

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON OMNIBUS WORKLOAD PLANNING PROCESS REVIEW AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an overview of the omnibus agenda item from Dr. Jim Seger, and offers the following comments.

Process

The GAP supports the Groundfish Management Team's (GMT) proposed annual schedule¹ to make the omnibus process more timely and efficient.

The GAP also supports the GMT's recommendation² to include omnibus as a dedicated groundfish agenda item at every Council meeting, after the National Marine Fisheries Service Report. Such a process could steer new proposals from groundfish stakeholders into one clear agenda item, rather than coming up under scattered agenda items, and be more user friendly for those who are new to the Council process. We also discussed the fact that in some cases a dedicated agenda item could reduce time spent on new proposals since participants sometimes submit the same proposal under multiple agenda items. The Council could also decide more quickly whether a topic merits placement on the omnibus list, and if not, the Council and advisory bodies would not need to spend time or effort keeping the item on the list. While the GAP had some concerns that this process could add to the workload, we ultimately support trying it for one year to determine if it will work.

As part of the omnibus process, the GAP also thinks it would be helpful if the Council could indicate their estimate of how much time would be available for new items in the coming year.

Prioritization

The GAP recommends that the following four omnibus items move forward for prioritization at this time, through the most expedient vehicle available.

Item 6: Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) Modifications

The GAP supports the GMT recommendation³ to prioritize the non-trawl RCA modifications item on the Council's Year-At-A-Glance. This could allow fishermen to access underutilized lingcod and mid-water rockfish stocks such as widow, yellowtail, and canary, providing significant economic benefit to the non-trawl sectors that cannot currently access the RCAs.

Item 14: Trawl/Non-Trawl Amendment 21 Allocations

The GAP recommends that the trawl/non-trawl Amendment 21 allocations be prioritized in order to analyze the redistribution of certain allocations, such as Lingcod South of 40° 10' N. Latitude, that could provide greater efficiencies in overall groundfish utilization.

¹ [Agenda Item G.4.a, GMT Report 2, March 2019](#) (under "Annual Prioritization" header)

² [Agenda Item G.4.a, GMT Report 2, March 2019](#) (under "Management Priority Check-In" header)

³ Agenda Item G.4.a, Supplemental GMT Report 4, March 2019

Item 15: Mothership Sector Utilization

The GAP supports the GMT recommendation⁴ to prioritize the mothership whiting sector utilization item on the Council's Year-At-A-Glance. As identified by the GMT, improved attainment in the mothership sector would support the National Standard goals of optimum yield, efficiency in utilization, and sustained participation of communities. The GAP has previously supported mothership utilization proposals being included and analyzed through the Council process⁵ and understands that the mothership sector submitted a document under omnibus public comment⁶ to provide more detail for the Council on the proposals coming forward from the sector.

Item 16: Moving Platt/Emley Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) into Regulation

The GAP continues to recommend⁷ that the Platt/Emley EFP be moved forward into regulation as quickly as possible. Several years of the EFP have already been successfully conducted, showing that the commercial jig gear configuration to harvest yellowtail can help to enhance optimum yield while avoiding overfished stocks. Through discussion with the GMT, we understand that the permit holder will be working together with the State of California to provide information relevant to moving this item forward, and once that occurs the GAP recommends this EFP be moved to regulation. This would help reduce the workload for the Council and the EFP applicants, and make the benefits more broadly available.

The GAP discussed several other items on the omnibus list and offers the following comments.

Item 2: Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl Requirement Between 40° 10' N. Latitude and 42' N. Latitude

The GAP notes that there is currently an EFP underway, and while there was interest in moving this forward, we recommend it stay on the omnibus list until there's enough data from 3 years of the EFP.

Item 4: Create 60-Mile Bank Rockfish Conservation Area Lines

While the GMT recommends this item be removed from the list, the GAP requests it remain on the list as a low priority item for further development.

Item 7: Remove Certain Midwater Area Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-Whiting

The GAP notes that there is currently an EFP underway, and while there was interest in moving this forward, we recommend it stay on the omnibus list until there is enough data from 3 years of the EFP.

⁴ Agenda Item G.4.a, Supplemental GMT Report 4, March 2019

⁵ [Agenda Item G.4.b, Supplemental GAP Report 1, November 2018](#); [Agenda Item G.4.a, Supplemental GAP/GMT Report 1, November 2018](#); [Agenda Item I.7.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, September 2018](#)

⁶ [Agenda Item G.4, Supplemental Public Comment, March 2019](#)

⁷ [Agenda Item G.4.b, Supplemental GAP Report 1, November 2018](#)

Item 9: Retain Halibut in the Sablefish Fishery (South of Pt. Chehalis)

The GAP supports the GMT recommendation to bring this issue forward in a workshop with IPHC, and then potentially through the proposed IPHC/Pacific Fishery Management Council commercial halibut process. The GAP addresses this issue further in our statement under Agenda Item H.1, Annual International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Meeting Report.

Item 17: Coastwide Sablefish ACL; Soft Caps for North and South (New GMT Proposal)

The GAP recommends that this item be added to the omnibus list. We did not prioritize it at this time but support further analysis being conducted so that we can have a better understanding of what the implications may be.

PFMC
03/09/19