

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

Pre Meeting Webinars

Over the last year, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has utilized pre-meeting webinar/conference calls in addition to meeting at Council meetings in order to have sufficient opportunity to provide input to the Council, which we would not be able to accomplish at Council meetings alone. For the GMT to have any detailed discussions or make any recommendations on these webinars, they are required to be publicly noticed ahead of time and open to the public. We acknowledge that this puts additional workload on Council staff and resources as they are preparing for the upcoming Council meetings. However, given the number of groundfish and groundfish-related items that the GMT is being asked to discuss, analyze, and provide comment on, webinars have become a necessary part of this process. These webinars allow the GMT to begin our detailed discussions, preventing truncated discussions particularly for those agenda items that are early in the Council meeting's schedule or that are very complex (i.e. harvest specifications). Additionally, this provides some time if additional data or analysis are required, so that it isn't being done "on the fly" during a Council/GMT meeting, where errors are more prone to occur. The overall goal is to provide for the best input possible from the GMT to the Council that is in line with reasonable workload for GMT members. On the March 1 webinar, the GMT discussed stock assessment prioritization, salmon consultation, gear changes, and meeting planning. Overall, while webinars are important to the efficiency of the GMT, we are learning that they can't be used to replace in person discussions and that additional time, while possibly less than if there weren't a webinar, is needed during GMT/Council meetings to finalize GMT discussions and recommendations.

April 2016 Council Meeting

The draft April Council meeting agenda contained in the advanced briefing book ([Agenda Item I.3, Attachment 2](#)) has eight groundfish items and six non-groundfish items that the GMT might be expected to comment on. We request Council guidance (as the Council is who determines the GMT's workload and priorities) on priorities for the GMT, given that we can't discuss and provide comment on all groundfish and non-groundfish items due to time and resource constraints. **The GMT discussed the April agenda, the associated workload, and believes we will only be able to comment on the following items, in priority order:**

1. 2017-2018 Harvest Specifications
2. 2017-2018 Management Measures
3. Inseason
4. Electronic Monitoring Whiting Regulation Deeming and Fixed Gear Final Preferred Alternative/Deeming
5. Stock Assessment Prioritization

The items below may receive GMT input provided the GMT has enough time given the intensive workload of the above items.

6. Essential Fish Habitat/Rockfish Conservation Area
 - a Within this item, the Rockfish Conservation Area portion will be our priority over Essential Fish Habitat
7. Workload Planning

As we have stated previously, several agenda items will be very complex and workload intensive, and will likely require a great deal of work prior to, and at the April meeting. Table 1 shows some information on the GMT's estimate of the amount of time each potential agenda item might require (overview, discussion, writing, and analysis) for those items we will only be providing input on. This table does not include any time for GMT members to be on the Council floor, or seeing to their other (state) duties. The total estimated hours of GMT time is 49, which equates to 6.2 8-hour days. Again, not including any time other than GMT overview, discussion, writing, and analysis time. There are approximately 5 hours of overview that the GMT has identified could potentially be done via a pre-meeting webinar, in addition to the amount of time we anticipate in person at the meeting.

Year at a Glance

The GMT has the following thoughts on the preliminary year at a glance summary ([Agenda Item I.3, Attachment 1](#)).

June

Currently, the June agenda has 7.8 days scheduled, which the GMT does not believe is tenable. Additionally, that meeting contains several high workload items for the GMT, including finalizing the 2017-2018 Biennial Harvest Specifications, starting the five-year review of the Individual Fishing Quota program review, Phase II Actions for sablefish, nearshore species management, and prioritization of the omnibus list. The GMT thinks that the Phase II Actions and nearshore species management may be complex and are topics that will require GMT input. If the initial discussion in June is simply selecting ad hoc working groups to carry the issue forward, this may not be as much of an issue. The GMT requests the Council take a careful look at the June agenda and develop a prioritization list.

September/November

Council Operating Procedure 25 ([COP 25](#)) states that at the September and November Council meetings in even years (i.e., 2016) there should be identification of any new models or changes to existing GMT projection models (e.g. nearshore, non-nearshore, etc.). Based on conversations with the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP), the GMT will need to include a review of changes to current GMT projection models in September and modify the "Stock Assessment Methods Review Topic Selection and Schedule" item in November to include changes to GMT projection models. Based on the expected workload at the June Council meeting, the GMT may have to have an additional webinar over summer to discuss priorities for model development and improvements.

Also recall that there were several issues from biennial harvest specifications and management measures that were taken out of the biennial cycle for more detailed analysis later since they did not require regulatory changes (e.g., discard mortality rates for commercial nearshore fisheries and updates to existing discard mortality rates).

March

Currently, there are no groundfish items listed on the March 2017 schedule. The lack of having time to meet in March may cause some issues with being able to progress on the extensive groundfish workload on the Year-at-a-Glance and Groundfish Priorities list. Further, since the GMT did not meet during the March 2015 Council meeting, the GMT was unable to provide input on [Agenda Item E.4](#), Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Final Action. This greatly

impacted the GMT's ability to provide input in September 2015 Agenda Item D.2, Unmanaged Forage Fish Regulations. As stated in the GMT's report under that agenda item ([Agenda Item D.2.a Supplemental GMT Report](#)), the GMT may have commented on some items which may have been already addressed in March 2015. The GMT's absence created increased workload and may have impacted the GMT's ability to provide effective and efficient comment. A similar situation may occur, given that the GMT is not currently scheduled to meet in March 2017, given that there is an item "FEP Identify New Initiatives" that may be of interest to have the GMT comment on, as we have been involved in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan discussions.

PFMC
03/14/16

Table 1. GMT *estimated* discussion, writing, and analysis hours for April agenda items the GMT views as priority. (Items in gray the GMT are not on the GMT’s priority list).

Agenda Item #	Agenda Item Description	Council Floor Time	Council Floor time (hrs)	Potential Webinar Discussion Time (hrs)	GMT Meeting Discussion Time (hrs)	Projected Writing/Analysis Time (hrs)	Total GMT Time (hrs)	GMT Priority/Statement
C.2.	Marine Planning Update	Sat; 13:00	1				0	N
C.3.	Electronic Technology Plan Update	Sat; 14:00	1.5				0	N
F.1.	NMFS Report	Sun; 08:00	1				0	N
F.2.	Implementation of 2016 Pacific Whiting Fishery Under U.S.-Canada Whiting Agreement	Sun; 09:00	0.75				0	N
F.3.	Biennial Harvest Specifications FPS	Mon; 08:00	3.5		5	5	10	Y
F.4.	Electronic Monitoring Whiting Regulation Deeming & Fixed Gear FPA/Deeping	Mon; 11:30	5		2	4	6	Y
C.4.	Comments on Bycatch Strategy and Bycatch Reduction Plans	Tues; 08:00	1				0	N
C.5.	Comments on Catch Share Program Review Guidance	Tues; 09:00	0.75				0	N
F.5.	Groundfish EFH/RCA Amendment Update, Revise ROA, and Select PPAs, if possible	Tues; 13:00	4	2	4	4	8	Y
F.6.	Biennial Harvest Specifications FPS	Wed; 08:00	5		5	5	10	Y
F.7.	Initial Stock Assessment Plan and Terms of Reference	Wed; 14:00	2	2	2	2	4	Y
F.8.	Consideration of Inseason Adjustments	Thur; 08:00	2		2	2	4	Y
E.2.	Regulations for Vessel Movement and Monitoring FPA	Thur; 10:00	2				4	N
C.8.	Future Council Meeting Agenda & Workload Planning	Thur; 10:30	2.5		2	1	3	Y
Total			32	4	22	23	45	5.6 days