

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON CONSIDERATIONS FOR A
SABLEFISH ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the [Agenda Item G.6.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1, April 2023](#) in the Briefing Book, received a briefing from Dr. Chantel Wetzel (Northwest Fisheries Science Center [NWFSC]), and provides the following comments.

The GMT supports the addition of a sablefish assessment update this year. This limited update assessment would provide additional clarity around recent cohorts, potential changes in future spawning biomass, and updated harvest limits based on the current sablefish population. The Science Center proposed that only 2021-22 fishery removals and data from the NWFSC Groundfish Bottom Trawl survey would be added to the 2021 adopted update assessment used for management. Given this proposal, the GMT understands that the estimates from this assessment may have an increased level of uncertainty that would need to be considered when setting the harvest control rule and could impact the workload during the 2025-26 harvest specification process. The GMT continues to recommend that sablefish be considered for a full assessment in 2025 ([Agenda Item G.7.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, September 2022](#)).

In the absence of a 2023 update assessment for sablefish, the GMT foresees potential 2025-26 harvest specification workload implications given the reports from industry concerning a large increase in encounter rates of small sablefish and the potential need for creating accountability measures or allocation changes to keep mortality within the annual catch limit.

The GMT requests the Council specify a process whereby the GMT and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel have a chance to review and provide comments to the Groundfish Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) as part of the review. The GMT agrees with the August 28-29 timing of the SSC review and appreciates that the SSC recommends GMT and GAP attendance at this review (Agenda Item G.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, April 2023).

PMFC
04/04/23