GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to discuss progress of this year's fishery and possible inseason adjustments. The GMT discussion was led by Ms. Jessi Doerpinghaus and Ms. Lynn Mattes. The GAP offers the following recommendations and comments on proposed inseason adjustments to ongoing groundfish fisheries.

Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of 36° N. Latitude
And
Open Access Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of 36° N. Latitude

Current model projections indicate the limited entry (LE) and open access (OA) fixed gear sablefish fishery north of 36˚ N. latitude is tracking much higher than normal. The GAP believes the higher prices being paid for sablefish, good weather, and the lack of a salmon fishery this year have likely contributed to the increased landings of sablefish.

The model projections indicate the fishery will likely exceed the 2015 landing targets if action is not taken at this meeting. The GMT has crafted two alternatives for consideration. After a good deal of discussion the GAP has decided to recommend going with **GMT Alternative 1.** This would close the LE and OA fixed gear sablefish fisheries north of 36˚ N. latitude effective November 1, 2015 and would remain closed through the end of the year.

The GAP believes that closing before November 1 will not save any fish. The GAP suggests Alternative 2 (a mid-October closure) would likely cause a rush to fish, and folks would fill their bi-monthly limits early, thus eliminating any possible savings of sablefish.

Oregon Recreational

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) finalized estimates of groundfish impacts through July in the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery on Sept. 8, 2015. Based on those estimates for July, ODFW also ran preliminary estimates of groundfish impacts for August. The estimated impacts (landed fish plus discard mortality) for yelloweye rockfish through the end of August are projected to be 2.6 mt. This is equal to the Oregon recreational harvest guideline. Projected impacts through the end of 2015, under the pre-season structure which includes opening outside 30 fm starting October 1, are currently estimated to be 3.0 mt. If the fishery were to close immediately, the estimated impacts would be approximately 2.7 mt. ODFW did model keeping the fishery restricted to inside of the 30 fathom regulatory line for the remainder of the year, and the projected end of the year yelloweye rockfish impacts are 2.8 mt. ODFW has concerns about a further depth restriction, as it will put additional pressure on the Minor Nearshore Rockfish

Complex N of 40° 10' N. lat species, which also have a restrictive harvest guideline for the Oregon recreational fishery.

The GAP agrees with ODFW that any further depth restrictions would likely shift effort into the nearshore fisheries, thus recommends leaving the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery status quo. The GAP supports using residuals of yelloweye in the scorecard to keep the fishery open.

Darkblotched Rockfish

Regarding the requested transfer of 8 mt of darkblotched to the mothership sector (see: H.9.b, Public Comment), the GAP reviewed the updated Scorecard as presented by the GMT in hopes of identifying any available amount of darkblotched rockfish to reallocate out of the "Off the Top Deductions." It appears that there is no estimated amount available for such a transfer. As highlighted by the mothership catcher vessel request, the GAP recognizes that the combination of hard caps on the at-sea whiting sectors (that is, mothership and catcher-processor sectors), the inability for inseason transfers of choke species, and the potential for lightning strikes is highly disruptive and can result in premature closure of either or both of the at-sea whiting sectors when there is no resource conservation problem. The GAP urges the Council to explore ways to fix this problem.

PFMC
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