

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS – FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the current status of groundfish fisheries, requests from industry, and the need for any inseason adjustments during the April 2021 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting.

Action items

Incidental Lingcod North of 40° 10' N. lat. retention in Salmon Troll Fishery

At the March 2021 meeting, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) submitted a request under the Workload and New Management Measures Prioritization agenda item ([Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental SAS Report 1, March 2021](#)) to adjust the incidental lingcod trip limit in the salmon troll fishery. Mr. Steve Wilson provided public comment to the GMT at this meeting refining the request to be one lingcod per two Chinook salmon, plus one lingcod, with a trip limit of ten lingcod. The GMT has had lengthy discussions on this and provides detailed information in Supplemental GMT Report 2.

Housekeeping

The GMT was notified by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of a typographical error in Table 2 (South) that was made in the correction to the 2021-22 biennial harvest specifications and management measure rule, published on March 16, 2021 ([86 FR 14379](#)). This *Federal Register* notice mistakenly changed the boundaries of the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) south of 34° 27' N. lat. from 100 - 150 fathoms to 100 - 125 fathoms. The GMT notes that the correct boundaries for the non-trawl RCA are in current regulations at Table 3 (South), and were published correctly in Table 2 (South) in the December 31, 2021 ([85 FR 86858](#)) final rule correction. NMFS notified the GMT that the corrected boundary could be implemented more expeditiously if the Council were to recommend the corrective action under inseason. The GMT understands that once the correction is made, the RCA boundaries will remain the same until amended (e.g. for 2021 and beyond). **The GMT recommends that the Council adopt a boundary for the non-trawl RCA south of 34° 27' N. lat. from 100 - 150 fathoms in Table 2 (South), which is consistent with Council action under the 2021-22 harvest specifications and management measures, and also brings consistency to the non-trawl RCA boundaries for the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) and open access (OA) fisheries in Tables 2 (South) and 3 (South), respectively.** The GMT also recommends that this correction be implemented by NMFS as quickly as possible in order to remove inconsistencies, be clearer for enforcement, and reduce confusion among industry members.

Shortspine Thornyhead

The GMT received a request to increase the OA trip limit for shortspine thornyhead north of 34° 27' N lat. The OA trip limit for the area between 40° 10' and 34° 27' N. lat. was increased as part of the 2021-22 harvest specifications and management measures process as a means to help reduce regulatory discarding. As noted in the 2021-22 biennial harvest specifications and management measures analysis ([Agenda Item F.1, Attachment 8, June 2020](#)), the recent high attainment of shortspine thornyhead in the non-trawl sector reduces the opportunity to increase trip limits for

both the LEFG and OA fisheries. The three months of landing data for 2021 currently available do not decisively indicate how the LEFG and OA fisheries will perform over the remainder of the year. Increasing the OA trip limit would be premature at this time. **Therefore, the GMT does not recommend adjustments to the OA shortspine thornyhead north of 34° 27' N. lat. trip limit at this time.**

Informational Items

In Appendix 1, the GMT provides 2021 sablefish catch projections for the Limited Entry north of 36° N. lat. (LEN), Open Access north of 36° N. lat. (OAN), and Limited Entry south of 36° N. lat. (LES) sectors in the sablefish Daily Trip Limit fishery compared to each sector's 2021 landings target. Projections for the Open Access fishery south of 36° N. lat. are not provided because fewer than five vessels have landed less than 24 mt of sablefish since 2018. The 2021 OA South Landings Target is 435 mt.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table 1 shows Chinook salmon catches as of April 12, 2021 in relation to the sector thresholds.

Table 1. Chinook salmon catch in 2021 as of April 12, 2021 in relation to the sector thresholds (Source =PacFIN IFQ521 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report).

Sector	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date	Threshold	% of Threshold
Whiting	CP	-	11,000	5.1%
	MS	-		
	Shoreside	-		
	Tribal	560 a/		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>560</i>		
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	283	5,500	15.1%
	Midwater Trawl	24		
	Tribal	25 a/		
	Fixed Gear	500 b/		
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec + longleader			
	CA Rec			
<i>Total</i>	<i>832</i>			
Reserve		3,500		
All groundfish fisheries		1,392	20,000	6.9%

a/ Current year tribal landings are estimated as the maximum of the historic landings for the last 5 years.

b/ GMT proposed assumption of annual mortality, which assumed maximum historical mortality (154) plus a 250 fish buffer from the 2017 BiOp and an additional 96 fish to account for some uncertainty in recreational salmon seasons; recreational estimates only apply to groundfish fisheries occurring outside of salmon seasons.

Shortbelly Rockfish Scorecard

Table 2 shows that 12.7 mt of shortbelly rockfish has been taken as of April 12, 2021. The GMT notes that shortbelly rockfish is again available on the public groundfish scorecard (Report GMT007) on the [PacFIN Reports Dashboard](#). The GMT thanks PacFIN staff for responding to the Council's request on this so quickly.

Table 2. Estimated mortality of shortbelly rockfish by sector, as of April 12, 2021. (Source = PacFIN)

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)
At-Sea Hake Catcher Processor	-
At-Sea Hake Mothership	-
IFQ	12.7
Incidental/Miscellaneous	-
Shoreside Hake	-
Treaty	*
Total	12.7

* Indicates confidential

Rebuilding Species Scorecard

Appendix 2 shows the updated 2021 rebuilding species scorecard for yelloweye rockfish.

Recommendations

The GMT recommends:

- the Council adopt a boundary for the non-trawl RCA south of 34° 27' N. lat. from 100 - 150 fathoms in Table 2 (South), which is consistent with Council action under the 2021-22 harvest specifications and management measures, and also brings consistency to the non-trawl RCA boundaries for the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) and open access (OA) fisheries in Tables 2 (South) and 3 (South), respectively.

Appendix 1. 2021 Cumulative Catch Projections for the Sablefish Daily Trip Limit Fishery North and South of 36° N. lat.

Figures 1 through 3 display the 2021 cumulative catch projections for the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) and open access (OA) sablefish daily trip limit fishery north and south of 36° n. lat.

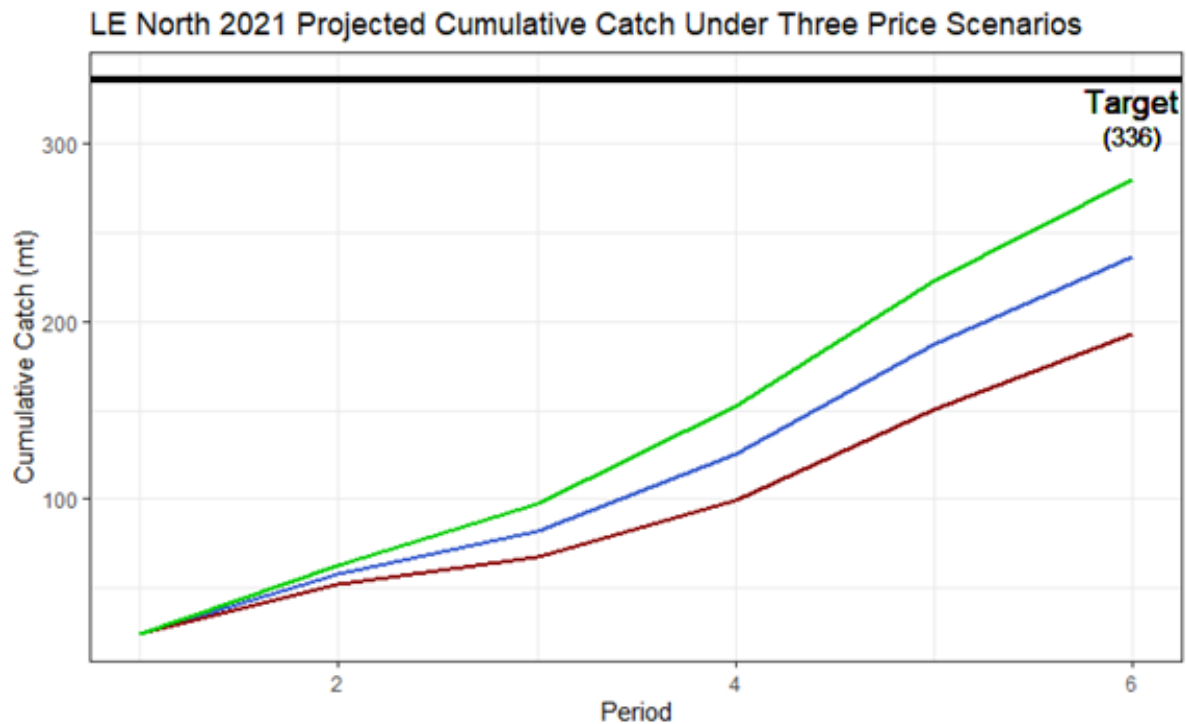


Figure 1. 2021 Cumulative Catch Projections for the LEFG Sablefish Daily Trip Limit Fishery North of 36° N. lat.

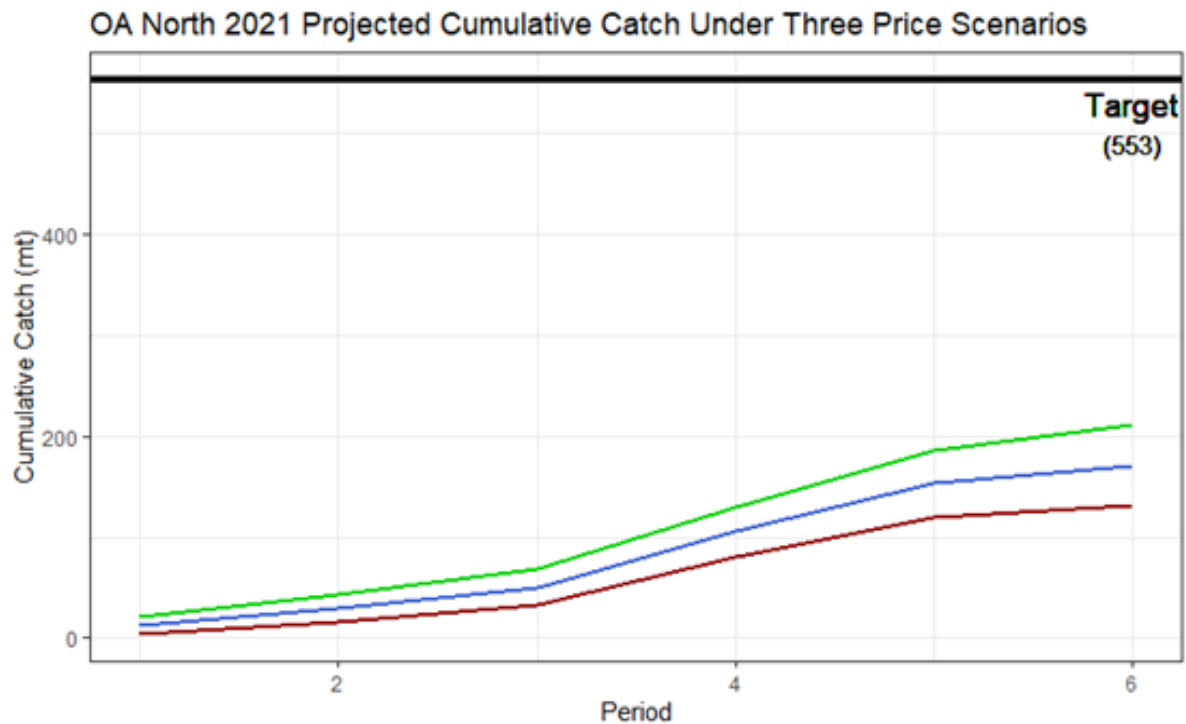


Figure 2. 2021 Cumulative Catch Projections for the OA Sablefish Daily Trip Limit Fishery North of 36° N. lat

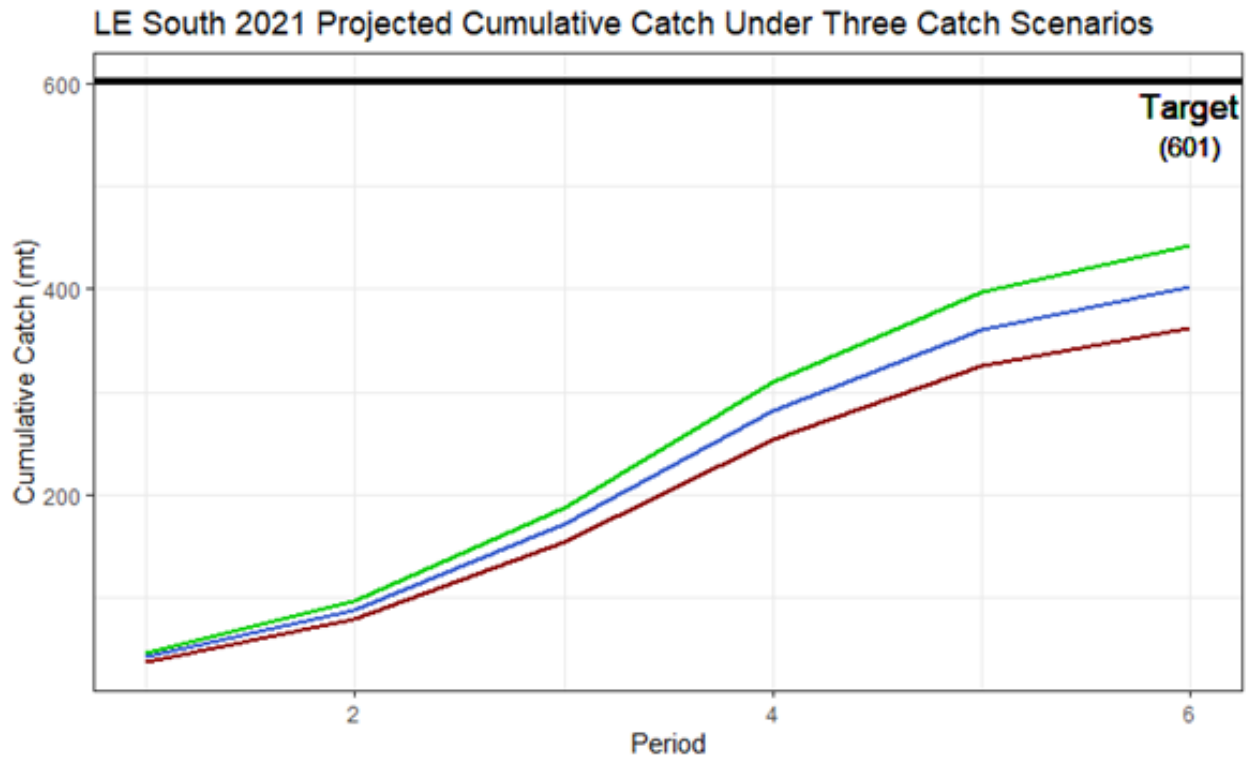


Figure 3. 2021 Cumulative Catch Projections for the LEFG Sablefish Daily Trip Limit Fishery South of 36° N. lat

Appendix 2. Allocations^a and projected mortality impacts (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as adopted for 2021.

Fishery		Yelloweye	
<i>Date: April 13, 2021</i>	HG Allocations a/	ACT Allocations a/	Projected Impacts f/
Off the Top Deductions	8.85	8.85	16.0
EFP b/	0.24	0.24	0.02
Research c/	2.9	2.92	2.9
Incidental OA d/	0.69	0.69	8.04
Tribal e/	5.0	5.0	5.0
Bottom Trawl			0.0
Troll			0.0
Fixed gear	5.0	5.0	5.0
mid-water			0.0
whiting			
Trawl Allocations	3.3	3.3	0.6
-SB Trawl	3.3	3.3	0.6
-At-Sea Trawl	0.0		0.0
a) At-sea whiting MS			
b) At-sea whiting CP			
Non-Trawl Allocation	37.9	29.5	23.6
Non-Nearshore			
LE FG	7.8	6.2	3.9
OA FG			
Directed OA: Nearshore			
Recreational Groundfish			
WA	9.7	7.5	5.7
OR	8.8	6.9	5.5
CA	11.4	8.9	8.5
TOTAL	50.1	41.7	40.2
Harvest Specification	50	41.7	41.7
Difference	0.0	0.1	1.5
Percent of ACL	100.1%	99.9%	96.4%
Key	= not applicable		
	= trace, less than 0.1 mt		
	= Fixed Values		
	= off the top deductions		

a/ Formal allocations are represented in the black shaded cells and are specified in regulation in Tables 1b and 1e. The other values in the allocation columns are 1) off the top deductions, 2) set asides from the trawl allocation 3) ad-hoc allocations recommended in the 2021-2022 EIS process, 4) HG for the recreational fisheries for yelloweye rockfish.

b/ EFPs are amounts set aside to accommodate anticipated applications. Values in this table represent the estimates provided by the applicants and approved by the Council, which are currently specified in regulation.

c/ Includes NMFS trawl shelf-slope surveys, the IPHC halibut survey, and expected impacts from SRPs and LOAs.

d/ The GMT's best estimate of impacts as analyzed in the 2021-2022 Environmental Impact Statement, which are currently specified in regulation.

e/ Tribal values in the allocation column represent the values in regulation. Projected impacts are the tribes best estimate of catch.

f/ taken from Agenda Item F.1.Attachment 8, June 2020, draft analytical document