

Status of California Dover Sole Stocks
1985

Prepared By

Larry F. Quirollo
California Department of Fish and Game

August 1985

ABSTRACT

The recent catch history of Dover sole in California was reviewed by INPFC Area. No biological data and analysis was incorporated in this report. Dover sole landings in the INPFC Eureka and Monterey Areas for 1984 were 4145 and 4342 mt, respectively. Dover sole production in the Eureka Area in 1985 is projected to be well below the 8000 mt ABC. Monterey Area landings in 1985 are down 23 percent from the previous year's level and will not exceed the 5000 mt ABC for this Area. The Conception Area fishery continued its rapid expansion from 108 mt in 1982 to 1286 mt in 1984. The 1000 mt ABC for the Conception Area was exceeded in 1984 and is projected to be substantially exceeded in 1985. A current lack of biological and fishery data hindered evaluation of the appropriateness of the present Conception Area ABC level.

STATUS OF CALIFORNIA DOVER SOLE STOCKS
1985

Fishery

The 1985 Dover sole harvest in California is projected to exceed 10,000 metric tons, possibly resulting in the highest catch on record. Landings through the end of June totaled 5426 mt, up 19.4 percent over 1984 landings for the same time period (Table 1). Major Dover sole production will continue to come from the INPFC Eureka and Monterey Areas, but the most rapid development in the fishery has occurred in the INPFC Conception Area where landings increased 3-fold in 1984 (Table 2). The ABC limit was exceeded in the Conception Area in 1984 and was surpassed again during the first six months of 1985.

INPFC Eureka Area

Improved market conditions resulted in increased Dover sole production in the Eureka Area in 1985. Landings in California increased 6.7 percent over the first 6 months of 1984, despite prolonged periods of strong currents and rough seas which restricted trawling. Landings totaled 1870 mt in California; Oregon landed an additional 333 mt. A projected 4500 mt of Dover sole are expected to be landed from the INPFC Eureka Area in 1985, well below the 8000 mt ABC limit.

Dover sole tags returned from experiments conducted in the INPFC Eureka Area from 1969 through 1973 tend to verify the identity of a single unit stock of Dover sole which exists between the Cape Blanco and Cape Mendocino headlands. Of 5017 tags released, 1233 or 24.5% have been recovered to date.

INPFC Monterey Area

Dover sole landings in the Monterey Area are down 23 percent from 4339 mt in 1984 for the first half of the year. The projected 1985 catch of 3400 mt is well below the 5000 mt ABC for this Area. The major reduction in landings occurred in San Francisco (down 36%) and Moss Landing (down 50%). Landings doubled in Bodega Bay.

INPFC Conception Area

The Dover sole harvest in the Conception area is the most dynamic in the State. The fishery expanded from 108 mt in 1982 to 1286 mt in 1984. Production in 1985 has reached 1633 mt through mid-June. The number of vessels targeting on Dover sole increased from one in 1983 to 11 in 1985. Roller trawls have been used to open virgin grounds to trawling. Landings in 1985 are projected to reach the 2000-3000 mt level.

Recommendations

No ABC changes are recommended for the INPFC Eureka or Monterey areas. It appears that landings have stabilized and that they will fluctuate with market demand. Landings will be monitored for biological stress and the fishery will continue to be managed with the points of concern mechanism.

Additional effort will be devoted to monitoring the catch from the Conception Area where a virtual virgin stock is being harvested. The 1000 mt ABC estimate is based on historical catch data which now appears antiquated. A concerted effort is underway to determine appropriate MSY and ABC levels for this population.

TABLE 1. Estimates of Dover Sole Landed in California
 (in metric tons) by INPFC Area 1982-1985.

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Jan.-June Landings</u>	<u>Annual Landings</u>	<u>ABC</u>
Eureka Area				
	1982	2817	5432	8000
	1983	1581	4011	8000
	1984	1753	4138	8000
	1985	1870		8000
Monterey Area				
	1982	2603	4429	5000
	1983	2195	4011	5000
	1984	2484	4339	5000
	1985	1923		
Conception Area				
	1982	61	109	1000
	1983	80	356	1000
	1984	308	1286	1000
	1985	1633		1000

TABLE 2. California Dover Sole Landings (in metric tons) 1972-1984.

INPFC STATISTICAL AREA

<u>Year</u>	<u>Eureka</u>	<u>Monterey</u>	<u>Conception</u>	<u>State</u>
1972	7038	2934	42	10014
1972	6752	3417	28	10197
1974	5829	2798	29	8656
1975	7013	3206	70	10289
1976	6533	3705	83	10321
1977	5035	4841	66	9942
1978	4516	4856	52	9420
1979	6427	4149	34	10610
1980	4979	3150	55	8184
1981	5722	3477	61	9260
1982	5431	4466	108	10005
1983	4011	4010	369	8390
1984	4145	4342	1286	9773