

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

At the March Council meeting the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), in conjunction with advice from the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), requested inseason adjustments to ongoing groundfish fisheries. The Council delayed action due in part to the lack of any catch and effort information at the time and also cited a 2005 policy adopted by the Council that June would be the earliest meeting in which management measures could be liberalized unless data or model errors warranted earlier consideration. However, the GAP believes there are other considerations.

Open Access Daily-Trip-Limit Between 36° and 40°10' N Latitude

The GAP requests an increase in the daily-trip-limit (DTL) open access sablefish limit from the current 2,200 pounds per two month period to 2,500 pounds as recommended by the GMT. The lack of a salmon season in 2008 and the unknown transfer of effort to open access sablefish during that year warranted low trip limits in anticipation of exceeding the open access allocation. However, in 2009 the northern sablefish optimum yield (OY) increased 23 percent from 5,723 mt to 7,052 mt. The GAP anticipates the lack of a salmon season in 2009 will likely result in the same level of open access effort as last year and the higher sablefish OY should accommodate a higher bimonthly limit. This inseason adjustment is needed by the fleet to help compensate for the lack of other fishing opportunities. Limits can be decreased in September for the last quarter if the allocation is projected to be attained prematurely.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear Daily-Trip-Limit Between 36° and 40°10' N Latitude

The GAP also requests an increase in the limited entry fixed gear DTL limits from 300 pounds per day or one landing per week up to 1,000 pounds not to exceed 5,000 pounds per two months to 500 pounds per day or one landing per week up to 1,500 pounds not to exceed 5,500 pounds per two months. The higher OY in 2009 and the lack of attainment of the sablefish allocation by the limited entry fixed gear sector in recent years compels this increase.

Limited Entry Trawl

Chilipepper Small Footrope Trip Limit for South of 40°10' N Latitude

The GAP also requests increased trip limits using small footrope trawls south of 40°10' N latitude for chilipepper rockfish. The trawl fleet is consistently encountering chilipepper while targeting other species, such as flatfish shoreward of the RCA. The chilipepper biomass is increasing and we need to turn discards into landed catch.

Slope Rockfish Trip Limits

The GAP requests that the slope rockfish cumulative limits be increased as suggested by the GMT in April. Increased access to slope rockfish can be accommodated by the availability of

darkblotched in the scorecard. This opportunity can make a substantial financial difference to the trawl fleet since slope rockfish is the mainstay of trawl fleet and easily marketable.

Whiting Trip Limit for the California Shoreside Fishery

The GAP requests a whiting trip limit of 100,000 lbs for the California shoreside whiting fishery to slow the pace of the fishery. It is estimated that with the smaller quota this year (5 percent of the shoreside sector quota or 2,100 mt) the fishery may last only five days. If this trip limit cannot be routinely decided for this year's fishery, the GAP would like to know what process needs to occur to consider this adjustment in the future. The northern processor representative notes that the establishment of this trip limit will negatively change the current business practice of northern whiting processors.

Recreational

The GAP would like to explore the possibility of adding a new management line at or near the Mendocino-Humboldt county line to better manage yelloweye impacts in the northern California fishery. The GAP would like to know what process needs to occur to consider adding this new line for the 2010 fishery.

PFMC

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