

GROUND FISH ENDANGERED SPECIES WORKGROUP REPORT

The Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (Workgroup) was established in June 2013 to serve as an advisory body to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) with the objective to support Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(2) compliance in the [Biological Opinions](#) (BiOps) for the continued operation of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Workgroup meetings are generally timed so that their recommendations that would need to be addressed by adoption or adjustment of management measures can be considered as part of the groundfish biennial harvest specifications and management measures process.

The Workgroup met from April 12 - 13, 2023 and reviewed reports detailing the most recent incidental take estimates for eulachon, green sturgeon, humpback whales, leatherback sea turtles, and short-tailed albatross in the groundfish fishery. The Workgroup, in part, considered whether incidental take was exceeded and if new information reveals effects not previously considered in the BiOp. Under its Terms of Reference, the Workgroup may recommend the Council consider new conservation and management measures to minimize bycatch of the aforementioned ESA-listed species (Agenda Item H.6.a, GESW Workgroup Report 1). The Workgroup chair is expected to present the findings from the Workgroup's report at this meeting.

The Council has the opportunity under this agenda item to address conservation concerns raised in the reports and consider measures to minimize bycatch of the aforementioned species. The Council may also recommend new analyses, reports, or changes to sampling protocols to improve bycatch estimates of these ESA-listed species. New management measures that the Council identifies at this meeting could be considered as part of the 2025-2026 harvest specifications and management measures process, if appropriate.

The specific reports for the ESA-listed species noted above (Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Reports 1-5) and a groundfish fishery effort report with an accompanying data file (Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Reports 6 & 7) are provided as Council reference material for this agenda item.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider the Recommendations of the Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup.**
- 2. Identify Measures to be Considered as part of the 2025-2026 Groundfish Biennial Management Process or Other Process, as Appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.6.a, Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Report 1.
2. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 1: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Eulachon in 2002–2021 U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
3. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 2: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Green Sturgeon in 2002–2021 U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries.
4. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 3: Leatherback Sea Turtle Bycatch in U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries 2002-2021.
5. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 4: Estimated Short-tailed Albatross Bycatch in U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries 2002-2021.

6. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 5: Estimated Humpback Whale Bycatch in the U.S. West Coast Groundfish Fisheries, 2002-2021 (**Electronic Only**).
7. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 6: Fishing Effort in the 2002-2021 U.S. Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries (**Electronic Only**).
8. Agenda Item H.6.a, NMFS Report 7: Fishing Effort in the 2002-2021 U.S. Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries – Data (**Excel file, Electronic Only**).
9. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.6 Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Report Todd Phillips
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Consider the Recommendations of the Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup and Identify Measures to be Considered in Planning for the 2025-2026 Biennial Management Process or Other Process, as Appropriate

PFMC
06/14/23