

Proposal Title	AB Assigned Priority	Action type	Relevant CFR Citation under Title 50 or Resp Agency	Description of recommended action(s)	Rationale of how the recommended action(s) reduces burdens on domestic fishing and increases production within sustainable fisheries	Proposal for initiating each recommended action(s) and Other Notes
PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL						
Action Categories: MSA or Primarily NMFS Related						
Salmon Tech Team						
Reconsider the current conservation objective for SRFC	1	Council action: FMP Amend		The action would include assembling data and performing analytical work to develop new management objectives. This work would also consider the potential for specifying the conservation objective in terms of natural area spawners and sub-basin escapement goals.	The current conservation objective for SRFC has been in place since 1984, and it is likely that the productivity and capacity of this stock has changed since that time. A new management objective would enable in targeting escapement levels that result in maximum sustainable yield (MSY), informed by an analysis of contemporary data.	Begin analysis. Highest priority because the existing objective has been in place since 1984 and there is substantial contemporary information available.
Develop an age-structured stock assessment for the SRFC stock using cohort reconstruction methods	2	Council Action to Adopt Revised Model		The action would include assembling data and constructing a cohort reconstruction model that would enable age-specific management of the SRFC stock. Tasks include data management and model development	Age-structured cohort reconstruction models enable estimation of important vital rates, including age-specific maturation rates. Results derived from such models can be used in the estimation of stock productivity, informing age-specific fishery planning models, and enabling age-specific abundance forecasts.	Begin model development work.
Develop age-structured abundance forecasts	3	Council Action to Adopt Revised Model		The action would require performing analytical work to develop candidate age-structured abundance forecasting models and evaluate the forecast accuracy of these candidate models.	Age-structured abundance forecast models have the potential to be more accurate than composite age forecast models. Improved abundance forecast accuracy enables better management by more precisely structuring fisheries to achieve MSY levels of spawner escapement.	Begin model development work (must come after cohort reconstructions covered in 2nd priority item).
Develop an age-structured SRFC harvest model	4	Council Action to Adopt Revised Model		This action would include development and testing of a new age-structured harvest model for SRFC.	Harvest models are used to project exploitation rates, escapement, and other metrics based on the spatial and temporal structure of commercial and recreational fisheries. Age structured harvest models allow for more precise targeting of separate cohorts in fisheries, relative to harvest models that aggregate age structure.	Begin model development work. (must come after cohort reconstructions covered in 2nd priority item).
Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (MSA)						
Revise management of sardine subpopulations and improve the underlying science.	1	FMP or reg modifications		<p>Management Priorities: Revise U.S. management of Pacific sardine subpopulations to use the same temperature parameters that are used to differentiate the two stocks.</p> <p>a. If it is determined that there are two stocks, then fish caught in warmer waters preferred by the southern stock should be attributed to the southern stock. This can be determined on a daily or weekly basis by satellite sea surface temperatures. Directed fishing opportunities could be based on the same parameters. The southern stock should have its own harvest limits and landings of southern stock should not be subtracted from harvest limits ascribed to the northern stock.</p> <p>b. If it is determined there is only one stock of Pacific Sardine, manage the fishery as we have in the past as a single transboundary stock.</p> <p>Scientific Priorities: Improve the science underlying the differentiation between the southern and northern stock, and their respective biomass estimates.</p> <p>a. (Near-term) Conduct a methodology review of the sardine habitat model and temperature thresholds used to apportion northern and southern stock of sardines, as requested by the Scientific and Statistical Committee CPS Subcommittee and CPSAS in 2019 with respect to the 2020 assessment.</p> <p>b. (Ongoing) Expedite research to genetically determine whether west coast Pacific Sardine is one or two stocks.</p> <p>c. (Ongoing) Continue to develop near-shore acoustic surveillance methodology and sampling with the charter of commercial vessels that can be outfitted to survey and sample in shallow waters. Surveys should be conducted in periods when water temperatures are near minimum and maximum annual levels.</p> <p>d. (Ongoing) Continue aerial surveys conducted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife concurrently and in coordination with the acoustic survey.</p> <p>e. (Near-term) Initiate further discussions with Mexican sardine scientists and fishery managers through the U.S. Department of State to improve and coordinate CPS surveys, align scientific understanding of Pacific sardine stock differentiation and biomass, and coordinate management measures and rebuilding.</p>	<p>At present, the U.S. Pacific sardine fishery is managed incongruously with the U.S. stock assessment's division of subpopulations. Pacific Sardine stock assessments in the U.S now assume that two sardine subpopulations exist along the U.S. West Coast, divided by a temperature boundary of 16.7°C as defined in a habitat model. However, only the northern subpopulation is included in stock assessments. As ocean temperatures change, Pacific Sardine from the northern and southern subpopulations move freely north and south of the U.S./Mexico border.</p> <p>All sardines caught in U.S. waters are assumed to be from the northern subpopulation for management purposes, hence subtracted from the harvest quota, regardless of sea temperature. However, all sardines observed and estimated in water temperatures above 16.7°C are assumed to be from the southern subpopulation and not included in U.S. stock assessment of the northern subpopulation. Thus, catch of southern sardines are being counted as part of the northern population and unnecessarily constraining the fishery.</p> <p>These recent U.S. stock assessments that only quantify the Northern subpopulation provided biomass estimates that resulted in the closure of directed Sardine fishing in U.S. waters and precipitated the declaration of an overfished status for Pacific Sardine in the U.S. This not only curtails opportunity to directly harvest U.S. West Coast sardines for the commercial sardine fleet, but incidental take restrictions limit and restrict fishing behavior in other fisheries where sardines are taken as incidental catch.</p> <p>Mexico has no restrictions on harvest of the northern sub-populations when in Mexican waters. They are deemed overfished in the U.S and under a zero level direct harvest rule. This is a major competitive disadvantage not only for the sardine fisheries but also numerous other fisheries that take incidental sardine bycatch.</p>	<p>This proposal can easily be written up as a conceptual project by November 2, 2020 and details for implementation worked out following that date. Requisite study and scoping could be initiated prior to the one-year deadline of the EO anniversary date.</p>
					See CPSAS statement for addition information on this rationale.	

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Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel						
EFPA Approval Process	NP (Not prioritized)	FMP/ COP		More efficient approval and permitting of exempt fishing permits.	In light of rapid climate change, recommend a more efficient approval and permitting of exempt fishing permits to innovate, test, and adopt new approaches to sustainable fishing	
Regulatory update (example, removal of observer requirements for shrimp trawl vessels).	NP	Reg		One example is that bycatch removal devices have replaced the need for observers on shrimp trawl vessels; removing the requirement for Federal fisheries observers on shrimp trawl vessels would reduce the burden on the shrimp fleet and does not impact the sustainability of the fishery or ecosystem.	Encourages updating regulations of fisheries that have adapted technologies to limit environmental impact, including bycatch, and remain burdened by previously important regulations that are no longer needed.	
Groundfish Management Team						
Non-trawl area management	NP	Reg	50 CFR 660	Begin opening the non-trawl rockfish conservation areas.	The unharvested non-trawl allocation is valued at \$55 million across all species (assuming 2019 non-trawl average prices). Harvesting the entire non-trawl allocation for each groundfish species may never be fully achievable, but there is an opportunity to expand access to healthy, underutilized stocks for industry, and to a valuable product for domestic and international consumers. Stakeholders have submitted ample public comment emphasizing the importance and urgency in accessing these underutilized stocks via this management measure.	The Pacific Council should initiate this action at the March or April 2020 meetings. Likely a three meeting process, and subsequent 9-12 month notice-and-comment rulemaking by NMFS.
Midwater trawl gear targeting non-whiting stocks	NP	Reg	50 CFR 660	Allow the use of midwater gear to target non-whiting species prior to the opening of the whiting season on May 15.	The Year-Round Coastwide Midwater Rockfish Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) has been ongoing since 2018 and allowed midwater gear landings prior to May 15, resulting in an annual average of \$2.2 million per year. Moving this EFP into regulation may help processors in developing year-round markets for midwater rockfish species, improving the ability to compete with foreign seafood products. The EFP will have been in place for the required three years at the end of 2020, so the Council could move forward with scoping in March or April of 2021. The GMT notes that this change could require reinitiation of the 2017 salmon Biological Opinion based on the scope of the proposed action.	The Pacific Council should initiate this action at the March or April 2020 meetings. Likely a three meeting process, and subsequent 9-12 month notice-and-comment rulemaking by NMFS.
Mothership (MS) s	NP	Reg	50 CFR 660	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change the whiting season start date. 2. Change the processor obligation deadline. 3. Change the mothership processor cap. 4. Change the process for mothership/catcher-processor permit transfers. 	As discussed in detail under Agenda Item D.2., Supplemental GMT Report 3, September 2020, the MS sector of the Pacific whiting fishery has averaged 71.2 percent of their initial allocation and 64 percent of their post-tribal reapportionment allocation between 2017 and 2019. This equates to an average of 34,778 mt of unharvested Pacific whiting allocation. Using the average 2017-2018 price of \$0.08 cents per pound, this equates to over \$6.1 million a year in lost potential revenue. Under Agenda Item D.2. at this meeting, the Council adopted a proposed purpose and need statement and limited the scope of any actions to north of 42° N. lat.	The Pacific Council initiated this item at the September 2020 meeting.
Survey Funding	NP	Guidance Document	NMFS	Funding for surveys should be a top agency priority.	Even prior to the cancellation of the Northwest Fishery Science Center West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl and Hook and Line surveys in 2020, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) budget to fund surveys had not kept pace with rising costs (Agenda Item I.1.b Supplemental NMFS NWFSC Presentation 1 (Hastie) June 2019). There is broad agreement of the importance of ongoing groundfish surveys to inform management and provide stability to domestic groundfish fisheries, a point emphasized in Agenda Item C.1.a Supplemental GAP Report 1. Survey-collected data, not only provides important length and age observations that inform the population length- and age-structure, but also provides critical information on incoming year-class strength (often a year or more prior to being caught by commercial fisheries). Additionally, data collected coastwide using a standardized sampling approach allows for the creation of indices of abundance that are an essential component in stock assessments to derive current trends in stock abundance. The Council should reiterate to NMFS that funding for surveys should be a top agency priority.	The Pacific Council should send a letter to NMFS detailing the importance of prioritizing ongoing survey work in the annual budget process for management and fishery stability after the September 2020 meeting.
Program Cost and Industry Competitiveness	NP	Other Similar Agency Action	NMFS	Request that the NMFS Interagency Seafood Trade Task Force provide a report to Congress indicating the degree to which legally required industry costs (i.e., buyback fees, cost recovery for limited access privilege programs, and monitoring coverage) compare to industry costs in competing fisheries in other countries.	These costs support biological and environmental sustainability, but may limit competitiveness in international and domestic markets with lower conservation standards. For example, the Economic Data Collection Program reports that these costs amounted to over \$8 million in 2018 for businesses in the West Coast Groundfish Catch Share Program. Congress may wish to explore further subsidizing these costs to provide parity with international substitute products, and ensure that environmental responsibility and stewardship in American fisheries management results in seafood products that are affordable on a global market.	Request that the NMFS Interagency Seafood Trade Task Force provide a report to Congress.

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Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP)						
High Priority Items (Not Prioritized Within This Category)						
Groundfish		Reg	50 CFR 660	A2 – Nontrawl area management and salmon troll incidental landings limits AND A5 – Moving Emley/Platt exempted fishing permit (EFP) into regulations	The GAP understands these items have now been combined after action earlier at this Council meeting under Agenda Item D.2. See discussion in the June 2020 Informational Report about High Priority Items ¹ and under D.2, Workload and New Management Measures GAP Report ² at this meeting.	Agendize for Council action.
Groundfish		Reg	50 CFR 660	A3 – Mothership sector utilization: the Council will begin scoping under this agenda item at this meeting	See discussion in the June 2020 Informational Report about High Priority Items ¹ and under D.2, Workload and New Management Measures GAP Report ² at this meeting.	Agendize for Council action.
Groundfish		Reg	50 CFR 660	A6 – gear switching and trawl sablefish area management	This is already a separate agenda item and some members of the GAP see this as a priority. More information about this issue is available under Agenda Item D.1, Gear Switching and Sablefish Area Management at this meeting, and specifically, GAP Report 1 ³ under that agenda item.	Agendize for Council action.
Low Priority Items (Not Prioritized Within This Category)						
Groundfish		Reg		Eliminate the aggregate cap in IFQ fisheries. Default to the sum of individual species limits (5.84%)	The aggregate cap forces fishermen to select species portfolios that will avoid lesser value species, which essentially eliminates underutilized species market development, contrary to the optimum yield (OY) mandate and the IFQ program goals and objectives.	
Groundfish		Reg		Increase allowance of surplus carryover, including for species where ABC=ACL	Revisiting these carryover provisions in the IFQ program could increase flexibility, which would promote short-term harvest opportunities and would further complement the basic economic objectives in the IFQ program environmental impact statement (EIS) while still adhering to the ACLs within each biennium. For more information, see: Informational Report 1, <i>National Standard 1 Technical Guidance for Designing, Evaluating, and Implementing Carry-over and Phase-in Provisions</i> ⁴ .	
Groundfish		Reg		"Soft cap" vessel limits and in-season adjustments	Adjusting vessel limits through in-season management could be raised for a particular species if it is lagging behind in attainment. This would allow more utilization of each IFQ species.	
Groundfish		Reg		Allow discards or survival credits greater than 50% for sablefish smaller than 22 inches caught with trawl gear	Sablefish are known to have high survivability rates, especially if harvested in shallower waters using shorter tows. This is similar to the quota program in effect in Canada. These smaller sablefish are undesirable and frequently unmarketable. Allowing discards or increased survival credits would increase the availability of individual quota for fishermen and thereby achieve greater resource utilization.	
Groundfish		Reg		Establish a process to provide incentives for cooperative research using underutilized bycatch	Using underutilized species from the previous year in the biennial management cycle could fund cooperative research projects.	
Groundfish		Reg	§660.60(d) Automatic Actions	Expedite the regulatory process to initiate harvest of species that are rebuilt	Allowing the NMFS Regional Administrator to relax ACLs for overfished species that are considered rebuilt based on updated stock assessments in the second year of a biennial management cycle would allow harvesters to access higher ACLs and provide more fishing and processing opportunity.	
Groundfish		Reg		Amend West Coast groundfish FMP to allow inclusion of a multi-year average catch policy	The Council considered this issue in 2017 but it dropped off the workload agenda. NMFS policies may have changed since then and this issue may be ready to be considered again. For more information, see documents under Agenda Item F.5, June 2017 ⁵ .	
Groundfish		Reg		Change the fishing calendar year from Jan. 1-Dec. 31 to April 1-March 31.	For catch shares program trawlers, this would allow more unused "insurance" species kept by whiting boats for incidental catch to be used by trawlers. Some of the most important species for bottom trawl (sablefish and canary, darkblotched, yelloweye and minor shelf rockfish) and midwater trawl (widow and yellowtail rockfish) are kept in large quantities until mid-October or November and then released, but are either not well utilized or their value not maximized because there is so little time left in the year. An April 1 start would allow use of those species for five months (Nov-Mar) instead of two (Nov-Dec).	
Groundfish		Reg		Allow a year-round non-whiting midwater trawl fishing and eliminate the selective flatfish trawl requirement	The trawl fishery has had three years of data from exempted fishing permits to support lifting these regulations permanently.	

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Action Categories: Other Agency (Including Parital NMFS Responsibility)						
Salmon Advisory Subpanel						
Ease restrictions o	1	Federal Leg	Congress	This action would require amendment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to allow a more comprehensive approach to managing salmonid predation in all areas inhabited by salmon.	Predation on salmon smolts is a key limiting factor, with both birds and harbor seals targeting out-migrating juvenile fish. Predation on adult salmon by Stellar and California sea lions is a key limiting factor on returning adult fish. Allowing a more comprehensive control program in all salmon habitats would increase the supply of salmon available for harvest by fishermen and would also contribute to the prey base for apex ocean predators like killer whales.	
Increase Hatchery	2	Funding and agency activities.	Federal (Including NMFS), tribal, state.	Increase salmon hatchery production within watersheds of the Pacific Fishery Management Council's jurisdiction. Tribal, Federal and state entities would be responsible for implementing this action.	Increased hatchery production of Pacific Coast salmon – especially Chinook and coho - has the ability to rapidly increase the salmon availability to all sectors within salmon fisheries. It will provide increased economic benefits to coastal and inland communities. It will also benefit tribal communities culturally and economically. Increased production would also contribute to the prey base for apex ocean predators like killer whales.	
Increase funds dedicated to dredging and infrastructure improvements for ocean ports	3	Infrastructure improvements.	Federal, state, local action.	This action would depend on Federal, State and local funds being maintained or increased through Federal appropriations, State budgets, and local taxing Districts.	Access to the ocean and adequate facilities for offloading catch, procuring ice and fuel, and repairing and maintaining vessels are vital for maintaining and increasing America's seafood supply. Dredging funds have been difficult to obtain beyond basic channel maintenance activities. Port infrastructure improvement and development efforts are entirely dependent on funding sources being available.	
Increase funding for creel surveys in salmon fisheries and biological sampling of salmon catch	4	Funding and agency activities.	Federal (NMFS?), tribal, state.	Increase funding for creel surveys and biological sampling of ocean salmon fisheries. Tribal, Federal and state entities would be responsible for implementing this action.	Justification: Funding should be increased to ensure that sufficient samples are collected so that the estimates of fishing effort and catch rate are sufficiently precise so that there is at least a 90 percent confidence that the true values are within 10 percent of the point estimates. Necessary sample sizes will vary by time and area depending on variation within the data. For surveys to be useful and valid, adequate and unbiased data must be available for analysis and interpretation with a view toward objective evaluation of the reliability of the conclusions based on the data. Creel survey sample size should be increased during times and at locations where data are highly variable which otherwise would result in estimates that have unacceptably large confidence intervals.	
Relieve burdensome Federal regulations	5	Reg change	USCG	Remove regulations that require annual review/action and cause unnecessary financial burden to the fishery participant. Federal entities would be responsible for implementing this action.	USCG regulations can be overly burdensome and do not provide flexibility to the fishing fleet. A prime example is the annual requirements for life raft repacking. The calendar year-based requirement fails to take into account shifting fishing seasons and potential closures, and is not tied temporally to the use of the life raft. These requirements are cost prohibitive, and without any certain benefit from the annual repacking versus a biannual repacking. A longer refresh cycle could lead to enhanced fleet safety by freeing up funds for other maintenance and safety projects.	

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Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (MSA) (Supported by the CPSMT)						
USFWS classification of market squid.	1	Guidance: NMFS/Secretary of Commerce request USFWS revision to Regulation	50 CFR Part 14 Importation, Exportation, and Transportation of Wildlife (See 73 FR 74615 and 50 CFR Parts 10-14)	Recommend regulatory change to US Fish & Wildlife Service to exempt U.S. harvested squid species from 50 CFR Part 10- 14 requirements, as most other fishery products are already exempt. This request is consistent with E.O. 13921: Sec.2(a), identify and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers restricting fishing. Sec. 4, Removing barriers to American fishing: reduce burdens on domestic fishing. Sec.11 (c) Resolve technical barriers to U.S. exports	USFWS now requires a redundant and unnecessary inspection process for U.S. harvested squid to be exported, even though these fishery products are already inspected by the US Department of Commerce (USDOC). Further, most other fishery products are exempt from USFWS inspection. The USFWS inspection and user fee system was established for monitoring the import and export of certain types of protected wildlife products. In the past, NMFS has taken a position in opposition to the USFWS' justification for including U.S. -produced squid species as part of this program. Despite objection from NMFS, the USFWS declines to classify squid as a fishery product or shellfish, defying best available science. This added burden of USFWS duplicative oversight, in addition to USDOC inspection, costs U.S. squid harvesters and processors collectively multiple tens of thousands of dollars annually in additional fees, requires export from only designated ports, at times disrupts exporting schedules, and makes US squid products less competitive in international markets. This undermines US trade policy and increases the US trade deficit, especially with China and Japan.	We ask the Council to include this request to NMFS as high priority on the list of EO recommended actions, to alert the US Department of Commerce of this burdensome and unnecessary duplication of oversight by USFWS that costs squid fishermen and processors on both west and east coasts many extra tens of thousands of dollars every year, making US squid uncompetitive in international markets. If the USFWS continues to decline to define squid as a shellfish and fishery product, and to exempt squid along with other fishery products from relevant CFR regulations, then we suggest such exemption be made by Congressional finding or Executive Order within the timeline of EO 13921.
Ecosystem Workgroup						
Sustainable Product Awareness	1	Seafood Promotion	Various agencies?	Are West Coast fisheries being adequately supported by agencies in ensuring that the general public knows about the sustainability of West Coast seafood?	Managing fisheries for sustainability likely ensures a long-term competitive advantage for West Coast fisheries and fishing communities. Consumers who care about sustainability and buying local product need information to make choices about the seafood they buy.	

¹ [June 2020 Groundfish Advisory Subpanel Informational Report for High Priority Items](#)

² [Agenda Item D.2, Workload and New Management Measures Supplemental GAP Report 1](#)

³ [Agenda Item D.1, Gear Switching and Sablefish Area Management Supplemental GAP Report 1](#)

⁴ [June 2020 Informational Report 1: National Standard 1 Technical Guidance of Designing, Evaluating and Implementing Carry-over and Phase-in Provisions](#)

⁵ [June 2017: Agenda Item F.5, Scoping of Multi-year Average Catch Policy](#)