

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON ADVISORY BODY MEMBERSHIP AND COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received information that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) recommended an additional NWFSC position be designated on the GMT under Open Public comment. This new NWFSC position is to be specifically for someone from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP). The current membership of the GMT believes this would be a welcome addition to the team.

Limited access to WCGOP data has been a bottleneck on the work the GMT has been able to do.¹ The situation has improved greatly with access broadened to include Oregon Department Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). Many of the analyses being considered as part of the 2015-2016 cycle were only possible because of this increased access (e.g., the groundfish closure areas analysis). We thank the NWFSC for broadening access to the data and hope that this increased access continues. Likewise, we appreciate the level of communication and coordination we have achieved with the WCGOP to date, yet see having one of their staff on the team further improving their understanding of team priorities and vice-versa. A WCGOP GMT member could help with improving our application and interpretation of data, and ensure that confidential results are presented properly in a public forum.

Council Operating Procedure 3

The above request led the GMT to a broader discussion of Council Operating Procedure 3 (COP 3) and the make-up of the GMT, and we offer some thoughts. Fisheries management involves many types of expertise and the contributions of staff from the SWFSC and NWFSC on the GMT are highly valuable to our work. While we support adding a member of WCGOP, we hope it would be an “and” and not an “or” in terms of NWFSC participation on the team. When the NWFSC and SWFSC are considering their GMT membership, we would recommend looking for balanced membership in terms of the following types of expertise: stock assessment biology and population dynamics, quantitative and statistical analysis, natural resource economics or other social science, fisheries management and policy, data collection and sampling methodologies, etc. This balance is possible given the GMT membership guidelines outlined COP 3 (shown below), but in practice has not always been achieved. Also, the current GMT members have worked with several SWFSC and NWFSC staff and understand that GMT participation is often a small part of their core duties and may not be regarded as highly as such things like producing publications. Their tenure on the GMT can therefore be short, which can be less than ideal with the steep learning curve of groundfish management and the Council process.

¹ e.g. [Agenda Item B.1, Supplemental Open Comment 3: GMT Report](#)

GMT membership in [Council Operating Procedure 3](#) (possible changes in **bold**):
Groundfish (11)

6 State fish management agency (two each from Washington, Oregon, California)

1 NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center

1 2 NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, (**one of whom shall be from the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program**)

2 NMFS West Coast Region

1 Tribal Agency

One of the members should be a ~~economist~~ **social scientist**

PFMC

04/10/14