

the minor rockfish OY in the north.

bb/ Blackgill rockfish is believed to be at 51 percent of its unfished biomass. The ABC of 343 mt is the sum of the Conception area ABC of 268 mt, based on the 1998 assessment with an Fmsy proxy of F50%, and the Monterey area ABC of 75 mt. This stock contributes 306 mt towards minor rockfish south (268 mt for the Conception area ABC and 38 mt for the Monterey area). The OY for the Monterey area is the ABC reduced by 50 percent for precautionary measures because of lack of information.

cc/ "Other rockfish" includes rockfish species listed in 50 CFR 660.302 and California scorpionfish. The ABC is based on the 1996 review of commercial *Sebastes* landings and includes an estimate of recreational landings. These species have never been assessed quantitatively.

dd/ "Other fish" includes sharks, skates, rays, ratfish, morids, grenadiers, and other groundfish species noted above in footnote c/.

II. Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

Since 1994, the non-tribal commercial groundfish fishery has been divided into limited entry and open access sectors, each with its own set of allocations and management measures. Species or species group allocations between the two sectors are based on the relative amounts of a species or species group taken by each component of the fishery during the 1984–1988 limited entry permit qualification period (50 CFR 660.332). The FMP allows suspension of this allocation formula for overfished species when changes to the traditional allocation formula are needed to better protect overfished species (FMP, section 5.3.2).

Historically, groundfish species and/or species groups have not been allocated between the commercial and recreational fisheries. Fishery managers instead estimated the amount that would be taken in the recreational fisheries and set that amount aside before determining the allowable harvest for the non-tribal commercial sectors. For 2003, the Council has recommended adopting nearshore groundfish allocations between the recreational and commercial fisheries. These allocations were proposed by the States of Oregon and California for waters off their coasts north and south of 40°10' N. lat. and are intended to maintain the ratio between recreational and commercial landings 2000. Most of the fish subject to the allocation will be taken in state waters, but state-Federal management of these nearshore species is coordinated through the Council. Commercial groundfish fishing is prohibited in Washington State waters.

Groundfish species or species group allocations and set asides for the tribal and non-tribal sectors, and between the different non-tribal commercial and recreational sectors, are detailed in Tables 1a and 1b. All OYs, allocations

and set asides are expressed in terms of total catch. The limited entry/open access allocations for bocaccio, canary, darkblotched, yelloweye rockfish, and the nearshore rockfish species group would be suspended to allow the Council to better develop management measures that provide harvest opportunity for more abundant stocks while protecting overfished stocks. Estimates of trip-limit induced discards are taken "off the top" and in accordance with the bycatch and discard analysis described in the proposed rule for this action at 68 FR 953 (January 7, 2003) before setting the non-tribal sector allocations, except for estimates of sablefish discards as explained in the footnotes to Table 1a. Landed catch equivalents are the harvest goals used when adjusting trip limits and other management measures during the season. Estimated bycatch of yellowtail, widow, canary, and darkblotched rockfish in the offshore whiting fishery is also deducted from the limited entry allocations before determining the landed catch equivalents for the target fisheries for widow and yellowtail rockfish.

III. 2003 Management Measures

Management measures for the limited entry fishery are found in Section IV. Boundary line coordinates for the RCAs are designated at paragraph IV.A.(19). Most cumulative trip limits, size limits, and seasons for the limited entry fishery are set out in Tables 3 and 4. However, the limited entry nontrawl sablefish fishery, the midwater trawl fishery for whiting, and the hook-and-line fishery for black rockfish off Washington are managed separately from the majority of the groundfish species and are not fully addressed in the tables. The management structure for these fisheries has not changed since 2002, except for the level of trip limits for sablefish and whiting, which are described in

paragraphs IV.B.(2) through (4). Similarly, management measures for the open access exempted trawl fisheries (California halibut, sea cucumber, pink shrimp, spot and ridgeback prawns) are described in paragraph IV.C.(2), separately from the open access fisheries trip limits set out in Table 5.

IV. NMFS Actions

For the reasons stated above, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (Assistant Administrator), concurs with the Council's recommendations and announces the following management actions for 2003, including measures that are unchanged from 2002 and new measures.

A. General Definitions and Provisions

The following definitions and provisions apply to the 2003 management measures, unless otherwise specified in a subsequent Federal Register document:

(1) *Trip limits*. Trip limits are used in the commercial fishery to specify the amount of fish that may legally be taken and retained, possessed, or landed, per vessel, per fishing trip, or cumulatively per unit of time, or the number of landings that may be made from a vessel in a given period of time, as follows:

(a) A per trip limit is the total allowable amount of a groundfish species or species group, by weight, or by percentage of weight of legal fish on board, that may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed per vessel from a single fishing trip.

(b) A daily trip limit is the maximum amount that may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed per vessel in 24 consecutive hours, starting at 0001 hours local time (l.t). Only one landing of groundfish may be made in that 24-hour period. Daily trip limits may not be accumulated during multiple day trips.

(c) A weekly trip limit is the maximum amount that may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed per