

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the end of year status for select 2021 species, current status of 2022 groundfish fisheries, requests from industry, and any needs for inseason adjustments during the April 2022 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting. The GMT may provide an additional supplemental report to discuss and provide recommendations on any remaining proposed adjustments.

Action Items

There are no action items at this meeting.

Informational Items

Sablefish LEFG and OA Trip Limits

The GMT did not receive any requests to increase any of the sablefish trip limits in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG) and Open Access (OA) sectors, but the Council has recently expressed interest in exploring whether it is possible to increase them prior to the September Council meeting in order to allow more vessels to take advantage of the higher trip limits.

The GMT ran the sablefish trip limit models prior to the April 2022 Council meeting and discovered that the model for the Limited Entry Fixed Gear sector north of 36° N. lat. (LEN) is severely underestimating sablefish catches in recent months. This is because the model assumes a linear relationship between sablefish prices and vessel participation, and in years where the price per pound of sablefish is below \$3 per pound, the model projects extremely low participation. However, generally a minimum of 10 vessels participate regardless of price, and below \$3 per pound, the sablefish price appears to have less influence on the number of vessels in the fishery. For reference, sablefish prices in the LEN sector have generally ranged from \$1 to \$6 per pound (adjusted for inflation) for the majority of landings since 2012, with some reaching up to \$10 per pound. Since 2020, average LEN prices by period have been tracking lower than \$2.50 per pound. Under a low price scenario, the model predicts that 6 vessels will participate between May and August of 2022, but in 2021, a total of 14 vessels participated during that time, despite the similarly low sablefish prices. Using the average price scenario predictions as a proxy does not appear to resolve the issue, which is associated with the linear regression between price and participation. The GMT plans to explore refinements to the model after the June Council meeting to attempt to better capture the true relationship between sablefish price and participation.

Discussions with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) indicated that the high participation in 2022 so far, despite low prices, is likely due to closures or low allocations in other fisheries (e.g., Dungeness crab and salmon), thus incentivizing prioritization of the sablefish LEFG and OA fisheries. The GAP also noted that, for these reasons along with expected increases in sablefish prices, participation in 2022 is likely going to be even higher than in recent years. Therefore, the GMT did not feel that increasing the sablefish trip limits was appropriate at this time given the LEN model's inability to accurately predict participation and catches under current market conditions.

The LEN sector is the highest sablefish attaining sector of the four trip limit sectors and is therefore the sector for which the Council generally takes added precaution. Additionally, the Council generally prefers to keep OA limits lower than LE limits, so the GMT did not consider increasing the Open Access North (OAN) limits. Markets and infrastructure continue to limit attainment south of 36° N. lat., so the GMT did not see a need to increase those trip limits either. The GMT will re-run the model prior to the June 2022 Council meeting and consider whether precautionary trip limit increases can be implemented at that time, recognizing that participation is likely to be high and the model may continue to underestimate catch.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table 1 shows Chinook salmon catches from groundfish fisheries and exempted fishing permits (EFPs) as of April 9, 2022, in relation to the sector thresholds. The GMT typically shows the breakdown of catches from the EFPs, but notes the catches are included in [NMFS Report 1](#) under this agenda item and thus not shown here.

Table 1. Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) in 2022 as of April 9, 2022 in relation to the sector thresholds (Source: PacFIN IFQ521 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report).

Sector ^{a/}	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date	% of Threshold	Total Threshold
Whiting	CP	N/A	N/A	11,000
	MS			
	Shoreside			
	Tribal	560 b/	5%	
	Total	560	5%	
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	241	4%	5,500
	Midwater Trawl	42	1%	
	Tribal	N/A	N/A	
	Fixed Gear	500 c/	9%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec + longleader			
	CA Rec			
	Total	783	14%	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs				

a/ Also, there is a reserve of 3,500 fish, in addition to the number of fish in the whiting and non-whiting thresholds.

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

c/ 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.

N/A = no catch to date

Shortbelly Rockfish Scorecard

Table 2 estimates that 8.2 mt of shortbelly rockfish has been taken as of April 9, 2022. The GMT notes that shortbelly rockfish is once again available on the public groundfish scorecard (Report GMT007) on the [PacFIN Reports Dashboard](#). **Since the data is publicly available, the GMT**

requests guidance from the Council on continued inclusion of this table in future inseason reports.

Table 2. Estimated mortality of shortbelly rockfish by sector, as of April 9, 2022. (Source: PacFIN)

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)
At-Sea Hake Catcher Processor	N/A
At-Sea Hake Mothership	
IFQ	8.2
Incidental/Miscellaneous	N/A
Shoreside Hake	N/A
Treaty	N/A
Total	8.2
Threshold	2,000

N/A = no catch to date

Rebuilding Species Scorecard

Table 3 shows yelloweye rockfish projections from groundfish fisheries as of March 24, 2022, in relation to the harvest guidelines (HG) and annual catch targets (ACT).

Table 3. Projected mortality of yelloweye rockfish by sector, as of March 24, 2022.

Fishery	Yelloweye		
	HG Allocations a/	ACT Allocations a/	Projected Impacts f/
Date: March 24, 2022			
Off the Top Deductions	8.85	8.85	10.56
EFP b/	0.24	0.24	0.02
Research c/	2.92	2.92	2.92
Incidental OA d/	0.69	0.69	2.62
Tribal e/	5	5	5
Bottom Trawl			0
Troll			0
Fixed gear	5	5	5
mid-water			0
whiting			
Trawl Allocations	3.4	3.4	0.6
-SB Trawl	3.4	3.4	0.6
-At-Sea Trawl	0		0
a) At-sea whiting MS			
b) At-sea whiting CP			
Non-Trawl Allocation	38.8	30.4	23.6
Non-Nearshore			
LE FG	8.1	6.3	3.9
OA FG			
Directed OA: Nearshore			
Recreational Groundfish			
WA	9.9	7.8	5.7
OR	9	7.1	5.5
CA	11.7	9.2	8.5
TOTAL	51	42.6	34.8
Harvest Specification	51	42.2	42.2
Difference	0	-0.4	7.4
Percent of ACL	100.00%	101.00%	82.40%
Key	Blank cells = not applicable		
	Dashed (--) = trace, less than 0.1 mt		
	Gray shaded cells = Fixed values		
	Light blue shaded cells = off the top deductions		

a/ Formal allocations are represented in the black shaded cells and are specified in regulation in Tables 2b 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/ updated based on GMT's best estimates