

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON 2021-2022 OREGON
RECREATIONAL FISEHRIES**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff have been working on the 2021-2022 biennial harvest specifications and management measures over the winter. During the fall of 2019, ODFW hosted a series of public meetings to get input from anglers on the 2021 and 2022 recreational groundfish seasons structure, bag limits, and other regulations. This report summarizes ODFW’s analysis and preliminary recommendations for the 2021-2022 Oregon recreational groundfish fisheries.

Harvest Guidelines

Under the No Action Alternative on annual catch limits (ACLs), the Oregon recreational harvest guidelines (HGs) or presumed state quotas are presented in Table 1 (with 2020 values for comparison). Based on this, the black rockfish and nearshore rockfish complex species are the primary drivers of the Oregon recreational fishery in terms of the season structure and bag limits.

Table 1. Oregon recreational Federal harvest guidelines (HG), or state quotas under the No Action Alternative (mt), with 2020 HGs for comparison.

Stock	2020 HG	2021 HG ^{a/}	2022 HG ^{a/}
Black Rockfish	389.1	364.3	360.2
Blue/Deacon Rockfish	79.1	73.7	71.2
Canary Rockfish b/ (Option 1/Option 2)	66.7	65/75	63.4/75
Cabezon	16.8	19.4	18.6
Greenlings c/	39.2	35.8	34.4
Nearshore Rockfish North of 40°10' N. Lat.	11.6	10.8	10.5
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH (ACT/ACL values)	7.2	6.9/8.8	7.1/9.0

a/ The state process in Oregon establishes the commercial and recreational quotas for black, blue, and deacon rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and nearshore rockfish. The values are the presumed recreational share based on the 2020 recreational and commercial sharing percentages in Oregon state regulations.

b/ Federal HGs are established for canary and yelloweye rockfish and should be included in Federal regulation.

c/ Includes kelp and other greenlings. Kelp greenling accounts for over 99 percent of the landings.

Season Structure

The season structure and bag limits proposed in Figure 1 for 2021-2022 are designed to balance impacts to black rockfish and nearshore rockfish species, while staying within their respective HGs, along with staying within the yelloweye rockfish HG. The yelloweye rockfish HGs/ACTs will allow for times and areas to be open that haven’t been open since 2004, which makes modeling and projecting impacts very uncertain. Therefore, the State of Oregon will likely put more restrictive regulations (lower bag limit, fewer months at all-depth) in place, via state regulations to be precautionary, as it has done in recent years. Depending on how the season progresses,

inseason action can be taken to further restrict fisheries or to ease restrictions through state process which can act in a timelier manner.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bottomfish Season	Open all depths											
Marine Bag Limit ^{a/}	Ten (10)											
Lingcod Bag Limit	Three (3)											
Flatfish Bag Limit ^{b/}	Twenty Five (25)											

a/ Marine bag limit is 10 fish per day and includes all species other than lingcod, salmon, steelhead, Pacific halibut, flatfish, surfperch, sturgeon, striped bass, pelagic tuna and mackerel species, and bait fish such as herring, anchovy, sardine, and smelt; of which no more than one may be cabezon.

b/ Flounders, soles, sanddabs, turbot and halibuts except Pacific halibut

Figure 1. ODFW recommended Oregon recreational groundfish season structure and bag limits for 2021 and 2022 under the No Action Alternative.

Under the Alternative 1 ACLs, the black rockfish ACL contribution to the Oregon black/blue/deacon rockfish complex ACL would be 512 mt in both 2021 and 2022, resulting in presumptive black rockfish recreational HGs of 398.1 mt in each year. This level, which is status quo relative to 2020, is not enough to allow for an increase in bag limits or any other regulation liberalization, but will reduce the chance of having to take action inseason to reduce bag limits or implement other restrictions.

Longleader Gear and All-Depth Pacific Halibut

During the 2019 Pacific halibut Catch Sharing Plan process, Oregon anglers put in a request to be allowed to fish in the longleader gear fishery and all-depth Pacific halibut on the same trip. Currently, the combination of those two trip types is prohibited in both the sport bottomfish and sport Pacific halibut regulations.

The longleader gear (Holloway Gear) was approved for use in the Oregon recreational fishery by the Council in 2016 and implemented in federal regulations in 2018. The new regulation allowed the use of the gear (description below) outside of the 40-fathom regulatory line April through September. The gear is legal gear in areas and times open to sport bottomfish in Oregon. It also prohibited to combine a longleader gear trip with a “regular” bottomfish trip and Pacific halibut trips. Retention was also limited to 10 species of midwater rockfish in state regulation; and retention of lingcod was specifically prohibited. All of these regulations were put into place to limit interactions with yelloweye rockfish.

Effort

Allowing these two activities to occur on the same trip is not expected to increase effort. There will not be rush of new participants into the fishery. Based on public comment during the ODFW public meetings, and to the Council in November 2019, this will instead allow anglers already participating in one or the other fisheries to have additional opportunity while offshore. Anglers indicated that on days when all-depth Pacific halibut fishing is slow, or really good, it would be nice to be able to fish for something else while offshore. The analysis for the longleader gear

action (NMFS 2017) estimated that the potential number of combined longleader gear and all-depth Pacific halibut trips could be up to 16,465. The difference between that estimate and the 10-year average number of Pacific halibut trips (14,487) is 1,978 trips.

Species Impacts

Since beginning in 2018, the longleader gear fishery has caught primarily midwater rockfish species, as intended, with very little bycatch. In 2018, yellowtail, widow, and canary rockfish accounted for 99 percent of the fish landed, and 97 percent in 2019. Yelloweye rockfish accounted for less than one percent of total fish encountered each year (0.08 percent in 2018 and 0.4 percent in 2019). If longleader gear fishing and all-depth halibut were allowed on the same trip, there is the potential for an increase in the catch of the three main longleader gear species (much lower potential for the other species) but should be within the Oregon recreational canary rockfish allocation and well within the non-trawl allocations of yellowtail and widow rockfish allocations for 2021-22. ODFW intends that this opportunity not lead to enough yelloweye rockfish bycatch to affect the traditional bottomfish or recreational Pacific halibut fisheries, and we will monitor carefully inseason, and can apply restrictions (such as returning to the prohibition on combo trips) in state rule if necessary

Yelloweye Rockfish

Over the two years that the longleader gear fishery has been allowed, the average encounter rate of yelloweye rockfish has been less than 0.02 fish per angler trip (Figure 2); this means that on average there would be one yelloweye rockfish encountered every 59 trips. In comparison, the encounter rate of yelloweye rockfish on all-depth Pacific halibut trips averaged 0.04 fish per angler trip in 2018 and 2019 which equates to about one yelloweye rockfish encountered for every 25 all-depth halibut trips. Applying the higher of the two above yelloweye rockfish encounter rates (to be precautionary) to the additional potential number of angler trips equals 80 potential yelloweye rockfish encounters. Assuming all are released dead, to be precautionary, and applying a 3.0 kg avg. weight results in approximately 0.2 mt of potential additional impacts. Therefore, there will likely be minimal additional impact to yelloweye rockfish from allowing longleader gear and all-depth Pacific halibut fishing to occur on the same trip. Additionally, those impacts when combined with impacts from the traditional bottomfish fishery are projected to be well within the presumed Oregon recreational yelloweye rockfish allocation (6.9/8.8 mt in 2021).

Chinook and Coho Salmon

Coho salmon encounter rate was 0.003 fish per trip, or one fish for every 297 angler trips on longleader gear trips (Figure 2). On all-depth Pacific halibut trips the encounter rate has been 0.002 fish per trip, or one for every 583 all-depth Pacific halibut trips. Of all the salmon species, Chinook salmon was encountered the least frequently, with only two fish encountered in two years each, a total of four fish, for both the longleader gear and all-depth Pacific halibut fisheries. That is an encounter rate of 0.0003 fish per trip, or one Chinook salmon encountered for every 3,714 longleader trips (Figure 2). All-depth Pacific halibut trips had an encounter rate of 0.0001 fish per trip, or one Chinook salmon encountered for every 14,273 trips. Given those encounter rates, and the potential number of trips (16,465), potential additional Chinook salmon encounters would be approximately 0.6 fish per year and coho salmon encounters would be approximately 6 fish per year. When added to the encounters from the “traditional” bottomfish fishery, the total annual encounters will not be much different than the recent years’ total estimates, and should not increase the potential for the total groundfish salmon thresholds to be reached or exceeded.

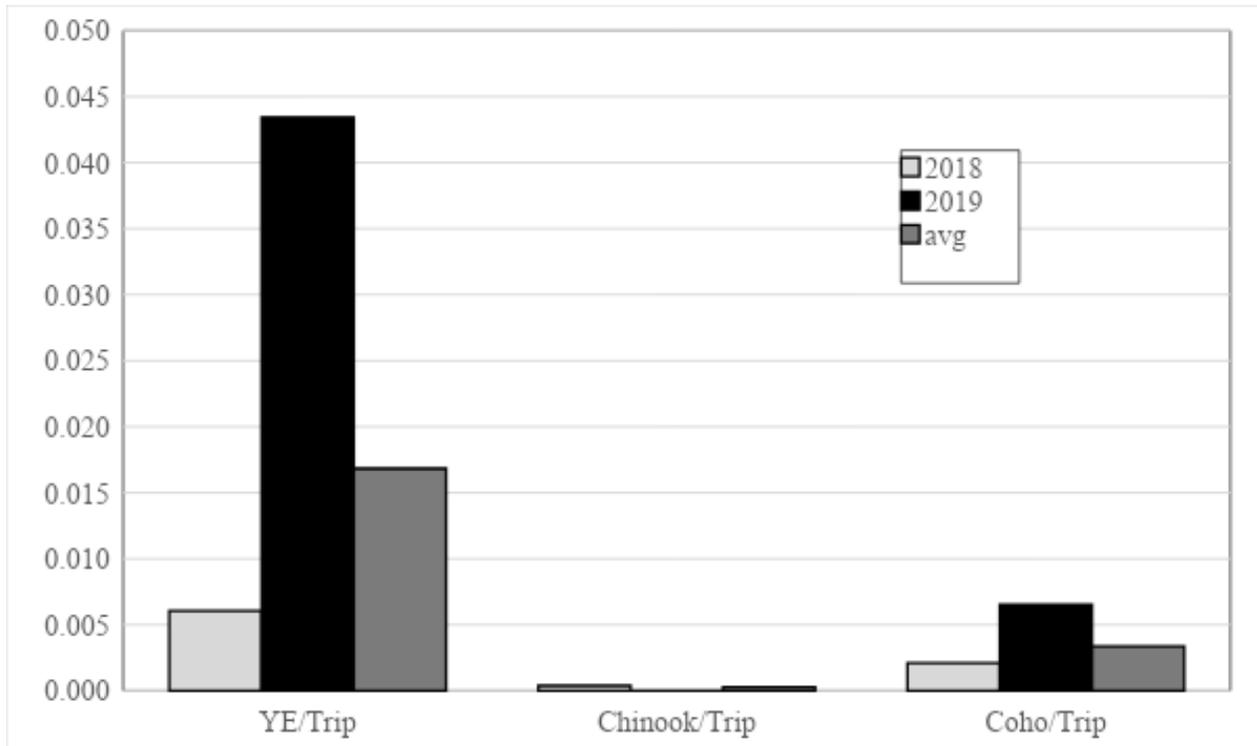


Figure 2. Catch rate of yelloweye rockfish, Chinook salmon and coho salmon on Oregon longleader gear trips in 2018 and 2019.

Recommendations

ODFW recommends the preliminary preferred alternative season structure for the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery be what is shown in Figure 1 with the addition of allowing longleader gear and all-depth Pacific halibut fishing on the same trip.

References

NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service). 2017. Authorization of an Oregon Recreational Fishery for Midwater Groundfish Species. Environmental Assessment.