

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON
ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2007 AND 2008 FISHERIES, INCLUDING PACIFIC WHITING
SEASON DATES

2007

Open Access Daily Trip Limit (DTL) Fishery North of 36°

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommends an increase to the sablefish DTL fishery north of 36° to 900 lbs per week and 2700 lbs per two-month period. According to the November 2nd quota species monitoring (QSM), catches reflect only 55% of the 2007 harvest guideline. The GAP questions the validity of yelloweye impacts in a fishery that takes place outside 150 fathoms.

Limited Entry Trawl Fishery North of 36°

The GAP requests an increase to trawl sablefish for the month of December. The November 2nd QSM report, catches of DTL sablefish are at 64% of the harvest guideline. There is substantial fish available under both shortspine (currently at 43% of harvest guideline) and longspine (31% of harvest guideline). This fishery takes place outside of 200 fathoms, therefore the impacts on darkblotch rockfish are negligible.

2008

Open Access DTL Fishery South of 36°

The GAP supports the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) proposal:

1. 300 lbs per day, 1 landing of 850 lbs per week with no cap.
2. If the Nature Conservancy/Environmental Defense (TNC/ED) exempted fishing permit (EFP) is implemented, a 300 lb daily limit, 1 landing of 800 lbs per week with a 2-month cap of 2,400 lbs.

Open Access DTL fishery North of 36°

The GAP proposes a 300 lb daily limit, 1 landing per week of 800 lbs with a 2-month cap of 2,400 lbs regardless of whether the TNC/ED EFP is implemented.

Limited Entry Fixed-Gear South of 40°10'

The GAP supports the GMT proposal combining chilipepper, shelf, short belly, widow, and bocaccio into one limit which would be 2500 lbs per 2-month period with no more than 500 lbs of any of those species with the exception of chilipepper.

Limited Entry Fixed-Gear South of 34°27' (Conception Area)

The GAP proposes continuing the shortspine thornyhead trip limit of 3,000 lbs per 2-month period for the start of the 2008 season.

Non-Whiting Trawl South of 40°10'

The GAP is seeking guidance from the GMT on efforts to increase trawl trip limits in this area. Currently the trawlers are discarding significant amounts of chilipepper rockfish which they would like the opportunity to retain.

Non-Whiting Trawl North of 40°10'

The GMT is proposing 2 options to reduce canary impacts in the non-whiting trawl limited entry fishery. One of the proposals reduces canary impacts to 8 mt while the other reduces impacts to 10.5 mt. The GAP is supportive of the proposal which results in reducing impacts to 10.5 mt.

Whiting Trawl

The GAP proposes two options for releasing bycatch during the 2008 season. The GAP does not propose any changes to the season start dates for any sector.

Option 1:

- April 1: release 50% of the overall bycatch cap
- June 15: release 45% of the overall bycatch cap
- September 15: release 5% of the overall bycatch cap

Option 2

- April 1: release 20% of the overall bycatch cap
- June 15: release 35% of the overall bycatch cap
- August 15: release 20% of the overall bycatch cap
- September 15: release 25% of the overall bycatch cap

General Comments

The GAP continues to feel frustration with how the scorecard is used and managed. For example, some GAP members are fairly certain that restrictive measures to be taken in the California Recreational Fishery will result in significantly less canary impacts than the current harvest guideline indicates. Other GAP members recognize that the single line which is examined and adjusted downwards continues to be the limited entry non-trawl whiting. The trawl fishery continues to be impacted in order to balance the scorecard and potentially accommodate EFPs. The GAP realizes that if the process were working with hundreds of tons of fish that this would not be such a large issue – but as we continue to work with tenths of a ton this is a significant problem.

The GAP is also concerned about data collection when fisheries or areas are completely closed. For example, both limited entry non-whiting trawl proposals close the area between Humbug Mountain and Cape Arago in Oregon due to canary impacts based on the 2006 observer data. If you eliminate fishing completely in this area you lose access to newer observer and fisheries-dependent data.

PFMC

11/07/07