

against the expected catch of canary rockfish and DTS species associated with moving the eastern boundary of the trawl RCA south of 40°10' N. lat. into deeper water (discussed below) when making DTS trip limit adjustments. Their goal was to provide adequate fishing opportunity while keeping the harvest of DTS species on track for the year and keeping the total mortality of canary rockfish within amounts forecast in the bycatch scorecard and within the canary rockfish OY.

Landed catch data through May 24, 2003, indicate that sablefish trawl catch was at 28 percent of the annual target with greater than 50 percent forecast to be taken within the last half of the year. There is a great deal of uncertainty in observer-based discard rates for sablefish. Should the final analysis of the observer-based discard rates result in higher estimates being used in 2003, the calculated harvest of sablefish may be greater than currently projected. Because new observer data will be available in September, the Pacific Council chose to slow the catch of sablefish during July and August, to ensure harvest opportunities through the end of the year, with the intent of increasing sablefish trawl trip limits later in the year, if possible. Therefore, the limited entry trawl sablefish limit north of 40°10' N. lat. is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 10,000 lb (4,536 kg) per 2 months to 9,000 lb (4,082 kg) per 2 months, providing that only large footrope or midwater trawl gear is used to land any groundfish species during the entire limit period. The limited entry small footrope trawl sablefish limit, (i.e., if small footrope gear is used at any time in any area (north or south, seaward or shoreward of the RCA) during the entire limit period) remains unchanged at 3,000 lb (1,361 kg) per 2 months. South of 40°10' N. lat., the limited entry trawl sablefish limit is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 12,000 lb (5,443 kg) per 2 months to 9,000 lb (4,082 kg) per 2 months.

Landed catch data through May 24, 2003, indicate that Dover sole catch was at 38 percent of the annual target. North of 40°10' N. lat., the Pacific Council recommended that Dover sole trip limits increase to allow for Dover sole retention by those vessels fishing seaward of the RCA. South of 40°10' N. lat., Dover sole limits were previously scheduled to increase during July and August in compensation for lack of nearshore fishing opportunity. Because nearshore fishing opportunity was restored by moving the eastern trawl RCA boundary into deeper water, Dover sole trip limits were decreased to

minimize the incidental catch of overfished species. Therefore, the limited entry trawl Dover sole limit north of 40°10' N. lat. is increased from the previously scheduled limit of 31,000 lb (14,061 kg) per 2 months to 34,000 lb (15,513 kg) per 2 months, providing that only large footrope or midwater trawl gear is used to land any groundfish species during the entire limit period. The limited entry small footrope trawl Dover sole limit, (i.e., if small footrope gear is used at any time in any area (north or south, seaward or shoreward of the RCA) during the entire limit period) remains unchanged at 12,500 lb (5,670 kg) per 2 months. South of 40°10' N. lat., the limited entry trawl Dover sole limit is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 35,000 lb (15,876 kg) per 2 months to 34,000 lb (15,513 kg) per 2 months.

Landed catch data indicate that shortspine thornyhead catch is higher than expected (44 percent of the annual target through May 24, 2003). Shortspine thornyhead is a long-lived species that cannot sustain aggressive harvest rates. This makes it a constraining species for the DTS complex fishery, because coincidental catch of shortspine thornyhead may prevent the harvest of Dover sole and longspine thornyhead. In order to keep the shortspine thornyhead catch within its 2003 OY while allowing for shortspine thornyhead retention during pursuit of sablefish or Dover sole with small footrope trawl gear, the Pacific Council recommended an adjustment to shortspine thornyhead trip limits. Therefore, the limited entry trawl shortspine thornyhead limit north of 40°10' N. lat. is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 2,800 lb (1,270 kg) per 2 months to 2,400 lb (1,089 kg) per 2 months, providing that only large footrope or midwater trawl gear is used to land any groundfish species during the entire limit period. The limited entry small footrope trawl shortspine thornyhead limit, (i.e., if small footrope gear is used at any time in any area (north or south, seaward or shoreward of the RCA) during the entire limit period) is increased from the previously scheduled zero retention limit to 1,000 lb (454 kg) per 2 months. South of 40°10' N. lat., the limited entry trawl shortspine thornyhead limit is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 3,100 lb (1,406 kg) per 2 months to 2,400 lb (1,089 kg) per 2 months.

Landed catch data through May 24, 2003, indicate that longspine thornyhead catch was at 32 percent of the annual target. Because of the coincidental catch of shortspine

thornyhead with longspine thornyhead in combination with moving the eastern boundary of the trawl RCA into deeper water during July and August, the catch ratio of shortspine to longspine thornyheads is expected to increase. In response to reduced trip limits for shortspine thornyhead and the need to maintain the catch ratio of 5 lb (2.27 kg) longspine thornyhead to 1 lb (0.45 kg) shortspine thornyhead, the Pacific Council also recommended an adjustment in longspine thornyhead trip limits. Therefore, the limited entry trawl longspine thornyhead limit north of 40°10' N. lat. is decreased from the previously scheduled limit of 14,000 lb (6,350 kg) per 2 months to 11,500 lb (5,216 kg) per 2 months, providing that only large footrope or midwater trawl gear is used to land any groundfish species during the entire limit period. The limited entry small footrope trawl longspine thornyhead limit, (i.e., if small footrope gear is used at any time in any area (north or south, seaward or shoreward of the RCA) during the entire limit period) is increased from the previously scheduled zero retention limit to 5,000 lb (2,268 kg) per 2 months. South of 40°10' N. lat., the limited entry trawl longspine thornyhead limit is decreased from the previously scheduled limit 16,000 lb (7,257 kg) per 2 months to 11,500 lb (5,216 kg) per 2 months.

*Limited Entry Fixed Gear and Open Access Minor Nearshore Rockfish Limits North of 40°10' N. Lat.*

Landed catch of nearshore rockfish in the limited entry fixed gear and open access fisheries off northern California is lower than anticipated through May 24, 2003. In an effort to enable the northern California fishery to achieve its nearshore rockfish harvest guideline, the trip limits for minor nearshore rockfish are increased from the previously scheduled limit of 3,000 lb (1,361 kg) per 2 months, no more than 900 lb (408 kg) of which may be species other than black or blue rockfish, to 4,000 lb (1,814 kg) per 2 months, no more than 1,200 lb (544 kg) of which may be species other than black or blue rockfish. This trip limit increase is consistent with Oregon's plans to proceed toward their nearshore rockfish catch cap. However, because the Oregon fishery is proceeding on schedule with their harvest of black and blue rockfish, this trip limit increase may require Oregon to take independent, State action at a later date to constrain their nearshore rockfish fishery in order to stay within their black rockfish catch cap.