

## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the progress of the groundfish fisheries to date and offers the following updates and recommendations.

### Action Items

The GMT received 11 inseason action requests via the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), state delegates, and public comment to adjust bag limits, trip limits, and the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) in California. After GMT discussion with National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region staff, it was determined that six of the requests did not meet the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act to waive notice and comment through inseason action but could be evaluated as part of the 2021-2022 Harvest Specification and Management Measures cycle. The remaining requests and rationale for inseason action are as follows:

1. Increase Minor Nearshore Rockfish in the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat. from 1,200 lbs/2 months to 2,000 lbs/2 months starting with period 3.
2. Increase Deeper Nearshore Rockfish from 1,000 lbs./2 months to 1,200 lbs./2 months, starting in period 3.
3. Increase the statewide recreational canary rockfish bag limit from 2 to 3.
4. Increase the statewide recreational black rockfish bag limit from 3 to 4 or 5.
5. Increase the recreational lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. bag limit from 1 to 2.

### California Commercial Fishery

#### **Minor Nearshore Rockfish in the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat. and Deeper Nearshore Rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.**

As of April 1, 2018, the California state Deeper Nearshore Fishery Permit became transferable for the first time since the state implemented the permit system in 2003. The Minor Nearshore Rockfish (MNR) trip limit in the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat. and the Deeper Nearshore rockfish trip limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. were not adjusted during the 2019-2020 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures process in effort to remain precautionary due to the number of new entrants participating in the CA nearshore fishery being uncertain. The 2018 commercial data, which was not available during development of the analysis for the 2019-20 harvest specifications, indicates the level of effort from new entrants did not exceed nearshore rockfish and yelloweye rockfish projections, which now provide a better indicator of fishery performance for 2019. Additionally, with the increase in the yelloweye rockfish annual catch limit (ACL), the nearshore share of yelloweye rockfish is now the least constraining component to the nearshore fishery.

Commercial landings to-date for the nearshore fishery are in Table 1. Due to poor weather along the coast and crab opportunities still available in the north, the fishery has been tracking low for the first few months of the year.

**Table 1. As of March 9, 2019, commercial landings of California Minor Nearshore Rockfish North in (mt). Deeper Nearshore South landings include black rockfish.**

<b>Landings to date</b>	<b>Jan-Feb</b>	<b>Mar-Apr</b>	<b>Projected landings estimate</b>	<b>% Attained</b>
MNRF (42°-40°10'N. lat.)	0.5	0.1	12.6	4.80%
Deeper Nearshore (S of 40°10' N. lat)	1.5	CLOSED	18.6	8.10%

The request to increase the MNRF trip limit from 1,200 lbs. to 2,000 lbs. is projected to exceed the CA share of MNRF allocation. A 1,500 lb trip limit (Table 2) can be accommodated to stay well under the CA share and non-trawl allocation (Table 3). This trip limit does not include black rockfish. The projected yelloweye rockfish mortality remains low compared to both the CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share and annual catch targets (ACT; Table 4).

**Table 2. Status Quo and proposed trip limits for Minor Nearshore Rockfish in the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat.**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Jan-Feb</b>	<b>Mar-Apr</b>	<b>May-Jun</b>	<b>Jul-Aug</b>	<b>Oct-Sep</b>	<b>Nov-Dec</b>
SQ	1,200 lbs./2 months					
1	1,200 lbs./2 months		1,500 lbs./2 months			

**Table 3. Projected Minor Nearshore Rockfish mortality (mt) for the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat. compared to the 2019 California MNRF share and MNRF non-trawl allocations for north of 40° 10' N. lat.**

<b>Projections/Allocations</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>Opt 1</b>
CA commercial impact	12.6	14.7
CA recreational impact	12.4	12.4
Total CA non-trawl estimate	25.0	27.1
CA share	36.6	36.6
% of CA share	68.4%	74.0%
Non-trawl allocation	78.6	78.6
% of Non-trawl allocation	31.9%	34.5%

**Table 4. Projected yelloweye rockfish mortality from status quo and proposed MNRF trip limits compared to the California nearshore share and nearshore ACT (mt) for 2019.**

<b>Projections/Allocations</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>Opt 1</b>
Yelloweye rockfish impact	0.59	0.6
CA Nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	1.3	1.3
% of CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	45.3%	46.1%
Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	4.7	4.7
% of Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	12.5%	12.7%

**The GMT recommends the Council consider increasing the Minor Nearshore Rockfish trip limit in the area between 42°-40° 10' N. lat. from 1,200 lbs./2 months to 1,500 lbs./2 months starting with period 3.**

The status quo and proposed trip limits for Deeper Nearshore rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. are in Table 5 and include black rockfish. The Deeper Nearshore rockfish mortality projections also remain well below the non-trawl allocation of the nearshore rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. (Table 6). Projected yelloweye rockfish mortality is included in Table 7 and remain low compared to the CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share and ACTs.

**Table 5. Status Quo and proposed trip limits for Deeper Nearshore Rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Jan-Feb</b>	<b>Mar-Apr</b>	<b>May-Jun</b>	<b>Jul-Aug</b>	<b>Oct-Sep</b>	<b>Nov-Dec</b>
SQ	1,000	closed	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
1	1,000	closed	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200

**Table 6. Projected Deeper Nearshore Rockfish mortality (mt) south of 40° 10' N. lat. compared to the 2019-2020 nearshore rockfish non-trawl allocations for south of 40° 10' N. lat.**

<b>Projections/Allocations</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>Opt 1</b>
Commercial estimate	46	48
Recreational estimate	538.5	538.5
Non-trawl estimate	584.5	586.5
Non-trawl allocation	1137.9	1137.9
% of Non-trawl allocation	51.37%	51.54%

**Table 7. Projected yelloweye rockfish impacts from status quo and proposed Deeper Nearshore trip limits compared to the California nearshore share and nearshore ACT (mt) for 2019. Impacts to yelloweye rockfish do not change with the adjustment to the Deeper Nearshore trip limits.**

<b>Projections/Allocations</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>Opt 1</b>
Yelloweye rockfish impact	0.59	0.59
CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	1.3	1.3
% of CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	45.3%	45.3%
Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	4.7	4.7
% of Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	12.5%	12.5%

**The GMT recommends increasing the Deeper Nearshore Rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. trip limit from 1,000 lbs/2 months to 1,200 lbs/ 2 months beginning with Period 3. Period 2 (Mar-Apr) will remain closed.**

Lastly, the projected cumulative impacts of increasing nearshore trip limits south of 42° N. lat. on yelloweye rockfish are well below the CA nearshore yelloweye rockfish share and ACTs (Table 8).

**Table 8. Cumulative yelloweye impact from increased trip limits in the CA Nearshore Fishery.**

<b>Projections/Allocations</b>	<b>SQ</b>	<b>Opt 1</b>
Statewide yelloweye rockfish impact	0.59	0.6
CA Nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	1.3	1.3
% of CA Nearshore yelloweye rockfish share	45.3%	46.1%
Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	4.7	4.7
% of Nearshore yelloweye rockfish ACT	12.5%	12.7%

## California Recreational Fisheries

The GMT reviewed proposed changes from the GAP (Agenda Item G.5.a Supplemental GAP Report 1), and public comments ([G.5.a Public comment and G.5.a Supplemental Public Comment, March 2019](#)) to increase recreational bag limits. The GMT also reviewed the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) report ([Agenda Item G.5.a CDFW Supplemental Report 1, March 2019](#)) that provides new information on the 2018 recreational catch estimates showing that lower than expected fishery performance for black and canary rockfish resulted in less than 50 percent attainment of the HGs, in 2018. Based on the information provided in the CDFW report, it is unlikely that either the canary or blackfish HGs would be exceeded in 2019 under the proposed sub-bag limit increases. Increasing the sub-bag limits is not expected to change the number of angler trips or effort but allow for fewer regulatory discards and allow for more targeting of these stocks. Delaying the implementation of these changes would limit the economic benefits to the recreational sector.

## Canary rockfish

The GAP is proposing an increase to the statewide recreational sub-bag limit for canary rockfish from two to three fish. The CDFW Supplemental Report 1 includes projected impacts for canary rockfish under a three or four sub-bag limit at 117.4 and 120.5 mt, respectively. Given that the projected impacts are below the 127.3 mt California recreational Harvest Guideline (HG), and that canary rockfish is routinely monitored inseason by CDFW, **the GMT recommends increasing the statewide canary rockfish sub-bag limit from two to three fish.**

## Black rockfish

The GAP is proposing an increase to the statewide recreational sub-bag limit for black rockfish from three to four fish. The CDFW Supplemental Report 1 included new information that 2018 catch was less than expected and an update to the recreational projected impacts for black rockfish under a four or five sub-bag limit at 165.1 and 227.4 mt, respectively. Given that the recreational projected impacts are below the 328 mt California non-trawl HG (noting the commercial non-trawl projection impacts are at 100 mt resulting in a combine recreational and commercial total impact at 81 percent). Given black rockfish is also routinely monitored inseason by CDFW, **the GMT recommends increasing the statewide black rockfish sub-bag limit from three to four fish.**

## Lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat

Supplemental public comment [G.5.a Public comment and G.5.a Supplemental Public Comment, March 2019](#) requested an increase to the bag limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. for lingcod from one to two fish. The GMT notes that lingcod is a highly attained species and the risk to increasing the bag limit too early in the season could pose a risk to exceeding the non-trawl HG. One consideration is to reconsider this request at a later Council meeting where 2019 commercial and recreational catch estimate data will be available to evaluate. **The GMT does not recommend the bag limit increase from one to two fish south of 40° 10' N. lat.**

# Informational Items

## Sablefish Daily Trip Limits

Table 9 shows the projected landings with landings and price data through February 28, 2019 and percent attainment by daily trip limit (DTL) sector. For the Limited Entry Fixed Gear north of 36° N. lat. (LEN), Period 1 predicted landings were within 0.2 mt of the low-price assumption landings for that period. The GMT has heard from industry that prices continue to be low. Therefore, the GMT believes the 83.3 percent attainment is more likely based on the current market. While Open Access north of 36° N. lat. (OAN) appears to be close to or exceeding the percent attainment based on the model inputs, the first period's actual landings were only 61 percent of the predicted landings. Given the volatile nature of this fishery and the difficulty modeling impacts, the GMT believes that attainment is likely overestimated in the table below. Both limited entry fixed gear south of 36° N. lat. (LES) and open access south of 36° N. lat. (OAS) are tracking low.

**Table 9. DTL projected landings, landing targets, and percent attainment for 2019.**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Projected Landings (rd. wt. mt)</b>	<b>Landing Target (mt)</b>	<b>Attainment (%)</b>
LEN	227.3-262.4	273	83.3-109
OAN	440-470.7	449	98-104.8
LES	318.2-380	788	44.6-50.7
OAS	29.3	338	8.7

**Rebuilding Species Scorecard**

Attachment 1 shows the updated rebuilding species scorecard for yelloweye rockfish and cowcod. Updates from November 2018 include increasing the projected impacts for yelloweye rockfish in the open access nearshore fishery from 1.5 mt to 2.1 mt due to a modeling update for higher projected landings.

**Recommendations**

1. **The GMT recommends the Council consider increasing the Minor Nearshore Rockfish trip limit in the area between 42°-40° 10'N. lat. from 1,200 lbs./2 months to 1,500 lbs./2 months starting with period 3.**
2. **The GMT recommends increasing Deeper Nearshore Rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. trip limit from 1,000 lbs./2 months to 1,200 lbs./ 2 months beginning with Period 3. Period 2 (Mar-Apr) will remain closed.**
3. **The GMT recommends increasing the statewide canary rockfish sub-bag limit from two to three fish.**
4. **The GMT recommends increasing the statewide black rockfish sub-bag limit from three to four fish.**

PFMC  
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