

## GEAR SWITCHING AND SABLEFISH AREA MANAGEMENT SCOPING

The possible impact of gear switching on trawl allocation attainment has been a concern mentioned in public fora since prior to the trawl catch share program review that was completed in November 2017. During the program review, with advice from the Council's Community Advisory Board (CAB), the Council identified a number of issues for consideration in a regulatory package that was developed directly after the review (the "follow-on package"). However, consideration of the gear switching issue was designated for a separate process. As part of that process, in the spring of 2018 the Sablefish Area Management and Trawl Allocation Attainment Committee (SaMTAAC) was appointed to advise the Council on the issue. Specifically, the committee charge was:

Identifying obstacles to achieving the goals and objectives of the catch share plan related to under attainment of non-sablefish trawl allocations and unharvested sablefish quota pounds (QP) south of 36° N. latitude. As appropriate to overcome identified obstacles, the committee will discuss and develop options, including but not limited to, actions that may modify rules for gear switching by trawl permit holders and QP leasing to vessels using fixed gear, as well as options that may encourage increased utilization of sablefish QPs south of 36° N. latitude.

The SaMTAAC worked on its charge over the course of six meetings from June 2018 through April 2020 but was delayed in completing this work due to after effects from a government shut down in 2018/2019 and COVID-19 in 2020. Its final report was provided as an information item for the June 2020 Council meeting (provided here as Agenda Item D.1.a, SaMTAAC Report). That report includes three alternatives that would limit catch of northern sablefish while gear switching: one based on the issuance of gear-specific northern sablefish QP, a second based on the issuance of gear switching endorsements for permits with gear switching history, and the third based on a vessel's status as an active trawler. The amount of gear switching under each alternative would vary based on the specification of a number of parameters within each alternative (e.g. qualifying requirements and gear switching limits).

Accompanying that final report provided in June was an analytical document that has been updated and expanded over the summer (provided here as Agenda Item D.1, Attachment 1). Changes made since the June version are identified in the document in order to make it easier to review for those who read the earlier document. The analytical document focuses mainly on information related to the need for action and describing the fishery for northern sablefish, but also goes into some of the analysis of qualifying requirements for the alternatives developed by the SaMTAAC.

For this meeting, the Council has decided to focus on the question of whether to move this issue forward for further deliberation. If it chooses to do so, it would formally adopt a purpose and need statement. The Council has previously reviewed and provided guidance on purpose and need statements but has not formally adopted such a statement. A proposed purpose and need statement that incorporates previous Council guidance is included in the SaMTAAC final report. The Council has also indicated that if it decides to move forward on this issue it might provide some guidance on the alternatives but it would not formally adopt a final range of alternatives for analysis at this meeting.

**Order of Business:** This agenda item will be split into two Council sessions. On Friday, September 11, a staff report will summarize the alternatives recommended in the SaMTAAC report and review the accompanying analysis. This opening presentation will be followed by presentation of the SaMTAAC report along with other advisory body reports and public comment. On Monday, September 14, the Council will take action.

**Council Action:**

**Decide, whether to move forward on this issue and, if so,**

- a. **Adopt a purpose and need statement, and**
- b. **Consider further development of alternatives.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item D.1, Attachment 1: Preliminary Assessment of Trawl Under-Attainment Issues and SaMTAAC Alternative Qualification Criteria (UPDATED), August 2020.
2. Agenda Item D.1.a, SaMTAAC Report, Sablefish Management and Trawl Allocation Attainment Committee: Final Report To The Council.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- D.1 Gear Switching and Sablefish Area Management Scoping (Continues Monday) Jim Seger
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. Council Action: Provide Guidance on Whether to Move Forward and if so, Adopt a Purpose and Need Statement and Consider Further Development of Alternatives

PFMC  
08/13/20