

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW)
REPORT ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2005

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

At the June meeting, the Council approved two WDFW-sponsored EFPs for public review-- a continuation of the Spiny Dogfish Longline EFP and a continuation of the Arrowtooth Flounder Trawl EFP. After reviewing the data collected in the Spiny Dogfish Longline EFP in 2003 and 2004, we believe that sufficient data exists to move this EFP into federal regulations. EFP data demonstrate that two small, discrete areas near the 100-fm curve could be open as dogfish "hotspots" for a portion of the year with very minimal impacts to yelloweye rockfish. As such, we do not believe that another EFP needs to be conducted in 2005 and we would like to pursue converting this EFP into federal regulations which would be effective in 2006. WDFW staff will prepare a report for the November Council meeting which would describe our proposal in more detail.

As for the Arrowtooth Flounder EFP--again, in reviewing the data collected primarily in 2003 and 2004 when specific gear restrictions were in place, we believe that sufficient data has been collected to demonstrate gear-specific bycatch rates, particularly of canary rockfish. The resulting bycatch rates, however, appear to be higher than those currently being used in the bycatch model for selective flatfish trawl gear; therefore, we do not think that moving the Arrowtooth EFP gear into regulation at this time would be prudent. If, though, federal observer data demonstrate that the actual bycatch rates for the selective flatfish trawl gear are higher than those being used in the model, and are comparable to the Arrowtooth EFP gear, then we would likely pursue using the EFP data to add Arrowtooth EFP gear to the list of legal gears to be used shoreward of the trawl RCA. In order to facilitate collecting the data on the selective flatfish trawl gear, we would not be conducting the Arrowtooth EFP in 2005. Washington arrowtooth fishers would then use selective flatfish trawl gear while fishing in the shoreward area and would be subject to federal observer coverage.

By not conducting any EFPs in 2005, the following amounts of overfished species would be freed up in the bycatch scorecard:

Canary rockfish - 1.85 mt
Darkblotched rockfish - 3.5 mt
Lingcod - 6.5 mt
POP - 26.5 mt
Widow rockfish - 6.0 mt
Yelloweye rockfish - 1.5 mt