

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the documents and public comments under this agenda item and offers the following comments.

General Comments

While Groundfish Workload and New Management Measures and Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning (Agenda Items D.2 and C.7 at this September 2020 Council meeting, respectively) are separate agenda items, the GAP would like to offer some general suggestions where there is overlap between these items.

Members of the GAP think that it would be helpful if there was consistency between future workload documents and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Groundfish Ongoing Workload document ([Agenda Item D.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1, September 2020](#)) in order to better understand overlap of Council workload issues, NMFS perspective on implementation timing, and both Council and NMFS capacity to make progress on these important issues.

In terms of prioritizing groundfish items for future meetings, the GAP position has consistently been, and will continue to be, that our panel is not able to prioritize certain groundfish items over others given the sectors and communities we represent. However, we find that there is often a lack of clarity about what the Council's groundfish priorities are, which may leave Council staff and NMFS staff in a difficult position for handling workload. In addition, it is sometimes difficult for the GAP and members of the public to determine what is moving forward and how, and under which agenda item. We find that this creates the perception that public comment is needed at each meeting under each of these agenda items, in both advisory bodies and on the Council floor, in order to keep items "hot", which may burn up time that could be better utilized. The GAP suggests it would be helpful for the Council to clarify their priorities, *in order*, under Groundfish Workload and New Management Measures, to provide clarity there. We believe this could also have the effect of simplifying discussion on agendaizing groundfish items under Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning.

November Meeting

The GAP recommends the following for the November Council meeting:

- Keep proposed Agenda Item F.2, Area 2A Fishery Transition – Final Preferred Alternative, on the November agenda (un-shade this item) in order to comply with the timeline set forward in the transition plan.
- Clarify the required timing for the Fixed Gear Catch Share Program Review (tier fishery) scoping. We heard from NMFS General Counsel on the Council floor that this review should begin in November 2020, but the Program Review Planning document ([Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 2, September 2020](#)) states that "because the [MSA] guidance is silent on second reviews of programs in place prior to 2007, the deadline for initiating the review might be considered as June of 2021" (page 2). On the Year-at-a-Glance ([Agenda Item C.7, Attachment 1, September 2020](#)) the program review shows as a shaded item for June

2021, and the GAP recommends keeping it there so we can address other priority issues first, unless it is otherwise required to begin sooner.

- Proposed Agenda Item I.6, Gear Switching and Sablefish Area Management – Range of Alternatives:
 - Some members of the GAP would like to keep this item on the November agenda (un-shade this item), now that the Council has moved forward with further consideration of this topic in their motions under Agenda Item D.1 at this September 2020 Council meeting. The GAP heard through public comment and GAP discussion that so much analysis and consideration has already been conducted that some GAP members think it is time for the Council to move ahead with the range of alternatives. These members of the GAP believe that a selection of a range of alternatives in November would not preclude discussions between vessel and processor stakeholders about potential solutions taking place both before and after November Council, and in fact having a range of alternatives may better facilitate these discussions over the winter. This GAP subset also recommends that if the Council would like to see alternatives in addition to those put forth by the SaMTAAC (proposed in [Agenda Item D.1.a, SaMTAAC Report, September 2020](#)), that the Council indicate this now so that analysts could be prepared with some preliminary information for November. These members suggest that one way to expedite the gear switching agenda item if the Council takes it up in November would be for the Council to provide guidance ahead of time that individual comments must be kept to two minutes and association comments kept to four minutes during the public comment portion. Providing this guidance now would give everyone proper notice, and still provide people time to speak, but could shorten the length of the agenda item, or at least keep it within the four scheduled hours.
 - Other members of the GAP would find it helpful to know whether the Council will consider additional alternatives at the November meeting or in the spring of 2021. They would like to see a solution come from fishermen, and therefore think it may be useful for the Council to next pick up the gear switching agenda item in the spring of 2021, rather than in November 2020. This would provide ample time to develop those solutions within the industry. These members do not support limiting the time for public comment in November, or at any meeting, regarding gear switching and sablefish management issues.
- The GAP would like to see mothership utilization and nontrawl Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) (including the Emley/Platt exempted fishing permit [EFP]) added to the November agenda.

Year-at-a-Glance

For groundfish items, the GAP would like to see mothership utilization and nontrawl RCAs (including the Emley/Platt EFP) added to the Year-at-a-Glance. These items are high priority for affected groundfish sectors, and it helps participants to know where these might show up in the coming year so that they can coordinate and prepare prior to Council meetings. The GAP notes that stock assessments appear to be missing from the Year-at-a-Glance.