

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON NATIONAL MARINE  
FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received presentations related to this agenda item and offers the following comments/suggestions.

- NMFS surveys: The GAP appreciates the update about 2023 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) survey deployment and is pleased that the survey planning for the West Coast Bottom Trawl Survey, Southern California Hook and Line Survey, and the Pacific hake acoustic survey are all on track and scheduled. Relative to the Hook and Line Survey, the GAP continues to express interest in extending the survey range north of Pt. Conception in Southern California and also to nearshore areas because it would provide sorely needed fishery-independent data to improve stock assessments and fishery management. Relative to NMFS planning toward an integrated hake/coastal pelagic species (CPS) survey, the GAP continues to call for an open and inclusive planning process for integrated survey development and suggests contingency planning include a potential delay in implementation of an integrated survey beyond 2025 to ensure data integrity is not compromised.
- Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT-RCA) action: The GAP wishes to thank the Council and all who participated in the years-long process developing the Non-Trawl Area Management measures and your approval of the package this past March. We recognize the broad support this action has and appreciate the many positive public comments that have come in regarding it under B.1, Non-Agenda Items at this meeting. Renewed spatial access will redistribute fishing effort much more broadly, further supporting our fisheries conservation goals.
- Potential Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of sunflower sea star: The GAP highlights our interest in the proposed ESA listing of the sunflower sea star as “threatened.” As stated by NMFS, groundfish fisheries have few, if any, interactions with this species or their forage. While the GAP understands that fishery consultations could be required, the GAP does not foresee a need to restrict access to those fisheries in order to further conservation efforts in support of sunflower sea star recovery. This is supported by the NMFS Report, which states that NMFS intends to coordinate “consultations to ensure no disruption to fisheries,” but that the “[c]omplexity of consultation will result on [the] nature of the fishery and ability to document or predict impacts.”

The GAP would like to note that both Washington State University and Oregon State University have been working on studies related to the sunflower sea star. Additionally, The Nature Conservancy incorporated several of the universities’ works when it published its [Roadmap to Recovery for the Sunflower Sea Star](#). The combination of all the studies and this roadmap demonstrate effective measures to recover the sunflower sea star.

- Humpback whale/fixed gear fishery court decision: The GAP is very interested in the recent court decision related to the groundfish fixed gear fisheries and humpback whales. The GAP recognizes that NMFS is still working to understand and respond to the court ruling. The GAP recommends continued, close engagement with fishery participants as the process moves forward.
- Draft Compliance Guide for Open Access (OA) fisheries: The GAP thanks NMFS staff and in particular Lynn Massey and Gretchen Hanshew for their work in creating an Open Access Compliance Guide and working with fishery representatives to make the new non-trawl electronic logbook as workable as possible. The Compliance Guide will be an essential component and is greatly appreciated by the GAP, especially as the OA groundfish fishery may see new entrants due to problematic crab and salmon seasons.

PFMC  
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