

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON AMENDMENT 31: STOCK
DEFINITIONS – FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received and discussed a presentation on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council's) proposed Amendment 31 to its Groundfish Management Plan regarding stock definitions for 14 groundfish species from Todd Philips and offers the following comments and support.

The GAP supports the following (which, in the case of copper rockfish, differs from the Council's Preliminary Preferred Alternative [PPA]):

- Alternative 1 (§2.3): Canary & squarespot rockfishes; Dover, petrale, & rex soles; Pacific spiny dogfish, sablefish, & shortspine thornyhead (Pacific Coast)
- Alternative 2 (§2.4): Lingcod (N/S of 40°10' N. lat.)
- Alternative 3 (§2.4): Copper rockfish (WA, OR, CA)
- Alternative 3 (§2.5): Black & quillback rockfishes (WA, OR, CA)

The Council did not select a PPA for vermilion/sunset rockfish but did identify 4 alternatives for analysis. Of these the GAP recommended Alt. 2a in our [GAP March 2023 report on Amendment 31](#). Today we recommend the Council select Alternative 3 as the FPA, in agreement with the [GMT statement under this item](#). This is for 3 stocks by state, an Oregon and a Washington vermilion stock and a state-wide California vermilion/sunset stock.

Our rationale for a California state-wide vermilion/sunset stock is that information suggests sunset rockfish exist in numbers far into northern California. We concur stocks should be defined on stock structure and think the spatial extent of a stock should encompass the entire region of interrelatedness, or gene-flow. This provides the Council the greatest degree of flexibility in determining appropriate management measures.

While a stock may be defined over a large range, management measures should be tailored to provide conservation where conservation is needed. For example, in California the Council has five identified management regions. While a stock may be defined as state-wide, conservation need may vary considerably between those regions. Management measures should continue to be tailored to fit the identified conservation need within a given region. Management measures should not result in lost access to healthy resources within one region on the basis of a conservation need in another.