

THE GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) considered the most recent information from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) and the status of ongoing fisheries. The GMT also gave consideration to the Council's policy of not liberalizing management measures until June. The primary rationale of this policy was to wait until adequate inseason fishery information becomes available to inform adjustments to management measures. In addition to recognized errors we note that there may be other instances where new information becomes available that does not directly conflict with this underlying principle (e.g. models were misspecified). Such new information may also warrant consideration of liberalized measures prior to June. The GMT offers the following considerations and recommendations.

Research Updated

As of March 2009, the projected research take of widow rockfish was 1.1 mt. A recent cruise by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) took an estimated 4.6 mt of unanticipated widow rockfish, which would be in addition to the other previously anticipated projects. Therefore, the projected research catch of widow rockfish was updated to 5.7 mt.

Commercial Fisheries

Limited Entry Non-Whiting Trawl

Chilipepper Rockfish

The GMT received a request to increase chilipepper limits in the non-whiting trawl fishery in areas south of 40° 10' N. lat. The GMT notes that chilipepper limits in areas shoreward of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) were increased to 5,000 lbs /2 months beginning in 2009 and the effect of those limits is not yet known. However, the NWFSC total mortality reports indicate that bocaccio bycatch in the trawl fishery has been declining over the past several years and as a result opportunities may exist for increasing chilipepper opportunities in the south. The GMT recommends waiting until June to examine the possibility of increasing chilipepper limits based on the progress of the fishery.

Slope Rockfish including Darkblotched

The GMT also received a request from the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) to explore providing more opportunity for deep water species if there is enough darkblotched available. Based on Council deliberation of this request in March, the GMT recommends waiting until June to examine increases in trip limits for slope species when more inseason data will be available.

Limited Entry Non-Tribal Whiting Trawl

The GMT received a request to examine trip limits in the California early season portion of the non-tribal whiting fishery. This request has the goal of slowing down the fishery. It is our

understanding that such trip limits cannot be accommodated because they were not evaluated as part of the biennial specifications process.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear Model

While most of our models were updated in April based on the latest WCGOP data, the Limited Entry Fixed Gear model has not been. The GMT is working with observer program staff to align the results of the latest year of observer data with our modeling structure and expect to have that completed by the June meeting.

Limited Entry Sablefish N of 36°

The GMT received a request to analyze increased opportunities for the limited entry (LE) daily trip limit fishery (DTL). While the model has not yet been updated with bycatch rates of yelloweye on more refined spatial scales, the average bycatch rates appears stable with the inclusion of 2007 data. Also current model estimates assume that the full LE DTL allocation of sablefish is harvested. Over the past several years, the LE DTL fishery has underharvested the LE DTL allocation, and trip limits in place for the current year are similar to the limits in place in recent years. Therefore, the GMT believes that an increase in trip limits for the LE DTL fishery could be accommodated. However, it is difficult to assess the appropriate trip limits in this fishery due to a lack of variation in trip limits over the past several years. In other words, it is difficult to assess the effects of various trip limits through the use of historic data because opportunities have remained relatively stable. Such stability makes it difficult to examine the effects of regulatory changes. Due to this uncertainty, the GMT recommends a precautionary approach to any trip limit increases in this fishery and that those trip limits be re-evaluated throughout the year to determine their appropriateness. Current limits are 300 lb/day, or 1 landing per week of up to 1,000 lb, not to exceed 5,000 lb/2 months. Should the Council wish to increase the LE DTL opportunities, a precautionary approach could be 500 lb/day, or 1 landing per week of up to 1,500 lb, not to exceed 5,500 lb/2 months.

Open Access Nearshore Fishery North of 40° 10' N. lat.

At the March 2009 Council meeting, the GMT updated the nearshore overfished species impact projection model based on the most recent WCGOP observer data. However, the model was misspecified with the incorrect total landings of black rockfish. We have updated the model with the correct projection of black rockfish take and the scorecard now reflects those impacts.

Open Access Sablefish Fishery N of 36°

Public comment received under Agenda Item F.2 requested increases to the bi-monthly limit in the open access sablefish fishery N of 36°. During the specifications and management measure setting process the GMT did not contemplate increased trip limits commensurate with the increase in the sablefish optimum yield. Current trip limits are 2,400 lb/2 months and are scheduled to decrease to 2,200 lbs/2 months beginning May 1st. Even with the expectation of another relatively poor salmon year (and the corresponding increased effort), model results indicate that the increase could be accommodated while still staying within the Open Access allocation as well as current projected impacts to overfished species. However in contrast to the

LE DTL fishery the GMT cautions that effort shifts can be greater in this fishery with increases to trip limits. As such if the Council wanted to provide increased opportunity, we suggest changes to the bimonthly limit as effort is less sensitive to this limit compared to changes in the daily or weekly limits. Therefore, the Council could consider increasing the bi-monthly limit up to 2,500 lbs/2 months beginning May 1.

GMT Recommendations

1. Consider increasing the LE DTL trip limits to 500 lbs/day, 1,500 lbs/week, and 5,500 pounds per 2 months beginning May 1.
2. Consider increasing the bi-monthly limit for Open Access sablefish North of 36° up to 2,500 lbs/2 months beginning May 1.

Attachment 1. Scorecard from March and updated scorecard for April.

Projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species updated through March 2009.

Fishery	Bocaccio b/	Canary	Cowcod	Dkbl	POP	Widow	Yelloweye
Limited Entry Trawl- Non-whiting	15.1	16.2	1.3	214.4	82.1	18.1	0.3
Limited Entry Trawl- Whiting							
At-sea whiting motherships a/		4.3		6.0	0.5	60.0	0.0
At-sea whiting cat-proc a/		6.1		8.5	0.5	85.0	0.0
Shoreside whiting a/		7.6		10.5	0.1	105.0	0.0
Tribal whiting		1.4		0.0	0.7	3.7	0.0
Tribal							
Midwater Trawl		3.6		0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0
Bottom Trawl		0.8		0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0
Troll		0.5		0.0	0.0		0.0
Fixed gear		0.3		0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Fixed Gear Sablefish	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.2	0.3	1.1
Fixed Gear Nearshore	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.9
Fixed Gear Other	5.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Open Access: Incidental Groundfish	2.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.3
Recreational Groundfish c/							
WA		20.9					5.2
OR						1.0	
CA	67.3	22.9	0.1			6.2	2.8
EFPs	13.7	2.7	0.3	1.3	0.0	5.5	0.3
Research: Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.							
	2.0	8.0	0.2	2.0	2.0	1.1	2.4
TOTAL	105.1	99.4	1.9	252.7	89.8	330.7	15.6
2009 OY d/	288	105	4.0	285	189	522	17
Difference	182.9	5.6	2.1	32.3	99.2	191.4	1.4
Percent of OY	36.5%	94.6%	47.5%	88.7%	47.5%	63.3%	91.9%
Key	= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data						
<p>a/ Non-tribal whiting values for canary, darkblotched, and widow reflect bycatch limits for the non-tribal whiting sectors. The widow bycatch limit is the difference between the OY and the projected impacts in all non-whiting fisheries. All other species' impacts are projected from the GMT's whiting impact projection model. The Council may elect to change these bycatch limits when setting final whiting management measures in March of 2009 or 2010 or under any inseason action at any of their future meetings.</p> <p>b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.</p> <p>c/ Values in scorecard represent projected impacts for all species except canary and yelloweye rockfish, which are the prescribed harvest guidelines.</p> <p>d/ 2009 and 2010 OYs are the same except for darkblotched (291 mt in 2010), POP (200 mt in 2010), and widow (509 mt in 2010).</p>							

Projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species updated with most recent research estimates and fishery projections through April 2009.

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TOTAL	105.4	99.6	1.9	252.7	89.8	335.5	15.7
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Difference	182.6	5.4	2.1	32.3	99.2	186.5	1.3
Percent of OY	36.6%	94.9%	47.5%	88.7%	47.5%	64.3%	92.4%
Key		= either not applicable; trace amount (<0.01 mt); or not reported in available data					
a/ Non-tribal whiting values for canary, darkblotched, and widow reflect bycatch limits for the non-tribal whiting sectors.							
b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.							
c/ Values in scorecard represent projected impacts for all species except canary and yelloweye rockfish, which are the prescribed harvest guidelines.							
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