

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLAN AND TERMS OF REFERENCE – FINAL ACTION

Dr. Jim Hastie, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Dr. Chantel Wetzel, NMFS briefed the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) on final stock assessment planning for 2023 and 2025. The GAP offers the following comments and recommendations on stock assessment planning, which are consistent with the Groundfish Management Team recommendations.

Full Assessments for 2023

The GAP recommends the following species for full assessments in 2023:

- Black rockfish
- Petrale Sole
- Copper rockfish-California only
- Canary rockfish

Black rockfish is an important species for the recreational sector and has new remotely-operated vehicle survey data that may inform a new full assessment.

Petrable sole is an important trawl target species. The most recent update assessment suggested a decline in recruitment occurring in recent years possibly as far back as 2012. A full assessment is recommended to incorporate new information and to include a new ecosystem driver of recruitment.

Copper rockfish is one of the more important nearshore rockfish species economically for non-trawl fisheries in California. They are a major component of the nearshore rockfish harvest in southern California and are caught in both the nearshore and shelf rockfish fisheries. There is new data available, including data collected in the California Collaborative Fisheries Research Program, the NMFS hook and line survey, and remotely-operated vehicle data that could better inform a full assessment.

Canary rockfish is another important species for both commercial and recreational fisheries. It is another stock assessment that has become stale as it will be 8 years since it was last assessed. If not assessed next year, canary would clearly be one of the top candidates for 2025, where there is already a long list. Conducting a canary assessment at this time will relieve a bit of pressure next cycle.

Data-Moderate Assessments for 2023

- Shortspine thornyhead
- Rex sole

Shortspine thornyhead was last assessed in 2013 and is a high attainment species in both fixed gear and trawl fisheries. Rex sole was also last assessed in 2013. A length-based data moderate

assessment for both species is warranted to better inform management in the future.

Possible Full Assessments for 2025

- Sablefish
- Quillback rockfish
- China rockfish
- Rougheye/blackspotted rockfish
- Aurora rockfish
- Yelloweye rockfish
- Spiny dogfish
- Yellowtail rockfish

Following are a few observations from the GAP regarding the 2025 assessments:

- A new sablefish assessment may be warranted to help validate what is believed to be numerous new year classes entering the fishery.
- Quillback rockfish is another key nearshore species for the recreational and commercial sectors. New data to inform a new full assessment is sparse. Due to the lack of new data to conduct a full assessment in 2023, the GAP suggests prioritizing quillback for a full assessment in 2025.
- Rougheye/blackspotted rockfish was last assessed in 2013, thus the assessment is becoming stale. Though rougheye tend to be difficult to age, there is the potential for a large amount of new age data to become available by 2025. New genetic testing has also been developed since the last assessment that will better inform the blackspotted proportion of the stock. This could lead to revisiting the current category 2 designation of rougheye/blackspotted and consideration of being a Category 1.

2022 Workshops

Dr. Hastie briefed the GAP on upcoming workshops this year which includes a hook and line survey workshop in late June or early July and an August workshop that will focus on closed area data gathering. A pre-assessment workshop dealing with the 2023 assessments is scheduled to take place later this fall. A GAP representative is expected to attend these workshops.

Terms of Reference

The GAP reviewed the revisions to the Terms of Reference and finds those revisions acceptable. Of particular importance, the GAP agrees with the Scientific and Statistical Committee that in the future, data-moderate assessments would benefit from a Stock Assessment Review Panel review, or at a minimum have a review process that would allow for sufficient review time and formal advisory participation.

PFMC
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