

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL COMMENTS ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2007-2008 FISHERIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed available portions of the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) report (scorecard, California recreational regulations, and Attachment 1) this morning (April 7, 2006) and does not object to using the GMT recommendations to create a range of options to be analyzed for the June 2006 meeting.

In general,

- for nontrawl and recreational gears north of 40°10' north latitude the most constraining species is yelloweye rockfish;
- for nontrawl and recreational gears south of 40°10' north latitude to 34°27' north latitude the most constraining species are canary rockfish and bocaccio; and
- South of 34°27' north latitude, bocaccio are constraining.

Limited Entry Trawl Whiting

The non-tribal whiting sectors discussed several management measures in an attempt to achieve the Council's proposed lower optimum yield (OY) values. It is a fact that over recent years the whiting fishery, through its own initiative and in cooperation with fishery managers, has developed rational methods to provide flexibility while prosecuting the fishery. This has resulted in a well-managed fishery, documented decreases in bycatch, and increased efficiency in production and marketing. Under the proposed lower OY values, all of these cooperative efforts and the worthwhile progress will be lost. Under the proposed higher OY values, whiting fishery sectors would likely be able to adapt and continue to operate as in past years.

To inform Council decision making regarding the proposed lower OY values, a variety of management measures were considered, including: equal season start date, depth-based management restrictions, sector specific bycatch caps, and a lottery. All measures except one were rejected for the following reasons.

Equal Start Date

An equal start date for all non-tribal sectors was suggested as a way to "level" the playing field. A tremendous race for fish would occur, negating progress the industry has made in reducing bycatch. Each sector currently has competing objectives for beginning their fishery at different times. Competitive behaviors as well as safety issues would be exacerbated with equal start seasons. A fair resolution to these competing objectives does not exist and the measure was rejected.

Depth-Based Restrictions

Consideration of depth-based restrictions such as a whiting conservation area were considered and rejected. This type of measure is extremely allocative and again removes flexibility to prosecute the fishery through the self-rationalization measures taken by the industry in recent years

Lottery

Discussion of a lottery system for the three sectors was considered. The lottery would allow each sector to fish one out of three years. This idea was rejected as not feasible based on potential for huge transfers of idle capacity to other sectors and fisheries and the volatility of the whiting markets.

Sector Specific Bycatch Caps

The only measure which seems remotely practicable is proportional reductions that are then divided between sectors based on their whiting allocation.

Allocated Caps

We then focused our discussion on three constraining species for the whiting fishery and proceeded as if the caps were allocated between sectors based on the whiting allocation. All of these species are continuing to rebuild. We are concerned that increases in biomasses of overfished species being rebuilt will result in increased incidental catch rates and more rapid achievement of the lower OY limits.

Canary Rockfish

An OY of 32 mt for canary rockfish results in 2.86 mt being available for the total non-tribal whiting fishery. Using the current sectoral whiting allocations this works out to: 0.69 mt for motherships, 1.2 mt for shoreside, and 0.97 mt for catcher processors. Under this scenario we estimate losses of up to 50% of the shoreside fishery. This is based on catches from 2005. This represents \$5 million dollars ex-vessel revenue based on a \$0.05 per pound price. Using the common multiplier effects this results in a loss of \$12,500,000 to the community overall.

Widow Rockfish

An OY of 120 mt for widow rockfish results in approximately 55 mt available to the non-tribal whiting fishery. Based on 2005 catches, under any scenario the whiting fishery as a whole estimates seasons no longer than 7 to 10 days resulting in a loss of 80% of the overall fishery. This results in a \$23 million dollar loss at the ex-vessel level.

Darkblotched Rockfish

An OY of 130 mt for darkblotched rockfish could result in approximately 10 mt being available to the entire non-tribal whiting fishery. With this level of darkblotched rockfish available, we estimate a 40% loss to the entire fishery – this equates to \$11,600,000 lost at the ex-vessel level. These estimates are based on 2005 catch levels.

Limited Entry Trawl

The GAP worked with the GMT on the trawl limited entry trip limit tables and concurs with the recommended options in the GMT report.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear

Move the outside boundary of the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) to 150 fm for the primary and DTL fishery and move the inside line to 20 fm. The GAP concurs with analysis the range of options in the GMT report.

North 40°10' North Latitude Commercial Open Access

High OY: For open access for 2007-2008 we propose a status quo year-round fishery which would result in a total mortality of 2.12 metric tons of yelloweye rockfish, which coincides with the historic share from 2005, when 20 mt was taken coast wide.

Low OY: In the case of a 12 mt yellow rockfish OY, the northern open access year-round fishery could be moved into 20 fathoms with a 10% reduction of other minor nearshore rockfish resulting in an expected mortality of 1.27 mt.

Compounding Effects to Consider

The least economically damaging way to reduce impacts on yelloweye rockfish is to move the 30 fm line to 20 fm. This results in a greater than needed reduction (i.e. from 2.12 mt to 1.39 mt) due to reduced mortality rate. The target of open access under a 17 mt OY and proportion reductions across all sectors should be 1.78.

If limited entry blackcod fishery is moved out to 150 fm to protect yelloweye rockfish and the line for the open access DTL fishery is also moved to 150 fm, as would be expected, this would result in an 0.2 additional savings in yelloweye rockfish for the open access fishery. The result from these two actions would be an expected mortality of only 1.19, i.e. .59 mt more than would be necessary.

Washington Dogfish

Northern Washington fixed gear the management measure of 150 fathom RCA would eliminate the dogfish fishery and would have detrimental affects to the market and affect the Puget Sound dogfish fishery.

A management measure defining yelloweye rockfish hotspots, as an estimate, would reduce the dogfish fishery by 50%. The GMT might consider whether the compounding effects previously described that result in greater than needed savings would eliminate the need for such hotspot management.

North 40°10' North Latitude Recreational

Washington Recreational

Washington State proposal for recreational fishery for the **low OY** scenario, use the 2006 season specification, eliminate the halibut fishery and close offshore of 20 fathoms as an inseason action. For **high OY** option use the 2006 season specifications for status quo.

Oregon Recreational

Oregon recreational conceptually agrees with hotspot protection for yelloweye rockfish.

Northern California

For the low OY option analyze a 7 month fishery open to 20 fm.

40°10' North Latitude to 34° 27' North Latitude

Recreational

40°10' North Latitude to 36° North Latitude

For the low OY option analyze a 6 month fishery open to 20 fm.

36° North Latitude to 34°27' North Latitude

For the low OY option analyze a 6 month fishery open to 30 fm.

Commercial

High OY: Open access supports status quo, and status quo for directed and incidental groundfish mortality impacts for overfished species.

Low OY: Directed open access: Change the DTL from 5,000 bimonthly to 3,600 bimonthly. Leave the 300 lbs per day and 1,000 pound per week limits in place.

South of 34°27' North Latitude Commercial and Recreational

High OY: Status Quo

Low OY: California south of 34°27' north latitude (Conception), with a 40 ton bocaccio OY, the RCA would be moved from 60 fathoms to 20 fathoms to negate impacts to bocaccio and still ensure a year round fishery.

It would increase the impact to nearshore stocks, radically decrease the opportunity to catch valued shelf rockfish species such as vermilion which lead to passenger discontent due to limited access to shelf species, and they could not sell a ticket. With a 40 ton OY, Commercial impact would basically eliminate access to valued shelf rockfish species and force more focus on nearshore rockfish.