

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

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

### June 2022 agenda

Referencing the draft [June 2022 Council meeting agenda](#), the GAP recommends the following:

1. Marine Planning: Unshading and **adding the Marine Planning agenda item to the agenda**. This is a critically important issue to members involved in Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council)-managed fisheries, especially since the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) recently released the Oregon call areas and a formal *Federal Register* notice will be announced soon. Additionally, the Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) plans to meet in late May to help inform the Council on issues and letters that have comment periods that coincide with the June Council meeting. The GAP believes the Council could benefit from discussion of these letters and comments during open session rather than relying on the quick-response process. The GAP suggests including a narrowly focused marine planning agenda item for June (Oregon call areas, Olympic Wind off Washington, activities related to the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)/BOEM strategy to mitigate offshore wind development on NMFS surveys). We also note there is a likely escalation in the number of events affecting the marine environment and our fisheries. Therefore, we urge the MPC and Council to look for ways to make commenting on these issues more efficient.
2. Electronic monitoring: The GAP supports **adding an update on electronic monitoring** to the June agenda.
3. Groundfish workload and new management measures: The GAP supports **removing this from the Council's June agenda**. The GMT and Council staff will have plenty of analyses to do on current groundfish subjects to inform agenda items in June.

### Draft Year-at-a-Glance

Referencing the [Draft Year-at-a-Glance calendar](#), the GAP recommends:

1. Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA): The GAP supports **scheduling the Non-trawl RCA ROA/PPA agenda item for the September** Council meeting. This would also necessitate tentatively scheduling a final preferred alternative agenda item in March or April 2023.
2. Electronic monitoring: The GAP supports the schedule for electronic monitoring as outlined in [Agenda Item F.7.a, Supplemental GEMPAC Report 1](#). We suggest adding, as shaded items, the selection of a **preliminary preferred alternative in September 2022 and a final preferred alternative in March 2023**.

## Transition to in-person meetings

The GAP had a lengthy discussion about the transition from virtual to in-person meetings, including some creative options the Council and staff may want to consider in the future. The GAP notes Council staff quickly adapted to online meetings at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic and we thank them for that action. **However, the GAP's preference at this time is for an in-person meeting in June while the Council considers ways to proceed with hybrid (virtual/in-person) meetings in the future.**

It is clear to many GAP members that in-person meetings facilitate better interpersonal communications between GAP members and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the greater Council family. It is important these discussions can be had, especially when difficult and complex issues are forthcoming. GAP members and members of the public can communicate interest, ideas and issues for consideration much more easily in direct conversation.

Several GAP members noted the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) met this week and included a hybrid option. GAP members who participate in both regions remarked on the success of this hybrid process and urges the Council to prioritize working on this option into the future for both the Council and advisory bodies (ABs). It remains important that members of the public be able to listen to the Council and provide comment virtually, even if the Council meeting is fully in person. We recognize the NPFMC has only one advisory panel, whereas the Pacific Council has many advisory bodies; therefore, the cost and staff resources to do both hybrid Council and ABs may be higher but those issues are surmountable.

The GAP also considered other ideas the Council may wish to consider:

1. Semi-virtual meetings: Using the GAP as an example, this would include GAP members who wish to attend a Council meeting in person so they can provide GAP reports, public comment, interact with Council and staff, etc., but have the GAP meeting itself be run virtually, as we have been doing. GAP members would attend from their private hotel rooms. The advantages include some of the personal interaction but also provide flexibility for GAP members who may not be able to attend in person. The GAP acknowledges there may be issues with high-speed internet connectivity in hotel rooms but that issue could be dealt with.
2. Consider virtual vs. in-person for some AB meetings dependent on Council actions and to what extent that AB's attendance is required: As the virtual option has proven, advisory bodies can adapt to the online venue. However, the Council recognized the importance for the Salmon Advisory Subpanel and Salmon Technical Team to meet in person in March and April. It may be possible for the GAP (and other ABs) to meet virtually for two or three of the five meetings per year, perhaps when those respective ABs have lighter schedules.

The GAP also notes that public participation is a key part of the Council and fisheries management process. It has increased during the transition to virtual meetings. The Council should keep this in mind as it explores more hybrid or virtual options.