

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE MOTION ON
THE TENTATIVE ADOPTION OF THE 2007-2008 GROUND FISH FISHERY
SPECIFICATIONS/MANAGEMENT MEASURES AND AMENDMENT 16-4

I move that the Council tentatively approve the following management measures, as described in the Action Alternatives in the draft Environmental Impact Statement, for preliminary action:

WASHINGTON RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Statewide Measures:

- Maintain status quo bag limits as described in the No Action Alternative (Chapter 2, p. 52), which include a recreational groundfish bag limit of 15 fish per day, including rockfish and lingcod, with a sublimit of 10 rockfish, and 2 lingcod. Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited.
- Maintain status quo lingcod season as described in the No Action Alternative (Chapter 2, p. 52); in 2007 and 2008, the following lingcod seasons would apply:
 - Marine Areas 1-3: Open the Saturday closest to March 15 (which is March 17 in 2007 and March 15 in 2008) through the Saturday closest to October 15 (which is October 13 in 2007 and October 18 in 2008).
 - Marine Area 4: Open April 15 through October 13 in 2007 and open April 15 through October 15 in 2008.
- Reduce the minimum size for lingcod from 24 inches to 22 inches.

Area-Specific Measures:

Management Measures for Marine Areas 3 and 4 (Queets River to U.S./Canada border)

Action Alternative 3 (Chapter 2, p. 89), with two revisions: Prohibit fishing for, retention, and possession of **groundfish** seaward of a line approximating 20 fm from May 1 through **September 30**, except on days that halibut fishing is open.

Revisions:

1. Change “rockfish and lingcod” to more broadly cover “all groundfish” for ease of regulatory understanding and enforcement of the regulations
2. Move the depth restriction in July from 10 fm seaward to 20 fm

Management Measures for Marine Area 2 (Leadbetter Pt. to the Queets River)

Action Alternative 3 (Chapter 2, p. 89), with one revision: Prohibit fishing for, retention, and possession of **groundfish** seaward of a line approximating 30 fm from the lingcod opening day in March through April 30, and from June 16 through July 31. From May 1 through June 15

(i.e., during the average period of the South Coast halibut fishery), allow the retention of sablefish and Pacific cod seaward of the 30-fm depth restriction.

Revision:

1. Change “rockfish and lingcod” to more broadly cover “all groundfish” for ease of regulatory understanding and enforcement of the regulations, while still allowing the retention of sablefish and Pacific cod, which may be caught incidentally while targeting halibut offshore.

Management Measures for Marine Area 1 (Oregon/Washington border to Leadbetter Pt.)

No Action Alternative (Chapter 2, p. 54), which would prohibit fishing for, retention, and possession of groundfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod, when Pacific halibut are onboard the vessel.

This suite of management measures would result in the following estimated mortalities of overfished rockfish for Washington recreational fisheries:

Bocaccio	Canary	Cowcod	Darkblotched	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
0	1.1	0	0	0	0	3.1

Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas (YRCAs)

- Maintain the “C-shaped” YRCA (Chapter 2, Figure 2-4, p. 53) in the Washington North Coast area, as depicted by coordinates in federal regulations at 50 CFR 660.390. Recreational fishing for, retention, and possession of groundfish and Pacific halibut is prohibited within this area, and this area is defined as a voluntary “area to be avoided” for commercial fixed gear and salmon troll fisheries.
- Add an additional YRCA in the Washington North Coast area, labeled North Coast Area B, under Action Alternative 1 (Chapter 2, Figure 2-8, p. 65), as described by the following coordinates:

Beginning at 48°11.77’ N lat., 125°13.03’ W long. ;
Then to 48° 16.43’ N lat., 125°07.55’ W long. ;
Then to 48° 14.72’ N lat., 125°01.84’ W long. ;
Then to 48°13.36’ N lat., 125°03.20’ W long. ;
Then to 48°12.74’ N lat., 125°05.83’ W long. ;
Then to 48°11.55’ N lat., 125°04.99’ W long. ;
Then to 48°09.96’ N lat., 125°06.63’ W long. ;
Then to 48°09.68’ N lat., 125°08.75’ W long. ;
And back to the point of origin.

This area would be closed to commercial limited entry fixed gear and open access groundfish fishing. WDFW notes that this area is already closed to trawl gear with the implementation of the trawl rockfish conservation area and the essential fish habitat trawl closure; most of this area is also closed to salmon troll as a salmon conservation measure.

- Add an additional YRCA in the Washington North Coast area, under Action Alternative 1 (Chapter 2, Figure 2-11, p. 69), as described by the following coordinates:

Beginning at 48°00.00' N lat., 125°14.00' W long. ;
Then to 48°02.00' N lat., 125°14.00' W long. ;
Then to 48°00.00' N lat., 125°16.50' W long. ;
Then to 48°02.00' N lat., 125°16.50' W long. ;
And back to the point of origin.

This area would be closed to the commercial salmon troll fishery. WDFW would like to point out that this area overlaps a portion of the “C-shaped” YRCA, and is already closed to recreational groundfish and halibut fishing.

- Add an additional YRCA to in the Washington South Coast area, labeled South Coast Area B, under Action Alternative 1 (Chapter 2, Figure 2-9, p. 66), as described by the following coordinates:

Beginning at 46°58.00' N lat., 124°48.00' W long. ;
Then to 46°55.00' N lat., 124°48.00' W long. ;
Then to 46°58.00' N lat., 124°49.00' W long. ;
Then to 46°55.00' N lat., 124°49.00' W long. ;
And back to the point of origin.

This area would be closed to recreational fishing for groundfish and Pacific halibut and would be a voluntary “area to be avoided” for commercial groundfish fisheries.

We believe these proposed area closures will assist in the conservation and rebuilding of yelloweye rockfish and, while the primary purpose for these closures is yelloweye protection, we also believe that there will be additional benefits for canary rockfish as well.

As mentioned in Agenda Item F.2.b, WDFW Report, even though we are not able to quantify the amount of reduced yelloweye rockfish mortality resulting from implementing these conservation areas, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife did review available yelloweye rockfish encounter data. We plotted the coordinates of the closed areas with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software with overlays of state observer data from recreational, salmon troll, and exempted fisheries for trawl and longline, groundfish trawl logbook data, and data from the annual International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) halibut survey, the National Marine Fisheries Service triennial trawl survey, and the WDFW submersible survey for yelloweye. Based on this review, and information communicated from recreational and commercial fishers, we believe that closing these areas to the specified fisheries will help conserve yelloweye rockfish. Over the next 18 months, we will have a series of meetings with recreational and commercial fishers to complete a more comprehensive review of the data and information about fishing locations to further refine and these YRCAs and potentially define new sites.