

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS – PART II

2010 Trawl – Darkblotched

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) notes that there is a great deal of uncertainty about the darkblotched mortality estimates provided in the score card and reason to believe they are excessive. For example, last year the darkblotched trip limits were substantially lower than this year and hence a greater proportion of the darkblotched bycatch would be discarded relative to the amount discarded this year under higher limits. Additionally, because this year's period 1 Petrale trip limits were much lower (1/3) than in 2009, the fishery effort in the 150 fm Petrale cutouts, where bycatch rates are higher, was much less. Both these factors would contribute to the overexpansion of the estimated darkblotched bycatch in this year's fishery.

The GAP also notes the scorecard provides bycatch limits but, in reality, sectors will take less than what is provided in the score card. For example, all whiting sectors are expected to come in under the bycatch limits provided in the scorecard. The industry representatives on the GAP have made a strong commitment to voluntary reductions in darkblotched bycatch starting today. This is expected to keep bycatch even further below the limits reported in the scorecard.

2011 Trawl – Overfished Species

The Council made two-year trawl non-trawl allocations for bocaccio, canary, cowcod, Petrale, and yelloweye during the 2011-2012 harvest specifications and management measures process. Due to the delay in implementing the specifications and the uncertainty surrounding the 2011 overfished species harvest specifications, the GAP encourages the Council to retain flexibility for adjusting the trawl and non-trawl allocations in 2011 for those species as needed.

2011 Trawl – Yelloweye

One impact of a reduction in the trawl allocation of yelloweye from 0.6 mt to 0.3 mt may be illustrated by examining the effect of the change on the amount of quota pounds (QP) that will be allocated to each permit. Assuming an average weight of 5 pounds per fish, the change would reduce the number of vessels with at least enough QP to catch one fish from about 75 vessels to about 40 vessels, leaving about 125 vessels without enough QP to take one average sized yelloweye.

2011 Trawl - Skates

As the fleet starts using halibut excluders this will likely provide some savings for skate, keeping skate mortality within the annual catch limit (ACL).

2011 Nontrawl Sablefish (Limited Entry and Open Access)

For open access in the north and south, since the limits are low and there is a long run to the fishing grounds, the GAP asks that the weekly limit be set at half the bimonthly limit. This will result in a more economically viable sablefish fishing opportunity. It will also provide them an opportunity to catch their limit and then move into other fisheries, improving the overall economic viability of the fishing operation.

The GAP also notes that the Council has been reluctant to increase the bimonthly open access trip limits in the north, routinely resulting in lost fishing opportunity and fish left unharvested at the end of the year. This pattern of fish left unharvested, show the importance of making inseason adjustments in a timely manner.

Next year the amount of sablefish that will be available will be even lower. The industry believes the lower amounts of fish available and lower trip limits will decrease effort. The GAP would like a Council assurance that it will consider inseason adjustment to bring the trip limit levels up even to the 2009-2010 levels if necessary to ensure that no sablefish are left over at the end of the year.

PFMC

11/08/10

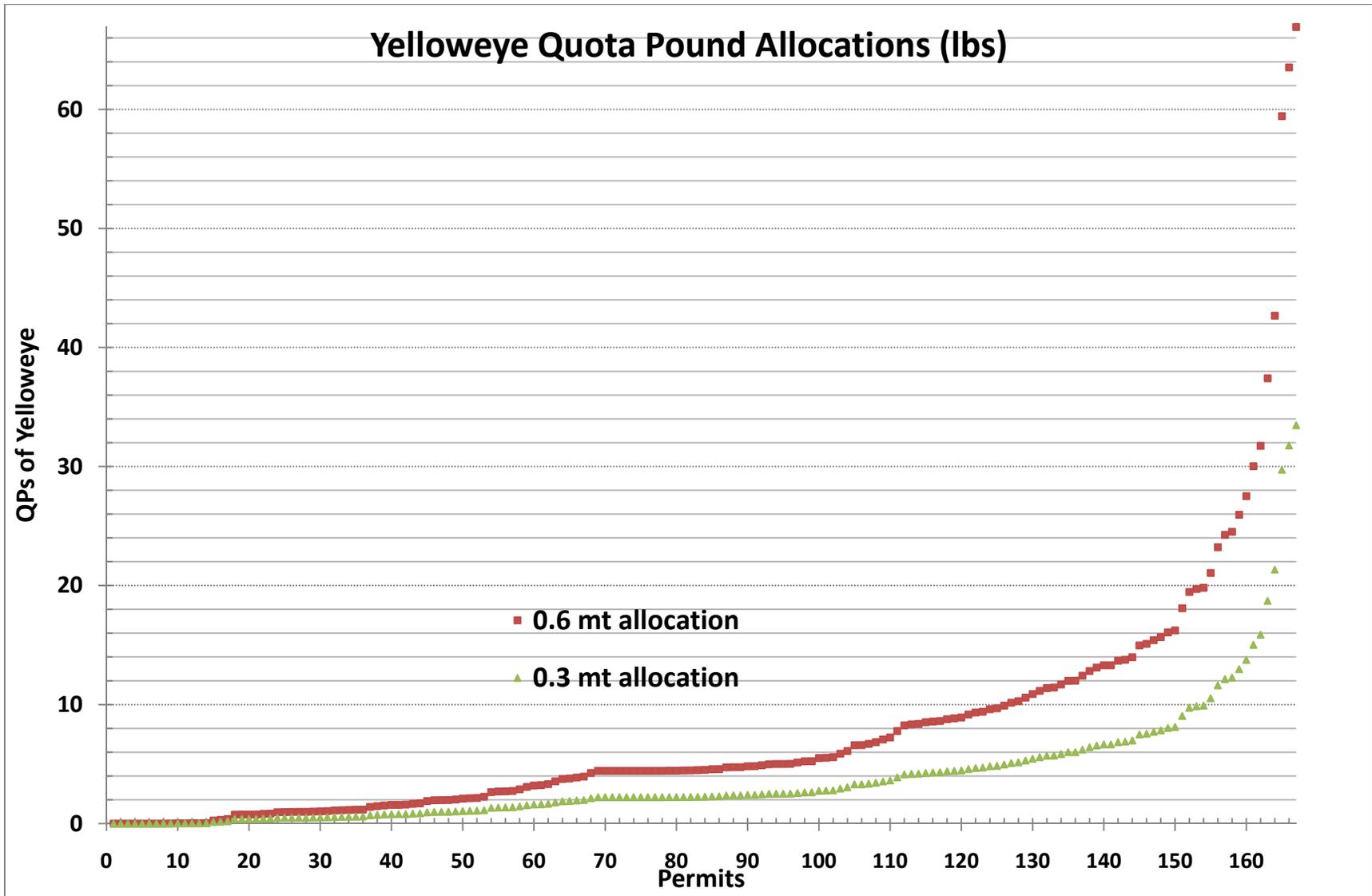


Figure. Allocation of yelloweye QP to trawl permits for 2011 based on level of trawl allocation.