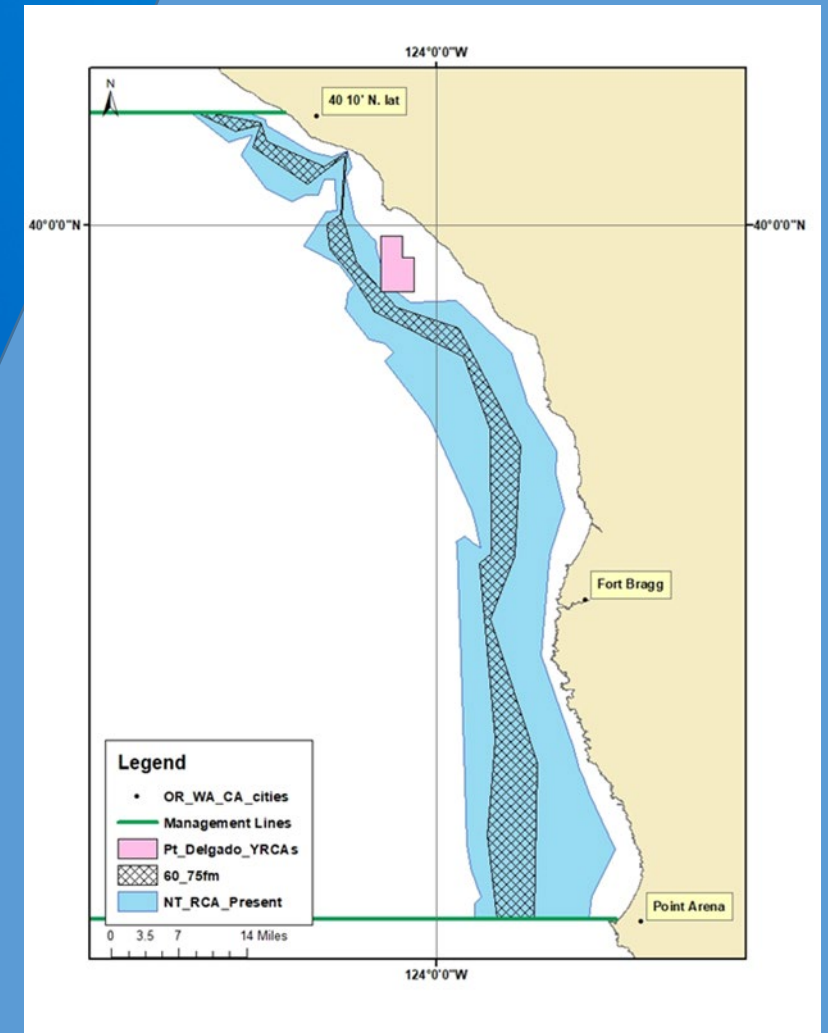


Non-Trawl Sector Area Management Measures

Todd Phillips/Brett Wiedoff
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Agenda Item E.6
Friday Nov. 19, 2021



Background & Overview

Options-Draft Alternatives

Preliminary Impact Analysis

Council Action



Recent History of Action

June 2020

- GAP provided detailed Informational Report 4

March 2021 –

- Removed Cowcod Conservation Area from Action

April 2021

- Council scoped Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT_RCA) management changes
- Adopted Draft Purpose and Need
- Directed staff to analyze:
 - Allowing LEFG and OA to operate in the NT_RCA
 - Allowing LEFG to fish to LEFG limits
 - Requiring limited gear types to be used in NT_RCA
 - Modify current NT_RCA boundaries



Purpose and Need: Key Portions

Purpose:

“...to provide access to additional areas that are currently closed to groundfish fishing inside the NT_RCA”

Need:

“...to provide increased attainment of available healthy shelf rockfish species that largely reside inside the Non-Trawl RCA, thereby increasing their utilization and economic value of the groundfish fishery.”

“...to help diversify fishing strategies in light of restrictive salmon and crab opportunities, provide more stable, year-round fishing opportunity, and expand opportunities to supply seafood, while bringing financial benefit to fishermen, communities, and the infrastructures they support.”



NT_RCA Background

- Implemented in January 2003
- Purpose: Minimize impacts to overfished stocks (canary, yelloweye, etc.)
- Boundaries have changed since inception (see Appendix 1)
- 2021-22 biennium changes
 - 40° 10' to 46° 16': 30-40 fathoms open to hook-and-line gears, except bottom longline, pot/trap, dinglebar
 - 34° 27' to 38° 27': Shoreward boundary moved from 40 to 50 fm
 - S of 34° 27': Shoreward boundary moved from 75 to 100 fm



Current NT_RCA Boundaries

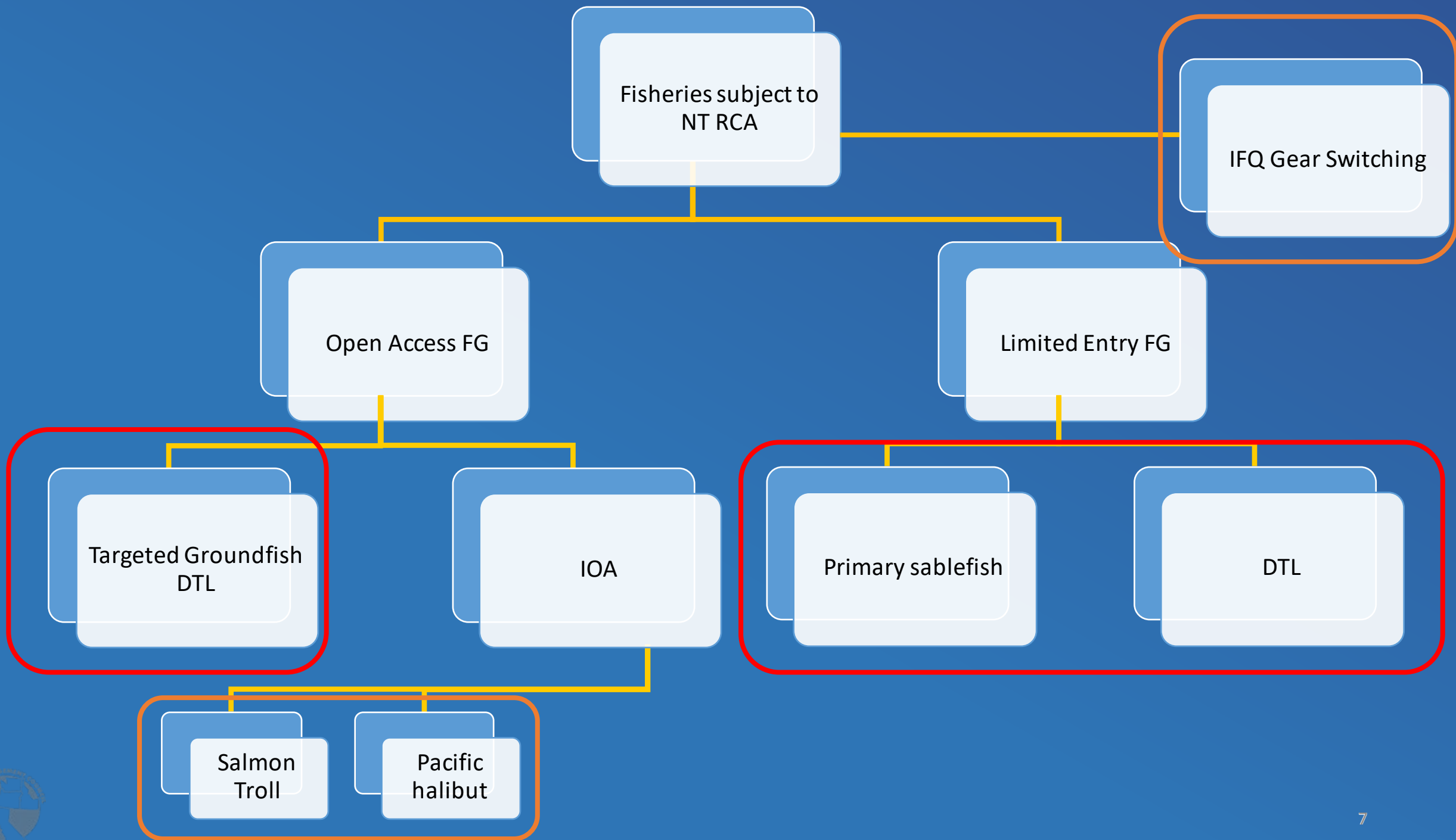
Management Area	Current NT_RCA boundaries a/
North of 46°16' N. lat.	Shoreline (0 fm) to 100fm
46°16' N. lat. to 40°10' N. lat.	30 fm to 100 fm ^{b/}
40°10' N. lat. to 38°57.5' N. lat.	40 fm to 125 fm
38°57.5' N. lat. to 34°27' N. lat.	50 fm to 125 fm
South of 34°27' N. lat.: ^{c/}	100 fm to 150 fm

a/ Current NT_RCA boundary coordinates at 86 FR 14379, see Tables 2 & 3 -coordinates at §§ 660.71-660.74

b/ between 46°16' N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat., 30 to 40 fm fishing is only allowed with hook-and-line gear except bottom longline and dinglebar (§660.11)

c/also applies around islands





Overview: Non-Trawl Sector Management Measures

Open Access (OA)

- Can use any type of 'open access' gear
- No federal permitting requirements, but some are state regulated
- Lower trip limits compared to LEFG

Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG)

- Must have fixed gear endorsed permit –longline/pot
- Generally, trip limits are higher than OA
- May use OA fixed-gear – but must fish to lower trip, more restrictive limits



E.6 Council Action

1. Review priority issues, including regulations and NT_RCA boundary modifications, as appropriate.
2. Consider adopting a Range of Alternatives.
3. Consider adopting a Preliminary Preferred Alternatives.
4. Provide guidance for development of alternative management measures as needed.



Draft Alternatives



Allow OA to Operate in the NT_RCA

No Action

OA not allowed to operate in NT_RCA, except where and when allowed in regulation.

Alternative

OA would be allowed to operate in NT_RCA with approved hook-and-line gear. Vessels must declare their intent to fish within the NT_RCA prior to departure.



Allow LEFG to Operate in the NT_RCA

No Action

LEFG not allowed to operate in NT_RCA, except where and when allowed in regulation.

Alternative

LEFG would be allowed to operate in NT_RCA with approved hook-and-line gear and fish up to their LEFG trip limits. Vessels must declare their intent to fish within the NT_RCA prior to departure.



Questions: Three Key Items

Fishing inside and outside of NT_RCA

- Motion did not specify if vessels can fish multiple areas on same trip
- Difficult to determine where fish caught

Fishing gear use

- Motion did not specify if vessels can carry, or use, multiple gears on the same trip
- Difficult to determine what gear was used where

Hook and Line gear definition

- In regulation, “Hook-and-Line” comprises multiple gears
- Exempted fishing permit (EFP) gear are of types/configurations



Gear Guidance

Hook-and-line gear

- Gear with one or more hooks attached to one or more lines, may be stationary or trolled (§660.11)
- Includes bottom longline, vertical hook-and-line, dinglebar, troll gear

EFP Gear

- Three configurations being tested
- Each EFP uses different number of hooks, buoys, weight off-bottom distance, line test, etc.

For Consideration

- Council may need to specify gear(s) and/or configurations that can or cannot be used
- Provides certainty to fishermen and enforcement



Sub-options for Consideration

Sub-Option A:

A1: OA/LEFG vessels may fish in either inside the NT_RCA or outside the NT_RCA on a trip, not both

A2: OA/LEFG vessels may fish inside and outside the NT_RCA on a trip

Sub-Option B

B1: OA/LEFG vessels shall only carry approved hook-and-line gear onboard vessel when fishing in the NT_RCA. Vessels shall not switch gears during a fishing trip.

B2: OA/LEFG vessels shall be allowed to carry multiple gears onboard vessel when fishing in the NT_RCA. Only approved hook-and-line gear may be used inside the NT_RCA.



Modify Current NT_RCA Boundaries

No Action

The NT_RCA boundaries shall not be changed under this Action

Alternatives

The NT_RCA boundaries shall be set at:

- Sub-option 1: 40fm to 80fm between 46°16' N. lat. to 40°10' N. lat.
- Sub-option 2: 60fm to 80fm between 40°10' N. lat. to 38°57.5' N. lat.
- Sub-option 3: 60fm to 80fm between 38°57.5' N. lat. to 34°27' N. lat.
- Sub-option 4: Off of Washington are ...



Washington NT_RCA Boundaries

Current boundaries are 0 fm shoreward and 100 fm seaward

Boundaries have not changed since NT_RCA inception

Council could select depth contours as shown or recommend developing new depth contours off WA

Depth Contours available off WA
10
20
30
50
60
75
100



Preliminary Impact Analyses



Biological

Prohibited & Protected Species

Monitoring & Enforcement

Socioeconomic

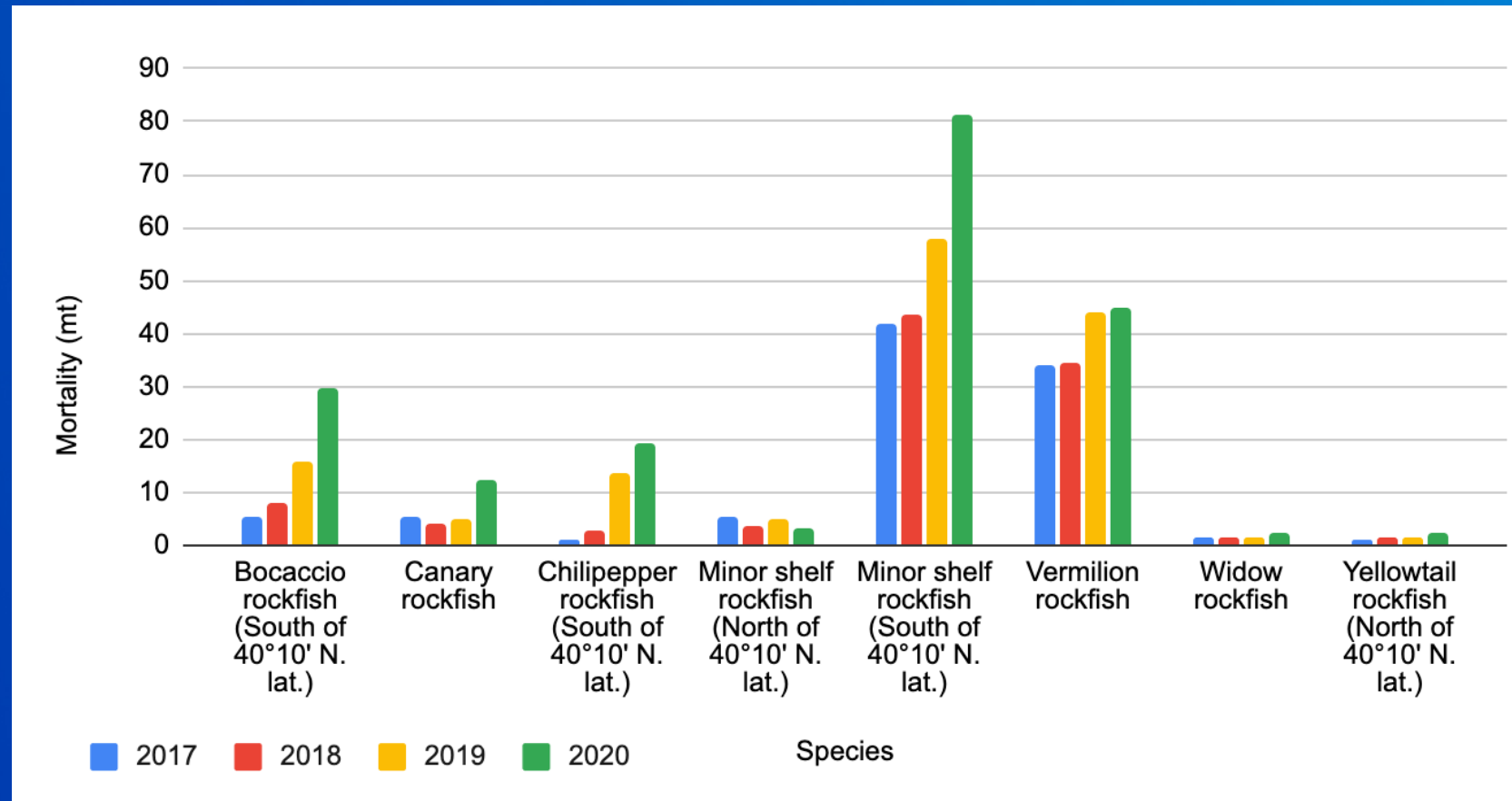
Habitat



Biological Impacts: Target species

Current

- Midwater rockfish landings have been increasing since 2017
- Increased opportunities, but NT_RCA could be limiting attainment



Biological Impacts: Target species

Under Alternatives

- Difficult to project impacts and highly uncertain
- Midwater rockfish ACL attainment likely to increase
- Non-target discards may increase
- If NT_RCA boundaries change, may see increase in more demersal species



Biological Impacts: Yelloweye RF

Current

- Mortality under non-trawl allocation –except 2017
- NT_RCA appears to be working as yelloweye rockfish catch mitigation measure
- Stock is scheduled to be rebuilt in 2029.
- Harvest specifications should increase, but not dramatically.

Under Alternatives

- Highly uncertain
- Yelloweye is demersal, but can be caught with midwater gear
- Likely yelloweye mortality will increase
- If NT_RCA boundaries adjusted, incidental yelloweye rockfish catch may increase



Mitigation Measures

Current

- Harvest specifications and management measures (e.g., trip limits)
- Inseason management
- NT_RCA
- Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas (YRCA)

Possible Mitigation Measures

- Increased number or size YRCAs and/or activate current YRCAs
- Block Area Closures (BAC)



Protected & Prohibited Species Impacts

Protected Species

- ESA-listed (and MMPA) species could encounter Alt 1& 2 gear
- Unlikely this gear would have same impacts as bottom contact gear (LL/pot)
- Alt 3 could allow for bottom contact gear

Salmon

- Salmon BiOp impacts were quantified
- Salmon impacts have been low in recent years
- Salmon biological thresholds in regulation for non-trawl sector



Monitoring

Inseason landings data and projections

Vessel Monitoring System

Forthcoming non-trawl logbook

West Coast Groundfish Observer Program

- OA/LEFG groundfish fishery not monitored at 100%
- Observation rates based partially on Council recommendations and requirements of the catch-shares implementation

Average WCGOP observer coverage rates from 2011 through 2020¹

Years	Sablefish LEFG LL/pot	LEFG non- sablefish	OA LL/pot
2010-2020	34%	6%	5%

¹. Source: Tables 14 and 15 of Agenda Item E.6 Attachment 1, November 2021 and Somers et al. 2021.



Socioeconomics

Intended to provide a preliminary assessment of which port groups may be benefited by each Alternative

Key assumptions/considerations

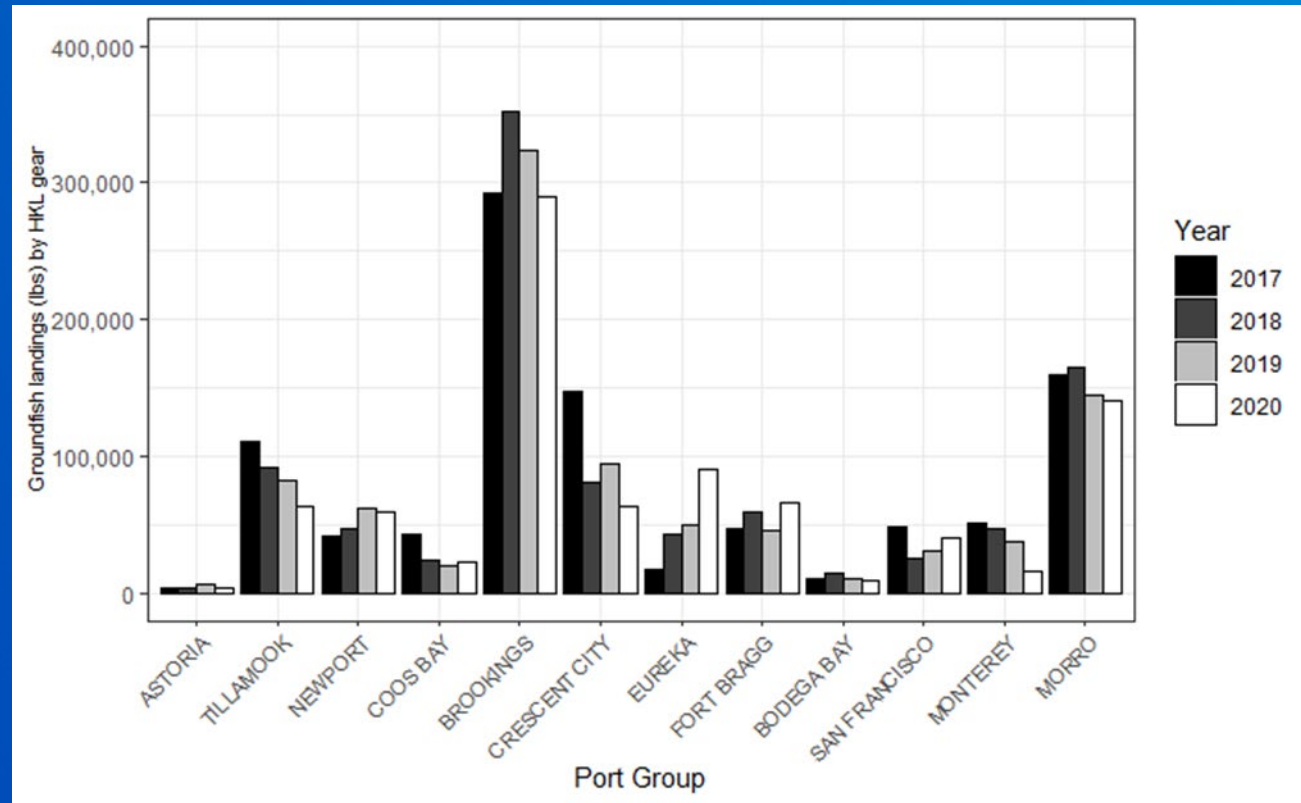
- 2017-2020 baseline
- Sablefish targeted trips were excluded
- Gear type: Alts 1/2 only considered vessels using HKL gear (excluding dinglebar and longline); Alt 3 allowed for any gear
- Only looked at directed groundfish (i.e., no halibut trips)



Socioeconomics: Alternative 1

Ports most likely to benefit initially:

- Brookings, OR
- Morro Bay, CA
- Eureka, CA
- Fort Bragg, CA

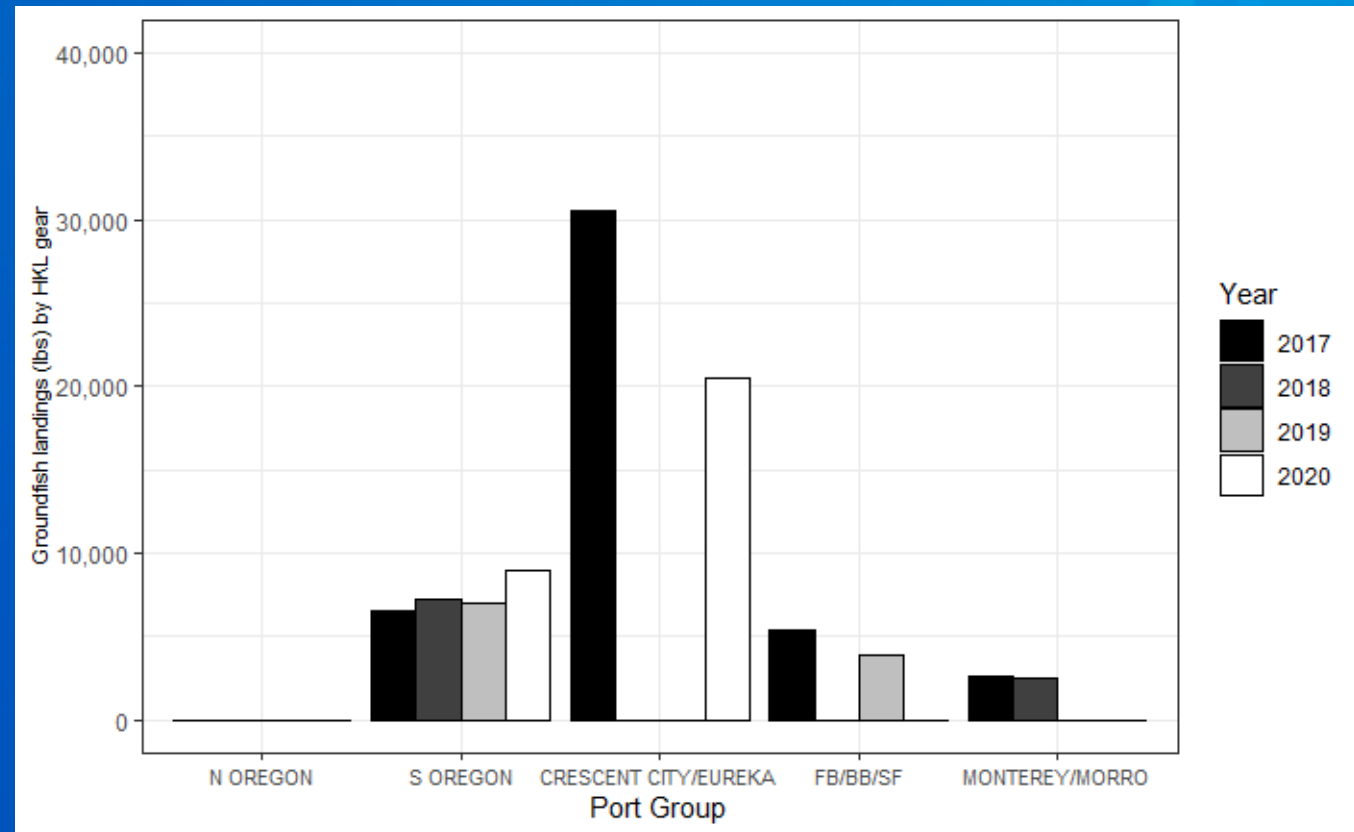


Socioeconomics Alternative 2

Limited effort by LEFG vessels using hook-and-line gear as held to lower OA limits

Ports most likely to benefit

- Brookings
- Crescent City



Socioeconomics: Alternative 3

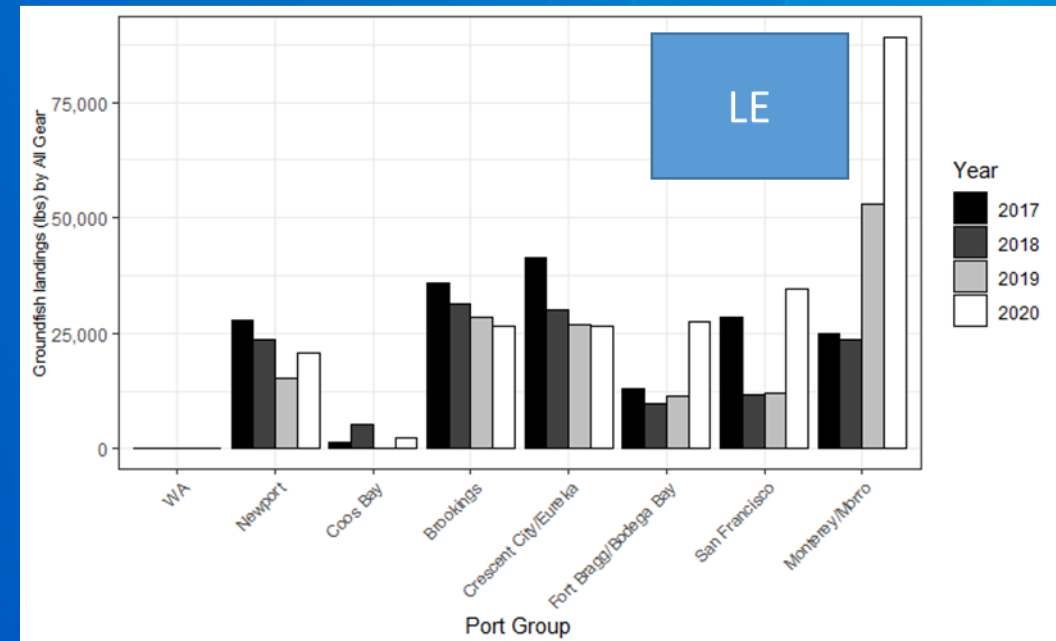
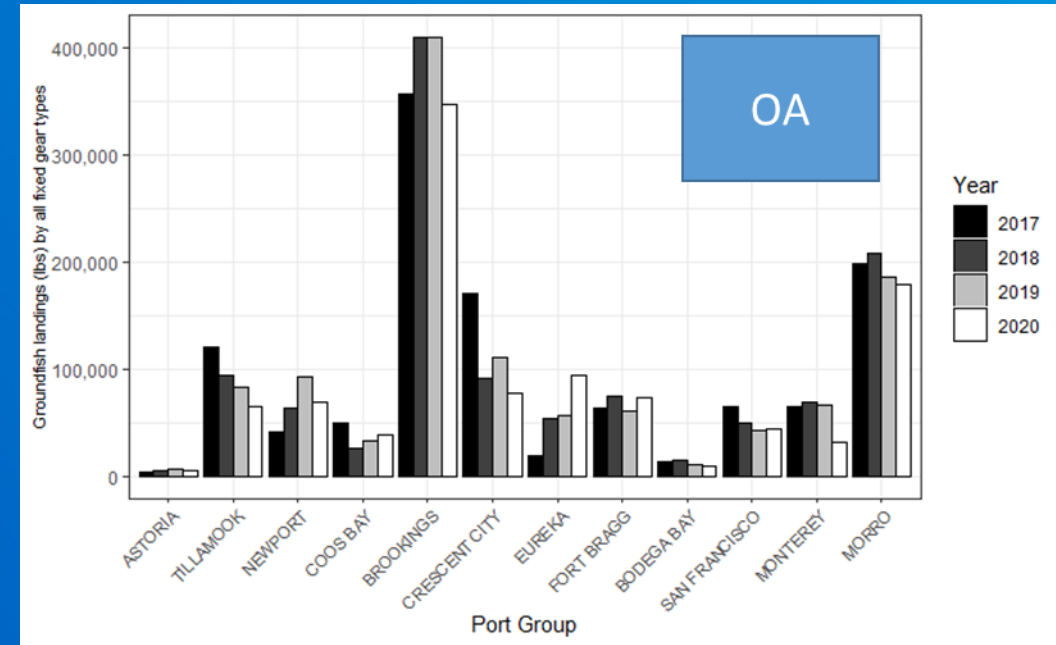
Intended
Ports most likely to benefit from
modifying boundaries of NT_RCA

Open Access

- Brookings
- Morro Bay

Limited Entry

- Monterey
- Brookings



Habitat Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2

- Fishing with midwater gear likely low impact; however,
- Weight strikes on bottom could harm epibiota
- Gear could entangle benthic inverts

Gear Type	Fishing Method	Where Fished	Impacting part	Impact
Troll Gear	Trolling in upper water column	Primarily fished in water column	Weights Weights, hooks, line	Crush/break biogenic habitat (from weights), Damage to and displacement of biogenic habitat damage; entanglement
Vertical Longline (single or multi hook gangion, and weight)	Drift fishing, “jigging” or trolled	All bottom types and water column		



Habitat Impacts

Alternatives 3

- Modifies NT_RCA boundaries
- Area exposed could be fished with all fixed gear types
- May result in increased habitat impacts due to gear effects

Gear Type	Fishing Method	Where Fished	Impacting part	Impact
Bottom longline	deployed on bottom	Soft and hard bottom	Anchors, weights, mainline.	Overturn, undercut, crush, break habitat and organisms, displace/disturb biogenic habitat
Pots/traps	deployed on bottom	Soft and hard bottom	pot, line.	
Dinglebar gear	Bounces on bottom	Hard bottom, Rocky reefs	Dinglebar, hooks, line	



Mitigation Measures: Habitat

NT_RCA was designed to mitigate OFS catch- not protect habitat

- Defacto habitat protection from FG for almost 20 years
- However, other fisheries (trawl, state) may have operated within proposed re-openings

EFH Conservation Areas (EFHCAs)

- Two types: bottom trawl and bottom contact
- Further analysis needed to determine what types of EFHCAs may be opened to FG fishing under boundary changes to the NT_RCA



Council Action

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Questions

