

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

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft Year-at-a-Glance (YAG; [Agenda Item E.7, Attachment 1, September 2021](#)) and draft November Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Agenda ([Agenda Item E.7, Attachment 1, September 2021](#)) as well as the status and ongoing work on groundfish items, and offer the following thoughts for Council consideration.

Fixed Gear Logbooks

The GMT reviewed the [Agenda Item C.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2, September 2021](#) on Fixed Gear Logbooks in the supplemental briefing book and received a briefing on Report 2 from Ms. Keeley Kent and Ms. Lynn Massey from the West Coast Region's Groundfish Branch and Mr. Craig Russell from the Northwest Fishery Science Center. While there was no Council action under this agenda item, the GMT supports the continued progress on fixed gear logbooks.

Council discussion noted the lack of clarity on the sectors that this logbook requirement would apply to, specifically the salmon troll fishery (particularly if retaining groundfish) and fixed gear fishery trips that occur partially or wholly in state waters. The GMT also discussed other aspects of the logbook requirement that would benefit from further discussion, which should be considered when allocating future agenda time for this item. For example, self-reported effort and discard data will be helpful compared to no data, but fishery managers and scientists will need to consider which types of analyses can use self-reported data as well as the degree to which uncertainty in self-reported data can be quantified for comparison with observer and electronic monitoring data. The GMT supports the recommendation of the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) to include engagement from industry throughout the west coast in the continued development of the fixed gear logbook. The GMT looks forward to further discussion on the scope of this logbook requirement and how to maximize data collection to inform fisheries management.

November Agenda

The GMT reiterates the desire to only be in person when the whole team can be in person, but due to differences in organizational strategy around COVID-19 travel restrictions, this is unlikely to happen in November 2021. The team realizes the increased efficiencies that happen when we are in person and hopes that we all can be safely together soon.

The GMT reviewed the draft November Agenda included in the advanced briefing book ([Agenda Item E.7., Attachment 2, September 2021](#)) and notes that an agenda item on the Fixed Gear Catch Share Review is not included but should be. The Regional Best Scientific Information Available Framework item is currently shaded (i.e., candidate for rescheduling) and should be considered for the November Agenda. Additionally, the agenda item to **adopt stock assessments** is currently shaded and **must be put on the schedule for November**. If not included on the November agenda, the GMT will not be able to conduct our overwinter analysis, and the 2023-24 biennial harvest specifications process will be significantly delayed.

Also in November, the results of several groundfish agenda items are needed for subsequent agenda items, so the GMT requests the Council be strategic when scheduling these items. Specifically, the GMT needs the results of the stock assessment agenda item to complete our report for 2023-24 harvest specifications, and the results of 2023-24 harvest specifications and preliminary approval of exempted fishing permits (EFPs) to complete calculations, tables, and our report for 2023-24 management measures. In order to accomplish these tasks, the GMT requests a minimum of 24 hours between the conclusion of those informing agenda items and when the GMT reports would be due (4 pm the day before an item comes up on the Council floor). As an example, EFPs are currently scheduled ([Attachment 2](#)) to conclude mid-morning on Friday, Nov 19; to give the GMT adequate time to complete calculations, populate tables, and complete our report, the Biennial Management Measures agenda item should be scheduled no earlier than Sunday, Nov 21. Allowing that time will facilitate the GMT being able to complete the necessary work and reduce the potential for errors.

Fall Meetings Outside of Council Meetings:

Members of the GMT will be participating in ancillary meetings that are Council and GMT related during the fall and early winter months, including:

- Stock Assessment Mop-Up Review Panel: Sept 29-30
- GMT work session: Oct 18-22
- Annual PacFIN meeting: Oct 27-28
- RecFIN Technical Committee Meeting: Nov 30-Dec 1
- International Pacific Halibut Commission interim meeting: Nov 30-Dec 1

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) proposed workshops

The SSC ([Agenda Item E.7.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, September 2021](#)) is proposing three workshops to look at: 1) conducting nearshore remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys and using ROV data in stock assessments, 2) developing methods for constructing abundance indices based on hook and line surveys, and 3) exploring approaches to deal with large closed areas and other spatial issues in stock assessments. The GMT sees merit in all of these workshops and anticipates participating in those workshops when scheduled.

GMT Engagement with Non-Groundfish Agenda Items

The GMT was heavily engaged with high workload groundfish agenda items at this meeting, including an emergency rule agenda item added during the meeting, and had limited time to engage in the Marine Planning Agenda Item in the detail necessary to provide a comprehensive analytical statement. Noting the importance of Marine Planning to fisheries and fishery participants, the GMT requests specific Council direction as to whether future groundfish engagement is expected from the GMT directly or if this role/responsibility will be filled by the Marine Planning Committee. Similarly, the GMT schedule did not allow for detailed review of materials related to the two Ecosystem agenda items at this meeting, nor for any substantive discussion, which resulted in no reports being submitted. If the GMT is expected to provide feedback on Ecosystem topics, and other non-groundfish Fishery Management Plan agenda items, the Council will need to prioritize those for the GMT relative to our competing groundfish workload.

Year-at-a-Glance

The GMT has created a YAG focused only on the GMT's workload at each meeting and notes that there are currently six items in red and italics that have yet to be placed on the Council YAG

[\(Agenda Item E.7, Attachment 2, September 2021\)](#). The GMT proposes to the Council our strategized placement of those items into the YAG from the lens of the current GMT workload in Table 1 of Appendix 1 of this report. The GMT hopes that the Council will use this tool to help guide the placement of items that have already been prioritized by the Council. The GMT will update this attachment as appropriate when/if the Council prioritizes new GMT workload items. An important note is that this YAG does NOT prioritize anything on the Workload and New Management Measures Prioritization list ([Agenda Item G.2.a, GMT Report 1, March 2021](#)). The GMT notes that the Sablefish Gear Switching FPA is not on either the GMT focused or Council YAG, and we propose that it be taken up at the November 2022 meeting. The GMT hopes this tool is helpful for the Council and would appreciate any feedback on improving this tool or providing other resources to support prioritizing and scheduling groundfish agenda items.

Scheduling of the Emergency Rule Agenda Item at this Meeting

The GMT appreciates the timing of the Council's scheduling of the sablefish emergency rule agenda item at the Council meeting. The Council's decision on day one to add that agenda item to the agenda later in the week provided the GMT with additional time to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service, discuss with the GAP, and conduct analysis and report writing, while also balancing our work on other agenda items. This is preferable to having several days of uncertainty, as has been the case with previous emergency rule requests. The GMT hopes that if future emergency rule requests come forward, the same timing will be used to help ensure that the team provides the highest quality reports possible.

Appendix 1

Table 1 Bold and Italics indicate items that are not currently on the Council's YAG. (H),(M),(L) indicates High, Medium, Low anticipated GMT workload.

November 2021	March 2022	April 2022	June 2022	September 2022
Workload & New Mgt. Measures. Update	Workload & New Mgt. Measures Prioritization	NMFS Report	Workload & New Mgt. Measures Update	Workload & New Mgt. Measures Update
NMFS Report	NMFS report	Inseason Management	NMFS Report	NMFS Report
Inseason Management & Whiting set asides	Inseason management	Fisheries in 2023-2024 - Mgmt measures PPA	Inseason Management	Inseason Management
Adopt stock assessments	Initial 2023 stock assessment plan & TOR	Strategic Plan Rev. Scoping (shaded on YAG)	Final Stock assessment plan & TOR	Impact Analysis Methodology Review
Biennial spex OFL/ABC, ACL-FPA, management measures ROA	Fisheries in 2023-2024- Check in (shaded on YAG)	<i>Non-Trawl RCA PPA (H)</i>	Adopt stock assessments (Shaded on the YAG)	<i>Non-Trawl RCA FPA (H)</i>
Non-Trawl RCA ROA	Whiting Treaty implementation (Shaded on YAG)	<i>LEFG Review Final (L)</i>	Final EFP approval	
Preliminary EFP Approval	At-sea whiting utilization FPA		<i>Sablefish Gear Switching PPA (H)</i>	
<i>LEFG Review (Adoption of Public Review/ take up new MM) (M)</i>	Trawl catch share review-scoping (shaded on YAG)			
	<i>Sablefish Gear Switching Check-in-if needed (L)</i>			

PFMC
09/14/21