



Meeting Summary

Commercial Nearshore Advisory Panel

April 2, 2024, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) convened the first meeting of members of the recently revamped Commercial Nearshore Advisory Panel (CNAP) on April 2, 2024. Eight of 10 CNAP members attended, along with ODFW staff, and members of the public. The meeting was held to start discussions on the upcoming reductions in Harvest Guidelines (HGs) for Black Rockfish in 2025-2026. ODFW staff provided background information about the CNAP, gave an overview of the 2023 Black Rockfish Stock Assessment, reviewed black rockfish landings and effort, and provided results from their initial analyses of potential vessel trip limit options to address the upcoming reductions. In addition to discussing potential impacts of harvest limit reductions to the Commercial Nearshore fleet, staff sought input from the CNAP on the 2025-2026 Black Rockfish management strategy and requested feedback on options or alternative measures to address the upcoming reductions in Black Rockfish HGs.

Black Rockfish Harvest Guideline Reductions

Following ODFW's presentation, significant time was spent addressing questions about the stock assessment results, assessment process, and data used to make the determination of stock status and annual catch limits. Staff provided a high-level overview of the assessment data and process, but several members remained unsatisfied with ODFW's answers. The Dungeness crabbing season and the COVID pandemic were discussed as potential factors affecting fishing effort, but staff explained that these also caused similar fluctuations in catch and were ultimately insignificant in the assessment results. Additional clarification was needed about the acoustic-visual survey that provided input to the assessment in 2023 versus the PIT tagging study used in the 2015 assessment.

When management measures were discussed, one member commented that the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) fishery would provide something to lean on during the Black Rockfish quota reductions but also noted that fishers are limited by vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements and gear restrictions, along with a market that has not yet adapted to midwater RCA fish. One member adamantly supported the riskier approach to management presented by ODFW staff, with no more than a 33% reduction in cumulative trip limits, stating that he would rather see the fishery close earlier than be limited with 40% reductions or more throughout the year.

Another member addressed the disparities between permit types and acknowledged that Nearshore Endorsed (NSE) permit holders have more opportunities to land other species and will be less impacted by reduced Black Rockfish trip limits. He proposed analyzing stricter reductions on NSE permits to allow for less reduction on Black & Blue Rockfish permits. Staff noted that it is within ODFW's authority to implement different trip limits by permit type, though this has never been done before, and that the analysis could be run to assess potential impacts. Some members were opposed to setting different limits

by permit type. There was also a suggestion to limit quotas between November and February, given the lower amounts of black rockfish purchased during that time, while taking the riskier (33%) reduction during busier times of the year. Some members expressed frustration annual catch limit reductions were already set and this meeting only addressed how to achieve the reductions.

Another member commented that the limited supply of black rockfish may ultimately affect the price and suggested that buying from additional boats or increasing use of less active permits would be required to fill market quotas. Further price discussion ensued and differences between ports with live versus fresh fish market options was thought to be the main source of disparity. One member commented that buyers are not buying a particular species, just what is out there by volume and that some could pivot to rockfish species other than black rockfish. This sentiment was echoed by fishers from the north coast; there is a buyer that sells processed, frozen, and vacuum-sealed rockfish fillets of any species for \$20/lb.

Another CNAP meeting will be held later this spring, after ODFW staff have had the opportunity to run additional analyses on scenarios suggested by the panel.

New, emerging, or other issues identified by the panel

ODFW asked if members had any new issues that they would like to discuss in the future. None were identified.

Public Comment

ODFW offered members of the public an opportunity to comment at the end of the meeting. There was no public comment.