

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING
AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft agenda ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 2](#)) for the June Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting and draft Year-at-a-Glance ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 1](#)) contained in the advanced briefing book, and offer the following comments.

June Council meeting

The GMT notes that both the team and Council are currently scheduled to meet on Saturday, June 26, according to the [draft June agenda](#) in the advanced briefing book. This is a change to how the virtual meetings have been scheduled over the last year, as there have been no meetings scheduled on weekends. The GMT is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, June 23. Additionally, many members of the GMT will be participating in the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) groundfish subcommittee meeting on Monday, June 21 and Tuesday, June 22 which will be focused on the data moderate stock assessments and catch only updates. Most team members will be scheduled for nine working days in a ten-day period, potentially disrupting attempts to balance GMT workload and personal and family responsibilities in the middle of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Table 1).

Table 1. Schedule of meetings GMT members will participate in during June and July 2021.

Week 1	Sun 06/20	Mon 06/21	Tues 06/22	Wed 06/23	Thurs 06/24	Fri 06/25	Sat 06/26
		SSC GF subcomm. mtg.		GMT/Council Meetings			
Week 2	Sun 06/27	Mon 06/28	Tues 06/29	Wed 06/30	Thurs 07/01	Fri 07/02	Sat 07/03
		GMT/Council Meetings					
Week 3	Sun 07/04	Mon 07/05	Tues 07/06	Wed 07/07	Thurs 07/08	Fri 07/09	Sat 07/10
	Independence Day	Federal Holiday					
Week 4	Sun 07/11	Mon 07/12	Tues 07/13	Wed 07/14	Thurs 07/15	Fri 07/16	Sat 07/17
		Lingcod STAR Panel					
Week 5	Sun 07/18	Mon 07/19	Tues 07/20	Wed 07/21	Thurs 07/22	Fri 07/23	Sat 07/24
Week 6	Sun 07/25	Mon 07/26	Tues 07/27	Wed 07/28	Thurs 07/29	Fri 07/30	Sat 07/31
		Vermilion/Sunset Rockfish STAR Panel					

The draft June agenda ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 2, April 2021](#)) has seven groundfish items scheduled. The majority are high workload, including fixed gear catch share review scoping, inseason adjustments, planning for 2023-24 harvest specifications and management measures, and adopting stock assessments. Two additional groundfish items are shaded, including the sablefish gear switching-range of alternatives, which may be onerous for the GMT. Additionally, there are

two administrative items that are shaded, which the GMT may be anticipated to provide comment on: standardized bycatch reporting-scoping and preliminary regional operating agreement. Based on the cumulative effect of an extended schedule, high volume and workload of agenda items, the GMT has concerns this may not allow for optimal work performance and report output; therefore, **the GMT requests specific Council guidance on which items to prioritize for discussions, analysis, and reports, and which items the Council does not expect to receive input from the GMT on at the June Council meeting.** The GMT suggests removing the Workload and New Management Measures Update from the June agenda because items prioritized during this process earlier this year are being worked on, the GMT does not have the capacity to take on any additional items, and therefore that Council floor time may be better used on another topic in June.

Additional GMT Work over the Spring/Summer

Between the end of the April Council meeting and the September Council meeting -- in addition to the six-week period with a maximum of 11 unscheduled workdays (Table 1) -- members will be involved in and working on:

- Analysis on items such as gear switching, non-trawl rockfish conservation area (RCA), mothership (MS) utilization, etc., as directed by the Council in preparation for upcoming Council meetings
- June GMT and Council meetings
- Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel in May (Dover sole/spiny dogfish) and two separate panels in July (lingcod and vermilion/sunset rockfish), with a possible mop-up panel in late September
- RecFIN Technical Committee spring meeting
- Continued work on the [Biennial Harvest Specifications database](#) along with beginning the process to develop a similar regulations database
- Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Meeting scheduled for April 26-28, 2021
- Sablefish Management Strategy Evaluation workshop scheduled for April 28-29, 2021
- Starting to think about 2023-24 harvest specifications and potential new management measures

Year-At-A-Glance

The GMT notes that any subsequent actions to Agenda Item F.3 on the non-trawl RCA item discussed at this meeting are not currently scheduled on the draft Year-at-a-Glance ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 2, April 2021](#)). **The GMT requests that the Council not schedule additional action on the non-trawl RCA item at the same meeting that MS utilization or gear switching are scheduled.** Each of these three topics have the potential to be a heavy workload for the GMT, so scheduling more than one at a single meeting would be difficult for the GMT, and likely mean work on other items will be limited (inseason, stock assessments, workload and new management measures prioritization, etc.). The GMT also reminds the Council that the 2023-24 biennial harvest specifications and management measures process begins in earnest in September 2021. November 2021 and April 2022 will be very busy meetings for the biennial process, which has in the past been the Council's priority. Care will need to be given in terms of what other items get scheduled at those meetings.