

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS
FOR 2005/2006

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed four exempted fishing permit (EFP) proposals - one each from California and Oregon, and two from Washington. The GAP provides the following comments and recommendations on these proposals.

California Selective Flatfish Trawl

The California proposal reviewed by the GAP contained several typographical errors that showed exceedingly high levels of bycatch. After further discussion with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) representatives, the errors were corrected, and the GAP withdrew its initial objection to the proposal.

The GAP notes that, even with the correction, large amounts of Dungeness crab are projected to be incidentally taken in this exempted fishery. The GAP recommends that interim and final reports on the fishery specifically include a break-out of crab incidental catch.

Oregon Selective Flatfish Trawl

The Oregon proposal is an attempt to refine the selective trawl work that has already been done by finding ways to further reduce incidental take of some rockfish species. The GAP supports the proposal.

Washington Arrowtooth Flounder

This EFP is a continuation of a permit that has been in effect for several years. The GAP is concerned that, while it provides a fishing opportunity for some vessels and some data on canary rockfish concentration, the fishery has not yet been converted into a regular, non-exempt fishery. The GAP also expressed reservations about the 2.5 mt cap of canary rockfish, since the fishery is currently capped at 1.5 mt.

The GAP recommends the fishing opportunity be continued for one more year, with the goal of converting it into a regular fishery in 2006. Further, given the current problems with distributing canary rockfish bycatch impacts, the GAP recommends that the proposal be capped at 1.5 mt of canary, even if this means reducing the number of boats that might be eligible to participate.

Washington Spiny Dogfish

This is also a continuation of an existing permitted fishery, which at present involves only one vessel. Similar to the concern about canary impacts in the arrowtooth trawl fishery, the GAP is concerned about the amount of yelloweye rockfish assigned to a fishery with low participation. A majority of the GAP recommends that the permit be approved, but that the amount of yelloweye be capped at .5 mt. A minority of the GAP believes that the permit should be approved as requested.

Finally, the GAP is aware that all states receiving EFPs have complied with reporting and documentation requirements. Unfortunately, the GAP seems to have been left off the distribution list for most of these reports. We respectfully request that future reports on exempted fishing permit fisheries be provided to the GAP.

PFMC

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