

Update on 2023-24 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures



Items Council Requested GMT bring back or we need clarification on:

- EFPs
- Set-asides
- ACTs
- Response to WDFW request for non-trawl canary rockfish catches
- Pacific spiny dogfish spatial management tools
- Block area closures--mismatch between FMP and Federal regulations
- New Management Measures
 - CA recreational RCA
 - CA recreational bag limits
 - Sablefish season extension
 - Shortbelly rockfish
 - Non-trawl RCA gear (new gear and sector definition)

Exempted Fishing Permits

- Depending on Council decision on 12e, the non-trawl RCA/gear limit item
 - Are the midwater rockfish EFPs still necessary?
 - If not needed, set-asides could be returned to the fishery harvest guideline, and allocated proportionally back to fishery sectors
 - Some possible interest in continuing, with looking at using natural bait
 - If the applicants want to add this, they need to signal in April, so can finalize in June
 - Set-asides would likely need to be adjusted as the purpose of natural bait is to increase catches

Quillback Rockfish Set-Asides for California

- No set-asides for quillback rockfish at present
- Set-aside categories: Research, EFP, and IOA
- Non-groundfish fishery mortality
 - North of 40° 10' N. lat.: highest in IOA, specifically directed Pacific halibut fishery
 - South of 40° 10' N. lat.: highest in research fishery
- In general, potential set-asides (cumulative amounts) are all less than 0.1 mt, with many than 0.01 mt

Copper Rockfish Set-asides off California

- No set-asides for copper rockfish at present
- Set-aside categories: Research, EFP, and IOA
- Non-groundfish fishery mortality
 - North of $40^{\circ} 10'$ N. lat.: highest in IOA, specifically directed Pacific halibut fishery
 - South of $40^{\circ} 10'$ N. lat.: highest in IOA fishery

Within Non-Trawl Allocations

- Request from WDFW Report 1 on recent mortality (mt) in non-trawl sectors for canary rockfish

| Sector | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 a/ | 5-Year Avg. | 2022 Share | 2023 Draft Share |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| WA Rec | 5.0 | 4.5 | 13.6 | 8.5 | 39.4 | 14.2 | 42.3 | 40.9 |
| OR Rec | 28.2 | 43.6 | 38.7 | 60.5 | 38.5 | 41.9 | 63.6 | 61.5 |
| CA Rec | 83.4 | 61.8 | 71.4 | 46.3 | 70.7 | 66.7 | 114.2 | 110.5 |
| Nearshore | 8.1 | 8.3 | 10.5 | 12.8 | 14.7 | 10.9 | 84.6 | 81.8 |
| Non-Nearshore | 4.6 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 11.4 | 16.1 | 7.9 | 39.2 | 40.9 |
| Total | 129.4 | 121.7 | 138.3 | 139.6 | 148.6 | 135.5 | 343.9 | 335.6 |

a/ preliminary estimates

Quillback/Copper Rockfish ACTs off California

- Council requested information for species-specific ACTs
 - Neither species have had ACTs
 - Sector specific mortality contributions were estimated
- ACT options considered were 25%, 50%, 75% of estimated sector specific mortality

Quillback Rockfish

- Rec. accounts for > 70% fishery mortality N & S of 40° 10' N. lat.

Copper Rockfish

- Rec. accounts for > 70% fishery mortality north of 40° 10' N. lat. & 90% south of 40° 10' N. lat.

ACTs: Cowcod south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Cowcod south of 40° 10' N. lat.

- With potential of increased offshore fishing as a means to reduce pressure on nearshore rockfish species from non-trawl commercial and recreational fisheries, Council may want to consider removing the ACT to provide additional flexibility and stability to the non-trawl sector.
- No Action: Maintain 50 mt ACT
 - 2023-24 trawl allocation = 18 mt
 - 2023-24 non-trawl allocation = 32 mt
- Option 1: Remove 50 mt ACT
 - 2023: trawl allocation = 24.8 mt; non-trawl allocation = 44 mt
 - 2024: trawl allocation = 24.4 mt; non-trawl allocation = 43.4 mt

ACTs: Yelloweye RF

- Does the Council want to continue using ACTs for the non-trawl sectors?
- Put in place previously to be precautionary

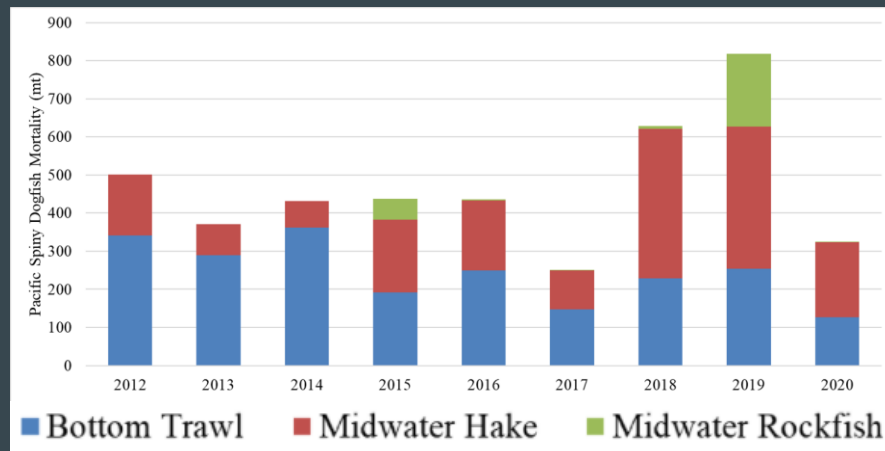
| Year | 2023 | | 2024 | |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| ACL | 66 | | 66 | |
| Fishery HG | 55.4 | | 55.4 | |
| IFQ (8%) | 4.4 | | 4.4 | |
| Non-trawl (92%) | HG | ACT | HG | ACT |
| | 50.9 | 39.9 | 50.9 | 39.9 |
| Commercial (20.9%) | 10.6 | 8.4 | 10.6 | 8.4 |
| WA Rec (25.6%) | 13.2 | 10.4 | 13.2 | 10.4 |
| OR Rec (23.3%) | 11.7 | 9.2 | 11.7 | 9.2 |
| CA Rec (30.2%) | 15.3 | 12.0 | 15.3 | 12.0 |

Pacific Spiny Dogfish Spatial Tools - At-sea

- ~20-40% of total Pacific spiny dogfish mortality is from at-sea sectors
- Higher bycatch rates in October and November
- The only spatial tool useful to the Council would be a Bycatch Reduction Area (BRA) within 200 fms but would effectively shut down much of the fleet
- However, Pacific spiny dogfish mortality in 2023 and 2024 is expected to be lower than the recent maximums in 2018 and 2019 given expected changes to the fishery
- Complete inseason tracking of Pacific spiny dogfish mortality is possible, and the fleet uses move-along measures

Pacific Spiny Dogfish Spatial Tools - Shorebased IFQ

- ~30-60% of total mortality is from shorebased IFQ sector
 - >95% bottom trawl is discarded
 - Nearly 100% shoreside whiting is landed
- Avg. latitude of hauls with >5 mt of Pacific spiny dogfish = 47° N. lat.
 - 1-5 mt = 46° N. lat.
 - <1 mt = 45° N. lat.
- Inseason tracking of bottom trawl discards is not possible (not a quota species)
 - However, shoreside Pacific whiting landings can be tracked inseason along with at-sea total catch



IFQ Pacific spiny dogfish mortality by trawl gear type and by target stocks for midwater trawl gear, 2012-2020; includes EM data.

“Midwater Hake” = “Shoreside Pacific Whiting”

Pacific Spiny Dogfish Spatial Tools - Options

- Block Area Closures (BACs) = bound by latitude and depth
 - Midwater trawl gear = only analyzed to mitigate salmon bycatch off all three states
 - Bottom trawl gear = only analyzed for use off OR and CA
- Bycatch Reduction Areas (BRAs) = bound by only depth; midwater trawl gear only
 - Shoreward of 75, 100, 150, or 200 fms
 - Analysis of 75, 100, & 150 fm depth contours potentially outdated but likely most effective for shoreside whiting catch
- Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) = depth-based north of 46° 16' N. lat.
 - Currently 100-150 fms off Washington for all trawl gear

Pacific Spiny Dogfish Spatial Tools - Options (cont.)

| State | BACs | BRAs | RCAs |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| WA | Currently not available | Available for midwater trawl gear | Modify the trawl RCA line in season (currently 100-150 fm) |
| OR | Available for bottom trawl gear | Available for midwater trawl gear | N/A |
| CA | Available for bottom trawl gear | Available for midwater trawl gear | N/A |

Pacific Spiny Dogfish Spatial Tools - Guidance

- *Does the Council wish the GMT to analyze the use of BRAs and/or BACs for uses not currently available/analyzed, making them potentially available for inseason Pacific spiny dogfish trawl bycatch minimization in the 2023-24 biennium?*
 - Potential Options:
 - BACs for midwater trawl gear to mitigate groundfish bycatch off all three (or certain) states -> 50-70% of total mortality is by midwater trawl gear
 - BACs for bottom trawl gear off WA
 - BRAs for bottom trawl gear (coastwide)
- This analysis would be conducted with the intent of including results in the April and/or June briefing books

Block Area Closures (BACs)

- Over-winter analysis discovered a mismatch between the FMP and current Federal regs
- Regs articulate the Council's intent to manage incidental salmon bycatch by vessels using groundfish midwater trawl gear in the EEZ off of WA, OR, and CA with BACs;
 - however, inadvertently, the FMP was not updated to sync with regulations
- To avoid potential future implementation delays, the FMP should be updated to be consistent with Council intent described in the salmon bycatch mitigation rulemaking document (86 FR 10857)

Block Area Closures (BACs) recommended language

“BACs are groundfish bottom trawl-specific management tool introduced as part of Amendment 28. BAC boundary lines are latitudes and depth contour approximations described in Federal regulations at 50 CFR §660.11 and §§71-74. BACs (one or more) may be closed or reopened inseason via the routine management measures process (Section 6.2.1) using latitude and longitude boundary lines defined in regulation. One or more of those polygons, as necessary may be closed to groundfish bottom trawl to control harvest of groundfish species or to reduce the catch of protected species. One or more of those polygons, as necessary, may be closed to groundfish midwater trawl to reduce the catch of protected species. BACs are available in the EEZ off Oregon and California, ~~and are intended as a catch control mechanism, not for habitat protection.~~ for vessels using groundfish bottom trawl gear and in the EEZ off Washington, Oregon and California for vessels using groundfish midwater trawl gear. BACs are intended as a catch control mechanism, not for habitat protection.”

New Management Measures

California Recreational RCAs

- Would allow fishing seaward of a specified RCA boundary line and prohibit fishing shoreward of that line.
- Depending upon which RCA boundary line (e.g., 30, 40, 50, 60, 75, 100, and 125 fathom lines) is used, fishing could be prohibited in state waters or state and federal waters

New Management Measures

California Recreational Bag Limit

- In the Nov. 2021 Council meeting, a one fish sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish, a one fish sub-bag limit for copper rockfish, and a four fish sub-bag limit for vermilion rockfish off of California to reduce mortality in the 2022 recreational fishery
 - The reductions to mortality associated are not yet known for 2022
- Several bag limit options analyzed as part of the 2023-24 specifications if further reductions to fishing pressure are needed
 - Quillback rockfish, copper rockfish, and vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits analyzed a range from ten to zero fish within the 10-fish RCG bag limit

New Management Measures

Sablefish season extension

- Developed options to extend the season from Oct. 31 to Dec. 31
- Also considers Pacific halibut retention north of Pt. Chehalis end date

Shortbelly rockfish amendment

- Developed FMP amendment language specifying a catch threshold for shortbelly rockfish that would trigger Council review.
- The threshold specified at 2,000 mt and
 - if exceeded, or projected to be exceeded, the Council would be required to examine available fishery data and determine if additional conservation measures should be implemented to reduce, if not curtail, shortbelly rockfish catch in the groundfish fishery

Non-bottom contact HKL gear in NT_RCA

- Vessels in the OA, LEFG, and IFQ gear switch sectors would be allowed to use non-bottom contact hook-and-line gear within the NT RCA
- From the OR/WA border to the U.S./Mexico border
- Vertical hook-and-line anchored to the bottom, dinglebar, and longline would be prohibited
- Biggest Issue: Uncertainty
 - Limited data, unclear gear definition

Non-bottom contact HKL gear in NT_RCA

- NMFS Report 1 describes a revised proposal to deal with uncertainties
 - *Council should consider this option for April when selecting the PPA*
- Area b/t 30-40 fm north of 40° 10' N. lat. to OR/WA border
 - 21-22: Allowed for hook and line gear, except longline and dinglebar
 - 23-24 proposal: Similar as 21-22, except also excludes vertical hook and line gear anchored to the bottom
- Should vertical hook and line gear still be permitted between 30-40 fm from 40° 10' - 46° 16' N. lat. or would it be aligned with rest of NT-RCA proposal?

Summary

1. Are the midwater rockfish EFPs still necessary?
2. Does the Council wish to pursue set-asides for quillback rockfish or copper rockfish off California? If so, for the set-asides south of 40° 10' N. lat., should the set-asides be applied to all of the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. or for 2 sub-areas, 40° 10'-34 27' N. lat. and south of 34° 27' N. lat.?
3. Does the Council wish to pursue ACTs for quillback rockfish or copper rockfish off California? If so, for the ACTs south of 40° 10' N. lat., should the ACTs be applied to all of the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. or for 2 sub-areas, 40° 10'-34° 27' N. lat. and south of 34° 27' N. lat.?
4. Does the Council wish to add to the management measures package an option to remove the 50 mt ACT for cowcod south of 40° 10' N. lat.?
5. Does the Council want to continue using yelloweye rockfish ACTs for the non-trawl sectors?
6. Does the Council wish the GMT to analyze the use of BRAs and/or BACs for uses not currently available/analyzed, making them potentially available for inseason Pacific spiny dogfish trawl bycatch minimization in the 2023-24 biennium?
7. Does the Council want to amend the Groundfish FMP to align the definition and uses of BACs with those in federal regulations as part of the 2023-24 harvest specifications process or pursue another pathway?
8. Should other bottom contact hook and line gears (e.g., vertical hook and line gear anchored to the bottom) still be permitted between 30 and 40 fms from 40° 10' N. lat. to 46° 16' N. lat., or would it be aligned with the rest of the Non-trawl RCA proposal (i.e., item 12e)?

Questions?