

Genocide

When the limited entry program for ground fish started there were two sectors defined. The trawl and the fixed gear fishermen. Fixed gear was further separated by those who fished for black cod and those who didn't. To qualify for an "A" permit the bar was set high and many of my friends with small boats did not catch the 87 tons of ground fish required. This was the first blow to the "artisanal" or small boat fishermen.

Since then it has been a death by a thousand cuts for this sector of the ground fish fishermen.

For those of us who did qualify we were promised a permanent part of the future. As it stands now an open access fisherman has more quota for black cod than I do with an "A" permit in north central California.

Many of us did not receive black cod endorsements because we qualified with shelf rock fish landings. Apparently there are sixty five of us, and we are the forgotten sector. Is it the intention of this council to wipe us out?

In north central California (34 to 40/10) we are given a quota of shelf rockfish but the RCA's in this piece of coast literally defines the habitat of the shelf rock fish and therefore there is no opportunity to fish for them seaward or shoreward of the RCA boundaries, quota with no access is no quota at all.

The only fish available to us is the black cod, and with no black cod endorsement we watch our share of these valuable fish go down every year. Open access boats have more quota, for half the year, making it a form of punishment to possess an "A" permit in this area.

Many of us do not travel up and down the coast. We live and fish in the same ports we qualified for our permits in. Living in this north central region all my life I know it is as abundant, if not more abundant, than the areas above and below. It is certainly the most protected piece of California waters. Why are the fishermen who live here punished with the lowest quotas and the most restrictive RCA's?

I must have asked for changes to the RCA's at least five different times. I have applied for three different EFP ideas and not once did I receive any explanation for the denials all of those requests received. I feel I am out of options and I will just have to watch this council commit genocide of a tribe of fishermen who once provided a service to their communities.

The EFP for yellowtail rock fish has been successful here and this model would be something to give to these boats that do not possess a black cod endorsement on their "A" permits. Abolish the RCA, or move it in to 100 fathoms, or copy the trawl and allow fishing out to 100, something to give these boats some access to the shelf rock fish we once fished.

What is the intention of the council concerning the fate of this forgotten sector?

The trawl sector is enjoying the new catch share system

The endorsed black cod "A" permits are making a living

The remaining sixty five "A" permits beg you to give us some consideration before all these permits are sold to other parts of the coast where opportunities are better.

Please respond in writing.

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