

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SABLEFISH ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Information reported to the Council during the March 2023 meeting led to consideration of a potential stock assessment update for sablefish in the current groundfish stock assessment cycle for 2023 and 2024 ([Agenda Item F.1.b, Supplemental NWFSC Presentation 1, March 2023](#)). The supplemental Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) presentation summarized data from the 2021 and 2022 West Coast groundfish bottom trawl surveys that included above-average recruitment success for sablefish, which raised concerns about sablefish bycatch in non-target fisheries. Based on a Council request, the NWFSC offered to prepare an update assessment before August 2023 for Council consideration.

Under stock assessment prioritization in June 2022 ([Agenda Item F.3, Attachment 1, June 2022](#)), sablefish was identified as a candidate for possible full assessment in 2025. Sablefish was last fully assessed in 2019, with an update to the full assessment conducted in 2021. The current option under consideration is to have the NWFSC conduct a new update to the last full assessment in time for review in August 2023, with some limitations on data availability.

During the March 2023 discussion, the Council requested the NWFSC provide an overview of the progress to date, including updates on ageing, for species already scheduled for assessments this cycle. The NWFSC is anticipated to provide a supplemental report to address questions and provide supporting information for Council consideration in April.

Council advisory bodies should provide feedback relative to workload capacity, timing, and other considerations for Council consideration of the potential addition of a sablefish assessment update to the current stock assessment cycle.

### **Council Action:**

**1. Provide Guidance regarding the addition of a sablefish stock assessment update to the current groundfish stock assessment cycle.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. If Received, Public Comments are Electronic Only ([see e-portal](#)).

### **Agenda Order:**

G.6 Considerations for a Sablefish Assessment Update Marlene A. Bellman  
a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies  
b. Public Comment  
c. **Council Action:** Consider Adding a Sablefish Assessment Update  
to the List of Stocks Assessed in 2023 and Provide Guidance on Process