

BS flatfish harvest specifications flexibility

June 11, 2012

The Council approves the following problem statement and alternatives and options for analysis:

Problem Statement:

Typically, the Amendment 80 sector is unable to fully harvest the TACs for flathead sole, rock sole, and yellowfin sole due to market limitations and limitations associated with allocations of certain species harvested incidentally in the directed flatfish fisheries. In an effort to create additional harvest opportunities for the above species, a new harvest and accounting methodology is needed that would provide the Amendment 80 sector and CDQ groups increased flexibility in using yellowfin sole, rock sole, or flathead sole allocations. A new harvest and accounting methodology would enable Amendment 80 cooperatives and CDQ groups to maximize their harvest of these three species under various regulatory, economic, and environmental constraints while also ensuring that the ABC for each individual species is not exceeded in order to avoid any biological or conservation concerns.

Alternative 1: No action.

Alternative 2: Allocate ABC surplus (the difference between ABC and TAC) for yellowfin sole, rock sole, and flathead sole among the Amendment 80 cooperatives and the CDQ Program, using the same formulas as are used in the annual harvest specifications process. Entities may exchange their yellowfin sole, flathead sole, and/or rock sole quota share for an equivalent amount of their allocation of the ABC surplus for these species. Quota share that is exchanged for ABC surplus may be credited back to the entity's allocation of the surplus if unused.

Note: options 2 and 3 are mutually exclusive.

Option 1: Each entity is limited to 3 exchanges per calendar year.

Option 2: Only allocate the ABC surplus for flathead sole and rock sole. Entities may, however, still exchange their yellowfin sole quota share to access their allocation of the rock sole or flathead sole ABC surplus.

Option 3: No entity may access more than [5,000 mt to 25,000 mt] of additional yellowfin sole.