GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS - FINAL

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the current status of groundfish fisheries and the need for any inseason adjustments. Below, the GMT details the action items that have been brought to the GMT for Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) consideration. Action items include inseason changes that the GMT recommends be implemented for 2025. The end-of-year 2024 scorecards are available in Appendix 1 of this report.

Inseason Changes

Oregon Recreational Long-leader Fishery

During the 2025-26 harvest specifications process, a reduction of harvested canary rockfish in the Oregon long-leader fishery was expected to be necessary to remain within the Oregon recreational harvest guideline given year-round all-depth recreational fisheries continuing as in recent years. However, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) does not adopt the recreational season structure for the ensuing year until December of the year prior, well after the development of the 2025-26 harvest specifications. With the mismatch of timing, the GMT recommended a five-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish as a placeholder, expecting the state to consider options at or below a five-fish canary rockfish sub-bag limit. State regulations can be more precautionary, but not more liberal than Federal regulations. On December 13, 2024, the OFWC adopted a one-fish sub-bag limit of canary rockfish in the long-leader fishery that went into effect on January 1, 2025.

Projected impacts of canary rockfish in the Oregon recreational fishery are provided in **Table 1**, updated since the biennial harvest specifications analysis with updated fishery information through December 31, 2024 (a full year of additional data). These projections are combined values of the long-leader and traditional bottomfish fisheries, as projections are generated by species, not gear type. Projections are calculated using the recent three-year average annual angler effort and ten-year average weight and catch rate with the assumption that catch numbers will be comparable, though the majority of the canary rockfish caught will now be released (with applied discard mortality rates). **The GMT recommends decreasing the sub-bag limit of canary rockfish from five to one in the Oregon recreational long-leader fishery, to mirror what is currently in Oregon state regulations.** In Agenda Item H.9.a Supplemental ODFW Report 1, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife states they will monitor canary rockfish landings and discard mortality inseason from the longleader gear and regular bottomfish fishery and take further regulatory actions should they become necessary.

Table 1. Projected total mortality in metric tons (mt) of Oregon recreational canary rockfish in 2025 with a one-fish sub-bag limit and a five-fish sub-bag limit in the Oregon long-leader fishery.

Canary Rockfish	2025-26 Harvest Specifications Projection /a	Sub-bag limit of 5 Projection	Sub-bag limit of 1 Projection	Recreational Harvest Guideline
Total Mortality	48.0	45.3	39.7	26.0

a/ Projections developed during the 2025-26 harvest specifications under a sub-bag limit of 5.

Informational Items

California Recreational Fishery

The GMT received a request to move the California recreational fishery from inside of 20 fathoms to offshore of 50 fathoms during the month of September for the San Francisco Groundfish Management Area. The California boat-based fishery does not open until April of 2025, so no additional information on fishery performance is available for this year. The GMT does not have new information to inform 2025 fisheries performance at this time, therefore the request was not considered further at this meeting.

Scorecards

The GMT will introduce three new scorecards in 2025 to the inseason report, beginning with shortspine thornyhead (**Table 2**). Canary rockfish and California quillback rockfish will be included at the June Council meeting, as it is still very early in 2025 and many fisheries have not yet begun. The GMT is aware of the constraints and concerns surrounding these species and anticipates additional attention by industry and Council on the mortality tracking of these species. For information on 2024 mortality for California quillback rockfish see the California Department of Fish and Wildlife inseason report (Agenda Item H.9.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1, March 2025). Additionally, the GMT will no longer be providing scorecards for Pacific spiny dogfish and shortbelly rockfish, as recent years' mortality for both species have remained well within their respective annual catch limits (ACLs) and thresholds. The GMT will continue to closely monitor these species' mortality at the sector level through the Pacific Fishery Information Network (PacFIN) APEX reporting system. This report is a scorecard generated for all species.

Table 2. 2025 estimated shortspine thornyhead mortality in metric tons (mt) by sector, as of March 7, 2025 (Source: PacFIN). Dashes indicate that the fishery has not started yet.

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)
At-Sea Hake Catcher-Processor	-
At-Sea Hake Mothership	-
IFQ (non-whiting)	46.4
Shoreside Hake	-
Non-Trawl	16.6
Incidental/Miscellaneous	*
Recreational	-
Treaty a/	50
Total b/	113.0
Estimated Year-end Discard Mortality (all sectors except Treaty) c/	189.2
Landings to-date + Year-end Discard Mortality Estimate	302.2
ACL	825
Percent ACL b/	**37%**

***** Confidential

a/ Full set-aside attainment is projected.

b/ Does not include any confidential data.

c/ Three-year (2021-2023) average discard mortality across all sectors (except Treaty) from the Groundfish Expanded Multi-Year Mortality Report. Treaty discard mortality is excluded, as treaty discard mortality is encompassed by the treaty set-aside and full set-aside attainment is projected.

Appendix 1.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table A1. Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) in 2024 as of March 6, 2025 in relation to the sector thresholds (Source: PacFIN IFQ021 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report).

Sector a/	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date (# of fish)	Percent of Threshold	Total Threshold (# of fish)
Whiting	CP	449	4.1%	**11,000**
	MS	-	-	
	Shoreside	899	8.2%	
	Tribal	264 b/	2.4%	
	Total	**1,612**	**14.7%**	
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	1,046	19.0%	**5,500**
	Midwater Trawl	234	4.3%	
	Tribal	*	--	
	Fixed Gear	500 c/	9.1%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec			
	CA Rec			
	Total	**1,780**	**32.4**	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs		**3,392**		

* Confidential data

a/ There is a reserve of 3,500 fish, in addition to the number of fish in the whiting and non-whiting thresholds.

b/ Current year tribal landings are estimated as the maximum of the historic landings for the last 5 years.

c/ GMT proposed assumption of annual mortality, which assumed maximum historical mortality (154) plus a 250 fish buffer from the 2017 BiOp and an additional 96 fish to account for some uncertainty in recreational salmon seasons; recreational estimates only apply to groundfish fisheries occurring outside of salmon seasons.

Yelloweye Rockfish Scorecard

Table A2. Allocations and year-end projected mortality impacts (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as of March 6, 2025.

Sector	Sub-sector	Projection (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking Limit (mt)	Projected Percent (%) Attainment
Grand Total a/		24.0	ACL c/	53.0	45.3%
Off the top b/		8.2	Set Asides	10.7	76.5%
Trawl	CP	--	Trawl allocation	3.4	11.8%
	MS	--			
	IFQ	0.4			
	Sub Total	0.4	***Trawl allocation***	***3.4***	11.8%
Non-trawl	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	3.8	HG	8.2	46.9%
	WA Rec	3.1		10.0	30.9%
	OR Rec	3.9		9.1	42.7%
	CA Rec	4.6		11.8	38.9%
	Sub Total	15.4	***HG d/***	***39.2***	39.4%
	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	3.8	ACT	6.4	59.8%
	WA Rec	3.1		7.9	39.4%
	OR Rec	3.9		7.2	54.5%
	CA Rec	4.6		9.3	49.6%
	Sub Total	15.4	**ACT**	***30.7***	50.2%

a/ The Grand Total is the sum of the Trawl Sector Total and Non-trawl Sector ACT Total.
b/ off the top set asides: Tribal = 5.0 mt; EFPs = 0.0 mt; Research = 0.53 mt; Incidental Open Access = 2.66 mt.
c/ ACL = Set asides + Trawl allocation + Non-trawl allocation.
d/ The non-trawl allocation is the sum of the non-trawl HGs, 39.2 mt.

PFMC
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