

Groundfish Allocation Committee Report

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel
Cascade A and B Room
8235 N.E. Airport Way
Portland, Oregon 97220
503-281-2500
February 20-22, 2008

Committee Members Present:

Mr. Donald Hansen, Dana Wharf Sport Fishing, Pacific Fishery Management Council Chairman
Dr. David Hanson, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Mr. Steve Williams, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Representative
Ms. Michele Culver, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Representative
Ms. Marija Vojkovich, California Department of Fish and Game Representative
Mr. Frank Lockhart, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Regional Office,
NMFS Representative

Non-voting Advisors Present:

Mr. Pete Leipzig, Limited Entry Trawl Representative
Ms. Heather Mann, Shoreside Processor Representative
Mr. Shems Jud, Conservation Representative
Mr. Robert Osborn, Recreational Representative
Ms. Michele Longo-Eder, Limited Entry Fixed Gear Representative
Mr. Tom Ghio, Open Access Representative
Mr. Dan Waldeck, At-sea Processor Representative
Ms. Eileen Cooney, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) General
Counsel

Others Present:

Mr. Dale Myer, Arctic Storm Inc., Council member
Mr. Rod Moore, West Coast Seafood Processors Association, Council member
Dr. Donald McIsaac, Pacific Fishery Management Council Executive Director
Dr. Steve Freese, National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Regional Office
Mr. Corey Niles, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, GMT member
Ms. Joanna Grebel, California Department of Fish and Game, GMT member
Mr. Robert Jones, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, GMT member
Mr. Merrick Burden, Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff
Mr. Jim Seger, Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff
Mr. John DeVore, Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff
Ms. Heather Brandon, Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff

Dr. Ed Waters, Pacific Fishery Management Council Consultant
Ms. Kelly Ames, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, GMT member
Mr. Marion Larkin, Washington Trawl, GAP member
Mr. Dayna Mathews, NOAA, Office for Law Enforcement
Ms. Laura Pagano, Natural Resources Defense Council
Mr. Steve Bodnar, Coos Bay Trawlers Association and Bandon Submarine Cable Committee
Mr. David Jincks, Midwater Trawlers Cooperative
Ms. Becky Blanchard, University of Florida
Mr. Dave Colpo, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Mr. Peter Huhtala, Pacific Marine Conservation Council
Mr. William Daspit
Ms. Lucia Morici
Mr. Bob Eder, limited entry fixed gear fisherman

Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC) Recommendations to the Council on Intersector Allocation

The GAC developed the following Intersector Allocation (ISA) recommendations for Council consideration:

- In general, the GAC recommended the lower trawl catch percentage relative to the 2003-05 total catch percentages (Alternative 1) and the 1995-05 landed catch percentages (Alternative 3). The preliminary GAC-preferred trawl allocations are shown in Table 1 below.
- Lingcod are currently managed under a coastwide acceptable biological catch (ABC) and optimum yield (OY); however, the last stock assessment (2007) indicated differences in the status of the coastwide stock north and south of 43° N latitude. For management purposes, the GAC considered using the Oregon/California border (42° N latitude); however, given that current regulations are applied north and south of 40°10' N latitude, the GAC recommends further analysis of lingcod allocations that contemplate a split at 40°10' N latitude. The GAC also recommends reconsidering the lingcod allocation south of 40°10' N latitude in the future, if a new assessment indicates a healthier southern stock.
- Analyze a 15 percent set-aside for Dover sole, petrale, and English sole to provide for potential future development of non-trawl harvest methods for these stocks.
- Recommend removing treaty set asides, set asides for exempted fishing permits (EFPs), and projected scientific research catches off the top prior to applying intersector allocations.
- Analyze an additional long-term set-aside ranging from 0 to 15 percent for all ISA species (except Dover, petrale, and English sole, where a 15 percent set aside was recommended). The set-aside percent may vary by species and could be zero for some species, could be taken by non-trawl gears, and is intended to aid developing fisheries.

- In order to provide flexibility in the trawl rationalization process, the GAC recommends the Council select the sectors under Alternative 1, which contemplates long term allocations for four trawl sectors, and all other non-treaty, non-trawl sectors would be combined in the analysis. If the Council ultimately decides to manage three trawl sectors once trawl rationalization is implemented, the allocations for the shoreside whiting and shoreside non-whiting sectors can be combined.
- Implement new intersector allocations in synchrony with trawl rationalization measures. ISA implementation is not recommended for 2009.
- Decide intersector allocations in a subsequent two-meeting process, where a preliminary preferred decision is made in April 2008 and a final preferred decision is made at a later meeting. Allow Council staff to recommend a timeframe after April 2008 for the final preferred alternative decision.

Table 1. Preliminary preferred trawl allocations recommended by the Groundfish Allocation Committee in February 2008.

Stock or Complex	GAC Preliminary Preferred Trawl Allocations		
	All Non-Treaty Trawl Sectors	Buffer a/	Rationale
Lingcod - coastwide			
N. of 42° (OR & WA)	40.0%		Recommendation is less firm than for other species; Explore a 40°10' split; Reconsider alloc. % if new assessment indicates a healthier southern stock
S. of 42° (CA)	5.0%		
Pacific Cod	98.0%		Equals the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Sablefish (Coastwide)			
N. of 36° (Monterey north)			
S. of 36° (Conception area)	42.0%		Equals the ave. 1995-05 landed catch % (< ave. 2003-05 total catch %); Note: actual ave. 1995-05 landed catch % = 47.7%
PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH	99.0%		Rounds to the ave. 1995-05 landed catch % (< ave. 2003-05 total catch %)
Shortbelly Rockfish	No alloc.		No allocation needed since incidental catch in all fisheries combined is a small fraction of the OY
WIDOW ROCKFISH	91.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Chilipepper Rockfish	80.0%		Rounds to the ave. 1995-05 landed catch % (< ave. 2003-05 total catch %)
Splitnose Rockfish	97.0%		Rounds to the ave. 1995-05 landed catch % (< ave. 2003-05 total catch %)
Yellowtail Rockfish	88.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Shortspine Thornyhead - coastwide			
N. of 34°27'	98.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %
S. of 34°27'	58.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Longspine Thornyhead - coastwide			
N. of 34°27'	99.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %
S. of 34°27'	5.0%		A higher trawl allocation % is recommended than in the alternatives since this stock is under-utilized
DARKBLOTCHED	98.7%		Equals the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Minor Slope Rockfish North	81.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Minor Slope Rockfish South	63.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Dover Sole	100.0%	15%	Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %; 15% set-aside to accommodate developing fixed gear fisheries
English Sole	100.0%	15%	Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %; 15% set-aside to accommodate developing fixed gear fisheries
Petrale Sole (coastwide)	100.0%	15%	Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %; 15% set-aside to accommodate developing fixed gear fisheries
Arrowtooth Flounder	99.0%		Rounds to the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Starry Flounder	87.0%		Slightly less than the ave. 2003-05 total catch % (< ave. 1995-05 landed catch %)
Other Flatfish	97.0%		Rounds to the ave. 1995-05 landed catch % (< ave. 2003-05 total catch %)
Spiny Dogfish	70.0%		Slightly less than the ave. 2003-05 total catch % and the ave. 1995-05 landed catch %

a/ The GAC recommends consideration for buffers of 0-15% for all intersector allocation species to manage the risk of exceeding OYs and to accommodate new fisheries. The GAC recommends a 15% buffer for petrale sole, Dover sole, and English sole.

The GAC identified the following issues regarding Intersector Allocation:

- Treaty allocations, primarily for Pacific cod and lingcod, may change significantly and may alter the ISA alternatives. Analyses should set aside 400 mt of Pacific cod and 250 mt of lingcod for treaty fisheries. The Council should be aware that there may be increasing treaty set-asides for other species.
- Analysis of long term allocation does not contain revenue and bycatch assumptions relating to the future paradigm of trawl rationalization. The assumption that bycatch amounts will decrease in the trawl fishery after rationalization is implemented is not an assumption that is made in the ISA analysis, but is a point of discussion in the ISA Environmental Assessment (EA).
- The method or formula for analyzing and determining intersector and within-trawl allocations do not need to be the same.
- An underlying assumption of the ISA analysis and discussion is that the amount of fish available for allocation to directed non-treaty sectors is the yield after deductions from the OY are made to accommodate treaty fisheries, research catches, EFPs, and incidental open access catches. Another underlying assumption of the ISA analysis and discussion is that the Council's vision for the future structure of the fishery shall be made clearer, equity between sectors will be addressed, and the goals and objectives in the strategic plan and the FMP will be incorporated.
- The GAC indicated the need for more information in the EA regarding the following issues: 1) the percent of the OY taken by each sector by year; 2) an analysis and/or discussion of how trip limits may have prevented trawlers from taking their sablefish allocation; and 3) a table depicting annual OYs for each species, what amount was actually attained, and which sectors took which portion of the total catch in each year.
- More detail is needed in the EA regarding constraints to individual trawl sectors to better examine within-trawl allocations. For example, one trawl sector might need a few more tons of a certain species, while another trawl sector might not need all that was allocated. An allocation that does not constrain the trawl fishery overall may be a constraint to any given trawl sector.
- The GAC discussion about the need for buffers in the ISA process helped to clarify that the term is not referring to a "buffer" within an Annual Catch Limit (i.e., setting an OY less than the ABC to lessen the risk of overfishing a stock). Buffers in the ISA process are intended to protect sectors from being impacted by catch overages in other sectors. Even with a buffer, the OY could still be exceeded by any sector's catch overage and the Council would then need to react with inseason adjustments to one or more sectors' fishing opportunities. The Council should consider a mechanism for allocating the buffer yield back to affected sectors. Buffers may be more important for species that are more fully utilized (i.e., species OYs that are more consistently attained or approached every year). In order to better consider recommended buffer amounts, the yields set aside for research catches, incidental open access catches, and EFPs would be better informed with a more complete historical record of these catches. Additionally, stocks targeted in new, emerging fisheries could be one use for buffers.
- Better documentation of historical catches of Pacific halibut in directed Area 2A fisheries and trawl bycatch estimates against annual estimates of constant exploitation yield would facilitate deciding trawl total catch limits for Pacific halibut. However, this is a lower priority for Council staff than the previous information requests. It is not the intent of the GAC to reopen discussion of the Pacific halibut catch sharing plan.