

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE OMNIBUS PROCESS AND COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURE 9

The process to consider new groundfish management measures is described in Council Operating Procedure 9 (COP 9), which requires the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to prioritize new management measures in June of even number years. In 2018, the Council postponed the groundfish prioritization exercise until March 2019 to provide time for the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to refine the list of potential new management measures. The delay also allows time for the Council to consider potential changes to the process that might improve efficiency of the process. The GMT spent considerable time at the September and November Council meetings discussing the current process and potential improvements. Below, we highlight key points from our September ([Agenda Item I.9, Supplemental GMT Report 1, September 2018](#)) and November ([Agenda Item G.4.a, Supplemental GMT Report 2, November 2018](#)) reports and provide details on how a new groundfish management measure prioritization process could work. Appendix A outlines the GMT's proposed process. The GMT will provide recommendations on changes to COP 9 language in a supplemental report.

Annual Prioritization

The GMT identified a primary weakness of the current process in that prioritization only happens every other year, and cannot be responsive to emergent fishery needs, changes in the fishery, or unscheduled disruptions. To keep the list of potential new management measures more relevant to current and emerging issues, in November the GMT recommended changing to an annual process with time dedicated at the March Council meeting for advisory bodies to review the prior and upcoming year's fishery status. The Council could then update the list, including deleting measures no longer needed and in-progress actions, adding items as needed, and allow for stakeholder input on new additions. This review would be coupled with an update from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Council staff on accomplishments from the previous year and item prioritization for the current fishing year given NMFS, Council, and state staff availability.

Management Priority Check-in

In addition to a yearly review to "clean up" the list of potential new management measures and prioritize groundfish items, the GMT discussed another way to improve the process by providing the Council the opportunity, *if needed*, to check in on groundfish workload and priorities at every Council meeting. This stand-alone agenda item for groundfish workload prioritization at every meeting would allow the Council to reprioritize the list of potential new management measures to address new, urgent management issues. We view this check-in to be relatively short, different than workload planning, and should not take significant Council resources. The GMT envisions this agenda item would follow the NMFS report, allowing the Council, advisory bodies, and the public the opportunity to evaluate emerging groundfish issues alongside NMFS updates to rule making and NMFS staff workload outlook. This agenda item would include a brief review of the prioritization list, updated as needed by Council staff and the GMT (e.g., items the Council has

taken action on in a previous meeting are removed from the prioritization list). Under this agenda item, stakeholders could submit proposals for additions to the list. New ideas would need to be submitted by the advanced briefing book deadline to provide time to review them. The Council could then elect to re-prioritize the list to include urgent new issues in place of existing work priorities, or include less time-sensitive measures for the GMT's overwinter analysis before the March meeting. If no emerging issues are identified at the previous meeting or through the advanced briefing book, then the workload prioritization item would be brief. We believe that these changes would help to increase the efficiency of the prioritization process and streamline conversations about workload impacts under future agenda items.

Additionally, this proposed process would allow the Council to consider groundfish priorities independent of other fishery priorities (Coastal Pelagic Species, Highly Migratory Species, etc.). If the Council prioritizes a groundfish issue, the Council would then discuss the timeline for consideration during the regular workload planning agenda item alongside all other Council priorities.

Based on our experience with workload prioritization, the GMT thinks that a process that clearly outlines when the Council will be considering new items and adjusting priorities based on workload will be more productive than the current method, and will allow for flexibility that can address new issues as they arise, while balancing priorities across multiple sectors. Therefore, **the GMT recommends the Council adopt the process changes to groundfish workload prioritization as discussed above and outlined in Appendix A.**

PFMC
02/11/19

Appendix A. Diagram of GMT proposed process.

MARCH

- *Public*: Opportunity to add new items
- *GMT*: Report on scoping of new items
- *Council*: Adopt cleaned up list
- If there is available NMFS/Council/GMT time on the year at a glance, prioritize items for action

Do new issues arise during the week or were materials put in advanced BB?



GMT preliminary scoping between meetings



APRIL

- *Public*: Opportunity to add new items
 - *GMT*: Report on scoping of new items
 - *Council*: Reprioritize list given new items assessed
- *If no new items brought forward, no action required under agenda item.

Do new issues arise during the week or were materials put in advanced BB?



GMT preliminary scoping between meetings



JUNE

- *Public*: Opportunity to add new items
 - *GMT*: Report on scoping of new items
 - *Council*: Reprioritize list given new items assessed
- *If no new items brought forward, no action required under agenda item.

Do new issues arise during the week or were materials put in advanced BB?



GMT preliminary scoping between meetings

