



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

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Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Fixed Gear CV Rockfish Retention - Discussion Paper

STAFF CONTACT: Jon McCracken (NPFMC) and Josh Keaton (NMFS)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review Discussion Paper
- Decide what further action is warranted

BACKGROUND:

In October 2016, the Council requested staff develop a discussion paper to consider requiring full retention of all rockfish species for fixed-gear catcher vessels. This discussion paper originated with the Council's fixed gear electronic monitoring (EM) integration analysis in October 2016. In the EM integration analysis initial review draft, the Council had evaluated an option that would have required full retention of all rockfish species *by vessels using EM*. The option was intended to facilitate identification of certain rockfish species pairs that cannot be distinguished by cameras, and full retention was proposed in order to implement a simple and consistent policy for all rockfish, rather than requiring fishermen to identify and remember which rockfish species must be retained and which must be discarded. In the end, the Council did not include this option as part of their preferred alternative for EM. Rather, the Council tasked staff to develop a discussion paper to evaluate full rockfish retention to all fixed-gear vessels, rather than limiting full retention of rockfish to fixed-gear vessels using EM.

The discussion paper identifies multiple benefits and challenges with full retention of rockfish. After reviewing this discussion paper, the Council could decide there is sufficient need to require full retention of rockfish for fixed-gear vessels. If full retention of rockfish is proposed, the Council may also want to consider changing the management of rockfish, including DSR, when on PSC status to still require full retention since this change would have many of the same benefits. If so, the next step would be the development of a purpose and need statement. The Council could focus their purpose and need statement on all fixed-gear vessels in the BSAI and the GOA or it can focus on just one FMP area and/or one fixed-gear type. The purpose and need statement should be focused on identifying species problems that motivate the proposed action, which, in turn, will serve to guide the development of specific alternatives and options for consideration.