

and 2002, this fishery and the open access hook-and-line fishery had season structures tied to that of the recreational fishery south of 40°10' N. lat. This season structure link was intended to facilitate enforcement, so that similar gear types would be either on or off the water at the same time. For 2003, the recreational and commercial fisheries will be separated because the recreational season has been shifted to a six month July-December block. If commercial hook-and-line fisheries were restricted to July-December, key fishing and marketing months in spring and early summer would be closed. Trip limits for species available in the open inshore area tend to be higher in the summer months. For the first time in 2003, species in the minor nearshore rockfish complex in the south will be managed with different trip limits for a shallow nearshore group, a deeper nearshore group, and California scorpionfish (shallow and deeper nearshore groups defined at IV.A.(20) and in Table 2.) These groups will be managed separately because the Council expects an increase in nearshore fishing effort due to fishing being prohibited in the RCA and wishes to spread that effort through the different minor nearshore species that will be available shoreward of the RCA. Cowcod prohibitions and closures continue to apply to limited entry, fixed gear vessels.

Limited entry fixed gear fisheries for sablefish will likely be concentrated offshore of the RCAs north and south of 40°10' N. lat. Larger sablefish, which sell for a higher price per pound than small sablefish, tend to be found farther offshore. The primary sablefish fishery will again be held from April 1 through October 31 north of 36° N. lat. Minor slope rockfish are often caught in association with sablefish, therefore vessels will be permitted minor slope rockfish landings of up to 25 percent of the weight of sablefish landed during the months of March through October. Minor slope rockfish may not be landed unless taken with sablefish so as to discourage directed targeting on that complex. The northern overfished slope rockfish species, darkblotched rockfish and POP, are not commonly caught with fixed gear. Historically, yelloweye rockfish have been caught incidentally in hook-and-line sablefish fisheries. In 2003, however, hook-and-line sablefish fisheries will be moved offshore of yelloweye rockfish habitat through implementation of the RCAs. Yelloweye rockfish retention will again be prohibited in the 2003 limited entry fixed gear fisheries.

As in 2001–2002, limited entry fixed gear fishing for lingcod will be

prohibited during January through April and during November through December. These closures are intended to protect nest-guarding lingcod during the spawning and nesting season. Nest-guarding lingcod are more available to fixed gear than to trawl gear, because lingcod nest in rocky habitat that tears trawl gear while line gear may be used successfully in rocky areas. Winter closures for fixed gear are intended to eliminate fixed gear lingcod targeting.

Open Access Nontrawl Gear (Hook-and-line, Troll, Pot, Setnet, Trammel Net)

The open access nontrawl fishery is managed separately from the limited entry fixed-gear fishery, but overfished species protection measures are similar for both sectors. As in the past, open access cumulative trip limits continue to be applied mostly to 2-month periods, and thornyheads may not be taken and retained north of 34°27' N. lat. Season structuring and RCAs are similar to those for the limited entry fixed gear fisheries, and implemented to protect the same overfished species. The lingcod fishery for all open access nontrawl gears is also subject to the same closures and size limits as the limited entry fixed gear fisheries. Similar to 2002, fisheries for minor nearshore rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat. are managed with sublimits for species other than black and blue rockfish, to encourage targeting on these more abundant nearshore rockfish species. Cowcod prohibitions and closures apply to all open access vessels.

Open access cumulative limits may exceed those for limited entry. If a vessel with a limited entry permit uses open access gear (including exempted trawl gear) and the open access cumulative limit is larger, the vessel will be constrained by the smaller, limited entry cumulative limit for the entire cumulative period.

Open Access Exempted Trawl Gear
Open access exempted trawl gear (used to harvest ridgeback prawns, California halibut, sea cucumbers, pink shrimp, or spot prawns in Oregon) is managed with both "per trip" limits, cumulative trip limits, and area closures. These trip limits are similar to those in 2002, and the species-specific open access limits apply but may not exceed the overall groundfish limits. The groundfish limits in the pink shrimp fishery are 500 lb (227 kg) of groundfish per day, not to exceed 1,500 lb (680 kg) per trip in the pink shrimp fishery. For other exempted trawl gears, there is a 300 lb (136 kg) per trip limit of groundfish. The pink shrimp fishery is subject to species-specific limits that

are different from other open access limits for lingcod, canary rockfish, and sablefish. As with open access nontrawl gears, thornyheads may not be taken and retained north of 34°27' N. lat. RCAs for the limited entry trawl fishery also apply to open access exempted trawl fisheries south of 40°10' N. lat. Cowcod prohibitions and closures apply to all open access vessels.

South of 40°10' N. lat., the RCAs for exempted trawl gear are similar to those for limited entry trawl gear. Between 40°10' N. lat. and 38° N. lat., trawling is prohibited in 60–250 fm (110–457 m) depths (50–250 fm (91–457 m) in January-February) and large footrope trawling is prohibited shoreward of the RCA. Between 38° N. lat. and 34°27' N. lat., trawling is prohibited in 60–150 (110–457 m) depths (50–250 fm (91–457 m) in January-February) and large footrope trawling is prohibited shoreward of the RCA. From 34°27' N. lat. to the U.S. border with Mexico, trawling is prohibited in 100–150 fm (183–274 m) depths and large footrope trawling is prohibited shoreward of the RCA.

In addition to the trip limit restrictions and area closures south of 40°10' N. lat., all three States are requiring that vessels operating in their pink shrimp trawl fisheries use finfish excluders. The States of Washington and California have banned trawling for spot prawns, requiring that spot prawn fishery participants use low bycatch pot gear. Oregon is in the process of considering whether to similarly ban trawling for spot prawns. The State of California is also requiring that ridgeback shrimp trawlers use finfish excluder devices, similar to requirements in the more northern pink shrimp trawl fishery.

Recreational Fishery

Recreational fisheries effort has also been constrained to protect overfished species, particularly for lingcod, canary rockfish, bocaccio, and yelloweye rockfish, which have significant recreational catches. Washington, Oregon, and California each proposed, and the Council recommended, different combinations of seasons, bag limits, and size limits to best fit the needs of their recreational fisheries, while also meeting conservation goals.

For lingcod, Washington proposed closing their recreational fishery for 5 months (January 1 - March 15, October 15 - December 31) and maintained its 2 fish bag limit and its 24 inch (61 cm) minimum size limit. For Oregon and California north of 40°10' N. lat., the States proposed increasing the lingcod bag limit to 2 fish, and continuing the