

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON  
2017-2018 BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) offers the following comments on several items under Agenda Item F.6, to inform Council decision making on preliminary preferred alternatives for 2017-2018 biennial groundfish management measures. Headings and numbering below refer to the [Action Item Checklist, Agenda Item F.6 Supplemental Revised Attachment 1](#).

**2017-2018 RCA Coordinate Updates, Allocations, and Harvest Guidelines (HG)**

**#2. Off the Top Deductions**

ODFW scientific research impacts on yelloweye rockfish are projected to be 0.4 mt in 2017 and 1.0 mt in 2018. Impacts in both years will result from three projects:

- 1) A tagging study using acoustic telemetry to estimate the spatial scale of daily and seasonal movements of Deacon rockfish. Fishing to capture Deacon rockfish for tagging may result in some impacts to yelloweye rockfish.
- 2) A study of long-term health of yelloweye rockfish after recompression. Recent ODFW research showed that yelloweye rockfish that survive capture from depths greater than 140 meters are still suffering significant health problems from the initial barotrauma 30 days after recompression, including compromised buoyancy control. This study will follow deep-captured yelloweye rockfish for longer than 30 days and determine if these problems resolve or worsen.
- 3) Ongoing ecological research in Oregon's marine reserves and comparison areas. Hook and line and longline surveys in these nearshore areas may impact small yelloweye rockfish.

Additionally, in 2018, ODFW plans to begin a new nearshore research effort. Building on significant interest within Oregon in improving the data available to inform nearshore species stock assessments, ODFW is engaging federal, state, and academic partners on the design and implementation of nearshore fishery-independent surveys. Full realization of an expanded ODFW nearshore research program will be possible if state funding is received in the 2017 Oregon legislative cycle. ODFW expects to know available funding and staffing levels by the fall of 2017, and at that time can provide the Council with an updated projection of ODFW research impacts on yelloweye rockfish in 2018, with the intent of facilitating redistribution of projected unused yelloweye rockfish from the research set-aside to fisheries earlier than in recent years.

**#8. HG or Shares: Within Non-Trawl**

Minor Nearshore Rockfish North of 40' 10 N: ODFW supports Option 2: 100 percent of the ACL contribution of stocks with state-specific assessment boundaries goes to that state, with status quo sharing proportions for stocks without state-specific boundaries. This option has the best

biological basis while retaining the previously agreed-upon state sharing proportions for the species without state-specific assessments.

In 2015 and continuing in 2016, as a result of a reduction in the minor nearshore rockfish ACL, Oregon had to implement (by state rule) notable reductions in both sport and commercial nearshore fisheries. In the sport fishery, a sub-bag limit of three blue (or Deacon) rockfish and zero other minor nearshore rockfish was necessary in order to stay under the reduced harvest guideline. This required discarding of China, copper, and quillback rockfish, and resulted in confusion and disruption to anglers and charter operators and crew. In the state-managed commercial nearshore fishery, the bimonthly trip limit for “other nearshore rockfish” (minor nearshore rockfish complex, except for blue/Deacon rockfish) was reduced from 700 pounds to 100 pounds, and a new trip limit of 15 pounds blue/Deacon rockfish was created. This had a significant impact on landings in the commercial nearshore fishery and resulted in discard of a lot of blue rockfish caught incidentally by fishermen targeting black rockfish in particular. Although these trip limits were raised slightly later in the year due to low attainment, they remained far lower than in 2014. This is a case where the regulations did not line up with what fishermen saw on the water; both recreational and commercial fishermen report encountering abundant blue/Deacon rockfish. Option 2 would return Oregon to approximately the same harvest guideline of minor nearshore rockfish as in 2014, and would allow removal of the sub-bag limit and increases to state-set trip limits in the commercial nearshore fishery, reducing discard and wastage.

### **2017-2018 Season Structures**

#### #11 Non-Nearshore and #12, Nearshore

ODFW supports allowing retention of canary rockfish in the limited entry (LE) and open access (OA) fixed gear fisheries, with bimonthly trip limits at levels substantially reducing discards. Canary rockfish trip limits of 300 pounds per period for LE and 200 pounds per period for OA appear to achieve the goal of enabling retention of most incidental catch.

#### #15. OR Recreational

ODFW met with stakeholders in October, 2015 to review and seek input on recreational management measures for 2017 and 2018. Based on public input and staff analysis, ODFW recommends the following:

*Season structure and bag limits:* No Action (same as 2016) with two exceptions. The Oregon recreational groundfish fishery would be open offshore year-round, except from April 1 to September 30 when fishing is only allowed shoreward of 40 fathoms, as defined by waypoints. Canary rockfish and minor nearshore rockfish would be part of the ten-fish marine bag. A seven-fish bag limit in state rule is expected to be necessary to keep harvest of all species within specified limits; however, a ten-fish marine bag limit in federal rule allows flexibility for in-season liberalization if conditions warrant. ODFW monitors the recreational fishery closely and can implement in-season management measures quickly if needed to stay within limits and maximize opportunity.

*Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) expansion:* Adopt coordinates as shown in Agenda Item F.3 Attachment 1, Table 4-59, for expanding the Stonewall Bank

YRCA as shown under both Option 2 and Option 3. This provides ODFW the ability to expand the Stonewall Bank YRCA if needed to minimize impacts to yelloweye rockfish from recreational fisheries.

*Minimum size limits:* No Action for lingcod (22”) and cabezon (16”). Remove the minimum size limit (10”) for kelp greenling. There is no management concern related to the kelp greenling minimum size limit, and removing the 10” minimum size simplifies regulations for anglers.

### **New Management Measures**

#### **#18. Starry Flounder Management**

ODFW does not support moving starry flounder into the Other Flatfish complex given the concerns over trawl/non-trawl allocation differences and potential for significant workload associated with this item which could delay implementation of the biennial harvest specifications and management measures.

#### **#23. OR Recreational – flatfish retention at any depth during the seasonal depth closure**

ODFW supports allowing the retention of flatfish at any depth during the seasonal depth closure in Oregon’s recreational groundfish fishery. This would allow fishing for flatfish (other than Pacific halibut) outside of the 40 fathom seasonal depth restriction. It is not projected to increase impacts to yelloweye rockfish because the fishing occurs in soft-bottom habitats with small terminal tackle, and could be particularly valuable if nearshore recreational groundfish fishing in Oregon is restricted if necessary to prevent exceeding a harvest guideline.