

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2019-2020

As described in Agenda Item F.6.a., Supplemental WDFW Report, November 2017, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) would like to include an alternative to remove Washington cabezon and kelp greenling from the Other Fish Complex and manage them in a separate Washington cabezon/kelp greenling complex. This report provides more detail on this new complex alternative and a summary of proposed management measures for Washington recreational fisheries for 2019-2020 that would be analyzed over the winter.

Stock Complex Alternative

The proposed changes to the Other Fish Complex proposed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife stimulated WDFW's interest in analyzing the management of Washington kelp greenling and cabezon as a separate complex. The current composition of the Other Fish complex was a product of the Council's recommendation to designate some stocks of the former complex as Ecosystem Component species without much thought given to the practicality of managing the remaining stocks as a complex.

In Washington, kelp greenling and cabezon are retained in recreational groundfish fisheries. They are nearshore species that are generally not targeted and often co-occur. We view this proposal as better aligning with the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Section 4.7.3), which suggests stocks managed in a complex should be grouped with species that have similar geographic distribution and vulnerabilities in the fishery. Grouping these species in a separate complex that is caught by only one sector (i.e., the Washington recreational fishery) also reduces management complexity and makes it easier to implement inseason management actions, if needed. We think these are sufficient reasons to consider an alternative to manage Washington kelp greenling and cabezon as its own complex.

Since this measure was not considered in September, the Groundfish Management Team was not able to discuss the potential analysis and workload that would be required at their October meeting; however, we do not believe that this would be a significant addition to the workload associated with the other stock complex alternatives forwarded in September as removing these stocks from the Other Fish Complex would have little effect on the annual catch limit for the remaining species, which would likely be sufficient to accommodate recent harvest levels.

Routine Management Measures

WDFW will analyze routine changes to management measures for recreational fisheries such as seasons dates, bag limits, and depth restrictions. In response to changes implemented for 2017 and 2018, WDFW will review the most recent catch and effort data along with updated annual catch limits and state specific harvest guidelines to develop a range of management measures that result in catch that meets but does not exceed allowable harvest amounts for 2019 and 2020. This may include analysis of allowing retention of canary rockfish in the north coast subarea or revising the sub-bag limit. Even with new information on the status of yelloweye rockfish, Washington recreational fisheries will still be primarily constrained by this species. However, we may consider changes to depth restrictions in place to reduce encounters with yelloweye rockfish. WDFW will

meet with recreational groundfish representatives and anglers over the winter to discuss specific management measures that achieve these goals.