

# Quilcene and Dabob Bay Flatfish Sport Rules



Photo of Starry Flounder (*Platichthys stellatus*) by S. Axtell

**Craig Burley, Fish Management Division Manager, Fish Program**

**Dayv Lowry, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist, Fish Program**

# Presentation

- Background
- Process and schedule
- Sport rule proposal
- Analysis
- Public comment
- Options
- Commission Action

# Background

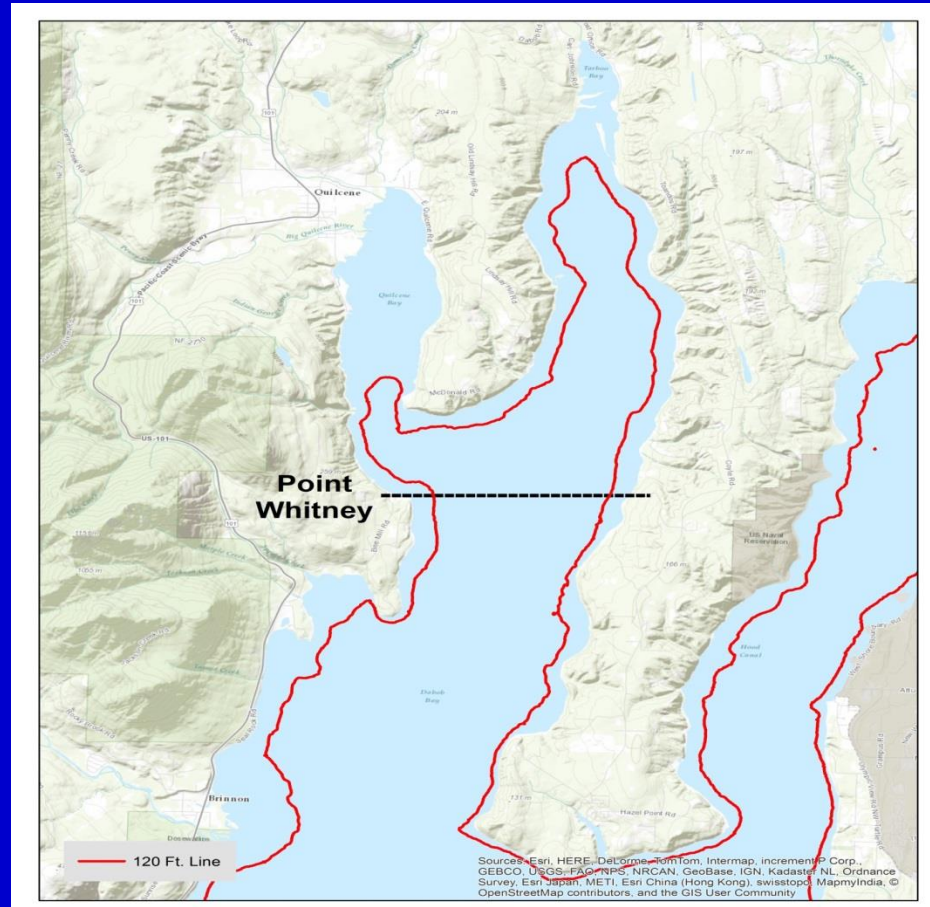
- Low dissolved oxygen conditions occur in Hood Canal
  - Configuration
  - Freshwater inflow and nutrients from upland sources
  - Poor mixing and highly stratified water column
- In 2004 the Department closed commercial and recreational fishing in Hood Canal due to low dissolved oxygen conditions
- Petition to allow bottomfish fishing in North Hood Canal region and Dabob Bay
- Commission directed staff to initiate rulemaking to consider allowing bottomfish fishing for selected species in waters shallower than 120 ft. in Quilcene Bay and Dabob Bay north of a true east line from Point Whitney to the Toandos Peninsula

# Process and Schedule

- October 17, 2014: Commission direction to staff to initiate rulemaking
- October 22, 2014: Filed CR-101
- March 4, 2015: Filed CR-102
- March 6, - April 1, 2015: Written Public comment accepted
- March 19, 2015: Public meeting in Pt. Townsend
- April 10, 2015: Commission briefing and public hearing
- June 12-13, 2015: Commission action

# Quilcene and Dabob Bay

- North of true east line from Pt. Whitney to Toandos Peninsula
- Open in waters shallower than 120ft.



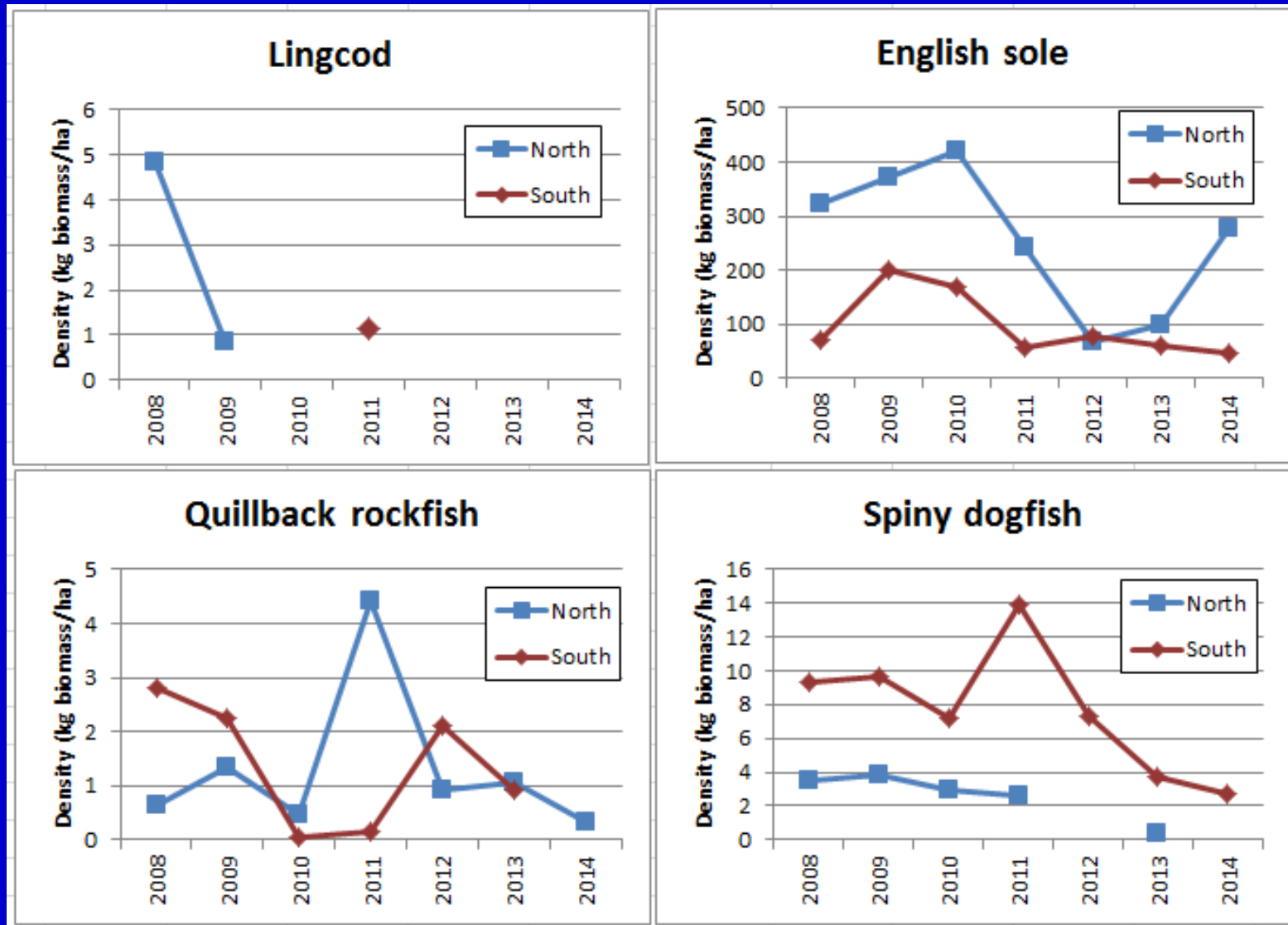
# Sport Rule Proposal

- Open year-round
- 15 fish daily limit
- Flatfish (except halibut)
  - Sole, flounder, and other flatfish species

# Analysis

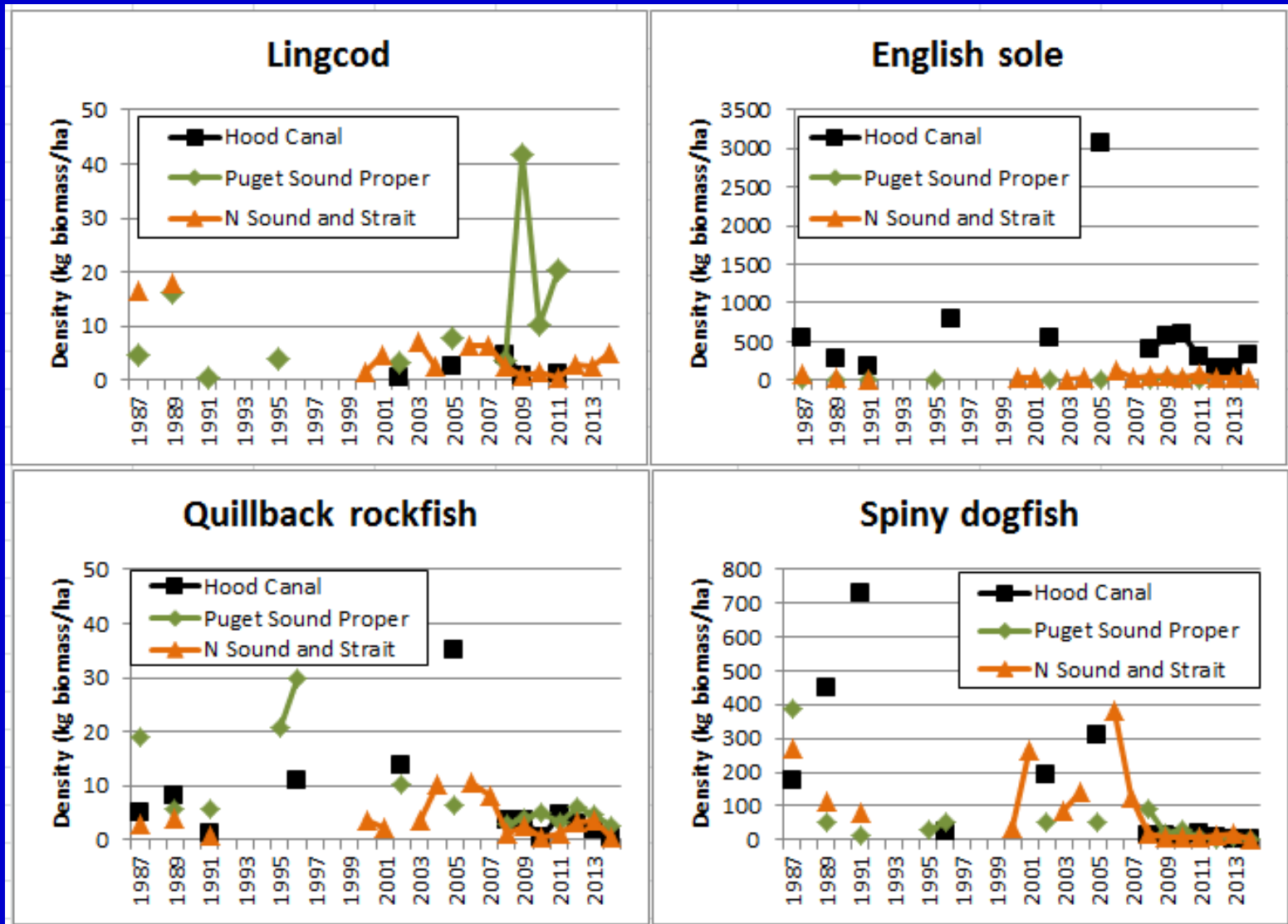
- Fish, and habitat, occurrence data compiled from:
  - Bottom trawl surveys (1987-present)
  - Remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys (2004-present)
  - Scuba-based surveys (1992-2011)
  - Drop-camera surveys (1994-2004)
- Limited data were available in the proposed fishing area
- Data from nearby locations/regions used to evaluate likelihood of fish/habitat occurrence

# Analysis





# Analysis



# Analysis

- ROV surveys inside Quilcene and Dabob Bays March 9-12, 2015 as part of larger rockfish-focused survey
- No rockfish, or high-relief habitats, were noted
- English sole, starry flounder, and other small flatfish were plentiful
- Flatfish were abundant both shallower and deeper than 120', suggesting deep waters will serve as a reserve

# Comments Received

37 comments received online via web or written

7 people attended the public meeting

1 person testified at the Commission public hearing

Percentage of comments:

Support/Support with Concerns –89%

Neutral – 4%

Oppose – 7%

# Comments Support/Support with Concerns

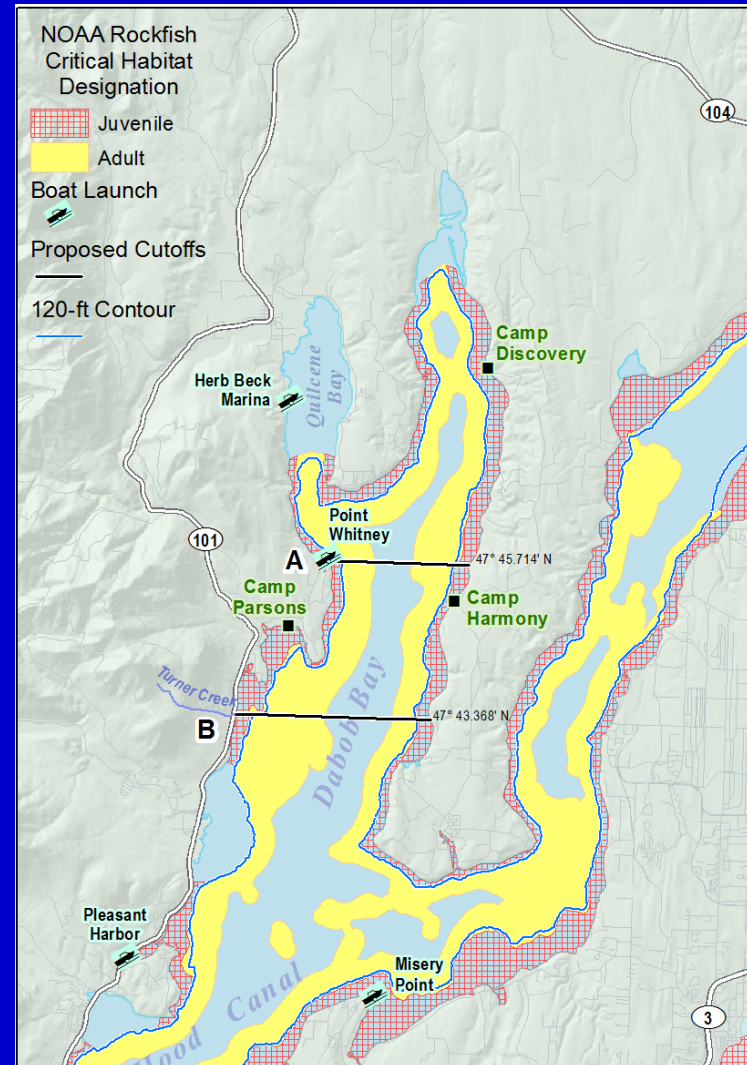
- Excited to see opportunity to fish for flatfish in this area
- Would like to see more area of Hood Canal open to fishing
- Would like to see other species of bottomfish and squid open
- Strongly in favor – take a conservative approach
- Recommend opening entire Hood Canal for juveniles in summer
- Moving the line farther south to include more access sites to avoid long run times from popular marinas
- Reducing run times would increase safety

# Comments Oppose/Neutral

- Concerns for illegal harvest of rockfish
- Hood canal not healthy enough for fisheries
- Oppose unless opened for all species

# Quilcene and Dabob Bay

- Options:
- Open in waters shallower than 120ft
- A: North of true east line from Pt. Whitney to Toandos Peninsula
- B: North of true east line from Turner Cr. To Toandos Peninsula



# Preferred Option B

- Additional area includes Camp Parsons and Camp Harmony
- Open area includes two boat ramps
- Reduces travel time from Pleasant Harbor
- Fishing area is north of observed listed rockfish species



# Questions

