

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON TRAWL RATIONALIZATION TRAILING ACTIONS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received a briefing from Mr. Jim Seger, Council staff, and Ms. Jamie Goen from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Region (NWR) on trawl rationalization trailing actions, process improvement and enhancement (PIE) rules, and NMFS items for corrections. We were also provided with a list of NMFS priorities, given current agency workload constraints. The priorities were: biennial groundfish harvest specifications and management measures, cost recovery, and response to litigation. As such, it is uncertain whether NMFS will be able to address additional trailing actions described under this agenda item. Given this situation, the GMT looks to the Council to help us prioritize our workload based on these NMFS priorities.

PIE 2 (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 1)

Allow a fixed gear permit and trawl permit to be registered to the same vessel at the same time
The GMT sees the benefit of this option to the fishery and to NMFS' administration of permit transfers; however it may cause some catch accounting issues and problems differentiating what permit was associated with the vessel at the time of landing. It may be possible to work out those issues relatively easily, however the GMT did not have time to fully discuss it here at this meeting. In short, state fish ticket systems do not flag individual fishing quota (IFQ) landings on their own. Yet we are currently working on a way of using the Federally-mandated electronic reporting system to match state fish ticket numbers to IFQ landings.

There may be separate issues with the Vessel Monitoring System declaration system and matters of enforcement. We did not have occasion to discuss this with the Enforcement Consultants (EC) because of our workload at this meeting.

NMFS Items for PIE 2 (Agenda Item F.8.b, NMFS Report 2)

Clarify Fishery Closure Language

The GMT reviewed the proposed language which considers adding automatic action for fishery closure if "there is a conservation concern or if the shorebased trawl allocation or overall allocation is projected to be attained. A conservation concern may include projected attainment of an ACL." The GMT would like to point out that the IFQ fishery is managed to a sector-specific allocation, and exceeding that allocation may not necessarily constitute a conservation concern. Further, exceeding an ACL may not necessarily constitute a conservation concern.

Trawl Rationalization Trailing Actions: Gear Issues (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 4, March 2012)

Alternative 1B, Using more than one gear on a trip

The GMT discussed the use of multiple gears during same trip. The GMT noted that small and large footrope trawls already can both be used during the same trips north of 40°10 N. latitude seaward of the rockfish conservation area. However, other combinations may be advantageous for attaining individual quota pounds under the current IFQ program. The GMT concluded that although versatility and flexibility are certainly advantageous to fishers, this issue of expanding multiple gear use should be thoroughly scoped regarding unintended consequences within

Federal and state regulations, fishery data recording and management, enforcement, and vessel safety, before being developed and before implementation. Preliminary concerns have been raised regarding these issues and are described in Agenda Item E.9.b, GMT Report, November 2011 (http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/E9b_GMT_RPT2_NOV2011BB.pdf).

Alternative 3. Allow trawl gear modifications that increase efficiency and selectivity:

The GMT recommends that regardless of the option selected under this alternative, that status quo large and small footrope requirements and restrictions remain in effect because of prohibitions on gear use in the groundfish essential fish habitat areas (50 CFR 660.130(b)(4)).

Enforcement Committee Report (Agenda Item F.8.b Supplemental Report)

The GMT supports the concept of a one-day workshop dedicated to gear regulations as they apply in the IFQ program. The GMT agrees that this workshop should occur immediately prior to the June Council meeting. Participants should include the Enforcement Consultants, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and GMT. The NWR and Fisheries Science Center staff should also be encouraged to attend.

PFMC
03/06/12