

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL (GAP) REPORT ON FINAL ADOPTION OF 2007-
2008 GROUND FISH FISHERY SPECIFICATIONS/MANAGEMENT MEASURES AND
AMENDMENT 16-4

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommendations on commercial fishery seasons, trip limits and rockfish conservation area (RCA) boundaries are as follows.

Limited Entry Trawl

The GAP agrees with the GMT's recommendations on limited entry trawl RCA and cumulative trip limits coastwide.

GAP members became aware of a proposal to limit the fleet to one gear on board per cumulative limits for the 2007-2008 fisheries. GAP members voiced concern over receiving the proposal on the Friday morning of the final action agenda item. The GAP understands that this proposal results from the GMT's hope they could better estimate effort shifts.

A subcommittee of the GAP explored the option briefly and has the following comments:

1. **Cost.** The costs associated with this proposal are large. The proposal would require fishermen to return to port between cumulative periods and switch their gear. Currently the vessels are allowed to have both gears on board. The costs associated with switching the gear can be significant.
2. **Flexibility.** The proposal limits the fleet's flexibility to access fish when and where they become available.
3. **Effectiveness.** Given the uncertainty of availability of target fish and the variability of bycatch species the GAP does not believe that this restriction will increase the accuracy of bycatch or target species actual catch.

The GAP realizes that this option was initially proposed prior to consideration of a trigger mechanism that allows for management action between Council meetings. The GAP believes that the trigger mechanism will be sufficient to adjust management measures as necessary. The trigger mechanism is the GAP's preferred alternative for dealing with this issue. Other options include some type of declaration system or an information sharing meeting where the GMT meets with members of the fleet to discuss their expected "game plans" for the upcoming season.

The GMT is also proposing that selective trawl gear be required south of 40°10 in order to avoid bocaccio rockfish capture. The GAP notes that there is little or no data on the effectiveness of this gear south of 40°10 with respect to bocaccio. Furthermore, the GAP is confident that the next bocaccio stock assessment will reflect a significantly higher, if not rebuilt, population of bocaccio. With this in mind the GAP believes that the costs associated with requiring this gear south of 40°10 poses an unnecessary economic hardship on the fleet when the gear may become irrelevant within the next management cycle.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear

The GAP recommends status quo management measures for limited entry fixed gear north of 40°10' N. lat.

The GAP also recommends status quo management measures for limited entry fixed gear south of 40°10' N. lat. with the following exceptions:

- The 34°27' N. lat. management line is recommended for stratifying management measures for thornyheads.
- Increase the California scorpionfish cumulative trip limit to 600 lbs/2 months during periods 1, 3, and 6; increase to 800 lbs/2 months during periods 4 and 5.
- Increase the shallow nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit to 600 lbs/2 months during periods 1 and 6; increase to 800 lbs/2 months during periods 3 and 5; and increase to 900 lbs/2 months during period 4.
- Increase the deeper nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit north of 34°27' N. lat. to 600 lbs/2 months during period 5; increase the deeper nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit south of 34°27' N. lat. to 600 lbs/2 months during period 6.
- Increase the lingcod cumulative trip limit to 100 lbs/ month during periods 1 and 6.

Open Access

The GAP recommends Alternative 3b management measures for open access gears north of 40°10' N. lat. with the following exceptions:

- Increase the lingcod cumulative trip limit to 400 lbs/month from May through November.

The GAP also recommends status quo management measures for open access gears south of 40°10' N. lat. with the following exceptions:

- The 34°27' N. lat. management line is recommended for stratifying management measures for thornyheads.
- Increase the California scorpionfish cumulative trip limit to 600 lbs/2 months during periods 1, 3, and 6; increase to 800 lbs/2 months during periods 4 and 5.
- Increase the shallow nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit to 600 lbs/2 months during periods 1 and 6; increase to 800 lbs/2 months during periods 3 and 5; and increase to 900 lbs/2 months during period 4.
- Increase the deeper nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit north of 34°27' N. lat. to 600 lbs/2 months during period 5; increase the deeper nearshore rockfish cumulative trip limit south of 34°27' N. lat. to 600 lbs/2 months during period 6.
- Increase the lingcod cumulative trip limit to 300 lbs/ month during November; increase to 100 lbs/ month during December.

The GAP recommends recreational management measures as follows.

California Recreational Management Measures

The GAP recommends option 5b California recreational seasons and open depths as follows:

RCG SEASON BY REGION

Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Region	---	---	---	---	> 30 fm Closed							
North Central	---	---	---	---	---	> 30 fm Closed						---
South Central - Monterey	---	---	---	---	> 40 fm Closed							---
South Central - Morro Bay	---	---	---	---	> 40 fm Closed							---
South Region	---	---	> 60 fm Closed									

NOTES AND KEY:

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings

--- = Closed to boat-based fishing for RCG

The estimated impacts under option 5b are:

Region	Estimated Impacts (mt)									
	Yelloweye	Canary	Cowcod	Bocaccio	Widow	Minor NS RF North	Minor NS RF South	CA Scorpionfish	Lingcod	
North region	0.9	0.7	N/A	N/A	0	17.3	N/A	0	51	
North Central	0.6	5.5	0	0.2	2.2	N/A	165	0	152	
South Central - Monterey	0	0.5	0	7.4	0.9	N/A	104	0	29	
South Central - Morro Bay	0	1.3	0	2.5	0.1	N/A	92	0	24	
South Region	0	0.3	0.3	57.4	5.2	N/A	61	75	26	
TOTAL CALIFORNIA	1.7	8.3	0.3	67.5	8.4	17.3	422	75	282	

Oregon Recreational Management Measures

Yelloweye: The GAP recommends a no-action management measure as described in agenda item F.2.b, ODFW Report June 2006. Also recommended is an ability to change to alternative more restrictive depth based management measures should the yelloweye impacts exceed a rate compatible with preseason projections. This in-season constraint ability would allow for a lowering of the impact rate.

Lingcod: The GAP recommends a change of the lingcod minimum length from 24” to 22”.

Bag limit: The GAP recommends that the bag limit be limited to no less than 5 fish with all management measures as indicated through Oregon public comment. A depth constraint or season closure is preferred to a bag of less than 5. Flat fish 25 bag limit in aggregate not to include Pacific Halibut.

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.

Cowcod Conservation Area Boundary Changes

The GAP supports the Alternative 2 Cowcod Conservation Area West boundary change to allow vessels equipped with VMS to fish within the bounds of the current CCA in depths greater than 175 fm. These new open areas are important for accessing healthy slope species, such as blackgill rockfish, and will not impact cowcod, which are not found in these areas. The GAP believes only about 9 vessels will actively fish in this area. Enforcement Consultants notified GAP members that there may be increased costs to vessels fishing in this area associated with increased VMS “ping” rates. The GAP and affected industry members are willing to bear these increased costs to provide increased slope fishing opportunities.

PFMC
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