

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS - FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the current status of groundfish fisheries and the need for any inseason adjustments during their April 2023 pre-Council meeting webinar on March 27, 2023, and again during the April Council meeting. At this time, no inseason adjustments have been requested or identified. This report provides the current estimates for the 2023 scorecards and information about the 2022 estimated total mortality of sablefish. As a reminder, the requested Pacific spiny dogfish scorecard will be included in the June 2023 GMT Inseason report.

Information Items

2022 Sablefish

By now, recreational and commercial sablefish landings data are fairly complete for 2022. It appears that the estimated total mortality of sablefish north of 36° N. lat. may have approached the annual catch limit (ACL), possibly exceeding the ACL. Final estimates are provided by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP), typically at the September meeting.

In the interim, the GMT provides a comprehensive table of estimated total mortality of sablefish, coastwide, compared to the harvest specifications, set-asides, and allocations (Table 1). Recreational catches are from RecFIN, commercial landings are from the PacFIN Comprehensive Fish Ticket database, and at-sea total catches are from APEX report GMT017. The estimated discards used in this table are a 3-year average (2019-2021) based on the reported discard mortality estimates with mortality rates applied¹ in WCGOP's Groundfish Expanded Mortality Multiyear (GEMM) data product. For the tribal, research, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), and incidental open access (IOA) off-the-top set asides, the pre-season projections are used as proxies until more information on their respective estimated discards are reported by WCGOP in September. The GMT notes there are discrepancies among the public reports on the PacFIN APEX webpage due to the way discards are estimated. Additionally, the estimated discards do not include the 20 percent and 50 percent discard mortality rates for fixed gear and bottom trawl gears, respectively. The GMT is discussing these discrepancies with PacFIN at our upcoming April 20 groundfish workgroup call.

¹ 20 percent for fixed gear, 50 percent for bottom trawl, and 100 percent for midwater trawl ([Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation](#))

Table 1. 2022 estimated total mortality (mt) of sablefish, coastwide, compared to harvest specifications, set-asides, and allocations.

Harvest Specification	Allocation (mt)	Retained Wt. (mt)	Est. Discard Wt. (mt)	Est. Total Mort. (mt)	Percent Attained
Coastwide OFL	9,005	6,188.6	295.9	6,484.5	72%
Coastwide ABC	8,375				77%
North of 36					
ACL	6,566.0	5,869.5	293.4	6,162.9	94%
Off the top deduction	694.4	493.3		493.3	71%
Tribal	656.6	457.9	--	457.9	70%
Research	30.7	30.7	--	30.7	100%
Recreational	6.0	3.6	--	3.6	59%
EFP	1.1	1.1	--	1.1	100%
Non-Tribal Commercial	5,871.6	5,376.2	293.4	5,669.6	97%
Limited Entry	5,319.7	4,821.7	280.0	5,101.7	96%
<i>Limited Entry Trawl</i>	<i>3,085.4</i>	<i>2,939.3</i>	<i>205.8</i>	<i>3,145.1</i>	<i>102%</i>
At sea (set aside)	100.0	168.4	137.0	305.4	305%
Shorebased IFQ	2,985.4	2,770.9	68.8	2,839.7	95%
<i>Limited Entry Fixed Gear</i>	<i>2,234.0</i>	<i>1,882.4</i>	<i>74.2</i>	<i>1,956.6</i>	<i>88%</i>
Primary Tier	1,899.1	1,570.1	3.6	1,573.7	83%
LEFG DTL	335.1	312.3	70.6	382.8	114%
Open Access	551.9	554.5	13.4	567.9	103%
South of 36					
ACL	1,809.0	319.1	2.5	321.5	18%
Off the top deduction	27.4	27.4	0.0	27.4	100%
Tribal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Research	2.4	2.4	0.0	2.4	100%
Recreational	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EFP	--	--	--	--	--
Incidental Open Access	25.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	100%
Fishery Harvest Guideline	1,782.0	291.7	2.5	294.1	17%
Trawl Allocation	748.0	95.4	0.9	96.3	13%
Non-trawl Allocation	1,033.0	196.2	1.6	197.8	19%
Limited Entry Fixed Gear	599.0	179.8	1.6	181.4	30%
Open Access	434.0	16.4	0.0	16.4	4%

The GMT also provides the total estimated mortality of sablefish north of 36° N. lat. from 2017 - 2022, as reported in the GEMM and Table 1, compared to the ACL for reference and to inform any future decision making (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimated total mortality of sablefish north of 36° N. lat. compared to the ACL, 2017-2022.
Source: GEMM, the 2022 estimate is from Table 1.

Reference Point	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Estimated Total Mortality (mt)	5,363.2	5,032.8	5,118.2	3,802.6	5,443.1	6,162.9
ACL (mt)	5,252	5,475	5,606	5,723	6,892	6,566
Percent of the ACL	102%	92%	91%	66%	79%	94%

2023 Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table 3 shows Chinook salmon bycatch (899 fish or 4.5 percent of the 20,000 threshold) from groundfish fisheries and EFPs as of April 2, 2023, in relation to the sector thresholds. The GMT will report the Chinook salmon numbers from the Trawl Gear EFP during the March, June, and September meetings; however, at this time EFP data is confidential. National Marine Fisheries Service will provide a full report on the Chinook salmon numbers from the Trawl Gear EFP at the April and November meetings.

Table 3. Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) in 2023 as of April 2, 2023, in relation to the sector thresholds (Source: PacFIN IFQ021 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			
	Total			
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	86	2%	5,500
	Midwater Trawl	30	0.5%	
	Tribal	19 ^{b/}	<0.01%	
	Fixed Gear	500 ^{c/}	9%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec + longleader			
	CA Rec			
	Total	635	12%	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs		899		

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, season has not started

* = confidential data

2023 Shortbelly Rockfish Scorecard

Per Amendment 30 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, if shortbelly rockfish mortalities exceed, or are projected to exceed, 2,000 mt in a calendar year, the Council would review relevant fishery information and consider if management changes are warranted, including, but not limited to reconsideration of its current classification as an ecosystem component (EC) species. To help track shortbelly rockfish throughout the season, Table 4 provides the estimated mortality by each sector.

Table 4. Estimated mortality of shortbelly rockfish by sector, as of April 2, 2023. (Source: PacFIN)

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)
At-Sea Catcher Processor	N/A
At-Sea Mothership	
IFQ (non-whiting)	31.0
Shoreside whiting	N/A
Incidental/Miscellaneous	N/A
Treaty	N/A
Total	31.0
Threshold	2,000

N/A = no catch to date

2023 Rebuilding Species Scorecard

Table 5 shows yelloweye rockfish projections from groundfish fisheries as of April 2, 2023, in relation to the specified reference points. Projected impacts are updated throughout the year based on GMT's best estimates.

Off the top deductions include projections for tribal, research, EFP, and IOA set asides, which are currently specified in regulation. Tribal projected values are the tribes' best estimate of catch. Research set-asides are based on anticipated research needs of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other projects. EFPs are amounts set aside to accommodate anticipated applications and are estimates provided by the applicants and approved by the Council. The IOA values are the GMT's best estimate of impacts as analyzed in the 2021-2022 Environmental Impact Statement.

Table 5. Allocations and projected mortality impacts (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as adopted for 2023.

Sector	Sub-sector	Projection (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking limit (mt)	Percent Attainment
Grand Total		35.5	ACL b/	55.1	64.4%
Off the top	a/	10.3	Set Asides	10.7	95.9%
Trawl	CP	--	Trawl alloc.	4.4	13.6%
	MS	--			
	Shoreside whiting	--			
	IFQ	0.6			
	Sub Total	0.6	Trawl alloc.	4.4	13.6%

Sector	Sub-sector	Projection (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking limit (mt)	Percent Attainment
Non-trawl	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	3.9	HG	10.7	36.4%
	WA Rec	3.2		13.2	24.2%
	OR Rec	5.5		11.7	47.0%
	CA Rec	12		15.3	78.4%
	Sub Total	24.6		HG c/	50.9
	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	3.9	ACT	8.4	46.4%
	WA Rec	3.2		10.4	30.8%
	OR Rec	5.5		9.2	59.8%
	CA Rec	12		12	100.0%
	Sub Total	24.6		ACT	40

a/ off the top set asides: Tribal = 5 mt; EFPs = 0.14 mt; Research = 2.92 mt; Incidental Open Access = 2.66 mt

b/ ACL = Set asides + Trawl allocation + Non-trawl allocation.

c/ The Non-trawl allocation is the sum of the non-trawl HGs, 50.9 mt.

PFMC
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