

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FINAL INSEASON
MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING SHOREBASED CARRYOVER AND EXEMPTED FISHING
PERMITS (EFP)

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) members Lynn Mattes, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW); Heather Reed and Jessi Doerpinghaus, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); Caroline McKnight, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); and Karen Palmigiano, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region, to discuss progress of this year's fishery and possible inseason adjustments. The GAP offers the following recommendations and comments on proposed inseason adjustments to ongoing groundfish fisheries.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Recreational Canary Rockfish Bag Limits

In 2017, California recreational fishing representatives requested the CDFW consider increasing the 2018 canary rockfish sub-bag limit from one to two fish. Fishermen reported they were having to release canary rockfish in excess of the one-fish bag limit in 2017. Estimates of canary rockfish mortality (77.4 mt) tracked well below the California recreational harvest guidelines (135 mt) in 2017 ([CDFW Report 1](#)). Therefore, the GAP agrees with the CDFW report and is fully in support of increasing the California canary rockfish sub-bag limit to two fish within the overall 10-fish bag limit for rockfish, cabezon and greenling. This change would allow fishermen to get off the water sooner and decrease impacts to other species of concern. It is imperative this is implemented by April 1, to align with the sport season opening north of Point Conception, California.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Canary Rockfish Bag Limits and Flatfish Retention

Washington recreational fishing representatives have requested the canary rockfish sub-limit be raised from the current one to two fish per angler for 2018. WDFW estimates of canary rockfish mortality for 2017 were extremely low with an estimated 4.8 mt taken out of the Washington recreational HG of 50 mt ([WDFW Report 1](#)). The GAP supports increasing the Washington canary rockfish sub-limit from one to two fish per angler and allow canary retention in all marine areas as soon as is possible.

Washington recreational fishing representatives have also requested allowing retention of three flatfish per angler per day in addition to the (status quo) aggregate groundfish limit of nine fish. This is simply correct oversight that occurred upon the bag limit rockfish reduction that went from 12 fish to nine fish. WDFW did not intend to consider excluding flatfish from this aggregated groundfish limit reduction. The GAP supports allowing retention of three flatfish per angler per day in addition to the aggregate groundfish limit of nine, to be implemented as soon as is possible.

Carryover

The GMT provided a detailed report on the sablefish fisheries and individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery performance in 2017 along with projections for 2018. The GMT reported the sablefish annual catch limit (ACL) was exceeded in 2017 due in part to unprecedented bycatch of small sablefish within the at-sea and shoreside whiting fleets, likely indicating a significant recruitment event. In the daily trip limit sablefish fishery, December landings were higher than expected and GAP members noted this was likely due to the delay of Dungeness crab season in several areas until January 2018 or later. Similarly, many petrale fishermen in the IFQ fishery, recognizing the crab season delay until the following year, continued to fish through December as well. This contributed to the IFQ sector exceeding the trawl allocation (but not the ACL) for petrale.

The GAP understands the amount of carryover of some species for the trawl fishery will be less than last year, but still recommends the full issuance of carryover quota for all eligible species for 2018.

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

2018 Trawl Gear EFP

The GAP had a robust discussion of the 2018 trawl gear EFP and the recent lightning strike tow of juvenile salmon.

The GAP understands the lightning strike was made using bottom trawl gear, seaward of the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA), using legal trawl gear. The vessel declared into the EFP because it carried multiple gears on board – a bottom trawl and a midwater trawl – as the captain planned to make a midwater tow on the return to port. Because the captain declared into the EFP, the EFP applicants voluntarily closed the EFP south of 42° N. latitude until the industry, Council and NMFS had a chance to discuss it at this meeting. Even though sampling was conducted consistent with catch monitoring protocols, the GAP was disappointed to hear only a fraction of the salmon caught were sampled. The GAP suggests it would be helpful to sample all the salmon, providing more data to both salmon and groundfish fisheries in the future.

GAP members recognize this tow is likely an anomaly. It is not the largest tow recorded and would not have garnered much attention had the vessel not declared into the EFP. Therefore, the GAP requests the EFP remain open. The EFP has built-in move-along rules, which the industry has heeded. The EFP applicants have demonstrated immediate and precautionary action in light of this one event. There is no reason to believe they would respond differently to another lightning strike.

Regarding extending the southern boundary of the bottom trawl portion of the EFP shoreward of the RCA between 42° N. latitude and 40° 10' N. latitude, the GAP referenced [H.8, Attachment 1](#), and agrees this extension would be beneficial. Again, the EFP has sufficient bycatch constraints and move-along rules to maintain a successful groundfish fishery without risk to the salmon fishery. GAP members involved in the EFP noted it is unlikely more than a handful of boats would participate. The extension would also create synchronicity with the rest of the EFP and more closely reflect the intent of the trawl gear package that is intended to be put into regulation.

Finally, the GAP supports re-opening the EFP for further enrollment. Some companies or fishermen were unable to make plans prior to the enrollment closure date. Conditions have now changed. The Environmental Assessment for the EFP is capped at 60 vessels; only 42 applicants are currently enrolled. The GAP sees no reason not to allow other companies and fishermen to participate.

Other EFPs

The GAP also briefly discussed the Emley/Platt EFP and The Nature Conservancy EFP and supports the prompt issuance of these permits for the 2019 fishery.

PFMC
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