

Rick Shepherd

F/V Sunset
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April 29, 2003

Re: In-season trawl management

Dear Mr. Burner;

I am a trawler based out of Crescent City, CA. I mainly fish the waters between Cape Blanco, Oregon to Eureka CA. I am very concerned and confused with the decision by the PFMC regarding the in-season restrictions beginning May 1, 2003. I have spent the last two years developing a market for what we call beach fish which includes mainly Sand Dabs, Petrale, English, Sand and Flounder Sole.

I have thirty years fishing experience and have never seen the ocean so rich in all types of sea life. The conditions of our ocean have come full circle in replenishing the fish-crab-shrimp and baitfish. I believe due to a more North Westerly flow and not a southerly influence is replenishing the sea life. I believe this is a resource that should be harvested. I realize the problem with harvesting these fish is there interaction with Canary Rock. I do not catch canary Rock inside of 50 fathoms. I cannot speak for Oregon and Washington, or even areas South of Eureka; but in the area I fish I have never caught Canary Rock inside of 50 fathoms.

My concern is with a small footrope I can harvest 20,000 lbs of beach fish, which may sustain the markets until we are able to harvest more, but not enough to operate a fishing vessel on. Also, with a small footrope I am able to harvest 3,000 lbs of Sable and 12,500 lbs of Dover Sole. This I will not do because of the fact I will be discarding Channel Rock because if you fish outside of 200 fathoms you will catch Channel Rock. The only option that I can see is to fish a large footrope, which 99% of the fleet will choose to do and the market for Beach Fish will go away. And that market will take years to get back and will not be there if or when you ever let us catch the Beach Fish. This leads me to the next concern of the large footrope; every trawler will be harvesting their Dover between 200 and 300 fathoms. In this area that is a strip less than a mile wide. During the summer months the Dover live between 100-200 fathoms. Fishing more tows to catch the Dover because of the normal location of the fish and the increased pressure in a small area will create high Black Cod discards that will be mainly caught in deeper waters while fishing Channel Rock.

I will lose my markets and be forced to fish in an area that will be over fished and unsafe for my boat over a fish I do not catch. I believe this in-season management plan will devastate the trawl industry.

Markets will be lost and large numbers of boats will be forced to fish in a small area which compromises the safety of the smaller vessels.

Sincerely,

Rick Shepherd

Subject: Re: West Coast Groundfish????????????????
From: Bill Robinson <Bill.Robinson@noaa.gov>
Date: Wed, 28 May 2003 09:41:44 -0700
To: Lee Ann Hightower <hightowers@cablespeed.com>
CC: Jim Seger <Jim.Seger@noaa.gov>, Mike Burner <Mike.Burner@noaa.gov>, Ed Waters <Edward.Waters@noaa.gov>, John DeVore <John.DeVore@noaa.gov>, Jennifer Gilden <Jennifer.Gilden@noaa.gov>, pfmc.comments@noaa.gov, Rod Moore <seafood@attglobal.net>, hradtk@oregonvos.net

Dear Mr. Hightower,

Your frustration is shared by many if the number of phone calls we at NMFS, Northwest Region have been receiving is any measure. The amount of time it has taken to prepare the inseason regulatory changes recommended by the Council is solely the result of obtaining and checking for accuracy the coordinates for both the 200 and 50 fathom lines, and by the unavoidable review and approval of the regulatory changes by our Headquarters Office in Silver Springs, Maryland. I am happy to report that the new regulations will be taken to the Office of the Federal Register in Washington D.C. this afternoon. We have asked that they be filed immediately and that they be effective upon filing. As soon as we hear that the regulations are filed we will do our best to send out public notices. The first thing we will do is post them on our website (www.nwr.noaa.gov), so please check it frequently today and tomorrow. I very much hope that everyone who is able only to fish the shallower waters can be back fishing again no later than tomorrow. I apologize for the amount of time it has taken. We are trying our best to be responsive to the needs of those engaged in the fishery. Best wishes.

Bill Robinson

Lee Ann Hightower wrote:

Mr. Chairman and members of the Council, We need to know what is happening with the current closure for the west coast groundfish. We are getting killed out here! When you first talked about closing the fishery down to redraw the coordiantes for the 200fa and the 50fa line, you said a two week closure... at the most three weeks. Well, we are all on week four now... we still have not heard one word from the Council on how things are progressing. And knowing that the process for the Council to get things into the Federal Register are long and arduous... it's not looking good for an opening anytime soon. Do we all need to declare bankruptcy right now?? The appearance of discrimination against those of us that use small footropes nearshore is looking more and more as a fact. Some of us are not capable of fishing with big gear that can operate outside of 200fa... we can not even hold that much wire on our boats without being in danger of capsizing... nor do we have the horse power it takes to pull that much gear through the water... you need to take that into consideration. As I write this, the large vessels continue to tow away... still making a living... they haven't missed a day of fishing. We (small boats) have been shut down for almost a month now... during the inseason time I might add. Many of us will soon be in jeopardy of loosing assets, like our homes or boats. We have already lost so much with the Cable Crossing, the Vessel Traffic Lane Change, and other inseason adjustments that we have no reserves left to fall back on. While I hate to think of discrimination to be an actual plausible cause... the Councils actions or lack of action speaks much louder than any words ever could... and thus speaks for itself. The Council needs to take action on this issue immediately. It is not that hard to draw up the coordiantes for the 200fa and the 50fa lines. Ask the fishermen themselves... they know right where they are and could have had the lines drawn out during one coffee break. Which makes all this look

more like politics that is keeping us shut down instead of real fish issues. The Council's action or lack there of, have real human impact. You are literally killing us off out here. While I am writing this I would like to include a couple of questions. How was it decided upon to use the 50fa line? Is it possible to use the 75fa line? The distance between 50fa and the 3 mile line is almost non-existent. We will hardly have any area that will be available for us to fish in... meanwhile the large vessels get to move in 50fa closer into the RCA... while we are moved out an additional 25fa away from the RCA. That does not appear to be **equal** opportunity... it reeks of politics. The difference between 75fa and 50fa is huge for the small boats... it will impact us much harder the large boats will be impacted. They can simply move to the deeper waters... we do not have that option. PLEASE come up with some different restrictions for us that will still allow us to survive. We do not want to catch fish into extinction... we want a viable **sustainable** fishery that we can continue our livelihood into the future... many of us have been fishing our small family boats for generations. But sadly, many of us do not encourage our children to partake of our tradition of being a fisherman... competition and politics have put an end to that dream. This is not information for the comment period (already past) for the Council's next meeting... we simply need to know what is going on asap. PLEASE... email me back asap and let me know what is going on with this closure and when we will be able to fish again... so that **we** may have the same opportunity as the large vessels. Sincerely, Mrs. Lee Ann Hightower F/V Sea Otter Neah Bay, WA 360-385-7299 Home 360-301-2824 Boat