

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT DETAILING THE
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE OREGON RECREATIONAL
GROUNDFISH AND COMMERCIAL GROUNDFISH FISHERIES IN 2007 AND 2008**

This report details Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (ODFW) preferred management measures for the 2007 and 2008 recreational and commercial groundfish fisheries. ODFW recommends the Council adopt the following management measures:

RECREATIONAL

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) recommends adoption of Alternative 3b (described in Chapter 2 of the preliminary Draft EIS, p. 90), as modified in this report, for the Oregon recreational groundfish fisheries in 2007 and 2008. This preferred season structure (Table 1) produces a fishery that is open offshore year round, except from April 1 to September 30 when fishing is only allowed shoreward of 40 fathoms. Estimated impacts for yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish associated with this preferred alternative are 3.2 mt and 4.3 mt respectively. We recommend a marine fish^{a/} daily bag limit of eight fish in aggregate and a flatfish daily bag limit of 25 fish in aggregate, consisting of all soles and flounders except Pacific halibut. The lingcod daily bag limit is two with a 22-inch minimum length limit.

Table 1: ODFW preferred 2007-2008 Oregon recreational groundfish fishery management measures.

Season Structure												Bag/Length Limits				Impacts	
Month												Marine Species Daily Bag ^{a/}	Flatfish Daily Bag ^{b/}	Ling Daily Bag	Lingcod Length Limit	Yelloweye Impact (mt)	Canary Impact (mt)
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D						
All depth			<40 fm						All depth			8	25	2	22	3.2	4.3

^{a/} Marine bag includes all species other than lingcod, salmon, steelhead, Pacific halibut, flatfish, surfperch, sturgeon, striped bass, pelagic tuna and mackerel species, and bait fish such as herring, anchovy, sardine and smelt

^{b/} Flatfish bag consists of all soles and flounders except Pacific halibut

Marine Fish Daily Bag Limit: ODFW recommends adoption of a marine fish daily bag limit of 8 fish in aggregate (as defined above). This will provide management flexibility to make necessary adjustments to the marine fish daily bag limit through the yearly state process, reflecting the progression of the current year’s fishery. The species most affected by adjustments in the marine fish daily bag limit is black rockfish. The fishery will be managed within the black rockfish harvest guideline.

Flatfish Daily Bag Limit: ODFW recommends adoption of a flatfish daily bag limit of 25 fish in aggregate (excluding Pacific halibut), removing flatfish from the status quo definition of “marine fish”.

Lingcod Daily Bag Limit: ODFW recommends adoption a lingcod daily bag limit of 2 fish, carrying forward the current bag limit.

Minimum Length Limits: ODFW recommends adoption of a minimum length limit of 22-inches for lingcod. This adjustment should reduce time on the water by allowing anglers to achieve the lingcod bag limit quicker, and thus reduce impacts to depleted rockfish species (primarily canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish) as well as constraining target species (i.e. black rockfish). This will also provide more access to the increased amount of harvestable lingcod available. Analysis shows that more lingcod are expected to be harvested due to decreasing the minimum length limit than increasing the daily bag limit. ODFW also recommends continuation of the minimum length limits for cabezon and kelp greenling of 16-inches and 10-inches respectively.

Stonewall Bank YRCA: ODFW recommends prohibiting groundfish retention within a defined area (Table 2), encompassing the high relief rocky habitat of Stonewall Bank, residing approximately 15 miles offshore from Newport, Oregon. There currently exists a Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area, adopted in Pacific halibut rules, which is closed to the retention of Pacific halibut only. Implementation of this same area (p. 55, Chapter 2, DEIS) in the groundfish fishery would aid in the conservation of depleted rockfish species. Targeting and retention of Pacific halibut and groundfish would be prohibited in the area year-round. Data is currently being collected to determine if anglers targeting Pacific halibut in the open areas of Stonewall Bank are also encountering yelloweye rockfish. This data will be used to determine if expansion of the adopted area is warranted for both the 2007 Pacific halibut fishery and the 2007-2008 groundfish fishery.

Table 2: Coordinates of the ODFW recommended Stonewall Bank YRCA.

ID#	Degrees	Minutes	Degrees	Minutes
1	44	37.46	124	24.92
2	44	37.46	124	23.63
3	44	28.71	124	21.80
4	44	28.71	124	24.10
5	44	31.42	124	25.47

Groundfish retention in the all-depth Pacific halibut fishery: Currently only sablefish may be retained in the Pacific halibut fishery at any depth in the area from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, Oregon. North of Cape Falcon both sablefish and Pacific cod may be retained at any depth during the Pacific halibut fishery. It is expected that groundfish retention in the all-depth Pacific halibut fishery will be similarly constrained in 2007 and 2008.

Inseason Management: The inseason actions that may be implemented if the 2007 or 2008 Oregon recreational groundfish fishery does not proceed as expected include: length limit adjustments, bag limit adjustments (including non retention), and season, depth, and area closures.

Depth management will be the main inseason tool for controlling canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish harvest, as retention is prohibited. Offshore closures may be implemented inseason at

30, 25, or 20 fathoms as the presence of these two species is reduced nearshore and release survival increases. ODFW will monitor inseason progress toward recreational harvest targets for canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish. If inseason catch projections indicate that one or both of the state harvest targets may be exceeded, ODFW and WDFW will consult to share catch information. If the states determine that a management response is necessary to avoid exceeding the Oregon-Washington harvest guideline of canary or yelloweye rockfish, then the appropriate agency(ies) will implement inseason management actions to reduce catches, as necessary. Regulations will depend upon the timing of the determination for their need.

Adjustments to the daily marine fish bag limit may be implemented to achieve season duration goals in the event of accelerated or decelerated black rockfish or other nearshore rockfish harvest. Season and/or area closures may also be considered if harvest targets are projected to be attained. Non-retention and length restrictions are the likely inseason tools to use for cabezon and greenling as release survival is very high. They may also be used to reduce impacts on nearshore species, such as black rockfish.

Gear restrictions and/or release technique requirements may be implemented to reduce the impact of overfished rockfish species if successful techniques are developed, researched, reviewed, and accepted. Research in this area is currently being conducted, testing the effectiveness and selectivity of various gears and the survivability of rockfish released at depth.

Directed yellowtail rockfish and/or flatfish fisheries may be implemented inseason, as were implemented in 2004, in the event of a closure of the recreational groundfish fishery due to attainment of target species harvest guidelines or state harvest caps. Specific gear restrictions may be implemented in the event that flatfish remains open during a groundfish closure. Fisheries will be monitored to ensure that impacts to yelloweye and canary rockfish are not in excess of the harvest targets.

In the event that the duration of total season is reduced from 12 months, or the nearshore waters are closed to groundfish fishing due to management of nearshore species, the fishery may be expanded to waters seaward of the RCA that is in effect at the time, promoting directed yellowtail rockfish and offshore lingcod opportunity. Fisheries will be monitored to ensure that impacts to yelloweye and canary rockfish are not in excess of the harvest targets.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial Limited Entry Fixed Gear and Open Access Fisheries

ODFW recommends adoption of a 22-inch minimum length requirement for lingcod in the limited entry fixed gear and open access fisheries off Oregon and Washington. This will provide consistency with lingcod minimum length requirements in the recreational fisheries in Oregon and Washington. Industry representatives have asserted that there is a viable market for smaller lingcod, primarily in the live-fish fishery off Oregon. This action would allow fishers to retain previously discarded fish, and access the increased allowable harvest of lingcod in 2007 and 2008.

Commercial Limited Entry Bottom Trawl Fishery

ODFW recommends the required analysis (DEIS) be conducted to provide the ability to implement a “one-gear-on-board” per cumulative period regulation in the bottom trawl fishery as a routine management measure in 2007-2008 for the purpose of partitioning the trawl fleet and improving catch projection modeling.

Commercial Nearshore Fishery

ODFW recommends adoption of Action Alternative 3b as described on p. 88 in Chapter 2 of the preliminary draft EIS. This alternative provides for a near status quo fishery shoreward of 30 fathoms, and results in updated expected impacts for canary rockfish, widow rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish of 1.7, 0.1, and 2.1 mt, respectively. The fishery would operate for 12 months under federal and state harvest guidelines and federal trip limits (northern California) and state harvest caps and state trip limits (Oregon). The fishery will be closely monitored inseason and trip limits will be adjusted via federal or state inseason action to avoid exceeding federal harvest guidelines or state harvest caps for target species. In the event that new information indicates that the projected impacts to depleted species would be exceeded, the fishery may be adjusted using depth based management tools. A 20-fathom open access RCA line is being added to the list of available inseason tools.