

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INITIAL HARVEST  
SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ACTIONS FOR 2019-2020  
MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the items in the briefing book under this agenda item and received an overview of the harvest specifications from Mr. John DeVore and Ms. Kelly Ames (Council staff). The GMT provides the following comments.

## I. Harvest Specifications

### Harvest Control Rules

Default harvest control rules (HCR), as implemented under [Amendment 24](#), will be applied to the best available scientific information to generate the 2019-2020 harvest specifications, including overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs) and annual catch limits (ACLs). **The GMT recommends that the Council indicate at this meeting if it would like to depart from the default HCRs.** This timing is necessary to coordinate with the stock assessors and prepare information for the November Council meeting, when the Council is scheduled to adopt preliminary preferred ACL alternatives. This information will also be discussed during the October 2-5, 2017 GMT work session in Portland, Oregon.

#### *Lingcod South of 40°10' North Latitude (N. lat).*

The GMT discussed the current default P\* of 0.40 that is specified for lingcod south of 40°10' N. latitude. Given that the 2017 stock assessment is a Category 1, **the GMT recommends that the Council consider changing the P\* to 0.45 for lingcod south of 40°10' N. lat.**

#### *California Scorpionfish ACLs*

The default harvest control rule for California Scorpionfish is a constant ACL of 150 mt. **The GMT recommends that the Council consider a constant ACL of 232.4 mt for 2019-2020, which is the level that is expected to keep the stock above the target biomass over the ten year period (i.e., the estimated maximum sustainable yield (MSY)) from the decision table; Appendix 1).** For reference, the ABC is 337 mt for 2019 and 331 mt in 2020. Previous to 2014, the recreational fishery was open year round; however, in 2014, 125 mt of mortality accrued, which exceeded allowable harvest limits and the fishery was closed through inseason action. Starting in 2015, the recreational fishery has been closed from September through December annually, to keep impacts within allowable harvest limits. A 232.4 mt ACL would keep the stock healthy, and provide greater opportunity, including allowing for consideration of a return to a year round recreational and commercial season.

#### *Considerations for Yelloweye Rockfish and Pacific ocean perch*

In November, the Council will review the new yelloweye rockfish rebuilding analysis and Pacific ocean perch (POP) assessment. The GMT may recommend changes to the spawning potential ratio (SPR) harvest rate for yelloweye rockfish or the HCR for POP at that time.

## II. Management Measures

### Annual Catch Targets

While the Council could select an ACL lower than the ABC, to account for management uncertainty, another approach could be the use of an annual catch target (ACT). ACTs are soft targets, not hard caps, and are useful when there is uncertainty in projections of fishery impacts or delays in monitoring inseason catches. During initial discussions on the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications, **the GMT recommends continuing to use an ACT for cowcod rockfish.**

### Preliminary Range of New Management Measures

Under this agenda item, Council action will adopt a preliminary range of new management measures, where impacts have not previously been analyzed and/or implemented in regulation. Adopting the measures at this meeting, allows the GMT to discuss the preliminary list of management measures at our October GMT work session, allowing for more detailed feedback in November.

Table 1 describes the new management measures that have been identified by the Council, GMT, or Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) as well as routine management measures that may be analyzed. Routine measures are ones that have previously been analyzed and/or put into regulation. While these measures have been previously analyzed, we must ensure that the existing impact analysis is representative of those expected in 2019-2020. These routine measures include recreational season structures, depth limits, and bag limits, commercial trip limits, minor adjustments to rockfish conservation areas, etc.

**The GMT recommends the Council provide guidance on priorities, and narrow the number of items in Table 1 for consideration.** This would allow us to be more efficient in our examination of management measures at our October work session, which will facilitate the detailed analysis over winter for those measures that are forwarded. Adding new management measures increases the likelihood of a delayed implementation due to the analytical complexity. Items 1-11 in Table 1 in particular affect all sectors and are likely to have a higher associated workload. **The GMT recommends the Council weigh the analytical complexity of any new management measures that are added to the current list, and consider whether they might be better suited for inclusion in another rulemaking package, such as omnibus.**

In addition, the GMT offers the following comments on the items below to help facilitate Council discussion:

*Item 4: Developing and Accessing ACL Buffers.* In the 2017-2018 biennium, the Council adopted a new category of off-the-top deductions, or “buffers”, for unforeseen catch events for darkblotched rockfish, canary rockfish, and POP. It is the GMT’s belief that the Council created the buffers to provide relief in cases where sectors needed an additional allocation inseason due to unexpected circumstances (e.g. lightning strike, high bycatch events, etc). However, the GMT believes the “unforeseen catch event” criteria should be re-evaluated this biennium. At our October GMT meeting, the GMT plans on exploring how buffers could be developed, as well as processes for allowing access to the buffers inseason. The GMT considered the species for which a buffer might be needed and at this time only **recommends consideration for a yelloweye rockfish buffer.**

*Item 10: ESA Salmon Mitigation Measures.* In their motion describing the proposed action for the ESA salmon consultation, the Council indicated it would develop mitigation measures (e.g., sector-specific catch limits, bycatch thresholds, harvest guidelines, time and area closures, and gear restrictions) after considering the results of the biological opinion. The workload associated with this action is dependent on the completion of the consultation, the outcome of the incidental take statement, and the resulting terms and conditions. The GMT also suggests that some mitigation measures could be developed for inclusion in the trawl gear rulemaking. Under this scenario, measures would be developed, brought forward for Council consideration, and implemented through the trawl gear rulemaking package, which is currently scheduled for implementation in 2019.

*Item 15: Removing the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) formula for darkblotched rockfish and POP.* When Amendment 21-3 is implemented in 2018, both species should be managed via set-asides from the trawl allocation. The GMT notes that in general, set aside amounts are established each biennium based on best available information, however, the formulas established under Amendment 21 exist in the FMP and will be used to establish the darkblotched rockfish and POP set-asides in 2019-2020. The [Situation Summary](#) notes the Council may want to consider removing the FMP formulas as both species are (potentially) rebuilt and may have much larger ACLs than previous biennial cycles. Depending on the ACL levels proposed by the Council, using the current FMP formula could leave a large amount of either species unharvested in the at-sea sector. If the formula was modified, the shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) allocation would be increased. However, the shorebased IFQ fishery may not be able to take the entire allocation due to other restrictions.

*Public Comment:* The GMT reviewed [Agenda Item E.9.a, Public Comment, September 2017](#), and believes that the California Commercial Vertical Gear request may be premature at this time. **We recommend that the Platt-Emily Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) be completed and analyzed prior to consideration of implementing the use of this gear type into regulation.**

### III. GMT Recommendations

- 1. The Council indicate at this meeting if it would like to depart from the default HCRs.**
- 2. The Council consider changing the P\* to 0.45 for lingcod south.**
- 3. For California Scorpionfish, consider a constant catch ACL of 232.4 mt for 2019-2020, which is the level that is expected to keep the stock above the target biomass over the ten year period (i.e., the estimated MSY from the decision table; Appendix 1).**
- 4. Continuing to use an ACT for cowcod rockfish.**
- 5. The Council provide guidance on priorities and narrow the number of items 1-11 in Table 1.**
- 6. The Council weigh the analytical complexity of any new management measures that are added to the current list, and consider whether they might be better suited for inclusion in another rulemaking package.**
- 7. The GMT recommends the Council consider creating a buffer for yelloweye rockfish.**
- 8. We recommend that the Platt-Emily Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) be completed and analyzed prior to consideration of implementing the use of the gear type described in Agenda Item E.9.a, Public Comment into regulation.**

**Table 1. List of potential management measures for 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures, sectors involved, and a brief description. Numbers do not imply any rank or priority by the GMT.**

| Item #<br>(not ranked) | Management Measure   | Sector(s) affected | Description  |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| <b>All Sectors</b>     |  |                    |  |
| 1                      | Mid-biennial ACL adjustments ("green light")                               | All                | Increase the harvest specifications based on stock assessment results (e.g., in 2019) and adjust management measures; Final action scheduled November 2017                                 |
| 2                      | Carryover (September 2017, Agenda Item E.5 and Agenda Item E.7)            | All                | Allows yield from one year to be carried over to the next within a biennium; Options to increase shorebased IFQ carryover from 10 percent up to 100 percent or carryover at-sea set asides |
| 3                      | Multi-Year Catch Policy (September 2017, Agenda Item E.5)                  | All                | Allows overfishing determination and accountability measure adjustments based on historical mortality  |
| 4                      | Establishing and accessing ACL buffers                                     | All                | Establish more specific criteria for releasing ACL buffers, move away from release based on "unforeseen catch events"  |
| 5                      | Modification or removal of lingcod size limit (June 2017, Agenda Item F.3) | All                | Routine: analyzed for 2013-2014 biennial process   |
| 6                      | USFWS ESA mitigation measures (April 2017; Agenda Item F.5)                | All                | Council should receive a briefing on the terms and conditions in November, decide which to include in 19-20  |
| 7                      | Increase access to the yelloweye ACL for all sectors                       | All                | <a href="#">WDFW Report</a>  |
| 8                      | Blue/Deacon/Black Rockfish Complex in Oregon                               | All                | <a href="#">ODFW Report</a>  |
| 9                      | Modifying Trawl/Non-Trawl Allocation for Cowcod                            | All                | <a href="#">CDFW Report</a>  |
| 10                     | Non-salmonid ESA mitigation measures                                       | All                | Eulachon, green sturgeon, whales (?)   |
| 11                     | Modify the outer boundary of the western Cowcod Conservation Area          | All                | <a href="#">CDFW Report</a>  |

| Item #<br>(not ranked) | Management Measure   | Sector(s) affected | Description   |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>Trawl</b>           |  |                    |   |
| 12                     | ESA salmon mitigation measures (April 2017; Agenda Item F.3)   | Trawl              | Council motion from April 2017 included consideration for sector-specific catch limits, bycatch thresholds, harvest guidelines, time and area closures, and gear restrictions   |
| 13                     | Lingcod and sablefish discard mortality rates applied to IFQ QP (June 2017, Agenda Item F.3)   | IFQ<br>Trawl       | SSC endorsed proposed discard mortality rates in June 2016; Would analyze impacts of applying DMRs in IFQ accounting  |
| 14                     | Daily QP vessel limits (September 2017, Agenda Item E.7)   | Trawl              | Vessel limits exist for bocaccio, cowcod, darkblotched, Pacific halibut (IBQ), POP, widow, and YE. Widow is scheduled to be removed in the Widow Rockfish QS Reallocation and Divestiture Deadlines rule. Bocaccio and darkblotched (maybe POP) can be removed since declared rebuilt. Limits could be adjusted for species with remaining daily vessel limits (cowcod, IBQ, YE, possibly POP). |
| 15                     | Individual Species Limits (September 2017, Agenda Item E.7)  | Trawl              | Adjustments to the amounts that limit the amount of fish an individual vessel can harvest (the amount of QP a vessel can use).  |
| 16                     | Establish biennial set-asides for whiting bycatch in research and incidental open access   | Trawl              | Currently establish annually in April. Proposal is to establish biennially set-asides that could be modified annually if necessary, potentially providing a more streamlined process.   |
| 17                     | Remove the FMP formula for establishing the darkblotched and POP at-sea set-asides. Established each biennium based on best available data as is done for other set-aside spp. | Trawl              | Amendment 21 specifies the formula for darkblotched and POP for within trawl allocations in the FMP. Council may wish to consider removing the formula, setting the set aside amounts each biennium, and exploring ways to manage at-sea set asides.  |
| 18                     | Non-Groundfish Trawl Housekeeping in CA  | Trawl              | Described in CDFW Report  |
| <b>Non-Trawl</b>       |  |                    |   |
| 19                     | OA Trip Limits and RCA adjustments   | FG                 | Including Supplemental GAP Report for N. of 40°10 for slope rockfish/darkblotched rockfish and shortspine and longspine thornyheads and measures in CDFW Report   |
| 20                     | LEFG Trip Limits and RCA adjustments   | FG                 | Including measures in CDFW Report   |

| <b>Item #<br/>(not ranked)</b> | <b>Management Measure</b>        | <b>Sector(s) affected</b> | <b>Description</b>                          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 21                             | WA recreational season structure | WA Rec                    |   |
| 22                             | OR recreational season structure | OR Rec                    | Includes consideration for midwater fishery |
| 23                             | CA recreational season structure | CA Rec                    | <a href="#">CDFW Report</a>                 |

## Appendix 1:

Decision table from the [2017 California Scorpionfish Stock Assessment](#). This table is provided for the ease of Council members to consider different ACL alternative.

Table h: Summary of 10-year projections beginning in 2018 for alternate states of nature based on an axis of uncertainty for the base model. Columns range over low, mid, and high states of nature, and rows range over different assumptions of catch levels. An entry of “-” indicates that the stock is driven to very low abundance under the particular scenario.

|                | Year | Catch  | States of nature |           |                  |           |                  |           |
|----------------|------|--------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
|                |      |        | Low M 0.164      |           | Base M 0.235     |           | High M 0.2745    |           |
|                |      |        | Spawning biomass | Depletion | Spawning biomass | Depletion | Spawning biomass | Depletion |
| Constant Catch | 2019 | 150.00 | 587.05           | 0.47      | 1154.73          | 0.71      | 2252.89          | 0.84      |
|                | 2020 | 150.00 | 584.87           | 0.47      | 1174.89          | 0.72      | 2312.02          | 0.86      |
|                | 2021 | 150.00 | 574.64           | 0.46      | 1176.29          | 0.72      | 2331.33          | 0.87      |
|                | 2022 | 150.00 | 561.72           | 0.45      | 1169.09          | 0.72      | 2330.83          | 0.87      |
|                | 2023 | 150.00 | 548.66           | 0.44      | 1158.79          | 0.71      | 2321.64          | 0.86      |
|                | 2024 | 150.00 | 536.43           | 0.43      | 1148.13          | 0.71      | 2309.70          | 0.86      |
|                | 2025 | 150.00 | 525.20           | 0.42      | 1138.24          | 0.70      | 2297.82          | 0.86      |
|                | 2026 | 150.00 | 514.89           | 0.41      | 1129.45          | 0.70      | 2287.10          | 0.85      |
|                | 2027 | 150.00 | 505.35           | 0.40      | 1121.77          | 0.69      | 2277.85          | 0.85      |
|                | 2028 | 150.00 | 496.46           | 0.40      | 1115.12          | 0.69      | 2270.05          | 0.85      |
| Estimated MSY  | 2019 | 232.40 | 573.15           | 0.46      | 984.92           | 0.61      | 1779.53          | 0.66      |
|                | 2020 | 232.40 | 588.87           | 0.47      | 955.43           | 0.59      | 1673.88          | 0.62      |
|                | 2021 | 232.40 | 592.42           | 0.47      | 912.16           | 0.56      | 1560.33          | 0.58      |
|                | 2022 | 232.40 | 588.94           | 0.47      | 869.23           | 0.54      | 1462.95          | 0.54      |
|                | 2023 | 232.40 | 584.63           | 0.47      | 837.51           | 0.52      | 1400.62          | 0.52      |
|                | 2024 | 232.40 | 579.50           | 0.46      | 812.51           | 0.50      | 1353.76          | 0.50      |
|                | 2025 | 232.40 | 575.83           | 0.46      | 796.20           | 0.49      | 1327.05          | 0.49      |
|                | 2026 | 232.40 | 572.04           | 0.46      | 782.22           | 0.48      | 1302.32          | 0.48      |
|                | 2027 | 232.40 | 569.72           | 0.45      | 773.77           | 0.48      | 1290.11          | 0.48      |
|                | 2028 | 232.40 | 567.04           | 0.45      | 765.22           | 0.47      | 1275.09          | 0.47      |
| ACL = ABC      | 2019 | 346.30 | 587.05           | 0.47      | 1154.73          | 0.71      | 2252.89          | 0.84      |
|                | 2020 | 333.89 | 479.44           | 0.38      | 1068.32          | 0.66      | 2206.66          | 0.82      |
|                | 2021 | 313.01 | 383.32           | 0.31      | 983.88           | 0.61      | 2142.68          | 0.80      |
|                | 2022 | 293.00 | 311.34           | 0.25      | 917.22           | 0.56      | 2085.85          | 0.78      |
|                | 2023 | 277.18 | 260.27           | 0.21      | 869.36           | 0.54      | 2042.74          | 0.76      |
|                | 2024 | 265.38 | 221.15           | 0.18      | 835.93           | 0.51      | 2012.49          | 0.75      |
|                | 2025 | 256.64 | 187.64           | 0.15      | 812.37           | 0.50      | 1992.23          | 0.74      |
|                | 2026 | 250.12 | 157.42           | 0.13      | 795.36           | 0.49      | 1979.19          | 0.74      |
|                | 2027 | 245.19 | 129.79           | 0.10      | 782.82           | 0.48      | 1971.20          | 0.73      |
|                | 2028 | 241.44 | 104.22           | 0.08      | 773.46           | 0.48      | 1966.69          | 0.73      |