

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE NATIONAL MARINE  
FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the groundfish ([Agenda Item C.1.a, NWFSC Report 3, September 2020](#)) and Pacific halibut ([Agenda Item C.1.a, NWFSC Report 1, September 2020](#)) mortality reports provided by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in the advanced briefing book. The GMT appreciates all of the effort that goes into developing these reports, and thanks all those involved.

The groundfish mortality report ([Somers et al. 2020](#)) estimates that mortality of yelloweye rockfish from the non-tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery was 7.42 mt, which is considerably higher than the total Incidental Open Access (IOA) set-aside of 0.68 mt. The 2019 annual catch limit (ACL) was not exceeded. Based on this information, the GMT will be proposing adjustments to the IOA projected impacts in the 2020 rebuilding species scorecard, which we will discuss in our inseason report under Agenda Item D.5.

The 2019 mortality of one stock and one stock complex, shortbelly rockfish and cabezon/kelp greenling complex in Washington, exceeded their ACLs. The shortbelly rockfish overage was anticipated and described in the inseason agenda item in November 2019 and therefore is not discussed further here ([Agenda Item H.10.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2019](#)). Furthermore, the ACL for 2020 was increased to 3,000 mt compared to 500 mt in 2019 ([85 FR 36803, June 18, 2020](#)).

The mortality of the Washington cabezon/kelp greenling complex in 2019 was 11.48 mt compared to an 11 mt ACL, equating to 104 percent attainment. Given the reduction in catch and effort in 2020 due to COVID-19 related closures and restrictions, the 2020 ACL of 10 mt is not projected to be exceeded. Currently, the 2020 catch estimates for the kelp greenling/Washington cabezon complex are only complete through the end of May, as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is awaiting certain data sources required for a complete up-to-date projection. However, estimates through May were well below average at 0.13 mt, compared to a 2019 value of 4.82 mt for the same time period. Additionally, the ports of Neah Bay and La Push, where the majority (~80 percent) of these landings occur, have been closed to non-tribal members since the third week of March. Even if the remainder of this season mirrors 2019's June through October catch, the total projected mortality would only be 6.77 mt. Additionally, the ACL increases to 20 mt in 2021 and 17 mt in 2022. Given this background, the 2019 overage does not constitute a conservation concern.

PFMC  
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