

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON TENTATIVE ADOPTION OF 2013-
2014 BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed and discussed the materials provided under Agenda Item D.5 including Attachment 1, which itemizes the anticipated Council actions. For several items, the GMT did not identify a need for further discussion, therefore, those items are not detailed in this report. The remaining items are covered in the order in which they were presented in Attachment 1. If the Council requests further input or analysis on any item, such information could be provided under Agenda Item D.9.

GMT Recommendations (in addition to action items in Attachment 1)

- 1. Adopt all set-aside updates provided in Supplemental GMT Report 2.**
- 2. Increase the arrowtooth flounder at-sea set-aside from the trawl allocation from 20 to 50 mt to accommodate catch in the at-sea sectors.**
- 3. Consider 2011 catch of spiny dogfish in the at-sea sector when establishing the at-sea whiting set-aside from the trawl allocation. Options include**
 - a. Increase the Other Fish set-aside from 520 mt to 726 mt to account for the 2011 catches in the at-sea sectors, or**
 - b. Continue with the preferred Other Fish set-aside of 520 mt.**
- 4. Require that all fish from any trip be offloaded prior to the commencement of a subsequent trip to ensure accurate catch accounting.**
- 5. Adopt modifications to the Fishery Management Plan and regulations to specify that shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) participants fishing with a non-endorsed gear be exempt from the open access trip limits since catch is covered by quota pounds.**
- 6. Adopt the shorebased IFQ option for enhanced accountability measures.**

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1. Final Non-overfished Species Harvest Specifications

Stock Complexes

The Council continues to improve methodologies to estimate harvest specifications for species without stock assessments (i.e., data-poor species) and evaluate the performance of the existing stock complexes relative to the revised National Standard 1 Guidelines. Based on the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fishery Science Center (NWFSC) presentation under Agenda Item D.1 ([D.1.c, Supplemental NWFSC PowerPoint](#)) the GMT would like to work with the Science Centers and Council staff to ensure that an adequate range of stock complex reconfiguration and management options are explored, if tasked to do so by the Council. It is our understanding that this work would have to be largely completed by the end of this year to avoid overlap with the Science Center’s stock assessment duties. As such, we suggest a working group be convened to address this issue in the fall. The GMT anticipates commenting further on workload matters under Agenda Item G.7, Future Meeting Planning.

2. Final Overfished Species Harvest Specifications and Rebuilding Plans

Canary Rockfish

Agenda Item D.5.a, Attachment 2 identifies the probability of rebuilding canary rockfish by 2027, which is the median time to rebuild in the current rebuilding plan. The new stock

assessment and rebuilding analysis indicates canary rockfish cannot rebuild by 2027, even under a zero harvest strategy. In April, the Council selected 2030 as the preferred T_{TARGET} under the proposed changes to the canary rockfish rebuilding plan. Table 1 shows the probability of rebuilding canary rockfish in 2030, which is the median time to rebuild under Alternative 1 (preferred) and Alternative 8. The Council’s preferred alternative is expected to rebuild with a greater than 50 percent probability by 2030. Alternative 8 has a 50 percent probability, while Alternative 2 has a 55.8 percent probability of rebuilding by 2030.

Table 1. Probability of rebuilding for 2030, the Council’s preferred T_{TARGET} .

Canary 2013 ACL	2030
101 mt (ALT 2)	55.8%
116 mt (ALT 1, PPA)	54.6%
147 mt (ALT 8)	50.0%

3. Final Set-Asides and Allocations

The GMT will provide updated set-aside estimates for tribal fisheries, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), research, and open access fisheries in Agenda Item D.9.b, Supplemental GMT Report 2. The updates will result in changes to the fishery harvest guidelines and sector allocations. The rationales for the changes are outlined below.

a. Adopt set-asides from the annual catch limits (ACL) and, for some species, the trawl allocations

Set-asides updates

EFP

If the Council modifies the PPA for EFP set-asides under Agenda Item D.4.b, the GMT will revise the EFP set-asides in Agenda Item D.9.b, Supplemental GMT Report 2. Depending on the magnitude of the changes, such updates may require further discussion under Agenda Item D.9.

Tribal

The tribal set-aside values used in the DEIS analysis need to be updated based on recent tribal requests. At the April Council meeting, the Makah requested changes to the minor shelf rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and widow rockfish set-asides (Agenda Item I.3.b, Supplemental Tribal Report, April 2012). At this meeting, the Makah submitted a letter requesting the petrale sole set-aside be updated to 220 mt for both 2013-2014 (Agenda Item D.5.b, Supplemental Makah Report).

Research

The Council adopted preliminary research set-asides for 2013-2014 in November 2011. The GMT recently received updated information from NMFS on anticipated research projects by the NWFSC, and set-asides were updated accordingly.

Other Fish

Set-asides for Other Fish are updated, based on the maximum historical catch in the tribal, research, EFP, and incidental open access fisheries.

At-Sea Whiting Set-Asides

Unlike set-asides that are taken as off-the-top deductions after setting the ACL, set-asides for some species are taken from the trawl allocation to accommodate bycatch in the at-sea whiting fisheries (catcher-processor and mothership). Like other set-asides, these catches are not typically managed inseason. Therefore the Council has generally established set-aside amounts high enough to accommodate the historical maximum or any increased catch that is anticipated. Inseason action may be taken if there is a risk of a harvest specification being exceeded, unforeseen impact on another fisheries, or conservation concerns.¹ Potential inseason action for the at-sea sectors include implementing bycatch reduction areas (BRA) which would prohibit vessels from fishing shoreward of a boundary line approximating the 75-fm, 100-fm or 150-fm depth contours and would be expected to reduce catches of some species.

In November 2011, catch in the at-sea sectors from 2009-2010 was evaluated and set-asides were recommended by the Council for the DEIS analysis. At this meeting, the NMFS submitted a letter detailing the catch estimates from the 2011 at-sea fishery (Agenda Item D.5.b, NMFS Letter). Two species had catches higher than the preferred set-asides for 2013-2014.

The arrowtooth flounder catch in 2011 was 45.2 mt while the set-aside proposed for 2013-2014 is only 20 mt. **The GMT recommends increasing the arrowtooth flounder set-aside from 20 to 50 mt to accommodate catch in the at-sea sectors.**

Catch of Other Fish in 2011 was higher than the proposed set-aside for 2013-2014; 726 mt compared to a 520 mt set-aside. The highest proportion of catch in the Other Fish set-aside was spiny dogfish, which occurred in the catcher-processor sector (Agenda Item D.5.b, NMFS Letter). **The Council could increase the Other Fish set-aside from 520 mt to 726 mt to account for the 2011 catches.** Preliminary analysis indicates that neither the Other Fish harvest specifications nor the spiny dogfish contributions to the Other Fish complex (e.g., ABC and OFL) would be exceeded if the historical maximum mortality in all sectors was encountered in 2013-2014. However, if non-trawl mortality is higher than the historical maximums, inseason adjustments to non-trawl routine management measures (i.e., RCA and trip limit adjustments) may be needed. Given the depth and geographic distribution of spiny dogfish (see DEIS and Appendix C), BRAs should be an effective management tool to reduce catch in the at-sea sector if the set-aside is projected to be exceeded.

The Council could continue with the proposed set-aside of 520 mt, track catches inseason, and consider inseason adjustments to BRAs, if necessary. Given the depth and geographic distribution of spiny dogfish (see DEIS and Appendix C), BRAs should be an effective management tool to reduce catch.

The GMT notes that the catcher-processor co-op has successfully resolved emerging inseason issues in the past. For example, in 2004 when catches of darkblotched rockfish was a concern for all fisheries, the catcher-processor sector worked closely with the NMFS to harvest their

¹ See 660.150(c)(2)(i)(B)(2)

remaining whiting allocation while avoiding darkblotched. We would anticipate a similar response in the rationalized fishery yet we cannot predict whether catches would remain within the set-aside.

In the next management cycle, the Council may wish to evaluate whether set-asides are the most appropriate tool for managing spiny dogfish in the at-sea fisheries. For example, a direct allocation to the co-op may be more effective and efficient than actively managing the set-aside inseason with command and control measures such as BRAs.

4. Final Season Structures

a. Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Fishery

The preferred rockfish conservation area (RCA) configuration represents the structure in regulation on January 1, 2012 (Table 2). If desired, the Council could adopt the current RCA configuration (as of May 11, 2012, Table 3). There have been several small changes to the trawl RCA between 40°10' and 48°10' N. lat. throughout 2012: in Period 2, moving the seaward line from 200 fm to 150 fm; in Periods 3 and 5, moving the shoreward line from 75 fm to 100 fm; and in Period 6, moving the seaward line from the modified 200 fm to 150 fm, between 45°46' and 48°10'. Adjustments to the RCA and associated changes in impacts cannot be modeled; yet projected attainment for overfished species under the preferred alternative for 2013-2014 are very low and therefore impacts can likely be accommodated.

Table 2. Trawl RCA boundaries as of January 1, 2012 (published in 2011-2012 Final Rule, 76 FR 27508, p. 27548).

	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
North of 48°10' N. lat.	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 150 fm line ^{1/}		shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
48°10' N. lat. - 45°46' N. lat.	75 fm line ^{1/} - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	75 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}	75 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/}	100 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/}	75 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}	75 fm line ^{1/} - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
45°46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.			75 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}	100 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}		
South of 40°10' N. lat.	100 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/2/}					

Table 3. Trawl RCA boundaries as of June 21, 2012 (published in inseason action, 76 FR 22679 on April 17, 2012, effective May 1, 2012).

	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
North of 48°10' N. lat.	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 150 fm line ^{1/}		shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
48°10' N. lat. - 45°46' N. lat.	75 fm line ^{1/} - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	75 fm line^{1/} - 150 fm line^{1/}	100 fm line^{1/} - 150 fm line^{1/}	100 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/}	100 fm line^{1/} - 150 fm line^{1/}	75 fm line^{1/} - 150 fm line^{1/}
45°46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.		75 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}	100 fm line^{1/} - 200 fm line^{1/}	100 fm line ^{1/} - 200 fm line ^{1/}	100 fm line^{1/} - 200 fm line^{1/}	75 fm line ^{1/} - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
South of 40°10' N. lat.	100 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/2/}					

5. Final Management Measures

b. Management of ACL set-asides

The GMT notes that decisions on IFQ surplus carryover are anticipated to occur in the spring while decisions on reapportioning set-aside amounts is anticipated to occur in the fall after research and EFPs are typically completed. Currently the issuance of IFQ surplus carryover takes into consideration projections to evaluate the risk of exceeding harvest specifications (see [Agenda Item D.8.b, NMFS Report](#)). Under attainment of the research and EFP set-asides could be an important consideration in evaluating the risk of issuing surplus carry-over. The Council may wish to consider moving the decision on surplus carry-over to the fall so that both issues can be considered concurrently.

c. Sorting requirement for aurora (north of 40° 10), shortraker (north of 40'10), rougheye (north of 40° 10)

In examining the slope rockfish landings data, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) discovered that its species compositions from pre-2010 were not being applied to slope rockfish landed by hook and line gears. Catch of aurora, rougheye, and shortraker rockfishes was therefore reported as being zero in PacFIN for these gears. That error was corrected and the PacFIN estimates are now shown in Table 4. These estimates include both tribal and non-tribal landings into the state. Of note, the catch history on which the overfishing level (OFLs) were calculated for these stocks were based on the erroneous landings data in PacFIN. The landings are significant enough for rougheye that we suspect the OFL calculation would differ if it were rerun. The GMT recommends that this be looked at for the next harvest specification cycle.

Table 4. WDFW Corrected PacFIN hook and line landing estimates for aurora, rougheye, and shortraker rockfish (in mt).

Year	Aurora	Rougheye	Shortraker
2000	0.12	25.64	5.62
2001	0.01	13.94	1.99
2002	0.05	24.69	2.75
2003	0.63	19.41	0.83
2004	0.04	32.07	5.83
2005	0.20	40.71	2.03
2006	0.01	54.28	3.16
2007	0.04	51.36	2.24
2008	0.06	44.81	3.29
2009	0.03	79.80	2.45
2010	0.09	45.30	4.27
2011	0.05	40.16	3.84
2012	0.00	7.92	0.29

e. Related regulatory and FMP language clarifications

The GMT would like to clarify some information for Council consideration relative to item 5e. The first is a regulation clarification regarding offloading language. The second is an FMP and possible regulations clarification regarding how the open access regulations apply to IFQ participants when they fish with non-trawl gear for which the vessel is not endorsed.

Offloading

Current regulations at 660.60(h)(2) require those vessels participating in the IFQ fishery to fully offload their catch before starting a new fishing trip. When this regulation was implemented as part of the trawl program components final rule it was specific to IFQ landings. The DEIS for 2013-2014 analyzed modifying regulations to apply this requirement to all fisheries. The GMT supports this change because requiring all fisheries to fully offload before the start of a subsequent trip will aid in catch accounting, because it will be easier to track the landed species associated with a particular fishing trip. **The GMT recommends modifying regulations to require all landings in all fisheries to be offloaded prior to the start of a new trip.**

Relationship between open access fishery regulations and the IFQ fishery

This issue relates to how open access (OA) regulations apply when an IFQ participant is fishing with gear for which the vessel does not have an endorsement (i.e., non-endorsed gear). Current groundfish FMP language (section 11.2.5) states that when an IFQ participant fishes with gear for which the vessel does not have an endorsement they must cover their landing with trawl IFQ, comply with the trawl IFQ program provisions, and open access sector regulations will not apply. The FMP clarification analyzed in the DEIS would modify the FMP to specify that IFQ participants fishing with gear for which the vessel does not have an endorsement would only be exempt from the open access trip limits and would remain silent on how other open access regulations would apply. As stated in the DEIS, "Gear and other regulations having to do with the open access fishery may continue to apply, however, this adjustment will not prevent NMFS and the Council from providing exceptions to other open access regulations as necessary and appropriate". Additionally, NMFS may need to amend regulations, including the gear switching regulations at 660.140(k) to be consistent with this FMP change. **The GMT recommends adopting modifications to the FMP and regulations to specify that IFQ participants fishing with a non-endorsed gear be exempt from the open access trip limits.**

g. Modifications to the shorebased IFQ surplus carry-over

The GMT recommends that the Council consider the enhanced accountability option for the IFQ surplus carry-over (see Appendix C of the DEIS). Under this option, the GMT could work with the NWR to analyze the projected impacts. This analysis would allow for discussion with other advisory bodies (i.e., the GAP) and the public to ensure the best available data is used for decision-making, and to bring the risk call to the Council, like is done with inseason actions now. Some on the GMT do not understand the "process" issue that has been raised with the carryover. The Magnuson-Stevens Act and National Standard Guidelines are designed to prevent overfishing and all involved here seem in agreement that the carryover does not raise such a risk (see Agenda Item I.3.b, Supplemental SSC Report, April 2012).

h. Remove or reduce to 20 inches the minimum length for lingcod in the shorebased IFQ fisheries (all legal gears)

Although the DEIS determines that there would be no significant biological impact by removing or reducing to 20 inches the minimum length for lingcod in the shorebased IFQ fishery using all legal gears, the GMT would like to provide additional context to this determination. Analysis of the difference between the projected amount of caught and retained currently sub-legal lingcod, in comparison to what is currently allowed, has not been conducted largely due to uncertainties around minimum market thresholds. That is, there is likely a minimum marketable size for lingcod at which point lingcod below this threshold will be discarded, regardless of whether or not it is legal. Input via public comment from industry processors may be valuable to the Council in understanding lingcod marketability relative to this proposed minimum size change. Since the assessment assumes that the full ACL is taken, it may be safe to assume that removing the size limit will not have a biological effect on the resource. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to eliminate the current lingcod size limit for the 2013-2014 biennium and potentially revisit this issue for the 2015-2016 management cycle.

m. Modifications to spiny dogfish bi-monthly cumulative landing limits and RCAs

The preferred action from April was to include all routine management measures to address spiny dogfish catches inseason. The GMT notes that for the next cycle, the Council may want to evaluate whether the current management measures are sufficient or if issuing spiny dogfish IFQ would be more efficient. A similar consideration may need to be given for longnose skate.

n, o, and p. Changes to California recreational management measures

The Council's PPA is to allow shelf rockfish retention in Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA), removal of bocaccio size limit, and increase bocaccio bag limit.

New information reveals that recreational impacts in 2011 were higher for bocaccio than previously thought. These data were not included in the recreational model and not analyzed in the DEIS. The GMT notes that the proposed changes to recreational management measures (e.g., bag limit, size limit) are all considered routine inseason measures. If these measures are implemented, and there are unanticipated consequences, adjustments can be made inseason.

PFMC
06/22/12