

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON INSEASON  
ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2017 AND 2018

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) monitors and manages the Oregon recreational bottomfish (groundfish) fishery inseason via data from the [Ocean Recreational Boat Survey](#) (ORBS) program. Effort, catch, and discard data are available monthly, on a one month lag; however, preliminary data may be available approximately one week after the end of a statistical month.

**2017 Recreational Bottomfish Fishery**

As noted in September ([Agenda Item E.10.a, Supplemental REVISED ODFW Report1](#)), on September 12, 2017 ODFW announced that the Oregon recreational bottomfish fishery, which is normally open year-round, was closed for all species except flatfish beginning on September 18. Oregon's black rockfish harvest limit for 2017 is 10 percent lower than in 2016, and is now an Oregon-specific Annual Catch Limit (ACL), which does not allow the flexibility of potential sharing with Washington or northern California. This year, despite a lower daily bag limit than in 2016, the highest recreational bottomfish effort on record in Oregon caused the black rockfish state-specified recreational harvest guideline (HG) to be exceeded inseason, along with Oregon's recreational HG's for nearshore rockfish complex north of 40° 10' N lat., cabezon, and yelloweye rockfish. Along with the closure, ODFW extended the flatfish fishery to all-depths in order to maximize that opportunity which remained open, and also allowed take of lingcod by spear only, as the lingcod stock is abundant and there is no bycatch concern with spearfishing.

At the September, 2017 Council meeting, ODFW requested and received Council approval to use some of the yelloweye rockfish residual (the amount under the coastwide ACL expected to remain unused at the end of the year, based on updated projections for research and fishery impacts), so that some limited opportunities to access groundfish could be reopened outside of the 40 fathom management line, where encounters with black rockfish and minor nearshore rockfish are infrequent. The earliest any opening could occur was October 1<sup>st</sup>, due to current federal rule restricting recreational fishing to inside of the 40 fathom management line until that date. With a limited offshore reopening, ODFW projected that total 2017 recreational impacts to yelloweye rockfish would be 3.8 metric tons.

On September 25, ODFW staff reviewed preliminary catch and effort data from September through the closure, in order to evaluate the potential to reopen based on the quota remaining for limiting species. Effort and impacts during that time period were higher than anticipated, due to some change in angler behavior, and not enough yelloweye rockfish quota remained under the revised limit of 3.8 metric tons to allow any fishing that would add significant additional impacts. After discussions with a number of fishery participants, ODFW reopened bottomfish fishing only outside of 40 fathoms and with the use of long-leader gear required beginning on October 1<sup>1</sup>.

Longleader gear targets midwater stocks such as yellowtail and widow rockfish, while avoiding more benthic species such as yelloweye rockfish. Retention of lingcod was not allowed, to eliminate any incentive to target lingcod and thereby reduce the chance of encountering co-occurring yelloweye rockfish; and retention of black rockfish, minor nearshore rockfish, and

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2017/09\\_sep/092617.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2017/09_sep/092617.asp)

cabezon was prohibited in order to minimize any further impacts to these stocks. The bag limit was raised to ten fish (the maximum possible under federal rule), which provides some additional opportunity for these trips which require travel farther from shore.

Impacts from the offshore longleader fishery for the remainder of the year are likely to be low, based on the normal seasonal decline in effort plus the heightened influence of weather and ocean conditions on offshore trips. Projected total full-year recreational impacts, based on preliminary data through October 31, are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Projected year-end recreational impacts and harvest guidelines for 2017.**

<b>Species/Complex</b>	<b>Impacts (mt)</b>	<b>OR Rec. HG (mt)</b>
Black RF	422.158	400.1
Canary RF	27.7	75
Cabezon	22.5	16.8
Nearshore RF	41.3	33.1
Yelloweye RF	3.7	3.0 <sup>2</sup>

### **2018 Recreational Bottomfish Fishery**

ODFW is developing state management measures for 2018 for consideration by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) on December 8, 2017. Information on the 2017 season is informing the development of alternatives, and ODFW staff will be proposing more conservative daily bag limits for the traditional bottomfish fishery to reduce the risk of exceeding harvest guidelines. In addition, ODFW intends to recommend a separate, higher bag limit (up to 10 fish, limited to midwater species) for offshore midwater (longleader) trips. This opportunity, if allowed under federal rule for the April through September period, could shift some effort offshore and reduce impacts on nearshore stocks.

In addition, ODFW will increase the frequency at which we review preliminary ORBS data on effort and catch and evaluate any potential need for inseason action, as well as the frequency with which we update and consult with advisors from the recreational fishing community. In order to provide the public with more timely information on quota attainment, preliminary catch estimates will be posted on our sport groundfish webpage approximately one week after the end of each month. This eliminates the one-month lag that was part of this timeline until now. The lag allowed for final processing of ORBS data in preparation for transmittal to the RecFIN data system, which occasionally results in minor adjustments to the preliminary ORBS estimates. The posted ORBS estimates would be revised accordingly if this occurred.

### **Information on Longleader Gear Fishing**

Anglers have participated in the longleader fishing opportunity since October 1<sup>st</sup> as weather and ocean conditions allowed. Preliminary estimates for October 1-31 are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Of note, yellowtail and widow rockfish together have comprised 84 percent of the landed catch, and canary rockfish has made up an additional 12.4 percent. Estimated discard mortality of yelloweye rockfish has been three fish (0.005 percent; Table 3). There have been zero impacts to coho or Chinook salmon (Table 3). Based on this data, there are 2,022 widow, yellowtail, and/or

---

<sup>2</sup> At the September, 2017 meeting, the Council approved the Oregon recreational fisheries impacting up to 3.8 mt of yelloweye rockfish

canary rockfish landed for every yelloweye rockfish mortality. Another way to look at it, there were 404 angler trips per yelloweye rockfish impact, compared to 58 angler trips per yelloweye rockfish impact from bottomfish trips in January through September of 2017.

**Table 2. Estimated number of charter and private angler longleader trips by port in October 2017.**

<b>Port</b>	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Total</b>
Garibaldi	213	6	219
Depoe Bay	286	0	286
Newport	473	12	485
Coos Bay	106	80	186
Brookings	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,178</b>

**Table 3. Estimated mortality by species (numbers of fish) from longleader trips during October 2017.**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Landed</b>	<b>Release Mortality</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total Impacts</b>
Yellowtail RF	4,257	0	4,257	65.86%
Widow RF	1,011	36	1,047	16.20%
Canary RF	799	0	799	12.36%
Redstripe RF	103	0	103	1.59%
Black RF	38	7	45	0.70%
Brown RF	28	0	28	0.43%
Silvergray RF	25	0	25	0.39%
Greenstriped RF	17	0	17	0.26%
Sablefish	5	0	5	0.08%
Bocaccio	4	0	4	0.06%
Jack Mackerel	3	0	3	0.05%
Deacon RF	3	8	11	0.17%
Blue RF	1	116	117	1.81%
coho salmon	0	0	0	0.00%
Chinook salmon	0	0	0	0.00%
Yelloweye RF	0	3	3	0.05%
	<b>6,294</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>6,464</b>	