

## WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) REPORT ON BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2017-2018 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) would like to offer some recommendations on harvest specifications in general and for nearshore stocks and canary rockfish specifically. For the nearshore, new assessments were done for black rockfish (Washington only) and China rockfish this cycle and, while not assessed, there remains an outstanding issue associated with a harvest specification for kelp greenling off Washington.

### *Harvest Specifications*

As we have noted in previous biennial specifications discussions, the Council has various avenues through which it can apply precautionary approaches to harvest specifications to account for uncertainty about the status of a particular stock. This can be done in using a precautionary P\* value to set the acceptable biological catch (ABC), setting a reduced annual catch limit (ACL), or by using annual catch targets (ACTs) as a reduction from the ACL—or some combination of these.

Given this and the sequencing of the Council's decisions, it may be difficult to achieve consistency across stocks without setting clear criteria for which tool to use when. It is also challenging to clearly articulate, and therefore understand, how much precaution is “enough” and whether the Council has sufficiently accounted for the uncertainty in the assessment and management through our recommendations.

For most of the stocks in the fishery management plan, this may not be an issue; however, for those stocks that are important target species for fisheries and are fully subscribed (e.g., sablefish, petrale) or have recently been declared “rebuilt” (e.g., canary rockfish), WDFW recommends the Council consider additional analyses relative to the probability of overfishing and/or having a lower depletion level as a means to assess risk, similar to what is done for Pacific whiting and Pacific halibut.

### *Nearshore Harvest Specifications*

In [March](#) and [April 2014](#), WDFW provided background information on the evolution of its nearshore fisheries and our thoughts relative to management of nearshore stocks, particularly those harvested primarily or, in some cases, exclusively within state waters. Our thoughts on this subject have not changed; therefore, we would recommend that the stocks within the Minor Nearshore Rockfish Complex (North of 40°10' N. latitude) continue to be managed as a complex under the same approach as in 2015 and 2016 with state-specific harvest guidelines (HGs).

### *Black Rockfish*

WDFW supports the use of the default harvest control rule (HCR) for black rockfish at a P\* of 0.45. WDFW continues to direct resources to monitoring this key stock and believes that these

monitoring efforts and regular assessment updates justify a P-star of 0.45 as sufficiently precautionary.

### ***China Rockfish***

For this cycle, WDFW supports continuing to manage China rockfish within the Minor Nearshore Rockfish Complex North of 40°10' N. latitude with a P\* of 0.45, which is consistent with the management approach for 2015 and 2016.

The projected OFL from the northern model (Washington only) of the 2015 stock assessment would be 9.63 mt in 2017 and 9.3 mt in 2018. With a P\* adjustment of 0.45 and ABC=ACL, this results in an ACL (HG) component of 8.8 and 8.5 for 2017 and 2018, respectively.

### ***Canary Rockfish Harvest Specifications***

WDFW supports keeping both the No Action alternative (P\*=.45, ABC=ACL) for canary rockfish and Alternative 1, ACL set at half of the default ACL, for analysis purposes.

### ***Kelp Greenling***

WDFW recommends that kelp greenling for Washington continue to be managed in the Other Fish complex and that the same numerical values for the component harvest specifications that were developed for 2016 carry forward for 2017 and 2018, as presented to the Council in April 2014. That is, an OFL of 28.4 mt and, using a P\* of 0.4, an ABC of 19.7 mt with the ACL equal to the ABC.