

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
June 7-10, 2022 - Sitka, AK

C1 CGOA Rockfish

The AP recommends the Council take final action and select its preliminary preferred alternative as the final preferred alternative (shown in bold).

Purpose and Need

Since 2007, the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Pilot Program and final Rockfish Program have improved conservation, fish quality, and stability for participants. Program reviews have shown increased vessel accountability, controlled fleet capacity, improved safety, and reduced bycatch. Given changes in the fishery since implementation, several changes to the program regulations would increase flexibility and efficiency, improve functionality, and better ensure the rockfish TACs are fully harvested and landed in Kodiak as intended.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Change the season start date and modify the harvesting, processing and cooperative holding caps (options are not mutually exclusive).

Option 1: Change the Rockfish Program season start date from May 1 to April 1.

Option 2: Eliminate the CV cooperative holding cap (30% QS assigned to CV sector).

Option 3: Increase the processing cap to 35 – 40% of the CV quota share pool for sablefish, cod and/or primary rockfish.

Option 4: Revise the vessel aggregated rockfish (POP, northern rockfish and dusky rockfish) harvesting cap by capping only POP harvests at 8% of the CV POP quota share pool.

Motion passed 17-0

Rationale in Favor:

- *All five catcher vessel rockfish cooperatives all support changing the season start to April 1; eliminating the cooperative holding cap; raising the processing cap from 30% to 40% for primary rockfish, sablefish and Pacific cod; and modifying the harvesting cap to only cap Pacific Ocean Perch. The rockfish fishery is 100% observed and participants deserve the maximum amount of flexibility under a rationalized program, which these discreet program adjustments will achieve. Rockfish stocks will continue to be managed for sustainability in a precautionary manner.*
- *For Option 1, changing the season start date from May 1 to April 1 will provide additional flexibility to fully harvest and process the available TACs and to fill in the times of year with low fishery landings to Kodiak. The EA concludes that moving the fishery opening date is unlikely to have impacts to the process of spawning/parturition and or larval dispersal for RP species.*

- *Under Option 2, the current cooperative holding cap is unnecessary because the design of the program allows a harvest cooperative to annually associate with any processor it chooses, and a processor can work with more than one cooperative. The processing caps are the controls on consolidation, not the cooperative cap. Eliminating the cooperative cap will remove some administrative burden for the cooperative and cooperative manager.*
- *Under Option 3, raising the processing cap to 40% for sablefish, Pacific cod and primary rockfish is necessary in order for all quota to be able to be landed. When the processing cap was implemented in 2012 there were seven processors active in the fishery and now there are only four. With the loss of three processors on the waterfront, it is difficult to get quota processed without exceeding the existing caps. Regulating processing does not result in more processors, instead it strands harvests since processors can't buy more and harvesters can't find a market to deliver to. The season ends November 15, and if a processor shuts down for the season early for any reason, as one processor did in 2021 and likely will again, it puts further constraints on the ability to process the remaining quota.*
- *For Option 4, the shoreside sector of the rockfish program does not harvest the available quotas for either northern or dusky rockfish. There are 26-28 catcher vessels that typically participate in the program but only a few harvest the majority of the northern and dusky rockfish because these species are more difficult to catch. The analysis notes that removing both northern and dusky rockfish from the harvesting cap will provide an incentive for those few CVs that have routinely harvested a larger portion of northern and dusky rockfish to catch more. In addition, the analysis notes, only one to three CVs have approached the harvest cap and based on the participation patterns of the CVs since implementation of the Rockfish Program, revising the vessel use cap will likely not contribute to CV consolidation in the fishery.*
- *Concerns were noted with the recommended change under Option 1, specifically the targeting of prespawning fish in deeper waters in April. It is understood that these temporal/spatial and fishery effort concerns, and the available data associated with them, will be incorporated into the currently scheduled Rockfish Program Review such that the effects of this date change can be better understood and evaluated.*