CHAPTER 13

SHORTRAKER AND ROUGHEYE ROCKFISH

by

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Introduction

In 2005, BSAI rockfish were moved to a biennial assessment schedule to coincide with the frequency of trawl surveys in the Aleutian Islands and the eastern Bering Sea slope. These surveys occur in even years, and for these years a full assessment of shortraker and rougheye rockfish in the BSAI area will be conducted. The 2006 full assessment can be found at http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM/docs/2006/BSAIsrre.pdf. In the September 2006 Plan Team meeting, guidelines were established for updating assessments in the off-years. In particular, a full assessment must be produced if the assessment model is re-run. BSAI rougheye and shortraker rockfish are currently assessed with an age-aggregated surplus production model, and the age-structured projection model is thus not used. Therefore, in this update the assessment model is not re-run, and the recommended ABCs and OFLs from the 2006 assessment are rolled over to 2008 and 2009.

Updated Catch

The final 2006 catch for rougheye and shortraker were 204 t and 208 t, respectively. The catch of rougheye was close to the 2006 TAC of 224 t, whereas the catch of shortraker was substantially less than the 2006 TAC of 580 t. The 2007 catch of rougheye and shortraker rockfish, through October 6, were 161 t and 329 t, respectively, which are 86% and 84% of the 2007 TACs.

Harvest Recommendations

The following table gives the harvest recommendations for 2008 and 2009, which are identical to the harvest recommendations for 2007 from the 2006 assessment.

	Rougheye Rockfish		Shortraker Rockfish	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
M	0.025	0.025	0.03	0.03
Tier	5	5	5	5
Total Biomass (mt)	10,782	10,782	18,857	18,857
Max F_{abc} (=*0.75M*)	0.0188	0.0188	0.0225	0.0225
Rec. F_{abc}	0.0188	0.0188	0.0225	0.0225
F_{ofl} (=*M*)	0.025	0.025	0.03	0.03
OFL (mt)	269	269	564	564
Max ABC (mt)	202	202	424	424
Recommended ABC	202	202	424	424

Area allocation, and future research activities

In recent assessments, we have recommended separate, area-specific ABCs of rougheye and shortraker for the EBS and AI regions. The information on genetics, size at age, length composition, and age composition presented in the 2006 assessment suggest that rougheye rockfish in the EBS may be not be the same stock as rougheye rockfish in the AI. However, it is not as clear whether the eastern Bering Sea rougheye are distinct from Gulf of Alaska rougheye. For shortraker rockfish, genetic samples are not available along the EBS slope, age data do not currently exist, and the differences in length composition between the areas are generally not significant; thus, information on stock structure is less clear. However, the current harvest patterns indicate that rougheye rockfish are taken in each area in proportion to the estimated biomass level. Disproportionate harvest may occur in the EBS for shortraker, but if the EBS shortraker are not a separate stock from AI shortraker then this may not be a management problem.

In the 2006 Plan Team meeting, the development of an age-structured model for rougheye rockfish for 2007 was discussed. It is proposed that such a model be presented in 2008 to take advantage of the 2008 Aleutian Island survey data, as well as allow time in 2007 and 2008 for more otoliths to be read. Ages now exist for rougheye sampled in all AI surveys from 1986 to 2006, with several collections being read in summer 2007 that would not have been available for the September 2007 Plan Team meeting. An age-structured model using these new data may affect the estimated size of the population and subsequent management recommendations; thus, it seems useful to postpone consideration of area-specific ABCs until this new model is developed.

Responses to the comments of the Statistical and Scientific Committee

There were no requests from the statistical and scientific committee (SSC) of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council pertaining to this assessment.

Summaries for Plan Team

Species	Year	Biomass	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch[2]
Shortraker rockfish	2006	20,500	774	580	580	208
	2007	18,900	564	424	424	329
	2008	18,900	564	424		
	2009		564	424		

Species	Year	Biomass	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch[2]
Rougheye rockfish	2006	11,200	299	224	224	204
	2007	10,800	269	202	202	161
	2008	10,800	269	202		
	2009		269	202		

[2]Current as of October 6, 2007

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