

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the latest information on the status of the ongoing groundfish fisheries and offers the following comments and updates.

Action Items

Public Comment-EM EFP discarding for whiting

The GMT reviewed [Agenda Item E.5.b, Supplemental Public Comment 1, June 2018](#) and met with Dana Matthews from the Enforcement Consultants (EC). The public comment included two items for the Council to consider:

1. Amending the current 2018 EM EFP to allow additional limited discards on camera that increase efficiency but do not undermine the catch accounting or personal accountability components of the catch share program, and
2. Delay publishing the final rule that implements the whiting EM regulations until discard rules can be better defined and until the third party review issue is resolved.

Under the most recent inseason agenda items, the Council has considered recommending changes to the terms and conditions for certain EFPs, when necessary. Therefore, under this agenda item, the Council could recommend to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that they make changes to the terms and conditions for the EM EFP. For reference, according to the NMFS Rulemaking Plan, the final rule for EM for the whiting fishery is expected to be published this summer.

As a reminder, the shoreside whiting fishery operates as a maximized retention fishery, which is defined in regulation as 50 CFR 660.140(g) (1) and (2).

(g) Retention and disposition requirements—(1) General. Shorebased IFQ Program vessels may discard IFQ species/species groups, provided such discards are accounted for and deducted from QP in the vessel account. With the exception of vessels on Pacific whiting IFQ trips engaged in maximized retention, prohibited and protected species must be discarded at sea; Pacific halibut must be discarded as soon as practicable and the discard mortality must be accounted for and deducted from IBQ pounds in the vessel account. Non-IFQ species and non-groundfish species may be discarded at sea. The sorting of catch, the weighing and discarding of any IBQ and IFQ species, and the retention of IFQ species must be monitored by the observer.

(2) Maximized retention for Pacific whiting IFQ trips. Vessels on Pacific whiting IFQ trips may engage in maximized retention. Maximized retention allows for the discard of minor operational amounts of catch at sea if the observer has accounted for the discard. Vessels engaged in maximized retention must retain prohibited species until landing. Protected species may be retained until landing except as provided under paragraph (g) (3) of this section. Pacific halibut must be accounted for and deducted from IBQ pounds in the vessel account.

The GMT therefore notes that any changes to retention requirements for vessels fishing in the maximized retention fishery, whether using EM or observers, would be a significant shift in how the fishery operates. Changes to retention assumptions for the shoreside whiting fleet would require approval from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) for Pacific halibut, and a consideration of potential changes in data quality for impacts on the incidental and protected species that are caught with whiting. Further, the EC have stated that the EM systems have difficulty identifying certain species, such as juvenile sablefish and salmon, among the mix of whiting when discarded down chutes as proposed in the public comment.

Based on our discussion with representatives from the EC and NMFS, the GMT does not support changes to the retention requirements in the EM EFP at this time. However, if the Council wishes to explore this issue further, the GMT suggests a new EFP that includes both EM and observers on participating vessels may be the best vehicle to assess potential changes.

Informational Items

Sablefish Daily Trip Limit

Table 1 below shows the projected landings for each of the daily trip limit (DTL) sectors with data through the end of May 2018.

Table 1: Projected landings, landing targets, and attainment by DTL sector for 2018. (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., OAS=Open Access South of 36° N. lat.)

Sector	Projected Landings (rd. wt. mt)	Landing Target (mt)	Attainment (%)
LEN	182.2-224	269	67.7-83.2
OAN	380.3-385.7	444	85.6-86.9
LES	308.1-388.8	759	40.6-51.2
OAS	51.8	325	16

At-Sea

Table 2 below shows the catch in the at-sea whiting sectors through June 10, 2018 for selected species. As a reminder, darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch (POP) are now managed as sector-specific set-asides, not allocations.

Table 2: At-Sea Bycatch in 2018 through June 10, 2018 for Sector-Specific Allocation/Set-Asides.

Species	CP			MS		
	Catch (mt)	Allocation/Set-Aside (mt)	Attainment (%)	Catch (mt)	Allocation/Set-Aside (mt)	Attainment (%)
Canary	0.28	16	1.75	1.16	30	3.87
Darkblotched	10.05	16.7	60.18	5.4	11.8	45.76
POP	9.41	12.7	74.09	2.6	9	28.89
Widow	8.44	384.8	2.19	23,260	87,044	26.72
Whiting	38,963	123,312	31.6	22.21	271.6	8.18
Chinook a/	139			67		

a/ Numbers of fish, not mt

Additionally, there have been some high bycatch of other species shown in Table 3 through June 10, 2018. For instance, the at-sea sectors have caught 47.2 mt of roughey rockfish to date, which is 24 percent of the component OFL of 195.9 mt. Roughey/blackspotted rockfish is a part of the northern slope rockfish complex and therefore the total mortality of 49.8 mt is approximately half of the 100 mt set-aside.

Table 3: Selected Species Bycatch (mt) in the At-Sea Sectors Through June 10, 2018.

Species	2017			2018			Total Set Aside
	CP	MS	Total Catch	CP	MS	Total Catch	
Sablefish N	2.7	2.1	4.8	20.6	6.4	27	50
Minor Slope RF N a/	9.1	1	10.1	48.3	1.5	49.8	100
Yellowtail RF	109	89	198	36.5	80.5	117	300

a/ Minor Slope Rockfish Catch is predominantly roughey rockfish.

As discussed in [Agenda Item E.2.a., Supplemental GMT Report 2, June 2018](#), the at-sea fleet has seen high bycatch of sablefish early in the 2018 season. In 2017, the at-sea sector took approximately 100 mt over their set-aside, and the fishery as a whole exceeded the ACL by 3 percent. At this time, the GMT does not see a need for the Council to take any action, as the GMT does not see a risk to the ACL. NMFS put out a voluntary notice for the at-sea fleet to avoid sablefish bycatch ([NMFS-SEA-18-11](#)), and based on discussions with industry, the GMT understands that they are actively trying to avoid high bycatch areas (e.g., off northern Washington). Additionally, as shown in Table 4, the individual fishing quota (IFQ) and primary tier fishery are both tracking behind, which is likely due to lower prices for sablefish on the global market. In September, the GMT will re-assess landings to date and provide updates to the Council.

Table 4: Landings of Sablefish North of 36 N. lat. (mt) in Commercial Sectors through June 10 in 2017 and 2018.

Sector	2017	2018
IFQ	765.7	638.9
LEN	66.6	65.7
OAN	105.2	131.2
Primary	467.5	296.6
At-Sea	4.8	27

Overfished Species Scorecard

Attachment 1 shows the 2018 overfished species scorecard. There are no updates to research catch at this time. The IPHC annual stock assessment survey has just gotten underway, therefore there are no updates. IPHC staff communicate yelloweye rockfish bycatch after every trip to members of the GMT for tracking purposes as the survey progresses.

Changes from March include updates to the at-sea sector bootstrap model with data through June 10, 2018.

PFMC
06/13/18
9:00 am

Attachment 1. Allocations^a and projected mortality impacts (mt) of overfished groundfish species for 2018.

<i>Date</i> : 6/11/2018	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	86.9	1.4	0.2	546.9	161.7	220.0	62.8	1.1	0.1
-SB Trawl	283.3	86.9	1.4	0.2	518.4	136.9	198.3	44.1	1.1	0.1
-At-Sea Trawl					28.5	24.8	21.7	18.7	0.0	0.0
a) At-sea whiting MS					11.8	9.9	9.0	5.1		
b) At-sea whiting CP					16.7	14.9	12.7	13.6		
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	304.4	6.0	4.4	653.0	195.2	281.0	77.9	20.0	18.1
2018 Harvest Specification	741	741	10.0	10.0	653	653	281	281	20	20
Difference	0.0	436.6	4.0	5.6	0.0	457.8	0.0	203.1	0.0	1.9
Percent of ACL	100.0%	41.1%	60.2%	43.9%	100.0%	29.9%	100.0%	27.7%	100.0%	90.5%
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 the values in regulation. Projected impacts are the tribes best estimate of catch.