

C1 Council Motion

BSAI Groundfish Harvest Specifications

Accountability Measures for the Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish Complex

December 6, 2024

The stock-wide annual catch limit (ACL), which is equal to the acceptable biological catch (ABC), for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) blackspotted and rougheye rockfish complex has been exceeded for three of the past four years. Current accountability measures (AMs) specified in the BSAI Fishery Management Plan have not prevented catch from exceeding the ACL. The National Standard 1 guidelines require that the system of ACLs and AMs be reevaluated and modified if necessary when an ACL is exceeded more than once in a four year period. In accordance with the National Standard 1 guidelines, the Council requests that staff develop a discussion paper to evaluate the effectiveness of the current AMs for the BSAI blackspotted and rougheye rockfish complex and explore additional or modified AMs to prevent catch from exceeding the ACL. This discussion paper should include the following elements:

1. A review of the current AMs, including the reasons the AMs have not prevented catch from exceeding the ACL for the BSAI blackspotted and rougheye rockfish complex in recent years.
2. Spatial information on blackspotted and rougheye rockfish catch in the BS, AI, and AI subareas.
3. Information on which fisheries caught blackspotted and rougheye rockfish and in what amounts over the time period from 2015-2024.
4. Current stock status information and an evaluation of the biological consequences, if any, from the recent ACL overages.
5. Discussion of limitations in assessment information available for evaluating stock status.
6. Evaluation of potential AMs that may be effective for this stock complex including:
 - a. Spatial closures;
 - b. Seasonal closures;
 - c. Modified inseason management authority;
 - d. Reducing Total Allowable Catch in fisheries catching blackspotted and rougheye rockfish; and
 - e. Any other AMs that may be relevant and useful

The discussion paper's evaluation of additional or modified AMs should consider their effectiveness in preventing catch of blackspotted and rougheye rockfish from exceeding the ACL. The discussion paper should also suggest, in the event of future ACL exceedances, how to address the circumstances that led to the exceedance as quickly as possible and account for the biological consequences, if any, from the exceedance.