

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. Additionally, this report contains information on other items for which we are involved.

April Council Meeting

The draft April agenda ([Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 2](#)) currently has six groundfish agenda items, which the GMT thinks is a manageable workload, given the items. Under I.1 at this meeting, the Council tasked the GMT with some work to aid the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff on the Chinook salmon bycatch in groundfish fisheries analysis for the Endangered Species Act consultation. The GMT has already started working on this and will aim to have it completed in time for the April briefing book.

Year at a Glance

The draft Year-at-a-Glance ([Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 1](#)) currently has a large number of groundfish items both shaded and unshaded for June and September. The GMT requests that the Council take a careful look at the proposed items to determine which items are a priority for the Council for the June and September meetings.

The GMT recommends bringing back for Council review the draft salmon biological opinion sometime in 2017, prior to its finalization. The Council and advisory bodies would likely be interested in providing feedback on developing mitigation measures (e.g. area harvest guidelines, bycatch reduction areas for salmon, etc.).

Additionally, the GMT recommends the Council consider combining three items that have similar themes, which are currently scheduled across several agenda items and meetings. These items include the National Standard Guidelines 1 provisions for carryover ([Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 1, March 2017](#); tentatively scheduled for June 2017), analysis of a multi-year average catch policy (omnibus #47 in [Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 2, June 2016](#); tentatively scheduled for June 2017), and mid-biennial annual catch limit adjustments ([Agenda Item F.8, September 2016](#) and [Agenda Item F.7, November 2016](#); tentatively scheduled for September 2017). The GMT believes considering these items together at the June Council meeting would provide for a more robust evaluation of the pros/cons and will allow the Council to prioritize the measures accordingly. The GMT also notes that a preliminary preferred alternative has been chosen for the mid-biennial annual catch limit adjustments (i.e. “greenlight” proposal), whereas the other two items would be scoping. Finally, the GMT recommends that the briefing book materials also consider how each of the measures would be implemented by NMFS after the framework has been established in the Fishery Management Plan and regulations (e.g., what type of analysis and rulemaking would be required to change a harvest specification and adjust a management measure mid-biennium).

The GMT notes that the Council may want to consider noticing the June-September groundfish inseason agenda items to include modifications of the Pacific halibut retention limits in the primary

sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis. As described in [H.2.a, Supplemental GMT Report, March 2017](#), the Council could consider and NMFS could adopt changes to the halibut to sablefish ratio through inseason action if achievement of the allocation is progressing on a pace different than expected.

Essential Fish Habitat/Rockfish Conservation Area

Given the number of items currently on the June agenda, the GMT recommends moving this agenda item to a later date, potentially September. However, adding something like essential fish habitat to the same agenda as the beginning of the biennial harvest specifications process would result in a large workload for the GMT.

GMT Representation on the RecFIN Technical Committee

The GMT has contacted Mr. Steve Williams at Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission who oversees the recreational fisheries information network (RecFIN) about having an official GMT representative on the RecFIN Technical Committee (RecTech), similar to the Pacific fishery information network Data Committee which has both a Council staff representative and a GMT representative. Mr. Williams agreed that it would be beneficial to both the GMT and RecTech to have GMT representation, and that RecFIN would be able to cover the travel expenses for the GMT representative. RecTech normally has two 2-day meetings each year, April in Portland and October in Southern California. The GMT has identified Ms. Heather Reed as our representative to RecTech.

October GMT Meeting

The GMT will be having a fall biennial harvest specifications and management measures meeting to set up ranges of annual catch limits and start formulating ranges of alternatives. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for the week of October 2-6, 2017 in Seattle or Portland. Details will be worked on as we get closer to that time.

PFMC
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