

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM STATEMENT ON
 EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS: UPDATE AND NEW PROPOSALS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the state Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) proposals for 2003 and prioritized these EFPs using the criteria of fleetwide applicability in managing future groundfish fisheries and the potential efficacy of EFP fishing gear and strategies in avoiding overfished species and more cleanly targeting healthy and abundant groundfish stocks. The GMT also discussed the EFP caps for overfished species and recommended the individual EFP caps for canary rockfish to conform with the Council decision to cap the total canary rockfish cap at 6.5 mt for all the EFPs listed below except shoreside whiting. The following table depicts the individual EFPs and overfished species' caps in prioritized order as recommended by the GMT.

The GMT believes the shoreside whiting EFP, which allows suspension of groundfish sorting requirements in the 2003 shoreside whiting fishery to enable shoreside sampling of total catch, is the most important EFP due to the catch accounting benefits provided. The GMT notes, while individual species' caps are not identified in the table for the shoreside whiting EFP, estimated catch of these species was included in the bycatch scorecard that was before the Council when final management measures were adopted in September. The bycatch scorecard provided estimates of total catch of overfished species under the Council-preferred management measures for 2003. In this regard, the EFP caps noted below are inherently different in that they are the limits of overfished species' catch proposed for each EFP; attainment of any of these caps would terminate the EFP for the year. The GMT still estimates total catch of overfished species in the 2003 shoreside whiting fishery will be as described in the bycatch scorecard presented to the Council in September and lower than the EFP caps presented below. As for all considered 2003 fishery opportunities, bycatch of any of the overfished species in the shoreside whiting fishery greater than was estimated in the bycatch scorecard could threaten other fishing opportunities. The shoreside whiting EFP is the only one of these EFPs without a requirement for observers. Participants in the shoreside whiting EFP are not covered under the NMFS Observer Program and, as a result, there is no opportunity to verify the level of compliance to the full retention provisions of the EFP. Therefore, the GMT recommends NMFS extend its observer coverage to include the shoreside whiting fishery during the primary whiting season.

Proposed 2003 EFPs caps (mt) for overfished West Coast groundfish species. EFPs are listed in priority order as recommended by the Groundfish Management Team.

Fishery	Bocaccio	Canary	Cowcod	Darkblotched	Whiting	Widow	Yelloweye
Shoreside Whiting	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
OR: Selective Flatfish Trawl	NA	2.7	NA	NA	NA	1.0	1.2
WA: Arrowtooth Flounder Trawl	NA	1.5	NA	3.0	NA	NA	0.5
CA: Nearshore Flatfish Trawl	1.5	1.3	0.5	NA	NA	NA	1.0
WA: Pollock	NA	0.5	NA	NA	5,000	3.0	NA
WA: Dogfish Longline	NA	0.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.0
TOTAL EFP CAPS	1.5	6.5	0.5	5.1	5,000	4.0	4.2

NA- Not applicable.