GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) offers recommendations and comments regarding the following inseason adjustment items:

Action Items/Industry Requests

1. Sablefish Daily Trip Limit (DTL) Fishery Trip Limit Reductions
2. Darkblotched Rockfish Transfer in the Mothership Co-op
3. Yelloweye Rockfish in the Oregon Recreational Fishery

Informational Updates

1. Overfished Species Scorecard
2. Selected Species Scorecard

Action Items

Sablefish DTL Fishery Trip Limit Reductions

Introduction

In June 2015, the Council approved trip limit increases for the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) DTL fishery N of 36° and the open access (OA) DTL fishery N of 36° for periods 5 and 6. At that time, the GMT had predicted an attainment of 84.7 to 94.8 percent for the LEFG DTL and 83.2 percent attainment for OA N. Since the June meeting, two additional periods of Quota Species Monitoring (QSM) Best Estimate Reports (BER) became available. Table 1 shows the No Action predicted attainment for all DTL fisheries. To account for the fact that the QSM has been almost double for both LEFG DTL and OA N on average this year compared to the predicted values in the model (which is retrospective), a correction factor[1] was used to predict for periods 5 and 6. The GMT did confirm with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) PacFIN program that the QSM correction factor (to account for soft data coming from port samplers and merging with hard data or tickets) was correct. All predicted attainments below reflect the use of this correction factor.

[1] A correction factor was derived by averaging the ratio of QSM to model predicted landings over the last four periods for both the LEN (1.56) and OAN (1.96).

Projections Through 2015

Table 1. No Action Attainment (QSM BER through August 31, 2015).

	LEFG DTL, by price assumption			OA N	LEFG S, by price assumption			OA S	South Sum, by price		
No Action	**Low**	**Mid**	**High**		**Low**	**Mid**	**High**		**Low**	**Mid**	**High**
Projected landings	296.7	312.7	328.6	488.5	312.7	418.2	675.0	53.9	366.6	472.1	728.9
Landing target	236.0	236.0	236.0	388	531.0	531.0	531.0	432	963.0	963.0	963.0
Difference	-60.7	-76.7	-92.6	-100.5	218.3	112.8	-144.0	378.1	596.4	490.9	234.1
Percent attainment	125.7%	132.5%	139.3%	125.9%	58.9%	78.8%	127.1%	12.5%	38.1%	49.0%	75.7%

The LEFG DTL and OA N are predicted to exceed their landing target based on the newest data. However, it is important to note that the trip limit increases that the Council selected in June were not a significant factor in the change in predicted attainment. These increases went into place on August 14, which is only reflected in the last 2 weeks of the available QSM data.

The GMT discussed several factors that may have led to the large increase in attainment of sablefish. Good weather, higher than average (2012-2014) unit prices, and reduction in fishing opportunities in other fisheries (e.g., salmon) may have driven the effort in the fishery higher. One example that supports the theory of higher effort is that halibut retention in the primary fishery North of Pt. Chehalis was recently prohibited as they had reached their allocation for the first time since 2001. Furthermore, during our discussion with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), it was brought up that during the sablefish program review there was discussion about creating a fourth tier in the primary fishery from the LEFG DTL fishery. Therefore, there may have been additional effort out on the water to increase historical landings records in anticipation that if a fourth tier was allocated and quota distributed.

Projections Relative to Allocations of Sablefish North of 36° N. lat.

With both LEFG DTL and OA N. predicted to exceed their landing targets, Table 2 describes the projected attainment for Alternative 1: Close the fishery for Period 6 and Alternative 2: Close the fishery as soon as possible (estimated mid-October).

Table 2. Predicted Attainment (mt) under Alternatives 1 and 2.

	LE N, by price assumption			OA N
	Low	Mid	High	
Alternative 1				
Projected landings	261.4	267.3	273.3	394.5
Landing target	236.0	236.0	236.0	388.0
Difference	-25.4	-31.3	-37.3	-6.5
Percent attainment	110.8%	113.3%	115.8%	101.7%
Alternative 2				
Projected landings	238.8	243.5	248.1	364.4
Landing target	236.0	236.0	236.0	388.0
Difference	-2.8	-7.5	-12.1	23.6
Percent attainment	101.2%	103.2%	105.1%	93.9%

The GMT reminds the Council that the LEFG DTL and the Primary fishery share one allocation and therefore, if the LEFG DTL exceeds its share, there is a possibility of a buffer in the primary fishery. On average, the primary fishery has taken approximately 86 percent of its share over the last 3 years. Table 3 shows the 2015 projections for the primary fishery using the QSM report data from August 31, 2015 and then applying the proportion of catch caught on average by the fleet in September and October to the 1) average 86 percent attainment of allocation and 2) full attainment of allocation.

Table 3. Predicted Attainment (mt) in the Sablefish Primary Fishery.

Allocation	**Projections**	
	Average	**Full**
1,336	1,284	1,336

Table 4 below shows the combinations of predicted attainment (mt) for both the Primary and LEFG DTL fisheries under each alternative and assumption. Those cells highlighted in red represent situations in which the total predicted landings exceed the LEFG (DTL + Primary) allocation (minus discard mortality) of 1,572 mt.

Table 4. Projected Total LEFG N of 36º Impacts

Alternative	Primary Projection	LEFG DTL N Projections (by price assumption)		
		Low	Medium	High
No Action	Average	1,581	1,597	1,613
	Full	1,633	1,649	1,665
Alternative 1	Average	1,545	1,551	1,557
	Full	1,597	1,603	1,609
Alternative 2	Average	1,523	1,527	1,532
	Full	1,575	1,579	1,584

Closure Considerations

Once a closure is announced, catch and effort are expected to increase in the remaining months or days prior to the closure. These behavioral shifts are not accounted for in the model, thus actual catch for the remainder of the year is expected to be greater than projected, but by how much is uncertain. If the fishery reacts in a similar manner as occurred prior to the announcement of the last closure in 2006 (for OA N), it may be reasonable (but highly speculative) to expect a 40-50 percent increase in landings compared to what is projected for the remainder of 2015.

Following the early September announcement of an October closure in 2006, landings from August to September in OA N increased by 47 percent (presumably as fishermen went fishing as much as possible before the season closed). Compared to other years, the 47 percent increase in landings from August to September prior to the closure in 2006 was much greater than normal for most years and on average (7 percent), but this was not always the case (similar increases were observed in 2008 and 2012). While we cannot assume that remaining landings for the rest of the year may be 40-50 percent greater than projected, it is very likely an increase will occur. Members of the GAP could provide greater insight to potential behavioral changes in the remainder of the fishery prior to the closure, as factors affecting the increase during 2006 may have changed (e.g., price, availability of other fisheries, etc.).

Furthermore, with closures in both north sectors, there may be an effort shift south of 36°. Currently for LEFG S, the predicted attainment is 78.8 percent, with the middle price assumption, as prices have been slightly lower than or close to the average price per period from 2012 to 2014. If the LEFG DTL N fishery were to close, there may be an effort shift south which raises the concern that the LEFG S fishery could exceed its allocation. Typically, LEFG S landings are approximately 20 percent of the landing target in period 6 (2012-2014). If the Council were to reduce trip limits for the LE S, the GMT offers two possible reductions for Period 6: Alternative 1) 1,300 lb/wk (accommodates the maximum average landings per week through April 2015), and Alternative 2) 850 lb/wk (accommodates the average landings per week through April 2015). Data is only complete through April 2015 in California and therefore, landings may have increased in periods 3 and 4 where landings are typically higher. Under

Alternative 1, predicted attainment is 334.88 mt under average prices, or 63 percent attainment. Alternative 2 results in a predicted attainment of 322.42 mt under average prices, or 61 percent attainment. In order to reach 100 percent attainment under current trip limits, there would have to be a 215 percent increase in predicted landings in period 6.

OA S has demonstrated a highly variable landings history from year to year. Currently, the OA S fishery is predicted to attain only 12.5 percent of its landing target and therefore has significant room for expansion. However, in the last 3 years, period 6 has landed a low of 5.9 percent of the total landings in 2014 to a high of 26 percent in 2012. After the 2006 closure of OA N, there was over a 1,000 percent increase in October landings compared to September. Even if we were to see an effort shift in the OA S similar to the one seen in 2006, the fishery is still only predicted to attain 43.3 percent.

The GMT notes though that members of the GAP mentioned that those fishing south of 36° in both DTL sectors have had a difficult time attaining their current trip limits. If there were an effort shift, the lack of fish would also impact those vessels that would move south. Further, given the relative distance between ports north and south of 36° N, relatively few vessels are expected to shift south, it is unlikely that a substantial effort shift will occur. However, southern vessels that also participate in the California spiny lobster and the Dungeness crab fisheries could shift their effort from the DTL fishery, since these two fisheries take place during period 6, with the spiny lobster fishery starting in October and the Dungeness crab fishery starting on November 15th.

Risk of Exceeding the Northern and Southern ACLs and Coastwide OFL and ABC

Table 5. Projected Impacts for Sablefish Under Alternative 1 for DTL N and No Action for DTL S

Fishery	Sablefish N.		Sablefish S.	
	Allocation a/	**Projected Impacts**	**Allocation a/**	**Projected Impacts**
Off the Top Deductions	506.0	480.0	5.0	2.0
EFP	1.0	1.0		
Research	26.0	26.0	3.0	3.0
Incidental OA			2.0	2.0
Tribal	479.0	479.0		
SB Trawl a/	2199.0	2107.0	720.0	227.0
At-Sea Trawl b/	50.0	3.0		
LE Primary c/	1385.0	1284.0		
LE DTL Landing Targets d/	244.0	267.3	547.0	418.2
OA DTL Landing Targets e/	402.0	394.5	447.0	53.9
Estimated dead discards		72.0		15.0
Recreational Groundfish f/	6.1	1.4	0.0	.01
TOTAL	4,792.1	4,607.8	1,719.0	716.1
Difference	0.90	157.84	0.0	999.89
Percent of ACL	100.0%	96.7%	100.0%	41.8%
Difference	3,064.9	3,221.8	6,138.0	7,137.9
Percent of OFL	61.0%	59.0%	21.9%	9.2%

a/ Based on projections in ◦Agenda Item E.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3, April 2015 , includes surplus carryover.

b/ The projection is based on the 2015 to date bycatch rates.

c/ Primary attainment is based on the average attainment 2012-2014.

d/ LE and OA DTL N. projections are based on Alternative 1, which implements a closure on November 1. LE and OA south is the No Action projections.

f/ Recreational projections are based on 2004-2014 average landings. Mortality estimates for the California recreational fishery are for the area north and south of 34°27’ N. latitude, as estimates are not stratified at the 36° sablefish management line.

North of 36◦ N. lat., under Alternative 1, the projected impacts of the LE and OA DTL fisheries and the sablefish primary season are expected to attain 96.7 percent of the northern sablefish ACL (4,793 mt).

South of 36° N lat., the ACL is shared between the LE and OA sectors. Based on the No Action alternative south of 36° N lat., combined projected impacts are anticipated to be 41.8 percent of the ACL (1.719 mt). Further, given the residual remaining in the ACL, it is likely that increased impacts resulting from any shift in effort can be accommodated.

Across all sectors, coastwide, projected impacts are well below the coastwide 2015 sablefish OFL (7,857 mt) and ABC (7,173 mt).

The GMT recommends Alternative 1 for both the LE DTL N and OA N, which would close the fisheries for Period 6.

Darkblotched Rockfish

In Agenda Item H.9.b, Public Comment, the Midwater Trawlers Cooperative (MTC) and United Catcher Boats (UCB) requested an inseason transfer of 8.0 mt of darkblotched rockfish. The GMT wanted to provide the Council with the current landings to date (Table 6) and 2015 projections for darkblotched rockfish (Table 7).

Table 6. Landings (mt) to date of darkblotched rockfish by sector. Data queried from PacFIN on September 12th, 2015. Hard data are considered to be 90 percent complete through April for CA, September for OR, and June for WA. NORPAC data were uploaded on September 12th. Discard represents inseason discards for at-sea sectors and average observer discards from 2012-2013 for remaining sectors. Note: trace amounts of catch were made in the nearshore and treaty sectors, but could not be reported due to confidentiality issues.

Sector	Inseason Retained (mt)	Discard	At-sea Inseason Discard (mt)	Average Annual Observer Shorebased Discard (mt)	Sum Catch (mt)
AT-SEA HAKE CP	0.41	0.19	0.19	0.00	0.59
AT-SEA HAKE MS	1.54	0.47	0.47	0.00	2.00
SHOREBASED TRAWL	69.18	2.42	0.00	2.42	71.59
IFQ FIXED GEAR	0.18	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.26
IFQ TRAWL GEAR	53.55	2.32	0.00	2.32	55.87
SHORESIDE HAKE	15.45	0.02	0.00	0.02	15.46
INCIDENTAL	7.11	4.32	0.00	4.32	11.43

NONNEARSHORE FIXED GEAR	1.78	1.06	0.00	1.06	2.83
TOTAL					88.46
% of ACL					26.17%
% of OFL					15.41%

The GMT re-examined the overfished species scorecard for darkblotched rockfish and provides our best estimates of projected impacts for 2015 in Table 6. Updates are described below:

- Incidental OA- This is based on Draft 2014 West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) projections, primarily from the pink shrimp fleet.
- For the shorebased IFQ sector (whiting, non-whiting, and gear switching), the value used was from the shorebased IFQ model described in the 2015-2016 Environmental Impact Statement. The GMT also explored the shorebased whiting component of the IFQ fishery and notes that the bycatch rate has ranged from a low of .02 mt of darkblotched rockfish per mt of whiting in 2011 to 0.11 mt of darkblotched rockfish per mt of whiting in 2012. In 2014, the shorebased bycatch rate was 0.08 mt of darkblotched rockfish per metric ton of whiting. The bycatch rate to date in 2015 has been 0.32 per metric ton of whiting in the shorebased whiting sector.
- For the at-sea fleet, projections were based on the 2015 bycatch rates to-date applied to the 2015 whiting allocation. The two projection columns in the table represent the potential situation described in the industry proposal. The first column represents the projected bycatch assuming that the MS sector continues to encounter bycatch at their current 2015 rate, while the second column shows the MS projected impacts if they experience the same rate seen by the shoreside sector to-date in 2015. The CP rate has ranged from 0.16 to 0.14 mt of darkblotched rockfish per metric ton of whiting from 2011 and 2014 respectively. The bycatch rate to date in 2015 has been 0.06 mt of darkblotched rockfish per metric ton of whiting.

Table 7. Updated Sector-Specific Scorecard of Darkblotched Rockfish.

		Projected Impacts	
	Allocation	MS sector with current MS bycatch rate	MS sector with shoreside bycatch rate
Off the Top Deductions	**20.8**	**32.2**	**32.2**
EFP	0.1	0.1	0.1
Research	2.1	7.4	7.4
Incidental OA	18.4	24.5	24.5
Tribal	0.2	0.2	0.2
-Bottom Trawl	0.2	0.2	0.2
-Troll	0		
-Fixed gear	0		
-Mid-water	0		
-Whiting		0.3	0.3
Trawl Allocation	**301.3**	**119.4**	**128.6**
SB Trawl	285.6	111.3	111.3
At-sea	15.7	8.1	17.3
-At-sea whiting MS	6.5	5.2	14.4
-At-sea whiting CP	9.2	2.9	2.9
Non-Trawl Allocation	**15.9**	**5.7**	**5.7**
Non-Nearshore		5.5	5.5
-LE FG			
-OA FG			
Directed OA: Nearshore		0.2	0.2
Recreational Groundfish			
-WA		--	--
-OR		--	--
-CA		--	--
TOTAL	**338**	**163**	**172.2**
2015 ACL	**338**	**338**	**339**
Difference		175	166.8
Percent of ACL		48.22%	50.80%
2015 OFL	**574**	**574**	**574**
Difference		411	401.8
Percent of OFL		28.40%	30.00%

Both projections show that the darkblotched ACL will most likely not be exceeded. If the MS sector were to encounter darkblotched rockfish at the rate the shoreside vessels have thus far encountered, they could exceed their allocation. However, shoreside and at-sea fleets do exhibit quite different behavior and distribution and these values are presented to provide the range of potential impacts for the MS sector. It is important to note that the CPs are also at risk of having a "lightning strike" event or encountering a higher bycatch rate and could exceed their allocation.

Yelloweye Rockfish in the Oregon Recreational Fishery

The GMT was informed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) that the estimates based on finalized data through July and preliminary data for August indicate that estimated yelloweye rockfish impacts are 2.6 mt, which is equivalent to the Oregon recreational harvest guideline (HG). Estimated end of year impacts are projected to be 3.0 mt. Using the Oregon recreational inseason tracking and projection model, end of the year estimates for several possible management options are included in Table 8.

Table 8. Projected yelloweye rockfish impacts for the Oregon recreational fishery.

	mt	Difference from HG (mt)
Harvest guideline	2.6	--
Preliminary estimate through August	2.6	0.0
Year-end projection	3.0	-0.4
Close end of September	2.7	-0.1
Restrict to inside 30 fm remainder of the year	2.8	-0.2

Informational Items

Overfished Species Scorecard

The overfished species scorecard (Attachment 1) has been updated to reflect new information on research and fisheries inseason projections. The research projected impacts for darkblotched rockfish has been updated to 7.4 mt, which is above the set-aside of 2.1 mt. A research project that was projected to have 0.7 mt of impacts encountered 5.0 mt during one set. That project immediately ceased. Additionally, the NMFS trawl survey has encountered 2.3 mt of darkblotched during their first pass. There could be additional darkblotched impacts on the second pass. We should have an update in November, as the trawl survey will have completed by that time. The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has completed their annual stock assessment survey. The IPHC survey yelloweye rockfish impacts totaled 0.4 mt, out of a 1.1 mt set-aside. Therefore, 0.7 mt of yelloweye rockfish have been returned to the scorecard. Additionally, the GMT was informed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) that completed and underway research projects will total approximately 0.1 mt of yelloweye rockfish impacts, out of the 1.0 mt set-aside. This will return an additional 0.9 mt of yelloweye rockfish to the scorecard. The projected impacts to yelloweye rockfish from the Oregon

recreational fishery have also been updated to reflect the end of the year projection, discussed above.

The GMT notes that a slight increase in the Directed OA Nearshore canary rockfish estimate, compared to the June scorecard, is a result of unanticipated increased mortalities of black rockfish in northern California (north of 40°10’ N latitude) and lingcod (statewide).

GMT Recommendations

- **The GMT recommends Alternative 1 for both the LE DTL N and OA N, which would close the fisheries for Period 6.**

Attachment 1. Scorecard for 2015. Allocations[a] and projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species for 2015.

Fishery	Bocaccio b/		Canary		Cowcod b/		Dkbl		Petrale		POP		Yelloweye	
***Date*: 15 Sept 2015**	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/ g/	Projected Impacts g/	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts
Off the Top Deductions	8.3	8.3	15.2	17.9	2.0	2.0	20.8	**26.1**	236.6	236.6	15.0	15.0	5.8	**4.2**
EFPc/	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.02	0.02	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Research d/	4.6	4.6	4.5	7.2	2.0	2.0	2.1	**7.4**	14.2	14.2	5.2	5.2	3.3	**1.7**
Incidental OA e/	0.7	0.7	2.0	2.0	--	--	18.4	18.4	2.4	2.4	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.2
Tribal f/			7.7	7.7			0.2	0.2	220.0	220.0	9.2	9.2	2.3	2.3
Bottom Trawl			0.8	0.8			0.2	0.2	45.4	70.0	3.7	3.7		0.0
Troll			0.5	0.5			0.0							0.0
Fixed gear			0.3	0.3			0.0						2.3	2.3
mid-water			3.6	3.6			0.0							0.0
whiting			4.3	4.9				0.3			7.2	11.1		
Trawl Allocations	81.9	81.9	56.9	56.9	1.4	1.4	301.3	301.3	2,544.4	2,544.4	135.9	135.9	1.0	1.0
-SB Trawl	81.9	81.9	43.3	43.3	1.4	1.4	285.6	285.6	2,539.4	2,539.4	118.5	118.5	1.0	1.0
-At-Sea Trawl			13.7	13.7			15.7	15.7	5.0	5.0	17.4	17.4	0.0	--
a) At-sea whiting MS			**5.7**	5.7			6.5	6.5			7.2	7.2		
b) At-sea whiting CP			8.0	8.0			9.2	9.2			10.2	10.2		
Non-Trawl Allocation	258.8	117.7	49.9	36.7	2.6	1.2	15.9	5.7	35.0		7.2	0.3	11.2	11.1
Non-Nearshore	79.1		3.8					5.5				0.3	0.6	0.6
LE FG				0.9						0.3				
OA FG				0.2						0.1		0.0		
Directed OA: Nearshore	1.0	**0.5**	6.7	**7.7**				0.2		0.0			1.7	1.8
Recreational Groundfish														
WA			3.4	**2.8**				--		--		--	2.9	2.8
OR			11.7	**11.7**				--		--		--	2.6	**3.0**
CA	178.8	**117.2**	24.3	13.4		1.2		--		--		--	3.4	2.9
TOTAL	349.0	207.9	122.0	**111.5**	4.0	2.6	338.0	**333.1**	2,816.0	2,781.0	158.1	151.2	18.0	**16.3**
2015 Harvest Specification	**349**	**349**	**122**	**122**	**4.0**	**4.0**	**338**	**338**	**2,816**	**2,816**	**158**	**158**	**18**	**18**
Difference	0.0	**141.09**	0.0	**10.5**	0.0	1.4	0.0	**4.9**	0.0	35.0	-0.1	6.8	0.0	**1.7**
Percent of ACL	100.0%	59.6%	100.0%	91.4%	100.0%	65.0%	100.0%	98.6%	100.0%	98.8%	100.1%	95.7%	100.0%	90.7%
Key			= not applicable											
	--		= trace, less than 0.1 mt											
			= Fixed Values											
			= off the top deductions											

a/ Formal allocations are represented in the black shaded cells and are specified in regulation in Tables 1b and 1e. The other values in the allocation columns are 1) off the top deductions, 2) set asides from the trawl allocation (at-sea petrale only) 3) ad-hoc allocations recommended in the 2013-14 EIS process, 4) HG for the recreational fisheries for canary and YE.

b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.

c/ EFPs are amounts deducted from the ACL to accommodate anticipated applications. Values in this table represent the estimates from the 15-16 biennial cycle, which are currently specified in regulation.

d/ Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.

e/ The GMT's best estimate of impacts as analyzed in the 2015-2016 Environmental Impact Statement (Appendix B), which are currently specified in regulation.

f/ Tribal values in the allocation column represent the the values in regulation. Projected impacts are the tribes best estimate of catch.

g/ the cowcod harvest specifation is a 4.0 mt Annual Catch Target (ACT). The off the top deductions are subtracted from the 10 mt ACL