

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT ON  
INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The GMT has several inseason adjustments for the Council's consideration regarding the commercial fisheries which will be addressed in our statement under agenda item C.3. The GMT has updated the current bycatch scorecard (Attachment 1) for status quo fisheries, and has estimated the potential results of the inseason adjustments that will be considered under C.3. (Attachment 2); changes are noted in bold. Under this agenda item, the GMT would like to bring to your attention these primary issues:

**Sablefish Tier Limits**

There was an error in the calculation of the sablefish tier limits that were published in the Federal Register. The calculation was made based on the sablefish ABC, rather than the OY, which resulted in higher tier limits for the primary fishery (see Exhibit C.6.a., Attachment 1, Chapter 2, p. 34). Specifically:

<u>Tier</u>	<u>Incorrect Tier Limits (lbs) Calculated Using ABC</u>	<u>Correct Tier Limits (lbs) Calculated Using OY</u>
1	69,600	64,300
2	31,600	29,200
3	18,100	16,700

Some of these tier limits have already been achieved and sablefish daily trip limit (DTL) catches are tracking higher (through May) this year than last year (256 mt compared to 241 mt). The GMT notes that if the sablefish tier limits are not changed, and if the full amount of the tier limits are achieved, then the estimated catch of sablefish will be 172 mt over the 2004 sablefish OY. The tier limits through April are tracking slower this year than last year, and the GMT believes that it is unlikely that all of the sablefish tier limits will be maximized. However, if the sablefish tier limits are corrected (which will take about two weeks to take effect), then fishers may maximize their tier limits in anticipation of the reduction. The DTL sablefish fishery limits were raised in November 2003 to 300 lbs/day; 900 lbs/week; not to exceed 3600 lbs/2 months (from 300 lbs/day; 800 lbs/week; not to exceed 3200 lbs/2 months).

The GMT has identified the alternative of reducing the DTL limits for both limited entry and open access back to the pre-November levels. The GMT believes that this action will result in a total sablefish mortality of 20 mt above the OY of 7,500 mt (0.27% over the OY). Action alternatives for this fishery include:

1. Change the sablefish tier limits to the correct amounts based on the OY, and/or
2. Reduce the DTL limits for limited entry and open access

With regard to not taking any action at this time, the GMT estimates that by the September Council meeting, over 80% of the DTL (limited entry and open access combined) will have occurred, as well as the majority of the tier limits. This would likely put us over the sablefish OY and would require inseason action to constrain other fisheries that harvest sablefish, such as trawl. The GMT may have additional information on this issue as part of our C.3. report.

## **Whiting Trawl Fishery**

There was a larger than anticipated catch of canary rockfish in the mothership sector of the whiting fishery in early June. Specifically, one catcher vessel caught an estimated 3.9 mt of canary off Heceta Bank, bringing the estimated mothership canary catch to 4.0 mt (compared to the 0.9 mt the GMT has estimated for this sector in the bycatch scorecard). To date, it is estimated that the mothership, catcher-processor, and tribal whiting fisheries combined have caught 4.5 mt of canary rockfish (note: the shoreside fishery has begun in northern California, and starts today off Oregon and Washington).

The GMT has identified some alternatives for the whiting fishery to help ensure that the whiting fisheries stay within an estimated impact of 7.3 mt of canary rockfish (as projected in the scorecard) and has shared these alternatives with the GAP. The GMT does not know if all of these alternatives are available for inseason management. Our understanding is that a few of these alternatives are available to be implemented now, while other will require emergency action by NMFS. These alternatives (which are not mutually exclusive) include:

### **Available Now**

1. Status quo (do nothing now and address in September, if needed)
2. Voluntary area closure until rule is adopted
3. Impose a trip limit in the whiting fishery in the interim
4. Include area restrictions for the shoreside fishery through the EFP permit

### **Require Emergency Action (which would take about six weeks to implement)**

5. Create an RCA closure (for whiting fishery) through emergency action
6. Area closure around Heceta Bank for whiting fishery and/or other area closures

### **Legal Guidance**

7. Explore whether the Council could give NMFS authority to impose an RCA or close the fishery outside of a Council meeting if the whiting fishery exceeds the 7.3 mt catch projection (through emergency action)

## **Research Catches**

The GMT has received an update from the NWFSC that the current catch of canary rockfish in the NMFS shelf trawl survey is 1.0 mt during the first of five segments off northern Washington (note: the GMT had anticipated a total of 1.0 mt of canary in all research catches (including SRPs and LOAs) combined—NMFS Triennial trawl survey, NMFS shelf trawl survey, NMFS slope survey, IPHC halibut survey, and Canadian whiting survey). At this time, the GMT cannot predict the total amount of canary rockfish that will be taken in the research surveys. The GMT would appreciate guidance from the Council on what measures to take to provide for those higher than anticipated catches. The GMT notes that as stocks under rebuilding plans recover, the survey catches will likely increase which could jeopardize fishing opportunity.

## **GMT Recommendations**

1. Provide guidance on inseason adjustments to the fixed gear sablefish fisheries
  - Does the Council want to add any alternatives for consideration?
2. Provide guidance on inseason adjustments to the whiting fisheries
  - Does the Council want to add or remove any of the alternatives for consideration?
  - Are there preferred alternatives?
3. Provide guidance on how to account for research catches of canary rockfish

C.1.b Attachment 1. Initial Consideration of Inseason Adjustments Scorecard

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Fishery	Bocaccio a/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	Lingcod	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
<b>Limited Entry Groundfish</b>								
Trawl- Non-whiting	51.0	<b>10.0</b>	0.5	73.5	104.7	90.7	2.5	0.3
Fixed Gear	13.4	0.9	0.1	0.8	20.0	0.3	0.5	2.5
<b>Whiting</b>								
At-sea whiting motherships		<b>4.0</b>		1.4	0.3	1.7	59.7	0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc		1.3		7.6	0.4	10.1	84.6	0.4
Shoreside whiting		0.4		0.5	0.7	0.4	29.9	0.0
Tribal whiting		4.7		0.0	0.5	1.5	37.1	0.0
<b>Open Access</b>								
Groundfish directed	10.6	1.0	0.1	0.2	70.0	0.1		0.6
CA Halibut	0.1			0.0	2.0	0.0		
CA Gillnet b/	0.5			0.0		0.0	0.0	
CA Sheephead b/				0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
CPS- wetfish b/	0.3							
CPS- squid c/								
Dungeness crab b/	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0		
HMS b/		0.0	0.0	0.0				
Pacific Halibut b/	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.5
Pink shrimp	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1
Ridgeback prawn	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Salmon troll	0.2	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
Sea Cucumber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spot Prawn (trap)								
<b>Tribal</b>								
Midwater Trawl		<b>1.3</b>		0.0	0.1	0.0	40.0	0.0
Bottom Trawl		0.5		0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Troll		0.5		0.0	1.0	0.0		0.0
Fixed gear		0.3		0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
<b>Recreational Groundfish</b>								
WA d/		1.7			65.0			3.5
OR		6.8			109.7		1.4	3.2
CA e/	62.8	9.3	1.8		268.9		1.4	3.7
<b>Research: Based on 2 most recent NMFS trawl shelf and slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and LOAs with expanded estimates for south of Pt. Conception.</b>								
	2.0	<b>3.0</b>		1.6	3.0	3.0	1.5	1.1
<b>Non-EFP Total</b>	141.1	47.8	2.5	85.6	671.1	107.8	258.7	18.5
<b>EFPs f/</b>								
CA: NS FF trawl	10.0	0.5	0.5		20.0			0.5
OR: DTS g/		<b>0.0</b>		<b>0.2</b>		<b>0.6</b>		<b>0.0</b>
WA: AT trawl		<b>1.0</b>		3.0	4.5	8.5	5.5	0.5
WA: dogfish LL		<b>0.0</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
WA: pollock		0.1					1.5	0.1
<b>EFP Subtotal</b>	10.0	1.6	0.5	3.2	25.0	9.1	7.0	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	151.1	49.4	3.0	88.8	696.1	116.9	265.7	19.6
<b>2004 OY</b>	250	47.3	4.8	240	735	444	284	22
<b>Difference</b>	98.9	-2.1	1.8	151.2	38.9	327.1	18.3	2.4
<b>Percent of OY</b>	60.4%	104.5%	62.5%	37.0%	94.7%	26.3%	93.6%	88.9%
Key	= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data sources.							

a/ South of 40°10' N. lat.

b/ Mortality estimates are not hard numbers; based on the GMT's best professional judgement.

c/ Bycatch amounts by species unavailable, but bocaccio occurred in 0.1% of all port samples and other rockfish in another 0.1% of all port samples (and squid fisheries usually land their whole catch). In 2001, out of 84,000 mt total landings 1 mt was groundfish. This suggests that total bocaccio was caught in trace amounts.

d/ Estimates for yelloweye have not been updated.

e/ Estimates for bocaccio, cowcod, widow, and yelloweye have not been updated.

f/ Values are proposed EFP bycatch caps, not estimates of total mortality. The EFP is terminated inseason if the cap is projected to be attained early.

g/ The darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch caps are not defined yet for this EFP but are expected to be lower than the placeholders in this scorecard.

C.1.b Attachment 2. Estimated Impacts as a Result of Inseason Adjustments Proposed Under Agendum C.3 Scorecard

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Fishery	Bocaccio a/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	Lingcod	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
<b>Limited Entry Groundfish</b>								
Trawl- Non-whiting	47.4	9.2	0.4	75.6	104.7	95.0	2.5	0.2
Fixed Gear	13.4	0.9	0.1	0.8	20.0	0.3	0.5	2.5
<b>Whiting</b>								
At-sea whiting motherships		4.0		1.4	0.3	1.7	59.7	0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc		1.3		7.6	0.4	10.1	84.6	0.4
Shoreside whiting		0.4		0.5	0.7	0.4	29.9	0.0
Tribal whiting		4.7		0.0	0.5	1.5	37.1	0.0
<b>Open Access</b>								
Groundfish directed	10.6	1.0	0.1	0.2	70.0	0.1		0.6
CA Halibut	0.1			0.0	2.0	0.0		
CA Gillnet b/	0.5			0.0		0.0	0.0	
CA Sheephead b/				0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
CPS- wetfish b/	0.3							
CPS- squid c/								
Dungeness crab b/	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0		
HMS b/		0.0	0.0	0.0				
Pacific Halibut b/	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.5
Pink shrimp	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1
Ridgeback prawn	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Salmon troll	0.2	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
Sea Cucumber	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spot Prawn (trap)								
<b>Tribal</b>								
Midwater Trawl		1.3		0.0	0.1	0.0	40.0	0.0
Bottom Trawl		0.5		0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Troll		0.5		0.0	1.0	0.0		0.0
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<b>Research: Based on 2 most recent NMFS trawl shelf and slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and LOAs with expanded estimates for south of Pt. Conception.</b>								
	2.0	3.0		1.6	3.0	3.0	1.5	1.1
<b>Non-EFP Total</b>	137.5	47.0	2.4	87.7	671.1	112.1	258.7	18.4
<b>EFPs f/</b>								
CA: NS FF trawl	10.0	0.5	0.5		20.0			0.5
OR: DTS g/		0.0		0.2		0.6		0.0
WA: AT trawl		1.0		3.0	4.5	8.5	5.5	0.5
WA: dogfish LL		0.0		0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
WA: pollock		0.1					1.5	0.1
<b>EFP Subtotal</b>	10.0	1.6	0.5	3.2	25.0	9.1	7.0	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	147.5	48.6	2.9	90.9	696.1	121.2	265.7	19.5
<b>2004 OY</b>	250	47.3	4.8	240	735	444	284	22
<b>Difference</b>	102.5	-1.3	1.9	149.1	38.9	322.8	18.3	2.5
<b>Percent of OY</b>	59.0%	102.8%	60.4%	37.9%	94.7%	27.3%	93.6%	88.5%
Key	= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data sources.							

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