GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2027-2028 – PART 2

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) offers the following recommendations for 2027-2028 management measures items 5-11 (to correspond with items covered in Agenda Item F.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2, November 2025).

#	Item	GAP Recommendation
5	ACTs	• Shortspine thornyhead: status quo non-trawl ACT N of 34° 27' N. lat. • Copper rockfish S of 34° 27' N. lat.: analyze removal of the ACT
6	Trawl/non-trawl allocations	Status quo for all stocks except: • Widow rockfish: status quo (300 mt to non-trawl, remainder to trawl) and option 1 (150 mt to non-trawl, remainder to trawl) • Slope rockfish S of 40° 10' N. lat.: status quo (63 percent trawl, 37 percent non-trawl), option 2 (utilizing a revised "blackgill math" method), and option 3 (52 percent trawl, 48 percent non-trawl)
7	Non-trawl harvest guidelines	• Cowcod: maintain within non-trawl HG • Bocaccio S of 40° 10' N. lat.: maintain within non-trawl HG • Blackgill: see #6 (slope rockfish S of 40° 10' N. lat.)
8	Sablefish allocation	Sablefish N of 36° N .lat.: • Analyze recreational set-aside increase to 35 mt • Recommend research amount per method in Supplemental GMT Report 1 Sablefish S of 36° N .lat.: • Status quo recreational set-aside • Recommend research and IOA amount per method in Supplemental GMT Report 1 • Status quo trawl/non-trawl allocation • Status quo within non-trawl shares for LE and OA
9	Yelloweye rockfish allocation	• Status quo trawl/non-trawl allocation • Overwinter, request GMT to examine non-trawl retention allowances
10	Canary rockfish allocation	• Overwinter, request GMT to examine WDFW proposal
11	Trawl - at-sea whiting set-asides	• See Table 1

Annual Catch Targets and Allocations

5. Annual Catch Targets

The GAP recommends maintaining the status quo method for the shortspine thornyhead non-trawl ACT north of 34° 27' N. lat. in order to protect the opportunity for the historic fishery south of 34° 27' N. lat. If the non-trawl fleet in the north comes close to the ACT in future years, the GAP may recommend a change in the method at that time.

For the ACT for copper rockfish south of 34° 27' N. lat., this ACT has been constraining on recreational fishermen in the recent biennium. We understand the purpose was to limit effort on a portion of a stock which the most recent stock assessments suggests is depleted. The low ACT in the current biennium has compelled a need to limit the months Southern California anglers have access to fish rockfish in waters inshore of the 50-fathom lines. This in turn has compelled transit regulations that prevent anglers having rockfish aboard from fishing gamefish inshore of those lines. This has the greatest cost to anglers fishing on multi-day trips. It constructively prevents any retention of any rockfish from any depth, until the afternoon of the final day of the trip. Relief from this dynamic would be much appreciated, and the GAP suggests analysis of the removal of the ACT.

6. Trawl/Non-Trawl Allocations

The GAP recommends maintaining the status quo trawl/non-trawl allocations for all stocks except for widow rockfish and slope rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. For widow rockfish, the GAP supports the GMT proposed range of allocations as shown in Agenda Item F.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2 which would include status quo (300 mt to non-trawl, remainder to trawl) and option 1 (150 mt to non-trawl, remainder to trawl).

For slope rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat., the GMT and GAP discussed the current allocation (63 percent trawl, 37 percent non-trawl) versus what the allocation would be using the blackgill "math" concept implemented in the 2021-2022 biennium. Given the recent changes in the amount of mortality taken by the non-trawl sector of slope rockfish (except blackgill), the GAP supports the GMT recommendation to analyze status quo (63 percent trawl, 37 percent non-trawl), option 1 (utilizing a revised "blackgill math" method), and option 2 (52 percent trawl, 48 percent non-trawl).

7. Non-Trawl Harvest Guidelines or Shares

For cowcod and bocaccio south of 40° 10' N. lat., the GAP supports the GMT recommendation to maintain the within non-trawl HG for 2027-2028. For blackgill rockfish, this is included in item #6.

Stock Specific

8. Sablefish

For sablefish north of 36° N. lat., the GAP supports analyzing an increase in the recreational set aside to 40 mt due to recent increased landings in the Washington sport fishery. For research, the GAP supports using the GMT proposed methodology (see Agenda Item F.8., Supplemental GAP Report 1, Agenda Item F.8., Supplemental GMT Report 1).

For sablefish south of 36° N. lat., the GAP supports maintaining the status quo recreational set aside and supports using the GMT proposed methodology for research and IOA as outlined in Agenda Item F.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1. The GAP also supports status quo for the trawl/non-trawl allocation and within non-trawl shares for LE and OA.

9. Yelloweye Rockfish

For yelloweye rockfish, the GAP continues to support the status quo biennial allocation of 8 percent trawl, 92 percent non-trawl and the within non-trawl HGs for commercial non-trawl and the three state recreational fisheries. Given the rebuilding trajectory of the stock, the GAP and GMT had extensive discussions about the potential of allowing yelloweye rockfish retention in both commercial non-trawl and recreational fisheries. Recreational members of the GAP noted that a one-fish yelloweye sub-bag limit is unlikely to create a targeting of yelloweye, but may reduce regulatory discards occurring currently. Yelloweye rockfish have a high degree of co-occurrence with canary rockfish, a key target species, and given the outlook on canary, it is likely that yelloweye will continue to be constrained. The GAP is supportive of the GMT examining retention allowances (e.g., sub-bag limits, annual limits, restricted season length for recreational fisheries) for the non-trawl fisheries for 2027-2028 for analysis. However, the GAP's main priority is to ensure that we do not constrain other groundfish or halibut opportunities through retention of yelloweye rockfish.

10. Canary Rockfish

For canary rockfish, the GAP and GMT had an extensive conversation as canary is expected to remain a constraining species for all sectors. The GAP appreciates the creative thinking proposed in the Supplemental WDFW Report 1 and recommends including it for analysis over the winter. While we wish that the shorebased IFQ program could also operate under a performance standard similar to that proposed to the non-trawl and at-sea sectors, we continue to seek ways to reduce the number of buffers present within the management system and increase opportunities and attainment for all sectors.

Trawl Sector

11. At-Sea Set-Asides

For 2027-2028 at-sea set-asides, the GAP recommends the following for analysis:

- **Removing at-sea set-asides** for dover sole, lingcod N of 40°10′ N lat, longnose skate, and petrale sole, since the at-sea sectors have had a historical maximum catch of less than 10 mt for each species and - with the exception of petrale sole - there is low IFQ/ACL attainment.

- **Carrying forward the 2025-2026 at-sea set-asides** for arrowtooth flounder (100 mt), darkblotched rockfish (100 mt), minor shelf rockfish N of 40°10′ N lat (35mt), minor slope rockfish N of 40°10′ N lat (300 mt), other flatfish (100 mt), Pacific halibut (10 mt) and Pacific ocean perch (300 mt), since these values will likely cover expected mortality and there have not been major changes to the ACL for 2027-2028.
- **Carrying forward the 2026 at-sea set-asides** for canary rockfish (21.9 mt) and shortspine thornyhead N of 34°27′ N lat (76.3 mt) to correspond with the Council's emergency action taken in September 2025 to revise the 2026 specifications and measures for canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and petrale sole (September 2025 Decision Summary Document).
- **Reducing at-sea set-asides** for sablefish N of 36° N lat (from 429 mt to 305 mt) and yellowtail rockfish (from 360 mt to 320 mt) to correspond with recent maximum catch, due to ACL decreases and the desire to provide more opportunity to the IFQ fishery.

While widow rockfish is pending SSC and Council decisions, the GAP recommends analysis of an at-sea set-aside range for widow rockfish of 200-300mt.

Table 1. 2017-2015 maximum and average catch, the 2026-2026 at-sea set-aside values, and the GAP recommendations for analysis in 2027-2028– all in metric tons.

Stock or Complex	Area	2017-2025 Catch		2025-2026 Set-Aside	2027-2028 GAP Rec
		Max	Average		
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	71	34	100	100
Canary rockfish	Coastwide	20	6	20 / 21.9	21.9
Darkblotched rockfish	Coastwide	100	55	100	100
Dover sole	Coastwide	6	2	10	Remove
Lingcod	N of 40°10′ N lat	3	1	15	Remove
Longnose skate	Coastwide	3	1	5	Remove
Minor shelf rockfish	N of 40°10′ N lat	16	9	35	35
Minor slope rockfish	N of 40°10′ N lat	144	92	300	300
Other flatfish	Coastwide	47	20	100	100
Pacific halibut	Coastwide	2	1	10	10
Pacific ocean perch	N of 40°10′ N lat	142	47	300	300
Petrale sole	Coastwide	0	0	5 / 5.6	Remove
Sablefish	N of 36° N lat	305	130	429	305
Shortspine thornyhead	Coastwide	245	83	70 / 76.3	76.3
Widow rockfish	Coastwide	475	175	300	200-300
Yellowtail rockfish	N of 40°10′ N lat	318	154	360	320

PFMC
11/17/25