

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS-PART I

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed potential inseason actions for both the 2010 and 2011 seasons. Following this initial inseason discussion the GAP wishes to recommend the following:

2010 Conception area fixed gear sablefish (South of 36° N Latitude)

The GAP supports the GMT Option 3, which allows for a 300-pound monthly limit for open access (OA) and a 1,300-pound weekly limit for limited entry for the month of December 2010. The GAP believes the 300-pound OA limit maintains access to the directed Blackgill fishery while still allowing for any associated incidental catch of blackcod that might occur. We have no desire to close the limited entry (LE) fishery and though the 1,300-pound weekly limit is much smaller than the current limit it will still allow for a directed blackcod fishery for that LE sector. It should be noted that the GAP does not believe the OA sector will catch all of its available fish, thus should leave a residual buffer. The GAP also requests affirmation to the Nature Conservancy landing all of its exempted fishing permits sablefish set-aside for 2010 as there may be a small residual there.

2010 Fixed gear sablefish (North of 36° N Latitude)

The GAP supports the GMT option for OA to increase the limits to 400 daily, 1,500 weekly, and 4,500 by/monthly.

The GAP OA representatives had requested an increase previously this year as catch has been running lower than usual so would greatly appreciate an increase especially for those few full time OA blackcod fishermen. It is believed that these larger limits will not induce effort shift as many boats have already geared up for the upcoming Dungeness crab fishery. Boats from south of Conception would be precluded from fishing this larger northern limit if they had already landed sablefish in November below 36° N Latitude (per NMFS staff guidance).

For the 2011 inseason adjustments, in particular for the Conception area sablefish fixed gear fishery, the GAP requests guidance from the Council on how to allocate between the OA/LE sectors prior to any further GAP discussions for setting trip limits. The GAP believes that a long-term formal allocation between LE and OA could help this process go more smoothly and recommends the Council begin an allocation process.

Immediate action must be taken to address the projected shortfall in darkblotch. Instead of a complete closure of all whiting and non-whiting trawl fisheries the GAP recommends the following:

- Current OY 330 mt
- Current projection 382.7 mt

Proposed corrective Actions:

- Move outside line of the RCA north of 40 10 to 250 fathoms 37 mt
- Reduce scorecard for shoreside whiting by 6 mt
- Reduce Catcher Processor scorecard by 1 mt
- Voluntarily reducing non-whiting trawl limit to 1000 pounds
Is projected to conservatively contribute 15 mt
- Projected catch thru 12/31/10 after corrective actions 323.7 mt

Depending on fishing decisions by the Mothership sector an additional contribution of 0.5 mt may be available.

The only other option is closing all whiting and non-whiting trawl on December 1 which will create an immediate rush by the fleet to catch the current higher limit to maximize their revenue. Providing an opportunity for a voluntary limit reduction by the non-whiting trawl fleet is expected to result in greater savings than a complete closure.

PFMC
11/06/10