

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON WORKLOAD AND NEW MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Introduction

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offers the following information for consideration under Agenda Item G.2.

Our focus continues to be meeting our mandates under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as prioritizing actions that keep the fishery running (i.e. specifications, inseason). The Council previously prioritized mothership sector utilization, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), sablefish gear switching, and non-trawl actions. We have not yet been able to staff all of these priorities due to our existing workload related to MSA and ESA mandates, as well as staffing changes ([Agenda Item G.1.a, NMFS Supplemental Report 1](#)). We do not support prioritizing new items at this time, unless existing prioritized items are deprioritized. Additionally, with a new harvest specifications cycle starting, as well as an MSA-required catch share program review for the primary sablefish fishery, the Council will need to carefully consider the timing of continued progress for the previously prioritized actions. We would not be able to support all of these actions moving forward at the same time. We can engage over the summer to support a limited number of items under Council consideration in preparation for the September and November Council meetings.

We recommend the Council conduct a holistic workload assessment, including consideration of those items previously identified ([Agenda Item G.2.a, GMT Report 1](#)) along with any emerging issues, taking into account potential implementation timelines (Table 1). In particular, more information is known about the potential pathways and timelines to address mothership sector utilization (Agenda Item G.3) since the last prioritization discussion in September 2020.

We also would appreciate Council guidance on prioritization of the Ad Hoc Cost Recovery Committee. We note there is substantial overlap between the staff that work on the catch shares priorities (i.e. whiting utilization, SaMTAAC, and electronic monitoring) so timing of the Committee discussions should be taken into account with the other groundfish priorities.

Table 1 summarizes expected rulemaking and implementation timelines.

Table 1. Rulemaking and Implementation Timelines

	2021					2022					Rulemaking Estimate	Implementation	Note
	Mar	Apr	Jun	Sep	Nov	Mar	Apr	Jun	Sep	Nov			
2023-24 groundfish specs, management measures, and EFPs			Plan	ROA	ROA		PPA	FPA			6 months	January 1, 2023	Required for fishery operation/MSA
Non-trawl logbook											9-12 months	January 1, 2023	Required by biological opinion
Humpback whale ESA consultation next steps											TBD		Required by biological opinion; coordination with industry/GAP in 2022. Feasibility study by March 2023 (required). Council to consider changes to pot gear marking regulations by March 2024 (required).
Sablefish gear switching		GS limit	ROA (tent.)								12-18 months	January 1	Current options under consideration require that implementation aligns with annual issuance of permits and/or quota pounds
Non-trawl/Emley Platt		Scoping									TBD		
Whiting mothership (including season start date)	ROA										12 months		
Whiting mothership (not including season start date)	ROA										9 months		May need to split implementation of processor obligation deadline depending on timing.
Whiting EFPs (season start date & processing south of 42)											12 months		Recommend out of cycle EFPs, i.e., do not include these EFPs in specifications action due to analysis needed.