

## SCOPING OF TRAWL CATCH SHARES DISCARD SURVIVAL CREDITS FOR SABLEFISH AND LINGCOD

The annual estimates of groundfish mortality, prepared by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP), include the application of discard mortality rates (DMR) of 50 percent for trawl caught lingcod and sablefish, 20 percent for hook-and-line and pot caught (longline) sablefish, and 7 percent for longline caught lingcod. Therefore it's assumed that 50 percent of trawl caught lingcod and sablefish, 80 percent of longline caught sablefish, and 93 percent of longline caught lingcod survive after being discarded, regardless of tow depth, tow duration, time on deck, or location of catch/discard.

Under the trawl catch share program 100 percent of the estimated discards, regardless of survivability, are debited from vessel quota pound accounts and tracked inseason against the trawl allocation and annual catch limits; there is no postseason quota pound adjustment. Industry has requested consideration of an individual fishing quota (IFQ) "survival credit" for discarded lingcod and sablefish, particularly for the discard of small sized lingcod (less than 22 inches) for which discard is currently required by regulation. The industry generally retains small sablefish regardless of low price or marketability since 100 percent of the discard is debited from quota pound accounts; under this action small sablefish would likely be discarded. The additional quota due to a survival credit could provide additional opportunities to target other species such as arrowtooth flounder or Dover sole.

This action could increase attainment of annual catch limits, allocations, and quota pounds provided to participants in the trawl catch share program, and reduce wastage of small fish. This action would create a mechanism to apply a discard mortality rate to the estimated discard prior to debiting an IFQ account. This would provide participants with additional, non-target species in their accounts (lingcod and sablefish) to potentially increase the attainment of other target species such as petrale or Dover sole. In addition, this action would align the annual mortality estimates provided by the WCGOP with the total quota pounds debited in the IFQ accounting system.

In November 2016, the Council adopted the methodology review topics and timeline for 2017 reviews recommended by the Groundfish Management Team and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) detailed in [Agenda Item F.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report, November 2016](#). Therefore in March 2017, and provided again under this agenda item, the GMT provided a report that discusses the discard mortality rates for sablefish and lingcod (Agenda Item F.3.a, GMT Report 1). The GMT considers the information on the current discard mortality rates used for the longline and trawl sectors to be the best available information and recommended no changes to the current rates. The SSC is expected to review the report and provide feedback to the Council. Under this action item, it's expected that any SSC-approved rates would be used by the WCGOP to debit IFQ accounts.

This item is scheduled for scoping by the Council and its advisory bodies which includes review of a draft purpose and need statement, and discussion of potential benefits and concerns (Agenda Item F.3, Attachment 1). In addition, should the Council choose to move forward, the Council may

provide guidance on future analyses and schedule. The item is currently scheduled for selection of a final preferred alternative in November, 2017 (Agenda Item C.8, Year-at-a-Glance).

**Council Action:**

- 1. Scope issues for applying sablefish and lingcod discard survival credits in trawl catch share accounts.**
- 2. Provide guidance on future analyses and schedule.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.3, Attachment 1: Trawl IFQ – Discard Survival Credit for Lingcod and Sablefish Scoping Document.
2. Agenda Item F.3.a, GMT Report 1: Sablefish and Lingcod Discard Mortality Rates.

**Agenda Order:**

- F.3 Scoping of Trawl Catch Shares Discard Survival Credits for Sablefish and Lingcod Brett Wiedoff
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Scope Issues for Applying Sablefish and Lingcod Discard Survival Credits in Trawl Catch Share Accounts and Provide Guidance on Future Analyses and Schedule

PFMC  
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