

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON PRELIMINARY EXEMPTED
FISHING PERMITS FOR 2025-2026

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the proposed exempted fishing permits (EFPs) and reports and notes that the existing EFPs have provided valuable information to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and National Marine Fisheries Service for better fisheries management while also affording the seafood industry more opportunity. As the GAP noted in 2021, the methods for accessing clean catch of healthy midwater rockfish populations will be critical in light of future restrictions to nearshore rockfish fisheries.

Regarding the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife \(CDFW\) EFP](#), the GAP expressed enthusiastic support for this EFP, especially since a lack of quillback rockfish information has been a hindrance to the assessment. Additionally, more commercial passenger fishing vessels may be interested in participating in this EFP in the future. However, some members of the GAP questioned what standard would be used to decide if a quillback should be descended or retained in the EFP. The GAP suggests more details be made available for final action in June 2024.

The GAP notes the [midwater trawl rockfish EFP](#) has been going on for several years, successfully, and would like to see this move into regulation.

For 2025-2026, the GAP recommends the Council move forward with the CDFW and midwater rockfish EFP.

The GAP understands the Dan Platt and Dan Yoakum EFP (Vertical Hook and Line Research Estimate) has been withdrawn ([Agenda Item E.6, Attachment 2](#)) and proposed as a research project ([Agenda Item E.6, Attachment 6](#)). The GAP supports the idea of using commercial hook and line fishermen for collaborative research in the future. However, there is no process for the Council to consider research proposals as a part of the biennial harvest specifications. The GAP sees value in the goals of this proposal to collect additional nearshore information and suggests the more expeditious path might be to expand the hook-and-line survey. We have noted our interest in this expansion repeatedly in past statements (e.g., [Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, September 2023](#))

PFMC
11/03/23