

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

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the three meeting outlook and notes that in addition to the core items scheduled on the March agenda, both trawl rationalization and open access (OA) license limitation should be a priority. Given that the scheduled percent of standard floor time is 121% without OA license limitation, the GMT recommends that the meeting be extended to accommodate this priority item.

Regarding trawl rationalization, the GMT understands the intent of the agenda item would be to review analyses and bring forth any outstanding issues. The GMT strongly recommends that only a limited number of emergent issues be presented. We expect the rationalization analysis will be very complex and a preliminary review of the results in March would allow suitable time to process the results prior to adopting preliminary preferred alternatives in June.

Regarding OA license limitation, it is our understanding that if this item is added to the March agenda, the Council action would be to review and refine alternatives. Given that a draft environmental assessment has already been circulated, the GMT would have adequate time to review and prepare for this agenda item. The team is concerned that if OA license limitation is not accommodated in March there will not be adequate time to implement this program for 2009. Timelier implementation of this program will allow the GMT to make more informed decisions for adjusting trip limits in the OA fishery. Additionally, considerable time and effort has been spent on this item and by further postponing the analysis, it may no longer reflect the current state of the fishery.

PFMC
11/09/07