

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON 2019-2020 BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) previously submitted [Agenda Item F.6.a, GMT Report 1, November 2017](#) for the advanced briefing book, which recommended no additional alternatives for analysis for the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications. However, after further discussions, the GMT offers the following recommendations to be considered by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council).

Yelloweye Rockfish

The current default harvest control rate (HCR) for yelloweye rockfish, under the rebuilding plan, is based on a spawning potential ratio (SPR) of 76 percent. While the GMT originally only proposed this HCR for 2019-2020 and beyond, we now realize there may be merit in adopting a range of alternatives for analysis.

When establishing a rebuilding plan, the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) specifies that the Council should

(A) specify a time period for rebuilding the fishery that shall— (i) be as short as possible, taking into account the status and biology of any overfished stocks of fish, the needs of fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the United States participates, and the interaction of the overfished stock of fish within the marine ecosystem ([16 U.S.C. 1854 MSA § 304 109-479 \(4\) \(A\).](#))

Under the current HCR, the rebuilding plan shows that the stock has a 100 percent chance of rebuilding by 2027, assuming full annual catch limit (ACL) removals (recent years' removals have been closer to 65 percent of the ACL). The corresponding ACLs for 2019 and 2020 under this HCR with an SPR of 76 percent are 29.1 mt and 30.1 mt, respectively.

While these ACLs are approximately 1.5 fold higher than the 2017 ACL of 20 mt, the resulting allocations (to be determined under Agenda Item F.9.) will still limit access to target species for all sectors, or individuals (e.g., individual fishing quota permit holders). However, under an SPR of 60 percent, the ACLs would almost double (57.5 and 59.0 mt in 2019 and 2020, respectively), and analysis still estimates a median time to rebuild by 2031 and a 100 percent chance of doing so by 2034. This additional seven years of rebuilding time could provide additional opportunity to fishing communities in the near future, while simultaneously continuing to rebuild the stock. Further, even assuming that the fishery impacts are equal to the entire ACL at the higher harvest rate, the likelihood of achieving the revised T_{max} of 2070 is still 100 percent.

Therefore, the GMT recommends the Council adopt an alternative HCR for 2019-2020 based on an SPR of 60 percent for overwinter analysis. Under Agenda Item F.9, the GMT may propose management measures for yelloweye rockfish, such as implementing a buffer in the off-the-top deductions.

Based on new guidance from NMFS and the benefit of waiting until the impact analysis is complete, the GMT recommends adopting the current T_{target} of 2074 as the PPA. After examining the range of alternatives above over the winter and understanding the needs of fishing communities, the GMT will provide additional thoughts in April.

Pacific Ocean Perch

The 2017 Pacific ocean perch (POP) stock assessment was coastwide; therefore the SSC recommends coastwide OFLs for 2019-2020 ([Agenda Item F.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2017](#)). Currently, POP is managed with stock specific harvest specifications north of 40° 10' N. lat., and within the southern slope complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. with a 0 mt OFL contribution (as a result of not being previously assessed, as POP are uncommon south of Cape Mendocino).

If the ACL is also coastwide, there would be reallocation of POP and southern slope rockfish quota shares. Such reallocation under the existing formula could result in socioeconomic impacts. In CFR 660.140 (c)(3)(vii), the formula for reallocating individual fishing quota (IFQ) quota share (QS) when two areas are combined are described:

(2) Area recombination. When two areas are combined for an IFQ species, the QS or individual bycatch quota (IBQ) held by individuals in each area will be adjusted proportionally such that:

(i) The total QS or IBQ for the area sums to 100 percent, and

(ii) A person holding QS or IBQ in the newly created area will receive the same amount of total QP or IBQ pounds as they would if the areas had not been combined.

While the GMT understands the rationale for the SSC's recommendation (i.e., coastwide OFLs), the GMT is concerned about the unintended impacts that could occur by using the existing regulation reallocation formula. **The GMT recommends keeping the POP ACL divided at 40° 10' N. lat. as there are no biological concerns, potential economic impacts, and a significant workload associated with looking at the reallocation.** This would be similar to as what is done with sablefish (i.e., coastwide OFL and split ACLs).

Stock Complexes

The action under Agenda Item F.6 is to adopt the harvest specification values for each stock. In our previous report ([Agenda Item F.6., GMT Report 1, November 2017](#)), we had recommend that the Council consider alternative stock complex harvest specifications (e.g., the proposal to removal Oregon blue/deacon from the nearshore rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat complex and pair it with Oregon black rockfish). Based on further discussion, the Council can adopt the stock complex alternatives under Agenda Item F.9. that rely upon the values adopted under Agenda Item F.6. **The GMT recommends the Council adopt the ABCs and ACLs listed in [Agenda Item F.6.a, Supplemental REVISED Attachment 1, November 2017](#).**

Lingcod S of 40° 10' N. lat. P*

The GMT recommends that the Council select a P* of 0.45 for lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA. Based on recent attainments and ability to manage fisheries inseason, the GMT does not believe there is any additional management uncertainty or risk of overfishing to account for.

California Scorpionfish

The GMT recommends that the Council select a P* of 0.45 for California scorpionfish as PPA. Similar to lingcod, the GMT does not see any risk to overfishing with the new status of the stock.

GMT Recommendations

Below are the GMT recommendations. Where these recommendations have been modified from our original GMT report ([Agenda Item F.6.a, GMT Report 1](#)), we have noted that. Therefore, the GMT recommends:

1. (**Revised** from the [Agenda Item F.6.a, GMT Report 1](#)) the Council adopt an alternative HCR for 2019-2020 based on an SPR of 60 percent for overwinter analysis.
2. (**Revised** from the [Agenda Item F.6.a, GMT Report 1](#)) the Council adopt the current T_{target} of 2074 as the PPA.
3. keeping the POP ACL divided at 40° 10' N lat. as there are no biological concerns, potential economic impacts, and a significant workload associated with looking at the reallocation.
4. that the Council select a P* of 0.45 for lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA.
5. that the Council select a P* of 0.45 for California scorpionfish as PPA.

PFMC
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