

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON WORKLOAD AND NEW MANAGEMENT MEASURES PRIORITIZATION

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the items in the tables in [GMT Report 1](#) and provides updates on two of the items below. The team also reviewed the public comment letter from Audubon and Oceana ([Agenda Item G.2, Public Comment, March 2021](#)) and members viewed the brief presentation to the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel from Anna Weinstein, Audubon staff. The team also heard from Mr. Steve Wilson on behalf of the Salmon Trollers Associations in Washington and Oregon. Below are some initial thoughts for consideration.

Potential Emergency Rule

At the time of this report submission, the GMT did not have the ability to know whether the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prioritized the emergency rule requested during open comment ([Agenda Item B.1, Public Comment](#)). The preliminary GMT understanding is that the emergency rule, if recommended by the Council to move forward, would potentially displace other planned or ongoing work to some degree. As a result of this, the GMT is not able to evaluate whether additional new items could be prioritized under this agenda item, or whether the items currently prioritized need to be shifted, in favor of working on the emergency rule. The GMT also notes that, if tasked under G.2 to advise on the emergency rule, statements and Council floor engagement on G.4, Inseason, and G.5, Electronic Monitoring will need to be reduced, or eliminated. The GMT expects that any additional recommendations we have on the emergency rule may come under the Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning agenda item (Agenda Item C.6) at this meeting.

Updates to Appendix 2, Table B

This item last came before the Council in September 2020 ([Agenda Item D.2](#)). Since then, the GMT has re-examined the items in Appendix 2, Table B in GMT Report 1. **The GMT recommends the following changes:**

- Update *Item B.6. Remove Certain Time and Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-whiting*. Update the “Progress to date” cell to read, “Starting year 4 of the EFP”. With four years of this exempted fishing permit (EFP) operating, the GMT looks to the Council for guidance on when to undertake scoping to transition the EFP into regulations.
- Remove *Item B.11. Sablefish Harvest Specification Change- Managing with ACTs*. The GMT believes this item has been addressed by the new apportionment method adopted for 2021-22 and use of P* of 0.45.

Cowcod Conservation Area-CDFW Report

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has submitted a report ([G.2.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#)) requesting that the Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA) revision portion of the ‘Non-Trawl RCA Adjustments (Including CCA revisions) & Emley Platt EFP’ in [Agenda Item G.2.a, GMT Report 1, Appendix 1](#), be decoupled from that proposal. CCA revision would be added to the management measure proposal list as a standalone item and be prioritized

at a later date. The GMT can provide some additional information on this item at a later meeting, as we have done in the past with other issues (preliminary scoping).

Shortbelly Rockfish

The GMT considered the proposal by Audubon and Oceana to prohibit a directed fishery for shortbelly rockfish ([Agenda Item G.2, Public Comment, March 2021](#)). Our initial thought is that such an action could follow two potential paths: (1) amend language in the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to include a prohibition, or (2) employ a broader ecosystem approach, similar to the 2016 forage fish amendment undertaken within the context of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). Regardless of path, this action will likely require an amendment to the groundfish FMP.

The comment letter suggests including a shortbelly rockfish fishing prohibition as part of the 2023-24 biennial harvest specifications and management measures. If considered there, it would likely fall under the ‘new management measure’ category. The Council has yet to determine the scope of the 2023-24 process, and the inclusion of this and/or other new management measures may make the implementation of specifications by January 1 more challenging.

The GMT notes that, regardless of the path forward chosen by the Council, prohibiting fishing for shortbelly rockfish would warrant similar considerations as were considered during the forage fish action under the FEP.

Lingcod North of 40° 10' N lat. retention in Salmon Troll Fishery

The GMT received public comment from Mr. Steve Wilson on behalf of the Salmon Trollers Associations in Washington and Oregon requesting an increase to the incidental lingcod trip limit, as salmon trollers are seeking additional opportunities during the 2021 salmon season. The salmon troll fishery is considered an incidental open access fishery in the groundfish FMP; therefore, impacts from the fishery are part of off-the-top deductions from the annual catch limit prior to allocating the stock to the directed groundfish fisheries. Adjustments to this trip limit would require additional analysis than typical inseason trip limit adjustments, as well as raise questions regarding equity and uncertain yelloweye rockfish impacts from an unobserved fishery. The GMT suggested to Mr. Wilson that the Salmon Advisory Subpanel consider submitting this request under this agenda item for further consideration by the Council.

PFMC
03/05/21