPS).

	Status Quo Alternative 2002 ABCs/OYs		**Alternative 1** 2003 Low ABCs/OYs		**Alternative 2** 2003 Medium ABCs/OYs		**Alternative 3** 2003 High ABCs/OYs	
	ABC	OY	ABC	OY	ABC	OY	ABC	OY
LINGCOD	745	577	841	555 (80%)	841	651 (60%)	841	725 (50%)
Pacific Cod	3,200	3,200	188,000		3,200	3,200	188,000	173,600
PACIFIC WHITING (Coastwide)	166,000	129,600	~~235,000~~	129,600	~~235,000~~	185,300 (F45%)	~~235,000~~	~~217,000~~ (F40%)
Sablefish (North of Conception)	4,644	4,367	8,113	4,381	8,113	7,359	8,113	8,091
Conception INPFC area	333	229	441	233	441	323	441	346
PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH	640	350	689	311 (80%)	689	377 (70%)	689	496 (50%)
Shortbelly Rockfish	13,900	13,900			13,900	13,900		
WIDOW ROCKFISH	3,727	856	3,871	656 (80%)	3,871	832 (60%)	3,871	916 (50%)
CANARY ROCKFISH (50%-50%)	228	93	256	30 (80%)	256	41 (60%)	256	45 (50%)
(80% Comm.-20% Rec.)			309	38 (80%)	309	52 (60%)	309	57 (50%)
Chilipepper Rockfish	2,700	2,000			2,700	2,000		
BOCACCIO	122	100	198	0 (54%)			198	5.8 (50%)
Splitnose Rockfish	615	461			615	461		
Yellowtail Rockfish	3,146	3,146			3,146	3,146		
Shortspine Thornyhead	1,004	955			1,004	955		
Longspine Thornyhead	2,461	2,461			2,461	2,461		
S. of Pt. Conception	390	195			390	195		
COWCOD (S. Concep)	5	2.4			5	2.4		
N. Concep & Monterey	19	2.4			19	2.4		
DARKBLOTCHED	187	168	205	172 (80%)	205	184 (70%)	205	205 (50%)
YELLOWEYE - Coastwide	27	13.5	27	2.1 (70%)	27	3.9 (50%)	27	13.5 (2002)
N of 40°10' latitude	22	11	22	2.033 (70%)	22	3.633 (50%)	22	11 (2002)
Monterey	5	2.5	5	0.067 (70%)	5	0.267 (50%)	5	2.5 (2002)
Minor Rockfish North	4,795	3,115			4,795	3,115		
Minor Rockfish South	3,506	2,015			3,506	2,015		
Remaining Rockfish North	2,755				2,755			
Black	1,115				1,115			
Bocaccio	318				318			
Chilipepper - Eureka	32				32			
Redstripe	576				576			
Sharpchin	307				307			
Silvergrey	38				38			
Splitnose	242				242			
Yellowmouth	99				99			
Remaining Rockfish South	854				854			
Bank	350				350			
Blackgill	343				343			
Sharpchin	45				45			
Yellowtail	116				116			
Other Rockfish North	2,068				2,068			
South	2,652				2,652			
Dover Sole	8,510	7,440			8,510	7,440		
English Sole	3,100				3,100			
Petrale Sole	2,762				2,762			
Arrowtooth Flounder	5,800				5,800			
Other Flatfish	7,700				7,700			
Other Fish	14,700				14,700			

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) STATEMENT ON RESEARCH HARVESTS

At its May meeting, the GMT reviewed a summary of research fishing catches compiled by the NW Region for 2001 activities in the EEZ and state of Oregon waters. This summary is not yet complete for all states, agencies, and institutions. Given the minimal OYs that will be available for decades for species such as bocaccio, cowcod, canary, and yelloweye rockfishes, and the paramount importance of achieving rebuilding harvest goals for these species, it is crucial that the GMT be as fully informed as possible, regarding all sources of fishing mortality affecting them. For some of these species, it is within the realm of possibility that research catches alone may exceed rebuilding targets. It is imperative that management efforts to achieve rebuilding targets be informed by the best possible understanding of all sources of mortality for these species.

The GMT has numerous concerns regarding protocols relating to the conduct, acknowledgment, and accounting of research fishing mortality. First, it is important that the states and other institutions are aware of the fact that the NMFS NW Region is attempting to coordinate the compilation of research catch data and its dissemination to the Council family for use in management. Second, existing projects which are providing data to the NW Region do not always provide estimates of catch weight for all rockfish species, or even all rockfish species of greatest concern. In the 2001 summary referenced above, 17 mt of catch were attributed to unspecified rockfish. For species such as yelloweye, where the coastwide rebuilding OYs are expected to be less than 2 mt, this level of resolution is unacceptable. Consequently, it is critical that the importance of enumerating removals of individual rockfish species and transmitting the information to the NW Region be conveyed through agency and institutional channels to those conducting these research projects. The GMT is asking for Council support in encouraging those individuals who are conducting research to 1) provide the NWR with an estimate the expected catch by species 2) enumerate and/or weigh research catch by species, and 3) to provide summary data to the NWR following the completion of the research.

An additional concern relates to the method of accounting for anticipated removals for research purposes in the annual specifications for the coming year. The existing approach for canary and darkblotched has been to deduct research catch from the OY. For other species the research catch is deducted from the ABC, to insure that overfishing is not occurring. For rebuilding species, the primary concern is not simply avoiding overfishing, but constraining total mortalities to be no greater than the adopted rebuilding OYs. **The GMT recommends that research catches for all species be subtracted from the adopted total catch OYs, for purposes of determining amounts remaining for commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries.**

Given the minimal amounts of fishing mortality specified for many species, it is important that greater effort be made to prioritize the importance of individual research projects, within and among agencies, as well as, more broadly, between research and fishery uses. Further, there is now a greater need than ever to ensure that those undertaking research projects develop and share biological information for groundfish species of concern with stock assessment scientists. The GMT strongly believes that a high priority should continue to be placed on conducting the NMFS slope and shelf trawl surveys, independent of the catch of overfished species. However, with several shelf species facing rebuilding periods that are estimated to exceed 50 years, shelf survey frequency alternatives should be evaluated with regard to tradeoffs between the impact of removals on rebuilding success and the quality of the abundance time series generated. Also, development of new abundance surveys in the future should focus, where possible, on the use of techniques, such as visual or larval surveys, that minimize associated mortality. Finally, non-NMFS projects that will take fish in the EEZ normally request a letter of acknowledgment from NMFS for those research activities. And although NMFS cannot prohibit these activities, the GMT believes it is appropriate for NMFS to evaluate whether such letters should be routinely conveyed when a project contributes to an expected total research catch that exceeds or approaches rebuilding OYs for one or more species.