

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON UPDATE ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2021-2022

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the briefing book materials for this item and was briefed by Dr. Jim Seger, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff on the February 25, 2020 GMT webinar. The GMT further discussed this item at the March 2020 Council meeting.

The GMT thanks the exempted fishing permit (EFP) applicants for their thorough and thoughtful responses to suggestions from the GMT, the Council, and Enforcement Consultants. The Coastal Conservation Association California (CCA Cal) EFP was withdrawn; however CCA Cal is now exploring the possibility of being involved with the EFP proposed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW, [Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 3](#)). CDFW amended their EFP to include a maximum limit of retained cowcod, which is expected to be accounted for in their standard catch estimation program rather than as a formal off-the-top set-aside amount. Given the expected increase to the 2021-2022 annual catch limit for cowcod, the GMT does not expect the proposed limit to pose any issue for exceeding established catch limits.

The Monterey Bay Regional EFP Targeting Chilipepper Rockfish (hereafter, “Real Good Fish EFP”) amended their application to remove the vessel monitoring system exemption, as suggested by the GMT at the November 2019 Council meeting ([Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1](#)). In addition, the Real Good Fish EFP requested their cowcod set-aside be increased from 0.15 to 0.5 mt ([Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 7](#)). The Real Good Fish EFP indicated this additional set-aside would provide additional buffer that could increase participation. This alteration is somewhat outside of this step in the process, as EFP check-ins typically address previously raised concerns and/or unconsidered needs. If the Council feels this increased set-aside should be adopted, the Council may want to ensure equitable access to the resource by making the option available to all other EFP applicants.

PFMC
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