

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

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft April Agenda and Year-at-a-Glance contained in the advanced briefing book and provide some information below on those agendas, as well as some additional items we are working on.

June Council Meeting

The draft June agenda ([Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 2](#)) currently has twelve groundfish agenda items, eleven of which are scheduled in three consecutive days, which is an extremely compressed schedule for the GMT. In addition, the GMT notes that highly migratory species (HMS) agenda items are also compressed into two days. While the GMT understands the benefit in minimizing the time team members need to spend at the meeting, we suggest that it might benefit both teams if some of the GMT and HMS items are divided between the two or three days to provide analysts on both teams time to complete necessary work. The GMT requests the ability to work with Council staff to establish the GMT start date after the final agenda is adopted that attempts to give the team sufficient time for discussion and to conduct any necessary analysis.

The GMT notes that the trawl five-year review agenda item will likely be a lengthy and complex agenda item. As we have noted with agenda items such as this in the past, it might be beneficial to have this agenda item split between two days, such that the overview is presented one day and the Council discussions and deliberations occur on a subsequent day.

As stated during our report on [Agenda Item F.4](#), **the GMT recommends delaying consideration of intersector quota pound trading until the completion of the intersector allocation review and the catch share program review, at which time the Council could consider prioritizing that action with other resulting actions.**

In March the GMT recommended combining the National Standard Guidelines 1 (NS1) provision for carryover, analysis of a multi-year average catch policy and mid-biennial annual catch limit (ACL) adjustment would provide a well-rounded evaluation of the pros and cons of very similar issues and would allow for an efficient process for analysis, Council consideration, and decision making ([Agenda Item C.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report, March 2017](#)). The GMT notes that scoping for the multi-year average catch policy is currently scheduled for June, while scoping for the NS1 carryover provision is scheduled for September. Final action for mid-biennial ACL is also scheduled for September. The GMT recommends keeping scoping for the multi-year average catch policy in June and will provide further comments at that time on the other items during workload planning. The GMT notes that after scoping of the multi-year average catch policy and carryover is completed, there may be efficiencies in combining some or all of the actions.

With regards to the gear modification Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) update and the year-round coastwide midwater trawl EFP scoping item, **the GMT recommends the Council consider combining these two EFPs as there could be efficiencies gained.** It is our understanding that

industry will also be recommending that these two EFPs be combined. The GMT does note that the current trawl gear EFP is currently only operating north of 42° N. latitude, and the expectation is for that to continue for 2018. Therefore, some consideration may be given to the scope of the EFP (i.e. not coastwide, but aligning with the other EFP to operate north of 42 N. latitude).

Year at a Glance

The draft Year at a Glance ([Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 1](#)) currently has a large number of complex groundfish items both shaded and unshaded for September and November. In September alone, an initial range of alternatives from the 5-Year Catch Share Review, final preferred alternative for the essential fish habitat and rockfish conservation area (EFH-RCA) Amendment, and initial actions for the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures will require substantial time and workload from the GMT.

As a reminder, the GMT recommended that both the Salmon Endangered Species Act (ESA) draft Biological Opinion (BiOp) and short-tailed albatross BiOp be brought back before the Council in September or November for comments on mitigation measures. Per the Council motion under Agenda Item F.3 at this meeting, any mitigation measures for Chinook salmon would be considered in the 2019-2020 management measures the scope of which will be decided in June with analysis beginning in September.

The GMT requests that the Council take a careful look at the proposed items scheduled to determine which items are a priority for the Council, and GMT, for the September and November meetings. For example, if the Council combines multi-year catch policy, mid-biennium ACL, and NS1 carryover into one item for consideration in the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications process, the GMT is concerned about the workload in addition to all the items mentioned above.

May Gear Regulation Package Conference Call

The GMT is currently working with NMFS WCR contract staff to set up a conference call (or webinar) to begin discussion on how the GMT may be able to assist with the analysis needed to complete the trawl gear regulations package.

October GMT Work Session

The primary focus of our October work session is preparation for the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures analysis. After some brief discussions with WCGOP, the GMT is also on standby to assist with the halibut discard mortality rate issue, but the GMT believes that if any detailed analysis or discussion from the team is needed, it would likely have to wait until the October work session.

PFMC
04/11/17