

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
REPORT ON PROPOSED EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS (EFPs) FOR 2005 AND 2006

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing to include the provisions of our Arrowtooth Flounder Trawl EFP into the federal regulations for 2005 and 2006. However, as a result of discussions with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), it is our understanding that these provisions may need additional analysis beyond what can be accommodated in the 2005-06 specifications EIS. As such, if the Council approves the WDFW proposal, then NMFS would have to file a regulatory amendment to move the proposed arrowtooth trawl fishery into federal regulations through a separate process. It is clear that the regulatory amendment process would not be finalized in time for the arrowtooth trawl fishery to begin in May 2005. Recognizing that the arrowtooth flounder fishery is extremely important to Washington trawl fishers and local processors, WDFW received guidance from NMFS to prosecute the arrowtooth trawl fishery as an EFP for another year in 2005.

Based on this guidance, WDFW is proposing the following EFPs for 2005, in priority order, with the associated bycatch caps (in mt):

	Canary	Darkbl	Lingcod*	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
Arrowtooth Trawl	2.5	3.0	4.5	18.0	5.5	0.5
Longline Dogfish	0.1	0.5	2.0	8.5	0.5	1.0

(* Cap would accommodate current trip limits)

The longline dogfish EFP has been conducted in 2003 and 2004. The EFP requirements include qualifying criteria that would have allowed three vessels to participate each year, however, only one vessel has indicated an interest. It is our intention to continue this EFP for one more year (2005) and remove the qualifying criteria to provide an opportunity for additional participation. If the results of the experiment continue to be positive, we would like to explore allowing this fishery in 2006 through the use of "hotspot" management.

Attached are the draft EFP applications for 2005 for the arrowtooth trawl and longline dogfish EFPs. WDFW is not proposing any EFPs for the 2006 fishing year.