

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Advance Briefing Book's Year-At-A-Glance (YAG, Agenda item c.5, Attachment 1, March 2019), currently lists the Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA) boundary revisions as tentatively scheduled for ROA/PPA action in June 2019, with FPA selection in September of 2019. The intent of this proposal is to make modifications to select portions of the outer boundary of the Western CCA to allow access to deeper-water groundfish species, possibly by modifying the configuration to be defined by waypoints approximating the 175-fathom depth contour.

In response to requests from commercial fixed gear sectors that target sablefish, thornyhead and slope rockfish, CDFW has proposed revisions to the outer CCA boundary for over a decade, as these deeper-water areas of the CCA are beyond the depth range for cowcod. In November 2017, following recommendations to remove the item from the 2018-19 specifications process, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recommended the Council consider evaluating the action in a separate stand-alone agenda item following the Essential Fish Habitat rulemakings, which resulted in the item's placement on the YAG.

After further consultation with California fixed gear representatives on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and following the Council's action this week under Omnibus Workload Planning (Agenda Item G.4, March 2019), CDFW recommends that the outer CCA boundary adjustment item be included for consideration in the action where adjustments to the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) lines will be considered. CDFW expects the type of analysis for the CCA boundary change to be similar in nature to the analysis needed for changes to the RCA lines.

Highly Migratory Species

Following Council discussion under the NMFS report (Agenda Item J.1, March 2019) regarding consideration of Drift Gill Net (DGN) hard caps, CDFW recommends the item be scheduled on the March 2020 YAG. This will provide notice to participants planning to continue in the DGN fishery that the Council intends to proceed with developing further recommendations on hard caps at that time.

CDFW also recommends that the Council continue to consider recommending issuance of new Deep Set Buoy Gear Experimental Fishery Permits (DSBG EFPs) each June, until the fishery is established in regulation. Further, CDFW recommends that NMFS continue to renew existing DSBG EFPs and update the Council on the number of these renewals each June.