

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF STATUS OF FISHERIES AND INSEASON
ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the recreational and commercial catch estimates and updated the bycatch scorecard (estimated impacts that have been updated are highlighted in bold) and have identified two significant issues for inseason consideration.

Canary Rockfish

In September, the GMT estimated the total mortality of canary rockfish in the directed groundfish commercial fisheries (limited entry trawl, limited entry fixed gear, and open access) would be 18.3 mt for the year. Through mid-October, the GMT estimates the total limited entry trawl canary catch is 17.1 mt, based on the amount of landed catch and applying the estimated discard proportion from 2003 (60%). In addition, the limited entry fixed gear and open access fisheries are expected to harvest 1.9 mt during the entire year for a total directed groundfish commercial mortality estimate of 19.0 mt. Added to the other fisheries in the scorecard produces a total mortality through December of 48.3 mt, which is 1.0 mt over the optimum yield (OY) of 47.3 mt.

This projected OY overage is calculated based on the preseason estimates for California recreational fisheries. As California recreational catch estimates are not available for 2004, it is difficult to determine whether restricting fishing opportunity for any fishery in December is necessary to stay within the canary OY (or reduce the projected overage). As the limited entry trawl fishery is currently closed shoreward of the deeper trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary (250 fm north of 38°; 200 fm between 38° and 36°; 150 fm south of 36°) to protect darkblotched and canary rockfish, further restricting the trawl fishery for the month of December would not result in canary rockfish savings.

Also in September, the Council reduced the canary rockfish bycatch cap for the whiting fisheries from 7.3 mt to 6.2 mt. To date, the whiting fisheries have caught 6.0 mt of canary. The catcher-processor sector is currently fishing and is scheduled to close next week; if the full bycatch cap is not reached, there would be a minimal amount of canary savings (0.2 mt).

The current fisheries scheduled for December which could impact canary rockfish include the daily trip limit fisheries for sablefish outside of 100 fm north of 40°10' and 150 fm south of 40°10'. During the winter months, effort in these fisheries drops off considerably, and there is very little anticipated canary catch associated with them. From 34°27' to the Oregon/California border (42°), nearshore rockfish fisheries remain open inside of 30 fm. South of 34°27', nearshore fishing can occur out to 60 fm. However, as the GMT's estimates for canary rockfish mortality in these fisheries are produced on an annual basis, the GMT cannot quantify the canary rockfish savings which would result from restricting these limited entry and open access fisheries (but estimates it would be about 0.1 mt). Also, fishers may achieve two-month cumulative limits in November if additional restrictions are anticipated for December.

The GMT did discuss proposals to increase the minor nearshore and black rockfish trip limits for limited entry fixed gear and open access between 40°10' and 42° because catches of black rockfish and minor nearshore are projected to be substantially below their respective harvest guidelines for that area. However, the GMT cannot quantify the expected additional canary rockfish impacts resulting from these proposals. Given that current fisheries are projected to exceed the canary rockfish OY, we do not believe these trip limit increases can be accommodated.

As a reminder, the canary rockfish OY is calculated based on the amounts harvested by the commercial and recreational fishing sectors (i.e., a higher proportion caught by the commercial sector produces a higher OY). Based on the new commercial catch estimates, the GMT recalculated what the resulting OY would be with the new commercial/recreational split. The resulting OY would be 50.8 mt (70% commercial; 30% recreational). Carrying these proportions forward results in a commercial OY of 35.7 mt (compared to a current commercial catch estimate of 34.2 mt) and a recreational OY of 15.1 mt (compared to a recreational catch estimate of 14.5 mt). Therefore, if the revised OY were used for management, both the commercial and recreational sectors would be underachieving their respective OYs, and this approach would not jeopardize rebuilding of canary rockfish.

Darkblotched Rockfish

In September, the GMT estimated the total mortality of darkblotched rockfish in the limited entry trawl fishery would be 268.1 mt by the end of September (for the remainder of the year). Based on the landings through the end of September, and applying the estimated discard proportion, the GMT's updated estimate is 293.4 mt. Combined with the estimated mortalities in the other fisheries and research, this produces a total mortality estimate of 307.8 mt (which is 67.8 mt over the acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 240 mt).

The GMT discussed an industry proposal to consider reopening the trawl petrale areas in December, which would require moving the deeper trawl RCA boundary from 250 fm to 150 fm north of 38°. The GMT reviewed the available NMFS observer data for Period 6, and estimates an additional darkblotched impact of 3 mt to 20 mt resulting from reopening these petrale areas. However, as the ABC has already been exceeded, the potential impacts to darkblotched rockfish resulting from this proposal cannot be accommodated.

GMT Recommendations

The GMT would appreciate Council guidance on (1) whether inseason action to address the projected canary rockfish overage is warranted; and (2) if so, which fisheries should be restricted.

PFMC
11/02/04

Attachment 1. Estimated Impacts Prior to Inseason Adjustments at the September Council Meeting

11/2/2004 14:21

Fishery	Bocaccio a/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	Lingcod	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
Limited Entry Groundfish								
Trawl- Non-whiting	47.4	19.0	0.4	293.4	104.7	95.0	2.5	0.2
Fixed Gear	13.4		0.1		20.0	0.3	0.5	2.5
Open Access: Groundfish directed	10.6		0.1		70.0	0.1		0.6
Whiting								
At-sea whiting motherships		6.2		3.0	0.8	0.1	11.4	0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc				5.8	0.4	10.1	84.6	0.4
Shoreside whiting				0.7	0.7	0.7	28.6	0.0
Tribal whiting				0.0	0.0	0.2	1.6	0.0
Open Access								
CA Halibut	0.1	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	0.1	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)								
Tribal								
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
Fixed gear		0.3		0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Recreational Groundfish								
WA		1.7			71.7			3.4
OR /e		4.3			109.7		1.4	3.2
CA	62.8	8.5	1.8		268.9		8.2	3.7
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.								
	2.0	3.1		4.0	3.0	3.0	0.5	1.0
Non-EFP Total	137.5	47.2	2.4	306.9	677.8	109.5	179.4	18.1
EFPs d/								
CA: NS FF trawl	10.0	0.1	0.5		20.0			0.5
OR: DTS		0.0		0.2		0.6		0.0
WA: AT trawl		1.0		0.7	0.8	4.0	0.0	0.0
WA: dogfish LL		0.0		0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
WA: pollock		0.0					0.0	0.0
EFP Subtotal	10.0	1.1	0.5	0.9	21.3	4.6	0.0	0.5
TOTAL	147.5	48.3	2.9	307.8	699.1	114.1	179.4	18.6
2004 OY	250	47.3	4.8	240	735	444	284	22
Difference	102.5	-1.0	1.9	-67.8	35.9	329.9	104.6	3.4
Percent of OY	59.0%	102.1%	60.4%	128.3%	95.1%	25.7%	63.2%	84.7%
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/ 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.

e/ Canary rockfish impacts through September 5 in all Oregon recreational fisheries (3.5 mt), plus impacts from remaining halibut fishery dates in Sept. and Oct. (0.4 mt), plus impacts from fishery shoreward of 40 fm through December (0.1 mt), plus fishery seaward of 40 fm in October with yellowtail rockfish retention (0.4 mt).