

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS INCLUDING PACIFIC WHITING SET-ASIDES FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to discuss progress of this year's 2022 fishery and possible 2023 inseason adjustments. The GMT discussion was led by Ms. Melissa Mandrup, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); Ms. Whitney Roberts, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); and Ms. Katie Pierson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The GAP offers the following recommendations and comments on proposed inseason adjustments to ongoing groundfish fisheries.

2022 Inseason Requests

There were no new inseason requests for the remainder of 2022.

2023 Inseason Requests

The GAP understands that there were major complexities in the proposed rulemaking for the 2023-24 biennial harvest specifications and management measures in main part due to a slew of new latitude and longitude coordinates for the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) corrections. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has suggested the latitude/longitudes may slow down finalization of the 2023-24 specifications package and thus may not meet the January 1, 2023, implementation date. The GAP wholeheartedly agrees that any 2023 inseason requests and actions be considered in a separate rule after the specifications package has been fully implemented. The GAP understands that any inseason action considered by the Council at this meeting may not be instituted until Period 2 in 2023 or later.

2023 LINGCOD TRIP LIMITS NORTH OF 42° N. LATITUDE

The fixed gear industry has requested an increase in the lingcod trip limits north of 42° N. latitude for the 2023 fishing season, which is similar to the action adopted at the September Council meeting for the remainder of the 2022 season. Fixed gear fishermen have noted that most of their allocation of lingcod has been taken during the first two weeks of the fishing periods thus has led to regulatory discards of lingcod later in the year. Previous GMT analysis suggests bycatch of yelloweye would increase only slightly with increased trip limits of lingcod north of 42° N. latitude but would remain within projected impacts. Effort is expected to be low during the first part of the year and the last two months of the year due to the Dungeness crab season. Furthermore, the Oregon crab fishery is not subject to the same, potentially early and/or immediate, crab season closure as fisheries in California. Additionally, Oregon fishermen may also have more salmon fishing opportunity than fishermen in California, resulting in less effort shift. Fishermen off Washington are restricted to waters seaward of 100 fathoms, so lingcod are not targeted.

Working from the supplemental GMT report, the GAP recommends the following:

Open Access Fixed Gear Lingcod North of 42° N. Latitude

- Current No Action 2023 trip limits: 2,500 lb./month
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 1**: Increase to 3,500 lb./month as soon as possible

Limited Entry Fixed Gear Lingcod North of 42° N. Latitude

- Current No Action 2023 trip limit: 5,000 lb./2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 1**: Increase to 7,000 lb./2 months as soon as possible.

SABLEFISH DAILY TRIP LIMIT (DTL)

Fixed gear sablefish landings continue to track low to date, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and no doubt effects from high inflation and deteriorating economic conditions. Thus, there is an opportunity to increase the daily trip limits for both limited entry and open access fixed gear in the north. For those fishermen who have a buyer willing to purchase their sablefish, a trip limit increase would be greatly beneficial. The GAP does suggest being a bit more precautionary setting the open access (OA) limits due to uncertainty in the California Dungeness crab and salmon fisheries for 2023. That is, it is uncertain when the Dungeness crab season will open (or close), due to the presence of whales and potential entanglement. Early predictions of salmon seasons do not look great and open access and some limited entry fishermen, particularly in California, may need to depend on sablefish to keep their businesses viable.

Referencing the supplemental GMT report, the GAP recommends the following:

Open Access DTL Fixed Gear Sablefish North of 36° N. Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits: one landing per week up to 2,000 lb., not to exceed 4,000 lb./2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 1**: one landing per week 3,000 lb., not to exceed 6,000 lb./2 months as soon as possible.

Limited Entry DTL Fixed Gear Sablefish North of 36° N Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits: 2,400 lb./week, not to exceed 4,800 lb./2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 1**: 4,500 lb./week, not to exceed 9,000 lb./2 months as soon as possible

FIXED GEAR TRIP LIMITS FOR CANARY ROCKFISH

Fixed gear representatives have requested an increase in the canary rockfish trip limits for the 2023 fishing season. Fishermen are encountering large numbers of canary while fishing for shelf rockfish, leading to regulatory discards. The GAP supports increasing the canary trip limits to those adopted during inseason at the September 2022 Council meeting. Working from the supplemental GMT report, Table 5, the GAP recommends the following increase in the canary trip limits for open access fixed gear in 2023 (**GMT Option 2**):

Fixed Gear Open Access Canary Rockfish North of 40° 10' N. Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits: 1,000 lb. every 2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 2**: 2,000 lb. every 2/months as soon as possible

Fixed Gear Open Access Canary Rockfish South of 40° 10' N. Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits: 1,500 lb. every 2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 2**: 2,000 lb. every 2 months as soon as possible

Fixed Gear Limited Entry Canary Rockfish Trip Limits North of 40° 10' N. Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits: 3,000 every 2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 2**: 4,000 every 2 months as soon as possible

Fixed Gear Limited Entry Canary Rockfish Trip Limits South of 40° 10' N. Latitude

- Current no action 2023 trip limits; 3,500 lb. every 2 months
- The GAP supports **GMT Option 2**: 4,000 lb. every 2 months as soon as possible

ODFW INSEASON REQUEST FOR THE 2023 RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The GAP was briefed by Ms. Lynn Mattes of ODFW as to the progress of the Oregon recreational groundfish fishery in 2022. Extremely favorable weather and sea conditions have led to large increases in recreational fishing effort in 2022. Bag limits have been adjusted downward as well as implementing non-retention of several nearshore rockfish species in an effort to extend the fishing season through the end of the year. For the 2023 fishing season, [ODFW is requesting an increase](#) in the longleader gear fishery daily bag limit to 15 fish per angler per day. Lingcod retention would continue to be prohibited, and the fishery would remain restricted to seaward of the 40 fathom regulatory line. Following GAP discussion led by recreational industry leaders from Oregon the GAP agrees with the ODFW proposal.

Additionally, the GAP supports consideration of a mechanism to move forward with the use of natural bait in the longleader fishery, similar to what is allowed in the commercial fishery. The GAP requests the Council and NMFS provide guidance on how to incorporate the use of natural bait in the longleader fishery in the future.

Pacific Whiting Set-asides

The Council is scheduled to adopt set-asides to accommodate the incidental mortality of Pacific whiting in 2023 research activities and in the pink shrimp fishery. The GAP supports the GMT recommendation of 750 mt of Pacific whiting for the 2023 research and pink shrimp set-asides.

Future Considerations

The GAP originally requested the GMT consider during this meeting the following requests to inseason management for 2023 fisheries. We understand that more information is necessary to justify making changes to these fisheries in 2023. However, we also want to make the Council and

NMFS aware that management changes that affect these fisheries may require adjustment later in 2023.

CALIFORNIA 2023 RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The GAP is concerned about upcoming changes to the California recreational fishery in 2023. It may be necessary to review the closure shoreward of the 50-fathom line in the Central California Region between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, and in the Southern California Region from Sept. 16 to Dec. 31 as specified within the June 2022 [f-6-a-supplemental-cdfw-report-1](#). The GAP realizes more information from 2023 would likely be necessary to inform this request.

California recreational anglers have been successful in avoiding copper rockfish in 2022 under the current season structure. Their objective is to hold fishing mortality of these fish below the ACL within 2023-2024 specifications.

If recreational anglers are successful in holding 2022 copper rockfish catches below the 2023-24 ACL under our more liberal 2022 season structure, California recreational members of the GAP hope to propose inseason action as soon as possible, to extend the all-depth access in 2023 beyond that currently specified in 2023-2024 management measures, on the basis that the ACL will not be exceeded. Thus, this action would need to be completed no later than the June 2023 meeting.

This is important to anglers not only because of the additional access to co-occurring nearshore rockfish species, but because it would allow fishing inshore waters, irrespective of having any rockfish from the shelf and slope complexes otherwise allowed, aboard. Under current management measures, recreational anglers would be barred from fishing nearshore waters at all for species such as bass, barracuda, and bonito once rockfish from the shelf and slope complexes were on board. Often, calm mornings and windy afternoons drive a pattern of offshore deep water fishing early in the day and inshore fishing in the afternoon.

FIXED GEAR SHELF ROCKFISH NORTH OF 40°10' N. LATITUDE

The GAP has some concerns regarding access to the RCA in 2023 and minor shelf rockfish trip limits for the fixed gear fisheries north of 40° 10' N. Lat. With the new 2023 gear regulations allowing vertical gear usage inside the RCAs, fishermen are concerned there will be much larger landings of shelf rockfish species such as chilipepper and bocaccio. The GAP notes these species have separate trip limits for the fixed gear fisheries south of 40° 10' N. latitude. Conversely, they are included in the overall minor shelf rockfish trip limits in the north. The shelf rockfish trip limits for open access fisheries also are lower than other rockfish species, particularly yellowtail, widow and canary rockfish.

While the GAP is not requesting any trip limit changes at this time, we want to ensure the GMT and Council are aware of this discrepancy because shelf rockfish trip limits north of 40° 10' N. lat. may need to be discussed and adjusted in the future, primarily to limit the amount of regulatory discards that may occur.

PFMC
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