

GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON AMENDMENT 31  
GROUNDFISH STOCK DEFINITIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was briefed by Mr. Todd Phillips, Groundfish Management Team (GMT) staff officer and Ms. Marlene Bellman, Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) staff officer on Phase One Stock Definitions and offers the following comments and suggestions.

The GAP recommends the following as preliminary preferred alternative (PPA):

**Canary Rockfish** Alt. 1, which follows best scientific information available (BSIA) in [F.7, Attachment 1](#) under this item.

**Dover Sole** Alt. 1, BSIA

**Pacific Spiny Dogfish** Alt. 1, BSIA

**Rex Sole** Alt. 1, BSIA

**Shortspine Thornyhead** Alt. 1, BSIA

**Sablefish** Alt. 1, BSIA

**Lingcod** Alt. 2, which is two separate stocks north of and south of 40° 10' N. lat., BSIA

**Black Rockfish** Alt. 3, BSIA

**Copper Rockfish** Alt. 2a, BSIA

Alt. 2a is supported by BSIA in [F.7, Attachment 1](#), table ES 3. The [SSC statement](#) under this item recommends any option finer than coastwide, and recommends alt. 4 be under consideration. Alt. 4 is OR, WA, and 2 CA stocks, one north and one south of Pt. Conception. The GAP supports BSIA, which is Alt. 2a – 2 stocks as a WA/OR stock and a CA stock.

**Quillback Rockfish** Alt. 3, BSIA

**Vermilion/ Sunset Rockfish** Alt. 2a (a combined OR/WA vermilion stock and a CA sunset/vermilion stock due to new genetic information regarding sunset rockfish range.

The BSIA recommendation in F.7 attachment 1, table ES 3 is Alt. 3a, which is as 3 stocks – an OR/WA stock, and Northern and Southern CA stocks divided at Pt. Conception. The [SSC](#) recommends finer than coastwide. If the reason for dividing California Sunset/Vermilion north and south of 34° 27' N. lat. (Pt. Conception) is solely on the basis that sunset rockfish range ends there, newer genetic information suggests that sunset rockfish are present in number into northern California (pers. comm. Dr. John Harms). The [E.3.a Supplemental SSC report 1, Nov. 2022](#) says: “For sunset/vermilion rockfish, separate stock areas should be assumed for status determination

for the Southern and Northern California assessments because of the presence of sunset rockfish primarily south of Point Conception.”

Therefore, on the basis of new information the GAP suggests the Council consider defining the vermilion/sunset stock as a Vermilion stock OR/WA and a single Vermilion/Sunset stock in California as their PPA – Sub-Alternative 2a.

The GAP recommends removal of squarespot rockfish (*S. hopkinsi*) from the phase 1 stock definitions list and move consideration to phase 2. This diminutive species contributes little to the potential harvest. There is no targeted commercial fishery. Furthermore, squarespot is primarily caught in the recreational fishery.

Squarespot landings in 2022 were approximately 8.4mt total - less than 0.20 tons commercially and 8.2mt recreationally. Almost all squarespot landed coastwide were caught by partyboat anglers south of Point Dume, California (Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego Counties). The total recreational catch south of Pt. Dume was 8.04mt, over 97% of which was caught by partyboat anglers (RecFIN data, 2022).

Furthermore, if there were concerns for this species in the interim between Phase 1 and Phase 2, management action to establish a minimum hook size for recreational rockfish and/or a sub-bag limit for squarespot could be implemented within California’s Southern Rockfish Management Region only. At this time the GAP thinks such concerns are not warranted, given the very small total catch.

Tribal allocations/set asides of groundfish are generally a fixed percentage of the coastwide annual catch limit (ACL) (or the northern portion thereof) or harvest guidelines based on the coastwide ACL. Before taking final action on this item, consideration should be given and analysis conducted to understand any potential impacts of the range of alternatives to tribal set asides.

PFMC  
03/08/23