



County of Del Norte  
Board of Supervisors  
981 "H" Street, Ste. 200  
Crescent City, California 95531

Phone  
(707) 464-7204

Fax  
(707) 464-1165

February 13, 2024

Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

*Comments Submitted via E-Portal <https://pfmc.psmfc.org/Meeting/Details/3034>*

**Re: March 2024 Council Meeting  
Agenda Item F2, F3, F7, F8**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors has previously transmitted comments stating concern with the manner in which both the federal and state authorities made in-season management of groundfish, decisions which were predicated on stock information specific to the Quillback Rockfish but affecting all groundfish fishing. The effects of these decisions on fishermen and women in and visiting Del Norte County has been severe. This Board is keenly interested in seeing the Pacific Marine Fisheries management Council (the "Council") take action to help resolve this matter and believes a number of steps could be taken to minimize impacts on Quillback Rockfish which would allow normal fishing of more sought after, and much less imperiled groundfish to take place. It is our understanding that the Council is contemplating the following actions regarding groundfish.

Agenda Item F.2

Proposed Council Action: Review Additional Analyses and Provide Guidance on Next Steps; Adopt California Quillback Rockfish Rebuilding Analysis

Agenda Item F.3

Proposed Council Action: Adopt for Public Review a Preliminary List and Schedule of Stocks for Assessment in 2025 and 2027 and Draft Terms of Reference for Assessments, Methodology Reviews, and Rebuilding Analyses

Agenda Item F.7

Proposed Council Action: Review Analysis and Provide Guidance; Adopt Preliminary California Quillback Rockfish Harvest Specifications and Rebuilding Parameters; Adopt Revised Harvest Specifications, As Necessary

Agenda Item F.8

Proposed Council Action: Adopt Final In-Season Adjustments for 2024

The Board of Supervisors supports action by the Council on these items *so long as these actions will contribute to resolving the closure of the groundfish fishery as appropriate.*

In order to do so, the Board believes that the Council could include the following suggestions/considerations as part of their action:

1. Collecting more usable and factual data for groundfish management and better-informed stock assessments (local fishermen are willing to help in collecting data). For this the PFMC needs more funding to support quality data collection. As stewards of valuable local knowledge, the PFMC should consider input from fisherman before an assessment even begins as this could help focus such efforts.
2. Evidence, by data collection, that Quillback mortality rate is high when released by recreational fishermen. This Board has been advised by local experts that Quillback are more resilient and do not suffer barotrauma to the same degree as other groundfish species. If proven by evidence, regulators should require the use of descending devices to mitigate barotrauma as well as provided better education for fishermen, especially tourists, by providing posters and pamphlets that local harbors can post addressing overfishing and the danger posed to certain imperiled species.
3. Ultimately, zero retention of Quillback may be necessary and any other endangered groundfish species (e.g. China and Copper, etc.).
4. If the California Department of Fish and Wildlife does a 20 Fathom line, the season for groundfish at the 20 fathom line should be from May 15 to October 15.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We look forward to being involved in future conversations for how best to move these issues forward in the best informed manner possible.

Respectfully,

Dean Wilson  
Chairman

CC: Charlton Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife