

GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON AMENDMENT 26:
BLACKGILL ROCKFISH MANAGEMENT – FINAL ACTION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with Pacific Fishery Management Council staff officers Mr. John DeVore and Dr. Jim Seger to discuss blackgill rockfish and minor slope rockfish intersector allocation. The Council is considering whether to reaffirm the final preferred alternative under Amendment 26 as well as considering revising individual fishing quota (IFQ) accumulation limits for blackgill rockfish. Mr. Dan Erickson and Mr. Brian Hooper briefed the GAP on the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) [Supplemental Report 1](#) under this agenda item.

After two days of discussion, the GAP recommends no action on this issue at this time.

A blackgill rockfish update assessment in 2017 changed the situation considerably. The stock was projected to be above T_{target} of B_0 by 2018. Because the stock is above target, there is no longer the need to move blackgill out of the minor slope rockfish complex due to conservation concerns.

The GAP felt the suggestion in the NMFS report that breaking blackgill out of the complex would not be constraining upon the trawl fishery is not well founded. The NFMS analysis views “constraining” at the fleet level, pointing out that the sum of all blackgill rockfish caught in recent years was less than the amount that would be made available to the sector.

The GAP notes that constraint occurs at the individual level not at the fleet level. Since the allocation of quota shares (QS) would be using the same percentages that are currently held on minor slope rockfish south, the distribution of quota pounds (QP) can be identified along the entire West Coast. Such an analysis shows that roughly 56% of the QP would be issued to entities operating north of 40° 10' N. lat. and only 44% would go to those operating in the affected area in the south. Additionally, since the total poundage associated with blackgill is a relatively a small amount, the amount of QP each entity would be receiving is relatively small. In fact, the amounts are so small that offering this QP up for trade or sale would likely not occur. For example, many entities would be receiving only the “equal share component” and this amount would be roughly 300 pounds. The sale value for quota pounds of minor slope rockfish south on the auction has been around \$0.015/lb (1.5 cents) for a total value of \$4.50. Most entities would not bother to offer this amount for sale.

At the same time, the IFQ sector truly would like to see the non-trawl sector access additional blackgill rockfish.

The GAP’s preference would be to see the reallocation occur and then to have the IFQ component repackaged as the minor slope complex as it currently exists. However, the GAP has been informed that such an outcome cannot be accommodated with the current analyses and documents.

The GAP recommends the Council modify the trawl/non-trawl harvest guidelines for blackgill rockfish and increase non-trawl trip limits of blackgill rockfish. For this year and in 2020, the GAP understands the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) can project trawl landings based on what the trawl sector has taken in the past and subtract that from the blackgill harvest guideline of 159 mt, with the remainder going to the non-trawl sectors. The GMT could then model increased trip

limits for limited entry fixed gear and open access sectors based on this amount, to be handled during inseason action. Recommendations for inseason changes for 2019 will be made under Agenda Item G.9 at this meeting. Future inseason action may be necessary later in 2019 and also in 2020. The GAP understands this does not accomplish the goal of reallocation to the non-trawl sector but it has the same effect. Both trawl and non-trawl sectors, including those who catch blackgill incidentally to other fisheries, should be able to operate with limited constraint in 2019 and 2020.

Try not to constrain other fisheries because there is no conservation concern

As noted during GAP discussions, no one wants to see blackgill return to rebuilding status but there are sufficient tools to constrain or slow down the non-trawl landings to keep the stock above target. The trawl sector is 100% accountable due to the catch shares program. California's new electronic fish ticket system will go online July 1, providing landings data much more quickly in the past. These options should provide some level of comfort for the Council to maintain the status quo for 2019 and 2020.

The GAP is cognizant of the work that has been done on this issue in the past and believes it remains relevant and understands this issue would best be rolled into the next biennial harvest specifications cycle, 2021-2022.

PFMC
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