

## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT SUMMARIZING PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED REGARDING THE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND ACCUMULATION LIMITS FOR OVERFISHED SPECIES

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) held public meetings in Newport (May 28, 2009) and Astoria (June 1, 2009). Public comment was also solicited on the south coast by the ODFW Port Biologists. The primary goal was to share information with the public and to gain insight on public perspectives regarding two trawl rationalization issues, the Adaptive Management Program and accumulation limits for overfished species. This report summarizes that feedback.

These meetings were designed to openly describe and discuss issues, answer questions, and obtain input and concerns from the public regarding issues that are critical to Oregon coastal communities. It was our intent to help the public better understand the basis and specifics of these complex issues. At the same time, these meetings were designed to help us better understand the concerns and needs of the public surrounding these three issues.

Eleven public stake holders attended the Newport meeting (8 associated with groundfish vessels and 3 associated with processors) whereas three from the public attended the Astoria meeting (all associated with processors). Even though attendance was sparse, the public actively engaged in discussions; they asked important questions and provided critical insight.

We asked attendees specific questions regarding Adaptive Management and Accumulation Limits. The responses are summarized below. Note that these responses were from a very small number of stake holders (N < 14) (harvesters and processors). It is important to note that this feedback may not be representative of all stakeholders, given the small sample size.

### **Adaptive Management Program**

Concerns and questions regarding the Adaptive Management Program were diverse. In many cases, individuals at the meetings were not all in agreement. One reason for varied opinions on these issues is the fact that they are complex, difficult to understand, and impact different stake holders in different ways.

Following are some (not all) general comments and questions from the public regarding the Adaptive Management Program.

- The Adaptive Management Program, as currently outlined, is too ambiguous to understand.
- Harvesters and vessel owners were concerned about giving up to 10% of their quota share to the Adaptive Management Program without a clear idea about how to get the resulting quota pounds back. These individuals felt that quota pounds from their vessels may go to other vessels or even outside of the state and they may not have the opportunity to get those pounds back. Some expressed the need to have a well defined opportunity to recover the quota pounds taken from their quota share for the Adaptive Management Program.

- The amount of quota pounds provided to an entity through the Adaptive Management Program should be limited. For example, no entity should be allowed to receive more Adaptive Management Quota Pounds in a single year than was taken from their quota share during that year. The rationale being that if the harvester surrendered up to 10%, then they should only be eligible to recover up to 10%.
- The definition of an entity that is entitled to Adaptive Management Program quota pounds needs to be clearly defined.
- Some were skeptical of the proposal driven process for distribution of Adaptive Management Program quota pounds. The concern was that individuals (or groups of entities) that hire consultants to prepare proposals for these quota pounds may outcompete those who cannot or will not hire professionals to prepare extensive proposals.

Attendees were asked specific questions about the Adaptive Management Program. Some individuals did not vote. Following is a summary of answers provided by those who openly answered questions.

1. In which year of the Trawl Rationalization Program should the Adaptive Management Program Begin?
  - a. Year 1 or 2 (4 votes)
  - b. Year 3 (3 votes)
  - c. Never (2 votes)
2. How should Adaptive Management Pounds be allocated?
  - a. Formula Approach: 8 votes
  - b. Proposal Approach: 1 vote
3. How long should an entity receive Adaptive Management Pounds before it is reallocated?
  - a. 2 years: 3 votes
  - b. 5 years: 6 votes
4. Who should directly receive Adaptive Management Pounds before ultimately being transferred to a vessel?
  - a. Harvesters: 5 votes
  - b. Processors: 6 votes
  - c. Port Authority: 0 votes
  - d. Community Organizations: 1 vote

## Control and Vessel Limits for Overfished Species

Similar to that observed for the Adaptive Management Program, concerns and questions surrounding control and vessel limits for overfished species were diverse. Most of the attendees understood control and vessel limits better than the Adaptive Management Program. However, few (if any) could determine the quantity of overfished species needed to prosecute their target fishery. This is compounded by the fact that the initial allocation of target species quota share for each permit holder is currently unknown. Permit holders felt that they could not adequately comment on the appropriateness of the overfished species limits since they did not know how much target species they would be attempting to harvest under the rationalization program.

We provided attendees with an example of maximum control and vessel limits (pounds) that could be allocated during the initial years of the Trawl Rationalization Program (see Agenda Item E.11.b). We then asked attendees whether these amounts would be enough to allow them to harvest target species. None could answer this question because they truly did not know the quantity of overfished species that their crew discards during a year. This problem is compounded by the current inability of permit holders to receive information regarding the initial allocation of target species they can expect to receive once trawl rationalization begins.

Following is a small sample of comments, questions, and concerns about control and vessel limits for overfished species that were voiced by individuals who attended these meetings. Note that these responses were from a very small number of stakeholders (harvesters and processors). These comments are not comprehensive and may not be representative of all stakeholders in the groundfish fishery.

- Uncertain how control and vessel limits for overfished species will be calculated.
- Uncertain about the amount of control and vessel limits needed to fully prosecute their target fishery.
- Some did not realize that control limits would apply to each permit (not to each vessel under a permit).
- Some did not understand that once a vessel limit was reached, the remaining quota pounds in that vessel account could be sold or leased even though the vessel would be tied up for the remainder of the year.
- Confusion regarding the halibut individual bycatch quota and whether harvesters would be rewarded for best practices, like shorter tow times and shorter time on deck, that reduce mortality.