

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON TRAWL RATIONALIZATION TRAILING AMENDMENTS

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed and discussed priorities for trailing actions on trawl rationalization and intersector allocation. In particular, the GMT provides the following considerations regarding set-asides from Agenda Item I.6.a, Attachment 5, April 2011.

Set-Asides

At the March 2011 meeting, the Council recommended flexibility for the redistribution of unused set-asides for “planned research activities, fishing activities under approved exempted fishing permits, tribal fishing activities, or projected bycatch in non-groundfish fisheries”. Currently there is no identified mechanism to make such adjustments. It is our understanding that under some scenarios, inseason adjustments would not be necessary as long as the species-specific annual catch limit (ACL) is not exceeded; however, it is possible that there may be instances where specifically changing allocations inseason is desired. For example if a non-trawl sector was projected to exceed their allocation and enough tonnage remained in a set-aside to prevent the ACL being exceeded, then there would be no need to adjust inseason. On the other hand, if the Council wished to provide additional opportunity to the trawl fleet to fill deficits in quota pounds, then an explicit change in those allocations would be needed. It is unclear what process is required to adjust allocations and the quota pounds associated with shares within the biennial management cycle. The GMT suggests that it would be beneficial to Council planning to know well in advance the process or requirement to release unused fish from a set-aside to other sectors.

As mentioned in the situation summary, release of fish from a set-aside would require that the sector to which the set-aside is ascribed be finished fishing for the season prior to the release in cases in which there is no direct Council management of those impacts. In some situations where the set-aside is designed to accommodate a fishery in a risk averse fashion (e.g. yelloweye in the International Pacific Halibut Commission survey) the Council may wish to update the amount of that set-aside based on new information inseason while still accommodating impacts in a risk-averse manner.

The GMT suggests that it would also be prudent to consider similar flexibility for annual set-asides for the at-sea Pacific whiting fishery. This flexibility may improve the likelihood of better achieving optimum yield (OY) for target stocks. As described above, the GMT recommends that if redistribution of unused set-asides from the at-sea Pacific whiting fishery were allowed, that such redistributions should only (a) occur after the conclusion of all at-sea Pacific whiting fisheries and (b) only be redistributed to the individual fishing quota (IFQ)-trawl fishery. If the at-sea Pacific whiting fishery persists through the end of the year, then redistribution to the shoreside IFQ fisheries would not be possible. The justification for allowing the release of this set-aside only to the IFQ-trawl fishery is because the at-sea Pacific whiting set-asides are deducted from the limited entry trawl fishery allocation.