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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY **Higher than expected catch in the bottom trawl fishery**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would like to alert participants in the Pacific Coast groundfish trawl fishing and processing sectors that the catch of petrale sole and canary rockfish is higher than expected in the bottom trawl fishery. If catch rates do not slow for these two species, substantial restrictions will need to be placed on the limited entry bottom trawl fishery in the late summer or early fall to keep the total mortality of these species within their acceptable biological catch and/or harvest guidelines.

Background

As of July 16, 2005, the Pacific Coast Fisheries Information Network's Quota Species Monitoring (PacFIN QSM) system is reporting the total catch of petrale sole as 2,063 mt and the total catch of canary rockfish as 6 mt. Both estimates predominately come from catch in the limited entry bottom trawl fleet by vessels fishing shoreward of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). The estimated amount of petrale sole caught to date represents approximately 75% of the 2005 petrale sole allowable biological catch (2,762 mt) and the estimated amount of canary rockfish caught to date is equal to the bottom trawl fleet's predicted take for the entire year.

Canary rockfish catch in other fishing sectors is predicted to be equal to or less than the amounts estimated to be taken for the year.

Recommendations

Opportunities currently exist for trawl vessels to target deepwater species, such as sablefish and thornyheads, seaward of the Trawl RCA. If trawl vessels switch target strategies and fish seaward of the RCA, it will likely decrease the amount of petrale sole and canary rockfish being caught. If catch of both species is reduced, it is more likely that the trawl season can extend into the fall/winter and that the Pacific Fishery Management Council's goal of maintaining a year-round groundfish fishery can be met. Therefore, NMFS is requesting the Pacific Coast groundfish harvesting and processing communities to voluntarily reduce targeting of petrale sole and avoid areas where canary rockfish are likely to be found.

A copy of the July 16, 2005, PacFIN QSM report is provided below. This report and others can be found at
http://www.psmfc.org/pacfin/ber_index.html

For more information contact: NMFS Northwest Region at 206-526-6140 or visit our website at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>, click on "Pacific Coast Groundfish;" NMFS Southwest Region at 562-980-4000; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at 360-249-4628; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 541-867-4741; or the California Department of Fish and Game at 707-441-5797 (Eureka), 510-581-7358 (Belmont), 562-342-7184 (Los Alamitos), 858-546-7167 (La Jolla).

Total Fleet Best Estimates* of 2005 Cumulative Shoreside Landed Catch and At-Sea* Total Removals. Catch/Discard values are in Metric-tons.

	NON-TRIBAL		Discard		WA	AT-SEA	Total	2005
	Wash	Ore	Calif	Estimate	Tribal			HG
Longspine THDS	—	75	316	43	—	—	435	2450
Shortspine THDS	10	144	214	103	4	6	482	995
TWL Sable (V&C&E&M)	35	636	358	241	—	6	1276	3505
Dover sole	357	2521	1361	406	48	—	4693	7445
Petrale	435	1086	437	88	17	—	2063	2762
English Sole	134	244	150	168	47	—	744	3100
Arrowtooth Flounder	438	727	36	1524	26	2	2754	5800
Remaining Flatfish	58	303	240	163	13	3	781	4909
Tribal Sablefish	—	—	—	—	470	—	470	749
NTW Primary Sable*	315	352	100	39	—	—	807	
NTW DTL Sable*	54	71	132	13	—	—	270	
CP NTW Sabl Pri	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
CP NTW Sabl DTL	—	—	30	1	—	—	32	
Sablefish Conception	—	—	93	7	—	—	101	275
Lingcod	15	42	22	66	12	3	161	274
Spiny Dogfish	401	3	7	—	3	300	714	
Widow Rockfish	8	15	9	25	18	76	152	282
Darkblotched RCKFSH	1	40	14	24	—	11	91	91
Canary rockfish	2	2	—	2	1	1	8	23
POP (V&C&E)	5	29	—	12	1	2	49	129
Yellowtail (V&C&E)	50	52	—	—	312	102	516	3871
Cabezon (V&C&E)	—	18	1	—	—	—	19	
(V&C&E) UNSP RCKFSH	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1612
Yelloweye (V&C&E&M)	—	—	—	0	—	—	—	9
Black Rockfish, Nor.	—	67	19	—	—	—	86	540
Kelp Greenling, Nor.	—	15	—	—	—	—	15	
Near-shore RF, Nor.	—	8	12	—	—	—	20	54
Shelf rockfish, Nor.	4	2	16	—	5	6	33	958
Slope rockfish, Nor.	32	61	6	—	16	23	138	1160
TWL Bocaccio (MT&CP)	—	—	2	2	—	—	4	
NTW Bocaccio (MT&CP)	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	
Chilipepper (MT&CP)	—	—	8	—	—	—	8	1973
Splitnose RF (MT&CP)	—	—	34	—	—	—	34	461
Cabezon (MT&CP)	—	—	14	—	—	—	14	69
(MT&CP) UNSP RCKFSH	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	854
Black Rockfish, So.	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	753
Kelp Greenling, So.	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	
CA Scorpionfish, So.	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	
N-S RF: Shallow, So.	—	—	18	—	—	—	18	
N-S RF: Deep, So.	—	—	16	—	—	—	16	
Shelf rockfish, So.	—	—	12	—	—	—	12	654
Slope rockfish, So.	—	—	79	—	—	—	79	639
Pacific Whiting	15395	30586	3350	1701	1927	98201	151160	269069
*Estimates Thru	16JUL	16JUL	16JUL		16JUL			
HARD DATA THRU	MAY05	JUN05	APR05		MAY05	JUL05		

Hard data for this report was extracted from the PacFIN database on 19-JUL-2005.

HG = Target Fishing Mortality Guideline

The HGs are commercial (LE and OA) guidelines only, the anticipated recreational catches are not included on this report.

* The at-sea catch statistics are estimates of total removals including discards.

* The nontrawl (NTW) sablefish catch displayed on the Total Fleet report includes catches for both the limited entry and open access fisheries.

* The values for NTW Primary Sable and NTW DTL Sable are limited to the V&C&E&M area.

* The 2005 Harvest Guideline for Bocaccio MT&CP (all gears) = 85 mtons.

- * The 2005 Harvest Guideline for Near-Shore Rockfish South = 97 mtons.
- * The HG for Pacific Whiting is the total U.S. coastwide allocation.

V&C&E = U.S. Vancouver & Columbia & Eureka INPFC areas combined.
V&C&E&M = U.S. Vancouver & Columbia & Eureka & Monterey INPFC areas combined.
MT&CP = Monterey and Conception INPFC areas combined.
CP = Conception area.
So. = Monterey and Conception INPFC areas combined.
Nor. = Vancouver & Columbia & Eureka INPFC areas combined.