

## GROUND FISH NON-SALMON ENDANGERED SPECIES WORKGROUP REPORT

On December 7, 2012, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a Biological Opinion (Opinion) prepared pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on the continuing operation of the Pacific coast groundfish fishery. The Opinion analyzed the effects of the fishery on green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*), humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), and leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*). The Opinion concluded that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat of green sturgeon, eulachon, and leatherback sea turtles, and is not likely to jeopardize humpback whales. (Note that the eastern distinct population segment [DPS] of Steller sea lions was subsequently de-listed.)

The Council's Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (Workgroup) was established in conformance with the Opinion and last reported to the Council in June 2015. The Workgroup meets biennially, reviews updated estimates of the incidental take of the above ESA-listed species, and makes recommendations to the Council on mitigation measures should take in groundfish fisheries be a concern. The Workgroup met February 15-16, 2017 to take up these tasks. Meetings of the Workgroup are timed so that recommendations that involve adoption or adjustment of management measures can be considered as part of the biennial harvest specifications process, slated to begin at the June Council meeting for the 2019-2020 period. The Workgroup Report is attached (Agenda Item F.3.a, Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Report). Copies of the reports on ESA-listed species bycatch reviewed by the Workgroup are provided in electronic format only on the April briefing book webpage (labeled as NMFS Reports 1-6).

### **Council Action:**

**Review Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Recommendations and Identify Measures to be Evaluated for the 2019-2020 Biennial Management Period or Other Appropriate Actions.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.5.a, Groundfish Endangered Species Act Workgroup Report.
2. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 1: Fishing Effort in the 2002-2015 U.S. Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
3. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 2: Humpback whale bycatch in 2014 - 2015 in the U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
4. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 3: 2016 Leatherback Sea Turtle Estimated Bycatch Reporting Requirements As Set Out In The NMFS Biological Opinion For The Continuing Authorization Of The Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
5. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 4: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Eulachon in 2002–2015 US West Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
6. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 5: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Green Sturgeon in 2002–2015 US West Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
7. Agenda Item F.5.a, NMFS Report 6: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Short-tailed Albatross in U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries 2014-2015 (**Electronic Only**).

Agenda Order:

- F.5 Groundfish Non-Salmon Endangered Species Workgroup Report Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Review Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Recommendations and Identify Measures to be Evaluated for the 2019-2020 Biennial Management Period or Other Appropriate Actions

PFMC  
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