

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON  
2019-2020 MANAGEMENT MEASURES PRELIMINARY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:  
ALLOCATIONS AND HARVEST GUIDELINES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has reviewed the documents under this agenda item and received an overview from Mr. John DeVore of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff. We have organized and numbered our comments in the order that is presented in the Action Item Checklist ([Agenda Item F.5, Supplemental Attachment 3](#)). This report covers items 1 through 8 dealing with 2019-2020 allocations and harvest guidelines.

## 1. Updates to Selected Rockfish Conservation Area Coordinates in California

The GMT reviewed the proposal to modify the latitude and longitude coordinates that define various rockfish conservation area (RCA) boundaries in California to better align regulatory fathom lines with their corresponding fathom isobaths. These modifications were previously discussed by the Council ([Agenda Item F.7, April 2017](#)) and were recommended to be completed during the 2019-2020 specification process. Affected stocks would be those included in the nearshore, shelf, and slope rockfish complexes, as well as some other bottom fish (flatfish). The proposed modifications would eliminate crossovers and provide better access to target species while maintaining protection to overfished/rebuilding species.

**The GMT recommends modifying the RCA coordinates as proposed in Section C.2.1 in Appendix C ([Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2, April 2018](#)).**

## 2. Off-the-Top Deductions

The GMT reviewed the off-the-top deductions from the annual catch limits (ACLs) for tribal, non-groundfish fisheries, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), and scientific research presented in [Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 3](#). Off-the-top deductions are not updated; however, **the GMT recommends that the Council specify any desired changes now, as they could affect two-year allocations to the fisheries for anything other than EFPs.** The Council will be taking final action on EFP approval in June, at which time the associated set-asides will be determined.

## 3. Annual Catch Targets

In November 2017, the Council proposed a 6 mt annual catch target (ACT) for cowcod, which was below the 8 mt fishery harvest guideline (HG). Although recent mortality has been a small fraction of the annual catch target (ACT), **the GMT recommends a cowcod ACT of 6 mt as PPA.** The GMT believes this would provide a hedge against uncertainty, especially given the proposed changes to management areas that could reduce protections afforded by the Cowcod Conservation Areas.

## 4. Harvest Guidelines

### **Blackgill rockfish S of 40° 10' N. lat.**

The GMT recommends a 159 mt fishery HG for blackgill rockfish within the slope rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. for 2019-2020, until Amendment 26 rulemaking is completed.

### **Blue/deacon rockfish S of 42° N. lat.**

Blue and deacon rockfishes south of 42° N. lat. have been managed with an HG within the deeper southern nearshore complex since 2009 to prevent overfishing while the stock status was in the precautionary zone. The 2017 stock assessment projects that the stock will be above the 40 percent depletion management target by 2019 ([Agenda Item E.8., Attachment 9, September 2017](#)). **Therefore, the GMT does not recommend the use of an HG for blue/deacon rockfish south of 42° N. lat. within the southern Nearshore Rockfish complex.**

## 5. Trawl, Non-Trawl Allocations

### **Cowcod**

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo 40 percent trawl and 60 percent non-trawl allocations for cowcod as PPA. Recent catches in both sectors have been well below these allocations.

### **Yelloweye Rockfish**

Based on direction from the Council at its November 2017 meeting, the integrated analysis used the status quo (SQ) trawl and non-trawl allocations based on applying the 2017 percentages to each fishery (allocations, HGs, and shares) to establish the fishery HG for each ACL alternative (Table 1). Under Agenda Item F.2, the Council selected Alternative 1 as their PPA for yelloweye rockfish ACLs (39 mt and 40 mt in 2019 and 2020, respectively), which is based on a spawning potential ratio of 70 percent.

Within the range of ACL alternatives, the Council could consider revising the trawl/non-trawl allocation proportions to address assessment and fishery uncertainty and volatility (i.e., off-the-top buffer to be used to cover sector overages inseason, or allocation of the full fishery HG to sectors) while addressing the needs of fishing communities through the routine and new management measures.

The GMT had extensive discussions on alternative trawl/non-trawl allocations (and resulting within-non-trawl allocations), including needs of the respective sectors, proposed management measure liberalizations, and the methods to buffer for uncertainty for these liberalizations. Ultimately, the GMT could not come up with an alternative trawl/non-trawl allocation as there are benefits with each ACL alternative resulting in higher allocations for all sectors. **Therefore, for all alternatives, the GMT recommends the Council adopt trawl/non-trawl allocations for yelloweye that are shown in Table 1 as PPA, which are based on status quo proportions from 2018.**

**Table 1. Alternative yelloweye rockfish ACLs and corresponding time required to rebuild, resulting fishery allocations based on using status quo ratios from 2017, and relationship between the fishery allocations and projected 2019 mortality for each sector, based on status quo regulations.**

<b>Allocations (mt)</b>					
	<b>Baseline 2017</b>	<b>YE ACL Alternatives for 2019</b>			
		<b>No Action Default SPR 76%</b>	<b>Alt 1 SPR 70%</b>	<b>Alt 2 SPR 65%</b>	
ACL	20	29	39	48	<b>Projected 2019 mortality (w/ SQ 2017 regs)</b>
Fishery HG	14.6	23.1	33.1	42.1	Total = 12.6 mt
<b>Trawl</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>Trawl total = 0.2 mt</b>
At-sea	0	0	0	0	0
Shorebased IFQ	1.1	1.9	2.7	3.4	0.2
<b>Non-trawl</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>Non-trawl total = 12.4</b>
Non-nearshore	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.1	0.8
Nearshore	2.1	3.2	4.6	5.9	1.4
---OR Share	1.4	2.3	3.4	4.3	0.9
---CA Share	0.7	0.9	1.3	1.6	0.5
WA Rec	3.3	5.5	7.9	10	3.2
OR Rec	3	4.9	7.1	9	3.7
CA Rec	3.9	6.5	9.3	11.8	3.3

However, the GMT does provide the following thoughts if the Council wishes to consider deviating from the status quo allocation proportions. The GMT believes that these allocation decisions would be best addressed by the Council after other advisory bodies and members of the public provide input.

### **Individual Fishing Quota**

Shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) participants provided public comment during the Catch Shares Review public hearings that low IFQ allocations of yelloweye rockfish constrain their ability to catch healthy and underutilized stocks. The primary constraint does not appear to be the annual vessel limits, but rather the stockpiling of limited quota pounds (QP); many quota shareholders are allocated 10 QP or less of yelloweye rockfish. Higher allocations would result in

increased supply of QP and likely promote willingness to trade, which would better enable targeting of healthy stocks with reduced consequences of yelloweye bycatch events.

### **Limited Entry Fixed Gear and Open Access (non-nearshore and nearshore)**

There is considerable interest in increasing attainments of underutilized northern lingcod, and midwater rockfishes coastwide (i.e., bocaccio, chilipepper, widow, yellowtail, canary, and vermilion rockfish). These species are constrained by the non-trawl RCA and low trip limits, which are used to minimize impacts to yelloweye rockfish. Although there are proposals to reopen portions of the non-trawl RCA and increase trip limits for 2019-2020, attainments are still expected to remain low since the liberalizations are modest. Higher allocations of yelloweye rockfish could provide greater liberalizations in the future that could further increase attainments.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

Recreational sectors in all three states have been significantly restricted by yelloweye rockfish (e.g., depth restrictions, shorter season lengths). Increasing the allocation to these sectors could minimize restrictions, provide access to underutilized species, such as lingcod and midwater rockfish, and increase recreational fishing opportunities. Additional yelloweye rockfish would also create a buffer between projected catch estimates and state-specific HGs that would provide relief to stakeholders and managers relative to concerns about potential closures or other inseason changes needed to keep catch within HGs. These buffers may become more important as the stock rebuilds and yelloweye rockfish encounters likely increase.

### **Bocaccio**

**The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo 39 percent trawl and 61 percent non-trawl allocations for bocaccio as PPA** since recent catches have been well below these allocations.

### **Big Skate**

**The GMT recommends the Council select the status quo 95 percent trawl and 5 percent non-trawl allocation for big skate as PPA** since this would provide for non-trawl removals and allow greater utilization by the trawl sectors.

### **Canary Rockfish**

Similar to yelloweye rockfish, status quo fishery proportions (i.e., no change to at-sea and applying 2017 ratios to all others) were used as a starting point for analysis, and alternative allocations could be developed based on the results.

As a reminder, the approach used for the 2017-2018 fishery allocations was to first address and buffer the “needs” of the non-trawl and at-sea sectors, then to allocate the remainder to the shorebased IFQ sector to reduce potential bycatch constraints that could result from increasing attainments of healthy underutilized shelf stocks. Even with proposed liberalizations in the Washington and California recreational fisheries, there are no projected constraints to the trawl or non-trawl fisheries based on the status quo proportions. Therefore, **the GMT recommends the Council adopt a trawl allocation of 1,001.8 mt (2019) and 942.5 mt (2020) and a non-trawl allocation of 384.1 mt (2019) and 361.4 mt (2020) for canary rockfish as PPA.**

## **Longnose Skate**

The GMT recommends the Council select the status quo 90 percent trawl and 10 percent non-trawl allocation for longnose skate as PPA since the allocation has covered recent years' catches by both sectors.

## **Minor Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40° 10' N. lat.**

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo 60.2 percent trawl and 39.8 percent non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA since both sectors have been well below their allocations in recent years.

## **Minor Shelf Rockfish Complex South of 40° 10' N. lat.**

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo 12.2 percent trawl and 87.8 percent non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA since both sectors have been well below their allocations in recent years.

## **6. Within-Trawl Allocations**

Widow rockfish is a formally allocated Amendment 21 species, and its allocation will be automatically implemented. Canary rockfish is a two-year allocated species (described above in Action Item #5), and therefore the within-trawl allocations are dependent on the trawl/non-trawl allocation. **The GMT recommends the Council adopt a within-trawl allocation for canary rockfish of 946.9 mt (2019) and 887.8 mt (2020) to the shorebased IFQ sector, 16 mt each year to the catcher/processor (CP) sector, and 30 mt each year to the mothership (MS) sector for the PPA.** Those values are not expected to constrain the at-sea whiting sectors, given that removals over the past ten years have been well below those allocations (Table 12; [Agenda Item F.9.a., Supplemental GMT Report 3, November 2017](#)).

## **7. Within-Trawl, At-Sea Set-Asides**

Unlike set-asides that are taken as off-the-top deductions after setting the ACL, set-asides for some species are taken from the trawl allocation to accommodate bycatch in the at-sea whiting fishery. Like other set-asides, these impacts are not managed inseason, so the set-aside amounts need to be large enough to accommodate anticipated catch. Additionally, Amendment 21-3 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) changed the management of darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch (POP) in the at-sea sectors from allocations to set-asides. The values listed in Table 2 below for darkblotched rockfish and POP represent the sector-specific set asides determined by the Amendment 21 formula. Species with at-sea sector set-asides will be managed on an annual basis unless a harvest specification is at risk of being exceeded, unforeseen impacts occur within another fishery, or conservation concerns develop. In all of these cases, inseason action may be taken.

As a reminder, the at-sea sectors exceeded their sablefish and shortspine thornyhead set-asides in 2017. The high exceedance of the sablefish set-aside was one of the factors that led to the exceedance of the 2017 ACL ([Agenda Item H.8.a., Supplemental GMT Report 1, March 2018](#)). A strong recruitment event may have been the primary cause of these high levels of bycatch, in which

case sablefish bycatch in 2019 may return to recent average amounts. In June, the Council could consider the trends in at-sea bycatch and change the set-aside values when they select their FPA.

Therefore, **the GMT recommends the Council adopt the at-sea set-asides presented in Table 2 as PPA**; noting the only change would be a 10 mt increase for shortspine thornyheads to better accommodate the high catch event in 2017. This is a 5 mt increase from the 25 mt that was proposed by the GMT and adopted for analysis by the Council in November 2017. The GMT notes that this 10 mt increase is not expected to negatively impact the IFQ fishery due to low IFQ attainments.

**Table 2. Proposed 2019-2020 set-asides for the at-sea whiting sectors from within the trawl allocations. Note the only change from November 2017 is 5 mt increase for shortspine thornyheads to better accommodate the high catch event in 2017.**

Species/Species Group	Area	Value in 2018 Regulations (mt)	2016 Mortality	2017 Mortality	GMT Recommendation for 2019-2020
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	Coastwide	0	0	0	0
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	70	10.07	17.50	70
Darkblotched rockfish a/	Coastwide	16.7/11.8	3.51/1.58	31.96/7.64	21.8/15.4 (2019) 23.2/16.4 (2020)
Dover sole	Coastwide	5	0.29	0.47	5
English sole	Coastwide	5	0	0.04	5
Lingcod	N. of 40°10' N. lat.	15	0.19	0.98	15
Longnose skate	Coastwide	5	0.83	0.97	5
Longspine thornyhead	N. of 34°27' N. lat.	5	0	0	5
Minor Shelf Rockfish	N. of 40°10' N. lat.	35	4.25	15.48	35
Minor Slope Rockfish	N. of 40°10' N. lat.	100	43.25	85.69	100
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	20	2.85	8.46	20
Pacific cod	Coastwide	5	0	0	5
POP a/	N. of 40°10' N. lat.	12.7/9.0	3.09/7.20	20.30/5.92	237.1/167.4 (2019) 231/163 (2020)
Petrable sole	Coastwide	5	0	0	5
Sablefish	N. of 36° N. lat.	50	27.74	153.17	50
Shortspine thornyhead	N. of 34° 27' N. lat.	20	10.57	27.95	30
Starry flounder	Coastwide	5	0	0	5
Yellowtail rockfish	N. of 40°10' N. lat.	300	62.28	277.82	300

a/Values shown in each column are for CP/MS respectively and set aside values in regulation are determined by Amendment 21 formula

## 8. Within-non-trawl, HGs or shares Cowcod (rebuilding)

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo approach of a collective non-trawl allocation for all the non-trawl fisheries (i.e., no separate HGs by fishery) for cowcod as PPA. There are no conflicts that would warrant sector protections.

## Yelloweye Rockfish (rebuilding)

For similar reasons as outlined above for the trawl/non-trawl allocation for yelloweye rockfish (#5), **the GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs and shares for yelloweye rockfish as shown in Table 1.** The values are based on status quo proportions from 2018. If the Council were to consider deviating from the status quo allocation proportions, the GMT provided initial thoughts for Council decision-making. Again, the GMT believes that these allocation decisions would be best addressed by the Council.

## Canary rockfish

**The GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs and shares for canary rockfish presented in Table 3 as PPA.** These values are based on the status quo proportions from the 2017-2018 biennium. Based on the Integrated Alternatives analysis in [Appendix A](#), these shares are not expected to constrain any of non-trawl fisheries.

**Table 3. Status quo non-trawl percentages of canary rockfish by sector.**

Sector	SQ proportion	Within Trawl	
		2019	2020
Non-Trawl		384.1	361.4
Non-Nearshore	11.40%	43.9	41.3
Nearshore	24.60%	94.5	88.9
WA Rec	12.30%	47.2	44.4
OR Rec	18.50%	70.9	66.7
CA Rec	33.20%	127.6	120.0

## Bocaccio Rockfish South of 40° 10' N. lat.

**The GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs shown in Table 4 for bocaccio rockfish as PPA.** Based on the Integrated Alternatives analysis in [Appendix A](#), these HGs are not expected to constrain non-trawl fisheries.

**Table 4. Bocaccio South of 40° 10' N. lat. within-non-trawl HGs (mt).**

Sector	2019	2020
Non-Nearshore	386.8	374.7
Nearshore	4.9	4.7
CA Recreational	874.3	846.9



**Sablefish south of 36° N. lat.**

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the 70-30 percent within-non-trawl shares for sablefish south of 36° N. lat. between limited entry and open access for 2019-2020 as PPA. Both sectors are projected to be well below these allocations.

**Nearshore Rockfish North of 40° 10' N. lat.**

The GMT recommends the Council adopt the state-specific HGs for the nearshore rockfish complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. as shown in Table A-46 of Appendix A and in Table 5 below. These are based on the status quo sharing approach that is primarily biologically-based (e.g., if an assessment is state-specific, then that state retains the resulting ACL contribution). Note that the Washington and California HGs remain the same regardless of Oregon blue/deacon rockfish are removed from the complex (Action item #16.b).

**Table 5. State HGs (mt) of the northern Nearshore Rockfish complex based on the status quo sharing approach.**

State	2019 HG	2020 HG
WA	19	18.7
OR	123.4	120.1
CA	37.3	38.6

## GMT Recommendations Summary

### GMT Recommendations in Bold

2019-2020 Allocations and Harvest Guidelines (HG)			
#	Category	Sector	Measure
1	Revisions	All	<p>Updates to selected rockfish conservation area coordinates in California (Section C.2.1 in Appendix C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends modifying the RCA coordinates as proposed in Appendix C.</b></li> </ul>
2	Off-the-top deductions		<p>Confirm or modify amounts adopted in November 2017 for groundfish mortality in Tribal, EFP, non-groundfish fisheries, and research activities (Sections A.1.1, A.2.1, A.3.1, and A.4.1 in Appendix A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends that the Council specify any desired changes now, as they could affect two-year allocations to the fisheries for anything other than EFPs.</b></li> </ul>
3	ACT		<p>Adopt preliminary ACTs for stocks as deemed appropriate (Table A-41)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends a cowcod ACT of 6 mt as PPA.</b></li> </ul>
4	HG		<p>Adopt preliminary HGs for species managed within a complex for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackgill rockfish within the Slope Rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. (159 mt; Section A.2.3.1 in Appendix A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends a 159 mt fishery HG for blackgill rockfish within the Slope Rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. for 2019-2020, until Amendment 26 rulemaking is completed.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Nearshore Rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat. – consider state quotas (Table A-46) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Therefore, the GMT does not recommend the use of an HG for blue/deacon rockfish south of 42° N. lat. with the southern Nearshore Rockfish complex.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

2019-2020 Allocations and Harvest Guidelines (HG)			
#	Category	Sector	Measure
5	Allocations	Trawl, Non-Trawl	<p>Adopt preliminary 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations; analyses in Appendix A assumed the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo 40 percent trawl and 60 percent non-trawl allocations for cowcod as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>Therefore, for all alternatives, the GMT recommends the Council adopt trawl/non-trawl allocations for yelloweye that are shown in Table 1 as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt status quo 39 percent trawl and 61 percent non-trawl allocations for bocaccio as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council select the status quo 95 percent trawl and 5 percent non-trawl allocation for big skate as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt a trawl allocation of 1,001.8 mt (2019) and 942.5 mt (2020) and a non-trawl allocation of 384.1 mt (2019) and 361.4 mt (2020) for canary rockfish as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council select the status quo 90 percent trawl and 10 percent non-trawl allocation for longnose skate as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt status quo 60.2 percent trawl and 39.8 percent non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt status quo 12.2 percent trawl and 88.8 percent non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. as PPA.</b></li> </ul>
6	Allocations	Within Trawl	<p>Adopt preliminary canary allocations for the shorebased IFQ, CP, and MS sectors (Tables A-47 and A-49 in Appendix A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt a within-trawl allocation for canary rockfish of 946.9 mt (2019) and 887.8 mt (2020) to the shorebased IFQ, 16 mt to the catcher/processor (CP), and 30 mt to the mothership (MS) sectors as PPA.</b></li> </ul>

2019-2020 Allocations and Harvest Guidelines (HG)			
#	Category	Sector	Measure
7	Set-Aside	Within Trawl, At-Sea	<p>Adopt preliminary set-asides for Pacific whiting at-sea sectors (Table A-49)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the at-sea set-asides presented in Table 5 as PPA.</b></li> </ul>
8	HG or Shares	Within Non-Trawl	<p>Adopt preliminary 2-year within-non-trawl HGs or shares for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the status quo approach of a collective non-trawl allocation for all the non-trawl fisheries (i.e., no separate HGs by fishery) for cowcod as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs and shares for yelloweye rockfish as shown in Table 1.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs and shares for canary rockfish presented in Table 3 as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the within-non-trawl HGs shown in Table 4 for bocaccio rockfish as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the 70-30 percent sharing of sablefish between limited entry south (LES) and open access south (OAS) for 2019-2020 as PPA.</b></li> <li>• <b>The GMT recommends the Council adopt the state-specific HGs for the Nearshore Rockfish complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. as shown in Table A-46 of Appendix A and in Table 5 above.</b></li> </ul>