



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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September 12, 2018

Executive Director Chuck Tracy
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Regarding: Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Technical Subcommittee (TSC) of the Canada-U.S. Groundfish Committee

Dear Executive Director Tracy,

The Technical Subcommittee (TSC) is an interagency group of groundfish researchers and resource managers from Canada and the United States that has met annually since 1960 to discuss groundfish research, assessment methods, conservation, and exploitation in the Northeast Pacific Ocean.

Specific objectives of the TSC are to:

1. Exchange information on the status of groundfish stocks of mutual concern and coordinate, whenever possible, desirable research programs.
2. Recommend the continuance and further development of research programs having the potential to provide a scientific basis for the management of groundfish fisheries.
3. Review scientific and technical aspects of existing or proposed management strategies, and their component regulations relevant to conservation of stocks, or other scientific aspects of groundfish conservation and management of mutual interest.
4. Transmit approved recommendations and appropriate documentation to appropriate sectors of the Canadian and U.S. governments and encourage implementation of the recommendations.

The TSC met April 24-25th, 2018 in Santa Cruz, CA at The University of California Santa Cruz's Coastal Science Campus. This year's meeting was hosted by NOAA's Southwest Fishery Science Center Laboratory and attended by representatives from ten resource management entities (full list of attendees attached). As is done each year, every agency submitted a written report summarizing groundfish accomplishments for the previous year and at the meeting their representative reviewed these achievements, responded to questions from other attendees, and discussed current year research and management activities. Final agency reports and minutes for the 2018 meeting, which dealt with activities occurring in 2017, are available online at <http://www.psmfc.org/tsc2/>. The following are some highlights of the meeting.

1. **The TSC noted the valuable ongoing work of the Committee of Age Reading Experts (CARE)** (<http://care.psmfc.org/>), a long-standing TSC Working Group that was originally created in 1982. The purpose of CARE is to facilitate standardization of groundfish age determination criteria and

techniques among management entities along the West Coast. In 2017 member agencies of CARE engaged in 13 exchanges of age structure collections for standardization and validation purposes, with five of these exchanges focusing on Yelloweye Rockfish. Yelloweye were of particular interest given their compromised population status along much of the West Coast and sensitivity to demographic stressors, including fishery exploitation, and because aging of older individuals is complicated by comparatively minimal growth rates. In 2017 CARE member agencies also actively pursued use of near infrared spectroscopy for aging samples, which could prove to be far less labor intensive and more cost effective than traditional techniques. While considerable validation and calibration is still needed, the TSC has encouraged CARE member agencies to support this research priority, as well as to continue supporting existing collaborative age standardization efforts.

2. As the TSC has members that represent groundfish management entities from Alaska to California, we recognize considerable capacity to address “hot button” issues of coast-wide importance by coordinating sessions and workshops at regional conferences. In recent years, one such hot button issue has been the use of descending, or recompression, devices to reduce barotrauma effects from recreational fishing on rockfishes. In February of 2017 **the TSC sponsored a symposium on descending device use and policy that kicked off the Western Groundfish Conference (WGC) in Seaside, CA.** Presenters discussed established, and recent developments in, science and policy related to descending device efficacy and usage across jurisdictions. The symposium was well received and plans for a similar session on a new topic at the next WGC are underway.
3. The TSC is a long-standing committee about which many researchers and managers along the West Coast are minimally aware. In addition to sponsoring symposia, as detailed above, **the TSC seeks to expand awareness of itself** by: 1) annually updating the TSC Accomplishments document and posting it to the website; 2) encouraging TSC members to widely distribute annual reports to colleagues, and make them aware of the web repository for past reports; and 3) generally publicizing the work of the committee, and the annual reports, to academic partners including students, who are likely to find the reports rich with clearly identified data gaps ripe for directed research efforts. Further information on the TSC, its accomplishments, and the annual reports are available at <http://www.psmfc.org/tsc2/>.
4. **The TSC continues to express interest in another trawl and longline survey methods workshop.** While interest was expressed in forming a working group or initiating a workshop to expand on the electronic data collection workshop that occurred in 2016, the TSC agreed to carry this over to the next meeting.
5. **The TSC recognizes the critical need to share distributional and tagging data for transboundary stocks.** Sharing of data for species such as Sablefish, Black Rockfish, Lingcod, and sharks that are tagged in both countries will enhance scientific understanding of population dynamics for these species, which will improve management. In April of 2018 a coast-wide, international meeting to exchange data for Sablefish occurred, prompted by the recommendation of the TSC. While this is a wonderful start, the TSC recommends sharing data for *all* tagged species where transboundary tag interception may occur and urges agencies in both countries to enable additional data exchanges using the Sablefish sharing agreement as a template.

The 60th Annual Meeting of the TSC is scheduled for April 23rd-24th, 2019, in Olympia, WA and will be hosted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. We hope to see representation from all entities that conduct groundfish research and apply management strategies to these critical natural resources in the Northeast Pacific Ocean.

The TSC would like to thank the member entities for their contributions to the annual report as well as their attendance at the annual meetings. The ongoing success of this organization is a direct result of this commitment and participation. We also thank the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Stephen Phillips for the funding and support that facilitates communication and information sharing among groundfish research and management entities on the West Coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dayv Lowry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dayv Lowry, Ph.D.

Chair, Technical Subcommittee of the Canada-U.S. Groundfish Committee

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Fish Management Division

Marine Fish Science Unit

Attachment:

List of attendees at the 2018 TSC Meeting:

Karla Bush, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Douglas, AK (Karla.Bush@alaska.gov)

Kevin McNeel, CARE Chair, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Mark Tag and Age Lab, Juneau, AK (Kevin.Mcneel@alaska.gov)

Jon Heifetz, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Auke Bay Lab, Juneau, AK (Jon.Heifetz@noaa.gov)

Jim Armstrong, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Anchorage, AK (James.Armstrong@noaa.gov)

Maria Surry, Science Branch, Pacific Biological Station, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Nanaimo, BC (Maria.Surry@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Greg Workman, Science Branch, Pacific Biological Station, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Nanaimo, BC (Greg.Workman@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Tracee Geernaert, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Seattle, WA (Tracee@iphc.int)

Josep Planos, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Seattle, WA (Josep@iphc.int)

Dayv Lowry, TSC Chair, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA (Dayv.Lowry@dfw.wa.gov)

Wayne Palsson, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Seattle, WA (Wayne.Palsson@noaa.gov)

Tom Wilderbuer, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Seattle, WA (Tom.Wilderbuer@noaa.gov)

Stephen Phillips, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Portland, OR (SPhillips@psmfc.org)

Alison Whitman, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Newport, OR (Alison.D.Whitman@state.or.us)

Traci Larinto, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Los Alamitos, CA (Traci.Larinto@wildlife.ca.gov)

Melissa Monk, Southwest Fishery Science Center, NOAA, Santa Cruz, CA (Melissa.Monk@noaa.gov)

John Field, Southwest Fishery Science Center, NOAA, Santa Cruz, CA (John.Field@noaa.gov)

Xi He, Southwest Fishery Science Center, NOAA, Santa Cruz, CA (Xi.He@noaa.gov)

Rebecca Miller, Southwest Fishery Science Center, NOAA, Santa Cruz, CA (Rebecca.Miller@noaa.gov)