

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT  
 MEASURES FOR 2017-2018 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

## Routine Adjustments to Management Measures

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) ([Agenda Item H.5.a, Supp ODFW Report, September 2015](#)), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) ([Agenda Item H.5.a, Supp CDFW Report, September 2015](#)) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) ([Agenda I.9.a, Supp WDFW Report, November 2015](#)) have all submitted state reports describing proposed routine measures that will be analyzed over the winter. The GMT briefly describes these measures and the associated workload in [Agenda Item I.9.a, GMT Report, November 2015](#). **At this time, the GMT has not identified the need for further guidance on season structures.**

### Action Item 12. Blackgill Rockfish Trip Limits for South of 40°10' N. Latitude

#### Trip Limits

Because the Council choose to recommend Alternative 1 from Table 2 of the draft Environmental Assessment document ([Agenda Item I.6, Attachment 1, November 2015](#); excerpted below in Table 1), an adjusted blackgill rockfish trip limit structure will be necessary. Possible blackgill rockfish trip limits based on Alternative 1 for both the non-trawl and trawl sectors have been analyzed. Analysis was completed to determine what the various harvest guideline (HG) amounts would be for the non-trawl and trawl fishery sectors. In the case of the limited entry and open access fixed-gear sectors, the current 60 percent 40 percent HG ratio was used to determine target levels of mortality and is shown in Table 2. Table 3 summarizes the blackgill rockfish trip limits for the limited entry non-trawl fixed-gear sector with a range of trip limits, and the estimated annual mortality resulting from those trip limit amounts. This trip limit structure applies to all six periods and applies to the subsequent trip limits for the open access non-trawl sector (Table 4).

**Table 1. Summary of allocation alternatives for blackgill rockfish analyzed in the draft Environmental Assessment for south of 40°10' N. latitude.**

Alternative	Blackgill Rockfish Removed From the SSRF Complex	Allocation Basis	LE Trawl Allocation	Non-trawl Allocation
No Action	N	Amend. 21 – 2003-2005 Total Catch	NA	NA
Alt. 1	Y	2003-2013 Total Catch	41.0%	59.0%

**Table 2. Calculated blackgill rockfish harvest guideline amounts (mt) for the limited entry and open access non-trawl fixed gear sectors south of 40°10' N latitude.**

<b>Alternative 1 blackgill rockfish ratios</b>		
	<b>LE</b>	<b>OA</b>
Target HG (mt)	36.0	24.0

**Table 3. Bi-monthly cumulative trip limits (in pounds) of blackgill rockfish for the limited entry fixed-gear sector, and the estimated annual mortality (mt), south of 40°10' N latitude. Estimated discard mortality is factored into the final annual estimated total mortality.**

<b>Alt 1</b>		
<b>trip limit</b>	<b>Est. take</b>	<b>% of HG</b>
1,600	24.5	68.1%
2,200	32.2	89.5%
2,400	34.8	96.6%

**Table 4. Bi-monthly cumulative trip limits (in pounds) of blackgill rockfish for the open access fixed-gear sector, and the estimated annual mortality (mt), south of 40°10' N latitude. Estimated discard mortality is factored into the final annual estimated total mortality.**

<b>Alt 1</b>		
<b>trip limit</b>	<b>Est. take</b>	<b>% of HG</b>
550	5.1	21.3%
1,000	8.6	35.9%
1,500	12.5	52.0%

## Results

This action alternative will provide more fishing opportunity for blackgill rockfish for the non-trawl fixed-gear sector. By removing blackgill rockfish from the SSRF complex, better flexibility is created to directly manage the fishery with trip limits in the non-trawl sector providing some of that flexibility that are designed to keep allowable harvest within the harvest guidelines setup by the alternatives. Because we are still working with a conservative set of increased harvest guidelines for the non-trawl sector, the trip limits represent a modest increase at most. While the estimated mortality for the limited entry sector is relatively judicious under these trip limit amounts, caution has to be exercised for the open access sector; latent capacity in this sector is unknown. As such, the open access trip limits presented here essentially stop at estimated annual mortality amounts near 50 percent of the harvest guidelines, providing a large buffer to compensate for unforeseen fleet size increases or fishing behavior changes that could occur.

## Recommendations

Because the trip limits presented here are considered preliminary at this time, no recommendations are given. They are presented here to display a possible range for Council consideration since it

choose alternative one based on Agenda Item I.6, pulling blackgill rockfish out of the SSRF complex.

## New Management Measures

In addition to the discussion of new management measures below, the GMT also provided a summary of additional new management measures in [Agenda Item I.9.a, GMT Report, November 2015](#).

### Action Item 27: Ecosystem Component Designation for Big Skate - IFQ Issuance

#### Background

If the Council chooses to manage the trawl sector catch of big skate with IFQ, then an initial allocation of quota shares (QS) will be required. The trawl catch share program has default rules for the subdivision or combination of IFQ management units (e.g., breaking out blackgill from southern minor slope rockfish or subdividing lingcod by area) but not for the inclusion of an entirely new stock.

#### Relevant Factors for Analysis

To move forward with an initial allocation of big skate, the first step is the development of a reasonable range of alternatives. Considerable effort goes into an allocation analysis, therefore it is usually best to specify an initial set of alternatives and review a preliminary analysis of the alternatives before moving to a full analysis. In the past, preliminary analyses have often led to substantial modification of alternatives prior to the final range being set for analysis. For example, the widow reallocation analysis preliminary alternatives were vetted in 2011 and presented at the November 2014 meeting along with some preliminary analysis, which permitted the Council to adopt a range of alternatives that were fully analyzed over the winter. Another consideration is the length of time it takes to produce a full analysis. Such analyses might be produced over the winter, between the April and June meetings, or over the summer but would not likely be possible between the March and April or September and November Council meetings. In addition to the time needed for Council consideration and decision making, NMFS would need time for rulemaking and implementation.

If the Council decides to move forward with a big skate allocation, there are a number of criteria for initial allocations to consider (based on Magnuson-Stevens Act, Sections 303(b)(6) and 303(c)(5)(A)), including

- consideration of current and historic harvests and community participation
- present participation and dependence
- employment in harvesting and processing sectors
- investment and dependence on the fishery
- economics of the fishery
- capabilities for engaging in other fisheries
- the cultural and social framework

- fairness and equity
- other relevant consideration

There are other provisions and guidelines that should also be taken into consideration, e.g., national standards and the allocation framework of the groundfish fishery management plan. See Agenda Item E.6, [Attachment 2](#) from the April 2015 Council meeting for a complete listing of allocation guidance.

The original allocations for the trawl rationalization program were based on then current ownership of trawl limited entry permits and the activity of those permits from 1994-2003, bycatch needs, and equal allocation. To address bycatch needs, there was additional consideration of the geographic distribution of fishing activity from 2004-2006 (based on trawl logbooks).

Through the initial allocation process, QS accounts were generated on the basis of trawl permit ownership and QS was allocated to those accounts.<sup>1</sup> Since the time the QS was allocated, trawl permits have been traded and may no longer be associated with the current owners of the QS accounts which those permits generated.

There are a variety of different approaches that might be used for an initial allocation of big skate QS. A few examples include:

- allocating based on recent history of big skate harvest (post-implementation of the catch share program)
- allocating based on recent history of harvest of species that are caught when targeting on big skate
- allocating to a person based on their ownership of other QS of species that co-occur with big skate

If an allocation is made on the basis of recent history, some issues to consider include

- the degree to which big skate is accurately recorded on fish tickets;
- the need for a control date to limit the incentive for speculative harvest; and
- the entities to which the allocation would be made (current LE permit owner, current vessel owner, or others associated with the harvest and delivery of big skate).

## Amendment 21 within-Trawl Allocations for Darkblotched Rockfish and Pacific Ocean Perch

Under Agenda Item I.4, the Council recommended consideration of minor revisions to the within-trawl allocations for darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch (POP) as it relates to the whiting allocations for these species. This action will require an amendment to the groundfish

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<sup>1</sup> Important administrative details of this process include the issuance of a QS permit to the owner of a limited entry trawl permit, the generation of a QS account(s) in association with each QS permit and the deposit of QS into those accounts based on the allocation formulas applied to each trawl permit.

Fishery Management Plan (FMP; Agenda Item [I.4.a WDFW supplemental report 2](#)). Below the GMT provides background, relevant factors for analysis, and workload estimate.

## Background

Over the last two years, the Council has had to take inseason action to allow the at-sea sectors to prosecute their Pacific whiting allocations due to constraining darkblotched rockfish set-asides. In October 2014, the Council had an emergency meeting that resulted in a shift of 3.0 mt of darkblotched rockfish from the catcher/processor (CP) to the mothership (MS) sector, which had exceeded their set aside and had to cease fishing due to the co-op agreement. Furthermore, in September 2015, the Council took inseason action in September to move 8 metric tons of darkblotched rockfish from the incidental open access (i.e. pink shrimp) set-aside to the at-sea sectors due to concerns of higher catch rates. However, NMFS determined that 7 mt were available and reallocated that amount evenly between the at-sea sectors. The GMT also provides the current percentages of attainment for whiting and darkblotched in our inseason statement ([Agenda Item I.8.a. Supplemental GMT Report](#))

## Relevant Factors for Analysis

The GMT discussed what information would be needed over winter to analyze the change in allocation to the at-sea sectors for darkblotched and POP. Table 5 and Table 6 provide 2011-2014 mortality and regulatory set-aside for darkblotched and POP, respectively.

Table 7 and Table 8 below shows the current allocations that would be given to each at sea sector under the range of ACLs adopted under Agenda Item I.4.

**Table 5 . Darkblotched rockfish mortality (mort.) and regulatory (reg.) allocations in the IFQ (in mt), Catcher Processor (CP) and Mothership (MS) sector, from 2011-2014.**

Sector	2011		2012		2013		2014 <sup>1/</sup>	
	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.
Total SB Trawl	250.84	91	248.94	86	266.70	101.5	278.41	96.6
Shoreside Whiting	10.5	1.2	10.5	4.3	10.6	3.3	11.1	8.4
MS	6.0	1.7	6.0	1.3	6.1	4.2	6.3	7.2
CP	8.5	10.3	8.5	1.4	8.6	2.08	9.0	3.41

1/ Effective at 2000 hours local time on October 17, 2014, the amount of darkblotched rockfish available to the catcher/processor fishery was reduced by 3.0 mt, to 3.3 mt, and the amount available to the mothership fishery was raised by 3.0 mt, to 9.3 mt. The amount available to the catcher/processor fishery was subsequently raised back to 9.0 mt by distributing to the catcher/processor fishery 3.0 mt of the 18.4 mt initially deducted from the ACL to account for mortality in the incidental open access fishery, consistent with 660.60(c)(3)(ii).

**Table 6 . Pacific ocean perch mortality (mort.) and regulatory (reg.) allocations in the IFQ in mt, Catcher Processor (CP) and Mothership (MS) sector, from 2011-2014.**

Sector	2011		2012		2013		2014	
	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.	reg.	mort.
Total SB Trawl	119.36	47	119.50	49	109.43	49.99	112.28	41
Shoreside Whiting	12.6	.28	12.6	12.4	12.6	7.1	12.6	10.2
MS	7.2	0.7	7.2	1.4	7.2	1.14	7.2	3.6
CP	10.2	6.5	10.2	3.1	10.2	4.28	10.2	0.32

**Table 7. Darkblotched Rockfish ACLs, Whiting Allocations, and At-Sea allocations (in mt).**

Year	ACL	Whiting Allocation	CP	MS
2015	338	27.1	9.2	6.5
2016	346	27.8	9.5	6.7
2017				
-No Action	406	32.9	11.2	7.9
-Alternative 1	641	53	18.0	12.7
2018				
-No Action	419	34	11.6	8.2
-Alternative 1	653	54.1	18.4	13

**Table 8. POP ACLs, Whiting Allocations, and At-Sea Set allocations (in mt)**

Year	ACL	Whiting Allocation	CP	MS
2015	158	30	10.2	7.2
2016	164	30	10.2	7.2
2017	171	30	10.2	7.2
2018	176	30	10.2	7.2

Finally, the GMT notes that this management measure would require that National Standard 4 fair and equity issues are addressed.

Workload  
Medium-High