

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft proposed schedules and other materials under this agenda item, and provides the following comments. The GMT appreciates the Council's support for our recommendations on priorities provided under the future meeting agenda item in March and April, which allowed us to focus on high priority issues such as harvest specifications and management measures at this and the April meeting.

2017-2018 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

Based on Council actions at this meeting, the GMT will continue to work with Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff to finalize any outstanding analyses and documentation in time to meet the mid-July deadline.

September Council Meeting

Amendment 21 Revised At-Sea Allocations

Based on Council Action at this meeting, the scope of the analysis has been reduced ([Agenda Item G.2, WDFW Report 1](#)) to only analyzing the impacts of setting at-sea allocations of darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch vs. set-asides. The GMT supports taking final action in September, if possible, in order to have a better chance to meet the start of the whiting season (i.e. May 15). Exploring temporary solutions to address the bycatch issues in the at-sea sectors has taken up extensive time on the Council's agenda. Implementing set asides, in addition to the actions taken under G.4, could create another temporary, yet more effective, resolution until additional long-term solutions can be taken up through the omnibus.

Year at a Glance

Upon reviewing the draft Preliminary Year-at-a-Glance summary ([Agenda Item F.6. Attachment 1](#)), the GMT notes that several groundfish agenda items are tentatively scheduled for the March 2017 Council meeting. Given all of the groundfish items that are currently in the workload queue, the GMT believes that spreading groundfish items out over five meetings instead of four in 2017 will be beneficial to the advisory bodies, as well as the Council.

The GMT recommends that it attends the March meeting, even if it is not for the full week. Oftentimes, when the GMT does not attend a Council meeting, there are issues that the GMT identifies but doesn't have time to provide input; one such item was the ecosystem agenda item in March 2015. We believe that having the ability to comment on such items is important, and input from the GMT could enhance Council considerations. For example, if, as the Ecosystem Work Group (EWG) recommends, the Sablefish Ecosystem Indicators item is moved to March, it would allow for an efficient way to provide input on that issue. For similar reasons, the GMT supports scheduling the Essential Fish Habitat and Rockfish Conservation Area (EFH/RCA) agenda item in March 2017. In off-years, the March meeting is not typically heavy with groundfish issues, and, given that the EFH/RCA is complex, this would give the GMT sufficient time to provide meaningful input for Council consideration of final action.