

**GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON PRELIMINARY PREFERRED
 MANAGEMENT MEASURE ALTERNATIVES FOR 2023-24 FISHERIES**

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the documents under this agenda item and received an overview from Mr. John DeVore and Mr. Todd Phillips of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff. We have organized and numbered our comments in the order that is presented in the Action Item Checklist ([Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1](#)). This report covers items 12 through 18, which deal with season structures and management measures such as depth restrictions, bag limits, and trip limits. Items 2 through 11 are covered in Agenda Item F.4, GMT Supplemental Report 3, April 2022.

As in Supplemental Report 3, the GMT’s main focus was to make it easier for the Council to make their motions. The “Enhanced Action Item Checklist” contains the various options along with the bolded GMT recommendations. For the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) selection, the Council could motion to “*select all the GMT recommended options as described in the Enhanced Action Item Checklist in Supplemental GMT Report 2 [with the following exceptions if desired]*”.

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12. “New” Management Measures

12c. FMP Amendment to establish shortbelly rockfish bycatch threshold to trigger Council review

The GMT acknowledges that there are no direct impacts from this action and that Option 2 simply formalizes a 2,000 mt mortality threshold that would initiate a review of pertinent information by amending the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. **The GMT recommends adopting Option 2 as the PPA.**

12e. Non-bottom contact hook-and-line gear allowance in the non-trawl RCA

[Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1, April 2022](#) contains a further revised and narrowed scope of gear and sector definitions that defines non-bottom contact hook-and-line gear as open access groundfish troll gear or stationary jig gear that is attached to a vessel and not anchored to the bottom. This definition also aligns with the minimum depth that is practiced by Emley-Platt EFP participants. It is the GMT’s understanding that additional discussions with Enforcement Consultants and the GAP will further refine this definition. **The GMT recommends the Council adopt the revised 12e proposal as described in NMFS Report 1 as the PPA to open the Non-trawl RCA to certain gear types with the gear definition revisions that the GMT understands are being further developed with the EC and GAP.** The GMT anticipates an update in the analysis document for the June Council meeting once a gear definition and narrowed scope has been adopted.

Using the data from the midwater rockfish EFPs (Emley/Platt, Real Good Fish and Cooke), the gear configurations proposed have relatively low bycatch of groundfish species of concern while being able to harvest healthy midwater rockfish. Additionally, natural bait will not be allowed

therefore further reducing the potential impacts to seabirds, which is the only prohibited/protected species that could likely be impacted by this action. Habitat impacts are expected to be minimal, and the Habitat Committee has stated that they have no habitat-related concerns with these gear types ([Agenda Item E.6.a, Supplemental HC Report 1, November 2021](#)). The potential risk of allowing OA and LEFG sectors into the NT_RCA with very specific gear is minimal given what has been outlined above, and, while it is difficult to determine the projected effort, effort is likely constrained by fuel prices, potential travel danger to “sport-like” OA vessels, and the VMS requirement. Additionally, the attainment of midwater rockfish would have to increase significantly to risk exceeding the non-trawl allocation, and, given the barriers to access the area, the GMT does not think that this is a likely outcome.

12f. Amendment to extend primary sablefish season from Oct. 31 to Dec. 31

Primary sablefish fishery participants and the Council have expressed interest in extending the primary season from an end date of October 31st (Status Quo) to December 31st (Option 1) given recent low attainments in the fishery. The original intent in setting the primary sablefish (or “primary tier”) season end date at October 31st was to provide enough time before December 31st for managers to track catches, given the data lag, so as not to exceed the annual allocation. However, current catch accounting is much faster and no longer requires such a buffer. Primary tier fishery participants are often engaged in other fisheries after October 31st (e.g. Limited Entry Fixed Gear Daily Trip Limit [LEFG DTL], Dungeness crab, or Individual Fishing Quota [IFQ]), but an additional two months in the primary tier season could incentivize vessels to prioritize the primary tier fishery until their full tier limits are attained. Therefore, habitat and gear-related impacts resulting from a season extension to December 31st are expected to be similar to those of the status quo October 31st season end date, because roughly the same number of fixed gear vessels are expected to participate in the groundfish fishery as a whole.

Overall, the added two months will give primary tier vessels the flexibility to make safer decisions and plan their season based on markets and weather with the ultimate goal of increasing attainment and profitability. This item would not change the primary sablefish allocation, and therefore, all groundfish impacts are expected to be within those analyzed under the three sablefish Harvest Control Rule (HCR) alternatives, which assume full allocation attainment ([Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2, April 2022](#)). Option 1 could increase the amount of time that humpback whales are likely to co-occur with the primary tier fishery, but the likelihood of humpback whale aggregations interacting with fishing gear decreases from October to December. All gear-related impacts are likely to fluctuate with sablefish ACLs. **The GMT recommends selecting Option 1 as the PPA.**

Additionally, the Council is presented with the option to extend the incidental Pacific halibut allowance for the primary tier fishery. Currently, the allowance ceases October 31st (Sub-Option 1) in line with the status quo season end date. Sub-Option 2 would set the allowance end date at the date specified by the International Pacific Halibut Commission for the closure of commercial fisheries coastwide, or until the quota is taken, whichever comes first. In recent years, this date has typically occurred in mid-November to early December. Sub-option 2 would reduce regulatory discards, provide more opportunity for an important alternative income source, and result in minimal additional impacts to mortality. Given these factors and that there is little to no risk of exceeding the WA sport allocation of incidental halibut due to the flexibility built into the Catch Sharing Plan, **the GMT recommends selecting Sub-Option 2 as the PPA.**

12g. Correct FMP language for Block Area Closures

In March 2022, a discrepancy between FMP language and current federal regulations was brought to the attention of the Council ([Agenda Item E.9, Attachment 1, March 2022](#)). The attachment contains suggested language that would make both sources consistent with Council intent for salmon mitigation as well as align the FMP with regulatory language. In March 2022, the Council agreed to include in an FMP amendment this alignment of the definition of Block Area Closures (BACs) with the regulations ([March Decision Summary Document](#)). Therefore, **the GMT recommends that the Council amend the FMP to align it with federal regulations.**

12h. CDFW Recreational Bag limits

At the November 2021 Council meeting, the Council recommended, and NMFS subsequently implemented, 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. These species are part of CDFW's recreational fishery Rockfish Cabezon Greenling (RCG) category. The reductions to mortality associated with the inseason action to reduce the sub-bag limit within total RCG bag limit for these rockfish effective January 1, 2022, are not yet known.

Several bag limit options are analyzed as part of the 2023-24 specifications if the Council decides further reductions to fishing pressure are needed. These range from modifying current sub-bag limits to prohibiting retention of some species within current aggregate daily bag limits. All of the bag limits described in this new management measure may be used during the regular season setting process or as inseason actions as needed to take steps to achieve harvest specifications. Quillback rockfish, copper rockfish, and vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits analyzed a range from ten to zero fish (i.e., no retention) within the 10-fish RCG bag limit. **The GMT supports the adoption of this new management measure as PPA for utilization in the 2023-24 biennium, and for inseason action in the future.**

12i. CDFW Recreational RCA Management Measures

This new management measure is a novel utilization of the previously established Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary lines for the California recreational fishery. This new management measure would allow fishing seaward of a specified RCA boundary line and prohibit fishing shoreward of that line. For example, fishing could be prohibited in Federal waters shoreward of the 30, 40, 50, 60, 75, 100, or 125, fathom line. Additionally, this novel use of the RCA would allow logistical flexibility for the management of overfished species like yelloweye rockfish (current RCA utilization) and non-overfished species that include species of concern such as quillback rockfish, copper rockfish, or cowcod (novel RCA utilization). This new management measure may be used during the regular season setting process or as inseason action as needed to take steps to achieve harvest specifications. **The GMT supports the adoption of this new management measure as PPA for utilization in the 2023-24 biennium, and for inseason action in the future.**

12j. Midwater Trawl Block Area Closures

The GMT has been investigating spatial management tools for mitigating Pacific spiny dogfish bycatch in the trawl sectors as directed by the Council. As the GMT noted in [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2, April 2022](#), the GMT will conduct and provide at the June Council meeting an analysis of the use of BACs for groundfish bycatch mitigation purposes by midwater trawl gear coastwide. While the GMT will also analyze the use of BACs for groundfish bycatch mitigation purposes by bottom trawl gear off Washington, that analysis can be tiered off of the Amendment 28 analysis, for which it was in the range of alternatives, and therefore is not considered a new management measure.

13. Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Trip Limits

Current trip limits for non-IFQ, non-whiting stocks are listed in Table 1-18 of the Attachment 2 analysis ([Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2, April 2022](#)). Other than Pacific spiny dogfish, the IFQ fishery landed less than 0.2 mt in 2021 of all stocks with IFQ trip limits. The GMT considered whether adjusting the Pacific spiny dogfish trip limit, currently 60,000 lbs./month, would minimize bycatch in light of low expected ACLs in 2023 and 2024 under either harvest control rule alternative. However, the analysis demonstrates that, compared to existing industry avoidance measures and the potential use of spatial management tools such as Block Area Closures (BACs), a lower Pacific spiny dogfish trip limit would likely not be as effective and would potentially impact the value of the Pacific whiting fleet's target stock (page 2-27, [Attachment 2](#)). **Therefore, the GMT recommends selecting the status quo Shorebased IFQ trip limits for non-IFQ stocks as listed in Table 1-18 of Attachment 2.**

14. Open Access Fixed Gear Fisheries

14a. North of 40° 10' N. lat.

OA sablefish north of 36° N. lat.

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 600 lb. daily or 1 landing / week up to 2,000 lbs., not to exceed 4,000 lbs. / 2 months

Option 1: 2,000 lbs / week, not to exceed 4,000 lbs. / 2 months (removal of the 600 lb. daily 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. Under both Status Quo and Option 1, the weekly and bimonthly limits would remain at 2,000 lbs. and 4,000 lbs., respectively. 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 GMT intentionally did not include a “one landing per week” specification as part of Option 1, because we believe this requirement is no longer necessary without a daily limit and could unnecessarily constrain OAN vessels. Additionally, the language for Option 1 mirrors what is currently in federal regulations for the OAS sector, for which the daily limit was removed in the 2021-22 biennium.

The GMT does not have a model that can predict impacts from the elimination of the daily trip limit. However, removing the daily limit does not change the landed catch share, and therefore,

the landed catch share is used as a proxy for maximum projected landings. In addition to any increase in profitability, Option 1 could also reduce the amount of regulatory discard that is associated with a daily limit. While it is possible that removing the daily trip limit could entice new entrants to target sablefish in the OAN sector, the weekly limit that would remain in place and the barrier to entry associated with the cost of Vessel Monitoring System equipment would likely offset that possibility. Additionally, the increase in the daily limit from 300 lbs. to 600 lbs. in 2020 did not appear to influence participation but did appear to improve existing OAN participants' abilities to attain their bimonthly limit ([Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2, April 2022](#)).

Under status quo trip limits, the OAN sector is projected to attain 41-55 percent between the low and average price scenario, indicating that there is a significant buffer in the landed catch share that could be attained by any increase in effort under Option 1. Combined with the knowledge that the model has overpredicted landings for 2020 and 2021, the buffer may be larger than we think. If unforeseen impacts happen and effort increases dramatically, inseason action can be taken to keep the OAN fishery within their target. **The GMT recommends adopting Option 1 as PPA for the 2023-24 biennium.**

Quillback rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

In November 2021, inseason action to reduce mortality of quillback rockfish off California in 2022 by implementing sub-trip limits of 75 lbs. per 2 months within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat ([Agenda Item E.7.a Supplemental CDFW Report 2](#)). The GMT does not know what effects on mortality, particularly discard mortality, the sub-trip limits will have until data is collected, at which time further adjustment could be made through additional inseason action. The GMT notes that allowing the continuation of fishery-dependent data collection through minimal retention will also be extremely important for future assessments. Additionally, further reductions on quillback rockfish in the commercial Nearshore Fishery, an important species in the live fish market, could destabilize the niche fishery. **Therefore, the GMT recommends status quo limits for quillback rockfish within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.**

Copper rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Similar inseason actions in November 2021 were taken on copper rockfish off California. For the same reasons stated above for quillback rockfish, **the GMT recommends status quo limits for copper rockfish within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.**

14b. South of 40° 10' N. lat.

OA sablefish South of 36° N. lat.

The GMT did not receive any requests to change the OAS sablefish trip limits and therefore **recommends continuing to use the status quo trip limits as PPA.**

Quillback rockfish

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for quillback rockfish within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. for the same reasons stated above in section 14a.

Copper rockfish

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for copper rockfish within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. for the same reasons stated above in section 14a.

15. Limited Entry Fixed Gear Fisheries

15a. North of 40° 10' N. lat.

LEFG sablefish north of 36° N. lat.

The Council adopted sablefish trip limits for this fishery of 2,400 lbs. per week and 4,800 lbs. per 2 months through inseason action in November 2021 after those limits were added to the 2023-24 management measures range of alternatives as Option 1 ([Agenda Item E.7.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2021](#); [Agenda Item E.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report 3, November 2021](#)). Therefore, as of November 2021, those trip limits are considered status quo. To reflect this, the

revised Action Item Checklist ([Agenda Item F.4, Supplemental Revised Attachment 1, April 2022](#)) no longer includes any alternative trip limit options. Additionally, the GMT has not received any other requests to explore alternative trip limits and does not see a need to do so.

The GMT recommends the Council reaffirm their November inseason decision and adopt the status quo trip limits of 2,400 lbs. per week and 4,800 lbs. per 2 months as PPA for the 2023-24 biennium.

Quillback rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for quillback rockfish within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. for the reasons stated in 14a.

Copper rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for copper rockfish within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Minor Nearshore Rockfish limit for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. for the reasons stated in 14a.

15b. South of 40° 10' N. lat.

LEFG Sablefish south of 36° N. lat.

The GMT has not received any requests for changes to the LES sablefish trip limits and therefore **recommends continuing to use the status quo 2,500 lb. weekly trip limit in the 2023-24 biennium.** The action item checklist will be updated to reflect this status quo, since there are no alternative options.

Quillback rockfish

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for quillback rockfish within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. for the same reasons stated above in section 14a.

Copper rockfish

Options that have been analyzed include:

Status Quo: 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 1: 50 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

Option 2: 25 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2,000 lbs. per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat.

The GMT recommends status quo limits for copper rockfish within the 2,000 lbs per 2 months Deeper Nearshore Rockfish limit south of 40° 10' N. lat. for the same reasons stated above in section 14a.

16. Washington Recreational

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) report ([Agenda Item F.4.a WDFW Report 1](#)) describes WDFW's proposed season structure changes for 2023 and 2024. Washington recreational fisheries depend largely on black rockfish and other pelagic rockfish species, and these will provide stable opportunity in 2023 and 2024. However, actions that will impact the recreational fishery are needed to address three species: vermilion rockfish, quillback rockfish and copper rockfish. Management measures will be needed to keep catch under the annual catch limit (ACL) alternatives for the Washington vermilion rockfish contribution to the Shelf Rockfish Complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. Management measures are also needed to reduce total mortality of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish, both of which are managed in the Nearshore Rockfish Complex north of 40° 10' N. lat. None of the three are targeted in the Washington recreational fishery, they are primarily caught incidentally when fishing for other species. The recreational fishery opens in March (second Saturday) and closes in October (third Saturday).

The WDFW is proposing measures for Washington recreational fisheries that impose retention restrictions for these species. Analysis by WDFW indicated that anglers typically only retain one and rarely two of these species in the daily catches so sub-bag limits would have minimal effect. Under no retention, total mortality would be reduced as some incidentally caught and released fish would survive. Specifically, the WDFW recommended PPA would prohibit the retention of copper rockfish, quillback rockfish, and vermilion rockfish in May, June, and July.

To develop its PPA, the WDFW explored various monthly and season no retention options (Tables 1 - 3). For copper and quillback rockfish projected mortality below the species-specific ACL contributions could be achieved by partial season no retention, i.e., only May through July for quillback rockfish and May and June for copper rockfish. Although projected mortality for

quillback rockfish under the 2023-24 ACL contribution could be achieved by prohibiting retention only during May and June, input from stakeholders supported a management approach that prohibited retention for copper rockfish and quillback rockfish during the same months to simplify regulations and avoid confusion. For vermilion, in addition to May, June, and July, the analysis also considers a retention prohibition for the entire season. While the alternatives for vermilion rockfish reduce projected mortality, none are expected to lower mortality sufficiently to stay below the Washington ACL contribution (0.72 mt). However, it should be noted that the catch projections were heavily influenced by 2019 data which was atypically high and total mortality in 2020 and 2021 was less than projected, possibly due to pandemic related impacts on effort. As a result, the 2023-24 projections are more uncertain than if they had been based on more typical fishery patterns.

The WDFW justification for the PPAs is that they align the retention prohibition of all three rockfish species and in doing so provide stability for industry and maintain ongoing data collection. Stakeholders at a series of public meetings conducted by WDFW also voiced support for simpler regulations over maximum retention opportunity for quillback rockfish. In addition, because there is no commercial catch of vermilion rockfish off Washington, allowing some retention in the recreational fishery maintains a continued flow of catch and biological data to inform future stock assessments. The WA vermilion stock assessment is already designated a Category 2 due to a lack of data. Catch data used to develop the projections for vermilion were anomalous and uncertain; catches in 2023 and 2024 could offer some insight on recreational fishery behavior while the Council further explores stock definitions.

Table 1. Copper rockfish projected mortality for a range of no retention options compared to status quo (average 2019-2021 catch). 2023 and 2024 HG/ACT is 1.9 mt. PPA in bold.

No Retention Options	Projected Mortality (mt)
Status quo	2.88
No retention in May	2.37
No retention in June	2.64
No retention in May and June	2.13
No Retention in July	2.56
No retention May – July	1.82

Table 2. Quillback rockfish projected mortality for a range of no retention options compared to status quo (average 2019-2021 catch). 2023 and 2024 HG/ACT is 2.2 mt. PPA in bold.

No Retention Options	Projected Mortality (mt)
Status quo	2.56
No retention in May	2.26
No retention in June	2.37
No retention in May and June	2.07
No Retention in July	2.33
No retention May – July	1.81

Table 3. Vermilion rockfish projected mortality for a one fish sub-limit and no retention options compared to status quo (average 2019-2021 catch). 2023 and 2024 HG/ACT is 0.6 (Alt 1) or 0.7 (Alt 2). PPA in bold.

Options	Projected Mortality (mt)
Status Quo	1.97
1 vermilion rockfish	1.77
No retention May – July	1.50
No retention	0.97

Given the information above, **the GMT recommends adopting the PPAs for the Washington recreational groundfish fishery for the 2023 and 2024 seasons, as indicated in Tables 1, 2 and 3 (and as described in [Agenda Item F.4.a WDFW Report 1](#)).**

17. Oregon Recreational

The season structure and bag limits proposed (Sections 2.10 and 3.10 in [Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2, April 2022](#)) are designed to balance impacts to nearshore stocks, such as black rockfish and nearshore rockfish complex species, and yelloweye rockfish. Modeling to the PPA Oregon recreational share of the yelloweye rockfish ACT shows that the fishery would be able to be open to all depths year round. It is the GMT’s understanding that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will likely put more restrictive regulations in place via state regulations to be precautionary ([Agenda Item F.4.a, ODFW Report 1, April 2022](#)). Under Alternative 1 for Oregon black rockfish, the Oregon recreational state harvest guideline will increase by approximately 35 mt from the No Action Alternative. That is not enough to allow for any additional liberalizations, but will reduce the probability of having to take inseason action to further restrict or close fisheries.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bottomfish Season	Open all depths											
Marine Bag Limit ^{a/}	Ten (10)											
Lingcod Bag Limit	Three (3)											
Flatfish Bag Limit ^{b/}	Twenty Five (25)											

a/ Marine bag limit is 10 fish per day and includes all species other than lingcod, salmon, steelhead, Pacific halibut, flatfish, surfperch, sturgeon, striped bass, pelagic tuna and mackerel species, and bait fish such as herring, anchovy, sardine, and smelt; of which no more than one may be cabezon.

b/ Flounders, soles, sanddabs, turbot and halibuts except Pacific halibut.

Figure 1. Oregon recreational groundfish season structure and bag limits for 2023 and 2024.

There was a proposal to allow additional longleader gear (Holloway Gear) fishing and all-depth Pacific halibut fishing on the same trip. This proposal would allow anglers to participate in the longleader gear fishery in addition to the all-depth Pacific halibut fishery and the otherwise legally allowed bottomfish (sablefish, Pacific cod, and other flatfish species). Allowing these activities to occur on the same trip is not expected to increase effort, and it will not entice a wave of new participants into either fishery (NMFS 2017; [Public Comment November 2019](#)). Instead, the most likely scenario is that some current anglers targeting all-depth Pacific halibut and legal groundfish with all-depth halibut will also fish with longleader gear on the same fishing trip. Based on angler input at a series of public meetings hosted by ODFW in the fall of 2021 and public comment to the September 2019 Council meeting (Agenda Item G.1.b., Public Comments), this would reduce confusion for anglers as well as potential regulatory discards. The analysis on the longleader gear (NMFS 2017) estimated that the potential number of combined longleader gear and all-depth Pacific halibut trips could be up to 16,465, which is within approximately 2,000 trips of the 10-year average number of all-depth Pacific halibut trips. Using data on catches and bycatch from the first two years that the longleader gear fishery has been in place in Oregon (2018 and 2019), it is estimated that this action would result in an additional 0.2 mt of yelloweye rockfish mortality, 0.6 Chinook salmon encounters (not mortality), and 6 coho salmon encounters annually. All three of those, when combined with the “regular” Oregon recreational fishery impacts, are well within the Oregon recreational yelloweye rockfish HG and non-trawl share of salmon bycatch impacts.

Based on the above, **the GMT recommends adopting the PPA season structure for the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery, as shown in Figure 1, with the addition of allowing longleader gear fishing on the same trip as all-depth Pacific halibut and otherwise legal groundfish with all-depth halibut (sablefish, Pacific cod, and other flatfish species).**

18. California Recreational

CDFW will be proposing a range of recreational groundfish fishery season structure scenarios for the 2023-24 biennium. The GMT received a briefing from CDFW staff on their upcoming report which offers different combinations of offshore and all-depth fishing opportunities with the dates and lengths of all-depth opportunity being the primary difference between the scenarios analyzed. The proposed season structure scenarios would be substantial departures from the status quo, in that all result in significant reductions in allowable fishing time of 50 percent or more in nearshore

waters. The severe restrictions are intended to incorporate the best scientific information available from the 2021 stock assessments and rebuilding analyses completed for quillback and copper rockfishes off California. The GMT understands CDFW will continue to work with the GAP members and other industry representatives to solidify recommendations in preparation of final action at the June Council meeting.

In general, the GMT is supportive of the range of options being proposed by CDFW. The GMT acknowledges the limitations of the RecFISH model, appreciates CDFW identifying the modeling uncertainties created when analyzing fisheries scenarios which are drastically different than those seen in recent history, and appreciates CDFW's commitment to continue their inseason tracking and reporting methodology for key species of concern. The GMT also appreciates CDFW's qualitative analysis to address model uncertainty in the different scenarios being proposed. The GMT understands that CDFW has not yet identified a complete PPA for recreational seasons, depths, and bag limits, and will defer making any formal recommendations at this time.

References

NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service). 2017. Authorization of an Oregon Recreational Fishery for Midwater Groundfish Species. Environmental Assessment.

Summary of GMT Recommendations

#	Category	Sector	Management Measures
	Council Request	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate potential catch control management measures for Pacific spiny dogfish in groundfish fisheries, including, but not limited to, Block Area Closures (BAC) and Bycatch Reduction Areas (BRAs)
‘New’ Management Measures			
12		All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CCA Repeal – moved to Non-Trawl RCA package b. Prohibit directed fishery of shortbelly rockfish – moved to stand-alone management measure c. FMP Amendment to establish shortbelly rockfish bycatch threshold to trigger Council review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend Option 2 d. Quillback rockfish rebuilding plan e. Non-bottom contact hook-and-line gear allowance in the non-trawl RCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend Option 1, with gear definition revisions f. Extend primary sablefish season from Oct. 31 to Dec. 31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend Option 1 and Sub-Option 2 g. Correct FMP language for Block Area Closures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend that the Council amend the FMP to align it with federal regulations h. CA Recreational Fishery Bag Limit Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend the adoption of this new management measure as PPA for utilization in 2023-24 and for inseason action in the future i. CA Recreational Fishery RCA Management Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recommend the adoption of this new management measure as PPA for utilization in 2023-24 and for inseason action in the future j. Midwater Trawl Block Area Closures
Trip Limits, Bag Limits, and Season Structures			
13		Shorebased IFQ	STATUS QUO IFQ trip limits for non-IFQ species

Trip Limits, Bag Limits, and Season Structures			
14a		OA (North of 40°10 N. lat.)	<p>Routine adjustments to the Non-Trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, and size limits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Sablefish north of 36° N. lat. trip limits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Status Quo - 600 lb. daily or 1 landing / week up to 2,000 lbs., not to exceed 4,000 lbs. / 2 months ○ Option 1 - 2,000 lbs / week, not to exceed 4,000 lbs. / 2 months (removal of the 600 lb. daily limit) ● <u>Quillback rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months minor nearshore rockfish limit ● <u>Copper rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months minor nearshore rockfish limit
14 b		OA (South of 40°10 N. lat.)	<p>STATUS QUO Routine adjustments to the Non-Trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, and size limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Sablefish 40° 10' N. lat. - 36° N. lat.:</u> see item 14a ● <u>Sablefish south of 36° N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO 2,000 lbs./week, not to exceed 4,000 lbs./2 months ● <u>Quillback rockfish:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months Deeper nearshore rockfish limit ● <u>Copper rockfish:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months Deeper nearshore rockfish limit
15a		LEFG (North of 40°10 N. lat.)	<p>Routine adjustments to the Non-Trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, and size limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Sablefish north of 36° N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO 2,400 lbs./week, not to exceed 4,800 lbs./2 months ● <u>Quillback rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months minor nearshore rockfish limit ● <u>Copper rockfish 42° - 40° 10' N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months minor nearshore rockfish limit
15 b		LEFG (South of 40°10 N. lat.)	<p>Routine adjustments to the Non-Trawl RCA configuration, trip limits, and size limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Sablefish 40° 10' N. lat. - 36° N. lat.:</u> see item 15a ● <u>Sablefish south of 36° N. lat.:</u> STATUS QUO 2,500 lbs./week

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Quillback rockfish</u>: STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months Deeper nearshore rockfish limit • <u>Copper rockfish</u>: STATUS QUO - 75 lbs. per 2 months, within the 2 months Deeper nearshore rockfish limit
15c		LEFG Primary	Extend the season end date to Dec. 31 - see <i>New Management Measure 12f</i>
16		WA Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc. (WDFW Report 1)
17		OR Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc. (ODFW Report 1)
18		CA Recreational	Bag limits, season structure, length limits, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GMT understands that CDFW has not yet identified a complete PPA for recreational seasons, depths, and bag limits, and will defer making any formal recommendations at this time.

PFMC
04/10/22