

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON BIENNIAL MANAGEMENT
 MEASURES FOR 2023-2024

This report provides additional details and where possible Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recommendations for Management Measure Items 12 through 18 from the Action Item Checklist ([Agenda Item E.5., Attachment 1](#)). Item 3 (GMT Report 1) and Items 1, 2, and 4 through 11 (GMT Report 2) are in separate reports.

Table of Contents

- Action Item #12: “New” Management Measures 3
 - 12a. CCA Repeal** 3
 - 12b. Prohibition on Directed Fishing for Shortbelly Rockfish** 3
 - 12c. Salmon Troll Incidental Groundfish Limits** 3
 - 12d. Rebuilding Plans** 4
 - Quillback Rockfish California*..... 4
 - Copper Rockfish Southern California*..... 4
 - 12.e Groundfish Retention in the Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area with Select Gear Types** 5
- Action Item #13: Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)..... 5
- Action Item #14: Open Access Fixed Gear Fisheries 5
 - 14a. North of 40° 10’ N lat.**..... 5
 - OA sablefish daily trip limit* 5
 - Quillback rockfish* 5
 - Copper rockfish* 5
 - 14b. South of 40° 10’ N lat.**..... 5
 - OA sablefish daily trip limit* 5
 - Quillback rockfish* 6
 - Copper rockfish* 6
- Action Item #15: Limited Entry Fixed Gear Fisheries..... 6
 - 15a. North of 40° 10’ N lat.**..... 6
 - Sablefish* 6
 - Quillback rockfish* 6
 - Copper rockfish* 6
 - 15b. South of 40° 10’ N lat.**..... 6
 - Sablefish* 6

Quillback rockfish..... 6
Copper rockfish..... 6
15c. Limited Entry Fixed Gear Primary Fishery..... 7
Action Item #16: Washington Recreational..... 7
Action Item #17: Oregon Recreational 7
Action Item #18: California Recreational..... 7
Public Comment Requests 8
Recommendations Summaries for E.5. Supplemental GMT Report 3 in the Action Item Checklist..... 9

Action Item #12: “New” Management Measures

12a. CCA Repeal

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommended the Council consider repealing the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCA) designation as a Groundfish Conservation Area. As noted in [Agenda Item G.6.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1, June 2021](#) and [Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, March 2021](#), the CCAs are no longer necessary to protect cowcod as this species was declared rebuilt in 2019.

As noted in [Agenda Item E.5, NMFS Report 1, November 2021](#), the CCA repeal has a high potential workload and is not necessary for implementation on January 1, 2023. **With that in mind, the GMT recommends this item be moved back into the E.6 Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT-RCA) item to be discussed at this meeting.**

12b. Prohibition on Directed Fishing for Shortbelly Rockfish

At the March 2021 Council meeting, Oceana and Audubon gave public comment [Public Comment Agenda Item G.2, March 2021](#) regarding developing a prohibition on directed fishing for shortbelly rockfish.

As noted in [Agenda Item E.5, NMFS Report 1, November 2021](#) and [Agenda Item E.5.a, ODFW Report 1, November 2021](#), this item has a potentially high workload, does not need to be implemented by January 1, 2023, and has several potential pathways outlined in <https://www.ecfr.gov/graphics/pdfs/er09jn21.039.pdf>. The GMT and the Council have heard the considerable public comments about the importance of this agenda item, however, the GMT does not see a compelling reason why this item needs to be addressed via the harvest specification cycle. **The GMT recommends that the Council move this management measure out of the harvest specification cycle and suggests that a different pathway is identified.** The other two pathways are a stand-alone groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment or addition to the list of shared ecosystem component species (SECS), which would require amendment of all of the Council’s FMPs.

12c. Salmon Troll Incidental Groundfish Limits

Over the last couple of years, participants in the salmon troll fishery have requested additional access to groundfish species when fishing for salmon within the NTRCA. Currently, salmon troll vessels are only allowed to retain yellowtail rockfish and lingcod within the NTRCA on the condition that salmon is on-board (or using a ratio provision in the case of lingcod). Landing of all other groundfish species is prohibited to salmon trollers within the NTRCA. If fishing outside of the NTRCA, salmon troll vessels can retain the regular open access (OA) trip limits as listed in [Table 3 \(North\) to Part 660, Subpart F](#), the same as any vessel participating in the OA groundfish fishery.

The GMT believes that there should be a holistic review on how these limits are set, how to account for discard mortality when this fishery is not observed, and how fishery HGs are allocated to incidental open access fisheries that are not directly targeting groundfish. However, the GMT does not believe that this needs to be done by January 1, 2023 (as noted in [Agenda Item E.5, NMFS Report 1, November 2021](#)) and therefore **recommends that it be agendized as a stand-alone item and be considered for prioritization under future workload and planning.**

12d. Rebuilding Plans

If the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) declares any stock overfished, the Council will be notified immediately. Rebuilding analyses were prepared for Scientific and Statistical Committee-endorsed stock assessment models where results indicated the status of the population was below minimum stock size threshold. Those rebuilding analyses were adopted by the Council under Agenda item E.2.

In the event that NMFS declares quillback rockfish off California overfished, a preliminary range of rebuilding plan alternatives will be analyzed between the November 2021 and April 2022 Council meetings.

Quillback Rockfish California

A draft rebuilding analysis for quillback rockfish off of California was adopted by the Council under Agenda Item E.2 ([Agenda Item E.2., Attachment 5. November 2021](#)). If quillback rockfish off of California is declared overfished, a rebuilding plan will need to be formally adopted. The minimum time to rebuild the stock in the absence of fishing, T_{MIN} , in the draft rebuilding analysis was identified as 2040. Since the stock is unable to rebuild within 10 years, the maximum time allowed for rebuilding is set equal to 2066 which is calculated as the T_{MIN} plus one mean generation time (26 years). The draft rebuilding analysis presents a range of spawning potential ratio (SPR) that would successfully rebuild the stock by 2066 or earlier. The Council requested that SPR rates of 0.50, 0.60, 0.70, and 1.0 (no fishing or $F=0$) be moved forward for consideration, where $F=0$ is a necessary run for inclusion in rebuilding analyses in order to evaluate the quickest time for rebuilding possible as prescribed by National Standard 1. This range of SPR values between 0.50-0.70 result in a range of 2023 ACL values (0.94 - 2.05 mt) and are predicted to rebuild the stock between 2046-2065, respectively. **The GMT would like to request additional runs of a SPR harvest rate at 0.55 and 0.65 to further examine the trade-offs of alternative rebuilding strategies.** This iterative process may be necessary to justify rebuilding alternatives with the needs of fishing communities.

Copper Rockfish Southern California

A draft rebuilding analysis for copper rockfish off of southern California was adopted by the Council under Agenda Item E.2 ([Agenda Item E.2., Attachment 3. November 2021](#)). If copper rockfish off California south of Point Conception is declared overfished, the minimum time to rebuild in the absence of fishing is calculated to be within 10 years. Therefore, the only viable rebuilding plan alternatives would require it to rebuild within 10 years from the start of the rebuilding plan, or 2033. Because the stock could be rebuilt within 10 years, the maximum time allowed for rebuilding, T_{MAX} , is set equal to 2033. Requiring the stock to rebuild by 2033 would result in a sharp reduction in fishing mortality requiring SPR harvest rates to be set at 0.935 or higher, where a value of 1.0 indicates no fishing.

However, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended the status for copper rockfish used for management should be based on pooled results from both California assessments. Pooling spawning output across California results in a statewide fraction unfished of 31.7 percent, above the Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST). If status for management is determined on a statewide basis a formal rebuilding plan would not be required for the portion of the copper rockfish stock south of Point Conception.

12.e Groundfish Retention in the Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area with Select Gear Types

It is the GMT's understanding that the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) is proposing a new management measure that would authorize selected hook and line gears within the Non-trawl RCA South of 46° 16' N. lat. (the WA/OR Border). The GMT does have workload concerns, for both GMT and NMFS, associated with putting this through the 2023-2024 harvest specifications cycle and is concerned that this addition would endanger ensuring that 2023-24 specifications are in place by January 1, 2023. Due to the late timing, the GMT was unable to discuss this proposal in detail and so does not provide a recommendation.

Action Item #13: Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)

At the time of writing of this report, the GMT has not received any requests for changes to the shorebased IFQ trip limits.

Action Item #14: Open Access Fixed Gear Fisheries

14a. North of 40° 10' N lat.

OA sablefish daily trip limit

The OA sablefish daily trip limit (DTL) sector is currently managed with a 600-lb. sablefish daily limit, 2,000-lb. weekly limit, and 4,000-lb. bimonthly limit.

The GMT and GAP discussed that the daily limit can reduce profit margins since it requires many trips to catch the full bimonthly limit. Removing the daily limit could improve profitability as fewer trips would be needed. The GAP wanted to maintain the weekly limit, because just a bimonthly limit could result in an influx of new vessels that could negatively impact current participants. The GAP identified this as a medium priority.

Options to be analyzed include:

Status Quo: Maintain the 600-lb. daily limit in the sablefish OA DTL sector

Option 1: Remove the 600-lb. daily limit (weekly and bimonthly limits would remain)

Quillback rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

Copper rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

14b. South of 40° 10' N lat.

OA sablefish daily trip limit

The OA DTL sector south of 40° 10' N. lat. (OAS) is currently managed to a 2,000-lb. weekly limit and a 6,000-lb. bimonthly limit, both of which were increased in 2021-22 from 1,600 lbs. and 4,800 lbs., respectively. Both limits are the highest they have been since 2010, and at the time of writing this report, the GMT has not received any requests to change the OAS DTL trip limits.

Quillback rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

Copper rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

Action Item #15: Limited Entry Fixed Gear Fisheries

15a. North of 40° 10' N lat.

Sablefish

In the 2021-22 harvest specifications cycle, the Council chose to increase the status quo trip limits from 1,500 lbs. per week and 4,500 lbs. per two months to 1,700 lbs. per week and 5,100 lbs per two months. The GMT has received inseason requests in 2021 to set the weekly limit at half of the bimonthly limit so that vessels can attain their bimonthly limit within two weeks instead of three. For that reason, the GMT is recommending including an Option 1 which accomplishes this goal while maintaining sustainable limits through the entire year. The GMT projected the Option 1 weekly and bimonthly limits as part of the inseason action item during the November 2021 Council meeting and estimated 99 percent attainment for the entire year of 2022 (Agenda Item E.7.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2021). Therefore, we recommend also using those limits for Option 1 in the analyses.

Options to be analyzed include:

Status Quo: 1,700 lbs./week, 5,100 lbs./2 months

Option 1: 2,400 lbs./week, 4,800 lbs./2 months

Quillback rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

Copper rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

15b. South of 40° 10' N lat.

Sablefish

In the 2021-22 harvest specifications cycle, the Council chose to increase the status quo weekly trip limit from 2,000 lbs. per week to 2,500 lbs. per week. There is no daily or bimonthly limit for this sector. The new status quo limit is the highest it has been since 2010. At the time of writing this report, the GMT has not received any requests for changes to the LES trip limits in the DTL fishery and therefore recommends continuing to use the status quo 2,500 lb. weekly trip limit in the 2023-24 biennium.

Quillback rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

Copper rockfish

Adjust bimonthly limits to implement 2023-24 harvest specifications.

15c. Limited Entry Fixed Gear Primary Fishery

Participants in the primary sablefish tier fishery have expressed interest in extending the season end date to December 31, from the current October 31 end date. The GMT does not believe that this needs to be done by January 1, 2023 (as noted in Agenda Item E.5, NMFS Report 1, November 2021) and could be taken up under either the 2023-24 biennial harvest specifications process or during the Fixed Gear Catch Share Program Review, which is currently scheduled on the Year-at-a-Glance (YAG) for June 2022.

Although [Agenda Item E.5, NMFS Report 1, November 2021](#) notes that this item is not necessary for January 1 implementation, the primary sablefish fishery experienced lower than average attainment of their allocation through September 13 in 2019, 2020, and 2021 ([Agenda Item C.9.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, September 2021](#)). The Council is currently considering alternative P*'s for sablefish of 0.45 (status quo), 0.40, and 0.35. Under all three of the alternatives, the sablefish ABC for 2023 is projected to be higher than those of 2021 and 2022, likely resulting in higher primary tier limits, and a season extension could provide additional opportunity for those vessels to fish their full tier limits before the end of the year.

Action Item #16: Washington Recreational

Washington will be considering routine changes to recreational fisheries. In 2021 and 2022, management measure changes reflected the improved status of yelloweye rockfish, allowing for relaxed depth restrictions and relieving pressure on nearshore species, such as black rockfish. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will review the most recent catch and effort data, along with ACLs and harvest guidelines approved at this meeting, to develop a range of management measure options that will keep catch within state-specific allocations or harvest guidelines in 2023 and 2024. Specific measures may consider revisions to bag limits and depth restrictions.

Action Item #17: Oregon Recreational

Oregon will be considering season structures, depth restrictions, and bag limits to keep impacts within appropriate harvest guidelines. Since 2004, yelloweye rockfish has been the most constraining species to the Oregon recreational fishery. However, lower ACLs for black rockfish and nearshore rockfish complex species, as well as increased groundfish effort, have resulted in black, China, copper, and quillback rockfishes becoming the primary drivers of recreational fisheries regulations. While depth restrictions are the main tools used to control yelloweye rockfish impacts, limiting fishing to shallower waters has the opposite effect and increases catch of black rockfish and the nearshore complex species such as quillback rockfish. Bag limit adjustment is the tool used to manipulate impacts to black rockfish, as they constitute 75 to 85 percent of the total number of groundfish landed by the Oregon recreational fishery. Once sector-specific allocations are identified through the Council and state processes (for black rockfish, nearshore rockfish, and cabezon), combinations of depth restrictions and bag limits will be analyzed.

Action Item #18: California Recreational

California will be considering changes to recreational fisheries, such as season dates, depth restrictions, bag limits, and sub-bag limits. A review of the most recent catch and effort data, along

with ACLs and harvest guidelines approved at this meeting, will be used to develop a range of catch control measures intended to keep catch within state-specific allocations or harvest guidelines in 2023 and 2024.

Public Comment Requests

At the time of writing there were five public comments on this agenda item in the Briefing Book, all of which expressed support for the prohibition on shortbelly rockfish. This topic is addressed under Action Item 12.b.

Recommendations Summary for E.5. Supplemental GMT Report 3 in the Action Item Checklist

GMT recommendations are in **bold**.

#	Sector	Management Measures	GMT Rpt. #
‘New’ Management Measures			
12	All	<p>A. CCA Repeal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move this item back into the E.6 Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT-RCA) item <p>B. Prohibit directed fishery for shortbelly rockfish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move this management measure out of the harvest specification cycle and identify a different pathway <p>C. Salmon troll incidental groundfish limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a holistic look at groundfish retention in the salmon troll fishery outside of the 2023-2024 biennial process <p>D. Rebuilding analyses-as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Quillback: The GMT would like to request additional runs of a SPR harvest rate at 0.55 and 0.65 to further examine the trade-offs of alternative rebuilding strategies <p>E. New--Groundfish retention in the Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area with select gear types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the late timing, the GMT was unable to discuss this proposal in detail and does not provide a recommendation. 	E.5, Rpt 3
Trip Limits, Bag Limits, and Season Structures			
13	Shorebased IFQ	<p>IFQ based on allocations, trip limits for non-IFQ species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified so far 	E.5, Rpt 3

Trip Limits, Bag Limits, and Season Structures			
14a	OA (North of 40°10' N. lat.)	Routine adjustments to the non-trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, size limits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the daily limit for the OA sablefish DTL north of 36° N lat 	E.5, Rpt 3
14b	OA (South of 40°10' N. lat.)	Routine adjustments to the non-trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, size limits	E.5, Rpt 3
15a	LEFG (North of 40°10' N. lat.)	Routine adjustments to the non-trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, size limits	E.5, Rpt 3
15b	LEFG (South of 40°10' N. lat.)	Routine adjustments to the non-trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, size limits	E.5, Rpt 3
15c	LEFG Primary	LEFG primary: extend the season end date to Dec. 31	E.5, Rpt 3
16	WA Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc.	E.5, Rpt 3
17	OR Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc.	E.5, Rpt 3
18	CA Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc.	E.5, Rpt 3

PFMC
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