

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2021-2022

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with members of the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to discuss biennial management measures for 2021 and 2022 groundfish fisheries. The GAP offers the following comments and recommendations. The GAP worked from [Attachment 1](#) under this agenda item, the Action Item Checklist.

During discussions with the GMT, the GAP suggested a few changes that could be incorporated into a range of alternatives for analysis prior to the April meeting (the Council is scheduled to select preliminary preferred alternatives in April; final preferred alternatives selection is scheduled for June).

Management measure action items for which the GAP differs from the GMT recommendations under Agenda Item H.8.a, GMT Reports 1, 2 or 3; the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife Report 1](#); the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report 1](#); and the three tribal reports are noted below, referenced by their respective action item number.

#2: Updates to selected Rockfish Conservation Area coordinates in California

The GAP supports the GMT recommendation as specified in the draft GMT report and **also supports analysis of the coordinates proposed in the public comment** letter submitted in April 2019. The GAP would like to verify the 100-fathom waypoints around the Channel Islands. If these are not part of the analysis, the GAP requests these be analyzed.

#3: Recommend deductions to account for groundfish mortality in tribal fisheries, research activities, non-groundfish fisheries, incidental open access, and exempted fishing permits (EFP) for analysis

The GAP suggests the incidental open access for darkblotched rockfish amount appears to be heavily influenced by an anomalous high amount of bycatch in the pink shrimp fishery in 2014. Because the high darkblotched bycatch in 2014 was likely an anomaly, the GMT should consider whether median or average catches may be more appropriate for darkblotched.

#4: Recommend annual catch targets (ACT), set below the fishery harvest guideline (HG), as necessary for analysis:

- **Cowcod:** Agree with GMT.
- **Shortbelly rockfish:** **The GAP does not support an ACT for shortbelly at this time**, since the Council and advisory bodies will consider check-ins on shortbelly (and other species) at each meeting. The GAP notes that if or when the GMT and Council consider establishing management measures related to an ACT, processing and operational procedures related to shortbelly bycatch should be taken into account. The GAP understands the GMT will discuss this issue more over the winter; we will be prepared to comment on this at a future meeting.

#6: Adopt preliminary 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations

For canary, the **GAP is concerned the 10 mt shared by the at-sea sectors, as noted in GMT Report 2, Option 3, Table 8, is too low** because it's based on historic attainment in a hard cap

regime and those values are likely to be underestimates of projected needs with set-asides. While the GAP is not advocating for Option 3, the GAP recommends adding a value of 20 mt for analysis under Option 3, which would reduce the individual fishing quota (IFQ) amount in Table 8 by 10 mt.

#7: Remove Amendment 21 trawl/non-trawl allocations (switch to biennial allocations)/Adjust Amendment 21 trawl/non-trawl allocations

Regarding the three options for lingcod South 40° 10' N lat, the GAP recommends moving all three forward for analysis and choosing an option in April or June.

#9: At-Sea Set-Asides

In terms of how the set-asides are organized in regulation, **the GAP recommends adding an alternative that would create separate mothership (MS) and catcher processor (CP) columns in the set-aside table in regulations**, because having individual values facilitates internal cooperative self-management planning and still provides an opportunity for the two at-sea sectors to work cooperatively in managing their respective at-sea set-asides. This should be analyzed in addition to what has been proposed by the GMT (to combine the MS and CP set-asides).

In terms of deleting the zero catch species from the set-aside table in regulation, GAP members did not have concerns with including this for analysis for species with low attainment in the IFQ sector, such as English sole.

For the GMT proposal to use five-year average catch to establish set-asides for stocks with ACL attainment below 90 percent (except sablefish), **the GAP recommends including for analysis a sub-option that would use a multiplier of 1.2 for select species**, such as darkblotched, Pacific ocean perch, and widow rockfish. The risk of the five-year average catch approach is low for most species, but for species where there is increasing use by other sectors, it would be helpful to have a small buffer built into the set-aside. The GAP notes we would still like the Amendment 21 formulaic approach to be included for analysis.

#13: Opening retention for OA from 34° 27' N. lat. to 40° 10' N. lat.

- Shortspine thornyhead
- Longspine thornyhead

The GAP suggests analysis of a daily trip limit of 50 lbs., no more than 1,000 lbs. bimonthly coastwide for both thornyhead species for a limited fishery. This mirrors the limits in the area south of Pt. Conception. The GAP suggests extending these open access (OA) limits coastwide which would allow for both incidental take and targeted fisheries.

#17: Routine adjustments to the non-trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, size limits, etc.

The GAP suggests combining limited entry fixed gear and OA lingcod North of 42° N. lat. and OA lingcod north of 40° 10' N. lat., and analyzing up to 2,000 lbs. monthly for both sectors, anticipating we can choose a lower value later in the biennial process.