

mt to 7,000 mt for longspine thornyheads. The 1995 ABCs apply north of Point Conception, CA (34°30'00" N. lat.), whereas in 1994 they applied only to the Monterey, Eureka, and Columbia subareas (36°00'00"–47°30'00" N. lat.). The reductions occurred primarily because the survey area was enlarged, revealing an overestimate of the coastwide biomass in the previous stock assessment, particularly for shortspine thornyheads. Shortspine thornyheads are fully exploited, but did not reach the overfishing level in 1994. Longspine thornyheads are being fished down to the level that would produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY).

For the first time, separate harvest guidelines are set for shortspine and longspine thornyheads. In previous years, they were combined because it had been thought that the two species, which often are caught together, were too difficult to tell apart. However, the industry has testified that the species can be differentiated, and certain areas can be avoided to decrease excessive harvest of shortspine thornyheads. Consequently, the Council recommended harvest guidelines of 1,500 mt for shortspine thornyheads (above its ABC) and 6,000 mt for longspine thornyheads (below its ABC). Even though longspine thornyheads are above the level that would produce MSY, its harvest guideline is less than ABC to protect shortspine thornyheads, and in anticipation of future declines in the longspine thornyhead ABC as it is reduced to its MSY level. The shortspine thornyhead harvest guideline is set above its ABC because of the uncertainty in the assessment; the 1,500-mt harvest guideline is less than the overfishing level under the preferred assessment scenario and is similar to the ABC level that would result from plausible assessments with higher levels of natural mortality or lower levels of survey catchability. These harvest guidelines, which apply only north of Point Conception, will result in a small increase in the longspine thornyhead catch and a large decrease in the shortspine thornyhead catch.

Bocaccio. The ABC and harvest guideline for bocaccio are increased from 1,540 mt in 1994 to 1,700 mt in 1995. This increase is due entirely to removal of an assumed discard level. The discard factor is removed because only a small number of vessels are constrained by current trip limits. As in the past, the harvest guideline applies only to the Eureka, Monterey, and Conception subareas (the EEZ south of 43°00'00" N. lat.), and, because discards are assumed to be negligible, the harvest

guideline represents total catch. An estimate of discards will be added to inseason projections of the catch if new information indicates that discarding is occurring.

Canary rockfish. A new assessment for canary rockfish in the Vancouver and Columbia subareas (north of 43°00'00" N. lat.) indicates that the stock has undergone a substantial decline and that continuation of current catch levels, which are at the ABC levels set in 1990, would be overfishing. Therefore, the 1994 ABCs of 800 mt in the Vancouver subarea and 1,500 mt in the Columbia subarea are reduced to 1,000 mt for both areas combined in 1995. The survey trend in the Eureka area indicates an even more severe decline, so the ABC is reduced from 600 mt in 1994 to 250 mt in 1995, close to the recent average catch in this area. Therefore, the coastwide ABC is reduced from 2,900 mt in 1994 to 1,250 mt in 1995. A harvest guideline is set for the first time in 1995, at 850 mt, for the combined Vancouver/Columbia area, which is equal to the subarea ABCs minus 150 mt of estimated discards.

Sebastes complex. The *Sebastes* complex includes all rockfish except widow, shortbelly, Pacific ocean perch (POP), and thornyheads.

North: The harvest guideline for the *Sebastes* complex in the Vancouver-Columbia area (the EEZ north of 43°00'00" N. lat.) is 11,800 mt in 1995, 1,440 mt lower than the 13,240 mt harvest guideline in 1994. It is calculated by adding the ABCs for canary and remaining rockfish in the Vancouver and Columbia subareas, and for yellowtail rockfish in the Vancouver, Columbia, and Eureka subareas and then subtracting 450 mt (300 mt for an estimate of the yellowtail ABC in the Eureka subarea, and 150 mt for estimated discards of canary rockfish). The reduction in 1995 reflects the reduction in the ABC for canary rockfish in the same area. Inseason estimates of yellowtail rockfish discards are counted toward this harvest guideline.

South: The harvest guideline for the *Sebastes* complex in the Eureka, Monterey, and Conception subareas (the EEZ south of 43°00'00" N. lat.) is 13,200 mt in 1995, slightly lower than 13,440 mt in 1994. It is based on the sum of the ABCs of the species in those subareas (bocaccio, chilipepper, yellowtail rockfish, and remaining rockfish); no estimate for discards is subtracted because trip-limit induced discards are believed to be negligible for these species in this area. The decrease reflects the net change in the ABCs for bocaccio and canary rockfish in the southern area.

Note: As in 1994, the 1995 ABCs and harvest guidelines for the *Sebastes* complex and yellowtail rockfish apply to different areas due to differences in stock assessment areas. The ABCs and harvest guidelines for the *Sebastes* complex apply north and south of 43°00'00" N. lat. (the Columbia/Eureka subarea boundary). The yellowtail rockfish ABCs in the Columbia area are divided at Cape Falcon (45°46'00" N. lat.) and the harvest guidelines are divided at Cape Lookout (40°20'15" N. lat.). Further explanation is found in the October 1993 SAFE document and at 59 FR 691, January 6, 1994. Trip limits are applied to the same areas as the harvest guidelines.

Dover sole. Based on a new stock assessment, the ABC for Dover sole in the Eureka subarea is reduced from 3,500 mt in 1994 to 2,900 mt in 1995, and in the Columbia subarea from 4,000 mt in 1994 to 3,000 mt in 1995. The Vancouver, Monterey, and Conception subarea ABCs are not changed, so the coastwide ABC is reduced from 15,900 mt in 1994 to 14,300 mt in 1995, which is similar to the catch in 1993; landings in 1994 are expected to be less than 9,000 mt. The reduction in the Eureka ABC appears to be due to declining recruitment. There is some uncertainty in Dover sole biomass estimates due to the catchability coefficient applied to the survey data, especially in the Columbia area. The Columbia ABC is believed to be a realistic upper estimate.

The coastwide harvest guideline for Dover sole is reduced from 16,900 mt in 1994 to 13,600 mt in 1995, equal to the sum of the subarea ABCs minus 5 percent for estimated discards. As in the past, a separate harvest guideline is set for the Columbia subarea. In 1992, the Columbia subarea harvest guideline was set higher than the ABC and was scheduled to be reduced by 1,000 mt annually until it equaled 4,000 mt, the expected ABC in 1995. However, the 1995 ABC has been reduced to 3,000 mt, and the Council maintained its original intent to set the harvest guideline equal to the ABC by 1995. Therefore, the Columbia area harvest guideline is reduced from 5,000 mt in 1994 to 2,850 mt in 1995 (the 3,000-mt Columbia ABC minus 150 mt for estimated discards).

Setting Harvest Guidelines Greater Than ABC

In most cases, harvest guidelines are less than or equal to the ABCs, or prorated ABCs, for specific areas. However, for 1995 as in 1994, the Council recommended harvest guidelines that exceed the ABCs for two species, POP and shortspine thornyheads. The FMP requires that the Council consider certain factors when setting a harvest guideline above an ABC. These factors were analyzed by