

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PRELIMINARY
MANAGEMENT MEASURE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE 2009-2010 WASHINGTON
RECREATIONAL GROUND FISH FISHERIES

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) held public meetings on December 14, 2007, February 14, 2008, and March 18, 2008 to develop and discuss recreational bottomfish proposals for 2009 and 2010. The intent of the proposed preliminary alternatives is to reduce incidental catch of overfished rockfish, primarily yelloweye, while anglers are targeting halibut and lingcod. Depth restrictions are used to keep the fishery focused in shallower water (i.e., 20 fathoms or less), which is expected to increase survivability of released rockfish based on research by Alvin and Karpov (1995). There is also expected to be a reduced encounter rate of yelloweye rockfish in shallower depths (i.e., 30 fathoms or less).

Based on the input provided, we are not proposing any changes to the current bottomfish aggregate bag limit of 15, which includes a sub-limit of 10 rockfish and 2 lingcod, but does not include halibut (which has a daily bag limit of 1). Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish would continue to be prohibited, regardless of area caught. We also plan to retain the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area in the north coast and the two offshore rockfish conservation areas in the south coast area. With that, WDFW supports the following preliminary management measure alternatives for the recreational fishery to be approved for public review by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Lingcod Seasons

Status Quo (2008 season): Marine Areas 1-3: Open the Saturday closest to March 15 (which is March 14 in 2009 and March 13 in 2010) through the Saturday closest to October 15 (which is October 17 in 2009 and October 16 in 2010). Marine Area 4: Open April 16 through the Saturday closest to October 15 or October 15, whichever is earlier, which is April 16 through October 15 in 2009 and April 16 through October 15 in 2010.

Option 1: Marine Areas 1-3: Open the 2nd Saturday in March through the 3rd Saturday in October. Marine Area 4: Open April 16 through the 3rd Saturday in October.

Bottomfish Seasons

North Coast (Washington Marine Areas 3 and 4)

Status Quo (2008 season): Prohibit retention of bottomfish seaward of a line approximating 20 fathoms from May 21-September 30, except on days that halibut fishing is open. The retention of yelloweye and canary rockfish is prohibited. It is prohibited for fish for, retain, or possess bottomfish and halibut in the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area.

Option 1: Prohibit retention of bottomfish seaward of the 20 fathom line from May 1-September 30, except on days that halibut fishing is open.

Option 2: Prohibit retention of bottomfish seaward of a line approximating 20 fathoms from May 1-August 15. Prohibit retention of bottomfish August 16-April 16 in Marine Areas 3 and 4, except in the following offshore area:

48°19 N lat. 125°22 W long.
48°19 N lat. 125°18 W long.
48°16 N lat. 125°18 W long.
48°16 N lat. 125°22 W long.

Option 3: Prohibit retention of bottomfish seaward of a line approximating 20 fathoms from May 1-August 15. Prohibit retention of bottomfish August 16-April 16 in Marine Areas 3 and 4.

South Coast (Washington Marine Area 2)

Status Quo (2008 season): Prohibit retention of bottomfish seaward of a line approximating 30 fathoms from March 15-April 30. Prohibit the retention of bottomfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod, from May 1-June 15 seaward of a line approximating 30 fathoms. The retention of yelloweye and canary rockfish is prohibited.

Option 1: Same as status quo, except continue to prohibit retention of lingcod seaward of a line approximating 30 fathoms on Fridays and Saturdays from June 16- September 30.

Option 2: Same as status quo, except continue to prohibit retention of lingcod seaward of a line approximating 30 fathoms on Fridays and Saturdays from June 16- September 30 and prohibit retention of lingcod south of 46°58 March 15-September 30.

Option 3: Same as status quo, except prohibit retention of lingcod seaward of a line approximating 30 fathoms March 15- September 30.

Option 4: Prohibit the retention of rockfish and lingcod seaward of a line approximating 25 fathoms from March 15-June 15, using the following coordinates:

47°31.70 N lat. 124°34.660 W long.
47°25.67 N lat. 124°32.775 W long.
47°12.82 N lat. 124°26.000 W long.
46°52.94 N lat. 124°18.940 W long.
46°44.18 N lat. 124°14.890 W long.
46°38.17 N lat. 124°13.700 W long.

Option 5: In combination with any of the options listed above for Marine Area 2, prohibit fishing for or possession of lingcod in the following areas:

46°57.00 N lat. 124°30.00 W long.
47°00.00 N lat. 124°30.00 W long.
47°00.00 N lat. 124°33.50 W long.
46°57.00 N lat. 124°33.50 W long.

46°55.50 N lat. 124°24.00 W long.
46°56.50 N lat. 124°00.00 W long.
46°56.50 N lat. 124°25.70 W long.
46°55.50 N lat. 124°25.70 W long.

46°56.70 N lat. 124°34.00 W long.

46°57.70 N lat. 124°34.00 W long.
46°57.70 N lat. 124°35.50 W long.
46°56.70 N lat. 124°35.50 W long.

47°07.70 N lat. 124°30.00 W long.
47°07.70 N lat. 124°27.50 W long.
47°06.50 N lat. 124°27.50 W long.
47°06.50 N lat. 124°30.00 W long.

46°52.50 N lat. 124°21.70 W long.
46°52.50 N lat. 124°20.30 W long.
46°51.60 N lat. 124°20.30 W long.
46°51.60 N lat. 124°21.70 W long.

46°52.50 N lat. 124°26.60 W long.
46°52.50 N lat. 124°25.30 W long.
46°51.60 N lat. 124°25.30 W long.
46°51.60 N lat. 124°26.60 W long.

Option 6: In combination with any of the options listed above for Marine Area 2, prohibit fishing for or possession of bottomfish, lingcod and halibut in the following areas:

46°42.50 N lat. 124°42.00 W long.
46°42.50 N lat. 124°34.00 W long.
46°37.50 N lat. 124°34.00 W long.
46°37.50 N lat. 124°42.00 W long.

46°54.30 N lat. 124°53.40 W long.
46°54.30 N lat. 124°51.00 W long.
46°53.30 N lat. 124°51.00 W long.
46°53.30 N lat. 124°53.40 W long.

46°53.50 N lat. 124°47.50 W long.
46°53.50 N lat. 124°45.50 W long.
46°52.50 N lat. 124°45.50 W long.
46°52.50 N lat. 124°47.50 W long.
47°05.50 N lat. 124°48.50 W long.
47°05.50 N lat. 124°45.50 W long.
47°03.50 N lat. 124°45.50 W long.
47°03.50 N lat. 124°48.50 W long.

47°10.00 N lat. 124°36.20 W long.
47°10.00 N lat. 124°33.20 W long.
47°08.00 N lat. 124°33.20 W long.
47°08.00 N lat. 124°36.20 W long.

Columbia Area (Washington Marine Area 1)

Very little yelloweye and canary rockfish are caught in Marine Area 1 (0.022 mt and 0.008 mt in 2007) Therefore; WDFW proposes to keep the status quo bottomfish fishing regulations in place through 2009 and 2010. Status Quo (2008 season): Prohibit the retention of bottomfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod, with halibut onboard from May 1 through September 30. The retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited.

WDFW believes that the range of management measure alternatives presented above is sufficient to stay within the state harvest targets for yelloweye and canary. Regardless of which options are chosen, WDFW is committed to monitoring our catch inseason and will take action as appropriate. In the event that we are projected to exceed our state harvest target, we will consult with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding our inseason harvest estimates to compare our projected catches with our joint harvest guidelines for yelloweye and canary rockfish. We will have another public meeting in late April to review and solicit input on the proposed alternatives.

PFMC
4/10/08