

**GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FINAL INSEASON MANAGEMENT,
 INCLUDING SHOREBASED CARRYOVER AND EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS**

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the final 2017 groundfish fisheries and the 2018 fisheries to date and offer the following comments.

2017 Groundfish Fisheries

Sablefish

In November 2017, the GMT assessed the risk to the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. due to projected high attainment in the daily trip limit (DTL) fisheries and the exceedance of the at-sea sector set aside by over 100 mt ([Agenda Item F.13.a, REVISED Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2017](#)). At that time, based on recent historical trends and projections, the GMT did not foresee a risk to the 2017 ACL.

Table 1 shows the allocation and total estimated mortality to date by sector for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. Based on these estimates, the 2017 ACL was exceeded. However, the acceptable biological catch (ABC) and overfishing limit (OFL), which are specified coastwide, were not exceeded.

Table 1: Estimated Mortality and Attainment of Sablefish North of 36° N. lat. in 2017 (LE=limited entry; OA=open access; DTL = daily trip limit)

Sector	Allocation (mt)	Mortality (mt)	Attainment
Tribal	525	499.2	95%
Rec	6.1	2.51	41%
Research	26	26	100%
At-Sea	50	153.17	306%
IFQ	2,416.4	2,528.77	105%
Primary	1,518	1,459.6	96%
LE DTL	268	289.9	108%
OA DTL	441	429.2	97%
ACL	5,252	5393.1	103%
ABC a/	7,350	5854.2	79.6%
OFL a/	8,050	5854.2	72.7%

a/ The ABC and OFL are set at the coastwide level, so mortality includes estimates from south of 36° N. lat.

It is the GMT’s belief that multiple factors led to the ACL being exceeded in 2017. One primary cause was the unprecedented bycatch of small sablefish within the at-sea and shoreside whiting fleets. The fleets combined caught 33.7 mt in 2017, which is 7.5x more sablefish than was caught in 2016. Based on reports from industry, port samplers, and members of the trawl survey, these sablefish were small in size and were likely ages 1-2. This may be a result of a large recruitment event propagating through the fishery. Note that sablefish recruitment events are considerably

volatile from year to year, and few high recruitment events have occurred in the past twenty years. If the high bycatch event was truly related to an atypically high recruitment class, then it is unlikely to be repeated in the near future. Additionally, the delay to the 2017/2018 Dungeness crab fishery due to low meat recovery led many fishermen to be more active in fishing sablefish in Period 6 than in more typical years (56 vessels in 2017 compared to 31 in 2016). If these anomalous conditions occur in the future, the potential for higher attainments of the sablefish ACL should be considered in management decisions.

Other factors that may have led to the overage were an error that underestimated catch in the DTL model (corrected after the September 2017 Pacific Fishery Management Council [Council] meeting) and the issuance of surplus carryover in 2017. When assessing if carryover should be issued, the GMT analyzes recent trends and projections to determine the risk to the ACL. In March 2017, the Council recommended to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that surplus carryover be issued with a projected attainment for the individual fishing quota (IFQ) sector of 98.4 percent and an overall ACL projected attainment of 94 percent ([Agenda Item I.3.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, March 2017](#)).

As a reminder, the revised National Standard 1 Guidelines (NS1) state that, “if an ACL was exceeded, AMs [Accountability Measures] must be triggered and implemented as soon as possible to correct the operational issue that caused the ACL overage, as well as any biological consequences to the stock or stock complex resulting from the overage when it is known.” The only AMs available to the Council in this situation are DTL limits (which are currently lower than those in place at the end of last year) and assessing whether to issue carryover to the IFQ sector (discussed in Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2). However, the high bycatch of small sablefish in the whiting sectors was unforeseen, and likely a result of a recruitment event. Therefore, this year, we will likely see lower levels of bycatch that are more similar to 2013-2016.

NS1 also addresses performance standards, in that, “if catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock or stock complex more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and AMs should be reevaluated, and modified if necessary, to improve its performance and effectiveness.” If issues were to arise in the next four year period, the Council could assess changes within the biennial specifications cycle for 2021-2022.

Petrale Sole

The IFQ Sector Balance website, as of March 5, 2018, shows that the petrale sole 2017 IFQ allocation was exceeded by 14,511 lbs, or ~6.6 mt. With the at-sea sector catching none of its 5 mt set-aside, the total trawl allocation was exceeded by ~1.6 mt. Overall, the 2017 ACL attainment is estimated to be 94.9 percent.

Oregon Cabezon

The GMT was notified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) that the ACL and OFL for cabezon in Oregon were exceeded ([Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental ODFW Report 1](#)). The recreational fishery saw much greater than anticipated effort and landings of cabezon in August. Although the fishery was closed in mid-September, the recreational fishery exceeded its state-specified harvest guideline (HG), as total mortality equaled 22.3 mt (133 percent of the HG). The Oregon commercial nearshore fishery has its own state-specified HG (the commercial and recreational HGs equal the ACL). Cabezon was tracking close to the HG throughout the year.

December brought about relatively serene weather and record December landings of cabezon. Similar to sablefish, this higher than usual level of effort likely relates to increased participation due to the delayed Dungeness crab fishery. Total commercial landings were 29.8 mt, which is 99 percent of the HG. Total impacts for combined recreational and commercial fisheries was 52.1 mt, which is 5.1 mt, or 11 percent, over the ACL and 3.1 mt, or 6 percent, over the OFL.

The ODFW report indicates that there is little conservation concern associated with the overage, since the overall mortality throughout the 2009-2017 projection period has been 94.9 mt less than assumed, and the actual removals have been closer to the low catch sensitivity which was projected to result in a 54 percent depletion by the end of 2017. While true, as stated above, “if catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock or stock complex more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and AMs should be reevaluated, and modified if necessary, to improve its performance and effectiveness.” The ODFW report states that Oregon has already adjusted management measures and inseason monitoring beginning in 2018, to help mitigate against exceeding the ACL/OFL.

Oregon Black Rockfish

The high recreational effort also impacted black rockfish. The recreational fishery exceeded the state-specified HG by 17.2 mt ([Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental ODFW Report 1](#)). Effort and landings in August were higher than expected. Once ODFW announced the September 18 closure of the recreational groundfish fishery, effort and landings spiked further. The commercial nearshore fishery impacts were 125.8 mt, under the state-specified HG of 126.3 mt by 0.5 mt. The combined impacts from Oregon fisheries totaled 543 mt, which is over the ACL of 526.4 mt, but under the OFL of 577 mt.

As with cabezon, management measures to reduce black rockfish impacts in the recreational fishery have been implemented by the state of Oregon and can be further adjusted if necessary based on inseason monitoring.

Yelloweye - California Recreational Fishery

In response to higher than anticipated catch of yelloweye, the Council took action in September 2017 to constrain fishing depths north of Point Conception to the depths used in 2016. The inseason regulation change became effective in state waters on October 16, 2017. After this action, the reported yelloweye rockfish encounters declined and the preliminary estimated catch for the statewide recreational fishery for 2017 is 4.45 mt. The overall risk to the ACL was minimal and, when combined with catch by all sectors, resulted in 98.5 percent attainment ACL. The GMT would note that the percent ACL attainment is preliminary and likely high as the final research catch has not been updated for 2017.

2017 Overfished Species Scorecard

Attachment 1 shows the final 2017 overfished species scorecard. Updates include final IFQ and at-sea landings and recreational updates for Washington, Oregon, and California. Note that the inseason transfer of quota from the buffer for darkblotched rockfish and Pacific Ocean perch (POP) and from incidental open access sectors for POP to the at-sea fisheries is reflected in allocations.

2018 Groundfish Fisheries

Action Items

Recreational Fisheries

The GMT reviewed information in agency reports from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (Agenda Item H.8.a., [WDFW Report 1](#) and [CDFW Report 1](#), March 2018), which included recommended changes to recreational fisheries for 2018 based on a review of the fisheries in 2017.

Washington Recreational

WDFW is proposing to increase the canary rockfish sub-limit from one to two fish and allow retention in all marine areas. The canary rockfish bag limit analysis was updated using final 2017 data, which shows canary rockfish catch totaling 4.8 out of the 50 mt Washington recreational HG for 2017 and 2018. The WDFW report states that projected impacts under a one or two fish sub-limit in marine areas are 5.67 and 6.22 mt, respectively. Given that projected impacts are well below the Washington HG, **the GMT recommends increasing the sub-limit to two fish in all marine areas.**

In addition, WDFW is proposing to include a flatfish limit of three per day that would not be subject to the aggregate daily limit of nine. This proposal would provide some additional fishing opportunity to recreational anglers with no detrimental impact to rockfish populations and would not result in an increase in the daily aggregate limit above 12 fish per day, which was analyzed for 2017 and 2018. **The GMT recommends adding a flatfish limit of three per day that would not be subject to the daily aggregate bag limit.**

California Recreational

CDFW is proposing an increase to the statewide recreational sub-bag limit for canary rockfish from one to two fish. The proposal includes projected impacts under a one or two sub-bag limit at 77.4 and 110.4 mt, respectively. Given that the projected impacts are below the California HG, and that canary rockfish is routinely monitored inseason by CDFW, **the GMT recommends increasing the canary rockfish sub-bag limit from one to two.**

Lingcod Limits in the Salmon Troll Fishery

The GMT received several requests from members of the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) for information on the process to increase the lingcod landing limit/ratio in the salmon troll fishery. The current limit is 1 lingcod per 15 Chinook, plus 1 lingcod per trip up to 10 lingcod total. The GMT is uncertain at this time which regulatory pathway is the most appropriate for this request: inseason or biennial harvest specifications and management measures. If the Council chooses, the GMT could work with NMFS and Council staff to determine the appropriate pathway and provide information this information in April.

Informational Items

On February 2, 2018, NMFS published an inseason notice in the federal register (83 FR 4850), implementing the Council-recommended adjustments from its November 2017 meeting. As a

reminder, all commercial trip limits from 2017 were in place for the start of Period 1. If the cumulative trip limits increased from 2017 to 2018, the increase was effective as of February 2 (i.e. within the same period); if decreased, then the 2018 trip limits were effective as of March 1 (i.e. the following period, Period 2).

Sablefish DTL Fishery

Table 2 below shows the trip limits by the DTL sector in place for 2018, reflecting the inseason adjustments beginning in Period 3.

Table 2: 2018 Sablefish Trip Limits for the DTL sectors (LEN=Limited entry fixed gear north of 36° N. lat.; OAN=Open access north of 36° N. lat.; LES=Limited entry south of 36° N. lat.; OAN=Open access south of 36° N. lat.)

Sector	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sept-Oct	Nov-Dec
LEN	1,125 lbs/wk, not to exceed 3,375 lbs/ 2 mo	1,100 lbs/wk, not to exceed 3,300 lbs/2 mo				
OAN	300 lbs/day, or 1 landing per week of up to 1,000 lbs, not to exceed 2,000 lbs/ 2 mo					
LES	2,000 lbs/wk					
OAS	300 lbs/day, or 1 landing per week of up to 1,600 lbs, not to exceed 3,200 lbs/ 2 mo					

Based on these trip limits, Table 3 shows the projected attainment by DTL sector. Projected attainments are based on updated price and inflation information for the limited entry sectors in the DTL model, as well as catch data for all four sectors through February 28, 2018.

Table 3: Projected attainment for the DTL sectors (LEN=Limited entry fixed gear north of 36° N. lat.; OAN=Open access north of 36° N. lat.; LES=Limited entry south of 36° N. lat.; OAN=Open access south of 36° N. lat.)

Sector	Projected Landings (rd. wt. mt)	Landing Target (mt)	Attainment (%)
LEN	200.7-252.8	269	74.6-94
OAN	393.7	444	88.7
LES	275.2-376.3	759	37.8-51.7
OAS	52.9	325	17

2018 Overfished Species Scorecard

Attachment 2 shows the overfished scorecard for 2018 with updates to projection models for all sectors reflecting 2018 management measures.

Update on Exempted Fishing Permits

The GMT reviewed the supplemental NMFS report on the exempted fishing permits (EFPs). At this time, we do not have any additional comments on that update. However, the GMT offers the following comments on the recent lightning strike tow in the 2018 Trawl Gear EFP.

The GMT received a presentation from Ms. Karen Palmigiano, NMFS staff, which provided information on the tow, compared this tow to historical bycatch in the bottom trawl fishery, and assessed how the impacts of this tow fit within both the environmental assessment for the Trawl Gear EFP and the recent Biological Opinion for salmon. The GMT provides the following thoughts on the three decisions points from that presentation.

1. Should NMFS close the EFP south of 42° N. lat. to all vessels due to the recent tow that included 173 Chinook salmon?

Based on the circumstances of the tow, the GMT recommends that the Council and NMFS do not close the EFP south of 42° N. lat. The haul that caught 173 salmon was a rare catch event (the second highest in over 50,000 IFQ bottom trawl hauls since 2011) and was using a gear in an area that is open outside of the EFP. The data from this trip would not help to inform the EFP in evaluating the opening of areas to year-round midwater fishing and removal of trawl gear regulations.

Additionally, the GMT understands that, per the monitoring protocols, a portion of the salmon were sampled when landed at the dock. Catch monitor protocols in place allow sub-sampling of salmon when there are more than 40 landed at one time. Due to the lack of stock composition data available in northern California, the GMT supports exploring alternative methods of collecting additional stock composition data.

2. Should NMFS extend the southern boundary of the selective flatfish trawl exemption area of the EFP that is shoreward of the Rockfish Conservation Area from 42° N. lat. to 40° 10' N. lat.?

The GMT could not come to a conclusion on whether to extend the EFP from 42° N. lat. to 40° 10' N. lat., shoreward. While the GMT wants to provide additional fishing opportunity for groundfish vessels in this area, we understand that current salmon forecasts are poor. The Council will need to weigh the benefits and risks of extending the EFP boundary.

3. Should NMFS reopen enrollment for the 2018 trawl gear EFP for additional vessels to join?

The GMT believes that reopening enrollment for the EFP north of 42° N. lat. would provide the opportunity to gather more data on the year-round midwater fishery and trawl gear regulations. The GMT recommends that reopening enrollment be limited to north of 42° N. lat., since the Environmental Assessment limits participation in the EFP in the area south of 42° N. lat. to ten vessels and nine vessels have already signed up.

Recommendations:

- **For the Washington recreational fishery, the GMT recommends increasing the sub-limit to two canary rockfish and allow retention in all marine areas.**
- **For the Washington recreational fishery, the GMT recommends adding a flatfish limit of three per day that would not be subject to the daily aggregate bag limit of nine.**
- **For the California recreational fishery, the GMT recommends increasing the canary rockfish sub-bag limit from one to two.**

Attachment 1. Allocations^a and final mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species for 2017.

Date: 3/12/2018	Bocaccio b/		Cowcod b/		Dkbl		POP		Yelloweye	
	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts
Off the Top Deductions	15.4	15.4	2.0	2.0	27.3	27.6	17.4	14.7	5.4	5.8
Additional Buffer					0.0		0.0			
EFPc/	10.0	10.0	0.015	0.015	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.030	0.020
Research d/	4.6	4.6	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	5.2	5.2	3.3	3.1
Incidental OA e/	0.8	0.8	0.03	0.03	24.5	24.5	3.0	0.3	0.4	0.4
Tribal f/					0.2	0.5	9.2	9.2	2.3	2.3
Bottom Trawl					0.2	0.2	2.0	2.0		0.0
Troll					0.0					0.0
Fixed gear					0.0				2.3	2.3
mid-water					0.0					0.0
whiting						0.3	7.2	7.2		
Trawl Allocations	302.4	91.7	1.4	0.4	585.6	221.4	252.0	120.0	1.1	0.2
-SB Trawl	302.4	91.7	1.4	0.4	507.6	181.8	198.3	93.8	1.1	0.2
-At-Sea Trawl					78.0	39.6	53.7	26.2	0.0	0.0
a) At-sea whiting MS					36.6	7.6	25.0	5.9		
b) At-sea whiting CP					41.4	32.0	28.7	20.3		
Non-Trawl Allocation	472.2	142.8	2.6	0.8	28.2	7.5	11.6	0.5	13.1	13.7
Non-Nearshore	144.3	16.6		0.0		7.3		0.5	0.8	0.8
LE FG		6.2								
OA FG		10.4								
Directed OA: Nearshore	1.8	0.6		0.0		0.2		0.0	2.1	1.6
Recreational Groundfish										
WA						--		--	3.3	3.2
OR						--		--	3.0	3.7
CA	326.1	125.6		0.8		--		--	3.9	4.5
TOTAL	790.0	249.9	6.0	3.2	641.1	256.5	281.0	135.2	19.6	19.7
2018 Harvest Specification	790	790	10.0	10.0	641	641	281	281	20	20
Difference	0.0	540.1	4.0	6.8	-0.1	384.5	0.0	145.8	0.4	0.3
Percent of ACL	100.0%	31.6%	60.2%	32.1%	100.0%	40.0%	100.0%	48.1%	100.0%	98.5%
Key			= not applicable							
		--	= trace, less than 0.1 mt							
			= Fixed Values							
			= off the top deductions							

a/ Formal allocations are represented in the black shaded cells and are specified in regulation in Tables 2b and 2e. The other values in the allocation columns are 1) off the top deductions, 2) set asides from the trawl allocation (at-sea petrale only) 3) ad-hoc allocations recommended in the 2013-14 EIS process, 4) HG for the recreational fisheries for canary and YE.

b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.

c/ EFPs are amounts set aside to accommodate anticipated applications. Values in this table represent the estimates from the 17-18 biennial cycle, which are currently specified in regulation.

d/ Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.

e/ The GMT's best estimate of impacts as analyzed in the 2017-2018 Environmental Impact Statement (Appendix B), which are currently specified in regulation.

f/ Tribal values in the allocation column represent the values in regulation. Projected impacts are the tribes best estimate of catch.

Attachment 2. Allocations^a and projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species for 2018.

Date : 3/12/2018	Bocaccio b/		Cowcod b/		Dkbl		POP		Yelloweye	
	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts	Allocation a/	Projected Impacts
Off the Top Deductions	15.4	15.4	2.0	2.0	77.3	27.3	49.4	14.7	6.0	5.8
Additional Buffer					50.0		25.0			
EFPc/	10.0	10.0	0.015	0.015	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.030	0.020
Research d/	4.6	4.6	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	5.2	5.2	3.3	3.1
Incidental OA e/	0.8	0.8	0.03	0.03	24.5	24.5	10.0	0.3	0.4	0.4
Tribal f/					0.2	0.2	9.2	9.2	2.3	2.3
Bottom Trawl					0.2	0.0	2.0	2.0		0.0
Troll					0.0					0.0
Fixed gear					0.0				2.3	2.3
mid-water					0.0					0.0
whiting						0.2	7.2	7.2		
Trawl Allocations	283.3	92.7	1.4	0.2	546.9	150.3	220.0	53.0	1.1	0.1
-SB Trawl	283.3	92.7	1.4	0.2	518.4	136.9	198.3	43.0	1.1	0.1
-At-Sea Trawl					28.5	13.4	21.7	10.0	0.0	0.0
a) At-sea whiting MS					11.8	6.3	9.0	3.5		
b) At-sea whiting CP					16.7	7.1	12.7	6.5		
Non-Trawl Allocation	442.3	202.1	2.6	2.2	28.8	6.2	11.6	0.4	12.9	12.2
Non-Nearshore	135.1	16.6		0.0		6.0		0.4	0.7	0.8
LE FG		6.2				5.1		0.3		
OA FG		10.4				1.0		0.1		
Directed OA: Nearshore	1.7	0.6		0.0		0.2		0.0	2.0	1.4
Recreational Groundfish										
WA						--		--	3.3	3.1
OR						--		--	3.0	3.0
CA	305.5	184.9		2.2		--		--	3.9	3.9
TOTAL	741.0	310.2	6.0	4.4	653.0	183.8	281.0	68.1	20.0	18.1
2018 Harvest Specification	741	741	10.0	10.0	653	653	281	281	20	20
Difference	0.0	430.8	4.0	5.6	0.0	469.2	0.0	212.9	0.0	1.9
Percent of ACL	100.0%	41.9%	60.2%	44.2%	100.0%	28.2%	100.0%	24.2%	100.0%	90.6%
Key			= not applicable							
		--	= trace, less than 0.1 mt							
			= Fixed Values							
			= off the top deductions							

a/ Formal allocations are represented in the black shaded cells and are specified in regulation in Tables 2b and 2e. The other values in the allocation columns are 1) off the top deductions, 2) set asides from the trawl allocation (at-sea petrale only) 3) ad-hoc allocations recommended in the 2013-14 EIS process, 4) HG for the recreational fisheries for canary and YE.

b/ South of 40°10' N. lat.

c/ EFPs are amounts set aside to accommodate anticipated applications. Values in this table represent the estimates from the 17-18 biennial cycle, which are currently specified in regulation.

d/ Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.

e/ The GMT's best estimate of impacts as analyzed in the 2017-2018 Environmental Impact Statement (Appendix B), which are currently specified in regulation.

f/ Tribal values in the allocation column represent the the values in regulation. Projected impacts are the tribes best estimate of catch.