

GROUND FISH ADVISORY PANEL REPORT ON
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the documents and received presentations from Mr. Ryan Wulff, Assistant Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR), and Dr. Chantel Wetzel (NMFS), under this agenda item and offers the following comments.

The GAP discussed an issue that occurred in mid-October where 2021 trawl individual fishing quota sablefish and thornyheads carryover quota pounds were mistakenly populated in vessel accounts even though northern sablefish was not eligible for carryover. NMFS was informed of this mistake a few days after the occurrence. By that time some vessels either not noticing their balance included this bump or believing they had a windfall for some unknown reason, fished or transferred pounds based on their new total. NMFS then retrieved the pounds back from vessel accounts. The GAP understands mistakes happen. However, the GAP suggests in the future if there is such an event that vessel account balances are being increased and decreased for activities outside of the vessel's control, that the information and remedy be communicated as early as possible with the affected parties. In this instance, if the mistake was already made and if there was no jeopardy of exceeding the annual catch limit, and participants were negatively impacted, the quota pounds could have stayed in the vessel accounts.

Mr. Wulff informed the GAP that NMFS has re-initiated consultation about impacts of the groundfish fishery on southern resident killer whales (SRKW). The primary reason for re-initiating is the recent SRKW critical habitat re-designation. NMFS indicated that this consultation should be a straightforward update of the 2012 BiOp, for example, to include information such as the recently updated SRKW critical habitat and updated fishery information.

The GAP appreciates the communication for the upcoming November 16th workshop, convened in coordination with Oregon Sea Grant, about pot gear line marking. The GAP appreciates the effort to proactively seek input and participation from the public including linking workshop registration in the NMFS report under this agenda item. The GAP encourages stakeholders to participate in this process.

Dr. Wetzel noted that there are no current impediments for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's research vessel Bell M. Shimada's participation in the 2023 coastwide acoustic hake survey. However, she said they will be monitoring for any issues that could limit the Shimada's participation, such as staffing or supply chain issues so that they can both engage on potential problems early and keep stakeholders and Council informed. The GAP appreciates this effort because the Shimada's full participation in the survey is critical for the whiting fishery.

The GAP appreciates the numeric information of bycatch of salmon in West Coast fisheries. The GAP suggests that genetic based data be added to the list of information in the future because this information (in addition to numeric trends) would be of interest to the GAP and the Council.