

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
STOCK ASSESSMENT PLAN AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) – FINAL
ACTION

Dr. Jim Hastie (National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center, NWFSC) and Mr. John DeVore (Council Staff) briefed the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) on stock assessment planning for 2021 and 2023. The GAP offers the following comments and recommendations on stock assessment planning.

Full Assessments for 2021

The GAP is in general agreement with both the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and Scientific and Statistical Committee and supports conducting full benchmark assessments for the following stocks in 2021:

Vermilion rockfish/Sunset rockfish as a complex
Lingcod
Dover sole

Vermilion/Sunset rockfish are important to both recreational and commercial fixed gear fishermen as it makes up a substantial percentage of the shelf rockfish take, particularly in the south. Landings have been increasing in recent years and industry suggests that is likely due to multiple years of strong recruitment. Vermilion/Sunset rockfish have not been assessed and warrant a full assessment.

Lingcod is a critically important stock economically for all sectors on the West Coast. Due to new age data and genetic research, lingcod is a good candidate for a new full assessment in 2021.

Dover sole was last assessed in 2011 and is at the end of its ten-year projections. There are new age data available from the 2011-2019 NWFSC trawl survey.

Data-Moderate Assessments for 2021

Pacific Spiny Dogfish
Copper rockfish
Brown rockfish
Squarespot rockfish

Pacific spiny dogfish bycatch has been increasing in recent years in all commercial fishing sectors. The stock was last assessed in 2011 and is at the end of its ten-year projections. There are new length data and very little age data available for this stock; thus, spiny dogfish is a good candidate for a data-moderate assessment.

Copper rockfish is one of the more important nearshore rockfish species economically for the

non-trawl fisheries in Oregon and California. They are a major component of the nearshore rockfish take in southern California and are caught in both the nearshore and shelf rockfish fisheries. Landings have been increasing in the south in recent years. Reports from industry have indicated strong recent recruitment for copper rockfish.

Brown rockfish make up a substantial percentage of the live-rockfish take from the Point Conception area north through the Morro Bay area. This is a very important species for the recreational fleet as well.

Squarespot rockfish is being caught in increasing numbers mainly as bycatch in both commercial and recreational fisheries in the south. The data-poor OFL has been exceeded in recent years as the stock is increasingly encountered in fisheries and in the southern California hook-and-line survey. A data-moderate assessment will better inform an OFL and upgrade the stock assessment to a category 2.

Update assessment for 2021

Sablefish

The 2019 sablefish benchmark assessment indicated the stock was finally out of the precautionary management zone and back above B_{MSY} . This is a critically important stock economically for the West Coast and warrants close monitoring.

Catch-Only Projections for 2021

The GAP agrees with the GMT to conduct catch-only projections for canary rockfish, arrowtooth flounder, darkblotched rockfish, and petrale sole.

Full Assessments for 2023

The GAP suggests the following stocks could be recommended for full assessments in 2023: shortbelly rockfish, petrale sole, redbanded rockfish, black rockfish, quillback rockfish, sablefish, yellowtail rockfish, and roughey rockfish.

Data-Moderate Assessments for 2023

The GAP suggests the following stocks could be recommended for data-moderate assessments in 2023: treefish, olive rockfish, speckled rockfish, bank rockfish, starry rockfish, longspine thornyhead, shortspine thornyhead, English sole, and rex sole.

Terms of Reference

The GAP reviewed the revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment Review Process for 2021-2022 and finds those revisions acceptable.