

**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**

**Shorebased IFQ Carryover**

After discussions with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff, the GMT will no longer be submitting a comprehensive report with analysis for carryover, as NMFS staff does a similar analysis each year in their memo on issuing carryover. However, the GMT will work with NMFS staff to calculate the final carryover estimates and ensure that issuing carryover will not result in a risk to harvest specifications, particularly for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. Table 1 below shows the species eligible for carryover in 2019, the percent attainment in 2018, and the estimated surplus carryover from 2018. As shown, all species, except sablefish north of 36° N. lat., had a total attainment of less than 50 percent of their individual 2018 allocation. Similar catch trends are expected in 2019. Therefore, the likelihood of exceeding the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) species allocation for any of these species in 2019 is minimal.

**Table 1. Fleetwide surplus carryover estimate (DRAFT as of 4/10/2019).**

| <b>IFQ Species</b>                        | <b>2018 Percent Attainment of Allocation</b> | <b>2018 Surplus Carryover Estimate (pounds)</b> |
|---|--|---|
| Cowcod South of 40°10' N.                 | 30%  | 239   |
| Dover sole                                | 14%  | 8,894,757                                       |
| Lingcod North of 40°10' N.                | 35%  | 255,500   |
| Lingcod South of 40°10' N.                | 10%  | 87,227  |
| Longspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N.  | 14%  | 475,644   |
| Pacific cod                               | 1%   | 210,225   |
| Pacific halibut (IBQ) North of 40°10' N.  | 39%  | 14,325  |
| Sablefish North of 36° N.                 | 91%  | 409,699   |
| Sablefish South of 36° N.                 | 6%   | 129,167   |
| Shortspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N. | 42%  | 246,848   |
| Shortspine thornyheads South of 34°27' N. | 0%   | 7,710   |
| Yelloweye rockfish                        | 12%  | 192   |

Due to the recent high attainment, the GMT considered the risk to the 2019 annual catch limit (ACL) in issuing carryover for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. and projects that sablefish north of 36° N. lat. will reach 94.1 percent of the attainment if carryover is issued. This estimate applies 2018 percent attainment to 2019 allocations, including the at-sea and research (based on draft data) sectors which exceeded their set-aside amounts.

Therefore, the GMT recommends that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) recommend NMFS issue the maximum amount of carryover for 2019 for all species that are eligible.

### **Emley-Platt Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Set Asides**

Between the March and April Council meetings, the GMT and NMFS were notified by the Emley-Platt EFP sponsor that the EFP was only issued 1.5 mt of lingcod north of 40° 10' N. lat., instead of the requested 1.5 mt of lingcod for both north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. The GMT reviewed our previous statements and tables and realized that the southern lingcod set aside was mistakenly omitted from the final Council adopted set asides. **After reviewing the off-the-top deductions, the GMT recommends the Council move 1 mt of lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. annually from the research set aside (currently 3.2 mt) and 0.5 mt from the Incidental Open Access (IOA) sector to the Emley-Platt EFP for 2019 and 2020, based on the recent five-year and four-year averages, respectively, shown in Table 2 below.** This would reduce the research set aside to 2.2 mt and the IOA set-aside to 7.6 mt (from current 8.1 mt). Table 2 shows the total mortality from the research and IOA sectors and a preliminary data estimate for 2018 for research. Even if the research and IOA sectors were to take the maximum observed in the last five years, the GMT does not believe there would be any risk to exceeding the ACL, given the low attainment in the trawl sector in recent years.

**Table 2. Research activity and IOA mortality (mt) of lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. Source: GEMM 2002-2017.**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b>   | <b>Average</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Research    | 2.1         | 1.0         | 3.2         | 1.7         | 2.0           | 2.0            |
| IOA         | 6.1         | 8.2         | 4.8         | 8.3         | Not available | 6.9            |

### **Lingcod South of 40° 10' N. lat.**

Based on Council guidance in March, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provided an update on commercial and recreation projections for lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. for 2019-20 ([Agenda Item G.9.a., Supplemental CDFW Report 1, April 2019](#)). Table 3 below shows the status quo and alternative trip limits requested by Council and analyzed by CDFW.

**Table 3. Status quo and proposed trip limits for lingcod south, 40°10' N lat. and the projected estimated mortality for the trip limits, assuming a June 1 implementation date.**

| Sector | Option | Jan-Feb        | Mar-Apr | May-Jun                              | Jul-Aug             | Sep-Oct           | Nov               | Dec | Est. mort. (mt) |
|--------|--------|----------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|-----------------|
| LE     | SQ     | 200 lbs./month | CLOSED  | 800lbs / 2 months                    | 1,200 lb / 2 months | 600lbs / 2 months | 300lbs / 2 months |     | 6.1             |
| LE     | 1      | 201 lbs./month | CLOSED  | 800lbs / month<br>  1,200 lb/month   | 1,200 lb / 2 months |                   |                   |     | 8.2             |
| OA     | SQ     | 300 lbs./month | CLOSED  | 300 lbs. / month                     |                     |                   |                   |     | 33.9            |
| OA     | 1      | 300 lbs./month | CLOSED  | 300 lbs/ month<br>  500 lbs. / month | 500 lbs / month     |                   |                   |     | 49.3            |

Figure 1 is a table from the CDFW report showing the impact projections from increasing the lingcod bag limit from 1-fish to 2-fish, as well as the combined commercial and recreation impacts compared to the non-trawl allocation.

**Table 3. Updated non-trawl lingcod bag limit, recreational and commercial non-trawl catch projections, and harvest limits south of 40°10' N lat. for 2019 and 2020. Data are from CDFW.**

| Year | Bag Limit          | Rec. Catch <sup>1</sup>     | Com. Non-Trawl Catch <sup>2</sup> | Total Non-Trawl Catch <sup>1, 2</sup> | Non-Trawl Alloc. | Non-Trawl Attainment <sup>1, 2</sup> |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2019 | 1(2 <sup>3</sup> ) | 223.0 (398.5 <sup>3</sup> ) | 40.6 (57.5 <sup>3</sup> )         | 263.6 (456.0 <sup>3</sup> )           | 565.2            | 46.6% (80.7% <sup>3</sup> )          |
| 2020 | 1(2)               | 223.0 (411.1)               | 40.6 (64.3)                       | 263.6 (475.4)                         | 471.7            | 55.9% (100.8%)                       |

<sup>1</sup> California Recreational Fisheries Survey data were used to model recreational projections. For 2019 and 2020, recreational catch values outside parentheses indicate projected catch based on a one fish bag limit for the full year (status quo) and catch values inside parentheses indicate projected catch based on a two fish bag limit.

<sup>2</sup> MLDS data were used to model commercial catch projections. For 2019 and 2020 commercial catch values outside parentheses indicate projected catch based on current monthly and bimonthly trip limits in the OA and LE fixed gear sectors (status quo, see current trip limit tables below). Catch values inside parentheses indicate projected catch based on increases to both the OA and LE fixed gear sectors as follows: monthly trip limit increases in the OA gear sector, and an increased bimonthly trip limit for Period 1, Period 3, and the month of December in the LE fixed gear sector.

<sup>3</sup> Projected catch for 2019 assumes an effective date by June 1 for increases to the recreational bag limit and commercial trip limits.

**Figure 1: Commercial and recreational impact projections for proposed adjustments to take limits for lingcod south of 40° 10' N lat.**

The GMT reviewed the updated projections for these limits in the CDFW report and notes that the projected attainment, assuming June 1 implementation, would be 80.7 percent of the non-trawl HG. **Therefore, the GMT recommends that the Council adopt increase to a 2-fish bag limit for the recreational, Limited Entry (LE FG), and Open Access (OA) sectors for 2019 as shown in [Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#).**

### **Blackgill Rockfish South of 40° 10' N. lat.**

Blackgill rockfish is a component stock that is managed within the Slope Rockfish complexes north and south of 40°10' N lat. The 2017 blackgill rockfish update assessment indicated the stock was at 39.4 percent depletion at the start of 2017 and is estimated to be at 40 percent in 2019. The blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N lat. harvest guideline is 158.9 mt, based on the blackgill rockfish contribution to the Slope Rockfish complex. Under Agenda Item G.4., the Council rescinded their original final action for removing blackgill rockfish from the Slope Rockfish complex as was selected at the November 2015 Council meeting ([Agenda Item D.7.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2, June 2015](#)). Instead, the Council selected the No Action Alternative, resulting in blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N lat. remaining in the southern Slope Rockfish complex and maintaining the Amendment 21 formal sector allocation of 63 percent of the annual harvestable surplus (as defined by the fishery harvest guideline [HG]) of southern Slope Rockfish to LE trawl sectors and 37 percent of the annual harvestable surplus to non-trawl sectors. This results in allocating 100.1 mt to the trawl sector and 58.8 mt to the non-trawl sector, an increase of 13.3 mt over the 2018 non-trawl allocation.

Table 4 shows the current trip limits for the LE and OA sectors for southern Slope Rockfish complex and blackgill rockfish. These limits have been in place since 2015 even though the species has been under-attained compared to the contribution of blackgill to the non-trawl allocation of southern Slope Rockfish (Table 5). Increasing the trip limits for blackgill rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. has not been considered as constituents were waiting for the development, passage, and subsequent implementation of Amendment 26.

**Table 4. Current Slope Rockfish complex and blackgill rockfish south of 40° 10' N lat. trip limits.**

| <b>Sector</b> | <b>Jan-Feb</b>   | <b>Mar-Apr</b> | <b>May-Jun</b> | <b>Jul-Aug</b>   | <b>Set-Oct</b> | <b>Nov-Dec</b> |
|---------------|--|----------------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Limited Entry | 40,000 lb / 2 months, of which no more than 1,375 lb may be blackgill rockfish |                |                | 40,000 lb / 2 months, of which no more than 1,600 lb may be blackgill rockfish |                |                |
| Open Access   | 10,000 lb / 2 months, of which no more than 475 lb may be blackgill rockfish   |                |                | 10,000 lb / 2 months, of which no more than 550 lb may be blackgill rockfish   |                |                |

**Table 5. Blackgill rockfish mortality (mt) from the non-trawl sector compared to the non-trawl allocation (37%) of the blackgill rockfish ACL.**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Non-trawl mortality (mt)</b> | <b>Non-trawl allocation (mt)</b> | <b>% of Non-trawl allocation</b> | <b>ACL (mt)</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2013        | 17.7                            | 42.1                             | 41.9%                            | 113.8           |
| 2014        | 31.2                            | 43.4                             | 72.1%                            | 117.2           |
| 2015        | 21.0                            | 44.4                             | 47.3%                            | 120.0           |
| 2016        | 23.7                            | 45.5                             | 52.1%                            | 123.0           |
| 2017        | 29.4                            | 46.5                             | 63.3%                            | 125.7           |
| 2018        | 18.6                            | 45.5                             | 40.8%                            | 123.0           |

Now that the Council has selected the No Action Alternative under Agenda Item G.4., the GMT investigated if it is possible to increase the current trip limits for LE and OA fixed gear fisheries south of 40° 10' N. lat. Table 6 shows the status quo limit and trip limit alternatives requested by the Groundfish Advisory Sub-panel (GAP), as well as the projected attainment for each alternative. The projected LE and OA impacts for the proposed alternatives range from 21.9 mt under status quo trip limits to 44.3 mt under Alternative 3 for LE and Alternative 2 for OA, the highest possible trip limits in both sector. **The GMT recommends the Council adopt Alternative 3 for LE (4,000 lbs./2 months) and Alternative 1 for OA (800 lbs./ 2months) which would increase the projected attainment of the Amendment 21 non-trawl percentage of blackgill rockfish (37 percent of the blackgill rockfish HG) to 75.3 percent compared to 37.2 percent under status quo.** Based on the analysis, these trip limits will provide additional opportunity to the fleet without risk to the blackgill rockfish contribution to the southern Slope Rockfish complex non-trawl allocation. The GMT and GAP agreed that the more precautionary alternative of 800 lbs./2 mo. under Alternative 1 for OA compared to 900 lbs./2 months may prevent additional effort from switching into the fishery.

**Table 6. Proposed blackgill rockfish south of 40° 10' N lat. trip limits for limited entry and open access and estimated mortality (mt).**

| Sector | Alternative | Jan-Feb            | Mar-Apr | May-Jun             | Jul-Aug            | Set-Oct | Nov-Dec | Est. mort. (mt) |
|--------|-------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| LE     | SQ          | 1,375 lb/ 2 months |         |                     | 1,600 lb/ 2 months |         |         | 20              |
| LE     | 1           | 1,375 lb/ 2 months |         | 2,000 lb / 2 months |                    |         |         | 24.4            |
| LE     | 2           | 1,375 lb/ 2 months |         | 3,000 lb / 2 months |                    |         |         | 33.1            |
| LE     | 3           | 1,375 lb/ 2 months |         | 4,000 lb / 2 months |                    |         |         | 41.7            |
| OA     | SQ          | 475lb/ 2 months    |         |                     | 550lb/ 2 months    |         |         | 1.9             |
| OA     | 1           | 475lb/ 2 months    |         | 800 lb / 2 months   |                    |         |         | 2.4             |
| OA     | 2           | 475lb/ 2 months    |         | 900 lb / 2 months   |                    |         |         | 2.6             |

### Salmon Caps for the 2019 Trawl Gear EFP

After reviewing the latest update on the 2019 Trawl Gear EFP including the numbers of salmon caught as bycatch in the NMFS Report ([Agenda Item G.9.a., Supplemental NMFS Report, April 2019](#)), the GMT does not recommend adjustments to the salmon caps for this EFP at this time.

### Informational Items

#### Excessive Allocation of 2019 Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota for Minor Slope Rockfish South of 40° 10' N lat.

On April 12th, NMFS reported that they had issued 1,049.1 mt of individual fishing quota (IFQ) quota, when only 456 mt should have been issued (NMFS-SEA-19-09). To minimize disruptions, NMFS will allow fishermen to retain the excessive quota pounds, but will hold them to the correct annual vessel limits and will monitor attainments closely inseason. The GMT does not believe there will be a risk to the trawl/IFQ allocation, as historical attainments have been 26 percent or lower, and few vessels fish in that area (Table 7). This should not disrupt the proposed higher blackgill rockfish trip limits, because attainments for both trawl and non-trawl sectors are expected to be low.

**Table 7. Allocations and recent mortality (mt) of the southern slope rockfish complex.**

| Southern slope complex A-21 allocations for 2019 (mt) |           | Range of 2011-2017 total mortality (mt) |           |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| Trawl/IFQ   | Non-trawl | Trawl/IFQ                               | Non-trawl |
| 456   | 268       | 50-123                                  | 19-88     |

## Sablefish Daily Trip Limit (DTL)

Table 8 shows the projected landings, with landings and price data through March 31, 2019 and percent attainment by daily trip limit (DTL) sector.

**Table 8. Projected landings, landing target, and projected percent attainment by DTL sector. (LEN= Limited Entry Fixed Gear North of 36° N. lat., OAN= Open Access North of 36° N. lat, LES= Limited Entry Fixed Gear South of 36° N. lat., OAS= Open Access South of 36° N. lat).**

| Sector | Projected Landings (rd. wt. mt) | Landing Target (mt) | Projected Attainment (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| LEN    | 258.16-296.78                   | 273                 | 95.5-104.4               |
| OAN    | 305.1-492.0                     | 449                 | 67.9-103.5               |
| LES    | 294.8-430.2                     | 788                 | 46.7-57.3                |
| OAS    | 24.8                            | 338                 | 7.3                      |

## Open Public Comments

### Error in Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Waypoint off Half Moon Bay

The GMT reviewed the Open Public Comment from Mr. Jack Gross ([Agenda Item B.1, Open Public Comment](#)). Based on our understanding of the issue, this proposed change would need to be considered in the 2021-22 harvest specifications and management measures cycle, as it would involve moving a rockfish conservation area waypoint to more closely follow a depth contour.

### Cowcod Annual Vessel Limit

The GMT reviewed the Open Public Comment from the California Groundfish Collective ([Agenda Item. B.1., Open Public Comment](#)). Based on our understanding of the issue, it would need to be either considered under the new groundfish workload prioritization process at a future Council meeting or as part of the 2021-22 harvest specifications and management measures process.

## Rebuilding Species Scorecard

The GMT has no updates to the rebuilding species scorecard from our March report ([Agenda Item G.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2, March 2019](#)).

## Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table 9 shows the inseason estimates of Chinook salmon bycatch through April 13, 2019. The 2019 groundfish fisheries are held to Chinook salmon thresholds from the 2017 Biological Opinion. The GMT projects that these whiting and non-whiting thresholds are unlikely to be reached or exceeded, based on these relatively low bycatch rates and amounts to date (Table 9).

**Table 9. Inseason estimates of Chinook salmon bycatch (number of fish) through April 13, 2019.**

| Sector                   | Sub-Sector          | Catch To Date | Threshold | % of Threshold |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| Whiting                  | CP                  | 0             | 11,000    | 0%             |
|                          | MS                  | 0             |           |                |
|                          | Shoreside           | 0             |           |                |
|                          | Tribal              | 0             |           |                |
|                          | <i>Total</i>        | <i>0</i>      |           |                |
| Non-Whiting              | Bottom Trawl        | 205           | 5,500     | 13%            |
|                          | Midwater Trawl      | 27            |           |                |
|                          | Fixed Gear          | 500 a/        |           |                |
|                          | WA Rec              |               |           |                |
|                          | OR Rec + longleader |               |           |                |
|                          | CA Rec              |               |           |                |
| <i>Total</i>             | <i>732</i>          |               |           |                |
| All groundfish fisheries |                     | 732           | 20,000    | 4%             |

a/ GMT proposed assumption of mortality, which assumed maximum historical mortality (154) plus a 250 fish buffer from the 2017 BiOp and an additional 96 fish to account for some uncertainty in recreational salmon seasons; recreational estimates only applies to groundfish fisheries occurring outside of salmon seasons.

## Recommendations

The GMT recommends the Council:

- recommend NMFS issue the maximum amount of carryover for 2019 for all species that are eligible
- move 1 mt of lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat. annually from the research set aside (currently 3.2 mt) and 0.5 mt from the Incidental Open Access (IOA) sector to the Emley-Platt EFP for 2019 and 2020
- adopt Option 1 for the recreational, LE FG, and OA sectors for 2019 as shown in Supplemental CDFW Report 1
- adopt Alternative 3 for LE (4,000 lbs./2 months) and Alternative 1 for OA (800 lbs./2mo) which would increase the projected attainment of the Amendment 21 non-trawl percentage of blackgill rockfish (37 percent of the blackgill rockfish HG) to 75.3 percent compared to 37.2 percent under status quo
- not make adjustments to the salmon caps for this EFP at this time