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## REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING

April 4 – 10, 2014

### GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

#### ***Fisheries in 2015 - 2016 and Beyond; Adopt Biennial Specifications Final Preferred Alternatives (FPA)***

The Council adopted all the 2015 and 2016 overfishing limits (OFLs) endorsed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The Council also confirmed all the preliminary preferred 2015 and 2016 acceptable biological catches (ABCs) previously adopted, with the exception of specifying an overfishing probability (P\*) of 0.4 for spiny dogfish and a P\* of 0.45 for the Washington substock of cabezon to determine the ABCs for those stocks.

The Council adopted a reconfigured Other Fish complex comprised of kelp greenling coast wide, the Washington substock of cabezon, and leopard shark with OFL and ABC contributions from kelp greenling in California, Washington cabezon, and leopard shark to determine the complex specifications.

The Council confirmed the preliminary preferred 2015 and 2016 annual catch limits, except higher values were adopted for Dover sole (50,000 mt), widow rockfish (2,000 mt), and spiny dogfish (2,101 mt in 2015 and 2,085 mt in 2016).

The Council confirmed the preliminary preferred annual catch target (ACT) of 4 mt and an ACL of 10 mt for cowcod south of 40°10' N latitude. The Council will select a new target year to rebuild cowcod at the June 2014 meeting.

The Council also adopted for public review preferred management measures including allocations for all fisheries.

The Council will select final preferred alternatives for the 2015 - 2016 harvest specs and management measures at the June 2014 Council Meeting.

Some notable allocations:

- For blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N latitude within the slope rockfish complex:
  - 2015 Harvest Guideline of 114 metric tons (mt)
  - 2015 Harvest Guideline of 117 mt
- Fixed gear allocations of blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N latitude.
  - Limited Entry (LE) 60%
  - Open Access (OA) 40%
- Fixed Gear allocations of sablefish south of 36° N latitude.
  - LE 55%
  - OA 45%
- Set-asides and two year trawl / non-trawl allocations for over fished species (OFS)

Preliminary Preferred Set-Asides and Allocations for Overfished Species

	Bocaccio		Canary		Cowcod		Darkblotched		POP		Petrale		Yelloweye	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
ACL	349	362	122	125	10	10	338	346	158	164	2816	2910	18	19
Set-Asides Total	8.3	8.3	15.2	15.2	2	2	20.8	21	15	15	236.6	236.6	5.83	5.83
Tribal			7.7	7.7	0	0	0.2	0.2	9.2	9.2	220	220	2.3	2.3
EFP	3	3	1	1	0.015	0.015	0.1	0.1					0.03	0.03
Research	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	2	2	2	2.1	5.2	5.2	14.2	14.2	3.3	3.3
Open Access	0.7	0.7	2	2	0	0	18.4	18.4	0.6	0.6	2.4	2.4	0.2	0.2
Fishery HG	340.7	353.7	106.8	109.8	4	4	317.2	325.2	143	149	2,579.40	2,673.40	12.2	13.2
Trawl Total	81.9	85	56.9	58.5	1.4	1.4	301.3	308.9	135.9	141.6	2,544.40	2,638.40	1	1.1
Shorebased IFQ	81.9	85	43.3	44.5	1.4	1.4	285.6	293	118.5	124	2,539.40	2,633.40	1	1.1
At-Sea Whiting	0		13.7	14			15.7	16.1	17.4	17.4	5	5		
C-P	0		8	8.2			9.2	9.5	10.2	10.2				
Mothership	0		5.6	5.8			6.5	6.7	7.2	7.2				
Non-Trawl Total	258.8	268.7	49.9	51.3	2.6	2.6	15.9	16.3	7.2	7.5	35	35	11.2	12.1
Non-Nearshore	79.1	82.1	3.8	3.9									1.1	1.2
Nearshore FG	1	1	6.7	6.9									1.2	1.3
WA Rec a/	0	0	3.4	3.5									2.9	3.1
OR Rec a/	0	0	11.7	12									2.6	2.8
CA Rec	178.8	185.6	24.3	25									3.4	3.7

**Fisheries in 2015 – 2016 and Beyond: Stock Complex Restructuring**

The Council adopted status quo with the addition of a sorting requirement for rougheye and blackspotted rockfish as a preliminary preferred alternative for slope rockfish complexes.

For rougheye rockfish, the Council received considerable public comment from representatives of the trawl sector detailing measures that will be implemented to minimize catches. These include avoiding rougheye hotspots through fleetwide communication. Most rougheye is caught in trawl fisheries (approximately 100 mt per year).

The Council moved National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Action Alternative A forward for additional detailed analysis and further consideration. Under this alternative, rougheye [including blackspotted rockfish] and shortraker rockfish would be removed from the north and south (of 40°10' N. lat.) slope rockfish complexes and managed as a new rougheye/shortraker complex.

**Sablefish Catch Share Program Review; Phase 1**

The Council requested the program review document be expanded to provide additional explanation and data on the origins of the endorsement system and changes to the regulatory environment which have occurred since the program was implemented, as well as to respond to recommendations in the SSC report.

The Washington State Representative asked that the Council explore allowing limited entry fixed gear vessels to switch between longline and fishpot gear. The specific question to be addressed before the June meeting is:

- Would switching from longline to fishpot reduce the catch of certain rockfish and other bycatch?

**Sablefish Catch Share Program Review; Phase 1, Own/Control Limit Alternatives**

Currently, the maximum amount of sablefish tier permits an entity may own or control through any means, is three. Any level of permit ownership counts as one permit towards the limit of three. In addition, any permits registered to a vessel that is wholly or partially owned by an entity count toward the three permit limit (e.g. a person that owns one percent of a vessel

with three permits stacked on it is determined to control all three permits). Some industry representatives have asked that the vessel ownership provisions be relaxed. To address this, the Council selected Action Alternative 2a. as a preliminary preferred alternative:

Alternative 2a: Status Quo for permit ownership (any percentage ownership in a permit is a count of 1), however holding a permit is counted only if the vessel owner has a greater than 20% ownership share. Partial vessel ownership is capped at two vessels (i.e. the 20% or less ownership in a vessel exemption could only be used twice).

### ***Sablefish Catch Share Program Review; Phase 1, Electronic Fish Ticket Alternatives***

The Council received a significant amount of public comment on the use of electronic fish tickets for fixed gear sablefish landings. There are questions about who would be responsible for completing the Federal E-ticket as well as when the ticket would need to be completed. There are four alternatives (status quo, and three action alternatives).

Alternative 1: (Status Quo) There are currently no federal regulations requiring fish ticket documentation for sablefish landings in the primary (tier) sablefish fishery or within the larger limited entry/open access fixed gear fishery.

Alternative 2: A Federal requirement that all tier deliveries be recorded on an electronic fish ticket that documents the associated federal groundfish permit number.

Alternative 3: A Federal requirement that all limited entry permit sablefish deliveries (primary/tier and daily trip limit (DTL)) be recorded on an electronic fish ticket that documents the associated federal groundfish permit number.

Alternative 4: A Federal requirement that all sablefish deliveries (primary/tier, DTL, and open access) be recorded on an E Fish Ticket.

### ***Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program Development Including Preliminary Approval of Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)***

The Council considered two matters related to this agenda item:

1. Provide guidance on further development of an Electronic Monitoring Program; and,
2. Recommendations for further consideration of EFPs.

For item 1, the Council had a general discussion on several matters, those include:

- Maximized retention/optimized retention, what exactly is meant by these terms? There are still several interpretations.
- Who will do the video review, and who will pay for the video review? NMFS staff with a possibility of perhaps a contract with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; could be a combination.
- Would EM potentially affect the rate of cost recovery, particularly for whiting sectors that are currently below the maximum [3%] threshold? Some costs would be borne by the industry, these could be significant. These questions should go through a Council process.... do not need to be NMFS decisions.

- Is the final EM product contemplated to be a single template; would it be several different parts and conditions for different participants? The Council will make the ultimate decision.
- Enforcement costs need consideration; there could be some unforeseen costs related to enforcement.
- EM use should focus on maximized/optimized retention; will not be able to discard at-will.
- There is a need to flesh the question of who pays.
- A Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held in Seattle, Washington May 8 and 9.

For Item 2, the Council received five EFP applications; one was not complete and was rejected. General discussion on EFPs included:

- All applications should be two year EFPs. Need to consider suspending an EFP entirely if a compliance issue surfaces (as opposed to suspending a single vessel).
- Applicants need to describe the reasons they would choose to not have observers present for at least some of the EFP.
- Some Council members are uncomfortable with the complete removal of observers; will not know just what is happening (documenting) without an observer present. Some circumstances would require different treatment; would need some level of observer present.
- Maximized/optimized retention, if that is the situation then observers could be removed very early.
- An exemption from the observer requirement is not the only exemption; could be exempted from the requirement to discard prohibited species (allow to retain them)
- Need to look at what happens with observers present, and what happens when they are removed.
- Will need observers to test different estimation approaches; with regard to discards for example.
- For the schedule and process calendar; The Council originally did not wish to have the EFP process interfere with the regulatory process.

The Council moved forward four EFP applications for further consideration at the June Council Meeting. Those were the Leipzig EFP, California Risk Pool EFP, Mann - Paine EFP, and the Eder – Parker – Corbin - Blue EFP.

The Council provided guidance to the applicants for refinement, and asked that applicants resubmit applications for the June 2014 Council meeting. The Council added specific requirements for the EFP resubmittals, those are:

- Leipzig EFP application – limit the number of vessels to six and require up to 100 percent observer coverage
- CA Risk Pool application – limit number of vessels to six and require up to 100 percent observer coverage on the bottom trawl vessels
- Eder et al. application – limit the number of vessels to four.

In addition, the Council adopted provisions to:

- Require the EFP applicants provide a list of the vessels and processors that will be participating in the EFP, to NMFS, and the States, a minimum of thirty days before commencing their EFP.
- Address the halibut issue within these EFPs with the intention that halibut retention will not be permitted.

The West Coast Region Sand Point office also volunteered to work with applicants on an ad hoc basis to improve EFP applications and would consider convening a meeting in the near future

## **SALMON MANAGEMENT**

### ***Final Action on 2014 Salmon Management Measures***

The Council adopted a set of ocean salmon seasons that provides both recreational and commercial opportunities coastwide. Washington and Oregon fishermen, in particular, will benefit from higher-than-usual salmon returns in the Columbia River this year. Salmon fisheries in California and Oregon provide access to an expected good return of Sacramento River fall Chinook while meeting protective measures for Klamath River fall Chinook, Sacramento River winter Chinook, and California Coastal Chinook.

The recommendation will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval by May 1, 2014.

### ***California and Oregon South of Cape Falcon, Oregon***

An expected abundance of over 600,000 Sacramento fall Chinook, combined with substantially improved coho expectations for the Columbia River, will support ample recreational and reasonable commercial opportunities for ocean salmon fisheries off California and Oregon.

Improved hatchery coho forecasts in 2014 will allow for sizable recreational coho opportunities and the potential for incidental retention in commercial Chinook fisheries.

The Klamath River fall Chinook forecast for 2014 is less than the very high abundance levels seen in recent years, leading to modest constraints on fisheries in Oregon and California, which are designed to meet conservation objectives and provide adequate spawning populations.

### ***Commercial Fisheries***

Commercial fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, Oregon will be open from April 1 through July 31, August 6 - 29 and September 3 through October 31.

Fisheries in the Humbug Mountain to California border area will be open in May, June, July, August, and September, with Chinook quotas in June (1,500), July (500), August (500), and September (500).

Fisheries from the California border to Humboldt South Jetty will be open September 12 - 30 with a 4,000 Chinook quota.

Between Horse Mountain and Point Arena (in the Fort Bragg area), commercial Chinook salmon fisheries will be open June 19 to 30, July 15 through August 29 and September 1 to 30, seven days per week.

In the area from Point Arena to Pigeon Point (San Francisco), the season will be open May 1 to June 30, July 15 to August 29, and September 1 to 30.

From Pigeon Point to the Mexico border (Monterey), the Chinook season will be open May 1 to June 30, July 15 to 31, and August 1 to 13. There will also be a season from Point Reyes to Point San Pedro, open October 1 to 3, 6 to 10, and 13 to 15.

## **ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT**

### ***Protecting Unfished and Unmanaged Forage Fish Species Initiative***

The Council approved a range of alternatives for protecting unfished and unmanaged forage fish species and identified the Ecosystem Trophic Role pathway as a preliminary preferred alternative. Under this pathway, protective measures for forage species would be added to each of the Council's four fishery management plans (FMP), perhaps under an omnibus process aggregating the four actions into one process. The Council is scheduled to review the alternatives and proposed amendatory FMP language at the September Council meeting in Spokane, Washington.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### ***Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning***

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for June 19 thru 25 at the Hyatt Regency Orange County, 11999 Harbor Blvd. Garden Grove, California. The Preliminary Proposed Agenda represents the agenda expectations for the June 2014 Council meeting and includes among other things:

#### Administrative

1. Boundary Expansion of the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries
2. Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

#### Salmon

1. Cormorant Management Plan

#### Groundfish

1. Electronic Monitoring Regulatory Process
2. Omnibus Regulation Changes Part I:
  - a. Adaptive Management Program Pass-Through FPA
3. Other 2014-2015 Catch Share Trailing Actions
4. New Management Measure Prioritization and Scheduling Including VMS Enhancements, Mid Water Sport Fishery and Other
5. Fisheries in 2015-16 and Beyond: Final EFP Approval Including Electronic Monitoring EFPs.
6. Consideration of In-Season Adjustments
7. Sablefish Catch Share Program Review:
  - a. Adopt Phase I FPA
  - b. Scope Phase II Issues as Necessary
8. Fisheries in 2015-16 and Beyond: Adopt Management Measures FPA
9. Initial Stock Assessment Plans and TOR

Highly Migratory Species

1. Update on International Issues
2. Initial Scoping of Biennial Specs and Management Measures
3. Preliminary EFP Approval
4. Drift Gillnet Transition Issues
5. Routine Management Measures Including Bluefin Tuna Bag Limits and VMS Enhancements

This report is provided to the Central Coast Community in 2014 via a grant to the Morro Bay Community Quota Fund from the Central California Joint Cable Fisheries Liaison Committee. Any interested parties may request an email copy of future reports (as long as funding continues) by contacting Christopher Kubiak at, [ckub@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ckub@sbcglobal.net) Ǝ

