

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON ENDANGERED SPECIES WORKGROUP REPORT

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) was given an overview of the Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup meeting and reports on our June 12th webinar by Mr. Brian Hooper, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff, and by GMT members of the work group.

Incidental Take Statements

The GMT supports the Workgroup's recommendation¹ that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) encourages NMFS to use a collaborative and proactive public process in the upcoming re-consultation for groundfish fishery impacts on humpback whales. This will allow the GMT, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and Council to provide input on monitoring improvements and new mitigation measures to reduce take, which will help inform the NMFS' Protected Resources Division in creating an incidental take statement (ITS) in the biological opinion. The Workgroup report noted that monitoring and mitigation measures could include better gear traceability, methods to identify stock-specific impacts, and requiring rope break-points to reduce lethal entanglements.

With regards to the short-tailed albatross ITS, the Workgroup also discussed safety concerns related to the proposed night setting requirement for floated longline gears. The GMT will further discuss this issue in our I.5.a, Supplemental Report 1, as NMFS has stated that a night setting exemption may be possible.

The GMT does not have any comments on eulachon, green sturgeon, or leatherback turtles as all are projected to be within their incidental take thresholds and no additional monitoring or bycatch reduction measures are needed.

Fixed Gear Logbook

The GMT believes that the proposed format as adopted by the Council in the 2009-10 biennium for the fixed gear logbook requirement will be sufficient for providing the finer scale effort data needed to better understand the location and quantity of gear being deployed on unobserved trips.

Fishing Effort Report

The GMT recommends that the fishing effort report continue to be produced every two years and supports altering the time periods for analysis to align with the years of the biennial harvest specifications.

PFMC
06/19/19

¹ Recommendation #1 on page 6 of the Endangered Species Workgroup report ([Agenda Item I.4.a, Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Report, June 2019](#))