

GROUND FISH ALLOCATION COMMITTEE REPORT ON
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 22:
OPEN ACCESS LICENSE LIMITATION

Groundfish Allocation Committee Meeting Highlights, July 9-10, 2008

Meeting summary:

- The meeting PowerPoint presentation is available at:
http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa22/GAC_Jul9_OA%20Update_2.pdf
- A final decision at the September 2008 meeting (Boise) meets the current schedule and would improve chances for 2010 program implementation. The next opportunity for final adoption would be March 2009 (Seattle), which would be a better location and give the public time to review and comment on the preferred alternative. The degree of complexity in the final decision will affect the implementation timeline.
- The Council has five alternatives to work with: A-1 is no action (status quo), A-2 is a vessel registration process with no limit on the number of participants. A-3, A-4 and A-5 are the B and C permit alternatives. B permits would be issued to vessels that target B species and would be limited; C permits would be issued to incidental fishery vessels and would not be limited. B species include all Federal groundfish exclusive of nearshore rockfish, cabezon, and other nearshore species. Within the limited entry alternatives there are 27 qualification criteria for consideration. Other issues in the alternatives include: (i) permit transferability, (ii) previous year landing requirement, (iii) state landing endorsement, and (iv) use of A&B permits on a vessel in the same year.
- The directed fishery (inclusive of nearshore) averaged 1,315 mt (85%) and the incidental fishery 226 (15%) mt during 1998-2006 (EA Table 3-1). The average number of vessels were: directed fishery, 840 (70%); incidental fishery, 358 (30%) (EA tables 3-2 and 3-5). (Added following the meeting).
- The gear and length endorsement provisions for B permitted vessels were removed at the March 2008 meeting (but can be added back in).
- It will be important at the September 2008 meeting to narrow the list of qualification criteria, starting with qualification frameworks (how the data are sorted) of which there currently are five: (i) 04-06 lbs landed (QF-1); (ii) 98-06 lbs landed (QF-2); (iii) 98-06 lbs landed w/04-06 landing (QF-3); (iv) trips in 2 of 3 yrs, 04-06 (QF-4); and (v) max lbs, any yr, 04-06 (QF-5).
- It may be possible to adopt different qualification criteria between states but the record must be very clear and supportive of why state-specific criteria are needed.
- QF-3 could potentially qualify about 1,500 vessels that have not made a directed fishery landing since 2004. QF-4 would qualify about 580 vessels, many of which have very small catch histories. QF-1, QF-3 and QF-5 have similar impacts. CA vessels get slightly more permits under QF-2, followed by QF-3; WA and OR get more slightly more permits under QF-1 followed by QF-3
- The distribution of permits between states and port groups is affected by the species harvested. WA vessels have large catch histories because they target sablefish almost exclusively. Many OR and CA vessels have relatively large sablefish catch histories while both states support fisheries that take shelf rockfish and lingcod and other species, which

have relatively small catch histories in recent years. Shark vessels in WA and CA also have relatively large catch histories.

- The qualification criteria analyzed resulted in a wide range in number of qualifying vessels and a wide range in B species harvest impacts based on 2004-2006 landings data. B species groundfish represented less than 5% of the total commercial fishery revenues overall by non-qualifying vessels under any of the qualification criteria.
- Some of the nearshore vessels in OR and CA may not qualify for B permits but still may be able to take B species incidentally; thus those vessels are not being taken out of the groundfish fishery altogether.
- The VMS program has brought in 537 open access vessels, which includes 36 shrimp/prawn trawl vessels. Nearshore vessels are not required to have VMS if they stay in state waters. The number is low and may be because of high fuel prices. There have been fewer than 20 vessels registered for VMS in the last two months.
- Fishery dependence, in addition to the need for capacity reduction, was a criterion cited in the Groundfish Strategic Plan for permit qualification.
- Limited entry is a good first step toward Market Based Management, which would be far more doable with 400 vessels than 1200 vessels.
- The advisors generally supported: (i) a fleet size of around 400 vessels, (ii) allowance for B permit transferability, (iii) a recent year fishery participation requirement (like QF-3), (iv) allowance for alternate use of A and B permit on vessels in the same year (using declaration process), and (v) elimination of state landing endorsement provision, and (vi) length endorsement for B permits.
- GAC amendments and motions appear below.
- Next meeting: October 9-10, 2008 to discuss Trawl Rationalization Program.

Proposed Needs Statement Amendments

- Fishing capacity needs to be carefully managed to ensure that capacity and/or effort is maintained consistent with resource availability and limited entry is an important step in the process.
- Restrictive landing limits have been necessary for some species because of high fishing capacity, which has reduced the economic potential of the fishery, increased fishery discards of target, non-target and overfished species, and limited entry has the potential to relieve the situation.
- Restrictive salmon fishing regulations, the states' nearshore management programs and regulations to recover overfished groundfish stocks have pushed vessels into deeper Federal waters, increasing fishing pressure there for species that were already fully utilized.
- Registration of all vessels is important to meeting fishery management goals and efficiently allocating sampling resources among coastal ports and at-sea monitoring and enforcement programs.

Motion re Amendment 22:

1. Support A-3 and A-4 and frameworks QF-1 (lbs landed, 2004-2006) and QF-3 (lbs landed, 1998-2006 w/ 2004-2006 trip requirement).
2. Support inclusion of length endorsement with B permits consistent with current A permit program.
3. The preferred qualification criteria are those found in A-3 and A-4, excluding those currently associated in A-4 and frameworks QF-3 and QF-4. (Note: this is with the understanding that

the standards associated with QF-1 in A-4 will be analyzed using QF-3 in time for the September 2008 meeting).

4. Oppose state landing endorsement provision.
5. Support B permit transferability consistent with current A permit program.
6. Support alternate use of A and B permits on single vessels but not at the same time.

Attendees

Dayna Matthews
Dave Hanson
Don Hansen
Don McIsaac
Eileen Cooney
LB Boydston
Michele Culver
Mike Okoniewski
Michele Longo Eder
Marija Vojkovich
Peter Huhtala
Pete Leipzig
Sarah McAvinchey
Steve Williams
Tom Ghio